

# History alive

Orange & District Historical Society newsletter

Spring 2016



## Inside Orange Regional Museum

**Plus:**

**Tribute to our  
volunteers**



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COVER IMAGE: Interior of new Orange  
Regional Museum revealed  
(see also Page 7)

This newsletter is designed to keep members and other interested people informed about the society's activities as well as matters of interest in the wider field.

If anyone would like to contribute to it they should contact editor Liz Edwards.

Our newsletter requires a considerable amount of money to produce each quarter with paper, printing and postage all adding to the cost.

Therefore, wherever possible, we email it to those members and others on our mailing list who have an email address.

However, if anyone with an email address would prefer also to receive a paper copy, they may do so simply by contacting the secretary.

Those who do not have access to email will continue to receive their copies by ordinary mail.

### Orange & District Historical Society

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**Patrons:** Russell Tym and Marie Hammond

**President:** Liz Edwards

**Vice-president:** Euan Greer

**Secretary:** Dave Sykes

**Treasurer:** Annette Neville

**Committee:** Phil Stevenson, John Glastonbury, Judy Agland, Jenny Maher, Ross Maroney

**Publicity officer/newsletter editor:**  
Liz Edwards

**Honorary historians:** Ross Maroney, Phil Stevenson, Julie Sykes & Elizabeth Griffin

**Membership fees (from January 2017):** Family \$45; individual \$30; single concession \$20; couple concession \$30. Contact secretary or treasurer. Please pay promptly.

#### Research inquiries:

The Research Officer, Orange & District Historical Society, P O Box 1626, Orange, NSW 2800

Please supply an A4, stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Cost: \$20 for the initial inquiry (plus additional charges for more extensive research).

Please provide your name, address, phone number and email address, details of your inquiry, any information you may already have, and the reason for your inquiry.

#### Bank:

Orange & District Historical Society, Orange Credit Union, BSB 802-129, A/c No 34252 (please include name and reason for payment). If you are transferring money from your account at Orange Credit Union, please add \$1 to our account number.

# A message from the president

**A**s I take on the role of president from Dave Sykes, I am very mindful of all those committee members and volunteers who have served the society since its inception in 1949, paving the way for our future success. We have been fortunate to have had such commitment to preserving the history of the Orange district.

Past members opened and ran a museum in two separate locations – the Cultural Centre in Sale Street and the former City Library building in McNamara Street – as well as running the day-to-day activities of the society, which was a huge undertaking. While the new Orange Regional Museum will be operated by Orange City Council, we hope to assist in any way we can.

Our focus has shifted in recent years from collecting historical items to being a repository of information, although we will always maintain our key collection of objects, documents and photographs relating to the Orange district.

To acknowledge the work the volunteers do for our society, we have devoted two pages of this newsletter (10-11) to listing their many and varied activities. They are truly a remarkable group of people who willingly give untold hours working on various projects.

Each committee – and each president – has a different approach, but their common aim over 67 years has been to ensure people are aware of Orange's rich history and to preserve it for future generations.

Our incoming committee comprises dedicated people who put much time and energy into their role. We especially welcome new committee member John Glas-tonbury, who brings with him a wealth of experience

and common sense as well as a particular interest in railway history.

Members will be aware that our society was among the early campaigners for the building of a museum in Orange. Now that construction is complete and the focus changes to the exhibitions and staffing, the society and affiliated groups are anxious to ensure the museum lives up to the expectations of the community. See the

article on page 7 of this newsletter for the latest news on the progress of the museum.

Finally, please make a note in your diary that our Christmas dinner will be held at 7pm in the Campdale Room at Duntryleague, on Friday 2 December (drinks on the terrace from 6pm). We hope to see you there to celebrate another successful year for our society. As well, on Wednesday 21 December, there will be drinks and nibbles from 5.30pm at the cottage on our last working day for the year.

