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# HISTORY WEST

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April 2022

## GENERAL MEETING

**The next meeting at Stirling House is on Wednesday 20 April at 6pm when Dr Peter Handford will present 'A Tailor's Tale: James and Mary Coultas, a Level Crossing and the American Blonde'. Refreshments available from 5.30pm; Bookshop open until 6pm.**

Most lawyers first encounter James and Mary Coultas as the victims of a near-miss train accident in Melbourne in 1886, which caused Mary to suffer 'nervous shock'. This case was the foundation of an important line of cases stretching down to the present day. But legal sources tell us nothing about James and Mary, apart from what happened to them on one particular day. I decided to look behind the case to find out James and Mary's history: where they came from, what sort of people they were, what was the effect on them of losing the case, and what happened to them after that. The story of James Coultas the tailor starts in Yorkshire, moves to Ireland, then to Melbourne and finally to Perth, where James and Mary tried to make a new life following James's bankruptcy – only for an unfortunate error of judgment by James to create new problems.



**Peter Handford** taught in the Law School at the University of WA from 1977 until his retirement in 2016. Between 1983 and 1998 he was the Executive Officer and Director of Research of the Law Reform Commission of WA. In addition to his specialist research areas, torts and limitation of actions – on which he has published two books, *Tort Liability for Mental Harm* and *Limitation of Actions: The Laws of Australia* – Peter has a long-standing interest in legal history, a subject he taught to first-year students for over 25 years. Since 2008, he has been involved with the Law Museum (housed at the Old Court House in Perth) and its oral history programme.



## History West Community Centre Fundraising Splendid news and sad postponements

I am sure you will all agree that ups and downs in life are better measured by the ups. And so it is for the Society. The Building Fund has this last month received a generous donation from one of our members for \$100,000. This is a splendid gift of support and belief in the future of the Society. It is an act of encouragement to us all to support the fundraising campaign however we are able.

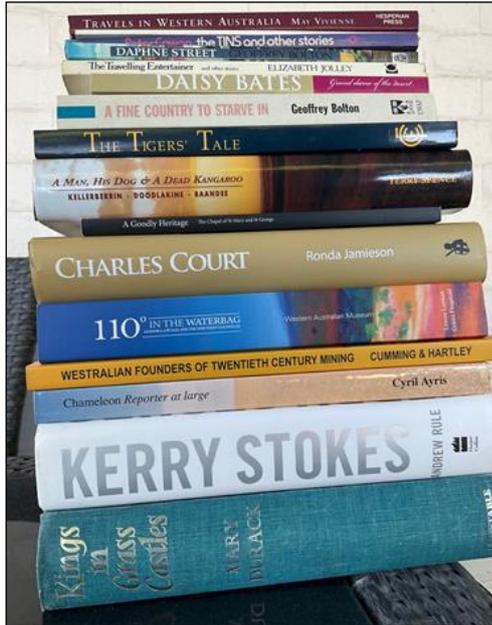
Sadly we had to postpone our fundraising visit to the Creasy Gem Collection owing to COVID rules that mining companies have to enforce. Please stay with us as this interesting event will be re-scheduled for later in the year.

Our History West Inaugural Lecture has been re-booked for Thursday 9 June with Mathew Trinca AM, Director of the National Museum, once again braving our borders. The extra good news is that our Patron the Governor Kim Beazley AC has agreed to open the lecture. So keep your fingers crossed for this special ticketed occasion that is for members and the general public and will be widely advertised.

Sally Anne Hasluck

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## Booksale - A bonanza of books!



These are just a few books pulled randomly from the boxes of Western Australian books in storage waiting for our April Secondhand Book Sale. We have a bonanza for those interested in history. There are dozens of books on our mining industry in this selection; for example, *Westralian Founders of Twentieth Century Mining* by Cumming and Hartley; Lenore Layman & Criena Fitzgerald's *110 in the Water Bag* about the mining towns of Leonora, Gwalia and the Northern Goldfields; and, of course, Ronda Jamieson's biography of *Charles Court*, which dwells on the enormous role he played in getting our mining industry off the ground. The other side of the bush is vividly described in Mary Durack's classic book *Kings in Grass Castles*, while Cyril Ayris wanders through the outback as a 'Reporter at Large' in his book titled *Chameleon*. Terry Spence is still in outback country in his book *A Man, His Dog and a Dead Kangaroo*, stories from Kellerberrin, Doodlakine and Baandee.

