



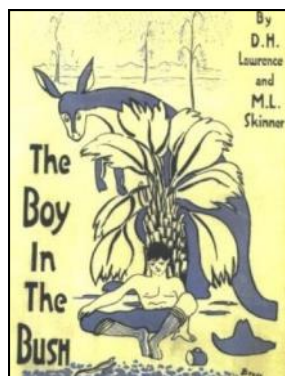
HISTORY WEST™

PUBLISHED BY THE ROYAL WESTERN AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

January-February 2025

GENERAL MEETING

The next meeting is on Wednesday 19 February at 6pm when Jenny Gregory will present a talk titled 'Letters to Mollie from D H Lawrence'.
Venue: Church of St Andrews, Anglican Parish of West Nedlands, 177 Stirling Hwy, Nedlands



First edition cover
The Boy in the Bush



Mollie Skinner 1930

Seventeen letters from controversial English novelist D H Lawrence to Mollie Skinner in Perth are held in the Battye Library. They cover the years from 1923 to 1928 and relate to their collaboration on the novel *The Boy in the Bush*.

This talk explores that collaboration. How did an English novelist whose novels were banned for obscenity, who was accused of spying for the Germans during World War I, and who escaped from persecution in England to travel the world in what he described as 'a savage pilgrimage', come to Perth? How did the daughter of an influential pioneering family, a down-to-earth army nurse running a convalescent home in Darlington, come to collaborate with such a man?

The letters give us an insight into Lawrence, his perceptions of Australia, his ability to collaborate and mentor, but also to profit from the ideas of others. The novel that resulted from their

collaboration received a mixed response. Overseas reviewers speculated that Lawrence had written nearly all the book. The *West Australian* suggested that 'the most excellent parts are probably the work of Miss Skinner'. Some eastern Australian reviewers found the book 'disgusting'.

Jenny Gregory AM is Emeritus Professor of History and Warden of Convocation: the UWA Alumni Association. She has published widely in the history of urban planning and heritage and is best known for her contributions to Western Australian history. Her books include *City of Light. A history of Perth since the 1950s*; *Building a Tradition. A History of Scotch College*; and *Claremont. A History* (with Geoff Bolton), as well as edited collections, including *Historical Encyclopedia of Western Australia* (with Jan Gothard).



Faces and Spaces of Cockburn: Stories waiting to be told 60th State History Conference, 12-14 September



Coogee jetty & boatsheds c1964.
Courtesy Steve Srhoy

We're busy preparing to welcome you to our conference which will include highlights exploring – changes at Coogee Beach over time, the history of protest in the district, and Cockburn as a place of camel quarantine.

Friday night's welcome reception will be at the Hamilton Hill Memorial Hall, which celebrates its 100th birthday this year.

Saturday and Sunday's conference sessions will be held at the Jakovich Centre, 4 McGrath Road Henderson (near Lake Coogee).

We are also planning exciting tours for Saturday and Sunday afternoons – more information to come.

Local accommodation includes:

- A range of cabins at Woodman Point Discovery Park (08 9434 1433 or <https://www.discoveryholidayparks.com.au/caravan-parks/western-australia/greater-perth/woodman-point>) 5km from our main venue at the Jakovich Centre
- A range of cabins at Coogee Beach Discovery Park (08 9418 1810 or <https://www.discoveryholidayparks.com.au/caravan-parks/western-australia/greater-perth/coogee-beach>) 7.5km from our venue
- Gallery Hotel in Bibra Lake (08 9494 2002 or <https://www.galleryhotel.com.au/>) 10km from our venue

We look forward to seeing you in September.

Denise Cook, Local History Officer, City of Cockburn
dcook@cockburn.wa.gov.au

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At long last a new home for the Society The key to a new future



The team of four – Richard, Maria, Sally Anne and Klara

We achieved success by the close of 2024 – finding a suitable property, fundraising, obtaining a Lotterywest grant and selling our present headquarters at 49 Broadway Nedlands. All was completed on Friday 20 December with settlement and the handover of the keys to 109 Stirling Hwy Nedlands. It has been a long journey since 2018 with the formation of the History West Community Centre Planning Committee. Many professionals have given their time *pro bono* with feasibility and business plans and reports, architectural plans to build on our own site, grant applications and fundraising by the membership. This support continues as we enter the next phase of planning the move. For the moment we will remain *in situ* and you will receive further updates on the move.

Many good memories will be taken with us to our new home. We carry our history with us and, as a tangible reminder, we will take the plaque created to commemorate the Stirling House premises, acquired in 1964. This was a great moment as the Society had been without a permanent home since its establishment in 1926. Now this move marks both continuity and change.

