



# HISTORY WEST™

PUBLISHED BY THE ROYAL WESTERN AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

September 2025

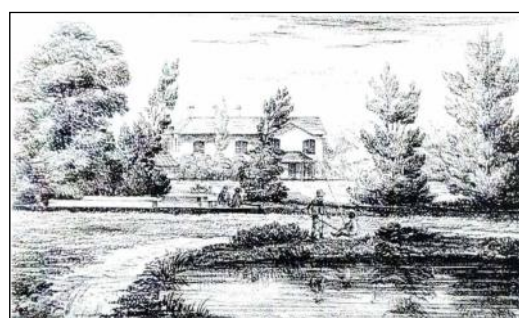
## GENERAL MEETING

The next meeting is on Wednesday 17 September at 6pm when Dr Pamela Statham Drew will present a talk titled 'The story of how Ellen Stirling's family – the Mangles – helped to keep Swan River colony afloat'  
109 Stirling Hwy Nedlands  
Refreshments available from 5.30pm



Ellen Stirling née Mangles in her early thirties, probably painted on her return to England in 1833

This talk focuses on Ellen Stirling's family, the Mangles. Ellen had become the wife of Captain James Stirling on her 16th birthday and came out with him and her sons on the *Pamelia*. She was attractive and a great help to her husband during his Swan River colony regime, 1829-1839. This paper will concentrate on her brothers, Frederick and Captain Charles, who ran the family's large shipping and ship chandlery business. We will see that, by funding and organising an annual visit by a cargo ship, the brothers ensured a life-saving link to the home country in the critical early years of the colony. Bad press from some early shipping disasters had severely curbed the numbers of ships visiting Swan River which, of course, cut off food supplies and news. Breaking that hiatus was just one of the ways the brothers helped the colony to survive.



Woodbridge: The Mangles Estate near Guildford, England

Pamela taught Australian (and mostly West Australian) Economic History at UWA for 42 years. In retirement she has continued to pursue her interest in Western Australia's history and has now published ten books with that theme and one outlier, for the fun of it, on the NSW Corps. Pamela is also a long-term and key volunteer at the Society, convening Reading & Publications Committee.



### Nominations for Council 2025-26

The election of President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and four Councillors will take place at the forthcoming AGM on Wednesday 15 October.

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

Nominations close at 4pm on Wednesday 17 September

### Look forward to seeing you at The State History Conference 12-14 September

Jakovich Centre 4 McGrath Rd, Henderson

<https://www.cockburn.wa.gov.au/City-and-Council/Events-and-News/Events-and-Workshops/Culture/ROYALS-Conference-Faces-and-Spaces-of-Cockburn>

### Notice of Annual General Meeting

The meeting will be held at 109 Stirling Highway, Nedlands on Wednesday 15 October at 6pm

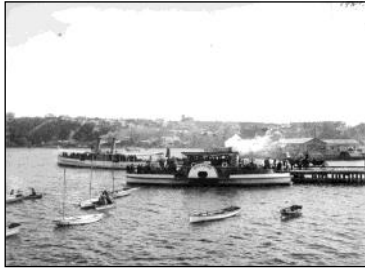
### Welcome to new members!

John Bungey, Hon. Barry House, Raymond Marks, Pippa McIntosh and Gary Gray, Alan Naber, Royal Agricultural Society of WA, Joy Sinclair

# Forthcoming Events — Don't forget to book!

Or ring the office 9386 3841 [admin@histwest.org.au](mailto:admin@histwest.org.au)

## HISTORY IN THE CITY



Duchess, Manx Ferry and the Perth Waterfront

**Citiplace Community Centre, Upper-Level  
City Railway Station Complex**

**Wednesday 3 September, 2pm start**

**Michael Nind**

### Transport on the Swan River

The Swan River was an important transport route from the early days of colonial settlement. However, the use of sailing boats and paddle steamers gradually gave way to the more practical and manoeuvrable ferries to transport people and goods along the waterway.

As technology improves, will there be an increase in public transport along the Swan River with the development of the electric era? What does the future hold for Perth's waterway?

How will this unfold with time?

