

CAMPERDOWN & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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 Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/camperdownhistory>

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NEWSLETTER

July, 2014

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Moveable

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Ray Watson
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Treasurer

Frank Rose

Committee

Maree Belyea
 Johnelle Kennedy
 Bob Lambell
 Heather McDowell
 Russell Pollock
 Gillian Senior
 Jan Whamond
 Rob Wuchatsch

Hello to all our members,

In this Newsletter we have reports on the 2014 Robert Burns Festival, a very successful chat with some of Camperdown's older citizens, a major discovery from Fromelles related to one of our local sons lost in 1916 in WWI and the remembrance of a local school teacher lost in WW2.

Our major article, on the builders of the Clock Tower and St. Paul's Parish Hall, developed from a surprise visit to the Heritage Centre by Peter Rodger who introduced himself with: *".....my grandfather built your Clock Tower."* Naturally that started a long and very interesting conversation! The full story, with a lot of extra information, appears later in this Newsletter.

We're extremely happy with the reception our Facebook page is having – latest figures from a recent post was that we reached over 600 people – a great result. An offer of maps to members and friends resulted in around twenty very happy map-loving people. The remaining maps available are listed later.

You don't have to be a member of Facebook to see our latest news. Just click on the link below and you can read all our posts. However, you will not be able to 'like' us or leave comments unless you join Facebook.

Here's the link: <https://www.facebook.com/camperdownhistory>

Our Annual General Meeting was held on the evening of 5th August and there's a full report on Page 2 as well as information about a really interesting trip to Lismore for members in October. We hope we'll see lots of you there.

New members welcomed are: Bev Fleming, Pamela Jellie, Beverley McArthur, Leon Morrissey and Fiona Webber. Welcome aboard – and we hope to see you at the Heritage Centre soon.

Gillian Senior Newsletter Editor

Camperdown

Heritage Centre

241 Manifold Street
 Camperdown 3260

Opening hours

Tuesdays and 1st Sunday
 of month, (Market Day)
 10am-3pm

Or by appointment

**From the Heritage Centre Collection:
 Souvenir Clock Tower China.**



This China Tuscan Tea Set consisting of milk jug, sugar bowl, saucer and five cups was produced as a souvenir of Camperdown.

In this issue:

- P1.** From the Heritage Centre Collection.
- P2.** Coming Events
AGM Report
- P3.** News items,
- P4.** Burns Festival,
Maps available.
30 year Anniversary
- P5-7.** Clock Tower
Builders – Rodger Bros.

COMING EVENTS:

Tuesday 2nd September, 10.30 am: Executive meeting at the Heritage Centre

Field trip: Antique Auto Garage Lismore, and the Derinallum-Lismore History Rooms



In the morning we will visit the fascinating *Antique Auto Garage* at Lismore, specialists in "garagenalia" and the restoration of bowsers and antique enamel signs.

After lunch at the Lismore Hotel,
we will visit the Derrinallum-Lismore History Rooms at Derrinallum.

Saturday, 18th October

Departing 9.45 am from the Heritage Centre (share cars)

A-la-carte lunch at the Lismore Hotel

RSVP by Monday 13th October:

Ray Watson Ph. 0487 261 048, or email camperdowndhs@gmail.com

Tuesday 11th November, 10.30 am: Executive meeting at the Heritage Centre

REPORT OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday, 5th August at the Heritage Centre.

We had a good turn up of members and ended the meeting with a good-sized Executive Committee including a couple of very welcome new committee members from our general membership. Very encouraging.

Bob Lambell stood down as President after seven years of sterling service. The amount of time he put into it over those years was way above and beyond the call of duty and he's more than due for a break.

There was no nomination for President at the meeting but the committee will meet on Tuesday, 12th August and arrange for the position to be held monthly or bi-monthly by various committee members. It will give everyone a chance to 'try out' the job and see if they're willing to take it on.

Bob has left very big shoes to fill and maybe we're all a little scared of the job.

