



HISTORY WEST

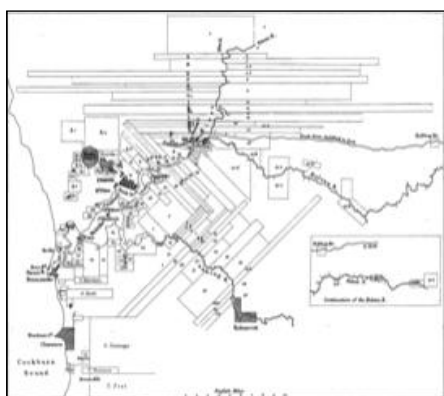
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July 2024

GENERAL MEETING

The next meeting at Stirling House is on Wednesday 17 July at 6pm when James Cassidy will present a talk on 'The Many and the Few: The implications of wealth distribution in the early Swan River Colony'.

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



The distribution of land, capital and cash at the foundation of the Swan River Colony had serious implications for the subsequent unfolding of the colonial process. From its initial design, the colony was intended to benefit the landowner class. However, 'Swan River Mania' and policies regarding land grants at the colony's foundation enhanced the success of some landed settlers while ultimately bringing ruin to others. Official measures designed to remedy the situation were helpful to many, but only further improved the situation for the colony's most fortunate settler families. These families have been studied with reference to their lives in the Swan and Canning River districts, but their potential influence further afield must be examined. As the colony entered its pastoral era, and settler violence increasingly occurred away from the colonial centre, our understanding of these violent incidents becomes less clear. Perhaps one possible answer lies in the dominant position of major landowners from the colony's earliest years.



James Cassidy is a PhD candidate at UWA and a teacher at the School of Isolated and Distance Education. As a member of the RWAHS he also volunteers behind the scenes, working with Lesley on the Society's website and Facebook page. What ultimately began as a journey to better understand WA history in order to improve his work as a teacher has evolved into an attempt to understand the world of the early Swan River Colony, and how these initial years influenced the colony's development.



Message to all members

We hope you are enjoying your membership of the Society and look forward to your renewal. 2024-25 membership invoices have been sent

For assistance, contact accounts@histwest.org.au or phone (08)9386 384

Nominations for Council 2024-25

The election of President, two Vice-Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer and five Councillors will take place at the forthcoming AGM on Wednesday 16 October.

If you are interested in nominating, please contact Lesley Burnett (email: admin@histwest.org.au) to obtain a nomination form.

Nominations close at 4pm on Wednesday 18 September

Welcome to new members

Margaret Besomo, Athena Daly & Michael Cowie, Pat Forster, Michael O'Connor, Gaye Poole, Roberta Smith, Lorraine & Ian Sweetman, and Lynley Ward

Congratulations to our Honorary Solicitor Denis McLeod

made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the King's birthday honours list — for service to the law, to urban planning and to the community of Western Australia.

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Forthcoming Events — Don't forget to book!

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

HISTORY IN THE CITY



**Citiplace Conference Room,
Perth Rwy Station Concourse
Wed 3 July, 2pm**

If the buses could talk ...

Don Dryden

There are many tales to be told of the buses that once serviced the needs of the Perth community, and now families can enjoy the unique history of bus transport at Whiteman Park. The Bus Preservation Society presents museum displays and rides at the Revolutions Transport Museum, regularly showcases one of its restored heritage buses and participates in community events to promote the heritage bus collection.

TOUR



**Australian Army Museum of W.A.
Artillery Barracks, Burt St, Fremantle
Friday 19 July, 9.30 for 10am**

A walking tour of WA's Australian Army Museum. This museum houses a treasure trove of army memorabilia tracing WA's military history from colonial times to the present. After the tour morning tea will be served giving us an opportunity to swap impressions of our visit.

Cost \$25. Bookings essential

photo ID essential for participants to sign in.

Meet at checkpoint gate, 6 Burt Street, Fremantle.

To book online [Click here](#)
or scan the QR code



COMMUNITY TALK



**Stirling House, 49 Broadway, Nedlands
Wednesday 24 July, 10 for 10.30-11.30am**

**Wirlomin Noongar
Language and Stories retold**

Kim Scott, Mary Gimondo & Lefki Kailis

The story of the revival of Wirlomin language, stories and song brought to light by the Laves documents and Elders of the Wirlomin clan, and the transmission of these ancient ancestral stories and culture to the younger generation.

AUXILIARY MORNING TEA



**Stirling House, 49 Broadway, Nedlands
Wed 14 August, 10 for 10.30-11.30am**

The History of Roses of WA

John Viska

An illustrated talk on the history of roses in WA from early settlement to the present day, describing the rose varieties that were fashionable in the different periods, how they were propagated and the rose-growing industry.