- Liz Edwards



## Book tells fascinating story of State's railway hotels

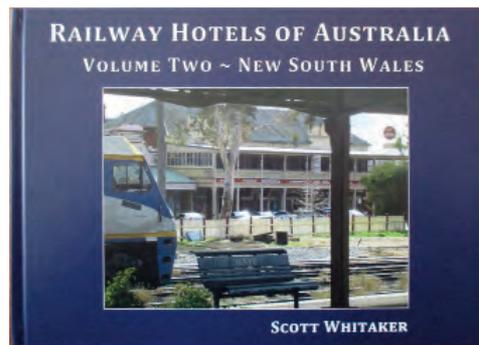
What started out as a 'nice little project' for his retirement, turned out to be a massive undertaking for railway enthusiast Scott Whitaker, culminating in his magnificent books on the railway hotels of Australia.

He recently launched the NSW volume, having completed three others on Victoria, Queensland, and a combined one on South Australia, the Northern Territory and Western Australia.

The volume on NSW contains an alphabetical list of close to 200 railway hotels, with details about their history and owners, copiously illustrated with historical and modern images.

The author has mined the rich resources of Trove, the National Library's wonderful on-line newspaper collection, with stories which add a fascinating insight into the history of the hotels and the people who ran them.

Three of Orange's hotels associated with the railways are listed: the Railway Hotel (now the Carrington Club)



on the corner of Byng and Peisley streets, the Railway Arms, on the corner of Moulder and McNamara streets (demolished in 1918), and the Railway Hotel, formerly the Terminus, in Peisley Street between Kite and Moulder streets (closed in 1980 and since then accommodating commercial premises).

Sadly, many railway hotels around the State are no longer in existence, while others have changed

their names, but their history lives on, thanks to Scott Whitaker's efforts.

The book is beautifully presented in hard cover and, a joy to this former sub-editor, with its inclusion of footnotes, acknowledgements and an index.

It retails for \$75 plus postage, which is a bargain considering the size of the book and the wealth of information contained therein. To order on-line go to [www.railwayhotelsaustralia.com.au](http://www.railwayhotelsaustralia.com.au)

- Liz Edwards

## Rich history of art and artists

The July History Alive meeting focused on the arts in Orange, with guest speakers former Orange Town Clerk and author of 'A Cultural Portrait of Orange' Bill Marshall and deputy director of Orange Regional Gallery Brenda Gray.

Brenda talked about the history of the Regional Gallery, which opened in 1986 and which has hosted many memorable exhibitions over three decades.

Acknowledgement was given to all those visionaries who supported the arts through the Festival of Arts and other initiatives.

Special mention was made of Janie Raffin, who had her own small art gallery above the shop she ran with her husband Peter as well as in her own home, and was a tireless

campaigner for the Regional Gallery.

Bill took the audience through his book, which lists the enormous contribution that art, music, theatre and a range of other cultural activities have had in enriching the Orange community over many years.

His talk stirred up memories among the audience of the many people who have contributed to the arts in Orange.

For details of the September History Alive meeting, see page 12.

The November meeting will revisit the Western Stores and Myer before its imminent closure early in the New Year.



Guest speakers former Orange Town Clerk and author of 'A Cultural Portrait of Orange' Bill Marshall and deputy director of Orange Regional Gallery Brenda Gray.



Long-term supporters of the arts in Orange Courtney Hawke with Lizzie Richards.



Bill McAulliffe and Bev Duncan.



Colina Huxtable and Barbara Glasson.

## Meet your new committee



Phil Stevenson  
Committee



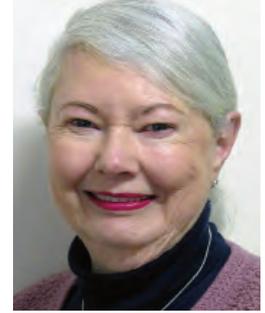
Dave Sykes  
Secretary



Liz Edwards  
President



Euan Greer  
Vice-president



Annette Neville  
Treasurer



Jenny Maher  
Committee



John Glastonbury  
Committee



Judy Agland  
Committee



Ross Maroney  
Committee

The society's annual general meeting, which was attended by 34 members, was held on Saturday 20 August in the West Room of the Orange Regional Gallery.

Patron Russell Tym conducted the election of office-bearers. New president is Liz Edwards, vice-president Euan Greer, secretary Dave Sykes, and treasurer Annette Neville. Committee members are John Glastonbury, Judy

Agland, Jenny Maher, Ross Maroney and Phil Stevenson.

