



Number 238  
March 2023

# Western Historian

Newsletter of the Western Victorian Association of Historical Societies  
A0020504K

Website: <https://westernhistorian.org.au/>

Societies' cost: Print or PDF, included in annual fee - \$30.00

Individual subscribers: \$15.00

Editor: Craig Proctor [craige@iprimus.com.au](mailto:craige@iprimus.com.au)

The Western Victorian Association of Historical Societies acknowledges the traditional owners of country on the land on which we are meeting throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, culture and community.

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Join our group at  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/wvahs>

## W.V.A.H.S. Executive Committee for 2022-2023

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## W.V.A.H.S. 60<sup>th</sup> Annual A.G.M., Executive and Zone Meetings

**Saturday 15 & Sunday 16 April at Charlton**

### Venue:

Charlton Senior Citizens, 1 High Street, Charlton  
(behind the round-a-bout)

### Schedule:

#### Saturday 15 April

#### Arrival and registration:

10 a.m.-10.30 at the Charlton Senior Citizens.  
Museum next door will be open from 9 a.m.

**Morning:** Zone Meetings

**Light lunch:** Provided at venue (\$10)  
Executive Meeting

**Afternoon:** W.V.A.H.S. AGM

Tour and old news reel screening at the historic Art  
Deco Rex Theatre to follow.  
Gold coin donations appreciated.

**Evening:** 6 p.m. dinner at the Charlton Club, 37 High  
Street, Charlton (\$25)

#### Sunday 16 April

(Optional) 10 a.m. – 11.30 a.m. (approx.) Bus tour  
of Charlton and Yeungroon including the Sir John  
Monash Memorial Garden and the newly-unveiled  
Yeungroon War Memorial and history display (\$5).

Please use this link for accommodation options and other  
information. <https://www.charlton.vic.au/>

**NOTE:** For those arriving and staying on the Friday night, the  
Rex Theatre has a live show. Sass & Secrets – Sharp wit, magic  
and showtunes, 8 p.m., \$30. Tickets can be purchased here:

<https://events.humanitix.com/sass-secrets>.

The [Golden Grains Museum](#) will be open:  
Saturday: 9am – 5pm and Sunday: 10am – 3pm

Societies can host a display of books for sale etc. at the  
Senior Citizens.

## Charlton Accommodation Options

### Charlton Motel

158-164 High Steet, Charlton  
5491 1600

[charltonmotel@gmail.com](mailto:charltonmotel@gmail.com)  
[www.charltonmotel.com.au](http://www.charltonmotel.com.au)

### Foundry Palms Motel

86 High Street  
5491 1911

[foundrypalms@bigpond.com](mailto:foundrypalms@bigpond.com)  
[www.foundrypalmsmotel.com.au](http://www.foundrypalmsmotel.com.au)

### East Charlton Hotel

43 High Street, Charlton  
5491 1613

[eastcharlton@gmail.com](mailto:eastcharlton@gmail.com)

### The Vale Bed & Breakfast

18 Mildura Way, Charlton  
5491 1353

[bookings@valeofavoca.com.au](mailto:bookings@valeofavoca.com.au)  
[www.valeofavoca.com.au](http://www.valeofavoca.com.au)

### Bakery Lane Serviced Apartments

16 High Street, Charlton  
0409 516 920

[pnoonan@iprimus.com.au](mailto:pnoonan@iprimus.com.au)  
[www.stayz.com.au](http://www.stayz.com.au)

### Travellers Rest Caravan Park

John Curtin Drive, Charlton  
0448 276 631

[info@charltontravellersrest.com.au](mailto:info@charltontravellersrest.com.au)  
[www.charltontravellersrest.com.au](http://www.charltontravellersrest.com.au)

Other accommodation options  
include Donald (42 km),  
St Arnaud (42 km), Wedderburn  
(31 km) or Boort (46 km).

## Ararat and District Historical Society Inc.: Celebrating 60 years

The major highlight of 2022 was celebrating the society's 60th anniversary in October.

The society was formed in 1962 by a group of people keen to preserve the district's history, and we are proud to continue their legacy.

It was the donation of a collection of Aboriginal artifacts that ultimately led to the formation of an historical society and museum in Ararat.

In the 1850s farmers John and Lawrence Mooney took up land adjacent to the Pyrenees Ranges and close to the Wimmera River, at what is now known as Mooney's Gap.

The pair became friendly with the aborigines of the Wimmera River area and over the years Lawrence Mooney obtained many artifacts from the local peoples.

After his death in 1956, Lawrence Mooney's family donated the collection to the then Ararat City Council.

The collection sat in storage in the Council's record's room at Alexandra Hall until January 1960 when the Institute of Anatomy in Canberra requested Council hand over the collection. The Institute considered the Mooney Collection the best individual collection in Australia.

A move by Council to hand over the collection was met with strong opposition by Ararat residents and Council eventually told the Institute they wouldn't release the collection as it had been a gift to the Ararat City Council.

Allan Blachford was mayor at the time and, having a keen interest in the Mooney Collection, sought a place to display the collection for public inspection.

Ararat Town Hall was considered the obvious spot, so the Council's engineering office was transferred from the right-hand side front of the Town Hall to a room by the west side entrance.

At the same time, a collection of aboriginal artifacts that had been collected by the late H.C. Best was added to the display.

On October 25, 1960 the Mooney and Best Collections were displayed for public inspection. The response was beyond expectation.

On August 17, 1962 a public meeting was held in the Ararat Town Hall to consider the formation of an historical society for Ararat.

The meeting was well attended, and after the proposal was explained, it was unanimously agreed to form the Ararat and District Historical Society.

A sub-committee comprising Lorna Banfield, Perc Biggin and Fred Homburg was appointed to draw up a constitution for the society. With minor alterations, the constitution was adopted at a meeting on October 5, 1962.

Allan Blachford was elected president, Perc Biggin and Fred Homburg vice presidents, E. Gwynne secretary, and Lorna Banfield treasurer.

Six years later the society decided it needed a permanent home to display items from the district's past, so in May 1968 the society approached Council with a proposal.

A resolution was put to Council that the sum of \$15,000 be set aside from the Civic Improvement Fund for the purchase and furnishing of a suitable building to house historical items. The motion was unanimously carried.

Prestige Pty Ltd owned an old grain store in Queen Street and agreed to sell the building to Council for the sum of \$10,000. Council inspectors estimated \$10,000 would be needed to repurpose the building as a museum.

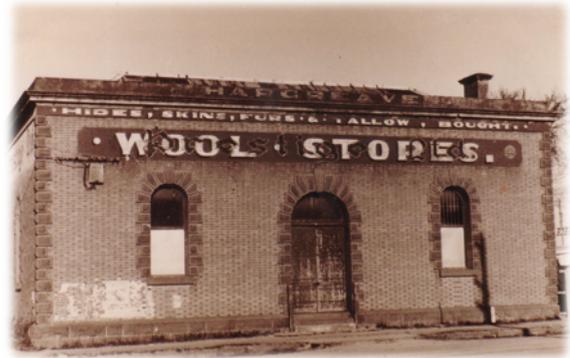
When then Premier Sir Henry Bolte visited the town in May 1970 he promised the sum of \$6,667 on a two-to-one basis, which Council met with \$3,333.