Correspondence

Georgiana Molloy's letters to James Mangles

A response from Bernice Barry

Readers will recall that in April's issue of *History West* Gillian Lilleyman provided a piece of fascinating historical detective work to explain how W G Pickering sourced the information for his article – 'The Letters of Georgiana Molloy', published in *Early Days*, 1 (4) 1929. Gillian found a web of family connections to explain how Georgiana's words came back to Western Australia after almost a century.

History West is delighted that Bernice Barry has written to add a further thread to the story of the letters. She explains —

There's one more name that needs adding to the list of generous donors in this story.

James Mangles had his letters (both incoming and outgoing) copied and bound professionally into books covered in blue calf leather and embossed in gold. Letters, grouped under the heading '*Botany, Gardening, Seeds, Horticulture, the Parks &c*' were collected into two volumes. He first gifted these books in 1847 to Anna Dick, the daughter of his second captain at sea in the first two years of his time as a midshipman in the Royal Navy. The books might have remained with that family if it had not been for Anna's decision, nearly ten years later, to pass them on. That kindness changed their route through history, and put them in the hands of descendants of John and Georgiana Molloy, the DuCanes.

Anna Dick's father was Vice Admiral John Dick. Soon after joining the Royal Navy, the young midshipman, James Mangles, served under Captain Dick on board HMS *Penelope*, with missions to Barbados and Martinique, 1807–1808.

Until she married in 1851 (aged 42) Anna lived in the parental home in Southampton with her father and two sisters, presumably in considerable comfort, with a footman, housemaid and cook to look after the four of them. Her husband, Captain John Shepherd, became a Rear Admiral and her life in a small household with three servants continued, with the addition of a governess by 1861 to home school their daughter.

Somehow, probably through her continuing friendship with James Mangles, Anna learned that Georgiana Molloy's daughter, Mary DuCane née Molloy, was now living in England. On hearing that Lady DuCane had expressed a wish to see her mother's letters to Mangles, Anna requested that the books be given to her.

How that exchange took place is not known but Mrs Shepherd must have returned them first to Mangles, in Devon, because the new dedications on the fly leaves of both volumes in 1856 are in his own handwriting. He passed them on to Mary DuCane, enabling the eventual donation to the J S Batty Library in 1952.

Textile Workshop: Safely storing heirloom textiles

Presenter: Wendy Lugg

This workshop, held in May, was attended by 25 keen participants, some of whom brought their own treasures for advice on storage. Under Wendy's expert leadership the morning was a great success. Our thanks to all the museum volunteers who assisted Wendy with the workshop.



Community Talk

The life and times of Faiz Mahomet

Criena Fitzgerald



Faiz Mahomet – ‘Afghan’ cameleer, entrepreneur and businessman – was the subject of April’s fascinating talk by Dr Criena Fitzgerald. He migrated first to South Australia in 1878 and was lured to Western Australia by the goldrushes. His transport business used camels across the goldfields and was highly successful, playing an essential part in the establishment of new goldfields and new towns. By 1896 the firm of Faiz and Tagh Mahomet had branches around the colony and employed five accountants and managers. However ‘Afghans’ were not welcome migrants to Australia at this time and were gradually forced out by stricter government policies aimed at making Australia white. Faiz



was refused Australian citizenship despite living here for almost 30 years and, by the time he left for Quetta in 1906, he was almost penniless. He never returned.



Community Talk

Perth Zoo over 125 years

Zoologist Dr Harriet Mills, Program Leader for Perth Zoo Science, spoke at our May gathering, taking us on a fascinating journey through the history of Perth Zoological Gardens across 125 years. We learnt that the Zoo site was originally an important birthing place for Whadjuk Noongar women because of the presence of hot mineral springs.

Our zoo journey began in 1896 with the establishment of the WA Acclimatisation Committee whose purpose was to introduce animals from Europe ‘to correct WA’s deficiency’ as well as to establish a zoological garden. This Society did not understand the WA environment and thought it could be improved by the introduction of — goats, deer, trout, turtle doves, white swans, mallard ducks, kookaburras and many other species. The original zoo buildings were designed to entertain visitors rather than concentrate on the welfare of the exotic animals, imported to be displayed. Popular entertainments included mineral baths, concerts, tearooms, baby shows, tennis courts, exotic gardens, miniature train, a carousel, goat and elephant rides.

