

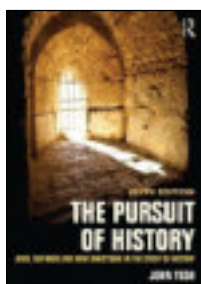
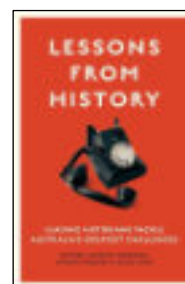


November 2026

GENERAL MEETING

The next meeting is on Wednesday 18 November at 6pm when Jenny Gregory will present a talk titled 'Rethinking History'.

History West Centre, 109 Stirling Hwy Nedlands
Refreshments available from 5.30pm



When I began studying history at university, to me history was simply what had happened in the past. It had not occurred to me that there could be different understandings of history which could change over time. What then is history? Whose stories are recorded? Is it written by the victors? Napoleon is reputed to have called it 'a fable agreed upon'. Henry Ford said history was 'more or less bunk' in 1916. Seventy years later historian Francis Fukuyama predicted that we had come to the 'end of history'. In this talk I will reflect on the changing understandings of history and the skills that we can learn from the study of history.



Jenny Gregory is Emeritus Professor of History at UWA, where she taught urban history, heritage studies and WA history. Her books include *City of Light: a history of Perth since the 1950s*, *Claremont* (with Geoff Bolton) and a centenary history of Scotch College now updated and soon to be republished in a new edition. She has also edited many collections including the *Historical Encyclopedia of WA*. Previously President of the National Trust WA and the History Council of WA, she has been Warden of Convocation: UWA Alumni Association since 2021. Current projects include research into our response to lost history and heritage.

Vintage textile sale
Sunday 8th November
9am - 4pm
at History west Centre
109 Stirling Highway
Fabric, books, vintage items,
mystery scrap bags, and more!
also a great selection of old maps

CALL FOR BOOKS !
for Jumbo Second-Hand Booksale



A History West tradition
3-4 April 2027

Downsizing? Spring cleaning?
Please donate any surplus books
(except magazines, textbooks or encyclopedias)

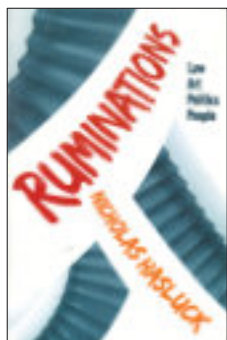
History West, 109 Stirling Highway, Nedlands
Please deposit them in the car park
Or, if necessary, call 9386 3841 to arrange a pickup
Many thanks from the Book Sale Team

The History West Centre | 109 Stirling Highway | NEDLANDS Western Australia 6009
TELEPHONE: (08) 9386 3841 | EMAIL: admin@histwest.org.au
FACEBOOK: facebook.com/histwest | WEB: www.histwest.org.au | ABN: 43 607 110 473
LIBRARY EMAIL: library@histwest.org.au | MUSEUM EMAIL: museum@histwest.org.au

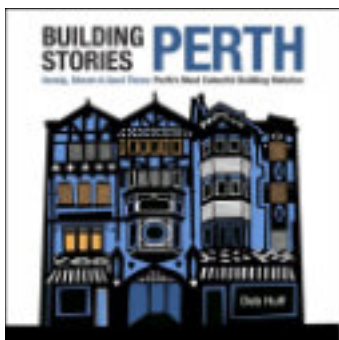
Forthcoming Events — Don't forget to book online!

Or ring the office 9386 3841 admin@histwest.org.au

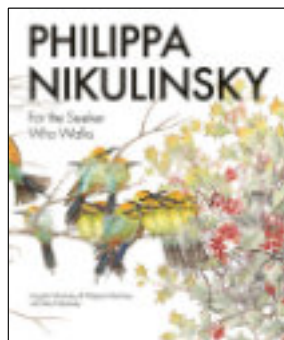
BOOKED IN FOR A XMAS CUPPA



Nicholas Hasluck
Ruminations



Deb Huff
Building Stories: Perth



Philippa Nikulinsky
For the Seeker Who Walks



Kate Lamont
Our Food

History West Centre, 109 Stirling Hwy, Nedlands

Wednesday 2 December, 10am for 10.30 start

MC Richard Offen

Our guest speakers will give brief talks on these featured books while the audience enjoys a hot cuppa.

Discover perfect holiday gifts for everyone on your list
including top recommendations for children and young adults.

Our Bookshop has Perth's most comprehensive range of WA history books.

Cost \$10 Bookings essential
Please ring the office: 9386 3841
Scan the QR code or click on the link

<https://square.link/u/T7JFupiY>



HISTORY IN THE CITY



The age of country telegrams

Derek Donegan

**Citiplace Community Centre, Upper-Level
Perth Railway Station Concourse**

Wednesday 4 November, 2pm

Traditional telegrams within Australia no longer exist but Derek Donegan has strong memories of that era and of life in a Western Australian town.

His talk will prompt memories for you and enlighten you of another time in history.

Entry \$10.00 at the door
Bookings not required

CHRISTMAS PARTY



Members and their partners are cordially invited
to our annual Christmas Party.

