

NO. 133

June 2009



FRIENDS OF BATTYE LIBRARY (Inc.) NEWSLETTER

ABN 571625138800

Annual General Meeting

Gerard Foley
State Records Office
Colonial Secretary's Office (CSO)
files 1883 to 1890

and

Steve Howell
State Library of WA
Dead Reckoning online



**1890 - The last Executive Council
before Responsible Government.**

Standing L-R: J Amherst, A O Lefroy,
Sir J Forrest, J. A Wright, Sir J.G. Lee
Steere; Sitting L-R: Sir M Fraser, Gov-
ernor Sir F N Broome, C N Warton.
(Courtesy Battye Library 032657PD)

Our meeting will be held on
Tuesday 14 July 2009
5.30pm for 6.00pm
(Please note later starting time)

Great Southern Room, 4th floor
State Library of Western Australia
Please see details on Page 3

Objectives

The objectives of the Friends of Battye Library (Inc.) are to assist and promote the interests of the J S Battye Library of West Australian History and the State Records Office, and of those activities of the Library Board of Western Australia concerned with the acquisition, preservation and use of archival and documentary materials.

Patron Mrs Ruth Reid

Emeritus President Professor Geoffrey Bolton

Committee (2008-2009)

President Dr Pamela Statham Drew

Vice President Mrs Gillian O'Mara

Secretary Mrs Lorraine Dearnley

Treasurer Mr Nick Drew

Committee members Mr Graham Bown, Ms Jennie Carter,
Dr Alison Gregg, Mr Jim Gregg,
Mr Robert O'Connor, and Mrs Marion Marlow.

Ex-Officio Mrs Margaret Allen (CEO & State Librarian)
Ms Cathrin Cassarchis (Director, SRO)
Dr Sarah Brown (Battye Historian)

Newsletter editor Ms Jennie Carter

Volunteers Ring (08) 9427 3266 or email:
volunteers@slwa.wa.gov.au

All correspondence to:
The Secretary, PO Box 216, Northbridge WA 6865

ISSN 1035-8692

Views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily the views of the Friends of Battye Library Committee, the State Library of WA, or the State Records Office.

Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 14 July 2009

Great Southern Room, 4th floor

State Library of Western Australia

5.30pm for 6.00pm. (Please note later starting time)

Following the meeting and the submission of annual reports from the President, the CEO and State Librarian, Margaret Allen, and the Director of the State Records Office, Cathrin Cassarchis, staff will give presentations on two of the interesting new projects that have been funded by the Friends of Battye Library Inc.

Our speakers will be

Gerard Foley of the State Records Office

“The Colonial Secretary’s Office (CSO) files 1883 to 1890”

and

Steve Howell of the State Library of WA

“Dead Reckoning online”

We will be going to dinner at a nearby restaurant after the meeting and members and guests are most welcome to join us. Bookings can be made on the night.

Important notices:

Due to bookings of the Great Southern Room which are not scheduled to finish until 5pm, our meetings for this year will be starting half an hour later and begin at 5.30pm for 6pm.

Newsletter: Due to rising costs, our newsletter will revert to being produced four times this year - March, June, September and November.

Problem with the stairs?

If any members have difficulty with taking the stairs to the fourth floor, please notify staff on either the ground floor reception desk or the Battye Library desk on the 3rd floor for access to the staff lift to the fourth floor.

About our speakers - Gerard Foley and Steve Howell

Gerard Foley is a Senior Archivist at the State Records Office of WA with responsibility for overseeing the operations of the Search Room; matters relating to restricted access archives; and the SRO's public programs, which include the Margaret Medcalf Award, the Geoffrey Bolton Lecture and a series of Lunchtime Seminars each year.

Gerard will be speaking about the results of the project to list the files of the Colonial Secretary's Office, which was made possible through funding provided by the Friends of Battye through its Sholl Bequest. 14,000 files dating from 1883 to 1890 were listed by Andrew Morant, and Gerard will talk about the project and the significant and interesting historical items that have been uncovered through his good work.

Steve Howell is the Senior Subject Specialist, Battye Library. He has been with the Battye Library for 32 years and is an acknowledged expert in Western Australian research using the Battye Library's collections. Steve is the author of *Dead Reckoning: How to find your way through the genealogical jungle of Western Australia* which was first published in 1997 and is currently being updated. It is planned that *Dead Reckoning* will soon be accessible from the State Library's website.

Steve will speak about his work on this exciting new project and how members will be able to use the online version in their own research.

Our speakers' program for 2009

8 September :

Dr Ronda Jamieson (biographer of Sir Charles Court.)

24 November :

End of year function (speaker to be confirmed.)

The National Library's Literary Journey of Australia tour - 12 days.

Departs 19 August 2009 and tour host will be Phillip Jones, Curator, author and historian of the South Australian Museum. Visiting Sydney, Kakadu, Arnhem Land, Darwin, Kimberley, Broome, Alice Springs and the Birdsville Track. Cost \$12,995. Further information ph: 1800 252 053; www.billpeachjourneys.com.au.

Message from the President.

Dear Friends,

Last month we were treated to one of Father Ted's wonderfully whimsical talks, this time on the *Curious Conveyances of Colonial Clergymen*. Turned out the conveyances were shanks pony, horses, bicycles, camels, various motor vehicles and maybe a boat (there was some controversy about the latter). Our Annual General meeting should be just as interesting as we will hear what has been going on behind the scenes at Battye and the State Records Office.

Can I entice any of you to nominate for our Committee? We meet at 4pm every second Tuesday in the months not covered by a general meeting. Business is usually over by 5pm or 5.30pm at the latest. Your society needs new ideas and replenishing energy – so do think about it. Nomination forms are in this issue of the newsletter.

