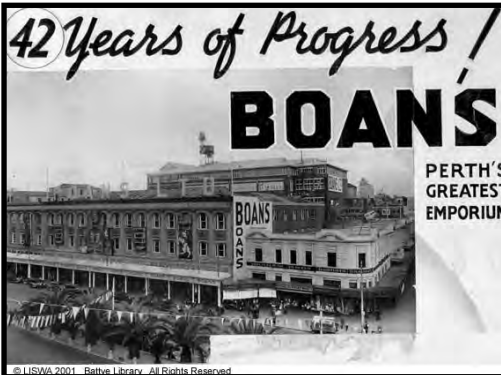


FRIENDS OF BATTYE LIBRARY (Inc.) NEWSLETTER

ABN 571625138800



History of Boans

Elevated view of the Boans Wellington Street entrance for promotional brochure, 1938. (Battye Library 000620D, Boans Collection.)

*David Hough
will speak on his research for his book on the
history of Perth's premier department store.*

*Our meeting will be held on
Tuesday 13 May 2008
5:00pm for 5:30pm start
State Library of Western Australia
Great Southern Room - (4th Floor)*

Please see details on Page 3

Our meeting

Tuesday 13 May 2008

Great Southern Room, 4th floor
State Library of Western Australia
5.00pm for 5.30pm.

Our speaker will be David Hough

***Boans for Service:
The history of Boans Limited Department Store***
(Details of David's talk is on page 4.)



State Library of Western Australia

Boans interior c1960. Photographer Fritz Kos. Courtesy Battye Library 340480PD. (Negative preserved through the HRRC project.)

We will be going to dinner at Vultures restaurant after the meeting and you are most welcome to join us. Bookings can be made on the night.

Please note:

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.

David Hough - Boans For Service

“If you can’t get it at Boans, you can’t get it in Perth,” was a familiar cry for nearly ninety years as Boan Brothers and then Boans Ltd established its reputation as a Universal Provider. David Hough will describe the challenges and the opportunities discovered through his undertaking of this commissioned history of Perth’s most famous, and most cherished, department store.

David, a Perth-based writer, was a theatre, opera and dance critic for more than twenty years for the *National Times*, *Dance Australia*, the *Bulletin* and the *Australian Financial Review*. He contributed to the *New Grove Dictionary of Opera* (1992), the *Companion to Theatre in Australia* (1995), the *New Grove Dictionary of Music* (2001), the *Historical Encyclopaedia of Western Australia* (now in production), and the forthcoming *Biographical Dictionary of the Australian Senate, V. 10*. He was also a regular broadcaster for the ABC’s *News Commentary* program.

His ‘Spectator’ columns for the *Australian Financial Review* were published in 1991 under the title *The Chameleon’s Dish* and his survey of Western Australian Theatre, 1829-1992, was published in 2003 in *Farewell Cinderella: creating arts and identity in Western Australia*. His *A Dream of Passion: the centennial history of His Majesty’s Theatre* was released in November 2004, and was short-listed for the 2005 Western Australian Premier’s History Prize.

He continues to contribute theatre criticism and the occasional Obituary to the *West Australian* – for pleasure, not for profit.



Boans Tea Rooms
c1920.

(Battye Library
112320PD.)

Message from the President.

Dear members,

We are in for a treat with David Hough presenting a paper on Boans on the 13th may - do hope you can come. We are looking for new members too so if you would like to bring a guest, we will make them welcome.

You may have heard about the recent survey of Battye Library users. The History Council of WA with the support of the State Library has circulated a comprehensive survey of services in the Battye Library. The survey finished on 30 April and when the results have been collated and analysed, a report will be provided in this newsletter for our members.

It is worthy of note that microfilm and reader printer machines in the Battye Library's reading room are being up-graded - not before time, but a very welcome addition for researchers.

Pamela Statham Drew

New Director of State Records

As mentioned in the last newsletter, Ms Cathrin Cassarchis commenced as Director of State Records on 4 March 2008. Ms Cassarchis, who hails from Melbourne, came to the State Records Office with a background in archives as previous Head of Public Affairs at The National Archives in the United Kingdom.

