

Affiliated Societies

of the Royal Western Australian Historical Society

Newsletter

July 2026

2026-30

2026 Affiliated Societies State History Conference

A Century of Change: Where to Next?

Book now: <https://www.trybooking.com/DMQTP>

1926 – 2026

A Century of Change

Where to next?

11-13th September 2026



The Royal Western Australian Historical Society and its Affiliated Societies

61st State History Conference

Hosted by

History West/Royal Western Australian Historical Society
on Whadjuk Country



Next Affiliates Committee
Meeting will be held in
August 2026

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 phone 9093 3360.



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
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- Trish Parker (Irwin Districts Historical Society) - Trishpark@bigpond.com
- Wendy Garstone (Bayswater Historical Society) - wendygarstone@gmail.com
- Elizabeth Craigie (Busselton Historical Society) - secretary@busseltonhistoricalsociety.org.au

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.



Most Recent Newsletters: Historical Society Matters.

In Issue 62 (June 2026), RHSV offers strategies to welcome into our societies Australia's diverse cultural groups while, in different succession-planning, RAHS reports on student placement programs that skill and welcome another 'next generation'. HSNT reflects on weather extremes as creators and disruptors of 'history', while Launceston Historical Society reminds us that history and heritage exist not only in what we see around us but in the ground beneath us. CDHS reports on Professor Frank Bongiorno's Canberra Day Oration, concluding with Frank's University of Canberra role that seeks to bring academic and local historians together, and, History West recalls 'Dorothy' who, in the late C19th, provided 'ladies' with recipes along with a differently progressive outlook. RHSQ informs readers about Greater Brisbane Council's formation and upcoming 'centenary' book, while HTSA reports on South Australia's History Festival of 550+ events, and the Port Lincoln Times' digitisation.

To download the latest newsletter click [here](#).



**Member of the Federation of
Australian Historical Societies**

COMMUNITY EVENT

ARCHAEOLOGY EXCAVATION GUILDFORD POST OFFICE 1897

Work alongside University of Notre Dame archaeologists
to uncover the past, catalogue discoveries and explore history

FREE TO JOIN DIG OR COME ALONG TO WATCH
REGISTER NOW | LIMITED SPACES AVAILABLE

Saturday, 8 August — Monday 10 August 2026

Join us as we work to make history matter:



Digging Into Guildford's Story

Guildford's much loved 1897 Post Office is ready to reveal a new layer of its story — and the community is invited to help uncover it.

Hosted by Bilgoman Property, with support from the Swan Guildford Historical Society and the University of Notre Dame Australia, the excavation will run from Saturday, 8 August 2026 to Monday, 10 August 2026.

Be part of living history. Work alongside archaeologists, students, Society volunteers, and heritage supporters in small 2-hour sessions exploring Guildford's past. Places are limited so register early.

Led by Dr Shane Burke, Vice President of the Swan Guildford Historical Society and Senior Lecturer in Archaeology, the excavation will investigate the site of the former Convict Depot Hospital and historic well at the rear of the Post Office.

Dig dates and sessions

Places are limited, with small public sessions available across three days.

- Saturday, 8 August 2026: 12.30 pm–2.30 pm
- Sunday, 9 August 2026: 9.30 am–11.30 am and 12.30 pm–2.30 pm
- Monday, 10 August 2026: 9.30 am–11.30 am.

Come ready to excavate, ask questions, meet local history champions, and help shape the next chapter of the Post Office restoration.

Viewing the Dig - If you don't wish to participate in the excavation but are interested in learning about archaeology and what is involved in an excavation, you are welcome to come along to view the works. Register early as places are limited.

[Select this Link to View Event Details](#)

[Select this Link to Register](#)

Swan Guildford Historical Society

Why join?

- Get hands-on in one of Western Australia's most historic towns.
- Help uncover clues linked to Guildford's past
- Learn from archaeologists, students, Society volunteers, and local heritage champions.

Play a part in bringing a beloved Guildford landmark back to life.

Excavate. Discover. Belong.

Explore Guildford's layered past and help bring a treasured landmark back to community life.

What lies beneath may reveal the everyday traces of people who lived, worked, recovered, laboured, and passed through the site.

"We know the historical record of the site's general use, but history does not describe all functions or small details about people's lives. The community excavation will discover artefacts that will give a richer understanding of the areas use," Dr Burke said.

"By undertaking this dig, with the Swan Guildford Historical Society and University of Notre Dame Australia, and inviting the local community to participate, we feel we are demonstrating our commitment to honour and preserve the heritage of Guildford and to reactivate the Post Office to serve the Guildford community in a meaningful way."
Chris McLoughlin of Bilgoman Property said.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Will people with mobility issues be able to participate?

Archaeological excavations may be challenging for people with mobility issues. Participants should have a general level of fitness, similar to what is required for activities such as gardening at home.

Can I bring children?

