

FAHS Newsletter

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From the FAHS President

Helen Henderson



Many historical societies in Australia suffer ‘the tyranny of distance’ when it comes to obtaining the assistance they need to undertake certain administrative tasks, the management of their collections or historical research. One way in which historical society members can obtain practical support and encouragement, is by talking to others who have grappled with much the same challenges they are facing and who may have the much needed information. **You can do this online by helping to build a virtual nation-wide community of historical society members.**

The Federation has an arrangement with the Royal Historical Society of Victoria whereby historical society members across Australia communicate through the Victorian Government’s *My Connected Community (mc2)* online program. Historical society members across the nation can do this by logging onto the mc2 site (mc2.vicnet.net.au) and then joining the Australian Historical Societies Support Group.

After you join the Group, join the Forum (you will see the link on the left-hand side of the screen). When the Forum screen appears, you can add a message indicating what you are interested in discussing or the information you are seeking. As soon as you add a message, this will be sent by email to all the other members of the Group. You only need to respond to those messages that interest you.

Obviously, the more people who join the Group, the more likely it will be for individual members to find others with similar interests and challenges. These might range from local history and family research, planning projects, digitising a collection catalogue and conservation of particular items such as a precious costumes or a nineteenth century farm implement – the possibilities are endless.

My Connected Community offers participating groups/individuals a variety of free, easy to use Web-based services which they can use to communicate with existing members & like-minded communities.

The website is designed for the use of ordinary people (not computer "experts") who want to utilise online technologies for communicating between group members and in some cases with the wider community. Apart from the Forum, features of mc2 include an events list, space for sharing files, space for sharing photos, a links page and a chat room. There is also a website generator to help group members create a website without the need for learning html coding. There is a step-by-step guide to joining the Group on the Federation’s website (www.history.org.au).

The Committee of the Federation strongly recommends that you visit and explore this wonderful site. Remember the success of the mc2 Australian Historical Societies Support Group depends, to a large extent, on the number of members it can attract and how they use it to improve their societies and to enhance their own knowledge and skills.

Federation of Australian Historical Societies Merit Award

Nominations for the Federation of Australian Historical Societies' Merit Award are invited from historical societies and other organisations affiliated with one of the Federation's member societies. Member societies are: Canberra & Districts Historical Society, History Council of South Australia, the Historical Society of the Northern Territory, Royal Australian Historical Society, Royal Historical Society of Queensland, Royal Historical Society of Victoria and the Royal Western Australian Historical Society, Tasmanian Historical Research Association.

All nominations are to be submitted on the official nomination form included in this Newsletter. The selection criteria are listed at the top of the nomination form.

A copy of the nomination form is also available at the FAHS website (www.history.org.au)

Nominations must be submitted to the Administrative Officer, Federation of Australian Historical Societies, G.P.O. Box 1440, Canberra ACT 2601 by no later than c.o.b. 30 June 2007.

Publishing History: A Guide for Historical Societies

Publishing History: A Guide for Historical Societies
by Helen Doyle and Katya Johanson
Federation of Australian Historical Societies, Canberra, 2006

The Federation is delighted to announce the publication of this guide on publishing history. It fills a long-felt need among those historical society members who lack confidence in their ability to produce a work that is acceptable to publishers and to their potential readership. It is a work that is packed with advice and information on all aspects of printed and electronic publication embracing such topics as planning and financing a project, self-publishing, the structure and elements of a history book, use of illustrations, editing and design, identification and access requirements and selling the finished product. There is also a section for those societies that can afford to pay for the services of a historian to write a local history.

The authors are to be congratulated. They have followed their own advice and produced a work that is not only informative but is well organised and easy to read.

Following distribution to historical societies across the nation, limited surplus copies are available for purchase at \$12 per copy including postage and GST. These can be obtained by forwarding a cheque/money order to the Administrative Officer, Federation of Australian Historical Societies, GPO Box 1440, Canberra, ACT, 2601.

HH

Responses to questionnaire in December 2006 Newsletter

A questionnaire seeking feedback from readers about this Newsletter was inserted in the December 2006 issue. The Editor is grateful to those who have taken the trouble to respond to the questionnaire. However, the numbers who have responded are only a tiny proportion of the readership. Although a due date for responses was shown on the questionnaire, the Editor is aware that in one State the Newsletters were not distributed in time for that deadline to be met. It is still not too late. **Any further responses would be greatly appreciated.**

FAHS Awards (2006) - Presentations

Fellowship – Dr Lionel Gilbert OAM (New South Wales)