Following her return to Australia in 2001, Ms Cassarchis was the Director of the Foundation at the Western Australian Museum. The previous Director of State Records, Tony Caravella, left the organisation in August 2007 for the Commonwealth Administrative Appeals Tribunal. Leigh Hays, Manager of Archival Services at the SRO, served as Acting Director during the seven months interval between Tony's departure and Cathrin's arrival at the SRO.

State Library Bookshop - discount for members

I am delighted to report that the State Library has again 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

It is interesting to learn that the bookshop now stocks archival materials as recommended by the State Library's conservation staff. There are a variety of boxes, paper and card, photo enclosures, binders and gloves available to help us preserve our precious items.

As a service to customers, the bookshop will order in Australian and Western Australian titles which are currently not in stock. Staff are also keen to learn of new titles and Western Australian publications.

The bookshop staff look forward to seeing many visitors to the shop.

State Records Office: Margaret Medcalf Award 2008

This Award was first presented in 2003 and honours Margaret Medcalf, who is well known to Friends of Battye Library members as the distinguished former Battye Librarian and State Archivist of Western Australia. Ms Medcalf held both positions from 1971 to 1989.

The award recognises excellence in referencing and research, resulting from use of the State archives collection at the SRO. All works nominated for this year's award must have been completed and/or published in 2007 and submitted to the Director of SRO prior to 1 April 2008. The Award ceremony will take place on 14 May at the Alexander Library Building.

Wanted: Australia's Missing Newspapers

If there's a stack of old newspapers gathering dust under the bed or out in the shed, the State Library of Western Australia wants to know about it.

The search is on for these valuable pieces of our social history as part of the Australian Newspaper Plan (ANPlan), a nation-wide initiative of state and territory libraries designed to find, collect and preserve access to historic newspapers. As a result of the work of the project to date, missing newspapers have been identified and the next step is to try to find these missing titles.

Become a newspaper detective!

We'd like your help to look for the missing newspapers and submit them to us for preservation. The missing titles which the State Library of Western Australia would like to find urgently include:

- *Pilbarra Goldfields News* (missing all of 1901)
- *Northam Courier* (missing all of 1915)
- *Geraldton Express* (missing all of 1916)
- *Swan Express* (missing all of 1916)
- *Evening Star* (Boulder - missing all of 1919)
- *The Swan River Guardian* (1836 and 1838, various issues)
- *Bulong Bulleting and Mining Register* (1897, various issues)
- *Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News* (1855 – 1857, various issues)

As well as many other titles. For a full list of the wanted newspapers, go to www.nla.gov.au/anplan

If you uncover these wanted papers, which may have been lying hidden in someone's garage, in an elderly person's collection of keepsakes or even in the vaults of a local historical society or archive, please telephone Carmel McRobert, Battye Library Subject Specialist, on (08) 9427 3305 to find out how you can help.

For a full list of the wanted newspapers, go to <http://www.nla.gov.au/anplan>

(From SLWA's website)

Email addresses needed

To enable us to share information and keep members up to date on important happenings, a group email list for current members is being prepared. 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 with your email details.

I recently circulated the Battye Library Questionnaire to members and if you received it, then your email address has already been included on the list and you do not need to reply to me or Nick.

If you have received the survey but do not want to be sent any more Friends of Battye Library information by email, please let us know and we will remove your email details from the group list.

Thank you for your assistance and co-operation in establishing this new service for members.

Jennie Carter

New Client copying service at the SRO

In August 2007 the State Records Office introduced a new service - the Client Copy Centre. This service replaced the SRO's photocopy service, and provides better access to copies by researchers, allows a greater range of materials to be copied (including volumes), and provides better protection for archival materials.

The Centre is situated in the SRO Search Room, and consists of a camera, copy-stand and PC. This facility has been set up to enable researchers to copy material for themselves. Clients may take images of archival material (subject, of course, to copyright provisions and the fragility of the record), and save the images to a portable USB device (flash or thumbdrive) or burn to a CD. These images may be printed at home or work, or through a commercial copying service such as OfficeWorks.

