

Affiliates Newsletter

2024-10

September 2024

59th STATE HISTORY CONFERENCE TERRIFIC SPEAKERS AND A LOT OF FUN

Bruce Baskerville, Chair, Irwin Districts Historical Society (IDHS)

Over 140 people attended the 59th State History Conference in The Priory Hotel in Dongara, on the beautiful Batavia Coast, hosted by Irwin Districts Historical Society over the weekend of 6-7-8 September 2024. The conference coincided with the start of the wildflower season and came a fortnight before the King's Birthday long weekend and start of the Spring school holidays. It also turned out to be huge sporting weekend in Dongara with golf and netball carnivals and football (Dongara won the grand final), so the town was full to bursting with a heady mix of sporty types and local history culturati, with plenty of *bonhomie* to go around!



The Conference theme was 'Waves of Change', which partly referred to the diverse maritime and fishing heritage of Dongara and Port Denison, and partly to looking at new developments and ways of doing local history and local museums. Both strands were woven throughout the program.

The Friday evening 'twilight welcome', with a spit roast and drinks at the Marine Rescue Centre in Port Denison, filled the hall and its verandahs. Local MLA and Leader of the Opposition Hon Shane Love addressed the crowd, followed by Deputy Shire President Barry Wyse who welcome everyone to the Shire, with RWAHS President Richard Offen rounding out the VIP welcomes. An enjoyable evening concluded with everyone well-fed and watered, and a surprise donation of fish and chips from the adjacent Port Store for all the volunteers cleaning up the venue, after which nothing remained but some scraps of wrapping paper! A big thank you to all the volunteers who staffed the registration desks, the spit, the bar, the tea urn, the food servery and the clean-up. It was a propitious start to a weekend of history.



The Sweeping Dance clears away negative energies, and makes way for new

Continued page 3.

Next Affiliates Committee
Meeting will be held on the
16th October 2024

Did you know the RWAHS Book Shop have more WA History books for sale, than any other Book Shop.

Open Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm, situated at 49 Broadway, Nedlands, WA 6010.

www.histwest.org.au under services, History West Shop or for any queries please see the contact details below.

If you have a book or know of a book that you would like the Book Shop to stock please contact the Book Shop - bookshop@histwest.org.au or 9386 3841.

Please send all queries and submissions relating to the newsletter to Rosie Stroud at the Eastern Goldfields Historical Society. eo@kalgoorliehistory.org.au or phone 9093 3360.

16 April 1937

HISTORICAL SOCIETY. Suggested
Katanning Branch.

Mr. A. Thomson, M.L.C., is endeavouring to form a branch of the Western Australian Historical Society at Katanning and has asked the central body to advise him as to the best procedure to follow. A copy of the constitution and other information has been forwarded to Mr. Thomson, who hopes to arrange for a meeting of those interested in the project at Katanning.

Your Committee Members

An Affiliated Societies Committee is elected each year at the Annual State History Conference of Affiliated Societies. This Committee acts in the interests of Affiliated Societies and is represented on the Society's Council of management. Representatives for 2024-25 are below:

- Nick Drew – **Convenor** (RWAHS- Council Rep) - nickdrew@bigpond.com
- Fiona Bush – Minute Secretary (Mundaring & Hills) - fiona.bush@icloud.com
- Ashleigh Murch (Denmark) - ashleigh.murch@gmail.com
- Bruce Baskerville (Irwin & Districts) - mrbaskerville@gmail.com
- Keith & Suzanne Cundale (Maylands) - maylandshs@gmail.com
- Marilyn Gazeley (Cervantes) - cervantes50th@hotmail.com
- Lyn O'Hara (South Perth) - lynn@eon.net.au
- Ellen Parrick (York Society) - ellen.parrick@gmail.com
- Rosie Stroud (Eastern Goldfields) - eo@kalgoorliehistory.org.au
- Richard Offen – ex-officio (President RWAHS) - richard.offen@inet.net.au
- Jacqui Huntley (Wanneroo & Districts) - huntleyjacqui@gmail.com
- Denise Cook (City of Cockburn) - dcook@cockburn.wa.gov.au
- Natalie Evans (Collections WA) - natalie.evans@amaga.org.au
- Tony Bird (City of Cockburn) - tbird@cockburn.wa.gov.au

Please feel free to contact anyone on the committee if you have a query or concern.

