

HISTORY

PUBLISHED BY THE ROYAL WESTERN AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

July 2023

GENERAL MEETING

The monthly general meeting at Stirling House is on Wednesday 19 July at 6pm when Bernice Barry will present a talk on 'Poor Mrs Bull'.

Refreshments available from 5.30pm; Bookshop open until 6pm.



In January 1840, botanical collector Georgiana Molloy wrote a letter to Captain James Mangles in London, in which she referred to 'poor Mrs Bull'. Henrietta Bull née Wells was the wife of the Resident Magistrate in the Koombana area of Western Australia, the district named Port Leschenault (Bunbury). Mrs Molloy gave no explanation. Did she assume that Mangles would understand her comment?

The family history of Henrietta and Henry Bull RN has always been littered with archival red herrings, creating difficulties for researchers. Their personal story, even with the mysteries it has yet to disclose, is one that vividly depicts the daily reality of life for Western Australia's first European settlers. Henrietta was related to socially significant people in Perth when she arrived in 1831, giving her a passport into elite society and Henry was an officer in the Royal Navy with one of the most impressive homes in the region. Their life together should have been a tale of happiness and success. This paper will present the available information about a marriage that did not endure, played out against a backdrop of violent events that reverberated long after Henry and Henrietta had gone their separate ways and returned to Britain.



Bernice Barry is a writer with a love of history, language and literature. Originally a linguist and primary school teacher, she became a regional English adviser then specialised in the teaching of literacy for the UK Department of Education. After ten years as an international consultant in curriculum innovation she 'retired' to full-time research and writing. Bernice has lived on the coast near Wooditjup (Margaret River) for 21 years, where her early interest in the native flora and fauna became an enduring passion. *A Lady's Pen* (UWA Publishing 2023) completes the story told in her biography of WA botanical collector Georgiana Molloy, *The Mind That Shines* (Picador 2016).

Changes to page 2 of History West

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This is the last month when you will find flyers in your copy of *History West*.

From the August issue onwards, page 2 of *History West* will feature all our forthcoming events and you will be able to book from that page.

Online booking technology as well as information from our new website will enable you with minimal effort to book and pay for the talks and events you wish to attend. All you need to do is click where indicated if you are reading a digital copy of *History West* or hold your phone over the QR code if you are reading a print copy. Should neither of these options appeal, you are very welcome to phone or email the Office to book and arrange payment in the usual way. But do have a go at this new system and see if you like it.

As well as saving you time, this change will benefit the Society because it will save scarce money (for paper and printing) and help the volunteers who handle *History West*'s distribution every month.

We think the new system will be a great improvement. See if you agree.

Forthcoming Events — Don't forget to book!

Or ring the office 9386 3841 admin@histwest.org.au



UWA Club Auditorium, Crawley Wed 26 July 6pm for 6.30pm

Dr Marie-Louise Ayres - From Perth to Canberra and back again: 3000k but only nanoseconds apart. How has Australia's 'tyranny of distance' nurtured national

How has Australia's 'tyranny of distance' nurtured national collaboration around cultural collections? Dr Ayres looks at WA heritage material held by the National Library of Aust. and the ways in which Western Australians can use those collections.

\$40 Register via TryBooking Link www.trybooking.com/CITMG



Hosted by Bridgetown Historical Society RWAHS 58th State History of Affiliated Societies 1-3 Sep 2023

For program details, accommodation options and registration see -

https://www.bridgetownhistoricalsociety.org.au/ conference-september-2023



Citiplace Conference Rm Perth Rwy Station Concourse Wed 5 Jul 2pm
Anthea Harris - *The history of Wattle Day*Entry \$10 at door, *No Booking required*



Stirling House, Nedlands Wed 2 Aug 2023, 10am for 10.30am

Miriam Crandell - A utopian suffragist settlement at Denmark: Emily Crawford's plan, 1906-1911. the story of Miriam Crandell's discovery of a little know the 20th century vision of a group of British suffragists.

The story of Miriam Crandell's discovery of a little known early 20th century vision of a group of British suffragists led by Emily Crawford, to create a farming community for female emigrants at Denmark, WA.



Tickets \$10 Click here to book



Stirling House, Nedlands Wed 9 Aug 10.00 for 10.30am

Andrina Treadgold - The Life of Architect Geoffrey Summerhayes.

Architecture and design have been entwined in the lives of his family for three generations. The speaker will focus on grandson Geoffrey.

