

PHA **WA**



# NEWSLETTER

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The opinions expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of the PHA (WA).

## President's note:

PHA (WA) has had a busy and active 2016, maintaining our regular calendar of activities and continued support to our members, peppered with some new events and professional development opportunities. We also launched our new punchy flyer aimed at promoting PHA and attracting new members, whether recent history graduates or those who are notching up a working career in the sector. It has been a busy year for other organisations too, as is testified by this edition of the newsletter which is full to the brim with news on books, events, anniversary milestones, grants, current projects and research.

Our AGM was held on 9 October and I am pleased to say that all office positions on the Management Committee have been filled, mainly by returning members Robyn Taylor, Ian Duckham, Prue Griffin, Sue Graham-Taylor and Jenna Lynch and new addition, Dominic Walsh.

After the AGM, we were delighted to have Dr Kate Gregory bring our members up-to-date on the interesting and successful *Storylines* project, an initiative of the State Library WA. This was followed by a complimentary guided tour of the current



Art Gallery WA (AGWA) exhibition *Unknown Lands* for PHA members. So, all in all, a productive, enjoyable and thought-provoking 2016 AGM was had. You can read more about the AGWA exhibition in this edition of the newsletter as well as the Management Committee Report presented at the AGM.

One of the highlights for this year was PHA's solid appearance at Heritage Perth's annual 'Perth Heritage Days' festival. This was our inaugural 'History Slam', a fast and furious storytelling forum in which each presenter had 180 seconds to tell a story, relive a moment, recount a tale in whatever form or shape they wanted as long as it had some connection to 'history' or the practice of historical research. What a ride it was, and so well supported by our members and the broader community, and proved to all involved that history is so much more than just an academic pursuit and can even be entertaining!

Another professional development opportunity offered this year by PHA (WA) was the payment of the conference fee and dinner for two of our members – Malcolm Traill from Albany and one of our newest members, Sinead Burt – to attend the National PHA conference 'Working History' in Victoria in August. Both delegates thoroughly enjoyed participating in the conference and expressed a great deal of appreciation for the support they received from PHA. But, as the saying goes, there's no such thing as a free lunch, and as part of 'the deal' they have provided us with an entertaining review of their thoughts and reflections on conference in this newsletter. The PHA committee is keen to offer further support and professional development opportunities to members in the year ahead – not just at a State level but also at a National level - so watch this space!

Looking to 2017, something that was emphasised at the AGM and in subsequent meetings, is to look for ways in which our members can have more involvement in the endeavours and functions of the organisation without necessarily committing to being part of the Management Committee or on an ongoing basis. Realising we cannot do everything - and that sometimes opportunities are missed - the Management Committee is very keen for other members to take on different initiatives and projects in the upcoming year on a needs basis and we will be looking for volunteers as well as making specific approaches. In this way we are drawing more broadly on the extensive and rich expertise of our membership, particularly for matters requiring specific knowledge and skills, and – just as importantly - nurturing more ownership of PHA (WA) for all. I am pleased to note this process has started and is already making a difference.

Another area of focus for the new year, and for which we will be garnering the support of the History Council of WA (HC), is to investigate and have a better handle on the tertiary landscape. The idea is for both organisations – which, although related organisations, offer different benefits and outcomes - to be better engaged with courses offered in history and other related courses and with students, graduates and their research. The desire is not only to support the learning and practice of history but to extend the reach and relevance of PHA and the HC and better promote ourselves to the next generation of historians. The hope is that we will become an important touchstone for students, beginning with their academic journey and continuing as they graduate and venture into the workforce.

Ending the year on a very pleasant note, we joined our fellow HC members at the combined end of year function at Wireless Hill where we toasted another inspiring and jam-packed year for both organisations, and patted ourselves on the back for doing our part in keeping 'history' alive, active and engaging!

Thanks so much to Kris Bizzaca for yet again pulling together another fabulous newsletter, and a special thanks to our super co-editor Lenore Layman who kindly offered to help Kris with this huge task.



I wish you and your family, loved ones, pets, etc a very jolly and safe festive season. I wish you prosperity in the New Year – full of contracts, commissions, funding and graduations and above all, joy.

*Helen Munt APHA  
President*

## PHA (WA) Management Committee Report 2015/2016:

**Editor's note:** *The Management Committee Report for 2015/2016 was presented at the AGM held on 9 October 2016.*

I would like to thank the State Library WA for its support of PHA (WA) by providing meeting rooms throughout the year free of charge, for our management committee meetings, AGM and professional development seminars and events.

### Committee

The PHA (WA) Management Committee has met four times during 2015/16, and a good amount of the Association's business has also conducted via email.

After last year's AGM, the Management Committee (MC) stood as follows: myself President; Jennifer Weir, Treasurer; Robyn Taylor, Vice President; Sue Graham Taylor, Membership Secretary/PHA delegate; and Cathy Day, Prue Griffin, and new member Jenna Lynch as general committee members. There was a vacancy for the position of Secretary and Ian Duckham kindly stepped forward after the AGM to take on the role. Ian's nomination was endorsed at our first MC meeting in November 2015 and we have greatly appreciated having him on board. In March 2016, Jennifer Weir resigned from the position of Treasurer and we were very fortunate Prue Griffin agreed to step up into this position. I would like to thank Jennifer Weir for the contribution she made to the MC, in particular as Treasurer. I also thank Kris Bizzaca who, although retired officially from the MC and from the position of President, stayed on as newsletter editor and website manager. Thanks again to Jennie Carter for continuing the task of organising the group insurance policy for members.

The MC has focused on ways of attracting new members, of retaining existing members, of ensuring our relevance to members and related sectors, of offering further opportunities to members and keeping our members informed not only on PHA activities but also the activities of other peer organisations, opportunities and events of interest and in keeping our website up-to-date. This is not only benefits members' knowledge and networking but demonstrates the value of membership to PHA. We have also discussed entering the social media age by developing a Facebook page (which PHA (Vic) has done) but, while this sounds good in theory, with our limited resources and the time required to manage a Facebook page to make it worthwhile, the idea has been put to one side with the potential to be revisited in the future.

One of the biggest changes instigated by the new MC was to arrange for internet/online banking. Online banking has meant much more efficient and expeditious payments, with approvals from our MC members being achieved predominantly via email endorsement. This has been an important step given that the MC only meets quarterly, and has almost superseded the need to use the cheque book. It has also reduced the need for MC members to make payments on behalf of PHA using personal credit cards.

Another change, endorsed at last year's AGM, was to reduce the publication of the newsletter from four times per year to twice. The editions were scheduled for June and December. We hope this change has been acceptable and members do



not feel the reduced frequency has reduced its impact, newsworthiness and importance. We always encourage your feedback on how changes like this are tracking.

The MC also initiated a combined end of year function with Museums Australia (MAWA) – due very much to the organisational skills of Cathy Day. The function – held at Heathcote Gallery in early December – was a delightful event. This year we decided to extend our reach to include the Oral History Association, the History Council of WA and MAWA. The date for this has been set for Wednesday 7 December, 6-8pm, and will be at Wireless Hill.

In last year's report, the idea of initiating a History Prize and also the development of a promotional flyer was noted. With regard the History Prize, there were discussions held at the MC meetings about this but, owing to more pressing business and new additions and changes to the MC, there has not been sufficient time to give this the proper thought it requires. However, it will remain on the agenda. By way of keeping the momentum for such initiatives and for professional development opportunities, the MC endorsed the payment of conference fees and conference dinner for two PHA members who were planning to attend the PHA conference (hosted by PHA (Vic)) in August. We were delighted to accept the applications of new member Sinead Burt and one of our regional members Malcolm Traill. Sinead and Malcolm will be providing an article on the conference for our December e-newsletter.

As for the flyer, we now have two promotional flyers: one developed last year which provides detailed information and a second one developed by this year's MC – which I would like to present - to compliment the original one with more provocative messaging and particularly aimed at recent history graduates and to attract experienced/working historians who have not yet joined. Thanks to Jenna Lynch for her work on this.

## **Membership**

In 2015/16, our membership totalled 53 people with the majority being Professional Members. We welcomed two new members to PHA (WA) – Dominic Walsh (accredited at the level of Professional Historian) and Sinead Burt (accredited at the level of Graduate Historian).