The pile also contains two of the late Professor Geoffrey Bolton's best – *A Fine Country to Starve In* and *Daphne Street* where he grew up. Another WA giant whose name is familiar to most of us is *Kerry Stokes* whose amazing story is told decade by decade by Andrew Rule. Another book, *The Tigers' Tale* by Kevin Casey, looks at the origins and history of the Claremont Football club. Four smaller books complete the haul. *Daisy Bates* by Bob Reece, *Mrs Cowan's Clock* by Paul Wycherley, *A Goodly Heritage* by Philip Raymont – the story of Guildford Grammar School's Chapel – and finally *The Travelling Entertainer* by our own Elizabeth Jolley who has no doubt taught a good proportion of our members.

All these treasures in one box. We sincerely hope this taste 'whets your appetite' and motivates you to mark the date, **2 and 3 of April**, in your diaries and come to our book sale. Remember you can take a haul and, once read, return them to our sale in the following year.

**Pamela Statham Drew**

## Affiliates News

**Eastern Goldfields Historical Society** is looking for images of Boulder as the Goldfields marks Boulder's 125th anniversary.

**Fremantle History Society** reports the opening of the City's new History Centre centred on its library. The 46-year-old collection includes 'unique historical pieces such as rare books, an extensive photographic collection and council archives'. It has an interactive 65-inch screen for viewing digital resources, microfilm reader and accessible reference collection. It is pleasing to see the City's collection so accessible.

**Margaret River Historical Society** has launched its digital historical walk trail guided by 67 marri and blackbutt plaques featuring embedded QR codes. Wood for the plaques came from the original Metricup group settlement and research for the project was undertaken by local member John Alferink drawing on the late May Wise's work. The plaques have been placed along the main street and at local historical sites. Definitely a walk to visit.

**Maritime Heritage Assn** journal contains a wonderful tribute to marine artist Pat Rodriguez who died in December 2021, aged 91 years, leaving a legacy of good memories among those who knew him as well as a collection of art works and models for us all to appreciate.

Wendy Durant has written an interesting article for the **Rockingham District Historical Society** newsletter on the State's turtle soup industry. Several efforts were made to ship live turtles from the north for processing first at Bicton and then at Rockingham. These ventures failed because of Perth's winter temperatures which were not warm enough to sustain the turtles. Another factory was established at Cossack. By the end of the 1960s the Dept of Fisheries & Fauna was concerned at depletion of the turtle population and turtle fishing was banned except for Aboriginal people for their personal use.

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### Diary Dates

- Sat 2, Sun 3 Apr** Annual Secondhand Book Sale
- Tue 5 Apr** Tuesday Treasures - cancelled
- Wed 20 Apr** Gen Mtg: Peter Handford - A Tailor's Tale
- Wed 27 Apr** Community Talk: Dr Fiona Bush - A History of Stained Glass in WA
- Fri 13 May** Tours & Events: Fremantle Walk - meeting at Fremantle Town Hall
- Fri 24 June** Submission deadline - Williams / Lee Stere Publication Prize

## Forum: History as we learnt it

*History West is always keen for members to contribute articles and we are most grateful to those who do so, thus keeping each monthly issue interesting and varied. Would other members like to contribute? Member Ian Abbott and I have chatted about the history we were taught at school, and think others will be interested in reading (and perhaps writing) about memories of history as we learnt it at school — for many of us a long time ago.*

**What do you recall about the history you were taught at school? Did your school experience influence your current interest in history or have nothing to do with it at all?**

Ian has volunteered his memories to set us going.

