



NEWSLETTER

Golden Jubilee Year 50th Anniversary Celebrations

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Special points of interest:

- **Committee Meetings:** Saturday, 3 November 2007, 1.30pm, Camden Museum.
- **Ordinary General Meetings:** Wed., 10 October 2007, 14 November 2007, 12 December 2007
Christmas Party 13 February 2008, 12 March 2008, 9 April 2008, 14 May 2008, 11 June 2008.
7.30pm, Camden Museum, John St, Camden.

The society has had a number of activities that have celebrated the society's golden jubilee.

Anniversary Meeting

The 50th anniversary meeting of the society was held in July. Ian Willis presented a paper called: 'Fifty Years of Local History: The Camden Historical Society, 1957-2007'. The foundation meeting of the society was held on 24 July 1957 and was sponsored by the Camden High School P&C Association.

Civic Reception

Camden Council gave a civic reception for the society in July to celebrate our golden

jubilee year. The 120 local enthusiasts listened to Camden's deputy mayor David Funnell praise the society for its achievements. Councillor Funnell then reminisced about the changing nature



of Argyle Street. Ian Willis gave a reply and outlined that the society's successes were not achieved in isolation. He thanked the many organisations that have supported the society's efforts over the past 50 years, particularly, Camden

Council, Camden Rotary and Camden Library.

Anniversary Dinner

The society celebrated its 50th year with an anniversary dinner in August. This was a first for the society and 35 members attended the function at *Impassion* restaurant. The attendees were welcomed by Ian Willis and were later addressed by David Constantine, chef and proprietor. He outlined his aims in establishing his restaurant in Camden's pre-eminent heritage building. He explained how the restoration was undertaken by the builders and architects. Many features of the old Whitman's building are still evident in the fabric of the restaurant.

SWOT Night

ing this method we will list the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for the society.

No ideas will be dismissed. All ideas will be accepted and put on the list.

Then a meeting of the work-

ing party for the development strategic plan will go through all the ideas. They will sift out the ideas that are most appropriate for the society over the next 5 years.

Do you have any good ideas for the society?

All correspondence to Secretary, Camden Historical Society, PO Box 566, Camden. 2570 • Museum 4655 3400

President: Dr Ian Willis 4658 0193 • Vice presidents: John Wrigley OAM 4655 9210; Peter Hayward OAM 4651 2253; Bob Lester 4655 9044 • Treasurer: Ray Herbert 9606 6075 • Secretary: Doug Barrett 4647 0597 • Julie Wrigley, Len English, Colin Mills, Milton Ray, Cathey Shepherd, Ros Tildsley, Richard Nixon OAM, Sandra Dodds, Dr Karen Farmer, Werner Wollinski, Peter Mylrea. *Newsletter Editor:* Dr Ian Willis. *Webmaster:* Steve Robinson



President's Shorts

The society participated in **History Week** and opened the museum on Friday night 21 September and Ian Willis presented a history workshop 'Be a Historical Detective' on Saturday 22 September.

A number of members participated in the **Camden Park Open Weekend** on 22-23 September with the open house and visitors, who walked around the gardens.

John Wrigley recently addressed **The Oaks Historical Society** at their August meeting. He spoke on the history of the Camden Historical Society

Ian Willis presented a paper called 'Yearning, Longing and

The Remaking of Camden's Identity: the myths and reality of 'a country town idyll' at the annual conference of the **Australian Historical Association Conference** at the University of New England, Armidale on 26 September.

On Sunday 19 August 2007 **The Oaks Historical Society** had 12 members visit the museum. Sandra Dodds and Fiona Gordon hosted a morning tea for the visitors after an introduction to the museum by Ian Willis. The visitors had a good look around the museum.

On Friday 17 August 2007 100 Year 1 & 2 pupils from **Mawarra Primary School** visited the museum. The five

classes ably were guided around the displays by Julie Wrigley, Jos and Ruth Ferguson, Doug Barrett, Peter Watson and Kay Freemantle.

On Tuesday evening on 5 June 2007 the society hosted Narellan Rotary Club at the museum. John Wrigley and Doug Barrett attended the dinner meeting, and then club members were given a guided tour around the museum after a short welcome by Ian Willis.

The society has been acting as host to Samantha Pacchiarotta, a high school student from St Patricks College at Campbelltown. Samantha is completing the service section of her Silver Award for the **Duke of Edin-**

burgh Scheme. She has completed a list of suggestions for the museum and has been working on a newspaper article.

The society has put in a submission for a proposed community partnership with Camden Council's Camden Creative Studios, the society and MTC Works Solutions. The project aims to **digitise the society's collection of audio-tapes** housed in the museum. If successful it means that the society will be able use the recordings for a variety of purposes as well as making the collection more accessible to the general public. One possible use is putting the recordings on the society's website so many people can listen to them.

