Newsletter of the Molong Historical Society Inc.

MOLONG MUSEUM
History matters.

VOLUME 4
ISSUE 10
WINTER 2026

Points of Interest:

Museum, 22 Riddell Street,
(Cnr Gidley St) Molong
Phone Contact 0400425015
contact email—molonghs@gmail.com
Postal Address P.O Box 179 MOLONG NSW 2866
Website **www.molonghistoricalsociety.com**

WHERE CAN THIS BE FOUND?

SEE PAGE 3 FOR MORE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2025/26

President	Bob Sullivan	(0427696256)
Vice President	Cameron Wild	(Maintenance/Displays)
Secretary/Membership	Jan McIntyre	(0402030270)
Treasurer	Susan Grinpukel	(Cataloging/Accessions)
Committee	Julie Lawrie	(Exhibitions)
	John Lawrie	(Odd Jobs)
	Doug Watson	(Equipment Officer)
	Sue Milne	(Editor/Fairbridge)
	Kim Frazer	(Cataloging/Accessions)
	Di Whiting	(Cataloging/Displays)

Historian— Catherine Mackenzie

PATRONS Jean Bennett, Marie and John Hammond.

MEMBERSHIP

Fees are $25.00 (per year)

MEMBERSHIP YEAR is from July to June.

Fees can be paid by direct debit, mail or in person

Bank Details
BSB 062-573 28007189
FOR MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES
Contact
Jan 0402030270
EMAIL molonghs@gmail.com

RESEARCH ENQUIRIES

Enquiries to the Society should be emailed to :-

molonghs@gmail.com
www.molonghistoricalsociety.com

Please include
Your Name, contact number
Your Email
Reason for enquiry
(family research, writing book etc)
Relevant information
Fees on Request

DISCLAIMER The MOLONG HISTORICAL SOCIETY accepts no responsibility for the authenticy and accuracy of any contributed article in this newsletter.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR 2026

	DATE & TIME	INFORMATION
MUSEUM OPEN DAYS	Every Weekend from 10 am until 2pm and most Public Holidays	All welcome to visit and view the museum. Limited research available.
MUSEUM OPEN with WORKING DAY	Every Thursday 10am until 2pm.	Members will be working on various projects. Open to visitors to view museum displays.
ANNUAL FEES DUE	1st July each year	Payment accepted in cash or card at museum and direct debit.
COMMITTEE MEETING	Held each month as required	Please let Jan know if you have anything for the agenda.
Visit by CUMNOCK CWA Group	Friday 26 June	Visit will include tour and light lunch
OPENING OF LOCK UP	SUNDAY July 26TH 11AM	See article next page
Annual MOLONG SHOW	Saturday 5th September	Please let Sue know if you can assist or have any ideas
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING	Saturday12th September (to be confirmed)	
AUSTRALIAN GARDEN HISTORY SOCIETY Conference Regional tour	Monday 28th September (Assistance needed on the day)	150 visitors expected. Please contact Julie if you can help.
CUMNOCK FAMILY DAY	Saturday 17th October 10 till 3	Cumnock Memorial Oval

MEMBERSHIPS DUE

Fees for 2026/27 remain at $25.00 per year are due in July. A reminder will be sent out in June. Fees may be paid by cash or direct debit after the 1st of July.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM will be held on Saturday 12th September 2026 (TBC) at the Museum. All members are welcome to attend.

"IT IS YOUR SOCIETY" and we welcome your participation.

OFFICIAL OPENING OF "THE LOCK-UP"

The official opening of the LOCK-UP will be held on Sunday 26th July at the Museum. This will occur at 11am.

A Sausage Sizzle will be held and the museum will be open

Please RSVP by Friday 10 July to molonghs@gmail.com or Secretary Jan 0402030270

VINTAGE CARS VISIT MOLONG

The Central Tablelands Historic Car Club held a weekend rally with more than 100 pre-1931 vehicles taking part. The bi-annual event was created specifically for pre-1931 vehicles and attracted historic vehicle enthusiasts from Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, the ACT, and all over NSW. On Saturday, the group travelled out to Molong for lunch, with the vehicles attracting quite a bit of interest in Bank Street.

A small number of participants took the time to visit the museum. Some of our members were able to view the cars parked in Bank Street including John Hammond, seen here on his gopher. (photo contributed by Michael Carroll)

Garden Expo Event at Boree Nyrang on 29th March, 2026

This major fundraiser for the museum proved to be a wonderful success with hundreds of people attending.

