



# *The Kernel*

## *Campbelltown and Airds Historical Society*

*"Love and Cherish the City in which you live"*

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*Newsletter*

*March, 2026*

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### *President's Report*

*by Stephen Coppins*

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Dear Members,

It has been a bit of a weird start to 2026. After starting off slowly, things have now been happening in quick succession.

Since the last issue of *The Kernel*, the Society held its Member's Christmas Party. Hopefully everyone who was able to attend, enjoyed themselves?

Campbelltown City Council arranged some significant repairs and renovations to Glenalvon and the property over Christmas and the New Year, which did affect access for volunteers until February. The floors in the kitchen and office in the main house can now be walked on without the persistent, loud squeaking and also cracks in the walls of these rooms have been repaired and painted.

The back fence has been replaced and is looking very nice, with the Council's Garden Team, cutting back some of the foliage and bushes in the garden beds, which is very much appreciated.

A big thank you to Glenn and Giulian from Campbelltown City Council, for arranging these significant works.

During the floor repairs, we also lost connection to the phone and internet. This was due to the line being cut in the front pavement. This took a bit longer than desired to fix, but we got there in the end.

Unfortunately, our February Open Houses at Glenalvon were down on usual numbers, mainly due to wet, hot and humid weather. But numbers were back to normal for our March Open House events. The Society opened up Glenalvon for the International Women's Day Event organised by Council and the Benevolent Society, held on Monday 9 March, with scones, jam and cream being supplied by volunteers of the Campbelltown Branch of the Country Women's Association (CWA).



Campbelltown and Airds Historical Society Inc

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I would like to thank all of our Society's volunteers for showing up on these days, as well as the volunteers from the CWA, who have agreed to take care of the scones, jam and cream during the Devonshire Tea Open Houses this year. The efforts of the volunteers from both organisations are greatly appreciated.

Another organisation the Society is partnering with is the Sydney Investigation Ghost Hunting Tours company, or SIGHT for short. SIGHT started doing paranormal tours around Glenalvon late last year, and will be conducting evening tours around Glenalvon on a monthly basis, from February to November this year. Our volunteers, headed by Michelle Hatfield, are on hand to take note of discussions with former inhabitants or patients, who have for one reason or another, decided to stay at Glenalvon a bit longer. Please check out their Facebook page for more details and bookings – <https://m.facebook.com/sydneyinvestigationghosttours/>

Since the last issue the Society has hosted tour groups from Connect Coaches in November, Chipping Norton Probus Club (February), and the Retired Teachers Association in March. Thank you to Julie Crowley, Chris Hayes and Sue Moore, for providing talks and tours, and also Chris, Jenny Goodfellow, Lyn Hudson and Gill Blackstone for arranging, serving and cleaning up the morning teas for these groups.

I would also like to thank Belinda Sacco, Sharon Greene and Michelle Hatfield for being on hand to promote the Society at the Positive Aging Expo, which was held at West Leagues Club on Thursday 12 March. It was nice to see some of the Society's members there, but it was good to meet residents across the Campbelltown Local Government Area, who didn't necessarily know about the Society and the work we do.

Sadly, we have lost two former members of the Society, Paul O'Loughlan and Brian Holmes. On behalf of the Society, I extend condolences to their family and friends.

At the General Meeting held in February, I announced that I had tendered my resignation as President of the Campbelltown and Airds Historical Society. My last day in this role will be this Saturday, at the General Meeting, where I will give my final, final President's report, before making way for a new President. This decision was primarily health related, which is not terminal, but will effect quality of life, if I don't get things under control.

I don't plan to totally step back from the Society. I have offered to provide a handover for the next President, and will attend Open Houses, when I am available. Hopefully after a bit of a break and health is back on track, I'll see what else I can do.

So, for the final time in *The Kernel*, I would like to thank all the volunteers for their help and support during my time as President.

I hope the Committee and general membership of the CAHS will support the new President and also continue to offer to help the Society in whatever capacity. It really does take more than just one person to keep a Society running.

But, see you around.