No, we ask that children under 16 do not attend this dig due to the work involved. Children are welcome to view the excavation works but must be chaperoned at all times.

Can my teenager participate in the dig?

We recommend that participants are 16 years old and older to ensure that they can follow the instructions provided by the archaeology team.

Submitted by Liesl Pitkin



New home needed

We have been contacted by Bill Carr from Geraldton, who is trying to rehome four horse-drawn carts, between 100 and 150 years old, that he would like to donate to any Society with space for one or all of them. They have been kept under cover and are well maintained. If you would like any further information, please call Bill directly on 0427 888 895.

Kalamunda & Districts Historical Society

MISS BRAGG'S PEDAL ORGAN



Following on from our recent interesting talk and demonstration from our member Greg Smith on Pedal Organs it was obvious not many of the audience was aware of our own Pedal Organ in Swindell's Room Church display.

In St Cuthbert's of Maida Vale, Miss Bragg supplied the music – She owned and played the organ for many years. The Maida Vale area took its name from the property settled by Mr McCormack that was called by that name, and which, is now the site of the Seventh Day Adventist Church and campsite.

St Cuthbert's Hall was built by the Anglican Parish of Guildford, in Kalamunda Rd, near the corner of Hawkevale Rd.

Miss Bragg was a schoolteacher who lived on Kalamunda Rd and her home was not far from the hall. During the week she taught at St Cuthbert's Hall which was used as a school during the 1950s and she had her organ installed in the Hall for their use as well as for the benefit of the wider groups who came to the church.

Pedal Organs were prized possessions in many homes as they never went out of tune (as pianos were noted for). This organ was made by Cornish & Co., Washington, New Jersey, USA, probably in the mid-1800s and sold by G.F. Kearns, Hay Street, Perth.

Submitted by Paula Wilkins

Marjorie Alice Ridley and Family by Chris Bishop

An unusual and interesting representative of the Ridley family's involvement in the history of Western Australia, is Marjorie Ridley.

Marjorie Alice Ridley

BIRTH 07 December 1897 • Cottesloe, Western Australia.

DEATH 28 September 1987 • Australind, Western Australia.

Early growth and influences: Around 1906, Marjorie and her family were residing in Albany, Western Australia. By 1913 they were living at 'Riverside' farm, near Gwambygine (near and south of York), where her father Bernard was trying to make a living as an orchardist. This does not appear to have been a success, as by 1916, he had gone bankrupt. Notices of creditors' meetings continued to be published in the newspapers until the late 1920s, by which time the family was living in the Perth metropolitan area. (1)

From an early age, Marjorie showed an interest in various organizations, including the Victoria League, whose aim was to strengthen connections between members of the British Empire, and to bring before the children the duties and responsibilities that lay before them as future citizens of this great Empire. In 1911 she was awarded a prize for the best essay on the Union Jack:

The Prize Essay Competition. Mr. Sanderson announced that the prize offered by Lady Edeline Strickland for the best essay on the Union Jack had been won by Miss Marjorie A. Ridley (Perth Girls' College). The essay Mr. Sanderson read out to those present, and the winner, on being presented with the prize, was warmly congratulated by Her Excellency. (2)

Marjorie likely boarded during the school year, whilst attending Perth Girls' College. This was founded in 1902 by Sister Rosalie and other members of the Community of the Sisters of the Church, an Anglican religious order. Their 1916 prospectus stated that their aim for their pupils was '[that they] not merely gain distinction in examination lists, but also be fitted to gain distinction in the greater business of life.' (3)

Marjorie never married, although there are rumours of her having a beau who died in the First World War. As a young adult she lived with her parents and four brothers in Fourth Avenue Maylands (a suburb of Perth, called by some references Mount Lawley), Western Australia. Near the end of that period she lived with her parents and one brother, Eric in Maylands. Eric had suffered from infantile paralysis that was possibly related to Polio, with delayed and restricted development and co-ordination. He never married. As her parents aged, there would have been an increasing expectation that Marjorie, as the only daughter, helped look after them and her brother.

She was always inquisitive and independently minded, not social or fashion interested, as then expected of young women. Painting was Marjorie's earliest artistic love, starting when she was a girl of between 12 and 14 years, living in Albany. A reference is made to a surviving painting from then of Mount Melville, in the Albany townsite. (4)

Toc H ethos: In 1929 there is a newspaper picture of a young, serious looking Marjorie, with the caption describing her as 'Honorary general organising secretary of The League of Women Helpers in Western Australia'. (5)

This interesting affiliation points to Marjorie's enquiring mind on the universal and personal spiritual plane. That she was the 'organising secretary' shows that she was prepared to lead, if required. This women's league arose out of the male only Toc H movement (abbreviation for Talbot House), that grew out of a social movement amongst returned First World War soldiers. Toc H is described as a 'Journey of Discovery', a journey which seeks both outwards and inwards change. The credos was that, what 'we believe affects how we live, and our experience affects what we believe. ...As we journey outwards, trying to build a loving society, we also journey inwards, seeking personal wholeness.'