Public officer is Ray Norman; publicity officer and newsletter editor is Liz Edwards. Honorary historians are Ross Maroney, Phil Stevenson, Elizabeth Griffin and Julie Sykes. Patrons are Marie Hammond and Russell Tym.

Draft minutes will be either mailed or emailed with this newsletter to all members.

## Coach, funds a major boost to Orange Regional Museum

In a boost for the Orange Regional Museum, the Cobb and Co stage-coach, donated by the Westpac Bank along with \$20,000, was officially handed over on 26 September by the Orange Regional Museum Fund to Orange City Council.

As well, the fund handed Councillor Russell Turner a cheque for \$110,000, representing money raised for the museum.

Among those who attended the event were Westpac's regional general manager Barry Ruddy, members of the fund, Councillors Reg Kidd and Chris Gryllis, council's community and cultural services director Scott Maunder, members of Orange & District Historical Society, and other supporters.

Cr Turner told the assembled group that council accepted the stage-coach 'with pride'. He thanked the fund for its work, saying communities relied on the efforts of groups such as the museum fund.

Russell Tym, who is a member of the fund, told those assembled that stage-coaches such as the one donated by Westpac travelled vast distances around the colony.

He said the journey from Orange to Forbes, leaving at 4am from the Cobb & Co depot on the corner of March and Hill streets (where the 1870 Restaurant is now) arrived in Forbes at 11pm, a 19-hour journey, which was an astonishing achievement in its day.



Above: Russell Tym of the Orange Regional Museum Fund hands over to Cr Russell Turner a cheque for \$110,000 for the museum, watched by Westpac Bank regional general manager Barry Ruddy and other members of the fund, with the stage-coach behind them.

# New storage for negative collection

By Elisabeth Edwards

Work on the CWD Negative Collection has entered a new era with the recent arrival of a shipment of acid-free envelopes and boxes.

The purchase was made possible through a \$3000 grant from Orange City Council, along with some of our own funds. We are grateful to Council for its assistance.

The new materials will allow the negatives to be stored in the best possible environment, ensuring their preservation long into the future.

Those negatives which are damaged will be scanned and then stored in special packaging in a freezer to prevent further deterioration.

Meanwhile, about 800 packets of the older large format negatives have been scanned, totalling 4000 individual negatives. Some 35mm negatives have also been scanned.

There is much more to do but we feel we have made a good start on digitising the collection.

A record of the digitised collection is kept on an Excel spreadsheet, giving full details of each negative, resulting in quick results when searching.

As the collection is so large, we are scanning individual negatives in response to requests from members of the public, as well as certain groups of negatives which are likely to be of historical interest in the future.

We are continually discovering historical gems among the collection. Recently we scanned all negatives relating to the Western Stores from 1955 to 1972, and are now working on a



Liz Edwards with some of the new acid-free archival materials for storing negatives.

complete set of negatives of the Orange Show and naturalisation ceremonies for the same period.

We are also developing a display of Western Stores photos in the City Centre before the closure of the Myer store.

Until recently we had been scanning negatives using a flat-bed scanner, but this proved very slow. With the acquisition of a suitable camera and macro lenses, plus the donation of a light-box from member Robert Bruce, we are now scanning using the camera, which is a much faster process.

## Photographic archives in danger

As digital technology advances, the future of newspapers is becoming more uncertain. Newspaper proprietors are shedding staff, many operations such as sub-editing – if it is done at all – have been moved off-shore, and newspapers are a shadow of themselves in both size and content.

While the larger newspapers retain specialist photographic staff, many regional papers have dispensed with photographers, and reporters now regularly take photos to accompany their articles.

Since the turn of the century newspapers have switched to digital technology, and while images are still retained, negative collections are often being off-loaded to historical societies or, worse, thrown away.

I recently conducted a quick survey of regional newspapers in NSW to see what the state of play is.

Several newspapers, including the Western Advocate (Bathurst), Champion Post (Parkes), Cowra Guardian and the Forbes Advocate, donated their collections to local family history groups, museums or historical societies. Some local groups have small, ageing memberships and are quite unable either to store their collections adequately or digitise them because of a lack of funding and trained volunteers.