Of course, clients may continue to use their own cameras to copy archives in the SRO Search Room, if they prefer to do so.

Tom Reynolds

Films from Yesteryear

Enjoy a selection of short films from the State Film Archives which have been preserved by the Historical Records Rescue Consortium funded by Lotterywest. These films are shown monthly on Wednesdays in the State Library Theatre from 12:30pm to 1:30pm.

28 May 2008

Water for you [1980] (17min.colour, sound). The story of water from reservoir to tap, with an emphasis on conservation.

Forecasting bushfire weather [1961] (12min; colour, sound). This WA Government film describes the steps that can be taken to reduce the risk of bushfire.

Royal Show [1909] (9min; b&w, silent). The country comes to the city. Early footage of Perth's largest annual community event.

Barrow island [1968] (10min; colour, sound). The establishment and operation of the Barrow Island oilfield.

Shearing at Tambellup [1975] (7min; colour, silent). An educational film showing all shearing activities from paddock to truck.

25 June 2008

Grandstand Perth – The summer sports scene [1971] (17mins; colour, sound). A dramatised story of the sporting activities in Perth over the summer of 1970/71.

The Centaur [1977] (11mins; colour, sound/ No commentary.) An educational film about the ship that sailed between Fremantle and Singapore.

Head of the River [1958] (3mins; b&w, silent). Official launch and rowing races including shots of the race from Kings Park.

South West Corner [1958] (916mins; colour, sound). A promotional film of the South West featuring the history and lifestyle of this popular region.

Historical Records Rescue Consortium (HRRC) project

The HRRC archival film screenings were held during the February. The Project Manager presented the films and also promoted the HRRC exhibition, talks and tours. There were 100 people who attended the film matinees, 10 people at the story telling and 35 people on the tours for the month of February.

The HRRC exhibition closed on 27 February and is on travel to selected Western Australian regional libraries.

The website has been updated and some additional images added. The site can be viewed at <http://www.hrrc.org.au>

Newspapers:

The preservation of newspapers project has been completed:

Microfilming total is 833,803 pages (119%), 1,229 reels.

Which consists of:

West Australian (January 1912 – December 1954) 270,979 pages

Western Mail (January 1907 – January 1926) 59,376 pages

Coolgardie Miner (March 1913 - December 1917) 1,277 pages

Kalgoorlie Miner (January 1906 – December 1950) 113,049 pages

Northern Times (August 1905 - June 1952) 18,907 pages

Pilbarra Goldfields News (January 1898 – December 1900, January 1902 – March 1923) 6,032 pages

Eastern Districts Chronicle (January 1906 – January 1927) 6,711 pages

South Western News (April 1905 – December 1949) 15,660 pages

Geraldton Guardian (October 1906 – December 1950), 39,090 pages

Daily News (July 1882 – December 1950) 263,032 pages

Southern Times (April 1894 – July 1903) 9,467 pages

Albany Advertiser (January 1902 – February 1950) 30,223 pages

Preservation of Photographic Negatives:

The total number of images digitised for the HRRC project to date is 77,716. A total of 45,795 images have been catalogued, linked and made available on-line for the HRRC project. This figure exceeds the projected outcome of 20,000 images.

Motion Picture Film Preservation:

The total number of film titles outsourced for preservation copying since commencement of the project is 150 film titles. One hundred and forty eight (148) film titles have been saved to a stable polyester base. Total of 130 titles have been copied to DVD.

All regional public libraries have received free copies of all microfilmed newspapers and motion picture film DVDs that are relevant to their districts.

Pat Beament, HRRRC Project Manager.

Sandwich Seminars in the State Records Office

Periodically SRO holds community seminars designed to provide an introduction for new clients, to help them better understand how to access the vast range of historical material contained within the collection. An annual program of lunchtime seminars, known as Sandwich Seminars are available, or clients may request a specific seminar or presentation. Seminar numbers are usually restricted to no more than 15 people.

