

No. 184



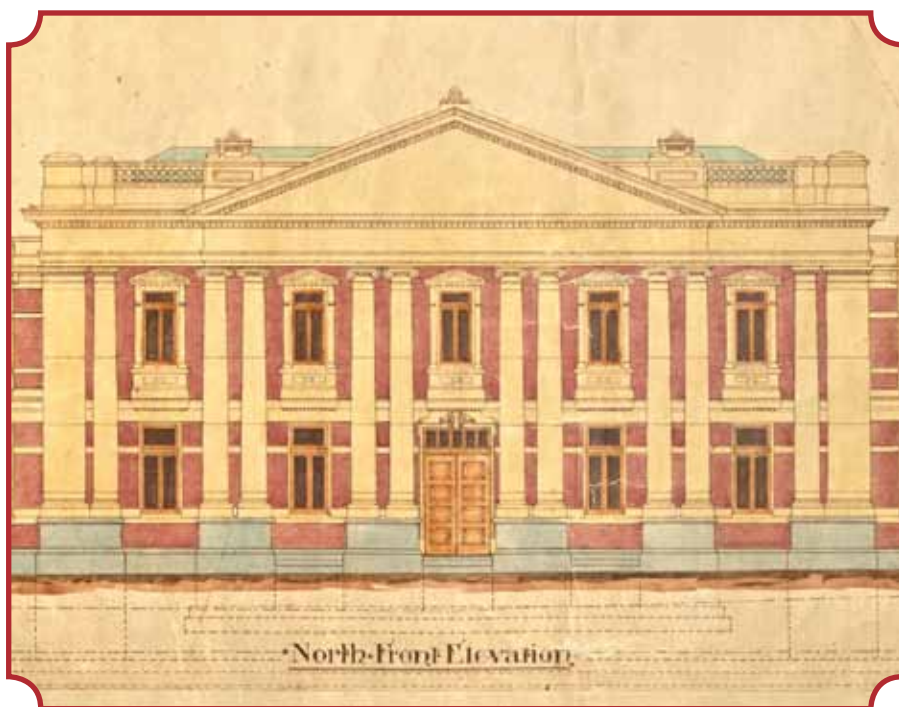
November 2025

FRIENDS OF BATTYE LIBRARY (Inc.) NEWSLETTER

Our End of Year meeting 18 November 2025

Caroline Ingram

*Women on Trial: The criminal trials of women in colonial
Western Australia.*



Plan for the New Supreme Court building in Perth [detail]
(State Records Office Western Australia (SROWA) Cons 1647 item 7897)

Tuesday 18 November 2025 at 5.00pm for 5.30pm. *See details on page 3.*

Objectives

The objectives of the Friends of Battye Library (Inc.) are to assist and promote the interests of the JS 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 Miss Margaret Medcalf OAM

Committee (2025-2026)

President	Jennie Carter (from September 2025)
Vice President	Vacant
Secretary	Pamela Statham Drew
Treasurer	Nick Drew
Membership Secretary	Cherie Strickland
Events Coordinator	Helen Mather

Committee members Lorraine Clarke, Steve Errington, Raymond Marks, and Michael Nind.

Ex-Officio Catherine Clark (CEO & State Librarian)
Damien Hassan (Senior Archivist, State Records Office)
Kate Gregory (Battye Historian)

Newsletter editor Heather Campbell
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All correspondence (other than membership or *Newsletter* matters) to:

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Friends of Battye Library (Inc)
PO Box 6143
Swanbourne WA 60105.

Views expressed in this *Newsletter* are not necessarily those of the Friends of Battye Library Committee, the State Library of Western Australia, or the State Records Office.

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End of Year meeting

Tuesday 18 November 2025

Great Southern Room, 4th floor State Library of Western Australia
at 5pm for 5.30pm

Our speaker will be Caroline Ingram

*Women on Trial: The criminal trials of women in
colonial Western Australia.*

Help us celebrate the end of another year

After the talk, members and guests are warmly invited to stay on and join us for a catered two course spit-roast dinner which will be served in the staff dining room adjacent to the Great Southern Room.

**The dinner cost is only \$40 per head
Including wine and soft drinks**

We are grateful to Catherine Clark, CEO and State Librarian, for her generosity in making the 4th floor staff canteen again available to us.

Bookings for the dinner must be received by the morning of Friday 7 November as we must provide final numbers to the caterer. Please RSVP to Nick Drew by email at: nickdrew@bigpond.com or telephone 0409 290 895 by 3 November 2025. Payment can be made in advance to the Friends Bank Account: BSB 016 185 Account No 4220 58413 or by card. Or payment on the 19 November at the door by card or cash.

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.

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About our speaker Caroline Ingram

Caroline Ingram is a research assistant at the University of Western Australia. Her research interests include Western Australian history, Australian legal history, women's history and the history of marginalised people. She currently works for the Australian Legacies of Slavery project and the Two Centuries of Chinese Heritage in Western Australia project. She received her PhD in 2024 for the thesis 'Women in the Court: An Examination of Women's Trials Heard in the Court of Quarter Sessions and the Supreme Court of Western Australia, 1830–1890.'



Topic

Criminal records can tell us a lot about how women in the colony of Western Australia were treated by the criminal justice system – but, when read 'against the grain' they are equally as good at shedding light on the everyday lives of working-class women. By combining information from the criminal indictment records, newspaper articles and various diaries and journals from the State Library collection, we can also get an idea of the pathways that led women to offending and the impact that the trials had on their lives. Caroline's talk will discuss how different legal rules and institutions affected the trials of colonial women, how the trials were gendered and what the trial records can tell us about the lives of these women.



Meeting dates for 2026

- 10 March** Sue Graham Taylor - *The growth of environmental activism: the role of the WA Naturalists' Club*
- 12 May** Christine Harris - *Ghost Towns in WA*
- 14 July** TBC
- 8 September (AGM)** Jane Lydon - *Abolition of Slavery and Settler Colonisation*
- 17 November (End of year celebration)** Kate Gregory (Battye Historian) - TBC

President's piece

It is a privilege to be president of our society for the next twelve months.

I would like to convey my respect and gratitude to Richard Offen who has been an outstanding President over the last five years. Richard was elected in 2020 when Pamela Statham Drew decided that she needed a well-earned break after more than sixteen years steering the Friends through some very productive, challenging, and exciting times. Richard has taken the difficult decision to stand down midway through his term because of the need to concentrate on his other commitments leading up to the 2026 and 2029 anniversaries of European settlement in Western Australia.

Because we are now only holding elections every second year, as Vice President, I have taken over the role of President until our AGM in 2026. My sincere thanks to the wonderful committee of the Friends whose support I will be relying upon for the coming year. My appreciation also to all our members for your involvement in our vital organisation which exists to assist and promote the work of the Battye Library and the State Records Office.

Sadly, since our last meeting, members Ruth Marchant James (Gem of Time), Peter duCane, and Reg Appleyard have died. We pay tribute to them on page 6.

Jennie Carter



We made a mistake

In the July issue of the *Newsletter* it was stated that for the last ten years of his life, Patrick Richardson Bunbury worked four days a week as a volunteer in the State Library helping staff in the Archives section. We are grateful to Salwa Soliman who pointed out that in fact Patrick Richardson Bunbury volunteered at the State Library for four days a week for an amazing 24 years.