President Richard Offen and I would like to pay particular thanks to our treasurer Klara Haselhurst and honorary architect Maria Gillman for all their efforts, particularly over the past three months, to achieve this successful outcome. Also, I should note the congenial communications with Summers Legal and Eddie from Vance Property for the vendors as well as the purchasers of our property, Broadway Properties Ltd. All was made possible through the coordination of a substantial Lotterywest grant and the sale of 49 Broadway together with our fundraising.

When we move to 109 Stirling Highway there will be more on-site parking, an internal lift and a dedicated community hall for meetings and talks. By the time you read this many of you will have visited the site ‘as is’ on our open day in January.

Our Honorary Architect has been planning the interior fit-out with the museum, library, bookshop and administration groups. All would like more space but all are pleased to be moving from the present, very cramped conditions.

It may interest you that in the last four years sixteen potential properties were inspected and seven considered by our Council with two reaching the stage of offer-making. It is all very exciting as we now know where our future is to be. We will be in the lively part of a new centre planned for Nedlands.

Constructed in 1982 this Stirling Highway building has its own history and was known as ‘The Sanctuary’. What a superb previous name on which we can build a new history for the building as the History West Community Centre. Liz Davenport says that when she took over the building in 1984 it was already a high-profile iconic location as it had been built as an exclusive women's health spa modelled on ‘The Sanctuary’ in London. It incorporated a clothing boutique, coffee shop, hairdresser, beauty salon, gym, suntan area and child-minding area – with a swimming pool, sauna and spa as its centrepiece. It was then briefly a Laurie Potter Gym for women and men before Liz Davenport made it the headquarters for her fashion company. The building with its ideal highway location was incorporated offices, showrooms, manufacturing workroom, sample room and distribution warehouse.

During the America's Cup the company conducted a series of functions titled ‘The Best of Australia’ incorporating an art gallery, fine jewellery displays and boutique, and entertained up to 120 people for lunches and dinner events featuring Australian food and wine. The Sanctuary became the headquarters for the Executive Women's Forum where businesswomen's breakfast functions for up to 80 people were hosted, with invited guest speakers such as Premier Brian Burke and then leader of the opposition Bill Hassell as well as international guest speakers. The Sanctuary underpinned Liz Davenport's success in expanding into international markets and in her recognition Australia-wide. It was the perfect location, highly suited to hosting events. Over a thirty-year tenure hundreds of fundraising events were held and many thousands of charity dollars raised.

The Society will build on this history, making our own story for future generations to recount. We will have achieved a new profile for our centenary in 2026. Welcome to our new home!

Sally Anne Hasluck, Chair HWCC Planning Committee

Can you assist the vision for our new home? A ‘founders’ opportunity for members.

Would you like to donate towards new stackable chairs for the community hall, bookcases for the library and bookshop, armchairs, reception desk, research tables, glassware-fast dishwasher, bar fridge?

All donations welcome and tax deductible

Please leave your name with Lesley at the office — 08 9386 3841 or admin@histwest.org.au

History Mystery Mondays



Mystery author Graeme Cocks giving his floor talk



Door prize



Janet Thickett, winner of the door prize, with her husband

Among the Society's successes in 2024 have been these morning challenges to explore the collection and answer some interesting historical questions. Volunteers from the bookshop, library and museum have worked together to make this innovative program a success and we look forward to their 2025 puzzles!

The last History Mystery Monday morning for 2024 saw author Graeme Cocks give a floor talk in the bookshop which was followed by a flurry of sales of his book on Claude Deane (offered at a special price).

The excellent barista coffee prepared by Claire from *Beachside Barista* coffee van and Billy's (bookshop volunteer) fabulous brownies were a huge hit with everyone.

Janet Thickett won the Rotary Club Traditional Steamed Pudding and bottle of Brut door prize donated by Daniel Ranshaw.

Would you have been able to correctly identify these two historical places?



Albion Hotel, Cottesloe c1880 P2002.10



The Esplanade, Perth Wanda Tennis and Cricket Club grounds

And what about this museum object?



