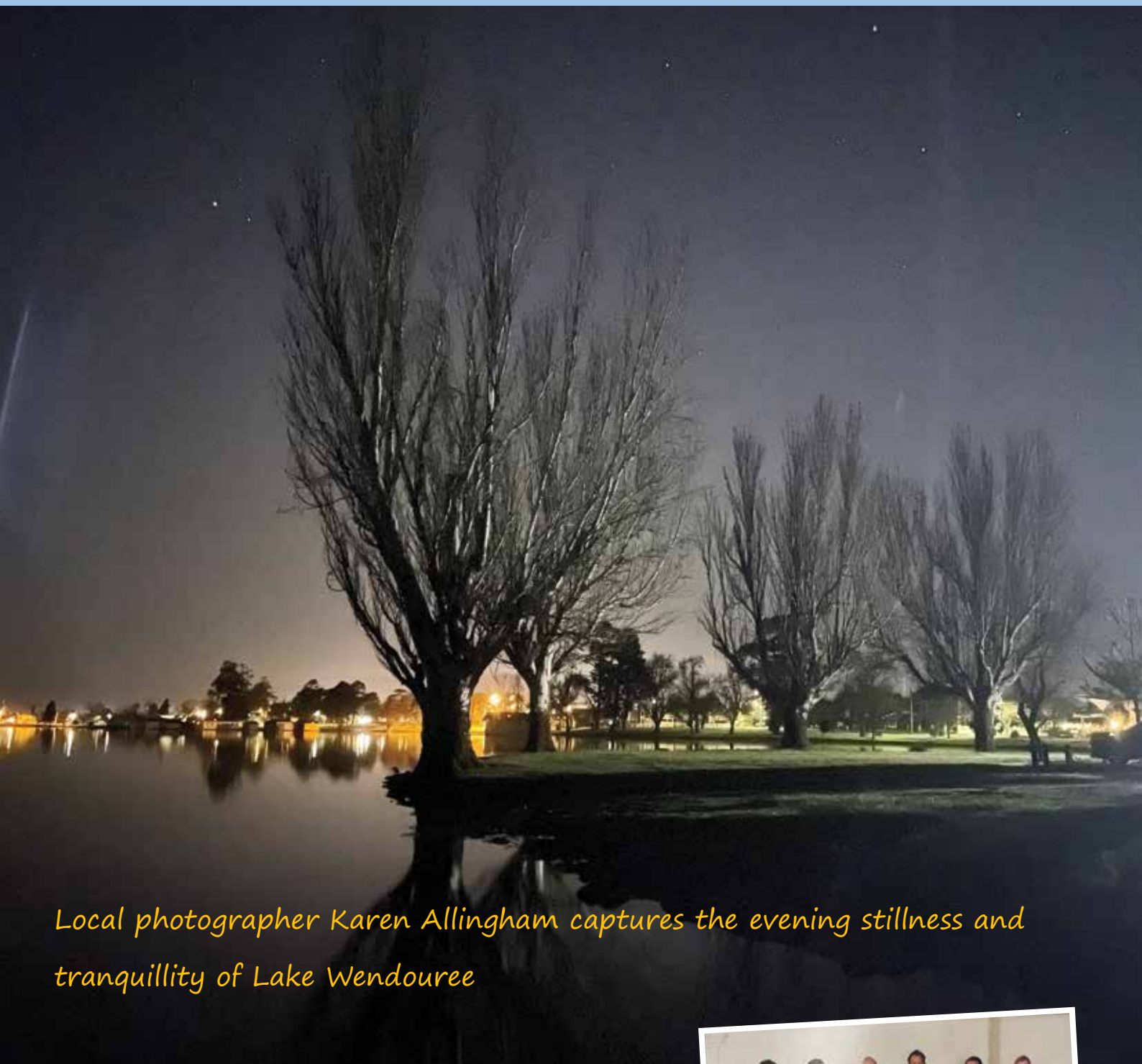


The LampLight

NEWSLETTER OF THE BALLARAT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

VOLUME 12 No. 5

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2022



Local photographer Karen Allingham captures the evening stillness and tranquillity of Lake Wendouree

**The Ballarat Travellers Social Club history
Members Show and Tell night
BRHAE update**



The Year in Review

by President Marion Littlejohn



President Marion Littlejohn addresses members at the recent Annual General Meeting. Kevin Williams image.

