

Donald History Society Inc.

President's Report 2022-23

I am pleased to present my sixth president's report to the 2023 AGM.

We ended 2022 with our annual dinner. Guest speaker for the evening was Professor Barry Golding AM, who spoke on the Dja Dja Wurrung nation.

We have been very fortunate to have had exceptional speakers this past year: - John Kumm, A Life Fulfilled; Allan Postlethwaite, Agriculture Through Time; Kelvin Clark, Kooka's Country Cookies; Peter Clark, Donald Meatworks; James Burke, BB Harvesting; and Geoff Park, field naturalist and nature photographer from Newstead, The Birds of our Catchment. All our speakers are recorded and the record kept at our archives. These talks along with our monthly newsletter 'The Buloke Bulletin' can be found on our website <https://donaldhistory.org.au>

Our first excursion for 2023 was to Swanwater Homestead where current owner Patrick O'Shannessy was host for the day. The O'Shannessy family are at present restoring some of the outbuildings originally built by previous owners, Harrison, and then Mogg.

In May we were taken on a tour of the Banyena area by some of the locals before meeting back at the Banyena Hall for afternoon tea and much reminiscing of their growing up in the 1950's and 60's. Hopefully we have encouraged them to record their memories and send a copy into our archives.

This year we held two of our monthly meetings out of town. This has created interest and attracted visitors.

Our September meeting was held at "Grassy Vale", Batyo Catyo, the original home of the Campbell family. The owners run an Airbnb from another house on the property called "Argyle House". They spoke on their business venture and the origins of the Airbnb company, and its expansion worldwide.

In October we travelled to Jeffcott to visit the site of the Coates memorial plaque where John Coates spoke on the Coates family since selection. This was followed by a meeting held in the Jeffcott fire shed. John spoke again, this time on the history of the local fire brigade. We then travelled to view the Tonkin memorial plaque before heading to "Oaklands" to enjoy the hospitality of the Pearse family.

During the year we were represented at the Western Victorian Association of Historical Societies (WVHAS) Midlands Zone meeting at Nullawil and the WVHAS 60th birthday anniversary in Horsham.

In May three members attended a conference in Birchip ran by the Royal Historical Society of Victoria (RHSV). The following day we opened our Court House Museum for conference attendees. In September, Rosalie Triolo, vice-president of the (RHSV) and chairperson of the Historical Societies Support Committee visited our museum. She was very impressed with our large collection and listened to the concerns the committee had in relation to housing our collection.

A generous donation from Alison at Look First Op Shop has allowed us to erect signage at the front of the Courthouse Museum telling the story of market gardener, Georgie Ah Ling.

Our archives, as usual, handled a variety of requests. The old microfilm copies of The Donald Times (1883-1946), Donald Express (1883-1894) and the Donald Mail (1913-1917) have been digitised making research easier and more efficient. Bound copies of the local newspaper from 1947 to 2022

are available in our reading room at the Archives. During History Month we held a stall at the Donald Show offering a selection of books published by our Society.

Valued member Peter Pendlebury, who over the years kindly stored a large volume of donated material for us, organised a highly successful auction which raised over \$5,000 dollars for the Society.

Our Antique and Collectables shop at 58 Woods Street, open when the archives are open, once again helped cover some of our ongoing costs.

Thank you to 'The Buloke Times' who regularly publish our articles highlighting the work we do promoting and preserving our local history, and to the executive, members and the community who have volunteered in any way to keep the Archives, Courthouse Museum, Agricultural Museum and Police Camp maintained and running smoothly.