

History alive

Orange & District Historical Society newsletter

Summer 2022-23



A treasure-trove at The Rocks



Plus:

**Rescue work at
Eugowra Museum**



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Main photo: Visitors are entranced by Ed Suttor's huge collection of memorabilia at his property The Rocks.
Below left: Ed Suttor talks to the visitors outside The Rocks Inn.
Below right: A small corner of the collection.

Bottom left: Clearing Eugowra Historic Museum of mud and water.

Bottom right: Volunteers prioritise tasks to clean the museum and rescue historic items for conservation.

This newsletter is designed to keep members and other interested people informed about the society's activities as well as matters of interest in the wider field.

If anyone would like to contribute to it they should contact editor Liz Edwards.

Our newsletter requires a considerable amount of money to produce each quarter with paper, printing and postage all adding to the cost.

Therefore, wherever possible, we email it to those members and others on our mailing list who have an email address.

However, if anyone with an email address would prefer also to receive a paper copy, they may do so simply by contacting the secretary.

Those who do not have access to email will continue to receive their copies by ordinary mail.

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Membership fees from January 2023

Family \$45; individual \$30; single concession \$20; couple concession \$30.

Contact secretary or treasurer. Please pay promptly.

Research inquiries:

The Research Officer, Orange & District Historical Society, P O Box 1626, Orange, NSW 2800

Please supply an A4, stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Cost: \$25 for the initial inquiry (plus additional charges for more extensive research).

Please provide your name, address, phone number and email address, details of your inquiry, any information you may already have, and the reason for your inquiry.

Bank:

Orange & District Historical Society, Orange Credit Union, BSB 802-129, A/c No 34252 (please include name and reason for payment). If you are transferring money from your account at Orange Credit Union, please add \$1 to our account number.

A message from the president

My Orange and District Historical Society's report on the workings as at this date is easy to compile because it's been so busy. I'll start with thanking the many members who attended the Annual General Meeting in August where the election of officers for another twelve months took place. It was a pleasure to see so many turn up. Sadly, our newly elected treasurer, Steve Brakenridge, has been sick; assistant Phil Stevenson has taken up the mantle while Steve continues his treatment. We wish him well.

Liz continues her work on the CWD Negative collection, and she took on the extra role of mentoring a year 10 student from Kinross Wolaroi School, Alice Wilson, from the Molong area. Alice showed great interest in our history despite her own troubles with the family property being cut off by flood waters so badly that she had to stay in Orange to be assured of being able to continue her schooling. Yet she never missed a weekly visit to ODHS to attend to the tasks set for her by Liz. I feel sure she will receive high marks for her efforts. You're a credit to your family, Alice, and the society wishes you every success.

The society's volunteers must be thanked, for they have been very busy throughout the year, but we continued to achieve a high standard of securing, recording, and storing a vast variety of items dropped into us pertaining to our area's history. We have also answered dozens of requests from members of the public who pose questions on an almost daily basis, Julie Sykes in the first point of call and her tireless work has been invaluable. Any requests she can't immediately answer, she gets plenty of assistance from other volunteers

A big help in finding these answers is Ross Maroney's files and the fact we now have the Internet and WiFi properly installed. New committee member Jim Coffey is a whiz in this area. Euan Greer has amazed again with some well researched stories for our newsletters The one on East Fork must have taken hours and his infectious enthusiasm is matched by all our volunteers. I would also make special mention of Phil's

work and leadership, which is greatly appreciated. Thanks all.

We have decided to put the History Alive nights on hold for a while and concentrate on trips. The outstanding one to Ed Sutor's property, The Rocks, left the large contingent of members gobsmacked by his huge and eclectic collection and the work done to display it.

The opportunity to see the collection of electrical supply memorabilia, being gathered and displayed by Essential Energy's Orange manager Richard Venner, was too good to miss and we thank him for what he is doing.

There was a great turn-up to our Christmas dinner which was pleasing to see. All credit goes to Karen Kloosterman and her superb organising skills. The night and venue were a huge success.

On a sad note, we are all aware of the devastating destruction caused to Eugowra by the floods. Our sympathy to those who will spend Christmas out of their homes, and to the volunteers of Eugowra Museum which was inundated, destroying some items and damaging others. Although they received help, the museum will be out of action for some considerable time. It must be heart-breaking.

