

# ORBOST & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

P.O. BOX 284 ORBOST VIC 3888



**President:** Heather Terrell  
**Vice President:** Marilyn Morgan  
**Secretary:** May Leatch  
**Treasurer:** Barry Miller  
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**Collection Management:** Marilyn Morgan, Marlene Robb, May Leatch, Margaret Smith, Barry Miller  
**Research Secretary:** Lois Crisp, John Phillips  
**Newsletter Editor:** May Leatch

## NEWSLETTER No. 103 NOVEMBER, 2013

### SOME HIDDEN TREASURES FROM OUR COLLECTION

- by May Leatch

**DURING THE PAST YEAR AND A HALF, I HAVE HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF WORKING ON THE SOCIETY'S COLLECTION MANAGEMENT PROJECT. MARLENE, BARRY AND I ARE FINDING, INSPECTING, PHOTOGRAPHING AND DOCUMENTING ALL ITEMS WITHIN THE COLLECTION. BARRY IS THE PHOTOGRAPHER AND MARLENE AND I ARE THE DOCUMENTERS. THIS IS THE FIRST MAJOR COLLECTION UPDATE OF OUR COLLECTION SINCE THE 1990s.**

**ALTHOUGH MANY ITEMS ARE ON DISPLAY IN OUR MUSEUM, MANY OTHERS ARE HIDDEN AWAY IN STORAGE. THE NUMBER OF RARE AND INTERESTING OBJECTS IS ENORMOUS. WHILE SOME ITEMS ARE WELL DOCUMENTED WITH THE NAME OF THE PERSON WHO DONATED THE ITEMS AND HOW THEY WERE USED ETC., MANY OTHERS LACK THIS INFORMATION AND THE VALUE OF THE ITEMS TO LOCAL HISTORY IS DIMINISHED.**

**THIS NEWSLETTER PRESENTS JUST A FEW OF OUR INTERESTING OBJECTS.**

#### THE HERALD 1919

This aged and battered copy of the **THE HERALD**, evening edition, Tuesday 9th September 1919, cost one penny, printed in Melbourne, has a very interesting story attached to it.

Written in pen and ink on the label which is stuck onto the piece of brown wrapping paper are these words:

*This "Herald" was received by the first aeroplane to arrive in Orbost from the President of the Bairnsdale Shire, Councillor Deery [?] to the Pres. of the Shire of Orbost, Councillor R P Cameron, Sept. 10th 1919.*



381

This photograph is in our collection. **Is this the famous aeroplane which came to Orbost on 10th September 1919?**

We have the **S R Mails** from 1890 to 1970 in digital form so are able to see the reports of this visit and get the flavour of those times. The report below is from



1235

**THE PEACE LOAN.**  
**AEROPLANE VISIT TO ORBOST,**

"I see it!" "There it is!" "Here it comes!" Such were among the expressions with which spectators at Mr McPhee's paddock on Wednesday gave vent to their emotions as they gazed towards the south-west to see the aeroplane, which, under the control of Lieutenant Oakes, presented suddenly the appearance of a hawk and came flying along, appearing gradually to get bigger and bigger until it passed the spectators, after which it soared round the township and returned to Newmerella, swooping gracefully down and getting lower and lower, until with charming ease and grace it alighted on the ground secured for the purpose. That may be called the first act, and it was greeted with loud applause.

Then occurred a scamp on the part of many who desired to get close to the aeroplane, which was naturally an object of much curiosity.

After the aeroplane had undergone a critical examination the President of the shire, Mr R. P. Cameron, had a few words to say. He referred to the splendid display given by Lieutenant Oakes, but pointed out that that gentleman, with his brother officers present, had important business to attend to besides doing pretty things in the air, and that their principal object was to secure subscriptions to the peace loan. Notwithstanding his apologies on the score of inexperience, Mr Cameron then made an admirable appeal in the interests of the loan.

Suffering from a severe cold, Lieut. Fredman, organizer of the tour, called for Mr Couper Johnston to say a few words on his behalf. Mr Johnston complied with the request, and championed the cause of the loan with his customary ability.

Loan subscriptions were then received. Miss M. Dreyer started the ball rolling by taking out the first bond. Subscriptions poured in to such an extent after that that before very long the amount subscribed totalled £11,320. As the Orbost shire quota is only £16,000, there is little doubt that eventually it will be fully subscribed.

This article (LEFT) refers to the plane having landed on Mr McPhee's paddock. **Does anyone know the location for McPhee's paddock?** It does not show up on any of our early maps of Newmerella.



ABOVE: These advertisements were also in the **Snowy River Mail** at the time of the plane's visit.



