NEWS

Pop-up shop for fans of fashion

BY JULIEANNE STRACHAN

VINTAGE SALE: Christine Howard models one of the vintage dresses up for sale this weekend. Picture: NONI HYETT

BENDIGO Historical Society will host a three-day shopping event for vintage fashion enthusiasts, quilters and crafters at the organisation's new headquarters in Mackenzie Street.

Society vice-president Euan McGillivray said the items were priced between $5 and $50 and represented an opportunity to secure pieces that, in some cases, were more than 100 years old.

"Many of these items would have been handmade or hand-finished and they have been contributed to the collection over the years, but we really don't know anything about them," Mr McGillivray said.

"We think a lot would have been donated in the 1960s and '70s on the basis that they were old, but without any information about who they belonged to or where they were from."

The pieces being put up for sale date from the 1900s to the 1960s.

Mr McGillivray said the society had between 35,000 and 40,000 items in its collection and needed to slim down its holdings to give greater attention to pieces of important historic significance.

A 2008 preservation needs assessment by Artifact Conservation estimated about 40 per cent of the society's holdings were valuable only for "curiosity interest" and had no historic link to Bendigo apart from having been donated locally.

Mr McGillivray said three separate reports had been written on the subject, which had motivated the sale.

"It's important that people know that we are not selling off important parts of the collection," he said.

"These are pieces that we have no documentation for. It's an issue of provenance - we don't know the history of the items - we cannot tell stories about them. Some things are ready to be worn and others have tears and would be better suited to handicrafters or quilters who can re-purpose the materials."

The sale items will be displayed in three rooms to give shoppers space to inspect the dresses, hats, shoes, gloves, baby clothing and crochet samples on offer.

Historical society member Christine Howard, who tried on some of the pieces, said the dresses had a transformative effect once they were taken off the clothes hanger.

"They make you feel as if you want to go off to tea," she said. "And a lot of these styles are really timeless."

The pop-up shop will be open on Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 10.30am-4pm at 11 Mackenzie Street, Bendigo.