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# Newsletter

Federation of  
Australian Historical Societies Inc. →



Image: *Now and Then: Series 1*, 2011, Newcastle Beach, Photograph: Anthony Scully, ABC Newcastle

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## Doing History

In this collection of articles, historical societies across Australia reflect on the myriad ways that we do history from developing curriculum resources to re-enactment and immersive learning.

Research and interpretation of local knowledge sources once confined to the most earnest of researchers now has extended reach through a diversity of publication formats, events, blogs and social media. One example is the online Melba Museum and associated blog from Lilydale and District Historical Society.

Many societies argue for the importance of a bricks and

mortar 'home' to engage and activate local and community interest in history. Others make a case for the value of doing digital history. Digitally savvy genealogists present some provocations calling for societies of tomorrow to move beyond geographical limitations and develop a more inclusive history reflecting the interests of Millennials.

On a practical note John Davies, (the FAHS Executive Officer) outlines the advantages of registering as a Tax Concession Charity and obtaining Deductible Gift Recipient Status.

Dr Bernadette Flynn, Editor  
FAHS Outreach Officer

The Federation of Australian Historical Societies is supported through funding from the Australian Government's Community Heritage and Icons Grants program via the ACT Government.

‘There are few ways in which the lives of community historians have been more obviously transformed by technology in recent decades than in how they *do history*’.



LOCAL RECORDS:  
Bendigo Regional  
Archives Centre

When I began researching local history back in the 1970s, in many libraries we were allowed to use hard copy newspapers and other paper material. It was often a dirty, dusty and delicate task, but we had a sense of a tangible link with the past.

That changed rapidly with the introduction of microfilm and microfiche which preserved paper records, but did terrible things to the eyes, shoulders, necks and backs of a generation of readers.



MICROFILM: Reels of  
microphotographs of  
newspapers, catalogues  
and other documents

How times have changed!! Mainly because of digitisation. For so much of our research we can now sit at our computer and gain access to a vast range of online material around the globe. We no longer have to skim-read hundreds or thousands of pages in the hope of picking up references to our research topics. We simply put in a few key

words and the online search engines will throw up long lists for us. In Australia, the National Library of Australia's Trove has been invaluable.

The digital revolution, together with associated social media, has taken 'doing history' much further. Historical research can now be 'published' in a multitude of forms. Most historical societies now have websites, some with comprehensive access to digitised records and sophisticated representations of their local history such as virtual museums as well as access to their newsletters and other publications.

Some societies use Facebook extensively to communicate their historical work, while smart phone apps are developing as an excellent way to provide information such as tourist walks. Digitally recorded oral history interviews, short films, lectures and other ways of telling stories can be made readily available on USB stick or DVD as well as on websites.

The old forms have not been forgotten and desktop publishing of hard copy books and journals is both easy and cheap.

I trust that you will find as much value as I have in reading the articles in this edition of the FAHS Newsletter about how we now 'do history'.

Professor Don Garden  
FAHS President



# Local History and Schools' Curriculum - Guidelines for Historical Societies



**In 2014, the FAHS commissioned a study of the ways local historical societies interact with their local communities to provide educational assistance and activities for schools.**

The study involved visits to a variety of historical society museums throughout Australia, talking with society members and looking at their collections. There was considerable variety in the provision of educational materials and visits for school groups in different communities, reflecting their access to resources and volunteers. A set of guidelines was then developed and published on the FAHS website (<http://www.history.org.au/Local%20History%20and%20Schools'%20Curriculum.html>).

The guidelines provide societies of all sizes and locations with resources to develop deeper links with local schools. These include easy curriculum links, information on teachers' needs and suggestions for rich activities for volunteers without an educational background to use (including some for societies not in a position to host actual visits by students).

The guidelines are intended to be as practical as possible, and were guided by Australia wide teacher surveys. The latter turned up some interesting information. Almost 60% of teachers surveyed had never visited a historical society museum, or only visited once every few years. The two main issues were obviously time and relevance to the curriculum.

Teachers tended to hear about museums by word of mouth and via the internet. Many were interested in the collections, but many had no knowledge of what historical museums could offer. The results suggested that outreach activities would encourage more visits by school groups. This reflects the great problem of time shortages for teachers. Outreach work suggested by teachers included museum volunteer visits early in the year to staff meetings, to provide information and ideally show them a few samples from their collections. If societies could make such visits, it

## What could your historical society provide, to encourage you to visit?

General information on the collection.	<div></div>	34.00%
Information on where collection items fit into the Australian Curriculum.	<div></div>	73.00%
Pre-visit activity/ideas material.	<div></div>	50.00%
Guided activities at the museum.	<div></div>	59.00%
Guidelines to take your class through the exhibits.	<div></div>	53.00%
Post-visit activity/ideas material.	<div></div>	48.00%

would address the problems of teacher lack of time and lack of knowledge of what museums had to offer and their relevance to the curriculum, in one hit. Volunteers, in turn, could find out which curriculum strands their local schools plan to work on, to identify relevant items from their collections for activities. This 'word of mouth' format would make it a really valuable use of volunteer time.

Other comments showed that major draw cards to local museums would be the provision of more personalised and interactive experiences for students, provision of further activities connected to visits, and the use of digital material and museum boxes. The ideas of having 'hands on' activities at the museum (or through a museum box), and photographs, both from the collections and of collection items, were very popular. The latter in particular would seem to offer opportunities for societies when volunteer capacity is low, with larger groups using them to work with schools in an expanded capacity. Interestingly, teachers did not want to replace visits with digital material, but rather to combine the two, as each year's circumstances permitted.

With these issues in mind, the guidelines included the following sections and information:

**1. Schools and their local historical societies** - issues and needs, initial approaches (eg visiting staff meetings, fliers), complementary skills/knowledge of historical society members and teachers. Issues to consider with school visits ( eg small group work and alternatives in small spaces, access to eating/toilets, transport options,



## A major draw card to local museums is the provision of personalised and interactive experiences for students

using volunteer or paid staff)  
Current teaching methods - enquiry learning, use of sources/ evidence, quality teaching/ learning activities, examples of graphic organisers and class activities – how these relate to your site, assessment tools used by teachers.

**2. Links to the National Curriculum** - History overview of historical concepts, skills and themes. Codes to find items quickly.

**3. Connecting with the National Curriculum** - case study, Year 2 examples by year level, connecting items from local and national collections with specific strands, 'mining' your collection. Attractive options for teachers and site visit activities - theme/grade based trails, pre and post visit activities, museum boxes, classroom visits by volunteers, transcripts, museum boxes and facsimile items.

**4. Connecting via digital resources and reproductions** - using historical photographs reproduction documents (eg letters, newspapers) and photos of collection items

**5. Working with pictures and artefacts** – productive questioning

**6. Drawing in the wider community** – ideas for attracting/retaining/managing volunteers to run school programs.

Examples of questionnaires and resources were also provided.

Societies are already using the guidelines to work with schools, and Ann is happy to visit to help groups explore them further and develop their programmes.

