



# NEWSLETTER

## Living in a historic house

Edwina Macarthur Stanham speaks on living in Camden Park House

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Society members were addressed at the June meeting by Edwina Macarthur Stanham. She detailed what it is like living with her family in an early 19th century colonial house.

John and Edwina have occupied the house since 1990 following the death of John's mother. Edwina said that she feels that her children have been lucky to grow up in the historic surroundings of original furniture, books, paintings and other items.

The house is a living museum that has been occupied by members of the Macarthur family since it was built in 1835. John and

Edwina's family is the 6th generation of the family that has lived in the house.

According to Edwina there is no such thing as a typical week. 'There is the open weekend in September and there can be visitors at all other times,' she said.

Her objective has been to maintain the house as her family home. Guided by the advice of the Camden Park Preservation Committee.

'The house is very welcoming' said Edwina, 'and comes to life with a party. The house has been used for many things, including our son's recent 21st birthday party, with all his friends. They all stayed

over at the house on Saturday night'.

'Camden Park House is a special place', she said. 'It has 13 cottages, some of which are rented out. Some have been lived in for 20 years. It is quite a community. We have Christmas drinks to say thank you and recognize that it is a special place'.

Heating the house can be a challenge, according to Edwina. She said, 'Every room has a fireplace. We only live in one or two rooms which are easy to heat'.

### Special points of interest:

- Ordinary General Meetings
- 13 July 2011
- 10 August 2011
- 14 September 2011
- 12 October 2011
- 9 November 2011
- 14 December 2011
- Each meeting is held at 7.30pm at the museum, 40 John St, Camden.
- All welcome

## Research and Writing Group

The Camden Historical Society's Research and Writers Group continues during 2011. The aim of the group is to foster research and writing of local history of the Camden area. Sharon Greene is now acting as the group leader, and has replaced Ian Willis. The group meets every second month for discussion of research projects of personal interest to members.

Research matters discussed were wide ranging and included: Julie and John - Mosaic catalogue, Brownlow Hill; Janice - Website for Camden Park, JB Martin, Mounted Rifles; Cathey -

Indexing Nepean Times, Camden News indexing, 1917 family history blog; Robert - 1939 history of Camden sewerage, Narellan Army Camp, Camden street names, Bob Mitchell; Sharon - Nepean River County Council history.

So why not come along and share your research and writing experiences. Enjoy a chat with others who enjoy developing their writing skills and find out what others are doing. Do not think you are on your own, discussion and

encouragement bloom. You will be surprised what tiny piece of information from someone else's work might solve a problem that has been frustrating you for ages or find the answer in the wealth of local information that can be found in the CHS files.

Up-coming meetings are 16 July, 17 September, and 19 November.

Meetings start at 9.30am at the Camden Museum and all are welcome to come along and share their experiences.

All correspondence to Secretary, Camden Historical Society, PO Box 566, Camden. 2570 • Museum 4655 3400  
 President: Cathey Shepherd 4655 9963 • Vice presidents: John Wrigley OAM 4655 9210; Bob Lester 4655 9044 •  
 Treasurer: Ray Herbert 9606 6075 • Secretary: Doug Barrett 4647 0597 • Immediate Past President Dr Ian Willis, General  
 Committee: Peter Hayward OAM, Julie Wrigley, Len English, Roslyn Tildsley, Dr Karen Farmer, Sharon Greene, Robert  
 Wheeler. Newsletter Editor: Dr Ian Willis 4658 0193. Webmaster: Steve Robinson



## Editor's Shorts

### Upcoming speakers

**8 June 2011**

Edwina Macarthur Stanham,  
Camden Park.

**13 July 2011**

**10 August 2011**

Annual General Meeting

**14 September 2011**

Show & Tell, Cooking of  
Yesteryear

### Events

The society has received a grant of \$2300 under the **Grants to Voluntary Environment and Heritage Organisations program** for 2010-11. The grant is supervised by the Federal Government's Department for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities. The grant is to

assist the society in its running costs.

A **committee meeting** was held in May. The matters dealt with included: repairing broken lights in museum; costing information for fans in museum; closing blinds in Nixon room; payments of insurances; change in colour of journal with new volume; donation of photographs of Camden township from Charlie Cowell; membership renewals are now due; an inspection of exhibition and display areas was undertaken; OH&S within the museum was reviewed.

An **OH&S inspection and review of display areas** was conducted after the committee meeting. Each display area was examined for its effectiveness, safety, ease of access and other issues. Suggestions were examined, ideas taken and a TO DO list

created for each area of the museum. Some areas had minor issues, such as tagging of cords and improved signage. It was felt that some display cases were dated and needed replacing. It was felt that some equipment was old and could be improved by seeking replacements. There were numerous ideas on how displays may be smartened up to allow easier interpretation and access by visitors. It was felt that some areas could be improved by de-cluttering and some items put into storage. There were ideas for more effective use of the research room and how the kitchen could be made a more friendly space. These projects will be put on a priority list and dealt with as funds become available or the society seeks grants to cover the cost. If members have any concerns or ideas pass them on the

committee.