Kind regards,

*Stephen*



To keep up to date with all the latest news, make sure you check out the CAHS Facebook Page

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## *WWII Honour boards now on display*

Here at Glenalvon the Honor Boards for WWI as well as Korea/Vietnam and the Boer War attract quite a lot of attention.

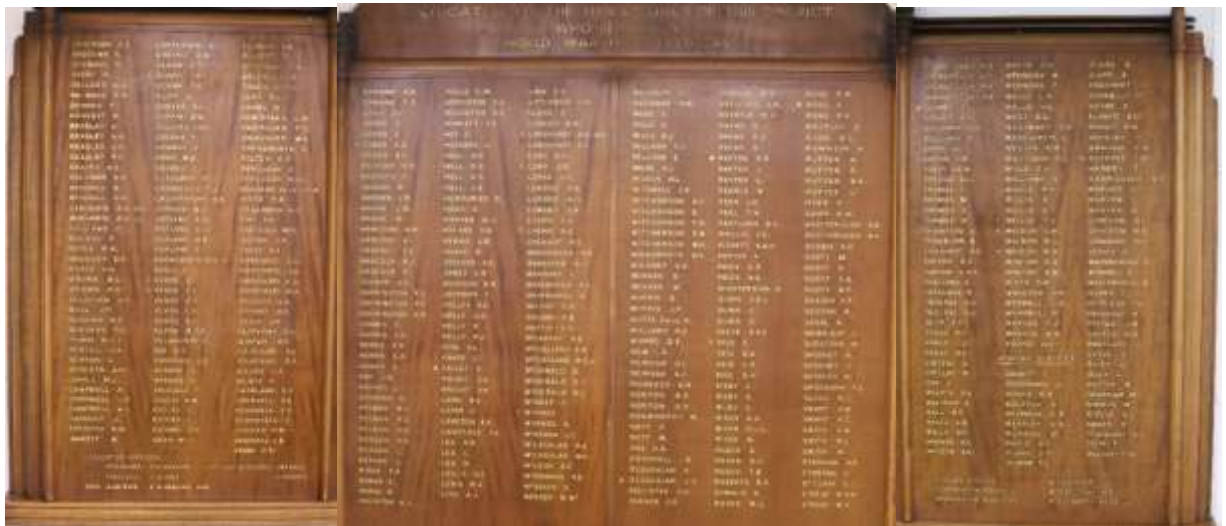
We have not been able to display the WWII Honour Roll as there were so many local veterans, men and women who signed up to the services from our area, that the boards would simply not fit in any space that we could find.

So, sadly they have spent around twenty years sitting on a high ledge at the Council storage depot in Minto.

Thanks to Mayor of Campbelltown, Darcy Lound and Councillor Karen Hunt of Campbelltown City Council our military history is now accessible, as the panels have been installed on the second floor of the H J Daley Library. It is rumoured that committee member Fran Musico Rullo may also have had a part in bringing the issue to notice. With her work as the History teacher at St Pat's College, and the reputation of the award-winning History Club, we feel the rumour will be completely true.

There are so many prominent 'old Campbelltown' family names and so many stories wrapped within these lists that I have decided to choose a few of the names and tell a little about them; who they were and a short recount of 'their war'.

J Crowley, Editor



### **Lieutenant Augustus William LONGHURST**

'Gusso' Longhurst was born in Campbelltown on May 1, 1917 and worked as a clerk at Central Station.

He enlisted on June 5, 1940 and was part of the 2/2nd Machine Gun Battalion. He was awarded the Military Medal 'for conspicuous bravery' on the battlefield of Tal el Azaz, on the Libyan frontier in 1942.

Later he served as a member of the 24 Infantry Battalion of the Australian Military Force, during the Battle of Bougainville in the Solomon Islands. He was killed in action on April 15, 1945, two months before the surrender of Japan. Augustus William was 28 years old.

Initially interred on Bougainville, he was later exhumed and reburied at Bomana War Cemetery in Port Morsby. His grave is marked with the inscription "The Greatest of these is Love".