I am pleased to report that over the past twelve months with COVID abating, we were only forced to hold one meeting via zoom.

We have enjoyed four regular meetings at the Ballarat North Community Centre, a visit to the new Tramway Museum for our April meeting, an entertaining Christmas in July event at the Ballarat Golf Club and two heritage walks. The December walk which explored the evidence of the 1882 Creswick mining disaster was followed by our Christmas breakup at Calembeen Park in Creswick. We then kicked off 2022 with Doug Bradby leading us on a walk around central Ballarat discovering what lay under the basalt. In May we enjoyed an entertaining Spielvogel Oration at the Mechanics Institute with noted author Robyn Annear as our guest speaker.

As the Gold Museum is still undergoing its transformation into two distinct spaces - the Centre for Rare Arts & Forgotten Trades and the Australian Centre for Gold Rush Collections, we have continued to hold our regular meetings at the Ballarat North Community Centre which has proven to be a most comfortable and

welcoming temporary home. The latest news we have from Sovereign Hill is that the Centre for Rare Arts & Forgotten Trades is scheduled to open later this year and we have booked a speaker from Sovereign Hill for our October meeting to bring us up to date with developments.

The Australian Centre for Gold Rush Collections is yet to be fitted out but it will include the area where the retail shop was located and is planned to provide public access to our collection as well as to the entire museum collection.

The Gold Museum also saw significant staffing changes during the year welcoming a new curator to replace Michelle Smith. Early this year, Lauren Bourke commenced as Head of Collections and Curatorial and in August, Jo Willey was appointed Collections Manager replacing Tina Lee who returned to Queensland. We look forward to working closely with both these ladies once the new research facility and lecture room spaces are completed.

During the year the committee started considering possible ideas for celebrating

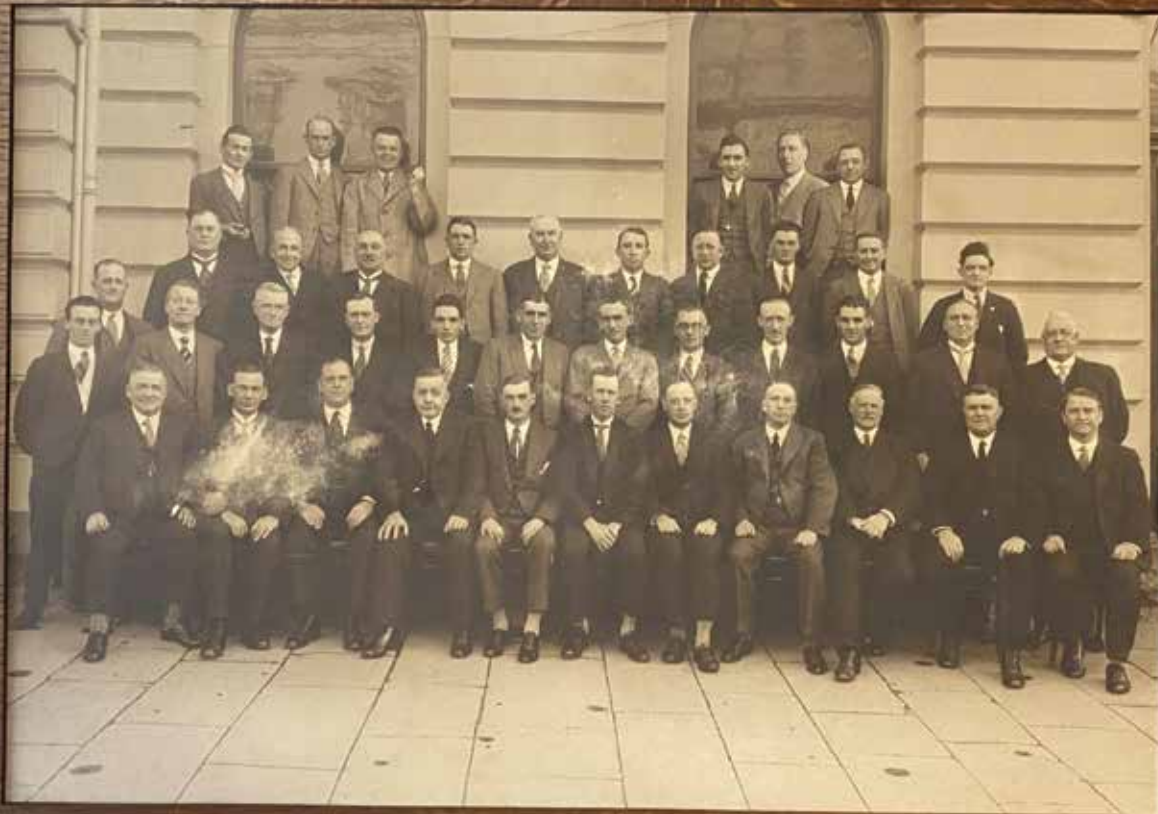
the ninetieth birthday of the BHS which will occur in 2023. We wanted to find a unique way to mark this milestone and decided upon producing a hard-cover picture book using photographs to highlight some of the many changes that have occurred in Ballarat since 1933. Changes which parallel the life of the Society.

