

PHA **WA**



NEWSLETTER

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

President's Note:

I hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter as much as we've enjoyed putting it together. Our editor for this edition, Lenore Layman, has gathered up a diverse collection of informative and interesting articles and other snippets for you to enjoy. The Management Committee has also been working very hard this year in find ways of raising the profile of the Association and also to offer varied and meaningful professional development opportunities for members. Pleasingly, these efforts have been successful to date as our many articles in this newsletter testify.

In our previous edition, members Sinead Burt and Malcolm Traill gave us a delightful overview of their experiences at the national conference in Victoria, for which PHA had paid their conference subscriptions. In this edition you will hear from Prue Griffin, who was the lucky recipient of the tickets to a Perth Writers' Festival event in February, and also Julia Wallis and Ann Hunter who were both successful in securing a day's registration each to the WA State Heritage and History Conference held in April. I've also provided a run-down of the very successful Quick and Quirky Quiz we held at the WASHH conference, which provided great publicity for PHA and garnered some fabulous support as reflected in our prize donors.



We are keen to include a regional focus for our newsletters, so in this edition we called upon David Theodore from the Princess Royal Forts in Albany to share the story of the recently installed temporary exhibition on the members of the Australian Women's Army Service who were posted in Albany during World War II. As you will read, this exhibition kept evolving as it was being developed with David coming upon more and more information about the AWAS and watching the list of women and the donation of photographs and objects grow; another great example of how the development of exhibitions and other such projects can be a catalyst for new and sometimes surprising discoveries and collections which keep adding to our knowledge and understanding of the past.

I would like to pay a special acknowledgment to our former Secretary, Ian Duckham. Ian unfortunately had to step down from his role on the management committee and he has been sorely missed. I can't thank Ian enough for stepping into the breach when I was new to the role of President. Nothing was ever too much to ask of him and he was a joy to work with. We thank him again and wish him the very best. In the meantime, Jenna Lynch and Dominic Walsh have been sharing the secretarial role until the AGM when we hope to have a new member put up their hand to come on board.

On that note, the AGM is coming up soon, and the Management Committee is in need of some new members to volunteer their services and help out. So I would ask all of you to use the next few months to think about whether you would like to, and have the capacity to, make a contribution. Having a full quota of committee members spreads the tasks and makes them much more manageable and also allows greater potential for us to initiate and put into action new and important events and activities that benefit everyone. With only four committee meetings per year and the AGM, it is certainly not an onerous commitment, and as well as attending to the more serious tasks on hand, the meetings are convivial and stimulating and we learn so much from each other. So please don't hesitate to contact me or your other committee members to find out more about what's involved and how you can help.

Last, but by all means not least, I am delighted to be able to take this opportunity to congratulate Kris Bizzaca on the arrival of baby Cole. I'm sure I speak on behalf of all of us to wish Kris and Cole health, joy and happiness in their new life together.

Thanks again to our super editor Lenore.

*Helen Munt APHA
President*

News from PHA (WA):

PHA (WA) 2017 AGM

Members please note that our 2017 Annual General Meeting is scheduled for **Sunday 1 October**. We will be looking to some new members to join the Management Committee for 2017-18. Further details to follow including venue and speakers. Any inquiries about the AGM or possible nominations to the management committee can be directed to Helen Munt at info@professionalhistorianswa.org.au



PHA (WA) History Slam Returns for 2017

PHA (WA) is excited to announce that on the back of its successful inaugural History Slam in 2016, this event will be returning even bigger and better in 2017. Helen Munt, in partnership this year with Gerard Foley (from State Records Office) will be starting to plan the event which will be held again during the Perth Heritage Days Festival scheduled for 14 and 15 October. We will be putting a call out for 'slammers' very soon but, if you would like to get in first and register your interest, please contact Helen at info@professionalhistorianswa.org.au

Heads up on the History Council WA

The History Council has some events in the planning that will be of interest to our members. One is an 'Ideas Forum' to bring together history organisations to network, discuss common issues and concerns and to see how we they can offer mutual support and share resources. Organisations that could be involved include PHA (WA), OHAA, RWAHS, Art Deco Society, Fremantle History Society, Labour History, History Teachers Association etc. The event is tentatively planned for July.

A film and panel discussion night is being organised for August at UWA in partnership with the UWA Institute of Advanced Studies and UWA Master of Heritage Studies. The film *Destruction of Memory* by film-maker and director Tim Slade, has received critical acclaim globally and is the recipient of several film festival awards. Based on the book of the same name by Robert Bevan, this uncompromising documentary looks at how over the past century, cultural destruction has wrought catastrophic results across the globe, destruction which is sadly and steadily increasing. The push to protect, salvage and rebuild has seen the emergence of not only legislation and policy to try and counter this devastation, but also the rise of heroic individuals who have fought back, risking, and in some cases losing, their lives to protect not just other human beings, but cultural identity and to save the record of who we are. More details to follow.

The History Council AGM will be held on Thursday evening 21 September. The Council is delighted to have as guest speaker Professor Ann Curthoys. Venue and time to be confirmed and will be advised.

PHA (WA) Quick and Quirky Quiz

PHA (WA) was pleased to run a successful event for the inaugural WASHH conference – the 'Quick and Quirky Quiz'. The idea for the quiz was to find an effective and relatively simple way to have a presence at and engage with the conference, as well as offer delegates an opportunity to experience a slightly different and creative engagement with history. The quiz questions were all loosely connected either to the venue and the presentations, highlighting milestones in WA history and also the variety of heritage and cultural places many of us visit.

The quiz was a great success with lots of positive feedback on how enjoyable (and even a little challenging) people found it. It also generated several inquiries from potential new members which was very encouraging. We gave the winners – who included some of our own members – the opportunity to choose their own prize and thankfully they all selected something different and all winners were impressed with the quality of the prizes. Thanks to the other Management Committee members: Prue and Robyn for helping out at the table and with the quiz, Dominic for securing the two Dome gift cards and Sue (a.k.a. our own Madam Lash) for coming up with such a great idea and organising the questions.

PHA was delighted to receive the support of many generous sponsors who provided six prize packs all of which had a connection to heritage and history and we would like to acknowledge them again: Heritage Perth, two feet and a heartbeat Walking Tours, City of Melville Heathcote Gallery and Museum, Dome and UWA Publishing.



Congratulations to Member Dr Crienda Fitzgerald:



Helen Munt and Crienda Fitzgerald at the launch of *Turning Men into Stone*. Photo courtesy: Helen Munt.

PHA (WA) Member Dr Crienda Fitzgerald has been awarded the 2017 Margaret Medcalf Award for her extensive and effective use of State Archives as the research basis of her new book, *Turning Men into Stone: a social and medical history of Silicosis in Western Australia from 1890 to 1970*.

Crienda was complimented on 'a deeply researched study'. 'It is an important work revealing an overlooked story in the history of mining in this State and is sensitively and soberly told.'

The annual Margaret Medcalf Award honours the second State Archivist, Ms Margaret Medcalf OAM, and has been presented since 2003. It rewards excellence in research and referencing using the State Archives.

PIAF Writers Festival 'Ripped from the Headlines' - Prue Griffin:



I was fortunate to have been granted tickets from PHA (WA) to attend a session of the PIAF Writers Festival, entitled 'Ripped from the Headlines'. The session provided the audience the opportunity to listen to three writers on the topic of true crime and the books they inspired. The authors and their books were:

- Kate Summerscale *The Wicked Boy the Mystery of a Victorian Child Murderer*, Bloomsbury 2016.
- Leigh Straw *The Worst Woman in Sydney The life and crimes of Kate Leigh*, NewSouth 2016.
- Amy Stewart *Lady Cop Makes Trouble*, Scribe 2016.

The session was moderated by local freelance journalist and writer, Tony Malkovic.

Throughout the session it was clear that all authors enjoyed researching primary source material. In some instances trawling through archival sources, particularly newspapers, provided the initial inspiration for a book topic. All the writers used archival material to enrich their writing.

