Victorian Community History Awards 2019

Proudly participating in History Week
Victorian Premier’s History Award

This award recognises the most outstanding community history project in any category.

Of the many memorials to the service of Australian men and women during World War I, Ballarat’s Arch of Victory and Avenue of Honour are particularly well known. Stretching for 22 km from the Arch, the Avenue comprises 3801 trees, each planted to commemorate an individual who enlisted from Ballarat. This was the idea of Tilly Thompson, a sales representative with the clothing manufacturer E Lucas and Co. Beginning in June 1917, the ‘Lucas girls’ took it upon themselves to both fundraise for the project, and plant the first 500 trees.

Avenue of Memories was produced to mark the centenary of the Arch and Avenue. As such the book is not about the service of the individuals who are honoured therein; but rather about the ongoing dedication of the Ballarat community, and especially the Price family, as a whole.

Despite many obstacles, the community has also organised maintenance over the past century.

The book is impeccably researched and omits no detail in relating the fascinating story of Ballarat’s Avenue of Honour. The book also reflects on the broader subject of war memorials in Ballarat and beyond, up until recent times.

Avenue of Memories, written by Phil Roberts on behalf of the Arch of Victory / Avenue of Honour Committee, is an excellent example of community history at its best.
Judges’ Special Prizes

The judges can award a special prize for any outstanding entry outside of established categories. This year, two Prizes have been awarded.

Blue Lake focuses upon the 8km square area west of central Melbourne, once known as the West Melbourne Swamp; part of the southern edge was later referred to as Dudley Flats. Earliest European references to the area can be found in the 1803 Charles Grimes survey, but it is George Gordon McCrae’s 1912 recollection of seeing the swamp 70 years previously as an ‘intensely blue’ lake that gives the work its title.

The publication is a layered history that shifts through time and provides a compelling and original exploration of Melbourne’s fringe. It masterfully draws upon the biographical, featuring three of Dudley Flats’ fringe-dwelling inhabitants; Elsie Williams, Jack Peacock and Lauder Rogge.

Sornig weaves social history, geographic meandering and the personal with concepts of belonging, identity, race and class into the Blue Lake narrative. The outcome is a thoughtful and beautifully written interpretation that brings new understanding to an often neglected corner of Melbourne.

Blue Lake: Finding Dudley Flats and the West Melbourne Swamp
David Sornig
Scribe, Melbourne, 2018

This powerful and suspenseful story of the 2009 bushfires in the Latrobe Valley is told from the perspectives of the police, the victims, the alleged perpetrator and his parents. The drama revolves around the accused, Brendan Sokaluk from Churchill, a social misfit with a cognitive disability. The author raises the issue as to what extent was he knowingly responsible for the inferno as she reflects on the nature of his disability and pyromania theories.

The backdrop is a disadvantaged community that experienced widespread unemployment after privatisation of the State’s energy grid and loss of community facilities at Yallourn and elsewhere owing to obeisance to coal mining.

Hooper uses a novelist’s skills to evoke the savage fury of the fire, a monster unleashed on a hapless little community, but her writing is anchored in fact; her sources are primarily the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission and court records. Her creative narrative represents a compelling way of telling the history of a catastrophe.

The Arsonist: A Mind on Fire
Chloe Hooper
Hamish Hamilton/Penguin, Melbourne, 2018

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The Springthorpe Heritage Project website represents the culmination of several years of collaborative learning, planning, research, oral history interview gathering and writing. The website brings together historical information with images, maps and plans that focus upon the areas of Springthorpe and its surrounds, in Melbourne’s north.

With numerous community contributors and a broad array of themes to explore, including landscapes and buildings, hospitals and asylums, and myths and stories, this project embodies true community collaboration. It provides a clean, pleasing and easy to navigate interface that allows audiences to get a snapshot of a subject, or drill further into topics of interest. A unique element of the region is its historical connections to several of Victoria’s psychiatric and repatriation hospitals. This theme is explored through both biographical and historical prose, and comprehensive references are provided within each section.

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Collaborative Community Award
This award recognises the best community collaborative work which involves significant contributions from several individuals, groups or historical societies.

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Local History Project Award
This award recognises activities that enhance access to records of significance to local communities.