The Barrier Daily Truth (Broken Hill) has only retained negatives from 1987; the older ones were thrown away. Worse, the Mudgee Guardian staff don't know what hap-

pened to their collection – when I inquired it was nowhere to be found.

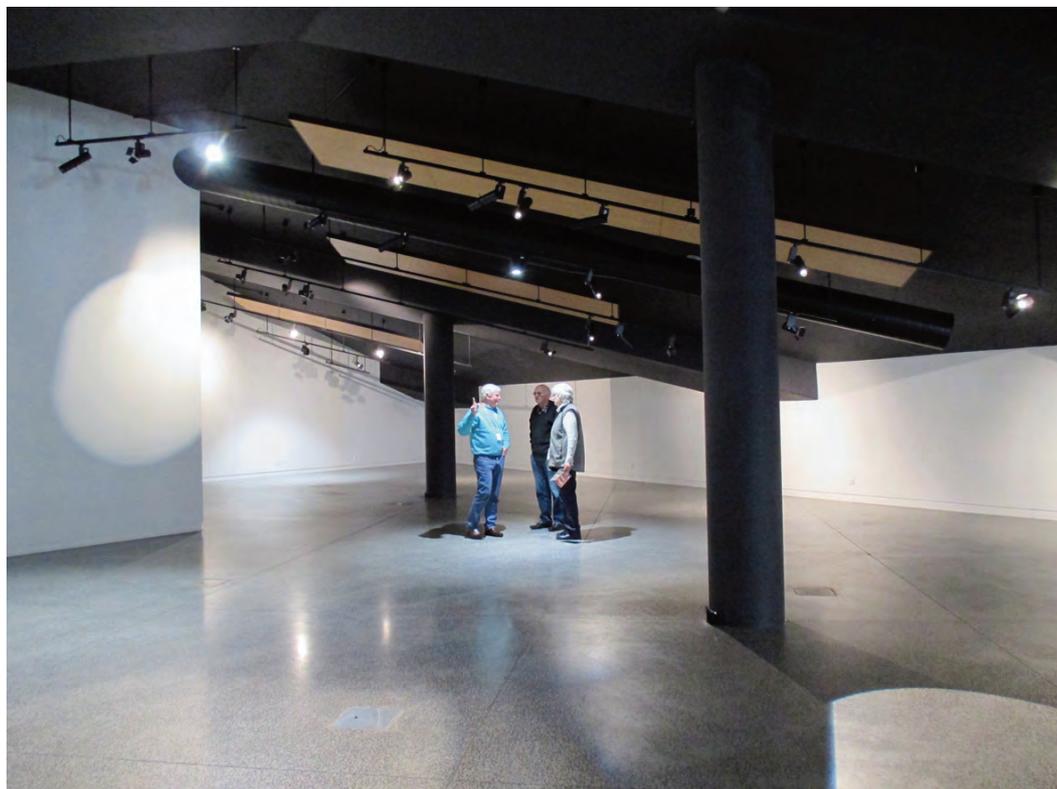
Charles Sturt University in Wagga holds the Wagga Daily Advertiser collection of negatives from 1965 to 2001 plus some older ones. However, virtually no digitisation has been done because of a lack of staff, scanners and funding.

The one outstanding example of newspaper staff taking a real interest in their negatives was at the Northern Daily Leader in Tamworth. The paper owns a huge collection of glass-plate negatives, dating back to the 1930s as well as more recent large-format images and 35mm negatives. Some have been donated to the local historical society but others have been scanned and used to illustrate historical articles in the paper. While there is much work to do on them, for the time being they are in safe hands.

Readers may be interested to know that Puke Ariki Museum in New Plymouth, New Zealand, whose staff provided advice to our society on digitisation and storage, has just completed digitising its Swainson Woods Collection of 250,000 negatives. It took them 11 years, \$NZ\$1.2 million in grants and the work of five staff members.

We are fortunate indeed in Orange to have the whole of the Central Western Daily's negative collection stored and managed by the society. It is a wonderful reflection of Orange's history over the past 60 years.

Right: The museum space looking from front to back during the recent open day.



