



Founded 1926

# HISTORY WEST

PUBLISHED BY THE ROYAL WESTERN AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

August 2022

## GENERAL MEETING

**The next general meeting at Stirling House is on Wed 17 August at 6pm when Rob Smith will present a talk on 'Robert John Sholl and the European settlement of the northwest - from Camden Harbour to the Flying Foam Massacre 1865-68. Refreshments available from 5.30pm; Bookshop open until 6pm.**

Robert John Sholl was sent in early 1865 as Resident Magistrate to Camden Harbour, an attempt by Victorian colonists to carve out a large pastoral area in the Kimberley. Poorly informed, led and prepared, the majority of the approximately 100 settlers had left or were leaving when Sholl, his son Trevarton and a party of enrolled pensioners, police and labourers arrived in early 1865. Sholl's report sealed the fate of this scheme, but he was left there until October 1865. Finally they were relocated to a scattered settlement in the Pilbara based around the waterhole on the Harding River that became Roebourne.

Sholl and his son Trevarton wrote their own journals and, being well-educated and intellectually and scientifically curious individuals, they give us an interesting look at life on this colonial frontier. Trevarton's death on the ship *Emma* left a hole in Sholl. However, he continued to write lengthy reports to the Colonial Secretary Barlee, and eventually returned to his journal.

In early 1868 a policeman, his Swan River assistant and two pearlers were killed by a large group of Aborigines. Sholl sent out a punitive expedition and the actions of this party have been much discussed and debated from that day to this. Sholl is our main contemporary witness, and I will explore how European settlement led to this outburst of violence, describing the experiences of the settlers, the Indigenous population, and Sholl himself through his writings.

**Rob Smith** is a graduate of UWA with a BA (History) and Grad Dip in Arts (Ancient History). For the last two years he has been transcribing the correspondence of Robert John Sholl from his time as Resident Magistrate of the North District 1865-82.



## Members champion fundraiser for a New History West Community Centre

*Lovingly kept. Important history.  
Deserves a major new building to keep  
and display this precious history well.*

Kim Beazley  
Visitor's book, Nov 2020

The History West Inaugural Lecture by Dr Mathew Trinca, opened by the Governor Kim Beazley, was a great event and it was pleasing to see so many members as well as the public.

An appeal by our President using the words of the Governor inspired donations of over \$12,000.

A Big Thank you to our Members.

## STOP PRESS

We warmly thank Minderoo Foundation for its donation of \$12,000 to conserve, digitise and safely store the John Forrest 1874 Expedition Scrap Book and three Illustrated Addresses presented to Sir John Forrest by the shires of Beverley, Katanning and Plantagenet in recognition of the government's purchase of land for the Great Southern Railway.



## Be a Container Saver for RWAHS

Please save your containers and assist the Society's fundraising.  
Quote History West Scheme ID when recycling containers at designated drop-off locations.

**History West Scheme ID C10623851**

If you need more information on the State-wide scheme go to —  
<https://www.containersforchange.com.au/wa/>

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# History West Inaugural Lecture

## Reading Western Australia in Australia's National Past

**Dr Mathew Trinca, Director of the National Museum of Australia**

Members and friends met at the University Club auditorium on the evening of 9 June to hear Dr Trinca speak and, at the same time, support the Society's building fundraising. Our President, Richard Offen, very ably chaired the occasion. The Society's Patron, the Governor the Hon. Kim Beazley, began the evening by offering strong support for the Society and reflecting on the truth that 'History Matters'.

Dr Trinca dedicated his lecture to the late Professor Tom Stannage, and one of Mat's former teachers. He stressed the influence this UWA historian had not only on himself but on all his students and readers, testifying to the power of lively and well-written history.

Mat began his lecture by pointing to the continuing value and utility of Australia's federal structure and, in doing so, hinted at his main theme — the influence of local and regional factors in Australians' lives and therefore the way in which Australian history is made at the local level. Yet his institution, the National Museum, seeks to tell the Australian national story. Dr Trinca finds this national story in the mosaic of many small local stories that together constitute a portrait of Australia's past and present. Local remembering and local stories create a powerful sense of place where, he suggested, it is possible to 'feel the past'. History is a form of personal experience — whereby the stories we tell link us as individuals to the trajectory of Australian history.