*Lenore Layman, editor*

**Ian Abbott:** I was educated in state schools in Sydney during the 1950s and early 1960s. My memories of what I was taught about history are mostly vague and unsurprising: James Cook's landfalls at Botany Bay and Endeavour River; George Bass and Matthew Flinders' voyage in 1795 to the south of Sydney in the *Tom Thumb* and their later voyage that established the insularity of Tasmania; and Charles Sturt's 1828-9 journey down the Murrumbidgee and Murray Rivers to South Australia. Narratives about exploration evidently appealed to my boyhood sensibilities concerning derring-do.

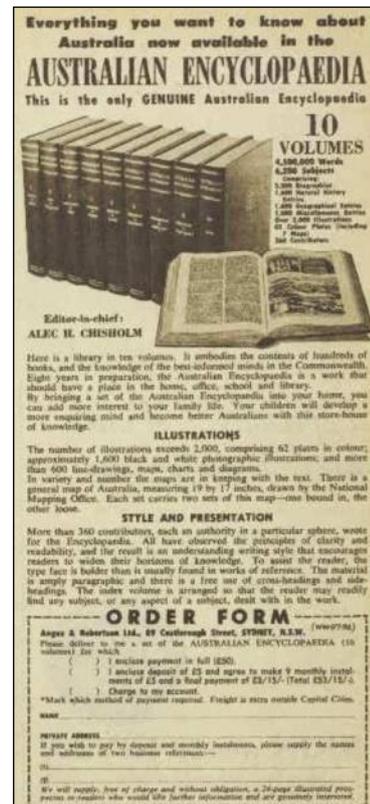
These three expeditions of exploration involved encounters with Aboriginal people. We were told of both the positive and negative aspects of these meetings, particularly the risks involved.

Local history was not neglected. We learned about the pioneer settler of the suburb in which I lived, even walking as a class to the site. It began to dawn on me that that the names of streets and parks offered clues to other historically prominent people and events, thereby providing a picture of the local expansion of settlement. The publication of the *Australian Encyclopaedia* in 1958 and its arrival in our school library was a highlight. I was most annoyed when I was told that these volumes were only for reference and could not be borrowed! (The set retailed at £50, which is \$1653 in today's money.)

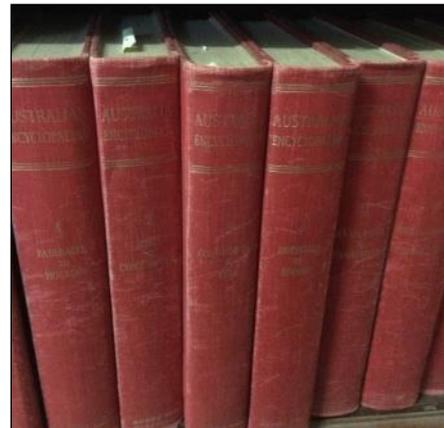
My stand-out memories actually concern WA history. The first was the part played by the Dutch in making the western edge of the Australian continent (New Holland) known to the wider world in the 1600s-1700s. Hearing about Dirk Hartog's plate and its subsequent fate excited my interest. My second memory was hearing the beguiling words 'Yampi Sound' and learning about the recent commencement of iron ore mining on Cockatoo Island in the Kimberley region.

Since settling in WA in 1974 as an independent adult, I have had the opportunity to visit the islands on which Dutch mariners were marooned as a result of shipwreck, as well as land on Cockatoo Island. It still strikes me as amazing that WA history was taught as part of the NSW curriculum – or was it just because of my well-informed teacher in upper primary school?

In high school I was streamed into languages and science. The only history lesson I recall was one in my first year about early mankind (the era of Fred Flintstone), focused on European history. Nothing was taught about Aboriginal history.