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Commendations

The Stories of Drouin
Committee for Drouin Inc.
www.storiesofdrouin.com.au

East Loddon Remembers Memorial
East Loddon P-12 College,
East Loddon Historical Society and Loddon Shire

A History of the Broadford Paper Mill
Broadford and District Historical Society Inc.
2019 Australia Day Display & DVD

Heidelberg’s Busy Bee Signature Quilt 1895–96
Heidelberg Historical Society Inc.
www.heidelberghistoricalsociety.com.au

When Roads Were Tracks
A History of the Roads of Monbulk, Kallista, The Patch and Sherbrooke
Jill AVard and Armin Richter
Monbulk Historical Society Inc.,
Monbulk, 2019

At Home on the Hill: Stories of Pioneers in the First 30 Years of the Phillip Island Cemetery 1870–1900
Pamela Rothfield
The Author, Rhyll, 2018

Searchable Database of Properties within the Old Shire of Phillip Island circa 1872 to 1900
Phillip Island and District Genealogical Society Inc.

War Worn & Weary: The Convalescent Nurses of Osborne House Geelong 1917–1919
Cheryl Scott and Margaret Phelan
Osborne Park Association Inc., Geelong, 2018

Castlemaine Gold Diggings Map
Historical & Modern Place Names
Clive E. Willman

Gravel and Bitumen: The History of the Street Names of Bairnsdale
Anthony A. Meade
Anthony A. Meade, Bairnsdale, 2018

As one of Victoria’s popular tourist destinations, the roads and thoroughfares of the Dandenongs can be incredibly busy. When Roads Were Tracks encourages readers to look back and explore how the area was subdivided, cleared and populated, and how the roads were laid; a difficult feat in often steep and unforgiving terrain.

This colourful publication documents the development of the roads in Monbulk, Kallista, the Patch and Sherbrooke and includes rich reproductions of maps, plans, photographs and images from primary documents showing subdivisions and land sales. The book provides comprehensive, local information about key roads and brings together historical documentation of the region, whilst still being able to captivate audiences, and entice them to learn more. It is a wonderful example of innovative use of primary records to provide visual allure and it tells the wider story of local communities through the documentation of the roads.
History Publication Award
This award recognises the most outstanding non-fiction publication or e-book on Victorian history.

The Blackburns of the title are Maurice and his wife Doris née Horden, both of whom were publicly active in many social causes. Maurice was a prominent Melbourne barrister, a committed socialist and pacifist, and parliamentarian for the Labor Party. As a young woman Doris was deeply involved in the suffrage movement, and later in campaigns for civil and Indigenous rights. She was also a member of parliament, elected in 1946 for the ALP in the Federal seat of Bourke, an electorate previously held by Maurice for nine years.

Rasmussen’s study focuses also on the major social, political and religious movements in Victoria during the first half of the 20th century, which is the context of the Blackburns’ activism.

The book is well researched and immaculately detailed. The author had access to private documentation on which to draw, as well as personal connections with the extended family. The result is a masterly study of an important couple who dedicated their lives to the public good.

The Blackburns: Private Lives, Public Ambition
Carolyn Rasmussen
Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 2019

Local History – Small Publication Award
This award recognises the best small publication or e-book which features Victorian local, cultural or social history.

The opening story of Violet Coppin encapsulates the dire circumstances of numerous people struggling to find accommodation and the professional skills and humanity of the South Port Community Housing Group. Violet’s bleak life began in an orphanage. In her twilight years, the Housing Group provided both a home and kind support.

Stunning photographs of state-owned heritage buildings appear throughout the book. These buildings, managed by the Housing Group for low-income tenants, confer dignity on marginalised people. The handsome book itself is a source of pride for all the social workers and tenants involved.

Formed in 1983, the Housing Group became a significant provider of low-cost housing to single people in Port Melbourne and South Melbourne. Two of the book’s authors, both senior social workers, were foundation members. The authors chart changing government housing policies and demonstrate how gentrification caused a dramatic drop in rooming houses. The personal stories of staff and residents alternate in this collaborative and impressive book.