Join us for an evening of festive cheer, good
company and a touch of 1920s glamour.

**History West Centre
109 Stirling Hwy, Nedlands
Friday 11 December, 5-7pm**

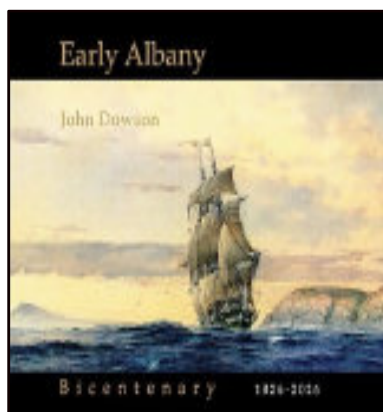
\$45 per person (canapes & drinks included)

Bookings essential
Please ring the office: 9386 3841
Scan the QR code or click on the link
<https://square.link/u/CRdNygaL>



Community Talk

Early Albany: exploring Western Australia's bicentenary



John Dowson's recognised historical expertise together with his new book on early Albany attracted a crowd of 70 or so for September's talk and the sale of 23 of the 24 books he brought with him indicate the book's strong appeal. John's focus on Albany's early colonial history (to mid-19th century) explores fascinating parts of the district's history: major scientific expeditions recording the inhabitants, coastline, landscape and natural history; the often-brutal sealers and whalers; and the initial amicable relationships between the local Menang people and the new arrivals, visitors and settlers alike.

John's talk paid tribute to Albany's bicentenary (1826-2026) and raised questions about how WA's upcoming bicentenary (1829-2029) will be commemorated.

If you missed buying a copy on the day of John Dowson's beautiful and informative pictorial history book, you can do so now at the Bookshop for \$75.



Robert Neill caught this fish in Albany in 1841, five years after Charles Darwin's visit, and sent it to the British Museum in 1843. It will be back in Albany later this year as part of an exhibition.



Bungaree, the first Australian to circumnavigate Australia, visited Albany with Flinders, and is the most painted of any early colonial figure. Painting by Augustus Earle.

* * * * *

Welcome to new members!

Catherine Akerman, Eileen Burns, Kevin Evershed,
Paul Grundy, Christine Haines, Christine Harris,
Zora Harvie, Johnathan Huston, Jill Anne Larritt,
Odhran O'Brien, Michael Rosario, Christine Watson

Affiliates Newsletter

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

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

SCHISM

Academic Conference 2026 — hosted by Limina
Friday 16 October, 9am-5pm

Margaret Fairweather Education Space,
University of WA

For details see —

<https://events.humanitix.com/limina-schism-conference>

Call for Expressions of Interest

2027 State Heritage Conference

*Heritage Horizons: Exploring heritage
above, below and beyond*

**3-4 May, Perth Convention and
Exhibition Centre**

We are seeking presentations that showcase
innovative projects, research, case studies,
community-led initiatives and emerging
approaches to heritage conservation, management
and interpretation. Whether you are uncovering
hidden histories, leading collaborative projects,
sharing lessons learned or exploring new
opportunities and challenges within the sector,
we encourage you to submit an
Expression of Interest.

For more information and submission details, visit

[https://www.wa.gov.au/government/document-
collections/state-heritage-conference#presenter-
expressions-of-interest](https://www.wa.gov.au/government/document-collections/state-heritage-conference#presenter-expressions-of-interest)

CENTENARY STORIES

Barbara R Harris

The ninth decade: Talks and Publications

A key objective of the Society has always been to gather and share knowledge about Western Australian history and, to this end, regular and diverse talks have been included in the Society's program throughout its life.

From the Society's earliest days the monthly general meetings have provided a forum for the presentation of research papers that reflect original research on WA history. The task of selecting speakers is assigned to the Readings and Publications Committee and each year it draws up the Speakers' program for the following year, inviting members to submit a paper on any subject of WA history which they are researching and which has not been previously presented or published. During the ninth decade (2006-2016), Pamela Statham Drew was Convenor of the Readings and Publications Committee (a position that she continues to occupy) and key members included Ian Berryman, Patrick Cornish, Steve Errington, Jack Honniball, Lenore Layman, Ruth Marchant James and Bob Reece.

In the early years most of the papers read at the monthly meetings dealt with WA's colonial history and presenters recalled personal experiences or what they had been told by their parents about the early years of the colony. However, in recent years the topics of the monthly talks have covered a wider range of subjects and better reflected the diversity of WA's history, including 'Chasing leather and choosing a code: WA opts for Australian Rules 1885' (Steve Errington, 2007), 'A Medical School for WA – the first fifty years' (Robert Pearce), 'Naming Noongars' (Aileen Walsh, 2010), and 'Yagan and other Early Aboriginal leaders' (Bob Reece, 2015). Often, speakers were members of the Society's Council: Robert Nicholson gave a talk on 'Getting Law going in the colony of WA', Geoffrey Bolton presented on 'The Life of Paul Hasluck' and Lenore Layman offered 'Investigating sudden death: Inquests in early colonial WA'.

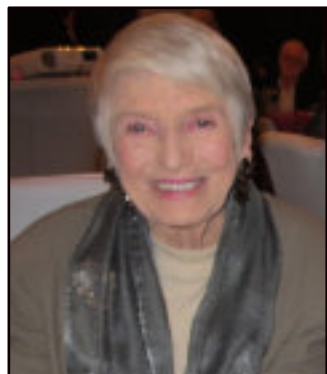
The general meeting research papers are subsequently considered for publication in the Society's annual journal *Early Days*. Editors in this decade were Steve Fargo (2007), Henry Wauchop (2008-2010), Lenore Layman (2011-2012), and Steve Errington (2013-2016). Later editors have been Ian Berryman (2017-2019), Patrick Cornish (2020) and, most recently, Heather Campbell and Jennie Carter (2021-2025).

As well as these research presentations, the Society has created several other opportunities for members and the public to learn about aspects of WA's interesting history, some held at the Society's home and others in the community, including the Foundation Day talk (now the Annual Lecture), 'History in the City', 'Community Talks', 'Tuesday Treasures', 'History Mystery Monday' and 'Booked in for a Cuppa'.

Very soon after the foundation of the Society in 1926, the Women's Auxiliary was formed with the aim to foster interest and enjoyment of WA history within the community and to raise funds which were donated annually to the Society's library and/or museum for the preservation of WA books, art and costumes. Monthly afternoon teas with talks were key functions organised by the Ladies' Committee and advertised with the promise: 'we can guarantee a good speaker, an excellent afternoon tea and a friendly group of people'. One of the reasons these talks became popular was the wide range of topics presented, everything from the history of hats to learning about Aboriginal sounds. Another reason for the popularity of these afternoon events was the reputation of the delectable afternoon teas for which participants paid an insubstantial charge of 35 cents in 1966, rising to \$5 in the 2000s.

The Afternoon Tea meetings were held on the second Wednesday of each month at various places, including the home of the Vice-President of the Women's Auxiliary, Eileen Elliott, in Adelaide Terrace, in Boan's Chandelier Room, at the Sheraton Hotel and Palace Hotel, and at the May Holman Centre, St Georges Terrace. In 1991 the venue moved to Citiplace Community Centre in the Perth City Station Complex, which offered a central community location that was easily reached by public transport.

In the early 2000s, reflecting changing social attitudes, members of the Society expressed concern that people might consider that these talks were for women only as they were held under the auspices of the Women's Auxiliary. As a



Ruth Marchant James



Win Cann



Dorothy Erickson



Patrick Cornish

result, the Society decided that membership of this committee should be open to all members and the Committee renamed to reflect and encourage a more inclusive participation. Some proposed ideas for naming were 'City Talks Committee' and 'Viva History Committee' but finally, in March 2007, the name was changed to 'History in the City'.

The success of these city talks owed much to the leadership and efforts of Win Cann, Auxiliary President from 1999 until her retirement in 2013, during which time community awareness and attendance at the History in the City program was increased and over \$32,000 was raised for the Society's collection. Subsequent presidents Lorraine Tholet, Rachel Roe and Susan Hall have maintained this program's life and success.

For many years the Society organised a Pioneer Memorial Service each year at the East Perth Cemeteries including a Foundation Day address. However, in recognition of changing times and changing views of colonial pioneers, the service was discontinued in 2022. The event had seen reduced attendance and no longer seemed relevant or popular with members of Society or the public. As well, there was declining community interest in a religious service. In its place the 'History West Annual lecture' was instituted and moved first to Stirling House and then to the University Club. The inaugural History West Lecture was held in June 2022 where Dr Mathew Trinca, then Director of the National Museum Australia, spoke about 'Reading WA in Australia's national past'.

One Tuesday in July 2013, Dorothy Erickson presented a glimpse into the Society's collection of 'Museum Treasures'. This event, hosted by the Auxiliary and the Museum at Stirling House, proved very popular and inspired a new regular program, 'Tuesday Treasures', where on the first Tuesday of every month a Museum volunteer presented research findings on items in the collection over a cup of tea. The first treasure presented was a beautiful display of mother of pearl, including a pearl necklace once owned by Lady Hasluck, and Susan Clarke gave a short talk on the pearling industry. On subsequent occasions treasures included an artefact foot warmer used around 1920, bells, hats and clocks.

Another innovative and very popular talk series that was initiated in the ninth decade was 'Booked in for a Cuppa'. Intent on promoting the Society's bookshop, Lesley Burnett (Community Officer) came up with the idea of inviting guest speakers to give short talks exploring books after which participants browsed in the bookshop and enjoyed 'a cuppa and a bun'. The August 2015 event, where Geoffrey Bolton, Ian Reid and Dorothy Erickson gave talks, drew an audience of 70 and resulted in one author selling out of his book supply on the day. On another occasion, in June 2016, the meeting room was so full people overflowed into the hallway.

Ever resourceful and resolved on raising the profile of the Society and its collection, Lesley Burnett in 2024 suggested monthly challenges to enable participants to explore items from the Museum, Library and Bookshop and to answer an interesting historical quiz (whilst also enjoying a 'cuppa' and chocolate brownies). 'History Mystery Monday' was set up in three rooms with three mysteries to solve: a mystery object from the Museum selected by Brixley Gale, a mystery photograph organised by Jeanette Longwood, and a guest author to meet in the Bookshop. This informal event was short-lived when, after about a year, preparations to move to new premises necessitated efforts being directed to planning for the relocation.

Although 'Tuesday Treasures' and 'History Mystery Monday' no longer exist, since 2019 the Society's 'Community Talks' have presented a range of interesting speakers who have explored diverse aspects of WA history. Now held throughout the year at our premises at 109, these talks attract diverse audiences and assist the Society's outreach to the wider public.

Alongside the extensive talk program, the Society's publications are significant in maintaining its objectives. Whilst the *Early Days* journal annually publishes new research, the monthly newsletter *History West* shares news with members about all aspects of the Society's affairs as well as information about the Collection and forthcoming events. Items published include Council news, notification of future events (meetings, talks, tours, conferences), book reviews, Affiliated Societies' news, spotlight on members' research, summaries of talks, and news from the library and museum. Lenore Layman took over the editorship of *History West* in November 2013 (a role she still fulfils).

Thanks to the efforts of so many committed volunteers the Society continues to offer a rich program of historical talks and publications, enjoyed by members and appealing to the interested public.



Lenore Layman



Pamela Statham Drew



Lesley Burnett



Steve Errington

A wonderful Christmas gift

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF TREASURES

FROM THE ROYAL WESTERN AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY 1926-2026



How do you condense 100 Years of Treasures collected across the century since the inception of the Western Australian Historical Society? For the Society to showcase its thousands of Treasures was not an easy task and perhaps a better title for this publication could be 'A Taste of Treasures'!

First, we established a timeline to guide our selections. Although much of our Aboriginal cultural material was handed to the Berndt Museum at the University of WA, acknowledgment is made to First Nations people in several of the items. There is an early photograph of Munjie, a Noongar woman photographed wearing a *baark*, a typical marriage dress, when she married leader Winjan. A pen and ink drawing of 'A Native of Port Leschenault' by Alexander Collie and the bronze reliefs of two of John Forrest's trackers, Tommy Windich and Tommy Pierre, are from the Museum collection.

One of our early treasures is a replica of Dirk Hartog's 1616 inscribed plate which records the first landing of a European in WA. This plate was presented to our Society in 1938 by the Consul-General for the Netherlands East Indies.

The vast areas of WA are recognised by a variety of objects – Capt. Hugh McKenzie's sextant from the time of his landing in Albany in 1840, Marmaduke Terry's theodolite which assisted with the surveying of the Kimberley district, and botanical specimens collected by Alfred Hillman as he surveyed the Perth to Albany Road and much of the Avon District. Seaweed albums collected at Rottnest Island, pearl shells gathered from Broome, Bishop Frewer's harmonium ferried around the northwest on horse and cart, and a melodeon which entertained families in the Walpole District Group Settlement Scheme are also featured. As well several items from the Bussell family at the Vasse and items from the Goldfields are included.

In recognition of achievements, there is an Illuminated Address presented to Paul Hasluck in 1932 for his contribution to journalism and his after-hours research for the Society as well as the 1881 sterling silver M A Racing Club Murchison Cup, a cigarette case presented to mechanic James Malett Bennett on completing the first aerial flight from England to Australia in 1919, and medals awarded at the 1881 Perth International Exhibition.

Artworks chosen from over 500 works held by the Society include an early etching of 'Swan River 50 Miles Up', paintings of landscapes and buildings of country districts, sketches and paintings of early Perth and WA wildflowers.

The costumes selected for the book were restricted to a very few from a vast and varied collection. Amelia Richardson-Bunbury's beetle-wing gown c1857, a rare example with this embellishment, and Harriet Gibbs' wedding gown at her marriage to Thomas Saw in 1852, both now in fragile condition, are archivally stored and boxed. Other costumes, Euphemia Macintosh's afternoon gown, and Elizabeth Anne Hodgson's home-made wedding dress for her marriage to Edward William Bolton in Wales in 1877, are in good condition and are currently on display in our museum exhibition space.

Another rare item belonged to Lieutenant John Moir of the Albany Volunteer Defence Rifles 1885-88 and is reported to be the only surviving Volunteer Defence Rifles uniform. Other items include Blanche Habgood's repurposed wedding dress which has quite a story of its own; a child's dress (one of six) bought in Paris in 1919 by Douglas McLarty who enlisted in the 16th Infantry Battalion and was away from home for three years. Upon his homecoming he finally met his daughter Josephine for the first time.

A beautiful example of the 1920s era is a colourful sequinned dress and an example of the 1960s period, a short, colourful mini dress typical of the fashion of that time. We are also fortunate to have Sir William Heseltine's Royal Household Court Jacket which he presented to the Society following his retirement in 1990 having served as Assistant Press Secretary to Queen Elizabeth II before becoming Senior Private Secretary and keeper of the Queen's Archives.

There are many examples of items brought to the colony, one being Matilda Roe's ceramic serving dish arriving with her in 1829 on the *Parmelia*, Ellen Stirling's colonial sewing cabinet, Charlotte Bussell's portable writing desk and other items all with stories to tell. Examples of early handcraft, precious memorabilia and acknowledgement of later immigrants who arrived with their own stories have been included. More contemporary items such as Ron Jenkins' jazz saxophone and Rica Erickson's typewriter will be familiar to some.

The Library's inclusion of photographs, maps, rare books, diaries, certificates and pamphlets as well as examples of our own journal *Early Days* published regularly since 1927 all add to the history of our State and Society.

The Museum committee has displayed more than twenty of the items included in the book in the large exhibition space, in the upright cabinets, in tabletop displays and drawers of the cabinets on the ground level and in the Wright Family meeting room. How many can you discover?

Val Hutch



HISTORY WEST

CENTENARY WALK AT HISTORY WEST CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF THE SOCIETY

**AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE RECOGNISED
AS PART OF THE HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY AND OUR NEW PREMISES**

**The Centenary Walk will replace the synthetic grass at the front of the building.
A tax-deductible donation to the Society will be acknowledged with a named brick paver. Either your own name as a member today, or the name for a past member or family, so that we record this centenary moment in our ongoing story.**



Examples:

**SMITH FAMILY : ARTHUR SMITH / 1908 – 1983: ANTHONY JONES /
AND MARGARET: BILL JONES / AND FAMILY / 1990 – 2026**

**You will have received a flyer to make a fundraising donation with recognition
in the Centenary Walk. Please complete and return to the Society.**

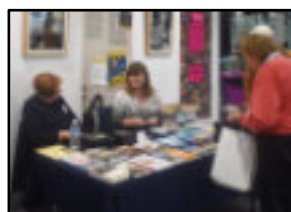
61st Affiliated Societies Annual State Conference 1926-2026 A Century of Change: Where to next?



Congratulations to convenor **Fiona Bush** and her team for the careful planning and hard work which produced a successful conference, held over the weekend of 11-13 September. Also thanks to our sponsors – City of Perth (reception), State Library of WA (conference venue), History in the City (funding assistance with lunches) and Wanneroo Historical Society (morning and afternoon tea).



The conference began happily on Friday night with a reception at Council House where the Deputy Lord Mayor, David Goncalves, welcomed the delegates. A group photograph captures the assembled members. On the following morning 126 delegates and friends occupied the State Library theatre for the program of talks. We were welcomed to Country and to the State Library before Nick Drew completed the traditional rollcall of attendees. Professor Jane Lydon led off the weekend's program of talks with an interesting exploration of WA's Centenary a century ago in 1929, featuring the differing visions of George Pitt Morison, John Kirwan, E O G Shann and William Harris. A newly emerging historical sense was encouraged by the centennial year. Today, our speaker suggested, WA's past is seen as more diverse than it was in 1929 – with recognition of the importance of First Nations' perspectives and truth telling/truth listening as well as a different history of Australia when told from its Indian Ocean perspective.



A panel consisting of Shane Burke, Bruce Baskerville and Cathy Baron then tackled the challenges facing historians today in both educational institutions and local historical societies. Richard Offen surveyed Perth's heritage losses from decades of demolition and insisted that we mustn't 'let it happen again!' Nonja Peters spoke passionately of the shattered lives of postwar migrants and the need for historical redress. And the experiment with the Professional Historians Association (WA) running a history slam as the final event on Saturday proved popular, with only one 'slammer' not being a delegate. Conference business was enacted on Sunday morning and History West's centenary cake was cut at morning

tea. The talks program concluded with Sharyn McCaskey speaking of the opportunities afforded by social media and Wendy Lugg outlining a century of change in collection practices.

The conference planners hope that delegates and friends left the weekend with some clearer ideas of 'where to next' in our service to members and community outreach. And we look forward to re-assembling next year in Busselton to continue our fellowship.

Congratulations to Narembeen Historical Society Winners of the 2026 Merit Award for its Emu Hill Townsite Project



This project entailed the erection of an information bay for visitors to provide shelter, table, seating and information panels at the site of the former Emu Hill townsite, c4km south of Narembeen. These tell the story of Emu Hill and the families who established the farming district.

Land in the district was surveyed for settlement in 1910 and farmers settled to graze sheep and grow wheat. Emu Hills was gazetted as a townsite in 1918 and provided the agricultural community's first school and bank branch. However its reluctance to allow a hotel to be built in the town (suggesting instead a coffee palace or temperance hotel) signalled the beginning of its end when Narembeen, then little more than a railway siding, built a hotel in 1922. Narembeen grew as Emu Hill declined until nothing remained of the latter.

Narembeen Historical Society is an active society which works to tell the history of the district in a variety of ways, for instance, with museums and schools projects.

"As part of their studies, the [high school] students were asked to choose a [museum] object and compare it with what we use today, looking at how its design and materials have changed. Objects chosen included a Bakelite dial-up telephone, flat iron, pump fly sprayer, biscuit tin, homemade potato masher and butter churn with butter pats. The students were fascinated by the Coolgardie meat safe and the old kerosene refrigerator used to keep food cool in years gone by. They were particularly amused by the size of the old ice-cream freezer and found it hard to imagine that it could hold only a very small amount of ice cream compared with today's servings! The typewriters also proved popular, although the students discovered that the keys were much harder to press than the soft touch keyboards they are familiar with today."

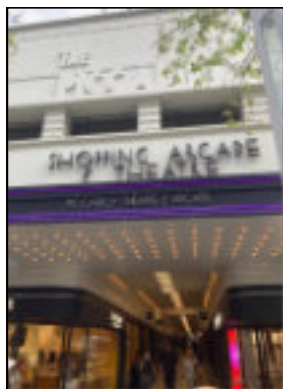
State History Conference: Sunday tours Perth City Tour

Jeanette Longwood



After a well-provisioned lunch, a happy bunch of conference attendees gathered in the State Library forecourt for a tour of the inner Perth precinct. Our knowledgeable City of Perth guide provided a succinct overview of the various arrivals of Europeans to the west coast of Australia, including the arrival of Stirling and his settlers. We then moved off to have highlights of properties

described as we walked along William Street to Yagan Square. We moved through Globe Lane, where its wonderful artworks were pointed out, to Forrest Place with its imposing post office and bank facades. Did you know Forrest Chase is a Myer marketing device? The name of that street hasn't changed.



We walked through Piccadilly Arcade which has been brought back to its original style – the interior of the Theatre just needs somebody to undertake that part of the restoration. Walking along Hay Street Mall we were encouraged to look above the street level fronts to see the previous uses of these buildings. The eastern end of the mall was once a thriving theatre precinct and included

the Theatre Royal and the Majestic. We heard that the lower portion of the Perth Town Hall was originally a busy marketplace.

A church built using river reeds was the original church for the largely Anglican settlers and was located near to where the St Georges Cathedral now stands. Stirling Gardens was originally planted by botanist Drummond who experimented to see what would grow in the unknown climate of the Swan River. Highlights of London Court were pointed out as we walked through it.



We finished with a drink at the Royal Hotel from which arrivals at the Perth train station could once easily be viewed.

Thank you to our City of Perth guide for this informative and easily understood tour! These guides offer a variety of daily tours of our city. Separately available

are tours of the new and amazing ECU City Campus and of St Georges Cathedral. It is well worth coming into central Perth to enjoy these opportunities.

Kings Park Tour

Fiona Bush

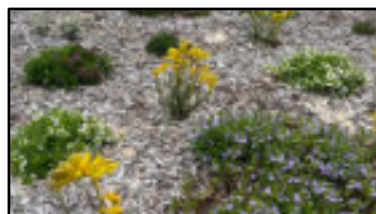
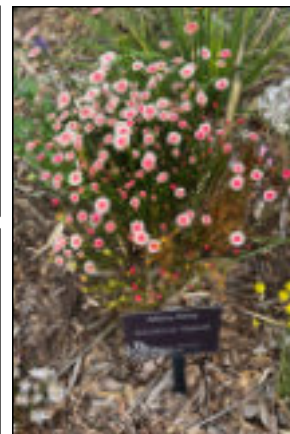
Our tour guide was Peter Creighton and we began on the grassy lawn in front of Information Centre which afforded a splendid view down Fraser Avenue, the main entrance to the Park. Peter explained that in 1929 the Park's Centenary Committee planted one hundred red flowering gums along the avenue. Plaques bearing the names of committee members, members of the Kings Park Board and other dignitaries were placed at the base of the trees. Unfortunately, these trees did not appreciate this location and in 1938 the avenue was replanted with the lemon scented gums you see today.

Our next stop was Flame of Remembrance, and a talk about the plantings in this area. Most of them are a species of scaevola: the usual mauve colour together with white ones and a deep mauve variation. While a couple of black ducks cavorted in the pond surrounding the Flame, Peter explained the Latin meaning of scaevola. It is derived from the surname of a prominent Roman, Gaius Marcus Scaevola who in 508 BC helped drive off an enemy invader. Scaevola apparently snuck into the enemy king's tent and, to demonstrate that the Romans would never give up, thrust his hand into the fire, thus displaying Roman bravery. It seemed rather apt that these small plants were used as a mass planting in an area commemorating the sacrifice made by service men and women.

Peter then introduced us to the Queen's Tree. It is a magnificent River Red Gum located to the south of the Flame and planted by Queen Elizabeth when she visited in 1954. Prince Phillip planted a companion tree nearby. Today, Phillip's tree is much smaller, why? The 1954 tree blew down in 1962 and he planted a replacement in 1962, but it failed to thrive. In 2011 he planted a sapling grown from the seed of the Queen's tree and thankfully this one is still standing!

We finished our tour near an unusual wattle which has enormous leaves, like those of an elephant; appropriately called the Elephant Ear Wattle. It was not flowering but we found the size of the leaves fascinating, particularly when Peter told us that these leaves, like those of so many acacias, are modified stems. The Elephant Ear Wattle is a striking example of this modification. In the juvenile stage acacias have true leaves. They are the rather feathery leaves you see. As an acacia matures, the juvenile leaves take on a radically different form: flat, round or spiky, to mention a few.

It was a great tour, and Peter was an engaging tour guide.



What's in a picture?

Swan View Railway Tunnel

Julie Taylor



Swan View Railway Tunnel M1999.2381

In March 1881 the first stage of the Eastern Railway was opened from Fremantle to Guildford. Construction continued to Midland Junction and over the Darling Scarp, and the line reached Northam in 1886. After gold was discovered in Coolgardie in 1892 the line was extended eastwards to Southern Cross (opened 1894) and Kalgoorlie (opened 1897).

The line ran around Greenmount Hill but it proved to be too steep especially as locomotives became bigger and heavier. As a result, a 'deviation' through what is now the John Forrest National Park was planned, part of which was a 332-metre tunnel at Swan View. Construction of the

tunnel commenced at each end and the two bores met almost perfectly on 18 April 1895. The tunnel was opened to traffic in February of the following year.

This photograph from the collection shows a suburban passenger train approaching the western portal of the Swan View tunnel in the 1920s. The photographer, from the Midland Junction Studio, is standing on top of the tunnel. The shadows tell us that it is late afternoon. A timetable from 1926 shows a train such as this travelling from Fremantle to Chidlow at that time of day although this service could have been travelling all the way to Northam.

The large, thick plume of smoke indicates that the locomotive was working hard. The train may have stopped at the Swan View station and was climbing towards the tunnel. Drivers would increase speed on the approach so that they could reduce smoke inside the tunnel, which is narrow with no ventilation shafts. Passengers familiar with the route knew to close all the windows before the train entered the tunnel. Drivers and firemen had no such protection. The best they could do was cover their heads with a wet hessian sack and keep low to the floor. The suffocating conditions in the tunnel contributed to a number of incidents, including the accident in 1942 in which driver Thomas Beer was killed.

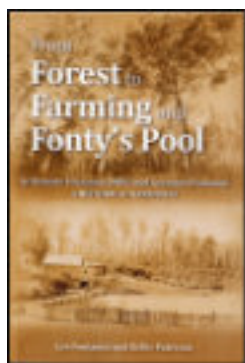
The locomotive was a WA Government Railways E Class. The E Class entered service in 1902 for passenger and express haulage. By the time this photograph was taken the class had been downgraded to more humble duties, such as the suburban service shown here. The carriages were what was known as the 'dog-box' type. Each had seven individual compartments for eight or ten passengers. They had side doors with no corridor running through them. They did not have toilets and were therefore not intended for long journeys. The rear carriage had a guards compartment and a look-out at the back so that the guard could see forward along the train to keep an eye out for anything amiss. The roof of each carriage had a number of round 'lids' which covered holes in the roof through which porters would hang oil lamps if trains were going to be running after dark.

As can be seen in the photograph, there was a single track through the tunnel. As a result of the accident in 1942 and the bottleneck created by the single track, a duplicate track was built. The 1.6km-long deviation was cut mostly through solid rock and took 17 months. The WAGR chief civil engineer reportedly called it 'the most expensive mile in Western Australia'. It was completed in 1945. Trains travelling towards the east then bypassed the tunnel while those travelling towards Midland continued to use it because there was less danger from the smoke on the run downhill. In 1955 the tunnel floor was lowered to increase the vertical clearance, and new sleepers and heavier rail were laid. The tunnel was closed ten years later in 1966 when the new Avon Valley deviation was opened. This is the route in use today.

Among the many exhibits at the Rail Heritage WA museum in Bassendean are an E Class locomotive and a dog-box carriage. An enjoyable day out can also be spent walking the line of the railway through the John Forrest National Park.

Many thanks Geoffrey Higham of Rail Heritage WA for identifying the locomotive and carriages and for providing the information about them.

Book Reviews



Lee Fontanini & Kellie Paterson, *From Forest to Farming and Fonty's Pool: Archimede Fontanini (MBE) and Germano Fontanini: a historical narrative*, Lee Fontanini & Kellie Paterson, Manjimup, 2025. In Library.

Reviewer: Heather Campbell

This attractive book traces the lives and fortunes of brothers Archimede and Jack Fontanini from their birth in Italy through their migration to WA and initial work in the timber industry to their settlement and eventual demise in Manjimup. In doing so, the book provides insights into the lives of migrants and those taking up virgin land in the southwest, the difficulties faced and ingenuity used to overcome them and develop their land.

In following the fortunes of the Fontanini family the book includes much of the history of Manjimup, albeit from the Fontanini family's point of view, and there is particular focus in a separate section on the establishment of the well-known Fonty's Pool.

In the New Year Honours List in January 1970 Archie was awarded the MBE 'for services to the community in Manjimup by providing a swimming pool for the district's children. It has been widely used to raise funds for charity'. In his response Archie asked people 'not to make a fuss about me, just treat me as plain Archie Fonty'.



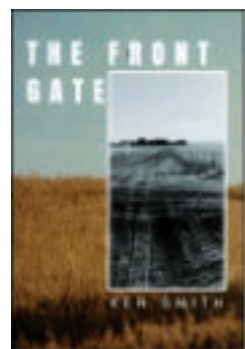
Swimming event held at Fonty's Pool
Source: *Western Mail* 1932

The authors tell the story chronologically interspersed with direct quotes which add interest and readability to the book. It is far more than a family history. Also encompassed are family relationships, migration, settlement and land development. While there is no index, the chapter titles together with subheadings make the book easy to navigate. Many of the images come from Fontanini family collections.

The authors and the Fontanini family should be commended for the work they put into this publication. The breadth of their research is impressive and includes not only family archives but newspapers from Trove and records from Italy.

Ken Smith, *The Front Gate*, self-published, 2026. In Library.

Reviewer: Bevan Carter



The Front Gate is a family history beginning when the author's father, Charles Smith, aged 18 from a farming family in Aberdeenshire, migrated with a mate to Western Australia in 1907. Charles soon found himself working at a mine in Ravensthorpe where he married and moved back to Perth where their first child was born. In 1910 he and his mate purchased a 240 hectare virgin block at Kukerin in the eastern wheatbelt towards Lake Grace where they set about clearing the block and building a house. Charles' second child was born in Subiaco in 1914. In that year both the children died and his wife contracted tuberculosis. She returned home to Victoria where she passed away.

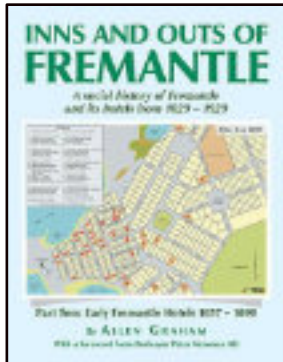
Charles' partnership was dissolved with him retaining the farm. He went home to Scotland where he met Jane Lindsay and she and his sister Jean returned to WA with him in 1921. He married Jane in Perth and they returned to the Kukerin farm. The couple had five children with the youngest Ken (the author) born in 1935. Charles' sister Jean married a Scotsman Bill Thomson whom Charles had employed. Ken was three when his father died of cancer and Jane decided to keep the farm going because the eldest son, also Charles and then a teenager, was keen to take it over. The farm has been in the family for over 100 years.

The book is about the lives and children of each of the family members of both the Smith and Thomson families, mostly sporting achievements and career changes. Ken's own life story in the Kukerin district, farming and managing the local co-op for fourteen years, gives a feel of life in the eastern wheatbelt. The book has numerous family photographs.

Ken and his wife moved to Mandurah after his wife had a massive heart attack and he had numerous jobs: real estate agent, management jobs and small businesses such as lawnmowing and supplying firewood. Now in his nineties, Ken has many a story to tell.

Allen Graham, *Inns and Outs of Fremantle: a social history of Fremantle and its hotels from 1829-1929, Part Two: Early Fremantle Hotels 1857-1890*, Xlibris, 2025. In Library & Bookshop \$75.

Reviewer: Heather Campbell



This publication is the second part of a planned trilogy on the hotels of Fremantle and like part one, is an attractive and comprehensive volume, this time of 307 pages. It has ten chapters arranged chronologically with enticing titles such as ‘A most miserably dull place 1857-1866’ and ‘The Fenian Filibuster, coloured ribbons and coffee palaces 1881-1883’, finishing sensibly with ‘State of things to come 1880-1890’. As well as a detailed contents list, in the preamble the book features an extensive list of illustrations, which appear liberally throughout and, as in part one, reproductions of Surveyor General Roe’s 1833 Map of Fremantle, and an 1877 Plan of Fremantle. There is also a useful map showing the key hotels in Fremantle and a listing in order of opening.

Both parts cover much more than hotels. As Allen Graham says in his introduction, the book also ‘tells the story of suffering and resilience of the early settlers and the hard economic and emotional deprivation they had to endure’. Meticulous research is evident in the numerous endnotes, the extensive bibliography and in an invaluable index at the end of the volume.

Images of newspaper cuttings are featured as well as black and white and colour photographs, all of which provide an evocative window into the past as does the regular use of direct quotations. Local correspondent *Artizan* thought Perth hotels were inferior to those of Fremantle asking:

Why, sir, should the bar rooms in Perth be so incomparably inferior to those in Fremantle? Why should not the working man be provided with decently furnished and wholesome rooms, in which they might sit in comfort, and drink their beer and enjoy their pipes amid decent surroundings, instead of being compelled to either lounge at the bar or to stay in rooms, which in every way are unfitted for the use of civilized beings? ... The working man is the publican’s best customer, and I think his comfort should be attended to quite as carefully as that of the so-called upper classes.

In writing about the hotels of Fremantle, Allen Graham has also included the people of Fremantle who ran and patronised those places and, in so doing, has provided the reader with insights into the lives of the ordinary people of those times.

Community Officer: Lesley Burnett
Editor *History West*: Dr Lenore Layman

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