*Australian Women's Weekly, 9 July 1958, p. 47.*



*Ian's set of The Australian Encyclopaedia (1958), inherited from his father-in-law. Its editor Alec H Chisholm was a noted ornithologist and journalist.*

Most of my current knowledge of history (WA and elsewhere) has been achieved as an adult via self-directed reading of books borrowed from libraries. In the 1970s I became interested in historical change in the distribution and abundance of seals in WA, as well as the occurrence of kangaroos and wallabies on islands around Australia. This entailed careful reading of historical accounts written by Dutch, French and English navigators. In the 1980s I read all issues of *Early Days*, borrowed from my Council library. By the late 1990s I had read all books about the history of the suburbs and shires of WA. In June 2000 I joined the RWAHS and presented my first paper to the Society in 2002.

**Ian Abbott**

**Please contribute your memories of history at school. We would welcome them. Any length is welcome – from a sentence or two up to c900 words.**

**Email to — [layman@westnet.com.au](mailto:layman@westnet.com.au)**

# Tuesday Treasures - Going to Town



*The Museum team was delighted to welcome members and visitors to the first Tuesday Treasures talk for the year. Even the new COVID restrictions did not deter an enthusiastic audience from donning the dress code of facemasks and coming along to remember and reminisce!*

The talk centred around Perth's older department stores which no longer exist, so it was an opportunity to bring out some of our incidental items, such as wrapping paper, paper bags, newspaper articles and catalogues from various shops with which we were all familiar.

A few of our more precious items such as a Royal souvenir cup, saucer and plate to commemorate the Prince of Wales' visit to Perth in 1920, and the Royal Winton china cup, saucer and jug made by Grimwades Ltd for the centenary of colonisation in 1929 all bear the mark 'Made for Boans'. Several items in our costume collection have a label or history attached to the old stores – fine leather ladies shoes from the 1930s with the label 'Bon Marche Ltd Perth'; and a more recent donation, a Christchurch Grammar School tie worn by Sir William Heseltine during his school years 1943-1947, also bears the same label.

Memorabilia from Aherns, Foy & Gibsons, Economic Stores and Moores were on display. Catalogues from several stores, the equivalent of present-day online shopping, were poured over. They were essential for country people who were able to order and have items freighted to them.

Memories of 'going to town' included a visit to the GPO and the photographer in Murray Street outside the Commonwealth Bank who captured every passer-by. It seems many of us still have these photographs — ladies dressed in their best for town with hats, gloves and handbags.



One could not enjoy a day in town without visiting one of the cafeterias – Boans and Coles being the best remembered. How grown-up it seemed to line up with your tray and choose whatever you wanted from the racks of food. There were several tearooms that were a little more elegant where you could order a pot of tea, or a lemonade!

Brothers Harry and Benjamin Boan opened the first Boans store on land in Wellington Street; it later became Perth's largest emporium. Many of us had fond memories of Boans. Aherns was another family-owned store, the last of the old department stores to close in 1999. Bairds first opened in 1896 as the Coolgardie Hardware Company and later extended its business to Kalgoorlie, Boulder and then to Perth. Bairds' catalogue was known as the farmers' bible!

Moores in central Murray Street was a favourite with children who would ride up the escalator to the Hay Street level, run down the stairs on either side and ride back up again! Cox Bros Economic store was on the corner of Hay and William Streets, and further west in Hay Street was Foy & Gibsons – another landmark fondly remembered for its wide variety of food produce, clothing, furniture, bedding and hardware. An article on display explained how the store's mysterious money chutes operated.

Other memories included window shopping on the weekends, particularly at Christmas time when the stores would go to no end of trouble to attract attention with their lights on the façade of buildings and window displays. Boans was remembered for its nursery rhymes or fairy tales with mechanical movements and Foy's also was a favourite.

There were many other memories — of Flower Day, held in September to raise money for the Silver Chain and Bush Nursing Association; of waiting patiently at the top of London Court to see the clock chime and the knights go in to battle; of sweet smelling boronia sold in spring from large wicker baskets; and of paper boys selling the *Daily News* on our way home.

Several audience members shared their memories.