Once the committee had agreed upon this project it was decided that we would not risk society funds on the venture. Therefore, under the strong leadership of Andrew Wallace we began to actively seek donations and grants to cover printing and publishing costs. I am pleased to report that we were successful in obtaining a \$10,000 grant from the Ballarat City Council Community Impact Grants scheme which makes the council our major sponsor.

Happily, I can report that donations now cover all of the quoted production costs so the project, as well as providing an invaluable resource, will not create a financial drain on the society's funds. In fact, it should produce a profit for the society.

Marion

BALLARAT TRAVELLERS - SOCIAL CLUB



Top: W. King — D. Marshall — A. Hermann — F. Smith — E. Todd — W. Philp
 1st Row: H. McKenzie — J. Russell — W. J. Carlow — A. Holmes — J. B. Waller — J. J. Fisher — E. H. Smith — C. Westcott — H. Lumsden — S. Oogah — J. Brehaut
 2nd Row: D. Cochran — J. Harrison — W. Murphy — V. Harvey — T. Spiers — R. Oliver — A. Brown — A. White — A. Williams — S. Hammer — J. Greenhill — E. Curtis
 3rd Row: G. Johnston — A. Blinkhorn — H. Harris — J. B. Sullivan — C. Collins — A. Harnsworth — G. Vickery — G. H. Hammer — C. King — W. Oliver — B. Mathews
 (Hon. Secy) (V. Pres) (Pres) (Pres. Hon.)

The Ballarat Travellers Social Club would be well known to many older residents of Ballarat and was synonymous with Gala Day, amusement rides, street raffles and other fund raising efforts. The money raised supported local charitable organisations such as McCallum House, Ewing House, Pennyweight Park, the Ballarat Orphanage, the Queen Elizabeth Centre, Peplow House and others. Recently, the Society was contacted by the disability provider PINARC regarding material relating to the Ballarat Travellers Social Club which had been found during a clean out. The Travellers Social Club used a shed at PINARC for storage of their records, such as committee meetings, annual general meeting reports and photographs. After the demise of the Club in the 1990's, the material was packed up in boxes and long forgotten until now.

Amongst the records retrieved is an undated short history of the origins of the Travellers Club written by club member Bruce Fryer. The Lamplight has pleasure in reprinting that story, along with some archival photographs to pay tribute to the travellers who raised hundreds of thousands of dollars over many decades, all of which went towards improving services and facilities for those most in need in the Ballarat community.

In the early 1920's commercial travellers did all their travelling by train – often having to lug their heavy sample cases with them. To while away the long hours spent cooped up in uncomfortable carriages, a pack of cards was often produced and these men became very adept and shrewd card players. The tales of their doings and misdoings would fill volumes, but they proved to be men of thought and vision. On one occasion a group of travellers from Ballarat, Victoria, were bemoaning

the fact that they had no special contact with each other outside their rail trips. It was on that day in 1924 that the Ballarat Travellers Social Club was born.

The original intention was that the club would provide the opportunity for members to meet each other socially and organise functions which would include their wives and families. For the first two or three years the club held its monthly meetings, cards and billiards nights, family picnics and children's

Christmas parties quite successfully. Fortunately, a few wise members realised the club was too self-centred and could not expect a very long life span if it continued along these lines and so began casting about for some activity to stimulate and maintain members interest.

