

Society Notes

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Restoring our Photographic Collection



Todd's butcher shop on the corner of Sussex and Clyde Streets, Linton, circa early 1900s, showing members of the Todd family, and the Linton Brass Band.

One of the strengths of the Society's archival collection is its historic photographs. Many are in superb condition, thanks to the work carried out by Max Satndish in the early days of the Society. However, many photos require restoration in order to see them at their best. Our member Gary Hunt is kindly donating his time and expertise to this task in order for us to prepare a new photographic history of Linton which will be published next year. The above photograph is one of the photos restored by Gary.

Also in this issue:

- *Celebration at the launch of new book on Linton's history*
- *President's annual report on the Society's year*
- *How Christmas has been celebrated in Linton in the past*
- *Report on Annual General Meeting speaker: "Farewell Dear People"*

Next History Night: Monday 16 November

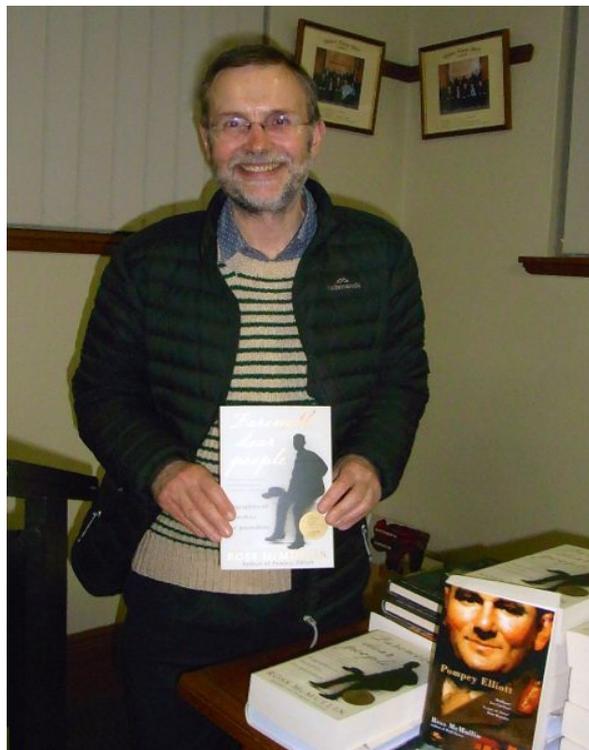
Engaging speaker at our AGM examined biographies of significant Australians lost in World War 1

Members attending the Society's **Annual General Meeting** on Monday 21 September 2014, were enthralled by the presentation of our guest speaker, senior History Fellow at the University of Melbourne, Dr. Ross McMullin, who lived up to his reputation as a lively and engaging speaker. A historian and biographer of a number of significant books, Ross has written extensively about the impact on Australia of its involvement in World War 1. His most recent publication, *Farewell Dear People*, was awarded the Prime Minister's Prize for Australian History and the National Cultural Award. Ross chose the subject matter of this book as the topic for his presentation to our AGM.

Farewell Dear People consists of ten biographies of Australia's lost generation of World War 1. These are stories of ten men who had embarked on illustrious careers that were to be cut short with the outbreak of the WW1 conflict. Their names, along with their heroic deeds in the context of their own service to 'King and Country', were little known until the powerful storytelling of Dr McMullin brought them to our attention. Like so many other young men of that generation they were caught up in a cruel war that was to take their lives in horrific circumstances and so to rob an emerging country like Australia of its 'brightest and best'. The collective devastating effect of this conflict would be over 60,000 soldiers killed, from a population of fewer than 5 million, and many more wounded or taken prisoner. Dr McMullin's talk emphasised the cost of that lost talent to our nation and the world.

The biographies include Clunes Mathison, an internationally acclaimed medical researcher; and engineer Robert Bage, a member of Douglas Mawson's 1911-1914 expedition to Antarctica. Both were killed at Gallipoli. Two other men featured are Geoff McCrae, and Tom Elliot, who were both killed at the Battle of Fromelles, which Ross describes as 'the worst 24 hours in Australia's history with 5,533 casualties in one night'. Geoff McCrae was a budding architect, a very creative man with "movie-star good looks" who came from a well-to-do family who were part of Melbourne's artistic elite. Tom Elliot, on the other hand, was the son of a poor tram worker from Sydney, who had topped the entrance exams for Duntroon Military College. He has been described as having outstanding qualities as a military officer, and a potential Kitchener.

Other accounts in the book are of a rugby international who became an esteemed administrator and a rising Labor star; a visionary vigneron and community leader who was renowned for successful winemaking at an unusually young age; a Western Australian Rhodes scholar assured of a shining future in the law or politics; a Tasmanian footballer who dazzled at the highest level



Dr Ross McMullin with some of his books for sale at our Annual General Meeting

Dr McMullin's other books include two World War 1 biographies: *Pompey Elliott* (a Brigadier and former Ballarat resident) and a biography of the legendary Australian cartoonist: *Will Dyson: Australia's radical genius*.

