



HISTORY WEST™

PUBLISHED BY THE ROYAL WESTERN AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

November 2024

GENERAL MEETING

The next meeting at Stirling House is on Wednesday 20 November at 6pm when Steve Errington will present a talk titled 'Captain Mangles visits his cousins at Swan River'. Refreshments available from 5.30pm; Bookshop open until 6pm.

The Society first heard about Captain James Mangles in 1928 when George Pickering gave a talk on Georgiana Molloy's letters, including those written to Mangles in 1837-40. His paper was published in *Early Days* in 1929. Mangles was then in his flowers and seeds collecting phase but there was more to him than that.



Captain James Mangles in Ottoman dress, c1819.

Mangles visited Swan River in 1831 where two of his cousins were then living. His cousin Ellen was Ellen Stirling, wife of the colony's founder Lt Governor James Stirling; his cousin George Mangles, now a forgotten figure, was a minor colonial official, and they helped to collect plant and other scientific specimens. Mangles enjoyed a continuing correspondence with prominent colonial figures and remained a supporter of Western Australia in later life. The paper will cover Mangles' early years, his naval career, his exploits in Egypt and the middle east, the visit to Perth and his impact on gardening in his later years.

This is **Steve Errington's** ninth presentation to the Society and takes him back to his favourite historical period, the 1830s. Steve has been a member of the Society since 1963, editor of *Early Days*, a councillor, and president. Hesperian Press has published his *The Round House 1831 to 1856* and *Locked Up in Fremantle 1829 to 1856*, inspired by his time as a volunteer guide at the Round House. His most recent book is a centenary history of Northcliffe, his hometown.



NEW PREMISES UPDATE

We reported to you in October's History West the good news from Lotterywest of the success of our grant application for funds towards a purchase of a building as a new home for the Society and its collection — a History West Community Centre.

A contract has now been signed for the purchase of a property in Nedlands subject to various clauses. These clauses include undertaking due diligence on matters such as structure, funding etc.

So, we are marching forward and, as soon as this period is completed successfully, we will hold presentation and information sessions for you.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Richard Offen, President & Sally Anne Hasluck, Vice-president & Chair HWCC Committee

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

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

Wednesday 6 November, 2pm

The history of cycling in the military and in times of war

Michael Le Page

In today's world bicycles are mainly used for commuting, recreation and competitive racing. However, over time from the 1800s bicycles have been used extensively in the military and during times of war and this history is the subject of the talk. The speaker is vice president of WA's largest cycling group, the Over 55 Cycling Club Perth.

BOOKED IN FOR A CHRISTMAS CUPPA



Stirling House 49 Broadway Nedlands

Wednesday 27 Nov 10 for 10:30am start

Booked in for a Cuppa Xmas Edition 2024

Meet our extraordinary panel of speakers Professor Fiona Wood AO, Richard Goodwin, Brian Simmonds and hear their remarkable stories and enjoy glimpses of their books

Master of Ceremonies Richard Offen

A selection of children's books will also be recommended

And of course a cuppa and a festive slice will be served

Everyone welcome

Tickets \$10 each Bookings essential

[Click here to book](#)



COMMUNITY TALK



Stirling House 49 Broadway, Nedlands

Thursday 14 November, 10 for 10.30-11.30am

Domestic servants in early colonial Western Australia

Lenore Layman

Elizabeth Tichbon, Ann Heppingstone, Letty Diermot, Amelia Blagg, Dorothy Embleton, Mary Cook, Ann Dawson and so many more. Come and explore the lives of these indentured servants in the first years of the colony. Only fragments have been left for us to piece together their lives and the world they made. What we find is a different and alternative history of the early colony.

Cost \$15 Bookings essential

Tel: 9386 3841

Email: admin@histwest.org.au

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



CHRISTMAS PARTY



Come and celebrate with us

Christmas Party

at the Mosman Park Bowling Club
39 Bayview Terrace

Wed 11 December 2024, 6-8pm

Cost \$45 per person
Canapés & first drink included

As always there will be a fantastic Christmas raffle, tickets \$5 each

Your support on the night will be appreciated

RSVP Monday 2 December 2024

[Click here to book](#)



Vintage Textile Sale Saturday 16 November, 9.30am – 3pm at the Society 49 Broadway, Nedlands



You are invited to forage through an eyewatering range of vintage and hand-made textiles, carefully curated by our museum team.

