

Affiliated Societies

of the Royal Western Australian Historical Society

Newsletter

September 2025

2025-21

Kalamunda & Districts Historical Society

Kalamunda & Districts Historical Society on Facebook and Instagram

Here at Kalamunda, we are very lucky to have two young volunteers who are still studying at higher level education. Lochlan Watts has been coming to Kalamunda History Village for a long time, as his grandmother is a long-term volunteer and would bring him when school allowed. Indiana Shailes has been with us for a few years now. When we first suggested that we needed to upgrade our social media profile Lochie and Indie were very keen to be involved.



Mrs Palmateer with daffodils for sale

Over the past two years they have posted weekly on both platforms and most recently have been posting about the Parmateer family who settled in the Bickley Valley. This 3-part post garnered over 26,000 views and over 11,000 interactions! This also translates to visitors.



The first "house" of the Palmateers in Bickely Valley

we had 7 sites on the State Heritage Register.

Their research into the Blue Goose plane crash was most extensive in Gooseberry Hill, and they pulled together all of our archival material which was scattered over several archival envelopes. So, if you haven't already started with social media, I would thoroughly recommend you do so. Start by following Kalamunda History Village on both Instagram and Facebook.

Next Affiliates Committee Meeting will be held in Septmeber.

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 109 Stirling Hwy (corner Baird St), 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



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 2025-26 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
- Marilyn Gazeley (Cervantes) - cervantes50th@hotmail.com
- Lyn O'Hara (South Perth) - lynn@eon.net.au
- Rosie Stroud (Eastern Goldfields) - eo@kalgoorliehistory.org.au
- Richard Offen (President RWAHS) - richardooffen@outlook.com
- Jacqui Huntley (Wanneroo & Districts) - huntleyjacqui@gmail.com
- Natalie Evans (Collections WA) - natalie.evans@amaga.org.au
- Trish Parker (Irwin Districts Historical Society) - Trishpark@bigpond.com
- Wendy Garstone (Bayswater Historical Society) - wendygarstone@gmail.com

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

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.



Swan River Pioneers 1829-1838 (Inc.)

From Humble Beginnings to a Thriving Society - The Swan River Pioneers 1829–1838 (Inc.) (SRP) was established to unite descendants of early Western Australian settlers and preserve their stories for future generations. From its earliest meetings, attended by only a few passionate family historians, the Association has grown steadily into a respected organisation with members across Western Australia, Australia and internationally.

Why 1829–1838? The chosen timeframe reflects the formative years of the Swan River Colony, spanning from its official founding in 1829 to 1838, by which time the Colony had gained stability and many of the families that would shape its future had arrived. Notably, this period also aligns with the years when Captain James Stirling, the Colony's founding Lieutenant-Governor (later Governor), was in charge. His administration managed the challenging transition from a fragile outpost to a community establishing its institutions, farms and settlements. By 1838, the foundations of colonial society were well established, making this decade a logical focus for the Association.

Purpose and Activities - The Association exists not only to foster fellowship among descendants but also to support research, education, and public recognition of the Colony's foundation years. SRP publishes regular newsletters and the *Settlers Gazette*, hosts guest speakers, organises tours of heritage sites, and encourages members to share family stories, photographs, and records.

A valued tradition of the Association is issuing **Certificates of Descendancy** to members who can demonstrate their lineage to a Swan River settler between 1829 and 1838. Each application undergoes a thorough review process to ensure genealogical records are accurate and the certificates' historical integrity is preserved. This process requires patience and careful verification but greatly enhances both individual family histories and the community's collective heritage.

Swan River Pioneers 1829-1838 (Inc.) continued

Growth and Contribution - Recently, SRP has expanded its focus to include the roles of women and children in the early settlement era, ensuring a comprehensive view of colonial life. The Association also actively participates in community events, notably WA Day, acknowledging the sacrifices and achievements of those who established new lives in challenging conditions.

This growth has been driven by the dedication of volunteers, who manage membership records, review certificate applications, plan events and maintain partnerships with heritage organisations. The adoption of digital tools and online platforms has further improved the Society's ability to connect with members, share family histories and efficiently preserve records.