Our Oral History Rescue project is inching closer towards action of some sort as the State Library has now provided a letter to Lotterywest assuring them of co-lateral support. Fingers crossed Lotterywest approves the grant.

I look forward to seeing you at our AGM on 14 July

Pamela Statham Drew

Current and recent projects funded by the Friends of Battye Library

Sholl Bequest

Robyn Taylor "Artists, Artisans and Manufacturing" database. 2009

Steve Howell "Dead Reckoning - online version". 2009

SLWA "Digitising and providing online access to the *Police Gazettes* 1876-1900". 2009

Battye 50th year grant

Julie Martin "WA Legislative Assembly Electoral Districts 1904-2000" index and guide. 2009

General Fund

Andrew Morant "CSO files - SRO online project" AEON access. 2008

SRO "Historical maps online" digitisation and online access. 2009/2010.

News from the Battye Historian

Strategic Directions

In April 2009 the State Library released its Strategic Directions 2009 – 2011 which represents its aspirations and focus as it continues to evolve its services to meet the needs of the Western Australian Community in an increasingly complex digital information world. The new Strategic Directions outline the Library's values and priority areas, which include:

1. Capturing the Western Australian Story
2. Enriching client experiences
3. Making content more accessible
4. Developing partnerships and community connections
5. Enhancing the public library network

For anyone interested in reading more, please visit our website: www.slwa.wa.gov.au/about_us/who_we_are/strategic_directions

Redevelopment of Ground Floor

The redevelopment of the ground floor is progressing as planned: the public toilets are now refurbished, cabling is currently being finalised and recruitment for new staff is currently underway. Upon completion (which is anticipated to be August) the new "Discovery Lounge" will provide clients with access to increased numbers of computers through SLWA workstations or wireless access, promote collections through a range of exhibitions and displays and promote the Library's newspaper collections in hard copy and digital format. The Discovery Lounge will be a welcoming and exciting space that will reflect contemporary practice in large public and research libraries.

Researchers' Room

At the end of June the State Library aims to open its relocated Researchers' Room which will enhance and enable improved service delivery and cater to the needs of all clients wanting access to rare materials and archives from the collections of the State Library. The Researchers' Room will be situated in the Battye Library reading room on the 3rd floor and will include five new computers and a new Canon Powershot G10 digital camera, complete with computer tethering software and copy stand. The Researchers' Room will support and expand client use of rare books and archival collections, provide greater access to materials for research, and provide a space for those undertaking sustained research projects to work efficiently and securely. Clients will also have access to specialist reference staff five days a week at particular times during the day.

The Place

On Sunday 24 May “The Place”, a new area for children and families at the State Library, was opened by the Hon John Day, Minister for Culture and the Arts. This new area is designed to provide children with books and stories to explore, as well as celebrating reading, writing and literacy. Children will be able see how stories are created with displays of drafts, manuscripts and original illustrations from Australian children’s picture books. This new area will also showcase the State Library’s collections for a new group of readers and researchers to discover, connecting students with our Western Australian heritage. A gallery and exhibition space will profile Western Australian writers and illustrators for children as well as linking with the Library’s heritage collection through education programs, events and activities.

Catalogue Only PCs

From 1 June, each floor of the State Library will have at least ONE “catalogue only” computer. These computers will be positioned next to the information desks on each floor and will be clearly signed.

Exhibitions Committee

The State Library has recently established an Exhibitions Committee to ensure the effective planning, coordination and implementation of displays, exhibitions and associated events across the State Library of Western Australia. The Committee has a clear mandate to showcase and profile State Library collections.

Krantz and Sheldon collection

The State Library, in partnership with the Heritage Council, is working on a project proposal to preserve and digitise some of the Krantz and Sheldon Collection, which consists of a large number of plans and approximately 200 boxes of records donated to the Batty Library by George Sheldon in 2002. The plans cover landmark buildings in Perth, government projects such as schools, hospital and state housing works, as well as many private buildings and apartment blocks. The records consist of letters, financial records, minutes and files relating to architectural projects, including architect instructions, building contracts, photographs and specifications. This is a wonderful partnership opportunity which will ensure that this important collection is preserved and readily accessible.

Australian Joint Copying Project (AJCP)

The Australian Joint Copying Project sought to microfilm important historical documents relating to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific housed in Britain. The State Library now offers a course on the AJCP which looks at the types of records available that might be of interest to family historians and explains how the collection is organised. The use of the AJCP handbooks and other indexes is also explained. Information from this new course will form the basis for a new information page on the State Library website. For anyone interested in the course please contact Tricia Fairweather on tricia.fairweather@slwa.wa.gov.au or 08 9427 3395.

Sarah Brown

Email addresses needed

To enable us to share information and keep members up to date on important happenings, we have a group email list for current members. If you would like to be kept informed of important matters or forthcoming events relevant to the Battye Library and the State Records Office, please email me at bevnjen@gmail.com or Nick Drew at nickdrew@bigpond.com.

In June, I circulated advance notice about the AGM. If you received this notice, then your email address has already been included on the list and you do not need to reply to me or Nick. If you are a new member or renewed your membership and included your email address, then your email address has also been added to the group list. If you do not want to be sent any Friends of Battye Library information by email, please let me know.

State Library Bookshop - discount for members

The State Library has generously offered members of the Friends of Battye Library a 15% discount on new book purchases. To be eligible for the discount, members must show proof of name when making their purchases so staff can confirm that you are a current member.

Please note that the discount does not apply to secondhand books sold in the bookshop, nor to the Friends of Battye Library publications which are sold at an already discounted rate.