More Than Just Housing: The South Port Community Housing Group Story 1983–2018
Beris Campbell, Janet Goodwin, Heather McKee and editor Helen Penrose
South Port Community Housing Group Inc., Melbourne, 2018

Commendations
Gardens of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria)
Anne Vale
National Trust of Australia (Victoria), Melbourne, 2018

Mirka & Georges: A Culinary Affair
Lesley Harding and Kendrah Morgan
The Miegunyah Press in association with Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne, 2018

The Boy from Brunswick: Leonard French, A Biography
Reg MacDonald
Australian Scholarly Publishing, Melbourne, 2018

The Football Solution: How Richmond’s Premiership Can Save Australia
George Megalogenis
Viking/Penguin, Melbourne, 2018

Her Majesty’s Theatre Melbourne: The Shows, The Stars, The Stories
Frank van Straten
Australian Scholarly Publishing, Melbourne, 2018

The Blackburns: Private Lives, Public Ambition
Carolyn Rasmussen
Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 2019

Victoria’s Earliest Potteries: Our Convict Era Potters
Gregory Hill
Gregory Hill, Melbourne, 2019

Not for Self But for All: A History of the Art Gallery of Ballarat Association
Anne Beggs-Sunter
Art Gallery of Ballarat, Ballarat, 2018

A Tribute to Those Who Served: Remembering WWI Service Personnel Who Are Buried or Memorialised in the Warragul Cemetery West Gippsland
West Gippsland Genealogical Society, Warragul, 2018

Shedding Light
The Murtoa Stick Shed Saga
Leigh Hammerton
Murtoa Stick Shed Enterprises, Murtoa, 2019
The City of Ballarat has adopted UNESCO’s Historic Urban Landscape approach to its historic built environment. As a part of this approach, the 150-year-old Ballarat Town Hall has become the setting for an audio tour, which aims to introduce visitors to the building and the roles it has fulfilled in the history of Ballarat. The tour is self-guided and takes in 10 locations around the building, each of which details different aspects of its history provided by means of short narrations. By accessing the tour website on a hand-held device, visitors can listen at any of these locations in any order they choose.

The stories related through this comprehensive and valuable tour include the major events in Ballarat’s sometimes turbulent past; and various uses of areas within the town hall, such as the Council Chamber and the main hall.

The text of each of the narrations can be accessed on the website, as can additional details, and references for use in further research.

Cultural Diversity Award
This award recognises the most outstanding project or publication that highlights the cultural diversity of Victoria.

Multimedia Award
This award recognises the best presentation of history which uses non-print media and has a broad community reach.

La Nostra Storia
The Story of Italians in Ballarat
Jan McGuiness
Ballarat Italian Association Inc., Ballarat, 2018

A Golden Age in Flemington: 10 Years of Active Ageing
Moonee Valley Golden Age Women, Edith Chen and Colleen Taylor, editors. Moonee Valley Golden Age Women, Melbourne, 2019

Vincenzo Rossi, for example, fled the province devastated by the Battle for Monte Cassino; in Ballarat he lived safely with his wife Giuseppina and three children, found employment in the Ballarat Railway Workshop, nurtured his vegetable garden and played piano accordion. Clearly written and well documented, this attractive book reinforces Ballarat’s reputation as an intercultural city. It resembles a family album, replete with photographs of Italian village life, weddings in a new land, children and community gatherings.

Commentations

Building Bridges: From Latin American Stories to Victorian History
Latin Stories Australia and exhibition curators Yunuen Páez and Antonio González wwwlatinstoriesaustralia.com/building-bridges-1

A Second Chance: The Making of Yiddish Melbourne
Margaret Taft and Andrew Markus Monash University Publishing, Melbourne, 2018

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If These Walls Could Talk
Ballarat Town Hall Audio Tour

Carlo Catani Blog
Heather Arnold
http://carlocatani.blogspot.com

The Ballarat Italian Institute commissioned Jan McGuiness, author and broadcaster, to write the story of Ballarat’s Italian community from the time of Raffaello Carboni and his gold-seeking compatriots. Personal stories based on more than 50 interviews, are deftly set in the context of causes for Italian migration: poverty and, above all, devastation caused by the Second World War. Italians from villages found provincial aspects of Ballarat appealing; working mostly in the food and construction industries, they enriched the local community with their culture and cuisine.

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HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION AWARD

This award recognises the most outstanding local history project presented in a unique format.