Upcoming Annual General Meeting -The Association's Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held in October at the Swan Valley Adventure Centre. The AGM offers members the chance to elect the Committee for the upcoming year, review the activities of the past twelve months and help shape the future direction of the Society. Members are encouraged to attend, share their views and play an active part in guiding the ongoing work of the SRP.

Looking Forward - Starting from humble beginnings, Swan River Pioneers 1829–1838 Inc. has grown into a dynamic and progressive society. The Association stays true to its original goal of honouring the pioneers of the Swan River Colony, while embracing new opportunities and challenges. Through its publications, activities, and traditions such as the Certificates of Descendency, SRP makes sure the stories of the first settlers are remembered and remain relevant for future generations.

Current Members and descendants are warmly invited to take part by attending the AGM, applying for a Certificate of Descendency or encouraging family and friends with links to the Swan River Colony to join the Association. Together, we can ensure that the legacy of the pioneers is remembered, celebrated, and preserved.

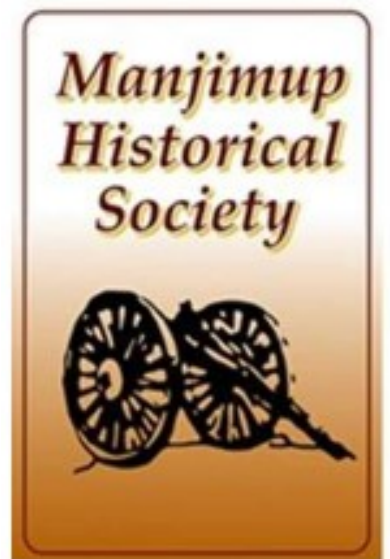
Submitted by Kim Edwards

Manjimup Historical Society

Timber Industry and Forestry workers Memorial by Ian Wilson

During the 1990's two people who had a long history of working in the southern forests of Western Australia worked up a memorial board, which was mounted in the State Timber Museum in Manjimup. The memorial board showed the names of Timber Industry and Forestry workers who lost their lives, in the line of duty, within the timber region commonly known as Southern Forests. Small metal tiles with the workers names, with dates, were affixed to a dressed timber board. Looked the part, just inside the entrance of the Timber Museum.

The memorial board created a good amount of interest. However, over time it became apparent there were some errors contained on it. Expensive to replace tiles, with the museum without funding to keep it accurate and maintained.



Manjimup Historical Society Continued

Society member Bernice Holbrook, worked with others to review the board details and undertook further research. This groups research was being input into a website which was being developed - Forest Deaths in Western Australia.

With the revamp of the State Timber Museum there was an updated list developed (2020), which was to be projected onto a wall, within a dedicated Memorial Room. However technical issues over recent times have forced the closure of this area. The



updated list was extracted from the websites data from all forest regions across Western Australia. However errors continued- a transcription from a 1899 newspaper article ...*their tent at the No. 6 mill*, had been input as No. 6 State Sawmill, potentially altering the context of the incident

With the Native Forest Transition funding that the Society has gained, the room which contained the memorial will become the Reflections Room. The reflection of how the timber industry has transitioned over time. As well as a revamp of the Memorial, with an updated list (2025).

Manjimup Historical Society

The COVID-19 pandemic (also known as the coronavirus pandemic), caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), began with an outbreak of COVID-19 in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. It spread to other areas of Asia, and then worldwide in early 2020. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) on 30 January 2020, and assessed the outbreak as having become a pandemic on 11 March.

The Reflections Room project will be finalised by the end of the 2025.

The Back Page or looking back!

During the early months of 2020, the world as we knew it changed dramatically---- with the COVID-19 pandemic. However, through the altering rules of lockdowns, travel restrictions and almost house arrest, it provided an opportunity to gather all of the MHS 'bits & pieces' within one's home and store them appropriately. Or perhaps create "year books" to show the Society's journey over the years. Has become a good collection.

Still work in progress, however, they show the breadth of activities the Society has been involved in over the last 30 years or so. While someone else may be enjoying a little less clutter.

Submitted by Ian Wilson



Celebrating Our Open Day and Looking Ahead

The Corrigin Pioneer Museum has had a memorable year, highlighted by the success of our Open Day on Sunday, 4 May 2025.

This special event brought together visitors from across the Wheatbelt to celebrate the pioneering heritage of our district.

