Victorian Community History Awards 2015

Proudly participating in History Week 2015
Victorian Community History Award
This award recognises the most outstanding community history project submitted in any category.

Jean Galbraith is widely renowned as one of Victoria’s (indeed Australia’s) most loved gardeners and garden, nature and botanical writers. Her life and interests, and her influential writing, are all captured in this biography by Meredith Fletcher.

Galbraith was born into a farming family in Gippsland and spent her life there, a single woman devoted to her garden and appreciating the surrounding bush. When possible, she travelled interstate and overseas to experience other gardens and other environments. Writing for more than fifty years from ‘Dunedin’, her cottage and magical garden in her valley in Gippsland, Jean Galbraith reached out to generations of gardeners and nature lovers and inspired them with her craft and her insights into the Australian environment. She developed an acute capacity to observe nature, an understanding of botany and a power of description that led to her being compared with English writer Gilbert White. Galbraith not only developed a garden that was rich in cottage garden plants, she loved Australian flora, especially wildflowers, and wrote extensively about them. Her concern at their loss has led to her being recognised as an early conservationist.

The judges agreed that Meredith Fletcher’s sensitive and insightful biography of this remarkable woman deserves the highest accolade in this year’s VCHA.
Family histories can be compilations of genealogical information assiduously collected, of interest to the family concerned but not much to other readers. This outstanding work shows what can be done when one of Victoria’s premier historians tackles the history of his family. It draws on the author’s superb command of the contexts of his family’s history in Hampshire and Victoria. The result is a book that has interest on so many levels not just to Davison relatives. His always interesting and accessible discussion relates to methodology as well as empathetic and cautious reconstruction of lives for which there are few surviving documents and memories.

The narrative tells us about the history of many families in Australia including the leaving of the known world, arriving in a new one and experiencing diverse community changes in family life, education, religious observance and material wealth. At one level the autobiography of the author and the biography of his family, but also an exemplar that breaks down barriers between academic and family history.
Collaborative Community Award
This award recognises the best community collaborative work which involves significant contribution from several individuals, groups or historical societies.

This book is the work of 32 collaborators brought together with skilful editing by a notable science communicator. The collaborators include archaeologists, criminologists, historians, lawyers and politicians as well as many with expertise in forensic science and medicine and links to the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine. The early chapters deal with the fascinating science that has underpinned the investigation of Ned Kelly’s remains exhumed at Pentridge and the possible link to the skull returned in 2009 after its disappearance in 1978 from display at the Old Melbourne Gaol. The remaining chapters deal with other persons executed at the gaol, phrenology, metallurgical examination of the Kelly armour, firearms used by the police and the Kellys, Ned Kelly’s injuries, the archaeology of the Glenrowan site, legal processes, handwriting and publicity. In all, a sufficient answer to the question posed by the editor about whether we needed another Kelly book (there are said to be 382 in the National Library’s catalogue). As he wrote, ‘as long as it has something new to say’. This book makes a substantial contribution to longstanding community interest in the Kelly phenomenon.

Ned Kelly Under the Microscope; Solving the Forensic Mystery of Ned Kelly’s Remains
Craig Cormick (editor)
CSIRO Publishing, Melbourne, 2014

Commendations

Scots Under the Southern Cross
Fred Cahir, Alison Inglis, Anne Beggs-Sunter (editors)
Ballarat Heritage Services, 2015

The First of Its Kind; Nurse Education and Training at the Northern District School of Nursing
The Northern District School of Nursing Graduates Association Inc.
The Authors, Bendigo, 2015

Prom Country: a History
Foster and District Historical Society
Anchor Books, Melbourne, 2014

Moreland Remembers World War One Travelling Exhibition, 2015
Moreland City Libraries and other groups

Chinese Anzacs: Chinese Australians and World War One, Exhibition, 2014
Chinese Museum, Melbourne
USB and Website: cv.vic.gov.au/stories/a-diverse-state/chinese-anzacs
Local History Project Award
This award recognises activities that enhance access to records of significance to local communities. The project should increase access, awareness and participation in history on a local or community level.