The deep time of Aboriginal history was an important theme. He reminded his audience of one of the treasures of the State's history — the 30,000-year-old string beads found in a rock shelter on Cape Range Peninsula in the northwest, the earliest ornamental material yet recovered in Australasia. These shell beads extend the age of human use of decorative ornaments in Australia to a time comparable with some of the earliest in Europe. As visitors to Boola Bardip we are personally reminded by these museum artefacts of Australia's long human story and the many millions of lives that have been lived on the continent. Dr Trinca pointed to both happy and unhappy stories — the warm friendship that developed between Minang man Mokare and early British colonist Alexander Collie in the early years of the 19th century on the one hand and, on the other, the recent destruction by the mining company Rio Tinto of rock shelters at Juukan Gorge in the Pilbara that were 46,000-year-old cultural sites of exceptional heritage significance.

Dr Trinca also spoke of his own family story, growing up in the Pickering area within an Italian-Australian family of orchardists. In this way he carried his stories from the deep past through the colonial years to the present.

Australia's history became in his hands one of multiple accretions creating a diverse whole — one of hope and promise and a work-in-progress.

*Our grateful thanks to Sally Anne Hasluck and her team for this very successful occasion. The lecture can be accessed on the RWAHS Facebook.*



**SAVE THE DATE**  
**Saturday 8 October**

Tours and Events Committee is planning a one-day trip to historic York. Details to be announced soon.

**Volunteer News**



Our grateful thanks for all the skilled work carried out by Margaret Medcalf, a founding member of Disaster Preparedness Committee. Margaret retired from the Committee on 4 July.

L to R: Adrian Phelps (Convenor), Margaret Medcalf, Maria Gillman (Hon Architect), Val Hutch.



A warm welcome to new museum volunteer Georgia Hildebrand who is working with Kathryn Swan in the Tranby Room.



**Call for books for the**  
**2023 Giant Second Hand Book Sale**  
**1/2 April 2023**

Donate any books you no longer want to a good cause.

Bring them to Stirling House  
or call 9386 3841 to arrange a pick up.

All books, except textbooks  
and encyclopedias, are wanted.

Many thanks from us all.

**Welcome to new members**

Carol Baldini, Mary Davies, Annie Kavanagh,  
Sarah Lodge, Peter McNab, Brett Wright.

We hope that you enjoy your membership  
& look forward to meeting you at  
some of the activities on offer.

**July issue feedback**

There was considerable interest in the new digital availability of items in the Society's collection of large photographs. They have not been easily accessible because of their size and storage and we all welcome the new availability.

Apologies for the captioning error on the image of John and Margaret Forrest in court dress (P1999.1712). John Forrest was not Lord Forrest until his death; at this point he was Sir John Forrest.

Another reader noted that the ostrich feather headdress Lady Forrest is wearing was not a special tribute to the Prince of Wales, later Edward VII. When ladies were presented at court they had to wear three ostrich feathers in their hair. There were also strict requirements regarding their dress and train. This was a protocol established before the reign of George III and lasted well into the 20th century.

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## Community Talk

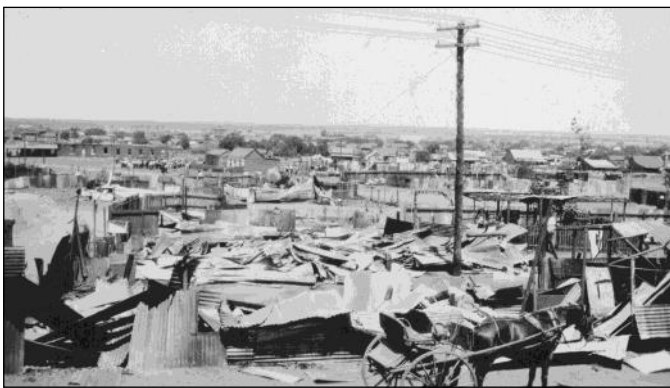
**Dr Criena Fitzgerald**'s February talk on the impact of the January 1934 Kalgoorlie/ Boulder race riots on the goldfields Yugoslav community attracted a crowd of 70, including many members of the affected community. There was much talk and many questions as the audience glimpsed the depths of the ethnic fracture in 1930s society. It was a bitter time for families labelled 'alien' or 'foreign' and blamed for the unemployment that consumed the State in the early 1930s. The warning given throughout the goldfields district at the time was: 'If you're Australian leave your light on, if you're a foreigner leave now'.