Work on the building started almost immediately and on August 21, 1970 then-Mayor Cr G. Marx handed over the keys to the museum committee.

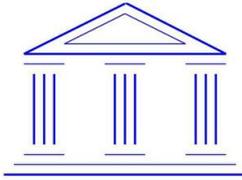
Permission was granted by Council to transfer the Mooney and Best Collections from the Town Hall to the museum.

Society members worked hard to prepare the museum opening to coincide with the Golden Gateway Festival and Sir Rohan Delacombe, Governor of Victoria, officially opened the museum on October 23, 1970.

His Excellency named the museum Morgala (indigenous for yesterday), and the historical society later agreed to add the word Langi (indigenous for home).



## Geelong Museum Association Inc.



### 2023 'Last Sunday Series' at the National Wool Museum

1.30 pm - 3 pm

Free entry. Afternoon cuppa provided; gold coin donation. Details of talks are updated on the Geelong Museum Association Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/geelongmuseum>

#### Sunday 26 March:

**Child migration to Australia.** Lyn Clough OAM.

#### Sunday 30 April:

**Eugene von Guerard and Geelong.** Von Guerard's relationship with Geelong began from the moment he arrived in Australia when he saw the You Yangs from the deck of the *Windermere*, the ship on which he sailed from London in 1852. The distinctive form of the peaks resonated in the artist's imagination, and it was a subject to which he returned many times throughout his career.

On multiple visits to Geelong, von Guerard filled his sketchbooks with studies of its worn-down hills and valleys, its vegetation, its waterways and low basalt boulders that lie in its riverbeds. He formed deep and lasting friendships with Geelong's close-knit German-speaking community. He made Geelong the subject of one of his greatest works, the panoramic View of Geelong 1856. This lecture will explore the seminal role that Geelong, its landscape and its people played in the career of our most inspiring landscape painter.

**Dr Ruth Pullin** is an Honorary Senior Fellow of the School of Culture and Communications, The University of Melbourne. She is the author / co-author of three books on von Guerard and widely published in Australian and international journals and anthologies. She is currently researching Eugene von Guerard's engagement with, and depictions of Victoria's First People.

#### Sunday 28 May:

**The Langlands – Australian Pioneers.** Five members of the Langlands family arrived in Melbourne from 1839 to 1840. The first four started a foundry in Flinders Street, Melbourne and apart from some firsts like part building Australia's first railway locomotive, trained apprentices like William Croll, who later started the Vulcan Foundry in Geelong, and a young English migrant Herbert Austin, who later made a name for himself in car manufacturing. The last to arrive took his young family (including the speaker's 6-year-old grandfather) to a place in the Wimmera, to be called Horsham. The town grew with the family and they established the *Horsham Times* newspaper.

**Edward (Ted) Stephens** has always been interested in history and has written five books on local history. His latest is about the Langlands family and their achievements. Some of his books will be available for purchase after his talk.

#### Sunday 25 June:

**Fromelles, Naming the Dead.** The Battle of Fromelles on 19 July 1916 was a bloody disaster. Soldiers of the 5<sup>th</sup> Australian Division, together with the British 61<sup>st</sup> Division, were ordered to attack a strongly fortified German front line. Over 5,500 Australians became casualties, with almost 2,000 killed in action or dying of wounds. This is believed to be the greatest loss by a single division in 24 hours during the entire First World War. 1,335 Australians soldiers remained 'missing' with no known grave. In 2007, following persistent research by Lambis Englezos, archaeological investigations began to uncover the remains of some Australian and British soldiers.

**Lambis Englezos** is a retired Melbourne teacher. He undertook persistent research and became convinced that many of the 'missing' could be located, some identified and reinterred in the Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery. His book, *Fromelles, Naming the Dead* will be for sale after his talk.

Topics and presenters to be confirmed for the July-November events.

Submitted by **Michael Menzies**, President, Geelong Museum Association Inc.

## Around the Groups

### Ararat and District Historical Society

<https://www.facebook.com/LangiMorgalaMuseum/>

#### Revamp of exhibits

Langi Morgala Museum has set aside space for what has become a rotating exhibition. Glass cabinets and photo boards will display short-term exhibits. The first temporary exhibition was dedicated to the now defunct Ararat and District Football Association.

Secretary Rhonda Holz curated the football exhibition using a range of items donated to the museum throughout the years, as well as a selection of old photos and jumpers loaned by district residents, especially for the display.

The latest temporary exhibition currently on display pays homage to schools of the Ararat district.

The group is planning to rotate the exhibition space every few months to attract new visitors to the museum from the Ararat area.

### Stawell Historical Society

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064455952211>

This has been an interesting start to the year for us as it has been for many.

We were successful in obtaining a grant from Stawell Gold Mines to upgrade our Server. This has become necessary due to the increase in Active Volunteers working hard to digitise and combine existing records.

In 2022 Northern Grampians Shire Council took over the operation of Visitor Information Centres in Stawell, St Arnaud and Halls Gap from Grampians Tourism. NGSC advised they were intending to relocate the Stawell VIC to the Library. There was huge objection by the community as this would remove it from a highly visible location adjacent to Stawell Historical Society on Longfield Street (Western Highway). Active intervention and contribution by our members encouraging the community to get on board and volunteer at the Centre has been very successful and has resulted in Council agreeing to retain it in its current location. It is now staffed by Volunteers seven days a week. Initially, promotional material has been created by our members and NGSC has agreed to reproduce this in different formats. Having the VIC adjacent is also proving beneficial to SHS as we are able to encourage visitors to take some time to visit our Museum.

As many of you would now be aware, we have been able to create a large Panorama of Stawell from images in The Holtermann Collection from 1874. This is on display in our entrance area and smaller copies are available to purchase. These are proving extremely popular with 1 and 2 metre copies being ordered locally and further afield.

Stawell Gold Mines has advised they have located several items of interest in their archives which they are planning to donate to us. As with most societies, we are always grateful for donated items that represent our history.

Thanks to **Kate van Dyck** for this update

### Camperdown & District Historical Society

<https://camperdownhistory.org.au/>

The late James Dowling 'Jim' Wilson, Past President and Life Member, was honoured posthumously with the Medal of the Order of Australia in the 2023 Australia Day Honours List. Jim was a Foundation Member of the group in 1959.

Digitisation of the *Camperdown Chronicle* for 1875, paid for with a grant from the Bendigo Bank, has now been completed and copies uploaded to Trove. Copies of the *Camperdown Chronicle* for 1876, *Western Press* (1866-70) and *Hampden Guardian* (1871-77) will be digitised during 2023 with Victorian Local History Grant funding from the Public Record Office Victoria.

## Swan Hill Genealogical and Historical Society

We at Swan Hill have been fortunate with the variety of guest speakers at our meetings, all well attended. A Pioneer Settlement worker gave a most interesting talk on River Trade. The first boat on the Murray was 'Mary Ann'. Echuca once had eleven shipyards, while Goolwa had seven. There were over 200 registered steamers and 350 barges.

A member from Austral Archaeology spoke on their work which includes aboriginal archaeology from areas such as Lake Mungo and Menindee Lakes. Some information they sourced were from old letters and even historical notes by Major Mitchell.