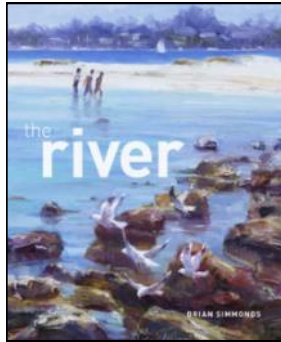
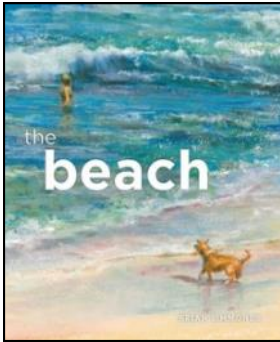
MA2008.41 Belonged to Sir Archibald Paul Burt, Chief Justice of WA

Whilst fly whisks could be used to keep flies and mosquitoes away, to sweep dust from delicate surfaces or as a weapon in martial arts, they were very much a ceremonial or status symbol carried by chiefs and date back to the 2nd Century BC. The handles were made of ivory, mahogany, sandalwood or ebony. The whisk part could be made from plant fibre such as palm leaves, coconut fibre or animal hair. Sir Archibald was WA's first Chief Justice (from 1861 to 1879). Educated in England, he came from the West Indies where his family owned sugar plantations. He wielded great power in the colony as Chief Justice and established a large family which continued to be a prominent part of WA society. Perhaps the fly whisk was one tiny symbol of his position and authority?

Many thanks to all our volunteers who organise these interesting mornings.

Booked in for a Cuppa

November last year ended on a happy note at the Society with a successful morning especially for book lovers. Congratulations to our Community Officer Lesley Burnett who organises this annual gathering with great support from our bookshop volunteers. Everyone enjoyed a happy morning which began with a sumptuous morning tea, courtesy of volunteer Billy Hawes' culinary skills! In all 66 guests attended, 35 books were sold, and total sales came to \$2,016.



Brian Simmonds with auction winner Lesley Forgione

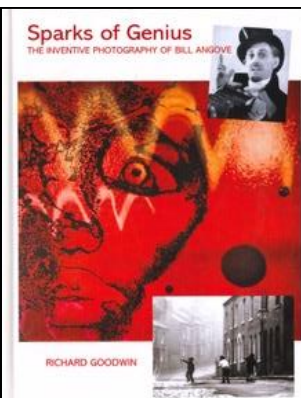
Brian Simmonds, author of *The River* and *The Beach* (both \$35 from the bookshop), led off proceedings. His pastel and pencil sketches celebrate Australians' enjoyment of relaxing and having fun outdoors. He says that his inspiration comes from his teenage years enjoying himself at Scarborough Beach. To his sketches he has added poetry and prose from well-known Australian writers to create perfect gift books. Brian prefers sketching to

speaking and so, on the morning, he set about creating a new picture of children with their dog at the beach. It was engrossing to see the image emerge to completion as the morning progressed. When it was completed, Brian offered it for auction and, after considerable bidding, Lesley Forgione took the prize and \$210 was donated to the Society.



Professor Fiona Wood was the first speaker, promoting the sale of her biography written by Sue Williams – *Under Her Skin. The life and work of Professor Fiona Wood AM. National Living Treasure* (Allen & Unwin, 2022). Fiona filled the room with her energy and enthusiasm, telling of her initial reluctance to have her story written but being persuaded eventually because all its sales support the Fiona Wood Foundation that funds research into burns, saving lives and assisting the recovery of burns patients. Fiona paid tribute to her mentor Dr Harold McComb (1924-2012), WA's first fully trained plastic surgeon. He was a memorable West Australian and a gifted plastic surgeon who

had a passion for reconstructive surgery, and became a source of inspiration to Fiona. A coalminer's daughter from a pit village in West Yorkshire, Fiona shared some memories of her life, noting the emotional impact of the Bali bombing and the vicarious trauma shared by all responders.



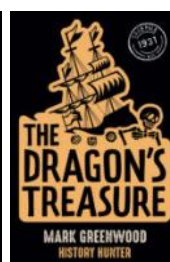
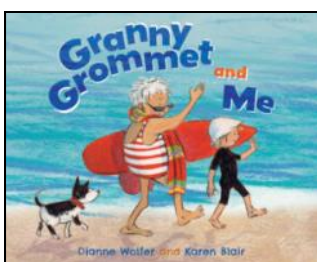
Our second speaker was Richard Goodwin who wrote *Sparks of Genius. The Inventive Photography of Bill Angove* (Linellen Press, 2024, \$50 from the Bookshop). Richard told of his good fortune in writing this biography because of the rich array of photographic and documentary records held by the family and made available to him. Angove trained as a painter and architectural draftsman, displaying dazzling talent and enjoying the pinnacle of his career in London in the swinging sixties. He died young at 55 and has always been under-appreciated in his home country. One of the pleasures of history is its capacity to look back and, to some extent at least, rectify the omissions and oversights of the past.



Bookshop volunteers – Marie Francoise Scott, Billy Hawes & Linda Bush

The morning was rounded off with a short presentation of children's books available from the bookshop and very suitable for family presents. Do check the selection if you are on the hunt for children's presents.