Tickets \$20, Bookings essential



Click here to book



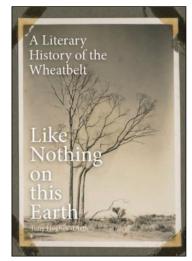
Leighton Battery Heritage Site Tue 25 Jul 10.30am start at the Command Post 20 places available



Click here to book

Community Talk

A wheatbelt history through writers' eyes



The Society was delighted to welcome **Professor Tony** Hughes-d'Aeth from UWA as our May speaker. In 2017 Tony published Like Nothing on this Earth: A Literary History of the Wheatbelt, and his talk explored how creative writers have described and recreated this significant region of the State and the transformation of its landscape in the 20th century. An area of land roughly the size of

England was cleared of its native vegetation for grain cultivation and the wheatbelt became a crucial component in the economic and social development of WA. Tony stressed that historians have researched and written about the wheatbelt's history and therefore he asked — What can creative literature add? He argued that they provide a record of how things felt. What did it feel like to create the wheatbelt?

He suggested that literature offers a dissenting or minority report on historical change. Individual writers create very personal impressions of what is happening around them, especially the environmental and social changes through which they are living. They are witnesses to historical change and their descriptions convey powerful personal emotions, in a way that historians mostly do not.

For instance, 'burning off' the bush left lifelong memories in the minds of participants. Farmer Laurie Anderson, for instance, recalled that 'the thousand twinkling eyes of the coals and the sweet smells of the burning strawberry jam trees are forever imprinted in my mind'. Albert Facey wrote of 'a good burn'. Henry Shearer farmed as a boy with his parents at Noongar,

east of Merredin, and he too had vivid recall of burning the bush:

The fire simply roared away with lightning speed. The heat was terrific and it was amazing the way the fire tore along, leaping yards at a time... Gosh it was roaring through!... It was now alight all around. The fire seemed to set its own draught and drew itself towards the centre. It was very hot... We hid our faces from the searing heat and dust... Looking back at the fire from the camp, it looked like a big city in the distance with all sorts of city lights. It was a brilliant sight in the darkness of the night.

Some new farmers found that poetry conveyed their feelings. For instance, Cyril Goode who struggled and failed to establish a farm at 'Lake Range', Turkey Hill, in the Yilgarn in the depths of the 1930s depression. In 'The Clearer' (Southern Cross Times, 23 Jan 1932) he wrote in part:

In the midst of summer the fire will sweep, With a smoke rack dark and unfurling, Through the clearing, And higher the flames will leap In a vortex madly swirling; Like a carnival city, viewed from a height (Whose lights are a changing medley) Will the burning timbers appear at night, With their embers glowing redly. Then for weeks on oppressive awful days, E'er the final stumps are level, The clearer will work in the smokey haze Like a mediaeval devil. He then may canvas and blankets roll And hoist to an able shoulder, And drift away to prospect for gold Or work on the mines at Boulder.

The immediacy and emotional impact of this wheatbelt literature was evident to all the audience and an extended and engaged discussion followed. Many audience members were retired wheatbelt farmers and discussion was lively.

Our thanks to all the volunteers who assisted with the successful occasion.



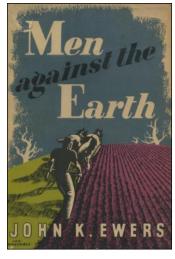
Ghooli



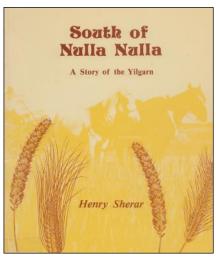
Avon wheat bin



Dorothy Hewett



J K Ewers, Men against the Earth



Henry Sherar, South of Nulla Nulla

Slater Homestead Tour

Georgina Wigley - Convenor Tours & Events

April showers didn't dampen the enthusiasm of the 45 participants who boarded the bus for Goomalling. By the time we reached picturesque Toodyay the sun was out as we enjoyed a hearty morning tea. Members then selected to wander the historic town, include in retail therapy, including the famous Christmas 360 shop, or find out more of the town's past by visiting one of its museums. After an hour in Toodyay we returned to the bus bound for Slater Homestead.

Three kilometres north-east of Goomalling townsite, along the Goomalling-Wyalkatchem Road, the striking heritage-listed homestead swept into view. This carefully restored complex, maintained by the Shire of Goomalling and volunteers, was established in 1856 by George Slater, a pastoralist with an entrepreneurial flair. The first of his buildings was a three-roomed residence built from stone with a shingle roof, later replaced by corrugated iron. This dwelling, the first permanent European settlement in the Goomalling region, was constructed in what is known as 'Old Colonial Georgian Style', using ticket of leave convict labour.

