

Hello members,

January/February 2018

Our first bulletin comes to you after a very busy start to the year. Resuming operations in early January following the holiday break we plunged headlong into preparations for the grand HeritageWorks Jumble Sale which was held on Saturday 13 January. In hindsight, we could have called it a "Monster Sale". As can be seen in the photos taken during the preparations for sale day, there was a diversity of goods on offer.

We extend a huge thank you to all members of both W&DHS and the Family History Group who responded magnificently to our appeal to donate items for the sale, and all those who came along on the day to pick over the offerings. Though the weather was not ideal, the bargains were plentiful. There were many tired and exhausted workers by the 2pm closing time but we were all pleased with the money raised, which will assist with keeping HeritageWorks open to the public five days per week, our lights on, our heaters warming us over winter and our research fees low.



Last year our committee made a decision to recognize the years of dedicated service to the Society by Les O'Callaghan. Members and invited guests will soon receive an invitation to an opening of our new exhibition and to the unveiling of a plaque which will denote the newly named *Les O'Callaghan History House*. Les, a prominent member of W&DHS from the early 1970s until his death in 2014, was president for over 30 years and took on many other committee roles, including that of newsletter editor. Les wrote, walked, talked, toured, worked and breathed history of the local area and to many his name was synonymous with History House, so we feel it is fitting to name it in his honour.

Last week we hosted a visit from members of the Sunshine Historical Society who came by train to Warrnambool for the day. They enjoyed a guided tour of HeritageWorks and viewed the current display in History House, which is an exhibition of items relating to the lives of women in the local area in the late C19th and early C20th.

On Sunday 18 February members of the Bonnett and Levy families came to HeritageWorks to view items and files in the collection of W&DHS and also to talk to the Family History Group, as part of their family reunion weekend. Although the advertised opening hours of HeritageWorks are Monday to Friday, members are reminded that we do also open by appointment at weekends. We realise that sometimes people make weekend trips to Warrnambool, so we can usually accommodate special requests for a visit, if given sufficient warning, by phone or by email.



Special offer **A TOAST TO MELBA – Lighthouse Theatre March 22-24**

A mere 91 years to the day since Dame Nellie Melba last performed at the Warrnambool Town Hall during one of her many farewells, the Warrnambool Theatre Group is presenting the Jack Hibberd play, *A Toast To Melba*. The Historical Society has been invited to participate in this season of four performances. We will be mounting a foyer display of original artefacts from our collection which relate to Melba's 1927 visit to Warrnambool. The play, written in 1976 encompasses the life of the diva from childhood in Melbourne to her death in Egypt and includes both live and recorded music.

The Historical Society is offering a group discount on seats to anyone who wishes to attend any of the four performances: 22, 23 & 24 March. There are two shows on Saturday 24 March. Ticket price is \$32, but for 10 or more people the price will be \$27. If you would like to be part of a W&DHS group purchase of tickets, please contact Janet at HeritageWorks (by phone or email). Please note that you can select any of the four performances to be eligible for the discount, as long as our group comprises 10+ overall.

We receive many routine requests and enquiries at HeritageWorks but occasionally things can take a strange turn. The object pictured at right was brought in recently by a couple who said that it had been found by a member of their family who had been fishing in a local river and caught a fish. While cleaning the fish this flat, badly corroded object was discovered in its gut. Closer examination revealed the words "City of Warrnambool" and "CAT" on the disk. A visit to WCC confirmed that it was in fact a metal cat registration disk, the type which is designed to be a permanent attachment to a collar. The disk was then brought to us for further examination, whereupon we applied our magnifying glass and several pairs of eyes and came up with a registration number. Unfortunately there was no hope of any DNA evidence! We sent the couple back to the WCC and are awaiting new developments in this mystery. Historical enquiry involves drawing conclusions from available evidence. Perhaps we can conclude that global warming is causing a reversal in the food chain. Anglers beware. You could be next!



Our Pioneer Board restoration and publication project is still underway. We are nearing our targets and hope to see the board go off to Melbourne for the conservation work in the next couple of months. Listeners to ABC South West Victoria might hear us on air soon, as we recently began recording some talks about some of the pioneers on the board. It is not too late to contribute to our appeal, so please consider adopting a pioneer, perhaps one you hear about on the radio.

Coming up soon – for your calendar

22, 23 & 24 May	A Toast to Melba	Lighthouse Theatre
Mid April (TBA)	Silent Lives exhibition launch	Les O'Callaghan House
21-22 April	WVAHS Annual General Meeting	Port Fairy
19 May	Family History Group seminar	Hammond Centre.

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Committee: Marita Murphy (Vice President). Barbara McLeod (Treasurer) Mandy King, Joanne Laity, Glenys Phillpot, Pat Varley and Eric van der Wal.

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