Our 'spruiker' Scott kept everyone up to date of the various offerings throughout the day which included:

Stalls offering plants and other goodies for sale;

Garden related presentations that were very well patronised and appreciated;

Delicious home-made morning and afternoon teas; and the ever-popular BBQ;

Tours of the Boree Nyrang Homestead were extremely popular;

Or merely sitting around tables on the lawn, enjoying the relaxed atmosphere and perfect weather, whilst listening to Live Music played by Annie and Graham;

And not to forget the Monster Raffle, with the first two major prizes going to Molong locals.

REMEMBERING RUTH

It was sad to hear that another Foundation member of the Society passed away at Prunus Lodge on 7th May 2026.

Ruth Agnes Bloomfield, aged 96, born in Molong and lived on the family property "KIRKBEAN' until moving into Molong in the 1960's where she lived until moving to Prunus Lodge recently. Ruth was a member of the BLOOMFIELD family who came to Molong district in 1836 and are well known in farming, social and local sectors.

Ruth was the second child born to Cyril (Jim) and Florence (Bloomfield) Bloomfield, a sister to Warren, on the 12th of January 1930. Her early life was spent on the family property "Kirkbean", and she attended Bridgewater School. Ruth stayed on the property assisting with the farm work. Ruth and Warren were the only family members with a driver's license and quickly became the main driver. In the 1960 the family moved into Molong and purchased a home in Edward St, where she lived until 2024. Ruth was able to get a job and was more involved in many community groups. For 10 years, Ruth delivered mail on the Euchareena/Larras Lee run. Ruth assisted her cousin Norm publishing the "Molong Express" each week. Ruth and her parents attended the horse races every Saturday and travelled to Orange, Parkes and Wellington for local meetings. Ruth enjoyed travelling and rarely missed the New Year cricket test and the NSW Tennis Open.

She was involved in several community organizations, helping throughout her life. She was a Life Member of the Annual Sheep dogs' trials for 50 years (missing only one year) usually would be found in the canteen.

Ruth was Life member of the Show Society and could be found in the Main Pavilion stewarding in several sections. The Molong Show was a highlight on Ruth's calendar, and she would have entries in the garden, photography and cooking sections.

Ruth (middle row third) and members of her family attended the early meetings of the Historical Society and were 1965 foundation members. Ruth was awarded Life Membership in 2012 for her years of service to the group. Ruth would be seen in the kitchen assisting and in the general running of the museum. Ruth was very quiet, but she enjoyed passing on stories of her life in Molong. She remained active until COVID hit, when she found it difficult to get out. Ruth always looked forward to receiving her copy of our newsletter and catching up with members.

Ruth was an avid gardener and had a stunning garden. She spent hours in her yard and reaped the benefits of her extensive vegetable garden. She often attended trips with the Molong Garden Club. She was a dedicated member of the Anglican Church and was often found preparing the church for services and special events. She was talented at flower arranging and would make the arrangement spectacular regardless of what flowers were available.

REFERENCES

Obituary provided by family
Molong Express (TROVE Research)
Molong Historical Society records
Member's memories

MUSEUM HAPPENINGS

Museum visit by Cumnock Activity Group

Twenty two members of the Cumnock Activity Group visited the Museum on Saturday 11th April. The Activity Group is made up of members from Cumnock and surrounds and meet bi-monthly, visiting places of interest around the Central West and sometimes beyond.

This months activity was a walk around Molong looking at sites of historic interest and culminated with a visit to the Museum. Surprisingly some of the group had never visited. Everyone was very impressed with the various displays and items on exhibition.

Some members of the group have relatives who were pioneers in the district and were fascinated to see some items relevant to their ancestors.

Jan McIntyre led the tour through the museum while Cameron spoke to the group about some of the outside items including the nearly completed lock-up.

While staying with their grandparents, these girls from Melbourne enjoyed a visit to the museum. They spent time testing their skills on the pianola and testing phones and typewriters of their grandparents day.

During the school holidays this family took the opportunity to visit their local museum. The girls were interested in the photos and objects on display.

Four French brothers stopped into the museum to check out their family who lived in Molong during the late 1880's. The brothers, who are scattered throughout Australia rarely get together, were enjoying a road trip.

HELP WITH RESEARCH

Recently we had an enquiry trying to find out the origins of a street name. We were unable to assist at the time, so I am putting it out to our readers.

BUNDELLA CLOSE a small street located near the Mitchell Highway, close to the Ambulance Station.