Committee Meeting News

2024 Merit Award: Busselton Historical Society

The Committee was impressed with the Society's work in several areas. These include recent improvements to their museum facilities, such as the installation of new concrete pathways to improve accessibility for prams and wheelchairs, as well as their weekly cleaning and maintenance schedule for the museum and its exhibits.

The Society's involvement in community affairs is extensive and includes such activities as: meeting cruise ships during the cruise season; membership on the War Memorial Committee; visits to aged care facilities; and supporting a new local event, the Busselton & South-West Heritage Festival, as well as 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 to research and label items on display in their collection.

All of these indicate that Busselton has had a very busy year while still managing to inform and include its own membership.



HISTORICAL SOCIETY. Suggested Katanning Branch continued ..

Writing in the "Great Southern Herald" recently Mr. Thomson said that some years ago, when the Young Australia League visited **Katanning** for the first time, Mr. J. J. Simons gave a guinea to form the nucleus of a fund for the erection of a memorial at Police Pools. The site of the first police camp in the **Katanning** district.

Mr. Thomson suggested that as a means of commemorating the coronation and an incident in the early settlement of the **Katanning** district the **Katanning** Road Board should plant one of the royal oaks from Windsor Forest at Police Pools and attach to it an inscribed bronze plaque indicating the date of planting and the date that Sergeant Grover and his family established the first outpost of law and order in that part of the State.

Urging support for the establishment of a branch of the Historical Society in **Katanning**, Mr. Thomson said it was lamentable that no organised method of obtaining and recording information existed in the district.

Members of the early families were passing away and it would soon be almost impossible to obtain from their descendants reliable data regarding the early days.

Supporting the suggestion that a memorial should be placed at Police Pools another writer to the newspaper said he was glad that Mr. Thomson's historical conscience had pricked him as, with the assistance of other district members of Parliament, it should be possible to form a branch of the Historical Society. He expressed regret that, in spite of the efforts of those interested in the project, people of standing in the district and the schools had not responded to appeals for support.

West Australian (Perth, WA : 1879 - 1954), Friday 16 April 1937.

Saturday morning heralded the start of the conference proper. Members of the Wattandee Littlewell Aboriginal Corporation under the guidance of elders Thomas Cameron and Annette Bynder performed a moving Sweeping Dance with a narrated explanation, then a warm and inclusive Welcome to Country from Elder Thomas. The ceremony took place on the lawns surrounded by terraced seating and accompanied by bird song from the surrounding trees.

Upon moving into The Priory Conference Room the formal and friendly official opening was made by the Hon Sandra Carr MLC for Agricultural Region. Keynote speaker Gary Martin, Curator of Greenough Museum & Gardens, drawing upon his long experience of how a museum can change and survive and remain relevant to its communities, challenged the audience to move beyond old pioneer stereotypes, and focused on four key points: **permanence**, **inclusivity**, **sustainability** and **participation**.

The days of the local museum as a The Sweeping Dance clears away negative energies, and makes way for new beginnings guardian of pioneer relics has passed, at least in those museums that are thriving and evolving. How do we keep moving as we approach WA's 200th? **Permanence** means asking what is best for the collections, maintaining viability, not struggling on to the last surviving member and just hoping someone will take it all on. **Inclusivity** means including Aboriginal histories under Aboriginal guidance, letting people tell their own stories, encouraging community exhibitions, loaning objects to other community groups, using languages besides English. **Sustainability** means realising museums are businesses, keeping good records and sound finances (building trust), philanthropy and DGR, and having opening hours that suit visitors. **Participation** means really valuing volunteers and not taking them for granted, a good mix of skills and capabilities, regular meetings, socialising and fun, team building. Gary's presentation contains much more but can be summarised in the motto "engaging-evolving-enhancing". Resting on our laurels is a luxury no local museum research centre can now afford – if it ever could.