Their eventual choice was to work in support of the Ballarat Orphanage, which at that time housed, tended and educated up to 200 children.

The clubs fund raising for this institution began in 1928 and members soon became involved in all aspects of the operation of the Orphanage. This involvement led members to realise that many similar institutions in Ballarat were carrying out their work for the community under severe financial strain. So, the list of beneficiaries grew to include such institutions as the Ballarat Base Hospital, Ballarat Benevolent Home for the aged, Alexandria Babies Home, St Joseph's Home for orphan boys and Nazareth House for orphan girls and the aged.

Increased commitments meant increased activity. As the club doubled and redoubled in fundraising, the list of charities grew in direct proportion. It was the club's policy never to solicit direct donations from any source, but always to offer the donor something in return. Consequently raffles and lucky envelopes were the only source of revenue. The prizes and prices were

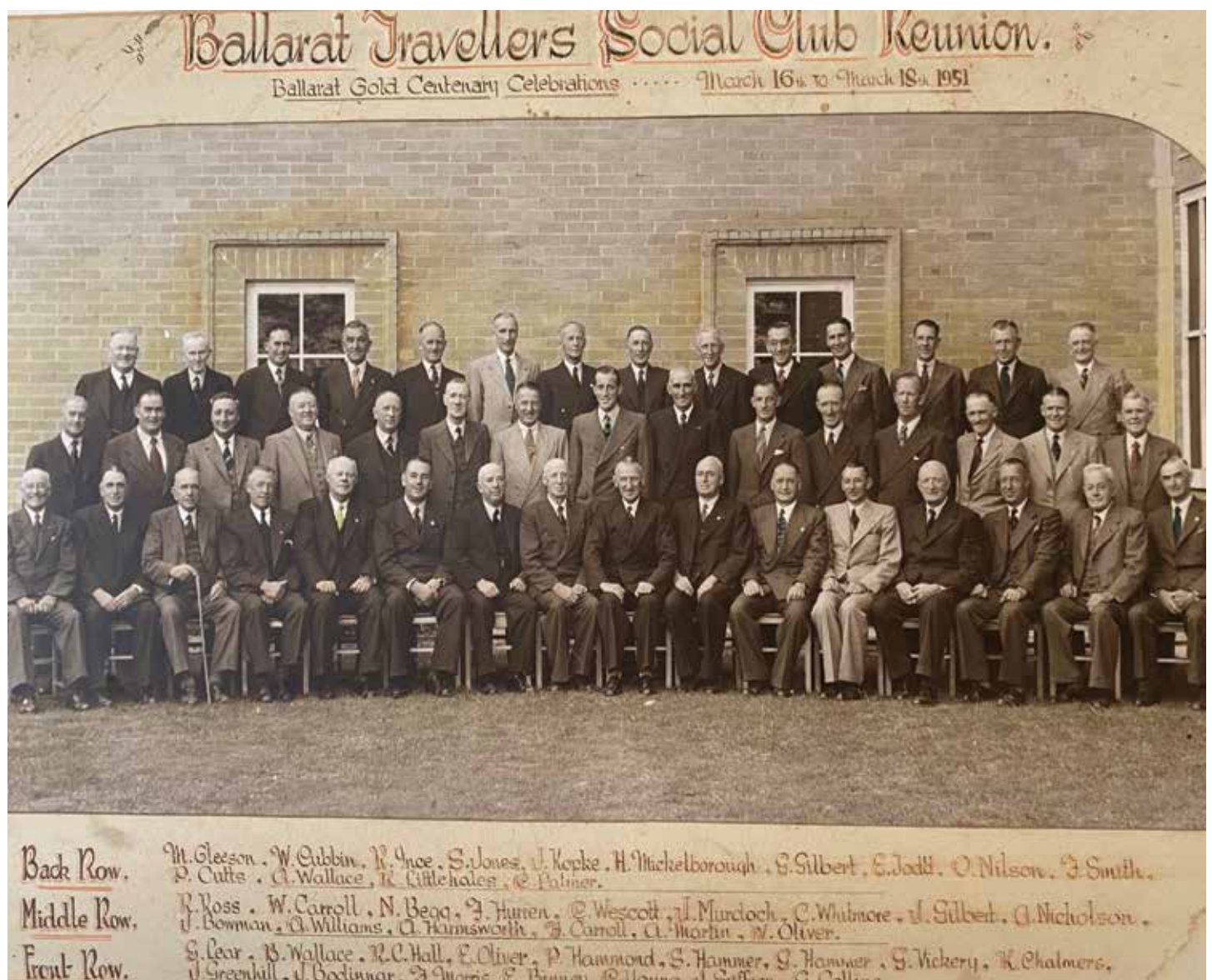
always aimed to gain the support of the ordinary person. With this approach the club gained tremendous public approval and support, and soon became the foremost fundraising organisation in the city.

