

No. 170



March 2021

FRIENDS OF BATTYE LIBRARY (Inc.)
NEWSLETTER

Our March 2021 meeting

Steve Errington

*Tales from Western Australia's oldest building
and oldest tunnel.*



Jug depicting the Round House Fremantle.

*(Jug in the possession of Dr Steve Errington. It shows the Round House,
with the tunnel entrance and original steps.)*

Tuesday 9 March 2021 at 5.00pm for 5.30pm. *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 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 Mrs Ruth Reid AM

Committee (2020-2021)

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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.

March meeting.

Tuesday 9 March 2021
Great Southern Room, fourth floor
State Library of Western Australia
at 5pm for 5.30pm

Our speaker will be Dr Steve Errington

*Tales from Western Australia's oldest building
and oldest tunnel*

Details of Steve's talk are on page 4.

After the meeting, members are very welcome to join us for a meal at a nearby Perth restaurant. Nick Drew will take bookings on the night.

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 Steve Errington

Dr Steve Errington has been a member of the Friends of the Battye Library since 2006 and has recently joined the committee. He is the author of 'Afterwords' which regularly appears at the back of the newsletter, and has previously spoken at general meetings on John Lomas the convict, the development of the village of Perth, and on the Aboriginal Prison which once stood in St George's Terrace.

He joined the Royal WA Historical Society in 1963 though he can't remember the circumstances, being a Chemistry PhD student at UWA at the time. He taught organic chemistry at WAIT/Curtin University for 41 years and retired as Head of the Chemistry Department in 2009.

Steve has been a member of the RWAHS Council since 2006 and has been president since September 2019, having previously been editor of the journal *Early Days*. He has also been a Voluntary Guide at the Fremantle Round House since 2014.

Steve's topic

The old Fremantle Gaol, better known as the Round House, was built in 1830 and opened in January 1831. It was the main gaol for Western Australia until a much bigger gaol was opened in Perth in 1856. The original plans of the Round House have not survived so the evolution of what is now WA's oldest building has had to be deduced from contemporary newspaper reports, tender documents, the Colonial Secretary's correspondence, and the 'blue books'.

In 1837, before the Fremantle Whaling Company built a whaling station on Bathers beach, they secured permission for Round House prisoners to dig a tunnel to connect the beach to High Street. Prisoners, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, completed the work as part of the hard labour component of their sentence. As a result of Steve's research, most of their names are now known.



Steve pondering the location of Capt Stirling's grave site at St John's Church Stoke Road, Guildford, UK in 2017.
(Bevan Carter)

Meeting dates for 2021

11 May - Richard Offen: *WA's oldest buildings*.

13 July - To be confirmed.

14 September (AGM) - Kate Gregory *History of collecting archival materials in WA*

23 November (4th Tuesday) - End of year function. To be confirmed.



[President's piece

Dear Friends

Pandemics – How History Seems to Repeat Itself!

My partner and I, plus our dog, were spending a weekend with friends in North Boyanup when news of the COVID-19 five day lockdown broke on the last day of January this year. At first our main concern was would we be able to get home? Having established this was going to be possible, my thoughts then turned to wondering how previous generations coped with earlier pandemics, when medical science and mass communication was much more rudimentary than now.



In her article on the Spanish flu epidemic of 1918-19 in the *Historical Encyclopedia of Western Australia*, Sue Graham-Taylor tells us that once virus was declared present in Victoria in January 1919, the Western Australian Government reacted very quickly. The transcontinental trains coming from the east were held near Kalgoorlie and tents erected for the passengers to quarantine in. During a storm the tents blew away and the railway carriages were used for accommodation, which was probably far more comfortable. The Commonwealth showed its displeasure with the actions of the WA Government by suspending all rail traffic from the Eastern States. There was also a difference of opinion over the length of quarantine required to suppress the virus, the Commonwealth said four days was sufficient and WA insisted on seven.

The inevitable happened and in early May, 1919 the first case of influenza in WA was diagnosed in Gwalia and by June the disease had reached Perth. Yet again the State Government's response was swift and decisive, with restrictions on movement around the State, limits on crowd numbers and a strapline which stated, 'Blockade the germs ...cut off their line of communication.' There are even photographs of people wearing masks!

This all sounds very familiar doesn't it? The result of the State Government's actions in 1919 was a fairly low mortality rate in WA, which Sue Graham-Taylor concludes, 'can perhaps be attributed to the preventative and quarantine measures adopted'.

I fear the early February lockdown will not be the last and the Friends of Batty Library must resign themselves to the possibility of disruptions to our 2021 programme. Let us hope we have none, but please be sympathetic if we have to cancel functions at the very last minute.

Richard Offen



Members' obituaries

Margaret Hamilton

(6 June 1921 - 14 February 2021)



Margaret Hamilton.
(Kevin Hamilton)

Margaret Priscilla Hamilton (nee Jones), who was a long term member and supporter of the Friends of Batty Library, died on 14 February 2021 just four months shy of her 100th birthday. Over her long and amazingly productive life, she had several different careers. She initially qualified as a nurse and saw war service in the UK and India. After marriage to Guy Hamilton and the birth of their three sons, the family migrated to Western Australia. Margaret started a second career in the entertainment industry and worked at the Playhouse. Pursuing her interest in history, she

enrolled at the University of WA (which is where I first met her) and was awarded a Bachelor of Arts degree with honours in History. Margaret became an accomplished oral historian and wrote a number of historical works for stage performance. The Hamiltons were also well known in WA's philatelic community. Guy, who died in December 2010, and Margaret were married for 63 years and clearly devoted to each other.

