Shadowers of History
Commonwealth History Project
Beechworth Secondary College

Query host?

Author: Jen Morrison
I am the SOSE Coordinator at Beechworth Secondary College, a small school in one of Victoria’s most historic and best preserved gold towns.

Tourism and related industries make up a significant component of the employment in the local area. The enrolment of the College is around 360 students. Approximately 50 percent of the students travel more than 4.8 kilometres to attend the College.

Within our rich historical area, the SOSE department pays an annual fee to The Burke Museum so that any class in the entire school can visit the museum. The Cultural Precinct, which includes The Court House, Chinese Protection Office, Telegraph Station, Beechworth Prison and Police Cells is also available for tours.

Our curriculum is rich in topics such as:
- Ned Kelly
- Pioneers
- Crime and Punishment
- Gold
- the Chinese Community
- Tourism.

Over the last few years, I have taken over the Anzac and Remembrance Day service from our School Administrator. I ask a Year 9 or 10 SOSE class to research, prepare and present the school ceremony and send representatives to our town services armed with their own speech.

I wanted to use the Commonwealth History Project to gain primary resources and be more confident in my own knowledge as a provider to SOSE staff and students using a Civics and Citizen approach.

I have gathered a range of resources from:
- the Shrine
- the Canberra War Memorial
- the Veteran Affairs Office in Wodonga.

These resources have been used in a number of ways at the school, including:
- lamination and incorporation into class sets
- cataloguing through the library
- as part of a presentation to our Curriculum Committee
- as part of a presentation at a SOSE meeting.

The local RSL has been approached about a possible oral history project for next year. I have also presented the two students who gave the town speeches for Remembrance Day with a Shrine pin. I hope to have the SRC fund this as an annual gesture.