Generous Gift to the Society from Joan Monti

Dr Ross McMullin and his wife Joan Monti travelled from Melbourne for Ross's AGM presentation. The visit was of particular interest to Joan, as she has family heritage in the district. Her ancestors included the family of James and Agnes Davies in Happy Valley. The Society took Joan and Ross on a tour of Linton, and its notable buildings, including our old public library in Sussex Street. Joan and Ross then examined our archival material on the Davies family that is held in our Resource Centre. Joan was delighted to find that the Society's file on the Davies family contained a hand-written letter from Joan's mother, sent some thirty years ago, to the Society's former Secretary Letty Armstrong, setting out further details on the family's history. To thank the Society for its work, and encourage us to keep going, Joan made a very generous donation to our funds. It has been suggested that we put the money towards upgrading our audio-visual equipment to ensure that we can have clear and reliable projections of our wonderful photographic collection, and to assist visiting speakers with their audio-visual presentations.



CHRISTMAS DRINKS

For the Society's Christmas celebration this year we will have Christmas Drinks at

The Linton Library

Sussex Street Linton, next to Nelson's Undertakers

Friday, 4th December

From 5:00 to 7:30

Please bring a plate and a bottle of your own favourite.

Hope to see you there to say Merry Christmas!



RSVP by phone to Jill on 0439 895 939, or to Jan Cooke 5342 8554 or email jillianleawheeler@gmail.com, or Jan at piggoreet-west@bigpond.com.au

Celebrating Christmas in Linton from 1860 to 1939

The following newspaper articles provide a snapshot of some of the ways Christmas was celebrated in Linton over an 80 year time-span. They show how celebrations became more elaborate over the years, and included wider community celebrations, as well as celebrations at each of the Christian denominations' churches.

The first article, from 1861 indicates that celebrations were somewhat homespun (chasing a greasy pig!) and centred on games at two of the local hotels, with no indication of religious services. There is mention of the upcoming sale of township lots (which took place in 1861). Government surveyors had laid out the town in late 1860 with wide streets, which meant that many of the shopkeepers who had already set up their premises closer together had to move them back to the new line of the street. It seems there was also a mining claim that found itself on the surveyed portion of the township that had subsequently been 'quietly abandoned'.

We also learn that there were two varieties of Methodism – the Primitives and the Wesleyans – both thriving in town, while the writer laments that the Church of England and the Catholics were slow to build churches. The first Wesleyan Methodist church was built in Sussex St in March 1860 (the one referred to here) but as a result of the street widening, it was moved to Grantley St in April 1861. St Paul's Church of England was built on its present site in 1862, and the first weatherboard Catholic Church in the same year on a site next door to the present church.

Ballarat Star 1 January 1861

LINTON. (From our own Correspondent) 29th December.

There has been very little doing here this week, and most of the miners have taken three holidays at least. On Wednesday there were the usual Christmas games, such as climbing the greasy pole, chasing pigs with soaped tails, &c., at the Black Swan and Prince of Wales Hotels. Great numbers had gone into Ballarat so that there were not so many present as might have been expected.

I believe I may report that the sale of the township is finally decided on. The memorial referred to in my last was presented to the president of the Land Board by Mr O'Meara. Mr. Brooke, after some conversation and explanations, promised to have it sold, and also consented to have valuations allowed on the buildings as they at present stand, and to allow the occupiers six months to remove them back to the line of street. The claim which was recently taken possession of on the surveyed portion of the township appears to be quietly abandoned, the windlass having been removed and no one remaining at work.

There was a tea meeting at the Primitive Methodist Chapel since I last wrote, but having been absent at the time, I am unable to give a report of the proceedings. This body of Christians deserve, certainly, great credit for their exertions. The late tea meeting was the second they have held within a comparatively short period, and their chapel is a very neat one.

The Wesleyans are about to erect a new church on a larger scale than the one they at present possess, which was erected about eight months since, and was the first religious edifice on the new township.

I regret to perceive that the Church of England is so supine in this quarter. Some time since it had a clergyman residing here, but he has left, and for a long time there has been no service.

The Roman Catholic body is equally sluggish. They have no church, no school, and as for a clergyman one would be a sight for sore eyes. The nearest place where mass can be heard is at Brown's and on what Sundays there, no one I have met here appears to know, while to be sure of seeing a clergyman involves a journey of 22 miles to Ballarat. I believe that an effort is about to be made by the last named body to raise funds to erect a church, and I trust it will not be allowed to fall through, for it is any-thing but creditable to the two most numerous and wealthy denominations in the country (which I believe the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches to be) to allow themselves to be outstripped by the zeal of smaller but more active bodies.

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This article from the Ballarat Star describes Linton's Christmas celebrations in 1891. The main Christmas event seems to have been a picnic run by the Wesleyan Sunday School (an annual treat for the local children) followed by a more religious 'service of song' in the Shire Hall in the evening, this time organised by the Presbyterian Church as a fundraiser for their Sabbath School. The Shire Hall was the old Hall in Sussex St where the present Shire offices now stand.