The other speakers that morning continued the theme. Thomas Cameron and Annette Bynder spoke of their long-term project preserving and interpreting the former Littlewell Aboriginal Reserve at Mingenew, and how they have been able to bring younger generations back to their heritage; Jeff Murray spoke on using maps in local historical research, with some great examples from the stock routes and pastoral stations, as well as some warnings on identifying inaccuracies and gaps in map materials; Tarun Preet Singh spoke on the history of Sikh migration to WA since the 1890s, and how the Sikh community in WA has become increasingly aware of its rich heritage across the State; and Heather Hunwick's paper on the links between 19th century food reformers in the US and UK that turned out to be very influential in WA, especially through the Greenough-born Mary Farrelly née Maley, bought the morning session to a close, and to lunch.

Two tours on the Saturday afternoon were both booked-out. One took in a leisurely stroll along the left bank of the Irwin River on the Old Port Road, through 'Old Dongarra' and a picturesque setting that belied the ferocity of occasional floods before reaching Denison House (the Old Benedictine Monastery) where the Art Group laid on an afternoon tea in which the Group's fabled scones heavily featured. The other tour by bus explored Edwardian-era Dongara on the north bank of the river, and the hamlet of East End, exploring the town's Sikh heritage. A highlight was alighting at Dongara Cemetery to view the empty grave site of local community and Sikh leader Sojan Singh and exploring the story of Sikh cremations in Dongara (which helped legalise cremation for all in 1929). The tour concluded at the Old Police Station & Courthouse with a viewing of the Sikh store journals and a lovely Indian-themed afternoon tea from Sea Folk Café.



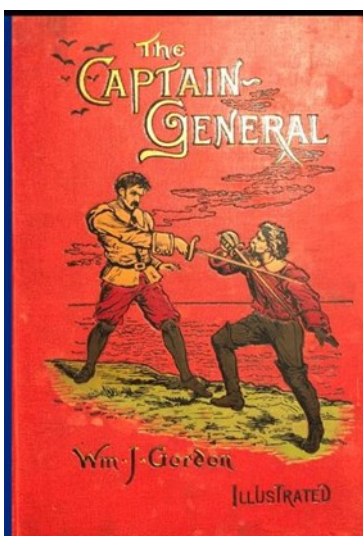
Bruce Baskerville and Tarun Preet Singh at the empty grave

Saturday evening saw the conference dinner held in The Priory Conference Room. A diverse buffet menu was given full justice by all, and I don't think it was possible for anyone to leave without a very full belly. Between courses IDHS Patron and local community and fishing industry leader John Fitzhardinge shared some amusing anecdotes from the early days of the crayfishery in the Abrolhos Islands, before the evening came to a convivial conclusion.

Sunday morning began with the RWAHS & Affiliated Societies business session, which included some important discussions about annual reporting and volunteer insurance, as well as the presentation of the annual Merit Award to Busselton Historical Society. Following morning tea, Sunday's speakers began with Dr Howard Gray tracing the changing research and interpretations of the Batavia shipwreck (1629) and posing the question 'where next?'; Su Dhu gave a very moving presentation on the Flat Sea project, researching and memorialising the many fishers lost at sea, especially those for whom no bodies were ever recovered (every WA coastal historical society should be involved in this project); Bruce Baskerville moved back on shore with a look at two historical local institutions, the Irwin Commons and the Victoria District Co-operative Flour Mill to demonstrate a history of people working together rather than competitively; Matthew Pavlinovich drew oohs and aahs with his talk on the Midland Railway Company and a



rich selection of historic train and station images, and his emphasis on the ways local societies can work together to create regional networks; and then film producer Paul Barron's reflections on making the 'Such Was Life' series, which has now involved several historical societies and museums across the Batavia, Gascoyne, Goldfields and South West regions, gave insights into how we can all extend the audiences for our museums and history publications, and also brought the session to a close. After effusive thanks and closing remarks the RWAHS President formally closed the conference, and it was off to lunch.