Ann can be contacted at [aparry49@gmail.com](mailto:aparry49@gmail.com)

Ann Parry, Educational Consultant, ACT



## Melba's Back-Blocks Tour



Front page of Melba's 1909 concert tour program for Queensland. (Image provided by archives, James Cook University, Townsville).



Melba's logo on concert tour program



Maryborough Town Hall, Queensland. Melba performed in this hall on July 23, 1909.

'I wanted to see what Melba saw in 1909; learn about the people she met, where she stayed, where she performed and how the local people received her – mostly as seen through the eyes of the local media.'

Read any biography on Melba and mention is made of her 1909 Back Blocks Tour. In the chapter in her autobiography *Melodies and Memories* headed Touring the Back-Blocks, Melba gives just a few pages to what was to the people of country Australia the greatest days of their lives. Melba wrote:

'Here is a typical day. The tiny train puffs slowly into the station of —, and as I look out of the window, I hear shrill cheers from an array of all the local school-children, lined up to meet me. I get out, and the sunburnt Mayor, followed by equally sunburnt Councillors, advances and tells me that the city of— (I see that city out of the corner of my eye, with its straggling shops and iron roofs) is honoured to receive me. A darling little lady, clothed by the local dressmaker in the pretty faded stuffs of twenty years before, drops me a curtsy and presses into my hand a bouquet of glorious flowers, mixed in an indescribable clash of colour, but precious to me none the less.

The school children sing God

Save the King, the sunburnt Mayor stands erect, and then we jumble over the rough roads to the one and only hotel. Oh, those hotels of the Australian Bush! What have I not learnt from them! So clean, so shabby, with such an amazing ignorance of comfort, such an astounding ugliness of furniture, and from time to time, such treasures hidden away in their depths. Sheraton book-cases brought out by some ancestor from the home in the old country, pieces, of Chippendale doing yeoman service in the kitchen, old first editions, dusty and forgotten, on bedroom shelves.'<sup>1</sup>

For Melba, it may not have been an important part of her life and seemed a little repetitive but our research showed every town was different and to country Australians her visit to their town was an event none forgot. Amazingly, no subsequent Melba book has explored this year Melba spent in Australia on tour, while I, a student of Melba for more than twenty years, have

1. Nellie Melba, *Melodies and Memories: The Autobiography of Nellie Melba* (Thomas Nelson Australia, 1980), 179.



always been fascinated by the tour: Where and how did she travel? Who travelled with her? What impact did the tour have on the people of rural Australia?

After about three months of research using local information and Trove we – my husband Wally and myself – finally had an itinerary that we believed was correct for New South Wales and Queensland.

### ***Where and how did she travel?***

Between 1 June and 3 September 1909, Melba gave thirty-one concerts in twenty-five towns and had to cancel another two due to the concert party suffering from severe colds. All the towns were on railway lines or reached by sea in North Queensland. The entourage generally travelled in the Governor's carriage in each state which was fitted out with sitting room, bedrooms, kitchen and maid's quarters etc. The train was often hooked up to the mail train to get the party from one town to the next.<sup>2</sup>

We spent five months and travelled 11,000 km in our caravan retracing her steps and visiting each town. We met with over fifty different groups – historical societies, family history groups, libraries, university archives and museums.

I didn't want to do a travel log listing the towns, points of interest etc. I wanted to see what Melba saw in 1909; learn about the people she met, where she stayed, where she performed and how the local people received her – mostly as seen through the eyes of the local media.

For our tour, we contacted each group well in advance of our

2. For the dates and places Melba visited go to : [www.nelliemelbamuseum.com.au/tours.htm](http://www.nelliemelbamuseum.com.au/tours.htm)



THE IMPERIAL HOTEL:  
Melba and her party rested  
at the Imperial before the  
concert.

### **The Imperial Hotel Armidale, 1895**

**Image: University of New England & Regional Archives, HRCPO975**

arrival so they had a chance to do some research for us. Some were wonderful and excited about our project. Some groups didn't know Melba had performed in their town; some had photographs misnamed which I identified as Melba and others had Melba images I had not seen before. For everyone it was the chance to exchange information about a day in the life of their community and we learnt more about their town and their organisation. Everyone wanted to help and were excited when I gave them information they didn't have. A couple of groups asked me give a special Melba talk and others invited us to their own meetings.

The trip for us was not just about uncovering the people and places of 1909, it was also about understanding Melba's impact on those towns.<sup>3</sup>

### ***Who travelled with her?***

The concert party was unchanged throughout her tour. There was Melba; flautist and tour manager John Lemmone,

3. For the groups and their contribution go to my blog: <http://www.nelliemelbamuseum.com.au/>

pianist Una Bourne, young Irish baritone Frederick Rannalow and accompanist Harold Whittle. Each state had their own concert program which was printed in mass and sold at each concert.

### ***What impact did the tour have on the people of rural Australia?***

Melba knew and understood her countrymen and used her status and performances to forever cement her name in the minds and lives of all Australians. She was our Queen of Song, the closest thing we had to royalty. She certainly played the part well and happily met the people, walked the street to the concerts. She was one of us and the people of Australia adored her for it.

In just one day, Melba etched her name into the recorded history of every town she visited, her impact was lasting and she helped in a small way, to create and/or enhance the cultural heart of every one of those towns.

Sue Thompson, President,  
Lilydale and District Historical Society





## Re-enact SA: Ten Years Young

Re-Enact SA (RSA) is an Adelaide based historical group who take the concept of 'doing history' a giant step further.

RSA was formed ten years ago by a diverse but enthusiastic cohort of people from different backgrounds, united by common interests in military history and collecting. Over the course of ten years, our membership has grown and we have developed into an incorporated body, whose activities can be viewed at: <http://www.reenactsa.com/>.

RSA's main 'impressions' are Australian Imperial Force (AIF, World War 1), 2nd AIF (WW2) and Axis (WW2). Some members dedicate a great deal of time and personal funding to preserving, restoring, maintaining, running and displaying vintage military vehicles, many of which would otherwise have been consigned to scrap heaps and have disappeared forever from our culture.

RSA researches, preserves and demonstrates to the public the uniforms, weapons, tactics, drills, vehicles and life of our Service forbears. Training is undertaken using the drill manuals of the period, guaranteeing authenticity and preserving the manuals. We interact with the public through displays and activities at a range of events, generally at the invitation of the organisers. RSA have worked with RSLs, local councils, State and Federal Government, schools, film production companies and many other organisations.

'For my first re-enactment, a public commemoration ceremony at a beautiful, historic farm property in the ACT, I had to learn Great War-era rifle drill. In tee-shirts and shorts, with rifles and whatever period military gear we had at the time, we tried to learn the drill in a neat back garden, under instruction of a veteran of the Malayan Campaign and Vietnam War. This was necessary as we needed to learn the drill of the period being represented – modern drill would not suffice. My first reaction, as I grabbed the wrong part of the de-activated rifle with the wrong hand, was 'this is impossible', I can't learn this, to which my immediate response was: 'of course you can learn this – the recruits of 1914 did'

James Hurst, RSA

We also train and refine our period military and field skills at private events, using drills and tactics of the period. To this end, RSA hosts an annual 'tactical' event. This is not open to the public and consists of the simplified 're-fighting' of a WW2 battle or campaign. The battle to be 'fought' is extensively researched and a number of scenarios are drawn up, based on the history, the ground and the personnel and vehicles available. The opposing forces do not know their objectives until opening the scenarios on the field. As authenticity is a prerequisite for participation, one aim of the preparations is, in terms of the range of forces who took part in the actions, to be as inclusive as possible, thereby enabling the maximum number of participants to take part.