## First glance inside Regional Museum

Orange residents saw for the first time the interior of the new Orange Regional Museum in mid-July when it was opened to the public.

The interior of the unusual building, with the Visitor Information Centre leading to the museum space, was then unfurnished but people could see the striking space reserved for the museum's exhibitions.

Since then the Visitor Information Centre has been opened and work on the initial exhibitions is taking place. The cafe is expected to open soon.

A date for the official opening is yet to be decided on as Orange City Council awaits notification on the availability of a Government minister to do the honours.

Meanwhile, two staff have been appointed – collections officer Alison Campbell from New Zealand, and education and public engagement officer Jessica Dowdell, who is originally from Queensland but has recently been working in the United Kingdom.

A director of the combined Regional Museum and Regional Gallery is yet to be appointed. Alison Russell is the museum manager and heritage co-ordinator.

Discussions are taking place about the future role of our society, ORMAA and the Orange Regional Museum Fund in the running of the museum.

Council has proposed that a friends or members' group be established for members of the public who would like to support the museum.

A volunteers' group would be a separate organisation whose members would assist in the museum and other activities such as events and fund-raising.

Meanwhile, Orange Regional Museum Fund will continue to raise funds for the museum.



The foyer looking towards the entrance to the building.



Civic Square comes alive during the recent open day.



Summer Street in the 1870s.

Photo courtesy Orange City Library.

## Portrait of Orange in 1878

*Orange was a small but thriving town 138 years ago as this edited article from the Sydney Mail of 28 September 1878, courtesy of Trove, reveals.*

Orange is generally regarded as one of the most thriving inland towns, and the district in which it is situated as one of the best for agricultural pursuits in NSW.

This is pre-eminently the land of wheat, potatoes, and English fruit, and it is likely to become a great emporium for these in years to come

One of the first things that strikes a visitor to Orange is the predominance of public-houses; and although for every drink there is a charge of sixpence, most of them appear to be doing a roaring trade. These houses, however, are well built, and are in general respectably conducted.

There are three flour mills, Messrs Dalton's, Hermann's, and Nelson Brothers, constantly at work; and several spacious and showy shops, where merchandise of all kinds are displayed to the best advantage.

Dalton's mill is a building three storeys high, replete with every form of improvement which science has shown to be necessary. The machinery is in splendid order, the engine-room being a model of neatness. Here are ground about 2000 bushels of wheat every week, fine samples of which I saw in the mill, the produce of the district. This is acknowledged to be the largest and most complete mill in the colony, out of Sydney.

At the carriage factory of Mr G M Robinson, Lords Place, including the yard-room, the works embrace an area of about half an acre. There are eight rooms, in which the various parts of the vehicles are shaped and fitted together; and it appears that no fewer than seven distinct branches of trade are concerned in turning out a first-class carriage in a finished state. At present there are twenty hands employed in the establishment. There are on the premises three forges, and also a steam-engine, to drive an apparatus for drilling, turning, and sawing the various kinds of materials used, the

majority of which are imported; in fact, there is here every appliance which science has shown to be necessary for the construction of vehicles that can stand the roughness of colonial roads.

Commencing business in Orange in 1868, since which time 1700 vehicles have been turned out, including 200 buggies of one class alone, Mr Robinson has become so popular as a carriage builder, that his name has now become, in the western district, a household word.

Mr Bowen has a very large boot factory, a little way out of town, where 500 pairs of boots and shoes are turned out every week. There are tanyards and all appliances for treating the raw hides, which come in at one side and pass out as boots and shoes at the other. Mr Bowen is a very enterprising man, and he has spent £15,000 on the factory and his private residence.

I went to see Mr Atkinson's steam biscuit and confectionery factory in Anson Street; I had often passed the shop under the impression that the attractive articles exhibited there had been imported from Sydney, but I was surprised to find that all of them were manufactured on the premises. Thirty-two different kinds of confectionery, and nineteen kinds of biscuits, are supplied to suit various tastes, and the quantity of the two made every week amounts to half a ton. They are of excellent quality and are sold as cheaply as they are in Sydney. I witnessed the process of manufacture in a room behind the shop, where steam machinery had been erected, together with many ingenious contrivances for converting the raw sugar and flour paste into the palatable articles which children so highly prize.