In 1857 George married Mary Lynch, an Irish emigrant residing in Toodyay. The following year they welcomed the first of their twelve children, nine of whom reached adulthood. As the family increased in size so did the homestead and George's pastoral leaseholdings. His business acumen came to the fore and it is estimated that by the end of the 1870s he had leased over 65,000 acres around Goomalling and beyond.

An early addition to the homestead was the stone barn built in 1860 to house agricultural implements for George's sheep-raising enterprise and later horse breeding for the trade in remounts for India and the colony's police force. The barn was also a focus for the Slaters' well-known hospitality with many social occasions held there. Today the tradition continued with the tour group enjoying a scrumptious buffet lunch in this beautifully restored barn.

Prior to lunch we explored the homestead complex to learn more about the pioneering challenges faced by the Slater family who lived, as the *Northam Courier* noted, 'beyond the limits of civilisation and into a wilderness which could give them no returns for their industry'. However these obstacles ignited George's resourceful outlook as he sought solutions to each problem encountered.

For example, in 1868 George was undaunted when the Board of Education decided not to provide a school for the children of the Goomalling district, including his growing family. The schoolhouse and teacher's accommodation he built to address the government's refusal still stand today and offered us an insight into 19th century teaching and learning methods. George employed an Irish convict, Thomas Duggan, to teach the children, a position he held in the district for 30 years.

Another building which attracted interest amongst participants was the homestead's inn, once called Goomalling Inn, which today is cordoned off because of fire damage. Again the story behind this building highlights George's entrepreneurial zeal and his ability to see beyond 'the wilderness'. The astute siting of his homestead adjacent to a reliable water supply and near what was to become a major route between Perth and the Yilgarn Goldfields meant he was well placed to provide services for eager prospectors. In 1888 George applied for a wayside licence and by 1890 Goomalling Inn was in full swing with Mary Slater and her daughters, Annie and Grace, cooking hearty meals using meat, vegetables and fruit sourced from their holdings. In addition to food, the inn provided wine from their vineyard, accommodation, and chaff and corn for horses. Folklore has it that Arthur Bayley, who later discovered gold at Coolgardie, when he didn't have enough money to settle his account at Goomalling Inn, left his firearm in lieu of payment.

In 1907 the final addition to the homestead, a stone room built in the Victorian Georgian Style, was completed in preparation for George and Mary's golden wedding anniversary. Until their deaths this couple contributed to the development of Goomalling and its pastoral and agricultural hinterland. As the *Northam Courier* recorded, 'they had lived to see civilisation come to them'.

When George died in 1917 his son, Thomas, inherited the homestead and its environs. After Thomas' death in 1930 the property changed ownership many times and gradually the buildings fell into disrepair. After years of neglect this historic homestead, which had witnessed the unpredictability of pioneering life, was acquired in 2000 by the Shire of Goomalling. Today the lovingly restored complex provides visitors with an opportunity to step back in time to learn about life in the 19th century. One participant referred to the Slater Homestead as, 'a hidden treasure' whilst another commented, 'They had to be tough in those days; true pioneers. A WA history in making do!'

References

L Gray, I Sauman & G Nayton, Slater homestead conservation plan, Shire of Goomalling. *Northam Courier*, 31 October 1913.

B Sewell, Goomalling, a backward glance: a history of the district, Churchlands, 1998.









Stories from the Storerooms

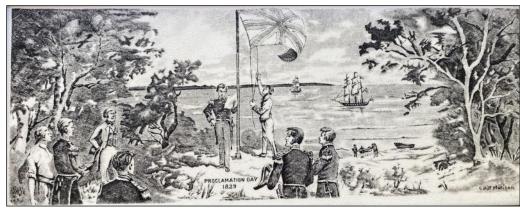
Making white chinaware in Australia, 1921-1945

Dr Dorothy Erickson

For many years the only producer of white china in Australia was Calyx Porcelain & Paint and its successor Lance Brisbane's Brisbane & Wunderlich. China objects made by Calyx in the 1920s-1930s and those from Brisbane & Wunderlich's Wembley Ware range in the 1940s-1950s are highly collectable. The Society has some 40 pieces of china made by Brisbane & Wunderlich in their Subiaco/Wembley premises between 1921 and 2004 when the firm ceased to manufacture in Australia. While the Society's collection has come from a variety of donors Mrs Pat Griffiths donated the canister, Mr Kynan Hoffman donated the plate, and the ceramic plaque was discovered in the collection in an audit in 1984 and we have yet to track down the original donor.