Gradually community and zoo attitudes changed to focus primarily on animal welfare, aiming to re-create more natural habitats for them. Scientific research has become a vital component of the Zoo’s work, researching and breeding threatened species for release into the wild. Research and education are now the most important of the Zoo’s goals.



WILLIAMS / LEE STEERE PUBLICATION PRIZE 2024

Have you published a non-fiction publication, either in print or electronic (pdf) form, on Western Australian history, between 1 June 2023 and 31 March 2024? Entries must be over 20,000 words in length. If so, do think about submitting it for the Society’s publication prize.

Closing date: 28 June 2024.

For full details see — <https://histwest.org.au/history-prizes-competition/>

Entries must be submitted to:

Royal Western Australian Historical Society, 49 Broadway, Nedlands WA 6009

Tel (08) 9386 3841 Email: admin@histwest.org.au



The far reaches of a good book

Nan Broad

How could the town of Cervantes have acquired its name from a 17th century author?

It happened this way. In 1836 a whaling boat was built in Maine, USA, and possibly it was the skipper, Sylvanus Gibson, who named the vessel after his famous literary countryman, Miguel de Cervantes, the author of the epic novel *Don Quixote*? Eight years later the *Cervantes* arrived on the West Australian coast hunting for seals. While whales provided oil to light the candles of the world and bones to make the corsets of fashionable clothing, seals were easy prey, offering oil, meat and saleable skins to the trade.

The crew noted abundant seals in the vicinity of modern Cervantes and accordingly made preparations to anchor close to the shore and set up their equipment on land. They would have manoeuvred their big trypot onto a dry area with a fire set under it to boil the seal blubber and produce oil, and sharpened their skinning knives. As these activities proceeded, a gale sprang up and, before they could release the boat, she had been washed ashore onto rocks which broke her keel. Three of the crew walked south to Perth and raised the alarm so that, in due course, the boat was auctioned off for £155 and her chronometer for £28, the crew dispersed and the seals lived another day.

After 118 years a fishing village was established near the site of the wreck and gazetted 'Cervantes', now grown into a prosperous and attractive town, revering its unique history. In the museum are exhibits from the *Cervantes* wreck with printed information available, while a concrete slab the size and contour of the boat is located in Ronsard Reserve, complete with three masts and an authentic ship's wheel at the stern. On the approach to the town are a weather vane sports cutout figures of the whaler, Don Quixote riding his thoroughbred and his companion, Sancho Panza, mounted on a donkey – memorials to the boat, the book and its author.

I wonder what other towns in WA are named for boats or for books?

With many thanks to Marlyn Gazeley, Curator of Cervantes Museum, for her expert knowledge and assistance.



US whaling barque *Cervantes*, artist unknown



Replica ship's wheel, *Cervantes* footprint



Cervantes footprint, Ronsard Reserve, Cervantes, built 2022.



The 'Big Weathervane' with *Cervantes* silhouettes, Cervantes Road



Have you thought about attending the **State History Conference, 6-8 September at the Priory Hotel, Dongara**, hosted by Irwin Districts Historical Society? Do join us for the weekend and don't forget to **book accommodation early**. See our website, www.irwinhistory.org.au Conference webpage, '2024 State History Conference'

History West Annual Lecture

People's stories making Australian history

Our Annual Lecture was held on Thursday 6 June at UWA Club Auditorium with an audience of approximately 130, as well as a group online at UWA Albany. Chaired by Professor Jane Lydon, a panel of three speakers – Steve Kinnane, Mike Lefroy and Susanna Iuliano – explored the three epic stories which have shaped Australian history and Australia today — our ancient Indigenous heritage,^[1] British inheritance and multicultural transformation.

Noel Pearson's 2017 text 'The Three Pillars of Australian History' inspired the evening's discussion, so let's begin by reprinting (in edited form) Pearson's vision for members to reflect on.

What is Australia and when did it come into existence? This question may seem impertinent until we reflect on it. At the beginning of the 19th century no one called this land Australia, let alone at the time of the First Fleet's arrival. It was well into the 19th century that the name Australia gained currency.

No event brought Australia into existence until Federation on January 1, 1901, when the Australian Constitution created the Commonwealth of Australia. Our country has retrofitted an unfactual myth of Australia on to the events of January 26, 1788. There was no Australia in 1788. There was only the colony of New South Wales. The events of 1901 gave legal effect to Australia...

What is Australia? Who are the Australians? These are questions we have never properly answered as an Australian people. That there is an Australian people, there is no question. That this continent and its islands are our land, there is no question. And when I say ours, I mean all of us. Yet we have never properly faced the idea of Australia. How could the idea of Australia conjured in our mythic reconstruction of January 26, 1788, or the Federation of 1901 — without contending with the indigenous inhabitants of our land — be a proper answer to the question of Australia?