Archival quality materials

The bookshop stocks archival materials as recommended by the State Library's conservation staff. There are a variety of boxes, paper and card, photo enclosures, and binders available to help preserve precious items.

Jennie Carter

State Records Office News

Lunchtime Seminars

Previously known as Sandwich Seminars, these events are designed to inform researchers about the State Records Office (SRO) and its collections. Speakers include SRO staff, researchers and Government agency staff. The program is organized by Gerard Foley of the SRO. The talks are usually held from 12.30 to 1.30 (on the advertised date) in the South-west room, which adjoins the SRO microfilm area on the ground floor of the Alexander Library Building.

On Wednesday 3 June Tom Reynolds, Archives Research Officer at the SRO, spoke about 'Business Regulation in WA 1858 -1990: Companies office records in the State archives collection'

The following seminars will be held later this year:

Tuesday 7 July - a speaker from the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council will give a NAIDOC week presentation, on the topic:

'Archives and the Indigenous experience in the South West'

Venue - Great Southern Room, 4th floor Alexander Library Building

Tuesday 6 October – Professor Anna Haebich, of Griffith University,

The story of Martha Rendell: last woman to be hanged in WA.

Venue – Great Southern Room, 4th floor Alexander Library Building

Margaret Medcalf Award

The State Records Commission established the Margaret Medcalf Award in 2003 for excellence in research and referencing utilizing original sources held in the State archives collection. This annual Award honours Miss Margaret Medcalf, the second State Archivist for Western Australia (1971-1989), for her valuable contribution to the development of archives in Western Australia.

The judging panel this year consisted of Dr Jean Chetkovich, from the Centre for Western Australian History at the University of WA, Ms Justine McDermott, State Records Commissioner, and Ms Cathrin Cassarchis, Director of State Records.

Ms Isla Macphail is this year's winner of the Award for her book, *Highest Privilege and Bounden Duty: A study of Western Australian parliamentary elections 1829-1901*. Commissioned by the Western

Australian Electoral Commission, the book was researched and written to celebrate 100 years of the Electoral Act 1907. At a special ceremony held on 20 May, Ms McDermott assisted Miss Medcalf with the presentation of a prize of \$1,000 to Isla Macphail.

A special certificate of commendation was also awarded to the book *Mowanjum: 50 years community history*, compiled and edited by Mary Anne Jebb, and published by Mowanjum Aboriginal Community and Mowanjum Artists, Spirit of the Wandjina Aboriginal Corporation.

Search Room Anniversary

In April 2009 the SRO celebrated the tenth anniversary of the opening of its public Search Room on the ground floor of the Alexander Library Building. The occasion generated media coverage in the West Australian on 14 April, in an article which highlighted the importance of convict records held by the SRO.

Cabinet Papers Launch

Since 2002 the SRO has organised a function, on or close to Foundation Day, to commemorate the annual release of the WA Cabinet papers from a 30 year access embargo. The release of the 1978 State Cabinet records saw good media coverage through The West Australia and through radio interviews on 720AM Local Radio and RTRFM Morning Magazine.

The papers reveal the concerns of Sir Charles Court's government about various issues, including: the serious health effects of asbestos on the remaining residents of Wittenoom and the decision to close the town forever; the expansion of Bauxite mining in the South West; plans for Uranium mining at Yeelirrie; and approval for drought relief and cloud seeding research. In 1978 State Cabinet also approved late night shopping one night a week; public service dress reforms allowing public servants to wear shirts without ties; and plans to mark the 150th anniversary of British settlement in WA in 1979. However, Cabinet did not approve of Sunday Football, or moves to ban tinted windows on vehicles.

More detailed information about the records can be found in the SRO's online Guide to the 1978 cabinet records; see www.sro.wa.gov.au/whatsnew

Volunteers

Pat Paterson, and Ann and Bruce Buchanan continue to be regular volunteers at SRO during 2009. Pat spends her Tuesdays relabeling archive boxes, and inserting stable liners in these boxes to protect the records stored within. The Buchanans continue to index references to convicts in the CSO outward letterbooks.

Tom Reynolds

State Records Commission News

There are two new appointees to the State Records Commission. In March 2009, the Governor of Western Australia appointed Ms Justine McDermott as a Commission member for three years, under the terms of the State Records Act 2000. Ms McDermott replaces the former Governor's appointee, Kandy-Jane Henderson, who retired from the Commission in 2008 after joining as an inaugural member in 2002.

Ms McDermott has worked in the field of information management since 1989, and is currently employed as the Manager, Archives and Records Management at the University of Western Australia. Justine's broad experience in the information management profession, spanning Commonwealth and State government organizations, make her very well equipped for her role as Commissioner.

Mr Sven Bluemmel, who was appointed as the new Information Commissioner in May, also joins the Commission as an ex officio member. Mr Bluemmel replaces Mr John Lightowers, who previously acted in the position. Prior to taking up his appointment in May 2009, Sven held senior positions in the Public Sector Commission, the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department. Sven also practised law in the private sector in Melbourne and Perth, where he was recognised as one of the leading lawyers in the areas of information and privacy law in the national publication Legal Profiles.

The SRO gratefully acknowledges the significant contributions made by Kandy Jane Henderson and John Lightowers during their terms. The expertise and knowledge they brought to their respective roles was immensely valuable to the work of the Commission.

Cathrin Cassarchis
Director, State Records Office

Launch of the Wittenoom History - Dr Ken Michael AC

On May 25th, His Excellency Dr Ken Michael AC, Governor of Western Australia launched, the book by Jacqueline O'Brien and Pamela Statham Drew *On We Go: The Wittenoom Way: Legacy of a Colonial Chaplain*. Opening his speech the governor said:-

“This is a remarkable book, detailing the extraordinary life of the Reverend John Burdett Wittenoom as the Swan River Colony’s first Chaplain and the contribution that he and, subsequently, his family made to the growth and development of Western Australia. Four generations have been traced in detail in this handsomely illustrated volume and throughout runs a dominant theme of public service.

