

CAMPERDOWN ROBERT BURNS CELTIC FESTIVAL 2025 - HISTORY TALKS

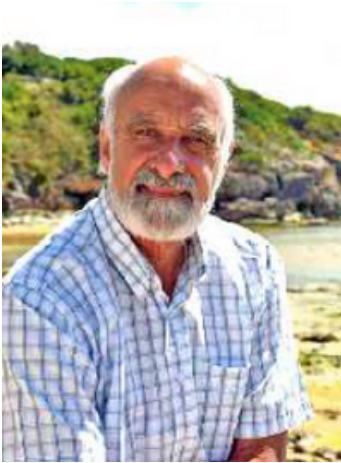
Saturday 28th June, 10.30 am – 3.45 pm, Killara Centre, Camperdown

SERIES TICKET: \$25.00 - BOOKINGS: [TRYBOOKING.COM/CXRJT](https://trybooking.com/CXRJT)

<https://camperdownburnsfestival.com.au/>

10.30am–11.30am Honorary Associate Professor, John Sherwood: 'Camperdown's Explosive Past'

Driving to Camperdown from virtually any direction concludes with a relatively flat traverse of the west Victorian Volcanic Plains. The flatness suggests a rather uninteresting geology -but that is far from true. The flatness was initially a result of a high sea level in the Miocene period roughly 15 million years ago). Camperdown had an off shore location with the coast near Hamilton. Marine fossils from this time can be unearthed in the city. As the sea retreated rivers cut valleys into the now exposed sea floor. About 4 million years ago, and for reasons not fully understood, the region began to experience volcanic activity. Hundreds of volcanic centres have been identified and, on average, a volcano has erupted every 10,000 years across southwest Victoria and southeast South Australia. Camperdown is surrounded by volcanic hills and crater lakes whose origins lie in explosive events over hundreds of thousands of years. Outpouring of lava from numerous volcanic vents created the present plains. The molten rock filled pre-existing valleys and depressions to overflowing, hiding the earlier topography. Aboriginal people witnessed some of the later eruptions. We may yet get the chance – the volcanic field is most likely dormant, not extinct!



Honorary Associate Professor John Sherwood joined Warrnambool Institute of Advanced Education as a Lecturer in 1979, moving to Warrnambool from Sydney with his family. Following formation of an expanded Deakin University in 1990, he was promoted to Associate Professor, a position which was made Honorary on his retirement in 2010. John has strong environmental research interests and is actively involved in environmental management. Until July last year he served on the Victorian Marine and Coastal Council and has previously been a member of the Board of Glenelg-Hopkins CMA, the Western Coastal Board, Victoria's National Parks Advisory Council and Victoria's Fisheries Co-management Council. He has also served as National President of the Australian Marine Sciences Association. His work has been recognised by Warrnambool City Council (Australia Day Awards 1988, 2017), Glenelg- Hopkins CMA (Individual in Business Award 2005) and the Victorian Coastal Council (Lifetime Achievement Award 2005).

11.30am–12.30pm Emeritus Professor Richard Broome: "Who'll Take a Glove": Aboriginal Tent Fighters'

*Part performance, part brutal reality, tent fighting was iconic at agricultural shows from 1900 to the 1970s in Victoria and beyond. Were Aboriginal tent fighters exploited by their managers, or agents shaping their own lives? Richard Broome will answer that question with special reference to the Western District. Richard began researching tent boxing in Warrnambool in the late 1970s, which led to several articles and a book *Sideshow Alley* (1998). He will share his insights, which will illuminate Australian life and Aboriginal lives in that era.*



Emeritus Professor Richard Broome AM has published many articles in Australian history, 20 books, and another 10 as second to fifth editions. He has written about Indigenous History, and histories of immigration, sport and popular culture, the Mallee, Coburg, and several life stories of Lebanese Australians and Nagaland people. He taught at La Trobe University for thirty years and has been President of the History Institute in the mid-1990s and President of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria 2019-2025. He co-edits the *Victorian Historical Journal* and is currently co-author of *The Story of Melbourne's Lanes*, RHSV (2024).



About Us

Community volunteers preserving & promoting local history. Heritage Centre 241 Manifold St: open Tuesdays & 1st Sun of month 10-3pm....