Among several large compilations about the involvement of communities and their citizens in WW1, the judges found *Strewth!* to be the most impressive. It is focused on those who served, both men and women, from Horsham and its district.

The editors have undertaken a huge task of tracing and examining information from official records, newspapers and private papers and compiling them into a readable and informative, if daunting, two volumes. The experiences of those who served are accompanied by contextual discussions about the war, and insights into the families and networks they left behind in Horsham and nearby. The compilation of the names of those who enlisted and the local institutions with which they were connected, such as schools and churches, exhibits great industry.

On behalf of the Horsham Historical Society, the editors have produced a rich body of information that will be of great value to those in the future who study both the War and the history of the Horsham district.

*Strewth! An Insight into Local Involvement in World War One*
Gillian and John Francis (editors)
Horsham Historical Society,
2 volumes, 2015

**Commendations**

*Stories Untold and Faces Forgotten: Great War Enlistments from Koroit, Port Fairy, Macarthur, Penshurst and Surrounding Hamlets*
James Affleck
Koroit and District Historical Society, Koroit, 2 volumes, 2015

*Cohuna Urban History*
Cohuna and District Historical Society
1230 Allotments indexed in 59 folders

*Stories Behind the Headstones*
Lilydale and District Historical Society Inc.
Website: lilydalehistorical.com.au/headstones_at_ lilydale_cemetery_introduction.htm

*The Changing Landscape of the Dandenongs 1890s–1920s (Vol. 4 in Reflections of the Past Series)*
John Waterhouse
Sherbrooke Foothills Historical Society, Upwey, 2014
History Publication Award
For a non-fiction publication or e-book on Victorian history which could include a biography or a story of social, urban, institutional, regional or cultural history.

Fergus Hume’s crime novel, *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab*, set in Melbourne and published in 1886, became a local literary sensation. It also had extraordinary sales in Britain and was adapted for theatre, radio and film. Hume sold the copyright for just £10. In the role of biographer, Lucy Sussex sheds light on the elusive Hume by intertwining revealing extracts from his novels with her own perceptive writing. Hume wanted to be a dramatist and Sussex’s book aptly has a theatrical air, ending with the fate of the ‘dramatis personae’.

In asking not ‘whodunit?’ but how Hume did it, Sussex employs sleuthing skills. This quest propels her to explore the emergence of the popular genre of detective fiction and the increasing adoption of alluring publicity by the book trade. The sales pitch of the talented Frederick Trischler makes Hume’s work a ‘must have’ book. While unravelling the mystery of print runs and editions, Sussex knits together the book trade of yesteryear with its contemporary counterpart in Australia.

Lucy Sussex has written her study with great flair but never at the expense of scholarship. Her disciplined and captivating book makes a significant contribution to Australian literary history.

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**Block Buster! Fergus Hume and the Mystery of a Hansom Cab**
Lucy Sussex
Text Publishing, Melbourne, 2015

**Commendations**

*Mannix*
Brenda Niall
Text Publishing, Melbourne, 2015

*Dick Hamer: The liberal Liberal*
Tim Colebatch
Scribe, Brunswick, 2014

*Making a Home: a History of Castlemaine*
Heather Holst
Australian Scholarly, 2014

*Banksia Lady: Celia Rosser, Botanical Artist*
Carolyn Landon

*Trendyville: the Battle for Australia’s Inner Cities*
Renate Howe, David Nichols and Graeme Davison

*Linton Makes History: an Australian Goldfields Town and its Past*
Jill Wheeler
Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2015
Commemorating the centenary of World War 1 has attracted much public and political support in terms of interest and involvement at the community level as well as generous and directed financial support. Capitalising on this interest and support has produced a plethora of community projects with diverse outputs including books.

Part of Boroondara’s output is this excellent book that focuses on stories of Boroondara people at home and abroad. They illustrate experiences of war at the personal level and they are skilfully set within the broader contexts of Australia’s experience. The approach shows how the local is influenced by the national/international but its responses tell us much about the community. The approach avoids the worst of military history with its focus on battles by seeking to understand the ways in which the war was experienced by not so prominent people and their families and communities. A deceptively simple evocation of the war at community level, engaging to the reader, aptly and beautifully illustrated, and an excellent response to the commemoration of the war.

