



HISTORY WEST™

PUBLISHED BY THE ROYAL WESTERN AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

April 2023

GENERAL MEETING

The monthly general meeting at Stirling House is on Wed 19 April at 6pm when Brendan Kelly will present a talk on 'CORA – Presswoman of Repute'. Refreshments available from 5.30pm; Bookshop open until 6pm.



Lilian Mitchell P1999.4712

From 1891 to 1895, 'THE LADIES' PAGE (BY CORA)' appeared in the *Western Mail*, a Saturday weekly newspaper published in Perth. CORA also appeared in the *Mail's* associated daily newspaper, *The West Australian*. Under the editorship of J W Hackett, with the workings of the Yilgarn goldfields about to explode into the boom discoveries of Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie, the newspapers were keen to accommodate the many tastes of their female readers. 'THE LADIES PAGE (BY CORA)' was compiled by Lilian Hart née Mitchell, a 27-year-old newspaper writer and undoubtedly the foremost female columnist of her time. CORA was introduced by an advertisement:

The Compiler of this page will be glad to receive contributions of all kinds concerning women, their work and their pleasures. Items of news of local interest are especially solicited, including reports of meetings, bazaars, and social gatherings and events. Contributions should be addressed to 'CORA' WESTERN MAIL PERTH and only be written on one side of the paper only: 'Cora' especially solicits country contributions.

Over the period of Western Australian statehood, the bonanza of gold, the peak of amateur entertainment, and the endless social watching in print, CORA was at the centre of Perth's who's who.



Brendan Kelly is a Bunbury resident, working a three-day week for a State Government Department, as he segues into retirement. Brendan is an eclectic writer, who by virtue of his profession came to write every day. He says writing simply became a habit that matched his research interest in amateur entertainment in WA. His specific period of interest 1875-1895 has now produced a third piece, to go with related essays on Francis Hart and Gerald Raikes. Brendan is also writing historical fiction as an offshoot of his research. With fiction, poetry, essays and file notes, he is always writing.

Tuesday Treasures

Made in W.A.

Local ceramics from our collection.



Calyx, Bristle, Wembley Ware and Australian Fine China.
Familiar names and now collectors' items.

Enjoy a cuppa while you are here.
Tuesday 2 May 2023, 10:30am start
Register your interest with Lesley 9386 3841

The Royal WA Historical Society (Inc.) | 49 Broadway | NEDLANDS Western Australia 6009
TELEPHONE: (08) 9386 3841 | FACSIMILE: (08) 9386 3309 | EMAIL: admin@histwest.org.au
FACEBOOK: [facebook.com/histwest](https://www.facebook.com/histwest) | WEB: www.histwest.org.au | ABN: 43 607 110 473
LIBRARY EMAIL: library@histwest.org.au | MUSEUM EMAIL: museum@histwest.org.au

GOOD NEWS FROM HWCC

Lycopodium

The **Lycopodium Foundation** has made a generous donation of \$25,000 to the HWCC Building Project, noting in support: 'The Committee recognises the important work undertaken by the RWAHS in the preservation and promotion of Western Australia's history and, as such, we would like to support the establishment of the HWCC at new premises'.

The Lycopodium website says: 'Doing the right thing matters to us. We do the right thing by our clients, but we also do the right thing by people – by society – whether we're supporting local charities, schools and universities or providing opportunities for Indigenous communities and businesses in our projects'.

Thank you to member Peter Farr for this contact.

Please Note - *Early Days*

Time is running out to register for your copy of **EARLY DAYS**

Due to rising costs, automatic distribution of our journal has ceased.

To receive your copy of *Early Days* in 2023, you must register before the end of June.

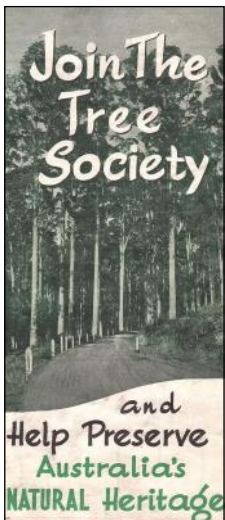
We would hate you to miss out, so please contact Lesley — 9386 3841, admin@histwest.org.au

or Nick — 0409 290 895, nickdrew@bigpond.com.au

Record whether you want hard copy, digital copy or both.

