



**Newsletter of the Gold Museum Society
Volume 27 No. 3; 2016**

MAY MEETING

The next meeting of the GMS is our annual Day out; this will be to Castlemaine on Thursday May 12th. See full details on next page. The bus will leave from the Gold Museum car park at 8.30am and is aiming to be back by 5pm. **PLEASE BRING A PACKED LUNCH WITH YOU.** Hot drinks will be available. After the visit to the historic homestead called 'Buda', and lunch, we have a mystery venue for the afternoon where afternoon tea will be provided. There are still spaces available on the bus so invite your friends to join us for a good day out. Please let Joanne know you are coming and give her your \$20 in an envelope marked with your name. (We are all very glad to see her back at her desk!)

APRIL MEETING

The speakers were Joy Menhennet and Wendy Benout and their subject was '*The influence of the Cornish on early Ballarat Society*'. Ballarat began as a tent town, with many miners coming from Cornwall. One of the largest nuggets, 'The Welcome', was found by the Red Hill Cooperative of 22-24 Cornish miners. The Cornish were very civic and community minded and founded a long list of houses, churches and businesses. Joy provided an excellent power-point presentation of photos and stories of notable people and families, with many thousands of descendants still in the area. Elaine thanked Joy and presented her with a gift.

Mary Clark



Early Castlemaine from State Library of Victoria collection

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

Those present at our last meeting were very encouraged to hear our Senior Curator explain the plans afoot for the Gold Museum. Michelle raised so many of the issues we have long wanted up-dated and also raised the challenges presented by the Pern Collection, with its many aboriginal artifacts, some of which are deemed “ Secret and Sacred” to the male members of that community. Bill McGregor has written some information about this collections below. The work will take time but an outside company, specializing in museum presentation, (and with whom Michelle has worked in the past) has already been appointed. It is going to be an exciting time...

Elaine Maberly

NOTES ON THE PERN COLLECTION

Sydney Pern began practicing medicine in Yarram before setting up in Ballarat. One of his junior partners was Neil Pescott. Neil, in due course, became one of the founders of Sovereign Hill. Dr Pern was an amateur anthropologist and travelled a great deal in central and northern Australia, collecting material for his extensive collection. In due course he donated the collection to the SMB Museum. At the time the School of Mines was the only tertiary institution in Ballarat. When this museum was closed in the 1950's he requested that the collection pass to the City Council from whence it finally arrived at the Gold Museum.

Bill McGregor

GOLD MUSEUM ANNUAL MAY TRIP

Depart Gold Museum 8.30 am **Arrive** Castlemaine 10.00 am

Please invite other people as we have space on the coach

The morning will be taken up with our guided tour of the historic house called BUDA.

Arrangements have been made for us to have lunch there after the guided tour of the house and garden. Hot drinks will be provided.

The afternoon will be taken up with a mystery visit and Afternoon Tea.

Cost \$20 per person -- please sign up and give money to Joanne.

Depart Castlemaine 3.00pm **Arrive** Gold Museum 5.00pm

National Volunteer Week Big Breakfast

National Volunteer Week (NVW) is the largest celebration of volunteers and volunteerism in Australia, and provides an opportunity to highlight the role of volunteers in our communities and to say thank you to the more than 6 million Australians who volunteer.

To celebrate the opening of National Volunteer Week and say thank you for your contribution we will be serving a yummy cooked breakfast. Please come along and join us on Monday 9th May. Breakfast will be served at Sovereign Hill's Café deck from 8.30am to 9.45am. We hope to see you there!

Kelly Steegstra

Stop press Coinworks have announced their project to photograph and detail the known Holey Dollars. 50 of the 300 on record have been done. The Holey Dollar located in the Gold Museum does not belong to the Museum - it is on loan from Museum Victoria and is subject to loan conditions. I have no doubt MV have been contacted and it is up to them to agree to additional documentation. If we are contacted we will advise Museum Victoria. We have no Holey Dollars in the Sovereign Hill Museum Association collection.

Michelle Smith

On Friday 29th April a workshop was held in the small Clark gallery for guides and other interested people. A pleasing number of guides were there. In the morning Helen Muir interviewed Clem Newey where we learnt that he had been brought up by an uncle and aunt and that he had a very strong love of farming and the countryside. He also took active roles in many of the local organisations in the areas where he and Bev lived. (I hope to have a much more detailed report for the next Aurum.

The guides feel that a replica of a troy ounce of gold would be a very useful tool for explaining what a troy ounce looks like. We understand that the replica probably would not be made of gold but perhaps a cube of metal with gold paint would work.