Australian historian and writer, Leigh Straw's non-fiction book detailed the life of famed Sydney crime boss Kate Leigh whose dominance of the criminal underworld in the 1920s and 1930s inspired the TV series 'Underbelly Razor'. Leigh's presentation of this well known figure was clearly based on considerable research and provided a glimpse into a more complex individual shaped by personal circumstance and the political and social conditions of the day.



American author, Amy Stewart, had written a diversity of fiction and non-fiction books before coming across the story of one of the first female deputy sheriffs in the USA with the most appropriate name, Constance Kopp. Kopp and her sisters, Norma and Fleurette, lived in a Hackensack, New Jersey USA during the early 20th century. Stewart spoke engagingly and affectionately about Constance Kopp who is the main character in three novels. She described what strategies she employed when presenting a fictionalised version of Constance and how she used newspaper articles and other primary source material to create a rich backdrop for the plot.

Kate Summerscale, an English writer and journalist, spoke of coming across the story of a thirteen year old boy who murdered his mother in the family home in East London in 1895. The boy, Robert Coombes, and his younger brother Nattie, then went on a spending spree including going to a cricket match at Lords. Summerscale's well researched and thoroughly referenced history examines the details of the case within the wider context of late 19th century English society. Summerscale spoke quietly but with great passion about this project, that lead her to Australia to follow Robert's story on his release from prison.

The session was engaging and good humoured, well managed by Malkovic as his questions prompted the authors to expand on particular aspects of their projects and there was amicable interchange between all members of the panel. The audience also had ample opportunity to ask questions.

I thoroughly enjoyed the session and was prompted to buy and read the three books, which is probably the most obvious demonstration of a successful event, at least for the authors and festival organisers!

Thanks to PHA (WA) for the opportunity.

Prue Griffin APHA

2017 WA State Heritage and History Conference - Ann Hunter and Julia Wallis:

PHA (WA) provided the financial opportunity for two members to attend the conference and here are their reports of a most successful conference.



Ann Hunter – Day One

I appreciated the opportunity to participate in the first day of the conference with the apt theme 'Connections'. The conference attracted over 375 delegates and 80 speakers from local councils, universities, and historical, curatorial, heritage and other organisations. It was particularly exciting to attend a conference where history and heritage interacted and were both strongly represented, emphasising the importance of each to the other.

This was demonstrated by the Executive Director of Heritage Perth, Richard Offen, who enthused all with his presentation on the relationship between heritage and history, highlighting a transformation of attitudes in the last decade in promoting and protecting heritage, and advocating for a sense of place. Challenges were highlighted as well as opportunities; for instance, how WA tourism could do more to promote the heritage and history of WA. In a buzz session, people offered



their thoughts on what they hoped to gain from the conference, which (for me) involved networking, learning about the new projects and attending sessions of particular interest.

I enjoyed learning about the exciting new projects that have been commenced or completed; for example, the one-stop portal for heritage information with layers of heritage and historical information for places in the City of Perth. The website address is under the Arts, Culture and Heritage Portal 2006, City of Perth. It links with interviews, and can build up layers of maps: (<https://www.perth.wa.gov.au/planning-development/heritage/found-perth>)

I chose selections from the three parallel sessions; the first being *New Directions in History* which explored research in Aboriginal history as well as history in schools, the public sphere and universities. I learned about the new trends in Aboriginal history when Cindy Solonec from Curtin University reviewed histories relating to the first Australians and how authors such as Bill Gammage (*The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines Made Australia*) and Bruce Pascoe (*Dark Emu: Black Seeds*) were dispelling myths around hunter-gathering and telling how Aboriginal people worked the land in a thriving economy long before Europeans arrived. Bruce Pascoe referred to the Indigenous harvesting of yam pastures and the destructive impact of Europeans' flocks of sheep, which grazed down to the ground and destroyed the yams. This made me reflect on how many thousands of sheep rapidly advanced into the Avon District in the late 1830s, impacting significantly on Indigenous landscapes.

Maree Whitley and Cathy Barren (from the History Teachers Association of WA) discussed the latest primary and secondary school curricula and how history is taught as part of the Australian curriculum. While it was significant that 20th century themes are taught there is also a need to push further with the teaching of 19th century Australian and WA history to give context for the later historical studies. They highlighted how, since schools have fewer resources to go on excursions to museums and other places, the use of the web for virtual tours and digital-based methods are increasingly used; combining the methods of historical inquiry with digital learning, which is developing kids' passion for history beyond their school years in order to keep the stories going.

Jenny Gregory chaired the next panel on the state of history in WA which explored where the innovative projects are taking place. There is also room for improvement, particularly in the universities which have cut back on their history departments. Despite this, there was still much going on. The *Historical Encyclopaedia of WA* (2009) is now available online through TROVE. An Aboriginal biographical dictionary project has been initiated at the ANU Centre for National Biography.

The second panel I attended had an enticing title: *A Year to Remember* and was convened by Pamela Statham Drew. It touched my interest in the history of the local railways in WA that started in the late 19th century, although the focus was on the 100th Anniversary of the rail connection between WA and "t'othersiders". The anniversary was discussed by Geoffrey Higham (from the Railway Society). The momentum for WA did not start until after the gold rushes when the different gauges made it impossible to have one continuous train journey from east to west. Philippa Rogers from the WA Museum gave a fascinating account of the social history of the Trans within WA which showed how little towns grew up around the rail line.

Elizabeth Spencer from State Library of WA spoke on the challenges of libraries in ensuring stories are held and reflected. A major question that she posed was how far do we go in interpreting history and how far we leave it for community to do? She also outlined an exciting project involving collaboration of National and State Libraries Australasia with the ABC and AIATSIS, called *Right Wrongs* Digital Exhibition. This is part of nationwide library plan to commemorate the 1967 referendum, the project launched on 27 May 2017 and commencing with Indigenous peoples' experiences leading up to 1967 and 50 years on – <http://www.abc.net.au/rightwrongs/>. A physical exhibition was also launched at the State Library



of WA on the '67 referendum - *The WA Story*. The panel session ended with thinking about the opportunities ahead – for the WA Bicentenary in 2029.

The last panel session for the day I attended concerned 'Community Connections'. Donna Oxenham (a researcher from UWA) reported on an inspiring project to repatriate photos to Indigenous people where relatives were photographed. This involved working with four European museums (and recently the Berndt Museum of Anthropology), which hold photographic collections of Indigenous peoples, in order to repatriate them to Indigenous communities. It is hoped to encourage other museums to participate. Donna outlined how it represents a shift from photographs as historical records to an emphasis on family heirlooms and community impact. What are the challenges? There was little information on identification and she concluded by asking what happens to those who were not identified. Who will remember them? Further information is at <http://ipp.arts.uwa.edu.au>.

In the same panel session, I learned from Michelle McKeough, of the interesting history of Fremantle's west end through the study of its community history. Jenny Gregory also investigated the new realms of the history of social media referring to two cities, Edinburgh and Perth and how people recorded lost heritage.



Julia Wallis - Day Two

I am grateful to PHA for giving me the opportunity to attend this conference and report back to the members. The Perth Concert Hall was an excellent venue, close to public transport and large enough to cope with the many presentations but not so big that you weren't able to mix and mingle with other delegates. It was nice to see so many friends from different organisations enjoying the presentations and the wonderful food.

It's always a good sign when you examine the conference programme and realise that you would like to attend at least two of the sessions that are running consecutively. Below is a brief rundown of the sessions I chose.

Musical Memories examined the ways in which music features in WA's history and heritage. The first session of the morning began with Adam Trainer, the State Library's Community Engagement Officer. Adam talked about the new Music Archive which has been created to showcase a new way of thinking about and defining music. The interactive web portal <https://wanma.org.au/> houses audio, photographs and documents. Perhaps the easiest way to navigate the portal is to go to the people tab and click on somebody you recognise. Members of the public can request to add their own material to the portal. Adam also discussed the copyright issues surrounding the creation of this portal which would make an interesting presentation on its own.