History in the City

Rachel Roe



Max Hipkins delivered our first talk for the year about the Tree Society of WA. This Society was at the forefront of protecting our natural cultural heritage for almost fifty years and advocated for the conservation of native forests, creation of national parks, safeguarding remnant pockets of vegetation and retention of individual trees.

Audience attendees could recall the Tree Society being part of their lives when as children they were encouraged to become members and help in tree-planting activities. Society achievements included submissions to state and federal governments for environmental protection, management and research programs for several reserves and wetlands, objections to prevent rezoning of A Class reserves, plus success in averting mining in national parks. The Society published a register of WA Christmas trees (*Nuytsia*



floribunda) and lobbied the government for research funding of these trees.

While employed as a town planner, architect and environmental engineer, Max worked to protect trees and also represented the Tree Society on the National Trust. He is chair of the Significant Tree Register. His wonderful book about the Tree Society 1956-2001 is available for purchase from our bookshop.

Join us on the first Wednesday of the month at Citiplace Community Centre 2pm. \$10 entry includes delicious homemade afternoon tea. On 5 April Chris Holiday will speak on Margaret Forrest (nee Hamersley), wife of WA's first Premier. (Books available for purchase)

Can you help with morning teas at Community Talks?

We like to provide members and friends who attend the morning talks with coffee/tea and a nibble.

And we need several more volunteers willing to join the team every so often.

No washing up involved - only setting up, loading dishwasher & cleaning up.

If it is something you are happy to do, please let us know on -

93863841 or admin@histwest.org.au

or Lenore - layman@westnet.com.au

Welcome to New Members

Bernice Barry, Ronda Beck, Margaret Fitzgerald, Tom Hogarth, Ed Jaggard, Dina Lewis, Kym MacCormac, Meredith Neumann, Betty Pyke.

A Diary Date

Kojonup Historical Society is commemorating the centenary of Kojonup Hospital from 17 to 30 April.

An exhibition of hospital history will be open from 10am to 3pm each day, including weekends, and will showcase a history of the hospital, including a display of the hospital mangle, original operating table, photographs and plans.

Visitors most welcome.

Do drop by and be reminded of times past.

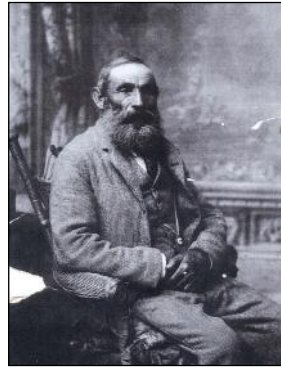
Can You Help?

With research and writing to create a brochure for a commemoration ceremony at the Claremont Teachers College war memorial by July?

If you are able to assist, please contact the Society's librarian Jeanette Lockwood
9386 3841 or library@histwest.org.au



Early sketch of New Norcia by a Spanish artist. Salvado's *Memoir*, published Italy/Spain, 1851. 77606P



Francisco Ventura



Isidro Oriol in old age



Our three speakers - Pat Mills, Hilaire Natt, Gillian Rodoreda

Community Talks

The new lives of three Spanish Benedictine brothers in Western Australia

Hilaire Natt, Gillian Rodoreda, Pat Mills

The year has begun with a bang! Our February talk attracted so much demand we ran a repeat afternoon session and that was also over-subscribed! Both audiences were full of descendants and there was much excitement and reminiscence.