A local woman of indigenous heritage spoke on her early life growing up here, their housing and Wandarra Centre support, and later in Robinvale.

We continue to meet in winter months on a Sunday afternoon, with good attendance.

**Lyn Cunningham (President)**

## Horsham and District Historical Society

<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~hhs/>

### Horsham Hotel Book

The author of the Horsham Hotels book, Doreen Rigetti, with her husband Clem, was the licensee of Horsham's White Hart Hotel for eighteen years from 1955 to 1973.

When it was suggested she write-up the history of the White Hart she decided to carry out research on all of the hotels within the Horsham Licensing District and so gave the Society a valuable historical record of Horsham's hotels up to her publication date of 1985.

In October 2020 Lynette McCrae took on the daunting task of transcribing the closely written 356 pages of the book to make it more accessible for research purposes. Doreen had custom-made tables printed in which she entered rate book entries and licensing details of each hotel. This layout has been faithfully replicated in the transcription.

Doreen also mentions that the 1891–1898 liquor licence records were missing from the Horsham Court house archive. We have been able to incorporate most of the missing records using contemporaneous newspaper reports.

We would like to acknowledge Doreen's contribution to recording Horsham's history and her accuracy and diligence.

**Lynette McCrae**

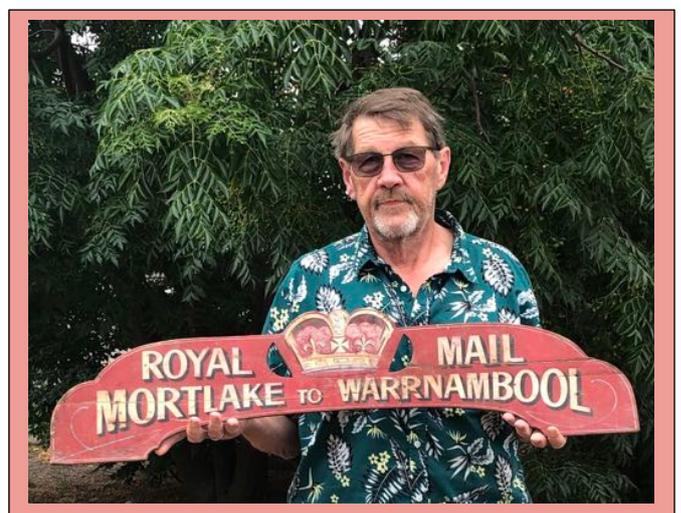
## A generous donation from one Historical Society to another

Recently the Mortlake and District Historical Society was contacted by the Numurkah and District Historical Society advising that it had had in its possession for many years an item its members felt belonged in Mortlake. After some negotiation and as a result of two people ferrying the item from Numurkah to the Wimmera and then to Mortlake, it is now back in Mortlake, possibly the first time it has been in the Mortlake and Warrnambool areas for well over 100 years, if not 150 years.

The item is a timber Royal Mail Mortlake-Warrnambool sign which would have been affixed to the coach plying the route between the two places. My research has revealed that this run was operating in the 1860s with the coach with mail and passengers leaving Mortlake on Tuesdays and Fridays at 4 a.m. and arriving in Warrnambool at 10.30 a.m., single fares being 12/6 and return fares being 20/-. In 1869 this service was being operated by a Mr Gleeson. However, as early as 1858 the Victorian government was advertising for tenders for these mail runs so it is likely that the sign dates from earlier than 1869. There were also Cobb & Co. services operating between Mortlake and Geelong, Mortlake and Hamilton and other destinations, so presumably this sign adorned either Gleeson's coach or a Cobb & Co. coach. The sign will take up its new residence at The Ark Heritage Centre in Mortlake.

MDHS is extremely grateful to the Numurkah group for its kind donation which is already engendering a great deal of interest both locally and on our group's Facebook page.

**Craige Proctor**  
Mortlake and District Historical Society



## From the Hopetoun and District Historical Society Inc.

Interview with **Jenny Stephens**, President of the  
Hopetoun and District Historical Society Inc.  
Interviewed by **Kerry Conway**.

### The use of social media and effects over 18 months.

The photos posted of the Society's Facebook page include photos from Hopetoun, Woomelang, Roseberry, Patchewollock, Turriff, Tempy, inclusive of many of the local satellite towns and farming regions and now National/State Parks, Cambacanya, Nyallo and Wathe.

**Kerry:** Can you outline the effect the Society's Facebook page has and the reasoning behind it being publicly published?

**Jenny:** There was a need to bring a public portal to people who were aware of the Society, yet not privy to the significance of the Collection itself.

Since the inception some 18 months ago, there have been numerous benefits, illustrating how far reaching and powerful the tool of sharing digitally can be.

A photographic and eclectic mix of Pioneering Farming, Town Publications, School Life, Shire Life, Towns, Town events, Sporting, Family Life and People who shaped the region, has been offered daily and regularly.

The Facebook page evolved into a substantial, respected, regarded and enjoyed medium. Not only are messages given to the Administrator, but comments are also left on Posts, people are connecting with one another and knowledge bases shared.

There has an unbridled generosity from the greater public – offering digital records, the opportunity to scan/photograph original family albums, donations of records and historical photographs for our Archives (both actual items and for our archival collection digitally). In a period of 23 months we have been offered 12 family bequests of photographs to our collection. Some 6,000 RAW and JPEG format are individually edited by post processing, placed in their appropriate categories and added to the collection, with data as provided. There have been countless hours in this process, but the rewards are so much more gratifying, knowing how important it is to ensure their safe keeping for the future.

### The Poulton Project

What began as a curiosity some eighteen months ago, while researching six siblings from an early pioneering family in the early 1890s, evolved to a staggering 6,800 individuals directly connected via marriage or bloodline. Another statistic, equally astounding, has

been the excess of 164 different family surnames arising. Such a body of reference has become a research tool, augmented by the donation of material and information of direct descendants. A small version of this study will be part of an inaugural display at the exhibition hub at the Hopetoun "Old Scout Hall" in coming months.

**Kerry:** What pleases you about this opportunity that you have taken?

**Jenny:** I have enormous pride on behalf of the Society that we've grown in a community space, and family history space, we have regenerated community interest in the beginnings/subsequent years of the district, we are regarded by peers who are dedicating their efforts, like ourselves, selflessly and voluntarily, and gained the faith of the Yarriambiack Shire. The opportunity to go forward with this collection, with projects and be able to demonstrate by example, is very much a pleasure and honour we value. The sheer numbers of individuals connected, is testament to the hard work, though as someone recently commented, not everyone publicly shows this even though completely following the progress being made.

**Kerry:** What surprised you about the response?

**Jenny:** I was astounded by the unseen engagements. Facebook has a professional dashboard, visible to the Administrator and calculates a month of postings, or engagements, as well as registering Page Likes and Followers from the perspective of Age Demographic and Country viewed from.

The average was 10,000 engagements each month, while most posts were commented on and liked in numbers averaging the hundreds.

The page has generated a public response and an interactive platform for participation in a topic and location many people hold dear in their families and nostalgia. Parallels are deduced by individuals, as they liken similar experiences. The platform has instilled interest far and wide.

