



HISTORY WEST

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November 2020

GENERAL MEETING

The next meeting at Stirling House is on Wednesday 18 November at 6pm when Hilaire Natt will present a paper on 'Isidro Oriol (1835-1912), Benedictine postulant, cabinetmaker and Perth businessman'. Refreshments available from 5.30pm; Bookshop open until 6pm.



My Spanish great-grandfather Isidro Oriol arrived in WA with Bishop Salvado and a group of 43 Benedictine missionaries on board the *John Panter* in August 1853. Most of the group were artisans or skilled workers, recruited in Europe by Rosendo Salvado to develop the Mission he and Joseph Serra established for the Aborigines at New Norcia. They became postulants and were known as Brothers.

Isidro spent the next two years working as a carpenter, joiner and cabinetmaker at New Norcia. But in mid-1855 Bishop Serra, who was in charge of the Perth diocese, returned from Europe and withdrew the Brother artisans, including Isidro, from the Mission to build the Bishop's Palace in Perth and a large presbytery in Fremantle – part of his plan to make WA a Benedictine monastic province. Salvado, meantime, remained dedicated to establishing an Aboriginal Mission at New Norcia

The conflicting aims and personalities of Serra and Salvado caused problems in the Diocese. Serra's autocratic ways upset the colonial government, various Catholic groups, and the Brothers who had come to work with the Aborigines at New Norcia. Some, including Isidro, left the Community and settled in Perth where they found work, married and had families. The story of these early Spanish colonists in WA is not well known. In this talk on Isidro Oriol I would like to shine a light on their contribution to the early history of Europeans in WA.

Hilaire Natt has been a scriptwriter and lecturer in Media Studies at Edith Cowan University and enjoys researching and writing local and family history. Many people contributed generously to this project, including her family and relatives, New Norcia archivist Peter Hocking, and the RWAHS Writing Group. She is also working on the wider story of Salvado's missionary group of 1853.



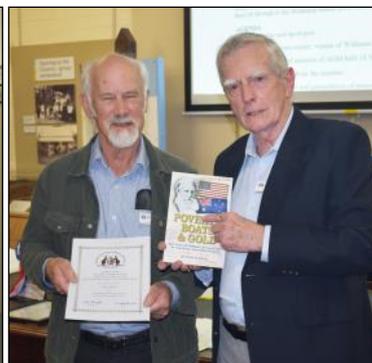
At the AGM



Gwynne Ryan (with Russell Ryan and Armelle Davies of Fremantle Press) accepted the William/Lee-Steere publication prize on behalf of the author, her brother Dylan Hyde.



Author Graeme Cocks with Pama Lawless and his special commendation



Rodney Gifford accepted Peter Birch's special commendation from President Steve Errington.



Many thanks to the Society's wonderful Community Officer, Lesley Burnett

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Community Talk

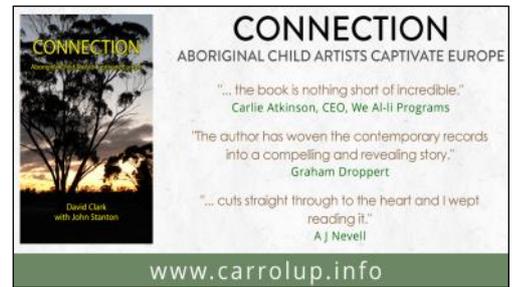
Aboriginal child artists at Carrolup

On Friday, 11 September, the Society welcomed Professor Emeritus **David Clark**, his co-author John Stanton, and family members of those who had lived at Carrolup, for a talk about the Aboriginal children of Carrolup Native Settlement in the 1940s. Most of the audience knew of Carrolup and were keen to hear more of the children's lives and art, and conditions at the settlement. David Clark told what at its heart is 'a story of trauma, and the overcoming of trauma'. It is not a happy story, but it is one about human resilience and hope in dire circumstances.