A sense of social responsibility for others was central. Members didn't have to be committed to a particular church or religion, but to a Christian way of life. (6)

Marjorie's involvement with Toc H The League of Women Helpers may have caused her some difficulties with her employer, in the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Western Australia. She worked in administration. She sought two weeks leave without pay to represent Western Australia as a delegate to The League of Women Helpers Annual Federal Conference in Melbourne in May 1928. This was provisionally approved by her immediate superior, if the faculty provided 'an efficient typist during Miss Ridley's absence'. She then sought two weeks extra leave without pay from Melbourne. It was granted, but possibly with reservations. She sought short periods of sick leave for minor ailments like influenza and a 'septic face', although a letter from the Vice-Chancellor in May 1929, states that 'actually Miss Ridley has lost a considerable amount of time through sickness'. (7)



Marjorie Ridley collecting Guildford grass (nd), courtesy Bunbury Museum & Heritage Centre.

Marjorie Alice Ridley and Family continued

The bulk of leave without pay related to attending to The League of Women Helpers. The Reverend CL (Tom) Riley wrote in support of Marjorie seeking leave to attend The Great Australian Festive of Toc H in Perth in May 1929, as she is 'one of the best workers on the women's side' and 'in charge of quite a lot of work'. The response from the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Western Australia indicates some reluctance to granting leave:

...the question of allowing a member of our clerical staff to devote a considerable amount of University time to an activity which is not connected with this University, is a question of principle which should, I think, be referred to the University Senate. The Senate will not meet, however, until May 20th, and that will be too late for the Toc H Conference. She took one week's paid leave and 10 days unpaid leave to attend a conference in Adelaide in May 1930. There is no recorded response to her applying in March 1934 for several days' leave 'due from last year's overtime'.

Then came the likely shock of a letter to her from the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Western Australia dated 20 December 1934, which stated:

*...we have come to the general conclusion that your general health is not good enough for you to sustain the continuous work of a clerical position in the University...when sickness is a great hindrance to the efficiency of University administration... we think therefore that you should seek another position where the duties would be lighter...we have decided to dispense with your services on account of ill-health...*As the bulk of her leave appeared to relate to attending to The League of Women Helpers matters, it is odd to focus on Marjorie's general health.(8)

She worked as a typiste (french for typist) and mail sorter at the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Western Australia from February 1924 to February 1935. She didn't just type, but maintained her typewriter, by cleaning, oiling and overhauling it. For at least 18 months, near the beginning of her employment the typewriter she used was one she had paid for herself. She did eventually ask the university to buy her typewriter secondhand and replace it. Whether they did is unknown. The Faculty of Engineering was considered a bastion of male chauvinism into the 1970s.(9)

At about this time Marjorie started being a regular visitor to Australind and Harvey. In January 1931, 'Mr. and Miss Marjory Ridley, of Perth, are the guests of Mr. and Mrs. A. Clifton, of Alverstoke'. The 'Mr' Ridley would have been younger brother Darby, who soon would marry Edith Clifton of 'Alverstoke'. Marjorie, was likely there in some form of chaperone role. (10)

In early March 1933, an article refers to a 'boat built entirely by Miss Marjorie Ridley, of Mt. Lawley, who is trying it out at Australind, where she is spending a holiday'. (11)

During World War 2 and with a shortage of sisal from source countries, she tried to get the Western Australian parliament to support the growing of Guildford Grass, an otherwise notorious weed, to replace sisal. It appears she attended parliament for that purpose. The likelihood of success was low, given opposition by the farming lobby, and it was not taken further. Her lack of fear of pressing the matter is noteworthy. A few influential men then took up the fight, with initial interest from the State government, which was discarded following expert advice. (12)

Then followed the death of her parents in close succession, her mother in 1939 (13) and her father in 1944.

Marjorie was reported to have returned to Perth in early March 1942 'after holidaying in Harvey with Mr. and Mrs R. J London'(14) . Richard J London (1890-1958) was a farmer, and married to Winifred M Gibbs, whose father George Gordon Gibbs was the brother of Herbert. Herbert was the father of well-known children's illustrator May Gibbs. By then, Marjorie's brother Darby was living on a farm at Harvey.

Marjorie was an active part of Perth's artistic life into the mid-1940s, before continuing her creativity at Australind, when moving there about 1945. Her mother's notable artistic talents and that of first cousin May Gibbs and May's mother, were expressed in her.