On another sad note, the loss of our former patron Robin McLachlan must also be mentioned and we extend our sincere condolences to his family and friends.

I am looking forward to seeing all our superb team again in 2023, which is the year that marks the 200th anniversary of James Blackman leading Percy Simpson and 100 convicts and cattle through Blackmans Swamp en route to setting up the government stock station at Wellington. Remember, if we ignore our history, we risk repeating our errors.

- Bob Curran



A full house again for morning tea

There was barely room to move at a recent morning tea at the cottage.

This is the time for everyone to catch up on news and plan the day's activities over a cuppa.

Clockwise from left: Tony Bouffler, Annette Neville, Euan Greer, Bob Curran, Jim Coffey, Kieran McLeonard, Ross Maroney, Jenny Maher, Judy Agland, Rosemary Curry and Liz Edwards. Photo courtesy Phil Stevenson.

Memorable visit to Ed Suttor's inn



Left: Visitors explore the huge storage shed filled with masses of historic rural items.

Inset: Inside one of the rooms at The Rocks Inn.



The praise just kept coming when a large group of members and others visited Ed Suttor's rural collection at his property The Rocks:

"This is the best place for history", "Fascinating". "Absolutely fantastic", "An Aladdin's cave", "What they were able to do with what they had is amazing", "Some people don't realise the value of these things", "The most extraordinary collection I've ever seen", "This is a truly memorable visit".

Ed's property is situated about half-way between Orange and Bathurst and it not only contains his gigantic shed in which his collection is stored but one of the region's oldest inns.

We gathered at the Beekeeper's Inn and drove in convoy to the Old Rocks Inn first, a mid-19th century building at the top of The Rocks hill. The inn is the second one at The Rocks, the earlier one, the Robin Hood and Little John being situated at the bottom of the hill, but it has all but disappeared.

Ed explained to us the history of the inn and surrounding property before we wandered inside and out. It is badly in need of repair and in places you could see

the original lath and plaster ceiling while outside part of the single roof was exposed. People wondered what could be done to preserve this historic building.

We moved on down the hill to Ed's shed for morning tea, supplied by Karen Kloosterman, then entered Ed's huge shed.

The collection is remarkable for its scope and our group delighted in exploring the collection. It included shearing combs, axes, bottles, saws, 50 wool presses, a huge wooden dray, kettles, meat mincers, rabbit traps, saddles, scales, sewing machines and a wealth of old tools.

Ed was kept busy answering people's questions, especially what would happen to the collection in the long-term. He is not sure about that but said his nephew was starting to take an interest in it.

Some of us wondered how many other uncatalogued, loosely arranged collections of rural memorabilia are scattered around Australia, and what can be done to preserve them.

When we had covered every inch of the shed we repaired to the Beekeeper's Inn for lunch. It was a memorable day and one we shall long remember.



Lath and plaster ceiling exposed at the inn.



Art Deco frieze at the inn.



Shingles beneath the iron roof.

and rural collection at The Rocks



Above, left and below: Part of Ed Suttor's vast collection of rural memorabilia.



Lunch at the Beekeeper's Inn.



Lunch at the Beekeeper's Inn.

The locomotive depots of Orange



Image 1. A late 1940s aerial photo of the new depot when it was about ten years old. East Fork is at the far left, West Fork far right and South Fork just beyond the Forest Road bridge. Image courtesy Milton Kent, Fairfax Media.

By Euan Greer

After 70 years of operating under increasingly strained facilities and with the last transfer of locomotives, machinery, stores, staff and records, the old depot in Orange Station yard was finally closed by September 1938. Closure culminated with the full opening of the new depot on the railway land encompassed by the triangle of railway lines at East Fork by the same date.

Orange East Fork Loco Depot (1937 – 1985)

Construction of Orange East Fork Locomotive Depot, Depot No 29 began no later than 1936. Other sites for a new depot had been discussed over a number of years before East Fork was finally selected.

It was a modern depot designed for efficient servicing

and minor repair of steam locomotives, their preparation for service and departure for their next working. To avoid conflicting movements, their arrival back on depot was separate from the departure side. The depot design was basically on the principle of what we would now call 'work flow'. A sketch of East Fork can be seen on p.14 of this newsletter's winter edition.