Jill Paterson recalled that 'going to town was going to Perth on "The Shopper" train, which ran from Bunbury to Perth Monday to Friday each morning with afternoon return. We got on at Pinjarra railway station... A highlight was a visit to Boans' or Foy & Gibson's dining room for lunch. A very favourite dessert was Peters ice cream with a wafer and a cherry on top! At Christmas time it was important to sit on Father Christmas' knee to have a photo taken!'

Ruth Phelps told us that the man who operated the cage lift at Boans had been permanently injured as a



stockman in an accident in the Kimberley and, on hearing this, Harry Boan offered to employ him as the lift operator. He was well remembered for his announcement of each department on every floor.

Anne Hairsine particularly remembered Mr Locke, manager of the Mail Order Dept at Boans.

Mr Locke was an unsung hero for those of us who were unable to pop into town. I went up to Dampier with my husband in 1967 when the town was a blip on the map. There were about 100 houses and a workforce of approximately 3000 men, catered for by Poons, who ran the wet mess. They had a small store where you could buy beer and essentials like shaving cream and razors. Anything for families had to be ordered from Perth and sent up in tea chests. This is where Mr Locke entered our lives and became essential for our wellbeing. Groceries, alcohol, clothes, children's toys, material, books – the list is endless. He would pack our orders up and the heavy stuff came on State Ships while urgent or small items would be sent by MMA. In many cases, for fast-growing children we would be sent a selection. Husbands on business trips to Perth became quite proficient at popping in and returning the unused items for friends and families. Mr Locke became an extended part of our family. He knew us all and I always took my children in to Boans to see him when visiting Perth.

**Val Hutch**

## A walk around a Perth city block in the late 1950s/early 1960s

Start at the junction of Barrack and Wellington streets – along Wellington St to Forrest Place, then to Murray St, on to Barrack St, and back down Barrack St to Wellington St.

Start at Trouchet's, the chemist on the corner. Alex Trouchet was in Kalgoorlie during the goldrush and later moved to Perth. Then a number of small shops – men's outfitters and the like – until you reached the Imperial Hotel. Then onto Blue's, the place where Boans sold surplus or discounted seconds. Mr Blue was a director of Boans and his name was used for this separate shop. John Wills' shop replaced Blue's.

Next was Boans – curved verandahs originally with magnificent window displays. The shop dated from 1912 when it replaced the original 1895 store. Next door and curving back as the footpath widened was the Smart Shoe Store – it had been next to Boans since the 1920s

at least and was there until Boans was demolished.

At the corner of Wellington St/Forrest Pl was Michelides tobacconist. Around into Forrest Place – past Bruce Small's bicycle shop where I bought the basket for my Bluebird bike and Charles Nelson the optician, to the gap between the shops that had the shoeshine machine where you put in sixpence to start the black and brown buffers whirling and release a clear polish that you could rub your shoe against before buffing them up.

On the other side of the gap was Albert's Bookshop – a large store with a mezzanine floor and hundreds of books. On to the 'Corner Fruit Shop' with produce stacked on racks outside. Around the corner past the tearooms to the Australia Hotel. Under its veranda roof was a sign pointing down the stairs to a bar, 'Davy Jones Locker'.

A laneway for Boans trucks to get to their despatch section and then the Murray Street frontage of Boans. The pastry and bread section was just inside the door to the right and hardware section down the left hand side of the shop. Next to Boans was their 'electrical annexe' where one bought all manner of electrical goods.

Then to the Grand Picture theatre building with Chas Cain, Tailor, just before it. Steps led to the upper floor where Melva Smirke taught piano to aspiring musicians. Of course, the Grand Theatre was the main attraction – with a lobby lined with display cases with showcards promoting coming films – all of which were British as the Grand advertised itself as the Home of British films. After that there was a milkbar and a chemist shop but on the corner of Murray and Barrack streets was a branch of the Bank of New South Wales.

Turning left and down Barrack Street. A variety of shops – I seem to remember a chemist but there was certainly a branch of Rowley's – the electrical goods chain commenced by Rowley Goonan. There was a flower shop too – I think it was Dawson & Harrison's because Wilson & Johns were further up Barrack Street on the other side. Nearer to Wellington St on that other side of the road was the Railway Hotel and the Manchester Trading Co with all the linen you would ever need. I well remember Len Berry of Edward Berry menswear shop.