Obituaries

Ruth Marchant James OAM (1929-2025)

Goodbye to a Gem

Ruth Marchant James, who died on 6 August, aged 95, was a Gem of Time, thanks to the Friends of Batty Library who added this formal accolade to others that had come her way in a life of authorial achievement.



Ruth at the Pinnacles 2018 (J Carter)

Gems sparkle, don't they? This one certainly did. In 2006 Ruth shined brightly enough to go on the Friends list for outstanding contributions to the recording, collection and preservation of WA history.

On the domestic front, at the home in Karrinyup she shared with husband Bill James, Ruth was most smiley of hostesses, catering for guests enjoying food and drink while going backwards and forwards between the kitchen and the outside area next the swimming pool. She bustled without hustling.

As a writer she knew how to get the best out of people, whether her intellectual arena was Cottesloe or the legacy offered by the nuns who had taught her at Iona Presentation College in Mosman Park. Judging by her later years, we can surely assume that the young Ruth was rarely reticent in putting her point of view. The author of several exceptionally researched and crafted works of WA history, Ruth received the 2007 Premier's Book award for *Cottesloe: A Town of Distinction*. Her 2006 Gem of Time citation, recently republished in this *Newsletter* featured her many and impressive achievements.

Five brothers, no sisters. She must have had plenty of practice at assertion around the dinner table. Ruth had a sort of busy grace. Bill's death four years ago was a severe blow but unlikely to still her voice.

At her funeral in August I made sure to talk to all three of their children, Rochelle, Damien and Kieron. They were proud of the mother, historian, guide, entertainer and Gem.

Patrick Cornish

Peter du Cane (1951-2025)

Peter du Cane, who died on 28 March, aged seventy-four, was a writer, producer, and director. He was also a renowned filmmaker who was responsible for award-winning wildlife and historical films and documentaries.



Peter du Cane (Screenwest)

Peter also had a mission to save film in archival repositories, hence his interest in the Battye Library and in the Friends. He had been a member since 2018 and wrote an article for our November issue of that year which highlighted the looming problem facing collecting institutions like the State Library and the State Records Office.

Bill Bunbury, who interviewed Peter in November 2017 for the National Film and Sound Archive Australia, remembers Peter as an impressive, sympathetic, and productive film-maker, adding that he felt privileged to have been able to record the career such a skilled documentary producer.

Heather Campbell



Professor Reginald Thomas Appleyard (1927-2025)

Born in Claremont, Reg attended Swanbourne State School and Fremantle Boys' School. He served in the Merchant Navy 1946-47, travelling much of the world as a deck hand. In 1954 he completed an Arts degree, specialising in Economics, graduating with first class Honours. Funds provided by the Rockefeller Foundation allowed Reg to attend Duke University where he obtained a PhD in 1956.

On returning to Australia, Reg took a position in the Department of Demography at ANU, which from 1957-1968 was working for the government, researching why many £10 immigrants subsequently returned to the UK. Reg then turned to a longitudinal study of Greek migrants which resulted in two books. In 1966 he was offered the new



Chair of Economic History at UWA. Reg later became head of department, remaining in that position for seventeen years. A gentle man who disliked conflict, he worked hard to maintain harmony and staff appreciated his consultative approach. Fortunately Reg had retired before Economic History was virtually abolished and economics relegated to just enough units to comprise a major. It was recently noted that Reg was Acting Director of the GSM 1992-1993 working there in his retirement in 1992, thereby influencing many people across the Business School.

Reg believed economists should be skilled in three areas - Economic theory, Economic History and Measurement (Economic Statistics) - with Mathematical Economics increasing in importance over the years. He was a pivotal figure in running the Economics Department at UWA. He held the Japan Foundation's 1973 Distinguished Visiting Fellowship and received the Austin Holmes Award in 1992. Perhaps his most important contribution to the University was his role in introducing the Japanese Studies programme, which combined the Japanese language and studies of its culture with an economics degree.

His publications included *Immigration: Policy and Progress* (1970), *Ten Pound Immigrants* (1988), *International Migration Today* (1988), and *The Beginning: European Discovery and Early Settlement of Swan River, Western Australia* (1979).

A member of the Friends from the 1980s to his death, Reg had an amazing collection of Westraliana which comforted him in retirement. Reg and his late wife, Iris, lived in City Beach. Our condolences to daughters, Helen, Ingrid, and Wendy, and granddaughter Bianca.

Pamela Statham Drew



Three snippets of Treasures from Trove

A different view of Dr Battye



A PUBLIC LIBRARY PASHA

I'm Battye, the Library boss,
And whenever you saunter across
Book treasures I'll show
From Homer and Co.
To Kipling, the jingoist joss'

In our reading-rooms week after week
The students fresh pabulum seek,
Though I fear me they read
Less classical screed
Than Nile hieroglyphics and Greek.

But the greatest committer of crimes
Is the person who asks for the TIMES
And hour by hour
Sits down to devour
Its pitiful prose and its rhymes.

Sunday Times, 'Pictorial Posters',
20 March 1904, p.11.

PROPOSING the toast of "Parliament"
at the Australian Natives' Association
social, Dr. Battye said that Parliaments
were but a reflex of the people they re-
presented; "if Parliaments were foolish,
the people who put them in power were
foolish."

Let us bow our heads in appropriate
humility.

Western Mail , 19 September, 1929,
p.28.

Peeps at People

The two men in Perth with the most
remarkable gaits are Architect
Poole and Librarian Battye.
Poole mincingly meanders his
elastic way along the footwalk,
while Battye ambles along as
if he were walking on eggs and
was afraid of the yolks sticking to
his boots.

Sunday Times, 'Peeps at People',
24 August 1913, p.17.

Members' News

A Note from our Treasurer

This is a friendly reminder to advise that the Friends of Battye Library (Inc.) is endorsed as a deductible gift recipient (DGR) organisation by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

This means that when a member makes a donation to the Friends, they maybe able to claim a tax deduction.

By making a donation this assists the State Library and/or the State Records Office in their mission to acquire, preserve and make available for research Western Australian material. If you have any queries please contact me at nickdrew@bigpond.com

Nick Drew



Have you a story to tell?

[Senior Archivist, David Whiteford, who will be well-known to our members has written several fascinating articles for the Newsletter most of them on the origins of places and their names.]

An A – Z of WA – Zamia

In my previous article I covered WA's only 'X' locality, Xantippe. The letter Z is represented in WA by a number of topographical, locality and road names but on the railways of WA there were only two sites with the first letter Z. The Commonwealth Railways had Zanthus on the

Trans-Australian Railway and its office shed is preserved in the rail transport museum at Bassendean. The only WA Government Railways locality was Zamia, a passenger landing on the Mundaring branch between Mahogany Creek and Mundaring and 20m 11ch from Perth. Although the WAGR operated



the zig-zag on the Upper Darling Range Railway (now a well-known tourist drive down the Darling Scarp from Gooseberry Hill), there was never a locality actually named Zig-Zag (unlike in NSW).

The Mundaring branch (earlier known as the Smith's Mill branch) was part of the original Eastern Railway with the section from Guildford to Chidlows Well opened on 11 March 1884. As the rail system expanded east and trains and freight grew, the original route proved insufficient and was relegated to a branch by the opening of the new Bellevue – Mount Helena route via Parkerville on 1 July 1896. But even as a branch line, the section remained busy with local and some through trains.

In December 1912 an additional stop was provided with the construction of a rail level landing at mileage 20m 11ch (Telephone post 401 to be precise). The landing was completed on 5 December.