Margaret was one of a kind, forthright, warm-hearted, humorous, and generous with a wonderful zest for life which she never lost. Our sincere condolences to her sons, Sean, Kevin, and Jeremy and their families.

Jennie Carter

Diana Wilson

[The Friends of Battye Library received the following message from Rosemary Ritorto of the Victoria Park Library. If members would like to contribute to the Diana Wilson memorial fund, please contact our Treasurer Nick Drew.]

We recently lost Diana Wilson - a great Local History Librarian. In her career Diana made a wonderful contribution to our profession, she contributed to the collection, preservation and sharing of local history in our great state for the benefit of all the generations to come. I am most especially grateful for her great work here on the Local History Collection at Town of Victoria Park Library. She has left a truly lasting legacy... Vale Diana Wilson.

With permission from Diana's daughter Kate, her local history colleagues have organised with the Friends of Battye Library to make a donation towards local history digitisation at the State Library of Western Australia. If you would like to donate some money towards local history digitisation in Diana's memory, then you can do so by any of the following means:

- by direct deposit/transfer to Friends of Battye Library - BSB 016-185 Account No 4220 58413 with Diana's name in the description;



Diana Wilson.
(Victoria Park Library.)

- you can post a cheque to Friends of Battye Library , PO Box 216, Northbridge, WA 6865; or
- leave an envelope marked Attn. Treasurer, Friends of Battye Library at the Welcome Desk, Ground Floor, State Library, Perth.

Donations are tax deductible so please send an explanatory email to nickdrew@bigpond.com to obtain a receipt.



Members' news

Ruth Reid reaches an impressive milestone!



Ruth and Gordon Reid on their wedding day 30 June 1945 in the UK.

(Battye Library SLWA, Gordon & Ruth Reid collection, 303012PD)

Our esteemed patron, Ruth Reid AM, CIT WA, turned 100 years on 17th February 2021 and celebrated with a high tea at the UWA Club attended by her family and friends, some of whom had travelled from other states and parts of Western Australia.

Ruth was the wife of Professor Gordon Reid AC (1923-1989), former Governor of WA from 1984 to 1989. In 2016 Ruth was awarded the City of Nedlands Freeman of the City Award in recognition of outstanding achievements and dedicated service to the community. She is also a Freeman of the Cities of Nedlands and Wanneroo as well as of the City of London.

A highlight of the celebrations was the display of a painted banner which decorated the front entrance of her home.

Ruth's daughter Sue commented



Mum woke on her birthday to find the banner had been hung outside her home. It had been painted by her granddaughter and great grandchildren. They linked her time in Western Australia with her childhood in London and the fact that she was later given Freedom of the City of London. This honour gives her permission to herd her sheep across London's bridges!

Ruth was also honoured by Governor Kim Beazley who came to her party to present her with a bouquet of flowers and a card from Government House. Members of the Friends of Battye Library (Inc.) are delighted to add our warmest congratulations to Ruth on such an important occasion and to pay tribute to her long years of public service.



The Governor congratulates Mrs Ruth Reid AM, CIT WA on her 100th birthday celebration. (<https://govhouse.wa.gov.au>)

Julie Martin honoured by the Friends

We are delighted to let you know that at the dinner in November, Julie Martin was presented with the Friends of Battye Library's **Gem of Time** award for 2020. Warmest congratulations to Julie and a fitting tribute to her long involvement and advocacy for WA history and the Battye Library.

Lorraine Clarke - Genealogy 101



Lorraine Clarke
(Briana Shepherd, ABC News)

Committee member Lorraine Clarke of Swan Genealogy is a regular contributor to the ABC radio program 'Afternoons with Christine Layton' and presents the 'Genealogy 101' segment every Monday afternoon. Lorraine covers a wide range of fascinating topics based on her research into all aspects of family history.

Tune into ABC Radio Perth 720AM or use the ABC 'Listen'

app on Mondays after the 3pm news to catch Lorraine speaking on her topic of the day.

Interestingly, on Monday 22 February, she discussed the life of Robert Mansfield from Parkhurst prison who prospered in the colony. He came out on the *Minden*, the same ship transporting Edwin Barrington (see his story below).



Have you a story to tell?

[Bevan Carter has been interested in convict history for decades. He is currently a member of the Family History WA (FHWA) Convict Special Interest Group who are researching the stories of all those who were transported to WA between 1850 and 1868.]

Convicts came after June 1850? Think again.

While researching the lives of convicts sent to WA I came across Edward George Barrington (later known as Edwin Lord Barrington), age 36, who had been convicted at the Old Bailey on 16 September 1850 for 'being at large ... before the expiration' of his sentence. He came on the *Minden* which arrived in the colony on 14 October 1851 as convict number 752.

A newspaper report of his trial notes that on being handed a sentence of seven years transportation:

[T]he prisoner who was dreadfully agitated, no sooner heard the sentence than he said he would sooner be dead than again transported; and drawing a pen knife he had secreted, made an attempt to cut his throat. ... The excitement was much heightened by the frantic screams of a woman in the gallery, said to be his wife, who could scarcely be restrained from throwing herself over into the dock. [*Colonial Times* 28 March 1851]:

In reading this I assumed Barrington was a Tasmanian convict, but was surprised to read in the court transcript that his crime was 'running away from Western Australia'. My next thought was that he must have been a Parkhurst boy. Wrong again. My interest was now definitely piqued and, thankfully, the numerous petitions made to the UK Home Office begging that Barrington be pardoned or allowed to remain in England have been preserved and his story can be pieced together.