## COMMUNITY EVENT



**109 Stirling Hwy, Nedlands**

**Saturday 4 October, 1.30-3.30 pm**

**Louisa Clifton: The First Lady**

**Norm Flynn**

Tours & Events Committee has much pleasure in inviting members, friends and descendants of Louisa to an afternoon of thespian delights. Join us while we watch actors from Bunbury perform an entertaining historical documentary compiled and narrated by Norm Flynn using Louisa Clifton's (1814-1880) diaries, letters and artwork.

Afterwards join the actors and playwright to discuss their reflections of the experience as you enjoy afternoon tea.

Cost: \$15.00 Bookings essential

Click on link or scan QR code

<https://square.link/u/ixFlZ0oJ>



## COMMUNITY TALK



**109 Stirling Hwy, Nedlands**

**Tuesday 30 September**

**10 for 10.30-11.30am**

**Ivan King**

**Actor & founder of the Museum of  
Performing Arts at His Majesty's Theatre**

Come and hear Ivan's backstage gossip and anecdotes of a lifetime in the theatre – performing, touring, collecting memorabilia and establishing the Museum of Performing Arts at His Majesty's.

Cost: \$15.00 Bookings essential

Click on link or scan QR code

<https://square.link/u/rXzml6u8>



## COMMUNITY WALK



Peninsula Farm (Tranby) Maylands P2012.999

**Maylands Peninsula Walk**

**with Maylands Historical and Peninsula Association**

**Saturday 25 October**

**9 for 9.30am until 12 noon**

Join us on a walk through the beautiful Maylands Peninsula starting at the Maylands Golf Club and including a guided tour of Tranby House. Keith and Sue Cundale will talk about the peninsula's rich history.

9 for 9.30am start from Maylands Golf Club  
15 Swan Bank Road Maylands

Bookings essential - only 20 places available.

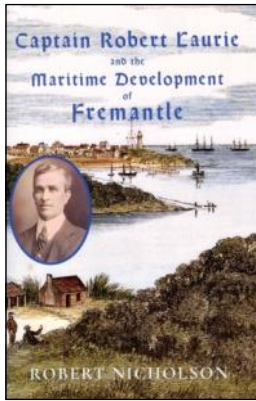
Cost: \$15

Click on link or scan QR code

<https://square.link/u/vnr6MEHh>



**BOOK LAUNCH**



**109 Stirling Hwy, Nedlands  
Friday 19 September, 5 for 5.30pm**

***Captain Robert Laurie and the Maritime Development of Fremantle***

A Scottish born sailor at fifteen Robert Laurie migrated to Australia to join the Adelaide Steamship Company which, in 1880, sent him to Fremantle where he fought to achieve proper marine standards to ensure the port attracted the patronage of international shipping.

**Robert Nicholson**

To be launched by the Hon. Robert French AC  
Do join us for the occasion and speak to the author

Drinks & nibbles

Past President, the Hon. Robert Nicholson AO, is the great grandson of Captain Laurie & a former Judge of the Supreme Court of WA & later a Judge of the Federal Court of Australia.

Please book by clicking on the link  
<https://www.trybooking.com/DEIMO>

**COMMUNITY TALKS**



**Sharing your collection**

Do you have a passion for collecting?

We invite members who have a collecting hobby to tell us about it.

We plan to hold a Community Talk at which 2 or 3 members talk about their collecting passion and show some examples from their collection (10 minute talks with 5 minute Q & A).

If you are a collector and are interested in sharing your story, please email us with a short explanation of your collection.

We would love to hear from you.

Lenore Layman (on behalf of Community Talks team)

[admin@histwest.org.au](mailto:admin@histwest.org.au)

**A very happy 90th birthday Frank!**



All our good wishes go to member Frank Pritchard from Kojonup who turns 90 on 30 September. We hope you have a wonderful celebration of the occasion and more of them to come.

**GIFT CARD**

**Give the perfect gift by visiting the Society's website**

Obtain a voucher for yourself or gift one to a friend  
And help to support the Society at the same time!  
Available on our website, top Left Hand side  
and look for "Gift Cards"

<https://app.squareup.com/gift/MLNMVS95FXC21/order>

**Message to all members**

We hope you are enjoying your membership of the Society and look forward to your renewal.