It has evolved into a way to honour a rich heritage and preserve important aspects both pictorially and in a preservation capacity for generations to follow. The inspiration to instil an interest and enthusiasm in the young, will ensure this wish is safeguarded.

Many thanks to Kerry Conway from the H&DHS Inc. for submitting this item.

Visit the fantastic H&DHS Facebook page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064896044405>



Alma Jane Poulton, granddaughter of John and Dorothea Poulton, at their farm near Cambacanya. Milking shed to the rear.



John and Dorothea's farm Cambacanya, west of Hopetoun

## Upcoming Events

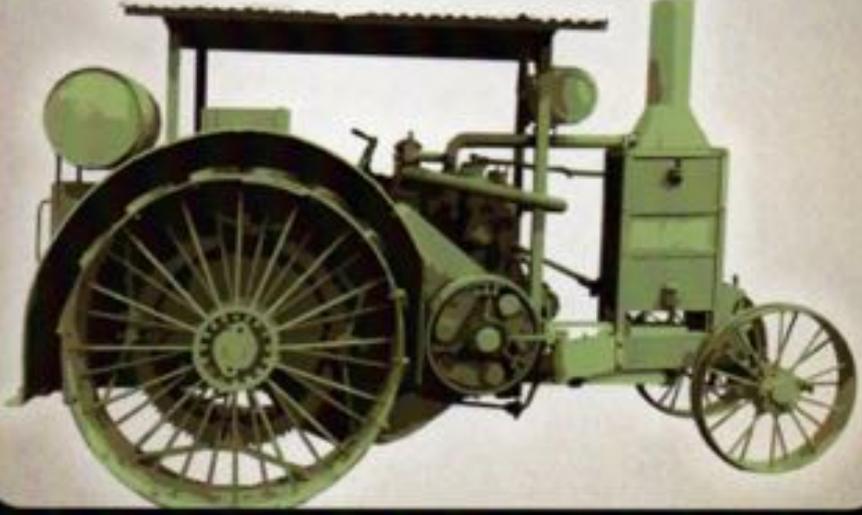
WWW.WARRACKNABEALHISTORY.ORG.AU

WHEATLANDS WARRACKNABEAL  
AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY MUSEUM

*Easter Weekend*

54th Annual Vintage Machinery Rally  
8th and 9th of April 2023  
34 Henty Highway Warracknabeal, Victoria

For further information: phone: 03 5384 2244 | mobile: 0429 146 597  
email: vintagerally3393@gmail.com | PO Box 355, Warracknabeal 3393



— FEATURING —  
**MCDONALD**  
AND AUSSIE ODD BODS  
100 YEARS OF HOWARD  
AUSTRALIAN SMALL ENGINES

WORKING MACHINERY • DEMONSTRATIONS AND DISPLAYS  
TWILIGHT TRACTOR PULL • KIDS ACTIVITIES • FULL CATERING

Working vintage  
tractors and  
tractor parade

Working vintage  
machinery

Stationary  
engines

Axe handle lathe

Shearing  
demonstrations

Model aeroplanes

Craft stalls

Vintage and  
collectable  
displays

Vintage Street  
parade down on  
Easter Saturday  
from 11am

Twilight Vintage  
Tractor Pull held  
Saturday night

Wheatlands Warracknabeal Vintage Machinery Rally is held over the Easter Long Weekend each year. Our unique collection of agricultural machinery is on display, plus restoration enthusiasts from many parts of Australia exhibit their own collections of vintage cars, engines and machinery.

### ADMISSION:

FAMILY \$20  
ADULT \$10  
STUDENT \$5 (12–18 Y/O)  
PRIMARY FREE

Goldfields Historical & Arts Society  
(Dunolly Museum) tour of



the ghost town of

**WEHLA**

Monday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Departs Dunolly Museum 10.00 am. Members \$5, visitors \$15. Bring your own car, lunch and chair. 80 km round trip. We shall be walking down the main street of Wehla stopping at the sites of various shops. Also open cut mine, Chinese gardens, stage coach robbery & Aboriginal ochre quarry.

No booking required. Further details: John Tully 0428178669.

All proceeds to Dunolly Museum.

### Goldfields Historical & Arts Society

#### Dunolly pioneer family reunion

Nance Esmore (Hancock) was born 101 years ago at Model Farm in Dunolly. She is returning to Dunolly to celebrate her 101<sup>st</sup> birthday at the St John's Hall on Saturday March 11. Her family is keen for her to catch up with any old families who will remember her and her late husband. Nance was friends with Dos Polinelli who passed away last year after celebrating her centenary. Nance has connections to the Taylor, Joy and Acker families. The Goldfields Historical & Arts Society has a file of information about the Hancock family, and we will present some of the history at the reunion. It would be wonderful if we could collect more photographs or stories from anyone who has anything to share as we are always keen to build on our knowledge of our district.

Nance's grandfather was George Hancock who was known as one of the grand pioneers of the Dunolly area. George established a farm near Dunolly on the Eddington Road in 1858 at the young age of 17, which became known as the **Dunolly Model Farm**. George was a bricklayer and built several substantial buildings in Dunolly including the Wesleyan Methodist Church and the large Town Hall both of which stand tall today. He had twelve apprentices who lived at the farm.

The Hancock children walked three miles from the farm to school (probably at Bromley) along paths bordered by old mine shafts. The whole family attended church on Sundays and no work was permitted on that day.

The farm was designed to be self-sufficient which required large dams to be built for water for growing produce. This required a reticulation system to water orchards and the vegetable plots.

George worked closely with the **Joy** family of Dunolly (Joy Bros. Bricks - Brickmakers) who supplied bricks for most of the town buildings in Dunolly. These two families came together in 1924 with the marriage of Emily Louisa Joy and Lionel Arthur Akers

The farm is still in existence although most of the outbuildings, dams etc have almost disappeared. The existing farmhouse has been occupied by various people over the years and is now regarded more as a hobby farm.

The obituary for George in the local paper was high in its praise for his standing in the community.

He and members of his family and connections, have many memorials in our midst in the substantial structures in the town. Mr Hancock, with the late Mr E. Taylor, was a building contractor. Mr Hancock's work was recognised as faithful and skilful work, and the name of the firm was known and respected far and wide, enjoying a large connection in early days. Among other buildings in Dunolly erected by the firm were the State School and the later additions to the Hospital.

The fine work of the firm is evident all over the town and district.

Later, however, Mr Hancock combined his work as a building contractor with farming at Bromley where the Model Farm became prominent in the Agricultural Shows and was successful in winning prizes.

Personally, he was regarded as a man of sterling character, industrious, energetic, manly, and independent in all things, a citizen of the highest worth, who in all his life and work set an example which could not fail to leave a fine impression.

We welcome any interested party to register with me for catering purposes and I will pass on the details to Nance Esmore's family. We would love to see you.

**Rachel Buckley** (Secretary, Goldfields Historical & Arts Society)

[rachelbuckley@bigpond.com](mailto:rachelbuckley@bigpond.com)

0427275006

Wimmera Mallee  
**PIONEER**  
MUSEUM

**Jeparit**

**2023 Vintage Rally**

King's Birthday Long Weekend

**10-11 June**

10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

*Working machinery - Heritage buildings  
& displays - Tours & Talks -  
Food stalls - Crafts - Demos*



*Something for everyone!*

John Tully of the Goldfields Historical & Arts Society has provided us with the following Acknowledgement of Country delivered at Dunolly's Australia Day commemoration this year.

