

ANNUAL EUREKA LECTURE 3 December 2009

The Annual Eureka Lecture sponsored by ESMA was highly successful with over 100 people attending the Mulkearns Theatre at Australian Catholic University. It began at 7.30 and finished around 8.30pm. The general feeling in the auditorium was one of interest and support for the concept and spirit of Eureka. The audience was appreciative and attentive. There was a broad spectrum of people in the audience. Attendees came from Warrnambool, Melbourne, Creswick, Smythesdale, Sebastopol, Ballarat, Carisbrook, Bacchus Marsh, and Dunnstown. They represented historical groups, universities, family members who were at Eureka, and the interested public.

Both Catherine King MP and Geoff Howard MP attended. Catherine King launched the publication *Women of the Diggings*.

Unfortunately Council conducted some sort of workshop on this night so that Susan Fayad, Heritage Officer, and other Council employees and councillors, indicated that they could not attend. No councillors attended this event.

Australian Catholic University employees, lecturer Dr Ann Gervasoni and Betty McGuinness attended the lecture and were extremely supportive. Both the cleaning and security staff of ACU were excellent to deal with.

The lecture was reported in The Courier the next day. The coverage was hardly representative (see comparative photos taken by The Courier and Lisa Gervasoni who attended the lecture). The reporter and photographer were at the venue half an hour before the start of the lecture, and left at around 7.15pm before the bulk of the audience arrived.



Photograph Courtesy Lisa Gervasoni



Photograph Courtesy Lisa Gervasoni

Eureka Day

Women's story comes to life

By Kim Stephens

WHILE the story of the men at the forefront of the Eureka legend is ingrained in Australian folklore, the story of the women who fought behind the scenes has largely been ignored.

Until now.

The annual Eureka lecture, one of the most highly anticipated facets of Ballarat's yearly rebellion anniversary celebrations, was last night given by local historian Dr Dorothy Wickham, whose newly released book *Women of the Diggings: Ballarat 1854* uncovers the vital role women played at Eureka, a role Dr Wickham said had been ignored for far too long.

"Women were very active and as conscious politically as their men folk because they were the ones at home trying to feed their families with very little money," she said.

"From that point of view, it was vital to them they had a fair go."

The Eureka Stockade, sparked by grievances over heavily-priced mining items and the inflated cost of a Miner's Licence, affected women on the home front just as much as it did their mining husbands, Dr Wickham said.

But her book, which details the daily lives of more than 1000 women whose husbands were involved in the rebellion, was the product of 20 years of research, thanks largely to the difficulty in tracing them.

"It was very difficult to find evidence because a lot of women were recorded as Mrs Smith or Mrs



LECTURE: Local historian Dorothy Wickham, with her newly released book *Women of the Diggings: Ballarat 1854*, at last night's lecture. Pictures: Daniel Hartley-Allen

Jones or whatever their name may be, without a first name," she said.

"But there are so many wonderful stories and such a wide variety of strong and interesting women.

"It has been a privilege to uncover the story of their daily lives and give them a voice."

Eureka Stockade Memorial chairman Frank Williams said Dr Wickham was chosen to give the annual address earlier this year — placing her alongside previous speakers such as former University of Ballarat Vice-Chancellor Professor Geoffrey Blainey — to reveal a different aspect of the stockade.

"The significant contribution of women to Eureka has been an overlooked aspect and it really is quite amazing the contribution they made," he said.

Dr Wickham will be signing copies of her book at Book City Ballarat on Saturday, December 12, between 11.30am and 2.30pm.



INTERESTED: Daryl and Erica Povey.



LEARNING: Ryan, 10, and Kerrie Kearney.



ENJOYING: Di Campbell and Pauline Riches.

Courier Report. Please note: Empty seats behind couples featured.

BOOK LAUNCH
3 December 2009

Catherine King MP launched the new publication *Women of the Diggings: Ballarat 1854* immediately after the Eureka lecture. This event was sponsored by Ballarat Heritage Services. The people who attended the Annual Eureka Lecture were invited to the Staffroom, ACU for refreshments and conviviality. This gave them a chance to speak to each other, catch up with old Eureka friends, and exchange knowledge and information. There was a feeling of the Eureka spirit and friendship throughout the evening. The event finished at approximately 11.30pm.



ANNUAL EUREKA DINNER

This event was sponsored by ESMA and held at the Old Colonists' Club in Lydiard Street on Sunday 6 December 2009. This event was well attended with people from Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne and central Victoria.



Photograph Courtesy Jacqueline Dark
Left to Right: Judy Verlin, Clare Gervasoni, Julie Bishop, Dorothy Wickham,
Laurel Johnson, and Val D'Angri

The guest speaker was Julie Bishop. The day was interesting and well attended. Julie Bishop delivered a thought provoking speech and it was exhilarating to see a few union men congratulate her on the ideas she put forward. Truly in the spirit of Eureka!

The mayor, Judy Verlin, councillors and council employees were in attendance. Representatives from groups such as Eureka's Children, Shearers' Union, Builders' Union, universities, Victorian Association of Family History Organisations, the interested public, and descendants of Eureka people attended. It was a successful day.

The day was a celebration of women's involvement in Eureka. The photograph (below) depicts four Ballarat women who have been vitally involved with Eureka, and who have published various titles on women at Eureka. Clare Gervasoni (Ballarat Heritage Services), Dorothy Wickham (Ballarat Heritage Services) and author of *Women of the Diggings*, Val D'Angri (The Eureka Flag); and Laurel Johnson (Women of Eureka).



Photograph Courtesy Jacqueline Dark
Left to Right: Clare Gervasoni, Dorothy Wickham, Val D'Angri, Laurel Johnson