## Re-enact SA commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the 10th Battalion - re-creation of the recruitment camp that was at the Morphettville racecourse

These events are known as 'immersive' experiences, as we may be 'in the field' in period gear for two days and to varying extents, living and eating as the soldiery did. The Axis forces give orders in the relevant language, and RSA members and other participants (we work closely with other groups around the country) have the opportunity to run their vintage military vehicles, which play an active role in the scenarios. These are also highly educational events: learning history by 'doing' history. They provide an opportunity for individuals to develop and utilise their interests, such as restoring and using period technology, and expanding their range of impressions. Safety is always paramount, and each event begins with safety briefs and identification of dedicated safety officers.

The largest public event organised by RSA to date was the launch of the Anzac Centenary in South Australia in 2014, made possible by a grant from the Federal Government's Anzac Centenary Local Grants Program. This took up to a year's planning and over six months of determined, full time effort by members of RSA. Re-enactors from throughout Australia participated, and the result was a weekend camp, open to the public, a march by 40 AIF infantrymen, ten mounted troopers, a section of mounted police, a handful of WW1 nurses, a band and vintage vehicles. The salute was taken by the Governor. The aim was to make the people of South Australia aware of the departure of the first contingent from this state. We understand that this proved to be the first major Centenary event in Australia.

Politics, such as Nazism, racism or supremacism, are not allowed. Strict obedience of the law is essential to the survival of groups such as ours, and members of RSA worked closely with the police in development of the latest firearms regulations.

One aspect in which a blind eye is turned to historical accuracy, is fraternisation with the enemy. At the end of a day's 'fighting', all involved, Allies, Axis and supporters, gather around an open fire for a communal meal, thaw frozen fingers, and watch the steam rise from each others' rain soaked uniforms, as the days' events are discussed, and improvements planned for next year.

James Hurst, Publicity Officer and Chris Thompson, Treasurer, Re-enact SA

FILM WORK: Portrayal of period soldiers for 'Changed Forever', History Channel, April 2016.





**'An online visitor is worth as much as a physical one. Our purpose in sharing history is deeper than trying to get people through a door'.**



## Doing (Digital) History at Carnamah

<http://www.carnamah.com.au>

The Carnamah Historical Society & Museum stumbled onto the internet 14 years ago in 2003. In the intervening years our website and online presence has evolved to become a core part of our organisation - on par with our museum and the heritage-listed Macpherson Homestead. When I say stumbled, I really do mean stumbled. We had not a clue what we were doing but two of us thought: hey, this could be good!

From the very beginning we did things online a bit differently. Rather than heavily talk about our organisation we have instead always concentrated on sharing local history. The only information you will find about us as a society are two short sentences on our home page and two small pages about visiting our museum and homestead. The thousands (yes, thousands!) of other pages relate to what we're about - local history!

This was our intention from the very beginning. We started by sharing cemetery records online, a few photographs and profiling our local war memorial and honour roll. Building on the great work of my co-member Jill Tilly, we then began what has evolved into our very expensive Biographical Dictionary of Coorow, Carnamah and Three Springs.

Our online Biographical Dictionary is a centralised resource that brings together referenced information on thousands of people from oral histories along with hundreds of primary and secondary sources. We don't gather information on just the big farmers, those who served on the Road

Board or people who lived here for a lengthy time. We gather and compile everything we can find on everyone who has ever lived here. We consult archival records from within our own collection as well as those held at state and national institutions.

In 2011, eight years into our online journey, we decided to create a few online exhibitions. This was with the dual benefit of sharing some of the objects from our museum while also telling specific stories about our local history. We felt this was a much more interesting and engaging model than simply publishing our collection catalogue. Our online *Virtual Museum: to be known and distinguished as Carnamah* (which is a play on words from the gazetting of the Carnamah townsite) started with just three online exhibitions and has since expanded to 14.

Like many heritage organisations, we were keen to create curriculum resources to engage with school and student audiences. However, we again decided to go about this a little differently. Instead of gearing them for purely physical visits to our museum, we instead created them around our online exhibitions. This meant that schools could use our resources in the classroom, with a visit to our physical museum, or both! For example, a class at our local school used our online content through an entire term and then concluded with a visit to our physical museum. Meanwhile schools hundreds of kilometres away in Perth are also using our resources and content in their classrooms!

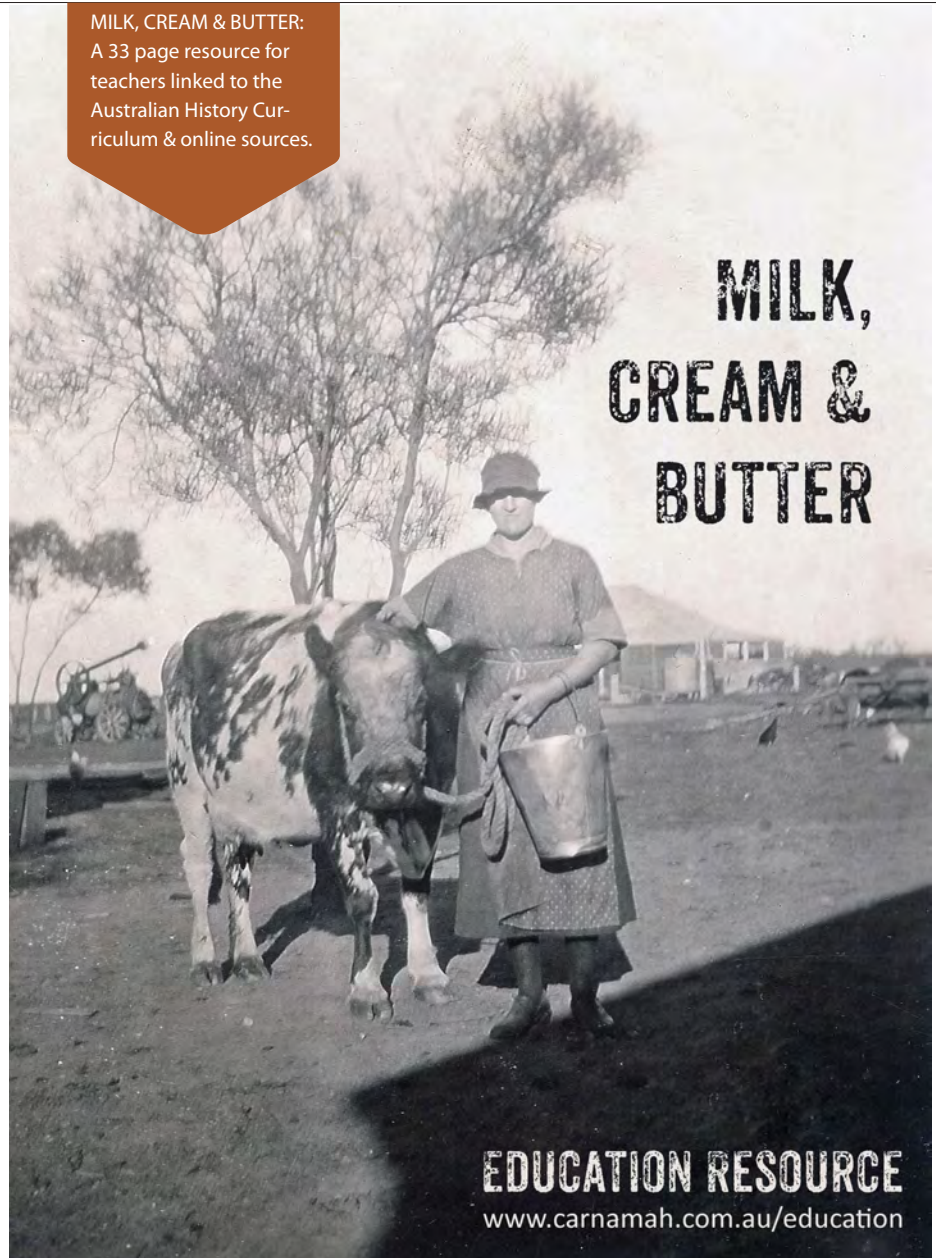
Carnamah is a small agricultural community of about 500 people and like many historical societies, we're a pretty small organisation in regards to membership and volunteers. With ambitions outstretching our capacity we began exploring in 2012 the use of online or virtual volunteers. This culminated in the development of our Virtual Volunteering website, through which thousands of people have helped us and other organisations transcribe, index and compile heritage material.