It began with the arrival of The Reverend John Wittenoom, with his four sons and sister in January 1830. Not only did John perform all the duties of a Colonial Chaplain – when there was no other minister of any religion in the colony, he also founded our system of education. By conducting baptisms, marriages and burials during 35 years, John also touched almost every family in the isolated colony, and through his passion for music lifted their spirits.

We learn of the Reverend’s relationship with Governor Stirling and later Governor John Hutt, the building of the first church, Rush Church, and later St George’s Church, officially opened on the 20th of January 1845. At that opening, The Reverend appropriately chose the sermon, 1 Kings 8.13: “I have surely built thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to dwell in forever”.

We find an enormous public regard for his work in the community due to, as the book says, “his temperament of an unquestionable optimism, the more remarkable for all the difficulties he had experienced in the colony’s foundation years”. This was so much so that at his death on the 23rd of January in 1855, at the age of 66, “no fewer than 400 people attended his funeral and almost all the shops in Perth closed for the day as a mark of respect for the passing of one of the town’s most esteemed citizens”.

The next Wittenoom to command such a funeral turn out was his grandson, Sir Edward, the longest serving Parliamentarian in Australia to that time. After establishing a pastoral empire with his younger brother Frank, Edward had been nominated for the Legislative Council under representative government in 1883. He was made the Minister for Mines, Telegraph and Education in 1894 under Premier John Forrest and, after a

stint in London as Agent General, returned to WA to become the President of the Legislative Council in the new State Parliament after Federation.

He was a larger-than-life character who saw no virtue in government funded tertiary education. In fact, he harangued Parliament that creating a university here in the West was a complete waste of money as there was a perfectly good railway across the Nullabor to South Australia which already had one. Fortunately, his views in this instance did not prevail!

Sir Edward who we learn delighted in telling people he had been the last person to be knighted by Queen Victoria before she died, was also responsible for attracting considerable investment into the West. While overseas he had made many contacts and joined the boards of a number of companies with branches in Australia. Like his grandfather, he had a powerful presence both inside and outside Parliament and again, like his grandfather, he married twice, choosing a woman half his age.



Rev. J.B. Wittenoom - Colonial Chaplain, ca. 1850 (Courtesy Battye Library 150759P)

The Reverend John, when 51 had married Mary Helms aged 29, while Edward, when a venerable 70, had married 28-year-old Isobel du Boulay. Edward's son Charles continued the trend when 54, choosing for his second wife 25-year-old Pat Hanrahan. The staunchly Anglican family were shocked as Pat was Catholic, but Charles went ahead and the marriage was a very happy one. Charles also played a large part in public life. Indeed, when he joined the Legislative Council in 1928 he became, with Sir Edward, one of the very few father and son teams in Australia to have served in the same House of Parliament at the same time. Charles fought hard for the man on the land and particularly for Albany, the major town in his South Province electorate. He believed the town had so many natural advantages that it was criminal not to further develop the harbour and rail-head. Throughout his 17 years as Mayor of Albany he never lost faith in the future of the town.

Public service has not only been the province of the men in the Wittenoom family. The Reverend Wittenoom's granddaughter – through his marriage to Mary Helms - was none other than Edith Cowan, the first woman to be elected to Parliament in Australia and a great campaigner for the rights of women, children and animals.

As the epilogue says: "When the Reverend John Wittenoom arrived in the Swan River colony in 1830, he and his mother, sister and sons took their places on an unfolding canvas in an isolated part of the British Empire. For nearly two centuries since then the family has been a part of the development of Western Australia from a tiny fragile colony into statehood and federation. Throughout the generations, sons to bear the Wittenoom name have been rare, but the many daughters have taken their inheritance and talents into other families, making their contributions under other names. Now these descendents of the Colonial Chaplain live and work all over the world."

The book mainly deals with the men who carried the Wittenoom name and the stories of at least eight such men are recorded. As explained by the authors, the title stems from the 4th generation Charlie Wittenoom's favourite toast: he would call out in his best mayoral voice at family celebratory dinner parties: "On we go!"

Pamela Statham Drew

Important - Membership renewal

Please don't forget that your membership renewal is due on 1st July.

Your membership of the Friends of Battye Library is crucial in enabling us to undertake important projects to assist in acquiring, preserving, and making available Western Australian archival and documentary materials. Another of the Friends' key roles is to help publicise and promote the collections of the J S Battye Library of West Australian History and the State Records Office as well as to advocate for the collecting, building and care of the State's Western Australian documentary heritage.

A membership form is included in this newsletter and we are pleased to offer an online payment facility, for those who use internet banking, to make paying your subscription even easier.

A sincere thank you for your continued support of the Friends of Battye Library.

Pioneers Memorial Service 2009

The 55th Anniversary Pioneers Memorial Service conducted by the Royal Western Australia Historical Society (RWAHS) in association with the Western Australian Genealogical Society and The National Trust, was held on a perfect sunny autumn afternoon on Sunday 24 May in the St Bartholomew's Chapel, East Perth cemetery, .

Gillian O'Mara, the Friends of Battye Library Vice President, gave the citation with about ten of our Friends of Battye Library members attending the Service.

This year's service was to commemorate the Enrolled Pensioner Guards buried in the cemetery. Rev Canon Dr Michael Evers conducted the service with the welcome by RWAHS President the Hon Robert Nicholson AO, followed by a very informative citation into the contribution made to the colony of Western Australia by the Pensioner Guards with assistance from Jean McDonald and Ian Barnes from the Enrolled Pensioner Guard Special Group. Two of the Pensioner Guards were specifically honoured in Gillian's citation these being Martin O'Dea and William Thomas Wimbridge.