The enquirers believe it may mean "two creeks" but I have been unable to prove this.
Our researcher believes it may be connected to a business that was set up at the end of the street in an old corn paddock, facing Riddell Street.
There is a village near Tamworth with that name (? any connection)
(From Wiki. Surname associated with BUNDELLA clan of India.)

UPDATE ON FAIRBRIDGE COTTAGE RESEARCH

In 2017, the Old Fairbridgians Association were asking: What has happened to the cottages that had been removed from the farm after it closed in the 1970's
There were originally fifteen cottages built in the village, with eight remaining on site (Molong cottage burnt down in 2022). Seven cottages were sold and moved to other locations. Mike Walker (Western Australia old Fairbridgian) during a visit in 2016 was able to locate the following, current use in brackets)

LILAC	In Molong
CANARY	In Garra (Burgess family)
BROWN	In Garra (Burgess Family)
GOWRIE	Near Yeoval (on Wellington Road)
RED	Main Street Cumnock (now a BNB)
CANNONBAR	Springwood (not correct see below)
ROSE	Unknown possibly near Queensland
CHAPEL	YEOVAL very forlorn (possibly not correct)

Recent research and correspondence to the Historical Society has added this information.
The CHAPEL, the materials from the Chapel were used to line the "Willow Park" Shearing Shed near Cumnock owned by the McKenzie family (newsletter Vol2 no7 2018)

ROSE COTTAGE It is believed there is a cottage in Dubbo, which has been renovated and transferred from Fairbridge. Is this ROSE COTTAGE? I am waiting on a reply (see Autumn 2026 newsletter)

CANNONBAR COTTAGE Purchased by the Warren Family and moved to their property "High Pael" at Isabella near Oberon. They sold the property in 1987 to the NSW Forestry Commission, except for the small house block. The house block of sixty acres was bought by Ken & Shirley Stapleton. There will be more about this cottage in a later newsletter.
We would like to hear from anyone with further information.

MOLONG IN THE 70's

A GLANCE THROUGH OLD FILES

A selection of articles found in a 1903 Express

From Molong Express Saturday MAY 23, 1903,

July 18th 1879, At 2am on Wednesday 9th July instant, Mr H.V Leathem, founder and editor of the EXPRESS, passed away after a brief illness from acute bronchitis, aged 36 years. The deceased had caught a chill at the opening of the new Bowan Park School, and although every effort was made to ward off the inevitable by Drs Ross and Warren (Orange), their skill and attention was without avail and the patient passed quietly and peacefully at the hour stated.
Despite the bitterly cold rain the next day an immense cortege followed the remains to their last resting place in the Molong Cemetery, representive men attending from all parts of the electorate. The cortege was led by the members of the local Oddfellows Lodge of which the deceased was a member. The coffin was covered with a profession of wreaths and floral tributes, and profound regret was expressed on every band at the untimely demise of one who had done so much for Molong and district in the few brief years of his residence here.

The deceased was a son of Mr J.E. Leathem of the Sydney Morning Herald and learned his trade under the late Sir Henry Parkes when the latter was proprietor of the "Empire". He, with a few other compositors stuck to Sir Henry-then plain Mr Parkes- when the latter's employees struck in a body and helped him to fetch out the "Empire" in the face of almost insurmountable difficulties. It was with anxiety, coupled with long hours he worked, during the strike that undermined deceased's constitution and left him an easy prey to the illness which ultimately laid him low. He conducted the "Gundagai Times" for over 12 years and only resigned his position there to start the MOLONG EXPRESS.

At a special meeting of Council last week, a vote of condolences was passed to the widow and family of the late editor of the EXPRESS.

VOLUNTEERS UPSKILLING WORKSHOPS

During this year several of or members have attended workshops to increase their knowledge.

COLLECTION WORKSHOP

An essential part of any museum is the conservation of the collection. To this end Jan, Lyndall & Susan participated in a "Collection Care & Basic Paper Conservation Workshop for Regional Museums". It was a 6 hour workshop offered by Create NSW and The Regional Sustainability Program and was well supported by representation from at least 6 regional museums. The workshop provided us with procedures and systems on how to conserve the paper portion of our collection, and included an emphasis on preventative damage measures. We also found the practical aspect of the workshop particularly helpful.

RAHS REGIONAL SEMINAR

Julie, Kim & John attended a RAHS Regional Seminar in Cowra recently. The programme included presentations "Using the Old Register for historical research and Land Records going back to 1791.Other presentations were Apprentice records,WW1 Soldiers Settlement Records, State Archives and NSW Railway staff. Speakers include Carol Liston & Christine Yates from the RAHS.