During the 1930's it became established that one day each year was set aside for the Travellers Charity Carnival which later became known as Gala Day. The day was declared a holiday for schools in Ballarat and the surrounding districts to allow the children to attend the festivities, hopefully accompanied by their parents.

Over the years various entertainments such as street parades, wheel barrow races and tug-o-wars were provided in Ballarat's main shopping centre, to entice the public into the area and the hands of the ticket selling, fancy dressed members of the club, who, being true salesmen, never missed an opportunity to sell a raffle ticket. One rather humorous fundraising activity

was the Court of Injustice. A mock judge and jury was set up on the back of a truck which stopped outside various business houses, arresting the owner and placing a fine of 5 or 6 shillings on him for selling a suit without a vest or slippers without laces or any other equally frivolous excuse.

After World War II the format settled into a two day carnival complete with various rides, stalls and spinning wheels set up in Grenville street which closed for almost three days. A raffle for a car at one shilling per ticket was the main attraction. In later years cars have become more expensive and tickets are now 20 cents; ticket selling has become more organised and more frantic. Last year was a typical year when 95,000 car tickets were sold and \$16,000 was raised and distributed to the clubs list of beneficiaries which has increased to include Pennyweight Park, Ballarat Ambulance, Lisa Lodge for girls, McCallum House, Ewing House, Kelaston, Lifeline, and Peplow House.





During its lifetime, the club has raised in excess of \$450,000 for local charities. The major part of this has been spent on projects which attracted Federal and State Government grant or two, or sometimes three to one which means that the club has been responsible for the provision of over one and a half million dollars' worth of amenities in the City of Ballarat.

Because of its long contact with the community the club has a wonderful image and is held in high esteem by the municipal authorities, State and Federal parliamentary representatives and charitable institutions.

Membership of the club is by invitation and was originally limited to the traveller who spent all his working life away from home. This rule was amended to open membership to any salesman who spends at least 40% of his selling time away from his employer's place of business. Present membership is approximately 35 which would be the average membership over the last 20 years.

The present social calendar still includes games nights, dinner dances, car trials, and children's Christmas parties. From the genuine friendship between members it is obvious that those old timers in the railway carriage knew what they were about and that the present generation have not let them down.

Toast List

B.T.S.C.	B.D. Sculley
Welcome	B.D. Sculley
Newly-Elected President	J.T. Bevan
Response: B.D. Sculley	
Immediate Past President	L.P. Cullinan
Response: L.R. Taylor	
Incoming Officers	R.J. Lytle
Response: A.J. Wolstenholme	
Mayor, Councillors and Parliamentarians	B.V. Fryer
Response: The Mayor of the City of Ballarat Cr. Wanda Chapman; J.B. Mildren, M.P.; F.P. Sheehan, M.L.A.; Hon. R.I. Knowles, M.L.C.; S.N. Elder, M.L.A.	
Media	P.M. Henderson
Response: A.A. Gnoato	
Visitors, Pianist and Master of Ceremonies	F.A. Gedye
Response: S.M.B.C. Representative	
Master of Ceremonies	B.D. Hocking

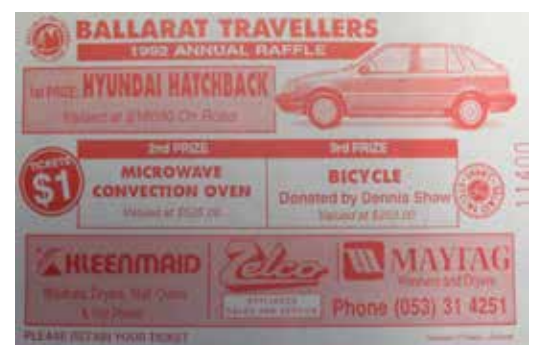


Above top; The 1969 Social Club reunion.

