



MANSFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



The Mansfield Historical Society operates as a not-for-profit organization dedicated to preserving and promoting the history of the Mansfield Shire since 1983.

On 3rd December 1986 Mansfield Historical Society became incorporated under the Association Incorporation Act 1981, Section 7, Registered Number A0011959E.

The Society has adopted the Model Rules for an Incorporated Association as per Consumer Affairs Victoria-Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012, and Associations Incorporation Reform Regulations 2023, Part 3.

The Society is registered with the Australian Charities and Not For Profits Commission and the Australian Taxation Office. Gifts to the Society are tax deductible.

Our purpose is to collect, preserve and share historical artifacts, documents and stories that help tell the story of the community and its people.

The Society is a member of:

The Royal Historical Society of Victoria

The Goulburn and Murray Association of Local and Family History Groups

Australian Museums and Galleries Association

STATION BUILDING
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MANSFIELD VIC 3722

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OFFICE BEARERS

PRESIDENT

Hon. Graeme Stoney AM

VICE PRESIDENT

Ms. Jennifer Delaforce

SECRETARY

Ms. Ann Ware

TREASURER

Mr. Peter Gardner

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Ms. Gerri Allen

Mr. Peter Mahoney

Mr. Bernie Anstee

Mr. Neil O'Halloran

Ms. Maureen Davies

Ms. Emma Oliver

Mr. Clint Desmond (apptd. Nov 23)

Ms. Colyn Ranken

Mr. Kevin Hogarth

Mr. Tim Skinner (resigned June 24)

Mr. Russell Jones

Ms. Julie Warren

Mr. Malcolm Kinloch (apptd. Nov 23)

Mr. Tim Watson

Ms. Susan Kinloch (apptd. Feb 24)



Committee and Volunteers at a meeting held in September 2024

PRESIDENTS REPORT – Graeme Stoney AM



Well, what an historic year it's been!

The most symbolic event was the 'sod turning' of the Mansfield Heritage Museum held on the 21st of February. Strong community support for the Museum project was demonstrated when more than 200 people turned out on site for the ceremony.

The basic building is now completed and locked up. Congratulations to Max Hennessy and his team, it looks fantastic. The big challenge now is to complete the inside ready to prepare the exhibits. I estimate it will be another twelve months before we can open to the public.

At the sod turning, I announced an appeal to raise \$600k to design and build the exhibits. The immediate response from supporters was heartening and nearly \$300K was raised in cash or pledges. I wish to recognise Colyn Ranken's efforts managing that appeal assisted by Heidi Millton-Young and especially our energetic Vice President Jenny Delaforce and her team who conducted several successful and interesting fundraising events.

We have a current promotion of named pavers now running to raise more funds. This project is being administered by Jenny Delaforce and Di Williams and is being well supported. This indicates again the Mansfield communities' support for the Museum.

We still need to raise another \$300K however, so we need more locals to donate or purchase a named paver so we can construct modern and themed exhibits worthy of Mansfield.

In conjunction with Council, we have recently assessed (using a transparent process) several professional consultants, with one to be eventually chosen, to design and build the exhibits when enough finance is raised.

The Museum project would not have occurred without the strong support of the Shire of Mansfield. Previous Mayors, Cr James Tehan and Cr Steve Rabie led the charge implemented by our efficient CEO, Kirsten Alexander and her executive team.

I need to especially recognise Cr Rabie's unbridled enthusiasm and practical support for the project during the past year. When things looked a bit sticky, Cr Rabie was especially helpful, and his personal support towards this project has not gone unnoticed.

The Society has been in never-ending talks with senior Council staff all the year over exhibits, landscaping and future arrangements. We also have several professionals giving their valuable time to assist with branding and landscape design including Gerard Brennan and Chuck Wark. Our thanks for the gift of your professional input.