There has been a slight decrease in members taking up the group insurance policy. As this is one of PHA's main areas of support to members, the decrease is something the MC will investigate to determine whether this is part of a natural ebb and flow or is indicative of the policy losing its appeal and attraction to members – for example, if the amount of Professional Indemnity cover is not high enough when applying for consultancies.

## **Professional Historians Australia**

Sue Graham-Taylor has served as the WA delegate to the national body. In addition to the teleconferences, Sue attended the AGM in Melbourne in August (which was preceded by the conference mentioned previously). With Kris Bizzaca standing down from the MC last year, we needed an alternate delegate and Jenna Lynch stepped up to the challenge and will be mentored by Sue in learning the scope and purpose of this role.

Out of the AGM, some discussion points were sent from the PHA to each individual PHA for feedback. These include: mechanisms for sharing details of PHA activities across the State; looking at greater contributions to the National Jobs bulletin so that it becomes a truly national resource; developing a national approach to professional development for members; and the potential for a paid national secretariat. Outcomes of these discussions by the MC will be passed on to our members as they come to hand.



## Activities

In summary, in 2015/16 the Management Committee's main activities have included:

- The publication of two newsletters (edited by Kris Bizzaca in association with Lenore Layman)
- Continued contribution/membership to other committees and affiliations such as-
  - National Archives Perth Consultative Forum (Prue Griffin)
  - History Council of WA committee (Helen Munt)
  - Chamber of Culture and the Arts, including attendance at an Arts and Culture Industry Function at Parliament House, Cultural Executives Group meetings and presentations on the changes to the Associations Incorporations Act
  - State Heritage Office – State Heritage and History Conference working/stakeholder group (Sue Graham-Taylor)
- The funding of two WA delegates to attend the Working History Conference hosted by PHA (Vic)
- The development of a new promotional flyer
- The continued administration of the group policy for members for Professional Indemnity and Public Liability insurance by Jennie Carter
- The monitoring and distribution of issues, events and opportunities of interest to our members via the email network thanks to our secretary Ian Duckham
- Revisions to the PHA (WA) MC manual to ensure it is up to date with internal operational changes
- The organisation of a professional development presentation by Dr Kate Gregory on the *Storylines* project to coincide with the 2016 AGM and the guided tour offered to members of the 'Unknown Lands' exhibition at AGWA

## Looking Forward

Other activities which will take place in 2016 include:

- Its participation in this year's Perth Heritage Days Festival which includes the History Slam event at the Burt Memorial Hall and an information booth to be located at the new City of Perth library
- Continued engagement and consultation with the State Heritage Office on the State Heritage and History Conference being planned for next year
- The combined end of year function with MAWA, OHAA, History Council of WA
- The review of our constitution (PHA (WA) Rules of Association) to ensure it aligns with the new *Associations Incorporation Act 2015* instigated as of 1 July 2016.

## Conclusion

On behalf of all Members of PHA (WA), I acknowledge the work of the 2015/16 Management Committee – Ian, Prue, Robyn, Sue, Jenna and Cathy. A special thank you to Cathy who will be stepping down from the MC this year.

*Helen Munt APHA  
President 2015/2016*



## Let the Slam begin! The PHA (WA) Inaugural History Slam, Perth Heritage Days Festival, 2016:



Introducing the first 'slammer', Dr Crena Fitzgerald, with her hard-hitting 'Profits or Death'. Photo courtesy: Helen Munt.

A new PHA (WA) initiative was the History Slam devised specifically for this year's Perth Heritage Days festival, which was held at various locations across the city over the weekend of 15 and 16 October. The slam took up the theme of the festival 'The Way We Worked' by presenting a range of experiences of how historians work as well as how people 'work' history. The challenge for each presenter was to do this in 180 seconds, making it a fast and furious storytelling forum. All up we had 16 presenters which made for a full and diverse program. In addition to historians, among the presenters were artists, designers, architects, archaeologists, librarians, broadcasters, tour guides and archivists.

Going by our best guess of how many would attend, a number of seats were put out in readiness at the Burt Memorial Hall, but as the clock ticked closer to the 3.30pm starting time, people kept pouring in, more seats were found, programs ran out and we had - at the final count - about 200 people.



Actor and playwright Jenny Davis and her convict tale. Photo courtesy: Helen Munt.



Enjoying the networking during the break. Photo courtesy: Helen Munt.



The audience was treated to a huge variety of presentations and subject matters, and lots of laughter, tears and revelations were packed into the three-minute moments. To highlight a few: Erika Jacobson had us enraptured with her observations on birth, death and wildflowers in the South-West captured in her poem on Georgiana Molloy, motherhood, loss and fertility; Shane Burke delighted us with his humorous account of the serendipitous discovery of Peel Town; Les Everett had us in tears with his tale of three brothers lost in WWI as did Deborah Hindley with her tribute to her grandfather – the first casualty of WWII; Robyn Taylor won the hearts of the audience in her struggle to keep to the 3 minute limit; Malcolm Traill brought gasps of surprise as he unveiled family connections in the Kimberley; Gerard Foley took us deep into the bush as we relived our childhood memories of Dot and the Kangaroo; and Susie Conte well and truly met the “slam” brief with a rap poem on Mollie Skinner.

For a first time event, the experience was overwhelming (in the best possible way) and its success was a comforting reminder that ‘history’ can and still does engage people in all measure of ways and that it is really immersed in our everyday lives. It can be emotional, provocative or controversial, but also just plain entertaining.

Having learnt so much from this year’s experience, and armed with some supportive and positive feedback from both presenters and audience, we look forward to bringing this successful event back next year. We already have offers from prospective presenters as well as other organisations interested in partnering with us to make it even better and extend its reach. However, while there is always room for improvement, I think those who attended the slam would agree what we don’t want to lose is the raw, unpredictable and unpretentious energy this unique event displayed.

Enormous thanks go to Heritage Perth who provided the promotion, the venue as well as the fabulous technicians operating the audio visual equipment at no cost, and to Richard Offen and his team who helped so much with the organisation leading up to and on the day.

*Helen Munt APHA*

## It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas - the PHA (WA) & History Council End of Year Function:



Function attendees. Photo courtesy: Helen Munt.



With the dulcet tones of Michael Bublé swooning around the beautifully revamped exhibition space at Wireless Hill Museum, the scene was set for a very pleasant and festive end of year function where it was certainly beginning to feel '...a lot like Christmas'.

Having enjoyed the companionship of Museums Australia members at last year's function, PHA (WA) extended an invitation this year to the History Council of WA. Also joining us were guests from the City of Melville and the National Archives.

As we sipped on wine, nibbled on tasty morsels and engaged in conversation, it was a treat to mill around the striking photographic exhibition *Botanica* by John E. Maloney. The exhibition, an Art on the Move touring exhibition, featured photographs of flowers collected in the late 18th and early 19th centuries around the Australian coast. As the evening grew darker, guests also took advantage of viewing the War Memorial installed by the City of Melville this year on Anzac Day which, when lit up amongst the towering anchor blocks in the Wireless Hill Park, certainly makes for a poignant installation.



The War Memorial at Wireless Hill Park. Photo courtesy: Helen Munt.

Thanks are again extended to Cathy Day, Coordinator Cultural Development at the City of Melville and former PHA (WA) committee member, for organising the function and also to the City of Melville staff who helped setting and packing up and serving the food and drinks on the night.

Now that we have enjoyed the hospitality of the City of Melville for two years running, we are on the hunt for a host for next year's end of year function or for any other ideas. Anyone keen to put their hand up and offer their venue or organisational skills, please get in touch!

*Note: There will be a Morse Code exhibition installed at the Wireless Hill Museum next February 2017. This will be a particularly important and relevant exhibition in light of the recent folding of the Morsecodian Society here in WA.*

Helen Munt APHA



## New Member profile - Dominic Walsh:



I first saw Glasgow University at six years old, and upon seeing its gothic spires and quads, announced to my bemused parents that I would be studying History there and becoming an historian. Despite being a peculiarly specific dream, and a long way from the astronauts and cowboys of my peers, I graduated from Glasgow with a MA in Medieval History in 2006 and have since specialised in built history.

I arrived in Perth from the UK knowing nearly nothing of the State's history. I quickly gravitated to Perth's beautiful buildings and discovered through them, and their former inhabitants, the stories of Western Australia's past. Despite writing about buildings, a focus on people that has informed most of my work.

Initially I worked at Heritage Perth where I researched and compiled histories of each heritage-listed building in the City. This has been collated into an online database, with photographs, which Heritage Perth is currently updating.