The maker of the attractive tins in Mr Atkinson's shop I found in the person of Mr Withers, a man who through possessing remarkable qualities of mind, has won his way from very small beginnings. His premises, though insignificant in front, present a busy scene behind, where several working men are engaged in the manufacture of every kind of tinware, with the aid of machinery.

# Ensuring iconic store is remembered



Left: Pulley wheel used to winch goods into the upper floor of the store from Post Office Lane



Right: Decorative marble-effect pillar.



Below left: Patterned ceiling.

Bottom left: The cellar.



Below right: spiral staircase leading from the ground floor to the cellar.



As the Myer store in Orange enters its last phase before closing in late January, our society is working to ensure its history is not lost.

Members Euan Greer, Phil Stevenson and Liz Edwards met Orange City Centre management recently to discuss how best to mark the store's history and share its story with the public.

It was agreed that a photographic exhibition, either in the windows of the store or in the City Centre would be of great interest to past and present employees as well as the public.

Liz Edwards has been scanning negatives from the CWD Negative Collection and there will be plenty of images to stir people's memories.

As well, some of our volunteers will be doing oral histories of past and present employees to ensure their memories of working at the store are recorded

for posterity.

Euan Greer wrote a submission to Orange City Council about the importance of the store to the Orange district over more than 160 years, emphasising that the developers of the site should ensure that certain features are preserved.

These include some features which are of great historical significance although they are not seen by the public, such as a metal pulley wheel, decorative marble-effect columns, and a cast-iron spiral staircase.

The society will also host a History Alive meeting on Wednesday 9 November which will focus on the store and its long history. We hope to see many current and former staff members at the meeting.

If you would like to assist with oral histories, lend us photographs to be scanned or let us know about memories of the store, please contact Liz Edwards.

# Our volunteers work on a variety of



John Kich, who is assisting in scanning documents, Narelle Campbell who is currently working on the Campbell family's photo collection, and Sally Watson, who is naming digitised index cards.



Treasurer and office manager Annette Neville with committee member and honorary historian Ross Maroney and visitor Jim Coffee.



Bill Showell, John Smith, John Glastonbury and Phil Stevenson work on identifying photographs from the Electrolux Collection.

Our society is very fortunate in having so many active volunteers to assist in its work of preserving Orange's rich history. There is no shortage of work to be done, especially in collection management.

The cottage became so crowded on our traditional Wednesday working days that committee member Phil Stevenson took the initiative to organise further working days on Mondays and Fridays.

The Monday group, which includes Judy Chapman, Julie Sykes, Jenny Maher, Karen Kloosterman and Sally Watson, with Phil supervising, keeps busy working on accessioning and recording the collection.

On Wednesdays, treasurer Annette Neville keeps the accounts up-to-date as well as running the office; Ross Maroney is there to assist with inquiries from the public as well as continually updating his vast database of information on local families and places; Liz Edwards keeps busy photographing negatives from the CWD Collection and continues this work at home using Photoshop; Narelle Campbell is currently working on the Campbell family's photo collection; Rosemary Curry is sorting out the society's library; Sally Watson and Judy Agland work on cropping and naming digitised index cards; Euan Greer works on railway history as well as the history of the Dalton family; Tony Bouffler is transcribing the letters of James Dalton Junior; Jenny Maher is working on the society's photographic collection; Phil Stevenson is there to deal with technical matters as well as assisting with inquiries from the public. Secretary Dave Sykes deals with the mail and other secretarial duties while continuing his regular employment.

**\* Continued next page**

# research and cataloguing projects

## \* From previous page

John Kich has been helping with scanning and enhancing documents of historical importance.

On Fridays it is an all-male day, with Phil Stevenson overseeing a group comprising Bob Showell, John Smith, John Glastonbury and Steve Brakenrige, who are in the process of identifying photographs from the vast Electrolux collection.

Bob Showell spent 41 years at the factory, starting as an apprentice and ending up as tool room supervisor.

Steve Brakenridge, who also began his career as an apprentice, became a long-serving and valued member of the management team.

While Orange born John Smith did not work at the factory, he brings to the group unrivalled knowledge of local people in helping to identify those in the photos.