We acknowledge this as the land of the Djadja wurrung balug clan, a group of 30 to 150 people who lived around Dunolly, Moliagul, Tarnagulla and this side of the Loddon River.

The first settlers arrived here in 1839. By April 1841 the clan were all dead. There are three known massacres sites but there probably should be more. Their demise was so efficient and complete that this was done without a single member having their name recorded.

Because the people of Dunolly are welcoming and inclusive we also acknowledge this as the land of those that came in chains, the gold seekers, farmers, and refugees. To these people and their descendants we say welcome.

## Horsham Rural City Band history....can you help?



Does your group or any of your members have any information, photos or memorabilia to assist in the production of a book honouring the Horsham Rural City Band's contribution of 150 years of community enjoyment and support?

The Band has been known by many names: Horsham Band, Horsham Brass Band, Horsham City Band, etc. In those years it has, as a member of the Wimmera Bands Group, been to many towns to meet with other member Bands to entertain the public.



Any details, no matter how minor they may seem, will be welcomed by me and the committee producing the book.

Kind regards from  
**Helen Curkpatrick**



One of the items in the most recent issue of the Camperdown and District Historical Society's *Past Matters* is this interesting item by Gillian Senior which is reproduced with the consent of C&DHS.

## Lorna Greene Medical Kit

### A World War 2 Medical Kit

In June 2022 the Society received an email offering us a small World War 2 medical kit which had belonged to a young nurse, Lorna Greene, who had been nursing in Borneo in 1945. The offer came from Dr Richard Travers who had been a friend of Lorna's for many years. With the offer, came a great deal of Lorna's history, her connection to Camperdown and her long life of service.



### Lorna Greene: A Nurse and a World War 2 De-coder

Lorna Leland Greene was born in Camperdown on 7th May, 1907 to Leland James and Lillian Greene, the sixth of ten children. Her father was an accountant whose clients included several large pastoral holdings in the Camperdown area, so he had decided to settle his family in the town. He named his home 'Avington' after his father's house in Toorak.

Lorna left Camperdown (possibly against her father's wishes) to study nursing at the Children's Hospital which was, in those days, in Rathdowne St., opposite the Exhibition Building.

She later travelled to the United Kingdom and stayed with family friends, the York-Beverleys. From there, she travelled with the family to Malta when Commander York-Beverley was sent there by the Admiralty in 1934.

A year later, when Italy invaded Abyssinia (Ethiopia), non-essential people were not permitted to stay on Malta. In order to stay, Lorna did a course in de-coding and worked there until 1936 when she returned to Australia.

When World War 2 broke out in 1939, she obtained work at the St Kilda Road Barracks as a de-coder and was there for two years.

In 1941, when medical manpower was needed, she enlisted in the 2nd Australian Imperial Force (2nd AIF) as a nurse and worked at the Heidelberg Military Hospital until, in January 1942, she joined the 1st Netherlands Hospital Ship "Oranje", repatriating wounded soldiers from the Middle East.

In August of that year she developed cerebro-spinal meningitis and was transferred to Prince Henry Hospital at Little Bay, north of the entrance to Botany Bay, NSW. There she was treated with the newly developed drug, penicillin and within a month was sufficiently recovered to be sent to "Berida" Convalescent Home in Bowral. She was totally recovered by November and returned to Heidelberg Hospital to continue nursing.

In July 1945 Lorna was sent to Borneo where she was quickly promoted to Principal Matron at the Casualty Clearing Station at Balikpapan. While in Borneo, Lorna met up with an old friend from Camperdown days, Dr Lennard Travers who was in Advanced Land H.Q. in Morotai, about 1,200 kilometres away.

In 1947, after the war ended, Dr Travers and his partner Lorrie Morton set up rooms in Spring St., Melbourne and they employed Lorna as their secretary. She went on to become the first secretary of the Melbourne Anaesthetic Group when it was formed in 1950, holding this post for ten years.

Lorna never married and had bought her own house in Fairbairn Road, Toorak. She pursued many interests in her later life, turning her love and knowledge of plants to advantage by running a highly successful shop called "Growing Things" in Hawthorn. She was a fine pianist and occasionally taught young people in her home.



She was always very close to and involved with the family of Dr Travers and taught piano to their young son, Richard and his sister Sue. In 1955, while their parents were away, she took the two young children to the first Australian Grand Prix at Albert Park where they all watched with great excitement as a car turned over and went up in flames right in front of them.

This is a quote from Richard Travers: *Her indomitable spirit is shown by her reaction to the car accident she had at the age of 88, driving to see a friend. She rolled her car, for the first time ever. It was at 4pm and her main concern was whether the whisky had broken. She tucked into a full roast that night, went to the hairdresser in the morning and judged the flowers at the Naracoorte Show that afternoon – with an ‘egg’ on her head.*

*Her two occupations in her final years were her garden (a source of continuing joy) and playing bridge – I have always thought her cryptology training gave her the competitive edge here. When it was no longer possible for her to stay in her house, she moved to Camberwell Manor and then to Albury, to be close to her relatives. Her cousin, Dame Elizabeth Murdoch (née Greene) drove up to visit her there. She did not like losing her independence, but the way she was cared for was exemplary and Lorna was well aware of this.*

Gillian Senior

## From the Nullawil Historical Society Newsletter

### We became the tourists

On 29 January twenty members travelled to Lake Boga and visited The Catalina Flying Boat Museum.

Steve Pentreath, Manager of the museum, welcomed members and presented a brief overview of why the World War 2 Repair Base was established on Lake Boga and the surrounding area. Some of the reasons were the lake was on and near both a main road and railway line and the lake itself is nearly round. This meant the Catalinas could land no matter the wind direction.

Members viewed a video which showed them in greater detail, the what, where and why of events during the war period.

Once the ‘Flying Boats’ were repaired and were able to leave Lake Boga they returned to service to help protect the northern coastal borders of Australia and neighbouring islands. These areas were of great interest to the invading Japanese Military Forces.

Members were in awe of the world class exhibition on display and feel the Lake Boga community can be congratulated on their many years of hard work they have put into developing the facility.

The important role the Lake Boga area played in World War 2 is well preserved and will never be forgotten.

Website for Lake Boga Flying Boat Museum:

<https://www.lakebogaflyingboat.com/>

From the website:

The idea of building a memorial to the service men and women who had been stationed at the No.1 Flying Boat Repair Depot at Lake Boga during World War II was first discussed by a few local Lake Boga Lions Club members over a few beers at the local pub in 1983.

From this humble beginning, countless volunteer hours, “blood, sweat and tears” and many more beers, the “dream” finally came to conclusion when the modern hangar which houses a restored Catalina and other exhibits was officially opened on 21st April, 2012.