Kevin Hogarth has been in the hot seat drawing on his long experience in administration in both the private and public sector to manage and record the regular meetings. Thank you Kevin, we couldn't have managed it without you. The Council has now offered to convene our many meetings and it's a weight off Kevin's shoulders, however, I notice he still takes notes!

I have been saying that none of us have built a Museum before or implemented a project like this, although most of us have the necessary transferable skills. There are many intricacies but importantly, we are trying to ensure the future and financial viability of the Mansfield Historical Society within a new Management structure. I think the result of the deliberations will be regarded in the long term by the residents to be an amazing result for Mansfield.

During the year we lost two much respected members of the Society, Sue Gardner and Frank Gray. Our sincere condolences to the families. Sue has been remembered by a plaque on the seat at the Station which she arranged to be installed some years ago; it is now appreciated and used by the public daily. Our esteemed Treasurer Peter Gardner has not been well since Sue's death. We wish him a speedy recovery and recognise him for his efforts over many years.

Malcom Kinloch has picked up the responsibility of finance as assistant to Peter. Malcolm this contribution and your new management structure including compiling our annual report has been invaluable. This brings me to Ann Ware. Ann is the backbone of the Mansfield Historical Society. When things go off the rails (as they do in any organisation) Ann calmly picks up the pieces with her no-nonsense approach. She will oversee curation decisions for the Museum.

Whilst preparations for the Museum have been onerous, the core work of the Society continued. Dot Marks, Maureen Davis, and many other volunteers' input continues with our important digitization program, research and the running of the Station. Among others, I must mention Helen Mullins, Lyn and Ian Bruce, Gwen Cornelius, Di Williams, Sue Card and Jane Taylor. Bernie Anstee and associates including Kevin Holland are on hand to deal with maintenance, moving exhibits around and the pesky possums.

Our monthly meetings are very extensive as we consider many items and reports to make decisions on how the Society interoperates with the Museum. Gerri Allan has been a stalwart recording the minutes; a thankless but very important task.

The Society has been grappling with a new computer operating system called Odoo and I must thank Tim Skinner, Jenny Delaforce and Clint Desmond for persevering with the introduction of this upgrade against all odds. Most of us struggle with new technology which we know we must embrace. Heidi Milton-Young has been a great help to us all with her practical experience and approach to complex IT issues.

Our membership base and administration has been ably supervised by Susan Kinloch and eventually will be managed efficiently under the new operating system.

One of the most important events that occurred this last year was the Society taking possession of the original "Super Shed" in the Railway Precinct. This will be used to store our precious larger artifacts and prepare them for display. When we took possession, Russell Jones almost on his own, began to prepare the shed for our use. A mighty effort- thank you Russell.