Barrington was originally sentenced to ten years transportation in June 1844 for theft of money. He was 29 years old with a wife, Jemima, and two children. After serving two years in Pentonville prison he was sent to the Swan River settlement in 1846 on the *Cumberland* armed with a good character reference from the Prison Governor and Chaplain. Travelling with Barrington were twelve boys from Parkhurst Prison and four from Millbank prison, as well as three other adult men from Pentonville - nineteen in all. Also on board was the colony's new Governor Andrew Clarke. Before boarding ship the boys had been officially pardoned on condition they agreed to be indentured to employers in WA for the duration of their sentences. Barrington and his three adult companions were granted pardons on condition:

[T]hat they be conveyed to our territory of Westⁿ Aust^r & that they do remain & continue within our Australian colonies for & during the remaining term of their respective sentences. [UK Archives Home Office records, HO13/87/52]

Barrington's own petition presents an account of that time:

When arrived at the above place Swan River the Governor inform us we were freemen and to be careful not to relate our former circumstances on any account to any one who or what we were. We were landed immediately on arrival at the Port of Fremantle without a penny in my pocket or food for my next meal. I stood on the beach of a foreign land nor anywhere to lay my head. ... I could scarcely keep shoes on my feet half my time for tools and clothes were so dear it took the whole of

my earnings. The colony was in a distressed state for the farmers were discharging their servants and doing with less and lowering the wages of those they kept. [HO18/292]

Nevertheless, he worked hard and behaved himself so well that the Governor Clarke granted him a free pardon which Barrington naturally believed was a complete remission of his sentence. He found employment on board the *Emu* a vessel trading from the Swan River to Singapore where he joined the Royal Navy, serving on the *Columbine* under Capt John Charles Dalrymple Hay. After two and a half years, his tour of duty completed, Barrington disembarked at Chatham on the Thames in March 1850, was paid 'wages and prize money earned in defence of his Country', and reunited with his wife and children. He bought a public house in Shoreditch, 'little thinking but I was a freeman once more in dear England'.

Almost immediately, after a tip off from a former ship mate who owed him money and didn't want to pay up, Barrington was arrested as a returned convict by the same officer who had apprehended him for his original crime.

Edwin Barrington was tried at the Old Bailey on 28 October 1850. When he was not able to produce his Governor's Pardon document, he was found guilty, although with a very strong recommendation to mercy based on the several witnesses attesting to his exemplary character. His former commanding officer, Captain Hay, wrote:

I am very sorry to find that you have been arrested as a run away convict. I should not have imagined from your conduct on board that you had been guilty of any serious crime. I have already placed your character on your parchment certificate and I am in hopes that your services will be taken into consideration and that you will receive your pardon. [HO 18/292]

Jemima was distraught.

I most earnestly appeal to you for merciful consideration from his having fought for his country, from his good conduct since his offence, & the testimony produced in his favour at his trial. That you will humanely feel it your duty to comply with the prayer of an unfortunate woman. [HO18/292]

Barrington pleaded to leave England 'in Her Majesty's Service or emigrate with my family to any part of the world', but to no avail. To compound the poor man's misfortunes, he and Jemima were fated never to see each other again.

On arrival in Fremantle for the second time on 14 October 1851

Barrington was granted his ticket-of-leave the same day he arrived. He found employment as a carpenter for 'Wm Brockman and working on his own account with Edward King'. [SROWA Cons 1386/1/175]

Clearly resigned to now living out his life in the Swan River Colony, Barrington prospered in his trade and became President of the Working Men's Club and secretary of the Working Men's Benefit Society.

As far as I can discover, Barrington was still married to Jemima when in 1864 he wed eighteen year old Ann Elizabeth Dewis, the daughter of Josiah and Mary who had arrived two years prior on the *Mary Harrison*. (Josiah and Mary were later to be Master and Matron of the Mount Eliza Depot.) The Barringtons went on to have several children until Ann's death in childbirth in 1879. Their baby boy also died not long after his mother. They were buried in the Dewis family plot in the East Perth cemetery.

Edwin Lord Barrington died in January 1890 aged 68 and was also interred in the Wesleyan section of the East Perth cemetery. No headstone exists and the precise site of his grave is not known.

Bevan Carter



Voices that Should be Heard

[Dr Ronda Jamieson is one of Australia's most notable oral historians. This article is the 17th in her series based on the oral history collections of the Battye Library.]

Phil Miragliotta (1920-2009) OH431

The interview with Phil Miragliotta was conducted in Geraldton where he lived all his life. His father, Francesco (Frank), had migrated from Sicily in 1902 and with four members of the family started the Rockingham Fishing Company. They moved to Geraldton in 1907 to fish in the Abrolhos Islands area, setting up a camp on Rat Island. Frank married a Melbourne girl, Loretta Johnson, whose father worked on the Geraldton railways, and he later became one of the first to catch crayfish. Two of his sons, Phil and Rincie, joined him in the industry, Phil in 1934 after finishing school. He went on to be involved in the Western rock lobster industry for 45 years. At the time of the interview, Phil was still assisting his two sons who were crayfishermen.