The aircraft on display is a Catalina PB5. It depicts the type and size of aircraft that were used as patrol bombers during World War II and was built in the USA by the Consolidated Aircraft Company. It was originally a Netherlands aircraft that was adopted by the Royal Australian Air Force in 1942 and given the registered number A24–30. After the war it was sold to Kingsford Smith Airlines, who used for spare parts. The body was sent to Lake Boga for scrap, but it was purchased by a local farmer and taken to Nyah. The farmer used some parts but left the rest lying under a tree for forty years. His family donated it to the Lake Boga Lions Club who has painstakingly assembled and semi-restored it to something of its former glory.

### New building

From 1988 until 2010 the aircraft was displayed in the open parkland adjacent to the original secret underground Communications Bunker. In early 1997, work began on developing the Bunker into a museum to house the many exhibits and artefacts that had been collected and donated. The Bunker museum was officially opened in November, 1997. Following its 24 years exposed to the elements and after a long and arduous process to procure funds to enable a hanger to be constructed over the plane, it was restored again in 2011. Late in 2011 the museum was relocated from the Bunker into the hangar with the Catalina and the Bunker was re-constructed using original plans and photographs to resemble its wartime state.

## From Italy to Charlton

After the devastating fire that destroyed Charlton's St Joseph's Catholic Church on New Year's Day in 1991, a new church eventually arose from the rubble and with it the opportunity to install new decorative pieces to adorn its walls.

Fr Denis Dennehy, the Charlton Parish Priest at the time, secured 14 Stations of the Cross sculptures for the walls of his new church. The Stations of the Cross, often in the form of small icons or images, are a 14-step Catholic devotion that commemorates Jesus Christ's last day on earth as a man, beginning with his condemnation and finishing with his being laid in the tomb.

The artworks, previously located in a chapel in Mentone, were relocated to Charlton and twelve of the pieces now hang in St Joseph's Church. The artworks were originally in a larger square or rectangle form and were sympathetically resized and shaped by local wood worker, Laurie Harvey, so they would fit on the church walls.

The history of the production of the religious artworks was largely unknown by local parishioners, so Carolyn Olive, Secretary of the Golden Grains Museum, offered to undertake a little investigating. Fortunately, a small plaque remains on the back of one of the artworks with the inscription - 'Ferd. Stuflessner, ARS SACRA, ORTISEI|VOLZANO|ITALIA'. A quick web search revealed that the company still exists and, after supplying them with images of the plaque and artworks, the story of their creation was unearthed.

The artworks were originally produced in Ortisei, a small town of about 4,500 people in northern Italy by the company, Ferdinand Stuflessner. Founded in 1875 by woodcarver, Ferdinand Stuflessner, they specialise in the production and restoration of statues, church interiors, monuments and other religious items and have the prestige of supplying artworks for the Vatican. Fifth generation brothers, Filip and Robert Stuflessner, now run the family business.

The pieces were thought to have been created in the early 1970s when Ferdinand's grandson, Fernando Stuflessner, was at the helm. They were carved entirely by hand in the workshop from linden wood, a soft, lightweight and easily-worked timber, which has little grain and is often used for intricate carving. High quality oil paints were also used.

Thanks to [Carolyn Olive](#), Golden Grains Museum, Charlton for this contribution.



*Condemnation*



*Nailed to the cross*



*He dies on the cross*

## Introducing a new series: Women of Western Victoria

As local historians we are all aware of many stories of extraordinary women who settled in Western Victoria during various periods. There must be *thousands* of stories just waiting to be shared! In future issues I hope we can devote time and space to member groups sharing with us just a small number of such stories. They have no doubt been recorded at the local level but *Western Historian* is providing all member groups with the opportunity of sharing these with a much wider audience. Please consider submitting a story you feel others simply have to know!

I will begin this series with a profile of a Scotswoman who spent only the last thirty-two years of her long life in south-west Victoria – predominantly near Mortlake and at Peterborough – but who, during her first fifty years, lived an extraordinary life and who became something of an entrepreneur; she was married for only twenty years, spent mostly in India, against the background of the Age of Empire and enduring great personal tragedies including the loss of her husband and eight babies. Eventually she would become a force to be reckoned with in south-west Victoria. I hope you enjoy learning just a very little about one of my favourite local pioneer women, Jemima Vans Robertson, ‘Mrs Colonel Robertson’.

Craige Proctor

### Scotland

Scotland. India. England. South-west Victoria. Jemima Vans Robertson’s life was one of migration and new beginnings and her story is one of those larger-than-life stories worth chronicling. I became aware of this extraordinary woman’s life many years ago and continue to be fascinated.

Jemima Vans Wallace-Dunlop was born in 1800 at Morham, near Edinburgh, the daughter of Lieutenant John Wallace-Dunlop of the 89th Foot Regiment, and his cousin Magdalene Dunlop. Jemima and her sister Flora, who also features in this story, were granddaughters of the 5<sup>th</sup> Baron of Craigie and Lochryan. Jemima’s paternal grandmother was a great friend and correspondent of the poet Robert Burns and it is said that one of the last things Burns did on his death-bed was to read a letter from Frances Dunlop. Jemima descended from many Scottish noble houses including legitimate and illegitimate scions of the Royal House of Stewart.

### To India

Jemima travelled to India in 1824 to visit a brother then living there and to find a husband. She did indeed find a husband, marrying Captain (later Lt.-Col.) Henry Dundas Robertson in Bombay in 1828. Robertson had arrived in India in 1804 and was a nephew of a director of the British East India Company. In 1817 he acted as Persian Interpreter to the Commander of Poonah Subsidiary Force and was Superintendent of Police at Poonah. By 1827 he was Magistrate and in 1841 he was appointed to officiate as Resident (Governor) of the Persian Gulf. So Jemima’s husband’s military career was an illustrious one.

Jemima’s father Capt. John Wallace-Dunlop died at Neemuch, India, in 1834 while serving in the Native Infantry. Jemima had three brothers who served in India both in the British Army and in the East India Company and another who served in the West Indies so Jemima’s

family’s movements certainly reflected the ‘Age of Empire’ during the early nineteenth century.

Jemima bore ten children, almost all in India, with only two – Henry and Catherine – surviving. According to family legend Jemima had an Rh-negative blood type which may have accounted for the deaths of so many of her children.

In 1841 Jemima and her two children were living in Edinburgh while her husband Henry was still in India where, in 1845, he succumbed to cholera; he was buried in Bombay. Jemima was now 45. By 1847 Jemima was living in London.

### Jemima takes on the British Parliament

Two years after Henry’s death in India and about five years before she arrived in Australia, Jemima embarked on a complicated ‘mission’ begun by her husband thirty years earlier. In 1817 the Peshwa of Poonah’s army was defeated by British forces and the Peshwa – the Prime Minister – fled. The British possessed the city of Poonah and the whole of the property of the Peshwa was declared to be Military Prize known as the Deccan Booty. Capt. Robertson was appointed to the civil and military charge of Poonah. The Peshwa, it was believed, had deposited vast sums of money – ‘treasure’ – in secret locations. A reward of one-eighth of the value of the treasure was offered to any and all parties who should discover the treasure. Capt. Robertson had located a significant amount of the treasure and consequently lodged his claim for his share – about £43,000. It was not forthcoming. He was still seeking his ‘reward’ into the 1830s. In 1847 the widowed Jemima submitted a petition ‘To the Honorable The Knights, Citizens and Burgesses of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament assembled’ seeking her late husband’s portion of the Deccan Booty because by 1847 Jemima was arguing that she and her children had

been 'left with very limited means, owing to the liberal and disinterested character and habits of her late husband'. A letter from Jemima to Field Marshal His Grace the Duke of Wellington, dated September 17, 1847, calls upon the Duke to intercede with the Trustees on her behalf although he declined to become involved. Jemima appears to have been tenacious in her quest for her husband's share of the fortune although in the end she received, for the benefit of her children, only a relatively small sum.