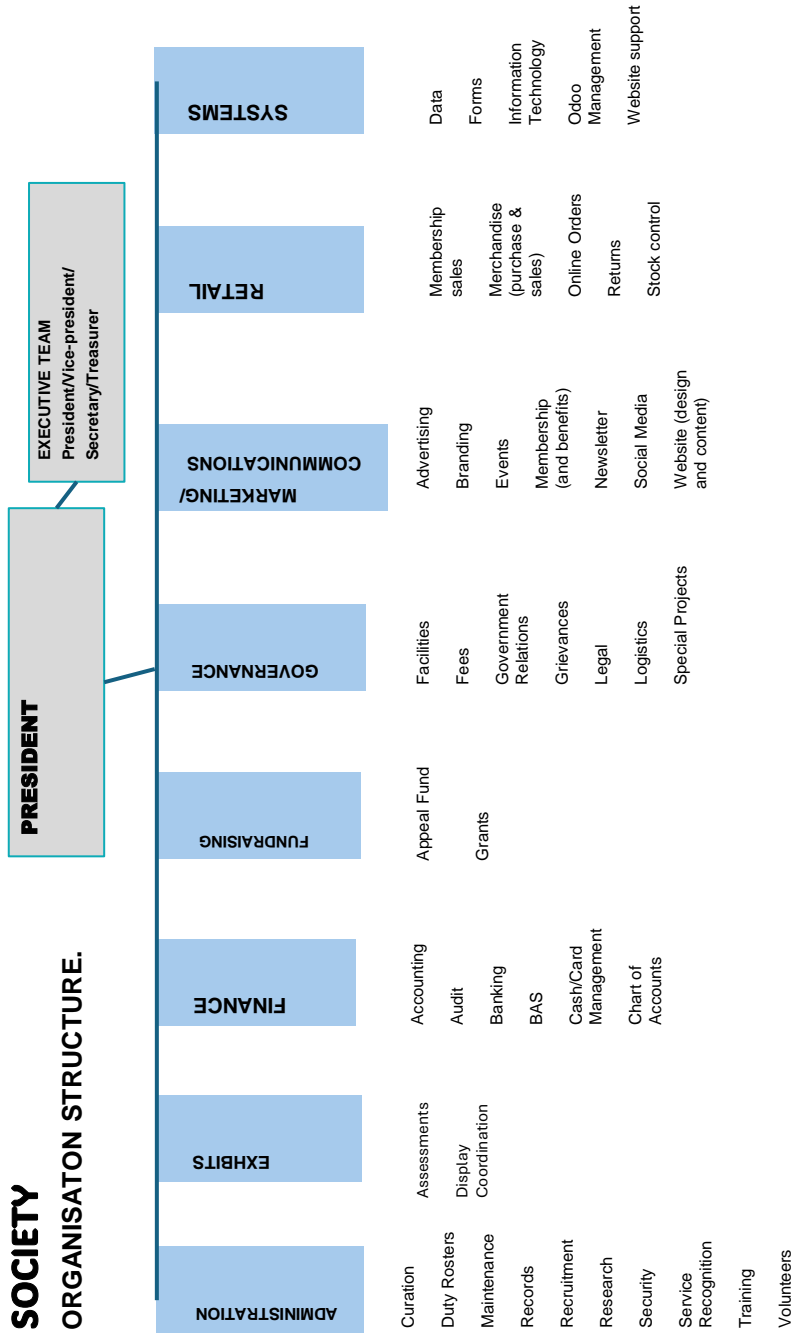
Finally, my thanks to my wife Wendy for her understanding as I am distracted dealing with a multitude of issues leading up to the completion and opening of the new Museum.

This will be hopefully in about twelve months from now.

Graeme Stoney AM



MANSFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORGANISATION STRUCTURE.



Our Local Legends

ADMINISTRATION REPORT - Ann Ware



It has been a busy year for the Administration Team, as we endeavour to complete tasks before we make the move into the Museum. The many facets of this area could not be covered without the dedication of our volunteers. They turn up regularly to do their tasks, enjoy themselves and make the working environment a happy place to be.

Achievements for this year

1. Research: Linda Bruce, Gwen Cornelius and myself assist with any enquiries
2. Duty Roster: there are 33 Volunteers who contribute to the running of the Station and keeping the doors open. We are enormously grateful to these people.
3. Maintenance: Bernie and Kevin Holland have assisted in keeping the platform lean and possums under control
4. Family, General, Obituary Files, School Records and Library Books, are constantly being updated
5. Inmagic Database of Photographs: 15,000 photographs are in the database at present
6. Training Volunteers- occurs at the Station
7. Visitor Nos: January to June 2024 1160; June to December 2023 1800, giving a total of 2960.

