Manfred heritage

Goulburn and District Historical Society is staging a display of works by architect Edward Manfred at St Clair.

The works by Edmund Cooper Manfred (1854-1941) are regarded as historically important by the society. They reflect accurately the times in which he practised his profession, the last 19th and early 20th centuries. It was the period of transition from colonialism to a true Australian identity.

Manfred left a rich legacy of public and domestic architecture, of which much has already vanished. The preservation of what remains is a task which presents one of the significant challenges in Goulburn's immediate future, according to society members.

The exhibition at St Clair is a small selection of Manfred's work.

It is presented by the society as a contribution to the promotion of awareness of the city's architectural heritage, particularly that identified by the Heritage Study recently published by the City Council.

Also displayed is a selection of photographs of decorative architectural work, including some examples of the work of early Goulburn iron-founders.

Some of Manfred's work on display includes a selection from a series of drawings for alterations to 'Varralama', subsequently acquired for use as Government House.

Other works include:

- Balcony for Goulburn Club, Market Street (once removed; Goulburn Town Hall, three elevations; Goulburn Town Hall, plan and rear elevation; Goulburn Municipal Swimming Baths; Goulburn Hospital, a series of design sketches.

The president of the Goulburn Historical Society, Mr Bill Gilber, at left, and the vice-president, Dr Peter Lynne, right, outline the Manfred display to Alderman Pat Fairall.

Festival of opals at Lightning Ridge

Lightning Ridge will hold its 14th annual Opal Festival in September.

It will run for six days.

Highlights include a Princess Ball, Opal Queen Ball, show-stopping costume and beauty contest, fun-run relay, Pottch Queen Ball, flag parade, chess contests, motor racing and children's day.

Art and craft displays will be open throughout the weekend of the Festival, which begins on August 29.

Lightning Ridge, in the far north of NSW, got its name from an unusual incident last century.

In those days of big stations sweeping across vast tracts of black-soil plains, north-west of Wagga, two in particular, "Dangaleen" and Angledool, covered some 500 square miles.

Near where these properties met was the Parish of Wallangulla and in the "big paddock", only a low ridge and a swamp.

The far western end of the ridge, where the stock route came down from Queensland, came to be known as Lightning Ridge.

There are variations in the story told today, but it seems that a large mob of sheep on the stock route from Angledool sheltered by night from a storm among the ridge and ridge tops on the top of the ridge.

Shepherds have always thought, superstition, that wood attracts lightning.

Suddenly, from the roll of thunder and wild words and rape, a flash came down and a hundred were struck and killed. The storm continued after the terrible night was over.

It may have been wool, or the trees, possibly it was the ironstone commonly found all around, but in any case that part of the station has always since been called Lightning Ridge. So it is known over the world today, a pleasant, quiet little place, miles away in the Australian bush.

It has often been said that Charles Nettleton found Lightning Ridge and was the first to work there, but various accounts of the early Lightning Ridge differ, sometimes very considerably.

Opal was first reported at Wallangulla in 1902, but was found there probably as much as 15 years earlier — about 1887. The first digging was done by Jack Murray about 1901.

"In 1903 prospecting carried on with apparently indubitable results," according to a Department of Mines report.

Charles Nettleton had the drive and determination which made the first threads into the gem trade for black opal.

Nettleton and later many others trudged 800 miles to and from Adelaide in their search for opal.

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