2025-26 membership invoices have been sent.

For assistance, contact  
[accounts@histwest.org.au](mailto:accounts@histwest.org.au)  
or phone (08)9386 3841

# Community Talk

## Liz Davenport returns to 109 Stirling Hwy

July's talk proved a memorable day for the Society. We decided that this first public event in our new premises should explore something of the history of the building into which we have moved. Constructed in 1980, this modern building has already had an eventful history most notably as the headquarters of Liz Davenport's fashion enterprise. We were delighted to welcome Liz back to Western Australia and back to the premises. Many of her friends and former clients were equally keen to welcome her, quite a number wearing their favourite Liz Davenport garments. So the day proved something of a stylish fashion parade! A full house of 80 people came in the morning and more than 60 in the afternoon. It was a wonderfully full day and the many photographs capture some of the atmosphere of the occasion. Liz sailed through the day with undiminished enthusiasm and her accompanying team of Shelley (model), Wendy and assistants helped ensure that everything proceeded in lively fashion and without a hitch!

Liz began by noting that the only part of the building she recognises now is the carpark; the rest has been restructured with added floors, walls and rooms. It was originally built in 1981 as a copy of The Sanctuary, a glamorous health spa and beauty centre for women in London's Covent Garden with a huge central atrium featuring a pool, waterfall, white doves in bronze cages, spa, sauna, gym, coffee shop, clothing boutique and hairdressing salon. This exclusive woman's business, membership-only, proved unprofitable and was replaced (and masculinised) by a Laurie Potter health club. This also had a short life before Liz saw the opportunity offered by the building's central and highly visible location for her fashion and fabric business. It became her headquarters with cutting and work rooms, storage, dispatch and administration. Her fashion parades were staged on a steel catwalk across the pool! Unlike the earlier businesses, this one thrived and Liz remained in the premises for thirty years (1984-2014).

These were exciting years and the Spinnaker collection to celebrate the America's Cup held off Fremantle in 1987 was an early highlight. Liz combined fashion with fundraising and campaigning for environmental change. Stressing that less than ten percent of native forest remained, Liz designed her Leaf collection and made headlines by being arrested in a karri forest protest. Other vibrant collections followed – Sunburnt Country collection, Butterfly collection, Blue collection (to celebrate fairy wrens), Save the Ocean collection and promotions of Australia's finest woollen fabrics. These high-fashion designs were then adapted into commercial ranges and the business prospered.

Liz concluded by insisting that we must look to the future as well as the past, arguing that what Perth lacks today is an Art & Design Precinct. At home in Queensland Liz has a large archive of fashion history with her dresses, fabrics and records safely stored. She argues that there is a great opportunity to create such a precinct to house the many private collections now sitting unseen by everyone but the collector; all it takes is vision – and passion!

Altogether an exciting start to public life in our new home!



## A museum evening with Liz

On Thursday evening the Society joined with Liz Davenport to deliver an event with a different focus. An appreciative audience of fashion design staff and students from North and South Metro TAFEs and Curtin University listened attentively to a conversation between Liz and our museum team co-convenor **Wendy Lugg**. Liz was particularly pleased to be able to offer some sound advice and inspiration to students starting out on their fashion careers.

Liz learned to sew on a treadle machine when she was only six and was making her own clothes by the age of eleven. She trained as a teacher and taught for some years but making clothes remained her passion. So it is not surprising that the fashion industry drew her in. Initially she worked as an agent, but the frustration of the delays in meeting local orders with garments made interstate led her to create her own, made locally. This grounding as an agent was invaluable in understanding how to market her own garments.

Asked how she established her international fashion career, Liz spoke about the importance of identifying her intended market then designing clothes to meet the needs of that market. Pattern cutting and cloth choices were crucial elements of her success. She became known for designer clothes that women could actually wear. Her garments were cut to fit women of different sizes, using fabrics such as silk and wool that had a soft drape to flatter the figure.