Not only was the depot fully modern for machines and men, it had the extra advantage that there were no longer any complaints from irate ladies whose freshly hung washing was ruined by smoke, soot and ash from the old depot when the wind changed to the wrong direction.

The central facility in the new depot was a partial (or sector) roundhouse covering five tracks (known as 'roads') for loco servicing and repair. Each of these roads and two uncovered roads west of the shed had an inspection pit between the rails. Access to the roundhouse was by way of a 75 foot turntable which also served another seven open-air roads to the right of the shed where serviced engines or those waiting their turn were kept.

During the steam age, a plentiful and efficient supply of coal and water to locomotives was essential. Coaling engines and removal of ash from the firebox involved heavy, dirty work. Both were made much easier by the provision of an automated raised coal bin (one of only five in the State), and an elevated de-ashing road allowed the disposal of ash directly into rail trucks for later removal. Poplar trees were planted in this area to help reduce noise and dust.

Two water tanks, of 40,000 and 10,000 gallons, each supplied water to columns and other outlets all through the depot. Water for the tanks was obtained from Orange Municipal Council mains.

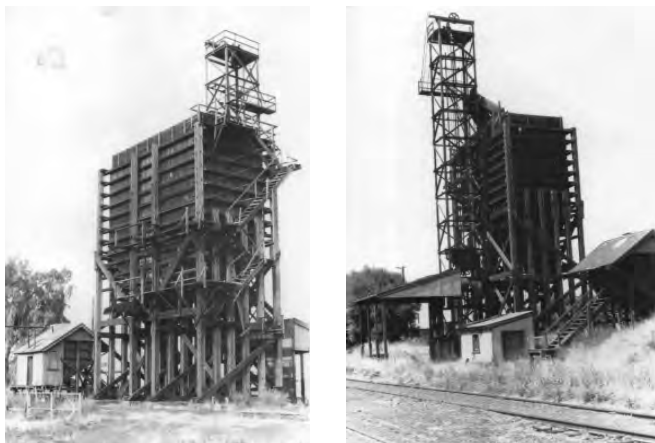


Image 3. Two views of the Holmen coal hoist and bin: it held 300 tons of coal and stood nearly 110 feet high. On the left is the side on which locomotive tenders were filled with coal, the right where coal was emptied from the bottom of railway trucks into a hopper, lifted up by the hoist and tipped into the storage bin. Tenders were called for its demolition on 7.8.1980. Photos: Euan Greer, 28.12.1978.

* Continued next page

Part 2: East Fork 1937 - 1985



Image 2. The heart of East Fork Depot, the partial roundhouse and the turntable with its radiating 'roads'. Below the turntable is the District Locomotive Engineer's office and below that again, the barracks for visiting off-duty engine crew. Image courtesy ODHS CWD Negative Collection, photo taken 9.07.1964.

* From previous page

Within the main work area of the depot two brick buildings provided office, store and amenities facilities for staff. Close to the roundhouse itself, was the brick-built District Locomotive Engineer's office. Immediately behind that, in the western apex of the triangle of railway lines, a unique style of enginemen's barracks of two storeys was built. It contained bedrooms, kitchen, dining and ablution facilities for 36 enginemen. All four buildings still exist.

Over time the depot become well-known for its gardens which made it a more pleasant place to work. They often took first place in their class in the Rail-

way's State-wide garden competition.

Diesel-electric locomotives started to appear on NSW Railways in the 1950s and gradually made their presence felt in the workings of East Fork Depot. By the mid-1960s, the diesels were really beginning to replace steam locomotives in the west of the State with less work needed to service those remaining. Steam locomotives disappeared from East Fork Depot in 1967 but it continued in use as a crew change point and for stabling of diesels between work rosters and minor maintenance. Until then the facilities had been allowed to become run down and some structures such as the roundhouse, coal hoist and de-ashing road were quickly demolished.

All locomotive servicing facilities ceased at East

Fork in 1985, thus ending 108 years of Orange being the home of a locomotive depot. Engine crews ceased to be based in Orange in 1989.



Image 4. The roundhouse during its demolition in December 1970. The five roads under cover are clearly seen with the turntable pit in the foreground. Courtesy Love (1998), p 14.

Acknowledgement and reference
As with Part 1, much of the information in this article was found in the excellent monograph on Orange locomotive depots by Ray Love (1998): *The Steam Locomotive Depots in NSW. Locomotive Depot No 29, Orange*. In *Byways of Steam. Encore* (Eveleigh Press, Matraville), pp. 6-101.