Australians have an epic story. It is one of the great epic stories of this planet. We will recognise the scale of our story when we recognise each other.

The first part of this story is the epic trek out of Africa. Latest research pushes back the date of Aboriginal presence in Australia beyond 60,000 years. Our epic story begins from science as well; as from within the mythologies of the First Peoples of this continent. Australia's most eminent ethnographer, W E H Stanner, explained the Dreaming as telling rich tales of "great marvels":

... how all the fire and water in the world were stolen and recaptured; how men made a mistake over sorcery and now have to die from it; how the hills, rivers, and waterholes were made; how the sun, moon, and stars were set upon their courses; and many other dramas of this kind ... how animals and men diverged from a joint stock that was neither one nor the other; how the black-nosed kangaroo got his black nose and the porcupine his quills; how such social divisions as tribes, clans, and language groups were set up; how spirit-children were first placed in the waterholes, the winds, and leaves of trees ...

These epic stories of the continent are much, much older than Homer. And are still held today...

There is a second epic story of Australia: the voyage of the *Endeavour*. Australians should know the epic nature of James Cook's voyage to the east coast of Australia in 1770. Everyone knows of his role in our history, but controversies over whether he was the first European to discover the east coast of Australia and the moral legacy of colonial annexation that followed his voyage have diminished the appreciation of one of history's greatest seafarers.

I, of course, should not be saying this, given the villainy that I should properly attach to Cook. But the epic scale of his courage and captaincy is plain. It was the equivalent of manned space travel to the outer solar system. He limped into the country of my forefathers after running aground on coral at the reef now called Endeavour, into the harbour of a place we call Waymburr, what would thereafter be called Cooktown on the banks of the Endeavour River...

No epic is pure happiness and light. Cook's voyage ultimately meant devastation and dispossession for the First Peoples. But it was still an epic voyage. Epics are about tragedy and heroism, cowardice and courage, the worst and best of humanity. The arrival of British institutions on the shoulders of the First Fleet, which became the law of this continent, is the second part of Australia's epic story, commencing with Cook.

I now want to turn to the third species of epic story. There are in fact millions of such stories. The epic migrations from Auschwitz, Somalia, Italy, Vietnam, Beirut and Tiananmen Square, and so many other places.

I want to tell one extraordinary story of an acquaintance, Binh. After the communist takeover of Vietnam in 1975, when Binh was five years old, everyone who had anything to do with the previous South Vietnamese regime were sent to re-education camps.

After three years, Binh and his family were let out with no money and no food. They knew they had to take a perilous journey to the West, for a better life. They took the boat journey across the South China Sea on a fishing trawler with 150 people on board. It was about 12m long. They landed in a camp in Malaysia after drifting on the ocean for three weeks... An Australian delegation came to the camp and chose his family on the basis that, as a young family, it could contribute positively to Australia. Binh's family arrived in 1980, when he was 10. They lived in Brisbane for a year, attending English classes and learning to adapt to the new culture. This is a familiar story. But it is also unique...

These are three equally epic parts to our national story. A Declaration of Australia should have three verses, but it must be one song. A Declaration will enable us to thread together these three epic stories into the one story of our Australian commonwealth: a declaration to unite the nation.



Audience Jane Lydon Mike Lefroy Susanna Iuliano Panel Steve Kinnane

Chairperson for the evening, Professor Jane Lydon, Wesfarmers Chair of Australian History at UWA, presented Noel Pearson’s ‘Three Pillars’ and then introduced the speakers and facilitated the panel. Our grateful thanks to Jane for ensuring that a complex order of proceedings flowed smoothly. This was no mean feat as one of our speakers, Steve Kinnane, was struck down with COVID and spoke via online technology.

Steve explored Pearson’s first pillar – Australia’s Indigenous inheritance – through the perspective of his own family whose story he has told so effectively in his book *Shadowlines*. It concerns the lives of Jessie Argyle, a Mirriwoong woman from Argyle Station who was taken from her family as a child and brought south to Noongar country, and her husband Londoner Edward (Eddie) Smith — Steve’s grandparents. He writes of how their lives came together and Steve’s family was formed. It is, Steve says, a braided history as Noel Pearson’s three pillars start to intertwine.