Phil was born in Geraldton in 1920. There was not a market for crayfish then but there was for schnapper, jewfish, groper and cod. Sail boats were used and a mother boat transported the fish to the coast and picked up stores. Later the family was one of the first to fish for crayfish which were exported to Singapore and sold to Blue Funnel Line ships and the State ships going to Darwin.

Phil was twelve when he spent many hours helping his dad with fishing after he injured his back. On leaving school, aged fourteen, fishing became his full-time activity, except in the war years, and remained so all his life; it was also something he enjoyed.

The family made their own beehive crayfish pots out of cane imported from Singapore and sticks cut from local tea trees. Phil and his dad hand sewed sails they made for the boat. Initially there were no closed seasons except during the war so fishing for crays could be done each day. Closed seasons were introduced 'well after the war'.

Phil joined the Army during the war and served on Bougainville Island. He considered his Army service 'a great experience ... I think it made a man out of a lot of men. You learn to live with men and trust one another.'

After the war their father's back was so bad that he had to stop fishing and Phil and Rincie took over. Most of their cray fishing was done around the Abrolhos Islands. The American market took off and much better prices were gained. They built a two-room camp on the island which was enough for the brothers and their two crew.

Seasons were then closed for the Abrolhos Islands: 'We could come ashore and still operate on the coast but we couldn't operate on the islands.'

Phil married Pasqualina Cuocci in 1948 whose father had been in the fishing industry 'all his life'. Their four children were Anita, Vicky, Frank and Phillip. As the family came along, Phil realised his children did not really know him living as he did on the islands: 'so I came back and operated off the coast and a good living was made of it'. After his family grew up, he went back to the Abrolhos and operated there.

In 1950, eighty per cent of the fishermen formed their own company, the Geraldton Fishermen's Cooperative, which Phil supported from its inception, becoming a member of the Board of Directors. It led to higher prices and better marketing and processing. Later the cooperative diversified to go into boat building, engineering and running a prawn



Cray boats at Geraldton October 1957.

(Norman Wylie collection. Battye Library, SLWA BA1686/369. 133836PD)

factory at Roebourne. Big holding rooms meant fish could be held for lengthy periods.

With the times it had to grow and we have our own helicopter, which is a service to the fishermen in the islands ... We have a big store down on the Fishermen's wharf, which supplies all the needs for fishermen.

The helicopter was used to cope with breakdowns, illness or accidents on the islands. A starter motor could break down on a boat and the helicopter could fly in a motor so the day's fishing could continue. 'It could be a thousand dollars at stake, and for the sake of an air flight, half an hour, he could have the part there and the fisherman is in business.' At the time of the interview the cooperative was employing 28 permanent staff.

Phil considered 'one of the greatest moves that was ever made in the fishing industry' was the development of winches. Bob Carlberg, a Norwegian who was a 'very efficient fisherman' had seen something similar in a magazine so he arranged for one to be prefabricated. The winch head had two plough discs. Further developments followed with

eventually hydraulics being used, which again led Phil to say 'And it's the greatest thing that ever happened'. Same as the pot tipper that was invented by a Geraldton fisherman which Phil rated as a 'great back saver'.

When it came to emergencies, Phil remembered there being 'one or two a year ... anyone in trouble you help them, and it's quite easy today with radio'. Before radio 'you had to estimate how fast the boat would have been travelling and the wind conditions to determine where it might be.' The missing boat was always found.

In 1974 Phil was thinking of retiring when his eldest son, Frank, who had shown no interest in fishing and who had studied accountancy rang about his job with WA Trustees. He told his father:

'I can see myself in ten years' time behind the same desk with the same bit of paper. I can't see any future in it for me.' And I said, 'Well if that's the decision you want to make you can come back and fish with me.' Which he did. The other boy [Phillip] did the same thing and he worked twelve months on the boat, did the same as his brother. He went into Wesfarmers, took accountancy of a night time and he had an upset with the firm he was working with and he said, 'I want to go fishing.'

Phil had another boat in Fremantle in partnership with a brother-in-law who died and he was left with two boats, so he brought the second one to Geraldton. Frank took over that boat and Phillip and his father operated the second one.

Later, Frank and Phillip did not want to use what they considered 'the old slow boats', so Phil built two 42 foot fibre glass boats for them. He went on to say how the fishing industry had become very efficient: 'I think that's why it is maintaining its catch, the efficiency of the fisherman and his equipment today.' He also said:

They're a young man's boat, I'll tell you that. I know the first time I went out it was on a pretty rough day and I couldn't even stand on my feet and I've been on the sea all my life. They laughed their heads off at me.

My final question was to ask Phil if he had any regrets about being a fisherman: 'No, no. If it was all over to be done again I'd do it again. And with the experience I have today I'd be a millionaire in twelve months.' We both laughed.

Ronda Jamieson

Treasures from Trove **(and the Oral History Collection)**

[Heather Campbell is not only our Society's highly competent Secretary, she is also a researcher, historian, and author. This is the third in her series on delving into the wonders of the NLA's Trove database of Australian newspapers.]

Dr Battye and book censorship

According to Dr Battye in 1932,

The censoring of books is an extremely difficult matter to deal with because a book that may be unwise to place in the hands of the general reader on account of the subject matter with which it deals may be absolutely necessary to the specialist in medicine, law, or psychology... For this reason it seems to me that there should be no censorship which is general in its application throughout the community.'

