

NEWSLETTER

Society launches new publication

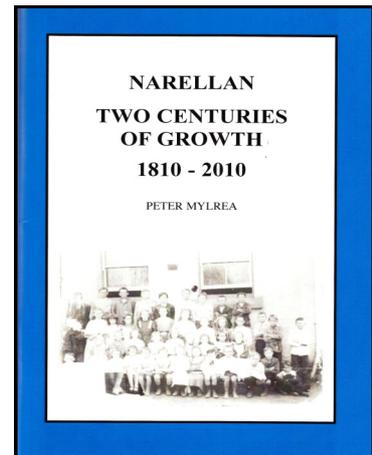
In 2011 the society launched a new publication by Peter Mylrea called *Narellan Two Centuries of Growth 1810-2010*.

The booklet starts with the early land grants and the establishment of the village in 1827 which pre-dates the foundation of Camden by many years.

Mylrea then examines the developments in and around Narellan up to the 1940s including the schools, churches, village life and the sly grog shops. The story of Pansy the train comes in for particular attention as there were three stations in the Narellan area, including Narellan. It was one of the regular toing and froing for the daily lives of the residents of the village.

There are a collection of memories for residents of the village. These include: Ron Guyer, Barry Cowell, Judy and Noel Gleeson, Wilma Skinner, Joan Scott, Peter Rolfe and Betty Scott.

The commercial growth of the village is tracked with the development of the Narellan Town Centre. Narellan is now the commercial hub of the Camden



Local Government Area and draws shoppers from a wide area.

The publication is supplemented by a variety of interesting photographs and maps. The reader should pay particular attention to a number of aerial photographs from between 1943 and 2005. These clearly illustrate the massive urban growth of the Narellan area as part of Sydney's rural-urban fringe.

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Reminder Membership Renewals

Special points of interest:

- Ordinary General Meetings
- 8 February 2012
- 14 March 2012
- 11 April 2012
- 9 May 2012
- 13 June 2012
- 11 July 2012
- Each meeting is held at 7.30pm at the museum, 40 John St, Camden. All welcome

The membership for the Camden Historical Society Inc. runs from 1 July to 30 June., the financial year. This has been the case since the society was first formed. Membership is \$10.00 for individual, \$15.00 for couples and families and \$75.00 for corporate membership.

I have updated the membership list each year to incorporate changes to allow me to now send out membership renewal notices to current members.

If you receive a membership renewal please pay it as soon as possible by either mailing it to the address on the form with your payment or by calling into the Museum with your payment.

You will be given a receipt for your payment when paying in person at the museum or an email confirming your membership if paid by mail. If you do not have an email address I will mail you a written receipt.

If for any reason you have an inquiry concerning current membership, membership payments, change of address, phone or email address please contact the Secretary by email at secretary@camdenhistory.org.au, by letter to Secretary/Membership at P O Box 566 Camden NSW 2570 or phone on 0402 324 540 or Museum phone on (02) 4655 3400 and leave your details on answering machine if Museum is unattended. *Doug Barrett, Secretary.*

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



Editor's Shorts

Upcoming activities

March 2012

Meeting: Ian Willis speaks on Perth conference paper.

April 2012

National Trust Heritage Festival 'Amazing Stories: Innovations and Inventions'. 14-19 April

May 2012

Meeting: Elizabeth Villy speaks on Convicts in the Burrageorang

Workshop on Land Records, 19 May. Organiser Cathey Shepherd.

June 2012

Blue Mountains outing. Organiser Cathey Shepherd.

Volunteer Training Day (TBA) Organiser Bob Lester

August 2012

Meeting: AGM

September 2012

Meeting: 'Threads'

History Week

October 2012

Meeting: Robert Wheeler speaks on John Oxley.

November 2012

Meeting: Doug Barrett speaks on Pansy

Events report

Camden Council Manager Environmentally Sustainable Design Vince Capaldi addressed the November 2011 meeting on the proposed plan of

management for Camden Cemetery. He presented an informative talk about the proposal, which was followed by questions.

The society's December meeting recalled the memories of Christmas by a number of members. They all spoke with passion about fond memories of the festive season from their past. They were Karen Farmer, Frances Warner, Ray Herbert, Janice Johnson, Doug Barrett, Ian Willis, Kira Leon, Peter Chessel and John Wrigley. Some of the memories recalled special presents from friends and relatives, Dedmanism and banning Santa, an English Victorian Christmas, child photos with Santa, making Christmas puddings and Christmas on the farm.