The three speakers were descendants of three of the Spanish missionaries who arrived in WA in the 1850s to work as artisans on the New Norcia Mission, established by Benedictine monks to 'civilise and convert' the Aboriginal people. The first group of 37, led by Bishop Serra, arrived at Fremantle in 1849 and the second group of 40 arrived in 1853 with Bishop Salvado. Internal Catholic leadership conflicts led to some disillusionment and a number of the missionaries left the mission and the Benedictine Order. Some returned to Spain; others, seeing opportunities in the new colony, settled in WA. Among them were Jerome Rodoreda, a baker from Barcelona, Francisco Ventura, a stone worker from Gerona north of Barcelona, and Isidro Oriol, a cabinetmaker also from Gerona.

Our three speakers are descendants of these Catalan men — Gillian Rodoreda is Jerome Rodoreda's great-great granddaughter. Pat Mills is the great-granddaughter of Francisco Ventura and Hilaire Natt is Isidro Oriol's great granddaughter.

Jerome Rodoreda was from Granollers and had as a mentor Martin Griver to provide spiritual guidance. At the age of eighteen he felt a calling to mission but on arrival in WA found himself working on church building in Perth not missioning at New Norcia. He had taken only temporary vows and left the Order in 1852. He married Mary Anne Hynes and they lived in Howick St close by St Johns Pro Cathedral where they were married. He was a gifted musician, organist and choirmaster. The couple had nine children. Jerome ran his bakery and grocery for three decades until Mary Anne's death when he moved to Melbourne to be close to his daughters.

Francisco Ventura also was disappointed that he was unable to evangelise as he wished and left the Order to become a stonecutter in Greenough where he obtained land on the Greenough Flats. He married Catharine Leahy in 1862 and they had six children. He remained a strongly committed Catholic devoted to the New Norcia mission and returned there to assist when he could. He saw it as home. He had a long life which included involvement in Broome's pearling industry. He died at the age of 93.

Isidro Oriol followed the same path out of the Order, also remaining a devout lifelong Catholic. He established a furniture-making shop in 'the Spanish end of town' close to the cathedral, marrying Mary Leahy in 1861. His beautiful furniture is now recognised as important 19th heritage.

These Spanish brothers who did not persevere in the Order but did very much persevere in WA constituted an important part of its Catholic community and added a rich dimension to the social and cultural life of the colony.

Our grateful thanks to the many volunteers who spent the day making this occasion the success it was!



Pat Mills with members of the Ventura family



Hilaire Natt with family members



Towards a History West Community Centre

Lionel Samson: the man and his buildings

On Sunday 26 March the Society held a fundraiser at Samson's heritage-listed buildings at 31-35 Cliff St Fremantle. Below is Lionel Samson's colonial story for those members who were unable to attend (as well as a reminder for those who did). The Society thanks the Samson Family History Group Inc for their generous support of this function.



Lionel Samson. P1999.4510

SALES BY AUCTION.

MR. LIONEL SAMSON
WILL OFFER FOR SALE, at his
 Rooms, Perth, on **WEDNESDAY,**
 the 6th JULY, at 1 o'clock precisely, the
 following goods.

Ex "Empress,"
From the Cape of Good Hope.

Cape Madeira Wine in half-pipes, quarter-casks, and half-ams; Pontac of various qualities, Champagne, French Brandy, Rum Shrub in dozen cases, Vinegar in 10 gallon kegs, superior Brazilian Coffee, Cavendish Honey-dew Tobacco, Mauritius Sugar, Stalk and Loose Raisins, Almonds, Apples, Pears, Apricots, and Peaches in small boxes; Linseed Oil in gallon jars, Hawes' London Soap, American ditto, and Nutmegs.

All these goods will be sold at a moderate advance on their cost price, deliverable at Fremantle, and samples of which will be exhibited at the time of Sale, and the Terms of Sale made known.

Perth, June 23, 1848.

Perth Gazette, 24 June 1848

SHIPPING.

The Ship "Hashemy" for Madras and London.