Above; A toast list from a 1980's AGM.

Above right; Ticket sellers in the Mall, November 1992.

Right; Tickets from 1957 and 1992.



Tales and Treasures Members Night

Our monthly meeting in August was the popular members "Shōw and Tell" evening. The night always brings forth some amazing artefacts and stories from members own collections and this year was no different. Below are some of the members and their treasures as captured by Kevin Williams.





On a sad note, we lost our past President, Michael Cuttle in August when he finally lost his battle with cancer. Michael was a committee member for twelve years and served a number of terms as President. He was a regular contributor to Lamplight and was the driving force behind the Society's active presence at Heritage Week and public events such as the Agricultural Show. He managed the regular stream of research queries and his drive, enthusiasm and obvious love of Ballarat's history will be greatly missed. On behalf of all members, the committee sends our condolences to Joyce and family.

VALE

Michael Cuttle



Snippets From the Past

The following Letter to the Editor appeared in the Weekly Times of 25th December 1857 and provides an interesting insight into a male perspective of a woman's role in that time.



“What a Woman On Ballarat Can Do”

Image supplied by Pauline Wallace

To the Editor of the Times...

"SIR - I removed to the Caledonian Lead a few months since, and located in the vicinity of the Brown Hill Hotel. In a few days after being installed in my new quarters, my attention was attracted by the strokes of an axe. plied incessantly from morning until night. On observation, much to my surprise, I perceived the indefatigable wood-chopper to be a woman.

At first, however as the stately gums and other primitive monarchs of the forest, one by one, came down with a groan and a crash, I naturally supposed that the limbs of the fallen were merely designed to supply the wood yard of a provident neighbour; but not so. The boughs were indeed chopped off, cut into uniform lengths, and the larger split. but not for the purpose which I had at first supposed. After the completion of this work, the conqueror next appeared in the field armed with maul and wedge, and with the utmost apparent good-will and determination, attacked the knotted trunks of the fallen trees, In a few days the last of these had disappeared in a heap of posts and rails.

Immediately in front of her tent, or bark hut rather, is a low piece of ground which at that time was partly inundated by the early rains. Of this ground she staked off the area of an acre, more or less: and after having planted her posts and erected the fence. (which, by the way, is a substantial one), as heretofore unassisted by anyone. She very deliberately set about excavation of a drain several hundred feet in length.

After completion of this, the spade was again brought into requisition, and about two-thirds of the enclosure turned up and prepared for cultivation. This ground, owing to its watery propensity, required the greatest ingenuity, and most laborious pains, in its preparation. But in time, in spite of all, industry and perseverance conquered. The marsh soil was deprived of its moisture, the ground planted, and now in a high state of improvement, presents one of the most forward and beautiful vegetable gardens in this vicinity.

I may further add that the time of this girl, (I have been told that she is single) is not undivided. With the assistance of another female, her partner, she keeps a milk dairy, a lot of poultry, and a herd of pigs. I am unable to give the name of either of the parties but any enquiries made in reference to the above - in the vicinity of 70 or 80 Caledonian Lead, would be successful. Her reputation has become quite a prodigy in these parts and everyone in the neighbourhood should be able to point out the garden made and cultivated by a woman.

I am, Sir, Yours &c
A LOVER OF INDUSTRY"

(From records held by the Ballaarat Mechanics' Institute)



History Happenings at the Ballarat Research Hub at Eureka

For September our Talking History speaker, Brigid Wagner, led an interesting examination of the ways in which Australia memorialises our authors and poets. She showed us items belonging to Henry Lawson and what collections these items are housed in. Our audience then wished to know Brigid's opinion on how this memorialisation has changed and may continue to change into the future. All our history talks can be found on YouTube if you missed out on this fascinating topic.

Next on 6 October, we are happy to welcome the Collections Officer at the Jewish Museum of Australia, Elizabeth Offer, to shed light on the hidden histories of Jewish Women on the Goldfields.