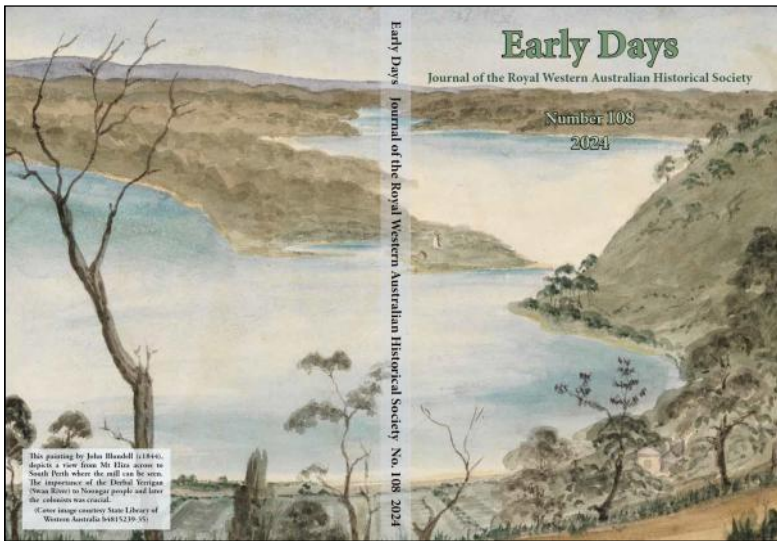
A key piece of advice Liz delivered was to grasp every opportunity and not be afraid to tackle the seemingly impossible. This attitude saw her establish a highly successful boutique that she maintained for eight years in the middle of the London's Bond Street high fashion precinct. Liz stressed that the spirit of entrepreneurship is invaluable.

For most attendees, this was their first engagement with History West and its extensive costume collection. We were delighted with their enthusiastic response to viewing the collection store and the varied selection costume items we displayed as an enticement for them to return. We have already had several requests for class visits and we look forward to welcoming them to view the collection in more depth.

We are grateful to Liz for her generous spirit in so willingly sharing her knowledge and answering all questions asked of her. The evening could not have been such a success without the efforts of the museum team who worked tirelessly to prepare and install the displays and helped host the evening. The Society is particularly grateful to TAFE lecturer and volunteer Silvana Mancini, whose assistance and advice ensured the event was worthwhile.



# Launch of Early Days, 108, 2024



A gathering of authors and editors

Congratulations to our two wonderful editors, Heather Campbell and Jennie Carter, and their assistants on the successful completion and publication of our annual journal. The issue should now be in the hands of all members who requested a copy, either in print or digital form. As always, the journal showcases the research papers delivered at our regular monthly meetings and reminds us that every year we learn more about WA's past.

Aboriginal-settler interactions in frontier times are the subject of two papers. **Janet Osborne** explored the 1840s story of Governor Hutt's provision of five town lots in Perth, Guildford and York to Nyungar owners Wyreup, Karbyne, Mandal, Wobut and Kowitych as a 'stimulant to their industry'. The scheme failed because none of the recipients was judged by the colonial authorities to be 'sufficiently civilized'. This small fascinating study vividly illustrates some of the complexities and anxieties of frontier times where, unequally matched, coloniser and colonised attempted to come to terms with the presence of the other. A second insightful article by **Matthew Wrigley** focuses on the impact of colonisation on the eastern goldfields. Frontier times in this region have been little researched by historians and the author points to the generally prevailing argument that it was loss of water resources which decimated the existing Aboriginal population. Looking closely at the sources, he discovers a more complex picture in which differences in both the natural environment (geology and flora) and in the responses of the different mobs across the region were also influential in the varied responses to the 1890s invasion of prospectors.

**James Cassidy** looks at the disproportionate influence of the very small group of investor-settlers who dominated the land grants of the early Swan River colony. He argues that they 'privately understood the violence essential to their success in the colony', expressed forcibly as pastoralism expanded. **Steve Errington** focuses on members of the most influential of the early colonial families — that of Ellen Stirling (née Mangles), the Governor's wife, specifically two of her cousins George and James Mangles, both of whom had passing acquaintance with the colony.