Social division was ignited into violence by the death of Charles Edward Jordan after a dispute with barman Claudio Mattaboni outside Giannatti's Home from Home Hotel. In response a crowd looted and burnt Italian hotels, Yugoslav boarding houses and businesses, and Greek businesses. Mining families living on the 'flats' in Boulder were warned and women and children fled into the bush, leaving a small group of single men armed with jam-tin bombs to defend their homes. A crowd of over 1,000 looted and burned homes, and more than 400 Yugoslavs were made homeless. The government dragged its feet for two years over compensation.

The Superpit has consumed the area where the community lived. However mob violence leaves memories and Criena played excerpts from some of the oral histories she has recorded with members of the Yugoslav community to capture those memories and family stories. Some of the affected families moved out of the district north to Gwalia while others moved to Perth; some rebuilt and the men returned to work underground as they had previously done.

These terrible events form one part of Criena's new book - *For a Better Life. Yugoslavs on the Goldfields of WA 1890-1970* which she sold at the talk. If you would like to buy a copy go to -

<https://www.historywest.com.au>



Homes on the Boulder flats after the riots

## Affiliates & other news

Congratulations to **Denmark Historical Society** for its success in acquiring a grant from the State government for technology upgrade to replace computers and software. The Society is a busy one and everyone looks forward to visiting shortly to enjoy the State History Conference.

**Eastern Goldfields Historical Society** is helping the Heritage Skills Association create a pictorial history of the old Ora Banda Hotel and hopes people will share their images and stories. If you can help, please email [eghs@kalgoorliehistory.org](mailto:eghs@kalgoorliehistory.org)

**Maylands Historical & Peninsula Assn** reports an interesting talk given in June by Keith Cundale on the railways in Maylands. His talk elicited a flood of reminiscences both happy and sad. If anyone has any information about two of the businesses that operated on the Falkirk Sidings — 'Southern Cross Windmill Company' or 'K W Thomas Freight forwarders' (later TNT) — please get in touch ([maylandshs@gmail.com](mailto:maylandshs@gmail.com)) so that Keith can incorporate the additional information into his next talk.

In an interesting article in June's **Maritime Heritage Assn** Journal Ross Shardlow explored what is known about the VOC ship *Leeuwin* and its first recorded landfall on the southwest and southern coast of Australia in 1622.

**Midland & Districts Historical Society** is delighted to have secured exhibition and storage space within the Powerhouse and Transformer Buildings at the former WA Midland Government Railway Workshops. The Society is now calling on past and present residents and business owners in Baskerville, Bellevue, Boya, Greenmount, Helena Valley, Herne Hill, Jane Brook, Koongamia, Middle Swan, Midland, Midvale, Millendon, Red Hill, Stratton, Swan View, Upper Swan, Viveash, West Midland, Wexcombe and Woodbridge for artefacts, photographs and information on these suburbs.

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For those of you who haven't already discovered it, *History West* recommends a visit to **Outback Family History**, a goldfields history website run by Moya Sharp from Kalgoorlie. Interesting weekly snippets of goldfields history make it well worth visiting. Recently, for example, Goolam Badoola of Bulgarbadoo was featured. Did you know that he was the only 'Afghan' camel teamster in WA to transfer successfully from the declining transport industry to a new industry — a sheep station named Bulgarbadoo? He used his camels to develop the property which, by 1935, covered 202,532 acres. He then sold the station to P M Morrissey of Nallan Station and returned to Karachi to live the rest of his life among his family. Do visit for a great variety of goldfields stories. <https://www.outbackfamilyhistory.com.au>