Despite the WAGR annual reports being very thorough in reporting even small works, there is no mention of the construction of the new landing in the 1912-13 report. Weekly Notice 4, 1913 p.115 announced the naming of the stop as Zamia and confirmed that as well as passengers it was available for goods and parcels up to 10cwt, easily handled by the train guard. However, the landing was without a shelter until a shed was erected on 14 October 1914.

Weekly Notice 29 of 1927 confirmed that Zamia was handling some goods, as a ledger account was opened with the Glen Forrest (formerly the aforementioned Smith's Mill) station master for goods consigned to Zamia to E M Anderson. I've been unable to locate any Anderson listed in Mundaring, Mahogany Creek or Glen Forrest in the annual *Post office Directory* for 1927-1931. Zamia is listed in the towns directory but only as *See Mundaring*.

Zamia continued to serve the local community until the closure of the railway from 23 January 1954, although most passenger services had been provided by bus for some years (Weekly notice 4, 1954 p.83)

The shelter shed was removed by the Glen Forrest P&C Association in November 1962 and the station nameboard was kept by the Mundaring Historical Society. The site

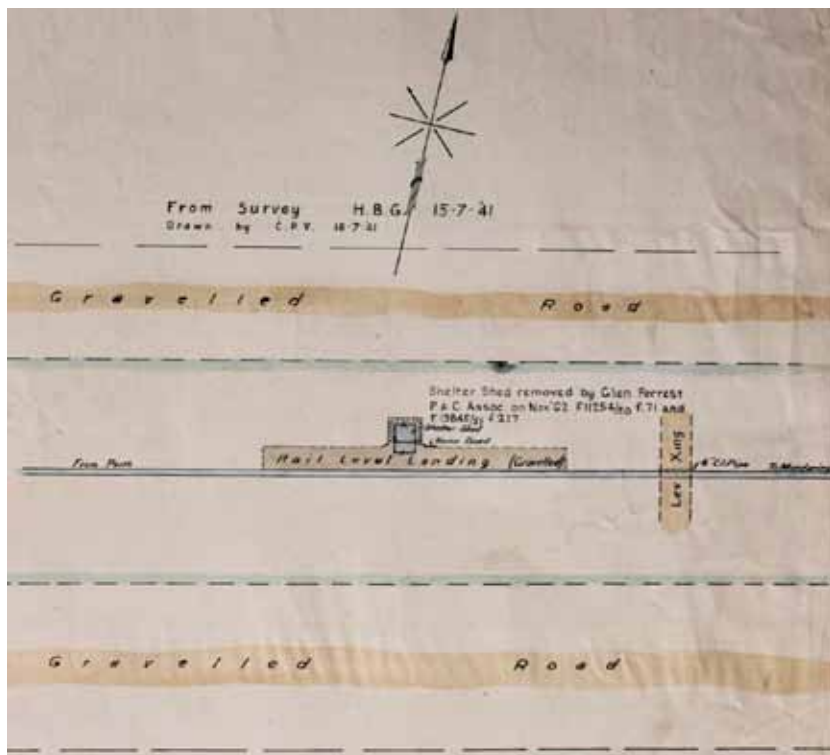


Mundaring Historical Society (Jeff Austin)

of Zamia is on the Kep Track / Railway Heritage Trail that utilises most of the former Mundaring branch formation but the site of the stopping place (adjacent to the Coppin Road level crossing) is not recognised by any signage.

However, there is currently a Zamia railway station in Western Australia – on the Bennett Brook Railway in Whiteman Park. On the bush loop line, the station was provided to serve the then Keith Maine Youth Camp and was called Maine. But camp changes and a little confusion with not being a 'main' station (the railway also had Central Station, changed to Whiteman Village Junction in January 1992), saw the name changed to Zamia early in 2008. This was a nod to both the original Zamia stopping place, and to the zamia plants found in the park.

As at 7 October 2025 there are seventeen entries in the State Records Office online catalogue for a Zamia search. Most of these deal with the zamia palm but there is one for plans of the railway site, a couple for court



Cons 1642 item 024E (SROWA).

cases involving someone living there, a couple relating to a government water tank at Zamia, a Forests Department file on Zamia Block, and road matters for Zamia Street, Mount Claremont. The State Library catalogue has 23 entries, again many are for the zamia palm but there are some photographs taken in the area, a series of buildings along Zamia Street in Northcliffe, a couple of motion picture entries with an actor named Zamia Fandio. There is even some drone shot film footage of a train on the Bennett Brook Railway approaching its own Zamia station in 2022 and 2017 'dash-cam' footage from a locomotive cab as a train runs along the line. The National Archives of Australia catalogue has twenty results for a zamia search. Of course, the palm features strongly, and there are some Queensland references for a Zamia Hill, and one for a sailing vessel named *Zamia*. But there are a couple of WA land sale files for properties at our own Zamia.

David Whiteford



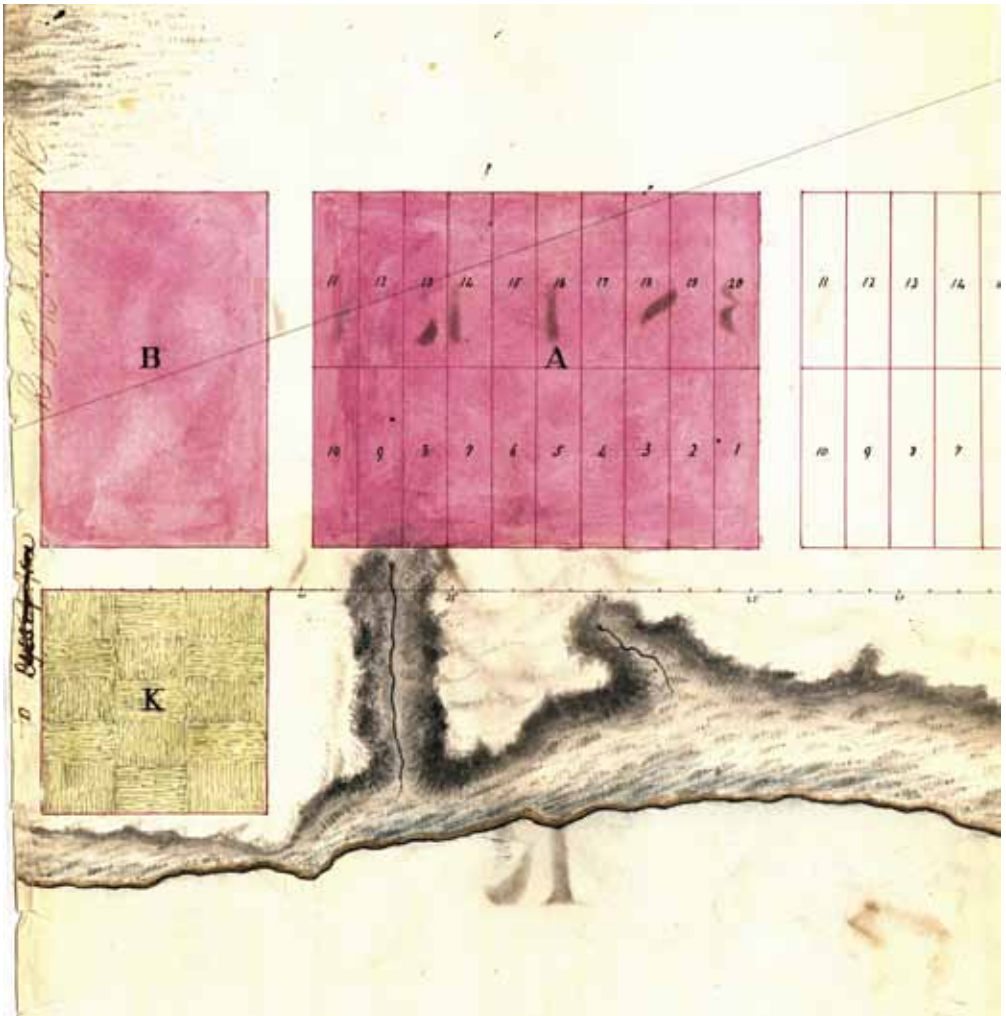
[Dr Michael O'Connor is a recently retired Digital Archivist, SROWA, having worked there since January 2019. In this article he shares one of the treasures he discovered.]