A large donation of one family’s textile treasures has enabled us to hold this rare vintage textile sale for those looking for an early Christmas gift as well as for the passionate craft makers. Many items are pristine and unused. Some were lovingly hand-made by the donor’s mother and others are commercial hand-made household linen purchased but never used. There is also a range of used vintage items in good condition. The creatively inclined, however, will love the voluminous collection of tatty timeworn, pre-loved handwork just begging to be repurposed.

We have an abundance of unused hand-crocheted doyleys, Battenburg lace pillowcases, linen and lace duchess sets, cutwork guest towels, vintage embroidered doyleys, mid and late 20th century dress patterns, haberdashery, babies’ clothes, dolls, babies’ blankets, aprons, crocheted cushion covers, vintage knitting and crochet pattern books and craft books. We also have a collection of crocheted shawls that would make a perfect gift for an elderly relative or friend.

All funds raised will go towards our planned move to a new premises.

Come along, find a beautiful bargain and support the Society’s future.

History Mystery Monday

History Mystery Mondays are proving an interesting addition to the Society’s programme for members, with historical mysteries to solve, a guest author to meet (in September’s case it was Richard Offen) and a tasty coffee from the Coffee Van, courtesy of member Daniel Ranshaw.



Do join us on Monday 18 November for more sleuthing. The guest author will be Graeme Cocks who wrote *Claude Deane – Western Australia’s Motor Dealer Extraordinaire*.

Welcome to new members!

Dunsborough Historical Society, Minna George, David Lilburne, Tony Overhue, Igor Rozenberg

Speaking of the Weather

Jeanette Longwood, Hon. Librarian

Nothing can rejuvenate a flagging conversation so much as a brisk, full-blooded discussion of the weather. Everybody knows something about it and here are some of the things talked about in early colonial days.

September 1854, Victoria River: ‘The whole country was parched, vegetation dried up and bushfires were frequent, but the maximum temperature rarely exceeded 114 degrees Fahr., although the thermometer was known to stand at 98 degrees Fahr. at sunrise.’

June 1856, Fremantle: ‘... a whirlwind passed over the prison premises. A large black cloud made a loud hissing noise and carried everything before it. The whole northern boundary wall (150 yards long, 20 feet high and 2ft 6in. thick) was laid perfectly flat, turning over on its foundation like a hinge.’

July 1862, Perth: ‘The flood which has just occurred during the last few days is unprecedented in the history of the Colony. For some days the Causeway was entirely underwater and had seven or eight feet upon it. At the rear of the city was one vast lake.’

July 1899: ‘Snow was recorded at Jarrahdale, Mundaring and Gooseberry Hill.’

Source: West Australian, 2 Sept 1950, p.19, held in F CUT, (1) 30/1829

An invitation to join Tours & Events Committee

We are excited to extend a warm welcome to members to join us on the Tours & Events Committee for 2025.

Our role is to plan appealing events for the Society’s annual program of guided historic walks and tours.

We also arrange special events and members’ social events such as the annual Christmas Party.

We hold our meetings on Wednesday morning in the first week of the month at 10am.

We are a very relaxed group and share much laughter together. As a group we truly appreciate the many new friends that we meet through our membership and volunteering at the Society.

We would love to hear from you.

Call Lesley at the Society on 9386 3841 to arrange a chat with a Tours & Events Committee member.

The 59th State History Conference

Dongara, September 2024

Hosted by Irwin Districts Historical Society

Report by Pamela Statham Drew & Georgina Wigley

Waves of Change was the stimulating theme of the conference. At the welcoming ceremony speakers pointed to the pressing need we all face to become more inclusive, relevant and connected, and the conference explored some of the ways this might be achieved. Keynote speaker, Gary Martin, curator of the award-winning Greenough Museum and Gardens, discussed the innovations that could help local history museums survive in the 21st century. He focused on the need to be inclusive, letting people tell their own stories and inviting community exhibitions; working out a sustainable business programme to secure the future; and ensuring wide volunteer participation by recruiting and socialising.