My next position was in a similar field, researching for the ABC TV show 'Who's Been Sleeping In My House?'. I stayed with TV for a while – working on other documentaries and preparing proposals on a wide range of subjects, to be used by producers to secure funding.

Currently, I am working with Dome Coffees as their in-house historian. They are in the middle of several renovations of heritage-listed buildings for use as hotels, and I'll be writing a book for each of the properties detailing its history and restoration. My role is also to provide research that explains the buildings to the architects and designers to ensure the historical integrity of each development is restored, retained, and renewed so they can be enjoyed by all the middle-aged six year olds still to come.

I still particularly enjoy discovering this personal aspect to the research, and see the individual characters in each story as key to finding the next piece of evidence.

*Dominic Walsh, MPHA*



## A historian's perspective of the *Unknown Land* Exhibition:



Frederick Garling, *View across the coastal plain*, 1827, watercolour and pencil on paper, 13.2 x 37.5cm. State Art Collection, Art Gallery of Western Australia. Purchased 1978.

The substantial '*Unknown Land*' *Mapping and Imagining Western Australia* exhibition at the Art Gallery of WA (AGWA), a major showcasing of art about Western Australia from European exploration to settlement and beyond, has much to offer the viewing public.

For lovers of art, there is a visual feast of 200 paintings, watercolours, prints and sketches. The exhibition is arranged chronologically, taking the viewer from the time of early navigation along the coast by the Dutch and French, to the exploration of the Swan River and establishment of the colony by the British in 1829. There is the subsequent development of outlying settlements, many depicted by the settlers themselves, and records of encounters with the Aboriginal people. Produced by professional artists and illustrators, government cartographers, surveyors and amateurs, they provide a visual record of what was encountered in this strange and unfamiliar land, and how it was interpreted through European eyes. The artworks are augmented by readings from diaries and journals that form an audio backdrop to the exhibition.

At the entry to the exhibition is a panel explaining its title and nature. '*Unknown Land*' comes from *Terra Australis Incognita*, and the idea there was a large unknown land to the south. It is a concept that dates from antiquity. Reading the panel is essential, although it is not entirely helpful. Without an accompanying catalogue the structure of the exhibition and the intentions of the gallery's curator Melissa Harpley are not all that obvious; for example, the reasoning behind the central enclosed section displaying 20th century and contemporary works. These provide a counterpoint to the main exhibition but this purpose could well be lost to most viewers.

Not having a catalogue is an extraordinary omission for such a major show organised by a State gallery. In her review for *The Australian* (19 October 2016), WA journalist Victoria Laurie writes 'Symptomatic of AGWA's basic fiscal dilemma is the need to charge entry for *Unknown Land*, ... and the lack of money to produce an accompanying catalogue'. The exhibition makes substantial use of AGWA's own collection that is normally free to the public.

I feel for the curator who has produced a significant exhibition that deserves better support than this. Accompanying catalogues provide an after-life for exhibitions, such as the catalogue for *The Colonial Eye* exhibition held at AGWA in 1979 for the State's 150th anniversary. This can be used as a fall-back guide to the works and artists as many feature in both exhibitions. Also, it seems fiscal restraints prevented the use of expanded texts. A number of works needed additional information for the public to make sense of what they were looking at; for example, the caricature of Thomas Peel plucking



a white swan and saying 'Cousin Bob's letter did the job. I shall feather my nest however'. This is a reference to Sir Robert Peel, Britain's Home Secretary at the time, and Thomas's private enterprise scheme to bring settlers to the colony.

There are many works in this exhibition that deserve close study for the information they provide, such as those by Frederick Garland who accompanied Captain Stirling on his exploration along the Swan River in 1827. Richard Ffarington's folio of watercolours and drawings dating from the 1840s has particular value for his depictions of the Aboriginal people. Lieutenant Ensign Dale's *Panoramic View of King George's Sound* (1834) is an extraordinary work showing the development of Albany within that majestic setting.

While informative about the nature of the land, its flora and fauna, and the growth of major centres and towns, the works also provided reassurance to family and friends back home in England, and encouragement to would be settlers and investors. Thus one of the sub-themes of the exhibition is the way images were manipulated to present Western Australia in a favourable light.

A number of works in this exhibition have been reproduced many times, but potentially significant aspects of the landscapes may well have been overlooked. Historians, pre-historians and anthropologists will see many of these as significant documents of their time open to interpretation and re-interpretation with the progress of scholarship.

Across Australia, the illustrations created at the time of first contact are now proving to contain information about Aboriginal customs and practices that have been overlooked or misinterpreted. The broadening of scholarship across disciplines has brought us into exciting times where new histories of Australia are being researched to encompass 'deep time history'. Of particular and vital interest, with the increasing incidence of catastrophic bushfires, is the need to understand how Aboriginals managed the land through their use of fire. (See Sylvia Hallam's revised 2014 edition of *Fire and Hearth: Karla Yoorda. A study of Aboriginal usage and European usurpation in south-western Australia*, first published in 1975 and Bill Gammage's *The Biggest Estate on Earth. How Aborigines made Australia*, published in 2011/2012.) Colonial paintings are now providing evidence of these practices, and there are landscapes in this exhibition that show fires and scenes of open grasslands and forested areas that may well relate to Aboriginal land management. York in the Avon River region is one example of this. The early explorers remarked that the open pastures reminded them of Yorkshire and that they could freely gallop under the trees, evidently unimpeded by the thick understorey that is prevalent today. Frederick Garling's *View across the coastal plain* (1827) may well depict such fire clearing practices, suggesting there may be a whole lot more to learn from these colonial artworks.

*Dr Robyn Taylor MPHA*

## 'There were all these nooks and crannies...' - The Land Titles Office and Treasury Building Precinct Oral History Project:

Through the foresight and planning of the City of Perth's Jan McCahon Marshall, the Perth History Centre now holds a microcosm of what life was like at the Treasury Building Precinct in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. This was achieved through an ambitious oral history project undertaken at the same time as the redevelopment of the former government building complex that added 42 interviews as well as photographs and other memorabilia to the City of Perth Cultural Heritage Collection.



From 2012 to 2016, I was commissioned by the City to work on the project and eventually carried out and transcribed 32 of the 42 oral histories. All up, I spoke to 24 men and 10 women, including two married couples who met whilst working there. The interviewees were born from about 1920 to 1955 and most were employed at the Department of Lands and Surveys or Land Titles Office. Their roles ranged from messenger boys, typists and clerks, bookkeepers and accountants, to cartographers, survey examiners, draftsmen and surveyors. Their backgrounds were equally diverse, from those born locally to migrants from Iran and many other places around Australia and the world.

Given the interests of PHA members, I want to highlight the way in which oral histories contribute to understanding heritage value, and particularly the way this project brought the Treasury Building – now a luxury hotel and contemporary restaurant and retail space – to life. The interviews highlight the way a 'bricks and mortar' history can be made more engaging through shared stories and memories.

For example, Michael Hampson, who started as a trainee with Lands and Surveys in 1974, recalled

... it was such a rabbit warren. Lovely big halls which went off into these big doors [which] either opened up into somebody's office or into another section of people... It was a very grand old building...

However, conditions were challenging for people working in the old buildings. In addition to its age and floors impregnated with kerosene, summers were hot and winters freezing with the large public maps often used by messenger boys such as Fred Rosling to draw the fire: '... and of course they [the plans] used to get singed and burnt. The Chief Draftsman wasn't very impressed.'

There were also rats and lice. As the officer in charge of the Microfilm Section of the Land Titles Office, Warren Lake was responsible for reformatting the documents, which required accessing the titles that were stored in the basement in leather bags:

They [the rats] ate a hole which they made into a nest, so they could comfortably eat the other two hundred titles that were sitting in there. I'd say quite a few thousand title deeds were half eaten by the rats over the years.

Mr Lake looked forward to fumigation day. The event was made highly memorable because work finished early on a Friday to allow the spray to dissipate over the weekend. Eventually the odd rat would reappear and staff knew it was nearly time for another Friday afternoon off.