He recommends as a guideline Ivan Bloch's definition of an obscene book as one 'which would induce in readers a condition of coarse and brutish sensuality', suggesting that the 'authorities of Australia would not be laughed at by other countries as they so frequently are for the exercise of their censorship over books' if this was used. Dr. Battye also observed 'a tendency on the part of the people to read that which is prohibited, simply because it is prohibited, and ... it must contain something of an extremely spicy nature.'

Rather than the Customs Department or the police authorities deciding on censorship of books, Dr Battye recommended its placement in the hands of a control board whose members, 'were qualified by their scholarship, wide reading, and breadth of view' and were better able to 'reasonably determine which books were written purely for the purpose of securing a sale through obscenity'. [*Daily News* 10 February 1932, p.7]

In 1935 in an address to the Perth Legacy Club he followed this up with 'an attack on the censorship of literature by the Customs Department'. The *Red Star* newspaper was delighted to report that Dr. Battye expressed the opinion that,

[T]he Australian public could be sufficiently trusted to distinguish the good from the bad so far as political and social literature was concerned. ... equal right should be allowed to people to read books for Communism as well as against it [and to exercise their] own discretion in such matters. [*Red Star*, 22 February 1935, p.4]

In exposing 'the hypocrisy of the book censorship' he recounted 'his

conversation with the Controller of Customs who said that only the cheap editions of Boccaccio's "Decameron" were banned; the expensive editions were not objected to. Presumably, said Dr. Battye, if a man had sufficient money to buy an expensive copy it was no longer possible for his morals to be endangered.' In his view 'no work of fiction should be banned which might be regarded as literature or education'. At the same time censorship should be exercised against books issued simply to 'promulgate indecency covered up by a third-rate story'. [*Red Star*, 22 February 1935, p.4; *West Australian*, 20 February 1935, p.5]

Dr Battye's views were endorsed by Rev. EHO Nye, of the Methodist Church, Fremantle, who said:

[I]n a country which provided free and compulsory primary education for all and made secondary education open to those who desired it, the judgment of readers was sufficient guide in sociology and needed no official supervision. There were two sides to every question and everybody should be encouraged to read widely and to form their own opinions upon things. [*West Australian* 22 February 1935, p.21].

A year later the 16th Annual State Conference of Women's Service Guilds of Western Australia also supported Dr Battye's view and urged, 'an amendment to the Customs Act, section 52c, for the following reasons:

(a) That the Australian censorship of literature is inconsistent with democratic principles, in that the Minister for Customs abrogates to himself the powers of a dictator, to determine what the people of Australia shall or shall not read; (b) further, that the power to ban a publication should not be vested in any one person, but in a trinity of persons, one or whom might well be a Judge and another a representative of the Senate of the University.' [*Dawn*, 22 July 1936, p.7].

In his role as Chief Librarian, however, Dr Battye was required to make judgments about what people were permitted to read. In the 1940s the Government Road Board grant was spent on books 'hand-picked' by members of the local library committee. However, before such books were consigned to the library 'the list is submitted to Dr. Battye (Perth Public Library), for perusal and approval'. To his credit 'no attempt at local censorship' was noted. [*Manjimup and Warren Times*, 27 April 1949, p.11]

A different story is told by Ron Wright who joined the State Library aged 19 in 1932, after completing a university degree, remaining there until he retired in 1978. He served as a librarian under Chief Librarian Dr Battye, for 22 years, until Battye's death in 1954. Ron was interviewed

by Chris Jeffery for the Battye Library Oral History Program on his retirement in 1978. He recalls being given desk in Hackett Hall on the west side of the building. Dr Battye and his secretary/typist, Nancy MacArthur, had adjoining offices.



Dr Battye at his desk showing a glass fronted bookcase to his left. (Battye Library, SLWA 304410PD)

Dr Battye's office had a number of glass fronted bookcases, which were filled with restricted books, many of which would be regarded as fairly innocuous now. *The Well of Loneliness*, the *Arabian Nights*, *Le Jardin Parfumé*, Havelock Ellis's *The Psychology of Sex* and Marie Stopé's works. Permission to read these had to be given by Dr Battye, who usually quizzed the reader fairly strictly for his reasons for wanting to consult them. There were also a large number of copies of Dr Battye's History of WA, stacked in one of the cupboards. I understand a number of these were sold to US servicemen here during the War.

[Wright, Percy Ronald, interviewed by Chris Jeffery 1978, Battye Library Oral History Program; OH 315.]

This writer ventures to suggest it would have been a brave reader who approached Dr Battye, even well-armed with reasons for wanting to consult a restricted book. Sadly, history does not relate whether any of the books actually left the glass fronted bookcases into the hands of an avid reader, or even whether Dr Battye had read them himself. He may well have done so – only, of course, to become sufficiently acquainted with the content of the books, to be able to make a well-informed decision on their use.

The more enlightened view of SLWA today. Taken from the website:

The State Library collections reflect a representative balance of views and perspectives. The Library does not seek to promote or discourage particular viewpoints and does not censor material, although the Library abides by federal and state government decisions on banned and restricted materials.

Heather Campbell



New books by members

Sandalwood History published

Dr Pamela Statham Drew, former President of the Friends of Batty Library has just released an informative book based on her research into WA sandalwood. The following information is taken from the publication.