After the service Gillian conducted a tour of the graveyard to visit some the graves that had been identified as Pensioner Guards with red ribbons. Flower petals were provided for those attending the ceremony to scatter on the graves. Following the function, afternoon tea was served at Gloucester Park.

Pamela Statham Drew

Gillian O'Mara delivering the key note address at the Pioneers Memorial Service held in St Bartholomew's Chapel East Perth.

(Courtesy Nick Drew)



Perth in 1961 – Letter from my Grandfather Alison Gregg

Recently I've spent a lot of time clearing out cupboards. Following our recent house move, I decided I simply had to start on the daunting task of sorting all the inherited family letters, photographs and other previous documents not yet unpacked.

What a treasure trove I found! I thought Friends of Battye members might like to share a letter sent in 1961 by my grandfather John English Barr to a relative in Northern Ireland. My parents Alan and Millicent Barr had recently visited the Barr family in Belfast. They must have told Grandpa about a particular dish they enjoyed there, because it seems he requested the recipe. This is his letter of thanks.

He also passes on family news, then goes on to describe Perth and its preparations for staging the Commonwealth Games the following year. I've copied the text just as he typed it, other than correcting some wayward spelling and punctuation for the sake of readability.

Grandpa Barr came from a generation when teachers compelled left-handed children to write with primitive ink pens held in their right hands. In consequence his handwriting was always atrocious and he bought a typewriter as soon as he could afford one. The only writing I've ever seen in his hand was his signature on letters and legal documents. This is his letter:

41 Elizabeth St
North Perth. 15th Nov 61

Dear Miss Barr

Thank you for the RECIPE - it seems A bit out of place this season of the year - it looks as if I have the honor of using it in another capacity meantime. How to cook a goose - more appropriate. By the way Turkey is more to the front here. The wanderers have returned and [are] settling down to refuel the banking account etc. They report that your parents proved great company - made me wish that I were there - sure they would have sent me off - alternative - find A bed for the night. Millicent is now over in Melb to welcome the new baby (her daughter Alison's). Tomorrow we celebrate BDays - Mother 81 on 15th & Dad 89 on 16th Inst . Everyone tells me that I am wonderful - I feel good - perhaps WELL would be more appropriate. Sorry to say Mother is not too well at present & requires attention - just the March of Time. Alan has this weekend off and is taking me with him down to his seaside

residence - daughter Heather (teacher) is coming over from Collie in her car to do the cooking.

Examinations are the whole go here for the next few weeks. Just announced - 22 new Doctors - sure there was a few special dinners - probably 22. I was present when Alan's son Marshall's Pass was declared - touching to see the head shake hands 'Congratulations DR' - first call. Amongst them was a girl - more like A big school girl - she nearly fainted; however 2 friends took charge of her.

How about coming out to the GAMES here at the end of next year? All sorts of preparations are going on just now - contracts have been let to build 1500 houses to accommodate the athletes - A large swimming pool - racing tracks etc – fancy all out of land that was bush 12 months ago. The houses are costing between 4 & 5 thousand each, plus land another thousand. After the Games the houses will probably be sold by auction - a new City about 6 to 8 miles out towards the ocean.

Sure Perth is on the crest of the wave at present - everyone busy - plenty of money. Railways Ad for boys yesterday - start at 15 - 5[pound] odd per week to start. Talking Drs – Lindsay's son Andrew starts 1st year Med coming year. His young brother Robert is about 8 years - another to follow on. I enjoyed seeing the slides of my old home - now 100 yrs. Also Church Gt James St. Too late to find out anything about Agnes McDonald - A girl friend of my teen years. The family were all musicians .

16 th. This is to close down - I'm waiting for Alan to get your address. Mrs B joins me in wishing you & family All the best for Xmas - New Year & beyond. Cheerio J. E. Barr.

Hot as fire here to day

Alison Gregg's Grandfather (John English Barr) and his son Alan Alison Barr (Alison's father) taken at North Beach in late 1920s or early 30s;



Colonial Clergymen and their Curious Kinds of Conveyances

The following precis of the paper read to the Friends of Battye Library by Rev'd Fr E. W. Doncaster at our last general meeting has been provided by Annie Medley.

Today with our busy lives we think little of the roads, rail and sea travel that allow us to keep our various and many appointments and plane travel is the norm for many busy individuals. On May 12th 2009, the Friends paused to reflect the not so easy days of travel in Western Australia for those intrepid clergy bold enough to take up the challenge.

Through the use of pictures and some colorful stories Fr. Ted Doncaster delivered a presentation enjoyed by all present which highlighted just how, especially in the early days, the clergy got around this rugged country. Whether they were stranded in the bush - only to be met by their own "undertaker", a tireless cyclist on dirt tracks having to retrace his steps by foot to pick up parts, bogged in cars on muddy tracks or flying to Rottneest in tiny planes for Sunday service all showed that in times of hardship they had a fortitude to make do and get on with the job, often with a sense of humor. For those who missed out, this talk will be presented to The Royal Western Australian Historical Society in early 2010.

Annie Q. Medley



Rev'd H.W. Simpson "Indian" motor 28 cycle with side-car. (Courtesy Battye Library 4131B/4)

Members' news

We are delighted to announce that two of our long term members, who are both Friends of Battye Library 'Gems of Time', have also been honoured by appointments to the Order of Australia in recognition of their outstanding achievement and service to the community.

Lennie McCall AM

Lennie has been awarded the Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for service to the preservation and promotion of history through state and national organisations, and to librarianship. Her professional career as a

librarian began as a young cadet in 1956 and at her retirement in 1998, she was the Director of the J S Battye Library of West Australian History. As one of Western Australia's pre-eminent librarians she has been instrumental in shaping policy and practice for the State Library and the Battye Library. As Director of the Battye Library Lennie was responsible for lifting its profile and attracting donations of valuable and unique Western Australian materials. She is also a strong advocate for the development of library and information services for Indigenous people and communities.

Lennie has been a key member of the Friends of Battye Library since its formation in 1981 and was for many years an *ex officio* member of the management committee. She was one of the driving forces behind the successful Historical Records Rescue Consortium, and is also Chairman of Council for the Royal Western Australian Historical Society. Gracious and charming, with a keen sense of humour, Lennie is indefatigable in her commitment to collecting and preserving Western Australia's history.

Ruth Marchant James OAM

Ruth has been awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for service to the community through the documentation of the history of Western Australia. She is a celebrated author, historian and leading authority on Western Australian history, particularly, that of the foundation of the Swan River Colony and the early years of Western Australia. Her most recent book is *Cottesloe - a town of distinction* which won the Premier's award for History in 2008.

Ruth with her husband, Bill James, has been an active member of the Friends of Battye Library Inc. for many years and is always generous with her time and knowledge. One of her favourite sayings is, "If you think you can, you can. If you think you can't, you're right." Even in her senior years, there is not much Ruth can't do. Her humour, energy, enthusiasm and zest for life are truly remarkable.

Our warmest congratulations to both Lennie and Ruth on their well-deserved honours.

Jennie Carter

The James Sykes Battye Fellowship

Report from the inaugural Battye Fellow Dr Sue Graham-Taylor

History of the Swan River

The James Sykes Battye Memorial Fellowship was established through the Leah Jane Cohen bequest to commemorate the 50th Anniversary



Portrait of Dr J S Battye, first State Librarian.
(Courtesy Battye Library)

of the J S Battye Library of West Australian History. I was honoured to be appointed the inaugural Battye Fellow, to commence my research in October 2007.

The aims of the Fellowship are to:

Promote the Battye Library as a centre of original research and scholarship in WA,

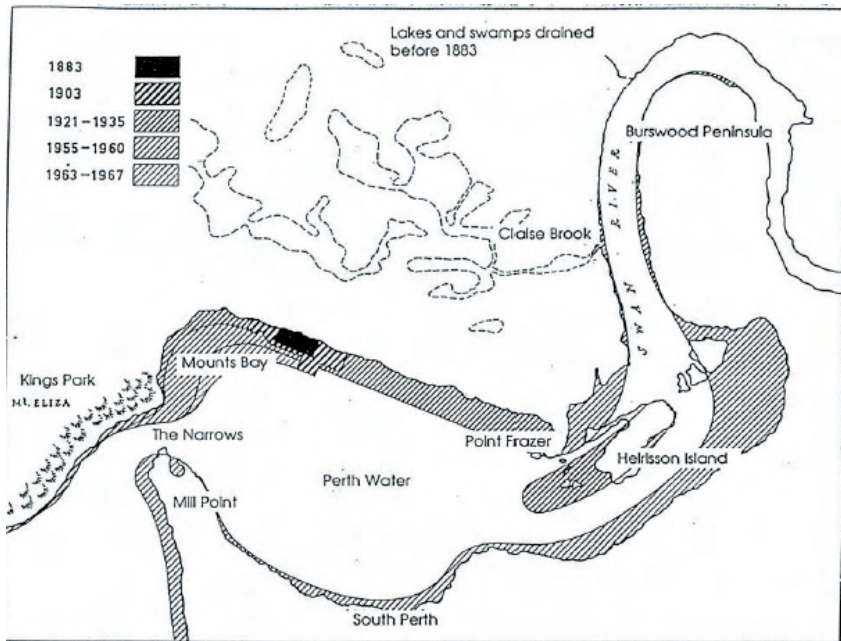
Encourage the use of the unique collections of the Battye Library;

Encourage research, publication, presentation and discussion based on them.

My topic, the history of the Swan River, arose from an active interest in the present state of the Swan as a River under stress from an environmental perspective and my interest as a historian in human use and abuse of the River. The Swan River lies at the heart of Perth and in 2004 was awarded the status of Western Australia's first heritage icon. The Swan River has linked suburbs and regions, the hills and the sea. It has been a transport route, a source of food, a sewer, a rubbish dump but also a spiritual place and a place where people are able to reflect and recreate. However, there has been no complete history of the River and its community connections.

In my application for the Battye Fellowship, I initially proposed to use the extensive Battye and State Records Office collections, as well as community voices in the form of oral histories, to document the community history of the Swan River. However, I was persuaded to narrow the focus

of my work and I chose to restrict myself to Perth Water - an area then under discussion in the context of the Perth Waterfront – Landcorp’s plans for linking Perth’s foreshore with the city.



Foreshore infilling

Map courtesy Sue Graham-Taylor.

It did not take me long to realize that even this reduced scope would be a problem. First, it is difficult to look at the River except in the context of the whole catchment. The total catchment of the Swan Avon River is 125,000 square kilometres, so activities very far from Perth, and often at some distance from the River, impact on the River itself and are a key part of any history of the Swan River.

Secondly, the research I sought to undertake was very broad, including engineering, planning, ecological knowledge, hydrological, political knowledge and thirdly, the community connection to the River, both Indigenous and non Indigenous was clear, but the problem was how to harness this as part of the project.