If the name ‘Catani’ is known to Victorians at all, it is most likely in reference to a small park in St Kilda, an artificial lake in the Mount Buffalo National Park, or a small town in western Gippsland. All of these features are connected with Carlo G.D.E. Catani, an Italian-born engineer who designed and supervised a number of major public works across Victoria. Today, Melburnians have Catani to thank for the shape of the Yarra, upstream of Princes Bridge, Queens Bridge, the Morell Bridge on Anderson Street, the formation of Alexandra Avenue, and the design and laying out of Alexandra Gardens.

From November 2018 to March 2019, to mark the centenary of Catani’s passing, his contribution to Victoria’s development was featured in the exhibition Carlo Catani: Visionary, Creator, Genius at the Museo Italiano in Carlton. Through text panels (in English and Italian), numerous images, objects, and a commentary by author Daniela Riachi, Catani’s life and legacy were honoured, in a beautiful and accessible form.

COMMENDATIONS

Sale Water Tower Museum
Peter and Ann Synan

Voila: Mourning, Remembrance and Spiritualism in Bendigo 1851–1901 Exhibition
Emma Busowsky Cox, Dr David Waldron, David Cooney and Leigh McKinnon
Bendigo Art Gallery

CARLO CATANI: VISIONARY, CREATOR, GENIUS

CO.AS.IT PROUDLY PRESENTS AN EXHIBITION ON VICTORIA’S FOREMOST ITALIAN-BORN CIVIL ENGINEER

EXHIBITION

MUSEO ITALIANO 20 NOV 2018 – 23 MAR 2019

black saturday
not the end of the story

Peg Fraser
Monash University Publishing, Melbourne, 2018

Black Saturday
Not the End of the Story
Peg Fraser
Monash University Publishing, Melbourne, 2018

COMMENDATIONS

Sharing Our Stories: RASV Oral History Collection
Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria and Way Back When

Bungalows of St Albans
Joseph Ribarow
Community Research and Management Services, Melbourne, 2018

ALONG THE LINE: CAULFIELD TO OAKLEIGH RAIL STORIES
Glen Eira Historical Society Inc., Melbourne, 2019

ORAL HISTORY AWARD

This award recognises the best print or non-print presentation that preserves the first-hand accounts and stories of individuals with unique life experiences and memories, including books, voice interviews and podcasts.

Peg Fraser worked as a curator of the Museums Victoria’s Bushfire Collection in the wake of the 2009 Black Saturday Bushfires. A decade on, Fraser’s publication Black Saturday explores the stories of the northeast Victorian town of Strathewen. In 2009, Strathewen was a township of 200 people and it was greatly affected by the tragedy – more than 10 percent of the population died and 80 percent of buildings were destroyed.

Fraser’s work draws from the extensive collection of oral history recordings and objects acquired by Museums Victoria in the aftermath of Black Saturday. She draws on hours of recorded personal testimony to understand how the people of Strathewen comprehended and made sense of their Black Saturday experiences. Insightful and beautifully written, this publication steps beyond most Black Saturday analysis and challenges many traditional narratives associated with overwhelming natural disaster.

COMMENDATIONS

Sharing Our Stories: RASV Oral History Collection
Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria and Way Back When

Bungalows of St Albans
Joseph Ribarow
Community Research and Management Services, Melbourne, 2018
Thank you

Listed are the entrants who have not already appeared in previous pages of this book. Thank you for your continued contribution to capturing, preserving and sharing our State’s memory.
This Victorian Community History Awards are held in celebration of activities undertaken to explore and preserve the State’s history. The range of award categories acknowledge that history can be told in many and varied formats with the aim of reaching and enriching all Victorians.

The Victorian Community History Awards are presented by Public Record Office Victoria in partnership with the Royal Historical Society of Victoria.

The 2019 Awards ceremony was held during History Week on Monday 14 October at the Arts Centre Pavilion in Melbourne. The judges’ remarks on winning projects are contained within the pages of this book.

Start planning your project for 2020 and uncover your local history today.

Public Record Office Victoria
prov.vic.gov.au

Victorian Archives Centre
99 Shiel Street North Melbourne
10am-4.30pm Monday to Friday
(and the second and last Saturday of the month)

Ballarat Archives Centre
Eureka Centre, 102 Stawell Street South, Ballarat Central
10am-4.30pm Monday to Thursday

Royal Historical Society of Victoria
historyvictoria.org.au

239 A’Beckett Street Melbourne
10am-4pm Monday to Friday
03 9326 9288