## A visit to Ngadju land on the Nullarbor

Dr Peter Gifford

*Member Peter Gifford travelled recently to the Nullarbor with Ngadju senior man Danny Graham to assist with the recording of heritage sites.*

Ethnohistorians, according to one definition, ‘study a particular group of people from a combined historical and anthropological viewpoint. They use written documents, oral literature, material culture and ethnographic data to enable their studies’. Roughly speaking, that is what I have done for the past 25 years or so, since obtaining a doctorate in Australian history, with Aboriginal people across much of WA, and with the Ngadju people of the southwest Nullarbor region in particular. For the last year or so, that has meant field trips with my old Ngadju friend John Walter ‘Danny’ Graham and ex-ABC cameraman colleague Clive Taylor, who lives in Adelaide. Danny uses that name to distinguish him from his cousin, also J W Graham.

Danny was raised largely in the bush where his father was a dingo trapper, and learned about country from him in between a bit of schooling in Kalgoorlie. Not enough, however, to enable him to do heritage salvage work by himself or write it up European style, which is where I come in. It was nonetheless his knowledge of country and cultural association (his father knew all the old Indigenous heritage sites, and spoke some language), which was largely responsible for the Ngadju gaining native title in 2016. He was the principal Ngadju informant to give evidence to the Federal Court.

The material I have already amassed from working with Danny, plus what we put together on our last trip, is to be placed in the Battye (WA State) Library. In disclosing information to me about the sites we visited, Danny has requested emphatically that this information be closed to the general public, and that anyone wishing to access it must apply to him for permission.

We saw five Indigenous sites this year, accompanied by Danny’s son, five grandsons and two great grandsons, and former ABC News colleague Doug Durack. Like his father Diddler, Danny was once a dogger (dingo hunter) and stockman in the area in question and the wider Nullarbor region. He maintains that the ground containing the sites is part of his traditional country, as it was for his father and for uncounted generations of their extended family before that – the ‘*Bunanga*’ bloodline, ‘*buna*’ being the ground or dirt linking areas both north and south of the Eyre Highway.

Most of the sites we visited are former Indigenous campgrounds associated with granite and limestone outcrops and rockholes, with no gender restrictions on access, while one is a significant campground and water source open only to women. Danny is also concerned to see protected another place of both European and Indigenous significance, a water tank and former hamlet on the old Eyre Highway east of Balladonia station known as the 40 Mile (its distance from Balladonia). And he and his family would like to see a plaque fixed to the Baxter memorial in the Nuytsland nature reserve, putting an Aboriginal point of view regarding the circumstances surrounding the death there in 1841 of John Baxter, the explorer Edward John Eyre’s overseer.

We began the field trip at Danny’s farm near Condingup, east of Esperance, and travelled northeast on the Balladonia road to a place known as Deralinya, first occupied by a German stockman and later pastoralist, Heinrich Dimer (Arthur Dimer’s

grandfather). From Deralinya we made our way east to Balbinia, where an Indigenous rockhole site overlooks buildings erected in the 1880s by the first Europeans in the area, John Paul Brooks, his sister Sarah and mother Emily, from Geelong. Sarah Brooks was interested in the flora and fauna of the area as well as its Indigenous people. She and John wrote articles for various journals across Australia.

Deralinya and Balbinia were followed by Booania, once an important wayside point for people from the northern stations such as Balladonia, Nanambinia and Noondoonia using camels to transport their wool to Israelite Bay for shipment to Perth and overseas. A large granite rock imposing itself over the surrounding flat countryside, Booania has always been an important camping place for Aboriginal people. Likewise our next stop at Wonberna rockhole, not far south of the Eyre Highway on Balladonia station; Wonberna was a gathering place for Ngadju people well into the modern age as they waited to be called on to work at Balladonia in particular, which was also a ration depot. Wonberna is a semi-permanent water source, which is why the Ponton brothers of Balladonia had it registered as freehold rather than Crown lease like the rest of Balladonia and most other stations in WA. The Pontons’ intent was to keep their neighbours from entering what was in effect private property for the water, but that did not stop the Dimers of Nanambinia.