Heading down Barrack St one would stop at Brown's Milk Bar – who can forget their American milkshakes with huge topping of cream, or their Palooka which had fruit, cream, cake, flavouring, icecream and goodness knows what else in it.

Draffen Bros had their butchers shop along here. There was also a camping shop where my father bought a tent -fly to put over our rotary clothes hoist in the backyard to provide shade. There were lots of other small shops with cafes predominating.

Then back to the corner intersection with Wellington St where, on Silver Chain flower day, the policeman directing traffic stood in a circle of flowers right in the middle of the road.

I'm sure I've missed out a number of shops as I'm going from the memory of a late teenager.

**Geoff Moor**

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*If you have memories you'd like to share please email them to us! One of the joys of growing older is sharing stories from the past!*

## A Treasure Trove of Photographs

A warm welcome to member and volunteer Julie Taylor who will contribute an occasional column to *History West* exploring some of the many wonderful photographs in the Society's collection.

### Cape Inscription Lighthouse



P1999.1103

This photograph from the Society's collection depicts one of Western Australia's lesser-known lighthouses, Cape Inscription, which stands on the northern end of Dirk Hartog Island. The photo is mounted on a decorative card. Sadly the photographer and donor are unknown.

#### The need to light the northwest

Western Australia has a long and treacherous coastline and by turn of the twentieth century it was still largely unlit. Trade and therefore maritime traffic were increasing, and there was growing pressure on the State to light the coast.

Since federation there had been an expectation that the Commonwealth would takeover responsibility for lighthouses. However, as the decade wore on, there was little action. There were frequent wrecks off the northwest coast and the WA government was forced to act. By the end of 1908 four sites along that stretch of coast had been chosen for lighthouses, one of which was at Cape Inscription.

#### Construction underway

In October 1908 the schooner *Queenie Alice* departed for Cape Inscription loaded with materials and eleven workmen. The steamer *Una* soon followed with more

men and materials. The works were extensive: a 70m timber jetty; a steep tramway leading from the jetty to the top of the island and a level tramway from the inclined plane to the lighthouse (total distance 4.8km); a 10.3m tower; a 75kL underground water tank and two semi-detached quarters – married quarters for the lightkeeper and single quarters for the assistant. In addition, there was a signalling mast, a stable and various storage sheds for oil and such like. The tower, tank and quarters were all made of concrete. Very utilitarian!

The tower was topped with a white lantern. If the lantern looks too small for the tower, this is because it was spare equipment being re-used. The lantern had come from the first Breaksea Island lighthouse, near Albany, which had been erected in 1858 and replaced in 1902. Perhaps it was thought that the Commonwealth would upgrade the apparatus and lantern in due course.

The light was first exhibited on 1 March 1910. It could be seen for 18nm in clear weather. The official opening took place on 23 June 1910. The lighthouse was decorated with flags, a tour was conducted for the dignitaries and a 'banquet worthy of the occasion' was laid on.

#### Transfer to the Commonwealth

The long anticipated *Lighthouses Act 1911* (Cwlth) came into effect in December of that year. It allowed the Commonwealth to acquire lighthouses and other aids to navigation from the states and private entities. Commander C R W Brewis RN, retired naval surveyor, was commissioned to report on the condition of the nation's lights. Between June and December 1912 Brewis visited every lighthouse in Australia.

He identified all the lights that he thought should be transferred to the Commonwealth; that is, all the 'coastal lights' that were essential for safe navigation. Cape Inscription, along with most other Australian lighthouses, was taken over in June 1915.

After just seven years as a manned station, in July 1917 Cape Inscription was fitted with an automatic acetylene flasher and the lightkeepers were withdrawn. Over one hundred years later it is still an active aid to navigation and now runs on solar power.

