

Re-enactment Societies

Presentation by Colin Robinson at the SEHA meeting held Sunday August 4, 2019
at the Springvale & District Historical Society.
(Talk summarised by Heather Arnold)

Colin, who is the President of the Springvale & District Historical Society and the President of the Victorian Re-Enactment Society, spoke on the re-enactment movement. People involved in the movement are usually interested in either an era, such as the Napoleonic Wars era or a period, such as the Vikings or the Medieval period.

The Victorian Re-Enactment Society of Victoria covers the history of Australia from 1788 to 1919. The group will attend events, for instance, the Rye 150th celebrations or the start of the Yachting season, where they fire the cannons on the Williamstown foreshore. They also visit places such as the Swan Hill Folk Museum, the Warrnambool Maritime Museum, Sovereign Hill at Ballarat. They spend their time in uniforms, interact with the public, put on performances etc. In 1997, the centenary of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, they went to England to participate in the festivities. They also had the opportunity to look behind the scenes at Museums.

Colin also gave us an interesting account of the Nursing Service. NSW has had an Army Nursing Service since 1885. Nurses from the various Australian Colonies went to the Boer War, some of whom had to pay their own way to get there. In 1907, the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry was established in England and they (all volunteers) served on the battle fields of both World Wars. Edith Cavell was one the volunteers.

Colin has a huge collection of original uniforms, over 1,000. He also makes his own uniforms. He has a fully kitted out World War One operating tent and over 30 wedding dresses dating from as early as the 1850s.

Colin is good friends with Bernie Dingle the owner of the Light Horse Museum in Nar Nar Goon North which was closed by the Cardinia Council around 4 years ago due to O.H. & S. or some paltry excuse. As a Cardinia Shire ratepayer, I say it is an absolute disgrace the way the Council has treated Bernie and his Museum.

Colin's favourite uniform is the Victorian Mounted Rifles from 1885 – the first militia in Victoria, before this it was all volunteers.

Colin is a wonderful speaker, we all would have liked to have heard more. He has an amazing knowledge of history and military matters.