At the other end of the scale – or rather the top of the building – things were different for drafting assistant Lynda Haythornthwaite:

... we were on the top floor. That's where the pigeon lice used to come down and drop on us. It was horrible you'd feel your skin crawl and there really was something there. If you looked at your desk you would see things moving on the desk.... you felt dirty because you had all these lice in your hair. The pigeons used to get up in the ceiling and die and the lice would drop down on us... When we complained after a while they would get the pest controllers in and they would try and put some wiring up, wire fencing stuff up to keep the pigeons out, but every now and then they found a way in.

And even though she had heard there were rats down in the 'dungeons', Lynda had a special view of the basement:

Oh my favourite place in the whole world! I used to lose myself down in there. I did not like history when I was at school; it didn't mean anything to me. But suddenly I found field books from John Forrest, Hargraves, John Septimus Roe and I could pull these field books out, the original field books and read them and read the daily travel of a guy like John Septimus Roe, who was exploring for the first time as a white person exploring... Each night he would write in his field book what he'd done, where he'd



been and I could touch these. It became tangible and suddenly history was alive to me. Later on I used to have the original plan of Perth, drawn in 1827, hand-drawn, on my desk. I had to re-draw it. I had the originals. History became part of me, it was lovely.

Regardless of conditions, government employment was considered highly desirable, secure and permanent, and many reported how thrilled their parents were when they obtained a position. Thorough training was provided and, in return, high standards of accuracy were expected as well as a strong work ethic. Frank Rodda, who joined Lands and Surveys as a cadet cartographic draftsman in 1957, spoke of old Harry Smith, one of the characters in the Department, who took clocking on and off very seriously:

He had these very strict habits. When he'd go to work in the morning he would come in and he'd catch the tram from where he lived into the corner of Barrack Street and Hay Street. He'd stand there and he'd have his hat and his suit. He always had a suit and a grey felt hat. He'd look up at the Town Hall clock. When it got to twenty-eight minutes past eight he'd walk from there up through the building up to the third floor where we were (or catch a lift I guess up to the top). Where you walked in there was the desk with the book that you had sign, everyone had to sign on. So at eight-thirty Harry would rule a red line under the last signature to make sure that everyone was there. Anyone late, below the red line, they would have to be careful because if you were below the red line more than three or four times a month or something you'd be brought to the Chief Draftsman and they'd decide whether you'd be docked pay or whatever, or what the penalty was going to be...

At knock-off time about three or four minutes before five o'clock everyone would start queuing up to leave the room, the big rooms. Harry would go up to the telephone on the wall and he'd pick up the phone and dial the time, for the time, the recorded time. He'd look at his watch and he'd dial the number and hang on and he'd hear the time, 'At the stroke it will be four fifty-nine,' or something or other. He'd always say, 'Thank you very much,' and hang up. Course we'd all laugh. Then he'd look at his clock again and as soon as it got to five o'clock he'd put his hat on and pick up his briefcase and we'd all follow him out. He had to go first.

The cadetship style of training and work experience prevalent at this time resulted in a 'cohesive' staff that had strong work and social relationships. This was something mentioned by a number of interviewees, including Steve Burgess from Lands and Surveys:

We had like almost a family atmosphere there. You got to know people, you got to deal with people, not just at a work level, but on a personal level. We started to have barbecues at one another's houses. Our wives got to know their wives. We even had children around the same time. Several of my work colleagues have got sons and daughters the same age as my daughter and son. You had this sort of family atmosphere which made going to work a pleasure because when you got in there it was like a visit to your family.

Besides the stories of fire hazards, rats, lice and inconvenient working conditions and amongst the tales of friends and family, favourite tea ladies, playing cricket in the halls of the basement, wedding confetti at the Office of Births, Deaths and Marriages and even a water fight involving a fire hydrant that destroyed papers on Minister Charlie Court's desk, what struck me was the affection which interviewees invariably expressed for their aging workplace. Kim Treloar, whose talent for architectural drawing led him to a cadetship in cartography, was delighted to hear the Treasury Building was to become a high-class hotel. He summed up what most felt:

Loved it, absolutely loved it. There were all these nooks and crannies. You could effectively get yourself lost within six months of starting. It was an amazing old building. With all honesty no matter what it charges I fully intend to spend one night in one room in the six-star hotel that's going to go up there.



The oral histories and indexed transcripts associated with the Land Titles Office and Treasury Building Precinct Oral History Project can be accessed at the City of Perth History Centre.

*Heather Campbell, Graduate Historian*

## A Potted Summary of 'Working History' - the 2016 Professional Historians Australia Conference:



Sinead Burt and Malcolm Traill at the Working History conference. Photo courtesy: Sue Graham-Taylor.

### Burt's Bit

It was quite the initiation. As a new member of all of three weeks, and through the generosity of the PHA (WA), I was off to the Working History conference in Melbourne, to immerse myself in the combined experience of the National organisation. All of this before I had met most of the members of the PHA (WA) branch!

As a graduate historian, I have so much to learn. If anyone needed a master-class in the realities of a working historian, I did. And this was, after all, the premise of the conference. A warts-and-all examination of the profession, including the challenges of procuring work, balancing ethical considerations with commitment to clients, and the role of new technologies in the communication of history.

The first presentation by keynote speaker Tim Sherratt was better than a strong coffee. The historian and self-described hacker gave a mind-bending talk in which he urged us to closely examine the data that have become so essential to our historical investigations. Digitisation has made history searchable. Yet Trove, with its 200 million plus digital articles frequently returns too much information for us to search in the traditional, linear fashion with which most of us feel comfortable. Rather, he suggested analysing information in other ways.

Tim framed his paper around the idea that technology is just another tool to be used to explore the human element in history. And while my technical abilities are limited, his talk inspired me to spend way too much time playing around with computer programmes that I didn't quite understand. Here is a link to the notes from his talk, where he recommends lots of fun tools. Enjoy! <http://discontents.com.au/telling-stories-with-data/>



The ethical considerations we face as historians was a theme discussed by the next three speakers as they contemplated their experiences 'Navigating Complexity'. The discussion by Helen Penrose was especially powerful, as she explained how her research for a school history uncovered historical records of child sexual abuse. It was a challenging reminder of our moral obligation to remain true to the sources.

The panel discussion 'Things they never taught me at history school' was of particular interest to me. It showed the diversity of applications, and some of the limitations, of a history degree. Abigail Belfrage works as a consulting historian. At the end of her degree, her research skills were fine-tuned, but she was completely at a loss as to how to deal with the complexities of running a small business. Dannielle Orr works as a heritage planner and her experience has taught her that history is contingent on budget, time, and other practicalities. Linda Young, who teaches cultural heritage at Deakin University, acknowledged the inadequacies of a history degree, and suggested that perhaps organisations such as the PHA should work with universities to shape degrees and graduates.

The lightning papers were perfectly timed for after lunch. Bite-sized snippets of history covering the diverse range of challenges faced by working historians. Birgit Heilmann gave an engaging talk about her experiences developing exhibitions with objects sourced exclusively from the community.

The papers from 'History & Policy' explored the role of the historian in the public sphere. Jen Rose encouraged us, as historians, to submit evidence to parliamentary inquiries to add depth to current policy debate, while Francesca Beddie advocated greater historical method in policy making. For improvements in policy she stressed the need to slow down - bad policy is made on the run!

Finally, ideas about history and ownership were contemplated in 'Challenging Grand Narratives'. Sally Percival Wood ran head-long into this problem while researching the 1960s student press. She struggled to frame the sometimes questionable conduct of people who are living now, especially those who have gone on to have a high profile in public life!

*Sinead Burt, Graduate Historian*

## **Traill's Tale**

It was a coup for the organisers to arrange a Q & A with the doyen of Australian historians, Geoffrey Blainey, who chatted to the ABC's Michelle Rayner. Now into his mid-eighties, Prof. Blainey reminisced and ruminated on a wide range of topics, including the low public profile of historians, the current state of history in higher education (not good!), the skills required for interviewing, and the fact that scientists should show more interest in history. His mind is still sharp and it is hard to know where the next national public historian will come from, once he is no longer with us.

Apart from being entertained by Geoffrey Blainey, my Conference highlight came early on Saturday morning (after the dinner – perhaps not good timing!). Lisa Murray is the City Historian at the City of Sydney and her talk on audience development was enticingly entitled 'Snore! I Don't Want To Know About Old White Men'.

Apart from the fact that this local government takes its history seriously enough to create a history department, Lisa's approach to defining audiences and their needs opened my eyes to different techniques of making local history more accessible to locals and visitors. Lisa is an engaging speaker who inspired us with her thoughts and policies.