Sarah Murphy, Director, Conservation at the National Trust of WA (NTWA) talked about *Sound from the Ground—East Perth Cemeteries*. She was inspired by a harpsichord performance in a 17th century grandstand on a UK trip. Back in Perth, she engaged classical guitarist Jonathan Fitzgerald to interpret the compelling stories of the people who were buried and/or associated with the East Perth Cemeteries. This culminated in a public performance at Saint Bartholomew's Church that was extremely well-received by the public, many of whom travelled great distances to attend. Perhaps other museums and heritage places will consider using music as a way to interpret their history and collections.

[Note from the Editor – Sound from the Ground was awarded a Commendation at the 2017 State Heritage Awards. Congratulations to Sarah and the musicians on this fine project].



Dr Geoffrey Lancaster, professor at the WA Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA), spoke about WAAPA's Stewart Symonds Collection of Historical Keyboard Instruments which was received in 2016 with many instruments in poor condition. It is hoped to train students to play these historical instruments and how best to conserve them. WAAPA's goal is to have a representative example of every keyboard instrument that has ever been created (including pipe organs) and to make Perth a major centre for research, interpretation and restoration. <https://www.waapa.ecu.edu.au/news/latest-news/waapa/2016/05/first-fleet-pianos-new-home-in-wa>

The session on *Telling Tales* looked at the ways interpretation is delivered to respond to the intended audience, place and setting, and the key messages that need to be conveyed.

Gina Pickering from NTWA discussed *Marli Riverpark: A model for developing and interpretation plan in a capital city riverscape*, outlining the process of creating an Interpretation plan for the Swan and Canning Rivers working with a heritage specialist team, Noongar Advisory Panel and 21 local government authorities. Four hundred and fifty sites of significance were established. The project also established a resource library of artwork, photographs, audio-visual material, literary works and oral histories.

Rikki Clarke's presentation on *Telling Tales Without Signs* advocated using other medium rather than just text-based panels for interpretation, such as podcasts, sensory links, re-creation of a setting, photos and theatre. Also discussed were the use of shopfronts and hoardings, bringing some of the collection outdoors, integrating interpretation into landscaping and collaborating with artists to create street banners or metalwork. Experiences such as the Fremantle Prison torchlight tour and spending a night in the museum have also proved popular with the public.

Renae Woodhams, Principal Project Officer–Communications and Engagement at the WA Museum, explained that the new WA Museum is being developed on the principle of 'people first' and that the Museum has been engaging with people from all around the State to develop the exhibitions and displays in a collaborative and participatory way. Like many in the audience, I look forward with excitement to the opening.

The session on Diversity and Representation In History and Heritage examined the impact of the separate regulatory framework in WA for managing Aboriginal Heritage and discussed how our heritage can be fully inclusive. Cesar Rodriguez and Tiffany Vale from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA) discussed the *Aboriginal Heritage Act of 1972* and the role of the Aboriginal community in Aboriginal heritage assessment and management. They explained the fine balance between land use and development, and protection of significant sites. Each proposed site must be assessed as to whether it is significant to Aboriginal people. The DAA has 37,000 places of significance on its database. It also administers a grants programme to protect Aboriginal history and heritage; holds forums, workshops and meetings; provides ranger training and site auditing and recording; facilitates access to Aboriginal heritage information and administers major heritage management projects such as the Pioneer Cemetery at Fitzroy Crossing.

Gemma Wilson spoke on the significance of the *Coolbaroo Club* arguing that Aboriginal heritage is under-represented in heritage and tourism interpretation of Perth's urban areas. The experience of the *Coolbaroo Club* in East Perth could be a total visitor experience combining museum space and entertainment space as has been the case at the Ritz Theatre in Jacksonville, USA, and in the Sophiatown Heritage and Cultural Centre in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Moss Wilson spoke on *Not just pretty buildings—diversity and representation in WA's Register of Heritage Places*, including commercial buildings, memorials, events and places as well as industrial sites. One of these sites is the Bundi Club in the



Shire of Meekatharra, Place Number 01531, which was a Courthouse and Mining Registrar's Office and then was adapted into an Aboriginal meeting place and used for sewing and cooking classes.

The final session of the conference looked at *Future Connections*, discussing how our history, heritage and culture can connect with communities and continue into the future. Heath McDonald, Professor of Marketing at Swinburne University, has worked with the Australian government to better understand public perception of heritage. The questions he posed the audience included: What does heritage mean? Do people care? Are we doing enough? Professor McDonald's research concludes that heritage is very personal. Most people are concerned about only what matters to me and mine. Making the leap to national considerations is too great for most people. Overseas visitors have spurred the protection of our national icons and, in this way, tourism and heritage can be inter-linked. Commissioned essays on Australian Heritage Strategy (including a paper by Professor McDonald) can be accessed using the following link:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/australian-heritage-strategy/past-consultation/comissioned-essays>

Lastly, South African heritage leader Webber Ndoro's presentation was a stark reminder that preserving heritage in some countries is more fraught than is the case in Australia. The African Union comprises 54 African countries and of the 1052 UNESCO heritage sites in the world, 90 are in Africa. Of UNESCO's 55 sites on the world danger list, 19 are in Africa. Many of these sites are in areas of high poverty and often the local community and local businesses do not profit from heritage tourism. Many Africans are illiterate and alienated from the development process. The African Union requires a peaceful and secure Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics. The *Burra Charter* has been of great importance to Africa as have the Australian experts who have shared their knowledge and training in Africa; on the other hand, Australian mining companies who operate in Africa have not always had a positive impact on the local heritage.

PHA (WA) members will be interested to learn that many of the speakers' presentations will be made available via the conference website – www.washhc.com.au

Ann Hunter MPHA and Julia Wallis APHA

Cruise Lecturing - Emeritus Professor Jenny Gregory:

I tore off the 'Astor' labels from our luggage only last week. I hesitated, perhaps because the experience of our 40 day and night voyage from Fremantle to Tilbury was so memorable and so remarkable.

Two years ago I was approached by Cruise and Maritime Voyages (CMV) to give some shipboard lectures. At that time I was too busy but, intrigued, I said, 'Ask me again later – maybe when I'm retired!' In late 2015, they contacted me again and, as I was on leave, I agreed to give several lectures on the Astor's Fremantle-Esperance-Albany-Bunbury-Fremantle cruise in January 2016. It was enjoyable, both my husband and I liked the ship as it was small, carrying less than 500 passengers, and very comfortable.

Ten months later I had another request to give a series of lectures. A list of cruises departing from Fremantle was provided. Which would I like to do? Fremantle to Tilbury in March 2017 was enticing though a 40-day cruise did seem to fall into the category of 'epic'. I knew several people who had done the same voyage the previous year and all said they'd loved it. I said 'Yes', but with a little trepidation as. So we became 'Guest Speaker and Travelling Companion'.



I was contracted to give 20 lectures. As the voyage from Fremantle up the west coast of Africa to England mirrored in reverse that of so many of our European ancestors, I decided to lecture on migration to Australia. I had some lectures prepared that I could rejig and, as I'd contributed a chapter on migration to a textbook on the Australian Curriculum, I was very familiar with the topic. I focused on key periods of migration —Indigenous (Origins, Australia's First Peoples, *Babakiueria*), European 'discovery' and colonization (Search for the South Land, Realities of the South Land), Convictism (Banished and Transported, Two Londons, Fatal Shore?, Banished from Memory), Gold rushes (Gold Fever and Multiculturalism, Gold and Eureka, Marvellous Melbourne, The Mile that Midas Touched), Child migration (British Boys and Girls), post-war immigration (Post WWII European Immigration, *They're a Weird Mob*, Ten Pound Poms, Full Circle project), and Immigration today (A Floating Life, An Immigrant Society). I used Powerpoint for all lectures and as much as possible I broke up lectures with film, YouTube clips, and participation. I tried breaking up into discussion groups to discuss a short film, but an audience needs to build up experience and confidence for group work and, as there was so much material to cover and my time slot was a maximum of 50 minutes, I abandoned the idea. Did I have all lectures fully prepared when I boarded the ship? No! I had about eight completed, eight partially completed, and bits and pieces that I could use to write four lectures from scratch. I knew that internet connection would be by satellite and irregular, I couldn't take a pile of books and articles with me, so everything I needed had to be on my laptop and a backup small hard drive.