An Australind home: The following appeared in a newspaper article in September 1947: *Her home and workshop on Leschenault Estuary she built herself. She also built a 14ft. 'flattie' which, rigged for sailing, is moored on the Estuary. All her weaving is done on a loom designed and built by herself. An accomplished water colour artist, Miss Ridley designs all the articles herself. Many are of intricate colour patterns. Cured native nuts are used for decoration. Once her hobby, this work is now her livelihood.* (15)

Her grandniece wrote: *A weaver and a watercolour landscape artist, Marjorie Ridley was born in Western Australia in 1898. She is the cousin of May Gibbs, a popular Australian author, and that being said, the talent clearly runs in the family. Her gifted hands had produced amazing woven crafts and watercolour arts throughout her living years. Marjorie was known as a very independent and handy woman; she made her own tools, built her own house, built three boats and even took part in fighting the parliament during World War 2. Her most noted work is her acquired knowledge from Joan Heath, weaving baskets using the despised weed, Guil(d)ford Grass(16) . She also pioneered using other native Australian resources such as gum nuts and Quandong seeds.*

Marjorie Alice Ridley and Family continued

Her works are well-appreciated, some of which are being exhibited in museums and featured by art publications. As her grand niece, I am truly grateful for having such a powerful and inspiring influence in my life. My learnings and memories with my Auntie and at Nangara has impacted me greatly. (17)

Expanding on the preceding information, it has been recorded that Marjorie:

...learned basketry from Joan Heath in the 1930s. Heath had been making baskets with local materials on Flinders Island, South Australia, and when her family moved to Western Australia she and Ridley became friends. (18) The Blind School in Mount Lawley did dye tests on the Guildford grass that Ridley cut and dried herself. She then began to work with colour. She advised the State Government on the use of local grass when supplies of imported fibres were scarce during World War II. She also taught basketry through the Red Cross to their workers at the Edward Millen Rehabilitation Home for Servicemen. After the war Ridley moved from Perth to Australind. She produced baskets, woven mats and jardinières; many are decorated with Australiana touches.

In 1984, the Crafts Council of Perth held an exhibition of her work. (19)

The Bunbury Museum and Heritage Centre recorded that:

In the 1930s, in an era when very few women were able to make a living from their craft, Marjorie Ridley succeeded in doing this with the most humble of material - Guildford grass. Also known as onion grass, this 'despised weed' can be found everywhere. Ridley perfected a weaving technique with which she made the grass into bags, trays, baskets, wallets, mats and brushes which were bought by many. Interestingly Ridley was cousin to May Gibbs, the artist and author of the 'Snugglypot and Cuddlepup' books. After living in Perth, Ridley moved in the late 1940s to Australind where she was sought out for her woven items.(20)

During World War 2 Marjorie was invited to teach at the Edward Millen Rehabilitation Home for Servicemen:

Miss Ridley led a women's war group out cutting Guildford grass and taught them how to use this product in basket making. Furthermore:

...she cut it in great quantities and when it was dry, she dyed it with varying rich colours. She made it into baskets, mats, and wallets, belts, and trays. Her baskets, adorned with tiny gum nuts, quandongs, and native twigs and grasses, were very useful and very charming. (21)

Marjorie tried a variety of techniques: coiling, plating, spinning and weaving. This was enforced by rationing of some art and craft materials in Western Australia after the war, but also encouraged by her inquisitive mind.

A noted art critic Charles Hamilton wrote of her 1939 Perth exhibition: *A most interesting exhibit of articles made from Guildford grass by Miss M. A Ridley shows that this despised weed can be put to some use after careful preparation and dyeing.* Her weaving work is held by several museums and art galleries. (23)

The Art Gallery of Western Australia holds two of her pieces:

A dyed Guildford grass, dyed plywood, and raffia tray from about 1965; and,

A Guildford grass, plaited and dyed, plywood base bottle holder from about 1957. (24)

The Guildford grass used had to be unusually long, up to 90 centimetres. Marjorie had favourite locations to collect this length material, including near Cannington, Harvey, Guildford and Pinjarra.

She would have been a significant and dutiful support for her parents in their final years. After their passing, she moved to Australind permanently in about 1945 and lived there for the rest of her life. In the 1947 Wise's *Western Australia Towns Directory* a 'Ridley, Miss M' is listed as one of 148 residents of Australind. At the same time, Eric moved to Darby Ridley's farm at Brunswick. Marjorie would have helped him settle there and visited him.