Electrifying historical collection

As we approach the centenary of the switching on of electricity in Orange, one man is working hard to ensure the history of electricity supply in our district is preserved.

Manager of Essential Energy in Orange, Richard Venner, has amassed an impressive collection of maps, plans, photos and equipment relating to local electricity supply at the company's depot in Lords Place.

Recently he hosted a group of interested people from our society to show us the collection.

Members of our group were intrigued by the maps showing the network of power lines, the original Ophir County Council logo (designed by local artist Clive Kaufman), various meters, insulators and switches, and items to erect and maintain poles and wires..

The photographs show workers laying underground cables for new lights, depictions of how electricity poles were erected, and images of staff over the years.

Richard is keen to exchange information and photos with our society.



Manager of Essential Energy in Orange, Richard Venner, shows Historical Society members Phil Stevenson, Jim Coffey and Euan Greer some of the maps in the collection.

There will be a small ceremony at the first power pole, in Byng Street near the Anson Street intersection in early January to mark the centenary of the erection of the pole.



Richard venner points out items on a plan of electricity lines.



Part of the collection of meters, switches and insulators.



Left: Richard Venner with pole climbing equipment.



Right: Men working on a power pole. We are unsure where this was taken.



The Ophir County Council logo, designed by Orange artist Clive Kaufman in 1956.

Christmas dinner for members and friends

Members, their families and friends got in early to celebrate Christmas with dinner at Kate Jones's in Moulder Street on Friday 25 November.

About thirty attended and enjoyed a good meal and festive drinks.

The dinner marked a productive year for the society following the restrictions of the Covid Pandemic, with much achieved, including some memorable visits to places of interest.



Left: Barb Brownrigg and Dina Hayter.



Liz Edwards and Anne and Steve Brakenridge.



Karen Kloosterman and Euan Greer.



Charlie and Yvonne Everett and Julie Lawrie.



Judi Spicer and her father Merve Wilkie.



Fred and May Brooking.



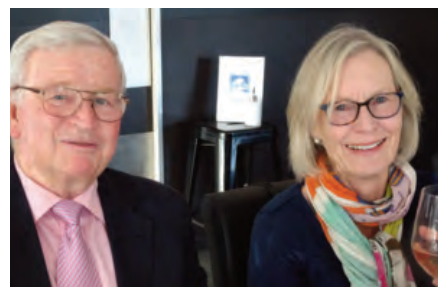
Bob and Judy Curran.



John Lawrie and Karen and Tony Bouffler.



Doug and Pam Brooks.



Robert Bruce and Christine Williams.



Far left: Russell and Anne Tym.



Middle: Judy Agland and Dave and Julie Sykes.



Left: Phil Stevenson and Marlene Farrell.

The Jaeger family story: Prussian immigrants

Compiled by **Bob Curran** after Jack Jaeger's grandson Grant found a 1945 Red Victory Loan pennant in his father's shed and donated it to Orange and District Historical Society. The unusual pennant was one of two awarded to Orange because it raised the most funds in the fourth victory loan fundraising competition that was run State-wide. Photos enhanced by **Robert Bruce**.

After the Napoleonic wars the Prussian Empire tried to create a confederation of all states. This confederation struggled through many revolutions until about 1867 when it finally failed.

Carl Adolph Herman Jaeger (known as Herman, born circa 1827 died 1899 at Orange aged 72) may have been fed up with the revolutions or he may have been chasing gold, however, we know he arrived by ship in Australia as an unassisted passenger about August 1853. The ship first entered port at Melbourne. Here in Victoria's gold fields, Herman stayed for almost six years.

He then set sail for New Zealand but his stay there wasn't long and he was soon on his way to Sydney.

Herman Jaeger arrived in Sydney about 1860 or '61 and in 1862 he married Elizabeth Ann Howell at Ryde. On the same ship were others who became well-known in Orange, such as Nonnenmacher, Rennie, Beck, and Kaufman. Without further research one can only assume that at least some of these were the ancestors of people of those names living in the Orange district, lured by the gold which was abundant at the time.