Lisa's colleague Laila Ellmoos gave us a practical demonstration of some of the City of Sydney's work with the development of an exhibition of the Great Strike in Sydney in 1917. Laila's designs placed an emphasis on the importance of public art to interpret history and will make a good combination when the exhibition is staged in 2017.

Rather than go through every paper on Day Two (guaranteed to send you to sleep!), perhaps some general thoughts on the Working History conference are more useful. Firstly, it was an ambitious plan to stage a two-day conference which, by and large, came together successfully.

The PHA (Vic) Branch (and other Eastern States' branches) are large and diverse, with enough members working on projects of significant difference to fill the program with interesting and provocative talks. Several of the speakers came with issues they wanted to solve and this also triggered audience participation.

Perhaps the most ambitious part of the Conference came at the conclusion – a 'Provocation: Where To For PHA? Have We Done Enough?'. The Australian history profession is small, scattered, diverse, low profile – all of these characteristics conspire against a united front to advance such issues as career planning, history courses in higher education, appropriate remuneration, take-up and maintenance of new technologies, and the setting of standards in research, presentations and reports.

The Open Forum format worked well and the results are available from us as an Excel Spreadsheet and in Word Cloud form. Please contact us via the [Newsletter Editor](#) and we can send you a copy.

It would be exciting, but perhaps a touch unrealistic, to think we in WA could match this conference in scale. In the interim, it was great to be able to attend, listen and learn, and I sincerely thank PHA (WA) for its contribution to our attendance. It was wonderful to be a part of it!

*Malcolm Traill, Graduate Historian*

## Shark Bay 1616 Festival - Celebrating 400 years since the landing of Dirk Hartog:

The year 2016 marks 400 years since Dutch explorer Dirk Hartog landed on what is now known as Dirk Hartog Island. On 25 October 1616 he nailed a flattened, engraved pewter plate to a wooden post to record his discovery. The plate remains the oldest artefact evidence of European contact with Australia and resides in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam after being removed by de Vlamingh in 1697.

From 21 to 25 October 2016, to commemorate the 400th Anniversary of Hartog's arrival, the Shire of Shark Bay and the State Government presented the *Dirk Hartog Voyage of Discovery: Shark Bay 1616 Festival*. Initiatives included new infrastructure and interpretive material on both Dirk Hartog Island and in Denham, a commemorative function at Cape Inscription on 25 October and a festival held in Denham. The presence of the replica Dutch ship of the era, the *Duyfken*, was one of the highlights of the commemorations. The *Young Endeavour* and the *Leeuwin* were moored off shore and the Batavia Long Boat replica arrived from Geraldton.



The small community of Shark Bay hosted celebrations that included arts, food and historical events. The opening Ceremony recognised the ownership of the land by the Malgana people and the Malgana community was closely involved in the Festival.

The commemorative function at Cape Inscription saw around 380 people make the trip to Dirk Hartog Island where the Minister for Culture and the Arts launched replica pewter dishes and new interpretive panels at the Lighthouse Keeper's cottage.



The focus in Denham was on the foreshore which had been extensively redeveloped for the occasion, including the extension of the jetty. The Premier was keen for a bust of Dirk Hartog to be commissioned and erected on the foreshore but fortunately there is no image of the explorer. What he launched was *Union*, a stunning art work by young artists Alex and Nicole Mickle to represent Hartog's landing.

The local community was fully supportive, even wearing costume and entertaining around town over the four days. There was a real Dutch flavour with many Dutch voices heard, Dutch flags and Dutch food specialities including poffertjes on sale. A spiegeltent housed *Moda 1616*, a costume display and was the venue for the Golden Age 1616 Ball that saw some amazing outfits (and perhaps more onlookers than guests at the start of the evening!). Children did not miss out and many worked hard on their boats for

the Sail In Parade, inspired by the historic Tall Ships Festival in the Netherlands. With the help of cardboard experts Box Wars, a parade made its way down Knight's Terrace with many custom-made cardboard boats.

Concerts featured the Black Sorrows alongside Blue Shaddy and talented local entertainers. Other entertainment included the Pyrophone Juggernaut, photographic exhibition, Ninety Degrees Five (ND5) and a nightly projection, *Navigating the West*, at the World Heritage Discovery and Visitor Centre. There was something for everybody.

It is interesting to note that the now very fragile inscribed pewter dish left at Shark Bay by Hartog is back in WA for a short time. It can be seen in the *Travellers and Traders of the Indian Ocean World* exhibition at the WA Maritime Museum until April 2017.

*Sue Graham-Taylor MPHA*

**Editor's note:** *Helen Munt's note about the book launch of The Life and Times of Dirk Hartog can also be found in this edition of the eNewsletter.*

## From the WA History Foundation - 2016 Grants Recipients:

The WA History Foundation is pleased to assist five promising history projects in its 2016 grants funding round. They are as follows:



## **Malcolm Traill History + Heritage – Bringing Albany's History To Life: Walking Tours With A Twist**

Guided walks to interpret the history of Albany have been trialled using actors and musicians to illustrate the stories attached to sites and buildings. To date, two separate walks have been designed and conducted. A major component of this integrated arts and history program is the planning and script development. Stories surrounding the buildings need to be identified and developed to make them interesting, appropriate, dramatic or comic, but essentially historically accurate. This grant will fund further heritage walking tours by providing payment for scriptwriters, actors and musicians, who will design, write and record new programs. The application also plans for the extension of the tour to schools, by developing written scripts suitable for primary classes. The walks will generally stop at four places of historic significance in central Albany, and will end in a public building for refreshments. The tours will be planned to last for about two hours each. Once developed, the tours will be cost-neutral. The scripts will also be developed as radio plays, and recorded for broadcast and podcast.

## **North Midlands Project in partnership with the Carnamah Historical Society & Museum – Frank Thomas, bushranger: an education resource for primary schools, in hardcopy and for free online**

Frank Thomas left his father's farm in Coorow as a young man in 1918 and took to the life of a bushranger. He raided farms, homes, trains and railway sidings – taking food, saddles and the best of horses. He was an accomplished rider and bushman who eluded police on their many attempts to capture him. In the end, he deliberately flaunted the efforts of police and escaped twice – from the Geraldton Gaol and the police lock-up in Buntine. The resource is expected to be 45-65 pages in length and will include an introduction for teachers, worksheets, activities, role-plays, outlines for running a 'bushranger day', arts-related activities and clearly stated curriculum links throughout.

## **Rail Heritage WA - Philippa Rogers: Trans Australian Railway – linking a new nation, 1917-2017**

October 2017 will mark the Centenary of the completion of the Trans Australian Railway linking Western Australia to the rest of Australia and the first large engineering project of the new nation. This project will produce a 72-page book to mark the occasion and to ensure this aspect of Western Australian history is recognised. The book will cover the years from the railway's initial promise and construction to the present. The grant will cover the photograph costs, graphic design and some production costs thus allowing a number of the books to be distributed free of charge to interested libraries and schools. The publication will be released in 2017 as part of the Centenary celebrations and it is hoped will assist others as well as Rail Heritage WA to mark this occasion.

## **Roman Catholic Archbishop of Perth St Marys Cathedral Perth Parish – Odhran O'Brien: St Mary's Community Museum and Gallery Space**

This museum and gallery space will be located under St Mary's Cathedral in Victoria Square, which was granted to the Catholic community in 1859. The first cathedral was completed in 1865 and a neo-gothic portion added in 1930. St Mary's was completed in 2006 and at that time new spaces under the Cathedral were designated to tell the social history of the site and its connection to the State's history – with photographic exhibitions, interpretative panelling, a timeline graphic, audio visual elements and a display area for museum objects. The displays will encompass broad social-historical themes associated within the site and surrounding locality, including indigenous peoples, migration, education, social welfare, healthcare, religious worship and monasticism. On completion, the space will be incorporated into weekly public and school tours. This grant will support the archival research component of the overall project.



## Rotary Club of Fremantle: Digitising the records

The club was founded on 26 September 1928 and has a continuous collection of archives covering its activities, including minutes of the board, annual reports, newsletters, correspondence as well as a large collection of photographs. In 2014 the club was approached by the Fremantle City Library History Centre after exhibiting some archival material in the library as part of the Heritage Festival. It was agreed that the History Centre would assist in digitising some of the club's archives to help preserve the original materials as well as make them available online for public use. Since then some photographs have been digitised in-house at the History Centre. Recently it was decided to microfilm and digitise the minutes of the board and annual reports. The project will be outsourced to Westnet Imaging and managed by the Fremantle History Centre whose services will be provided in kind. Records relating to the club will be made publically available [subject to privacy issues] through the Fremantle History Centre. The State Library of Western Australia has also expressed interest in making the digital files available through its website.