Introducing the speaker, Immediate Past President Bob Nicholson reminded us that we live in a time when the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures in Australia is changing. He pointed to the decision of the High Court in *Mabo* and its enactment into statutory law by the Australian Parliament. The reconciliation movement began its campaign, culminating with the historic walk across the Sydney Harbour bridge. The Federal Court began its work on hearing applications for native title across the country. There is now a new recognition of Aboriginal peoples' connection with country, as well as a growing interest in, and respect for, Aboriginal culture. A government apology to Aboriginal Australians for the forced removal of children (the Stolen Generations) from their families has been made. Viewed against this background, David Clark's talk, the fine book he and his co-author John Stanton have just published, as well as 'The Carrolup Story' website (<https://www.carrolup.info>) they have developed, are part of Australians' growing understanding of the lives and culture of the continent's first peoples.

In his talk, David described the squalid living conditions experienced by the children and their poor, often harsh, treatment at Carrolup. In response to these conditions, and being removed from their family, the children withdrew into themselves, so that when teacher Noel White and his wife Lily arrived in 1946, the students were frightened and disengaged. Noel was clearly an inspirational teacher and he found that singing, dancing, storytelling, drawing and bush walks gave his pupils confidence and unlocked their interest and talents. Their childhoods were re-invigorated. Successes in art, schoolwork and football followed. Those who saw the Carrolup children's art were amazed and impressed. One of them, 71-year old Englishwoman Mrs Florence Rutter, exhibited their art in Europe to great public acclaim.

However, there was eventually resistance in the Department of Native Affairs to what was happening in Carrolup and beyond. At the end of 1950, the school was closed, the Whites transferred, and the new opportunities for the Aboriginal children ended. Carrolup art was almost forgotten. However, it is now being acclaimed once again. David Clark and John Stanton's excellently-researched and movingly-written book and website are part of the reconciliation process; but above all, they seek to facilitate the healing of inter-generational trauma and pay tribute to the struggles and resilience of the Aboriginal families.



Class photo 1948/9



Child artists of Carrolup, 1948/9



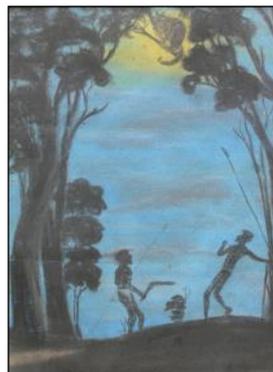
Carrolup drawing 1948, permission of owner



Noel & Lily White, 1949



Mrs Rutter with Parnell Dempster & Reynold Hart, 1949



Cliff Ryder drawing, 1950, permission of Charon Ryder



Carrolup drawing 1948, permission of owner

Mystery Photos

The colour slide phenomenon

There is a saying that the two world wars were fought in black and white (think photos and films), and we could add that, post-war, many of us grew up, travelled the world and raised our families on colour slides. So when Library volunteer Mike Taylor discovered a cache of unidentified colour slides in the old fireplace in the Library photograph room, he was uncovering a lost world. Not only were they ‘mystery photos’ but they were relics of a popular revolution in photography — the development of 35 mm colour film, when everyone who could afford (or borrow) a 35 mm camera was able to capture the world in brilliant colour.

For decades photographs were black and white prints, sometimes artistically hand-tinted in watercolour. Colour was the holy grail and, when the breakthrough came, it was on 35 mm film, with the development in 1935 of Kodachrome and the ‘integral tripack’ or three layer emulsion process, each recording an additive primary colour – red, green and blue.

But the technology was complicated and expensive and, after exposure, the film had to be processed in a laboratory. It was not until the 1950s that it became cheaper and more widely accessible, when Kodak sold the film to include processing. Even then, when the little slides were returned they needed a special apparatus to view them – a viewer or a projector, sometimes with a carousel and even a screen. More expensive than black and white, colour tended to be reserved for special occasions, such as weddings or grand tours. Other companies followed Kodak, including Agfa (Germany) and Fuji (Japan).

The projected images were so entrancing that screening became a social event in its own right, when proud photographers invited their friends around to view the result at what became known, to many, as a ‘boring slide evening’.

However, since the mid 1980s, the 35mm colour slide phenomenon has become another victim of the rise and rise of digital photographic innovation and the triumph of the omnipresent smart, mobile phone. The glowing images, which record so much of our past, can be retrieved today only in a diminished form by scanning to a computer.