Boarding the ship and leaving Fremantle on such a long voyage was exciting. No streamers, but family madly waving as we sailed past the South Mole and out into the Indian Ocean towards a magnificent sunset. No time for champagne. First up was an emergency lifeboat drill, complete with life jackets.

Throughout the voyage, the cuisine was uniformly good, with menus changing each day. There were two restaurants; a buffet restaurant or set seating in the Waldorf restaurant with white tablecloths, full service and beautifully presented meals. It took a while to find our way around the ship, but we soon became familiar with the daily routine when at sea. Breakfast in our cabin or the buffet, lunch in the buffet and dinner in the Waldorf, punctuated by reading novels, chatting to fellow passengers, listening to lectures on ports we were visiting and, in my case, writing lectures. If I'd have been better organized I could have had painting lessons, been part of a writing group, played cards, joined a musical theatre workshop or a non-denominational fellowship group organized by one of the passengers. I could also have had a regular afternoon snooze.

The entertainment was of a high standard. The Captain's Club featured very talented duos – classical (violinist and a pianist) or popular (singer and pianist) – each night before dinner. After dinner there was usually a performance in the Astor Lounge by an orchestra, dancers and entertainers — often it was musical theatre, adaptations of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Rocky Picture Horror Show*, *South Pacific* — but we were also treated to some wonderful operatic excerpts by two extraordinarily talented singers.

I and another lecturer alternated our lectures in the main Astor Lounge at either 11am or 3pm; those times were preceded by a couple of hours of tinkering with prepared lectures. Generally my lectures attracted around 70 or 80 passengers. Most of the ship's passengers were over sixty, many were over seventy. Probably fifty percent were Australian, but a large proportion of those were ex-Ten Pound Poms returning to Britain to visit family, the remainder British or German. My lectures were very well received, attracted lots of questions and, I was often told, stimulated hours of discussion. Many of the audience were retired professionals, many very well educated and they enjoyed stimulation and challenge. In some lectures I tackled controversial subjects which inspired considerable debate and which some of the audience found a little too challenging. One lady told me how much she enjoyed my lectures, even though 'It made me think about some things I didn't want to know about'.

A highlight of any voyage is the ports of call. And this voyage did not disappoint; Mauritius, Reunion, Durban, Mossel Bay, Capetown, Walvis Bay (Namibia), Las Palmas in the Canaries, Casablanca (I watched the film with Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman three times on the continuous loop on television in our cabin), Lisbon and then Tilbury. Magical places, excellent tours. If only there'd been more than one day in each port! But the oceans had their fascination. Five days to cross the Indian Ocean, only one bird and one ship seen, and a depth of over 6000 metres. Twelve days on the Atlantic Ocean voyaging north up the West African coast and only the occasional whale and a few ships, one — a cruise ship holding 6000 people — referred to as a block of flats, were sighted. The weather was fine, only one day of drizzle. We had a couple of days of rough weather off Fremantle and one day in the Bay of Biscay, but generally the oceans treated us very kindly. To me it was simply astonishing that the voyage to England had taken 40 days and the flight home took 17 hours. And for those ancestors of mine — for one family a voyage of 112 days with many passengers afflicted by fever. And here were we in the comfort of a luxurious ocean liner. The Astor, its officers and crew could not be faulted.

Would I do it again? Yes! But this time, though I really enjoyed writing my lectures, I might be better prepared so that I could also enjoy more shipboard activities.

Jenny Gregory MPHA

Centenary of the Trans Australian Railway - Philippa Rogers:



October 2017 marks the centenary of the completion of the Trans Australian Railway (TAR) – the ‘carrot’ for Western Australia to join the Federation of Australia. Its building became the first major Commonwealth engineering project and it finally ‘connected the nation’ with a railway between Kalgoorlie and Port Augusta.

The Commonwealth Government decided that the new railway was to be built as a standard gauge line hoping to set a national standard although, at that time, it was incompatible with all its connecting rail systems. The WA Government developed plans to convert the railway between Kalgoorlie and Perth to standard gauge. However these plans were dashed by WA’s difficult economic conditions at the time. Thus began fifty years of laborious and inconvenient changes of trains in a journey across Australia.

The railway was built from both ends simultaneously – from Port Augusta and Kalgoorlie – and the track builders worked towards each other. Building the TAR was a massive undertaking through country that did not provide for the numbers of workers requiring housing or for their supplies. It was built through the lands of several Aboriginal nations who had lived and travelled on this country, understanding the land and managing the resources. The demands of the railway builders and relationships with workers proved detrimental to these people, their land and culture. The workers and the steam locomotives needed water and so bores were drilled and water sources used – with soaks such as Ooldea drying up as a result.

Consistent with its policies, the Fisher Labor Government ensured that the railway was built using day labour. With a peak of over 3,400 workers, the TAR construction attracted new migrants and many of the early train crews were from Scotland. The provision of labour was a challenge throughout construction due to World War I enlistments but in early 1917, as the project was drawing to completion, the 2nd Australian Light Railway Operating Company was formed under the Chief



Mechanical Engineer for the Commonwealth Railways. Their experience on the TAR was to be invaluable on the Western Front.

The TAR benefitted Western Australian industries. Because of World War I steel and rollingstock were not available from overseas allowing the Westralian Ironworks (Rocky Bay) to construct carriages and wagon and carriage frames. Collins and Co. of Maylands also supplied freight rollingstock.

The need for 2.3 million timber sleepers led to a major expansion for the industry with the formation of the State Saw Mills leading to the construction of three mills at Manjimup and Pemberton. Although jarrah was considered to be the best sleeper timber, karri sleepers treated by powellising, an American chemical treatment process, were accepted. The State Saw Mills were awarded a contract for the supply of 1.4 million powellised karri sleepers and 100 000 jarrah sleepers. But delays occurred and the contract was cancelled and replaced by one for 500 000 powellised karri sleepers. Nationally other companies benefited, with BHP using the demand to proceed with its steel-making facility at Newcastle.

Just the organising of provisions and the allocation of men to prepare the food was a significant task. The stores' suppliers at the western end (McGurks) set up a bakery at Naretha for the camps. Each day the men took their crib with them – tea for their billy and bread with salted beef. The evening meal usually comprised soup, boiled beef, cabbage and potatoes or rice. Sometimes there was a treat of jelly and custard.

As the railheads grew closer, the encampment of 1000 men at the railhead took on an air of festivity. The WA team of platelayers claimed the privilege of laying the last length of rails to connect the two sections near Ooldea at 1.45pm on 17 October 1917. Little adjustment was required to line them up. A holiday was declared the next day and a sports meeting with horse and camel races took place.



The first passenger train, October 1917. Photo courtesy: Philippa Rogers.

The first passenger train left Port Augusta on 22 October to arrive in Kalgoorlie on 24 October using ten different steam locomotives taking 42 h 48 mins. The gates at Kalgoorlie Railway Station had to be locked as the platform was so densely crowded that it could have been dangerous. Lord Forrest said, 'From today Western Australia is in reality a member of the Australian family. The isolation that has hitherto existed is at an end'. The next day the first train from west to east departed and some celebrated the occasion with the specially printed postal envelopes, 'the first mail to cross Australia overland from west to east'.



The official opening of the TAR was cancelled because of sensitivity at the heavy casualties on the Western Front. In early November the Governor General took part in a brief ceremony outside Perth Station on 12 November 1917, declared it open. WA school children received a commemorative stamp to remind them in the future of a great day for WA and indeed Australia.

Sidings (places for trains to cross, take water, etc) grew into small communities. The track maintainers lived in the smallest ones whereas the larger settlements had a greater diversity of workers and families. Men with children of school age were sent only to places with schools. Some places included recreation halls and had enough talented people to form a brass band. Generally they made their own entertainment. For the families, a community atmosphere helped them to live in such remote locations.

After the railway opened the McGurk brothers supplied goods on the Tea and Sugar train, running the butchers' van. Without refrigeration it was necessary to take live sheep and kill them as required. Family records show that in one 1921 day they baked 732 loaves of bread in Rawlinna, including supplying bread for the passenger trains and stores along the line.

The arrival of the Tea and Sugar was a big event for the communities. At Christmas Father Christmas visited. Marking the end of an era, the Tea and Sugar stopped running in 1996 as by then few people lived along the line

From the beginning in 1917 trains ran with sleeping accommodation; a lounge car was supplied for first class passengers with separate sections for ladies and gents; and there was an elegant dining car.

The TAR claimed to be the first train to carry a piano and to provide hot showers. For forty years the meals were cooked on a wood stove! Australia became the first country in the British Empire to introduce air-conditioning in trains when it was installed in both the lounge and dining cars in 1936.

During World War II the Great Australian Bight contained German mines so the TAR was essential for defence – as had been predicted. Train frequency more than tripled and there were restrictions on travel. Water, coal (still the era of steam), locomotives and carriages were all in short supply. To carry more troops former cattle trucks were 'converted' with a bucket and straw paillasses supplied.

Whilst the Brisbane - Perth line was not in fact implemented as defence policy there was sufficient concern that the Commonwealth Bank in WA removed its gold stores from Perth, transporting them to Broken Hill. The gold was transported in the 'Prince of Wales' carriage, normally set aside for special travellers. As Prime Minister, John Curtin made a number of trips between Canberra and Perth and, as he hated flying, he travelled by train.

When the TAR was originally constructed the dream was to have steel carriages and internal combustion locomotives. But World War I prevented this dream from realisation and it was not until after World War II that it came to fruition.

The importance to the public of the post war modernisation was so great that the first time that GM1, the first standard gauge mainline diesel locomotive, arrived in Kalgoorlie an official dinner was held in celebration! The new steel carriage fleet, considered world class in luxury, was similarly feted with a formal tea including Ministers and key stakeholders.

Following World War II plans were made for the resolution of the problem of frequent transfers due to the differing gauges and the creation of a truly national railway whereby people and freight could travel without changing trains. Fifty-two



years after the line opened, a passenger finally did not have to change trains in Kalgoorlie. Other works continued and in February 1970 the first through train, the Indian Pacific, arrived in Perth from Sydney.

Now the emphasis is on freight traffic and not passengers. Over 80% of east-west freight is now carried by rail and the TAR is even more important to WA than ever. Indeed in December 2014 there was a derailment and newspaper reports were full of warnings about the non-delivery of Christmas goods and parcels.

In 1997 the former Commonwealth Railways was sold following a program of removal of buildings, including whole settlements. And finally, Andy Thomas, an Adelaide-born astronaut, noted that the Great Wall of China wasn't the only human construction that could be seen in space but that the 478km 'long straight' was also visible. One hundred years ago the Connection of the Nation left its mark that can be seen from space – an idea that would hardly have been imaginable to the men who built it.

Philippa Rogers APHA

The State Library's *Storylines* - connecting communities, revitalising culture, creating opportunity:

Over the last 5 years the State Library of WA's *Storylines* has quietly revolutionised the organisation's approach to working with Indigenous collections and communities. This digital platform has returned collections to communities, created new understanding about the significance of collections and provided a forum for community to share knowledge, descriptions and stories associated with the State Library's collections. *Storylines* emphasises reciprocal ways of working, foregrounds the value of community memory, and records Indigenous perspectives in an iterative way. The project has been changed State Library practice and informed the development of cultural and community protocols. It has allowed the State Library to target many of the historical limitations and barriers which have contributed to a deep divide between Indigenous people and the 'archive.'



State Library of WA *Storylines* training in the Mowanjum community, 2015 & 2016. Photo courtesy: State Library of WA.



Storylines connects with thousands of Western Australian Indigenous clients through a network of Public Libraries, Community Resource Centres and Aboriginal Organisations across the State. This digital platform provides learning opportunities and access to photographs, oral histories, video recordings, and genealogical information. *Storylines* uses the Keeping Culture software. This software has been developed over 20 years with remote Indigenous communities and allows us to manage heritage collections in a culturally safe online environment. *Storylines* can be accessed anywhere and anytime, with any device with an internet connection. No software is required except a browser. Collections are connected by place and people - rather than subject headings and call numbers. The platform encourages intuitive navigation and discovery. The system has been designed by and for Aboriginal communities and specifically for people for whom English is a second or third language.

Growing out of the State Library's long and reciprocal relationships with Indigenous communities through Better Beginnings Family Literacy Program for Remote Communities, (2010-2017), *Storylines* enables the State Library to protect, collect, and digitally return Indigenous heritage collections to individuals, families and communities. It is a driver of change, stimulating creative practice, fostering tourism enterprise, harnessing multi-generational engagement, as well as creating new skills while preserving culture, language and history.

As a state-wide resource *Storylines* creates a forum for Indigenous Western Australians to explore their diverse histories, and to tell their own story.

Access to *Storylines* is provided at both local community level and through the State Library central online platform available to all. Support, training and learning opportunities are delivered centrally and through community partners such as Public Libraries, Community Resource Centres and Aboriginal Organisations. Pathways are provided for potential partners to engage with *Storylines* according to their needs and tailored to specific community requirements.



State Library of WA *Storylines* training in the Mowanjumb community, 2015 & 2016. Photo courtesy: State Library of WA.



Community reach

Since 2012, the State Library has engaged with the community through hundreds of hours of consultation across the State, including workshops, community engagement sessions and public talks. Community training sessions have been delivered and are ongoing on a monthly basis within the State Library. Communities across the suburbs of Perth and the wider metropolitan area, as well as a cross-section of regional and remote centres, including Roebourne, Noonkanbah, Northam, Goomalling, Albany, Armadale, Busselton, Manjimup, Geraldton, Mullewa, Carnarvon, South Hedland and Karratha, have been visited by the State Library to develop community skills and engagement with *Storylines*. Sustained community engagement has occurred with the setting-up of community-controlled *Storylines* platforms at Mowanjum and Yawruru in the Kimberley. *Wurnannangga Storylines* (Mowanjum) and *Mangara Storylines* (Yawruru) have implemented *Storylines* in these communities. (See Inge Kral, 'Evaluation of the Wurnannangga Storylines Project (Mowanjum)', State Library of WA, August 2015.)

A range of organisations across the arts, health and corporate sectors have engaged with *Storylines* through targeted education and outreach to raise awareness and increase the reach of the program. These include the Community Arts Network, Wandoo Early Release Centre, North Metropolitan Health Service, Yorgum, SWALSC, Martu Knowledge Project, Link-Up, Shell, Woodside, Chevron, Albany Aboriginal Health Service, Noongar Radio, Kinship Connections, Professional Historians Association Australia (WA), Museums Australia (WA), Arnhem Northern and Kimberley Artists Corporation as well as the wider collections sector, such as the Berndt Museum at UWA, the Sisters of St John of God Heritage Centre Broome and the Royal Western Australian Historical Society.

Storylines is more than a digital platform. It provides a safe and welcoming space for our Indigenous collections to finally meet our Indigenous clients. It is demystifying collections and creating a space for community voices. *Storylines* is also encouraging Aboriginal people to bring in material, particularly photographs, which they want to share and preserve. This is resulting in a far more comprehensive representation of the social and visual history of Aboriginal communities. Where previously the vast majority of the collection was assembled from a non-Indigenous perspective, now we have a mechanism for sharing Aboriginal perspectives and social histories. It is enabling the State Library to reexamine our heritage collections with a new lens and re-energizing collections with community memory. *Storylines* is fostering a reciprocal relationship with Indigenous communities that moves towards co-curation of collections with community.

Please explore Storylines at <http://storylines.slwa.wa.gov.au>

Damien Webb and Kate Gregory, State Library of WA

Damien Webb is a Palawa man living in Western Australia and currently working as Indigenous Liaison for the State Library of Western Australia. Damien splits his time between archival research and client outreach, and is currently co-chair of the NSLA Indigenous Working Group.