Herman and his wife, like many others, chased gold at Lucknow, whose Wentworth Mine was a very rich field. But they ended up at Forest Reefs a little southwest of Lucknow and here he had a reasonably successful life where he made a living mining and had a small farm. Here, he and Elizabeth had two sons and six daughters: Ferdinand Rudolph Herman (b 1863), Rosa (b 1868), Wilhelm Otto (b 1870), Cecilia (b 1872), Sophia Wilhelmina (b 1874), Charlotte Clara (b 1877), Ida (b 1879), and Florence J (b 1881). One daughter died un-named.

Herman Jaeger was an active member of the Forest Reefs community and heavily involved in fighting for better mining conditions and the Forest Reefs School.

While second son Otto Wilhelm is not the family line I wish to follow, he is worth a mention, for he was a persistent and effective member of the community who was very much involved in the particularly nasty and protracted strike at Lucknow gold mines in 1897. The men refused to go back to work until safety conditions and workers' rights improved.

It was both Otto and his brother Ferdinand Rudolph Herman (also known as Herman) and their father who were main leaders of the powerful Strike Committee, and these three men were well respected for their stubborn stance. Eventually the strike was settled by the great Billy Hughes after two bombs were planted, one



All Black premiers, winners of the B-grade competition in 1918, Jack Jaeger standing, second from left.

of which exploded. To solve the problem of poor pay the men worked in 'tributes' which meant all the gold mined was weighed and not 'personally removed' so the mine owner and the workers got a better outcome.

This gave Otto a high profile and he set about trying to become the local Member of Parliament on two occasions. The first time, after a lot of electioneering, he nearly succeeded in taking the seat off a very popular sitting member, Paddy Crick, only failing by 44 votes. The second time, however, he tried against Henry Newman of Lucknow and was defeated soundly. This was the final straw and Otto left to live in Sydney where he died in 1938.

Ferdinand Rudolph Herman Jaeger, known as Herman, married Lucy Donovan from Molong and they had at least nine children. Otto Wilhelm (b 1891), Percival John (known as Jack, b 1893), Ferdinand Rudolph (b 1894), Marguerite E (b 1895), Albert H (b 1897), Hector Irwin (b 1899), an unnamed female (b 1903), Alma (b 1904), Ernest Edwin (b 1907), and Florence J (b 1909). Sadly, Herman would outlive many of his children.

Albert H and Ernest E Jaeger were very good rugby league players but both died as young men. Ernest was an outstanding player, so good, in fact, his nickname was Bonza, and his life, though short, was often mentioned in the papers. He was greatly mourned on his death, when a steam boiler blew up at Bunnerong power station in Matraville, Sydney. He sustained shocking injuries and died in Prince Henry Hospital.

Percival John Jaeger (known as Jack) probably came to the notice of the people of Orange through his excellent rugby league refereeing career and his involvement in starting the game of rugby league in the Western Districts as well as his involvement in the Eight Hour Day Committee.

* Continued next page

become leading family in Orange district

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His chosen profession was buying and running grocery shops, firstly at Five Ways and later in Churchill Avenue, which he did for successfully for many years. He became known as a congenial store-keeper who dealt honestly with his customers, many of whom he allowed tick during the Depression. Jack was also involved in community and sporting events around the city, including cricket.

It's almost certain that he was at the inaugural meeting held in the Foresters Hall in Lords Place in April 1912 to form the Western Districts Rugby League competition which would later become the Group 10 Competition. This was the start of rugby league in this district; until then rugby union had been the game.

I have not been able to prove that he was there on the night of the inaugural meeting, but I do know that he was on the committee in 1913 and I also know that he was referee and the manager of a team that went from Orange to Bathurst in 1912 and he was later made a life member of Group 10 'for his long and outstanding service'.

He later became secretary of the Western Districts Rugby League and was also a musician and was involved with the Orange City Band for decades.

As a result of his community profile, Jack was probably urged to enter politics and to follow the exploits of his uncle Otto, of whom we have spoken before.



Jack Jaeger and Sterling Ada Fahy were married at St Joseph's Church, Orange, in 1929.

From what I can find out he must have tried to be elected to Orange Municipal Council, firstly in about 1916, again in 1919, and it looks like there was some sort of by-election in 1920 again, but he went closest in 1922.