Members of your Committee are:

Secretary:	Ray Watson
Treasurer:	Frank Rose
Committee:	Maree Belyea
	Johnelle Kennedy
	Bob Lambell
	Heather McDowell
	Russell Pollock
	Gillian Senior
	Jan Whamond
	Rob Whuchatsch

IN MEMORY OF JOHN CALLAHAN



This 8-day, pendulum English Enfield wall clock hangs on the wall above our work table in the Heritage Centre. The plaque reads:

IN MEMORY OF
F/O J. CALLAHAN
KILLED IN AIR OPERATIONS
ENGLAND
4TH SEPT. 1942
"LEST WE FORGET"

Two of our members, Clock Repairer, John Woods, Laurie Clementson, had given it some TLC and it now it keeps perfect time – and tells us when it's time to go home!!

We had a query about it early this month and can now tell some more of its story:

Flight Officer John Callaghan was born in 1918 in Colac and, in 1939 was the head teacher at the Koallah State School. He enlisted in Colac in 1940 and was a member of 296 Squadron. His RAAF record says that he is listed on a Roll of Honour at Gerangamete. We are still researching further information about him and his story.

OUR SENIOR CITIZENS - A very successful gathering of about 25 members and friends welcomed our guests who were: Jock Hay, Pat Howley, Thelma McGill, Lillian Greaves, Margaret Lafferty and Jim Kidman. Guests and audience all had a great time talking about past adventures and the Society was given some assistance in identifying a few of our old photographs.



LOCAL SOLDIER IDENTIFIED:

In 2009, Colac resident, Arthur Grant provided some family DNA to the Defence Investigations Department and, on April 23rd, this year, he received a call to tell him that his great uncle, Corporal Joseph Edward Lee had been identified as one of the 'lost diggers' buried in a mass grave in Fromelles, France.

Arthur contacted our Society and we were able to show him a collection of memorabilia – badges, photographs, etc. that had been given to his mother and preserved by the family for many years. Mr. Grant and his wife were delighted to find them displayed in our museum as part of our War Memories exhibition.



Arthur Grant, Helen Gaut (Chronicle),
Maree Belyea

The full story, including a lot of extra information gathered by our researcher, Maree Belyea, was reported by the Camperdown Chronicle and we have that very comprehensive report on record for the use of future historians.



Collection of War Memorabilia

BURNS FESTIVAL 2014

We had a very encouraging response from local people for Scottish memorabilia to include in our Burns display this year. Many thanks to you all! The local stories added another dimension to our Scottish stories.

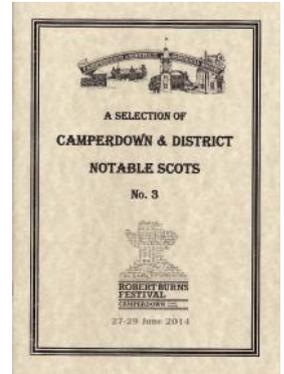
The winner of the members' lucky number for visiting the Heritage Centre during the Burns weekend was Bob McKenzie who by now has received his copy of the Historic Camperdown DVD.



Our Notable Scots No.3 Booklet was given a right royal launch on the Friday before the festival and we were delighted to welcome around 40 members and friends to join us in some drinks and nibbles. Rob Wuchatsch was our speaker for the evening and gave us some interesting information about the influence of the Scottish settlers on the whole of the south-west of Victoria. He also let us in on a little-known fact that in the early days of the settlement of the Stony Rises, there were a number of Scotsmen who suggested that the Scotch thistle – the symbol of their homeland – was *not* a pest and would eventually die out. He quoted from a Burns poem which says: *"I turned my pruning hook aside and spared my symbol dear."* Fortunately, the authorities did

not agree!

Our Scots exhibition will remain in the Heritage Centre until around September/October because in September, there will be yet another Scottish group making Camperdown their home for a weekend of dining and wining plus various meetings. Book No.3 now joins our earlier editions which are all for sale at \$5 per book. Together, they make very interesting reading and give a remarkably detailed picture of the early days of Camperdown's settlement.