The success, at the end of all of this, is that we reach and engage with many thousands of additional people every year. Each month huge numbers of people Google the name of a person, an object or theme and end up on our website exploring our local history through our Biographical Dictionary, Virtual Museum or other online content. The best thing about this is that most of these people weren't searching for Carnamah or the Carnamah Historical Society. In fact, many have never heard of Carnamah before! A book is limited to those who buy a copy and a museum to its opening hours and geographic location. The internet is open 24/7, knows no geographic bounds and is fully indexed ready to draw people in!

There's a few foundations that have helped us get to this point, which might be useful considerations for other heritage organisations to adopt:

- We come from a perspective of wanting to share, rather than control, our local history.
- Our purpose is to share with all of the community, not just our membership.
- People saving and using our

MILK, CREAM & BUTTER:  
A 33 page resource for  
teachers linked to the  
Australian History Cur-  
riculum & online sources.



**'Instead of gearing them [curriculum resources] for purely physical visits to our museum, we instead created them around our online exhibitions.'**

photos is great - it means more people see them!

- Putting content online doesn't diminish our physical museum, it actually builds interest which makes people more likely to visit (that's right, more physical visitors).

- However, an online visitor is worth as much as a physical one. Our purpose in sharing history is deeper than trying to get people through a door.

- Not receiving income for photos, information or research is more than compensated through being a more successful organisation (which brings dividends such as more donations and greater success with grant applications).

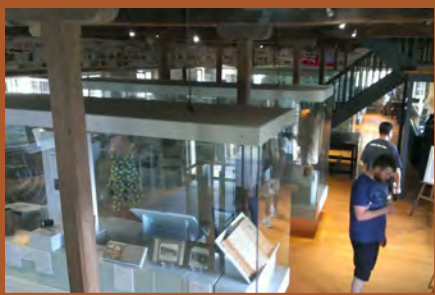
Andrew Bowman-Bright  
Virtual Curator & Local Historian,  
Carnamah Historical Society &  
Museum



## 'Doing History' with The Royal Historical Society of Queensland



Bookstore at the RHSQ



The Commissariat Store Museum



Successful Publication: Lost Brisbane 2

The goals of The Royal Historical Society of Queensland (RHSQ) include to research, publish, preserve and promote Queensland, Australian and Pacific Islander history and to engage the public in this history. In keeping with these goals, the RHSQ 'does history' in a myriad of ways.

The Commissariat Store is a niche museum that showcases Queensland's history. The most significant exhibit is the building itself which is Queensland's oldest habitable and most significant heritage building. The lower two floors of this magnificent building were convict-built in 1828 and 1829. The museum features both rotating and permanent exhibitions. The ground floor showcases several handcrafted, detailed models of the Moreton Bay penal settlement. It also features the Tom Petrie interactive display, a series of panels detailing Brisbane's convict history and a television screen with photographs of the Dig Tree of which the Society is Trustee.

The store runs tours which are

delivered by enthusiastic and skilled volunteer guides. A large number of the guests to the museum are school children. The tours bring convict history to life with hands-on activities and interactive exhibitions and are designed to be both educative and entertaining. The RHSQ has developed its education program in line with the Australian National History Curriculum for Year 5 students. Other visitors to the museum include international and Australian travellers and local residents. In 2016 there were around 2,500 visitors to the museum all gaining a unique insight into Queensland history.

### **Library and Research Services**

A substantial library of Australiana was bequeathed to the society in 1939 by its former Treasurer, President and foundation member, Thomas Welsby. The library has been added to substantially since. It consists of books, pamphlets, maps and manuscripts. The library covers Queensland history predominantly. There is a very extensive collection of newspaper cuttings (not on TROVE), magazine articles,



RHSQ TRUSTEES OF THE DIG TREE RESERVE: Outing to reserve for memorial Burke & Wills Camp 65

letters and reminiscences. A large collection of the society's manuscripts have been digitised. The Library also holds approx. 24,000 photographs which are being progressively digitised. The society has a highly skilled and professional Library and Research Team which undertakes research queries for members and non-members. The number of queries from companies and government departments has increased in the past year.

