

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2024 – REVIEW OF 2023 – 2024

As I put this review together, I realised it has been a very busy and successful year for the Bellarine Historical Society. No wonder we are all feeling a bit exhausted!

It began with our Volunteers Recruitment Day on the 24 September 2023 which resulted in 15 people signing up in addition to our seven Committee members. Over 1,000 volunteer hours were recorded in the last financial year but probably three times as many again were worked by volunteers at home on various projects. Special thanks to those who have been coming in regularly on Thursday mornings. We have been holding monthly volunteer morning teas to add a social element to their work and also started a quarterly members newsletter to keep members informed about what has been going on.

In April we held a very successful Gala Open Day as part of the National Trust's Heritage Festival. Over 130 people attended and participated in activities such as the historic walks and drives, the historical mystery talk, vintage machinery display and the best scones that I have ever tasted. As sideline, we raised around \$800 for the Society.

Regarding fundraising, a number of events were held which resulted in a steady stream of funds including Fly on the Wall, the Writers Group, North Bellarine Film Society, Poetry & Pinot and the Rhubarb, Rhubarb competition. Special thanks to Lorraine Stokes, Jenny Macauley, Nin Paton and others for organising these events. The side benefit was that our Museum are being used by groups in addition to the Society. Other activities which have helped raise our profile in the Bellarine community include our monthly talks, school visits and talks to organisations such as View Clubs, Probus, the Drysdale Library and the Geelong Family History Group.

Highlights for the year include completion of the All-Abilities Ramp, thank you to Loz and the boys, and the Bellarine Lives Exhibition in the old Shire Room, thank you to Gen, Chas and others. We have received a donation to expand this exhibition and are organising new display boards to go on the back wall.

We received a small grant through Libby Coker to support our volunteers. We are holding a day training session covering establishing social history exhibitions on 26 September. Jen Morey and myself have attended workshops on entering our Museum collection onto the Australian Collections database. All these courses were organised through AMAGA Victoria. Pauline Wigan is also taking a course on cataloguing for Historical Libraries through RHSV. It is also planned to develop a new induction manual for volunteers.

We receive a steady stream of research requests. Less of these are for family history queries and more are about the location of ancestral properties on the Bellarine. Gwenda Brehaut has produced two files on the Gange family of Garringall and the Eastwood family of Dunkald, both properties near Drysdale, from donated material. Ann Hodgkinson and Di Kolomeitz have written a book on the history of Griggs Creek / Greenvale, the property on which the Jetty Road Urban Growth development is now located.

Finally, an incredible thank you to the Committee and our dedicated volunteers without whom I would not have survived this year.

ANN HODGKINSON