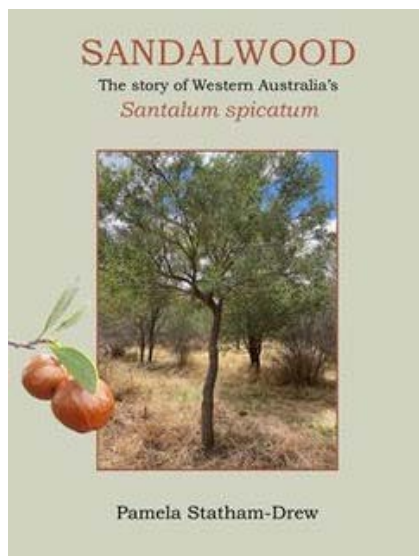
‘Sandalwood is one of the most exotic and unforgettable woods in the world. It is a yellowish timber with an elusive fragrance that is a combination

of floral, spicy, and earthy aromas.

The oil has been used as a perfume for centuries and is used as a base by many iconic perfumes such as Lanvin’s *Arpege*, YSL’s *Yvese* etc.

Cosmetic demands, however, pale in comparison with spiritual needs. Many religions, especially Hindu and Buddhism believe that sandalwood smoke create a link between heaven and earth and powdered sandalwood has been used for at least 4000 years both in temples and personal offerings.

The highest quality trees in the genus *Santalum* are trees which grow in tropical countries such as India,



New Caledonia, Fiji, other Pacific islands, and Indonesia – but in these countries domestic demand takes up all the timber harvested.

Western Australia has the only native, non-tropical sandalwood in the world.’

This lovely little publication can be purchased for \$30 from the Royal WA Historical Society’s bookshop, or by ringing Nick Drew on 0409 290 895.



News from the State Library

Events, exhibitions, projects, acquisitions

Your Library with Dr Kate

The popular Dr Kate series continues ABC Radio, Battye Historian, Kate Gregory, has been regularly sharing treasures from the Battye Library's collections with radio listeners on Fridays at 2.00pm on ABC radio (720). Also 6PR on Sunday evenings. Recent talks have included the Emily Clifton Diaries, with a reflection on the 1919 Global Pandemic, a look at the 1892 *Cycloramic View of Perth* created by John Stewart Jackson and posters collected from the Connections Nightclub.

So make it a date with Dr Kate. If you miss one of her broadcasts, you can still listen to it later on the State Library's website <https://www.slwa.wa.gov.au/slwa-on-abc-radio>.

SLWA Closure

Due to the Covid Lockdown of Western Australia, the State Library was closed from Monday 1st February to Friday 5th February reopening, with compulsory masks and social distancing on Saturday 6th February.

Battye Fellowship 2021

Submissions opened for the Battye Fellowship 2021 on 18th January and were due to close on 5th February but have been extended to 19th February. We are looking forward to working with a new Fellow and getting their take on our unique collection.

Storylines

The Storylines Aboriginal engagement project goes from strength to strength with the team planning a liaison visit to Kununurra in March. Another exciting opportunity has arisen

with renowned historian of Aboriginal culture Neville Green donating his personal collection to SLWA. There is an extensive photographic collection contained in this collection, which has a lot of content featuring Aboriginal people in the Kimberley



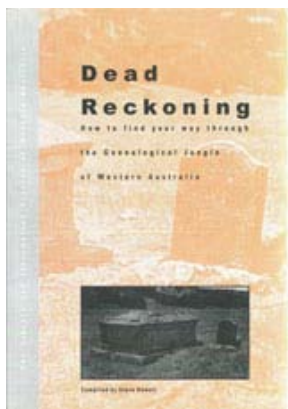
WA Reflections

SLWA is liaising with Screenwest and five filmmaking teams who will create five short documentary films which highlight aspects of our collections. The films will be ready for release in April 2021.

National Redress Scheme

The State Library continues to assist DLGSC in adding considerable value to many NRS requests for information. Applications for redress are scheduled to close on 30 June 2027.

Dead Reckoning review and update



Work has commenced to review *Dead Reckoning* with an aim to check and correct broken hyperlinks, review and update content where required, and looking for more effective ways to provide online content.

Rare Materials Assessment for digitisation

Assessment of rare materials continues apace with a focus on assessing private archival materials with the aim of digitising all of them. The process is lengthy, requires consideration of donor access restriction requirements and will see each item in each private archival collection assigned an individual descriptive caption. If rare materials are selected for digitisation but remain under a restriction of some form, they will be stored in the digital stack. So doing ensures the preservation of the original materials at archival quality and is permitted according to section 113H of the Copyright Act 1968.

Roll Plans

A small initiative aiming to identify all SLWA 'roll plans,' i.e. plans rolled up in long plastic tubes, recently commenced. This initiative will see the roll plans listed, described (where necessary), digitised, and will then receive conservation attention ahead of being rehoused on broad shelves to avoid storing them in plastic tubing.

Cartographic Notes

Work on the review, update and digitisation of the cartographic notes (CNs) continues to progress. 50 out of 82 CNs have been refreshed and

added to their respective online catalogue records. The remaining 32 CNs need considerable review and investigation, whilst yet others are no longer relevant as the items on them have been individually catalogued or relocated to different collections.

Forthcoming SLWA Events

Tuesday 30 March – 5:30 – 7:30: *Disrupted* Panel Discussion – ‘Poverty in Western Australia’ what needs to change. <https://disrupted.slwa.wa.gov.au/events-2021/march-poverty>.

19 – 25 March – *Snap Shot* – WA Music Photography: A digital display featuring local music and photography spanning over a century. (The Nook).

16 March – 6 June – *Ten Pound Pom* – The illustrated picture book exhibition (Story Place gallery).

Wednesday 16 March – Teacher and educator online event: *Illustrating Historical Narratives* with Liz Anelli.