Very little has been written on the history of rivers in Australia with rivers generally seen by historians as the backdrop to history, rather than as

a vital and living part of that history. To the Noongar traditional owners and custodians, Western Australia's Swan River, the Derbal Yerrigan, has remained at the heart of their culture and heritage for more than 40,000 years. Their knowledge has not to date been taken into account in planning for the future of the River.

In documenting engineering works and changes that involved dredging and reshaping the river, as well as the construction of infrastructure



Aerial photograph of the Narrows Bridge and freeway construction.

3 March 1964

Photo: Aerial Surveys Australia. (Courtesy Battye Library 257867PD)

such as bridges, I relied on government files, particularly the Public Works Department, Planning, Main Roads, and the State Gardens Board, as well as newspapers. I also relied heavily on maps of all sorts – early exploration maps, sketches by colonists, plans from government departments particularly PWD plans and above all photographs, of which the Battye Library has a fantastic collection. The story of pollution of the River involved records of individual facilities and industries as well as newspapers and the Battye's records of community groups such as the Swan River Pollution Committee and the Society for the Protection of Kings Park and the Swan River.

Recreation on and around the River was another huge area where there was a wealth of secondary and primary material in the Battye collection. The involvement of the community in the protection of the River became clear early, but I was unsure just how would I involve people with the project. Fortunately this proved easy – but I would have liked to have taken this a bit further. I had a bit of radio and newspaper publicity when I was awarded the Fellowship. This meant that I was constantly being asked to speak about the River at a variety of functions, adjusting my talk

to the part of the River where I was speaking.

My first Community Forum held at the Library looked at the future of the Swan River, with speakers on the state of the River, the various proposals for the riverfront and the heritage values of the recreation ground/Esplanade area. A few months later, I organised a second Community Forum, this time using photographs to encourage people to reflect on their connections with the River. Selected stories were interspersed with voices from the floor. Speakers covered Indigenous cultural connections, yachting, swimming, fishing and boat building. A couple of poets read their work and the Swan River Trust provided an overview at the end.

The project saw successful community interaction with the State Library of WA on an important community issue. I am in the process of producing a web site to provide information about the history of the Swan and a book using around 100 key photographs, largely from the extensive Battye collection, relating to *Perth Water: the Heart of a City*. I



Royal Perth Yacht Club jetty c.1919. Photo by Izzy Orloff. Royal Perth Yacht Club's original location was at the bottom of William Street. Perth City Baths built in 1897, were superseded by Crawley Baths in 1914 and demolished in 1920. (Courtesy Battye Library 112364PD)

have also completed a great deal of work towards a major history of the Swan River. I hope to continue working with the Battye Library on this issue, perhaps producing an exhibition based on my work and organizing a broader Conference on River History.

To be awarded the Battye Fellowship was an immense privilege. I was able to work within the Battye Library, a huge and valuable repository of Western Australian history. I worked with librarians and archivists behind the scenes, to get an understanding of their roles, their challenges and their achievements and I recognised the growing importance of libraries as community information hubs.

Sue Graham-Taylor

Battye Library Survey and State Library response

Last year a group convened by the History Council of Western Australia which represented a broad range of history organisations, including the Friends of Battye Library Inc., conducted a survey of Battye Library users. The survey was also supported and promoted by the State Library and attracted replies from a range of clients, but almost 90% identified themselves as long term users of the Battye Library. In general the comments were positive, and it is clear that there is loyal support for the Battye Library and its staff, but there were some items of concern that the CEO and State Librarian, Margaret Allen, agreed to consider. Survey respondents were also apprehensive that the name 'J S Battye Library of West Australian History' or its shortened form 'Battye Library', would under the Library restructure, eventually disappear.

The State Library has addressed some key issues.

1. It is anticipated that problems with research access in the Battye Library's reading room, and concerns about security of materials on the fourth floor will be alleviated with the opening of the new Researchers' Room at the end of this month.
2. Training and assistance for reference desk staff has concentrated on building up knowledge of the Battye collections.

In addition, the CEO, in a letter written to the President of the History Council, dated 15 May 2009, stated.

".. the Battye Library is and will remain a central part of the State Library of Western Australia. I would further like to reassure you that there is no intention to change the name of the Battye Library and in any instances where the name has been removed from the catalogue or web site, it has been done so in line with the library's systemised approach to naming conventions. The State Library is dedicated to maintaining the Battye Library as the world's most comprehensive and diverse repository of Western Australian materials."

At the Friends of Battye Library Committee meeting on 9 June , it was resolved to accept with appreciation the CEO's assurance and to review the situation in six months time.

Pamela Statham Drew

Jack's back - Our holiday at winter's outset

180 Years since the founding of Western Australia!

215 Years since the original 'glorious 1st of June'!

I write this piece a week or so before the important anniversary that we now mark rather quietly but which brings us the one holiday and long weekend of our winter months. It has set me to consider the history and timing of some of the public holidays that Western Australians have enjoyed over the years.

The questionable Foundation day of his own choosing was certainly well feted while Governor Stirling was at the helm. Naturally enough, it was the first holiday of purely local significance to be added to the several inherited from the church calendar and British practice. One of these, for the first few years, was the anniversary of the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660, on 29 May, but presumably this proved too inconveniently close to the 1st of June to warrant continuance.

Just a week after Stirling's return from his lengthy visit to England in August 1834, a Government notice in the *Perth Gazette* announced that eight days would be observed annually as public service holidays. Besides the three religious occasions of Good Friday, Christmas Day and Whitmonday, they were the anniversaries of the King's birthday (21 August), the Queen's birthday (14 August), the Battle of Waterloo (18 June), the Battle of Trafalgar (21 October), and the Foundation of the Colony which was again emphasised as the 1st of June. Thus it meant quite a plethora of holidays in the wintertime, and even Whitsun could fall as late as 13 June!