The Sandwich seminars are presented by SRO staff or by researchers with many years experience using the State archives collection. The seminars usually consist of a series of short talks on different areas of the collection, followed by brief question and answer sessions.

These lunchtime seminars are held between 12.30pm and 1:30 on the dates stated and are free of charge. They are held in the South West Room (Ground Floor) of the Alexander Library Building, Perth. This meeting room is located adjacent to the State Records Office Search Room. Bookings are essential and can be made at the SRO Enquiry desk or on ph. 9427 3360 in the fortnight prior to each seminar.

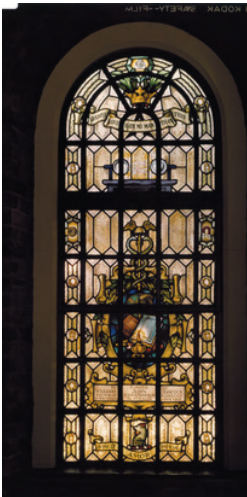
The next Sandwich Seminar will be presented by Tom Reynolds, the SRO's Archives Research Officer, on Wednesday 30 April . The topic is 'Maps and Plans in the State archives collection'.

Tom Reynolds

A voyage of artistic discovery using the Battye Collections

By Robyn Taylor

In the course of my work researching building histories for heritage related projects I often wonder about the artist or artisan behind the stained glass window, the uniquely designed terrazzo floor, and the well-designed wrought iron gate. Were these objects imported or produced locally? If they are local products, then who was the designer, and how were these objects manufactured? Sometimes the answers are found in the course of research, but all too often the artists and artisans remain anonymous.



rary of Western Australia
Stained glass window in Winthrop Hall, University of WA. (Battye Library 085354PD)

My chance to find out came when the Friends agreed to fund a pilot study using funds from the Maude Sholl Bequest. The study is entitled *Artists, artisans, and manufacturing industries located in the Perth metropolitan area, 1900 to 1939. An annotated bibliography of sources held in the JS Battye Library of West Australian History.*

I started with some artists I was already familiar with such as Wilfred Priestner (1871-1961) whose papers are lodged in the Battye's Private Archives. Priestner was a wrought iron artist and engineer who began to practise his trade around 1919. His workshop was located in Kingsway, Nedlands. I knew about Priestner's work on the University of WA campus, although a Melbourne firm had undertaken the initial ironwork on the Hackett Memorial Buildings, and there had been some confusion about which firm was responsible for what.

The Priestner archives proved to be a treasure trove of information about his dealings with many of Perth's architectural firms and the commissions he undertook all over the State, and interestingly, the range of products he designed from hospital operating trolleys to steel window frames. However the most rewarding find was the collection of delightfully illustrated letters from Monsignor Hawes, the priest-architect,

who commissioned Priestner to undertake much of the wrought-iron work for his churches and his own priest-house in Mullewa.

These letters are not only precious documents, but also very fragile, and staff were notified about their vulnerability. Detailed descriptions of Hawes' buildings can be found in John Taylor's beautifully illustrated publication *Between Devotion and Design* published in 2000, which can be found on the Battye shelves.



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Church of St Mary's priesthouse, Mullewa c1980
(Battye Library, 005436D: WA Tourism collection)

There are, however, few collections in Private Archives that relate to my area of study, therefore much time is being spent scanning the two main journals covering my research period; *Western Australian Mining, Building and Engineering Journal* (WAMBEJ). The Battye Library holds issues from July 1896 to September 1897, and from April 1903 to 1917, though there are some missing issues between 1913 and 1917. The other publication is *Building and Construction*, and holdings date from 1927 to the 1970s.

Unfortunately there will be a ten-year gap between these two collections of weekly trade journals that have proved in the past to be goldmines of information for historians. Neither journal has been indexed so it is generally 'hit and miss' for researchers looking for specific information. But there are benefits in not always knowing exactly where to look as serendipity often reveals other items that may prove useful. I sometimes think there is an angel or sprite that contrives to reveal a hidden gem of knowledge just as I start to wonder 'Why on earth am I am doing this?'