**Michael Nind** carries readers into the twentieth century to tell the complex story of researcher and 'agitator' J G Hay. His account provides the background to Alice Mayes' research work in London that resulted in the 'Swan River Papers', a boon to generations of researchers. Hay's clashes with J S Battye, Public Librarian, are explored and we learn more of Hay's focus on the 1827 voyage of the *Success* and the pre-colonial contact history of WA. None of the author's account reflects well on J S Battye. **Richard Offen** takes readers to another aspect of early twentieth century history through his exploration of the life of the Royal Hotel on the corner of Perth's William and Wellington Streets. He traces the history and heritage of the building from 1882 to the present. **Bobbie Oliver** reminds readers of the domestic conflict that arose through the conscription of young men for national service in the Vietnam War. Her focus is powerfully on the experience of the draft resisters.

The issue begins with an overview from the State Librarian **Catherine Clark** (with Kate Gregory as co-author) of the role of today's State Library. Its title tells its story – 'Old Acquisitions, New Meanings'. She writes of old archival collections being 'rediscovered through research'; in other words, the State Librarian tells of how her public institution is changing to serve its contemporary clientele.

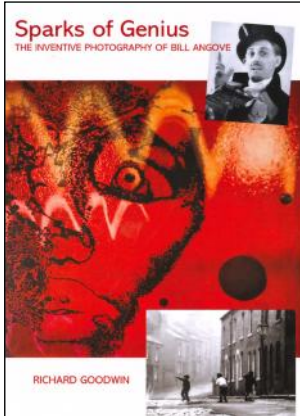
As you can see, there is something for everyone in this issue. We do hope you enjoy reading it all.

If you wish to buy more copies, they are for sale at the Bookshop for \$15 each.

## Book Review

**Richard Goodwin, *Sparks of Genius. The Inventive Photography of Bill Angove*, self-published, Lancelin Press, 2024. In Library & Bookshop \$50**

**Reviewer: Ed Jaggard**



Writing in 1966, Perth journalist Cyril Casellas described Bill Angove's photographs as 'the work of a genius'. In this entertaining biography of Angove, Richard Goodwin leaves little doubt that he shares Casellas' opinion of someone extraordinarily talented who deserves greater recognition.

Angove's career unfolded in identifiable phases, in Australia and London,

beginning with his exploration of photography during his schooldays. Descended from a family of government surveyors, always on the move, he attended schools in Albany, Bunbury and Roelands. While living in Roelands he was given a Brownie Box camera, motivating him to photograph local people and town locations.

Soon after leaving school at fifteen, Angove joined the AIF, taking his camera with him into the Army Corps when he was sent to Wagga, NSW. There he was encouraged to develop his creative urges in both photography and sketching, with some success. Discharged in 1946, Angove then took advantage of a Commonwealth Rehabilitation Scheme to further refine his skills. Convinced that his future lay in photography he moved to Perth where, for several years, he practised social photography – shooting people in the streets and at social occasions such as weddings.

From 1947 until 1955 he embarked on a program of self-education, attending classes in drawing and painting, and architectural drafting, as well as joining the WA Camera Club. Furthermore, as he explored the boundaries of photography and art, he widened his social and professional contacts, associating with illustrators such as Paul Rigby, Norman Aisbett and Rolf Harris. By the early 1950s, not only was Angove on the committee of the Camera Club he was also giving lectures on psychological aspects of art and photography, while building connections with Perth Technical College and UWA.

Although enjoying the Club's traditions of exhibitions and competition, by 1955 Angove realised he could advance his career by moving to London. He took with him a folio of work, a set of 'highly experimental and innovative prints', a willingness to work in different mediums, and a belief that he could produce work straddling painting and photography, and incorporating emotions. Always seeking to challenge himself Angove initially gained experience by working in the dark rooms of several studios where he was poorly paid but enriched by experience. One of the better-known studios, the Mayfair, employed him and its owners, impressed by Angove's prints which they

referred to as 'avant-garde', 'crazy', and 'eye catching', gave him the opportunity to work with several of their high-end clients, such as Pfizer and the *British Medical Journal*.

Besides advertising, Angove expanded his repertoire to working with ballet dancers and fashion models. A gregarious bachelor, throughout his four-year London sojourn he built up a circle of connections – Cecil Beaton the renowned society portraitist, Australians Sidney Nolan, Arthur Boyd, Keith Michell and others who helped infuse his photographic/artistic work with a striking creativity encompassing art, music, and colours. By 1975 when he returned to Perth he was popular and well known in London's artistic circles.