MAPS AVAILABLE

Jan Whamond, one of our hard-working volunteers, has been going through all our map collection - listing and cataloguing, putting aside those which are not relevant to us, and checking for duplicates. We have already given a selection away to other Societies where the maps were more relevant to their area and some have already been taken from Facebook watchers. Now we have another selection to give away to anyone interested. You can contact us on camperdowndhs@gmail.com or ring our mobile phone number: 0487 261 048.

MAPS TO BE DELETED FROM COLLECTION

Barnie Boluc Estate, Colongulac, Derrinallum South, Ferguson Hill, Geelengla, Geelengla & Pircarra (3), Glenelg Hopkins Rabbit Management, Jellalabad Estate, Koort Koort Nong, Laang, Mt Koang, Mortlake, Naringhil East, Parish's Estate, Purrumbete Estate Sale Notice 1923, Rokewood, Simpson – Agroforestry, Simpson - Water table contours, South Western Victoria-Geomorphic units, South Western Victoria-Rabbit Management, Stonehenge Estate (2), Stoneyford Rabbit control, Terrinallum Estate, Terrinallum South Estate, Werneth South.

THIRTY YEARS ON



On Tuesday, 22nd July Robert Fleming called in to let us know that 30 years ago, on this date, as Mayor of Camperdown, he had declared the Camperdown Museum open. So of course, we took his photo out the front with the plaque.

On checking our photographic records, we found a photo of the big occasion and the citation reads: "Black and white photograph of the opening of the Museum 22-7-1984 by Mayor

Robert Fleming with Mr Jim Wilson standing beside him and people gathered around in front of the I.O.O.F. building. Mr Harold Lamb is in his buggy and horse by the side of the road".

We're pretty sure that Norma Wynd was President at that time but we'd be very grateful for any further information or memories – or even photos – of the occasion.



LATEST NEWS – WHERE CAN YOU FIND IT?

Right here: <https://www.facebook.com/camperdownhistory>

News of special offers, extra trips or events, interesting photos, additions to our collection ... you never know what you'll learn by clicking on our Facebook link. It's a great way to keep in touch.

“My grandfather built your Clock Tower!”



Peter Rodger

This was the greeting we received at the Heritage Centre on Sunday morning, 9th July. After that interesting start, a very long conversation ensued about the builders, their musical abilities, and their origins in Scotland and Williamstown. Since then, a complete history of the building firm of Peter Rodger & Co. has been obtained from their family historian, Ms Vanessa Kiessling and it makes fascinating reading.



David Rodger

More Notable Scots?

The brothers were both born in Renfrew, Scotland and arrived in Australia in 1885. Peter came first in July of that year on the *Chimborazo* aged 23 years. David, aged twelve, arrived in the December on the *Loch Tay* accompanied by his mother and two sisters.

It is apparent that Peter wasted no time in establishing himself as a builder for within four years, in 1889, he had won the contract for building the Fire Brigade Station at Yarraville at a cost of £1,000 – quite a sum in those days – and his reputation grew from then on.

“Independent” Newspaper, Footscray, May 1889.

The public of Yarraville will have the satisfaction of being able to say, without fear of contradiction, that they are possessed of one of the nicest fire stations in the suburbs.

In 1889-90, he was the successful tenderer for the Courthouse at Tungamah, near Benalla, as well as the Railway buildings there.

More contracts followed every year, Post Offices at Euroa and Avenel, the Commonwealth Bank at Morroopna and then, in 1992-94 the magnificent Courthouse at Bairnsdale.

This must have been a landmark in the progress of the contractor as the local newspaper reports:

The contractor was Peter Rodger and the amount of his tender was £4967. The work has taken sixteen months to complete. It is regarded as one of the very cheapest buildings ever put up by the department and reflects great credit upon the officers and all who have been engaged in its erection.

1895 saw two more Post Offices – at Footscray and Williamstown.