Boroondara Remembers: Stories of World War One
Fiona Poulton and Katherine Sheedy
City of Boroondara, Camberwell, 2015

Commendations

The Right to Vote; The Right to Stand. The Involvement of Women in Local Government in Victoria
Helen D Harris
Australian Local Government Women’s Association (Victorian Branch), Forest Hill, 2015

Yalukit Willam. The River People of Port Phillip
Meyer Eidelson
City of Port Phillip, St Kilda, 2014

The Eight Wurundjeri Seasons in Melbourne
Jim Poulter
Red Hen Enterprises, Templestowe, 2015

Tracking the Dragon. Thematic History of the Chinese People in the Rutherglen/Wahgunyah Region of the Indigo Shire, Victoria
Barry McGowan
The Author, 2015

The McIvor Timber and Firewood Company
Frank Stamford
Light Railway Research Society of Australia Inc.
Melbourne, 2014
Postcards from Port: An Audiovisual Retrospective of Port Melbourne, DVD
Port Melbourne Historical and Preservation Society

Nine thematic short films on the history of Port Melbourne are each introduced by a relevant postcard note. The unifying theme is the profound effect of the port on the suburb, originally known as Sandridge, from the time of the Liardets’ arrival in 1839. The combination of port and railway, constructed in 1854, facilitated the suburb’s emergence as a major manufacturing centre. Swallow and Ariell, for example, was one of the largest biscuit manufactories in the world.

The films move deftly from the personal postcard to panoramic views, from family circle to subjects such as housing and immigration which are discussed from a suburban viewpoint and dovetailed into the national experience. The project displays many striking images and the clear narration is interspersed with comments from local residents. All participants, except for the DVD producer, were volunteers and the project has a highly professional finish. This excellent DVD showcases the history of Port Melbourne and the collaborative, dedicated work of its historical society.

Commendations

Virtual Yallourn
Yallourn Association Website: virtualyallourn.com

They Treated Us With Respect USB
Tatura and District Historical Society

Lilydale and District Historical Society Website Re-design

Donna Buang: The Forgotten Ski Resort
David Sisson
Website: australianmountains.com/donnabuang
Historical Interpretation Award
This award recognises unique formats of historical representation. Applicants are encouraged to submit history related experiences told through physical exhibitions, artistic interpretation, history walks & tours.

Melbourne Dreaming: A Guide to Important Places of the Past and Present
Meyer Eidelson

An attractive, comprehensive guide to significant Aboriginal sites in and around Melbourne with precise instructions on how to visit them. It is amply illustrated by excellent visual material with succinct discussion of each site, contextual overviews of traditional, contact and recent Aboriginal history always presented with both the collaboration of Aboriginal people and the underlying empathy of the author.

Inevitably, the sites are in Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri lands but also include those that have assumed importance in contact and recent times when Aboriginal people have come to Melbourne and especially the suburb of Fitzroy. While not a novel format, this is a finely crafted example of a historical guide that fulfils a particular need but also provides inspiration for other guide writers.

Commendations
Mercy College 2015 ANZAC Commemoration
Mercy College Year 9 Exhibition

South Gippsland at War – 1914 to 1918
Foster and District Historical Society Exhibition

Eaglehawk Avenue of Honour
Eaglehawk Heritage Society Inc.
Story boards depicting Eaglehawk soldiers and nurses

Upper Plenty History Exhibition
Upper Plenty Mechanics' Institute Hall Committee of Management
Rose King (writer), Claire McGregor (editor)
Story boards for permanent exhibition

Crime and Punishment: a History of Bendigo’s Law and Order
Post Office Gallery, Bendigo
Exhibition, booklet and program of events
Centenary of World War One Award
This year judges have awarded a special prize for the best work or project submitted in any category on the impact of World War One on Victoria or Victorians.