The earliest surviving survey plan of Perth, 1829

Late in 2024 I discovered within the SROWA collections what appears to be the earliest survey plan of Perth. The plan shines a light into what may have been the original attempt by Lieut. Governor Stirling and Surveyor-General Roe to impose a European town layout on their chosen site of Perth. It also records features of the Perth foreshore at the very start of Swan River colonisation.

The plan survives because it was re-used to make a cover for a register of Survey Office correspondence.¹ It is relatively intact, other than a small hole in the top-left corner and some bleed-through of lettering from the register's title page. Due to the way the register pages (folded foolscap) are stitched into the cover it is only possible to view the map in two halves. It has been scanned and digitally reassembled, though further work is required to produce a more exact digital copy.

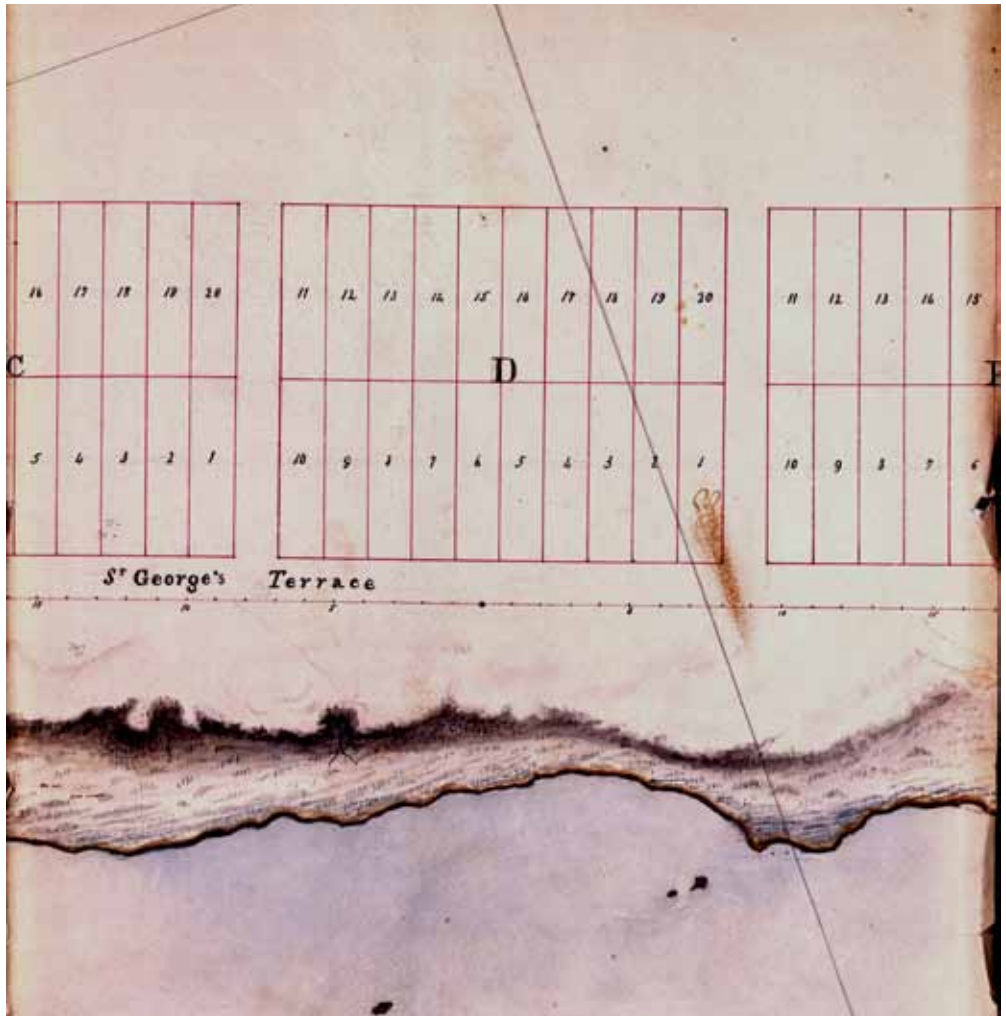
Its extent is from present-day Barrack Street to Bennett Street (north-west to south-east), and Murray Street to river bank (north-east to south-



The earliest survey plan of Perth (c. August–September 1829) ; surviving as the inside covers of SROWA S1956 cons5000 116.

west). Sections of land are set out in with designations A, B, C, D, E, and K, all of which were perpetuated in later plans except for K. Sections A, C, D, and E (boundaries only; not coloured) are subdivided into allotments. Colouring sections indicate reservation: A, B in red (government land), K in green (tilling or agriculture).

The plan has some interesting features:



- Earliest detailed depiction of the central Perth topography, by means of black/grey watercolour and ink shaded relief. The foreshore is also 'hatched' in vertical line clumps that may suggest vegetation such as rushes or low shrubs and adjoining the water's edge some shading may indicate marshy ground. In the top-left corner the same technique indicates the south-east tail of (not-yet-renamed) Lake Kingsford. Topography above the river is also depicted, except where allotments are laid out.

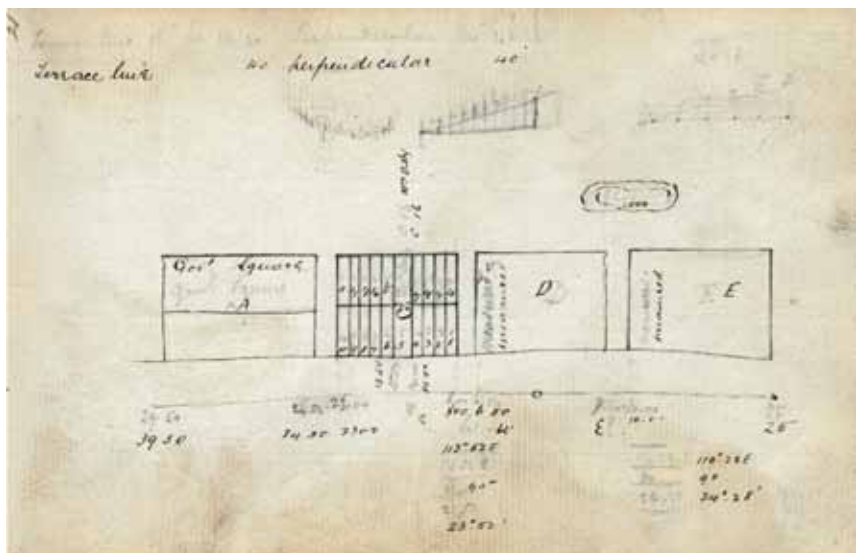
- Four drainage lines are indicated, the largest two in the vicinity of present-day Government House running from St. George's Terrace to the foreshore. The largest of these was later covered by a small bridge before being filled in.
- The square section marked 'K' is hatched in green lines at right angles to suggest intended tilling, which aligns with its reservation as the Barracks Garden.²
- St. George's Terrace – the only street named on the plan – runs straight in a consistent width across the plan. There is no riverside protrusion of most allotments in sections C, D, and E.
- An origin point for the survey is indicated on the Terrace below allotment D6, with chain divisions on the Terrace line to the west and east.
- Below present-day Pier Street is a faintly-drawn jetty, one of the earliest colonial structures in Perth.
- There is a mysterious crossed-out word along the left-hand margin near section K; it appears to read "Eyes of [?]". Annotations elsewhere include D, 88, 300+
- An empty tabular grid in the lower quarter of the plan [which has been cropped from the plan for better reproduction in this *Newsletter*] may have been intended to record the first occupiers of each allotment.
- Four bearing lines drawn in ink bisect the plan, but their origin points sit beyond the plan boundaries, making it difficult to know their purpose. This suggests the plan was cropped from a larger sheet (e.g. section E continues beyond the right-hand edge), but no other fragments were located during a brief search of early Survey Office register covers.