Mike Lefroy illustrated Pearson’s second pillar — British colonisation — through the lens of the Lefroy family. He told of his family who first arrived in Western Australia in 1829 as thoroughgoing British men and women. He traced some of their lives over the generations to show how the family became thoroughly Australian, adapting to the country which has become their home. For some of his family stories see <https://freetopia.org/fhs/fs/6/Lefroy.html>

Susanna Iuliano spoke of more recent multicultural migration, using her parents’ migration from Italy after World War II and their family life in Fremantle. She explored the way in which what it means to be Australian has expanded from the mid-20th century to include the influx of peoples from around the world.

The panel members then reflected on the following questions:

What significant aspects of life and culture does your strand of our epic story bring to modern Australia?

How can we all as Australians come to better understand and appreciate the interweaving of our three epic stories into an Australian history? What strategies are called for today to create this interweaved history?

The evening concluded with Professor Jane Lydon’s inciteful summary of the three presentations.

Finally our grateful thanks to Sally Anne Hasluck and her hard-working team, to everyone who made the evening a success. It couldn’t have been done without all your contributions! Many thanks indeed.

If you were unable to attend the evening but would like to view the lecture and learn more, go to the Society’s Facebook page – <https://www.facebook.com/histwest/>

Advice from the Library collection

To the driving public when the Narrows Bridge opened in 1959

- Do NOT use the Freeway if your vehicle cannot maintain a speed of 45-50 mph, or if it is likely to break down.
- Do NOT use the Freeway if fast driving is uncomfortable to you.
- Do NOT drive on the Freeway if your faculties are impaired in any way whatsoever.
- DO NOT WANDER FROM LANE TO LANE.
- DO NOT DRIVE TOO CLOSE TO THE VEHICLE AHEAD OF YOU IN YOUR LANE.
- Always try to concentrate fully on your driving whilst on the Freeway, and be prepared for any emergency.

Source: Narrows Bridge: official opening, 13 Nov 1959. Souvenir brochure, held in Box 43/1983/40.

Jeanette Longwood, Honorary Librarian

Message from the Huguenot Society of Australia

The Huguenot Society is keen to promote genealogical research into the Huguenot connections of Australian families. If you are interested in exploring possible Huguenot connections among your ancestors, see the Society’s website —

<https://huguenotsaustralia.org.au/our-society/who-were-the-huguenots/>

ADVERTISEMENT

“I think Daniel’s experience in selling homes and respect, respect for the property and our family connection with the property. I don’t think you can buy that. I don’t think you can produce it, it’s who you are. I would recommend Daniel 110%. He took care of all the loose ends, and that was wonderful.”

Barbara-15 Bulimba Rd, Nedlands”

Daniel Ranshaw

0415 181 664
or
dranshaw@realmark.com.au



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Affiliates & Other News

Friends of Donnelly Village held an exhibition of paintings and pencil drawings in the Donnelly Village Workers Club as part of the Australian Heritage Festival in May. These works represented the former mill town and surrounding area undertaken by distinguished artists Elizabeth Blair Bunning (née Barber) and Eric Moyle along with recent pencil drawings by Michael Spight.

Maylands Historical & Peninsula Association has launched its new digital map project – ‘Putting Maylands on the Map’. With a grant from LotteryWest the Association has purchased a touch-sensitive, screen mounted on a height-adjustable stand, two laptops for research, and also engaged software experts to configure the map and provide training for MHPA volunteers. The core of the project is displaying a map of Maylands that can be manipulated, zoomed, scrolled and expanded as one would with any on-line map. Onto this map ‘pins’ are being placed that relate to key places and buildings around the suburb. Users can explore the map down to the level of individual houses or locations and, by touching a pin, an information box opens that displays one or more pictures of the location, a short digest of the related information and a link to the website. Whilst it will be good if we already have information on the past history of that house or plot, the absence of information creates an opportunity for that person to undertake research themselves and eventually add that information to the database. Within a few months the final public version of the software will be released enabling remote, read-only, access to the map.

Walpole Nornalup & District Historical Society reports that the Walpole community has re-named its library – the Elizabeth Gerner Walpole Library in tribute to the dedication of its long-term librarian, Elizabeth Gerner.

York Society has recently been gifted for display models of the town hall and railway station. You can look forward to seeing them when you next visit York.



Western Ancestor, journal of Family History WA, has published an interesting extended article on the Levitzke family’s important contribution to the establishment and growth of the WA Deaf Society from 1921 to 2021. It is an important record of community action.

WA Fishers Lost At Sea Memorial Association website has been launched. See - <https://www.fisherslostatsea.org/> or alternatively <https://www.flatsea.org/>

Facebook page can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/fisherslostatsea>

Affiliates Newsletter

If you would like to read more about Affiliates’ activities, please go to —

<https://histwest.org.au/affiliates-news/>

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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