We know that David Green and Thomas McKenzie donated a number of these slides. If you have any further information please contact – library@historywest.org.au

Hilaire Natt, library volunteer



P2020.61



P2020.60



P2020.63



P2020.57



P2020.56



P2020.62



P2020.58

Stories from the Storerooms Ride to Win – The Murchison Cup



The Murchison Cup MA1984.259

Surmounted by a deftly sculpted horse, this sterling silver cup has a heavy relief patterned base and scrolling arms while the horse forms the finial for the lid. J M Wendt of Adelaide, one of Australia's foremost silversmiths, made the Murchison Cup. Mr F Brown's horse 'Highlander' won the cup in 1884 but the next one hundred years of its life remain a mystery. It was found in the collection in an audit in 1984 and the Society is pleased to hold this testament to the importance of horse racing throughout the colony.

In the early days of the colony the newly rich wanted their silver to give the impression that the family had always owned it; consequently they rarely commissioned new work and bought old where possible. However bloodstock and horse-racing trophies were different. It was quite acceptable for these to be commissioned. The first one we know about was acquired by landed gentleman William Locke Brockman who commissioned the Margeaux Cup in 1844. The maker is not known but, as it arrived on the *Trusty* in 1844, it would not have been local. It was described in the *Inquirer* as 'very elegant in design, being in the form of a vase, with two handles, surmounted by a cover, bearing on its top the figure of a foal in frosted silver. The whole is richly chased, and highly ornamented with appropriate scrolls of the most finished workmanship. The cup stands more than a foot high'.

The Murchison Amateur Racing Club established at Nookawarra Station by Frank Wittenoom in 1881 awarded the Murchison Cup. Edward Wittenoom and his brother Frank took up the property on the Gascoyne River 440 km northeast of Geraldton and 320 km from Carnarvon in 1875. Edward moved on but Frank stayed and started the club. The meeting was part of an attempt to improve the thoroughbred horses of the area where breeding for the India market was undertaken. Races were held at the property for the next sixteen years with Wittenoom winning many races. The club programmed eleven welterweight races across two days with the cup being a handicap race over two miles with local owners and friends riding as jockeys except for one race in which the jockeys were Aboriginal riders. Racegoers came for the two days and were



Frederick Francis (Frank) Wittenoom
c1872. P1999.1215

welcome to bed down in the Nookawarra woolshed half a mile away from the track where the 'the inner man' was also 'well catered for'.

Joachim Mattias Wendt (1830-1917), the maker of the cup, was an Adelaide silversmith who migrated from Holstein, then part of Denmark, in 1854. He won awards and his business flourished. Wendt's silverwork included extravagant naturalistic creations to restrained Regency taste while at a later date the firm made stylish Edwardian domestic designs. At its best, it ranks with the finest produced in Australia in the second half of the 19th century.

The donors of the cup for 1884 were the brothers A C and J C Cruickshank who were Murchison and Gascoyne graziers who had arrived in WA a year before from Melbourne and taken up Annean Station near Meekatharra.

The winner Mr F Brown is thought to have been a northwest liquor merchant who was also a carter and, from 1880-1887, a blacksmith who went on to farm at Arthur River. 'Highlander' was probably his riding hack, for this was a country race meeting.

Dr Dorothy Erickson



Country race meetings were highly popular and often grand occasions in the 19th century. This photograph from the collection shows the stewards' stand, betting ring and enclosure yard of the Cue racecourse during a race meeting in 1898. Keen racegoers had left the grandstand to be closer to the action. Interest in horses and gambling combined with love of a social occasion to make country race meets major features of the colonial social round. P2015.128

Museum News

History told on a plate!

A Closer Look at Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee Commemorative Plate, 1887



MA1900.278

What an elaborate plate it is! Obviously intended for display in a china cabinet, not for holding cakes or sandwiches, we see images of the Queen and Prince of Wales, a world map, emblems of empire, sketches of people from around the globe, and a collection of economic data. Why would such a piece of china be made?

