



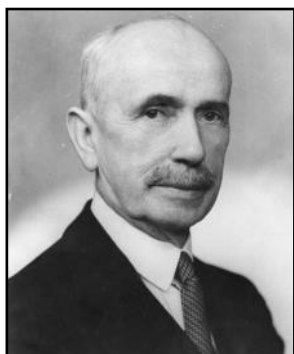
# HISTORY WEST

PUBLISHED BY THE ROYAL WESTERN AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

November 2018

## GENERAL MEETING

**The next meeting at Stirling House is on Wednesday 21 November at 6pm  
when John Wheatley will present a paper on 'Professor Alexander David Ross,  
Foundation Professor of Physics and Mathematics of the University of WA, and his wife Euphemia'.  
Refreshments available from 5.30pm; Bookshop open until 6pm.**



Professor Alexander David Ross (1883-1966) was a man of small stature with an enormous intellect who came to Western Australia in 1913 determined to leave his mark both in science and the arts. He and his wife Euphemia promoted the new University, the local orchestra, singing, and the Presbyterian Church. Professor Ross, the winner of the Kelvin Medal, was the founding professor of physics and mathematics at UWA, a founder of the University Extension Service and, through radio broadcasts, brought science to the masses. He was a founder of Presbyterian Ladies' College and of the forerunner to the WA Symphony Orchestra. Euphemia gave lectures at UWA when her husband was unable to do so and assisted him when lecturing at

country centres. She was one of the pioneers of the Kindergarten of WA, took an active interest in the Girl Guide movement, was the second president of the WA Association of University Women, president of the Karrakatta Club and a vital help to her husband in his wartime activities. Together, this powerful couple gave a lifetime of service to Western Australia.



**John Wheatley** was born in Mount Lawley and grew up and in Perth. He obtained his bachelors and masters degrees in law from UWA and joined his father and uncle in the legal firm of Wheatley & Sons. John and his wife Rosemary practised law in that firm until 2007. John has always been interested in both history and numismatics, and his research for background information in relation to talks for numismatic societies has strengthened his interest in and passion for history, particularly the history of WA. On the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Professor Ross' first lecture in mathematics at UWA, John promised the late Verna Rowbotham that he would deliver a talk to the Society about her parents, Professor and Mrs Ross.

## Mystery Photo



### Outback town

This old postcard view of an outback town was sent for identification by a reader who believes it is in WA. If you have any information please contact the library on 9386 3841 or email - [library@histwest.org.au](mailto:library@histwest.org.au)



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## Council News

At its meeting held on 11 October business included the following where Council

- welcomed new members – His Honour Philip Eaton & Elizabeth Eaton, Travis Holcart, Alison Rigg
- elected Lennie McCall as chairperson of Council and Lorraine Clarke as deputy chairperson, and welcomed new elected member Jan McCahon Marshall
- appreciated the report by Sally Anne Hasluck and thanked her for organising a successful visit of the Forrest family to a temporary display of items from the Society's newly donated Forrest collection
- welcomed and thanked all volunteers who made the recent new members' event such a success
- thanked Ally Drake Brockman from Tours & Events committee for the very successful Guildford homes and gardens tour
- noted with sadness the death of former Council member and Treasurer Bill Henderson
- accepted the generous offer from companies MDKC and Castledex for new foyer equipment and noted plans for this refurbishment to occur in November
- resolved to replace the Society's old and inadequate file server with a new one which includes Cloud File storage
- resolved to discuss with the volunteer Outside Exhibition team the mounting of a photographic display at the 2019 Affiliates conference at South Perth
- endorsed the recommendation of Readings & Publications Committee that the A E Williams Western Australian History Prize be awarded to Gillian Lilleyman for her book *Pioneer Daughter*, and also the special commendation award to John Norman for his book *Broome 1910* and congratulated both authors
- welcomed the planned visit of the Federation of Australian Historical Societies' meeting on 1-3 November and the forthcoming workshop on succession planning by Bernadette Flynn.

**Lennie McCall Chairperson**

### **Don't forget to buy your tickets in our Christmas raffle!**

Be in the draw for a wonderful prize and help the Society at the same time.  
See flyer for details.