### **Queensland History Journal**

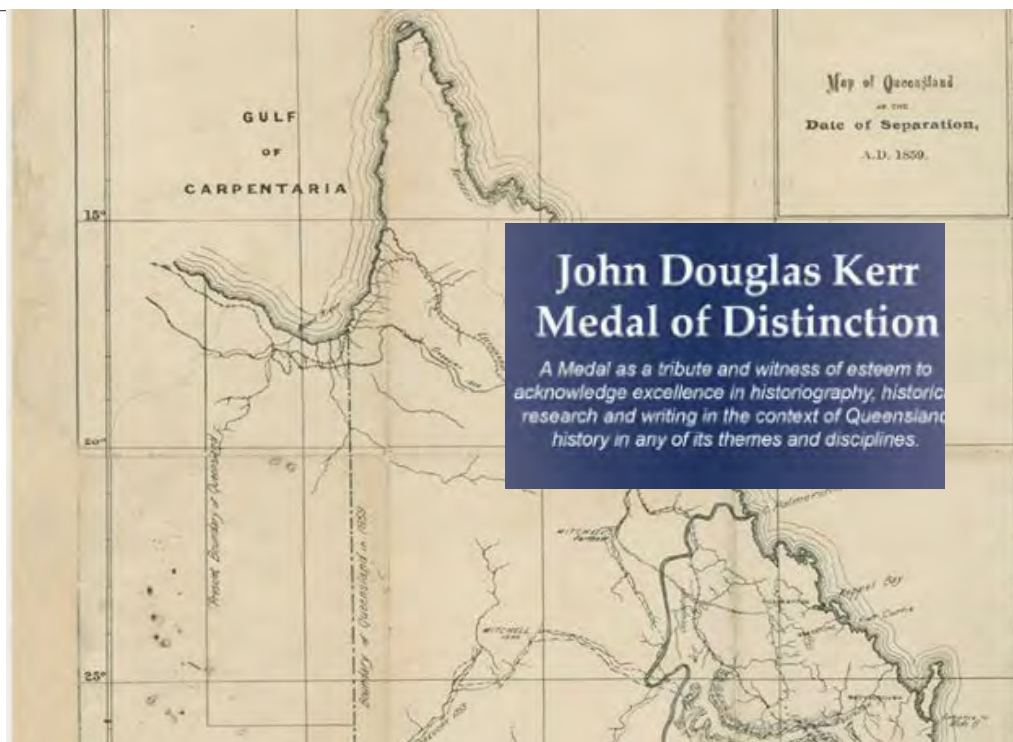
The RHSQ has three editors of its quarterly and refereed Queensland History Journal. Historical papers have been published by the society since its formation in 1913. The editors are all professional historians with extensive experience in research and writing Queensland history. There is always a good supply of papers submitted for publication.

### **Lost Brisbane 1 and 2**

Five professional historians and a photographer all of whom are members of the RHSQ researched and wrote two books on Lost Brisbane and surrounding areas – 1860-1960 and the later years (to 1990). The books are each of approximately 350 photographs and are of 368 and 384 pages. The two books have been an outstanding success for the publisher QBD The Bookshop and RHSQ. Lost Brisbane 1 was a winner in the 2015 Heritage Awards by the National Trust. Lost Brisbane 2 has been nominated for an award in 2017.

### **Monthly lunchtime talks**

Each month the RHSQ holds talks for both members and non-members. Historians, generally local, present across a wide spectrum of topics. Some papers are submitted for publication in the Queensland History Journal.



### **Special events**

In addition to its regular activities the society holds a number of other events throughout the year.

The Queensland Day Dinner on 6 June each year commemorates the date Queen Victoria signed papers creating the colony of Queensland. This is a formal event which in recent years has attracted around 100 guests. The John Douglas Kerr Medal for excellence in research and writing Australian history is presented at the dinner.

The Separation Day Cocktails function is held on 10 December each year at the Commissariat Store and celebrates the separation of Queensland as a separate colony from New South Wales.

Riverfire, Brisbane's premier fireworks display, is held in September. Members and guests enjoy front row seats to watch the festival. This event is a great success attracting a wider cross-section of the community. The RHSQ recently conducted a

bus tour to the Warwick district visiting historic buildings. Other locations are being considered for future tours.

From time to time The RHSQ holds special events such as the upcoming seminar on the history of the Lebanese in Queensland which will be held in collaboration with The Australian Lebanese Historical Society (Queensland).

Finally, in October the Commissariat Store opens its doors to the public free of charge for a weekend as part of the Brisbane Open House festival.

Through its journal, research services, library collection, convict-built museum, public seminars and special events The RHSQ 'does history' and fulfils its mission of promoting, interpreting, publishing, collecting and preserving Queensland history.

Maryanne Pender, Councillor, Royal Historical Society of Queensland



## History House in Darwin open for business



HISTORY HOUSE LAUNCH:  
President Earl James,  
Minister Moss, the Hon  
Grant Tambling and HSNT  
Secretary Janie Mason.

The Historical Society of the Northern Territory was formed fifty three years ago in 1964 by about ten young men, many of whom were surveyors whose work in those post war days reflected that of the early pioneers. For many of those early years the Society was led by that icon of NT historical research, the late Peter Spillett. Today, there are only two remaining foundation members, namely Vern O'Brien & Earl James.

Early activities of the Society consisted mainly of exploration to find points of interest relating to early explorers, e.g. the relocation of the tree on Point Stuart marked by John McDouall Stuart in 1863 and the placing of a monument on the site was one of the Society's projects; journeys to places of early settlement in the Territory such as Fort Dundas on Melville Is, Fort Wellington in Raffles Bay and the Township of Victoria in Port Essington featured high on the agenda. Members today still enjoy an annual pilgrimage to such places though these days the journeys are a lot less uncomfortable than they were in the days of Peter Spillett.

Collection and storage of historic memorabilia was another prominent activity in the early days and one that caused much

heartache in finding appropriate storage facilities. Cyclone Tracy did a lot to help that situation in 1974 when our headquarters in the former Holtz Cottage in the Botanic Gardens was blown away. Since then the Society has continually been seeking a home and for decades has been using borrowed storage space and holding meetings in members' homes. Eventually we gave up being a collection agency and about ten years ago we donated our collection to the appropriate authorities. But we still had problems.

Over recent years the Society's activities morphed into a not-for-profit publishing agency. We then had a greater problem with storage. We spent the last ten years renting accommodation and pestering government for money or meeting space, but without success. Many other historical societies in Australia have homes donated either by government or by generous benefactors but this society had none, until early last year. At that time Councillors were surprised to receive the generous donation of a large sum of money from an anonymous supporter who specified that the donation was to be used for the purchase of a

home for the Society.

The Historical Society of the Northern Territory now has great pleasure in telling the world that the Society now has a home. In May 2016 the Society became the proud owner of a small unit in a commercial area of Darwin. It has been named History House. The first major function to be held in our new home was the member's Christmas function on 3rd November 2016 during which former Senator, The Hon. Grant Tambling launched a history of the Northern Territory's Legislative Assembly as recorded in *Turning Forty* by Robyn Smith and Dean Jeansch.

The Minister for Tourism and Culture, the Hon. Lauren Moss then officially declared the premises open for business, cut the celebratory cake and presented the Society with \$10,000 for the purchase of appropriate furniture.

Councillors and members of the Society would once again express their thanks to that anonymous donor.

Earl James, President, Historical Society of the Northern Territory

# Teachers, Historical Societies and Primary School Children: 'Doing History'

PHOTOGRAPH: Keysborough State School, Dandenong and District Historical Society, Image No 1406



## 'Teachers can benefit a great deal by using the amazing collections of past material held by historical societies'

Personal, family and local histories are key components of the new 'Victorian Curriculum' for 'Prep' to Year 2 children. Having been adapted from the Australian curriculum, children in Victoria learn how the past is both different from and similar to the present in terms of their childhoods and those of their parents' and grandparents'. The children learn also about significant people, events (such as commemorations or festivals) and places in their local community.

With these opportunities in mind, three excellent Monash University History student-teachers recently chose to devise assessment tasks that included close and positive work with their local historical societies. Because the students chose to focus on the early years of schooling, they required resources that were not text-heavy, and opted mainly for rich visuals.