During the 1840s, Foundation Day was usually enlivened by such amusements as horse racing, a regatta and a tradesman's ball. Then in 1850 the colony received a much-needed fillip with the arrival of the first shipload of convicts on 1 June, its twenty-first birthday.

Governor Kennedy has won a reputation for the thorough shake-up he gave the public service soon after his arrival in July 1855, and clearly he would have allowed little scope for idleness and frivolity. So a *Gazette* notice in November declared that in future there would be only four public service holidays - Christmas Day, Good Friday, the Queen's Birthday, and Coronation Day. However, perhaps he was succumbing to local pressure when Foundation Day was restored as a fifth one on

the list in 1860. Throughout the world generally, the rationale of public holidays developed considerably in the latter nineteenth century. Their status was further defined here by the Bank Holidays Act of 1884, which followed example in England of 1871.

The next local holiday added to the calendar marked the inauguration of Responsible Government in 1890. Governor Robinson formally proclaimed the adoption of the new Constitution at a ceremony held on Perth Esplanade in 21 October, the day after he came back from England to begin a third term in office here. Proclamation Day continued to be a holiday for the next thirty years. From 1892 it also served to accommodate Eight Hours Day, when the trade union movement underlined its achievements with a procession through the city streets. In 1922, renamed Labour Day, the holiday was moved to the first Monday in May, so falling into line with many other countries. Finally, in 1949, it was again transferred to the first Monday in March. This removed it from proximity to the nationwide holiday for Anzac Day, but it was the more reliable weather that was really the decisive factor in this choice.

Another example of a dual holiday is that of the Queen's Birthday, in which not so long ago was repositioned for observance on the Monday of Royal Show week and thereby justified the cessation of the Show Day holiday that formerly took place on the Wednesday. It is because of the proximity of Foundation Day that Western Australia alone celebrates the official royal birthday in springtime and at a far different date from the other States and other Commonwealth countries.

In 1972 a small semi-government body was created called the Western Australia Week Council, whose purpose was to promote a range of events and activities associated with heritage matters. Renamed as Celebrate W.A. in 1994, it directs a prime focus on Foundation Day, but has also placed some emphasis on the Proclamation anniversary.

Turning to the private sphere, we note the formation in the year 2000 of the Nelson Society of Australia, which has its base in Perth. This worthy body arranges various public functions on or near 21 October to mark the anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar and Nelson's death.

There is little likelihood of a public holiday ever returning on 21 October, but one that would celebrate both Trafalgar and Self-Government would surely have appeared a very pleasing prospect to our founding Governor!

Jack Honniball

Membership Subscription (from 1 July to 30 June - GST inclusive)

Life membership \$500

Annual membership

Ordinary \$20

Joint \$30

Pensioner / student / junior \$10

Corporate \$50

Meetings

General meetings are held each year in March, May, July (also the Annual General Meeting), September and November (also the end of year function). These are held at the State Library of Western Australia and usually begin at 5.00 pm for 5.30 pm and conclude before 7.00 pm.

Newsletter

Published four times per year - March, June, September and November (no newsletter is published in May). Articles from members and supporters are very welcome and the deadline for copy for the newsletter is 10 February, 10 June, 10 August and 15 October each year. The editor reserves the right to accept or reject articles and notices for publication.

Contact details

For comments, more information, membership forms, a copy of the Friends of Battye Library (Inc) Constitution, or to send articles and notices for the newsletter, please contact:

The Secretary, Lorraine Dearnley on dearnley@aapt.net.au, or,

The editor, Jennie Carter at bevnjen@gmail.com

or write to:

The Secretary
Friends of Battye Library (Inc)
P O Box 216
Northbridge WA 6865

J S Battye Library of West Australian History

Opening hours Mon/Thurs 9.00 am - 8.00 pm
 Friday 9.00 am - 5.30 pm
 Sat/Sun 10.00 am - 5.30 pm
 Public holidays - closed (from 1 July 2009)

Retrievals Every half hour during opening hours.

Telephone enquiries (08) 9427 3291 Fax enquiries (08) 9427 3256
Website www.slwa.wa.gov.au Email: battye.library@slwa.wa.gov.au

Specialist staff: Sarah Brown (Battye Historian) (08) 9427 3165
Steve Howell (Senior Subject Specialist : Battye) (08) 9427 3476
Carmel McRobert (Subject Specialist : Battye) (08) 9427 3305

State Library shop: Mon/Fri 10.00 am-5.00 pm. Sat & Sun 12.00 noon-5.00 pm.

State Records Office

The SRO Search Room on the Ground Floor is open for enquiries and use of material on weekdays from 9.30 am to 4.30 pm. A Researcher's Ticket is required.

Retrievals Previous day Available 9.30 am
 11.00 am Available 12.00 pm
 1.00 pm Available 2.00 pm

Requests for use of Government archives in the Battye Library must be lodged at the State Records Office by 1.00 pm if required the same evening and by 1.00 pm on Friday if required on the weekend; for continued use of the material in this way, the requests must be renewed on each occasion they are required. Requests must also be submitted for after hours use of State Records Office microfilm.

Telephone (08) 9427 3360, website www.sro.wa.gov.au, email: sro@sro.wa.gov.au

The Genealogy Centre

(First Floor State Library) for Family History research.

Opening hours- as per Battye Library opening hours.

Specialist staff for Family History: Tricia Fairweather ((08) 9427 3395), Leonie Hayes (08) 9427 3247. Email: family.history@slwa.wa.gov.au

Volunteers from the Western Australian Genealogical Society Inc. (WAGS) are available to assist researchers on Tues, Wed, & Thurs from 9.30 am to 1.00 pm.