Objectives for 24/25 Year

1. Smooth removal of files and computers to the new area within the new Museum building
2. Smooth transition into new working environment
3. Establishing a Policy and Procedures Document for this team

LIFE MEMBERS

Bernie Anstee
Pat Arbuthnot*
Steve Arbuthnot*
Peter Gardner
Sue Gardner*
Eileen Healy*
Sheila Hutchinson
Mark Klingsporn
Dot Marks
Marg Noble
Neil O'Halloran
Glad Phillips*
Graeme Stoney AM
Albert Walsh*
Margaret Walsh
Ann Ware

VOLUNTEERS

Margarett Adcock
Gerri Allan
Bernie Anstee
Melva Anstee
Gerard Brennan
Iain Bruce
Linda Bruce
Sue Card
Michelle Comerford
Maureen Davies
Jenny Delaforce
Clint Desmond
John Eason
Ron Ekkel
Sue Ekkel
Jenny Fogarty

Peter Gardner
Sue Gardner *
Iain Geer
Frank Gray *
Margaret Gray
Kevin Hogarth
Kevin Holland
Russell Jones
Malcolm Kinloch
Susan Kinloch
Val Kirley
Peter Mahoney
Dot Marks
Margaret McCormack
Heidi Millton-Young
Helen Mullins
Lois Neely
Russell Neely
Gail O'Halloran
Neil O'Halloran
Colyn Ranken
Tim Skinner
Cathy Stevenson
Graeme Stoney
Wendy Stoney
Jane Taylor
Joan Tehan
Robyn Toomey
Ann Ware
Chuck Wark
Julie Warren
Tim Watson
Dianne Williams



RETAIL REPORT – Julie Warren

Our Retail shop at the Station is quite limited in space and we look forward to the new museum providing us with a much larger area to showcase and sell our many items on offer.

Members of the team over the year has been Ann Ware, Tim Skinner and Julie Warren.

Achievements for this year

We have extended the range of items to include jigsaws, coffee table books.

The online bookshop has been setup with Tim Skinner's expertise

A stocktake was undertaken and at 30th June 2024, inventory sales for the year were up on the previous year, totalling \$18,848.30.

Tours were run in 2023/24 for schools and other groups.

Objectives for coming year

We aim

- for a smooth changeover to the shop front in the new Museum
- to involve volunteers from the retail sector of Mansfield to enhance book and souvenirs displays and online presence
- to increase the number of tours from schools and the community.

APPEALS REPORT - Colyn Ranken

In February of this year the Mansfield Historical Society launched Stage One of an Appeal to raise \$600,000 for the fit out and display of exhibits at the Mansfield Heritage Museum. The response to the appeal from the many individuals and local businesses approached has been both generous and encouraging with half of the target amount donated or committed.

However, the amount required was and remains an ambitious target and as they say, 'the first half is the easy half'. Stage Two of the Appeal will now centre around the opportunity for community members, families and businesses to buy a Paver inscribed as they choose to be laid along the paths around the Museum. Other avenues to donate and support the Appeal remain ongoing and efforts will continue with gusto to ensure that Mansfield has a Museum that is world class and something our community can be proud of. The MHS would like to thank all those who have been part of this effort to date.

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS –

Jenny Delaforce and Emma Oliver



The main objectives of the marketing and communications team is to create awareness, understanding and interest of the new Mansfield Heritage Museum, the proposed Tea Rooms and the Mansfield Historical Society, through the following services and infrastructure.

EVENTS AND FUNDRAISING

- Achievements in 2023/24:

- Elizabeth Taylor Love Affair with Jewels - 14th October 2023

- Open House and High Tea at Glenroy Homestead - 26th November 2023

- International Volunteers Day - 5th December 2023

- Sod Turning of the Mansfield Heritage Museum - 21st February 2024

- A film night with Jim Brown on Henry Lawson and Banjo Paterson – 14 March 2024

- Showing of Jim Brown's short films - 12th April 2024

- Making of an Outlaw - Ned Kelly - 20th April 2024

- International Museum Day Slab Party - 18th May 2024

These events were ticketed through the Try Booking platform except for the slab party, which was ticketed through Odoo, our new in-house management system. Revenue from events was more than \$35,000. By utilising Odoo in the future we have control of our event ticketing and avoid fees associated with outside ticketing platforms. Revenue and costs will also be automatically recorded through Odoo ensuring correct net revenue and accurate recording.