It was time for a new adventure for Jemima Vans Robertson.

#### To south-west Victoria

Perhaps Jemima had been encouraged to emigrate to Australia by her sister Flora who had arrived here in 1849 with her husband Alexander Cunningham Faerlie Wallace-Dunlop and who by 1850 had purchased *Parasia* near Mortlake in south-west Victoria, renaming it *Hexham Park*. Jemima arrived in Victoria in mid-1852. Flora had been widowed in June 1852 and so Jemima could not have known that while she was *en route* to Victoria presumably to visit her sister, Flora had been widowed. Also in mid-1852 Jemima's son Henry Dundas Robertson, 23, arrived in Sydney from Manila.

Jemima purchased the lease of *Kona Warren* (later *Connewarren/Wollongoon*) of approximately 18,132 acres in 1852 or 1853. Jemima was now in partnership with her sister Flora Wallace-Dunlop of *Hexham Park*. Jemima's residence at *Kona Warren* became *Connewarren House*.

In 1851 Jemima's nephew Anthony Mackenzie, aged 19, had arrived in the colony from New Zealand where his mother Susan had settled and would work for Jemima at *Kona Warren*, later managing the vast property for her.

Jemima's daughter Catherine Flora Dundas Robertson married her cousin Francis Mackenzie in Sydney in 1856 and they had the first of their twelve children in 1857, all being born in New Zealand.

Jemima's son Henry Dundas Robertson married his first cousin Alexandrina Wallace-Dunlop, daughter of Jemima's sister Flora, in 1859 at Brighton, Victoria. Prior to marrying, Henry had been serving in the Bengal Civil Service where he had been appointed Collector and Magistrate – as had his father before him – and where he had witnessed the Indian Mutiny of 1857 and which he described, from a civil servant's perspective, in a book published in 1859. In 1858 Henry was appointed Deputy Commissioner for Detection of Rebels and later Commissioner for Trial of Military and State Offences and of Mutineers and Deserters. Following his marriage Henry returned to Saharunpore where he died in 1867, aged only 38 and after less than eight years of marriage during which four children had been born in India. So Henry, born



Jemima Vans Robertson with her daughter Catherine, born in India ca 1830.

in India, had gone to England as a child but had gone back to live in India where his father had also died as a relatively young man some thirty years earlier. Following Henry's death Alexandrina brought her two young children – Flora and Alexander – to Australia to live with Jemima at *Connewarren*. So while Jemima's only surviving son had died and while her only daughter Catherine was living in New Zealand, in her later years Jemima had two grandchildren to share her life. Alexander would subsequently attend Geelong Grammar School before going to England for further education.

#### Jemima's granddaughter the Countess

Jemima's granddaughter, Flora Dundas Robertson (known in the family as 'Teeyah'), married in 1883 at *Connewarren*. 'Teeyah' married Count Stanislaus John Emil Antony Zichy-Woinarski who had been born in Ballarat in 1857. He was a medical practitioner. 'Teeyah' and Stanislaus had seven children, all of whom were entitled to be styled 'Count' or 'Countess'. These were Jemima's great-grandchildren. Still today Teeyah's descendants are, technically, Counts and Countesses despite living in Victoria!

#### Jemima consolidates her wealth

The lease of the land at *Kona Warren* would have been cancelled in the late 1850s, but in 1860 at a sale in Warrnambool Jemima purchased the property from the Crown for £1 per acre. A good

proportion was in the name of her son Henry Dundas Robertson who presumably was used as a 'dummy' as he was then living in India. Jemima continued to live in the homestead at *Kona Warren* and her nephew Anthony Mackenzie spent £800 building for himself a bluestone house which then became the main homestead where he and his wife, Grace Beveridge Murdock, lived.

In 1870 Jemima divided her land into two parts. She remained on *Connewarren* in the homestead – *Connewarren House* – with 640 acres, her pre-emptive right, and leased the other portion of 17,492 acres to her nephew Anthony Mackenzie. The leased portion and the new homestead then became known as *Wollongoon*.

#### A benefactress

Jemima settled into the life of the community and by 1870 when a meeting at Ellerslie decided to go ahead with the building of a Presbyterian church in the area, Jemima donated two acres of land with an acre reserved for a manse and was then forever a constant patron of the church, contributing much towards its support. Jemima laid the foundation stone for the Ellerslie church in 1870. In his address to the gathering on the day the Rev. Robert Sutherland stated:

You are known to them [the community] as one of the oldest colonists in the district. They all respect your high character, great energy, and large beneficence. You are a large contributor to all benevolent purposes, and from the very foundation of the colony, you have been one of the most generous supporters of our church, and this church at Ellerslie, owes its erection principally to your large munificence. I have therefore much pleasure in asking you to lay the foundation stone.

In 1872 Jemima gave the money to furnish the church with a bell and a collection of 100 children's books for use in the Sunday school. With the books she also gave a bookcase which was made by an aboriginal worker on the *Connewarren* estate.

Jemima also adopted at least two children and paid for a number of local indigenous children to receive an education but this is a complex story beyond the scope of this brief article.

#### To Peterborough

Jemima spent a good deal of her later life living at Peterborough as around 1877 she built her seaside home which the locals called 'The Big House' and which was later to become 'Blair House', a guest house. Subsequently she purchased a great deal more land – around 1,000 acres – at Peterborough. Jemima Robertson might have been a woman in her



Scots' Church, Ellerslie, of which Jemima was the benefactress and supporter, her contribution recalled on the plaque in the church which is now a private residence.

eighties but that did not seem to limit her desire nor her ability to acquire yet more property. Jemima was, by several accounts, quite a character. One anecdote tells that she once ordered wallpaper samples from England and when the supplier wrote some months later asking if she was going to place an order she wrote back explaining she had been able to do all the papering she required with the samples and did not need any more.

Jemima Vans Robertson died at *Connewarren House* on October 13, 1884 at the age of 84. As per her wishes she was buried in the Ellerslie churchyard; her grave is the only grave in that churchyard and can still be seen today.

At the time of her death Jemima was the largest property owner in Peterborough and still owned 'The Big House'. She had consolidated her lots of the township land into one, which was nearly half the township area. She had also, during the 1860s and 1870s, acquired considerable parcels of land in and around Ellerslie and Mortlake.

Until the end of her life Jemima was referred to locally as 'Mrs Colonel Robertson'. In June 1877, the *Young Australian* was wrecked off the coast of Peterborough and the *Argus* reported that 'The survivors express themselves as deeply indebted to Mrs Colonel Robertson and other residents of Curdie's Inlet for their kind attention.' It is interesting that after almost forty years as a widow and despite her husband never having come to Australia, the venerable old lady of *Connewarren* was styled 'Mrs Colonel Robertson'.