1639

Also in our collection is this impressive plaque which shows that Orbost was a generous subscriber to the Peace Loan.



## ORBOST CHRISTY MINSTRELS TROUPE

Another fascinating item in our collection is a small Minute Book for the **Orbost Christy Minstrels of 1885**. This musical group held its first meeting in June 1885. Initial members of this singing group were: Alex Cameron, Josh. Rathbern, Jas. Thompson, D Ward, Wm. Park, A Munro, A W Ward, G Philpot, Wm Cameron, Robt. Cameron, Geo. Waycott, Jas. Hossack, and Jas. Drew. Membership fees were 2/6. Mr Hossack was appointed as Musical Conductor, Mr Waycott and Wm Cameron were corner men, and Mr Rathbern was centre man. They planned to meet twice a week for practice and Mr Waycott was instructed to get the Court Minstrels music book and also a tambourine and bones for accompaniment.

Unfortunately, this little book only records the first few meetings of the group, the last on August 15th 1885, so we do not know how long this group continued. It pre-dated the first Orbost Pipe Band by several years. Also, because the Snowy River Mail did not begin until August 1890, there are no reports to be found there.

This little book was donated by the Estate of Elsie Cook.

**CAN ANYONE HELP with further information?**

1828

Orbost June 3<sup>rd</sup> 85  
 (Christy Minstrels Troupe)  
 Preliminary Meeting Friday  
 Evening 5<sup>th</sup> June  
 Business  
 Secretary Instructed to Write  
 for Catalogue of Books Called  
 The Court Minstrels.  
 The following Gentlemen were  
 Elected as a Committee.  
 Mr Jas Hossack Mr Geo Waycott  
 Mr Robt Cameron Mr Josh Rathbern  
 Mr Wm Cameron Mr Jas Thompson  
 Mr Arch<sup>d</sup> Munro No Amendment  
 (Carried)  
 Proposed By Mr Thompson that  
 Mr Waycott be Treasurer Seconded  
 By Mr Rathbern and Carried

## BOER WAR HANDKERCHIEF / SOUVENIR

This is one of several souvenir handkerchiefs in our collection. Made of fine linen, this printed handkerchief was produced by the **Daily Mail** in London to raise funds for the "Soldiers' Families Fund" after the outbreak of the Second Boer War (1899-1902).

The **Absent-Minded Beggar** is a 1899 poem by Rudyard Kipling set to music by Sir Arthur Sullivan. The chorus exhorts the audience to "pass the hat for your credit's sake, and pay—pay—pay!" The poem was a huge success and raised more than £250,000.

Kipling's song is printed in full on the left hand side of the handkerchief. On the right is a map showing the South African Republic, Cape Colony, Portugese East Africa, and Rhodesia, all names which have disappeared from modern maps.

The image of an aged Queen Victoria is on the lower right.



**DOES ANYONE KNOW who donated this item?**

1802

## SHELL ART FIGURINE

This lovely little treasure, just 14cm tall and entirely made of shells is set onto a recycled cigar box. What a charming example of whimsy art!

The musician's body, possibly imitating a Carribean guitar or tambourine player, has a naturalistic tilt to his body and bears his weight on his right leg, leaving his left leg free to tap the rhythm. His hands and fingers are made from shells which have been specially selected for their shapes.

The only information we have is that it was made and donated by Mrs Elma Camm.

**CAN ANYONE SUPPLY INFORMATION ABOUT MRS CAMM PLEASE?**



## MYSTERY OBJECT



**CAN ANYONE HELP?** This lump of shaped iron has a diameter of 21.5cm and a height of 8.8cm. It has 8 facets on its edge and is slightly concave on one side (showing) and has an overall weathered and rusty appearance. It is also extremely heavy! We have no information of what it was used for or who donated it and when.

## CLINOMETER / PITCHING GAUGE



This small precision instrument was donated by Len Robinson.

The two leaves are made of wood (possibly birch) and are framed with brass. Information from the internet describes it as a 12 inch clinometer rule which could date from the mid 19th Century. It was made by London instrument makers Troughton & Simms. On the outside is a conversion scale for Centigrade, Fahrenheit and Reaumer and another for Angle and One In. The interior has a semi-protractor graduated 90-0-90° with an index arm pointer and with a graduated edge in inches.

**HOW WAS IT USED LOCALLY? Was it used to measure the height of trees perhaps? HELP PLEASE.**

**NOTE:** object numbers displayed with the items in this Newsletter are our catalogue numbers. Our catalogue is presently being updated with lots of photos and additional information if available. Many items, although wonderfully interesting and intriguing, have very little recorded information.