Thomas Carter, a Wattandee Elder (who led the ‘welcome to country’ smoking ceremony) spoke of how he had rallied his people to preserve the old Reserve on which they had been detained in the past. He was determined that this Reserve become ‘a place of identity, a place for our people’. ‘I do not want to speak politics I want to do something about it’, he said. Setting an example that has been followed by other groups, a sustainable future has been forged from the bad memories (and the good ones) of that past. Nick Drew, convener of the Affiliates Committee, led the rollcall of Societies, with members attending standing to acclamation; and, more sadly, he announced the list of bereavements.

Cartographic Chronicles presented by Jeff Murray and Nan Broad showed how history can be gleaned from different types of maps, while Tarun Preet Singh introduced what became a second theme of the conference — the Sikhs of Dongara. He outlined the history of Sikh migration to WA in the 1890s and the strong contribution of this community to the district’s rich and diverse history. Later in the day conference participants could participate in an optional tour to discover more about Dongara’s Sikh heritage and the impact of their hawking, cameleering and farming across the Mid West. Today’s WA Sikh community is proud to acknowledge this heritage and recently over 200 members travelled to Dongara to discover more about their ancestors.

The last talk for the morning by Heather Hunwick on food history featured the work of one of the RWAHS founders, Mary Farrelly who was born in Greenough. A social reformer, she was convinced of the benefit of a diet ‘consisting chiefly of fruit and vegetables, as far as possible in their natural state’ together with whole wheat products, such as porridge, bread and biscuits baked at home; accompanied by temperance, that is, abstention from alcohol. She led the Women’s Christian Temperance Union and was a leading light in the Women’s Service Guild. Clearly a woman whose life awaits further research.

After the Sikh tour or the alternative walking tour along the Port Road, members gathered again in the conference room in the Old Priory which had been transformed into a dining room with chairs and tables for 140 people and beautifully hand-painted placemats depicting the wonders of Dongara’s marine life. As we enjoyed our food John Fitzhardinge entertained us with tales from the early days of crayfishing at the Abrolhos Islands. All were fed amply by the same team who had provided plentiful morning teas and lunch; we were spoiled for choice.

Sunday morning was divided into the business section and more talks. RWAHS president Richard Offen chaired the business meeting which announced that the Merit Award for the Affiliated Society which had made most progress went to Busselton Historical Society. Cockburn Historical Society gave a presentation on their ideas for hosting the 2025 conference, which will be assisted by the City of Cockburn. Richard reminded members that RWAHS will host in 2026 as it will be our centenary year.

After a break for morning coffee (with scones, jam and cream) Howard Gray spoke about the Batavia Phenomenon. He showed how the initial story has been told and retold so many times - one being in the late Hugh Edwards’ book, then the opera written around it, and now adoption of the name to suit so many purposes by both private business and government. Su Dhu followed with her tribute to those fishermen and women who never returned



from the sea. Her on-line dictionary of deaths includes naval people and pearl divers as well as fisher folk. Their stories are now listed at <https://www.flatsea.org/>. Bruce Baskerville then finished the session with a look at the history of Common Lands in the Irwin district and how they shrank over time.

After tea and scones plus numerous other delicacies we reconvened to hear Matt Pavlinovich speak passionately of the Midland Railway Company and its past services. Delegate John Dowson, whose father had been the last General Manager of the Company, presented the Midland & Districts Historical Society with a model of the last train in service. This was followed by a presentation that was almost theatre as Paul Barron explained that he was more film-director than historian. Nevertheless he had been busy visiting small societies and making films around objects that could tell lesser known stories. Five films are complete and the last is about the Irwin District Museum's Sikh Ledger book – accounts from their large general store written in their own language, which of course led to the story of the Dongara Sikhs. Paul pleaded passionately for more grassroots histories, hidden histories to be brought to the fore, and advocated digital media as the best way to reach younger audiences.