THIS fine first-class Ship, 11, 640 tons, will leave her anchorage for Madras on Monday, 25th instant, unless Shippers of Wool will engage to put on board 600 Bales at least (to be well packed and pressed in bales of the usual size) by the 25th December next; in which case CAPTAIN ROSS will charge 11d. per lb. at the Queen's beam, and stow the Wool on board without securing. This Vessel offers a fine opportunity to get the Wool home in good order, at a cheap rate, and with the greatest despatch, as her detention at Madras will not exceed fourteen days, and she will arrive home at least six weeks before any other vessel from this Port possibly can.

Parties willing to enter into the arrangement, and sign an agreement to that effect, are requested to apply, within the given time, at the Store of LIONEL SAMSON, Perth, where the document lies for signature.

N.B.—Superior accommodation for Cabin and other Passengers for India or England.

LIONEL SAMSON, Agent, Perth.

Nov. 16, 1850.

Inquirer, 20 Nov 1850

For Sale,
A Few Jetty Debentures.—Apply to
LIONEL SAMSON.
 Perth, Nov. 27, 1849

On Sale,
VASSE BUTTER by the keg, Hams.—
 Apply at the office of this journal.
 November 5, 1849.

On Sale,
VASSE POTATOES by the bag.—For
 particulars apply to Mr. LIONEL SAMSON,
 Perth.

Inquirer, 28 Nov 1849

Londoner Lionel Samson (1799-1878), a well-educated man of means, arrived at Swan River Colony in August 1829 on the *Calista* with his brother William and much merchandise, which enabled them to quickly begin business as wine and spirit merchants and importers. They came well prepared not only with wine and liquor but also a pre-fabricated house, sheep, horses and three servants. To obtain goods to continue supplying customers, the Samson brothers chartered vessels to the Cape of Good Hope. In 1832, for instance, they purchased rice, flour, oats, barley, wine, brandy, rum, beer, pork, beef, butter, honey, plants, glass, dried fruit, cotton goods, stationery, castor oil, snuff, candles, shoes, spades, muskets, musket cartridges, blankets, nails, chain cables and horses.

Lionel first set up shop on the beach near Arthur Head and was granted almost 5000 acres of land on the Upper Swan at Henley Brook. More importantly, he purchased Fremantle town lots in the first land sale and obtained the colony's first liquor licence. Both the Samson business and spirit licence have been in operation ever since on the original Cliff St lot granted to them. Their business interests expanded into whaling and sandalwood, and subsequently the family company's investments spread even further into vineyards and wine making as well as industrial packaging.

Lionel became a widely respected colonist both for his business integrity and concern for fellow colonists. He proved a successful merchant trader, auctioneer and agent, securely establishing the family's business success. He was appointed to the board of the Bank of Western Australia in 1837, became a member of the Fremantle Town Trust, a non-official member of the Legislative Council (1849-56 and 1859-68), and chairman of the newly formed WA Chamber of Commerce in 1853.

Samson was Jewish and returned to England in 1842 to find a bride. He married his cousin Frances (Fanny) Levi and they had a family of six — three sons and three daughters. Other members of the Samson and Levi families settled in South Australia. Brother William joined them there and his partnership with Lionel was dissolved in 1846. The Fremantle business became Lionel Samson & Son when he brought his son Michael into partnership with him in 1867. When Michael rejoined the public service, his brother William became his father's partner. The Samson family continued to prosper in Fremantle and three family members became mayors of the town.

The Lionel Samson Building stands as a monument to its founder's business and community skills. It is a building of three storeys with a basement, adjoining Samson Cottage. It dates from the gold rush period in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and is a decorative example of a commercial building of that boom period. In the 19th century Cliff St was a vital thoroughfare connecting the seafront jetty with the Swan River (also an essential transport route), and the many businesses located along the route.

Samson Cottage was built in the 1850s and has been known as Fanny Samson Cottage because Lionel and Fanny lived there from 1856 after they began their married life in Perth. After Lionel's death in 1878 Fanny continued to reside in the cottage until she died in 1888. The cottage was restored in 1978-79 for use as a museum and works revealed that the limestone came from Arthur's Head and the bricks were French, used as ballast in the sailing ships. An unusual truss system roof, found in some houses at Rottnest Island, was also revealed.

