



# NEWSLETTER

## Elegance and Romance Wedding Dress Exhibition at Museum

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A keen group at the Camden Museum is putting together a new exhibition of wedding dresses.

The group is made up Cathey Shepherd, Julie Wrigley, Janice Johnson, Shirley Rorke, Jenny Akers, Olive McAleer, Frances Warner and Margaret Wheeler.

The group has already been active and got together on 17 January and 24 January to organise the Camden Museum's archive clothing boxes.

The new exhibition is located in the display area of the Research Room. The theme of the display is 'Camden Weddings' and it inspired by the upcoming Royal wedding!

### Exhibits

So far, in the display there are

the wedding dresses.

Peg Tegel (nee Reeve) who married Albert (Bert) Tegel in 1934.

Beryl Kerr (nee Stuckey) who married William Kerr in 1944.

Mavis Sidman (nee Sharpe) who married Ralph Sidman in 1946.

Lorna Inglis (nee McIntosh) who married Richard (Dick) Inglis in 1948.

Olive McAleer (nee Davis) who married Geoff McAleer in 1952.

Jill Leemen (nee Bownas) who married Richard (Dick) Leemen in 1969.

Karen Farmer (nee Bailey) who married Wayne Farmer in 1983.

Rebecca Whitfield (nee McAleer), Olive McAleer's daughter, who married Jason Whitfield in 1996.

Joy Thorn (nee Bradford) who married Keith Thorn in 1945.

The exhibition will run for most of 2011.

Some of these dresses are on loan and while others are from the permanent collection of the society.

Thanks to Shirley Rorke and Janice Johnson for lending some items for the exhibition.

Thank you to Tails Dry Cleaning for their generous help in preparing some of the clothes for the Museum.

### Appeal

If you have any wedding memorabilia you would like to lend to the Society for the display contact Cathey Shepherd on 0406 050804.

### Special points of interest:

- Ordinary General Meetings

9 March 2011

13 April 2011

11 May 2011

8 June 2011

13 July 2011

10 August 2011

14 September 2011

- Each meeting is held at 7.30pm at the museum, 40 John St, Camden. All welcome

## Camden Images

Camden Images Past and Present is a unique collection of significant past and present images from the Camden area. It includes people, places, events and the natural and built environment. It is the joint responsibility of the Camden Historical Society and Camden Council Library Service.

The project is part of the partnership agreement between the society and the library. There is a joint committee overseeing the project which meets on a regular basis, with representatives from both organisations. The images are located on a website that is maintained by Camden

Council. The society volunteers digitize the images, library staff add headings from the Australian Thesaurus and the images are uploaded by commercial software company. Permission is obtained from copyright holders for images. New images are always welcome by programme participants.

All correspondence to Secretary, Camden Historical Society, PO Box 566, Camden. 2570 • Museum 4655 3400  
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 Committee: Peter Hayward OAM, Julie Wrigley, Len English, Roslyn Tildsley, Dr Karen Farmer, Sharon Green, Robert  
 Wheeler. Newsletter Editor: Dr Ian Willis. Webmaster: Steve Robinson



## Editor's Shorts

### Upcoming speakers

9 March 2011

Helen Laidlaw, author *The Gardner's Gamble* (2010)

13 April 2011

Show and Tell. Members bring along an item and tell a story about it. Always popular.

11 May 2011

Doreen Lyon, Curator, *With the Best of Intentions*, The Oaks Historical Society.

8 June 2011

Edwina Macarthur Stanham, Camden Park.

13 July 2011

10 August 2011

Annual General Meeting

14 September 2011

### Events

The society's February meeting had an informative talk from Lee Abrahams the editor of the weekly **District Reporter**. She outlined in detail the weekly news and newspaper production cycle of the newspaper. The society and its members regularly provide articles for the back page's Back Then history spot. It is one of the most popular pages in the newspaper.

A relative of former local identity and society member **Dick Nixon** has provided a prize for Senior History at Camden High School in his name. Pam Nixon, Dick's niece, now of Melbourne, has generously supported the legacy of her uncle. Dick was a well known Camden raconteur and storyteller. He was a former president and committee member of the society for many years. He

was an active member of the Camden Show Society, St John's Church and Camden's Masonic Lodge.

The society lodged a submission on the draft **Camden Development Control Plan**. The submission proposed the inclusion of a number of items (cottages and precincts) to Table B4 Potential Heritage Item - Built Heritage. The items that the society would like to see added reflect the growth of the town between 1945 and 1973 (The Three Cities Plan of the NSW Government). There are at least 4 housing styles used during that period. They were: simple fibro cottages; triple fronted and L-shaped brick cottages; houses using asbestos-cement sheeting; ranch style. These cottage styles represent a period in the town's growth largely due to the Burrarorang coal fields of

the 1960s. After 1973 the Macarthur Region, of which Camden is a part, was a designated growth centre for the urban expansion of Sydney. These items reflect the character of Camden's community identity and sense of place.