The above photo showing Marjorie collecting Guildford Grass from her drying rack, appeared in a newspaper article on 13 September 1947. She advised that about 10 years earlier, 'she had to give up secretarial work for health reasons'. She stated that 'the possibilities of Guildford Grass are unlimited', and that 'tests have proved that it makes the strongest rope known for its strength-weight ratio'. Marjorie credited Joan Heath of Perth (then a resident of London Court) with having pioneered the use of Guildford Grass. The relevant article described her as ingenious. (25)

She used to have map-style drawers full of Guildford and other grasses, that had been dried and dyed, ready for use. (26)

The Australia Electoral Rolls from 1949 had Marjorie living at Australind on her own, and describes her in a misleading way as carrying out 'home duties'. She was living at 3 Eastwell Road Australind, then a fairly remote location surrounded by bushland. Most land in the vicinity was then in the ownership of the Clifton family. As Marjorie was part of the extended Clifton family, they may have gifted her the Eastwell

Marjorie Alice Ridley and Family continued

Rd land, or allowed her to purchase it on good terms. Up into the 1960s the Alverstoke Cliftons kept cattle at their property called 'Eastwell' in the vicinity of the Collie River Elbow. The unmarried sisters Emily and Cecile Clifton (called CC) did drop in on Marjorie or invited her to 'Alverstoke'. (27)

At a Brunswick Country Women's Association meeting in April 1954, it was reported that: *...then followed the most interesting exhibition of handiwork that the branch has ever been privileged to see. It was given by Miss Marjorie Ridley and included the most amazing variety of articles made from Guildford grass. Miss Ridley gave a short talk on the history of her art, which included experimenting with dyes to obtain the lovely colours. Trays, with matching glass holders, shopping baskets, work baskets, bowls, vases, trinket boxes, and table mats were among the many beautiful articles shown.* (28)

Skill, artistry and independence: Marjorie was strongly independent and capable of many tasks. She was known to drive alone to Perth, and carry out maintenance of her vehicle. Her highly recognisable vintage 3-seater 1928 Citroen Tourer was driven and maintained by her in pristine condition, until well into her 70s. To maintain her vehicle she had a drive-over pit at her Eastwell Road property. (29) She built several boats and used them, built her house at 3 Eastwell Road, built her own loom, built her own tools (e.g. drying racks and dyeing equipment) and did her own domestic house repairs.

She was an active member of the Australind Naturalists Club and Australind Tree Society. In about 1980 she is reported to have led the latter group. (30) In 1965, and relative to works at the Australind Pioneers' Memorial Park, it was recorded that:

Miss Ridley has done a wonderful job in organising interested people to help with the watering, staking, and weeding, and taking several lengths of hose joined together so that all trees could be watered from the same tap in the lower corner of the Park... (31)

Marjorie was always greatly interested in the 'condition' of her neighbours and community, and felt the social responsibility that the Toc H movement encouraged. She was a foundation member of the Australind Progress Association, and at some point she was the secretary. The Association was heavily involved in the social, services and environmental issues of Australind at that time. In particular the impact of Laporte Titanium Ltd's plant was of direct interest. As secretary, she publicly expressed her concern about air pollution and odour from Laporte, and the consequent health impacts. (32) These impacted on her own health, being a close neighbour to the plant. Marjorie was the only remaining active foundation member when in 1974 at the age of 77 she was awarded life membership for 'services rendered'. (33)

On the available evidence and with hindsight, Marjorie is a much-loved enigma. A niece, supplemented by others, who knew her in real life used the words; 'different for the time', 'intelligent, funny, compassionate', 'passionate conservationist', 'marvellous with children', 'loved history and music', and an 'excellent cook'. (34)

'Plenty lookie, plenty talkie, no touchie': Her popularity with children needs further clarification. There were two types of children she interacted with; being teenage boys from 'Swan Cottages', and children from her extended family and friends.

The Swan Cottages or Swan Boy's Orphanage had a poor record of treatment in the early days, but had improved performance by the time Marjorie became involved. In 1943 it was called Swan Homes, and began accepting girls. (35) Marjorie used to host two boys from Swan Cottages, during the school holidays, and by all accounts this was an important event for the chosen ones. Many of the boys became life-long friends of Marjorie. One of the boys later moved to Hong Kong. Every year without fail he would write to Marjorie and tell her what was happening and she would write back. Others visited her at Eastwell Road after they had become men. (36)

Children from her extended family and needy friends visited often in the holidays. The last Marjorie-built boat was called the 'Jolly Roger'. It was moored in Leschenault Estuary for many years, only a stone's throw from her house in Eastwell Road. It was an often-recalled landmark. Marjorie was consistent about requiring visiting children to do household chores, but they were then rewarded with fun activities. If the weather was good, she and the children would spend all day on the Leschenault Peninsula. Often the children would need to row over in the 'Jolly Roger' or be rowed over by Marjorie, and sail back using the afternoon sea breeze. It is likely she acquired the nickname of 'Skip' because of this activity. Fishing was allowed from the 'Jolly Roger'. It had a scull and cross bones flag, and everyone wore a pirate scarf. A packed lunch was taken over and consumed at a picnic spot, often on a sand dune on the ocean side of the Peninsula. First came an ocean swim. Marjorie, ahead of time, was fanatical about her and the children avoiding sunburn. She required the children to wear overalls which she quaintly called 'combustion overalls', and hats, long sleeved shirts and sand shoes. (37)

Facebook posts illustrative of the character of Marjorie include:

We nearly lived at Skips place as kids. Playing in the wooden boat as Jenny Hanley commented. I remember her small cottage. We never knocked, just went in. She would give us a small hand full of sultanias and we had to chew 20 times before swallowing. We used to wash the many beach shells in her garden and rearrange them for a small amount of \$. A wooden horse with stirrups and bridle also a favourite. I watched her weave her baskets and still have one. (38)

I was always amazed at how she float [sic] in the estuary channel, end of now Christina Street, with her toes up out of the water and her head up looking around. (39)

Marjorie Alice Ridley and Family continued

As there were often several children at her house and a lot of captivating and sometime dangerous items to investigate, Marjorie put up signs like, 'Plenty lookie, plenty talkie, no touchie'. She always had dog and cat pets, all named after characters in Charles Dickens' books.

A young male relative of around 10 years old visited Marjorie with his grandmother, several times in the 1950s. As an elderly gentleman he fondly recalled her in 2025, as clever with her hands and inspirational, leaving a life-long impression on him. He loved exploring the work areas of her house, but did not believe she was particularly house proud. This type of recollection applies to other living relatives spoken to in 2025, 38 years after her passing. (41)

There is no evidence she was ever a 'militant' feminist, or wanted to be seen as a feminine ideal or fashionable, and did not appear to crave the domestic lifestyle expected of women. She was fiercely independent. She did appear to care for and about her fellow human beings, without being self-promoting or expecting reward. She lived at her Eastwell Road home to near the end of her life, with visiting care from her cousin Win (Winifred) Walker and husband. (42)

After her death on 28 September 1987, Marjorie was laid to rest at the Australind Pioneer Cemetery. Her plaque states, 'a loved aunt and friend to three generations'. This plot is near that of her pre-deceased brother Darby and his wife Edith.

The immediate family of Marjorie Alice Ridley

Marjorie Alice Ridley had four brothers, two being older and two younger. She outlived them all. Her siblings were as follows:

Eric Walford Ridley

BIRTH 06 January 1894 • Perth, Western Australia

DEATH 17 August 1975 • Denmark, Western Australia

Harold Bernard Walford Ridley

BIRTH 19 January 1896 • Perth, Western Australia

DEATH 24 June 1982 • Perth, Western Australia

Geoffrey Walford Ridley

BIRTH 11 July 1904 • Cottesloe, Western Australia

DEATH 29 April 1962 • Denmark, Western Australia

Darby Walford Ridley

BIRTH 12 February 1906 • Cottesloe, Western Australia

DEATH 3 January 1969 • Bunbury, Western Australia

Her parents were both born in England, and were:

Bernard Walford Ridley (father):

BIRTH- 19 February 1864 • Reading, Berkshire, England.

EMIGRATED to Western Australia in 1902.

DEATH- 24 August 1944 • Perth, Western Australia

He was:

...son of W. Walford (Timber Merchant of England). Arr. 12.4.1886 per Yeoman from London, m. 1892 Jennette ROGERS b. c.1864 d. 1939, dtr. of Ishmael Chd. Eric, Darby, Harold, Marjorie, Geoffrey. Licensed surveyor, came to W.A. to work on Great Southern Railway project. Assistant to civil engineer Hay in surveying Bunbury Railway. Formed the Grosvenor Prospecting Co. in 1888 : participated in early prospecting of Eastern Goldfields with Gillies MacPherson. Ill health caused him to resume survey work : became draughtsman in P.W.D. Surveyed in Avon, Armadale, Albany. Southern Cross. Founder of Institute of Licensed Surveyors in W.A. Founder of W.A. Cricket Assoc. His wife was a relative of May Gibbs, the artist. She was a competent artist herself. Residence Stirling St. Perth. (44)

Bernard married Jennette Alice Rogers in 1892, and they went on to have five children.

He became a draughtsman in the Public Works Department and the founder of both the Institute of Licensed Surveyors in WA and the WA Cricket Association. Bernard tried to earn a living as an orchardist near Gwambygine, but by 1916, he had gone bankrupt. Bernard and Jennette had returned to live in North Perth by 1919. They later moved to Cottesloe, and then Maylands.

Marjorie Alice Ridley and Family continued

Jennette Alice Rogers (mother):

BIRTH- 31 Jul 1864 • St Pancras, Middlesex, England.

EMIGRATED to WA with parents and five siblings in 1886. (45)

DEATH- 23 June 1939 • Perth, Western Australia.

She left: ...*London with her family in 1886 arriving in Fremantle, Western Australia in 1887 where because their belongings had been lost on a cargo vessel her mother established a private school.*

Ridley had trained at the London School of Art and was able to help her mother in the school. She was sister of Cecilia Gibbs and an aunt of May Gibbs. Ridley was a member of the Wilgie Sketching Club (46) and exhibited a painting of irises in their only exhibition in 1890. (47) She was a competent artist. She was also a key instigator of the establishment of the Gilbert and Sullivan Society. 1916 (48) .

Submitted by Sharen Cousens.



Woven Guildford grass basket by Marjorie Ridley (nd), courtesy Bunbury Museum & Heritage Centre. (49)

Footnotes

1. https://www.york.wa.gov.au/Profiles/york/Assets/ClientData/RIDLEY_HBW.pdf
2. *Great Southern Herald*, 14 June, 1911. 1911 'Victoria League of West Australia.', *The Great Southern Herald* (Katanning, WA : 1901 - 1954), 14 June, p. 6. , viewed 30 Apr 2026, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article146216511>
3. <https://perthcollege.wa.edu.au/about/our-history-and-faith/>
4. N Searle, Nalda Searle interviews Beth Frans and her sister Jessie Proctor, [interview transcript], 3 October 2015. Supplied by B Rae, Bunbury Museum Local History Engagement Officer in July 2025. This painting was not recorded at the Albany Art Gallery, as of October 2025, and may have been confused with one by her brother Geoffrey Walford Ridley.
5. 1929 'Household.', *The West Australian* (Perth, WA : 1879 - 1954), 6 December, p. 4. , viewed 09 Mar 2025, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article32335868>.
6. <https://www.toch.org.au/principles-aims--ethos.html>, viewed 10 March 2025.
7. 1934, University of Western Australia- Personal file- *File No.718 Ridley, M.A. Typiste*
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9. For context- The first female graduate from any faculty at the University of WA was not until 1940, and the first UWA female engineering graduate completed her Civil/Structural Engineering Degree in 1970. Personal observation by the author and feedback from others in about 1977, led to the conclusion that this faculty was the most conservative at UWA.
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13. 1939 'Family Notices', *The West Australian* (Perth, WA : 1879 - 1954), 24 June, p. 1. , viewed 09 Mar 2025, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article46402255>
14. 1942, *The Harvey-Waroona Mail* (Collie, WA : 1931 - 1956), 19 February, p. 1. , viewed 09 Mar 2025, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page29837158>
15. 1947 'BUILDS, WEAVES HER OWN INDUSTRY', *The Daily News* (Perth, WA : 1882 - 1955), 13 September, p. 22. (FIRST EDITION), viewed 11 Feb 2025, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article79613951>
16. The *Romulea* genus contains small perennial herbs arising from bulb like underground stems (corms) with annual leaves and small pink, white, purple or yellow flowers. Four species are naturalised in Australia, of which *R. rosea* var. *australis* and *R. rosea* var. *communis* are the most widespread. In Western Australia, *Romulea rosea* is a common lawn and pasture weed and is ubiquitous in most woodlands, on granite rocks, limestone heath and clay wetlands throughout the south-west. (<https://weeds.org.au/profiles/guildford-grass-onion/>)
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18. Note that in some sources Heath is reported as coming from Tasmania. Both States have a populated island called Flinders Island.
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20. <https://collections.wa.net.au/items/8a3bd0ed-6399-46c8-9269-8a623da36f8c>
21. <https://www.daao.org.au/bio/marjorie-alice-ridley/biography/>
22. <https://www.daao.org.au/bio/marjorie-alice-ridley/biography/>
23. <https://museum.wa.gov.au/online-collections/content/H1987.371>
24. <https://collection.artgallery.wa.gov.au/objects/7773/bottle-holder>
25. 1947, *The Daily News* (Perth, WA : 1882 - 1955), 13 September, p. 22. (FIRST EDITION), viewed 10 Mar 2025, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page7772260>
26. H Wade and S Cousens, *Heather Wade and Sharon Cousens interview Holly Nutley*, Harvey History Online, 14 February 2023.
27. Emily Ker Clifton, *Diaries of Clifton, Emily Ker, 30 December 1891- 17 May 1990*. State Library of Western Australia, ACC 10079AD. eg entries for 21 June 1958, 17 July 1958 and 21 August 1958
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31. August 1977 (Additions of 11 December 1966), E. K. Clifton- *The Story of the Australind Pioneers' Memorial Park*. <http://www.harveyhistoryonline.com/the-story-of-the-australind-pioneers-memorial-park/>
32. 1 March 1973, *South Western Times*.
33. 1974, Unknown newspaper cutout held by Harvey History Online. The first meeting of the Australind Progress Association was held on 3 July 1957.
34. Notes from Winifred Walker (niece to MR), circa 2019, as recorded by B Rae, Bunbury Museum Local History Engagement Officer. Provided in July 2025
35. Swan Orphanage Industrial School for Protestant Boys, Guildford was opened in 1876. <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/swan-boys-orphanage/>. Viewed in July 2025.
36. N Searles - Interview with Beth Frans and her sister Jessie Proctor.
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38. Bronwen Tocknell, 2 September 2020- 'Bunbury Museum and Heritage Centre' Facebook page., viewed 20 April 2026.
39. Michelle Campbell, 2 September 2020- 'Bunbury Museum and Heritage Centre' Facebook page, 2 September 2020, viewed 20 April 2026
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43. N Ridley- Letter from English relative Nick Ridley, 16 Nov 1990. Copy made available by 'The Bunbury Museum & Heritage Centre'.
44. https://www.friendsofbattellibrary.org.au/files/ugd/f5623a_2f0ab7007ea649609032502942afb84b.pdf?index=true
45. J Proctor. 1990- Letter from grand-daughter Jessie Proctor. Copy made available by 'The Bunbury Museum & Heritage Centre'.
46. The Wilgie Sketching Club was founded in Perth in 1889. The founding members of the club included Bernard Woodward (director of the Western Australian Museum and Art Gallery, Lady Forrest, Herbert Gibbs, Henry Prinsep and George Temple-Poole. Initially this was a group of landscape painters and sketchers. [1916 'THE MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY.', *The West Australian* (Perth, WA : 1879 - 1954), 10 July, p. 4. , viewed 20 Apr 2026, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article26984640>]
47. <https://www.daao.org.au/bio/jenette-alice-ridley/biography/>
48. 'THE MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY.', *The West Australian* (Perth, WA : 1879 - 1954), 10 July, p. 4. , viewed 20 Apr 2026, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article26984640>
49. CollectionsWA, registration number cwa-org-73-wand-003- 19 February 2026; Permission to use from the Bunbury Museum & Heritage Centre, accession number MUS.2019.