Here, they recount how they and local historical societies collaborated in 'doing history' with enjoyable outcomes for all parties in the process. They hope their ideas may inspire similar partnerships between historical

societies, teachers, student-teachers and whole school communities elsewhere.

*Shehani Rukunayake worked with Dandenong and District Historical Society:*



The History unit assessment task required us to research a topic, find resources and write activities that could be used over an extended period of time. We needed also to write three single lesson plans in detail. For one of my plans, I selected the topic 'understanding the concept of continuity and change through comparing past and present lives of schools'. My aim was to present history in a way that made it personal and meaningful for school children, and something that they could engage and connect with on a deeper level. I focussed on my city of Dandenong, 35 kms south-east of Melbourne.

Part of my intended lesson plan

included presenting children with various photographs taken from their local community. Initially I telephoned several schools in my local area inquiring about possible photographs and other items they may have about the history of their school. Many did not have sufficient resources of any kind to assist me. One school suggested that I should visit the Dandenong and District Historical Society.

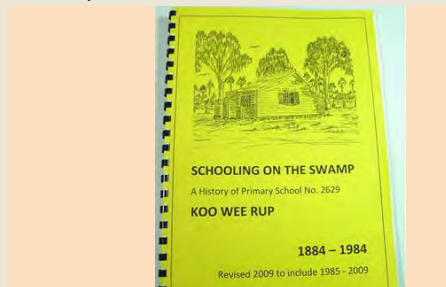
Before visiting, I rang the society, explained what I was wanting to do and that I was looking especially for past photographs of a particular school. Upon arrival I was greeted by very friendly members who showed me a variety of primary sources, from old photographs and historical documents to a rare collection of resources used by children in schools dating back to the early 1900s. The members were highly knowledgeable and provided me with a detailed background on the items, helped me immensely in selecting what was best for my unit.

Teachers can benefit a great deal by using the amazing collections of past material held by historical societies. Societies and teachers can enable school children to



observe and understand the changes that have occurred in their local areas throughout time and relate local people, places and events to those children's lives.

### ***Sarah Cammarano worked with Koo Wee Rup Swamp Historical Society***



I devised a unit that related to the topic of 'Change in our Community'. I decided to focus on my own town of Koo Wee Rup, 90 kms south-east of Melbourne, with its rich human history in an area that was originally largely swamp. I provided a detailed rationale explaining the importance to children of learning about the community in which they live. The body of my unit was made up of three sequenced lesson plans that focused on a timeline, analysing photographs from 'then and now' and finally writing a narrative based on an old photograph. Within the unit's conclusion, I recommended a possible excursion opportunity as well as a most useful organisation.

In fact, I recommended the Koo Wee Rup Swamp Historical Society throughout my unit. Established in 1974, it is a most valuable organisation run by a group of volunteers dedicated to preserving, collecting, researching, and interpreting historical documents or items. In particular, the society has a range of photographs and local newspaper collections, as well as local history books, numerous of which I used to

develop my lessons. The society also manages a museum of many local artefacts to teach residents the town's rich history and heritage and help future generations understand how their community came to be.

I initially visited the society's website to discover the services offered to the community, then contacted the society by phone for additional information. I quickly realised that the members are very knowledgeable and passionate about what they do. The society enabled me to access historical documents and photographs of the township. These primary sources greatly enhanced the overall quality of my History unit and deepened my understanding of my town's history. My unit further suggested the society as an excursion venue.

I would definitely encourage schools to develop a partnership with their local historical society, to give their children a well-resourced, well-rounded localised experience rich in a locality's history.

### ***Finally, Suzanne Boatto worked with the Cockatoo History and Heritage Group:***



Cockatoo is a small tight-knit community, 60 kms east of Melbourne, with a rich history including goldmining, tourism, fires, and even a visit from Princess Diana. With many residents having lived there their entire lives, the area's history is significant to them,

indeed, proudly integral to their community identity.

Events such as the Ash Wednesday bushfires remain strong in the memory of many residents. When the kindergarten in which some had taken shelter during the fires was listed for demolition, they rallied to save it, transforming it soon after into the Ash Wednesday Bushfire Education Centre. The centre now annually holds a display during 'heritage week' and local historians attend to guide visitors through the town's rich history.

To create a unit of work for Year 2 children who live locally, I worked closely with members of the Cockatoo History and Heritage Group, drawing upon their deep knowledge and diverse resources, especially artefacts, photographs and original footage of Cockatoo in the 1950s. We built stories around the artefacts which formed the 'primary source' basis of the History unit. The unit includes 42 different activities where children can describe what they see, ask questions about other things they want to know, create timelines, compare the past and the present, notice change and continuity, and write simple creative stories or historical accounts. A range of abilities and learning preferences are catered to.

I have given a copy of the unit to the History and Heritage Group as well as the Cockatoo Primary School so they may each easily share Cockatoo's history with the young people of the area.

Suzanne Boatto, Sarah Cammarano, Shehani Rukanayake and Rosalie Triolo  
History Education, Monash University

‘Paynesville Maritime Museum has taken on a role to find and record the maritime history of the locale and, importantly, to make that information readily available to the community and many visitors of the town.’



Although now a bustling tourist and retirement town, Paynesville was originally a small fishing village on the Gippsland Lakes in Eastern Victoria that would have otherwise gone largely unnoticed except that a yard for building and servicing steamships was established there in 1888.

Formed in 2009 and finally gaining traction in 2014 Paynesville Maritime Museum ([www.pmm.org.au](http://www.pmm.org.au)) has taken on a role to find and record the maritime history of the locale and, importantly, to make that information readily available to the community and the many visitors of the town.

Whilst it would have been ego building to try to have coverage of all of the wider Gippsland Lakes, and perhaps a slice of Bass Strait too, it was decided on reflection to concentrate on the area nearby to Paynesville - described as ‘the area in which the Paynesville fishermen fished’. This has proven to be a sound choice able to be serviced by a

small volunteer group and still provide plenty of interest to talk about.

Having secured the lease on a storage shed from the local Shire a compact display facility was installed with guidelines making it an interpretive museum that tells the story of maritime Paynesville via photographs and whatever artefacts and related materials we can find. The target is for visitors to leave with an understanding of what was here and how it worked. Donations of things that do not fit with maritime Paynesville are politely declined and/or moved on to a new home, in doing so we have ‘missed out’ on some really nice nautical items - but they did not fit.

Whilst we strive to have display items of known maritime provenance, we recognise that ‘telling the story’ is our main raison d’être and equivalent items will be utilised for the purpose - is there any difference between a one inch chisel used by a boatbuilder and that from a

carpenter’s toolbox? Similarly the tools of a Melbourne boatbuilder differ little from a Paynesville one.

The Shed, as it has become known, is open each month on the same day as the Lions Club conduct their market on the adjoining reserve, ensuring somewhere between 80 and 200 visitors in the three hours we are open. Private viewing and tour groups are catered to by special arrangement. Entry is free as we want to reach as many people as possible and the donation box is prominently located near the exit and is rarely ignored. Promotion of Open Day is done via removable street signage and a regular place in the local newspaper where museum activities are explained in relation to local history. Support from the newspaper was instrumental in 240 people attending the first opening.