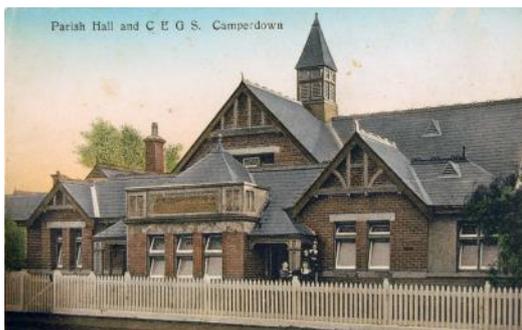


Bairnsdale Courthouse

Camperdown Church of England Parish Hall and Clock Tower

In 1896 Peter Rodger and his brother David, by this time 22 years old, won the contract for the Camperdown Church of England Parish Hall, Sunday School and Gymnasium with a commitment to use local labour and materials.

“Camperdown Chronicle” 14 July 1896



St Pauls Parish Hall

When the tender of Mr. P. Rodger for the erection of the St. Paul's Church of England Parish Hall was accepted, the hon. secretary of the Church Committee (Mr. C. B. Were) wrote to the architects and contractor suggesting the advisability of employing as much local labour as possible in the erection of the building. Mr. Were has received a reply from the architects stating that the contractor intends to use all the local labour and material he can, and with that object, will be in Camperdown tomorrow to make the necessary arrangements. It is the wish of the committee that no delay shall take place in proceeding with the building, and a start will therefore be made with the foundations at once.

A month later, the brothers were already working on the Clock Tower as well. It is quite astonishing to note that between July 1896 and March 1897, both buildings were completed to great acclaim.

“Camperdown Chronicle” 20th August, 1896

The contractor for the erection of the clock-tower in Manifold Street is getting on well with the structure, a commencement having been made with the brickwork. It is not intended to have a foundation stone formally laid, but a memorial tablet to the late Mr. T. P. Manifold will be placed above the door.

NOT ONLY BUILDERS, BUT MUSICIANS TOO!

“Camperdown Chronicle” 20th February, 1897

A very enjoyable hour and a half was spent by the large audience that was attracted to St. Paul’s Church of England last evening by the sacred concert in aid of the choir funds. The programme was without a suspicion of the dreariness frequently associated with concerts of the kind, and keen interest was maintained throughout. David Rodgers sang "Lord Remember David," from Handel’s oratorio "The Redemption," with appropriate religious fervour, accompanying himself on the double bass, while his brother. Mr. P. Rodgers, played a clarionette obligato. The item was undoubtedly one of the best of the evening.

And on the 18th March that same year, the Chronicle reports:

Camperdown Clock Tower.

Mr. Rodgers was also the contractor for St. Paul’s Parish Hall and Sunday School, and the eulogy recently bestowed on the workmanship in the latter work can be repeated in regard to the clock tower.

“The Argus” Melbourne 22 March 1897

THE CAMPERDOWN CLOCK TOWER, CAMPERDOWN, Saturday.

The clock tower erected with the proceeds of a bequest of £1,000 by the late Mr. T.P. Manifold has been completed and the clock placed in position. The tower, which is the only structure of the kind in Australia, occupies a commanding position at the intersection of Manifold and Pike streets. It is built of brick, on a massive bluestone base, the roof being of slate and the ornamentation of cement. It is 100ft in height. The clock, which was constructed for the purpose by Messrs. T. Gaunt and Co., of Melbourne has four dials, each 6ft in diameter, the figures being 13in. in length. The three bells were cast specially for Messrs. Gaunt and Co. by Mears and Stainbank, of London, and weigh respectively 8cwt., 3½cwt and 2cwt. They are of the best bell metal, with an admixture of silver, giving a richness to their tone not otherwise obtainable. The total cost of the tower was £950, and of the clock £450. This exceeded the amount of the bequest by some £400, which was generously given by the Messrs. Manifold. The ceremony of starting the clock was performed by Mrs. W.T. Manifold, in the presence of the members of the family and a few friends. The ribbon which secured the pendulum was severed by Mrs. Manifold with a pair of silver scissors presented to her by Messrs. T. Gaunt and Co for the occasion.



One wonders how the builders managed to fit everything into their busy lives because, by October 1897, having also built the Congregational Sunday School at Kyneton, they were beginning work on an incredibly ornate theatre and shop complex in Zeehan, Tasmania.

