



INFORMATION NEWSLETTER

Number 155 – April 2022

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Our March Meeting Danielle Trewartha

Marion Heritage Research Centre showcase

Heather Latz introduced the meeting by saying that she regarded the Marion Historical Society's campaign to establish the Marion Heritage Research Centre (MHRC) as its most important achievement.

The Marion Historical Society first met in January 1985 and, from the beginning, one of its aims was to establish a facility where photographs and documents could be filed, and members of the public could look at the material to learn more about Marion's history. Claude Rankin and Philippa Middleton worked hard from 1985–1993 to try to make this happen. Bob Donley and Heather Latz resumed the campaign in 2008. On the 22nd of November 2011, the Council voted 8 to 3 in favour of considering the establishment of the MHRC in its 2012–13 budget and then supported the funding in May 2012. Danielle Trewartha was appointed as the co-ordinator and an opening ceremony was held on the 2nd of May 2013 – 28 years after the Marion Historical Society's campaign had started.

Danielle's presentation gave us an idea of the breadth of what the MHRC does. Its core business is to collect, preserve and provide access to photos, documents, newspaper articles, maps and oral histories. Volunteers help enquirers to find answers to their family and local history questions using these records and online resources. The MHRC currently has 17 volunteers, several of whom are members of the Marion Historical Society.

The MHRC is much more than a place people can go to ask questions about Marion's history. There is usually one presentation or workshop for the public each month (although COVID has disrupted that in the last couple of years), and these are publicised in the City of Marion's quarterly 'What's On' booklet, which is available in libraries and online on their web site.

The MHRC has also staged exhibitions, such as the *From Almond Groves to Poppy Fields* exhibition at Gallery M in 2015, which commemorated local people's involvement at home and on the battlefields in World War I. This was followed up with a professionally-made video of interviews with four local WWII veterans. *Their Own Words: Marion's Unsung War Heroes*.

Danielle made the point that you don't have to be a formal volunteer at the MHRC to contribute to the work they do. MHS member Stuart Thomson and others donate photos (or let the MHRC copy their photos) so that there is a record of changes over time at sites across the City of Marion. Photos that may seem to some families to be very mundane, such as photos of a family home in Park Holme or Edwardstown in the late 1940s, are highly desired at the MHRC. Don't throw them out!! Recording your own memoirs, labelling your old photos, recording interviews with people who've lived in the area for a while or researching a topic that interests you are other things people could do and then donate to the MHRC.

Danielle then handed over to three MHRC volunteers who talked about some of their work. Jill told us about her efforts to find out more about a friend's mother, who had died when he was very young and was never spoken of. He knew nothing about her family or cause of death. Thanks to the different skills and teamwork of several volunteers she was able to find out more about the mother and her parents than her friend dreamed was possible and put him in touch with some of his mother's relatives. We were all moved by her story.

Avril spoke about the range of work done at the MHRC, the complementary skills and interests of the MHRC volunteers, and illustrated how a group of volunteers worked on a particular piece of research and presented it to a very happy customer. She said that she had "found her tribe", as she had hoped to when she retired from paid work.

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Heather gave a short demonstration of the online catalogue which describes and helps to find the things that are stored in the MHRC but may only represent about 10% of the holdings (so far). She also described a recent enquiry, for which a photograph and newspaper article collected by the late Maggy Ragless and donated to the MHRC exceeded the hopes and expectations of the enquirer.

The Marion Heritage Research Centre is in the brick bungalow (the 'Red House') at the front of the Marion Council building at 245 Sturt Road, Sturt. It can be contacted by calling 7420 6455, emailing heritage@marion.sa.gov.au or visiting between 10 am and 4 pm from Monday to Wednesday each week, apart from in January.

NEW EXHIBIT FOR MARION VILLAGE MUSEUM

The Marion Village Museum is delighted to announce an exciting new exhibit is in the works. After a successful grant submission to the Department of Industries "Building Stronger Communities Program" work has now begun on the *Stable Gallery*.

The museum has acquired a large number of agricultural tools and artefacts previously displayed in the now defunct Westminster School Rural Museum. These items are significant to the history of Marion Village and many can be identified as belonging to well known pioneer families of the area.

The Stable Gallery will be located in the old stables (c1900) adjacent to the museum which became vacant when the Warradale/Marion Uniting Church erected a new storage shed and kindly allowed the museum to occupy this historic building. For their kindness we thank the Church.

It is anticipated that the Stable Gallery will be complete sometime later this year and a grand opening will be arranged to christen this achievement.

The Museum would also like to thank the office of Nicolle Flint MP for their support and sponsorship in the success of the grant.

From the Marion Heritage Research Centre

From the Marion Heritage Research Centre we **Congratulate** the Marion Historical Society on a very 'brilliant career', spent sharing, protecting, building and promoting Marion's history and heritage. It is Thanks to you that Marion's heritage is as known and loved as it is.

What you have built over so many years, we seek to continue, by also collecting, preserving, researching and sharing Marion's amazing history. It is Thanks to you that the MHRC exists.

Please come along any Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday and find out more about us and explore what we have. And do not hesitate to inform us of any history we have that needs correcting!

As sad as this moment is, please know that we strive to **carry on** your legacy; to be a place where Marion's history is available, lives on, and keeps growing, educating, delighting both current visitors and future generations.

**You are warmly thanked and welcomed
to carry on with us into the future.**

*Marion Heritage Research Centre
245 Sturt Rd, Sturt. Phone: 7420 6455
Email: heritage@marion.sa.gov.au*

Marion Historical Society

If outcomes of the Annual General Meeting meet expectations there will be no further meetings of the Marion Historical Society. Indeed, the Society will cease to exist. A sad outcome but not unusual for Societies in these times.

I would like to thank all those who kept the Society going over its 37 years, especially those who held offices, those on the committee and, importantly, all those who attended the meetings.

Probably the least known and recognised activity undertaken by the MHS was the work undertaken to raise awareness of Marion History through the installation of information signs in public areas and, probably, the highlight was the hard work that led to the formation of the Marion Heritage Research Centre, an organisation that will continue to raise the profile of History in the Marion Council area in the future.

John Hoult