Some expected features may be 'missing' because they were surveyed after this plan was made:

- Howick Street, later Hay Street, is not shown, hence section allotments run two deep from the Terrace. Those living in the back allotments would have had a longer 'commute' to the river, the major means of accessing Perth at its commencement. This may have led to Howick being surveyed in late 1829.

- Section B (for Barracks), is a single large area that is eventually bisected by Howick/Hay Street.
- There is no large church site reserved for the Anglicans — it was not added to the middle of sections A and C until mid-1830.

This plan appears to represent Roe's initial survey and layout in August 1829, and was intended to facilitate the taking up of allotments the following month. Cross-reference to Survey Office diaries (SROWA series1861 cons5000) tentatively support this conclusion, though the September–October diary is missing. Part of the rediscovered plan has similar information to field notes in an early Survey Office field book³ which shows a sketch layout of sections A, C, D, and E, and refers to the survey base line as the 'Terrace line'. This field book page is probably of a later date as it includes features not on the plan, such as an 8 October 1829 assignment to 'Mrs Daly'⁴ and a wetland beyond section D and E.



Hillman/Roe Fieldbook Page (1829)

Previously, the earliest known survey plan of Perth was by Arrowsmith, published in London in May 1833⁵ from documents in the Colonial Office, London. Arrowsmith's plan depicts a larger area, showing many more parcels and streets; some allotments in sections A and C have been altered to create Howick/Hay street and a reserve for a 'Church site'.



Arrowsmith, John (1833). Perth [extract of inset plan] in *Discoveries in Western Australia from documents furnished to the Colonial Office* ; MAP RM 1183. Retrieved from <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-231431819>, 22 October, 2025

The foreshore edge in both plans is similar. Arrowsmith's plan is derived from an earlier one completed by George Smythe in August 1831, and sent to London with Lieut. Governor Stirling. Smythe's plan also survives (not at SROWA), but that is for another time.

Michael O'Connor, recently retired Digital Archivist, SROWA

Endnotes:

1. SROWA S1956 cons5000 116 *Abstracts - official letters received* (nos 158–426) ; 10 Nov 1830 – 14 Jul 1834
2. See 'K' in SROWA S2094 cons5000 517. *Register — Perth town and suburban lots*.
3. SROWA series32 cons3401 HIL/01 (attributed incorrectly to Hillman, but most likely used by Roe and Sutherland).
4. See 'C16' in 4 SROWA S2094 cons5000 517. *Register — Perth town and suburban lots*.
5. Arrowsmith, John (1833). Perth [inset plan] in *Discoveries in Western Australia from documents furnished to the 5 Colonial Office*. Retrieved from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-231891898>, 13 December, 2024.



[Our guest writer, Brendan Kelly, a Bunbury based member of the Friends is becoming a regular contributor to the newsletter. In this issue he looks at a famous West Australian.]

The Night the Hangman Came to Bunbury

After the Second World War, boarding houses in Bunbury provided many people with alternative accommodation. The port town boasted a range of lodgings for tourists, travellers, single men and women, everyday working class people, and boarders of all ilk. Everyone had a story and boarding houses were known for their characters, although mostly, apart from advertising, the houses received more attention for mundane matters. In 1951 in the *South Western Times* the editor lectured about parked cars that:

...must be somewhere, of course. People who work in the town and get to that work by car, must leave their vehicles somewhere — but it does NOT necessarily have to be right outside the door of their hotel or boarding house.¹

However, sometimes there was more excitement, like the night the hangman stayed in town.

In 1952 the arrival of a mystery visitor would be whispered about as the night the hangman came to Bunbury. There was only one hanging in Perth in the 1950s, that of Karol Tapci on 23 June 1952, who was hanged for the murder of Norman Perfect at Wubin, on 17 March. The newspaper report told how:

The execution was the first in Fremantle Gaol since 1932. It was watched by the Comptroller-General of Prisons (Mr A McKillop), the superintendent of the prison, the prison doctor, two priests and a number of duty warders. After the hanging Mr. McKillop returned to his office in Perth where he issued the following statement: 'The execution of Karol Tapci was effectively carried out at Fremantle prison this morning at 8 o'clock in the presence of the usual panel of gaol officials. The proceedings were decorous and without untoward incident. The Rev. Father W Cowan assisted by the Rev Father Joseph Peksa, attended

CORRESPONDENCE

"Bunbury Is Already Booked-Out"

Sir,—I, with others, take exception to the remarks of Mr. G. Clarke, the manager of the S.W. Tourist Bureau, as published in your last week's issue of the "South Western Times." Several guest houses and at least one hotel have not yet been approached as to accommodation available for the period mentioned.

South Western Times, 'Correspondence', 4 September 1952, p 5.

Tapci, whose last words, in reply to the usual inquiry, were: "Goodbye, Thanks for everything. I am very sorry I killed a citizen of your country." The identity of the hangman, who is believed to have come from the Eastern States, is known to only two or three prison officials.²

In Bunbury it was rumoured that a certain stranger, who had checked in to one of the town's boarding houses, was in fact the Eastern States hangman. Why the hangman would be in Bunbury is not explained. Perhaps he came by coastal ship from Melbourne or Sydney, to the port of Albany - an anonymous trip? Then by train from Albany to Bunbury, stopping over prior to travelling to Fremantle, to execute his grisly task. Whatever the case, overnighiter or not, the suggestion that the grim executioner should be in Bunbury was enough to get tongues wagging. Somebody always knew someone, who had heard from somebody else, of the comings and goings of boarders. If they were outsiders, all the better ground for speculation and hearsay. Neighbourhood chatter about the social happenings in Bunbury, true or not, was always a rich source of gossip. A hangman on a mission was quite the story, maybe good business for the keeper of the house, maybe not.

Brendan Kelly

Endnotes:

1 South Western Times, 15 February 1951, p. 1.

2 West Australian, 24 June 1952, p. 1.

Other sources used:

Personal Comms. (Bunbury Identity) Judy Jones, 9 February 2024.

'List of people legally executed in Western Australia', *Wikipedia*, retrieved 9 February 2024.