On then to Meelina, a limestone rather than granite site containing a secret, well-concealed water source along with European ruins now partially restored as a rough camping place; thence to the service station at Caiguna and down to the women’s site which Danny treated with the utmost respect. Then in the rain to Baxter’s Cliffs and the memorial, a fruitless search for an associated rockhole named Jindera, and then back west and the 40 mile.

It was in the rain that one of the highlights of the trip took place — a piece of ingenious repair work that could have earned a place in the television series *Bush Mechanics*. In short, a steel bar connecting Danny’s trailer to his vehicle’s towbar snapped. Emergency repairs were carried out using a small hacksaw, a U-bolt salvaged from a wrecked, abandoned vehicle beside the track, and a couple of pieces of freshly hewn mulga wood – probably harder than the original poor quality steel. It shouldn’t have worked but it did – Danny made it home to Condingup with the trailer still attached to his towbar.

For Clive, Doug and me it was Esperance and the first hot shower for several days; then back to Perth. And that may well be it as far as ethnohistorical journeys are concerned for me. Sleeping under the stars in a swag and boiling the billy may have romantic connotations, but it’s really for people younger than I am – particularly when it’s raining.



Danny Graham & Peter Gifford

# What's in a Photograph?

## The Osborne Park Tram

Julie Taylor

This photograph from the collection shows Tram 10 standing at the terminus of the Osborne Park line near the intersection of Main and Royal streets. The rather grand building in the background is the original Osborne Park Hotel. The motorman (driver) and conductor are standing on the platform; the three men in the foreground are not identified.

The tram is one of Perth's original ten A Class trams, which were imported from the USA and entered service in

1899. Each car had a capacity of 24 seated and 17 standing passengers. The windows were unglazed. This was badged as a SMOKERS CAR, warning the ladies that men would be smoking on the ride. Each end of the cars was fitted with a safety net (visible in the photograph) intended to scoop up inattentive pedestrians. The surrounding trees have been ruthlessly pruned, presumably to keep them clear of the new overhead cabling.

The first Act of Parliament authorising the building of an electric tramway in Perth was passed in 1885. After two failed schemes, a British company called Perth Tramways Ltd was registered in 1898 and was successful in raising the capital and building a network of lines radiating out from the Perth city centre.

An extension to Leederville began running in 1901, and the Osborne Park line, a single-track extension from Oxford Street to Royal Street, via Scarborough Beach Road and Main Street, opened on 11 April 1903. Therefore it is likely that this photograph was taken in that year when the tram was a novelty to be admired, inspected and photographed.

The Osborne Park line was built by Town Properties of West Australia Ltd under an agreement with the tramway company. Town Properties was seeking to develop 6,000 acres of land at Osborne Park and it built the tramway to encourage people to take up land on the estate. On Wednesdays and Saturdays passage was free for prospective purchasers travelling to inspect the lots.

At the time the Osborne Park area was used mainly for market gardening. In June 1902 the *Sunday Times* reported that just over 2,700 tons of 'garden stuff' had been sent to market from Osborne Park in the previous year. The same article predicted that the opening of the tramway would be appreciated by the 'gardeners' and dairymen on the estate; it was expected that the tramway would carry produce to market by towing trailers behind the passenger cars. Whether this ever eventuated is not known.

An advertisement for the estate in September 1902 promoted quarter-acre blocks with 'fresh water at a few feet, sea air, high altitude, a country residence with city facilities and with no city drawbacks, and a delightful and bracing tram ride'. Other inducements were broad streets, a ten-acre pleasure reserve and excellent business allotments in the townsite.

In November 1910 and January 1911 there were derailments at the Osborne Park terminus. The local Agricultural Society took up the cause. It believed that poor lighting was the cause of these accidents. Kerosene lamps had been erected at cross streets along the route so that passengers could see where they were and would not be carried beyond their stops. The tramway company claimed that the ambient light from the Osborne Park Hotel was sufficient.