As I go through these collections Friends' member, Beth Frayne, is expertly assisting me. Beth has been trawling through the *Post Office*

Directories and creating spread sheets based on professions and trades such as artists, architects, stained glass and lead light companies, stone masons and monumental works, carpenters and wood carvers and turners, modellers and plaster companies.

Part of the study will be to match up Beth's data with the details of my research to create a document of sources for individual artists and companies. For example Barnett Bros was a firm producing a range of standard products including glass and leadlights for domestic homes. When the highly skilled stained glass artist H H Estcourt arrived in Western Australia during the gold boom and joined the firm, Barnett Bros was able to offer (and apparently for the first time in WA) locally designed and made stained glass windows that could compete with the English and Irish glass that had previously dominated the market. The *Western Australian Mining, Building and Engineering Journal* reveals the beginnings of Barnett Bros activity in this area and Estcourt's work being installed in places such as St George's Cathedral and St Mary's Catholic Cathedral in Perth and a number of other churches.

Estcourt, like Priestner, received a number of commissions resulting from the work of architect Mons. Hawes. It would have been during the process of researching his book on Hawes, that John Taylor started compiling information on stained glass artists. This resulted in his monograph, *Investigation and Assessment of Stained Glass Windows in St Francis Xavier Cathedral, Geraldton, Western Australia*, which was produced in 1999 and copies lodged in the Battye Library. This document contains details on H H Estcourt, Barnett Bros. Ltd, and other English stained glass artists.

I was also excited to find new references to the work of Phil Goatcher, the world famous designer of theatre drop curtains and scenery who decided to make WA his home. Some of Goatcher's work is described and illustrated in David Hough's publication on His Majesty's Theatre, *A Dream of Passion*, copies of which are held in the Battye Library. I knew Goatcher and his son also undertook the decoration of office buildings and homes and references to specific commissions by Goatcher & Son can be found in the *Western Australian Mining, Building and Engineering Journal*.

There have been similar exciting finds relating to a wide range of related

topics such as the training of artisans at the Perth Technical School; the finding and promoting of Donnybrook stone for local building; the modelling and plaster work of Robert Tindale who designed the lions on top of His Majesty's Theatre as well as some, or maybe all, of the celebratory arches that adorned the city for the visit of the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall in 1901. Photographs of these arches can be found in the Pictorial Collection (see example below) and that other great resource, *Twentieth Century Impressions* (see pp.56-58).

Robyn Taylor



State Library of Western Australia

The Agricultural Arch, Barrack Street Perth, July 1901.
(Battye Library 006674PD)

Sholl Bequest funding for CSO file listings

In late 2005 the Friends of Battye Library Committee granted funds to the State Records Office, to be spent in the 2006/07 financial year, to employ a project officer to commence the compilation of an electronic list of records in the main Colonial Secretary's Office correspondence file sequence from 1878 – 1918.

Andrew Morant was employed as the project officer last year and started the listing, familiarising himself with the peculiarities of 19th century administrative language and creating a useful listing of these records for SRO staff and clients. Andrew finished the first stage of the project in June last year. Earlier this year the Friends granted more funding to SRO so that Andrew could be re-employed to continue working on these vital colonial records. He recommenced with SRO on 25 March and will be working on the records until mid June. Welcome back Andrew!

Tom Reynolds

Friends of Battye Library \$5000 Research Grant awarded

In commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the JS Battye Library of West Australian History the Friends of Battye Library funded a research grant. In 2007 applications were called for research proposals that provide guides, links, or aids to interpreting specific aspects of existing Battye Library collections. We are pleased to announce that the successful applicant for the \$5000 grant is Julie Martin who has commenced a project to compile a user friendly and comprehensive *Guide to Western Australian Legislative Assembly Electoral districts 1904-1980*.

The guide will assist the public, historians, researchers and genealogists to more readily locate persons registered to vote in Western Australia during this period. The dates 1904 to 1980 have been chosen as there were few if any electoral rolls published prior to 1904. From 1980 to 2000 the electoral rolls were issued in alphabetical order by name of the elector. Since 2000 the rolls have reverted to previous electoral format with the Electoral Commission producing an alphabetical index of streets and areas covered by each electorate. Julie anticipates that her Guide will be completed by December 2008. It will then be available to users who visit the Battye Library and it is hoped that in due course it will be published on the State Library's website.