Ballarat Star 28 December 1891

LINTON.

The annual picnic in connection with the Wesleyan Sunday school took place at Linton Park, kindly lent for the occasion by the Hon. E. Morey, M.L.C. Owing to the cold and threatening weather, the attendance was not so

large as usual. A goodly number of young people were, however, present, many of them on a visit to their friends. The teachers, children, and others appeared to thoroughly enjoy themselves at the different games. There was an excellent supply of Christmas cheer, which was duly appreciated by all present. The teachers were most assiduous in attending to the wants of the children, which was a most pleasing feature on the occasion. In the evening at the Shire Hall a service of song, entitled "Mother's prayer," was exceedingly well rendered by the choir of the Presbyterian Church, in aid of their Sabbath school fund, the connective readings by the Rev. Mr Drummond being very feelingly rendered. The hall on the occasion was well filled by an attentive audience.

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This next article from the Ballarat Star gives us details of a Christmas concert held in Linton on Christmas night in 1902 that obviously attracted quite a crowd. Note that most of the singing was of sturdy hymns, with only one Christmas Carol as we know it today.

Ballarat Star Wednesday 1 January 1902

(From Our Correspondent.)

On Christmas night an entertainment under the auspices of St. Paul's Church of England was held in the Shire Hall, and was very well attended. The proceeds are to be devoted to improvements for the benefit of the church choir, and the effort was very successful. Mr E. V. Coates occupied the Chair, and the accompaniments were played by Miss Bennett and Miss Wilson. The following programme was rendered:— Chorus, Lo, the Heavens, children; Chorus, God Reigneth, Choir; solo, Rock Me to Sleep, Mrs J. Nicol; solo, He Shall Reign for Ever, Miss B. Jennings; Chorus, If I were a Sunbeam, little girls; solo, Gates of the West, Mrs Bolte; chorus, Children of Jerusalem, children; solo, Pass Under the Rod, Mrs Wishart; anthem, Hark the Herald Angels Sing, Choir; solo, Pilgrim Fathers, Mr Percy Roberts; trio by Miss and Masters J. and M. Todd; solo, He Wipes a Tear, Miss Burnside; solo, Only Tired, Mrs J. Nicol; solo, Perfect Life, Miss Roberts; chorus, Christmas Carol, children; solo, Too Late, Miss Williams; chorus, Good Night, choir.

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Here The Camperdown Chronicle is flagging the upcoming events associated with the Linton Centenary over Christmas 1939. The Centenary Committee obviously wanted to advertise widely to attract as many former residents as possible. Christmas in those days was a much more communal event to be shared with other townsfolk, both past and present, and as many former residents would come back to Linton to see their relatives at Christmas anyway, it would have been an opportune time to hold the centenary celebrations.

Camperdown Chronicle Saturday 18 November 1939

LINTON'S CENTENARY

The committee of the Linton centenary celebrations invite all former residents back to participate in the centenary celebrations to be held from December 23 to December 26. The programme commences Saturday December 23 and comprises:—Grand concert by local artists in parish hall. Sunday: Morning, church services; afternoon, motor tour to points of historical interest; evening, church services. Monday Christmas Day: Morning and evening, church services; afternoon, basket picnic. Tuesday: Morning, official reception to visitors; afternoon, historical and floral procession to recreation ground where children's display and sports programme will take place; evening, grand centenary & 01 at parish hall. The committee would like the names and addresses of former residents, and others desiring to attend the celebrations, to be forwarded to the honorary secretary. Mr. H. J. McDonnell, Linton, without delay.

New Committee Elected for 2016

The following were elected to the Society's management committee at the Annual General Meeting on Monday 21 September, 2015:

President: Dr. Jill Wheeler

Vice President: vacant

Secretary: Drew Hopkins

Treasurer: Jan Cooke

Committee members: Joan Giles, Deirdre Nichol and Ken McLachlan. In addition to the position of Vice President, there is a vacant position on the committee. Under Rule 51(a) of our Constitution, the Committee may appoint a Society member to fill a position on the Committee that was not filled by election at the last annual AGM. Anyone who would like to join us, please get in touch!

Big Crowd attended the launch of *Linton Makes History*

A champagne celebration with over 80 people attending was held in the Sussex St Shire Offices on Sunday 16 Augusts to launch *Linton Makes History: an Australian Goldfields Town and its Past*, the first comprehensive history of Linton ever published. The book was written by Society President, Dr. Jill Wheeler. It was formally launched by Emeritus Professor Peter McPhee from the University of Melbourne, following a speech from him, and a speech from Cr. Bill McArthur of Golden Plains Shire, who is also the current President of the Municipal Association of Victoria.



Society members and other guests discussing *Linton Makes History*

Photo: Gary Hunt

When launching the book, Professor McPhee made the following comments:

‘Linton Makes History is one of those rare local histories which illuminates the history of an entire community, rather than just cataloguing important people and events.