“The Mercury” Hobart, 18 October 1898

New Theatre for the West Coast – The Zeehan “Gaiety”

....The design is a conglomeration of styles (probably best characterised as free renaissance), effective in appearance, and, above all, utilitarian. As showing accuracy of Mr. Searell’s calculations it may be mentioned that the whole job was, completed for within £18 of the contract price, which was £7,075.

The builder is Mr. Peter Rodger, of Williamstown, Victoria, whose sterling work and general straightforwardness have so won the esteem of the proprietor and architect that no praise from them is too good for him. Good, substantial and skilful work



Gaiety Theatre - Zeehan, Tasmania

has been put into the building even to the veriest detail. Of that there is no doubt to anyone who has seen it. Everything has been under the personal superintendence of Mr. Rodger, and the building will be a standing monument to his ability and integrity. And above all - especially as Mr. Rodger is a Scotchman - there has been a profit on the contract.

And still there was time for music – with the architect and the owner!

“Zeehan and Dundas Herald” Tasmania 10 October 1898

The Gaiety Music Hall

An important era in the annals of the West Coast was marked in Zeehan on Saturday evening, the 8th October, by the opening of the Gaiety Music Hall. To celebrate the event, at a little after 8 o'clock over 200 gentlemen, including most of our leading citizens, assembled in the hall in response to invitations issued by Mr. Edward Mulcahy, M.H.A. and the entertainment provided by that gentleman was, in every respect, worthy of the occasion. The magnificent hall, a full description of which will appear in these columns at a future date, in point of beauty and size takes rank among the finest in these colonies, and was lighted by the new illuminant "Acetyline gas" and the bright but soft and steady light was much admired by all present. Mr Mulcahy having reminded his guests that they had come there to enjoy themselves expressed a wish that the proceedings should not be too formal. The first part of the programme was then entered upon. This consisted of an excellent miscellaneous concert. The first item was Beethoven's grand trio for clarinette, violin, and piano, Adagio and Allegro, Op. 38, the instruments being played respectively by Messrs P. Rodger (contractor), E. Mulcahy, M.H.A. (proprietor), and T. Searell (architect). The other numbers contributed by this compact little orchestra were Beethoven's Instrumental trio, "Adagio and Minuet," Op. 20, a Fantasia of National Airs, arranged specially by Mr. Searell, and the accompaniment to Mr. Whitton's song, "Will o' the wisp." The manner in which these items were played stamps the performers as true musicians, and plainly showed that infinite pains had been taken in the way of practice in order that they might be produced as they should be.

Flinders Street Railway Station

The brothers continued to prosper as builders of many public and church buildings in Victoria, Tasmania and Queensland and in 1905, the contract was signed for the building of their biggest venture to date – the Flinders Street Railway Station.

Unfortunately, this was to prove to be a nightmare for the company, due in large part to the various alterations ordered by the Commissioners during the building stage and, after three years, in 1908 the contract was terminated.

A Royal Commission

Eventually, after various petitions and court cases, a Royal Commission to investigate the complaints was set up on 8th August, 1910 and at last, in April, 1915, judgement was made in favour of the builder and a large compensation amount was paid. Various letters of commendation from satisfied clients had helped the case and the builders were thoroughly vindicated.

Afterwards - In February 1906 the contract was let for the magnificent Gothic Anglican Cathedral in Brisbane and it was completed in 1910.

Family Homes

Many other buildings were completed during those years of the Royal Commission investigations but the last buildings recorded in the family history are the homes built in Williamstown by the brothers and the many beautiful pieces of furniture crafted by David. Both these buildings, as well as many others built by the brothers during their careers are Heritage listed.

The Society is fortunate to have these documents in their keeping and interested members are welcome to visit the Museum/Heritage Centre to see more information about these very talented builders.

CAN YOU HELP US?

The Society and the family have no photographic record of the actual process of building the Clock Tower. No photos with scaffolding and none showing the rope and pulley which was powered by horse or pony and used to haul the bricks up to the top of the tower during construction. Does anyone out there have any?



Photo taken 15.8.08 showing condition of work at that date.





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**POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA**