

Affiliated Societies

of the Royal Western Australian Historical Society

Newsletter

August 2026

2026-31

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

Please see pages 3 and 4 for a full list of the program.

Please contact Lesley on 93863841 for any booking queries.

Next Affiliates Committee
Meeting will be held on the
15th October 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.

2026 Affiliated Societies State History Conference

**Looking for a place to stay
during the**

**A generous member of the
RWAHS has a room
available if you need
somewhere to stay for the
two nights.**

**Please contact Lesley
Community Officer at
History West for more
information.**

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) - richardoofen@outlook.com
- Jacqui Huntley (Wanneroo & Districts) - huntleyjacqui@gmail.com
- 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 and the back catalogue : 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**

2026 Affiliated Societies State History Conference

Friday Night - 11 September

5.30pm City of Perth Reception Hosted by Lord Mayor - **Free Event**

Council House 27 St George's Terrace, Perth

Saturday - 12 September

Cost for Conference on Saturday and Sunday \$110

State Library Theatre: Ground Floor, State Library, Perth Cultural Centre, 25 Francis Street, Perth

TIME	EVENT	SPEAKER
8.00am	Registration Opens	
9.00am	Conference Opening: Welcome to Country	Freda Ogilvie
9.15am	Welcome: President RWAHS	Richard Offen
9.20am	Welcome by CEO and State Librarian	Catherine Clark
9.25am	Opening Roll Call; apologies, remembrance; call for nominations for	Nick Drew
9.45am	Key Note Speech: Progress, Depression, and Exclusion. Four Views of the Western Australian Centenary: George Pitt Morison, John Kirwan, Edward Shann, and William Harris.	Prof. Jane Lydon
10.30am	Morning Tea	Library Foyer
11.00am	Panel Talk: Challenges for Historians in 21st century	Bruce Baskerville, Shane Burke,
12.00pm	Don't Let it Happen Again: changing attitudes to demolition of historic	Richard Offen
12.40pm	Lunch	Library 4th Floor
1.40pm	Storytelling: Memory, Place and Belonging	Nonja Peters
2.20pm	Don't Follow Me, Walk with Me	Jeff Murray
3.00pm	Afternoon Tea	Library Foyer
3.30pm	History Slam	Professional Historians Assoc.
4.30pm	Close/housekeeping	
Dinner:	Perth Town Hall 6.00 for 6.30pm	Cost \$90 per person

TEA/COFFEE

Unfortunately, tea and coffee cannot be provided by History West prior to the conference. There are a number of cafes/pop-up booths that you will pass on the concourse between the Perth Cultural Centre and the State Library.

Delegates parking in the Library Carpark will find these booths along the concourse between the Art Gallery and Library.

2026 Affiliated Societies State History Conference

Sunday 13 September

TIME	EVENT	SPEAKER
8.30am	Registration Opens	
9.00am	History West Business Agenda	Richard Offen: Chair
	Confirmation of Minutes	
9.05am	President's Report for RWAHS	
9.15am	Promotion for 2027 Conference: Busselton Historical Society	Busselton
9.30am	Call for nominations for 2028 Conference	
9.35am	Results of Affiliated Societies Committee Election	Nick Drew
9.45am	Affiliated Societies Presentations and Nominated Persons	
10.15am	Balancing Governance and Mission	David Gilchrist
11.00am	Morning Tea: Birthday cake	Library Foyer
11.30am	Using social media to bring people into your museum	Sharyn McCaskey
12.10pm	History West: A Century of Transformation in Collection Practice	Wendy Lugg
12.50pm	History West's 100 Treasures Book and Conference	Richard
1.00pm	Lunch	Library 4th Floor
2.00pm	Start of Tours	

Sunday Tours: Cost \$15 each tour

History West Centre: Take a tour around History West's new 'home' at 109 Stirling Highway, Nedlands. Attendees will be divided up tour the library and museum collections. Wendy Lugg will be on hand to further discuss the points raised in her talk on how collections policies have changed. Our Librarian, Jeanette Longwood will be happy to show you the Library. A simple afternoon tea provided.

Perth Tour: Specially trained City of Perth guides will lead a tour from the State Library ending with refreshments at the recently renovated, heritage listed Royal Hotel in Wellington Street. You will learn about Perth's history, combining significant heritage buildings and historical landmarks with a touch of the City's Art Deco architecture along with stories of the people who helped shape Perth. Please bring a bottle of water and wear appropriate attire, such as walking shoes and a hat! Tour takes approximately 1 - 1.5 hours

Discover King's Park Tour: The walk introduces you to many aspects of King's Park, including the very significant botanical collection, the story of the establishment of the Park, its cultural importance and recreational features. Tour takes approximately 1 - 1.5 hours.

Please bring a bottle of water and wear appropriate attire, such as walking shoes and a hat!

City of South Perth Historical Society: *"Nutting About with Mamie"*. The Society is located 111 Mill Point Road, South Perth. No parking is available at the Society, but paid parking is available at the Windsor Hotel and the Zoo. 1 hour tour from Heritage House that takes in the restored Ferry Tram, the artworks associated with May Gibbs and a talk about her. Meet your guide at the restored Ferry. Limited refreshments and gift will be provided.



CERVANTES MUSIC MUSTER

November 13th -15th 2026

Cervantes Community Recreation Centre

Tickets at Trybooking- DKJKV \$120 pp

(includes Fri Night, Sat, Sun & Poet's breakfast)

Camping on the oval -unpowered sites

3 nights \$60 per caravan -bookings separately online



Terry Bennetts, Evan Platschinda, Ginger Cox,

"The Band of Mates"

Connie Kis Andersen Lee Forster Alysha Cleeman,

Warwick Trant Moira Scott Sarah Broome

Kate Linke Kevin Lansdell Tyson Lansdell

Katelyn Lansdell Ian Fletcher Brian White

Jannes Kleiman **Jurien Bay Men's Shed Band**

Ken Linley **The Nambung Country Band.**

**Bush Poets: Keith Lethbridge, Bill Gordon, Alan Aitken,
Meg Gordon, Daniel Avery, Peter Rudolf,**

Bev Shorland, Rob Gunn



Sponsored by Cervantes Historical Society Inc

Contact 0427527153

Albany Through Time - Discover Albany's remarkable journey from Western Australia's oldest settlement to a thriving port, communications gateway, whaling centre and ANZAC departure point, shaping the state's history for nearly two centuries.



Above: Albany Foreshore from Princess Royal Harbour, c.1858. Source: George Chester. AHS P88.84

Albany's Rich and Historic Past

Albany holds a unique and distinguished place in the history of Western Australia. Located on the southern coast of the state, overlooking the sheltered waters of King George Sound and Princess Royal Harbour, Albany is recognised as the oldest settlement in Western Australia and one of Australia's most historically significant regional centres.

Albany rests within this natural amphitheatre of sea and hills, framed by Mount Clarence to the east and Mount Melville to the west. Beyond the harbour lie the fertile valleys of the King and Kalgan Rivers, while the ancient granite peaks of the Porongurup Range and the dramatic ridgelines of the Stirling Range dominate the northern horizon. To the south, the rugged coastline of Torndirrup National Park embraces both Princess Royal Harbour and King George Sound, creating a landscape shaped by wind, ocean and time.

The Custodians of Kinjarling

Long before European ships appeared on the horizon, the Albany region formed part of the traditional lands of the Menang Noongar people, the custodians of this country for tens of thousands of years. The Menang maintained a deep connection to the coastline, waterways, forests and natural resources of the area, developing a rich cultural heritage that continues to be celebrated and respected today.

Known as Kinjarling, often interpreted as "the place of rain" or "the place of abundance," the region provided rich marine resources, fresh water, shelter and cultural significance. The sheltered waters of King George Sound, the surrounding estuaries, rivers and forests supported generations of Menang families who lived in harmony with the seasons and the natural environment.

Through a profound understanding of the land and sea, the Menang people developed extensive knowledge of local plants, animals, weather patterns and marine life. Their stories, traditions and cultural practices remain deeply connected to the landscape and continue to be shared with future generations.

The enduring relationship between the Menang people and Kinjarling represents the earliest chapter in Albany's story and remains an important part of the region's cultural identity and heritage today.

The Arrival of the Amity and the Founding of Albany

The modern history of Albany began on Christmas Day, 25 December 1826, when the H.M. Colonial Brig *Amity* sailed into King George Sound. On board were twenty soldiers, twenty-three convicts, government officials, supplies, livestock and Major Edmund Lockyer, who had been commissioned by the Government of New South Wales to establish a settlement on the western coast of New Holland.

Britain's decision to establish a settlement at King George Sound was largely strategic. Concerns existed that other European powers, particularly France, might seek to establish claims along Australia's southern coastline. To secure British interests and sovereignty over the region, Major Lockyer was instructed to create a military and penal outpost at the Sound.

On 26 December 1826, the party came ashore at what is now known as Residency Point. There they began the difficult task of building shelters, unloading supplies and establishing what would become the first European settlement in Western Australia. On 21 January 1827, a formal ceremony was held to proclaim British possession of the territory. During this ceremony, Major Lockyer named the settlement Frederick Town after Prince Frederick, Duke of York and Albany, the second son of King George III. However, the name never gained widespread acceptance and the settlement was generally known as King George's Sound.

In 1831, Governor James Stirling incorporated the settlement into the Swan River Colony and officially renamed it Albany, a name that has endured ever since.

Western Australia's First European Settlement

Although Perth and Fremantle would eventually become the colony's principal centres, Albany predates both settlements and played a vital role during the formative years of Western Australia. From its beginnings as a military garrison and penal outpost, Albany quickly evolved into an important regional centre. The settlement provided security on the southern coast and established the foundations for future European development across Western Australia.

As settlement expanded inland, Albany became the centre of the region's growing pastoral industry. Vast areas of surrounding land were developed for sheep grazing and agricultural production, helping to establish one of the colony's earliest and most productive rural economies. Wool and agricultural products were exported through Albany's harbour, strengthening its role as a commercial centre.

A Strategic Port and Gateway to Western Australia

Albany's natural harbours gave it a significant advantage over many other coastal settlements. King George Sound and Princess Royal Harbour provided deep, sheltered waters that were considered among the safest anchorages in Australia. Throughout the nineteenth century, Albany became a critical port for coastal and international shipping. It served as a safe harbour for vessels travelling along the south-west coast and became an important link between Western Australia and the rest of the world.

The town's strategic importance was formally recognised during the 1850s when Albany was selected as Western Australia's coaling station and mail steamer port. Steamships travelling between Great Britain and the Australian colonies required regular supplies of coal and Albany's location made it an ideal refuelling point.

For much of the nineteenth century, mail ships travelling between Britain and Australia's eastern colonies called at Albany. As a result, most travellers arriving in or departing from Western Australia passed through Albany. The town became the colony's primary gateway to the outside world, handling mail, passengers, supplies and commercial goods.

Albany Historical Society

Until 1897, King George Sound contained the only deepwater port in Western Australia capable of accommodating large vessels. This made Albany the preferred point of entry for international mail and cargo. From Albany, goods and correspondence were transported to Perth and Fremantle by road or coastal shipping services.

Communication and Transport Links

As Western Australia continued to develop, the need for faster communication became increasingly important. To improve contact with the eastern colonies and the rest of the world, a telegraph line linking Albany to the eastern states was completed in 1876. This revolutionary infrastructure project dramatically reduced communication times and strengthened Albany's role as the colony's communications hub.

The importance of Albany as a mail port also led to major investment in transport infrastructure. The construction of the Great Southern Railway linking Albany and Perth provided a faster and more efficient means of transporting mail, passengers and freight between the state's major centres. Completed in February 1889, the railway revolutionised travel and communication within Western Australia, reducing the reliance on slow and often difficult road transport. It enabled mail arriving from overseas ships at Albany to be rapidly distributed throughout the colony, strengthening connections between Western Australia and the rest of Australia and the British Empire. The railway also supported the growth of agriculture, pastoralism and commerce by providing producers with improved access to markets and export facilities through Albany's port. The completion of the line marked a significant milestone in the colony's development and further cemented Albany's position as one of Western Australia's most important transport and communication hubs during the late nineteenth century. For decades, Albany remained Western Australia's principal point of international communication and transport, connecting the colony to Britain and the wider world.

Federation and Changing Fortunes

By the late nineteenth century, improvements in infrastructure and shipping technology led to changes in Western Australia's transport network. Premier Sir John Forrest recognised the growing importance of Fremantle and made the transfer of the colony's mail service from Albany to Fremantle a key condition during negotiations for Western Australia's entry into the Australian Federation in 1901.

Although the shift reduced Albany's role as the state's primary port, the town remained an important regional centre with a thriving economy and strong maritime connections.

The Whaling Industry

Among Albany's most significant industries was whaling, which played a major role in the town's economy for more than a century.

Commercial whaling operations began in the region during the 1830s and expanded significantly throughout the 1840s. The waters surrounding King George Sound were rich in whale populations, particularly southern right whales and humpback whales.

Whaling provided employment, supported local businesses, and contributed substantially to Albany's economic development. The industry became one of the defining features of the region's maritime heritage.

In 1952, the Cheynes Beach Whaling Company established a modern shore-based whaling station at Frenchman Bay. The operation continued for more than two decades and became one of the most productive whaling stations in Australia. However, increasing awareness of marine conservation and declining whale populations led to the industry's eventual closure. The final whale was processed in 1978 and the station officially ceased operations in 1979.

Its closure marked a historic milestone, as the Cheynes Beach Whaling Company was the last surviving shore-based whaling enterprise in the Southern Hemisphere. Today, the Albany Historic Whaling Station preserves this important

chapter of the region's history while educating visitors about marine conservation and the recovery of whale populations.

Albany and the First World War

Albany's strategic maritime location also gave it an important role in Australia's military history. The significance of King George Sound led to the construction of coastal fortifications designed to protect the harbour and safeguard shipping entering and leaving Western Australia.

When the First World War commenced in 1914, King George Sound was selected as the assembly point for the first convoy carrying Australian and New Zealand troops overseas. More than 40,000 soldiers, along with thousands of horses, gathered in the sheltered waters before departing for service abroad.

The departure of the ANZAC troops from Albany remains one of the most significant events in Australian military history and is commemorated today through the award-winning National Anzac Centre and numerous memorials throughout the region.



The First ANZAC Convoy in King George Sound in October 1914 before departing for overseas service during the First World War. AHS P1991.20

A Legacy of Contribution

Throughout its history, Albany and its people have made significant contributions to the economic, social, cultural and political development of Western Australia.

From its origins as a penal outpost and military garrison, Albany grew into a thriving port and commercial centre that helped shape the future of the colony. Its industries including pastoralism, whaling, fishing, timber production and coastal shipping, supported the development of regional communities and contributed to the prosperity of Western Australia.

The town served as the colony's principal gateway to the world for much of the nineteenth century, connecting Western Australians with Britain and the eastern colonies through shipping, mail services, telecommunications and trade. Today, Albany's rich heritage can be explored through its museums, historic buildings, monuments and cultural attractions. Sites such as the Brig Amity replica, Residency Museum, Albany Convict Gaol Museum, Albany Historic Whaling Station and the National Anzac Centre preserve the stories of the people and events that shaped the region.

Albany's story is one of resilience, innovation and enduring significance. From the arrival of the *Amity* in 1826 to its role as a strategic port, communications hub, industrial centre and military staging point, Albany has played a central role in the history of Western Australia and remains one of the state's most treasured historic destinations.



**FREMANTLE
HISTORY
SOCIETY**

The 2026 Ron and Dianne Davidson Research Scholarship



The Fremantle History Society is delighted to announce that, thanks to the very generous support of Fremantle Ports, we are once again, able to offer the Ron and Dianne Davidson Research Scholarship.

The scholarship, named after two founding members of the society, was established to encourage new, high quality research which will contribute to the understanding of the history and heritage of Fremantle and encourage new audiences to this endeavour.

This year, thanks to the support of the Fremantle Ports Community Investment programme, the Fremantle History Society is offering a \$3000 scholarship for an original research project.

Application and selection process

Applications are called from the community as well as entry level, mid-career and experienced heritage and history researchers. The successful applicant is expected to produce a work of academic quality based on factual research. They are encouraged to pursue a topic or perspective not covered in existing literature. Their research findings are to be presented both orally at the Fremantle Studies Day in late October/early November 2027 and in a written paper, the latter to be rigorously reviewed and edited by the Society editorial team, then published in the Fremantle Studies Journal.

Applications should include a research proposal (250 words), brief CV and sample of writing and be submitted to the Society secretary at: secretary.fhs@gmail.com no later than COB Monday 5th October 2026.

Applications are assessed by a panel of history and heritage experts against the following criteria:

- Is the research new or take a new perspective on past research/findings?
- How well does the proposal connect to Fremantle?
- Demonstrated ability to complete the work to a high standard within the time frame.
- Innovative or creative approach to the chosen topic/theme.
- Confirmation the proposed study has not been published elsewhere or submitted for another publication.

It is anticipated that applicants will be informed of the outcome on or before Friday 23 October and the Scholarship recipient announced at the Society's annual Studies Day on Sunday 1 November 2026.

For further information, please contact Jude Robison, President FHS at: juderobison49@gmail.com

Kalamunda & Districts Historical Society

Hi. My name is Sandy and I have been a volunteer with the Kalamunda History Village Education Programme for nearly eleven years. I'd like to tell you about the wonderful work done by everyone involved in making this programme such an important part of the Kalamunda community.

In 2015, when I decided I had a little time to incorporate some volunteer work into my (often chaotic) life, the Education Programme was just made for me. Becoming involved in this was a wonderful experience. Everyone was so kind and welcoming and I could choose the days that suited me. The training was fun plus I could channel my primary school teachers, waving a stick around and making the children sit up straight in class.

Kalamunda & Districts Historical Society

At present the Education Programme is co-ordinated by our dedicated Heritage Officers-Lisa, Nicole and Nicky-who, together with Kiralee and Alison, are staff of the City of Kalamunda. In addition to co-ordinating all the school tours they create and maintain the props used during the programme (and would welcome volunteers who may like to assist with this work). They also help guide tours alongside a valued team of volunteers, currently comprising nine men and women.

There are several guided tour formats, the most commonly chosen ones being Early Settlers for Pre-Primary and Year 1 students and the Junior Pioneer Life for Year 2s and 3s. There is also the Pioneer Life tour for Year 4 to 6 students. Some schools with larger numbers of students choose to do self-guided tours.



Occasionally there are event days run during the school holidays, the next one being Rag Rug Making in the July break. Over the years I have been involved in overseeing: lemonade making, French knitting, bubble blowing, shrunken apple head making, bush ornament creating (my first-ever experience with a glue gun, to the detriment of my fingertips), scone cooking and butter making and biscuit making and decorating. There have been many other activities but as I am not very creative I usually request being allocated to an activity requiring no artistic talent whatsoever (and no glue guns). There is something for everyone.

Lisa and Nicole have kindly provided me with some statistics, which you will probably find to be as mind-blowing as I did:

2025 saw a total of 92 schools involving 5076 students, 772 adult helpers and 442 teachers come to the History Village to experience being pioneers. By the end of May this school year there had been 30 school bookings for the Education Programme, 1805 students, 229 adult helpers and 167 teachers. The second half of the year is always much busier than the first. The farthest travellers were from Calingiri school, near Wongan Hills, who made the 1hour 45minute trip to Kalamunda to learn about some of WA's history.

Volunteering at the History Village is such an enjoyable way to spend an hour or two showing young children what it was like living here in the olden days, The children are excited to do something special and some of the questions make it hard to muffle a laugh and turn it into a smile.

Volunteering at the History Village is such an enjoyable way to spend an hour or two showing young children what it was like living here in the olden days, The children are excited to do something special and some of the questions make it hard to muffle a laugh and turn it into a smile.

"Did they have kids in the old days?" "No Nintendo?" "How old is the washing water?" "Do people still use the dunny?" "Is he stuffed?" (the blacksmith mannequin). "Are you 100?" I was recently asked by a Year 1 boy (answer "No, I'm 68", and thinking to myself I should get a better moisturiser)

If you, or anyone you know, have a few hours every now and then to have fun as an Education Programme volunteer or to get involved in the school holiday events, please make a call to the History Village on 9293 1371. You will be made very welcome, just as I was. Sandy Mackenzie Matthews

Dunsborough Historical Society

The Dunsborough Historical Society have a temporary exhibition housed at the heritage Lighthouse Keepers Cottage at Cape Naturaliste Lighthouse.

The display titled “**Reflections of The Cape**” officially opened Saturday 1st August 2026.

It’s a shining light on the stories, people and industries that helped shaped our Capes Region.

It draws on more than 100 years of local; archives and family records to tell stories of Castle Bay Whaling, Port of Quindalup with the timber industry, Fishing families, history of Caves Road ,and the early development of the town of Dunsborough.

The display showcases material gathered and preserved over previous generations of local families and historians.

The Society doesn’t have permanent premises. One of the challenges was selecting the stories, photos and themes from our archived boxes.

There were many hour and hours, days and days of choosing and selecting the right material for these 1200 x 1200 composite boards.

We’re excited knowing the exhibition will preserve local history and inspire future generations to learn and connect with our regions past.

If people are still sharing these stories in the next 100 years, then the Society will have succeeded in preserving our local history.

Dunsborough Historical Society appreciates the Capes Foundation allowing the Society to showcase and share our stories from the past.

Reflections of The Cape exhibition helps build the story of our Capes region’s valued history, alongside the Lighthouse interpretive Centre’s extensive collection of stories of the life on the Cape of Lighthouse Keepers and their families. Local Schools and Tourists to our region hopefully will leave with a better understanding of our history. Cruise passengers visiting the Busselton Margaret River Region will gain a deeper understanding of Dunsborough. The Society secured a Lotterywest grant, along with many fundraisers to complete the display. A local photographer took each small black and white image, then improved its resolution to allow for them to be printed it in large sizes. Each board has a QR code to take visitors to our website.

Follow the Society on Facebook and Capes Foundation to see more of what the society have planned.

The Dunsborough Historical Society are celebrating our 10th Anniversary in October.



The Medallion That Led Back to Coolgardie

Rediscovering William Trezise Eddy

Researched and written by Nicole Edwards

In February 2026, Rhys Hall of Relic Custodians Australia asked me if I could research a medallion he had found while metal detecting near York.

At first it was simply an intriguing historical object. The reverse of the medallion was engraved:

RECITATION

Any Aust. Author

2nd Prize

Won by

Mr W.T. Eddy

1901

Those few words provided the starting point for a research trail that led back more than 120 years to Coolgardie and to William Trezise Eddy, a businessman, councillor, public reciter and later Member of the Western Australian Parliament.



Obverse of W. T. Eddy's 1901 A.N.A. medallion. Photograph courtesy of Rhys Hall, Relic Custodians Australia.



Reverse of W. T. Eddy's 1901 A.N.A. medallion. Photograph courtesy of Rhys Hall, Relic Custodians Australia.

prize won at Coolgardie -William Eddy was already closely involved with the *Australian Natives' Association* before the competition that produced the surviving medallion. By August 1900 he was president of the Coolgardie branch of the A.N.A., presiding over its fortnightly meeting at the Mechanics' Institute. He had also represented the branch at the opening of the new Burbanks branch and took part in an evening of music and recitations.

The following year, Eddy was among the competitors when the Coolgardie A.N.A. held a series of competitions at the Tivoli Theatre. On the second evening, the recitation section for Australian authors was won by Miss Kate Hardiman, with W. T. Eddy placed second.

The match with the surviving medallion is exact. Rhys's find is the second-prize medallion awarded to William Trezise Eddy for the recitation from an Australian author at the 1901 Coolgardie A.N.A. competitions.

Geraldton Historical Society continued

...of the judges in this competition were possessed of voices of very good quality, but Mr. Coupland gave his decision without hesitation, and placed second Mrs. Arnott, who is not unknown to the public.

The second section of recitations from Australian authors was completed. The honors descended on Miss Kate Hardiman's head, and Mr. W. T. Eddy was placed second.

observing that competitors on the Goldfields could hold their own with those of the metropolitan area.

Who was W. T. Eddy?

William Trezise Eddy was born at Clunes, Victoria, in 1864, the son of Andrew Eddy and Elizabeth Jane Trezise. He came to Western Australia in 1894, during the rapid development of the Eastern Goldfields, and established himself at Coolgardie as a storekeeper.

Eddy soon became involved in civic affairs. In November 1899 he was elected to the Coolgardie Municipal Council, representing the South-West Ward. By August 1900 he was also serving as president of the Coolgardie branch of the Australian Natives' Association.

His involvement in local government continued. In April 1904 Eddy was serving as Acting Mayor of Coolgardie, presiding over an ordinary meeting of the Town Council. His ambitions also extended to State politics. After unsuccessful attempts to enter Parliament in 1901 and 1904, Eddy again contested Coolgardie at the 1905 State election. This time he was successful, standing as a Ministerialist and winning the seat by the remarkably narrow margin of just 23 votes.

His victory was challenged and in May 1906 the election was declared void because of voting irregularities. At the resulting by-election in July, Eddy again won the seat, this time by 100 votes. He remained the Member for Coolgardie until the 1908 State election, when he was defeated by Labor candidate Charles McDowall.

From the Tivoli Theatre to Parliament

Eddy's inaugural parliamentary speech, delivered on 23 November 1905, provides an opportunity to hear something of the man behind the electoral record. Seconding the Address-in-Reply at the opening of the sixth Parliament of Western Australia, he proudly described Coolgardie as the "mother-city of the goldfields".

Left - The Kalgoorlie Miner, 14 November 1901, recorded W. T. Eddy being placed second in the recitation from an Australian author. Source: National Library of Australia, Trove.

The same report shows that recitation was not Eddy's only interest. He also entered the prepared speeches section. Although A. E. Green won with an address on "Colonial Expansion", the correspondent noted that Eddy, Martin and Lowry delivered thoughtful and well-prepared speeches.

The judges were impressed with the talent on display,



*Above - William Trezise Eddy (1864–1926)
Courtesy of Robin Davies*

Geraldton Historical Society continued

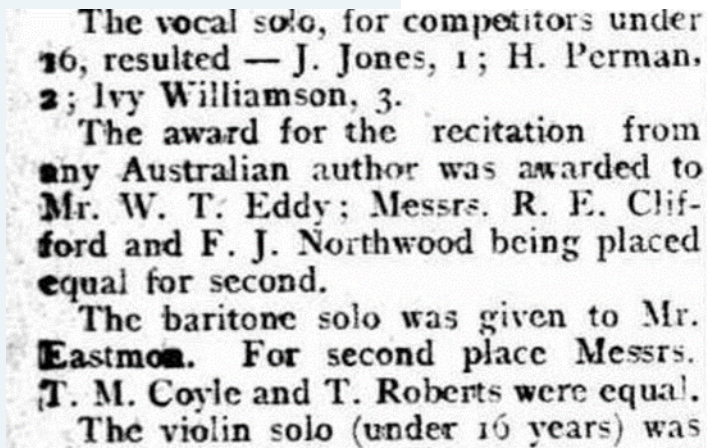
Mining, transport and water were among his principal concerns. Eddy argued that the Goldfields deserved fair consideration alongside the coastal and agricultural districts, supported improved railway connections and praised the Coolgardie Water Scheme. He also called for greater assistance to prospectors and small mining syndicates.

He spoke with particular respect for the pioneering prospectors who had blazed tracks and opened the way to settlements and mining centres, arguing that they deserved practical government support.

There was also a rather prophetic concern in his first parliamentary speech. Eddy complained about the poor condition of Coolgardie's electoral rolls and warned that irregularities could affect election results. Within months, his own election was declared void.

A regular competitor

The 1901 medallion was not the end of Eddy's involvement in public recitation. The following year he was competing again. On 15 November 1902, the Kalgoorlie Miner reported on Australian Natives' Association competitions held at the Mechanics' Institute in Boulder. This time, in the recitation from an Australian author, W. T. Eddy took first place, with R. E. Clifford and F. J. Northwood sharing second.



The vocal solo, for competitors under 16, resulted — J. Jones, 1; H. Perman, 2; Ivy Williamson, 3.
The award for the recitation from any Australian author was awarded to Mr. W. T. Eddy; Messrs. R. E. Clifford and F. J. Northwood being placed equal for second.
The baritone solo was given to Mr. Eastman. For second place Messrs. T. M. Coyle and T. Roberts were equal.
The violin solo (under 16 years) was

One year later, W. T. Eddy won first prize in the same recitation category. Source: Kalgoorlie Miner, 15 November 1902, p. 8, National Library of Australia, Trove.

The two results provide a delightful progression in Eddy's story. In 1901 he won second prize in the Australian authors recitation at Coolgardie; in 1902 he returned and won first prize in the same category. Only three years later he was standing in the Western Australian Legislative Assembly delivering his inaugural parliamentary speech.

From Coolgardie to Merredin

After leaving Parliament in 1908, Eddy continued in business as an auctioneer, initially at Coolgardie and later at Merredin, where he was based from about 1913.

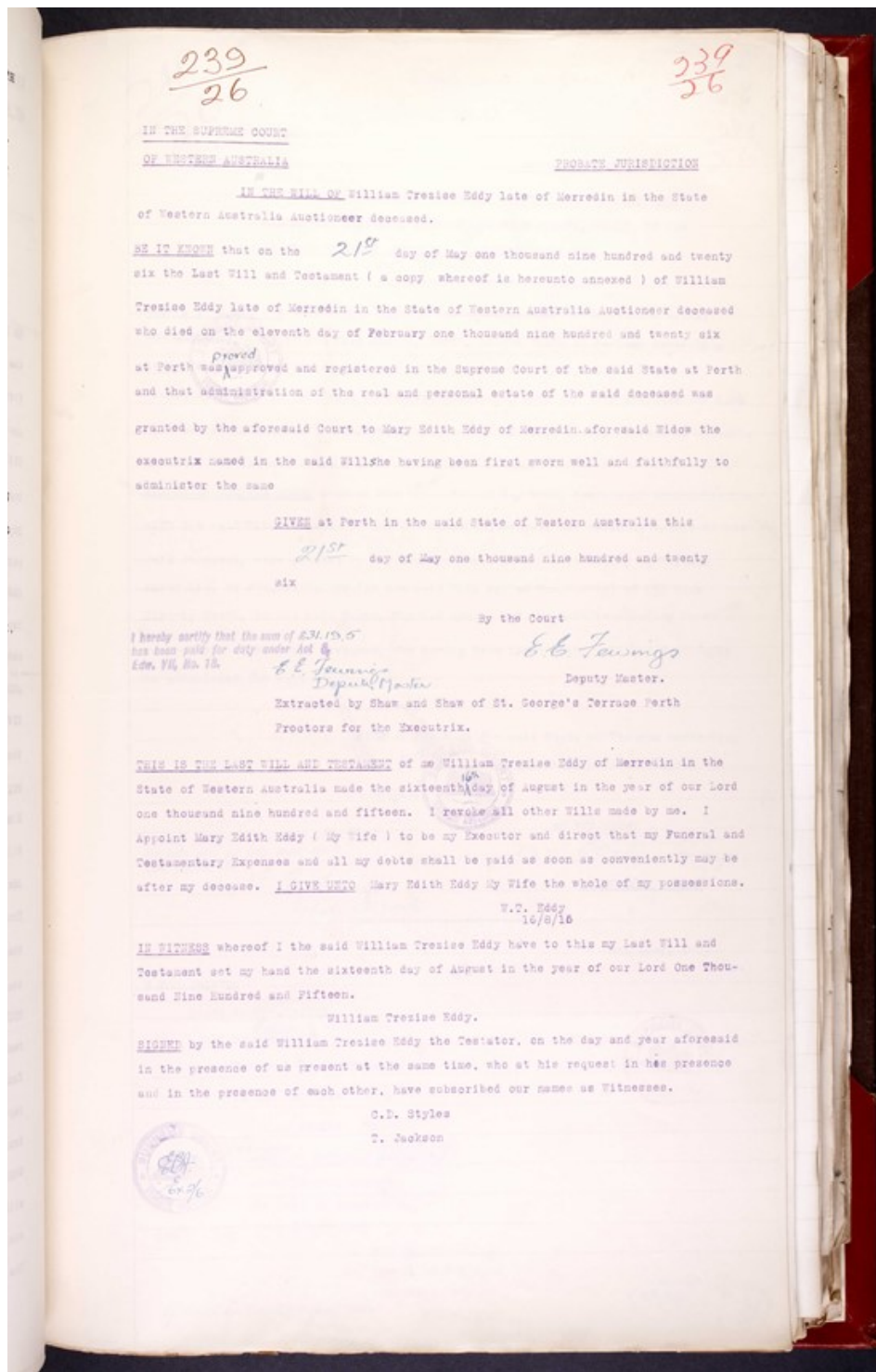
William married Mary Edith Kell, a widow, in 1904. The Biographical Register of Members of the Parliament of Western Australia records no children of their marriage. A family death notice nevertheless described William affectionately as "Pa" of Alice Montague and grandfather within her family, showing the place he held in the wider family.

William died at St George's Hospital, Perth, on 11 February 1926, aged 61. His probate papers confirm the date of death and describe him as William Tresize Eddy, late of Merredin, auctioneer.

His will, made on 16 August 1915, appointed Mary Edith Eddy as executrix and left the whole of his possessions to his wife. Probate was granted to Mary on 21 May 1926.

An object finds its story

More than a century after the Coolgardie competition, William Eddy's medallion survived. At some point it became separated from the man whose name was engraved upon it and from the story of how he had earned it.



Probate record and will of William Trezise Eddy, 1926. Supreme Court of Western Australia, Probate Jurisdiction. The record confirms his death on 11 February 1926 and Mary Edith Eddy as executrix.

Rhys Hall's discovery near York has now allowed that history to be recovered. The medallion can be connected to a particular evening at the Tivoli Theatre in Coolgardie in November 1901, when Eddy was awarded second prize for a recitation from an Australian author. The following year he went one better and won first prize. Three years later he was representing Coolgardie in the Western Australian Parliament.

Given the medallion's direct association with a Coolgardie event and Eddy's long connection with the Eastern Goldfields, the Eastern Goldfields Historical Society would seem an appropriate organisation to approach regarding its possible donation and long-term preservation.

Historical objects often survive long after their stories have been lost. Sometimes all that remains is a name, a date or a few engraved words. In this case, those clues were enough to lead back to William Trezise Eddy and the story behind a medallion awarded at Coolgardie more than 120 years ago.

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