

February 2017

Hello Members,

Following a nice long Christmas/New Year break we are all well and truly back into the swing of things at HeritageWorks. In late January the 100th anniversary of the first flight to Warrnambool was marked with a small exhibition of memorabilia and documents relating to the pioneering flight of Basil Watson, who landed at the racecourse on January 24, 1917. He carried with him on that flight three letters including one from the Lord Mayor of Melbourne conveying greetings to the Mayor of Warrnambool, thereby making not only the first landing in Warrnambool, but the first delivery of airmail to the town. The journey from Point Cook took one hour and fifty-five minutes which set an Australian distance record at the time.

Basil Watson's 50cc bi-plane was homemade, in the true sense of that word. He constructed it in the billiard room of his family home in Brighton, partly demolishing a wall to get it out of the building. Collection items in our display include photographs and news cuttings as well as the seat from his aeroplane and the letter presented to the Mayor. The display will continue for the next few weeks.



In the weeks following his first flight to Warrnambool, Basil Watson established the first interstate airmail run in Australia between Mt Gambier and Melbourne, including stops in Casterton, Hamilton, Warrnambool and Camperdown. This postcard stamped at Warrnambool Post Office 20 February 1917, was written on one of the special cards printed for delivery by the "aerial postman".

The relatively wet and cool summer has not deterred the spiders and flies from moving indoors at HeritageWorks and History House. While we have been on holidays, they have been busy. The committee has decided that the first day of autumn will be "Declare war on cob-web" day. We are planning a working bee 4-5pm next Wednesday 1st March and invite members to come along and assist. The windows have already been cleaned, and there is a long list of little jobs to do, but no really big heavy tasks, so one hour should bowl them all over. Many hands make light work, so if you are able to spare an hour of your time, please come and join us. Volunteers will be rewarded with tea and chocolate bikkies.

Recent Acquisitions The Collections sub-committee has been busy during January assessing items which have been donated to the Society during December & January. The following is a list of recent donations:

5 portraits on glass (donor Marjorie McLean), 2 poetry books (Trafalgar Hist Society); Berrambool Recipe Book, 1915 (Mary Coverdale); 2 calendars, Warrnambool song sheet music, programs and brochures (Ray Welsord); City Pound Keeper's ledger books 1956-2004 & 1967-1980 (Sue Looney); 16 small b&w photos Wbool & Port Campbell (Jenny Levett); 2 photos of old baths (FSH Maritime Village); documents & survey maps from Jim Henry collection (Catherine Macdonald); National Heritage Trail Plaque- Gold Escort Route 1836-1936 (Clive Brownsea); Wbool Hockey Club files, artefacts, scrapbooks (Dulcie Askew); Souvenir greeting card of *Rowitta* (Bev Moore); photograph W&DFL West End FC 1962 (Glenys Phillpot); Ledger of Alex Black, painter, letter, textbook- Progressive Reader and items from Absalom family collection (Ray Welsford); Documents, scrapbooks and photos of Speedway (William McDowell).

Students from local schools are frequent visitors to our Society during the course of the school year, and we make school visits and conduct walks focused on aspects of school curriculum.

The first school group for the year – twelve Year 10 from the Warrnambool Special Development School – made a visit to HeritageWorks on Thursday 22nd February. The students are currently studying local history and showed great interest in the Pioneer Board and artefacts from the collection and took home information to add to the timelines they are currently compiling in class.



Coming soon at HeritageWorks

- Wednesday March 1: Working bee 4-5pm –many little tasks to do – all welcome.
- March – April: installation of baffles under Pool Room to insulate building for winter.
- April – May: RHSV heritage festival – watch this space for details
- May 20 : Family History Group Seminar

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