In my career as a social historian, I have read thousands of local histories, about France, Australia, the United States and elsewhere. This is among the very best of them. As well as giving us a strong narrative account of the making of the Linton we know today, she gives us other, equally rich, perspectives: she uses her understanding of the importance of memory, of symbols, of memorials. She places Linton within regional, national and even international history.

There is deep scholarship behind this engrossing story, so movingly told. We know Linton – and Australia - much better for having this book. Jill draws not just on local and state records, but on interviews, memoirs, comparative histories of other communities, environmental history, and visual material.

I have written histories of small communities in France. I know how difficult it is to piece together scattered snippets of information into a coherent story. Jill has done this brilliantly. She has given a great gift to this community. There are few small towns in the world which have had such an illuminating, excellent history written about them. Linton owes a great debt of gratitude to Jill.’

Linton Makes History has received a Commendation in the Victorian Community History Awards, which are presented annually by the Public Record Office Victoria in partnership with the Royal Historical Society of Victoria (see page 8 for details).





Faces of members at the launch of Linton Makes History: clockwise from top, Karen Ronan, Graeme Ellis and Alice Knight; Tim Cooke, Alan and Joan Giles; Del Atkinson, David Drake-Feary, Joan O'Beirne and Leon Dark; Betty Grigg and Catherine Rogers; Cath Block, Susie Cooke, Jan Cooke and Ken McLachlan (the booksellers); and Councillor Bill McArthur, Jill Wheeler and Peter McPhee.

***Linton Makes History* wins an award!**

We are delighted to report that Jill Wheeler's book, *Linton Makes History: an Australian Goldfields Town and its Past*, won a Commendation in the Victorian Community History Awards. The presentation of awards took place at a ceremony at the Arts Centre in Melbourne on Monday 19 October. *Linton Makes History* was in the category entitled 'History Publication Award'.

In this category, *Linton Makes History* was one of six books commended. The other commendations included Brenda Niall's *Mannix* and Tim Colebatch's biography of Dick Hamer, amongst others. The book that won the category was *Sensational Blockbuster! Fergus Hume & the Mystery of the Hansom Cab*, by Lucy Sussex. There were many other books entered in this category that did not get commended, so we are feeling pretty pleased with our Linton history.

Don't forget that *Linton Makes History* is for sale at various outlets around town for \$30 if you haven't already got your copy!



Jill Wheeler (centre) in the official photo taken of the finalists in the History Publication Award category of the Victorian Community History Awards, presented at the Arts Centre on Monday 19 October.

Publications available from the Linton and District Historical Society

DVDs of History Night talks

Talks by Jim Stapleton (2012), Rod and Joan O'Beirne (2012), Bruce Adams (2013), Aaron Kerr (2013), Rob Lewers (2014), Chris and Bill Grigg (2014), Joan Hunt (2014), and Hans and Gerry Ver Doorn (2015). \$10 each + \$5 postage/handling – Contact Joan Giles: joangiles@hemsleypark.com.au or tel: 5309 1770.

A Walk-Drive Tour of Linton: \$5 plus \$2 postage and handling. Cheque payable to the Linton and District Historical Society, PO Box 41, Linton 3360.

Linton Makes History: an Australian Goldfields Town and its Past

Copies can be purchased (and signed!) directly from the author – just email Jill for electronic banking transfer details – jillianleawheeler@gmail.com - or send a cheque for \$30.00, plus \$8.00 postage & handling, to Jill Wheeler, c/- Linton & District Historical Society, PO Box 41, Linton 3360.

President's Report for 2015

Below is the President's Annual Report presented by Jill Wheeler at the Annual General Meeting on Monday 21 September, 2015.

This is my fifth year as President of the Linton and District Historical Society and it has been, like all the others, a busy & eventful year.

Membership

At the end of August this year, we had 87 members, and although we lost some members in the course of the year, we also had several new members join. As was the case last year, it is interesting to note that almost half of our membership – 47.6% - lives beyond the Linton-Ballarat district – in Melbourne, in other places in Victoria, and interstate.

Meetings

Since this time last year, we have had three well-attended **History Nights** - in November, February and June, plus a History Day in April, and a **Christmas celebration** in December.

At our **November History Night** our speaker was member and local historian Joan Hunt, who gave an enthusiastic audience an update on her research for her PhD into the Springdallah gold discoveries. On this occasion she focussed on her findings regarding the gold mining community of Happy Valley from the 1860s to the 1880s.

In **February** we had Doug Bradby, a retired teacher from Ballarat who talked about the history of the Ballarat goldfields, and his voluntary work in Ballarat and Buninyong, talking about local history, particularly gold rush history, with local school children.

Instead of a **History Night in April** we had a History Day in Beaufort, where we were taken on an historic walk around the town and shown around the Beaufort Historical Society's rooms by their President, Shirley Boyle.