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## Stanley Robert Hamilton REEVE (1918-2012)

Stan Reeve grew up in Queen Street, Campbelltown, attending Campbelltown Public School, Parramatta High School and then Hurlstone Agricultural High School. After working at Camden Park Estate for a year (1936) he studied Dairy Technology at Hawkesbury Agricultural College, followed by a summer course at Ohio State University in America. He then worked as a Dairy Chemist before enlisting with the RAAF in Brisbane in 1942.

His Initial Training Course was at Bradfield Park, North Sydney followed by pilot training at Temora, then at Point Cook Victoria under the Empire Training Scheme. Stan graduated with his wings in June 1943, and after some leave in Campbelltown, he embarked on a troopship in Sydney in mid-July 1943. The ship *SS Monterey* sailed via Panama Canal to New York, the men proceeded overland to Halifax, Canada where *RMS Queen Elizabeth*, a very fast ship, took the thousands of troops (mostly American and Canadian soldiers) to Gourock, on the Clyde River in Scotland. The Australian and Canadian aircrew contingents travelled by train to England and were allocated to various RAF Squadrons, at a time when casualties were very high.



Stan, with three of his pilot friends, were selected by No. 10 Squadron RAAF, one of two Australian Sunderland Squadrons based in England for the duration of the war in Coastal Command. After some weeks of training on this aircraft, his first operational flight was on 16<sup>th</sup> October 1943, less than a year since he began to fly. Sunderland aircraft had crews of about 12 men, three of them pilots. Stan was soon assigned as first officer to skipper Jack Mabbett, with second pilot Tom Hughes (later a notable Sydney barrister and attorney-general in the Fraser Government).

The squadron operated out of Plymouth Harbour, which was full of ships; the Royal Navy would mark out the flight path for operations, both day and night. Their main duty was anti-submarine patrols in the Bay of Biscay; at other times they were on escort duty with convoys or fast ships. The flights usually lasted 12 to 14 hours. Stan did a special course in radar and in October 1944 became captain of his own crew. By the end of the war, he had accumulated 950 operational hours, rising to the rank of Flight Lieutenant.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> February 1945, in marginal weather conditions, his fully laden aircraft failed to become airborne, hit the Plymouth Harbour boom gate and caught fire. That marked the end of the war for Stan who was seriously injured, spending three months in hospital and rehab., arriving back at Mount Batten just in time for special victory flights over Plymouth on the 8th May 1945. By the grace of God Stan was spared to return home to Australia (on the *Athlone Castle*), arriving back in Campbelltown in January 1946.

*Tom Reeve*

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### **Flying Officer Thomas Wallace SWANN**

Thomas Wallace Swann was born on July 4, 1916, in Campbelltown, the son of Tom and Agnes Swann of *Ferndale*, Wedderburn. Tom senior was an orchardist and amateur photographer. After attending Hurlstone Agricultural High School Tom jnr completed a Diploma in Agriculture at Hawkesbury College.

He enlisted in the Royal Australian Air Force on April 28, 1941 and served with No. 2 Squadron, Hughes, Northern Territory.

On June 12, 1943, during a forced landing attempt, his aircraft, a Hudson A16-186, crashed while attempting a forced landing at Hughes and caught fire and exploded on impact, resulting in the loss of all seven RAAF members on board. The aircraft seemed to be approaching from the northern end of the airstrip to make a landing. When the aircraft was directly over the end of the strip it was approximately 500 feet high with flaps and wheels down. The port engine was not running and the airscrew was feathered. When the aircraft was halfway down the airstrip, the wheels were pulled up and the Pilot appeared to put more power on the starboard motor. The aircraft then turned to port and lost height rapidly. At this stage the aircraft disappeared from sight and a few seconds later there was a crash followed by a loud explosion.



Tom was 26 years old at the time of his death and is buried in the Adelaide River War Cemetery, Northern Territory.

As a Congregant of St David's Presbyterian Church, he had been offered an Eldership to be taken on his return from the fighting. On March 18, 1945, a service was held in his memory, during which a Memorial Tablet was unveiled.