In 1979, as part of the State's sesquicentenary commemorations, 150 brass plaques were inlaid on pavements on St George's Tce. Lionel Samson is remembered on one of them: 1832. Lionel Samson. Merchant. Merchants prospered in the colony's early years. Lionel Samson arrived in August 1829 with large amounts of merchandise. He became one of the most respected members of the business community.

References

D A Lambert, 'The Lionel Samson Story: A brief history of Australia's oldest family business', *Early Days*, 9 (4) 1986.

A & W Antonovsky, 'Here from the beginning: Jewish community life in early Fremantle', *Fremantle Studies*, 6, 2010.

Gary Gillard, Fremantle Stuff. garygillard.net

D'Orsogna Brothers

The Society thanks Marco D'Orsogna for the company's generous support of its Samson Cellars function through sponsorship of the hams for the Sunday Supper. Below is a short history of this highly successful family business built from nothing to international success in sixty years.

The D'Orsogna family are among many Western Australians of Italian descent who first migrated to WA in the early 20th century in search of a better life. They found it but only after many struggles and enormous hard work, enriching their new home in the process. Father Luigi D'Orsogna arrived from Lanciano in Abruzzo with his eldest son Guiseppe (John) in 1927, moving to Wiluna on the goldfields in search of work during the 1930s depression. He saved to bring out his other sons to join him. They settled initially in Wiluna and son Tommaso (Tom) found employment at a local smallgoods factory. His obituary in the *West Australian* seventy years later written by his son tells the story:

Tommaso was only 15 and too young to work in the mines, he found a job at the Wiluna Meat Supply Piggery. This was his initiation into the meat industry. Tom, as he was now called, started his day at dawn with horse and cart, collecting food scraps from the miners' camps to make swill for the pigs. He fed them and cleaned their pens. Soon after turning 16, Tom moved to the smallgoods factory attached to the Lakeway butcher shop as an apprentice. He worked from 6am to 6pm six days a week under the gentle natured Harry Hunter, the master manufacturer. Harry, a World War I veteran, made the best sausages, polony and corned beef. But the ingredients he used were a secret.... When it was evident to Harry that his days were numbered, he presented to young Tommy the list of secret ingredients for the smallgoods.

Even with this help Tommaso's life was hard:

Hreturn to his motherland and many a time shed a tear when he saw where he was going to, but that was life then. They knew that because they didn't have any money there was no other opportunity for them that was the life they had to followe talks about when he left Italy, crying, thinking he wasn't sure when he would .

Tommaso was interned with his brothers as an 'enemy alien' during World War II and worked as a butcher at the Harvey internment camp. He found internment frightening and came close to a nervous breakdown. After the war he moved to Melbourne and worked in an Italian smallgoods business learning the continental smallgoods business before returning to Perth in 1949 to open T D'Orsogna Family Butcher in Stone St, West Perth, among a growing postwar European migrant community. When his brothers joined him in 1951 D'Orsogna Brothers Pty Ltd was born.

The smallgoods were initially made at the rear of the shop using the one mincer and one filler but no smoker, and the products limited to saveloys (wieners) and frankfurts. Demand for salami, prosciutto and other Italian products grew rapidly.

And that's how it all started and when he (Tommaso) established it, he got his brother Giovanni (John) who has been his lifetime partner in the business.... They worked day and night to get the business going and obviously they branched out into continental goods because they say there was an opportunity there for the migrants. And the third brother arrived about two years later, Cesare, and so the three of them then started the D'Orsogna brothers and from there, obviously, it became a household name.

In 1973 the company moved to larger production premises to Palmyra.

His (Tommaso) first apprentice was an Australian and then from that there were many Italians who arrived and other migrants too looking for job opportunities so as the business grew it was certainly very multicultural. I think that's another thing that dad really prides the business on is that it's very much a multicultural, multi-ethnic business and if you were to go down to the factory today you'd certainly see that and I think that was one of the things dad was very proud of.

