

Hello members,

April 2018

It was good to catch up with some new members and also some longer term faithful supporters and invited guests last Tuesday 24 April at the opening of our current exhibition, *Silent Lives*. History House was bathed in sunshine for the late afternoon opening, which also served as an opportunity to recognize the significant contributions of two life members who passed away in recent years, following long and dedicated service to our society. Our guest speaker, former Warrnambool Standard journalist David Towler spoke of his association with both Les O'Callaghan and Reg Smith through his stewardship of the Camera Remembers column which was a feature of the Saturday Standard from the early 1990s to 2016.



Flying the flags at History House for opening, 24 April.



Some of the O'Callaghan family members who attended the event.

If you missed the opening of our new display, there is still plenty of time to come for a look, as it will be open during the usual HeritageWorks opening hours right through the month long National Trust Heritage festival and beyond. If History House front door is locked, please enquire next door at HeritageWorks, as opening hours are reliant on availability of volunteers.

On the weekend of 21 & 22 April four WDHS committee members attended the annual general meeting of the Western Victorian Association of Historical Societies, which was hosted by Port Fairy HS this year. This group meets twice a year and provides opportunities for the interchange of ideas and information between groups with an interest in history. The meeting was well attended by groups across the region, from Swan Hill to Portland and apart from a forum to discuss common interests and problems, provides an opportunity for historical artefacts to be appropriately repatriated. Warrnambool HS took to the meeting some Colac soft drink bottles which had found their way into our collection some years ago, and came home with some maps and posters of Warrnambool land sales from the 1930s. During the meeting, delegates to the meeting attended the annual dinner, where guest speaker Roger Haldane relived his early years on Griffiths Island and also gave a lively account of his role in the introduction of alpacas to Australia. Street walks and a museum visit were also part of the weekend activities in Port Fairy.

Sixty year 1/2 students from St Pius X Primary school came by during their local history tour of the town on 24 April. They visited the War Memorial, then were joined by historical society president for their stops at the railway station and Breakwater. The students asked interesting questions and showed some good understanding of the importance of these local landmarks.

From our collection – TOMMY CORRIGAN

May Race week seems the appropriate time to feature this small cast metal bust of champion jockey, Irish born Tommy Corrigan, whose family settled in Woodford in 1864. Young Tommy made a sudden decision to begin his racing career when he arrived at a Woodford race meeting in 1865 on his mare Juliet, to find that there was a hack steeplechase event on the card that day. He went home with the prize, a new saddle, and thus began a career which spanned thirty years. Of his 239 wins a large percentage were over hurdles. He rode in Warrnambool's first Grand Annual Steeplechase on July 1, 1872 but was unplaced. He subsequently rode the winners Postboy 1875, Aeneas 1876, Left Bower 1879 and Aslanbegoff in 1882. Most published accounts of Tommy's life mention the length of his funeral cortege (4.8 km) which followed his death after a race fall at Caulfield in 1894.



PIONEER BOARD project update

We're counting down the days until our Pioneer Board makes its big trip to Melbourne for the long planned restoration work to begin. We have been notified by the specialist art movers that they will be collecting the board in May for transportation to the Grimwade Centre for the Conservation of Cultural Materials. Donations to assist with this work and with the publication of a book containing the biographies of the 204 men on the board and of its creators are still being sought. Please contact us if you are interested in adopting a pioneer. Every contribution brings us a step closer to achieving our goals.

RECENT ACQUISITIONS have included some maps, aerial photos, letter books, ledgers, text books, office requisites and documents from the business of the late Michael Hand, land surveyor. The office at 45 Banyan St contained documents dating back several generations. As well as Michael and his father Vivian who preceded him in the business, the Hand family collection contains documents from three generations of the Crawley family, shire engineers whose work also included surveying. Some of the documents recently donated by the Hand family date back to the 1890s.



Page of J Wm Crawley's letterbook showing field drawings for a subdivision, c. 1907

COMING UP IN MAY – FAMILY HISTORY GROUP SEMINAR – Saturday 19 May Hammond Centre, Christ Church, Henna St

Again this year the WFHG has lined up an interesting range of guest speakers for the annual seminar:

- Jenny Harkness – What's New at Family Search
- Susie Zada – Victorian Land Titles and Documents – from old to new
- Jason Reeve – Using Ancestry.com for research & an introduction to AncestryDNA
- Bernard Wallace – 'Visitors Voices' – Impressions of Portland 1834-1884

Also there are the traditional attractions of this day – the cake raffle & lucky door prizes, publications for sale, delicious morning and afternoon teas. All this for the special discount price of \$20 for WDHS members. Registration from 9.15am for 9.45 start.

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

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