Events in the pipeline:

- Historic shearing shed tour
- Making of an outlaw driving tour (Kelly Gang/Mansfield Police story)
- Fish fossil walking tour on the Broken River with John Eason
- Wappan Station film night including our local legends program
- Special guest, Brigadier David Westphalen, at the AGM
- Man from Snowy River Event
- “Name on a Paver” fundraiser

WEBSITE

The website is now located on the Odoo platform and has been updated to reflect our events, and the progress of the new heritage museum and fundraising. All items available in our shop (merchandise, books, jigsaws, membership, renewal, DVD's etc) are also available for purchase on-line with collection from the station. Currently waiting on advice on whether the museum and society will share a website. At this stage they do. Also waiting on advice regarding uniform resource locators (url's) required.

MEDIA

All media enquiries, content and design is implemented by our media manager, Emma Oliver, who has been exceptional in raising the society's profile in providing a professional look and consistent feel to our media and in generating local interest in our activities. Thanks to Emma the society has also enjoyed exceptional regular coverage in The Mansfield Courier.

We have distinct themes surrounding our social media posts:

- Our Collection
- Our Volunteers
- Our Museum
- Our Events
- Our Story
- Our People

Local Legends program is progressing with audio/visual interviews with Bill Griffiths, Val Kirley, David Yencken, Joan Curtis and Margaret Adcock already in the can. A big thank you to Ron and Sue Ekkel for their time and expertise in film. These will be used in the museum and for film night events into the future. Joan Tehan heads up the audio recording of local identities and their stories for use in the museum and on radio. From these stories, we will choose to commit a number to film.

Currently our newsletter is printed and sent to members free of charge. It is also printed and available for purchase at the station. We are currently waiting on decisions from the relevant department as to the future direction of the newsletter.

ADVERTISING

We utilise several media options depending on the desired outcome, budget and market we are targeting. They include:

- MHS database and website
- MHS/community social media platforms
- The Mansfield Courier newspaper
- Local radio station
- Posters throughout town
- Mansfield Shire Council electronic/physical notice boards/websites



BRANDING

We are currently awaiting decisions from the relevant committees on the final look and feel of the Museum and the Society before further committing to changes to our communications designs. At this stage we are using the new logo(above) for our branding. Wherever possible the link between the museum and the society is made to ensure it is known that the Society is the driver and owner of the Museum, with the tag line - Mansfield Heritage Museum - home of the Mansfield Historical Society.

We have presented to the CEO, Mayor and councillors of the Mansfield Shire Council our proposal and budget to operate the old station building and surrounding area as tea rooms to compliment and assist financially in the operation of the museum.

The tea rooms will provide food and beverage at the station precinct for:

- Mansfield Heritage Museum
- Great Victorian Rail Trail users
- Volunteers and staff
- Locals and visitors



Host and cater events

The team has extensive experience in organising and executing events. Coupled with a catering arm we can provide for our own events and others in the district. With the addition of the Station Tea Rooms we will be able to provide more events on and off site and benefit financially from providing our own catering rather than relying and paying for third parties to provide this service. A staff member has a RSA licence which will also allow us to serve alcohol responsibly utilising one off event liquor licences.

Provide community enrichment

Engage and support the community within a friendly safe environment in which they can share their stories, recorded for the benefit of future generations.

GRANT ACTIVITY REPORT – Kevin Hogarth



Our normal monitoring of available grant funding is done via a daily email alert of *Grant Guru* which is maintained by the Dept of Parliamentary Services and circulated by local Federal MPs. This is not the exclusive source but covers most private, State and Federal agencies offering grant opportunities.

Grants opportunities are available typically for a range of community-based groups including sporting, heritage, cultural, artistic, benevolent, self-help-groups, allied health and charitable institutions for a wide range of aims and causes; and for a wide range of funding levels.

In the past 12 months the Mansfield Historical Society grant activity has involved lodging applications as a separate entity, assisting others with written support and working collaboratively with others (eg Mansfield Council) in major grant applications which requires considerable amounts of supporting documentation. The following grant applications were lodged, and activity noted:-

Community Heritage Grant – National Library of Australia - for a significance assessment of the Forestry Collection – Successful \$6,400.