In 2009 the company expanded further to Melbourne and even further in 2018 when D'Orsogna smallgoods became available in supermarkets around Australia and into southeast Asia.

The D'Orsogna family grew in the postwar decades as part of the rapidly expanding Italian-Australian community initially centred on the inner northern Perth suburbs from Northbridge and West Perth to Yokine and Morley. Family members became community leaders; for instance, in the establishment of the Italian Club in West Perth and soccer's D'Orsogna Cup. D'Orsogna is a Western Australian postwar migrant success story!

Thanks to Bruce Hoar for the research for this article.

References

Luigi D'Orsogna, 'Cavaliere Tommaso D'Orsogna AM. Master of Smallgoods (1918-2014)'. Obituary, *West Australian*, 6 May 2014.

For D'Orsogna's website history see — <https://www.dorsogna.com.au>



Eco Italiano (Perth),
24 Dec 1958, p. 8.



Il Canguro (Perth),
25 July 1956, p. 5.



Beverly Times,
24 Jan 1963, p. 4.



La Rondine, 1 Mar 1973, p. 8



Manjimup & Warren Times,
23 June 1954, p. 14

Gallipoli, The Nek, the 10th Light Horse and the Harper boys

Dr Peter Gifford



Postcard showing Gresley Harper and others in front of the Sphinx, Egypt 1915. P2010.128



A flag presentation to the Australian Imperial Force by William Padbury of Padbury Stores, Terrace Road, Guildford c1915. P2004.101

The Harper family from Woodbridge lost two brothers, Gresley and Wilfred, at Gallipoli. Gresley, born in 1884, studied law and became a barrister, while his brother – six years younger – having captained Guildford Grammar's cricket first XI, carried on another family tradition and was farming when the two of them enlisted in the 10th Light Horse Regiment in Perth soon after the outbreak of war in 1914. Like the other members of the 8th, 9th and 10th Regiments which formed the 3rd Light Horse Brigade, they left their horses behind in Egypt and served together as infantry reinforcements during the Gallipoli campaign in 1915.

The Harper brothers were among seven officers and 73 men from the 10th Light Horse killed in the ill-conceived Australian attack on 7 August 1915 at The Nek. The Victorians from the 8th Regiment suffered 154 killed. The Great War historian Dr Charles Bean concluded that the attack was 'one of the bravest actions in the history of war', but in terms of its wider impact, according to a later historian, Les Carlyon, the attack gained no ground and served no strategic purpose. It was, in effect, a microcosm of the whole Gallipoli campaign.

The circumstances of the Australian deaths at The Nek (the Turks had almost no casualties there) are portrayed graphically and fairly accurately at the climax of Peter Weir's 1981 film, *Gallipoli*. Dr Bean likewise is never more eloquent than in describing the manner in which they died.

In a hopeless situation after a failure in communications caused a supporting artillery bombardment to end seven minutes early, the men of the Victorian 8th Light Horse regiment had attacked first, only to be mown down by the massed Turkish rifles and machine guns which the communication breakdown had allowed to move back into defensive positions literally only a few metres from the Australian line.

Two waves of Victorian troopers having been killed – more than half the regiment's strength – what happened then, according to Dr Bean, was that:

The 10th went forward to meet death instantly, as the 8th had done, the men running as swiftly and as straight as they could at the Turkish rifles. With that regiment went the flower of the youth of Western Australia, sons of the old pioneering families, youngsters – in some cases two and three from the same home – who had flocked into Perth at the outbreak of war with their own horses and saddles in order to secure enlistment in a mounted regiment of the A.I.F. Men known and popular, the best loved leaders in sport and work in the West, then rushed straight to their death.

As the film movingly depicts, and Dr Bean describes, the men of the 10th had known full well what awaited them. Their commander, Lieutenant Colonel Noel Brazier, had attempted to have the third wave cancelled, but was thwarted by his immediate superior, the brigade major, Lieutenant Colonel John Antill. An abrasive, unpopular personality, Antill disliked Brazier, who he felt was being insubordinate in questioning orders. Antill had received reports that marker flags, implying success, had been sighted; but he had not checked to establish if it was of any use to send the next wave, nor did he confirm if the marker flags were still in place.