**Museum visitor** numbered 2662 up to 10 June 2011, which compares favourably with 2037 for the same time in 2010. This is an increase of 25 per cent from the same time in 2010. In May 2011 there were 337 adults and 245 children, which was made up of a number of school groups. Giving a total for May of 582 visitors.

The **wedding dress display** is continuing to attract visitors and has been a credit to all who contributed to its compilation.

## Southern Highlands and Illawarra Chapter Museums Australia (NSW) Inc

The chapter held their June meeting at Glenalvon Museum, Lithgow Street, Campbelltown on Sunday 19 June.

The guest speaker was Rebecca Evans from the Ponwerhouse Museum. She spoke on the **Secrets of a Stitch Detective** and outlined how to read garments, tell their stories and store them properly.

After Rebecca's talk there was a tour of Glenalvon Museum by members of the Campbelltown and Airs Historical Society.

Rebecca's presentation was preceded by the regular business meeting of the chapter. Each society gave a short account of their activities from the previous three months. This was followed by the annual general meeting and then lunch.

Delegates were greeted on their arrival by members of the Campbelltown & Airs Historical Society who, hosted the meeting and, provided morning tea and a smile.

The Camden Historical Society has been a member of the Chapter for many years. It provides useful updates of other societies and networking opportunities.

## Doreen Lyon

May Meeting Speaker on the exhibition: *With the Best of Intentions*

Doreen Lyon from The Oaks Historical Society addressed the May meeting of the society on the current exhibition at Wollondilly Heritage Centre.

*With the Best of Intentions* was curated by Doreen and tells the story of Dr Barnardo's Farm School at Mowbray Park. The exhibition describes the stories, the experiences and the challenges faced by child migrants between 1929

and 1959. This is a difficult subject dealt with in a sensitive fashion.

Doreen gave a short presentation of the history of the development of the exhibition. She then showed a series of short films produced by film maker Sandra Pires of Why Documentaries. The films are a montage of contemporary photographs, archival footage and re-enactments by drama students of

the stories of child migrants. There are parallel exhibitions at National Maritime Museum in Sydney and the National Museum in Liverpool (UK).

John Wrigley read a review of the exhibition written by Ian Willis from *History Australia*, the journal of the Australian Historical Association. The exhibition runs until late 2012 and is free with museum entry.

### 2011-12 Fees Now Due

Society fees are now due. Society secretary Doug Barrett requests that all members fill in a details form so that you can receive your journal and newsletter. Members will be issued with a receipt on request. This all allows the society to keep accurate records and maintain our contact with you. Members are the society.

### Werner Wollinski

During May one of the society's long serving members, Werner Wollinski, died. His funeral was held at St John's church on Thursday 12 May. The society was represented by the presence of a number of members. Vice president John Wrigley gave a valedictory address paying tribute to Werner's community service, which extended well beyond his work with the society. Werner was a positive force within the Camden community and we all benefited from knowing him.



# Partnership Meeting 5 May

Camden Historical Society, Camden Area Family History Society, Camden Council Library Service

Matters discussed included: Heritage Festival program evaluation reported stated that it was very successful with 316 people attending 9 events and many viewing the exhibition. There was positive feedback from participants. It was suggested that a collections based tour of the 3 partners be a future activity to target local journalists, staff, group members, tourist officers and councilors.

History week planning for September 3-11 is well in hand. The theme is 'Eat history'. Planned activities include a photographic exhibition of people and place of the Camden food industry in Camden library and a display of cookbooks and cooking utensils in the Galleria

by Camden museum. A high tea is planned, along with a mini-discoverers session for pre-schoolers and parents in the museum. Family history members will share their family recipes, while there will be an indigenous food walk at the Australian Botanic Gardens, Mt Annan and finally a show & tell at the Camden Historical Society meeting on 14 September on 'Cooking of Yesteryear'.

There was concern expressed by CHS and CAFS on the loss of the library information desk. Kathryn asked for feedback - the decision was a library operational one.

CAFHS Conference provided a demonstration of Camden

Voices and Camden Images websites.

Jo Oliver presented a paper called: 'A practical partnership: library, historical society and family history society co-operation at Camden' at the Australia & New Zealand 'A Sense of Place' local studies conference at the state library in May. It was well received and Camden is seen as a leader in this area.

Nepean Shire Council (abolished 1949) minutes are being digitized as a joint project between Camden, Liverpool and Penrith Councils.

Camden Images is to include subject headings.