Calyx Canister MA 2011.29a-b



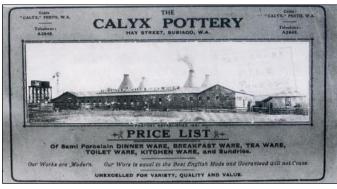
Ceramic plaque featuring the raising of the flag on Proclamation Day 1829 after a painting by George Pitt Morrison. MA1984.378



Tableware for the Country Women's Association MA 2000.3c

The original company, Calyx Porcelain & Paint Co. Ltd, was set up by Danish-born architect Christian Frederick Mouritzen in 1921 to exploit kaolin deposits near Popanyinning in the Great Southern, producing the first range of domestic tableware made in Australia. This was a grand adventure. Bendigo Pottery had been producing stoneware products for many years but not porcelain. Deposits of the basic white clay were located. Skilled ceramic workers were brought out from England to work under W H Yates (senior), the works manager until 1931, who had trained at Wilson's Pottery Works in Stoke-on-Trent. The main artist-decorator until the 1940s was Harry Howell, who had trained at Copeland, the English pottery. He arrived in Western Australia in 1921 where he worked at engraving the copper plates that were used to make transfers for the china. He retired in the 1940s. His mark was H Howell or H H. The chief modeller was William Brough, who was also the first mould-maker. His daughter, Nellie, was the gilder and bander, and Ernest Smith the caster. It was a family affair as daughter Nancy Brough also worked there until she married Alan Piercy, who worked

Association MA 2000.3c daughter Nancy Brough also worked there until she married Alan Piercy, who worked in the pottery after being injured in World War II. The flower modeller was Ruby Neevay, previously at Royal Doulton, an artist and decorator who worked most of the time from 1941 to 1985. The pottery also employed part-time artists, including an Egyptian man whose name has been forgotten who painted in the 1920s; Helen Walker who arrived from Sydney in the 1920s; and Jean Lang, a local artist who worked there during the depression of the 1930s. Calyx secured large contracts for the armed forces and government enterprises because for many years it remained the only company making whiteware in the country.



Calyx Pottery c1926, as published in John Thomson's *Calyx, Wembley Ware and Bristile China.*

Sadly buyers preferred to purchase English or European wares, leaving the company insolvent by 1925. Rescued by the government, it continued producing whiteware and sanitaryware and was leased by entrepreneurial Lance Brisbane. In 1933 the firm had over one hundred employees and was producing hotel and domestic wares such as cups and saucers, jugs, basins, crockery, etc., and a range of artware and sanitaryware. World War II reduced the competition of imports from China and Japan, and Brisbane purchased the company outright in 1941 to add to his Wunderlich interests.

After the war ended Brisbane merged the Calyx Porcelain & Paint Co. Ltd into the H L Brisbane & Wunderlich group of companies. A program of modernisation and expansion began under manager George Clausen who generated new ideas. As postwar

reconstruction was not yet fully operational in war-torn Europe there were still shortages of imported goods and the time appeared opportune to develop a range to fill the gaps and so *Wembley Ware* was launched in 1946. The story of that colourful ware will be told in the next 'Story from the Storerooms'.

Commemorating Foundation Day (now WA Day)

In 1954 a Pioneers Memorial Service was inaugurated at the **East Perth Cemeteries** (EPC) and held there annually until 2022 to mark Foundation/WA Day. Each year we focused on one early settler family and family descendants gathered to recognise their ancestors. The occasion was marked by a religious service with hymns and prayers as well as the reading of a family citation and a visit to the family's graves. In recognition of changing times we recently changed the name of the service to the East Perth Cemeteries Memorial Service and this year decided to bring the event in to Stirling House in the form of a talk without the service. Why did we do so?

The major reason was that the EPC event had seen sharply declining numbers of attendees in the last decade. It no longer appeared to be relevant to or popular with members. Additional concerns centred on the unpredictability of June's weather and a declining community engagement with religious ceremony.