Our **June History Night** was another in our *Stories from the Elders* series. These are History Nights where we invite longstanding or former Lintonians or their descendants to tell us of their memories, or their family's memories, of Linton. Our speakers on this occasion were Gerry and Hans Ver Doorn speaking about their memories of immigrating to Australia from the Netherlands and growing up in Linton in the mid-1950s.

Our History Nights are always well attended and often include non-members as well. We have had as many as 44 people in this room - and we have been grateful to the Shire for the use of the Shire Offices to accommodate the larger numbers. Our sincere thanks go to all of our speakers for agreeing to share their important oral histories with us.

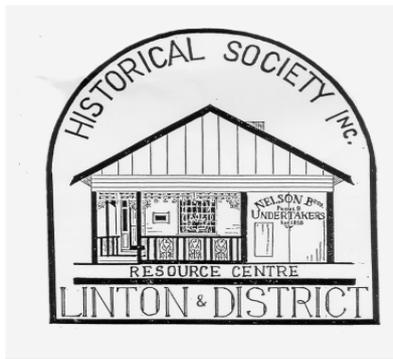
Just a reminder - we have made DVDs of each of the speakers in our *Stories from the Elders* series and we have placed them in our archives for posterity. They can also be copied for anyone who is interested, and purchased from the Society for \$10 each + \$5 postage and handling.

Meanwhile, the everyday business of the Society has been handled by the hard-working **Committee of 7**, which has had six meetings during the last year and has reported back to the members at History Nights and via *Society Notes* on any matters of general concern to the membership.

Grants

We have done well with grants in the past year although most of this money has been directed towards the conservation of the two Golden Plains Shire buildings that we inhabit and manage. We already had a **Local History Grant** from the State government via the Public Record Office to produce an A4 size book, entitled **Linton: a Photographic History**. We have found it hard to find the time to allocate to this project due to other pressing commitments, but we have an extended deadline and hope to have it at the printers by the end of this year.

For the 2014-15 year, we received a **Community grant of \$2,420** from the Shire towards the repairs to the north wall of the Nelson's Undertakers' building which is our Resource Centre. This wall was the one most damaged by damp as a result of the previously leaky roof. There was a complication when asbestos was



Linton and District Historical Society

Next History Night

Monday 16 November, 2015

at the Shire Offices, Sussex St, Linton, 7.30 pm.

Remembering Piggoreet, its town and its people

Joan Hunt will tell some stories in her very entertaining style arising from her research into the early history of Piggoreet. These will be accompanied by her showing images of the mines and the buildings in the township, with maps and plans.



Come and join the discussion

Supper will be served at the end of the meeting (please bring a plate).

discovered in all the exterior walls of the building as a result of an audit by Golden Plains Shire of asbestos in all its buildings. The Shire subsequently agreed to pay for the removal of the asbestos sheeting by a licensed plumber. After that the wall was replaced with weatherboards and new non-asbestos sheeting, in the same style as the previous wall, and in keeping with its vintage as a 1920s building. It was painted in heritage colours suggested by the Shire's heritage consultant and the job was finally completed in October 2014.

This year, **the 2015-16 year**, we have received a **Community grant of \$2, 825** from the Shire to continue the restoration of Undertakers' building. This phase of the restoration will involve the repair and repainting of a section of the exterior weatherboards at the front of the building, along with the verandah and front door. So by Christmas our Resource Centre will hopefully be presenting a new, fresh face to Sussex St.

It is worth mentioning that these Community Grants are required to be matched dollar-for-dollar by the Historical Society, either in cash or kind. The Society contributed \$920 in cash and \$1,775 in kind towards

the wall replacement last year, and will contribute \$512 in cash and \$2,880 in kind towards this year's project.

You might recall that last year we received a **Commonwealth Government Heritage Grant for \$10,000** for the completion of a Conservation Management Plan for the historic Linton Library and for the commencement of restoration of the Library. The Golden Plains Shire also contributed a total of \$7,500 towards this project.

A recent report by a heritage engineer has a detailed plan of what needs to be done to restore it, and how, and in what order. We will have \$3,783 left over from our grants to put towards commencement of the repairs, although obviously much more money will be needed down the track to pay for the restoration of the Library for use by the community.

When our Treasurer, Jan Cooke, presents her financial report shortly it might look like we are awash with funds. However, it is worth bearing in mind that a large slice of this - a total of \$13,847 - is grant money that is already allocated to projects.

Victorian Heritage Register

In June this year, the long running saga of our trying to get the 1874 Linton Library on the State Heritage Register finally came to an unhappy conclusion.

After numerous reports, a visit to the Library by the three members of the Heritage Council panel, and a formal hearing in Melbourne attended by the myself and Drew Hopkins arguing for the inclusion of the Linton Library on the Register, the Heritage Council decided, after deliberating for four months, that our Library is not of cultural significance to the State of Victoria and therefore does not warrant inclusion on the Victorian Heritage Register.