### **Pilot Officer John Alan 'Jack' BURSILL**



Jack Bursill was born in Campbelltown on 6 October 1916, the second son of Samuel (jnr) and Eleanor Bursill who lived for many years at *Rosslyn*, a dairy farm later renamed *Claymore*, situated on Badgally Road.

He had his schooling at Campbelltown Public School and later at Parramatta, then taught for a short time until he decided, with a strength in Mathematics, he would be more suited to the world of banking. His career then took him into the Commonwealth Bank in Martin Place, Sydney.

At the age of 24, with the war in its second year, Jack enlisted in the RAAF on 26 April, 1941 and was sent as part of Unit No. 31 to the Operational Training Unit (RAF), in Debert, Nova Scotia, Canada.

At 0005 hours on 10 August 1942, the Hudson BW401, the aircraft he was piloting, took off from Debert on a night cross-country navigation exercised. The weather conditions deteriorated unexpectedly, and as the estimated time of arrival back at base was 0336 hours. At 0359 hours, the aircraft acknowledged a signal diverting it to Charlottetown, Prince Edward

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Island. This was the last contact with the aircraft, which crashed when it struck high ground in level flight on Dalhousie Mountain, Scotsburn, Picton County, Nova Scotia, and all the crew members were killed.

John Alan 'Jack' Bursill is buried in Truro (Terrace Hill) Cemetery, Nova Scotia

### **Corporal Dorothy Jean HEPHER**

Dorothy Hepher, known to her family as Doss, was born on February 17, 1919, in Campbelltown, to parents John Charles 'Charlie' Hepher and Adele nee Nicholls. Doss was the fourth of seven children.

Her father was a WWI veteran who took up the offer of a soldier's settlement allotment in East Campbelltown, where he raised chickens. Her mother was a talented seamstress who passed her love of music on to all her children.

Doss enlisted in the army on September 5, 1942 and worked as a signalwoman.

In the Australian Army signalwomen were involved in intelligence, cryptography and telegraphy, playing a crucial role in the success of military operations.

Doss met her future husband, Morton James Maiden at a dance in Campbelltown. He was also serving in the army. They married on December 12, 1942.

They both survived the war, settled down and raised a family. Doss lived on to the age of 94.



### **Maurice John HUNTER and Tessie Linda HUNTER**

Both Maurice and Tessie were born in Camden, Maurice on January 2, 1923 and Tessie on May 18, 1924. Their father Ernest had enlisted in World War I however the Armistice was declared before he left Australia.

Maurice enlisted in July 18, 1942 and served with the AIF Transport Unit. He drove trucks in the Northern Territory for about a year before being sent to New Guinea where he loaded aircraft with supplies, then travelled on the plane with them, to parachute the supplies to ground troops in the jungle. In 1942



his plane collided with another on take-off. Both planes crashed and Maurice jumped from the moving plane, breaking his leg in three places, the injuries resulted in a permanent limp. He was the only survivor from the two planes.



Tessie Linda Hunter joined the Australian Women's Army Service, enlisting on 20 April, 1943.

She served in Australia in the First Australian Searchlight Battery which was formed to release men from certain military duties and move them to other units.

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## Calendar of Events

### March

Saturday 28 Mar 1.30pm – CAHS General Meeting  
**Guest Speaker: Saturday 28 March** Michael Chalker  
 "Recollections of the Downes City Plaza and Queen Street in the Early 1980s"