**Batavia lesson: can romance
alone sustain our local histories?**

Three tours were on offer for the afternoon. The longest was a bus tour of historic Middle Irwin and the James Drummond Wildflower Walk, where the first flush of flowers was coming into view, perhaps most enticing being the drifts of cowslip orchids and stands of elegant spider orchids, and then afternoon tea in the field from Poppies at the Park Café. A maritime theme pervaded the second tour with a viewing of the Blue Marlin boat restoration project and then the Packout Room Museum of Fishing and the Sea, with afternoon tea from the Sunset Diner. The third tour was of the Old Priory itself, which had been largely designed with help from Old Dominicans (students) and a surprise appearance by Father Ted, and afternoon tea from the Priory Hotel in which the rock cakes were a real hit (rock cakes being a traditional afterschool treat at the convent school).

People then finally began to wend their ways home, although happily many stayed on for longer touring in the shire and broader Batavia region, with its many attractions of local museums, heritage places, nature reserves and places of natural beauty.

In hosting the conference, the IDHS was assisted by many corporate, public and private sponsors and philanthropists. An honourable mention in this regard goes to our host at The Priory Hotel, Kerry Grove. Kerry is also an IDHS member and volunteer, as well as local businesswoman, undertaking a huge conservation project at The Priory, and it has been wonderful, through the conference, to combine the two key themes in its history, hospitality and education. The speakers were outstanding and feedback on their talks has been overwhelmingly positive. It was an honour to have the RWAHS president and council in our shire, and hopefully not for the last time. Lastly, but in no way leastly, to the numerous local volunteers (members) who have worked for months to get everything just right in the conference planning and operation, testing tour routes, setting up the Priory history exhibition in the conference room, and so, so much more.

59th STATE HISTORY CONFERENCE TERRIFIC SPEAKERS AND A LOT OF FUN Bruce Baskerville, continued

Every conference goer had contact with IDHS secretary Trish Parker who went way above and beyond the call of duty to ensure everything worked as it should. Trish's energy and vivacity played a starring role in the conference's success. And nothing would have been possible with our legion of 'sky blue shirts', and I thank them all for their generosity of spirit and contributions to community. Even the fresh spring wildflowers and the Indian Ocean sunsets were more spectacular than usual! Dongara's charms were on full display.

See you all in Cockburn for the 60th Conference.



Su Dhu delivering her paper



Drift of cowslip orchids



Priory Window



Spider orchid



Merit Award to Busselton Historical Society



RWHS business gets under way



Matt Pavlinovich at the lectern



Welcoming smiles at the registration desk



Priory Conference Room, ready for business



Morning tea awaits

Affiliates News

Kalamunda & Districts Historical Society - For some time, we have been wanting to improve our reach on social media, and with our Publicity Officer working full time and others who weren't familiar with Facebook or Instagram, we looked to the younger generation.

Lochie Watts and Indiana Shales are our youngest volunteer members. Lochie has just started Uni, studying Journalism and Indie is a year or two older.

Both have volunteered here at Kalamunda History Village for some time and have the requisite experience with social media, being teenagers!



Indie and Lochie work with our Publicity Officer and President to formulate a plan and theme for the next month. They work with our photo collection or go and take relevant photos to use over the next few posts. Lochie has taken over our Facebook account and has increased our followers to 19,000 and Indie has done the same with Instagram to 190 followers. **So, join our Facebook page and keep up with what's happening in Kalamunda.**

Midland and Districts Historical Society is pleased to announce that in partnership with the City of Swan we will be commencing monthly tours of the iconic Midland Town Hall.

The Midland Town Hall is the jewel in the crown for Midland. The tours will provide an opportunity for more people to learn about its history in the heart of Midland.

The first tour is scheduled for Saturday September 28 at 10am. The tours are free.

Each tour will be limited to 15 people, if you are not successful in booking a spot on one tour day, you can be put on a waitlist for the following month.

Attached to this email is the tour flyer with a direct link to the booking page or follow this link: bit.ly/midlandtownhall

Serpentine Historical Society - The Old Bridge School, cnr. Gordon Rd & SW Highway, will be open 10am - 2pm, Sunday the 8th of September.

City of Swan



Midland Town Hall Tours

Explore the iconic Midland Town Hall

Join us to discover more about the iconic building with the Midland and Districts Historical Society's knowledgeable tour guides.