Jemima's estate was valued at £106,364 which today would approximate \$13,000,000. Her executors ran her estate until her grandson Alexander Dundas Robertson arrived from England. Alexander, born in India, had been sent to Rugby in England for his education. He was still a young man – in his early twenties – when he inherited his grandmother's wealth. In 1889 Alexander arrived at *Wollongoon* to take up his inheritance. He was reputed to have run up debts of £25,000 while studying at Cambridge.

#### The end of Jemima's empire

Alexander was to live in extravagant style at *Wollongoon* as he built the magnificent bluestone stables, harness room and coach house – all still standing today – and even purchased a yacht for the nearby lake. He also indulged his passion for thoroughbred horses. His residence at *Wollongoon* seems to have been brief. In 1893 at Sedbergh in Yorkshire he married Evelyn Upton-Cottrell-Dormer, a descendant of an aristocratic Oxford family but they eventually separated.

Alexander sold 'The Big House' at Peterborough to Helen Blair in 1894 and the title to the 700-acre farm at Peterborough was transferred to the Bank of Australasia in 1895. This coincided with the sale of *Wollongoon* which Alexander had mortgaged in the previous year. Alexander had four beautifully-matched cream ponies which were used in a four-in-hand and at the time of the sale of *Wollongoon* they sold for £100 for the four. They were eventually sold, reputedly, to the Empress of China! Alexander seems to have gone to Africa – more specifically to Transvaal which later became part of South Africa – as that is where he died in 1915. Alexander had lost his grandmother Jemima's empire. The descendants of the Weatherly family still reside on the property today but it is now named *Woolongoon*.

N.B. This is an abridged version of the biography of Jemima Vans Robertson researched for inclusion in the Mortlake and District Historical Society's *Women of the Mount* (2009) by Florence Charles and Craige Proctor. All photos are from the Mortlake and District Historical Society's collection.



Jemima was the only person ever buried in the grounds of Scots' Church, Ellerslie. Her grave is still visible to passers-by despite the Church now being held in private hands.



'Mrs Colonel Robertson' in later years.

Please consider sharing through *Western Historian* a story of a significant woman in your part of Western Victoria. We hope to include many stories in future editions.

Please submit contributions to me at [wvahsinc@gmail.com](mailto:wvahsinc@gmail.com) or [craige@iprimus.com.au](mailto:craige@iprimus.com.au)

## New publications

**Swan Hill Genealogical & Historical Society Inc.**

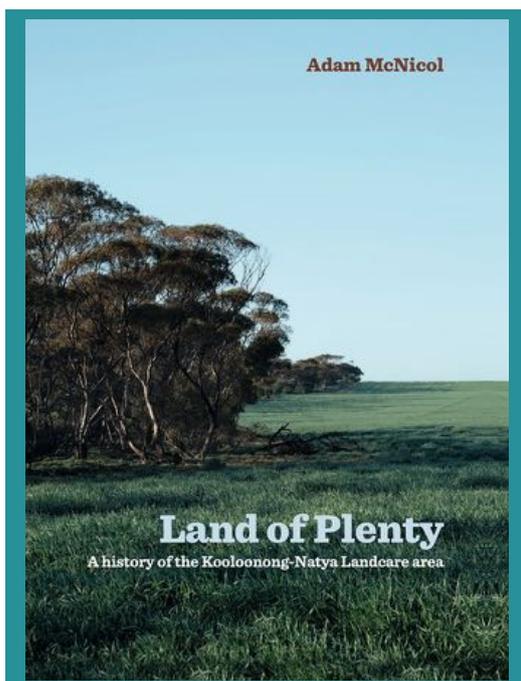
*Land of Plenty. A history of the Kooloonong-Natya Landcare area* by Adam McNicol.

Drawn from oral history interviews conducted by Lyndel Caffrey, with photography by Erin Jonasson, this book aims to preserve the memories of those little towns and the lives of the people who lived in and around them. But it also sets out to tell the inspiring tale of how the region covered by the Kooloonong-Natya Landcare Group has become an economic powerhouse.

The Kooloonong-Natya Landcare area is a land of plenty in many ways. It is a place that produces vast amounts of food and fibre that is sold around Australia and around the world. It is a place where settlers endured plenty of suffering along with plenty of good times. And it is a place where a push to conserve some of the natural landscape has created a mecca for bird lovers and people with a passion for ensuring agriculture and conservation can co-exist.

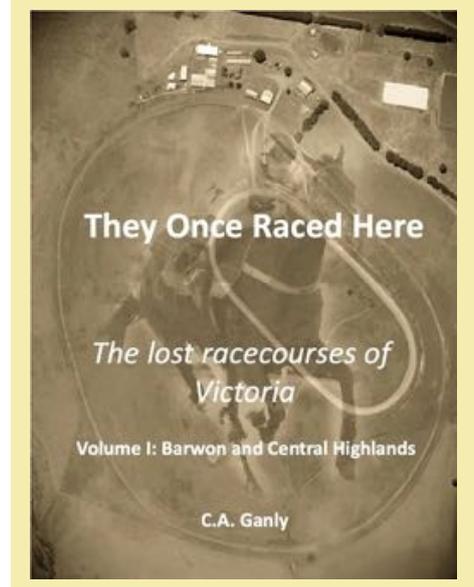
This book has come about largely as a tribute to the soldier settlers who arrived in 1919 and set the place on a path to becoming the highly productive region we know today. Copies of this book can be found at the Swan Hill Regional Library, and also in our Library.

If anyone is interested in purchasing a copy of this book, they are available through Ten Bag Press at: [tenbagpress.com.au/product/land-of-plenty-a-history-of-the-kooloonong-natya-landcare-area/](http://tenbagpress.com.au/product/land-of-plenty-a-history-of-the-kooloonong-natya-landcare-area/)



***They Once Raced Here – the lost racecourses of Victoria***

Newly-published books by Chris Ganly



Chris Ganly is a Geelong-based author who has produced a number of books on local history including the two-volume work *They Once Raced Here* which chronicles the stories of 'lost' racecourses in Victoria.

Volume 1, released in 2021, focusses on the Barwon and Central Highlands regions, taking in former racecourses in Geelong, Queenscliff, Surf Coast, Colac Otway, Ararat, Ballarat, Golden Plains, Hepburn, Moorabool and Pyrenees LGAs.

Volume 2, released in January 2023, explores racecourses in the Loddon and Campaspe and Mallee regions: Loddon, Campaspe, Central Goldfields, Mount Alexander, Macedon Ranges, Mildura, Swan Hill, Buloke and Gannawarra LGAs.

Volume 3, a work in progress will cover the Wimmera Southern Mallee and Great South Coast regions. Subsequent volumes will cover Gippsland and the metropolitan areas.

Obviously these two volumes could be of some interest to W.V.A.H.S. member groups.

For more information on some of the lost regional racecourse, the books and on Chris Ganly himself, go to

<https://chrisganly.wixsite.com/author/post/it-s-a-miracle-it-s-finished> and Chris can be contacted at [chris\\_ganly@hotmail.com](mailto:chris_ganly@hotmail.com)