## History in the City

Our October talk was delivered by Ron Banks who spoke on the *West Australian* newspaper. Ron started work as a junior reporter in October 1978. His basic tools then were a typewriter shared with others, a shorthand notebook and a large black telephone, also shared, situated against one wall. Only a few senior staff members had individual telephones. At first, all staff were male but later females were employed. Reports were written with original and three copies, so carbon paper was essential. Ron eventually decided to buy his own typewriter which he did without remuneration from the *West Australian*. At first, Ron was a general reporter but then he wrote about the cultural life of Perth.

*The West Australian* was published six days of the week and also distributed around Perth and to country areas. It was taken by trucks south to Albany and to northern districts. If there was late news, particularly sensational, it was printed in red on the back page. *The West* was viewed as a staid and sensible newspaper in contrast to the *Daily News*, which was published in the late afternoon and had a racier, snappier style. The *Daily News* closed in 1990. Nowadays many people prefer an electronic version of the *West*. By the time an article is written, then printed and the newspaper distributed, many feel the news is old. Ron said that real estate advertisements have decreased, but that births, deaths and funerals have not. His interesting talk was a concise review of journalism from the days of typewriters to the digital era of today.

History in the City is held on the first Wednesday of each month from March to December. Our talk on 4 December will be given by Denise Cook on Noongar Camps in the shared history of our suburbs. Join us at 2pm at the Citiplace Community Centre on Perth Railway Concourse. Donation \$5 with afternoon tea, all welcome.

**Lorraine Tholet**

## Council membership 2018-19

President - Robert Nicholson

Immediate Past President - Sally Anne Hasluck

Chairperson of Council & Vice-President - Lennie McCall

Vice-President — Steve Errington

Deputy chairperson of Council & Treasurer - Lorraine Clarke

Councillors - Fiona Bush, Nick Drew, Neil Foley, Helen Henderson, Lenore Layman, Wendy Lugg, Jill Maughan, Jan McCahon Marshall, Pamela Statham Drew.



# Guildford's private homes and gardens tour

## Old world village charm under threat

On a mild, cloudy but still October day, the owners of *King's Cottage*, *Earlsferry*, *'Mandoon'* and *St Clements* generously opened their Guildford homes to a group of RWAHS devotees, led by Ally Drake Brockman. We were enchanted.

Our first visit was to the seemingly tiny *King's Cottage*. Originally four rooms, it was built by ticket-of-leaver George King around 1864. The soft pink Flemish bond brickwork, she-oak shingled roof and neat symmetry were attributes of colonial Victorian Georgian architecture. George later added a kitchen and pantry, stables and workroom as well as a small shop, where he made and mended boots and shoes. Later the family sold flowers from the garden and at times operated a general store. The King family owned, lived in and loved the house for almost 120 years.



*Kings Cottage*

When Barbara Dundas and her husband bought *Kings Cottage* in 1982, they foiled plans for a multi-storey development. This was to be their home. Modifications were needed to accommodate their five children but these were done with the utmost care to retain the essence of the original building. They researched and restored, watched the seasons and gardened to old memories. In a little less than 40 years every room and every part of the garden are testament to their dedicated love of No. 11 Meadow Street. We enjoyed a delicious morning tea served in the garden.



*Earlsferry*, our second stop, has had a much more chequered history. James and Jane Dodds acquired Swan Location R on the Swan River in West Guildford in 1830. They kept it undeveloped until the railway, new roads and gold money made it profitable to subdivide and, at the turn of the century, sold a one-acre parcel overlooking the river to Chief Traffic Manager of the WAGR and civic leader J T Short. On this fine site, he built a two-storey, red brick, Federation-style family home, naming it *Briarsleigh*.

No expense was spared. An art nouveau staircase, stained glass windows, decorated verandahs, rose gardens, orchard, tennis court and stables made it an elegant home. In 1923 Sir Edward Horne Wittenoom

bought it but his busy life meant that he didn't often live there. Mrs Mildred Foster (who renamed it *Earlsferry*) owned it briefly then sold it to Karl Edgar Drake-Brockman. When that gentleman's plans for a hotel weren't accepted he sold to the government who converted it into a girls' home. After years of neglect sculptor Martin Jaine and his wife Janet Bowen bought it in 2008 and the once grand old lady re-emerged. *Earlsferry* is now heritage listed, restorations continue and the large home is run as an elegant Bed and Breakfast and a sculpture garden.



