



ECHUCA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

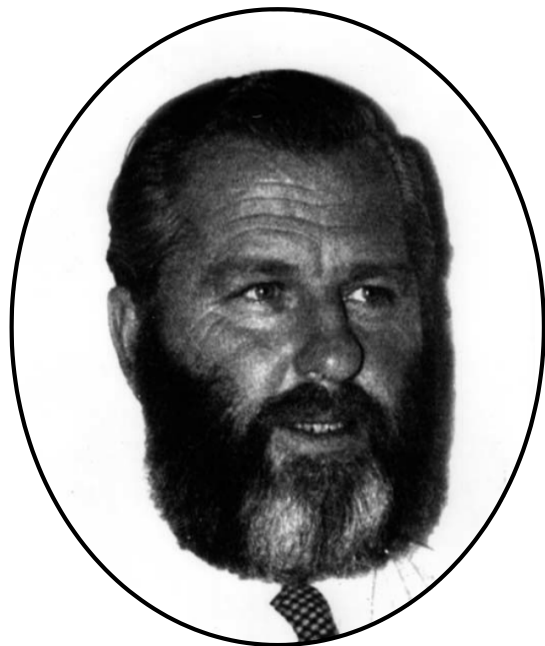


The Echuca Historical Society was formed at a public meeting held in June 1960 by residents concerned there were no visible reminders of the town's riverboat heritage – those great days when Echuca was Australia's leading inland port. The first project was to find and bring back to the town a suitable steamer for preservation. The P.S. ADELAIDE, with its long association with Murray River Sawmills, was ideal. It was bought for £950 - raised by Apex - and the Society organized its return from Mildura in October 1960. The arrival of ADELAIDE increased the town's awareness of its history and the Society successfully pursued its aim of also obtaining and preserving, artefacts, documents and photographs. In 1965 the Society made a submission to council seeking support for its plan for re-creation of the old port.

Approaches to the Hamer Government were successful and work began in 1971. The Society had no home for the first 10 years of its existence but in 1970 the former police station at 1 Dickson Street became available and a museum and archives resource centre was established. Over the years the Society has acquired a large collection of significant, photographs, documents and objects. Computerisation of records began in the early 1990s. In recent years the outdoor display area has been upgraded and exhibits restored, with some made operational. The interior of the Museum has recently been refurbished and in 2007 conservation work continues on significant items in the collection.



Founding Members



PHILIP W. SYMONS
Foundation Member
President 1960-62
Treasurer 1963-73

Instigated purchase & return of P.S. ADELAIDE to Echuca, October 1960, in association with Ian Stewart. Became volunteer skipper of Port's P.S PEVENSEY in 1976.



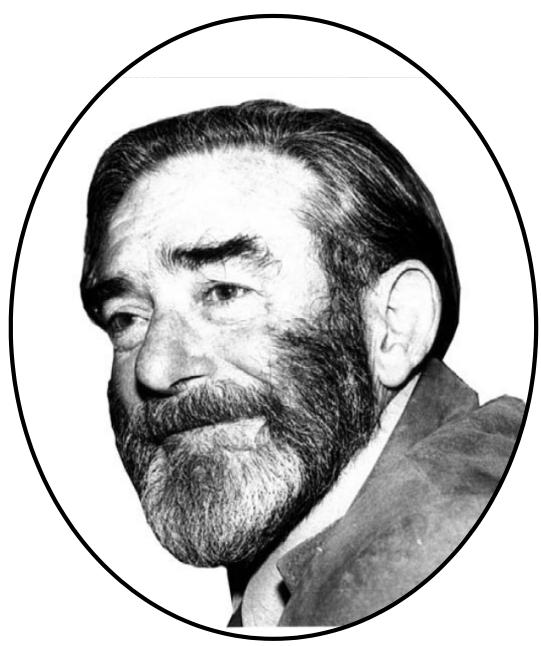
FRANK KEMP
Foundation member
Hon. Treasurer 1960-61

First treasurer of the Society. Manager Murray River Sawmills was active in promoting heritage within the community and a keen sportsman Echuca East.