Many thanks to Lesley and her team for an interesting end-of-year gathering.



Christmas Party

Many thanks indeed to the Tours & Events committee and its convenor Georgina Wigley for a happy end to a pathbreaking year! In enjoying the festive season we look forward to some new beginnings for the Society in 2025 in our splendid new building on Stirling Hwy!



Pamela & Nick Drew, Wendy Lugg,
Judy Dill-Macky, Roberta Smith



Gay Black, Georgina Wigley,
Christopher Black, Kate McGurk



Steve Errington,
raffle winner



Jenny Twine



Alan Pritchard,
raffle winner



Hon Architect
Maria Gillman



Gillian & Warren Lilleyman,
Anne & Neville Garrity



Megan & Michael Ewing,
Hilary Silbert



Leonie &
John Lukin



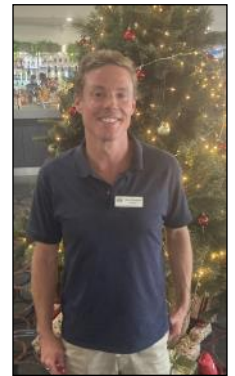
Elizabeth Vinnicombe,
Jennie & Bevan Carter



Lynne & Bob
Nicholson



Ruth & Adrian Phelps



Daniel Ranshaw



Val Hutch



Jill Paterson



Margaret Metcalf, Georgina Wigley,
Lennie McCall, Fleta Lidbury



Pamela Statham
Drew, Jo Cornish

Stories from the Storerooms

Jane Dodds

Dorothy Erickson



Jane Dodds/Dods, silhouette, ink and paper in frame c1829 A1940.19

The Society's collection contains some interesting silhouettes and portraits. One of the earliest is this ink-type of colonist Jane Dodds. Silhouette portraits were fashionable before the invention of photography and were taken from a shadow and scientifically reduced, using a pantograph. This silhouette, a rare example of an ink-type rather than a papercut silhouette, would have been taken before she left England. The portrait was donated in 1940 by Mrs Nestia Freeman who had received it from Miss Anne Thompson, daughter of Dodds' daughter Mary Anne.

Jane Dodds (1790-1844) had a relatively short but fascinating life in the colony. She was a nursemaid and housekeeper before marriage and was an early settler of the York district. With her husband James, children and servant Jane arrived on the *Rockingham* in 1830 as part of the unfortunate Peel group who settled initially at Clarence. With the failure of Peel's scheme, the family selected land at Guildford and Location K at York. According to Mrs Freeman, Jane was 'A good Christian woman, esteemed for her many excellences of character in every situation in life – with natural ability of no ordinary kind'.

The Society also holds a copy of an extract of a letter by her describing her arrival in the colony. In it she relates the night of their arrival: 'We reached Perth about five – had an interview with the Governor (who is but a young man exceedingly thin, elegant, and dignified in his manners without ostentation ... His

Excellency gave us quarters in the Vestry (which was hardly completed) for the night ... the Psalmsingers ... began my favourite tune an old version of Hundreth Psalm "Enter then his gates with praise" – and believe me, if ever I felt true devotion it was at this moment'. Later in 1833 she wrote that 'Our colony is generally in want of something'. At that time there were 'no oil or candles to be had', at others 'no tea and sugar'.

Husband James first established what was dubbed the 'Cleikum Inn' at West Guildford where he had a ferry licence in 1834. Jane described it in a letter to a relative of her former employers as 'a comfortable rustic inn, on a site that the noblest Peer in England might be proud to build his castle on ... The Governor's chaplain performs divine service here every other Sunday: he is our constant visitor'. Shortly after establishing the inn in 1834, the first in Guildford, it became the venue for the first meeting of the Agricultural Society and the centre of its activities for two years. The Society held an annual fair and race meeting in the grounds adjoining the inn. Ploughing matches were held, produce was exhibited, and prizes were awarded for the best servants!

The family moved to their property 'Cobham' at York in 1837 where James also 'purchased' their allotted land from a local Aboriginal man whose relatives helped with the jobs of carrying water and chopping wood: 'the girls often complain of their absence, as they do all the drudgery for them'. They told of how Aboriginal people believed that the settlers were friends and relatives who had died, travelled across the water, become white and returned with plenty of things that they have a right to share as the law prescribed. This, of course, led to many misunderstandings.

The Dodds' eldest son Thomas inherited 'Cobham'. Their eldest daughter Mary Ann married John (George) Thompson, baker and storekeeper of York. Their second daughter Elizabeth married John Wyborn Parker, farmer of 'Marley', at York in 1845 and acquired 'Cobham' after Thomas died.