*Briarsleigh later renamed Earlsferry*

Crossing the river we arrived at another grand turn-of-the-century house, *Mandoon* at 25 Market Street. It was built in 1903 by Dr J E Fergusson Stewart as home and surgery, shared with his sister Dr Roberta Jull. The high-ceilinged main entrance hall is stunning and leads through a great arch into a light and airy wallpapered sitting room with bay windows, cosy sitting nooks, timber floors and rugs, fireplaces with marble and Minton tile surrounds. A hot water supply to the kitchen and bathroom, the latter with a bath and shower, was an innovation not often found in houses of the time. The cellar, regularly flooded when the river rises in the winter, is little changed. When Peter and Elizabeth Atkins bought the house, their children bred marron underneath the wine racks! On Saturday, Elizabeth and a band of helpers served us bowls of steaming soup, delicious fruit and cheese which we ate at a grand living room table or on the verandah outside.

The delicious perfume of orange blossom filled the air as we made our last visit to *St Clements* at 1 Turton Street. Timber merchant John Le Cornu and his wife Emma built the Federation style home facing the Helena River at the turn of the century. They planted an extensive garden with citrus trees of all kinds which still produce fruit, while roses also love the rich soil. The Le Cornus left about 1910 and, as with many houses in Turton Street, *St Clement's* became home to a number of Guildford Grammar School staff. Those at Number 1 changed regularly but cared for the house and their gardens. The present owners Kim and Seldam Mart have done the same and welcomed us warmly to view their charming old property.

It was a privilege to see these superb old properties, loved and cared for. But historic Guildford is under threat. Government plans to promote infill, especially in areas with easy access to public transport, will allow properties to be amalgamated, houses pulled down and high-rise developments intrude into the tranquil streets. It would be a tragedy for this to happen to this area. The lovingly nurtured precinct and other parts of this microcosm of colonial Perth are worth preserving. Let's hope that public opinion will save it for us and for future generations.

**Val Krantz**

# Museum News

## Dog Spike: Trans-Australian Railway

A commemorative silver dog spike presented to Sir John Forrest on the completion of the Trans Australian railway in 1917 has been donated to the Society by Kimberley John Forrest Craig, great-grandson of Alexander Forrest, brother of Sir John Forrest.



The inscription on the dog spike reads as follows:

Completion of Trans Australian Railway  
Model of dog spike driven at Wynbring S.A.

By the Right Honorable Sir John Forrest PC GCMG  
Treasurer Commonwealth of Australia  
November 12<sup>th</sup> 1917

The opening ceremony was to have taken place in Wynbring on 12 November 1917 but at the time, the Federal Cabinet decided to proceed with another referendum on conscription and hence senior politicians and the Governor General were unable to travel to the ceremony and it was abandoned.

The last railway spike was hammered into place outside the tiny settlement of Ooldea in remote South Australia on 17 October 1917.

The first train left Port Augusta on Monday 22 October arriving in Kalgoorlie five days later. The first passenger train set off from Port Augusta arriving at Kalgoorlie at 2.55pm on Wednesday 24 October, 42 hours and 48 minutes later. On board were Sir John and Lady Forrest. A large reception was held for them and the other distinguished guests in Kalgoorlie that afternoon and evening.



Sir John Forrest had been a strong advocate for a Trans-Australian railway throughout his State and Federal political careers.

A 'rail spike' (also known as a cut spike or crampon) is a large nail with an offset head that is used to secure rails and base plates to railroad sleepers in the track. Common size is approx. 14-16mm square head and 140-150mm long. A 'dog spike' is functionally equivalent and of similar dimensions to a 'rail spike' but has a penetrating end and the nail head has two lugs on either side giving the impression of a dog's head and aiding spike removal.