Bruce Baskerville concluded by thanking all participants: speakers, stall holders, the large group of volunteers and the hotel staff with a special thanks for facilitator Jenny Thomas, who had kept everything moving to time with good humour and grace. Everyone then broke for lunch and the afternoon tours offered a choice of a wildflower walk, a tour of the museum of fishing and the sea or a history of the Priory Hotel, the site of this wonderful conference, and accommodation for many delegates.

Congratulations to Irwin Districts Historical Society for a fascinating conference. Many thanks to Carolyn Jupp for her photographs, to Georgina Wigley for her wildflower pictures, and to Lorraine Clarke and Cherie Strickland for staffing the RWAHS's successful book stall.



* * * * *

2024 Merit Award Congratulations to the Busselton Historical Society

The Society has been working to improve its museum facilities, including the installation of concrete pathways to make life easier for prams and wheelchairs, and maintaining a weekly cleaning and maintenance schedule for the museum and its exhibits.

Members are active in the Busselton community: meeting cruise ships during the cruise season, joining the War Memorial Committee, visiting aged care facilities, and supporting a new local event, the Busselton & South-West Heritage Festival, as well as joining the centenary celebrations for 100 Years of Group Settlement.

As well as these community activities, the Society has started to scan and digitise its research resources and continues to digitise its photographic collection and research and label items on display in the collection.

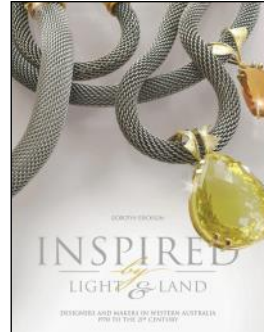
All of these activities indicate that Busselton has had a very busy and productive year.

A date for your 2025 diary! 60th State History Conference *Faces and Spaces of Cockburn — stories waiting to be told*

Hosted by the Historical Society of Cockburn & the City of Cockburn
12-14 September 2025
history@cockburn.wa.gov.au

Winner of the Williams/Lee Steere Book Prize 2024

Dorothy Erickson, *Inspired by Light and Land. Designers and Makers in Western Australia 1970 to the 21st century* (WA Museum, Welshpool, 2023).



Congratulations from us all to Dorothy Erickson for her prize-winning history of design and craft in Western Australia from the 1970s mining boom to the start of the 21st century. This is a richly illustrated book, 700 pages in length, which focuses on the practice of individual artists (with stunning images of their artworks) together with a clear account of the educational institutions and cultural

organisations which shaped, sustained and professionalised that practice. It concludes with a substantial reference section of endnotes, chronology, bibliography, websites, acknowledgements and index. This book is a sequel to the author's previous volume covering the years from 1829 to 1969, which was published in 2015.

As a prominent designer and artist, Dorothy has been active in the world she is describing and provides an authoritative history. She demonstrates the truth of her conclusion that:

Art is not made in isolation. Whether it is made as an adornment to social life, a critique upon it or an activity of personal necessity, it remains the product of the economic and social milieu in which it was developed.

The book highlights the stories of 50 craftspeople who worked with fire (potters and glass artists), with metals, precious stones, wood and textiles (weavers, knitters, embroiderers) to produce art works that have been woven, stitched, fired and forged. The works range in size from delicate jewellery to imposing installations of public art.

It is not possible to do justice to this book in words alone because Dorothy's engaging text is complemented by such an amazing array of images which bring the words to vivid life. The images illustrate the truth of the book's title that 'the environment and the special qualities of the clear light' are reflected in the made objects.

This is a book to enjoy and savour.