Professor Ian Jack, FAHS Senior Vice-President and President of the Royal Australian Historical Society, presented Dr Lionel Gilbert with his FAHS Fellowship at a special function held at the Armidale Folk Museum on 14 March 2007. Professor Jack paid tribute to Dr Gilbert's outstanding contribution to the history movement at both the local and national level. Mrs Jean Stewart, the President of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland and one of that Society's delegates to the Federation, was present and has reported that it was a very well attended and pleasant occasion. At the invitation of the President of the Armidale and District Historical Society, Ms Judith Grieve, Mrs Stewart spoke about her association with Dr Gilbert and the Society in the 1970s and 1980s when she served two separate terms as its President. About fifty people attended and gave Dr Gilbert a standing ovation before he gave a characteristic, witty speech in retaliation. There was good media coverage in the local newspaper and on the local ABC radio station.



Photo courtesy of Gary Fry, Danieli Studios, Armidale

FAHS Awards (2006) - Presentations

Merit Award – Ms Pearl Ogden (Northern Territory)

Dr Helen Henderson, FAHS President, presented Ms Pearl Ogden with her FAHS Merit Award at the Annual General Meeting and annual dinner of the Historical Society of the Northern Territory held on 28 March 2007. The citation, read by Dr Henderson, outlined Ms Ogden's significant contribution to the understanding and promotion of the history of the 'Top End' and to the community history movement in the Northern Territory. Aside from being a very happy occasion, it was especially notable because it was the first time the FAHS Merit Award had been conferred.



Reports from the States and Territories

Canberra and District Historical Society

The last two months has been a very eventful time for the CDHS. We have, at last, moved into our new premises in Curtin. Although we are still unpacking the collection, the new rooms was unveiled in an opening ceremony on 5th May. In spite of the difficulties associated with our move, the work of the Society has continued. On Monday 12 March, the Society held its annual Canberra Day Oration at the National Library of Australia. The guest speaker was Paul Perkins AM, the current adjunct professor at the Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies CRES ANU and the former CEO of ACT Electricity and Water. Professor Perkins spoke about the role of water in the history and planning of Canberra the Garden City, as well as outlining some of the difficulties in managing water in the current environment. The lecture was enthusiastically received by a large audience and well reported in the media. On Tuesday 10 April, the Society's April monthly meeting was addressed by noted winemaker, Ken Helm, whose topic was "*Winemaking in the Canberra Region* " Ken Helm, who comes from a long line of winemakers, began his winery, one of the first commercial wineries in the Canberra District Wine Region, near Murrumbateman in 1973. He has been involved in the development of the National Wine Show, Cool Climate Wine Show, and the Wine Press Club of Canberra and in numerous promotional events for the Canberra region. Mr Helm hosted a wine-tasting at the end of his talk and also generously donated two bottles of wine for a raffle. The May monthly meeting was addressed by former CDHS Vice-President Lenore Coltheart, who spoke on "*The Cultural Significance of the Albert Hall*" – a particularly relevant topic, in the light of a current debate on development proposals for the Albert Hall precinct. The Society also had a stall at the recent *Family Day* at the National Archives of Australia and our bi-monthly newsletter continues to appear without fail. While financial difficulties still loom large on our horizon, there have been some glimmers of hope, including a donation from the Royal Australian Historical Society. I would, on behalf of the Canberra and District Historical Society, like to express our gratitude to the RAHS and to RAHS President Professor Ian Jack for the very generous donation of \$500. It has been very heartening to all councillors to realise that we do indeed have friends out there.

EVD

History Council of South Australia

Celebrating a Jubilee 175: -History Council of SA plans for 2011.

The History Council of SA is planning a Forum in mid June 2007 with key players in heritage, government and the community to start planning for South Australia's 175th Jubilee of white settlement in 2011. As several states have already been through similar commemorations, ideas and experience will be very welcome. We are particularly interested in hearing how those with funds and other resources came on board.

Ideas and material will be very welcome. Please send any information to

secretary@historycouncilsa.org.au, or

History Council of South Australia

PO Box 6809 Halifax Street, Adelaide SA 5000, or

Phone 0415 052 174.

See <http://www.historycouncilsa.org.au> for CONTINUING NEWS of plans for South Australia's Jubilee 175

Historical Society of the Northern Territory

In 2007, the Society's focus will be on museums as the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory celebrates 25 years. Our first speaker for the year was Dr Mickey Dewar, Curator of Territory History, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT) on 28 February. Mickey spoke about aspects of the history of the MAGNT facility at Bullocky Point. Established on the site in 1981,

MAGNT presents the history, visual arts, indigenous art, maritime, southeast Asian art and material culture and natural history of the Northern Territory within the region. MAGNT has played an exciting, dynamic and at times, controversial role within the community but it is a continual success, attracting 200,000 people annually.