Providing an insight into the displays are volunteers - named as ‘interpretellers’ - who circulate amongst the visitors to explain



ITEMS FROM THE  
COLLECTION: Fishing  
equipment; ship build-  
ing and nautical tools



the finer points and answer questions. Several video screens run informative material and, for those requiring more, we have prepared YouTube videos that can be accessed by QR Codes from visitor's Smartphones.

Collection management has been established in the general form recommended by Museums Australia, but with significant tailoring to fit to the 'PMM way'. Cataloguing is by InMagic and will form the centrepiece for storage and retrieval of digital information as well as control of artefacts.

Despite the success of The Shed it was apparent that we needed to do more to engage with the community and visitors to the town. The means utilised for dissemination of information include a website, presence on Facebook and 'The PMM Journal' published twice yearly with articles about the area. A recent experiment with podcasts of interviews with former fishermen has been well received.

The Journal fulfils a secondary task of recording for perpetuity the stories which might otherwise be lost to future generations, with copies

provided to national, State and local libraries. The Journal is sold by local newsagencies and craft centres to enable access when we are not open, it is also available (free of charge) on the website.

Underlying the operations of the organisation we have a strong foundation of policies and procedures (thanks MA for the guidance) and a robust filing system to enable future committees to pick up the processes and move forward. It does help a bit in this if you have someone a little OCD!

How have we done, thus far?

Membership is approaching 100, although many we rarely see; a monthly newsletter keeps members and supporters informed of what is happening and a smattering of history; we have strong support from the community and many people come back for repeat trips to The Shed and The PMM Journal has four issues published with Issue 5 due in July (with an overflow destined for Issue 6). Importantly, we have a positive financial situation that will be needed as we look for a larger home.

Rob Cook, Secretary, Paynesville Maritime Museum



## TASMANIAN HISTORICAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

PAPERS AND PROCEEDINGS  
Volume 64 No 1 – April 2017



The Tasmanian Historical Research Association (THRA) 'does' history by giving lectures, holding excursions and publishing a journal three times a year.

I'm the editor of the journal, which has the unwieldy but traditional title of Tasmanian Historical Research Association Papers and Proceedings. It's inadvisable to meddle with some traditions and I haven't challenged this one. We're now publishing volume 63 and there's great pride in our longevity.

We include some papers which have been given as talks, and some sent in by members or non-members. There's no peer review, but I've edited a journal with peer review and I'm sceptical of its usefulness. It's OK for yes, publish or no, don't, but what if the reviewer suggests changes with which the editor doesn't agree? The editor ignores them, of course.

THRA's audience, like most for

historical journals I expect, ranges from academics to general readers. I aim for a high standard of accuracy and some contribution to the general history of Tasmania, but a variety of papers to interest everyone. While we have references, I try to keep the papers interesting and jargon-free. I also encourage the authors to prune their papers of unnecessary detail, which is a particular fad of mine, to keep the narrative flowing. But at the same time I check all references and facts I can, to keep the authors honest.

When I took over we had a format which had been unchanged since the 1970s. It was unattractive, with small print, uninviting to read – and I noticed that no one told me they'd enjoyed such and such an article. I thought hardly anyone actually read them. I persuaded the committee to move to a new, excellent designer who had worked on books for me, and looks on each page as a work of art, marrying the text and the illustrations. Her design is modern, taking advantage of the latest technology, but at the same time conservative, not bell-and-whistles, not annoying to the most die-hard traditionalist. We haven't had any complaints.

The new format and the emphasis on interesting articles (as opposed to merely worthy ones) has created a lot more interest in the journal. Now people do tell me they've enjoyed articles – mostly I think because of the wonderful design which invites reading.

One of the aims in refurbishing the journal was to increase our membership, and that hasn't actually happened. But we feel we're in good shape, with our attractive journal and our

excellent audiences for talks and excursions.

The April 2017 issue of Tasmanian Historical Research Association Papers and Proceedings includes book reviews and the following scholarly articles:

- Noreen Le Mottee, A life on the stage (and a smidgen of film)
- Luke Agati, Illuminating the Theatre Royal, 1837–1952
- Leonie Mickleborough, The 'invaluable art' of swimming in the River Derwent and Hobart's many swimming pools, 1803–1998
- Craig Collins and Sally Bloomfield, Hobart Town 1816: Andrew Bent and fermenting change

A free FULL TEXT sample of a THRA Papers and Proceedings is available at: [http://www.thra.org.au/papers\\_guidelines.html](http://www.thra.org.au/papers_guidelines.html)

Alison Alexander, Editor, Tasmanian Historical Research Association Papers and Proceedings, The Tasmanian Historical Research Association





**'If an historical society has DGR endorsement, donors to the society can claim a tax deduction for their donation, which increases the likelihood of donations. Grants from government and philanthropic bodies are sometimes conditional upon the recipient having DGR status.'**



This article summarises some of the benefits and considerations for historical societies of registering as Tax Concession Charities (TCC) and as endorsed Deductible Gift Recipients (DGR). It points societies towards useful sources of information.

After making a random selection of names of historical societies from its distribution list, and using those names to search the publicly-accessible Australian Business Register, the FAHS has made a very rough estimate of the proportion of historical societies that are registered as Tax Concession Charities (TCC) and as endorsed Deductible Gift Recipients (DGR). In round figures, the following are the very rough estimates:

Neither TCC nor DGR	50 %
Both TCC and DGR	20 %
TCC but not DGR	20 %
DGR but not TCC	10 %

Charity tax concessions are mainly federal (including income tax exemption and GST concessions) but also extend to state and territory taxes and may include payroll tax exemptions, stamp duty, council rates, water rates and land tax.

The primary sources of information about charity status are the administering bodies, the

ATO and the ACNC: <https://www.ato.gov.au/Non-profit/Getting-started/Endorsement/Tax-concession-charity-endorsement>

[http://www.acnc.gov.au/ACNC/FTS/Fact\\_ConcAvail.aspx](http://www.acnc.gov.au/ACNC/FTS/Fact_ConcAvail.aspx)

The following simple English overview of charity law in Australia (which is a chapter in the international book – 'Charity law, a global guide from practical law', 2nd edition, October 2016, published by Thomson Reuters) has been written by Vera Visevic of Mills Oakley Lawyers: <http://www.millsOakley.com.au/docs/Vera%20Visevic%20Charity%20Guide%202016.pdf>

If an historical society has DGR endorsement, donors to the society can claim a tax deduction for their donation, which increases the likelihood of donations. Grants from government and philanthropic bodies are sometimes conditional upon the recipient having DGR status.