Anne Neil, *Going Home*, 1996



Dean Malcolm, *Crucible*, 2005



Jacquie Sprogoe, *Green Lace* brooches, 2017



Pippin Drysdale, *Green Swamp Hills*, 2014



Rinske Car Dreisen, *Firestorm* tapestry, 1973



Philippa O'Brien, *Ellenbrook public space*



Gerry Reilly, *Fire on the Water*, 2008



Jill Smith, scans for Gormley's Lake Ballard sculptures, 2003



Holly Grace, *Birch Trees Ebeltoft*, 2015



Dorothy Erickson, *Terra Australis III*, 1982



Fleur Schell, *The artist and the angler*, 2019



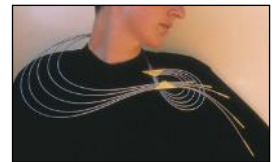
Holly Grace, *Leaf Forms*, 2005



Philippa O'Brien, *Lace*, 2017



Philip Noakes, *hollowware*, 2019



Dorothy Erickson, *The Peacock*, 1990

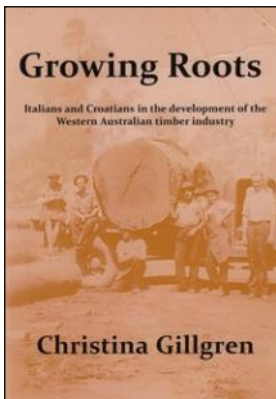


Wendy Lugg, *Fragment: Winter Forest*, 1989

Book Reviews

Christina Gillgren, *Growing Roots. Italians and Croatians in the development of the Western Australian timber industry*, Salina Books, 2024. In Library.

Reviewer: Lenore Layman



You had to earn, because when you're a stranger in a strange country, strange language, you have to do something to stay on your two feet. [Stripe Grubisin]

These workers, mostly men with some wives, did more than just stay on their own two feet – that is, earn a living and survive. From the 1920s to the 1970s they provided an increasing

component of the workforce that sustained the southwest timber industry. Arriving from Italy and the Balkan Peninsula, from what used to be Yugoslavia, they rarely spoke any English or had trade or clerical qualifications. They knew they would have to work at manual labour to survive, prosper, send money home, save to support a family and create an independent life here. They occupied the bottom rung of the occupational ladder, doing work no one else wanted to do. The bulk of these workers were, the author states, Italians and Croatians although they also included Macedonians, Serbians, Montenegrins and others. This interesting book explores their working lives in Western Australia. It is not an easy or happy story.

The book's strength lies in the workers' voices telling their stories in their own words. Christina has used 54 oral interviews to piece together their role in the timber industry. We hear how they saw things — the hard and dangerous work, their struggles for payment, poor working conditions, the favouring of Anglo-Australians, the ethnic prejudices and discrimination, the personal abuse and WA society's reluctance to accept them as equal members of the community. Those who tell their stories are the survivors and they show how WA slowly became more accepting. But even today some still don't feel at home — *We're here, we elderly people, always as foreigner, never how it should be, come inside, always as foreigner.* [Stefania Rijavec] In this oral recall there are many repeated stories but also clear differences of memory. Memories reveal the complexities of the past as well as its dominant truths.

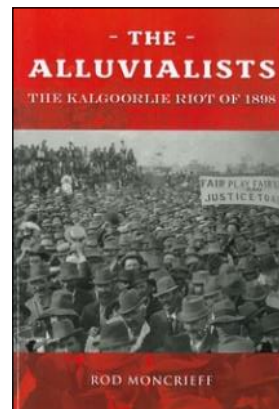
These lives were shaped by the timber industry. We follow the history from the 1920s when they first arrived in significant numbers to find jobs in the bush as hewers on private property and to work in the small spot mills, often run by their countrymen. Jobs in the big mills like Bunnings were closed to them. Rising unemployment with the onset of depression increased antagonism to 'foreigners' and the war years were also

hard, especially for Italians who were classed as 'enemy aliens'. Greater acceptance came slowly in the postwar decades and these families began to 'grow roots' in WA. Above all, the book exposes past ethnic prejudice and the damage that was done to people's lives.

The history of WA timber work and the operation of the industry in the 20th century has not been told from the perspective of its migrant workforce, making this a book which will interest readers.

Rod Moncrieff, *The Alluvialists. The Kalgoorlie Riot of 1898*, Hesperian Press, Victoria Park, 2024. In Library.