 Camperdown & District Historical Society Inc.

1.30pm–2.45pm Dr Ruth Pullin and Dr Thomas A. Darragh: 'Camperdown and Kangatong: von Guérard's Berlin Letters and What They Reveal' In his correspondence with the Berlin Ethnological Museum, the landscape painter and inveterate collector, Eugene von Guérard (1811-1901), documented and described the 24 Aboriginal cultural belongings that he had collected on sketching expeditions throughout colonial Victoria. His letters record where and from whom the objects were acquired, the circumstances of their acquisition, the prices paid for them and, in some cases, their makers, traditional uses, materials and manufacture. The most detailed information relates to items that were acquired at James Dawson's property, Kangatong – there von Guérard, Gunditjmara, Kirrae wurrung and Kolorer gunditj people had the opportunity to meet in the atmosphere of mutual trust and respect nurtured by Dawson. And in 1874, on an extended stay with the Dawsons at Wuorong, von Guérard renewed his deep connection with the Camperdown region, its landscape and its people – both the settlers and the Djargurd wurrung from whom he acquired four objects – forged on sketching expeditions in the 1850s. In this paper the authors of recent research on the artist and his Berlin correspondence will discuss – with a focus on Kangatong and Camperdown – the new insights revealed in his letters and the challenges presented by the project.

Dr Ruth Pullin is an Honorary Fellow of the University of Melbourne, and the 2025 Ross Steele AM Fellow, State Library of New South Wales. She was the co-curator of the National Gallery of Victoria's 2011 touring exhibition, *Eugene von Guérard: Nature Revealed*, curator of the Art Gallery of Ballarat's *Eugene von Guérard: Artist-Traveller* in 2018, and the author / editor of their accompanying publications. Her research has been published in numerous Australian and international journals and anthologies – most recently *65,000 Years: A Short History of Australian Art* (eds. Marcia Langton & Judith Ryan), in association with the exhibition of the same name currently showing at the Potter Museum of Art, The University of Melbourne. She and co-author, Thomas A. Darragh, published their research on von Guérard's correspondence with the Berlin Ethnological Museum in companion papers in *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 54, no. 4, and *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Victoria*, vol. 135, in 2023.



Dr Thomas A. Darragh is a graduate of the University of Melbourne in invertebrate palaeontology. He worked at Museums Victoria as a Curator and in administration for 36 years. As a Curator emeritus at Melbourne Museum, he continues his research interests in the field of Tertiary marine molluscs and has published many papers on this subject. He has had a long-standing interest in the history of the German scientists and intellectuals in Victoria and has published several papers and two books on this topic, as well as a translation of the Australian diaries of Ludwig Leichhardt. He is able to read the old German handwriting and so serves as an editor on the Ferdinand von Mueller Correspondence Project. He has published on the history of the natural sciences, especially geology, in Victoria and on the arts of engraving and lithography in nineteenth century Victoria, particularly as regards the personalities involved and the production of geological maps. He is the recipient of the Tom Vallance Medal of the Geological Society of Australia for contributions to the history of geology in Australasia.

2.45pm–3.45pm Robert McLaren: 'The Rev. Kay: Front Row Seat to a Changing World from 1850 to 1880' There are great stories on people who lived in our local areas that are out there waiting for someone to turn the first stone to shed light on them. The Rev. Kay and his wife Caroline Hoste who arrived at the Wickliffe Charge in 1863 is one such story. A photo in the State Library of Victoria, a Melbourne University scholarship and a large memorial on a grave in the Dunedin cemetery in New Zealand were the catalysts for me to decide to seriously commence researching this couple. The story in time, was to unearth a naval hero, links to the British Royal Family, a life in rural Scotland, scandals, the birth of Italy, a messy Victorian court case and a legacy that continues today.

Robert McLaren grew up at Mortlake in the Western District of Victoria. Although he moved away from the district he has maintained a strong interest in the area. Robert has written four local history books and numerous articles on the people and places around Mortlake and district. He worked as an Accountant and then as a Humanities Secondary Teacher. He has recently retired from full time work. Robert is the President of the Mortlake and District Historical Society.