Relative newcomer to Orange John Glastonbury ably assists the team.

Phil is also working with Mark Dombrowski, who has a special interest in film and video, on identifying local content in 16mm films acquired by the society.

Some volunteers don't work at the cottage: Elaine Kaldy, Keiren McLeonard and Michael Le Coureur are interviewing people for an oral history of the Western Stores and Myer, Kiki Hopcraft Photoshops images from the CWD Negative Collection, and Margot Sharp is working on a history of people and property to the east of Orange.

Member Robert Bruce has been assisting with photographic matters. He recently donated a light-table to the society, which has proved most useful in the scanning process, and he has also enhanced some photographs from the CWD Negative Collection which will be on display in the Orange Regional Museum.

If anyone would like to join our team of volunteers, they can contact Phil Stevenson or Liz Edwards.



Phil Stevenson and Mark Dombrowski, who are identifying local content in 16mm films acquired by the society.



Above: Jenny Maher and Sally Watson cataloguing the society's book collection.



Right: Liz Edwards photographing negatives from the CWD Collection using a camera and light box.

# Diary October - December 2016

**Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays:** Work days at Heritage Cottage 10am-4pm. Work includes cataloguing, answering visitor inquiries, administration and research. If you would like to volunteer, please contact co-ordinator Phil Stevenson.

**Millthorpe Golden Memories Museum:** open on weekends, public holidays and school holidays 10am-4pm.

**Molong Museum:** Open on the last Sunday of the month 12.30-3.30pm, 20 Riddell Street.

**Molong and District Servicemen and Service women's Portrait Gallery:** This can be viewed whenever the Molong RSL Club is open (phone 6366-8105 for details).

**Wentworth Mine:** open Saturday and Sunday on the first weekend of month 10am-2.30pm.

**Wednesday 5 October:** ODHS committee meeting at the cottage.

**Wednesday 2 November:** ODHS committee meeting at

the cottage.

**Wednesday 9 November:** History Alive meeting at Senior Citizens Centre, 6.30 for 7pm. Subject is the Western Stores and Myer.

**Friday 2 December:** Christmas dinner for members and their relations/friends in the Campdale Room at Duntryleague. Drinks on the terrace at 6pm, followed by dinner at 7pm. There will be a choice of three mains and three desserts for \$35 per head. Bookings essential; contact Phil Stevenson on 0402 412 188 or Liz Edwards on 6362 8647.

**Wednesday 7 December:** ODHS committee meeting at the cottage.

**Wednesday 21 December:** Christmas drinks for members at the cottage from 5.30pm. Please bring a plate.

There will be a break from volunteer activities at the cottage from Christmas until the beginning of February to allow us all to recharge our batteries.

## Challenges aplenty for early government stock-keepers

A small but enthusiastic audience listened to guest speaker Russell Moor on Wednesday 14 September when he talked about the early government stock-keepers.

Among the earliest white people to live and work in Central West NSW were the men who lived a lonely existence managing government stock breeding stations.

Their job was to operate the stock establishments for the provisioning of convicts and their military keepers.

It was an unenviable task which entailed not only the physical work of managing stock but also the onerous documentation required by the Colonial Secretary in Sydney and the British Government in the United Kingdom.

Stock-keepers also had to ensure the fencers and other workers were regularly supplied with rations of flour, meat and tobacco, involving long journeys between their work and the supplier.

Russell's talk included information about the first government stock-keeper Rowland Hassall (appointed in 1814) and John Maxwell, who served between 1823 and 1831.

Maxwell's trials and tribulations are documented in his letter book, which was found in a stable loft at Narroogal, a property owned by the descendants of John Smith. They were compiled by Bertha MacSmith and Brian Lloyd.

Maxwell was responsible for every aspect of life at the Government stock station at a time when messages might take days or even weeks to be delivered and received. He dealt with convict workers, landholders, stock losses, fire and bushrangers, all the while keeping his masters in Sydney fully informed.



Above: Guest speaker Russell Moor (centre) with Alison and Peter Colla.



Left: Greg and Margaret Hahn from Carcoar.



Left: Karen Kloosterman and Dinah Hayter.