By 1910 there was growing dissatisfaction with Perth's tramway system as a whole, and there were calls for the State Government to take the lines over. The necessary legislation was passed in 1912 and the tramway system was transferred to State control on 1 July 1913 at a cost of £475,000.

In 1914 the government bought the Osborne Park tramway from Town Properties for £4,250. The line closed in 1948.

*Information in this article is drawn from various newspapers and Tracks by the Swan by T Culpepper-Cooke, A Gunzberg and I Pleydell.*



P2009.262

# The Provenance of the Houghton Bell

Laurie & Flora Smith



Houghton Bell

Museum in Fremantle and received the following response.

The bell appears similar to the Roebuck bell recovered from Ascension Island which is also unnamed and has the line decorations around the rim. The Roebuck bell has a broad arrow mark indicating it was Admiralty property.

The Houghton bell shows no man-made impressions, nor is it embossed; its surface is pitted with corrosion.

We also sought the advice of Graeme Henderson, former Curator at the Maritime Museum, an expert on shipwrecks and ships' bells. His response was:

Although there is not a lot to say that it is from the *Marquis of Anglesea*, there is nothing to say it is not. If it is, then the Fremantle context is highly important. The wreck came to rest at Anglesea Point, not much more than 100 metres from the Maritime Museum. The *Marquis'* loss – right on the colony's doorstep – was a highly visible symbol of failure. The resulting pessimistic reports of ships' captains on return to London almost led to the demise of the colony.

The Houghton bell is historically significant because it was an integral part of an historic property and, more importantly, there is circumstantial evidence that Revett Henry Bland, the crown grantee of the land that became known as Houghton, salvaged the bell from the wreck of the *Marquis of Anglesea*. Three of the buildings at Houghton are permanently heritage-listed (homestead, winery and stables/kitchen).

Flora's father, Donald Barrett-Lennard, sold Houghton in 1973, ending generations of involvement between the Ferguson and Barrett-Lennard families and the iconic winery. Flora's father took little when he left Houghton but he did take 'the bell' because he suspected it was of historical significance. The bell had been associated with the families for over a century and Flora, being its last family custodian, was loath to part with it. It languished in our garden shed until donated to the Guildford Museum in 2011.

The details of the bell are as follows: weight 14 kilos; height (to crown) 200mm; total height 260mm; diameter at base 265mm. There are no identifying marks and the 'gong', appeared to us, to be cast iron. The rocker looks like cast iron too and of the same vintage.

## The Ferguson family connection

The Ferguson involvement with Houghton began in 1859 when Dr John Ferguson purchased the upper part



Dr John Ferguson  
1847. P2013.1227

the largest in the southern hemisphere.

of what had become a divided colonial grant. In 1863 he purchased the remaining part, known as Strelley Farm. He retained the name Houghton for the two titles which gave him a total of 572 acres.

The bell hung in a huge cape lilac at Houghton for as long as five generations of the Ferguson family can remember. According to Charlie Gardiner, the late Government Botanist, the cape lilac (now cut down) was



Early Houghton. Residence of Charles Houghton 1890.  
P2011.504

The Ferguson family always maintained the bell was nothing to do with the family. Maud Ferguson (1881-1975) eldest daughter of Charles W Ferguson and his wife Dora Viveash claimed the bell had always been there; so it must have been there when they arrived.

## The possible *Marquis of Anglesea* connection

Revett Henry Bland arrived in the Swan River Colony on 4 September 1829 on the *Marquis of Anglesea*. The ship foundered in a gale adjacent to what is now the Maritime Museum. Bland took part in the salvage operation and received some salvage as payment in kind. A bell was an important item in those days, potentially the telecom of the day and possibly something the shrewd young Bland would value.

Could the Houghton bell be from the *Marquis of Anglesea*? Probably there would have been few, if any, bells in the colony at the time.