Further information about the WA History Foundation can be found on its website at –  
<http://www.wahistoryfoundation.org.au> or from the secretary at [layman@westnet.com.au](mailto:layman@westnet.com.au)

## From the State Records Office of WA - 2016 Geoffrey Bolton Lecture:

### 'Children in need: why records are central to identity and justice' – 2016 Geoffrey Bolton Lecture



Commissioner Andrew Murray speaks at the Government House Ballroom, 2016.  
Photo courtesy: State Records Office of WA. Photographer: Bohdan Warchomij.

Commissioner Andrew Murray, from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, delivered the 2016 Geoffrey Bolton Lecture on Thursday evening 24 November 2016 at the Government House Ballroom, St George's Terrace Perth. The lecture topic was *Children in need: why records are central to identity and justice*.

Commissioner Murray began the lecture by stating that 'my own impression is that the importance of identity is underestimated by many in the general community, perhaps because they have never lost it or been disconnected from it'. He covered issues related to problems with historical records, such as their absence and destruction, plus the fact that those that do exist are very often inadequate, inaccurate and full of insensitive and judgemental statements. Commissioner



Murray also spoke about Royal Commission findings on the current significant problems with recordkeeping practices in institutions and the non-government sector, adding that while sound recordkeeping guidelines have often been created, they are not always followed. He made the point that there are worries about the security and longevity of digital records.

Turning to issues about access to records for those who experienced out-of-home care, he stated that 'child abuse victims and survivors... are still finding it very hard to access historical records about their time in care' due to procedural difficulties with FOI legislation, such as the requirement to be specific, the costs involved, redactions and third party privacy. Commissioner Murray ended his speech by outlining the Royal Commission's consultation paper on records and record keeping practices, which proposed principles for good institutional record keeping. He also spoke of the need for 'life histories' and 'life story books' so that those who are in out-of-home care have tangible representations of their childhood – like photographs, mementos, art work, etc.

The lecture was illustrated with the stories of survivors of child abuse while they were in out-of-home care, and also included Commissioner Murray's own personal reflections as a child migrant in Fairbridge children's home in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) along with his own search for information.

At the conclusion of his speech, WA State Archivist Cathrin Cassarchis thanked Commissioner Murray for his profound and stimulating address. She also reminded guests of the vital role records play in supporting human rights and justice, citing the Universal Declaration on Archives which seeks to improve understanding and awareness of archives and records among key decision-makers and the general public.

It was a very moving and sometimes heart-rending event that attendees will long remember.

The lecture was recorded for broadcast and podcast by ABC Radio National and the text of Commissioner Murray's speech is available on the SRO's website at: <http://www.sro.wa.gov.au/events/geoffrey-bolton-lecture>

The Geoffrey Bolton Lecture series is an annual event hosted by the State Records Office of Western Australia. The aims of the Geoffrey Bolton Lecture are to encourage the expression of ideas and debate about the meaning and nature of history, culture and society, grounded in archival research; and to provide archival and historical context to national debate on contemporary issues.

*Gerard Foley, Senior Archivist, State Records Office of WA*

## From the Batty Library - Celebrating its 60th Anniversary:

A very pleasant affair was held at the Batty Library this month, to commemorate 60 years since the State's Public Library was renamed the State Library of Western Australia and when a new section was created specifically to house West Australian materials. This 'special' section was 'The 'J. S. Batty Library of West Australian History' which has indeed become a very special place in the hearts of many historians and researchers and for many of us is like a second home. An interesting fact I learnt on the day was that the adjective 'West' was chosen intentionally for the Batty Library rather than 'Western' to reflect the focus of the library predating the British establishment of Western Australia in 1829. A great example of how attention to small details can be so easily overlooked and yet significant in the original intention.



Jenny Gregory shares her experiences of the Battye Library. Photo courtesy: Helen Munt.

The event, attended by many familiar faces from around the traps, was hosted by CEO Margaret Allen and officiated by the Hon. John Day, Minister for Health, Culture and the Arts. Some lovely memories and stories of the Battye Library were also shared by Professor Jenny Gregory AM and Amanda Curtin, author of *The Sinkings* and other historical fiction. To complete the formalities on a humorous note, the audience was treated to a ballad 'a-la-Banjo Paterson' style penned by the talented and long-serving Battye Library staff member, Steve Howell.

*Helen Munt APHA*

## From the 2016 City of Perth History Awards:



Helen Munt (second from right) with Deputy Lord Mayor Cr James Limnios (centre) and history award entrants. Photo courtesy: Bob Litchfield.

A rewarding task I was offered this year, was to be a judge in the City of Perth History Awards in the Open Category, along with Richard Offen of Heritage Perth. The City of Perth History Centre initiated this biennial history award in 2012 to promote the people, places and events that have shaped the City of Perth. It provides an opportunity for researchers and



historians to explore Perth's unique history and heritage and in turn to share their findings with the community. The awards – which offer an Open as well as a Student category - are not restricted to local residents and interested researchers and students anywhere in Australia can enter as long as the essay fits the remit of the competition. Importantly, both categories come with monetary prizes for each winner and runner-up. This is a notable contribution by the City of Perth not only to elevate the appeal of the awards but more importantly to even in a small way acknowledge the effort and time that goes into historical research as a professional endeavour.

This year nine entries were received and all were of a high calibre which made our job as judges extremely pleasurable but also difficult in deciding upon the winner and runner-up. The submissions ranged from traditionally-styled text based essays, to more photographic/image-based essays and journalistic styles, and covered topics from hotels and shops, famous and less well-known men and women from the past, Anzac celebrations, whales, art and the first Aboriginal to challenge Colonial law and take a white settler to court – and succeed!

Brad Lambert was awarded Winner of the Open Award Category for his entry 'The Grosvenor Hotel: Open to All-comers'. Lambert's essay, richly supported by photographs, was both an historical history and also a contemporary history, covering the story of the hotel from when it opened to the present day. Even though the 1980s/90s does not seem that long ago, attitudes and expectations even from the 1980s to today have changed significantly and impacted on hotels such as the Grosvenor and also on the halcyon days of the live music scene in Perth. Coinciding with this change has been the rise and dominance of the small bars and niche food outlets in Perth that have affected the sustainability of traditional, larger hotels such as the Grosvenor. Despite the downtimes, Lambert ended on a positive note and suggests a renaissance for hotels like the Grosvenor in the context of what is happening in Perth today.

The Runner-Up of the Open Award Category was awarded to Eddie Marcus for his essay 'Daisy and Otto and the Whale: The true story of the WA Museum's most famous exhibit'. Having grown up in Perth in the 1960s/70s I was only too familiar with the big whale skeleton in the museum and nearly every school holiday for many years included a visit into Perth to see it. I can't recall what (historical) information was available with the exhibit, but Marcus' essay made for fascinating reading to learn more about the capture of the whale, how it was prepared and transported to the museum, and also how it was originally exhibited. A refreshing and creative essay – including allusions to Melville's *Moby Dick* - it was also a topical history given the building of the new WA Museum and the controversy in the early discussions and plans for the museum around whether this 'famous whale' would have a place in the new building. I look forward to revisiting this old friend with new eyes when the new museum opens.

All the award entries are now included in the City's Cultural Heritage Collection and can be accessed by visiting or contacting the City of Perth History Centre, in the City of Perth Library, Level 2, 573 Hay Street. They are certainly a worthy addition to our local history archive generally and I would encourage members to look them up and utilise them in future research on these and related topics, and also look to submitting an essay in the next round of the awards.

*Helen Munt APHA*



## From the Art Gallery of WA - *Unknown Land* Exhibition:

### 'Unknown Land' Mapping and Imagining Western Australia

Open until 30 January 2017



George Nash, *An extensive view of Perth, Western Australia with a group of natives in the foreground*, c1846, watercolour and pencil on paper, 37.1 x 54.8 cm. State Art Collection, Art Gallery of Western Australia. Purchased with funds from the Geoffrey William Robinson Bequest fund, 1992.

The first European explorers and settlers viewed Western Australia and its spectacular coast as an 'unknown land'. Of course, it was no such thing – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people had owned the land for thousands of years and were quickly in conflict with the imperialists.

Whatever their motives – colonist, invader, explorer, settler, adventurer – the Europeans were awestruck by the land we now call Western Australia – and the opportunities it presented. This exhibition of the earliest watercolours, paintings and drawings of WA superbly captures unforgettable images of idyllic locations still familiar, but now mostly transformed. These artists were the first of many generations to be inspired by the landscape of WA.

For more information and to purchase tickets please visit [artgallery.wa.gov.au/exhibitions/unknown-land.asp](http://artgallery.wa.gov.au/exhibitions/unknown-land.asp)

**Editor's note:** Robyn Taylor's review of *Unknown Land* can also be found in this edition of the eNewsletter.



## From the National Trust (WA) - Peninsula Farm Christmas Carols:

### Peninsula Farm Christmas Carols



Photo courtesy: National Trust (WA).

The National Trust of Western Australia and the volunteers of Peninsula Farm invite you to join us for Christmas carols on the banks of the Swan River at this iconic heritage property. Tuxedo Junction will lead the singing in a wonderful mix of traditional songs of joy and happiness. Bring your friends, family and a picnic.

**When:** 5.45 pm, Saturday 17 December 2016. Grounds open from 4.30pm

**Where:** Johnson Road, Maylands, WA

**Cost:** National Trust Members and children under 12: No charge

Non-members: Individuals \$5, Concession \$3, Families \$10

**Bookings:** No bookings necessary

## From the Royal WA Historical Society - 2017 History in the City Program:

Georgiana Molloy  
*the mind that shines*



Bernice Barry

History in the City 2017 Program presented by the RWAHS Auxiliary

Meetings are held from March to December on the first Wednesday of the month at 2pm at the Citiplace Community Centre situated on the Perth Railway Concourse. Interesting talks are presented with afternoon tea provided. Entry by donation \$5. See *History West* and the Society website for detailed information [www.histwest.org.au](http://www.histwest.org.au)

The first three meetings for 2017 will be:

**Wed 1 March Bernice Barry**

Georgiana Molloy: the mind that shines

**Wed 5 April Melinda Tognini**

The War Women's Guild

**Wed 3 May Lee-Anne Ashley**

Tales from our home: 80 years of dog rescue in WA



## From the 2017 WA State Heritage & History Conference:

### ARE YOU READY TO *Get Connected*

**HERITAGE ~ HISTORY ~ COLLECTIONS ~ ARCHIVES ~ CULTURE  
~ INTERPRETATION ~ TRADITION ~ SENSE OF PLACE**

We believe these are intrinsically and inseparably connected. In an Australian first, the WA Heritage & History Conference is offering a platform for these subjects and more to be discussed under the theme of 'Connections'. You'll love our venue, and we're sure you'll find plenty to explore in the program. Over two days, more than 60 presenters, a dozen panel discussions, interactive workshops and more, delegates will be informed, challenged and motivated to build and strengthen their connections with their history, their heritage and with others.

Collaboration across the heritage, history and collections sector will see the WA State History & Heritage Conference deliver a high quality, diverse event featuring international, inter-state and the best of Western Australia's presenters.

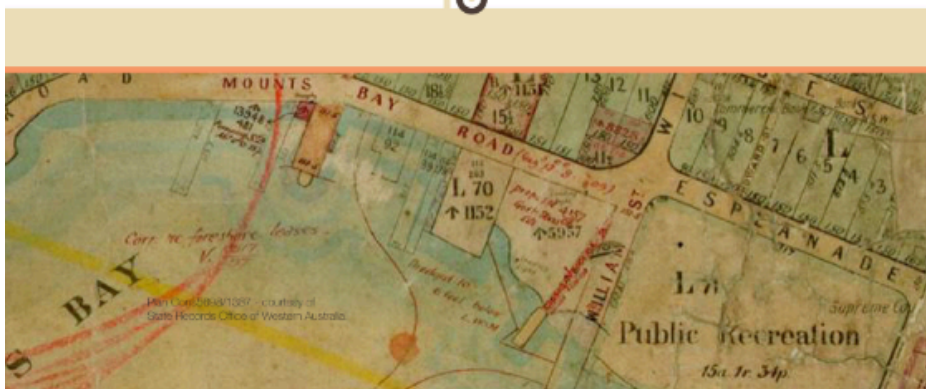
Visit the Conference Website, [www.washhc.com.au](http://www.washhc.com.au) to check out the program, read more about presenters and find out which State-Registered place has been picked as our venue.

We want everyone to have the opportunity to attend, so conference registration is competitively priced. If you think this is going to be out of your price range, you might be pleasantly surprised.

**Save the date – Main event: 11-12 May 2017**

Additional tours and activities will take place on 10 May and 13-14 May.

See you there!



**WA STATE  
HERITAGE  
& HISTORY  
CONFERENCE**

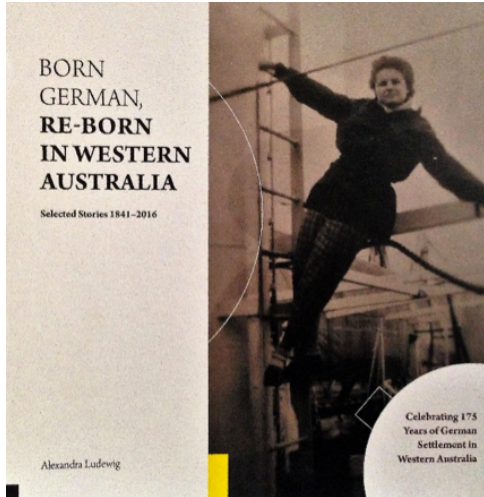


Thursday 11th and Friday 12th May 2017

[www.washhc.com.au](http://www.washhc.com.au)



## Book launch - Alexandra Ludewig's *Born German, Re-born in Western Australia*:



I was very fortunate to be invited to attend the launch of this book held at Government House on 3 October. The book was authored by Professor Alexandra Ludewig of UWA's European Languages and Studies Department as a commission of the Honorary Consul of the Federal Republic of Germany to recognise the 175th anniversary of the first German migrant to settle permanently in Western Australia – Frederick Waldeck, of the well-known Waldeck Nursery business.

This beautifully presented and compiled book is very much like an album, with snapshots of stories and biographical profiles that are, in the main, thematically linked and supported by some wonderful images. It looks at Germans who settled here and made Western Australia their home, as well as those who came here temporarily either in pursuit of adventure or on

scientific expeditions or others for whom life here did not work out for one reason or another (or because of the outbreak of the World Wars) and therefore did not stay but still left their mark. Many of those featured – like Waldeck – are familiar and synonymous with well-known and enduring family businesses, as well as with art, architecture, place names and social circles in Western Australia such as Von Bibra, Strelitz, Hoffman, Rischbieth, Blumann and Iwanoff to name a few.

The launch coincided with the National Day of German Unity and so the event was attended by many dignitaries including the Governor of Western Australia, the Hon. Kerry Sanderson AC, and the Honorary Consul of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr Torsten Ketelsen. As well as the launching of the book, awards were presented to students heading to Germany on exchange and a short concert of German music was given, featuring internationally renowned Australian flautist, Jane Rutter. Combined with the exquisite setting of the Government House ballroom, the event was quite a spectacular and impressive affair.

A highlight of the evening was the theatrical vignettes performed during the supper by students studying German at UWA under the tutelage of Alexandra. Students each selected a character from the book and conducted further research in order to devise a short monologue and prepare other material for improvised performances about their character as they mingled with the crowd. These performances, which were very well received and appreciated, added a sparkle to the launch by bringing many of these German characters from the past to life, and also whetted the appetite to dip into the book to discover more.

*Helen Munt APHA*



## Book launch - *The Life and Times of Dirk Hartog*:



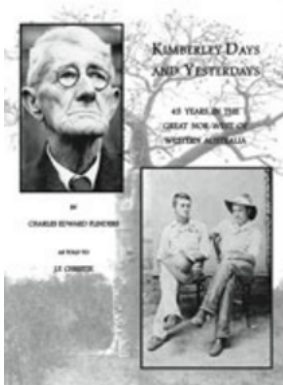
The Governor congratulates the authors at the launch. Photo courtesy: Helen Munt.

