

No. 185

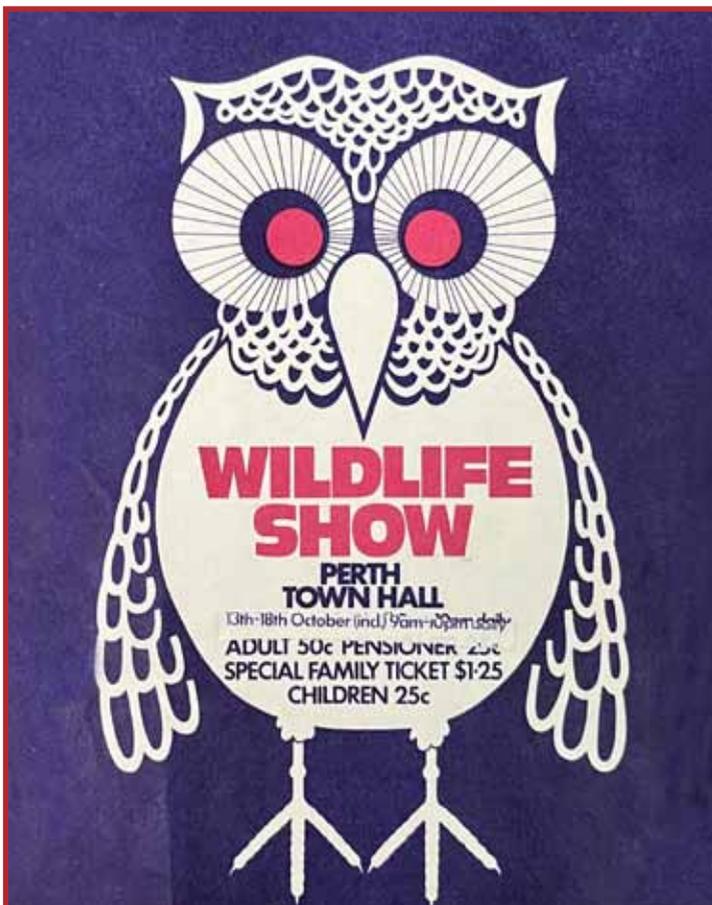


March 2026

FRIENDS OF BATTYE LIBRARY (Inc.)
NEWSLETTER

Our March 2026 meeting
Dr Sue Graham-Taylor AM

The Centenary of the WA Naturalists' Society



Tuesday 10 March 2026 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 (2024-2026)

President	Jennie Carter
Vice President	Vacant
Secretary	Pamela Statham Drew
Treasurer	Nick Drew
Membership Coordinator	Cherie Strickland
Events Coordinator	Helen Mather

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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.

Our March meeting.

Tuesday 10 March 2026
Great Southern Room, fourth floor
State Library of Western Australia
at 5pm for 5.30pm

Our speaker will be
Dr Sue Graham-Taylor AM

The Centenary of the WA Naturalists Club

After the meeting, members and guests are very welcome to join us for a meal at a nearby Perth restaurant. Our Treasurer, 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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Meeting dates for 2026

- 12 May** Christine Harris - *Ghost towns in WA*
- 14 July** TBA
- 8 September (AGM & election)** Jane Lydon - *Abolition of slavery and settler colonisation.*
- 17 November** End of year celebration - speaker Kate Gregory (Battye Historian) TBC



About our speaker - Sue Graham-Taylor

The Western Australian Naturalists' Club was founded in 1924 with the aim of 'encouraging the study of natural history in all its branches and preventing the wanton destruction of native flora and fauna.' Sue will discuss her work on the centenary history of the organization, with particular emphasis on the Club's role in the growth of environmental activism in Western Australia.



Dr Sue Graham-Taylor AM is a professional historian, previously Curator History at the Western Australian Museum.

She has contributed to a range of exhibitions and projects, including the National Anzac Centre and the WA Museum Boola Bardip's Changes Gallery. Sue was the first Battye Fellow and has continued to work on Swan River history as an historian and as a community volunteer.



President's Piece

This year we mark the founding of the first British settlement in Western Australia in Albany. Of note also, is that 2026 is the 45th anniversary of

the formation of the Friends of Battye Library with the first President being Sir Paul Hasluck.

In 2002 I wrote a short article for the Friends' 21st birthday and the official inauguration of our Gem of Time award to honour Western Australia's living treasures and their contribution to our State's history and heritage.