Within a year Angove left Perth for Sydney but before he moved he boldly produced a one-man show at Perth's Kodak Gallery, an exhibition that was later shown in Sydney. There opportunities abounded, illustrating his well-known reputation. He quickly gained contracts with *Vogue Australia*, Penfolds, CIG, United Foods and others. In a city where photographers were in demand and well-paid, Angove more than held his own.

Seeking greater creative stimulus, in 1962 Angove returned to London where he quickly joined the efflorescence of Australian expats becoming a presence in British cultural life: Clive James, Germaine Greer, Richard Neville, Barry Humphries, Sidney Nolan. At this time a growing body of opinion, Angove included, believed that photography could be art. Meanwhile he was profiled in art magazines, his reputation leading to his successful establishment of his own independent studio.

By 1970 as the British economy slowed, Angove decided to return to Perth where he soon contributed to exhibitions that enhanced his local reputation. Also, he became a member of the Institute of Australian Photographers, joining a group labelled photographic artists. He worked regularly with the WA Ballet Company and the WA Opera, taught at Perth Technical College and operated a freelance business. Advertising and promotional assignments provided his income; for example, Plunkett Homes, the National Trust, Sportslane, and the inevitable young models.

Angove also had the satisfaction of being included in the WA Art Gallery's 1979 exhibition, *Western Australian Photographers*. 'It was a sign of photography taking its place in the visual arts constellation'. And it was the first local exhibition to give photography the recognition it had already gained world-wide. For Angove this was another opportunity to demonstrate his attachment to music and the performing arts. Unhappily it was to be his last, for he died one year later.

Afterwards, Angove was acknowledged by those who knew and worked with him as an original and creative artist. Furthermore, as an admirer pointed out, when overseas 'he worked with some of the world's great photographers, and all were impressed by his skills'.

Through patient research in the Angove archive and many interviews, the author has produced a 242-page biography overflowing with detail of his subject's world. Lavishly illustrated, with oddly presented but informative endnotes and an index, *Sparks of Genius* successfully rescues William Angove from the obscurity which had almost claimed him.

## Welcome to new volunteers



Barbara Harris  
New Library Volunteer



Prartho Goldney  
New Museum Volunteer

### Second Hand Book Sale

**Fri 7, Sat 8, Sun 9 November**  
**Fri 4-6pm, Sat & Sun 9-4pm**

Your generosity has been overwhelming –  
thank you all

**We have all the books we need except for Western  
Australian titles and good children's books**

Book Sale Convenors Pamela & Nick Drew  
[nickdrew@bigpond.com](mailto:nickdrew@bigpond.com) 0409 290 895

### *Affiliates Newsletter*

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

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

### Exhibition at the Old Court House Law Museum Stirling Gardens, Perth

April 2025-April 2026

### **The Unfortunate Woman v Her Well-Respected Killer A Domestic Violence Trial in 1876**

*The Unfortunate Woman* covers a domestic violence trial in 1876 and provides a fascinating glimpse into a tragic and compelling chain of events which still holds relevance today.

It focuses on the Supreme Court criminal trials of Kenneth Brown, who was the father of Edith Cowan and a man from a well-respected settler family. Kenneth murdered his wife, Mary Ann, on 3 January 1876. Due a multitude of cultural, social issues and the structure of the colonial justice system, it took three trials to find Kenneth Brown guilty of murder, despite shooting his wife twice at point blank range in front of witnesses.

Read historical material surrounding the trial, such as media reports, court transcripts and documents written by Chief Justice Burt. The exhibition includes an exciting short film to grasp the parallels between past and present in relation to family and domestic violence and the law.

Museum open Tues-Sun 10am to 4pm.

Entry is free - donations appreciated

<https://lawsocietywa.asn.au/old-court-house-law-museum/>

**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.).

If you're a member who receives this newsletter in hard copy by post, and you're happy to receive it by email, please contact 9386 3841 or [admin@histwest.org.au](mailto:admin@histwest.org.au) with your email address, and save money and trees by receiving it online!