In the world of British royal politics, mass-produced memorabilia has been created for public purchase to celebrate and commemorate major royal events. In our collection at the Society, we have two of these identical plates — commemorating Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887. Donated to the Society by P J Warmlesley and Una Rowley respectively, they celebrate Queen Victoria's reign by highlighting Britain's global domination in her era. London-based manufacturer Silber and Fleming decorated them with transfer printing to sell them cheaply to the public.

This plate features Queen Victoria and her son Albert, Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII). Crowned in June 1838, Victoria celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of her reign in July 1887. Venturing into London, despite her aversion to the city after her husband's death almost 26 years previously, Victoria greeted the masses of people lining the streets to celebrate her long reign. All over England, there were fairs, picnics, and sports; dinner parties were thrown for the poor and prisoners were set free.

'The Empire on Which the Sun Never Sets'

The Victorian era saw Britain at the height of its imperial power. The plate celebrates the Empire by highlighting Britain's expansion in four major areas: Australia and New Zealand, Canada, Africa, and India.

New settlements in Victoria and South Australia were established. Ambitious British colonists settled in New Zealand, signing the Treaty of Waitangi with Maori leaders in 1840, although there was continuing altercation over land ownership. In the late 1830s, political turmoil unified Upper and Lower Canada into a single Province of Canada, a largely British colony. In 1857, a suppressed rebellion against British control in India saw the rise of the British Raj, meaning that

India was under direct rule from Britain. Queen Victoria became Empress of India in 1877. Cape Colony was colonised by Britain in the early 19th century and Britain kept hold of its colonies in southern Africa despite Afrikaaner resistance in the First Boer War in 1880.

In the centre of the plate, Silber and Fleming illustrate this imperial strength by personifying Britain as Britannia; from left to right she is surrounded by India, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Africa. The Latin motto reads 'where there is strength, there is victory', implying that the Empire's strength lies in the unity of its colonies. That is not to say that all was well in the British Empire — Britain faced uprisings, warfare and unrest in its global expansion, and had a fierce disregard for the land ownership of native populations. However, certainly by Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, Britain had a significant, although at times tentative, hold on the world.

Colonial Forces in the Sudan

Beneath the depiction of Britannia and her colonies, the plate pictures a violent conflict in the early 1880s. At this time, Egypt and Britain's joint control over Sudan was under threat from a rebellion led by the Mahdi, Muhammad Ahmed. After failed attempts by the Egyptians and British to crush the revolt, a British relief force was sent to evacuate General Charles Gordon and his surviving forces from Khartoum. Canada contributed around 400 volunteers called 'voyageurs', who were skilled in navigating through lakes and rivers. Their role was to transport soldiers and weaponry down the Nile into Sudan. However, it was too late — Gordon was killed, and Britain still had no control of the Mahdi and his followers. After Gordon's death, the NSW government offered the services of Australian soldiers to aid in retaking Sudan. There was very little action throughout this small campaign, and the British abandoned it in 1885, although control of Sudan was eventually re-established. Despite these small and largely unsuccessful contributions, their depictions on the plate highlight their importance not in impact, but in implication. This marked the first occasion that both Canada and Australia contributed to a British conflict, thus not only proving the strength of the British Empire, but setting a precedent for their enduring loyalty to the 'mother country'.

Industry and Trade

Finally, the bottom left and right edges of the plate announce the great value of the Empire's imports and exports in 1885. In this period Britain was 'the workshop of the world' as mass production began, allowing goods to be made more cheaply and in larger quantities. This innovation went hand in hand with improvements in railway and steamship technologies, meaning goods could be transported throughout Europe and the rest of the world more efficiently. As well, improved communications bound the Empire more closely.

Thus, by Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, Britain was one of the world's dominant forces both economically and geographically; never before had the British Empire been so prosperous and united. The plate celebrated this imperial strength under the Queen's long reign, and reminded the British people of their empire's growth and prosperity. They could be proud to be British, whether living in Britain itself or the colonies. It certainly is a plate with a story!

Zoe Newby, museum volunteer

Reporting the Atomic Test on the Monte Bellos, 1952

This year 3 October marked the 68th anniversary of Australia's first atomic test, on the Monte Bello Islands, 120km north of Onslow. Member Margot Lang brings us the fascinating story, told by her father Griff Richards, former editor-in-chief of The West Australian newspaper, of how Perth journalists outmanoeuvred the official security ban to give world coverage to the spectacular event.

It was Britain's bomb, and the British were determined to keep the test blast secret. Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies had secretly agreed, without even telling his own Cabinet, to a request from British Prime Minister Clem Attlee in September 1950 for the bomb to be tested on Australian soil. In December 1951 Britain decided to go ahead with the tests.

Rumours began to circulate in Canberra early in 1952. William McMahon, Minister for the Navy, came to Perth and dodged the Press. This was unprecedented – like a fish renouncing water. I sent a senior reporter, Norman Milne, to knock on his door at the Esplanade Hotel. He slammed the door.

I went to see Captain Bryce Morris, naval officer in charge at Fremantle. Bryce Morris, a blue-water man with a contempt for chairborne warriors, was candid, as usual, but very much in the dark. The phone rang and he kept saying 'Speak up' until he hung up muttering: 'Bloody Security! They ring up to tell you something and whisper so you can't hear them'. Tom Cotton of Intelligence, a neighbour of mine, was the mysterious caller.

As bits of information built up, we sent reporters to Onslow and published reports of naval activity. Protests came from high places, but we were able to say that we did not publish anything without approval from Bryce Morris. Finally, Sir Arthur Fadden, Deputy Prime Minister, invited all newspapers to send their top people to a security conference in Canberra on 14 July.

Jim Macartney, managing editor of *The West Australian*, launched preparations for a large-scale expedition. A cavalcade of reporters, photographers and technicians under the leadership of Jack Nicoll left Perth on 16 August. Four men – a reporter and a photographer each for *The West Australian* and *Daily News* – stayed at the Onslow hotel to keep a continuous watch on the explosion area. The rest of the party established a camp at Mt Potter, 215km northeast of Onslow.

The main camp was next to a billabong containing a foot of brackish water which could be used for washing. Drinking water had to be carried from a pump 10km away. The camp was directly under the north-south telegraph line, which was tapped and connected to machines on the table-top of a six-ton truck. It was one of Australia's most unusual post offices. It gave instantaneous communication with Perth by morse through two channels – one down the coast through Onslow and Carnarvon; the other through Port Hedland, Marble Bar and Meekatharra. Two operators from the Postmaster-General's Department and a junior reporter from *The West* slept next to the machines. Both lines had repeaters and on demand could be used simultaneously for half an hour continuously. In the next six weeks the telegraphists sent 25,000 words to Perth. The nearest resident was 22km away at Mardie station.

An ironstone hill 76 metres high, 2½ km from the camp and about 100km from the Monte Bellos, was selected for an observation post. To get to the top, the men had to scramble up a gradient averaging one in three. They called it Nick's Nob in honour of their leader. The observation post commanded a view of the atomic-test prohibited area. The men set up special cameras, a dark room and crude living quarters. They could not put up tents because there were winds up to 100km an hour, and gelignite had to be used to dig a post-hole.

Bill Mangini, a physicist, designed a four-metre camera, the biggest in the world. The lenses were mounted in a big plywood box designed by Harold Rudinger, WAN's senior photographic technician, and the assembly was called Long Tom. A dark room was there to check results on the spot, the effect of radioactivity being unpredictable.



Reporter Lloyd Marshall using the field telephone to dictate his reports for relay to Perth. © West Australian Newspapers Ltd.

The men rigged an army field telephone to connect the observation post to the main camp. The plan was that when the bomb exploded reporters at the top of the hill, working in relays, would telephone their stories to the junior reporter at the camp, who had headphones and a typewriter. Since morse transmission was not fast, his typewriter could keep both telegraph channels fully occupied. An Anson aircraft flown by Jimmy Woods was kept on standby at Mardie station for the pictures to be rushed to Perth.

Nearly every day an RAAF patrol aircraft buzzed the observation post at the lowest possible altitude. The WAN men arranged a notice in painted stones – TOP SECRET: KEEP OUT. Neither the Navy nor Commonwealth Security showed any curiosity about the special cameras, which had formidable-looking barrels pointing out to sea. Captain McNicoll, vice-chief of the Australian naval staff, said the Navy had tried to arrange for the Press to inspect the Monte Bellos installations before the explosion, but this had been vetoed in London.

Macartney told the WAN board: 'In view of our heavy cost (about £4600 so far, including all wages) we felt justified in asking every Australian metropolitan publisher for a contribution of £500. We are now guaranteed assistance to the extent of at least £5000. The sale of pictures overseas should produce a good deal more money and altogether we can feel confident now that we will get the story ourselves for nothing or next to nothing.'

The men on the job slept beside their equipment for nearly seven weeks. The bomb went off on 3 October at 8am. They had no warning of it, but the organisation worked perfectly. More than 12,000 words were telegraphed to



The blast.
© West Australian Newspapers Ltd.

Newspaper House and Woods landed in Perth with excellent pictures in time to catch all editions of *The West* – results which would never have been achieved if we had relied on official releases. It was a triumph for Macartney. The cost was more than £12,000, but WAN got most of it back by selling the coverage interstate and overseas.

The bomb, code-named Hurricane, was detonated 2.4 metres below the waterline in the old 1450-ton Royal Navy frigate HMS *Plym*, which vaporised. The bomb had a yield of about 25 kilotons of a million degrees Celsius and the radioactive cloud rose 549 metres in one second. There was some fallout on the mainland about 30 hours later, but most of the radioactivity fell into the sea to the north and west as planned.

An Australian royal commission headed by Jim McClelland, a former judge and Minister in the Whitlam Government, reported in 1985 that the Monte Bellos were an unsuitable site because of the prevailing weather pattern and the limited opportunities for safe firing. He said that information was concealed from the

Federal Government. The Australian scientists did not know enough about the test to tell the Government whether the weapon could be fired without posing a hazard to the mainland.

Two more bombs were exploded at the Monte Bellos, in 1956. The first, Mosaic G1, tower-mounted on Trimouille Island, exploded on 16 May. It had a yield of 15 kilotons and its cloud mushroomed to 6,400 metres. Radioactivity was detected on the mainland from Onslow to Broome because of a change in wind direction after the explosion. The next bomb, Mosaic G2, tower-mounted on Alpha Island, exploded on 19 June. It was the biggest tested in Australia. Its yield was 60 kilotons and the cloud rose to 14,325 metres. Fallout was again bigger than expected and again affected the mainland where none had been predicted. The main cloud crossed the coast. It produced radioactivity at Port Hedland and Derby 24 hours after the explosion. The fallout was highest at Port Hedland, exceeding the permitted level for the general public. The two Mosaic tests were conducted in a hurry under marginal conditions and predictions about the movement of fallout proved to be wrong. McClelland accused the safety committee of having made a grossly misleading and irresponsible report to Menzies.

After the first Monte Bellos test, there were five trials at Emu Plains, South Australia, in 1953 in which two bombs were detonated. The Australian Cabinet agreed in 1954 to Britain's establishing a permanent proving ground at Maralinga, South Australia, and in trials begun there in 1955 eight more bombs were exploded. The trials continued to 1963.

Aborigines reported that a 'black mist' after the Emu Plains tests in 1953 had made them sick; and in 1962 it was reported that radioactive contamination at Maralinga might be a health hazard. Britain began a clean-up Operation Brumby at Maralinga in 1967, but McClelland claimed it was unsatisfactory. He recommended in 1985 that regular monitoring of radiation at the Monte Bello Islands should continue.

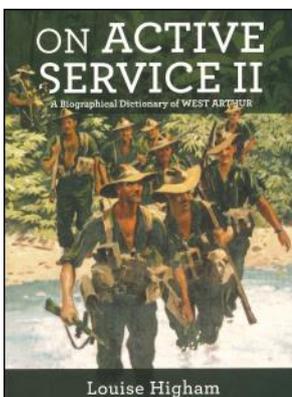
Griff Richards

Griff Richards' unpublished history of West Australian Newspapers 1939-1984 is now available at the RWAHS library and the State Library WA. We will run more of Griff's stories of newspaper life last century in future editions of History West.