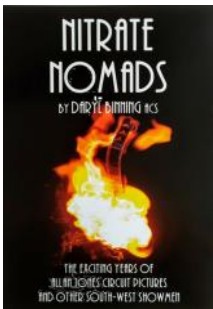
There is a 30-year gap from 1829-1859 when Dr John Ferguson came to the property - certainly time for a tree to grow to sufficient maturity to carry this bell. Such a tree would have been planted by Bland or T N Yule, who undertook Bland's location duties for him, and thus acquired the property very quickly.

## References

Michael McCarthy, *The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*, 33.1. 2004, pp. 54-66.  
Flora Smith and Donald Barrett-Lennard, *A History of Houghton (Swan Location 11)*, 1978.

**Daryl Binning, *Nitrate Nomads: the exciting years of Allan Jones Circuit Pictures and other south-west showmen*, Hesperian, 2019. In Library & Bookshop \$50.**

**Reviewer: Steve Errington**



If you have fond memories of picture nights in a southwest town hall or mill hall in pre-television days, or if you just love movies, this is a book for you. Many WA ‘picture show men’ like the legendary Paddy Baker who built the Regal in Subiaco are recorded, but the focus is on Allan Jones Circuit Pictures, formed in May 1930 by the young entrepreneur who had started showing moving pictures in the Deanmill hall in

1923. After the Deanmill hall burnt down in 1925 he moved to Bridgetown, Dixvale and Jardee.

The 1920s were the days of rather unstable cellulose nitrate film giving author Binning a descriptor for his travelling picture showmen.

William Allan Jones, born in Perth in 1902, was adopted by a Bridgetown couple, William and Hannah Jones, both of Aboriginal descent. His future might have been decided on a 1909 visit to Perth. At His Majesty’s Theatre he saw ‘The Dumb Hero’, a silent film about a man on a sinking boat being saved by his little dog, an experience which made an indelible impression.

In September 1929 Jones opened the oddly-named Adyar Hall in Pemberton (the author tries hard to determine the origin of ‘Adyar’). The work of our own Jack Honniball, being a former State Film Librarian and film historian, appears regularly in the book. Jack’s schoolboy memories of movies in Adyar Hall in the 1940s are featured, but the hall is now holiday accommodation.

Further south, I have similar memories of much-anticipated picture nights in the Northcliffe Town Hall. Jones took his movies over rough roads to the group

settlement town, as early as 1927. Picture nights were a highlight for the struggling English ‘groupies’ isolated on their farms by bad roads.

By 1952 Jones was giving free kids’ tickets to headmasters and I became a regular beneficiary. Hopalong Cassidy movies were a favourite, though Gabby Hayes’ inability to get his gun out of its holster was a constant worry, and ‘King Solomon’s Mines’ was the stuff of nightmares. Also the newsreels were rather dated – we would be lucky to see the Melbourne Cup before Christmas.

Allan Jones and his wife Doll (who played the piano for the silent movies and then sold her home-made cakes at interval) showed their pictures in over fifty towns with the help of four teams of projectionists and assistants.

However, the book is not all about little towns – there’s a section on the arrival of ‘talkies’ in Perth on Saturday 6 April 1929. The enormous Prince of Wales cinema in Murray Street showed ‘The Jazz Singer’ which featured songs by Al Jolson but, as Binning tells us, only 61 words of spoken dialogue. Union Theatres used synchronized sound-on-disk while, around the corner in William Street, the Regent (Hoyts) showed ‘The Red Dance’ using their sound-on-film system but only for a musical accompaniment.

There is much in the book on the mechanics of projecting the films with technical talk of film joining, automatic wet slicers, Australian-made XL-tone amplifiers, carbon arc lamps and xenon lamps; however, the chemical used to make limelight is calcium oxide not calcium hydroxide as claimed on page 56.

The Jones family remained in the movie business for 92 years but television’s penetration into the country in the 1960s saw them focusing on bigger towns and drive-ins. By 2005 the family was running only the Busselton drive-in and this was sold in 2016.

This is a substantial book, profusely illustrated, well indexed for both people and places, and a careful reading will also tell you the connection of Sao biscuits and the suburb of Whitfords to early movies. An entertaining book for all movie lovers.

**Community Officer:** Lesley Burnett  
**Editor *History West*:** Dr Lenore Layman

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