Jack's Back Before Siam, Anna was here awhile!

A fascinating new twist will henceforth attach to Western Australia's history in the convict era, as was recently indicated through an address delivered to the Royal Western Australian Historical Society. The speaker was Gerard Foley (of the State Records Office) and he was co-author of the exposition along with Alfred Habegger, historian and biographer, a resident of Oregon, USA. Their paper dealt with Thomas and Anna Leonowens and the four years they spent here from 1853 to 1857.

Quite a few of our Friends may at once recognise the name of Anna Leonowens as the lady who in 1862 took up a teaching post at the court of King Mongkut of Siam. Some will know of the book *Anna and the King of Siam* by Margaret Landon, published in 1944, and of the Hollywood film of the same name that was made in 1946. Virtually all will surely be aware of the splendid musical version of the story, *The King and I*, that came out five years later.

It sparks intriguing speculation why Anna herself made no mention of her Western Australian stay in her own rather imaginative autobiographies, and later biographers also met with some puzzlements about the period concerned. It was thanks to the publication in 1979 of Volume 3 of the *Dictionary of Western Australians* (edited by Rica Erickson) that people gradually became aware of the sojourn here of Thomas Leonowens, together with his wife and growing family.

In their recent research, the joint authors actually uncovered a lot more about Thomas than about Anna, but this was most welcome for filling in serious gaps. Thomas served in government employ for three years in Perth and another year or so at Lynton near Port Gregory. Besides some valuable details of family history then, the research has been able to focus clearly on several interesting realms of the couple's experience, beginning with a near-shipwreck that preceded their arrival at Fremantle. Early on, prominence is accorded to the Swan River Mechanics Institute, then young and vigorous. Attention is next directed to the little-known Commissariat Department, and finally some animation is given to the short-lived convict depot at Lynton. No doubt the whole story will in future be well exploited for tourism purposes up at still-remote Port Gregory and its hinterland.

I will refrain from revealing more about Anna's later life, as that will be fully covered in a book which Al Habegger is now compiling under contract to a major American publisher. Instead I will indulge another of my own interests and switch to a survey of film and stage portrayals of the woman who trod the streets of tiny Perth more than 150 years ago before she went on to make her debut in royal Bangkok.

In the film of *Anna and the King of Siam*, the leading roles were interpreted by Irene Dunne and Rex Harrison, both highly respected stars in their time. Though well regarded generally, it failed to attract the level of business expected when it play for just a week at Perth's Plaza Theatre from 26 September 1947.

On the Broadway Stage, *The King and I* began its very successful run on 29 March 1951, with Gertrude Lawrence and Yul Brynner taking the leads. Brynner again played the King in the sumptuous film adaptation of 1956, which also had Deborah Kerr admirably cast as Anna. In Perth the film ran four weeks at the Ambassadors Theatre from 23 May 1957 and a fifth week at the Plaza soon after.

It was 1963 before Perth was able to enjoy the first of several stage productions of the *King and I*. This ran three weeks at the Capitol Theatre, with Susan Swinford as Anna. Then in June 1982 Terri Johnson played the part in a season of 16 nights at the lately restored His Majesty's Theatre. The same venue hosted the most elaborate presentation of all for a season of seven weeks from 17 August 1991, with Nyree Dawn Porter as Anna. Two 'amateur' productions also made brief appearances at the Capitol in 1965 and in 2004 at the Regal Theatre in Subiaco.

Hollywood's third film offering (and without music) came to Perth on 16 December 1999 and played five weeks at Cinema City and Cinecentre in turn, with simultaneous suburban release. Called *Anna and the King* it projected Jodie Foster as the latest depiction of Anna.

So, all in all, the long-gone Anna must be quite a well-known personage in this part of the world once again, and likely to be more so.

Jack Honniball