Stories abound of men, gold, and rebellion on the Ballarat goldfields, yet amongst such tales lie the hidden histories of Jewish women, who laboured to make a life for themselves and their families on the booming goldfields. Elizabeth recently completed her PhD in History and has published in Jewish Culture and History, Journal of Australian Studies, and in the Australian Journal of Jewish Studies. She is the 2022 John Barrett Prize winner (post-graduate) for her article, 'Dressed and Blessed: The Abraham Family, Brit Milah and Dress in Colonial Ballarat, 1850–1900'.

Our final Talking History for the year is on 3 November. In the lead up to Eureka 168 audience favourite Doug Bradby joins us to present an examination of November 1854 and whether the violent events of December 1854 were inevitable. Doug is a local teacher, historian, and author. He has written several history books and is now working on a series that explores the vibrancy of Ballarat's community life.

'BRHAE workshops continue on the third Wednesday of each month from 2-3.30pm. On 21 September was 'Researching your Home', which is always a popular topic. Coming up next, we have 'Local Government records and Family History' on 19 October, followed by 'Exploring the Public Record Office' on 16 November. These workshops are free to attend, though booking is essential. Contact Simon Jacks, the Australiana research Librarian to reserve your place. simonjacks@ballarat.vic.gov.au

December is always a busy time of year at the Eureka Centre, the Peter Tobin Oration is on 2 December, the Commemorative Service is on 03 December and we have a jam packed program for Eureka Sunday including a discussion led by Eureka Descendants. Pick up a seasonal brochure from the Centre or an eye on our website for more details at: <https://eurekacentreballarat.com.au>



Left; Part of the new research facilities at BRHAE.

Every Picture Tells a Story



In an interesting sidelight to the Ballarat Travellers Social Club history in this issue, the following story appeared in The Ballarat Courier in 1990 detailing how John Walker won the very first Ballarat Travellers Club raffle in 1930. John went on to become a very successful businessman and coincidentally, enjoyed a long career as a traveling draper for more than 50 years. The Lamplight presents an edited version of the Courier story below.

An old photograph published in the Courier Heritage column of the first car raffle by Ballarat Travellers in 1930 brought a wealth of memories to John Walker, Ballarat's travelling draper. He had no difficulty recognising the unknown young man who won the car. "That's me" he cried when he returned from a country circuit and saw the Courier story.

John Walker was only 15 when he won the car, but he remembers the events as clearly as it they were yesterday. Gambling was illegal, so patrons bought a "Golden Apple" for a shilling. Inside the gold wrapping paper was a numbered ticket. Young Johnny Walker was working for Mr Bill Curnow, a builder, and on his way back from Friday lunch he brought a "Golden Apple" for a shilling at the corner of Peel and Bridge St. It was only a small apple, but he enjoyed it. The prize was drawn that night. At work the next morning, Mr Curnow had a copy of The Courier and mentioned the raffle. John remembered that he had a ticket – somewhere. The tall, lanky lad delved into his hip pocket and there it was – the winning number.

The presentation was made outside the Block Arcade where Mr Bob Jermyn (conjurer and entertainer) had the

Ford showroom. The car that young Johnny won was any boy's dream – a 1930 A model Ford tourer, navy blue with grey hood and red wheels. Sadly, the dream of getting behind the wheel remained just that. Although he had driven a car around his brother's farm since the age of 12, he had to be 18 to obtain a licence. The nearest he came to driving was to sit in it for a moment. Then it went back into the showroom.

The tourer was worth 250 pounds, a lot of money for a boy earning 15 shillings a week. He sold it to Tinney Brothers of Bungaree for 200 pounds. This was the height of the depression with 29 percent of the people out of work John was the youngest of six children and trying to help his widowed mother. He gave her some of the money from which she bought a house and he banked the rest.

When he turned 18 in 1934 he used his savings to buy a motorcycle and set himself up as a travelling salesman – initiating a business which was to become legendary in rural Victoria, and one that is carried on today by John's son Kerrin.

The image above shows a young John Walker (second from right) being congratulated on winning the Golden Apple raffle. Image courtesy of Kerrin Walker.

Our Next Meeting

Tuesday October 11, 7.30pm

Join us for an exclusive members only behind the scenes tour of the Centre for Rare Arts and Forgotten Trades and Australian Centre for Gold Rush Collections



Hosted by Lauren Bourke, Head of Collections and Curatorial and Erin Santamaria, Head of Rare Trades at Sovereign Hill

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