



Canberra Archaeological Society Inc
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Welcome to all our members and friends!

I always seem to say that we have had a busy year, but this is true again. I look back on the last six years that I have been President and I am astonished and gratified that this small, voluntary association has accomplished so much and established itself as a respected player in the ACT heritage arena.

As reported last year, we have continued our advocacy role for archaeological heritage, but as time passes more historic and heritage sites are threatened and planning outcomes seem to aim for profit rather than conservation. Our links with the National Trust (ACT) continue – two of us are on the Council, Sally Brockwell and I, and CAS members Peter Dowling and Trish Saunders are on the panel of Heritage Experts. Our knowledge and opinions are sought by the Trust on various issues of Canberra's heritage.

The ACT Heritage Unit sought our advice on the site of 'The Valley' at Gungahlin and we congratulate them and the former Chief Minister Mr Jon Stanhope on their program of conservation works on the Ginninderra Blacksmith's workshop, The Valley and Robertson Cottage at Oaks Estate, all places that we have raised concerns about over the past decades.

Our small committee once again rose to all occasions and worked hard to keep CAS afloat. Once again my heartfelt thanks to them all: Vice President Peter Dowling who keeps our fingers on the heritage pulse and provides most of the interesting articles for Old News; Treasurer Dianne Dowling under whose encouragement our membership continues to rise and our coffers to be healthy. We also acknowledge the receipt, for the second year, of a very useful small grant under the GVESH program of the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities. This covers our insurance and some other administrative costs.

Dianne has been the editor of Old News for several years and come up trumps, with only one glitch when the Turkish internet defeated her. Sally has fitted the role of our secretary into her busy academic career, meeting the regular tasks admirably and helping to find speakers. Rose has cajoled speakers to fill our timetable; John has planned several interesting walks and talks with more in the pipeline; Marika came aboard to help with our Symposium and Bob is there to support us all.

Our speakers this year have taken us on imaginary journeys across Australia and the world and through the mists of time. We are lucky to have such wealth of speakers in Canberra, all willing to share their knowledge and to entertain us. Some audiences have been disappointingly small. This has been a worry for some years, especially in the colder months and we have considered reducing the number of talks. To this end I have sounded out the Trust and ICOMOS with a view to combining for one or two lectures a year. The audience is limited in Canberra and we see each other at the same events, so perhaps combining our resources will attract larger audiences worthy of the speakers' time and effort. The next committee will consider the options.

This year we replaced the July meeting with a day-long Symposium on Heritage and Planning, and this was a resounding success. Grateful thanks to Dianne Dowling and Belinda Bentley for their sterling catering and support on the day and to Marika Behr

for finessing the speakers' timetable and keeping time on the day. Thanks also to Sandy Blair for procuring the excellent venue on campus.

Peter and I compiled summaries of the Symposium and these and the presentations are on the National Trust (ACT) website. We had speakers from NSW and Queensland and the topics included international heritage examples. Many consultants from various fields attended and a few government officers. I think this is one of the best ways that voluntary groups can promote heritage, by showcasing examples of good outcomes and encouraging discussion between professionals, residents and authorities. I hope the tradition is established and I have been talking to our colleagues in the Trust and ICOMOS about them taking the lead in future events, with CAS and others assisting.

Many thanks to all members and friends for your continuing support and enthusiasm. Perhaps you could help to promote CAS by bringing a friend or hapless relative to one of next year's talks. They might get the bug for archaeology and swell our numbers.

I wish you all a very happy and peaceful festive season and look forward to catching up with you when I am in town next year.