### April

Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> Apr **Good Friday Public Holiday**  
 Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> Apr **Easter Saturday – 1.30pm, Campbelltown District Family History Society Meeting, Servant's Quarters**  
 Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> Apr **Easter Sunday Glenalvon Open Day cancelled**  
 Monday 6<sup>th</sup> Apr **Easter Monday Public Holiday – NO VOLUNTEERING**  
 Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> Apr Brian Holmes Celebration Service, Symphony Chapel, Macarthur Memorial Park, Varroville  
 Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> Apr 6.30pm-9.30pm, SIGHT Tour at Glenalvon  
 Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> Apr **Heritage Festival 2026 Start: Theme: Change**  
 Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> Apr 10am-1pm – Glenalvon Open Day, Devonshire Teas (CWA), and Handmade & Homegrown Markets  
 Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> 11am-3.30pm, Appin Massacre Memorial Ceremony, Cataract Day  
 Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> Apr 5am, Ingleburn ANZAC Day Dawn Service, Ingleburn RSL Memorial Garden  
 Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> 5.30am, Campbelltown ANZAC Day Dawn Service, Mawson Park  
 Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> 9am – Campbelltown ANZAC Day Main Service, Mawson Park  
 Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> CAHS General Meeting **Cancelled**  
 Monday 26<sup>th</sup> ANZAC Day Public Holiday – CAHS office closed

### May

Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 10am St Patrick's College for Girls Open Day (CAHS Book Sale)  
 Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 10am-1pm – Glenalvon Open House  
 Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May 6.30pm – 9.30pm SIGHT Tour at Glenalvon  
 Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May 10am-1pm – Glenalvon Open House Handmade & Homegrown Markets  
 Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> 1.30pm, CAHS General Meeting Guest Speaker: Robert Strang  
 Topic (working title): "The Mystery Penny Farthing Rider of Campbelltown"

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## *Hurley Park Early Stories Project*



At our first general meeting for the year, we were fortunate to hear Abbey Davies, the WSIG Project (Western Sydney Infrastructure Grants Program) Coordinator for Campbelltown Council, speaking about the Hurley Park Early Stories Project, and the Multi-Purpose Community Facility.

This project aims to increase access to this significant historic open space in the centre of the city by restoring the historical structures.

The existing community building is to be demolished and the carpark resurfaced. Restoration work will be done on the reservoir wall, silt traps, spillway and cattle tank.

The scout hall in this vicinity will be retained as it is not part of the project and on separate land ownership.

As well as restoration work, appropriate fencing is to be installed to allow safe access to the heritage areas, new paved pathways to help accessibility to, and within the park, planting of new trees and greenery, and seven stations with signage - complete with information, historical photos and reproductions of charcoal artwork commissioned to artist, Catherine O'Donnell.

A new multi-purpose community facility will also be built.



*Above left: the planned locations for the signage Right: the community hall at present on the site. Below: the artists impression of the new facility. Photos on site by Julie Crowley*



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There has been some tidying up on the site, removing grass from over the spillway and some bushes and trees that have seeded over recent years.



*Are You a Member  
who would like to be more involved?*

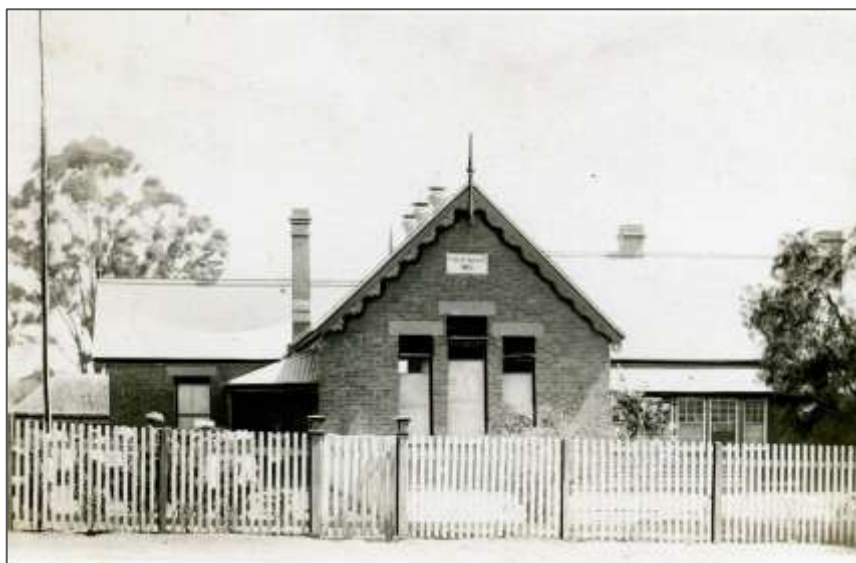
There are many volunteer opportunities

- Join our new gardening team
- Look through our collection and design new displays
- Scan old slides into digital photos
- Help co-ordinate the events: tour groups, open days