#### Lightkeepers

Like many remote stations, Cape Inscription saw a high turnover in keepers. Over the seven years there were four assistant keepers; the fourth was appointed in February 1915. It was the first appointment in the service for each of the men – it was clearly a tough posting, and difficult to attract experienced keepers. The lightkeeper William Chessher and his family, however, were made of sterner stuff. They stayed on the station for the entire seven years.

Commander Brewis' report helps explain the high turnover. He states that a third keeper was required; this recommendation was not carried out. Further: 'It is not desirable that 'married' and 'single' quarters should adjoin one another, nor that single men, or married men without their wives and families, be sent to isolated places'. He also recommended that wireless telegraphy be installed. The keepers' only means of communication with the outside world was by Morse lamp or signal flags to passing vessels.

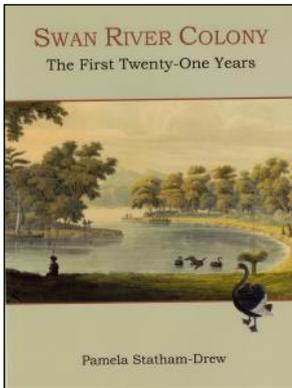
We do know that at least the fishing was good. In August 1910 'Subscriber, Cape Inscription Lighthouse' wrote to the Mutual Help column in the *Western Mail* seeking a recipe for curing and smoking fish!

Julie Taylor

## Book Reviews

**Pamela Statham-Drew, *Swan River Colony: the first twenty-one years*, Pandorus Publications, Swanbourne, 2021. In Library & Bookshop \$40.**

**Reviewer: Steve Errington**



Our tireless Secretary Pamela Statham-Drew has been re-visiting her early years as an economic historian. Way back in 1981 Pamela made a substantial contribution to the economic history of WA by writing a chapter titled 'Swan River Colony 1829 – 1850' for Tom Stannage's big book *A New History of Western Australia*. You might have a

copy. Pamela's pioneering arguments are still valid but brushing up on our early economic history by bedtime reading of an 836-page book is not the way to go.

Luckily, she has now re-issued her chapter as an expanded stand-alone, easy-to-read book. In the original, Pamela backed up her arguments with tables of revealing key data, tracking sheep numbers, acres under cultivation largely for wheat, settler population growth and the value of imports. From 1837 the tables focus on the value of exports starting with massively important wool exports. From 1844 we have whale products and a small contribution from sawn timber, then sandalwood from 1845 as the colony climbed out of a depression.

All the hard data have survived the test of time and are reproduced in the new book, except that in rounding off the value of imports (p. 33) a factor of 1000 has disappeared – our imports in 1837 were £45,407, not £45. The important role of banks is well-covered as you would expect in an economic history, as are the ever-changing regulations for the allocation and sale of Crown land.

But the 1981 text is not simply reproduced. A layer of social history has been added concerning the foundation of Perth, Thomas Peel's ill-fated town of Clarence, the building of churches and the role of Governor John Hutt, along with the 1831 acquisition of the NSW outpost at King George's Sound and a discussion of the contribution made by British soldiers and their families who remained as settlers after their tour of duty.

In Chapter 11 'Why convicts?' Pamela re-iterates her view that it wasn't simply the need for labour that saw an 1849 public meeting in Perth call for WA to be made a penal colony. The British had already offered to send out some Pentonville ticket-of-leavers, but what the meeting wanted was the British capital that would accompany a full Convict Establishment.

However, the major departure from the 1981 original is a new chapter – the longest of the 12 – dealing with the

dispossession of the original landowners. It is headed 'First 21 years: impact on indigenous peoples'. Despite the heading, most of the allusions are to 'Aboriginals' which I understand Noongar people much prefer to 'indigenous' which they see as eastern states terminology.

It is a very good survey, with accompanying maps and plans, reporting the physical clash of cultures in Perth, Pinjarra, the Avon valley and the Vasse, with a contemporary view from George Fletcher Moore from some recently re-discovered writings of his in the *Colonial Magazine* of 1840-41.