1924 was a landmark year for Jack when he was involved in the community at Mullion Creek organising an eight-hour day and a combined fundraiser event to raise funds for a community hall and piano. As one of the organisers he was asked to crown the winning entry in the queen competition who raised over £102.00 towards much needed funds for the community hall.

The winning lady, Ada Fahy, was seated and Jack placed the crown upon her head as a photograph was taken by William Bursle, who had motored from Orange to Mullion Creek for the event.

Whether he knew her before or whether this was their first meeting, we don't know, but in 1929 Percival John Jaeger married Sterling Ada Fahy.

Finally, on his fifth attempt, Jack was successful at being elected to Orange Municipal Council in 1925.

Jack and Ada had three sons and one daughter: Carl, Brian, Trevor and Mary.

Jack made an immediate presence on council, taking up the fight for many improvements.

In 1944 Jack was returned to council with the highest vote. He served as mayor for two terms, from 1945 to 47 and 1951-53, during which time he presided over the massive expansion of Orange after World War Two.

By far his greatest achievement was to go into bat for all the workers, but particularly the women, of the Small Arms Factory which had been set up during the war. When the factory was no longer needed the Federal Government was going close it in 1945, putting hundreds out of work.

Jack lobbied government and organised a street march that was successful in getting the great Ben Chifley to visit Orange, resulting in setting up the Emmco factory which later became Email Ltd.

It manufactured fridges, freezers, heaters, electric metres, fans, ovens, stoves, washing machines and other whitegoods for use in homes throughout Australia. This factory lasted until 2000 when it was taken over by Electrolux before it would end, finally closing in 2016.

It was this factory that enabled many families to earn a living and the growth of the city was assured. This makes Jack Jaeger probably one of Orange's greatest mayors.



Jack Jaeger crowned Ada Fahy in the Mullion Creek Queen fundraising competition in 1924 (Jack seated on left).

Student delves into Orange's history

For the first time, this year we hosted a student on work experience. Alice Wilson, a year 10 student from Kinross Wolaroi School, was keen to see how we operate and do some work with us.

Our volunteers showed her around our March Street headquarters, Ross Maroney gave her a run-down on his vast historical files on Orange people and places, Liz Edwards took her on a historic walking tour of Orange, and Karen Kloosterman showed her how displays are set up. Alice also visited Orange City Library and Orange Regional Museum.

In her second term with us Alice worked on a project to discover the history of Suma Park homestead. This involved looking at land records for the site dating back to the early days of settlement in Orange, finding out about the various owners of the land and house, which included Simeon Lord and Sir Neville Howse, and discovering the history of federation houses.

Alice also helped photograph and catalogue the Suma Park Collection, which comprises mainly fine china tea-sets from the 1940s and 50s.

We were impressed with Alice's interest in local history and we wish her well in her future studies.



Alice with Orange Regional Museum manager Mary-Liz Andrews.



Alice with Orange City Library librarian Julie Sykes.



Euan Greer shows Alice a book from our collection.



Suma Park homestead.



Items from the Suma Park Collection.

Volunteers help Eugowra Museum's recovery

The severe flooding of the Eugowra recently saddened people throughout the region and many local people travelled to the stricken town to assist residents who were left with severely damaged homes and businesses.

One of the affected buildings in the town centre was Eugowra's Historical Museum, where floodwaters covered exhibits and display cases with a thick layer of mud.

Help was swift, with Orange City Council's Heritage and Community Museums team and professional conservators organised through Museums and Galleries NSW and funded by Create NSW all lending a hand. A number of individuals also rushed over as soon as floodwaters had subsided. They were joined by museum adviser Margot Jolly from Parkes, Hayley Lavers from Millthorpe Museum and Landcare volunteers. Phil Stevenson from our society also put in a day assisting.

Their first job was to do a basic clean-up and rescue of damaged items.

In subsequent days some of the volunteers continued cleaning and salvage operations at the stricken museum while others started cleaning, treatment and storage of

items at Orange Regional Museum.

A great deal of material was salvaged, including paper, photographs and textiles. Among significant and vulnerable items were Irish lace, a beautiful embroidered velvet jacket, a rakali (water-rat) fur coat, and paper-work relating to significant local families.

Orange Regional Museum manager Mary-Liz Andrews said that although the damage to the museum and its contents was devastating, the recovery had been remarkable: "We're very proud to have been able to support the efforts through professional knowledge, co-ordination, the funding of supplies including PPE, salvage and transport equipment and shelving, facilities for preliminary treatment, drying and freezing, and boots-on-the-ground.