News from the State Library

A Recipe for Life: The Food That Shapes Us

The State Library launched its latest exhibition *A Recipe for Life: The Food That Shapes Us* on Friday 19th September. Three hundred and fifty people filled the ground floor of the library to feast on some traditional West Aussie fare, including meat pies, sausage rolls, recreated WA sauce, conti rolls, roo stew and caramel slices. The exhibition presents stories and items from the State Library collection including historic

cookbooks, menus from memorable restaurants and occasions, archival photography and advertising from iconic WA brands and eateries.

A Recipe for Life charts the changing tastes of Western Australians through the State Library's extensive collections of historical material and more contemporary stories.

There are fun interactive elements and a new video oral history series with personal stories and memories from WA food and hospitality identities Anna Gare, Blaze Young, Dale Tilbrook, George Kailis, Marco D'Orsogna and Russell Blaikie.

Becoming Western Australian: Insights from Kings Park and Botanic Garden

On Tuesday 7 October the State Library welcomed Australian conservation biologist and author Professor Stephen Hopper AC for a talk on his accomplished career, including time as Director of Kings Park and Botanic Garden. Following the presentation, Professor Hopper joined a panel of Kings Park science and horticultural experts for a discussion on the past and future of the Western Australian Botanic Garden.



Kings Park wishing well. (Battye Library, SLWA b2463428-1)

Presented in partnership with the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority as part of the 60th anniversary of the Western Australian Botanic Garden.

Forthcoming Events

Stella Day Out – Sunday 26th October

The Stella Prize-listed authors Laura Elizabeth Woollett and Santilla Chingaïpe spoke on themes of violence and power, slavery, and history (and its erasure).

The first session was *Growing up on the margins* featured 2024 longlisted Stella author Laura Elizabeth Woollett discussing navigating desire, violence and limited choices in suburbia. Moderated by Megan McCracken

The second part was *Finding erased stories* with 2025 Shortlisted Author Santilla Chingaïpe discussed her novel *Black Convicts* with Sisonke Msimang.

Peter Greste – Day of the Imprisoned Writer

Grey Zone: The Debate Democracies Cannot Afford to Lose - PEN Perth Annual Lecture.

Tuesday November 11th 6pm

The State Library is thrilled to be able to host renowned journalist, academic, film maker and author, Professor Peter Greste. Peter is currently professor of journalism at Macquarie University and executive director of a not-for-profit advocacy group, the Alliance for Journalists' Freedom.

He came to academia in 2018 after 30 years as an award-winning foreign correspondent for the BBC, Reuters, CNN and Al Jazeera, in some of the world's most volatile places.

He is best known for becoming a headline himself, when he and two colleagues were arrested in Cairo on terrorism charges while working for Al Jazeera. In letters smuggled from prison, Peter described their incarceration as an attack on press freedom.

General admission \$15.

Students/Seniors/ Unwaged – pay what you can.

WA Reflections Opening Night – Thursday 20th November 6pm

The State Library has partnered with Screenwest for the third season of *WA Reflections*, a short film series pairing emerging filmmakers with

unique WA historical stories preserved in the State Library collection.

The four documentary short films in the series shine a spotlight on lesser-known identities and events that have shaped the State's history. The films explore rock 'n' roll masses, astronomical discoveries, guide dogs and a vaudevillian male impersonator, Effie Fellows.



Effie Fellows in a gymnasium in Suva, Fiji, surrounded by young Fijian boxers and onlookers, 1968. (Battye Library, SLWA BA1493/19)

Over the coming months, each short film will be screened, followed by a panel discussion and Q&A session featuring subject specialists and the creatives behind the films.

Free event

World Behind Their Lens – Tuesday 2 December 6pm

Ever wondered what it takes to create an award-winning photograph?

Join 2025 Ilford Orloff Awards winners Richard Goodwin and Johannes Reinhart as they share the images and subjects that continue to fascinate them, providing a rare insight into the World Behind Their Lens.

Walkley Award winning journalist, writer and photographer Richard Goodwin has spent much of his career hunting out a good story. His most recent book focuses on Bill Angove, one of WA's most inventive photographers who was hailed internationally as a "creative genius" but largely forgotten in his home state.

Johannes Reinhart won both the 2025 Ilford WA Professional Photographer of the Year and Fine Art category awards. He is renowned for his powerful photographic style which has earned him plaudits

worldwide. Johannes will reflect on how his photographic practice has developed to encompass a more holistic approach to capturing his subjects.

See both photographers' works featured in the 2025 Ilford Orloff Awards: Photography Exhibition on Levels 1 and 2 of the State Library. Presented in partnership with the State Library and Pro Photography WA. Free event/ booking required.

New Acquisitions

Henry Charles Prinsep and Prinsep Family Archive

The Prinsep family are significant for their role in the history of Western Australian settlement but also for their international presence, with widely cultivated familial, social and mercantile networks that extended throughout the British Empire. These connections are well documented in this collection of material, comprising of over 3,000 items, including manuscript material, chiefly correspondence, as well as photographs, artworks, ephemera, and published materials.

Captain John Thomas papers

This collection provides a unique insight into the shipping and maritime trade of colonial Western Australia, which was vital to the establishment and development of the fledgling colony. It includes the bills of lading and shipping inventory, detailing what trade goods were in need and what Western Australia was exporting at the time.

Nuova Norcia. Missone Benedettina Nell Australia Occidentale
(Monochrome lithograph, Guglielmo Ewing lithographer, circa 1864.)

This lithograph is an important acknowledgment of Indigenous communities in the settlement of New Norcia. It depicts two forms of Indigenous life after settlement: a village of houses for Indigenous persons and families, and a group of Noongar people living in pre-European style.

Set of photographs of Fremantle Port

A collection of fourteen images showing the construction of Fremantle Port - dredging vessels, construction of timber wharves, workmen and diving equipment.

Bill Angove Private Archive

Bill Angove was a prominent figure in WA's photographic and cultural history. This collection reflects his artistic and commercial success in

London and Sydney in the 1950s and 60s, and includes photographs, letters, business papers, contact books, certificates, small folios of work, an oral history recorded on his deathbed and handwritten notes of recollections late in life.

Kate Gregory, Battye Historian



State Records Office (SRO)

News from the Archives

Margaret Medcalf Award 2025

The following works have been shortlisted for this year's Margaret Medcalf Award:

- *Rails in the West: How Western Australia's Government Railways shaped the State, 1870-2000* (book) by Fred Affleck.
- *Settlement, Struggle and Success: Margaret River and its Old Hospital, 1924–2024* (book) by Jenny and Bill Bunbury.
- *Northcliffe 1924-2024: Scenes from Rural Life* (book) by Steve Errington.
- *Timber and Tobacco: Yugoslav and Macedonian sleeper cutters and tobacco growers in Manjimup 1890-1962* (book) by Crena Fitzgerald.
- *Industrial welfare in the South West Timber Industry of Western Australia, 1945-1954* (article) by Charlie Fox in *Studies in WA History*, 36, 2024.
- 'Death at Butterabby: the case of Belo and Mumbleby and Aboriginal women's place in the nineteenth-century criminal justice system' (article) by Caroline Ingram in *History Australia*, Vol. 21: No. 3, 2024.
- *From the Avon to the Irwin: a story of two valleys* (Book) by Anne Jefferys.
- *An entangled but separate system: examining the experiences of Colonial offenders in Western Australia, 1829-1868* (PhD thesis) by Emily Lanman.