Reviewer: Ed Jaggard



One of the best-known episodes of the 'Roaring Nineties' in Kalgoorlie-Boulder was 'The riot where no-one was hurt,' the title of a poem describing the confrontation between angry miners and WA's Premier Sir John Forrest, on 24 March 1898. The background to the affair was recently passed legislation by the Forrest government banning shaft sinking deeper than ten feet

on large, underground pegged leases. Forrest and his Minister of Mines, Wittenoom, attracted enormous criticism for penalising the small miners, the affair coming to a head at the Kalgoorlie meeting.

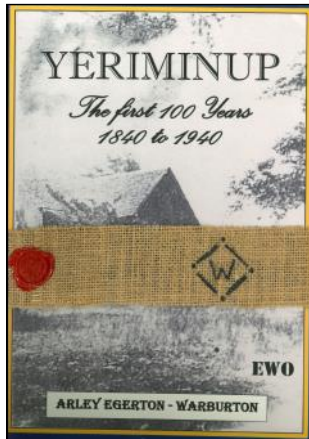
The so-called riot (violence was notably absent) has been briefly described by most WA historians writing of the period. The circumstances preceding it and the affray itself, including the unfortunate Forrest being poked in the ribs by an errant umbrella wielded by his personal secretary Fred North, are well known, so why has the author examined the affair again? The justification is in his wide-ranging detail: eight chapters beginning with the incarceration of two alluvial miners and ending with the aftermath of the riot.

Moncrieff tells his story entertainingly, providing the political and social context as well as introducing interesting detail about the principal figures. Besides Forrest and his Minister, the articulate Cornishman Vosper, *Kalgoorlie Miner* owner-editor John Kirwan, Fred Hare the local Warden, and assorted politicians have their place. At times the author might be criticised for his forensic descriptions, but generally they add colour to a well-told analysis. For example, on page 72 he quotes a newspaper report suggesting that the only casualties of the 'riot' were the men who got in the way of beer barrels being rolled in and out of the nearby hotels, 200 barrels being emptied by the thirsty crowd during the afternoon!

The book's eye-catching cover and a selection of photographs are evocative of the time and place and add to the book's interest.

Arley Egerton-Warburton, *Yeriminup: the first 100 Years, 1840 to 1940, The Author, 2024.* In Library.

Reviewer: Jeanette Longwood



The bright blue cover of the slim hard-back volume will stand out on your bookshelf. Egerton-Warburton traces family origins back to Arley Hall, Cheshire, in the early 18th century. George Edward Egerton-Warburton arrived in King George's Sound via Van Diemen's Land with the 21st Regiment in 1840. Letters home detail his experiences and describe his early days in this colonial settlement. He evidently intended to stay

as he married Augusta Spencer, a member of a well-known family, and also acquired lease holdings. The couple initially lived at Strawberry Hill, which is now a National Trust property.

George took up 320 acres west of Mount Barker, named it St Werburgh's and moved his family there in 1849. Money from an elder brother enabled him to build St Werburgh's Chapel near to their homestead. You can request to view the chapel when next visiting Mt Barker.

Egerton-Warburton details the slow development of colonisation in the hinterland of the south coast, and the difficulties experienced by early settlers and businesses in that region. He intersperses his text with copies of photographs, newspaper articles maps and documents. Two family trees at the rear of this book

demonstrate the lineage of George Edward and Augusta Egerton-Warburton.

By 1855 George leased 20,000 acres on the Gordon and Franklin Rivers, stocking them with sheep. A son, George Grey Egerton-Warburton, worked closely with his father and later owned part of this area called Yeriminup, an Aboriginal name for the place. The subsequent activities of the people associated with Yeriminup are the focus of much of this book.

In all, this book provides insights into an area of land development that has been less explored than the settlement at Swan River. Additionally, the difficulties experienced by an early settler family provide interesting reading.

Affiliates Newsletter

If you would like to read about Affiliates' activities, please visit—

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

ADVERTISEMENT

Free barista coffee, free entry, everyone welcome at Stirling House, Nedlands!
History Mystery Monday 18 November.
A mystery photo in the library.
A mystery artifact in the museum.
A mystery presented by Graeme Cocks, author of *Claude Dean, Western Australia's Motor Dealer Extraordinaire* in the bookshop.



Daniel Ranshaw

0415 181 664

or

dranshaw@realmark.com.au

Realmark

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

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