Midland Town Hall
312 Great Eastern Hwy, Midland WA 6056

Saturday September 28
Saturday October 12
Saturday November 23

To book your ticket scan the QR code below or visit bit.ly/midlandtownhall or email placeactivation@swan.wa.gov.au



City of Swan

Affiliates News

Eastern Goldfields Historical Society - The EGHS hosted some of the delegates from the Australasian Mining History Conference (held at Leonora 9-13 September 2024) on Saturday 7th September at the Old Boulder Power Station. After a morning of tours, with Life Members, Scott Wilson, the group joined volunteers at the power station for a dry blowing and panning demonstration with Lindsay Stockdale and Gerry Lamont. After the demonstration lunch was served and everyone was invited on a tour of the EGHS. After lunch the group went in search of the Super Pit, returning to the Society for afternoon tea and one last excursion to the Boulder Pioneer Cemetery, accompanied by Scott and President Tim Cudini.

Sunday proved to be just as busy for the volunteers with a trip out to Kanowna, guided by Scott and some billy tea and other refreshments at the Deep Leads site. After morning tea was served the group made their way back into town where they enjoyed lunch at Hamond Park. The day concluded with a trip to King Battery.

The conference continued in Leonora/Gwalia.

York Society -



The York Society Presents 2024 York Art & Craft Awards

5-13th October
Optional Theme

MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THIS....

Enter at www.theyorksociety.com

Drawings
Pastels
Printmaking
Mixed media
Oils
Acrylics
Pastels

Fibre & Textiles
Fine Metals
Jewellery
Beadwork
Ceramics
Glass
Mosaics
Woodcraft
Sculpture

Sponsored by
Boyle Family
Lutze Family
Michael Watts
Elisabeth Christmas

Entries close 5pm
Tuesday
17th September



7

Aurizon Community Giving Fund Applications now open.

Since 2011 the Aurizon Community Giving Fund has been giving back to our local communities and has supported over 630 charities and community groups in the areas of Health & Wellbeing, Community Safety, Environment, and Education.

Apply now for a grant of up to \$20,000 to support your charity or community group. Applications are now open and will close on Friday 25 October 2024 at 5pm AEDT.

For more information see the link below -

www.aurizon.com.au/community/community-giving-fund



The Eastern Goldfields Historical Society acknowledges the support of the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder.

DISCLAIMER

Accuracy of facts or the opinions expressed in any of the articles of this newsletter, are not necessarily those of the Royal Western Australian Historical Society and the Society cannot accept responsibility of any action taken as a result of statements contained within.

Funding Opportunities

Marking (First World War) Private Graves Grants Program - This program aims to contribute to community recognition of the service and sacrifice of service personnel in the First World War. It forms part of Program 3.1 – War Graves under Outcome 3 of the DVA Portfolio Budget Statement which is an ongoing grants program to assist with the purchase of a grave marker for private unmarked graves of veterans of the First World War.

The intended outcome of the program is to contribute to the work being undertaken by the community to mark private graves of veterans of the First World War so as to:

- Enable community recognition of service.
- Preserve and add to the knowledge of, or provide information about, Australia's wartime heritage.

A one-off funding of up to \$620 is available per grave. Applicants can seek funding for up to ten grave markers in each individual application.

<https://www.dva.gov.au/news/latest-stories/marking-gravesites-first-world-war-veterans#:~:text=The%20Marking%20First%20World%20War,ineligible%20for%20an%20official%20commemoration.>

Connellan Airways Trust – General Grants - This program aims to assist, support and enable improved social and economic outcomes for people of Outback Australia. It will assist rural and remote people to overcome challenges caused by remoteness to enable:

- Access opportunities for increased education, health or wellbeing.
- Improve social and economic outcomes by expanding skills, increasing remote livability and reducing isolation.

Grants of up to \$10,000 are available.

Applications are to be received by the Executive Officer by the 15th of February, May, August and November each year. The Trust's decision will be notified to applicants by the end of March, June, September and December each year. Applicants who may require a faster turnaround are encouraged to contact the Executive Officer.

[Online Grants for outback Australians - Connelan Airways Trust](#)