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RWAHS Merit Awards

In the past, awarding the annual merit award has been a little like comparing apples with oranges and the Affiliated Societies Committee has agonised over whom the award should go to. Last year the Committee could not reach an agreement on a fairer system and as you know the award was not presented.

This year we have decided to take a different approach which we hope will be fairer.

We would like you to choose an achievement made by your society between August 2024 - June 2026. This can be anything which you feel has assisted your society become more efficient or enabled your local community to become better acquainted with what your society does or has to offer. Subjects that this might cover could include digitising your photographic collection, thereby making them more readily available to the public (either online or in your office/museum), a new exhibition, a walking trail, a new website or any other activity which your society has spent some time working on and which has come to fruition. All responses will be shared on the History West website as the information contained in these reports contributes to the ongoing success of all our affiliated members. These reports need to be provided to the Affiliates Committee no later than Friday 3 July.

The Committee proposes to select three or four finalists, who will be notified prior to this year's Affiliated Societies Conference to ask each finalist to brief presentation, about 5 - 10 minutes, describing their achievement. A special session has been set aside in the Business section of the Sunday program (13 September) for these presentations. Following these presentations, the winning finalist will be announced.

As in alternative, or in addition, you could also nominate a person who has made a significant contribution to your society, either over the past year or over several years. This nomination should be forwarded to the Committee by 1 August. It is proposed that a special certificate will be presented to that member, remember this is the Society's centenary year, and the names displayed at the State History conference.

Please send your proposals/nominations to fiona.bush@icloud.com before 1 July for the achievement proposal or 1 August for a nominated person.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to get in contact with me.

Kind regards

Fiona

Dr Fiona Bush OAM BA, MBEnv, PhD M.ICOMOS
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110 Peartree Lane
Parkerville WA 6081

Mobile: 0423 142 864
Email: fiona.bush@icloud.com

Community Heritage Grants

The Community Heritage Grants 2026 Round is now open. Please read the [Guidelines \(PDF, 405.74KB\)](#) for further information. The Guidelines is supported by resources on:

CHG website (this landing page, [Preparing an application](#), [Preparing for an assessment](#), [Recipients and reports](#) and [Other resources](#));

[Trove Partner Learning Hub](#) (select the 'Login as a Guest' option at the bottom left corner) and click on Community Heritage Grants 2026.

Applications are made via the SmartyGrants online platform. Depending on previous CHG grants, your organisation will complete one of three forms: New Applicants, Repeat Recipients or Training Projects. More details are provided below.

All applicants should contact the CHG Program to confirm that the organisation and project are eligible, prior to receiving a link to the appropriate SmartyGrants form.

[Send an email](#) with:

- name of your organisation and entity type (eg incorporated association, local government);
 - nature of the collection;
 - brief details of previous CHG projects; and
- proposed project and budget items (estimates are fine).

Australia Post – Community Grants Program

<https://grantguru.com/au/ckb/g/wvi750vx>

Overview This program aims to provide funding to eligible community-led, local projects that connect individuals and communities to improve mental health and wellbeing.

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

Some projects that are unsuccessful for a grant of up to \$10,000 may be considered for a smaller grant of \$4,000. Applicants will be asked in the application process if they would like to be considered for this.

Multiple applications for the same project are not accepted.