On a cold Monday 6 July 1981, the Friends of Battye Library was formally established with a prime objective to assist and promote the interest of the Battye Library with an emphasis on the acquisition, preservation, and use of archival and documentary materials. When the Public Records Office (now the State Records Office) which is responsible for State Government records, became a separate branch, the Friends' aims broadened to include the Office as well. (*Knowit* no.263)

Our first 'Gem' was the amazing Rica Erickson AM.

Issue no.1 of the Friends' *Newsletter* was published in February 1982 and since then has grown in breadth and importance. Our March 2026 issue is the 185th in the series.

Considering the size of the membership of the Friends of Battye Library, our organisation has made some remarkable achievements over the years. It has funded acquisitions, publications, finding aids, and important projects. As well as this, it has administered multi-million dollar Lotterywest grants to preserve 'at risk' and in demand Western Australian newspapers, photographs, films, and oral history tapes in the Battye Library and make them widely available to the public through the State Library's catalogue.

In 1991 Miss Maud Sholl left a bequest to the Friends which allowed us to set up a fund in her name, the proceeds of which regularly provides for special projects for the Battye Library and State Records Office. We are also grateful to our Patron, Miss Margaret Medcalf OAM, the second State Archivist, who recently gifted the Friends a generous fund to further its work.

To borrow shamelessly from that popular television show – may the Friends continue to 'live long and prosper!'

Jennie Carter
(President)



Obituaries

Gillian O'Mara (1946-2025)

In November last year the Friends lost a stalwart of our organisation when Gillian died after a long illness. She will be remembered as a skilled genealogist, specialising in records of convicts transported to WA. She wrote a still popular guide for researchers, *Convict Records in Western Australia* that was published by the Friends of Battye Library in 1990.



Gillian was part of Rica Erickson's team in producing the first set of the Dictionaries of West Australians in 1979, typing up the cards that prefaced every volume. She went on to help bring out the four volumes of the Bicentenary Dictionary and Rica made it known several times that she could not have brought out this widely acclaimed set without Gillian.

In 1984 she became a member of the WA Genealogical Society's Convict Special Interest Group and was its convenor for many years. She was widely recognised as an expert in the field and gracious and generous in sharing her knowledge.

In 1989 Gillian became a member of the Friends of Battye Library going on to hold several committee positions including that of President, Vice-president (a role she undertook for more than two decades) and Secretary, as well as long stints as acting President. She was also involved in several other history societies and organisations. Among her honours was the Friends of Battye Library's Gem of Time which was awarded in 2012 in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the collecting and recording of Western Australian history.

Possessing an infectious zest for life, Gillian was an excellent mentor, a great companion, and an adoring wife and mother. Our sincere condolences to her family. Those of us who were lucky to be numbered among her many friends, will miss her greatly.

Jennie Carter and Pamela Statham Drew



Jan Beresford-Pierce (1940-2025)

Jan was born in Western Australia, but was of Scottish and Irish descent. Her father worked for Dalgetys, a stock and station company, enlisting and serving in the Royal Australian Navy in the Second World War and subsequently returning to Dalgetys after the war, working in the North West of WA.

Jan moved around to several schools, loved books and was always interested in reading. She finished her education at Presbyterian Ladies College, subsequently training and qualifying as a nurse at Fremantle Hospital. After meeting Ian in the 1960s the couple married and had three sons, Giles, Angus and Digby. Jan continued her career as a nurse after marriage and worked at numerous hospitals in country WA. When Ian retired and bought 300 acres just out of York Jan had a stint as a farmer's wife. In retirement the couple travelled extensively establishing friendships throughout Australia and the UK.



Since joining in 2016, both Jan and Ian have been supportive members of the Friends, regularly attended meetings, and remained closely involved ever since.

[Extracted from information provided by Ian Beresford-Pierce.]

Heather Campbell



Anne Gill (died 28 January 2026)

Members will be saddened to hear of the death of Anne Gill who died recently in Hereford, England, where she lived with her husband, Paul, for some years. In the March 2025 edition of this newsletter, readers had the pleasure of enjoying a contribution in which Anne described her voluntary work with parish records at Hereford Cathedral.