Wednesday 28 April 2021 - *The City Beautiful: William Earnest Bold and the Development of Perth 1901-1944* (State Library Theatre).

29 April – 2 May - Sydney Writers Festival Live – The festival will stream its headline events direct to the State Library Theatre.

Saturday 17 April – New Noise Collective Library Sessions – Musical performances by Lyndon Blue and Lia T.

Community collecting drives for the State Library collections

The State Library seeks community help to collect materials that relate to significant events that affect the people and places of WA.

Ongoing impact of Covid-19 and the bushfire emergency

The State Library has an ongoing collecting drive for Covid-19 to collect materials which reflect the community response and changes to services as a result of COVID-19 and the recent lockdown affecting parts of WA. During this challenging time, a bushfire devastated communities in the Perth Hills area.

Photographs, video, journals and ephemera materials such as posters, flyers, signs, etc. that reflect these events and their impact on our communities are welcomed for the collection, to help remember and tell the stories of WA for future generations.

State Government election ephemera

The State Library actively collects election advertising materials created by parties, candidates, lobbyists and other interest groups. These ephemeral materials give insight into Western Australia's cultural, social and political history within the context of a political election.

Materials relating to the next State general election on the 13th of March, including how-to-vote cards, posters, flyers, letters, stickers, badges, and any other ephemeral materials, are welcomed for the Library's collection.

How to donate

Donations of digital material can be made by completing the Collection Offers Form.

Hard copy materials can be deposited at the Welcome Desk on the ground floor.

Digitisation of the Richard Gale collection, BA2640

Richard Gale, who traded as Galeforce Photography, donated his collection of photographs to the State Library of Western Australia in 2014. The collection totals 3,964 photographs and ranges from 1979-2010, covering a wide range of subjects from portraits, advertising shots of products, businesses, places and events. This fascinating collection is now available to view online through the State Library catalogue.

Significant Acquisitions

Architectural studies photograph album, circa 1926: Colin Ednie-Brown and Harold Boas

Album comprising 38 silver gelatin photographs of residential homes and apartment buildings, with interiors, by two Perth architects following World War 1: Colin Ednie-Brown and Harold Boas.

Colin Ednie-Brown (1894-1960) studied with Charles Oldham and then Harold Boas (1883-1980) and later joined the Oldham and Boas architectural practice (the State Library holds a collection of their architectural plans). Harold Boas was known for his ornate Tudor Revival style and his influence can be seen in many of the projects documented in this collection of photographs taken by artist photographer George

Iona, of 17 Blencowe Street, West Leederville. Some of the black and white prints have been hand-coloured and most pages of the album have been annotated with locations and names of the homeowners.

This sales sample album represents the work of two notable Perth architects and provides an important record of the California Bungalow and Tudor Revival architectural styles and the influence of Arts and Crafts and Art Deco on interior design in Western Australia post-World War 1.

Lucy Garlick Johnstone papers

Lucy (nee Garlick) Johnstone (1911-1995), completed her nursing training in Melbourne, and was an Army Nurse in the Northern Territory and New Guinea, before becoming a Matron in NSW and then at Broome. In Broome from 1947- mid 1950's, she was the infant welfare sister with the Royal Flying Doctor Service and a Native Affairs Officer. Whilst there she developed the *Where does it hurt* body chart, that is still in use today and is featured on the previous version of the Australian \$20 note, together with John Flynn the founder of the RFDS.

Other acquisitions:

- Nonja Peters papers - Includes addresses, correspondence, diaries, memoirs and transcripts.
- Original manuscript of *The Cockney and Crocodile* by Dame Ida Mann (Caroline Gye).
- WA Horticultural Council papers.
- Canning Stock Route guest book.
- Western Australia Club Minute books.
- Bayswater Art Society Records.
- Airey Taylor Engineering Plans - Includes plans for Perth Entertainment Centre, Subiaco Oval grandstand and Princess Margaret Hospital.
- Daryl Binning collection on WA cinema history.
- Bussell family papers, including transcripts of various Bussell family letters.
- Offshore Angling Club Records.
- Press Clearing House of WA. Minute books.

- Rosie Raven letters. Two handwritten letters from Rosie Raven written in 1910.
- Durack family tree.



State Records Office - News from the Archives

New State Records Office website

The State Records Office has a new online home on wa.gov.au. The old web site at sro.wa.gov.au has now been re-directed to this new home to make it easy to find the SRO. You can also search 'State Records Office' on wa.gov.au able to bookmark the new site for return visits. The SRO has updated most of the content on the new web site and retired some material that hasn't been searched for some years. However, all the old content has been safely archived.

State Records Office Newsletter

The State Records Office launched a new online newsletter in 2020 and is publishing a new update at least every quarter. You can subscribe to the newsletter via the SRO's new web site and follow the SRO on Facebook and Twitter to ensure you always have the latest news.

State Records Office on the airwaves

The State Records Office and State Library are continuing a fortnightly chat on ABC 720 Perth called 'History Repeated'. Tune in Friday afternoons and look out for online stories on the ABC Perth Radio web site. The SRO and State Library are also sharing a regular chat with Harvey Deegan on 6PR on Sunday evenings 'Remember When' – taking it in turns every fortnight (once a month each for the SRO and State Library) with a new story from the archives. You can also catch-up on these stories via the 6PR web site.