- 'Western Australia's first domestic servants 1829-1840' (article) by Lenore Layman in *Studies in WA History*, 36, 2024.
- 'To Protect, Exploit, or Govern: The Role of Indigenous Labour in Western Australia, 1829-1850' (article) by Kellie Moss in *Studies in WA History*, 36, 2024.

The winner will be announced at an Awards ceremony in late October.

This annual award honours Miss Margaret Medcalf OAM, Western Australia's second State Archivist, for her landmark contribution to the development of the State archives collection in Western Australia, which was established in 1945 and is 80 years old this year.

Governor's Establishment Records

In June, the SRO accepted an 'emergency transfer' of State archives from Government House. These records date back to the early 1900s and span through to the early 2000s. They include large sets of correspondence files, Governor's Despatches, photographs, government films of royal tours and events, inventories of historical artefacts and furniture at Government House and records documenting investitures and honours awarded.

These records are an important supplement to existing sets of records that the SRO received from Government House in previous decades.



Information Commissioner and Chair of the State Records Commission Catherine Fletcher receiving on behalf of the SRO a government film from Governor Chris Dawson in June, prior to Ms Fletcher's retirement.

We have noted many interesting finds in the records within this new transfer, such as confidential communications sent to the WA Governor prior to the abdication of King Edward VIII in 1936, correspondence in the early 1970s documenting tensions between WA Government and the Commonwealth Whitlam Government and even a photograph of Prince Charles windsurfing in WA in 1979.

Most of the records have been processed and will be publicly accessible soon.

Governor Chris Dawson also made a visit to the SRO in June to view State archives related to an upcoming speech he is making. The Governor then had the chance to explore his own family history. He was shown Captain John Molloy's letterbook (Resident Magistrate of the Augusta and Vasse regions in the 1830s) which includes a number of entries relating to the Governor's great-great-grandfather Elijah Dawson, such as Elijah being made Police Constable for the area.

1994 State Cabinet Records

A guide to the 1994 State Cabinet Records was published on 26 September to coincide with the International Day for Universal Access to Information. The 1994 State Cabinet records have been released from their 30 year access embargo and are now open access archives. The records document the initial period of the Richard Court / Hendy Cowan Coalition government. The condition of the Swan and Canning Rivers, deregulation of trading hours, reform of land tax in WA, juvenile justice, and the role of the Collie coal fields in Western Australia's energy equation were some of the significant issues discussed by State Cabinet in 1994.

Structural Changes

As part of broader machinery of government changes, on 1 July 2025, the SRO's parent department became the Department of Creative Industries, Tourism and Sport (previously the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries).

The Aboriginal History WA (AHWA) unit is now also reporting directly to the State Archivist. The work of AHWA – which is the lead State agency for Aboriginal family history and truth-telling projects – relies extensively on historical Native Welfare records that are part of the State Archives Collection. This change in reporting will better support the operations of AHWA in the work that they do.

New to the Catalogue

Recent additions to the SRO's online catalogue include:

- Itemised listings / descriptions of regional and metropolitan Police Station records (nearing completion);



One of the digitised WA Government Railways Roll of Honour Boards now available through the SRO catalogue.

- Digital copies of WAGR Roll of Honour Boards of those who served in WWI from the different branches of the WAGR (Cons 7808);
- Digital copies of photos of WA Premiers from John Forrest through to Richard Court (Cons 7812 and 7835);
- Digital copies of LISWA artwork associated with the opening of the Alexander Library Building (Cons 7798);
- Digital copies of Colonial Secretary files (post 1883, Cons 527 and 752) and Police Department files (post 1883, Cons 430).

Digitisation of Colonial Secretary's Office records

Work on the digitisation of the Colonial Secretary's Office records held in the State Archives Collection is progressing well, with the first 160 volumes digitised at time of writing. This project is being funded through the Friends of Battye Library's Sholl Bequest.

Research Sector Support

The SRO has been providing in-kind support to the UWA project team focussed on 'Two Centuries of Chinese Heritage in Western Australia, 1830s-2020s'. This important project aims to collect, record and tell stories of two centuries of Chinese communities' contributions to our State and Commonwealth. The SRO has assisted with the digitisation of State archives that record the entry into WA of Chinese nationals in the late 1800s / early 1900s. Copies of these records are available through UWA's Chinese Heritage Portal and will be used in an upcoming exhibition being developed by the UWA project team.

The SRO has assisted Professor LeeAnn Banaszak, Professor of Political Science and Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies at Pennsylvania State University during a recent visit to WA. Lee Ann spent two weeks in the archives reading room accessing State archives related to women's suffrage in WA, and the rights of Aboriginal people to vote in elections.

The SRO was also visited by Fiona Giles who has used State archives over the last four years for her Masters' Thesis at Notre Dame University. Fiona demonstrated the board game she has developed as a component of her thesis, which uses real activities, events and people who were at Fremantle Asylum as part of the playing of the game. This is a very novel use of historical and archival sources.

If you've not already done so, we also recommend checking 'Brendan's Odyssey' on YouTube, which explores lost heritage of Perth and WA using historical sources such as State archives. We often see SRO's RetroMaps website (a Friends of Battye Library supported project) popping up in his videos.

Promotion and Outreach

- SRO continues its monthly session on 6PR's 'Remember When' radio series with Harvey Deegan.
- SRO staff appeared on two episodes of the latest series of 'Who Do You Think You Are?' screening on SBS, with Australian actors Mark Coles Smith and Matt Nable.
- The State Records Commission held their June meeting in Albany. Members of the Commission met with State and local government staff from the Great Southern region as part of this visit. SRO staff also partnered with Janet Osborne from Wagyl Kaip Southern

Noongar Aboriginal Corporation to provide a joint presentation to the Albany community on State archives.

- The SRO has been supporting local company Theatre 180 in recent months. Copies of State archives associated with the 1925 murder at Government House Ballroom were used in the visual backdrop to their new play 'Arthur Haynes and the Smoking Gun' which had its September opening night in Government House Ballroom. The SRO is also supporting Theatre 180 in a similar way for their new play 'Catalpa: Flight to Freedom' which opens at the WA Maritime Museum in late October.



From the production of 'Arthur Haynes and the Smoking Gun' in which State archives were used as part of the visual design for the play. (Image courtesy of Theatre 180).

Damien Hassan, Senior Archivist



Friends of Battye Library (Inc) Membership Form

Subscription period 1 July to 30 June

Life Membership \$500

Annual Membership

Ordinary	\$25
Joint	\$35
Concession (pensioner / full time student)	\$15
Corporate	\$50
Donation	\$_____

(Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible)

I wish to apply for membership:

Name _____

Organisation _____

Address _____

_____ post code _____

Tel: _____ mobile _____

Email _____

Do you wish to receive emails about meetings or events? YES or NO

How would you like to receive your Newsletter? POSTED or by EMAIL

To join Friends of Battye Library (Inc) send this form to:

Membership Secretary
Friends of Battye Library (Inc)
PO Box 6143
Swanbourne WA 6010

Or

Submit the form available on the website
<https://www.friendsofbattyelibrary.org.au/membership>

Once the form is received an invoice will be sent containing payment options.

Thank you for your interest in the Friends of Battye Library, it is
much appreciated.