The dogspike was made by T Gaunt & Co. of Melbourne. Thomas Ambrose Gaunt (1829–1890) was a jeweller, clockmaker, and manufacturer of scientific instruments, whose head office and showroom were at 337–339 Bourke Street, Melbourne. T Gaunt & Co. also made the ceremonial scissors for the opening ceremony of the Trans-Australian Railway. Gaunt emigrated to the colony of Victoria in 1852 and gained a reputation for reliability. He built the chronograph used for timing races at Flemington Racecourse, and was appointed their official timekeeper. In November 1876 he was made a life member of the Victorian Racing Club.



A great many watches and clocks had the Gaunt name on the dial face and many public clocks were manufactured by the company. Scientific instruments produced by the company included glass thermometers and barometers. They also manufactured gold and silver devotional jewellery and ecclesiastical ornaments. Although Gaunt died in 1890, the company continued to trade through to 1960.

**Bruce Hoar, Museum volunteer**



# The Forrest Collection

## Tributes from Beverley, Katanning and Plantagenet

John Forrest was a great Western Australian developer. He lived during the time when WA was transformed from a convict colony struggling to survive economically and gain its political independence into the first decades of the 20th century when the state could move with confidence into a newly federated Australia—and he was the political leader who steered this transition.

Forrest's vision for WA was clear: as the colony's first Premier (1890-1901) he used the goldfields' riches to drive agricultural development which he believed was the key to long-term prosperity and to the settled rural life sought by so many of his and subsequent generations. Freedom and independence on a family farm was a powerful dream and closer settlement for agriculture (as distinct from pastoralism) promised to secure and grow WA's population and wealth. Rail transport throughout the southwest agricultural region would provide the means of getting produce to markets as well as delivering farm supplies without exorbitant costs or excessive slowness.

Before the 1890s, however, the colonial government did not have the finances to build these railways and so they reluctantly turned to the land grant system through which private companies built and ran rail lines in exchange for large grants of surrounding land which could then be sold at a profit to hopeful new farmers. In 1881 Forrest led the survey of land from Beverley to Albany where such a land grant railway was planned, and in 1889 the WA Land Co. opened its Great Southern Railway linking Perth and Albany in exchange for a land grant of 3 million acres. The expected flood of new farmers did not materialise; in 1896 only 8 per cent of the land had been sold and the scheme was failing.

By this time Forrest was Premier and his government took the bold step of buying both land and railway from the company. This farsighted move marked the beginning of an active land settlement policy which shaped the state's early 20th century agricultural development, one of Forrest's major policy achievements. The district prospered as the towns of Katanning, Broomehill, Tambellup, Cranbrook and Mt Barker were established to service the many new farmers who arrived.

The settlers of the district were filled with gratitude to Forrest and honoured him formally in 1896 by presenting him with illuminated addresses expressing 'heartfelt appreciation' of the purchase. They praised 'the masterly and statesman-like manner' in which he conducted negotiations and looked forward to the development of the agricultural resources of the district in the hands of the government.

Today communities have different ways of saying thank you. At this time the illuminated address was a common form of honour, and were presented to congratulate as well as to mark farewells, condolences and retirements. Each was a unique testimonial intended as a keepsake, perhaps to be displayed by the recipient. Illuminated addresses were objects of intrinsic beauty with decorative borders and elegant calligraphy, deliberately referencing an English mediaeval past with gothic script and archaic imagery.



Parts of Katanning's address are reproduced here and you can see the ornate gothic script and decorative surrounds of local flora, including leschenaultia and Geraldton wax. The traditional sower is a reminder of the harvest bounty that nature will provide after the harrow has done its work, while the steam engine celebrates the new, modern means of transport. The flowery surrounds celebrate nature's beauty; altogether an idyllic scene. It was the work of A T Stach of the Public Works Dept, Perth. Plantagenet's address was designed by J Gribble — does anyone know who he might have been? The maker of Beverley's address is unnamed.

Many colonial illuminated manuscripts survive in Australian reference libraries and in private collections. Not all were made solely by hand. Most illuminated manuscripts were produced by a manual and mechanical process known as chromolithography, a forerunner to lithographic colour printing.

These artefacts will be displayed for you to see when they have been conserved.