As well the struggle to save this cemetery has been well and truly won. When this annual event was initiated the Society was in the forefront of a campaign to preserve disused colonial cemeteries from destruction. Skinner St Cemetery at Fremantle and the Old Bunbury Cemetery were both cleared in the 1930s. In the late 1940s East Perth Cemeteries also faced the threat of clearing but it was saved and a restoration project begun. The current excellent online database constructed by Lorraine Clarke and Cherie Strickland (from Swan Genealogy and also RWAHS members) began with research work by members Dorothy Henderson and Kate Caldwell in the 1940s. Then in the 1960s RWAHS Vice-President Ray Oldham reinvigorated the campaign to fully record the burials and restore the Cemeteries. James Richardson in the 1980s continued that work. The campaign for the cemetery's preservation and for documentation of the burials has been successful and now the National Trust WA has carriage of this heritage place.



So where to from here for the Society? The name of Foundation Day was formally changed to WA Day in 2012 to emphasise that the day was in future to be inclusive of all people no matter how long they have been Western Australians. And, most importantly, the new name is now inclusive of Aboriginal people who have a history of at least 60000 years in this place and have not felt included in commemorations of 'pioneers' who arrived from 1829.

This year 2023 we are delighted that Lorraine Clarke and Cherie Strickland presented a fascinating talk — Children of the Swan River Colony – at the Society. They detailed the sad story of children buried at the East Perth Cemeteries.

If you have any views or suggestions for the future of the Society's WA Day program please do email or phone the Office or any member of Council. We look forward to hearing from you.

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Long time museum volunteer and convenor **Val Hutch** reflects on this change — For forty or so years I have attended the Memorial Service in the little old St Bartholomew's church in the East Perth Cemeteries with a service conducted by a minister of faith (of various denominations). I have valued the experience, admiring the flowers on the altar, singing hymns (with or without the organ), hearing the citations of the families being honoured and, after the service, placing a wreath or scattering petals on the gravesite. This has been a meaningful and heartfelt remembrance of those buried at the cemeteries, many of whom endured hardships in their lives. However, times are changing and perhaps it is time to move on and celebrate and commemorate WA Day somewhat differently.

The sun was shining on Sunday 4 June 2023 as 48 members and friends arrived at Stirling House to hear the sad stories of several families whose children are buried at the East Perth Cemeteries. Following the talk, afternoon tea was served and appreciated by all in attendance. During this time the heavens opened and the rain continued for the afternoon and evening. We were thankful we were not standing under our umbrellas in the grounds of the cemetery.

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A moment of time: Children of the Swan River Colony — buried at East Perth Cemeteries (1829-1899)

Lorraine Clarke

Below are some excerpts from Lorraine's poignant talk.

Statistics can tell us a lot about the health and wealth of a colony; individual stories give us a better and more realistic viewpoint.

Sarah Mayo was both a mother who died during childbirth and a child herself; just thirteen when she died. Her son Benoni may or may not have survived; we have no knowledge. She was born in Perth when the colony was just a fledgling, the daughter of Louis de Mayo, an Italian from Florence and Sarah Mews. Her father left the colony in 1842, three years prior to Sarah's death. We have no knowledge of Benoni's father. Was this a case of rape or young love with little knowledge of the facts of life?

Infant mortality in 19th century Perth was high: 32% of EPC burials were those of infants. Yet the cause of their deaths is mostly unknown, because of a lack of access to death certificates. Of the 2929 recorded infant deaths we have been able to obtain a cause of death for only 30%, and for those the major cause was stillbirth. The registration of stillbirths was not practised in any Australian colony except WA, where they were registered both as a birth and death. There are 82 stillbirths recorded for EPC. Many infants are without parents' names, just one line in a burial register.

Other causes of infant deaths cited in the records were convulsions, diarrhoea/ dysentery, debility/ weakness, and premature birth. Were these conditions due to the death of the mother, poor sanitary conditions in the colony or a lack of wet nurses? Infant deaths fluctuated as the colony matured and the maternity system improved.

Unlike infant mortality, the rate of childhood deaths was low – only 7% or 612 children's deaths. The major cause was accidental death, with burns and drowning the most frequent causes. Others were diphtheria, pneumonia, typhoid, debility or diarrhoea and croup. It appears that, if a baby could reach the age of eighteen months, it had a better than average chance of reaching adulthood.