Dr Kate Gregory is Batty History at the State Library of Western Australia where she manages the WA Heritage team. Kate has broad research interests in the histories of collecting, cultural heritage practice and interpretation. She has been on the Board of the Western Australian Museum since 2012.



What's happening in the Regions? Princess Royal Fortress Albany:

The Australian Women's Army Service Exhibition at the Princess Royal Fortress Albany.

On Wednesday 10 May the Princess Royal Fortress Military Museum in Albany officially opened a new exhibit on the Australian Women's Army Service (AWAS). This new exhibit presents to visitors artefacts, photographs and stories that were brought out of the museum's archives to help tell of the role the AWAS played in Albany during the Second World War.

As the museum commemorates 75 years since the first AWAS arrived at the Fortress, the exhibit is a timely reminder of their posting to this coastal defence site. Even though the time spent in Albany was brief, some twelve months, they faced many challenges whilst here. Poor living conditions and feelings of homesickness were common among the young women, some having just turned eighteen years old. Others faced the cold and wet of Albany's harsh winter with regret having come from warmer and drier climates. Nonetheless they did their daily duty without complaint.

However, the exhibit does not just look at life in the army but also sheds light on their personal stories of love and loss. For some women their love lead to marriage and children once the war ended, whilst for others heartbreak as fiancées, husbands, brothers and fathers were killed in action overseas. For us here at the museum the sharing of family stories and photographs that are on show have been gratefully received over several decades as, without these contacts and donations, stories such as the Albany's AWAS could not be possible.

Content from the *Australian Military Forces Unit Diaries* gave great insight into these living conditions and duties the women performed with many official reports being used. In addition many letters, notes and recordings have been used in the exhibit. It was important to allow the women's words to speak rather than interpreting or rewriting them.

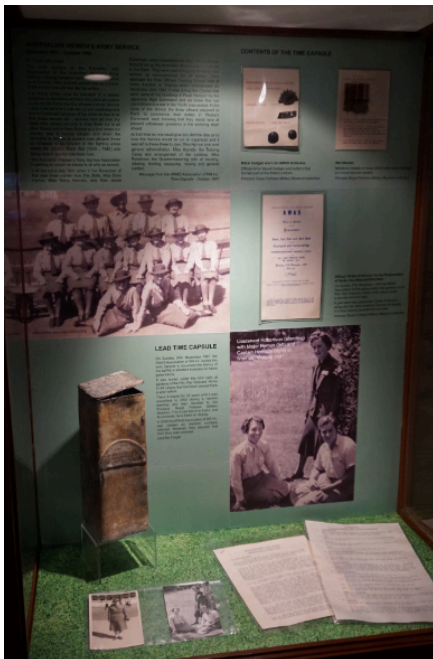


Image courtesy: David Theodore.

Another important object on display is the 1967 AWAS Association of WA Inc. time capsule and its contents. The lead capsule was buried on 26 November 1967, unearthed in 2002 and subsequently donated to the museum. Contained within are numerous artefacts and an account of the formation and service of the AWAS from November 1941 to October 1946. All are on display.

The museum was also fortunate enough to have a member of the AWAS who served here in Albany during 1943, Mrs Gwen Norman (née Pierpoint) who was a sergeant during the war. Her story was captured through the Albany Centenary of ANZAC Alliance Oral History Programme in 2011 by the Albany History Collection where she still volunteers each Friday morning. I was also fortunate enough to ask Gwen a few additional questions recently that helped clarify a few queries I had about the AWAS in Albany. The answers helped the exhibit immensely and also gave us a photograph of Gwen that we never knew existed.

Currently the museum has 66 AWAS members on its Albany service list but we believe this number may grow as further research is carried out.



I believe we've captured a big part of the AWAS history here at the Fortress and in Albany but I think there's more to discover. One previously unknown AWAS woman was brought to the museum's attention by a family enquiry just three weeks prior to the official opening.

The AWAS exhibition runs until 6 August 2017 and is free to enter. The Princess Royal Fortress Military Museum is located on Mt Adelaide and is open daily 9am until 5pm.

David Theodore, Princess Royal Fortress Curator

From the State Library:

Right Wrongs Exhibition

On 27 May 1967 a Federal referendum was held, in part to determine whether two references in the Australian Constitution, which discriminated against Aboriginal people, should be removed. The people of Australia voted in favour of their removal by the highest Yes vote ever recorded in a Federal referendum, with 90.77% voting for change. *Right Wrongs: '67 Referendum – the WA Story* is an exhibition running on the ground floor of the State Library of WA from 27 May to 3 September 2017. The exhibition reimagines our understanding of the 1967 Referendum and its impact on who we are, and what we can become, through the voices and stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders people. Fifty years later, the deeply symbolic victory of the Yes vote remains a key moment in the long and ongoing fight for equality. The exhibition reveals decades of activism through personal stories and powerful objects. For more information visit: www.slwa.wa.gov.au. *Right Wrongs* is presented in partnership with the NSLA, AIATSIS, ABC, The Western Australian Museum and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. Access the *Right Wrongs* Online exhibition at: <http://www.abc.net.au/rightwrongs/>

Botanical Wonderland Exhibition

The State Library of WA, in partnership with the WA Museum and the Royal WA Historical Society (RWAHS) is mounting a small exhibition in the Nook on the ground floor of the State Library from 10 August to 24 September 2017. Called *Botanical Wonderland* the exhibition will showcase some of each institution's collections relating to wildflowers. The Museum is showing fabric and wire flower sculptures of Thelma Knox and wildflower painted china by Helen Creeth; the RWAHS is showing seaweed albums and a collection of material featuring wildflowers (matchboxes, pennants, badges, bookmarks, doilies etc); and the State Library is showing photographs of wildflowers hand painted by Hilda Wright, watercolours of wildflowers by Albert John Hall, pressed wildflower art by Lilian Wooster Greaves and a book presented to Governor Bedford upon his departure from WA in 1909 featuring artworks by school children, many of which were depictions of wildflowers.

Recently Acquired Material

Ingetje Tadros images of Indigenous communities in the Kimberley: 180 digital images by award-winning documentary photographer Ingetje Tadros, showing the stark realities of daily life in some of WA's most impoverished and disadvantaged communities. The collection includes confronting and provocative images of displacement, alcoholism and ill-health,



gambling and fighting, grief and despair but also conveys strong family ties across multi-generations. Photos include bush camps, family homes, traditional arts and crafts, corroborees, weddings, funerals and repatriation ceremonies, cultural celebrations (Mowanjum Festival, Shinju Matsuri Festival), sporting events (Cable Beach Polo), and the Anti-Gas political campaign.

Stanley Preston Walker photographs of missions: scanned copies of photographs 1918-1970s but mostly taken in the 1940s-50s while Preston and his wife Kathleen were doing missionary work with Aboriginal people at Mt Margaret Mission, Sunday Island, Roelands Mission Farm, and Fitzroy Crossing. These images document the localities, people, and activities of the northwest in the mid-20th century and contribute greatly to the record of mission life in WA. They also provide a more personal record of this evangelical couple who went on to have six children. The photographs of indigenous staff and children at the Mission schools will also be of interest to *Storylines*.

Archive of Sir Malcolm Fraser, 1852-1898: English-born, civil engineer and administrator, Sir Malcolm Fraser (1834-1900), was the second Surveyor General; Colonial Secretary; Government Administrator and Lieutenant Governor of Western Australia; and later Agent General for the Colony in the United Kingdom. These papers are an important archive of documents and correspondence, 1852-1898. Prior to his 1870 appointment as Surveyor-General in WA, Sir Malcolm held several positions in New Zealand. According to Frank Crowley's entry in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Fraser was a most efficient and able contributor to public administration in the colony. The collection consists of documents and correspondence which relate to his New Zealand and Western Australian appointments and some which relate to his professional qualifications.

Recently Digitised Newspapers

The National Library has recently added 11 WA newspaper titles to its digitised newspapers on Trove. Funded by the State Library of WA and the WA Library Foundation, these titles are: the *Albany Mail & King George's Sound Advertiser* 1883-1889, the *Collie Miner* 1900-1916, the *Coolgardie Mining Review* 1895-1897, the *Goldfields Morning Chronicle* 1896-1898, the *Group Settlement Chronicle & Margaret-August Mail* 1923-1930, the *Magnet Mirror & Murchison Reflector* 1928-1935, the *Manganese Record, Peak Hill, Nullagine & Marble Bar Gazette* 1928-1941, the *Menzies Miner* 1895-1901, the *Mt Leonora Miner* 1899-1910, the *Murchison Times & Day Dawn Gazette* 1894-1925 and the *Yalgoo Observer & Murchison Chronicle* 1923-1941. There are now 137 digitised Western Australian newspaper titles on Trove.

Family History Month

The State Library of WA, in partnership with the WA Genealogical Society, will be presenting a series of events for Family History Month throughout August. The main event is on 8 & 9 August at the State Library. *Grow your Family Tree* features talks such as Getting started; WAGS, Family History WA and beyond; DNA for Genealogists; Success Stories; Australian Research; Using the Internet for your Research and What's not on the web; Let's try Plan B: maps useful for Family History; Manorial Records; The lives of frontier families of the Northwest and What's New at the National Archives. Presenters include Leonie Hayes, Ian Simon, Cate Pearce, Ray Smith, Loreley Morling, Edwina Shooter, Julie Martin, Trish Fairweather, Steve Howell, Geoff Barber, Jenni Ibrahim, Kate Gregory and Marjorie Bly. To book a talk, email nfhm@slwa.wa.gov.au or call 9427 3111. Other events are noted in the Family History Month program on the State Library's website.



Forbes & Fitzhardinge Plans

The State Library has recently digitised a collection of Forbes & Fitzhardinge architectural plans, some drawn by Sir John Joseph Talbot Hobbs. There are 177 plans in the collection, covering 78 buildings such as churches, commercial buildings (banks, hotels, theatres etc), halls and private residences. The dates range from 1877-1946. Many of these plans are as much works of art as they are plans, so please take the opportunity to look at them online. The digitisation was kindly paid for by a grant from the Sholl Bequest administered by the Friends of Battye Inc.

Steve Howell, Senior Subject Specialist, State Library of WA

From the Author - Joanna Sassoon on *Agents of Empire*:



Having returned home after a busy round of publicity across the country, including at the recent Sydney Writers' Festival, Joanna Sassoon shares with us the inspiration behind her new book: *Agents of Empire. How E. L. Mitchell's photographs shaped Australia*, Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2017.

I became interested in E. L. Mitchell's photographs when I was Curator of Pictures in the Battye Library in the 1990s. I noticed that Mitchell's images were some of the most frequently used from the Battye collections, yet no-one knew anything about who he was. Over time, I became familiar with the several thousand glass negatives and prints held in the Battye, and I noticed that Mitchell's work was repeatedly published for nearly a century in newspapers, school textbooks, picture postcards and government publications. However, it was when I saw one of Mitchell's photographs published in my grandfather's copy of the 1929 *Encyclopaedia Britannica* that I decided to find out how a photograph from Western Australia became part of this most significant of international publications.

In *Agents of Empire*, I have charted Mitchell's rise from his Yorkshire childhood and his struggles as a migrant in New South Wales and Queensland, to his success as the Governors' photographer in Western Australia and photographer for the 1920 and 1927 Royal Tours. I have tracked the impact of his photographs of industries, country towns and Aboriginal people through their uses in the pictorial press, publications and postcards and shown how they were sent internationally to advertise Australia to prospective migrants and investors. I can now state with confidence that Mitchell's photographs are amongst the most widely distributed and most highly used of any 20th century photographer in Western Australia, and they stand alongside his better known Eastern-States counterparts including J. W. Beattie and Kerry and Co for their reach and influence in shaping ideas about Australia internationally.



Cleaning Pearls by E. L. Mitchell. Photo courtesy: Joanna Sassoon.

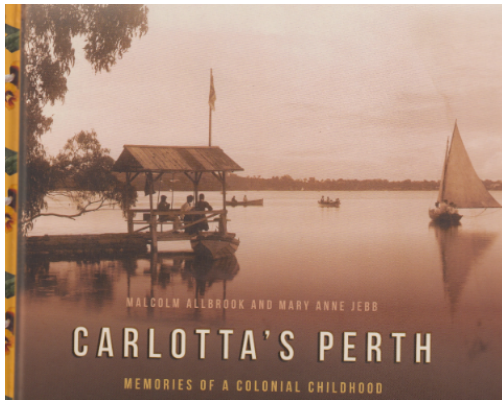
Agents of Empire contains over 200 images from public and private collections, but it is no ordinary picture book. This book weaves together three biographies – the life of Mitchell, the lives of his photographs, and the history of his archives. This approach brings together my longstanding interest in the way that collecting and documentation practices in cultural institutions shape how we can now think about the past. It also demonstrates how my approach to thinking about photographic records runs counter to the way that cultural institutions document photographic images. In order to move photographs from being seen as illustration to understanding them as evidence, I have used a range of unconventional sources including text on the backs of photographs, captions in publications, the contexts of use and the donors of materials to cultural institutions. This material-centred approach to research and collection documentation has generated considerable interest amongst cultural institutions and photographic historians internationally.

This book is my piece of advocacy for the visual document and the visual archive. It draws on my experiences working in cultural institutions and shows the research potential of photographs and the stories they can tell if we think archivally about photographs – that is to see the way that photographs are shaped by the relationship between their content and their context. Photographs need this kind of advocacy as the way in which they are collected, documented and digitised by cultural institutions shapes the research that can be produced through destruction, documentation and digitisation. I have felt it my duty to draw on my two professions of archivist and historian and to produce a book that raises these issues for a general audience through the life of one of WA's most significant photographers.

Details of *Agents of Empire* can be found at: <http://scholarly.info/book/544/>

Joanna Sassoon

Book Note - *Carlotta's Perth:*



Malcolm Allbrook & Mary Anne Jebb, *Carlotta's Perth: Memories of a Colonial Childhood*, City of Perth, 2017.

It is a great pleasure to welcome a book which delves into the life of a colonial woman – Carlotta Prinsep. Too often it has been colonial men whose activities and opinions have attracted the eyes of historians. If Carlotta had any place at all, it used to be only as Miss Prinsep or Mrs Peter Brockman, subsumed in the identities of father and husband. This neglect is being redressed and Carlotta's story is most welcome in giving us a better sense of colonial society and, in particular, of Perth life in the period when she was growing up in the second half of the 19th century. Of course, we need many more such accounts to form a relatively complete picture but each adds to our understanding.

Carlotta's Perth is enjoyable at several different levels. Her reminiscences paint a vivid picture of social life among Perth's elite in the period from the 1870s to 1900. Her clear and detailed memories for both people and places convey that world to us as readers. And she had an eye for a good story; for instance that of George Leake's false teeth (see page 80). One of those wonderful yarns that pepper the most lively of reminiscences and oral histories.

Carlotta's reminiscences capture the physical shape of Perth as well as the social conventions of the time and the expectations placed on children. A rich array of visual images has been added to the written text. I particularly enjoyed Henry Prinsep's sketches, Carlotta's watercolours of wildflowers and the photographs of Perth's urban environment in the 1870s-1880s. The built environment of these decades has tended to be lost between the city's foundational shape and its gold rush boom. This is a visually most appealing book, a delight to view.

There are also other levels at which the book can be appreciated. Carlotta pictures her family as thoroughly genteel, cultured and well-connected – connected to most other elite families. Her account gives us a better understanding of the networks of support which enabled the family to flourish despite emerging from bankruptcy and having very little money. Historian Frank Crowley called these elite families 'shabby genteel' – full of culture and respectability but with no significant monetary assets to support them. Carlotta's reminiscences show that this lack of wealth was not of primary importance – support networks including the governors, those in official positions and, most importantly, the circle of elite families (many of them inter-related in complex ways) provided employment, assistance to acquire residences, a lively social life and all other assistance to sustain an elite urban existence.

