

City of Greater Dandenong Shared Archives Facility

By Heather Arnold Secretary, South Eastern Historical Association

The South Eastern Historical Society had a tour of this facility on Sunday, May 7 2017. The Facility was opened in February 2016 and holds collections from the City of Greater Dandenong (CGD), the Dandenong & District Historical Society and Heritage Hill (Benga and Laurel Lodge)

The building, in Hammond Road, was the old Progress Hall and the Council has spent \$250,000 to re-purpose it to an Archive. It has a new strengthened floor, new lighting, zoned temperature control, new wiring and new office fit-out amongst other things.

Rhonda Diffey, City of Greater Dandenong Collections Archivist, gave a tour of the collection. The City of Greater Dandenong collection has

- Art works including cultural exchange gifts from Sister Cities etc and paintings acquired by the City of Dandenong and City of Springvale as acquisitive art awards.
- Photographs, including Mayoral photos and other photos of Civic leaders and the Graham Southam collection of negatives. Graham Southam was a Dandenong photographer who captured all aspects of Dandenong life from the 1950s to 1990s.
- Objects including official gifts; a textile collection (mainly clothes), toys and household items from the Hart family who lived in Laurel Lodge. The Hart collection is displayed at Laurel Lodge on a rotating basis.
- Books and other paper based items.

Rhonda described how and why the items were stored, what they are used for - exhibitions, periodic displays in the Council Offices, research and loans to other organizations for specific purposes (such as the Dandenong Market 150th anniversary) The collection is catalogued in Excel and many items are being digitised. The Dandenong & District Historical Society also have part of their collection at the Archive which they manage separately from the the Council collection. The rest of their collection is at their new rooms at 39 Clow Street. The Springvale & District Historical Society has been approached to house some of their collection at the facility.



Part of the City of Greater Dandenong collection on purpose built shelving



The Civic Leaders photograph collection



Peter Drummond telling us about the Graham Southam negative collection. The negatives are housed in their own room.

The second part of the tour was done by Peter Drummond, who has an I.T. background and runs the digitising project. There is a workroom with three scanners and computers all networked and backed up by the Council. They have a Fujitsu SV600 Scan Snap overhead scanner that does books and objects and two Epsom flatbed scanners - V700 and V800 Photo Perfection.



Left: The Workroom

Peter, with the help of a team of volunteers, digitises the items. They are working their way through the Graham Southam negatives - not every negative will be scanned; they are selecting a representative sample and are half way through this process.

The digitised images are uploaded onto eHive. They currently have around 2000 items uploaded - view the collection here

<https://ehive.com/collections/5704/city-of-greater-dandenong>

eHive is a New Zealand product <https://ehive.com/> that allows Museums and other collecting institutions to catalogue and publish collections on-line. You subscribe to eHive (prices depend on the amount of storage space you require), it's easy to use, can be used from more than one location and more than one person at a time. You can have your collection public or private or a combination of both. CGD currently put a low resolution version on-line but the aim is to eventually have their high resolution copies on eHive but not made public so all images are stored in one place. eHive has an option to add comments and tags. It can also provide statistics.

It is a great facility and Rhonda and Peter provided us with an interesting, inspiring and informative tour. The Archive Facility is a model that all Councils should provide for their collection and Historical Societies. A big thank you to Rhonda and Peter for giving up their Sunday for us.