# The Margaret Medcalf Award 2018

*This annual award was presented on 28 June and the RWAHS congratulates 2018's dual winners — Dr Joanna Sassoon and Dr Leigh Straw. In welcoming guests, **State Archivist, Cathrin Cassarchis** spoke of the importance and value of archives. Because of the vital importance of her topic to all of us who are interested in history, we asked Cathrin if we could provide members with some of the highlights of her speech. Here they are.*

Since 2003 the Margaret Medcalf Award has been presented to the authors and creators of outstanding works displaying excellence in referencing and research, using the State Archives Collection. It is named in honour of the second State Archivist, Ms Margaret Medcalf, in recognition of her remarkable achievements. This Award has grown from humble beginnings in 2003 with the number and variety of entrants each year surprising and delighting the judging panel. This year's entrants demonstrate the importance of using archives, examining and re-visiting primary source material in context to allow new investigations and interpretations.



Margaret Medcalf 1986

In today's world where it is increasingly common to access research sources online, historiography can sometimes focus on secondary published materials. The use of primary sources to inform ideas and debate about who we are is more important than ever. Archives are our essential and authentic memory.

The State Archives Collection is made up of the critical records of government (those deemed to have archival value) which need to be actively managed and protected over time. However the Collection would be a series of unrelated images, or individual documents, or meaningless noughts and zeroes in a computer program and incredibly difficult to navigate without:

- the contextual information provided through catalogue descriptions which place individual items within the records series created by government agencies as they carried out their daily functions;

- the guides to accessing the collection developed by staff; and

- professional archivists to help researchers navigate their way through the complex holdings of government business records,.

This complexity is the nature of such a government collection, when you consider that information on a particular subject or individual may be dispersed in records across a great number of government agencies. In providing access, the work of the archivist in managing the Collection is therefore vital to ensuring it is preserved and maintained as a State asset and passed on for the benefit of future generations.

As the custodian of government information, the State Records Office's dual role is to assist government agencies with accountability as they create their records in the course of their business and to ensure the ongoing contextual, legal and evidential value of that government information.

Some might think archives are about the past, but they are in fact evidence of decisions and issues that affect us today, and will continue to affect us for generations to come. State Archives can help us discover our personal identity through family history research, and strengthen our community identity by providing social anchors thereby promoting community cohesion. At the most fundamental level archives ensure that institutions driving our modern society are efficient and accountable and have the potential to ground our democracy and culture.

**Cathrin Cassarchis**



## Affiliates & Other News

**Albany Historical Society** has a splendid new website. It is well worth a visit and especially if you intend to visit the district—you can plan to see many places and events of historical interest. It is also an historical tour in itself with a rich array of images and stories. Do learn more about the history of Albany by making a virtual visit.

**Bindoon and Districts Historical Society** and the Chittering District Information Bureau made good use of seven panels from the Botanical Wonderland exhibition for a display at their September Spring Festival. They were also displayed at Enderslea Farm for the AGM of the Garden History Society of Australia, WA Branch. The RWAHS is delighted that these attractive and interesting panels have been re-used and have captured visitors' interest again.

The journal of the **Maritime Heritage Association** contains a story of great interest about the 're-discovery' of a painting by George A D Forsyth showing Arthur Head and the mouth of the Swan River. The painting is dated 1893 but shows the scene as it was in the 1870s. The river mouth is depicted as a 'hostile barrier of white water in a nor-wester gale' with two wrecked boats testifying to the danger. The author Ross Shardlow analyses the painting fully for his readers and gives us a detailed description of a significant place which was to be transformed in the 1890s.

**Maylands Historical and Peninsula Association** is busy with its major exhibition for 2018 – Worshipful Maylands. Research on past and present places of worship in Maylands has turned up some interesting information which will be included in the exhibition scheduled to run from 7 November until the end of January 2019.

**Moora Historical Society** is keen to let everyone know of their talk by archaeologist and historian Bob Sheppard on World War II in the Moora, Dandaragan and the Midwest. It will take place on Saturday 3 November at the Moora Recreational Centre in Robert St at 2pm and will be followed by afternoon tea. Approximately 30,000 troops trained in the Moora district during the war and there are many military sites in the region. For confirmation of your attendance, please phone Kaye Lewis on 0447511372.