Afterwords - Steve Errington

Mrs Mary Charlotte Peel asks for help

The late Friends member Ian Berryman had long planned a new book on Thomas Peel. With his next major work *Swan River Letters volume two* in his own words '99 per cent finished' he was ready to make a start. He undertook to deliver a paper to the July monthly meeting of the Royal WA Historical Society with the title 'The Private Life of Thomas Peel and Mary Ayrton'. But, as we know, Ian passed away unexpectedly in February.

Peel's wife Mary Charlotte (née Ayrton) and their three children did not come out on the *Gilmore* with him and his reputed child, Frederick Peel,' in 1829. Mary being again pregnant was probably sufficient explanation. The child, Robert, was born in March 1830 and baptised at St Marylebone's Church, Westminster, but seems not to have survived.

Mary and her three children arrived on the *Quebec Trader* in April 1834 accompanied by Mrs Bridget Ayrton, her mother. But Mary and her daughters Julia and Dora left again for London in January 1840. As she later wrote, she did this 'to fit my daughters to become Governesses, should our evil fortunes render it necessary'. Peel promised 'small though punctual' remittances. Thomas junior (and Mrs Ayrton) remained behind.

By September 1842 Mary's plight was desperate. In fifteen months she had received no remittances from Thomas whatsoever. She and her daughters were boarding with two sisters who were running a school in King's Road Chelsea. She was nearly £60 behind with her payments and the ladies were in urgent need of the money.

What she did next, we know from Ian's unbelievably patient research. Ian's wife Gerry and daughter Caitlin gave me his working file on the Peel paper. What it contained was not the hoped for full draft of a paper, just a page and a bit of Ian's handwritten general introduction. But the file also contained something amazing, symbolic of Ian's meticulous, painstaking work.

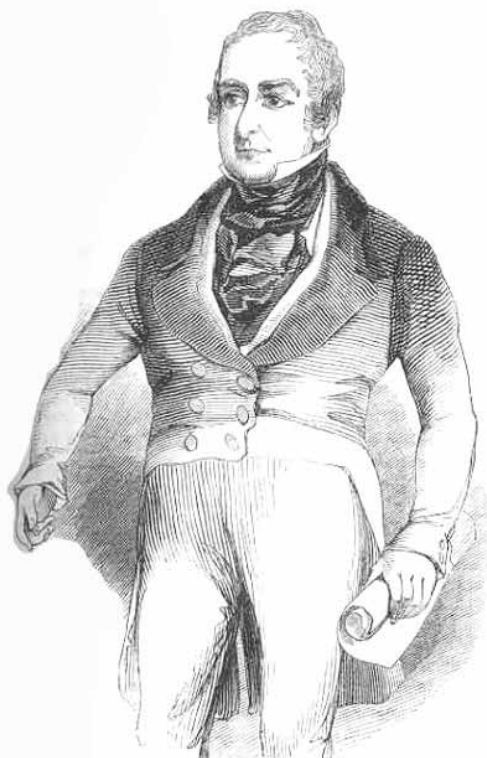
On 21 September 1842 Mary wrote to the most prominent member of Thomas's family, his first cousin once removed, Sir Robert Peel, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. Decades ago, when the British Library was still part of the British Museum, Ian sat down in the famous Round Reading Room with Robert Peel's official and private correspondence.

In volume CCCXXXV, general correspondence 1-23 September 1842, p. 284 Ian found Mary's letter - it is MSS 40,515 should you go looking for it.

These days you would pull out your smartphone and photograph it. Not then. Ian copied the whole letter and Robert Peel's reply in his neat handwriting using an obligatory pencil. Mary wrote asking for a loan but her words clarify much about her marriage;

From my own family I have been alienated for years for though Mr Peel chose to marry in opposition to his family he did not choose to avow that marriage and my relatives would not I well know receive me in my doubtful character.

In his reply the prime minister wrote that he was 'an absolute stranger to all the circumstances' to which Mary referred but, accepting 'the fact that you are the wife of Mr Peel', suggested that Thomas Peel senior had 'command of pecuniary means' to 'accede to any just application'.



A portrait of Sir Robert Peel,
Prime Minister of the United
Kingdom 1834-35, 1841-46.)

(*Illustrated London News*,
4 February 1843 public
domain image)

We don't know what happened next, but Mary somehow survived the crisis only to die of tuberculosis in 1857, eight months after daughter Julia died at 33 of the same disease. Daughter Dora returned to Swan River soon afterwards.

But was Robert Peel's unawareness of a marriage significant? Thomas Peel's biographer, Alexandra Hasluck, could find no evidence of a marriage, nor could Ian's *ancestry.com* search last December.

What Ian *did* find last December looks like confirmation of Mary's 'doubtful character'. When Frederic Proctor (born December 1817) was baptised In St Marylebone's Church in June 1821, the parents were recorded as Mary Charlotte Ayrton and George Proctor.

What other stories did Ian have for us? Had he noticed that the *Bicentennial Dictionary* entry for Fred Peel included the observation: 'Assumed the surname of Proctor briefly.' Was Fred Peel Mary's illegitimate son, not Thomas's?

We missed out on hearing a very entertaining lecture.

Steve Errington



Membership Subscription (Annually from 1 July to 30 June - GST inclusive). Please see subscription form on page 32 for more details.

Contact details

To join Friends of Battye Library please submit the form available on the website:

Friends of Battye Library website:
<http://www.friendsofbattye.org.au>

For membership information, subscription, change of address etc email Cherie Strickland at *membership@friendsofbattye.org.au*

Meetings

General meetings are held each year in March, May, July, September (the Annual General Meeting), and November (also the end of year function). They are held at the State Library of Western Australia and usually begin at 5.00pm for 5.30pm and conclude before 7.00pm, except for the November function which finishes around 8.00pm.

Newsletter

Three issues will be published each year in March, July, and November (flyers will be sent out in May and September). Articles from members and supporters are very welcome and the deadline for copy for the newsletter is 5 February, 5 June, and 10 October. The editor reserves the right to accept or reject articles and notices for publication.

For comments, requests for information, a copy of the Friends of Battye Library (Inc) Constitution, or to send articles and notices for the *Newsletter*, please contact:

Heather at *hgmessina@bigpond.com*

or write to:

The Editor
Friends of Battye Library (Inc)
PO Box 6143
Swanbourne WA 6010

J S Battye Library of West Australian History

Opening hours Mon/Thurs 9.00am - 8.00pm
 Friday 9.00am - 5.30pm
 Sat/Sun 10.00am - 5.30pm
 Public holidays - closed

Retrievals Every half hour during opening hours.

Telephone enquiries (08) 9427 3291 Website www.slwa.wa.gov.au
Email: info@slwa.wa.gov.au

Specialist staff: Dr Kate Gregory (Battye Historian)
 Mr John Hughes (Team Leader Senior Subject Specialist)

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

State Records Office

The SRO Search Room has co-located to the Battye Library, third floor of the State Library, Alexander Library Building. To access these materials in the Leah Cohen Reading Room a Researcher's Ticket will still be required.

Retrievals

As per usual times for SRO retrievals.

Telephone (08)9427 3600, website www.sro.wa.gov.au
email: sro@sro.wa.gov.au.

The Genealogy Centre

Opening hours- The hours that the Genealogy Centre will be accessible will remain the same as Battye Library opening hours on the third floor.

Volunteers from Family History Western Australia, formerly the WA Genealogical Society (WAGS), are available to assist researchers on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 9.30am to 1.00pm.

Specialist staff for Family History: for Family History information call Tuesday to Thursday on 08 9427 3247 or email info@slwa.wa.gov.au.