A major benefit of producing a revised version 40 years later means that it can now be illustrated in colour. I love early topographical paintings, and, forty years on, two black and white sketches of 1830s Perth in the 1981 original, though valuable in themselves, have been replaced by numerous early paintings reproduced in glorious colour. Several of the paintings happen to be from the marvellous Wordsworth Collection, now housed in the National Gallery of Australia. The illustrations make the book a pleasurable as well as a profitable read.

**Lucy Hair, *Proud to be PLC. 40 years of the PLC Perth Pipe Band, PLC Perth, 2021. In Library & Bookshop \$25.***

**Reviewer: Sally Green**



Presbyterian Ladies College offered piano and voice as the principal music options for students from 1918. By the 1970s the school community

became concerned the music programme had become outdated, prompting a review and the appointment in 1975 of Mr Eric Page as inaugural Musical Director. He began a spectacularly successful musical programme that continues today. In addition to a popular school band established in his first year, chanter lessons were introduced to the Junior School in 1976, indicating his earliest intentions to start a pipe band.

Sadly, Mr Page's illness and premature death in 1982 meant he did not live to see the pipe band reach maturity. His successors, in particular Ailsa Miller, piping tutor, Kerry Jones, pipe drum tutor/pipe band co-ordinator, and Peter Jones, dress and drill volunteer, committed three decades to developing the pipers and drummers into a marching pipe band of international standard.

The pipe band began touring interstate before heading overseas to Scotland (1983), United Kingdom (2005), Singapore (2007 and 2010) and Virginia/USA (2013 and 2016). From 1986, the band competed in the biennial WA Pipe Band Association State Championships, earning both individual and overall success as well as winning awards as early as 1988 at the World Championships in Glasgow.

Lucy Hair's book pays tribute to this significant period of musical expansion and cultural change at PLC. Lucy's commitment to researching and collating the pipe band's history from both school records and recollections of those involved is evident in her attention to detail and comprehensive endnotes. Lucy has recovered important photographs from school and private collections illustrating the polish, professionalism and camaraderie of the band. She pays particular attention to the extensive fundraising, in most part undertaken by parents and volunteers, required to equip and dress the band and to fund overseas tours. The publication is punctuated throughout with accounts from previous principals, Heather Barr, Hazel Day, Kate Hadwen and Kate Begbie (spanning 1968 to the present day), giving the reader a sense of the achievement and continuity, as well as the unanimous support the music programme received.

The early years span music at PLC from the early 1970s through to 1981, culminating in eight pipers and eight drummers performing on stage at the 1981 Speech Night at the Perth Concert Hall for the first time. The middle section covers the rapid growth in enrolments in pipe and drumming lessons, the requisite expansions to the staff and buildings of the Music Department, the girls' commitment to weekly rehearsals and annual camps, the joys and rigours of performing and touring and, importantly, giving back to the community by way of commemorative services, in particular Anzac Day celebrations. The final section contains photographs of the members of the band each year from 1981 to 2021, followed by an alphabetical list of the alumni totaling an extraordinary 558. Each year the band's oldest and most experienced players

left and the band then accommodated a newer, younger group of initiates.

I read with great interest to see how developments within the Music Department shaped the programme after I left PLC in 1979. I count myself fortunate to have started at PLC in 1975 in the same year as Mr Page and was one of the students who 'quickly flocked' to join the band. There was no audition process as there was with the pipe band of latter years, and instruments were allocated on the basis of availability. Mr Page expected us to work hard and aspire to high standards. However, it required someone of his skill, energy and humour to turn a majority of novices into a professional group in such a short period. The pride as we marched down the track for the first time at the Interschool Athletics Carnival in 1976, belting out *Scotland the Brave*, was palpable. We caught the attention of the seven other Independent Schools competing that day and became a model for other schools to follow.

It gave me great pleasure to read Lucy Hair's excellent history of the PLC Pipe Band, learning that the joy of playing music together and the excitement and pride of performing continues today.

*With thanks also to member Elizabeth Green.*

## Tuesday Treasures

There will be no April gathering but  
we will resume meetings in May.

We look forward to seeing you all again then.

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

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