Book Reviews

Louise Higham, *On Active Service II: A Biographical Dictionary of West Arthur*, Vivid Publishing, Fremantle, 2019. In Library.

Reviewer: Jack Honniball



Title and sub-title give a good indication of the nature and content of this sturdy tome. Thus its primary focus is on the details of military service performed by 278 men and women whom West Arthur claims as its own. With the addition of particulars about each one's home, family and civil occupation, it develops into a social history of a small rural shire. The dictionary

format ably records its entries in alphabetical order of surname, though divided into three sequences — for each of the two world wars and (in just seven names)

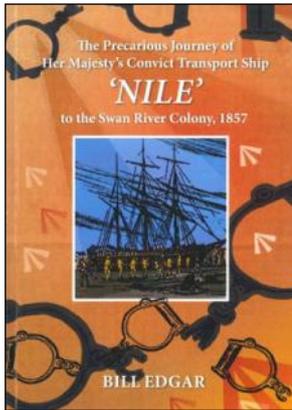
for subsequent war zones. Entries vary greatly in length, from just a single paragraph to three or four pages of text when it embraces citations for awards, wartime letters home, contemporary newspaper reports and the like. About half the subjects appear in the 100 or so photographs that the book contains. This is the successor to a similar work on the adjacent Shire of Williams produced by the author in 2016.

Louise Higham has drawn extensively from the official records of the Australian War Memorial and the National Archives as well as from a range of State and local publications, and, not least, from local residents of recent times. Doubtless many past and present citizens of West Arthur will read the book avidly from cover to cover, and many too in the seven neighbouring shires that share its borders. But it will also be a useful source of reference and research for a much wider community that delves into such areas as family history, primary industry and the scourge of war.

Stemming from a distinguished military family herself, the author has clearly been meticulous in her research and assemblage of the facts, and the result is a credit both to her and the Shire of West Arthur.

Bill Edgar, *The Precarious Journey of His Majesty's Convict Transport Ship 'Nile' to the Swan River Colony, 1857*, Tammar Perth, 2019. In Library & Bookshop \$25.

Reviewer: Pamela Statham Drew



This is the latest of many books Bill Edgar has written on Western Australia's colonial history. His treatment of the *Nile*'s convict passengers, from their British life and conviction to their troubles on HMS *Nile*, is detailed and well referenced. He shows that the convicts selected for the *Nile* were amongst the worst that had been sent to

the colony to that time, one third of the contingent being lifers, convicted of violent crimes. He goes on to prove that convicts reaching WA after 1854 (after which transportation was reserved as a sentence only for serious crime) were definitely of a criminal background. But, investigating crime figures in the colony from 1854 to 1868, he finds no appreciable increase in crime, and that the transported villains, in the main, lived lawful and productive lives in the colony.

The author then explores the possible reasons for this seeming transformation and examines living conditions in the colony both for convicts and ticket-of-leave men,

as well as environmental conditions (including fresh air) and psychological factors. He concludes that in every respect the men were better off in the colony than they had been in Britain. One particular convict on the *Nile*, George Woodcock, is discussed as an example. George was sentenced to ten years but received his ticket-of-leave 23 months after arrival. He married in the colony, had four children and then in 1870 was convicted of stealing £35 – a fortune in those days. He was sentenced to six years' imprisonment but granted his ticket-of-leave in 1874 (and conditional pardon in 1876). He had another six children with the same wife and most of these children became pillars of society. George himself retained the habits of his criminal past and was frequently apprehended for being drunk and disorderly, but never again for a serious crime.

The entire convict system – its adoption in WA and differences with the experience in eastern Australia – is well researched and referenced. As such, it is a welcome addition to the literature. However there is nowhere mentioned the highly significant fact that WA received only male convicts, that the 'lustful wenches' sent to eastern Australia never made an appearance in the west. Neither does he mention the condition that an equal number of free women as male convicts be sent to the colony, and the Colonial Office turning to Ireland's young female paupers to reach the required numbers. These omissions are unfortunate. Nevertheless, this little book definitely adds to our knowledge of the convict period in the colony.

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