The ATO is the primary source of information about DGR: [https://www.ato.gov.au/Non-profit/Getting-started/Endorsement/Deductible-gift-recipient-\(DGR\)-endorsement](https://www.ato.gov.au/Non-profit/Getting-started/Endorsement/Deductible-gift-recipient-(DGR)-endorsement)

The following (dated March 2014) is a comprehensive guide

to DGR published by Justice Connect: [https://nfplaw.org.au/sites/default/files/media/Guide\\_to\\_Deductible\\_Gift\\_Recipient\\_Status\\_3.pdf](https://nfplaw.org.au/sites/default/files/media/Guide_to_Deductible_Gift_Recipient_Status_3.pdf)

There are considerations to both TCC and DGR. Firstly, they take time and effort to establish. Secondly, they take time and effort to maintain. Charities must submit an Annual Information Statement to the ACNC. The requirements are less demanding for smaller societies than for larger ones. They must keep clear financial records and adhere to certain governance standards. For DGR, the application process can be difficult, and there are procedures that need to be put in place for the receipt and handling of donations. However, good record keeping for your organisation is worthwhile in any case. Historical societies contemplating TCC and DGR should carefully weigh the anticipated benefits against the costs.

The FAHS has no expertise in these areas and cannot provide societies with advice on their particular TCC and DGR applications.

John Davies, Executive Officer,  
FAHS



# Young & Savvy Genealogists

## The Historical and Genealogical Society of Tomorrow

<http://youngandsavvygenealogists.blogspot.com.au/2015/09>

A blog from the Young and Savvy Genealogists on the topic of the Historical and Genealogical Society of Tomorrow has been circulating around councillors at the Royal Western Australian Historical Society. The authors Caitlin Gow and Heather Collins speaking as millennials raise a number of provocations for societies of the future. Not least: inclusion of younger people, digital collaboration and the importance of creating volunteer opportunities both on and off line.

Although the blog was written in 2015 many of the concerns raised still highlight challenges faced by societies. Other issues such as investment in web presence and the importance of collecting and preserving digital records are by and large now recognised as organisational best practice. The following are some extracts from the blog. The full version can be found at <http://youngandsavvygenealogists.blogspot.com.au/2015/09>

### Updates

If a genealogical society is still spending money on sending paper newsletters through the mail, their organization is trapped in 1998. And if their website hasn't had any sort of major overhaul since then, I rest my case. Social media, blogging, and email will take the place of paper newsletters in the genealogical society of the future.

Throughout the years, many societies have tried to cut costs with low budget websites, and have avoided making real investments in their web presence. Because genealogical and historical societies of the future will take their place on the front lines of digitization, their websites need to become robust repositories of information. Becoming an online community trust means providing original records, transcribed indexes, photos, maps, better catalogs and directories for newspapers, books, periodicals, and vast collections of other records. Becoming the first providers for all legally available records is a market just waiting to be created.

### Collaboration

Preserving local history is a community affair. It requires interaction between organizations of all kinds, at every level. The historical and genealogical society of the future knows how to be the bridge between these organizations. Schools, colleges and universities, libraries and archives, courthouses and public offices, civic organizations, and businesses, and government offices of every kind, each play a role in this mission. Finding, protecting, digitizing, and sharing a community's history is a shared responsibility. Anyone can play a part, and successful societies recognize they can reach out to anyone.

Historical and genealogical societies of the future



know how to create volunteer opportunities, both online and offline. They identify and exercise every resource at their disposal. If creating a new index means paying for scanning services, they're the ones to create and promote the GoFundMe campaign. Then they reach out online for volunteer indexers. When it finally comes time to build or expand the website for a new collection, they find the college students in web design who need an internship to graduate. These societies understand that when they unite diverse groups in a common love of family and history, they make their communities better places to live.

Collaboration in historical and genealogical societies of the future also means looking beyond immediate geography. Various historical records are no longer kept in the places that created them. Some of the most passionate historians do not live anywhere near the places they study. Societies will expand their reach to these places and people. Because these societies are looking to adapt, they will find ways to expand their membership offerings to those outside their communities, both online and offline.

### Meetings are Old News

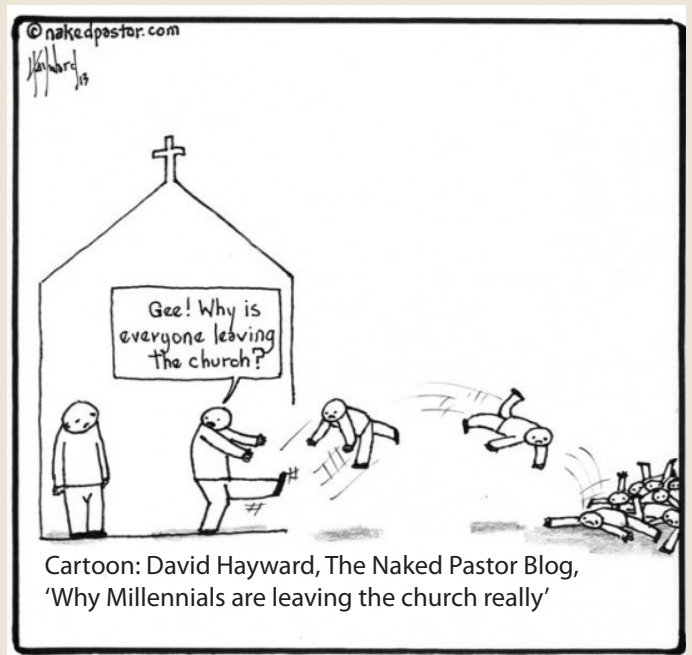
Gone will be days where the only way to attend meetings of these organizations is to actually live nearby. The genealogical societies of tomorrow will accept that the newest generation, in order to adapt to an ever-changing economy, has become one of the most transient in history. Their first cross country move is a rite of passage, their first experience living abroad a must-have. Especially for the minimalist urban living which defines the Millennial generation, the thought of a meeting that cannot be attended remotely is incomprehensible. Yes, including for genealogy, because hardly any of us live in the communities where our ancestors lived.

Webinars, Google Hangouts, and live YouTube events are the meetings of the future. It's what the new generation expects from any organization to which it gives its paying patronage. Attendance is not limited by geography, time zone, or day of the week. The most experienced researchers for a community may not actually live there, but they can be engaged and participating with the genealogical community who does. Because all that is required to create a YouTube channel is a computer, an internet connection, and a device that records video, anyone can do it. Google and YouTube have made all of the investment to make the software, the interface, and hosting the video available for free.

### Generational Culture Clash

Historical and genealogical societies of the future understand that reaching my generation is crucial to their survival. Embracing new technology means bringing us into their organization by default. The environment the society creates by the activities they engage in will determine if we will choose to stay.

Reaching and retaining our generation is summarized in one word--inclusion. We want to feel included in every part of the society--decision making, leading projects, organizing events, spending funds, all of it. Our voices need to be heard, and have an impact. At the same time, we need to feel everyone else is included, too.



The most compelling way to attract our crowd in the future will be by preserving a more inclusive history. As the genealogical and historical societies of the future become the force behind creating new record collections, they need to include all types of people in these collections. Millennials are interested in minorities, the underdogs, the 'forgotten' history not included in the history books. In many communities, the history of African Americans, Latinos, the LGBT community, and even women have received almost no attention by their local historical and genealogical societies. By collecting and preserving the records from these populations of their community, these societies choose to be inclusive. They become inviting places for my generation and our values.

Caitlin Gow and Heather Collins,  
Bloggers, Young and Savvy Genealogists