**Rockingham District Historical Society** members are frequently asked whether convicts were involved in the establishment of Rockingham. They were not, but there were convicts among Rockingham's early colonists. One was Thomas Smirk. He farmed and cut shingles to support his wife and 14 children; as well he contributed to the community by teaching Sunday School for 20 years. He also served on the Fremantle Road Board (1890-94). His long life ended in 1920.

**Walpole, Nornalup and District Historical Society** is saddened by the loss of foundation member, first secretary and past president Lee Fernie. She made a valuable contribution to the history and heritage of the district and will be greatly missed.

*Koorabup*, journal of the **Denmark Historical Society**, recognises the long and valued service given to the

district by the Country Women's Association, St John's Ambulance and the Scout Association. It has been the network of voluntary organisations that have sustained local communities.

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**State Library WA** will hold a one-day symposium on the life and legacies of **Bishop Mathew Blagden Hale (1811-1895)** on Friday 14 December, 9-5, in Great Southern Room, Alexander Library bldg. This is a free event; however registration is required. Book at [slwa.eventbrite.com](http://slwa.eventbrite.com)

For more information, visit—<https://www.slwa.wa.gov.au/whats-on/family-history/life-and-legacies-bishop-mathew-blagden-hale>

Students from Mullewa and Perth recently came together to clean up the **Mullewa Pioneer Cemetery**. Mullewa researchers have been documenting those buried at the Pioneer Cemetery and have uncovered a long list of Aboriginal people who lie there but their exact location and family links are not known. 'If anyone has any information about the Aboriginal people buried at this Cemetery the City would very much like to hear from you to capture this important part of Mullewa's history', Geraldton's mayor appeals. Please contact the City of Greater Geraldton on (08)9956 6600 or email [council@cgg.wa.gov.au](mailto:council@cgg.wa.gov.au)



### Federation of Australian Historical Societies - Guide to collecting and preserving digital materials

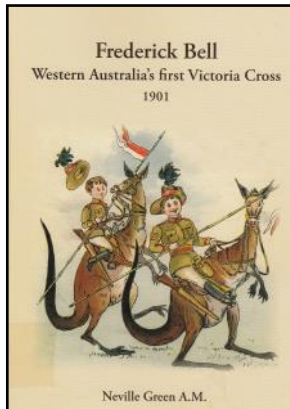
The FAHS has developed an online guide to assist historical societies to preserve their digital collections. The guide assumes a reasonable level of computer literacy and offers further advice for those with more knowledge. It can be accessed at:

<http://www.history.org.au/Documents/Collecting%20and%20Preserving%20Digital%20Materials.pdf>

The Oral History Association (WA)'s journal *Play Back* for August contains an interesting account by Dr Ronda Jameson of her oral interview with Gerald (Gerry) Ledsam Throssell, 1902–1984, which is lodged in the State Library WA at OH330. He worked for the Department of Agriculture from 1921 to 1965 as an agricultural advisor and the interview traces his life and many involvements with the agricultural scene over that time. These oral histories are an invaluable addition to the historical record for which we should all be most grateful.

## Shelf Help

Neville Green, *Frederick Bell: Western Australia's first Victoria Cross 1901*. Clarkson: Focus Education Services, 2016. In Library.



This small book traces the life of Frederick William Bell (1875-1954) who was born and grew up in Western Australia and enlisted in the 1<sup>st</sup> and then the 6<sup>th</sup> Contingent of WA's Mounted Infantry to fight in the Boer War where he became in 1901 the first Western Australian to be awarded the Victoria Cross for gallantry in action. It

follows his life story through his subsequent employment in the British colonial service in Africa and his further military service in World War 1, followed by his return to colonial service and then retirement to England and marriage. There are photographs, source references, and a listing of the names of members of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Contingents. The book will appeal to all interested in military history.

**A pleasing addendum:** Member Mike Galvin has reported that, when he attended the Society's photographic display presented by the Exhibition Team to commemorate Remembrance Day last year, one photograph from the Library collection particularly

caught his eye. It was labelled 'Boer War Soldiers McKay, F W Bell and Bill Mills 1899'. 'I have no doubt that this is a previously unacknowledged photograph of Fred Bell VC', Mike says. What a find! Here it is for you to see.



RWAHS P1999.4250

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

Opinions expressed in *History West* are not necessarily those of the Royal WA Historical Society (Inc.)

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