Damian Shepherd
Director State Records

Friends of Battye Library (Inc) Subscriptions form
From 1 July to 30 June each year

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 / renew 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

If paying by cheque, please complete this form and send with your cheque to:

The Treasurer
Friends of Battye Library
PO Box 216, NORTHBRIDGE 6865

If paying by electronic direct funds transfer, our details are:

BSB Number – 016-185
Account Name – Friends of Battye Library (Inc)
Account Number – 4220 58413

In the reference section, please use your initial and surname as well as 'subs' or 'donation' to ensure that your payment can be identified.

We need a completed form for our records, so please return it either by post or as an attachment to an email to ***membership@friendsofbattye.org.au*** with your online receipt number.

Afterwords

Old lists

As an amateur historian I like to get my chronology correct and I like lists. Just like plaques on buildings and places, I cannot walk by – I have to read them. Some old lists are reliable – those of the Kings and Queens of England, Australian Prime Ministers and AFL Premiers are safe bets.

But lesser institutions – not so much. The WA Suburban Turf Cricket Association started in the 1890s, and when the WAIT Cricket Club affiliated in 1972 I was given a fixture book that listed the past premiers. This started with ‘1894-98 Friendly matches only’, an unconvincing statement that would ultimately re-direct my life. Five years later, after WAIT had joined the list of premiers, I set out to discover what really happened in the early days.

This turned into several years of Saturday afternoons neither playing cricket (badly) nor watching football but instead ploughing through piles of microfilms in the Battye Library, reading about cricket and football in very old newspapers. This was in the years when microfilm readers carried warnings of repetitive strain injury (RSI) if your thumb spent too long pushing the lever that advanced the film.

I emerged with a working thumb and reams of notes in pencil (cricket), football (blue biro) and chemistry etc (red biro). It turned out that our Association had actually commenced – under a long-forgotten name – in 1896 and that four of the first five premiers had either been forgotten or misremembered.

The same pile of pencilled notes revealed that early WACA records were in similar condition – the names of several early premiers carefully painted on a big honour board were actually wrong. These names seem to have been copied from those inscribed retrospectively on a 1920s perpetual trophy.

This made the WACA a victim of what I call ‘the oldest member syndrome’. This occurs when an organisation is over twenty years old and the conscientious and historically-curious secretary asks the oldest member to write down the list of presidents, secretaries, captains etc, from memory.

The WAFL had also suffered from this because someone old and influential misremembered that the powerful Fremantle Football Club



Cricket being played at the WACA, ca. 1905. The signs on the scoreboard read 'West Wicket; East Wicket. West Wicket is batting'. (Passey collection, Batty Library, SLWA 009934PD.)

had won the premiership ten years in a row, 1887-1896. A faulty list incorporating this was published in a 1929 *Football Souvenir*. Forty years later, football historian Dave Clement consulted the microfilms and produced the correct list: Perth Rovers' two flags had been forgotten and the rest was a jumble. However, the wrong list was faithfully reproduced until 1975.

Once misinformation makes it on to a jarrah board in gold paint it is difficult to correct. The WACA managed it and, years after making his discoveries, Clement was finally invited to WAFL headquarters to unscrew the incorrect nameplates.

One night I was at a function in the Council chamber at the City of Nedlands. They have an impressive honour board of Road Board Chairmen and Mayors. I read it – obviously – and spotted that there was no Chairman for 1944. I told Mayor Max Hipkins and he had the missing Councillor restored to his pace of honour, though how much work I had caused for someone, I know not.

An honour board at the Perth-Tattersalls Bowling Club showed that Sir John Forrest was president from 1892-96, and the club set out to

celebrate its centenary in 1992, organising an interstate carnival for the occasion. But a committee member had a 1944 club booklet that indicated 1894 as the foundation year, and tensions were rising. Her friend's husband was a cricket mate and asked if I could help.

My old notes in red biro showed that the Perth Bowling Club was formed in June 1895. I left photocopies of the news stories in my meter box for collection (no spy dramas here, we were simply going out). These were displayed anonymously on the club notice board and settled the matter.

My old notes in blue biro revealed that my own football club, South Fremantle (2020 premiers, incidentally), had also suffered from old-timers' faulty memories, compounded by failure to keep copies of annual reports. Three presidents, three secretaries and two captains from the club's first decade had failed to make it into club records.

All old lists should be checked. Thanks to Trove, you can even do it on your smartphone at half-time at the footy.

Steve Errington



Important notice about the bookshop

Members will have noticed that the shop which used to be situated on the ground floor near the reception desk has been closed. It is not clear at this point, but it is hoped that Western Australian publications may be able to be purchased at the Western Australian Museum when building works have finished.

The Royal Western Australian Historical Society, however, has a bookshop with an extensive collection of WA materials and purchases may be made either in person by visiting 49 Broadway, cnr Clark Street Nedlands, or by browsing the catalogue and ordering online through <https://shop.histwest.org.au/books.html>. The RWAHS bookshop also sells a range of other goods including archival materials. For more information phone 08 9386 3841 during business hours or email: admin@histwest.org.au.

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

Life membership \$500

Annual membership

Ordinary \$25

Joint \$35

Pensioner / student / junior \$15

Corporate \$50

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 5.00 pm for 5.30 pm and conclude before 7.00 pm, 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.

Contact details

Friends of Battye Library website:

<http://www.friendsofbattyelibrary.org.au>

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 editor, Jennie Carter at *bevnjen@gmail.com*

or write to:

The President
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

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)

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 as per 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 9.30 am to 1.00 pm.

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