Society member **Dr Ian Willis** presented a paper called 'Townies, ex-urbanites and aesthetics, Issues of identity on Sydney's rural-urban fringe' at the **11th Australasian Urban History/Planning History Conference**. The conference proceedings were held at the University of Western Australia and the State Library of Western Australia between 5-8 February in Perth. The paper outlined the attempts by the Camden community to protect its rurality in the face of the Sydney's ever encroaching urban sprawl into the local area. The society provided financial assistance towards the cost of attending the conference.

Guest speaker Lorraine

Iddon discussed the beginnings of tea in China at the February meeting of the society. She talked about the differences in tea ceremonies between the East and the West. In the West sharing a cup of tea is about meeting together and aristocracy, while in Asian countries is about 'savouring the moment, meditating and the health benefits of the tea'. She outlined how tea is the most popular beverage in the world and that 'tea is back' with a 'resurgence in high tea' and all the ceremony attached to it.

The society had a **stall at the Narellan Rhythms Festival** on 29 October 2011. The event attracted 'thousands' according to the local press and was full of 'colour and excitement'. Elyard Street Narellan was closed to cater for the many different types of entertainment. The society raised \$80 in book sales.

Society member Robert Wheeler attended a **training day** on 25 November held by the Powerhouse Museum.

Society president John Wrigley and his wife Julie visited the offices of **Camden London Borough Council** in the United Kingdom on a recent holiday. They returned with some mementoes and will reciprocate by sending a Camden NSW publication to the UK.

Author and society member **Janice Johnson** is preparing a book for publication called '**Reminiscences of Early Camden**'. The society will be publishing the book and it will be available at the Camden Show.

The society has been

successful in obtaining a grant from Camden Council under the **Community Small Grants Program** for a display case for textiles. The grant application was successfully organised by Bob Lester. The grant is valued at \$4,500 and will be used to purchase a high quality display case with drawers for conserving and displaying the museum's collection of textiles.

President John Wrigley represented the society at the Camden High School annual presentation night. The society's history awards and the Dick Nixon History Awards were presented on the evening.

The Camden Museum hosted a **photographic exhibition in October called 'Camden - Paradise Lost?'** in October 2011. The competition was organised by Dr Larry Vogelneest and judged by Councillor Eva Campbell.

The society has launched a new publication by Janice Johnson. She has edited a new edition of **Obed West's 'Reflections on Old Sydney and Colonial Days'**.

The society was represented at the **Southern Highlands and Illawarra Chapter of Museums Australia (NSW)** in October by Ian Willis. The meeting was held at the Tongarra Museum at Albion Park. Speakers were: Sarah-Jane Rennie of Museums and Galleries NSW on her recent study tour of Scottish museums and galleries and introduced the website 'There's A War On!'; Rebecca Pinchin, Powerhouse Museum, and Carly Todhunter the recipient of the 2010 Powerhouse Museum Movable Fellowship, and introduced the EHive database for museum's collections.

Museum Attendance

Museum attendance for 2011 were 5,638 visitors for the year. This is made up of 3,807 adults and 1,481 children. School groups continue to be the main part of the child visitors to the museum. These young visitors are guided through the museum with the assistance of their teachers. 2011 numbers were boosted by the wedding exhibition which gained quite a bit of publicity for the museum.

2011 visitor numbers were up on 2010 with 5,057 visitors in total for the year. This compares to 2009 with 5,327 visitors, 2008 with 5,973 and 2007 with 6,001.

Museum volunteers continue to act as a point-of-entry welcome for the museum and without their continued enthusiasm and presence these numbers would not be as good. These figures are used by the society committee for grant applications and the like. It is important that volunteers continue to accurately record all visitors for these purposes.

New Exhibition at Museum

Camden Christening Robes from the Past

A new exhibition on children's christening robes from Camden's earlier days has been curated by the Camden Museum display group. Society members Jo Booth, Janice Johnson, Kira Leon, Shirley Rorke, Margaret Wheeler and Julie Wrigley have worked on the exhibition.

On 16th and 23rd January two working bees were held to replace the 'Camden Weddings' display in the Research Room at the Camden Museum with a new display of 'Camden Christenings'. Society members took down the display of wedding dresses and arranged the exhibition of christening dresses from the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The exhibition shows changes in customs to do with christening and childhood. It includes a christening robe believed to be used for the four recorded baptisms at St John's, Camden, of the children of William Henry and Mary Thompson: Ethel in 1873, Madeline christened in 1874, Cecil christened in 1876, and Charles christened in 1877.

Another robe was used for the christening of William Adams in 1886 and John Adams in 1888. William and John were the uncles of the donor, Mr. Don Rapley of Elderslie.

One of the prettiest gowns is the christening robe worn by the daughters of Dr Francis West: Kathleen baptised in 1908 and Lydia baptised in 1915 at St. John's. The robe was donated by Dr West's grand-daughter Virginia West.