William Stone demonstrated how he presented the panoramic view from the Eureka Walkway on his tours and John Hamilton presented his talk about the Welcome Stranger nugget.

These presentations initiated some good discussion.

The afternoon program turned out to be the single most successful segment that has been presented in all the workshops that I have organised over the years. It consisted of Ian Holland, a Ballarat citizen, explaining how he became a professional gold prospector and how he went about this particular occupation. His talk covered many aspects of gold prospecting including the use of metal detectors, the “eye” for gold-bearing terrain, the history of gold as a mineral etc, etc. His audience was rapt, firing question after question at him. We all feel that we have gained immensely from this session as far as understanding more about the main subject of our job of being guides - gold. And we even got to pass round one of his nuggets!

Thank you to all people who helped in any way and in particular to Ian Holland who provided us with a highlight to remember.



NOTES FROM THE SENIOR CURATOR

A key activity over the past two months has been the development of a new Strategic Plan for the upcoming four years (2017-2020) in line with Creative Victoria funding which is now provided on a four year funding cycle. The plan was an important piece of support documentation for the Organisations Investment Program under which the Gold Museum hopes to be awarded approximately 30% of its operational funding over the next four years.

The following is the executive summary from the plan:

The Gold Museum will enhance its level of contribution to the community and the sector over the next four years by building on the capacity of the Museum to deliver high quality exhibitions, engaging public and education programs supported by best practice collection management and active volunteer programs. This focus will ensure that the Museum delivers effective outcomes for a range of audiences, internal and external, as well as our community. The Collections and Research Centre, with its state of the art storage facilities, work areas and information technology systems, has revitalised the way in which the Gold Museum operates. The Gold Museum will consolidate its work in this area while also focusing on audience development by upgrading core exhibitions and maximising the use of the outdoor space in order to increase connections to the Outdoor Museum and enhance the sense of place.

In implementing this vision, the Gold Museum will:

- 1. Be a high profile regional cultural asset with strong community support and tourist appeal*
- 2. Achieve excellence in exhibitions and associated public programs*

3. *Carry out 'best practice' in museology and collection management*
4. *Manage an effective and productive volunteer and intern program*
5. *Deliver effective and current education programs and children's activities*
6. *Optimise use of site and space*

In actively exploring opportunities for new directions and contemporary practice in areas of exhibition development, collection management, research, and community, sector and regional engagement, the Gold Museum will continue to develop as a significant museum and collection facility in regional Victoria.

In achieving all these six objectives all the elements of the Gold Museum will be required to work together – and that definitely includes the valuable contributions of the Gold Museum Society members.

Snjez has been working very hard on the upgrade of the Gold Pavilion and an exhibition designer has been engaged to create a new look and feel for the space and work is starting to plan out the implementation. Changes will include shifting the focus from the intrinsic value of gold to the stories of the people and places that are linked to the gold. In particular the story of Paul and Jessica Simon will be made more apparent. Money is limited and not everything we wish to happen will occur immediately but the GMS will be informed as each section is upgraded.

MADE officially opened their new exhibition “Bling: 19th Century Goldfields Jewellery” last Saturday night (16 May). The Gold Museum has loaned 45 objects to the exhibition including four sets of Mayoral Chains and a range of beautiful brooches.

After discussions with Bill Llewellyn, I have agreed that a reproduction of the Eugene von Guerard (Ballarat in the early times; at it appeared in the summer of 1853-54) artwork depicting Mt Warrenheip should be displayed in the Eureka Walkway. We have designed an installation that is in keeping with the current space, meets safety requirements and will not impede visitation. It will be installed in the window so visitors can look straight out to the mountain in question. A further piece of signage will also be installed, using the same design and installation technique, at the start of the walkway interpreting the Selkirk sculpture in the garden.

The Indigenous material in the Pern Collection is being registered with Aboriginal Affairs Victoria in accordance with state legislation. As part of Gnarrwurring Ngitj Festival (Sovereign Hill, 27 May – 3 June 2016 – National Reconciliation Week) a guided tour of the Pern Collection will be offered and special education programming utilising the collection is also being developed. It is great to see focus on such a significant collection.

Over the next ten weeks Elizabeth Triarico will join the team at the Gold Museum, working four days a week auditing the collection. Elizabeth will focus on areas that haven't been investigated for some time, seeking out any hazardous materials or objects that require special care, such as firearms, ordnance, pharmaceuticals etc. It is hoped that this project will help eliminate the sort of problems that resulted from the discovery of the mortar grenade a few weeks ago. Should you come across Elizabeth please make her welcome.

Michelle Smith

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