Nonetheless, after heated words with Brazier, Antill issued the order for the third wave to proceed without referring the matter to higher authority. Having no choice, Brazier returned to the forward Australian position and gave the order for the third wave to attack, telling them 'Sorry, lads, but the order is to go'. In respect of Antill, his entry in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* does not even mention The Nek – in my view a serious omission on the dictionary's part.



General Birdwood laying the foundation stone of the War Memorial in Stirling Gardens, Guildford, 1920. P2011.138

My grandfather, a trooper in the 9th Light Horse Regiment, was like his fellow South Australians in reserve at The Nek. Had the attack continued, they too would have gone over the top and been slaughtered. As it was, their turn to face the Turkish machine guns came several weeks later in the second futile attack at Hill 60, where the dead included their newly promoted colonel, well known SA vigneron Carew Reynell. My grandfather was slightly wounded, but was blown up by a shell soon after while sniping and evacuated to Australia; his war was over.

The 10th Regiment survivors of The Nek were also involved at Hill 60. It was during this second phase

of the battle that Lieutenant Hugo Throssell was awarded the Victoria Cross, the last to an Australian during the Gallipoli campaign and the only one to any Light Horseman during the entire war. Throssell, extremely fortunate to have survived at The Nek, later referred to it as 'that damn fool charge'.



Knitted poppies on tree stump. Anzac Centenary Commemoration, Albany 2014. Anzac Peace Park, Albany. P2016.346

Mystery Photograph Album: Is this the Fleahy Family album?

Hilaire Natt



This photograph with its colourful floral backing page comes from an unusually decorative family album of unidentified photographs dating from about the 1870s [Album 19 RWAHS]. It was donated by Mrs M A Fleahy of Frenchman's Bay, Albany, to the WA Museum, which passed it on to the Society in 1986.

Unlike the sepia studio portraits, taken in Hull or Dewsbury in Yorkshire, and Swansea in Wales, this later glossy black and white photograph replaces another which was torn out.

Could this be the family who brought the album to WA? Are they members of the Fleahy family or other relatives?

A Farming Family: the Fleays of Western Australia (1991) by Jennifer Gardner is a well-researched account of the family, from the arrival of John Fleahy in 1830 on the *Drummore*. John married Jane Cook who arrived on

the same ship. The families were both indentured to William Tanner, who took up land in the Swan River.

The book includes some early photographs but none appears to match those in the album.

If you have any information, please contact the library@histwest.com or phone 9386 3841.

Visit by the Quilt Textile Sewing Group (QTSG)

Val Hutch



At the invitation of our Hon. Artist in Residence, Wendy Lugg, members of the QTSG visited our Society on 24 February. Wendy had chosen a variety of items of interest for the group and these were displayed on mannequins and six tables. Among the items was our 1750s silk damask Saque dress, very full at the back and with an open front which allows the heavily quilted underskirt to be shown. The separate bodice insert, detachable fine net undersleeves with double tiered wide flounces, together with a lady's wig, complete the outfit. This is the oldest gown in our collection and is in surprisingly good condition.

One mannequin was used to display our crinoline cage and Wendy talked about the rise and eventual demise of this mid-19th century fashion, and also demonstrated the use of our crinolette, a later half crinoline which laces onto the back of the body, and an 1870s precursor to the bustle. The group also admired Major Tom Sherwood's military jacket showing the quilted lining and a beautiful red quilted petticoat.

To demonstrate the broad range of textiles in the collection, Wendy spoke about the wood shaving hat now exhibited in our Conservation display; Marjorie Ridley's Guildford grass woven baskets; a silk square created in 1878 from silk grown and spun in WA at the Claisebrook mulberry plantation in East Perth and then sent to England to be woven. We own three of these fine silk squares, made to promote the local silk industry which sadly did not proceed as the experimental farm proved unsuccessful.