Mansfield Community Bank - Funding for Railway Carriage infrastructure works – \$11,500, Unsuccessful

Stronger Communities Grant - Dept Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and Arts Artist in Residence Mural Project -\$16,000 – Unsuccessful

Local History Grant , Public Records Office Vic, Audio Visual Equipment for MHM \$12,800 – Unsuccessful

Volunteer Grants Program 2024. Community Grants Hub, Dept Social Services, Upgrade of PC Scanners \$4,560 . Required local Federal MP Support. Not supported by H Haines to proceed to DSS - Unsuccessful.

Strengthening Rural Communities Program - Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (Percy Baxter Foundation) \$10,000 for Mansfield Courier Restoration Project in new MHM.

Support of Grant Applications by others

Mansfield Shire Council

*Application for Railway Precinct Shared Path;

*Application to Victorian State Regional Tourism Investment Fund for refurbishment of the Goods Shed.

*Application to Tourism Northeast for “*Activating the Delatite Valley Project*”.

*Applications x 2 to Federal Government’s Regional Precincts and Partnership Program.

Note Support of these applications involved MHS Exec Committee attendance at 3x Council consultative committee meetings and associated administrative support in drafting of grant submission.

Taungurung (GADABA) Creative Project Fund Victoria – Cloak for Feature Display in new MHM.

Taungurung (GADABA) Creative Project Fund Victoria – Support for Indigenous local artists.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY REPORT – Clint Desmond



INVESTIGATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ODOO

To achieve greater efficiency as we move towards a future incorporating our Mansfield Heritage Museum, MHS has made a business decision to introduce a new accounting/administrative support system that will be fully integrated and streamlined with all our activities. This followed a review that there were several discrete systems involved in the administration of Society operations, including for instance, event booking, inventory management and an all-important accounting governance function.

The decision was made to introduce an accounting software system called Odoo (an acronym for On-Demand Open Subject). A big thank you to Tim Skinner who spent countless hours investigating the right product to manage all facets of the society and beyond to the museum. Tim was then involved in the early implementation of Odoo and we are very appreciative of the work he was able to do prior to being unable to continue with his valuable work.

Odoo is a suite of Belgian origin business management software tools that include customer relationship management, e-commerce, billing, accounting, manufacturing, warehouse, project management, and inventory management. To date areas in the process of finalisation include: Point of sale, Inventory, Subscriptions. Completed areas: Website; Chart of accounts; Email marketing.

At the time of preparation of this Annual Report the work of training key Society members and volunteers in the many functions of Odoo remains at an on-going stage. We are confident that the system offers what Mansfield Historical Society and affiliated entities require for a flexible and fully accountable business system.

MOBILE/ CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS

Tyro payment system has been implemented, so credit card payments can be made off site, such as events, fundraisers, etc.

HIGH COUNTRY HISTORY HUB

This facility has been in operation for some years and is still operational but in need of a revamp. People can google the website and research many stories about the High Country especially the Mountain Cattlemen's history and stories. Photos are available for purchase.

The Society has decided to upgrade the service and website over the next few months and a terminal will be available in the new Museum for people wishing to access information contained in the Hub.



Treasurer's Report – Peter Gardner

The year saw a continuation of the previous years highly successful fund-raising events, with five events grossing \$15,000. After expenses, the result was \$10,167 added to our building fund. Retail sales of \$21,985 were more than double the previous year, reflecting the success of new items like jigsaw puzzles.

Donations received for the new Museum totalled \$143,780, with further substantial support promised.

The Society's cash position is strong and provides a sound base for the fund-raising task ahead in raising a further \$300,000 to complete the fit-out of the new museum.

The Annual Financial Report is annexed to this report.



Peter & his family seated on the bench-seat to commemorate his late wife Sue Gardner.