The decision hinged on whether, when considering whether the Library should receive heritage listing, the committee should consider the building only, or whether it could also take into account the heritage value of the books and shelves (and any other objects) that are currently in the building.

After receiving legal advice, the Committee concluded that, given the current wording of the relevant provisions of the Heritage Act, it could only consider the building itself, and not the heritage value of the collection within it. With regard to the building, evidence was given that the façade of the building had substantially changed during an earlier renovation. Hence, the Committee concluded, it did not meet the criteria and was no longer a highly intact example of a Mechanics Institute library.

The Society thinks that this decision just does not make any logical sense and it was very disappointing for us after a mammoth and extremely time-consuming effort. While this means we cannot access more generous sources of funds for the restoration of the Library, we will, however, continue to apply for other grants to restore the building. It will just take longer to achieve!

Cataloguing, sorting, scanning and storage

The sorting, scanning cataloguing and storage of all the items and paper documents in our collection has continued throughout the year.

Apart from bursts of group activity at working bees, most of the day-to-day slog of cataloguing our collection on the computer has been done by our volunteer member, Del Atkinson, whom we thank sincerely for her perseverance and dedication to this task. Del has also recruited two other volunteers to help her - Karen Ronan and Monica Keefe have worked regularly with Del throughout this year on the cataloguing and we'd also like to thank them very much for their invaluable assistance.

There is still much to do in this area, but this all means that we are gradually getting a more accessible and reliable system for finding what we need to find in our archives.

Publications and DVD sales

Our little booklet, *A Walk-Drive Tour of Linton*, has continued to sell steadily throughout the year, and at \$5.00 a copy, is still bringing in income for us. To add to this, in the past year, we have sold a lot of DVDs of our History Night talks, which have been very popular, especially for members who live in far-flung places and can't get to hear our speakers in person.

You will notice in our Financial Report that we made \$799 in the past year from these sources plus sales of our photographs.

Website

The website has proved to be an important asset in our contact with the public beyond Linton. Our member, Ken McLachlan, has very successfully managed it over the past year and ensured that it is always up to date. He has also got us onto Facebook!

Donations

In the past year, our donations account has steadily built up, and you will notice in our Financial Report that we have received a total of \$1,312 from this source (last year it was \$708). This is a fantastic result that might be partially attributed to the fact that donations are tax deductible, but also to the generosity of our members and others whom we help with research queries and access to our collection in particular ways. We take this as a vote of confidence in what we do, which is very heartening.

We notice that many of you, our members, in renewing your membership this year have included a donation along with your subscription and we thank you sincerely for your generosity.

Involvement in Linton and Beyond

Our involvement in our community is one of our key functions – it makes us relevant and accessible. During the past year we have done this in a variety of ways.

In September last year, about 25 members of the **Goldfields Car Club and the Holden Car Club** visited the Linton Library and the Historical Society's Resource Centre. I gave a talk on the history of Linton and the district, plus a short history of the Library and an explanation of its heritage significance.

In March this year, I was interviewed on **Ballarat Community Radio, 99.9 Voice FM**, about the Linton Library, its history and our efforts to get it placed on the State Heritage Register. I also took the opportunity to talk about the work of the Society in general. If you missed it and would like to listen to it, go to our website www.lintonhistory.org.au, and click on our 'In the News' page, and the interview is right there.

On **Anzac Day** this year, the Historical Society joined with the Linton Primary School in a special **commemoration of the centenary of the Gallipoli landings in April 1915**. At the Avenue of Honour Memorial at the bottom of Clyde St, a minute's silence was held, and I spoke briefly to the children about the history of the Avenue of Honour. The Society, along with others, then laid a wreath at the Sussex St War Memorial in front of the Shire Offices.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, the school children and community members were invited to the old Linton library where the Society had a display of WW1 memorabilia from our collection, and the school and the Historical Society showed a power point presentation of the 55 soldiers listed on the school's WW1 Honour Board. This presentation was developed by a Federation University student with our help over some weeks in researching any information or photos we had of these men and their families.

In May, the Society was involved with the celebrations for the **centenary of Linton's Catholic Church, St Peter's**. We loaned items from our collection relating to the building of the church and the history of the Catholic Parish in Linton.

The Society has been involved throughout this year, as it was last year, in **Linton Community Planning** meetings, where we have reported on issues regarding the town's history and heritage. One of our recurrent themes has been that the preservation of Linton's heritage streetscape will contribute to a sense of community pride, as well as enhance the town as a tourist destination.

Research Requests

Since the beginning of September last year, in my role as Research Officer, I have responded to 29 individual requests for help with local and family history research, an increase of 10 on the previous year. The vast majority of these requests came via our enquiries email address on our website, making this now the preferred way for enquirers to reach us and the easiest way by far for us to correspond with them, including giving them our bank details so they can pay our research fees promptly online and sending them scans of documents and photographs.