The day featured guided tours of the museum's heritage buildings and machinery displays, offering guests the chance to step back in time and experience the daily lives of early settlers. Our volunteers proudly demonstrated restored vintage farm equipment and shared stories connected to the collection, bringing history to life for both long-time residents and first-time visitors.

Community stalls added to the festive atmosphere, with local produce, crafts, and refreshments available throughout the day. Families enjoyed children's activities and the relaxed country setting, making the event a genuine gathering of community spirit. The Open Day also provided a valuable opportunity to connect with new supporters and highlight the importance of preserving our local history for future generations.

The Corrigin Pioneer Museum was founded in the 1970s by volunteers passionate about safeguarding the stories of the Wheatbelt. Over time, it has grown into one of the region's leading heritage attractions, featuring heritage-style buildings, restored machinery, and a wide range of domestic and social history displays. Today, the museum continues to be operated entirely by volunteers, and its success is a testament to their commitment and the strong support of the community.

Looking ahead, we are excited to announce a new event for next year – the Dusty Boots Festival, which will be held at the museum on Saturday, 4 April 2026 (Easter weekend). This heritage-themed festival will feature live music, food vendors, children's rides, market stalls, and of course, our much-loved museum displays. With an expected attendance of several hundred visitors, it promises to be a lively celebration of Wheatbelt history and culture.

The Corrigin Pioneer Museum is proud to be part of the network of affiliated historical societies across Western Australia, and we look forward to continuing to share our district's heritage with the wider community.

Submitted by Ken Baldwin

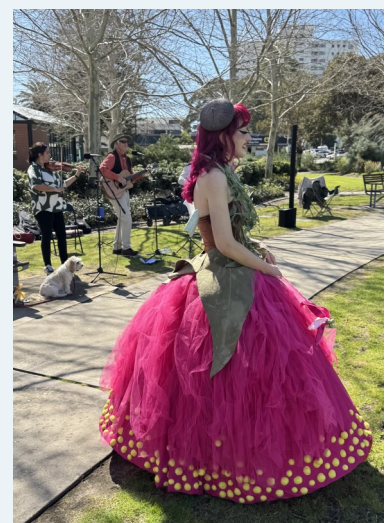
South Perth Historical Society

The South Perth Historical Society had the perfect weather for Wattle Day and feedback has been so positive. The stalls operated by charities all received significant donations and the atmosphere was, as said to us, 'joyful'. Gumnut children and dogs dressup competitions were popular.

The day finished with the Phillip Pandal Youth Heritage Awards and all winning entries are displayed in Heritage until November. Oliver Newman won the major award based on some original Second World War research. He is helping to curate our next exhibition about South Perth and Wars, to open in November. The Old Mill Theatre next door is having a musical, Mates, at this time too.

On Sunday 21 September at 2pm in the South Perth Bowling Club Lucy Hair is giving a talk about UWA's Two Centuries of Chinese Heritage Project. South Perth is proud of its Chinese market gardens.

Submitted by Anthea Harris



Fremantle Studies Day 2025

FHC LH001753 E&F



Sunday 19th October 2025

12.45 pm for a 1.00 pm start

Fremantle Port Authority Building, Victoria Quay

Bookings ESSENTIAL, for security purposes

Email: secretary.fhs@gmail.com by Friday 3rd October

Cost: Members \$20.00, non-members \$25.00

Payment can be made online:

Account name: Fremantle History Society BSB: 036-306 Account No: 604012

Launch of Fremantle Studies Volume 14

Program:

Neil Stanbury

The box that changed a city - the social and economic impact of containerisation

The advent of containerisation in the 1960s, starting with the arrival of the container ship *Encounter Bay*, transformed the way in which cargo was handled through Fremantle and eventually most ports around the world, bringing to an end almost all break-bulk cargo handling. This development introduced great economic and logistic efficiencies but was accompanied by significant social, cultural, labour and commercial changes to not just the waterfront, but also Fremantle, most particularly in the West End. This paper by Fremantle Ports explores this transition.

Neil Stanbury is Manager Communications and Community with Fremantle Ports. Prior to joining the port seven years ago, Neil was Director Media and Public Affairs for the Western Australia Police between 2003 and 2017 and formerly a journalist with The West Australian, Seven News and the Yorkshire Evening Press. In 2007 he was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to research the public information response to terrorist incidents, visiting Spain, the UK, Netherlands and Singapore.