Janice Johnson has been editing *The Memoirs of Obed West, A Portrait of Early Sydney* by Edward West Marriott. Janice has added a list of illustrations, footnotes, and an index to this now out of print publication. It is available at the Camden museum.

The museum was again represented in the **Australia Day** parade with a car lent by Vic Boardman. John and Julie Wrigley were in the car and made a colourful account of themselves. The town crier announced that the museum was open as Vic's vintage car went through the roundabout.

## Heritage Week

The themes for the National Trust's Heritage Week 2011 is 'Amazing Stories'. There will be 11 events across the two weeks of the festival. The festival programme lists all the events and gives a short profile of each. Programmes are available at the museum, and local libraries, and also on the National Trust website.

The Camden programme is a joint series of events between the society, Camden Council Library Service and the Camden Family History Society. The programme has a varied series of interesting and stimulating events. There is an exhibition 'Our Memories, Our Stories', a number of lectures 'Writing Your Story', 'On the Edge', and on German immigration. There is a 'Show

and Tell' on the Camden Historical Society meeting night. Tours of St John's Cemetery (a regular and always popular), 'Your Amazing Story' seminar and a book launch.

Bookings for Heritage Festival events in and around Camden and Narellan are taken by Camden and Narellan Library. Camden Library 4654 7951 Narellan Library 4645 5039

### April 2011

#### Retirement

After a long period of service Peter Mylrea has decided to retire as the co-ordinator of the society's photograph digitization project. Peter initiated History Pix, (now Camden Images). Peter has scanned 100s of images and organised their safe storage. Without his effort this project would never have reached its current status.

## Australia Day 2011

The Museum opened at 9am to give people an opportunity to visit before the start of the annual Australia Day street parade. Signs were prepared and displayed on Vic Boardman's car. John Wrigley then left to pick up Olive McAleer who rode in the car during the parade.

Bob Lester organised a display featuring photos of past floods in Camden. This was of great

interest to many of the visitors on the day who were unaware of the history of flooding in our local area.

We had a total of 95 people through the Museum on the day. Many were local residents who were first time visitors. Everyone was impressed with the quality of the displays and the broad range of historical information available about the local region. Doug Barrett

### Society & Library Partnership Meeting

The quarterly partnership for the Society and Library is to take place on Tuesday 22 February 2011. The meeting will discuss the ongoing activities for the remainder of the year. The main agenda item will be Camden Images and its continuing development and Heritage Week in April. The third party to the partnership is the Camden District Family History Society.

#### Museum Chapter

The society is a member of the Southern Highlands & Illawarra Chapter of Museums Australia (NSW). The last meeting was held at The Wollondilly Heritage Centre at The Oaks. The guest speaker was Sean O'Brien from ABC Open Illawarra. He spoke on the 'Now and Then' project which uses digital photography and oral recordings. He talked about the equipment, its use and then provided demonstrations that could be applied to local museums.



## Book Launch

### *The Gardener's Gamble, a social history of Australia through the Dawson family.*

Helen Laidlaw, 2010

The large extended Dawson family of Mount Hunter and Camden has been in Australia for over 175 years, linking back to their arrival on the ship 'Canton' from Lincolnshire England in 1835. Lincolnshire gardener John Dawson, his wife Mary (nee Hocknell) and eight of their children made the challenging voyage. Now an engrossing new book of the family's lives in Australia is to be launched in Camden on 9 March. It is a true story and has never been told before. Over time the family connections have extended to many other district pioneer families including Scott, Cranfield, McLeod, McNiven, Rofe, Thomas, Coker, Hobbs, and Gates.

Author Helen Laidlaw researched her book for 20 years using original diaries and letters, and the book is full of amazing stories of the nine different branches of the Dawson family, covering the years from 1835 to 1918, as the family spread to many different areas of the country.

Helen will speak at the Camden launch of her book entitled *The Gardener's Gamble – A Social History of Australia through the Dawson Family* at the 9 March meeting of the Camden Historical Society at the Camden Museum starting at 7.30 pm.

The book can be purchased at the Camden Museum. John W

Susanne Garvey writes on her blog in January 2011, 'The Gardener's Gamble' is an engrossing story revealing the famous and infamous, artists, the lawyer for Breaker Morant, David Jones family ... you'll love it'.