Some of these requests have been straightforward and not involved much work, others have been complicated and involved ongoing correspondence with the person who has inquired. Our member and cataloguer, Del Atkinson, has been an invaluable help in researching our collection for any information we have for these enquirers. Joan Hunt has also assisted with any requests for information on the history and inhabitants of Happy Valley.

As was the case last year, the majority of these requests have come from non-members of the Society who don't live in Linton, but who have family heritage here.

All of these requests are over and above the enquiries we get at Open Days when visitors to the Resource Centre can do some research themselves, with the guidance of the volunteers on duty that day.

Society Notes

Has continued to be produced quarterly, under the editorship of our Secretary, Drew Hopkins. It is usually 12-16 pages, and as most of you know, includes historical news items, regular reports on Society business, summaries of talks by guest speakers at meetings, notices about upcoming events, and photographs, both historic and contemporary. It also includes reader contributions where they are available and would like to encourage more members to add to this.

Plans for the year ahead

Our first major project is the completion of our book of historic photographs of Linton.

The second major project is the repainting of the façade of our headquarters, the old Nelsons Undertakers building, due to commence next month.

The third project will be beginning the process of restoration of the Library according to the schedule set out in the heritage engineer's report. These two latter projects will continue the process of securing these two important historic buildings in Linton for the future.

Meanwhile, the Society plans to continue to present and record more talks from senior current and ex-Lintonians as part of a *Stories from the Elders series* in order to preserve for posterity these stories from the early twentieth century in Linton.

We will be continuing to work away on our cataloguing and the scanning of our photograph collection.

We will continue to try to attract new members, and encourage more members who have time to become actively involved with the Society. Here I would like to make a special plea for anyone who has some time to get involved with our work. There are lots of small jobs that need doing and any and all contributions are welcome. For example, we need a volunteer to keep our scrap books, a job that involves reading the local newspapers and cutting out relevant articles on Linton and district news and pasting them in books.

Thanks

As I come to the end of my report, I would like to thank everyone on the committee for their hard work and diligence throughout the year:

Jan Cooke, for continuing to do a brilliant job in the thankless role of Treasurer.

And to Jan and Susie who regularly clean the Centre and the Library, help to organise the suppers at our History Nights and do a myriad of other organising and catering tasks around the Centre.

Drew Hopkins, for his production of *Society Notes* and for taking the minutes at all our committee meetings throughout the year and for doing so again tonight. His advice and experience have been important, particularly on legal issues, but also to me personally, acting as an ever-patient sounding board, and in many more supportive ways throughout the year.

Joan Giles, who has taken on special projects, for example, the production of our DVDs and CDs, as well as attending to many other admin tasks besides. She & Alan have also done regular stints at our Open days throughout the year.

Deirdre Nicol, who has collected our mail for committee meetings and who writes reports on Society activities for the Linton News. She has contributed to the sorting and filing of our paperwork, as well as doing a lot of tea and supper making.

Warwick Madden, who has continued working on our photograph collection and for being a regular helper on Open Days and working bees. Warwick is not standing for committee this coming year and I would like to give a vote of thanks to him for his contribution. He will continue to be involved with the photo collection however, and with helping out on Open Days.

Ken McLachlan, who has done a great job managing our website and being our membership secretary, keeping our membership date base up to date at all times. This year he also took on the task of valuing our assets for insurance purposes.

As well as these people, I would like to acknowledge the support of others who have taken on specific jobs around the Society.

Firstly, **Joan Hunt** for her advice, expertise and hands-on input with research queries which we have found invaluable. Secondly, to **Del Atkinson** for her diligent and continuing efforts with our cataloguing tasks, and to her 2 new assistants, Karen Ronan & Monica Keefe, who have regularly helped out during the year with this sometimes thankless task.

Thanks to **Tim Cooke, Roy Nicol and Chris Grigg** for their combined efforts with garden maintenance - lawn mowing, weed spraying and to Tim for wood supplies. Thanks to Chris also for his endless, invaluable local history input, and to **Alan Giles** for his help on Open Days & all the fix-it jobs he does around the place.

Before I conclude I would like to **thank the committee and other members who assisted at the launch of my book, *Linton Makes History***, on 16 August. I was overwhelmed by the generosity of you all in so many ways – in setting up the Shire Offices on the day, with the catering, with selling the books, with taking photos, with working on the day to make sure the guests were well supplied with food and drinks, and then with cleaning up afterwards.

Conclusion

I conclude now by saying that, while there are many things that we as an Historical Society would like to be doing that we are not, mainly because we haven't got enough volunteers 'on the ground' in Linton. However, on the whole we are going well, we are financially viable with healthy membership numbers and we are generally well regarded in the community and beyond.

In order to exist, Historical Societies need members, so a big thank you to you all for your support for the Linton Historical Society and for coming out tonight to our Annual General Meeting. Your involvement is much appreciated and is vital for our prosperity.

Do you have a red dot on your Society Notes?

Have you paid your membership subscription?