*Email or ring the office if you are interested*

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## *Campbelltown Public School Celebrating 150 Years*



*Above: Original rooms and Headmaster's residence, designed by G A Mansfield. Postcard published by J J Taylor.  
Right: A 1951 class photo with a good view of the grounds behind.*



*Above left: The original building demolished in the 1960s, photo taken by Alex Goodsell, c. 1963  
Above right: The demountables were a familiar part of the infant's school with a newer building behind.  
Photo from the Ken Bagley Collection 1969.*

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*Above: Mrs Catherine Flamos, present Principal and dignitaries at the official assembly 5<sup>th</sup> March 2026. Above right: Mrs Catherine Flamos, Education Area Director Clayton Reddie, Mayor Darcy Lound and MP Greg Warren. Photos Julie Crowley*

Many of our longer-term members will probably have memories of Campbelltown Public School at a time when it was the only public school in town, probably stronger memories than mine. I will recount some of my early memories, and feel free to add or change anything you recall.

Kindergarten 1958: still in the old brick buildings, two rooms with very high roofs. Nearby an ex-army building, hot in summer and always meant to be temporary, from memory we were held there in 'transition' before going into Year 1.

The excitement of Empire Day, 24<sup>th</sup> May and being allowed to go home at lunchtime, after celebrating with a maypole dance at the bottom of the infant's playground. Into this memory creeps a quick rain-shower on the way home and wet crepe paper; colour seeping everywhere!

Not so exciting: Milk, hot after sitting in the sun all morning; teachers prowling actively making sure no-one went into the toilets to tip it out or 'watered' the garden with it. Flavoured straws were a fad for a little while, until they were banned as it made the bottles harder to wash.

Not so exciting: Sewing lessons with the headmaster's wife in the oldest building. Scary! But the desks were interesting, wrought iron sides and lift up lids.

Primary school: Girl's Department/ Boy's Department ne'er the twain did meet...except for dance practice for the Juvenile Ball held at the end of each year.



*Ex-students getting together at the school across Thursday and Friday 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2026.*

This year the school celebrated with two open days, Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> and Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March. On the Thursday, an assembly was hosted with Mayor Darcy Lound and State Member Greg Warren in attendance, as well as the Director of Educational Leadership Clayton Reddie. The children from the Te Kaha islander choir sang after a performance from the aboriginal dancers. The school library held a display of school photos and memorabilia, the old school bell being a very popular attraction.

On Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March a dinner was held at Wests Leagues Club where about eighty people; past and present staff and pupils gathered. Many ex-students had travelled for the event, some coming from Queensland or as far away as Western Australia. It is wonderful that our town still has the ability to bring people together.

J Crowley Editor

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## *Unveiling of the Photo Mural in the Downtown Plaza*





*Downes Department Store 1963, photo Ken Willott Collection CAHS*

*Downes Store Christmas party 1963 with Eric Routley, Mr Nesbitt, Eric Avenell and Owen White. Pam Bonomini Collection CAHS*

Downes Department Store, Downes City Plaza featuring Spotlight, Downtown Plaza, Campbelltown H J Daley Library.... when did you join in the story of this building in Queen Street?

On Thursday, March 5 on the lower level of the Downtown Plaza, near the new home of the H J Daley Library, the Mayor Darcy Lound together with Derek Downes unveiled a plaque next to a photo mural showing the different incarnations of the site.

The mural recognizes the contribution of the Downes family, Rex, Clive and Bryce from the early 1950s Downes Department Store.

As well as the Mayor, Cr Meg Oates and Cr Khaled Halabi, several members of our Society were in attendance.

We are grateful to Michael Chalker who's organizing skills, energy and enthusiasm made this event possible



*Left: Mayor Darcy Lound and Derek Downes a descendant of the original owners cut the cake. Photo Julie Crowley  
Above: Councillors and members of CAHS.*