The story is true and has never been told before. An old rhyme .... describes some of the characters in this story:-

*Quaker, tailor, soldier, sailor, rich man, farmer, lawyer and thief.*

The life stories of the children of a Lincolnshire gardener John Dawson and his wife who migrated in 1835 to Australia reveal the social history of 19th Century Australia.

## Altruism: 'Give' and 'get a high'

Researchers have found that altruism can be a source of 'getting a high'. Pleasure centres in the brain are activated when people think about giving. 'Altruism may be a natural path to peak experiences', so a report by Rebecca Webber in *Sunday Life* stated recently.

Jeffrey Kottler, a psychology professor of California State University, states, 'a lot of peak experiences involve a feeling of spiritual transcendence, where you feel

transported beyond yourself as a human being'.

Kottler maintains that people throw off the restraints (often only mental) that have kept them from doing things for years.

Ryan Howell, a psychology professor at San Francisco State University, states, 'you stop worrying about impressing others and move towards things that are inherently interesting to you'.

Giving can be a peak experience which can contribute

to a person's short-term and long-term well-being. Howell explains that peak experiences 'become part of your positive memory capital'.

William Miller, a psychologist from the University of New Mexico, states that people re-assess 'who they were and what their place was in the universe' after they changed careers and started volunteering.

Source: Rebecca Webber, 'A 'eureka' moment can transform us forever', *Sunday Life*, 23 January 2011, pp16-17.

## Lee Abrahams

Editor/Proprietor, *District Reporter*

The editor/proprietor Lee Abrahams of the *District Reporter* addressed the Camden Historical Society on the life of an editor of a small community newspaper on Wednesday 9 February at the Camden Museum.

The *District Reporter* is owned by Lee Abrahams and

Noel Lowry of Camden. It is a 16pp free weekly published in Camden NSW each Monday. Abrahams maintains that it has a 'quirky' style that concentrates on local and rural news. The most popular sections are the back page feature, 'Back Then' on local history, followed by 'The

Diary' which is a summary of local community events. Society members are contributors to 'Back Then'. It has a print run of 17,000 which is circulated in the Camden and Wollondilly Local Government Areas. It is printed in Marrickville, NSW.

## Membership

Whether first joining as a new member or renewing your membership, please fill in the Membership Application form available at the front desk. A receipt for your money will be given upon request. When completing the membership form please print clearly and make sure your current phone number, email address and postal address are legible. This is to enable the email link to be sent to you so that you can connect to the Society's newsletter on our website and to ensure your journal reaches you at your current address. Your contact details will not be given to any third party, however we do need to keep your membership details at the Museum for our insurance and public liability policies.

Doug Barrett, Secretary.

## Committee Meetings

The society committee meetings will be held before the general meeting in March and April at 6.15pm in the Camden Museum. The May meeting will be held on Saturday afternoon May 7 at 1.30pm. Meetings for June and July will be held before the general meetings.

## Museum Visitors

The museum continues to attract a steady number of visitors. The total attendances for 2010 were 5,039. Visitor numbers were made up of 3,985 adults and 1,054 children. The busiest month was September with a total of 795 visitors followed by April with 533. The average monthly attendance was 419. visitors across the year.



## 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

## The Camden Historical Society

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 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 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.

### 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

### *Early post office communications in Camden*

Communications in colonial New South Wales were slow and difficult, including those in the Camden district.

The first mails were delivered 6 days a week to Camden and the Cowpastures in 1828 by the Liverpool Mail Coach.

The foundation of the post-office is seen by many historians as the foundation of settlement in an area. The first post office at Camden opened in 1838 with Mr Skinner as postmaster.

The post office became a meeting place for the local

community, and the postmaster was a local identity and the 'font' of all knowledge. Mrs Pearson served the community as postmaster for 37 years until she retired in 1878 due to ill health. At the time the post office posted 554 letters weekly.

Often the post office was at the cutting edge of new technologies. So it was with the morse code telegraph transmissions. The first telegraph office was opened in Camden in 1877, with the first transmissions in NSW only in 1857. The telegraph office was

located in an office in the two front rooms in a cottage owned by James Bocking. The first station-master was John Moroney.

As now the post office was more than just the mail. It undertook a range of functions and one of those was banking. The Camden post office became a branch of the NSW Government Savings Bank in 1871 when all NSW post offices became agents. By the end of the year there were four account holder with a total of £39/9/9.

*Source:* VL Cremer, 'Camden Post Office History', Typescript, Australia Post, Sydney, 1980. (Copy at the Camden Museum) *Ian Willis 2011*

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