References

I Berryman, *Swan River Letters vol 1*, pp. 217, 233-4.

R Erickson (comp.), *The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians pre 1829-1888*, p. 852.

Mrs E D Cowan, 'Letters of Early Settlers', *Early Days*, 1(1)1927, pp. 55-56.

P Hasluck, 'Guildford: 1827-1842', *Early Days*, 1(2)1927, pp. 13-14.

If Jane Dodds' colonial life interests you, you can learn more from Lilian Heal's book about her great great grandmother titled *Jane Dodds 1788-1844. A Swan River Colony Pioneer* (Book Production Services, Sydney, 1988). A copy is held in the library.

Perth City Walk

President **Richard Offen** led our recent heritage walk around central Perth. We started at the Town Hall, then took a few steps south to view the oldest brick wall in the city, originally part of the 63rd Regiment Guard House of 1833. Following that, we visited the Old Court House, Old Deanery, Government House and St John's Pro-Cathedral, the oldest church in the city. It was truly an historic short walk, rich in colonial stories.



Our Hon. Architect



We extend the Society's grateful thanks to our Hon. Architect **Maria Gillman** who has been busy on our behalf providing her professional expertise to ensure that our new premises are renovated to make them fit for purpose.

A State Cultural Treasure



Member Dr **Dorothy Erickson** has added another honour to her growing collection — she has been named 'A State Cultural Treasure'! We extend our warm congratulations on this honour which recognised the major and ongoing contribution Dorothy makes to the State's cultural life. At the Society we greatly value

the knowledge and skills which Dorothy generously provides, especially to the museum collection.

Congratulations



Our best wishes to member **Colin Cayless** who turned 101 on 2 February. We hope it was a very happy birthday!

New Volunteer



A warm welcome to new library volunteer **Nina McManus**.

Writers Group enjoying a Christmas morning tea



L to R: Hilary Silbert, Meredith Wilkie, Christine Haines, Gillian Kings-Lynne, Megan Ewing, Elizabeth Eaton, Margaret Furphy, Rosemary Hunter, Dina Lewis, Jill Paterson (sitting).

Museum/Library volunteers admiring their Christmas spread

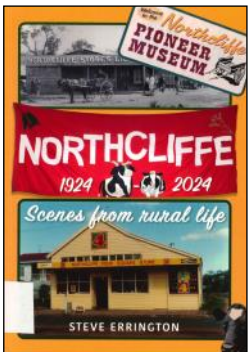


Many thanks to every one of you for your contributions to the Society's life in 2024.

Book Review

Steve Errington, *Northcliffe 1924–2024. Scenes from rural life, Northcliffe Pioneer Museum, 2024. In Library & Bookshop \$30.*

Reviewer: Jeanette Longwood



Steve Errington's latest book details the establishment and development of Northcliffe, a town celebrating its centenary. His roots are in Northcliffe and this early connection provided the impetus to research the people and events shaping the district.

Land was cleared with great difficulty under the Group Settlement scheme established by Premier Mitchell. This

scheme appeared to provide a solution for many British families struggling to establish a livelihood after World War I. Errington tells us about the families involved in this scheme, including their struggles, which were similar to those of many others in the group settlements of the time. With high hopes, no farm skills and debts beyond their means, many walked off their farms with nothing to show for their struggles. Additionally, the swampy conditions of the initial land allotments meant that the town itself had to be moved. At first, medical services were minimal if available at all. The lack of any telephone service is stunning to think about in these days where we expect constant availability wherever we travel.

Because of the initiative of those settlers who remained, extensive timber and dairy industries were established, providing livelihoods for many locals. Errington's research found that the steam locomotive

used to haul the first official train in Perth was later used in the district. Shops opened and houses were built as the population increased. Schools were developed; by 1947 there were 47 students in a one-teacher school! A junior high was sought and finally established in the early 1960s. A bushfire group was established as a necessity. A branch of the CWA was established. Dances were held, often to raise funds for a worthy cause. There is an intriguing story about a little boy lost in the bush.

Locals played (and still play) sports including cricket, footy, hockey, rifle shooting and table tennis. Mountain bike riding and walking the Bibbulmun track are currently popular activities among visitors. Errington also touches on the rise of the award-winning Bannister Downs Dairy.

Why call a town 'Northcliffe' when it is on the southern coast of Western Australia? Errington's careful and extensive research reveals the answer, together with many other interesting details. He combines text and photographs to good effect. This book provides a worthy addition to our knowledge of this part of rural Western Australia.

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Let's make a positive impact.**

ranshaw.

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

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