

Volume 19. No. 3 Spring 2026

IN TOUCH

Newsletter of the Echuca Historical Society Inc.



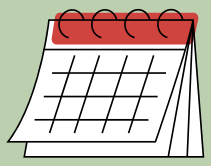
Paddle Steamer Canberra

An historic event happend on the Murray this week when the PS Canberra struck a submerged object and damaged her hull.
The PS Canberra is the oldest Paddle Steamer doing tours in Echuca. She was launched in 1913. The Canberra was commissioned to be built in 1912 by the Conner Family. She was built at the mouth of the Murray in Goolwa, South Australia and was originally used as a single deck fishing steamer by the Connor family.
Her current misfortune caused a lot of interest in our town this week and we are pleased to see that she has been towed back to the port and is now on the slip for repairs.

Editors Notes...

Welcome to the Spring edition of the Echuca Historical Society newsletter.
Deidre and Gill have taken over the editing of this newsletter and welcome suggestions and feedback. We are going to continue producing one newsletter per term and hope to have some interesting and informative articles and news.
As the days become longer and the sun starts to warm up we are approaching the last quarter of the year with great anticipation.

UPCOMING EVENTS ...



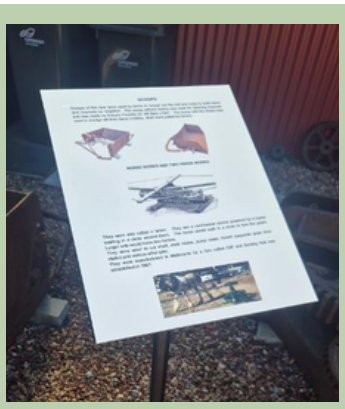
- **Afternoon tea with the Federal Band. On Sunday 25th October we are hosting an afternoon tea to celebrate senior's month. Refreshments will be served in the yard area and the band will be playing. You are all welcome to attend at 2.30pm. Please RSVP to eh.soc@bgpond.com**

- **Trip to PROV – Please pop into the research room and put your name down if you are interested in coming. We are currently collecting names and dates people are available.**

- **The Echuca Show – Julie, Bev and Robyn are currently preparing our next exhibition on the Echuca Show. It is a 150 year celebration. This will be ready on 28th October.**

ECHUCA HISTORICAL SOCIETY CELEBRATES 150 YEARS OF THE ECHUCA SHOW PRESS RELEASE:

"Echuca Historical Society will mark a remarkable milestone this year, celebrating 150 years of rich and diverse history of the Echuca Show.
This 150th anniversary exhibition brings together an extraordinary collection of diverse and personal stories that trace the evolution of the Echuca Show from its early beginnings to the vibrant community event it is today. Many items have ben carefully preserved for decades and will be on display to help honour the 150 years of Echuca Show.
Reaching 150 years is a profound moment for the Echuca Show and this exhibition is our way of honouring the people and events of the Echuca Show."







WHAT'S NEW?

- Three of our pedestal signs have been updated and are looking stunning.

- Our veranda has been replaced and we are loving the new look. It is slightly wider than the old one and is now ready to be stained. The Museum was closed for a few days while this was undertaken. The cost of these works were largely supported by a grant from Carol Holsworth.

- Two of our computers were taken away to be repaired and our Scan Pro is in need of a new globe so that we can continue to view our microfiche files.

- We have a new cleaning roster for our members in order to make sure our museum is always looking its best. If you want to help with this please see Gill, Robyn or Deidre.

- We are having a Needs Assessment. This was last undertaken in 2011 and it is time to see where we have come in regards to our displays, preservation and conservation of materials, physical items and ephemera. It is a two day process and we are excited to have Duncan and Christine Rolley from Artifact Conservation Kyneton undertaking this for us. The audit will help us in any future grants we may pursue and also prepare us for our upcoming accreditation.



THE GOAT LADY

Sarah Cochrane led a colorful and unfortunate life and was well known for her frequent appearances in court and rowdy behavior in the pioneering town.

The earliest record of Sarah & husband Peter are to be found from the Magistrates Court. From 1856 until her death in 1879, the family was subject to repeated court appearances for aggression and dissolution. It appears that alcohol was the main contributor to her aggression.

In 1858 her husband was charged with violent assault whereupon he disappeared. Much of her life was lived as a separated or deserted wife.

In the early days Sarah engaged in various forms of work, for many years looking after Dr Newbould's herd of goats and together with her own herd of goats to supply milk for sale, she also cared for many other towns people's goats for a small fee to keep them from straying as they grazed on the town common. These goats also caused many court appearances, with her being charged 'for nuisance', when the roaming goats escaped from the town common into the streets and gardens of the town.

As a businesswoman running the town dairy, she attended many business meetings upsetting the local gentry, by being a woman and with her forthright attitude.

Many of her court appearances were claims for payments for milk sold or work done, all of which were decided in her favor. This might indicatethat people tried to take advantage of her weaknesses, but she was prepared to stand up for her rights.
Her inquest papers describe her as 'a well-known character of intemperable habits', and in her later years she became a figure of fun for the youngsters of the area. As stated earlier she had an unfortunate life and at the end was found drowned in Campaspe River.



President's Report

Hello everyone. You will notice a slightly different selection of content in this edition. After several years of editing your newsletter, I have passed the torch to our new secretary and her merry band of helpers. I wish them the best of luck in this endeavor.
Things around the museum have been going strong. The displays and exhibits are looking great, and our visitor numbers are slowly increasing with the warmer weather.
We have partnered with Campaspe Shire in their Artist in Residency Program, so we are hoping that the artist who selects to reside with us will get much out of their experience being surrounded by the rich and fascinating history of Echuca/Moama.
In other news, our verandah is completed. It looks fantastic, with cypress timber being used on the decking. A huge thank you to Rick, Pat & Jack of Bourke Builders for the wonderful job they did.

Feedback

We often receive great feedback from our visitors and thought it would be great to share some of these:

- Very nostalgic
- The best museum I have every been in
- Just a beautiful walk through history
- Thank you for keeping the history alive
- Fantastic museum – so well maintained
- Amazing place - from a Hannasky decendent
- Absolutely amazing and will be back with family

Recent visitors from:
New Zealand
Tasmania
NSW
Victoria
Western Australia

Volunteer News

- Welcome to Denise – our latest volunteer. Denise will be looking after the reception area on a Friday.

- Some of our volunteers have just returned from extended holidays – welcome back Bev and Maree.

Calendar 2026

Coming General Meetings:

15 Oct
12 Nov
10 Dec

Start 4.30pm @ Research Centre

Executive Meetings:

1 Oct
4 Nov
2 Dec

Start 4.30pm @ Research Centre

Find us on facebook

Around the Traps

We are looking for volunteers to help out with our displays and exhibitions. If this sounds interesting to you, or you'd like more information, please reach out. Our textile displays are approaching change over time, so here is your opportunity to get up close and personal with some of our exceptional artefacts.

Contact the President, Secretary or Treasurer

WANTED

Have an idea for an article or a photo you would like to see published in the newsletter? Put pen to paper or have a hunt through those personal archives and see what you can find. All related content welcome.

Please drop us a line at:
eh.soc@bigpond.com or d.coombs@bigpond.com
or leave a paper article in the 'In Touch' Box on the filing cabinet in the Research Centre.

AU REVIOR OUR WATER TOWER

The 111 year old municipal water tower is currently being demolished by Coliban water.

It was designed by General John Monash and cost around £3000



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