In the mid-1880s newly arrived Irish lawyer John Horgan labelled these families the 'Six Hungry Families', to the delight of Perth crowds. Goldfields leader John Kirwan insisted that there were many more than six of them! Horgan mocked their kin inter-connections, saying that he had begun to sketch their genealogical tree but couldn't 'get a piece of canvas large enough'. I think we understand his problem. What is striking is that this kin assistance and friends' support appears to



have enabled life to be pleasant and comfortable – not shabby at all, despite Crowley's label. In some cases, especially in rural areas, we know the struggle to keep up appearances was hard and unrelenting but we get no sense of this from Carlotta. Perhaps with secure official employment, life for these families was easier in the city? There is food for thought in this book.

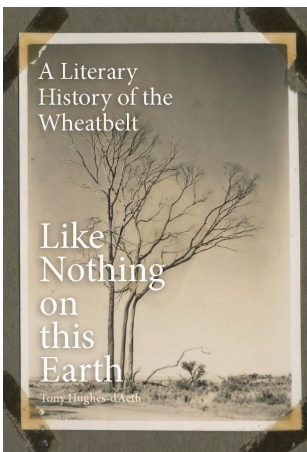
Carlotta lived a rich emotional life, consumed with family and friends (particularly girl friends). She was sentimental rather than coolly rational, with great love for family and friends. Hers was a life lived within family and kin and friendship networks. She saw some things so sharply and so much else passed her by. Did she choose not to remember or is this warm picture of hearth and home the sum of her recall? Yet she is clear-minded about sadness within her family – the nervous breakdowns of her mother, the arrival of the sad orphan Mary Anne Currie to whom the family gave shelter but also gained a live-in domestic worker, and the death of her brother. She saw and remembered and recorded what she valued.

The reminiscences encourage us to reflect on the nature of memory – the way it is shaped by individual personality, by the moulding of identity in early childhood, by the social conventions that frame day-to-day interactions and by the variety of life experiences that come a person's way. As well the reasons that the author has in putting pen to paper is also decisive in shaping the stories remembered for telling.

I recommend this book as an interesting and appealing addition to the library.

Lenore Layman MPHA

Book Note - *Like Nothing on this Earth*:



Tony Hughes-d'Aeth, *Like Nothing on this Earth: A Literary History of the Wheatbelt*, UWA Publishing, 2017.

The landscape is so immense, hot and huge like nothing on this earth, that I fear it might swallow me.

This line from the wheatbelt novel *Oceana Fine* by Tom Flood (1989) bears the inspiration for the title of this new book by Tony Hughes-d'Aeth. In this book, Hughes-d'Aeth examines the creation of the event he refers to as 'the wheatbelt' through its creative writing; that is, a literary history as a history of the wheatbelt captured in the literary works deriving from it. Through examining creative writings, he demonstrates the value of literature in understanding the human



experience of geographical change, and more specifically how the literature of the wheatbelt provides a bridge between material policy and individual aspiration.

Commencing the book with his intrigue with the clearing line so evident from satellite images of Western Australia, he suggests it's not unlike the famous walls that marked the limits of Roman and Chinese empires. What this line is evidence of in Western Australia is how, in the space of only a few decades, an arc from Esperance to Geraldton, an area of land larger than England, was cleared of native flora for the farming of grain and livestock, highlighting the juxtaposition between the creation of the wheatbelt with the disappearance of a vast territory of native wilderness that once had a biodiversity almost without equal on the planet.

His own background in literary criticism and cultural history has confirmed for him the value of creative writing as 'a document of record'. Reflecting on history through creative writing offers something different from, for example, the commissioned shire histories, as it presents a dialogue about the 'interior apprehension of how life feels to people' of what the wheatbelt 'felt like'. Literary works therefore have the capacity to paint a picture of this region that is personal, as a subjective experience, as something that was lived 'emotionally and imaginatively'. The works also carry acute observations of the changing environment and the devastation by human intervention.

Although it's quite a tome at nearly 600 pages, the nature of the book lends itself to dipping in and out of and to experience, through each writer, a different journey and a different perspective with each sampling. For anyone searching for a snapshot of the genesis and development of the wheatbelt region to the present day, the introduction alone makes for meaningful reading. As for the literary component, the book contains the works of some of Australia's most well-known writers who wrote about their varied experience of and connections to the wheatbelt - Albert Facey, Dorothy Hewett, Tom Flood and John Kinsella. The selected writers not only represent the changes in historical time but also the variations in literary genre and the variety of encounters with the wheatbelt. As a tasting plate of the range and experience of writers, here are some of the others who are included:

Jack Davis: Aboriginal writer, activist and intellectual, lived for at least eleven years in the wheatbelt region. Davis' poetry, plays and non-fiction works show us a very different wheatbelt that extends beyond the normal iconography and ideology of 'wheat' as seen in European writings to the experience of the wheatbelt from the other side of the fence – the Aboriginal experience. As Tony explores in his introduction, the Aboriginal perspective gives us insight into the observations of a people who did not know what a paddock was, or what wheat, let alone crops, were. Yet despite the massive clearing undertaking by white settlers which tragically also led to the obliteration of so many Aboriginal tribes, the wheatbelt still retains – particularly for Aboriginal people – a connection to 'an ancient system of language, thought and human community'. Davis was one of the first Aboriginal writers in WA to deliver this experience from a literary point of view, and indeed the chapter on Davis contains an important contextual overview of the Aboriginal experience. The breadth of Davis' writing on the experience of the Aboriginal people, especially who lived out on the reserves dotted throughout the wheatbelt, is captured in both his poetry and plays:

Over the campfire
The bat cries shrill
And a "semi" snarls
On the Ten Mile Hill



And the lonely whistle
Of the train at night,
Where my kingdom melted
In the city's light
(*Camped in the Bush*)

FRANK: Where to? I been on the road already for six months. Kondinin, Merredin, Kalgoorlie: no work. Headed up the Murchison, Mullewa, Northampton: nothing. I got a wife and two kids staying with her parents in Leederville. I can't even raise a train fare to Perth to go and see them. (*No Sugar*, 1985)

Peter Cowan: who was born in Perth and at age eighteen left the city to work in the wheatbelt, where he found much inspiration for his writings – namely his collections of short stories in *Drift* (1944) and *The Unploughed Land* (1958) and his many beautifully penned letters home. In these letters he paints the great contrasts often experienced in the wheatbelt – ‘a sunset whose glory of changing colour must bring inspiration to anyone possessed of the faintest imagination – a sunset peculiar to the wheatbelt’ to other contrasting observations in which he describes the landscape as ‘Completely barren & the creek I mentioned is salt – dead trees stand in silent mockery along its banks... Even looking at the wheatbelt I have endeavoured to – to see the best of it – it takes a lot to make it pleasant’.

Elizabeth Jolley: who was born in the UK and arrived in WA in 1959 with her husband and three small children in tow. Although Jolley lived for a time on acreage near Wooroloo, she never actually lived in the wheatbelt and yet produced the seminal novel *The Well* (1986) regarded as the wheatbelt's most famous novel. With its dark storyline, Jolley is considered the first writer to produce the Gothic wheatbelt and the first to really capture ‘the existential qualities of the wheatbelt’. The wheatbelt fascinated her, and she came to call it simply ‘the wheat’; a place outwardly non-descript and yet deeply intriguing. As Jolley said herself ‘I have always felt that the best literature is regional’.

The road between the black paddocks was flat and strange as though they had never travelled along it before. Swirls of white mist came towards them and sometimes when there was a dip in the road they were completely enshrouded in a light white endlessly winding garment. The surrounding countryside, Hester said, could seem desolate and frightening for anyone travelling especially if they had not home to go to. (*The Well*, 1986)

Helen Munt APHA

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 **November 2017** and can be sent to [Lenore Layman](#) or [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
A/Secretary	Jenna Lynch, Dominic Walsh
Treasurer	Prue Griffin
Membership Secretary	Sue Graham-Taylor

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	Lenore Layman, Kris Bizzaca

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.

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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