Museum Volunteers Afternoon

Saturday, 27 October 2007, 1.30pm

Bob Lester is organising an afternoon for museum volunteers on Saturday 27 October 2007 at 1.30pm. This will be an opportunity for museum volunteers to get together for a training day.

Bob has worked out an interesting afternoon where he will go over museum procedures. This will include use of the computer, the lift, archives room and records.

Bob has recently updated the volunteers manual at the museum called, '**Volunteering at the Camden Museum**'. It contains much valuable information that will help the volunteers during their shifts. This will be the basis of the afternoon.

If you have any questions, worries or just want to say hello to other volunteers. Come along.

Bob is to be commended on the wonderful job he has done in updating the manual. It is extremely comprehensive.

If you are a volunteer make sure that you pick up your copy of the manual at the front desk when you come on duty.

If you would like to **become a volunteer**, see Bob. It is very rewarding and good for you.

Contact Bob on 46559044.

Society Web Page

www.camdenhistory.org.au

Steve Robinson continues to do a great job on our website. Since the beginning of the year the number of hits on the website have increased from 3091 in January to a peak of over 8300 in August. To 9 September there had been 3231 hits on the site. In September the busiest day to the 9th was on 3 September with 660 hits on the website, with

most days averaging around 300 hits. Sunday is the busiest day of the week followed by Wednesday. Most of the visitors to our website come from the USA, followed by Australia, then China and Canada. The most common links from an external webpage are from Camden Council's website. The most common keyphrases used in a search to find our

website were 'Camden' followed by 'Camden history' then 'Camden historical society'. The common keywords used in a search to find our website were 'Camden', 'history', 'society', then 'historical'.

The latest feature on the website is a photo gallery of our events, particularly our 50th anniversary celebrations.

High School P&C To Sponsor Local Historical Society

'At Tuesday night's meeting of the High School P&C meeting a report was given on the forthcoming tours arranged for the Australian History groups. Considerable discussion followed and the meeting developed into what could be called an Historical Society Function.

Several members spoke on the subject and after hearing the view of the Headmaster, Mr J Brownie, and the Deputy, Mr W McCullough, it was agreed that the association sponsor a local Historical Association.'

Camden News 18 July 1957

Colin M. Clark Chemist-Optometrist For Cameras and all Optical Goods

**Spectacle Frames
from the Continent**

**Cameras with built in
light meter**

Camden News 18 July 1957

Camden Park Gardens

Colin Mills

Camden Park possesses one of the best preserved colonial gardens in Australia. It was begun in 1820 by William, the youngest son of John and Elizabeth Macarthur, although the garden surrounding the house that you see today was started about 1830, before the completion of the house in 1835.

William imported plants from all over the world, mostly on a barter system. He sent Australian plants to the leading nurseries of England requesting plants in return. He undertook many plant collecting trips and befriended Ludwig Leichhardt who entrusted his botanical collection to William. A number of important trees in the garden, such as the mag-

nificent Queensland Bottle Tree, were grown at Camden from seed collected by Leichhardt.

William started the Camden Park nursery about 1840, selling large quantities of plants all over Australia, to the commercial nurseries, orchards and vineyards then becoming established. Camden was their principal source of plants for two decades. The nursery flourished until WWII, latterly producing mainly cut flowers and bulbs for the Sydney markets.

The Camden Park Nursery Group, a voluntary organization, has recently re-established the nursery with the aim of refurbishing

the gardens and raising money to help maintain them. William was an accomplished plant breeder and was the first in the world to hybridise a woody leguminous plant. Some of his camellias, such as 'Aspasia', are still widely grown. But many of the plants bred at Camden have been lost and a major aim of the "new" nursery is to recreate some of the lost plants using William's breeding records as a guide.

The Camden Historical Society has organized a visit of the gardens for members only on Sunday 7 October 2007. Bring a plate, tea and coffee provided. See Ros Tildsley for details.

Society Members Visit Sunday 7/10/07 2.00pm

Camden Historical Society Formed

'A Camden Historical Society was formed at a meeting held in the High School library last night, and plans were made for the Society's initial activities to include inspections of many of the old buildings in the district.

The President, Mr W McCulloch, who is deputy headmaster of the High School, said the Society would endeavour to find out more details of the district. It was necessary to do that now as 'quite a lot of historical information is always lost when old residents pass on if the information is not collected and properly recorded beforehand.'

Camden News 25 July 1957

Camden, A Biography of a Country Town

The Camden Bibliography

The society has recently launched the Camden bibliography on the our website. The aim of the bibliography is to highlight some of the research that addresses the notion of Camden as a country town.