If your copy of *Society Notes* has a **red dot** on the front page, this is a reminder that you have not yet paid your annual subscription. Please forward your Renewal Form, with payment, to **Linton & District Historical Society, PO Box 41, 69 Sussex St., Linton 3360**. Subscription: \$25;
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Please indicate on direct deposit your member number or surname and what payment is for, e.g. membership, donation, etc. Any queries? Ken McLachlan! 0409 814 201.

Recent Research Requests

Between February and June this year, we have had the following research requests:

LEWIS, William and Anne – Wendel Davis, a descendant of this couple, enquiring what information we have on them, & if there were other members who are descendants. We were able to provide some information from our file on the family & to connect Wendel with other relatives.

SPARROW, Lionel – Adam Beams emailed he was coming to an Open Day. His mother, Julie Thompson, had previously enquired about Lionel, a former editor/owner of the Grenville Standard, from whom they are descended. They did come to Open Day & while we gave them some information, they also gave us a lot of information on Lionel for our file.

SANDOW, Mary Ann - Marion Sandow from the UK researching the Sandow family's connection with the Cull family. We put her in touch with descendants Leanne Cull and Chris Grigg.

SMITH, George Henry – Peter Faull came to Open Day researching his ancestor & this family from Happy Valley. There was quite a lot of information on file, including a CD of images & other information from the file.

THE GABLES – a query from the Golden Plains Shire Heritage Consultant asking if the Society had any historical information on this distinctive Linton house. Enquiries pinpointed its date of construction at 1957-8.

DANBY, John Thomas – Nick Wheeldon from the UK researching this ancestor who emigrated to Victoria in 1852 & lived in Linton with his family in the 1860s. Extensive correspondence followed between the enquirer & ourselves, & he sent us two valuable hand written accounts by John Thomas for our archives. Although we did not initially have much information on him, we now have a large amount.

ROBERTS, Digory Pendray – Sally Silk wanting photographs of this ancestor, but we only had rather unsatisfactory ones.

OLD GOLD MAPS – Sam Kelly wanting any old gold maps of Linton & Happy Valley. We do not have old gold maps. Referred him to a 1999 report on all the goldfields in the district.

WISE and ROBERTSON – Vida Wallace enquiring about the possible connection between John Mardling Wise and Esther Robertson. We had no information but referred her to several other relatives who had previously enquired and who had done family history research on the Wises.

CAREY family of Brownsvale – Jeff Carey enquiring as to the location of Brownsvale and Western Creek where his ancestors lived in the 1860s. Referred this to Joan Hunt who gave Jeff precise directions.

WATTERS/WATERS and WILSON families – Trevor Watters asking for any information we had on these Happy Valley families as he was coming to the area later in the year to look around. We referred this to Joan Hunt, which resulted in a long correspondence between Joan & Trevor. Joan was able to supply family tree information and maps of where they lived, and eventually she took Trevor & his wife on a tour of Happy Valley in September.

MITCHELL/TONKIN/ANGUS families - Rodney Tonkin asking for any information on these Linton families who were all interrelated. We had some information but Rodney did not get back to us after we told him that & asked for the research fee.

RAILWAY HOTEL – Scott Whittaker, who is researching a book on all the railway Hotels in Australia, asking for information on Linton's Railway Hotel & for any photos. Scott subsequently came to an Open Day and found the information and photos he needed.

(Many thanks to Joan Hunt for her assistance with research into the individuals and families above who came from the Happy Valley area).

If any readers think they might have further information on any of these families or topics, please let us know.

The Society charges a \$30 fee for detailed research, plus small fees for copies of photographs and other documents.



The Linton and District Historical Society is now on the World Wide Web. Check out our website at www.lintonhistory.org.au.

the Bulletin board

- **Next Open Days at the Resource Centre** – The second Sunday of the month: 8 November, 13 December, 14 February 2016. Opening times: **2:00 – 5:00 pm**.
- **Our next History Night will be Monday 16 November: Speaker: Joan Hunt on *Remembering Piggoreet, its town and its people***
- **Christmas Drinks: Friday 4 December, 5:00 – 7:30 at the library, Sussex St, next to the Society's Resource Centre**
- Donations to the Society are **tax deductible**. Please contact the Treasurer for details.
- Lots of information is on our website www.lintonhistory.org.au and follow us on **facebook**
- **DVDs of History Night talks are available (Jim Stapleton, the O'Beirne family, Bruce Adams, Aaron Kerr, Rod Lewers, Chris and Bill Grigg, Joan Hunt, Hans and Gerry Ver Doorn): \$10 each + \$5 postage and handling. Contact Joan Giles: joangiles@hemsleypark.com.au Tel: 5309 1770.**
- **Welcome to New Members:** Kylie Fenton, John Fallon, Bernadette Franc and Jill Bear.
- **Society Notes is a quarterly publication. The next issue will be February 2016.**

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Society Notes contributors and helpers: Alan Giles, Joan Giles, Deirdre Nicol, Ken McLachlan, Jill Wheeler.

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