HELEN COULSON
Foundation member
Hon. Secretary 1960-1980
Hon. Treasurer 1975-80
Life Member

Historian, author and heritage activist. Involved in ADELAIDE's return 1960 and opening of Museum in Old Police; Station 1970. Original member Port Advisory Committee 1971. Manager Port of Echuca, 1976-1990.



IAN STEWART
Foundation Member
President 1965 & 67
Vice-President 1961-64

Active in return of P.S. ADELAIDE to Echuca. In 1967 wrote original submission on behalf of Society, requesting Council's support towards re-creating the old Port of Echuca by restoring wharf and waterfront area. Became longtime Chairman of Council Port Advisory Committee formed 1971.



FRANK SUTTON
Foundation member
Hon. Treasurer 1980-1990
Hon. Secretary 1981-1991
Life Member

Historical researcher par excellence. Instrumental in retaining Council records in Echuca. Indexed early copies of Riverine Herald, a research tool that remains a lasting reminder of his dedication to the Society.



CHARLES DOWELL
Foundation member
Curator 1961-1970
Life Member

Original settler Echuca Village. Donated historical material "saved" after closure of Echuca Mechanics' Institute, including classic photographs of steamers at wharf at height of river trade, which form the basis of the Society's collection. Dedicated to preserving the history of the wider Echuca district.

Life & Notable Members



LARRY MITCHELL
Curator 1977-1992
Life Member

Longtime, manager of Museum collection and contributor to Society's photographic archives. Identified artefacts and maintained same. Interested in preserving and interpreting Echuca's wider history.



JOAN MITCHELL OAM
President 1982-2006
Life Member

Historical researcher and consultant, with a great depth of personal knowledge. Assisted in identifying artefacts for cataloging and arranging exhibits. Guardian of district heritage, particularly in Echuca East.



HARRY RACKKIND
Vice-President. 1989/90

Englishman who emigrated to Australia in 1977. In 1996 he helped bring the Society into the 20th Century by organising the purchase and installation of the first computer .



ALEC NORRIS
Museum Trustee
Life Member

Involved in maintaining and preserving the Museum's collection for over 20 years. Associated with Harry Rackkind in the forward thinking that led to computerising Society's records. Continues this work, including further indexing of Riverine Herald.



VAL NORRIS
Hon. Treasurer 1990 -

In role of Treasurer, upgraded Society's financial records to a professional standard. Longtime involvement in research, indexing and computerising records.



DOT HAMMOND
Secretary 2001 - 2011
President 2012 - 14, 2016-18

Obtained grants providing real money for the first time, resulting in improved Museum systems, equipment, exhibitions and displays. Completely at home in computerized world. Driving force behind construction of new Research and Archive building adjoining Museum, which opened 2013, largely responsible for Society being recognized as a modern progressive organization.



HEATHER RENDLE
Secretary 1993 – 2001, 2018
Treasurer 2012 – 2013
Archivist / researcher.

When a computer system was installed in 1996, she took advantage of new technology to digitize records and access important online archives to gain information used in response to historical enquiries. Has a strong eye for detail, Long time member specialising in research and exhibition projects. Always on call.



DONALD FRASER
Chair Museum Committee 1971 -1973
Vice President 1973 – 1976
President 1976 -77

Joined the society in 1969. Actively sourced and collected objects for the Museum Collection. Led working bees to remove large machinery from Murray River Sawmills, which was then donated and delivered to Port of Echuca for their fledgling exhibitions. Strong advocate for the preservation of heritage buildings in the town. Society Representative to Echuca Regional Development Society . A member of the PS Pevensey Club was on board when she returned to Echuca.



MICHAEL HALLAHAN
Vice President 1997 – 1999, 2002 - 2003
Treasurer 1996 - 1997, 1999 - 2000
President 2006 - 2008, 2015

A member since 1992 was always involved with the outdoor exhibitions and buildings. Drew up plans for new Covered Outdoor buildings & gained permits. Involved in working bees for the construction of these buildings. A strong advocate for Museum Display Principals and Procedure, in caring for the collection, led the way in renovations to indoor exhibits. As Treasurer he ran a tight ship ensuring the society continued to prosper.