As part of the Dirk Hartog commemorations, the Royal WA Historical Society launched its publication: *The Life and Times of Dirk Hartog* by Phillip Playford, Robert Cribb, Greetje Bouma and Cor Boer (edited by P. Playford and L. Layman). The publication was a joint initiative by researchers of the RWAHS and the Nationaal Archief (National Archives) of the Netherlands and published with acknowledgement of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Canberra. The book was officially launched in October by the Governor of Western Australia, Her Excellency the Honourable Kerry Sanderson AC. It was a pleasure to also meet the two Dutch researchers - Bouma and Boer - who were both delightful and entertaining. The book is available for purchase at the RWAHS bookshop or online.

Helen Munt APHA

**Editor's note:** Sue Graham-Taylor's article about the Dirk Hartog commemorations at Shark Bay can also be found in this edition of the eNewsletter.

## Book Note - *Kimberley Days and Yesterdays*:



*Kimberley Days and Yesterdays : 45 years in the Great Nor-West of Western Australia* by Charles Edward Flinders as told to J. F. Christie. Hesperian Press, Carlisle, WA, 2016. Soft cover, 122 pages, A4, illustrated. ISBN 978-0-85905-064-5. RRP \$30.



In Wyndham in 1934, J. F. Christie wrote: 'There are very few of the old-timers who retain such vivid memories of the early days of the Nor-west of Western Australia as Charles Edward Flinders.' While Christie might have come to journalism late in life, he knew a good story when he encountered one. And there, sitting in Flinders' home town, he was looking at enough to fill a small book.

In a Publisher's Note at the front of *Kimberley Days and Yesterdays*, Peter J. Bridge tells of tracking down this manuscript after reading, in a 1934 letter (then 50 years old), that Angus & Robertson had rejected. The reason? Because its theme was similar to the book *Cossack Gold* (Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1933).

Hesperian reprinted *Cossack Gold* in 1984 and intended to publish Flinders' manuscript in the annotated form adopted for such works as Lamond's *Tales of the Overland*. Research and editing began but the breadth and nature of the stories defied all efforts to provide comprehensive annotation. Since then, as Bridge observes, the publication of other people's reminiscences and the advent of Trove have reduced the need for such editorial intervention. Readers will, however, need to verify any information they wish to use from Flinders' work because, like many people recalling events from past decades, his memory was far from infallible.

To round out the Christie manuscript, Hesperian Press added seven chapters to the front of the book. That material came from manuscripts, articles and documents held by the Flinders family and the Battye Library. In the first addition, titled 'Fleeing London', Flinders introduces himself as the great nephew of the navigator Matthew Flinders. Then, describing his voyage to Australia with his younger brother, 17-year-old Bill, in our summer of 1886/1887, he wrote:

On board I met Sir Malcolm Fraser, Colonial Secretary for Western Australia, ... and I chummed up with William Lambden Owen, a young engineer who, like myself, was setting out on a great adventure. In fact, he was my cabin mate.

Owen was the author of *Cossack Gold*, which Flinders considered 'well worth reading'. The two men started work in the Cossack and Roebourne area in 1887, and Flinders then moved to the Kimberley. His early jobs tended to be short lived because, in his twenties, he wanted 'something with at least a bit of excitement in it'. He saw and heard plenty as a police constable (1887), court orderly, landing waiter, West Kimberley Road Board secretary, auctioneer, mail contractor (1894–95), Halls Creek publican, Wyndham storekeeper (1905 onward), and Road Board chairman (1928–34). He knew pastoralists, pearlers and policemen, and he had firsthand experience of Jandamarra (Pigeon) and other Aboriginal people clashing with settlers and the police in the West Kimberley in the late 1880s and early 1890s.

Flinders' rambling but interesting flow of stories about his life is interspersed with anecdotes about history, other people and their experiences. Errors are obvious in some of those anecdotes. The places he discusses include Broome, Cossack, Derby, Halls Creek, Port Hedland, Roebourne and Wyndham as well as various stations and mines outside the towns.

In a foreword to the Christie manuscript, Flinders' friend Michael Patrick Durack wrote: 'I have heard the stories and incidents recorded in these pages and am delighted to find how accurately they have been memorised and faithfully set forth.' Durack was a keen reader and would have been familiar with other north Australian memoirs and reminiscences that appeared in the early 1930s.

The Kimberley featured in two books published in London in 1931. Herbert Jenkins Limited brought out *The Odyssey of a Pearl Hunter* in which Fred D. Burdett and Percy J. King told of Burdett's involvement in the 1886 gold rush and later pearling activities. Putnam produced Michael Terry's *Hidden Wealth and Hiding People*, the story of his motor vehicle trip from Port Hedland to the Northern Territory. Two years later Angus & Robertson, as well as publishing *Cossack Gold*, released Gordon Buchanan's *Packhorse and Waterhole: with the First Overlanders to the Kimberleys*.



Broome and the surrounding area was also being used as a setting for fiction. Clothilde Graves, writing as Richard Dehan, had Thornton Butterworth Limited publish *The Sower of the Wind* in London in 1927. She then wrote *Dead Pearls : A Novel of the Great Wide West* (John Long Limited, London, c. 1932). In Australia, novels included Robert Waldron's *Pearl Shell* (NSW Bookstall, Sydney, 1934) and Henrietta Drake-Brockman's *Blue North : Being a Narrative concerning the Incidents and Adventures which befell John Fordyce when he went in Search of Freedom and Pearls in the Year 1876* (The Endeavour Press, Sydney, 1934).

By that time, Angus & Robertson had been publishing the works of Ion Idriess for six years. Idriess was in the Kimberley in 1934, talking with locals and gathering the stories that would eventually go into *One Wet Season*. That book did not appear until 1949 but Angus & Robertson published his *Man Tracks* (1935); *The Cattle King : The Story of Sir Sidney Kidman* (1936); *Forty Fathoms Deep* (1937); and *Over the Range: Sunshine and Shadow in the Kimberleys* (1938).

The publication of *Cossack Gold* and other Kimberley-based books in the early 1930s would have encouraged Flinders and Christie to think that *Kimberley Days and Yesterdays* had a good chance of being accepted by Angus & Robertson. Whether either of them showed the manuscript to other publishers is unknown. Its recent release, complete with an index, not only puts it out there with its contemporaries but also expands our ready access to entertaining and informative Australiana.

Cathie Clement OAM MPHA

## Next Newsletter:

We encourage members to submit articles about their current projects or reviews of recent histories for inclusion in the PHA (WA) Newsletter. Copy for the next newsletter is due in **early June 2017** and can be sent to [Kris Bizzaca](#). Calls for submissions will be emailed closer to the date of publication.



## PHA (WA) Management Committee 2016 - 2017:

President	Helen Munt
Vice-President	Robyn Taylor
Secretary	Ian Duckham
Treasurer	Prue Griffin
Membership Secretary	Sue Graham-Taylor
Committee Members	Jenna Lynch Dominic Walsh

PHA Representative	Sue Graham-Taylor
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### Sub-Committees 2016-2017:

Rules & Incorporation	Helen Munt, Sue Graham-Taylor
Promotions & Publications	Helen Munt, Robyn Taylor, Jenna Lynch, Dominic Walsh
Credentials	Sue Graham-Taylor, Robin Chinnery (co-opted)
Commissioned History	Prue Griffin, Jenna Lynch
Newsletter	Kris Bizzaca, Lenore Layman

### Annual Membership Fees as from 1 July 2014:

Professional Historian	\$85
Professional Historian (Retired)	\$50
Professional Historian (Associate)	\$65
Graduate Historian	\$40
Historical Researcher	\$40
Joining fee	\$30

### Further information:

Membership applications, the Rules of the Association, the Register of Consultants, and advice regarding consultancy fees are available on request via [info@professionalhistorianswa.org.au](mailto:info@professionalhistorianswa.org.au).

Members of PHA (WA) adhere to the Code of Ethics and Professional Standards endorsed by the Professional Historians Australia in August 2001.

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# OBJECTS OF THE ASSOCIATION

To promote the concept of professional history and the status of Members of the Association in the community.  
To set and maintain standards of professional practice.  
To act in the interest of Members.  
To maintain a register of all Members.  
To advise Members and prospective clients on desirable terms of employment.  
To collect and disseminate information of professional and general interest to Members.  
To encourage further professional development by such means as seminars, workshops and publications.  
To maintain links with similar organisations.

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