In contrast was a recent acquisition, a Dreske Somoff patchwork leather skirt and jacket featuring a variety of Australian leathers including emu skin feet! Our rabbit skin knee rug, which has recently been conserved through the generosity of its donor, was displayed with its archival box and padded pillows to ensure safe storage, a luxury we hope to provide for more of the collection when we achieve our goal of moving to larger premises with less crowded facilities.

A variety of large tea cosies made a colourful display, comprising examples of patchwork, embroidery, beading and one of Wendy's favourites, the wattle tea cosy.

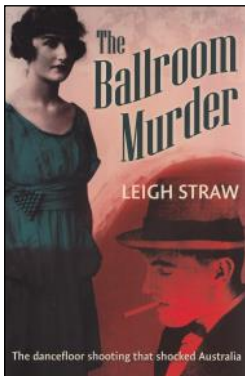
The visitors were excited to see this small portion of our collection and we hope they will return at a future date to see more of the collection first hand.

If you are involved with a special interest group whose members might like a personal viewing of some aspect of our museum collection please let us know well in advance and we will do our best to accommodate you.

Book Review

Leigh Straw, *The Ballroom Murder*, Fremantle Press, 2022. In Library.

Reviewer: Heather Campbell



This book has all the elements of an exciting and gripping fictional who-done-it; however the broad-ranging use of primary sources is testimony to its veracity. It is not necessary to issue a spoiler alert to give the facts of the case that are not in dispute. The murder took place in August 1925 at a charity ball at Perth's Government House, witnessed by numerous guests and speedily followed up by police on duty at the event.

Audrey Jacob shot former fiancé, Cyril Gidley, who was dancing, and was still standing on the dance floor holding the murder weapon, a revolver, a few minutes later when apprehended by the police.

It is therefore not a case of who-done-it that keeps the reader glued to the page into the wee small hours, but the story prior and subsequent to the event. Leigh Straw adds colour and depth to the inquest and trial, and indeed the whole story, by using commentary of witnesses. Dr Sydney O'Neill, who was present at the ball knew that blood and air coming out of Gidley's mouth and nostrils was 'a bad sign' and 'quickly turned up Cyril's shirt and saw the bullet wound in the chest'. Background detail on even relatively minor characters adds texture and increases reader interest and satisfaction. For instance, Albert Timms before becoming a policeman had been a shunter on the railways and then a blacksmith. He was also an

accomplished musician and became a member of the Police Band after he joined the force in 1902. Albert was on duty at the ball at the 'foot of the staircase of the back balcony when he heard a "report" coming from the ballroom. He hurried towards the sound.' Subsequently Audrey told him 'she had her reasons for shooting Cyril', making this case one of 'the most significant' in Albert's career.

At the subsequent trial successful criminal lawyer, Arthur Haynes, defended Audrey. He had 'represented a lot of women from petty offenders to brothel madams' and was not averse to media interest, particularly from his friend Victor Courtney of the *Mirror*. Haynes was up against Crown Prosecutor Hubert Parker, a man with 'striking eyes, well-defined lips and a deep voice'. He was also a decorated war hero, who fought at Gallipoli and on the Western Front in France.

To discuss the trial and its verdict in this review would be to spoil the mystery and intrigue of the story. Suffice to say that these are thoroughly explored by Leigh Straw, who also competently details the subsequent lives of those involved so, never fear, the reader is not left wondering...

ADVERTISEMENT

4/1 Webster Street, Nedlands,
launching soon.
Single-level renovated villa,
two beds, two baths, lovely gardens.
Please call for details.

Daniel Ranshaw

0415 181 664
or
daniel@hubresidential.com.au



hub.residential

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

Opinions expressed in *History West* are not necessarily those of the Royal WA Historical Society (Inc.).

If you're a member who receives this newsletter in hard copy by post, and you're happy to receive it by email, please contact 9386 3841 or admin@histwest.org.au with your email address, and save money and trees by receiving it online!