All of the fourteen gowns on display, except one, are from the Society's collection. The exhibition will be on show during 2012, with changes from time to time. You are invited to come and see how Camden celebrated christenings in the past.

The newly-conserved Maud Hodge wedding dress was also displayed upstairs. The dress dates to 1899 when Maud Huthnance of Menangle married Ben Hodge of Camden. The Society had arranged for the treatment of the dress in Sydney by the International Conservation Services to repair and clean the dress. A donation from Camden Quota was used to help provide funds for the conservation of the wedding dress. A plastic-coated wire mannequin suitable for displaying heritage gowns has been used to display the wedding dress.

Julie Wrigley

Maude Hodge Wedding Dress Conservation Project

The society has undertaken the professional conservation of Maude Hodge's 1899 hand-sewn embroidered ivory silk wedding dress.

The conservation project has been co-ordinated by society members Julie Wrigley, Cathey Shepherd and Janice Johnston.

The dress has been placed on the Australian Dress Register, which is a database of the history of dresses in NSW before 1945.

The wedding dress is a valuable heritage item in Camden's social history. The Hodges were important local identities and they are part of the Camden story.

Powerhouse Museum Visit

Powerhouse Museum Curator of Textiles, Lace Design and Society Lindie Ward and Assistant Registrar, Registration and Collection Management Sarah Pointon, visited the Camden Museum on Friday 2 December 2011.

The Powerhouse Museum staff members inspected the popular wedding dress display and made some recommendations for inclusion on the Australian Dress Register from the collection. (see Camden History September 2010)

Ms Ward and Ms Pointon gave some helpful advice on dating: a number of garments in the museum collection; and the christening garments in the collection.

Lindie Ward, who made the mannequin for the Maude Hodge wedding that has recently been restored, delivered it to the society. It will help the conservation of the Hodge wedding dress.

Be a Volunteer

If you are thinking of how to fill in a few hours a month, contact the Society to become a volunteer.

It has many advantages, a closer look at the items in the museum, meeting new friends, renewing old friendships, tea or coffee with other members and assisting the society in keeping the Camden Museum operating.

The Camden Museum has a reputation of being one of the best local Museums in the state with other Museum operators visiting to see how we do things. We have tours by school groups, other voluntary organisations and many groups from around the state staying in the area. So why not join the already growing group of volunteers at the museum.

We currently have a volunteer who is reviewing the society's research files and we are looking for more to assist in the task. Her name is Kira Leon. So far she has re-organised the Aboriginal files. *Doug Barrett*

Donation from Camden Quota

Camden Quota have recently donated \$1000 towards the Maude Hodge Wedding Dress Conservation Project and upgrading the costume display area. The donation was part of the distribution of funds raised from the 2011 Camden Quota Antique Fair.

Museum tours

Groups touring the museum in recent months include Camden Quota, Probus of Leura/Katoomba, Magdalene College, Older Women's Network and Wollondilly Support Group. The society has tour guides and is assisted on the day by museum volunteers. For more information contact society secretary Doug Barrett. Ph 0402 324 540 or 4655 3400.



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

ABN 84 182 869 026

MEMBERSHIP

Individual \$10

Family \$15

Corporate/Assozn \$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

Memories of the Nepean River

Memories of the Nepean River were recalled by society members at the August 2005 monthly meeting.

Dick Nixon recalled that the Camden Swimming Club had a timber lined shed at King's Reserve. 'There was a male dressing shed near the softball fields and a ladies 60 yards further up the river. Swimming costumes were made of cotton,' he said. Very fashionable!

Vic Boardman told how the river was used for relaxing in the 1950s. 'There were family gatherings at the end of Ferguson's Road. Some went skinny dipping at Chellaston Reserve and swimming at Little

Sandy and Whiteman's paddock,' he said. He remembers how his eyes 'popped out' when the girls first wore a 2-piece swimming costume.

Elaine Ray remembers that at around 13yo she swam at Little Sandy. Sometimes Milton, her husband, would take her down to the weir in a canoe. 'There were platypus in Narellan Creek in the early 1940s. You would have to be very quiet to see them,' she said. She recalled how the local school teachers took the children down to the river to teach them to swim.

Olive McAleer spoke of the wonderful quiet places along the

river near the weir and how she would flirt with the boys in the 1950s.

Len English remembers school sports on the river. 'The boys went to the weir and the girls went to Little Sandy. The scouts held their swimming carnival at Little Sandy,' he said. He recalls how the river was dry in the 1940s with the only water in the deeper holes in the river bed. He enjoyed fishing and in hole near the Bruchhauser paddock there were catfish and eels.

John Stanham recalled swimming in the river to service the irrigation pumps. He said, 'the river has improved considerably in recent times.'

Ian Willis 2012.

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