There are over 260 references in the bibliography. They are categorised under a number of headings, including newspapers and journals, books, articles, theses, studies and

audio-visual.

The bibliography covers the Camden district and includes a number of villages to the west of Camden and the Burragarang Valley.

The bibliography has a number of hyperlinks to other websites and is easy to navigate.

It is only meant to be a starting point for any research on the local area and provides on

an overview of the resources related to Camden.

The bibliography does not include manuscript sources or artefacts, objects, works of art or photographs. The compilers of the bibliography are looking for suggestions to add to the list.

It should make the job of any research project related to Camden a lot easier for the avid local or family historian.

Another Burragarang Valley Landmark To Go

'The valley of Burragarang is being evacuated in readiness for submerging when the Warragamba is complete.

A well known landmark, the old stone building of St Paulinus' Church, completed in 1872, is shortly to be demolished.

The last Mass was celebrated there on Sunday morning of July 7, at 10 o'clock, by Father Ekerick, of Campbelltown, a former priest in charge.'

Camden News 25 July 1957

Narellan History Prize 2008

Have you a story to share? Entries are being sought for the inaugural Narellan History Prize. A Prize of \$1,000 is being offered to stimulate research into, and the writing and recording of, the history of the greater Narellan district. The Prize will be awarded to the best piece of original, unpublished historical research. The subject criteria is open to any

aspect, including individual and family histories, or a study of a particular locality, geographical feature or heritage item.

Entries are only open to individuals. Guidelines and entry forms are available from the Narellan and Camden Libraries, or can be downloaded from <www.library.camden.nsw.gov.au>. People interested in entering are encouraged to contact

Betty on 4658 0602 or email celebrating-narellan@hotmail.com, if they require assistance with subject matter or accessing history resources. Entry is free. Entries close 4pm Friday 14 March 2008. A panel will judge the entries with the winner to be announced at 10 am on Saturday, 29 March 2008 at the Narellan Library.

Red Cross Hopes To Increase Members

'Camden Red Cross Society at present has a membership of 323, but the branch hopes to increase this number considerably by a house to house canvass in the near future.'

President, Miss LH Moore.

Camden News 1 August 1957



CAMDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

PO Box 566
Camden NSW 2570

Camden Museum

Camden Library and Museum Complex

40 John St, Camden.

General Admission Free

Opening Times

Thursday– Sunday 11.00am – 4.00 pm

Phone: Museum 02 4655 3400

<http://www.camdenhistory.org.au>

Email: info@camdenhistory.org.au

ABN 84 182 869 026

MEMBERSHIP

Individual \$10

Family \$15 Corporate/Assocn \$25

For Year Ending 30 June

The Camden Historical Society

The society was founded in 1957. Its aim is to promote the local history of Camden in a contemporary context. It primarily does this through managing the Camden Museum which opened in 1970. General admission to the museum is free, although visitors are encouraged to leave a donation. The museum is conducted entirely by volunteers. It also receives substantial and continuing assistance from Camden Council.

Historic Precinct

The museum is located in Camden's historic precinct. It is part of the Camden Library and Museum Complex. It provides an ideal start for a walking tour of the town area. The visitor can take in the charm of the many 19th and early 20th century buildings.

Research

The Society's archives are open to the public. General enquiries are free. Specific research by our volunteers attracts a \$15 fee plus photocopying. Extensive use of the Society's records is by negotiation.

All donations to the Camden Historical Society Inc over \$2 are tax deductible

The accredited value of objects donated to the society are eligible for tax deduction

Camden Retrospective *Camden's 'country town idyll' ?*

Sydney's urban expansion into the local area (in Elderslie, Oran Park, South Camden) threatens to destroy what is left of the notion of Camden as a country town.

Fact or fiction?

There is a desire by many in the local community to retain the image of Camden as a country town.

Is this just a dream or is there some reality to this idea?

Many local people talk about the retention of Camden's 'country town atmosphere' or 'keeping Camden country'. The

town is described as being 'picturesque' and having 'charming cottages'. To others Camden is a 'working country town' or simply 'my country town'.

These values and ideas are connected to the reality of trying to keep what is left of Camden as a country town.

These ideas are used in tourist brochures which picture idyllic rural scenes. Land developers have scenes of families frolicking in the meadows with their children.

These values and ideas look

back to the early days of Camden's when daily life in the town was uncomplicated, innocent, and genuine with traditional rural values; when people talked to their neighbours and stopped for a chat in the street. They are based on nostalgia.

These ideas form the basis of a paper that Ian Willis is presenting at the Australian Historical Association Conference at the University of New England in September. He maintains that nostalgia and yearning for a lost past have been re-created in a 'country town idyll' in Camden today.

The Camden Historical Society would like to acknowledge the assistance of the Hon Pat Farmer MP in the printing of this newsletter.