Suburbs at War. The Cities of Malvern and Prahran during the Great War
Helen Doyle
City of Stonnington, Malvern, 2015

Among many high quality studies of the experiences of local communities during WWI, Helen Doyle’s examination of the former cities of Malvern and Prahran, now part of the City of Stonnington, was considered particularly admirable. Malvern was a relatively uniform comfortable suburb, while Prahran displayed greater contrast between the spacious estates and mansions of South Yarra and the more crowded housing and streets of Prahran and Windsor. Overall, however, these were affluent or comfortable communities.

Helen Doyle’s study demonstrates that while socio-economic divisions were at times apparent, across the areas there was a high level of patriotism. This resulted in significant levels of recruitment to both the armed services and nursing, and of consequent loss. On the homefront the citizens, notably many women, devoted themselves to various forms of charitable and financial support for the war effort. Such patriotic communities voted very strongly for conscription and later devoted a considerable effort to the honouring of their fallen.

This is a perceptive, well-researched and well-written study that has made a considerable contribution to our understanding of Melbourne in WWI.

Commendations

Woman War Doctor. The Life of Mary De Garis
Ruth L. Lee
Australian Scholarly, North Melbourne, 2015

The Sweetland Project. Remembering Gallipoli in the Shire of Nunawading
Steven Cooke
Australian Scholarly, North Melbourne, 2015

MLC and the Great War Exhibition
Methodist Ladies College, Kew

Commemorating the Centenary of the Anzac Landing in Boroondara
City of Boroondara and Gallipoli and Beyond 2015 Committee
Program of events, booklet and CDs

Port Melbourne First World War Centenary
Port Melbourne Historical and Preservation Society
Website: portmelbfirstworldwar100.org.au

Scotch College World War One Commemorative Site
Scotch College
Website: www.scotch.vic.edu.au/ww1/index.htm
In ‘Anzac Memories Revisited: Trauma, Memory, and Oral History’, Alistair Thomson returns to the story of Victorian Anzac Fred Farrell, one of the subjects of Thomson’s prize-winning book *Anzac Memories*. Using newly opened repatriation records, he shows how Farrell’s story, and his telling of it, was influenced by his postwar experiences, including his political activism.

The article is both a subtle exploration of the interplay of memory and history and a fascinating contribution to our understanding of the effects of war on the psychology of those who fought.

**Anzac Memories Revisited: Trauma, Memory and Oral History**
Alistair Thomson

**Commendations**

*Exodus or Panic? Melbourne’s Reaction to the Bathurst Gold Discoveries of May 1851*
Douglas Wilkie,
Victorian Historical Journal, December 2014

*Writers and Readers: Melbourne’s Bohemians and its Athenaeum*
Margaret Bowman
Journal of Australian Colonial History, Volume 16, 2014

*The Sludge Question; The Regulation of Mine Tailings in Nineteenth-Century Victoria*
Susan Lawrence and Peter Davies
Environment and History, Volume 20, No 3, 2014
Start planning your project for 2016 and uncover your local history today.

To find out more about the Victorian Community History Awards visit:
historyvictoria.org.au/programs/Victoria-community-history-awards

The Victorian Community History Awards are held annually and are a celebration of the activity undertaken to explore the history of Victoria. The range of award categories acknowledge that history can be told in many and varied formats with the aim of reaching and enriching all Victorians.

The Victorian Community History Awards are presented by Public Record Office Victoria in partnership with the Royal Historical Society of Victoria.

The 2015 Awards ceremony was held during History Week on Monday 19 October at the Arts Centre Pavilion in Melbourne.

Victorian Archives Centre
99 Shiel Street North Melbourne
10am – 4.30pm Monday to Friday
(and the second and last Saturday of the month)
prov.vic.gov.au

Ballarat Archives Centre
Cnr Mair and Doveton Streets Ballarat
9.30am – 4.30pm Mondays and Tuesdays
prov.vic.gov.au

Royal Historical Society of Victoria
239 A’Beckett Street Melbourne
10am – 4pm Monday to Friday
03 9326 9288
historyvictoria.org.au

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