In February 1892, five boys went sailing on the Swan River heading towards Freshwater Bay. The wind picked up and, within moments, their boat had capsized and all five boys were in the water. The boys had been having swimming lessons, however only one of them was a good swimmer. Lionel Duncan was hit on the head as the boat overturned and drowned instantly. John Jones and John Beddoes tried to keep Robert Wittenoom and Theodore Parry afloat. Jones helped Robert and Theodore until Beddoe retrieved boards and oars; however panic overtook the two young boys, and they soon sank. Beddoes swam to a boat nearing the accident and got help. Jones was rescued soon after. Lionel Duncan's body was immediately found; however, it took another day to find the body of Robert

Wittenoom. Theodore Parry's body was later recovered, and his burial is the only one to have been recorded in the burial records. This tragedy shook the colony.

In March 1887 Maggie and her friend and neighbour Robert White, both aged nine, were playing at Robert's house in Douro Street. Mrs White had just passed the bedroom where the children were playing when she heard gunshots. She raced into the room to find Maggie with horrific head injuries and poor Robert standing next to his friend screaming. Later Robert told the police that he and Maggie had been playing and he had found the gun standing in the corner of the room. He picked it up, aiming it at the ceiling and then out the window. However it was too heavy for him and, as it dropped, the gun went off. The bullet hit Maggie in the head and killed her instantly. Robert told the inquest he was unaware the gun was loaded. The inquest found that Maggie's death was accidental and the court recommended that in future parents be more careful as to where they left their firearms. Nothing is known about the effects on Maggie's family. There is no surviving monument to her passing nor a family notice in the newspaper. Her father died in 1896 and is buried in the Presbyterian Cemetery at East Perth. There is no surviving monument for him either. Jessie, her mother, died in 1925 and is buried in Karrakatta.

From the 1870s there were outbreaks of diphtheria in the colony. In a one-month period 27 individuals contracted the disease in Perth and 21 outside the city. The Cemeteries' database reads like a roll call of the little souls.

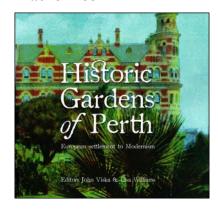
Evelyn Rachel Arnold – aged 3 Thelma Leonora Bandy – aged 7 Susan Dinah Barry – aged 7 Frank Noel Bennett – aged 5 John George Bowra – aged 2 Amelia Brand – aged 5 Maud Olive Brodie – aged 2 Ralph Richard Bushby – aged 12 George West Churchward – aged 3 Arthur Cross – aged 7 months

In total 44 children are buried at EPC whose cause of death was attributed to diphtheria.

A newspaper article in 1887 is a fitting way to end this talk. The writer, a woman, discusses remedies — the need to visit a doctor without delay and to consult books, and for families to learn more about health, nutrition and when to ask for help from the medical community; not to leave it too late. The 'Housewife' suggested that a pamphlet or brochure titled 'Things Mothers Ought to Know' be printed as a matter of urgency and distributed throughout the colony. 'The life of one child saved would richly repay the colony for the small expense this measure would incur'.

History in the City

Rachel Roe



Our June talk by John Viska titled 'Hyde Park – The Park's History and Conservation' was a visual delight. The wetland site, known as Boodjamooling to the Whadjuk Noongar people, was named Third Swamp by early Europeans. In 1897

the area was gazetted a public park and renamed Hyde Park in 1899 after London's park. After moving from Melbourne, John George Braithwaite became the Perth City Gardener in 1896 and oversaw the development of the park. Original paperbarks *Melaleuca preissianna*, jarrah *Eucalyptus marginata* and flooded gum trees *E. rudis* were retained and a large oval lake was created with two islands. An elaborate three-tiered fountain installed in 1900 near the original Lake Street entrance no longer exists.

John showed many interesting early photos of the park, which helped the audience understand its evolution. A highlight was seeing a rare historical painting of Hyde Park by Walter Paterson Meston in 1904. We learnt about tree species planted at different times which were often sourced from the Hamel Nursery, near Waroona. Fortunately this beautiful park now has heritage status

and a written conservation plan. The newly published book *Historic Gardens of Perth – European settlement to Modernism* was purchased by many attendees.

Please join us for our talks at Citiplace Community Centre (Conference Room) Perth Railway Concourse at 2pm, 1st Wednesday of the month. \$10 entry includes afternoon tea.

5 July: Anthea Harris – The History of Wattle Day 2 August: Dr Nathan Hobby – Katharine Susannah Prichard

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EVENT CANCELLED

Please note that the
Karrakatta Club Joint Gala Dinner
event scheduled for Thursday 14 September
has been cancelled.

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.).

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