From Molong Express Saturday JUNE 6th, 1903, issue
TO THE EDITOR OF THE MOLONG EXPRESS

SIR-In reading your very interesting column of reminiscences of Molong in the 70's I may I have frequently reminded of many incidents of the past-some of which have almost been forgotten, while others as fresh in our memories as if they happened yesterday. Verily, time flies (or, as the Latin has its *Tempus Fugit*) and is an old man before he has time to realize that he is a young one.

Many of the incidents and happenings which you have resurrected from the almost forgotten limbo of the past are worth dilating upon, if only space permitted, and, although many of the actors in these stirring scenes of long ago have now passed away. I am pleased to say that there are among us some of the old timers who as hale and hearty as ever. Particularly does this refer to my old friend Mr William Tanner who, in the days to which you refer, was in a large way of business in Moong, a first-class townsman (there was none better) a though sportsman and a most genial spirit. He it was built and owned premises known a "Neilson's Glasgow Stores" and he it was who contested the several trotting matches to which you refer in the last EXPRESS. Mr Tanner and I had, I think of these contests as well as a few racing matches. Each of us owned a trotter and that the latter were a cut above the ordinary may be gauged from fact that both could do even time (three minutes) on the racecourse mile track) In saddle, 10st up. We had four matches to decide who premiership, and each of us had won two. Mr. Tanner, however, would have it that" his mare was the better horse" and so after all the excitement, sport etc which we already had he issued a challenge to a final contest, course from Bothorem Farm (Blakefield's) to the Freemason's Hotel for a tanner aside, owners up. The event duly came off, the writer's pony (Murphy) being returned a winner after a close race in a very fast time.

However, Mr Editor, my chief reason in referring to these trotting matches is with a view of finding out if others are likely to come off shortly. Some may be on the cards, and if so I may say as either Mr Tanner nor myself are engaged at present we might accept a mount, though I would certainly give the preference to my friend Mr Tanner.

Yours etc
JOHN WYNNE
Copper Hill

William (Bill) Oates OAM

"William Oates of Armidale has received the OAM for service to history preservation, recognised for more than two decades of work protecting the documentary and heritage record of the New England region."

Bill is the son of Vic & Lorraine Oates and Julie's brother. He was born and raised in Molong & Orange before moving to Armidale. Bill Oates served for more than 17 years as director of the Heritage Centre at the University of New England Regional Archives.

He continues as an adjunct senior lecturer in the UNE School of Humanities, Archaeology and Social Sciences, and serves as a records officer for the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development.

Bill regularly visits this area and has held workshops for the Orange Regional Museum Network as well as offering us advice and assistance.

Congratulations Bill, well earned.

BOOKS FOR SALE (Reviewed February 2025)

AILEEN ROBERSON

A HISTORY OF THE MOLONG CATHOLIC CHURCH	$20.00
ALLAN TOM Picture Show Man	$20.00
PADDY McARDLE	$20.00
THE SHEEN TEAM (Max &Nita)	$15.00
VILLA ASH	$5.00

ROBERT ELLIS

SESQUICENTIENNAL HISTORY OF MOLONG SHOW	$35.00
PIPER & YURANGH	$25.00
HOW THE WEST WAS WON	$25.00
HISTORY OF THE SHEEPDOG	$25.00

DAVID RUTHERFORD

LIFE & TIMES OF JOHN SMITH	$30.00

KATE GADSBY

CONVICTS, CAPITALISTS & CORRUPTION	$40.00

HELEN HAYNES

MOLONG RSL PORTRAIT GUIDE	$15.00
ORANGE 1901	$8.00

DIANNE WOOLBANK

WOOLBANK MEMOIRS	$10.00

ORANGE ROTARY CLUB

BANJO PATERSON & NARRAMBLA	$3.00
$15.00	

GREG RAFFIN

EVERY CLOUD HAS A SILVER LINING	$20.00

BERTHA MacSMITH

LETTERS OF JOHN MAXWELL	$20.00

TINA McGEOGH

BOREE CABONNE	$10.00

ANNE MARIE INGHAM

THE BOSS DROVER	$35.00

PLEASE ADD POSTAGE $10 TO $15 depending on book size.

More puzzles from our collection

Can you assist with identifying these photographs please

Nothing known about this couple

A Tilbrook photo taken 1905 & 1930. Family names needed

This photo donated by Viv Sharpless. Names wanted