The Society's camping trip to Bradshaw Station in July is being firmed up. A Bradshaw descendant and two people who once worked on Bradshaw will accompany the party as guides. Another Bradshaw descendant from Sydney will be joining the trip. Members from the Kununurra and Wyndham Historical Societies will also participate.

On 28 March, the 65th anniversary of the bombing of Darwin was celebrated with the launching of Pearl Ogden's new booklet *Katherine's Wartime Years 1942 to 1947*. At the launch, Pearl recalled the evacuations – women and children evacuees leaving by ship or train, their terrible conditions during the height of the Wet season, the bomb damage to Darwin and Katherine, army camps between Darwin and Katherine, the rationing of the troops across the Territory and, at the end of the war, the Army Disposal sales.

The HSNT is proposing to publish a series of Occasional Papers on matters of general interest. These will not be peer-assessed as is the Journal. There are many articles in the HSNT Archives which deserve to be showcased. An interesting collection of letters written by members of the services and private persons relating to the bombing of Darwin on 19 February 1942 has been donated to the HSNT. It is hoped that some of these will appear in the Occasional Paper series.

Royal Historical Society of Queensland

The holiday period is over and it is business as usual as the New Year is beginning to pick up – there have been a pleasing number of visitors to the Museum mostly from overseas. The lecture programme recommenced in March.

In December the special issue of the *Journal* 'Tropical Transformations, Denis Murphy in Queensland History' was launched by the Premier and Minister for Trade, Peter Beattie at a well attended function at the Commissariat Store. Copies will soon be sent to members.

Royal Western Australian Historical Society

An enjoyable Christmas Party for members and guests rounded off the Society's 80th anniversary celebrations. On that occasion Ms Sue Walker MLA, Member for Nedlands, launched the 2005 edition annual publication of the Society's journal *Early Days*. A generous donation of \$4,000 was received from Dr A Williams, son of the late AE Williams, for investment towards the ongoing financial support of the Society's History Prize in his father's name.

The annual program of research readings commenced in February with a paper entitled 'A Medical School for Western Australia – the first Fifty Years' by Dr Robert Pearce.

Tasmanian Historical Research Association

The Tasmanian Historical Research Association has recently elected historian Dr Alison Alexander as its President. Dr Alexander has been the THRA's delegate to the Federation for many years and for a time served as Vice-President and Hon. Secretary.

Changes to FAHS representation

There have been some recent changes to the FAHS Committee. Mr. Nigel Ridgeway has been replaced as the Delegate of the History Council of South Australia by Ms Diana Chessell. Diana is an Adjunct Research Fellow of the Hawke Research Institute at the University of South Australia, Convenor of the SA Chapter of Manning Clark House and the Durrell School of Corfu representative for Australia & Southeast Asia. A specialist in migration history, Diana has published extensively concerning the Italian–Australian's influence in 'opening the piazza/Australian mainstreet to cosmopolitanism.

Dr. Alison Alexander and Ms Dianne Snowden have been replaced as Delegates of the Tasmanian Historical Research Association by Mr. Ian Terry. Ian has been on the THRA committee for 3 years. He was a free-lance historian, and worked particularly in writing heritage reports for government and municipal councils. In 2006, he became an assistant historian at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, where he is preparing displays. He is particularly interested in heritage history.

Teaching History

On 7 March 2007, Julia Ryan from CDHS, Ruth Kerr and I met with Declan O'Connor and Emily Cunningham of Department of Education, Science and Training at Barton. We reiterated the themes of our letter to the Minister on 8 October 2006, outlining the vast documentary and artefact resources held in the nation's historical societies, and their possible application to the teaching of Australian history as well as to the production of local and affordable professional development for teachers. Following our presentation, Declan O'Connor outlined the History Summit's key themes of teaching history presenting a global perspective, teaching some civics, and teaching local history. The department is also working on a model curriculum policy and the government's determination to revive and strengthen history teaching in Australian schools. We promoted the opportunities for historical societies to have their records categorised and accessible in a consistent way. The idea of gateways to local histories online was expressed. We felt the hour-long meeting with the operations staff in DEST likely to be implementing the History Summit outcomes and government policy was worthwhile and that they were receptive to the viewpoints we were advocating. Following the meeting, we also forwarded our policy statements to Professor Tony Taylor, the consultant charged with drafting a national history curriculum and received a very positive response. It remains to be seen just how successful we have been in getting our ideas incorporated into the curricula around Australia. In the light of these matters, it has been heartening to hear, in recent days, that history and geography will once more be a part of the national curriculum.

EVD

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