Max Vickery

Ways of relating: Noongar people, settlers and the environment in early colonial Fremantle

From Captain Fremantle's proclamation of possession at Manjaree (Arthur Head) in 1829, through to the blasting and reshaping of Derbal Nara (the mouth of the Swan River) in the 1890s, colonists related to nature as a site to be reconfigured for their own ends. Their activities over the nineteenth century, however, were always entangled with Noongar ways of relating to the environment. This paper will discuss colonial and Noongar interactions with and through the environment around Fremantle across the nineteenth century.

Max Vickery is an historical researcher of early colonial history in Whadjuk/Country in the south-west of Western Australia with a background in history, Indigenous Knowledge, and anthropology. His

Honours thesis, Beings and Relations, completed at UWA, is a study of the interaction of Noongar and colonial social forms and ontological commitments in the first two decades of colonisation, bridging the sub-disciplinary research areas of Indigenous biography, histories of emotions, legacies of British slavery, and more-than-human histories. Currently, Max is engaged in similarly informed research on the ontological interactions between colonists and Noongar people implicated in the desecration of Noongar sacred sites over the first century of Noongar-colonial contact in Fremantle.

Leigh Straw

The Ballroom Murder: A scandal in Perth

In August 1925 Audrey Jacob of Fremantle, shot dead her former fiancé in full view of hundreds of guests at a charity ball. Arrested with the gun still in her hand, it seemed an open and shut case of murder, and possibly would have been if Arthur Haynes had not been assigned to her defence. His manipulation of the press and ability to exact sympathy from the jury led to an extraordinary outcome. Based on firsthand archival research and newspaper accounts of the day, this case from 100 years ago reveals the power of the press and privilege. Leigh discusses her book which describes this sensational true crime story.

Dr Leigh Straw is Associate Professor of History at Notre Dame University, Australia, where she teaches in Australian, European and Modern US history. Leigh is the author of several books including The Worst Women in Sydney: The Life and Crimes of Kate Leigh which was longlisted for an Australian Book Industry Award, and Lillian Armfield, a biography of Australia's first female detective. Her WA history books include The Petticoat Parade: Madam Monnier and the Roe Street Brothels for which she was joint winner of the 2022 Margaret Medcalf Award, and The Ballroom Murder: The dancefloor shooting that shocked Australia. Leigh's most recent book is The Kennedys at Cape Cod, 1944: The Summer That Changed Everything (Bloomsbury, August 2025).

Aurora Philpin, Andrew Oakeley and Alex Aberle-Leeming (WreckSploration)

Wadjemup Kepawirn/ the Rottnest Deepwater Scuttling Ground

From 1910, redundant vessels have been scuttled in the deep water southwest of Rottnest Island, known as the Wadjemup Kepawirn (Watery spirits)/ Rottnest Deepwater Scuttling Ground. The wrecks include hulks, tugs, submarines, naval vessels, aircraft and more. They tell a story of Fremantle's maritime operations including dredging and port development, steam shipping and coal hulks, salvage and vessel recycling. Many sites are unidentified, with few divers able to visit them safely due to their depth, while many other sites remain to be discovered. The WreckSploration team are local divers using custom-made camera rigs to produce 3D models of the graveyard wrecks that lie in depths of 45-120 metres, which is outside the reach of recreational or commercial divers. In this talk WreckSploration and the WA Museum will present the results of a project they have been collaborating on since 2023 to locate, 3D map and identify sites in the Wadjemup Kepawirn.

Aurora Philpin is a maritime archaeologist and Assistant Curator of Maritime Heritage, WA Museum. With an interest in telling the stories of unidentified shipwrecks to understand their significance, Aurora works with her team to identify sites based on information in the historical record.

Alex Aberle-Leeming works in IT sales and has long had a passion for technical and cave diving across WA and abroad including cave exploration work in the Nullarbor Plain and technical dives off the WA coast. Alex also has an extensive background in aquatic and maritime rescue, volunteer with the Swanbourne Nedlands Surf Lifesaving Club and as a swiftwater rescue operator.

Andrew Oakeley is an IT Consultant with 10 years' experience in technical diving. He is passionate about encouraging people to further their technical diving skills, and is a driving force behind many local and overseas diving projects. Andrew is one of the few divers in Australia completing dives deeper than 200m.