## Museum Tours

Camden Public School came through the museum in February with 150 children. This was followed by Killara Probus (40) and Narellan Activity Centre (20).

St Pauls Catholic Primary School visited in March (25) and again in May with 93 children.

In June there is a bus tour group and two school groups.

These tours were led by the Doug Barrett who does a sterling job.

# Museum Visitors' Book

## Source of visitors

The visitors' book tells the society a lot about the places that people come from to visit the museum.

Visitors come from all over the Sydney area: Parramatta, Macquarie Park, Canley Heights, Greystanes, Quakers Hill, Lugarno, Gladsville, Cranebrook, Melrose Park.

There were lots of locals from Harrington Park, Ruse, Cobbitty, Bradbury, Currans Hill, Catherine Fields, Eschol Park, Rossmore and even from Camden and Elderslie. So there are still people in the local area who have not been to the museum before.

The book reveals many visitors from other parts of New South Wales including Inverell, Kyogle, Corrimall, Marulan.

There were quite a number from interstate: Melbourne, Strathfieldsage (Vic), Sunshine Coast, Victor Harbour (SA).

There was even a smattering of international visitors from: South Otago (NZ), Christchurch (NZ), Pleasant Grove, CA (USA), Kloof (SAfrica), Goslav (Germany).

It is useful to keep an eye on where museum visitors come from as it gives us an idea of the influence of the museum,

and how important it is in the local community.

These comments provide a useful tool when completing grant applications and dealing with other government authorities such as Camden Council and the New South Wales government.

Government authorities want verification that their support, financial or otherwise, is being effectively used by community organisations, like the Camden museum.

## Visitors Book

The visitors book is an often under utilised source of information about the views of museum visitors. It highlights what the visitor is looking for: memories of the past; an educational experience; a pleasant time; seeking information about the past; an opportunity to immerse themselves in the past; show their children what the past was like; explaining their local environment; other things.

# 78-80 John St Proposed development

The society lodged an objection to the **demolition of the outside toilet** behind 80 John Street.

The new building at the rear of the sites has been requested to be redesigned to **reduce both its unattractive bulk and overall height. It** is proposed to be 2.5m above Council's standard. The saving of a

mature Jacaranda tree and more sympathetic paving has been suggested instead of a sea of concrete for their car parking located between the new 9.5m high building and the existing heritage cottages.

The development application will not impact on these existing cottages at 78-80 John Street.

There has been a request to keep the heritage fabric of the cottages, including the 1938 toilet. This is a significant structure visible from Broughton Street.

View the proposal at the Museum.

Robert Wheeler

## Museum Visitors' Comments

The visitors enjoy the museum and leave comments like: 'Enjoyed it', 'Very nice, ta!', 'Very informative', 'Wonderful', 'We loved it'. There is lots of praise for our efforts: 'Keep up the good collection', 'We will recommend to others'. Some have the past brought to life with: 'Brings back memories'.



## 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: [secretary@camdenhistory.org.au](mailto:secretary@camdenhistory.org.au)

ABN 84 182 869 026

### MEMBERSHIP

Individual \$10

Family \$15

Corporate/Assocn \$75

For Year Ending 30 June

## Camden Historical Society Inc

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

### Camden Historic Precinct

The museum is located in Camden's historic precinct and is part of the Camden Library Museum Complex. It provides an ideal start for a walking tour of the town area where the visitor can observe the charm and character of the town centre.

### Archives and 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

### *Memory and the legend of John Macarthur*

There are many historic figures that are more myth than reality and Camden has some of them.

One local legend is the story of John Macarthur as the founder of sheep farming in Australia. The story has exaggerations that are different from the real person of history.

The legend had an early appearance in the *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia (1886)*. The story really gained traction between the 1920s and 1960s in a host of publications. Some were school textbooks.

Rene Rem recalls learning about

the story of John Macarthur in 3rd Class at St Therese Catholic Primary School at Padstow Heights in 1962. The history textbook was a green and gold paperback that had stories of explorers and other pioneers. It told of adventure, 'daring do' and strange and exotic places.

Rene recalls stories about John Oxley, Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson, Joseph Banks, Captain Cook and Captain Arthur Phillip. They started his 'love of history' and a fascination with Camden.

On one occasion Rene had an

exciting day out when his father drove him to visit the Rotolactor at Menangle. It was located on famous Macarthur property of Camden Park which holds some of the legend and mystery of the story of John Macarthur. Rene held a life long desire to be connected with the 'Birthplace of the Nation's Wealth'.

These stories of discovery, exploration and pioneering created 'giants of men' in the progress and development of the Australian frontier, including Camden.

*Ian Willis, 2011.*

*Rene Rem, Camden, May 2011.*

**This is printed at Russell Matheson's office. The society gratefully acknowledges his assistance.**