"Professional conservation of specific items will take place next year in consultation with the Eugowra Museum and MGNSW, which has secured some funding through Create NSW. For now, everything salvaged is either in stable state, having been washed and dried (and mould having been neutralised), or is frozen for later treatment."



Left: Volunteers face the daunting task of scraping mud and water from the museum.



Right: A corner of the museum showing the results of the devastation on the historic collection.

Photos courtesy Hayley Lavers.



The scene outside the museum as cleaning and salvage work continues.



Volunteers prioritise tasks to clean the museum and rescue historic items for conservation.

Diary January - March 2023

We will be in recess from Thursday 22 December until Wednesday 1 February.

Orange Regional Museum: Open daily 9am-4pm.

Millthorpe Golden Memories Museum: Open weekends and public holidays plus school holidays 11am-3pm.

Molong Museum: During renovations for the next few months the museum will be closed to general visitors. It may be open on Thursdays but please phone ahead to book an appointment.

Contact secretary Sue Milne on 0400 425 015 or email: susanmilne55@gmail.com

Wentworth Mine: Open Saturday and Sunday on the first full weekend of the month 10am-2.30pm. See www.orangemuseum.com.au/wentworthmainmine

Wednesdays and Fridays: Volunteer working days at Heritage Cottage. Visitors with inquiries are welcome. Phone Liz Edwards on 0408 390 918 before your visit so we can start working on your inquiry.

Wednesday 1 February: ODHS committee meeting 5pm.

Wednesday 1 March: ODHS committee meeting, 5pm

Tributes to former patron Robin McLachlan

Members were saddened recently to hear of the death of our former patron Dr Robin McLachlan.

Canadian born Robin came to Australia in 1972 on a Canada Council doctoral fellowship to undertake a Ph D in far eastern history at the Australian National University.

He subsequently took up a lectureship at Bathurst's Mitchell College of Advanced Education in 1976, where he was given the freedom to teach a wide spectrum of history subjects, ranging from Chinese history to public history.

Robin continued teaching history with the college's successor, Charles Sturt University, but resigned in 2002 to better follow his own methods to explore the past. The Bathurst Pillars project, undertaken for Bathurst Regional Council, proved to be an interesting journey into the history of the Bathurst region.

The pillars, originally from the Royal Hotel in William Street, were transported to a cultural heritage garden on the riverbank. Each pillar tells the story of people who were important to the development of the Bathurst community.

Robin carried out a lot of research into Bathurst's first settlement, established in 1815, which included a jail, a female factory and mounted police headquarters, describing the site as the 'birthplace of inland Australia'.

Another project concerned Australians and New Zealanders who went to the 1898 Klondike Gold Rush in Canada's Yukon. He once said he wanted to make history accessible 'beyond the cloistered, narcissistic world of academic historians'.

One of his many achievements was a collaboration with Andrew Pike on a film titled 'The Chifleys of Busby Street', which explored the community memory of Ben Chifley, who was Australian Prime Minister from 1945-49 and a life-long resident of Bathurst.

He also researched and wrote signage to accompany a banner and heritage trail developed by Bathurst Regional Council.

As a consultant in history and heritage (with CSU and his own company Time Past Productions) he



worked on projects and sat on management boards of numerous heritage and arts organisations.

His research projects included commissioned book histories, heritage reports, education programs, exhibitions and computer-based products. In 1986 he was the Britain-Australia Bicentennial Trust Fellow at the Ironbridge Institute, University of Birmingham, and in 2004 he was one of the judges of the NSW Premier's History Awards. He also hosted workshops to inspire people to use theatre and drama to tell the stories of local history. Two of his history-content theatrical works were 'Bully Beef and Bullets' and the musical 'City of the Plains' which drew on his research and was written in collaboration with the late Bob Ellis.

Robin was awarded the medal of the Order of Australia in January 2022 for his contribution to Bathurst's history.

One of our members who has fond memories of Robin is Bev Holland, who enjoyed his lectures on East Asian history at Mitchell College. She said he had interesting ways of getting the information through, including asking students to speak as if they were actually at particular historic events. She also remembers his 'wicked sense of humour'. "I was lucky to have known him," she said.