Anne joined the Batty Library in the mid-1970s, moving to the State Archives branch after some years. With the development of the State

Archives as a distinct entity, Anne assisted in the training of Government records personnel in recordkeeping techniques. Later, with the enactment of the new *State Records Act 2000*, Anne assisted WA Government agencies in the formulation of recordkeeping plans, a process by which current records are earmarked in advance for retention as archives or for destruction when their useful life has ended. In this context it is thanks to Anne that numerous historical records are now in safekeeping for future researchers. Users of the impressive built-for-purpose search room of the State Records Office (a modest version is now on the third floor of the Alexander Library Building) would frequently benefit from Anne's friendly help when she was on duty there.

Anne's gentle, intelligent style of communication was enhanced by her kindness and professional integrity which was recognised by staff and clients alike. Not satisfied with two career changes, Anne moved on again with apparent ease to become a practicing Records Manager within the WA public sector. Anne is remembered as a much admired and respected colleague and friend who clearly had a positive impact on the creation, management and preservation of WA information in all its forms, before moving back to the United Kingdom.

Cheerful, caring and always helpful, Anne was a dearly loved person. Our heartfelt sympathies go out to Paul and the family.

Chris Coggin and Isabel Smith



Members' News

**Warmest congratulations to our Patron
Margaret Medcalf OAM
on her 100th birthday this month.**

We are delighted to announce that Margaret Medcalf will be celebrating an impressive milestone centenary birthday.

Margaret was born in Albany on 26 March 1926. She attended school in Albany and Perth and went on to gain a Bachelor of Arts and Diploma of Education at the University of WA. On her return after time spent overseas, Margaret joined the Archives Branch of the State Library in 1955, then headed by Mollie Lukis, the first State Archivist. Margaret and

Mollie were very conscious of the need for the Battye Library collections to reflect the history of the whole of Western Australia and they personally travelled all over the state to collect archival materials.

With the retirement of Mollie Lukis in 1971, Margaret became the State Archivist and Principal Librarian of the Battye Library – a position she held until her retirement.

Margaret's contribution to the archives profession and to the State Library and State Records Office has been profound and in 1991 she was appointed as the Library Board's Visiting Scholar and named as a Board Fellow. She received the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in 1999 for her service to the preservation of history.



State Records Office.

A valued advocate and committed supporter of the Friends of Battye Library from its founding, Margaret was honoured with our Gem of Time award in 2004 and agreed to be the Friends' Patron in 2022.

Congratulations indeed from your many admirers.

Jennie Carter



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 the State Records Office in their mission to acquire, preserve, and make available for research Western Australian materials.

If you have any queries please contact Nick at nickdrew@bigpond.com.

End of Year meeting 2025.

Another successful EoY meeting was held on 18 November. The evening's function began with a fascinating presentation by Dr Caroline Ingram, the 2025 winner of the Margaret Medcalf Award for excellence in research using the Western Australian State archives, on the topic of 'Women on Trial: the criminal trials of women in colonial Western Australia'.

Following Caroline's talk, members who had booked to attend the end of year dinner moved into the brightly decorated staff dining room for a fully catered meal. Full credit for the success of the evening is due in no small part to the organisation and hard work of Pamela and Nick, ably assisted by several of our members, with special mention to Helen Mather and Lorraine Clarke.

Sincere thanks to Catherine Clark, CEO and State Librarian, and her team for once again making the facilities available to the Friends. The generosity and support of the State Library and State Records Office staff are highly appreciated.



Treasures from Trove

One hundredth anniversary of RWAHS

The Royal Western Australian Historical Society was formed in 1926 to encourage the study, writing and enjoyment of the history of Western Australia in all its cultural diversity. In September this year, the Society, which now uses the brand name of 'History West', will reach its 100th milestone. To mark the occasion *Treasures from Trove* reproduces a report of its inaugural meeting from the *West Australian*, 11 September, 1926, p.12:

HISTORICAL SOCIETY - Inaugural Meeting. Saving Old Records.

At a meeting last night the Western Australian Historical Society was formed. The functions of the society are to collect, classify, and preserve records and articles concerned with the history of Western Australia; to publish selected records from time to time, and to create a public opinion favouring the preservation of worthy historical relics and fit recognition of notable anniversaries in the State's history. These sentiments were enthusiastically endorsed by the large gathering in the Karrakatta Club Hall. Sir James Mitchell presided. As Sir James was later obliged to

attend another meeting. Professor EOG Shann was elected to the chair.

Sir James Mitchell said that, not only was it desired to overtake the past, but it was of considerable importance that the happenings of the present should be properly recorded. Valuable records were fast disappearing because — apart from the Public library— no efforts were made to preserve them. Although this was a new country, there were records and relics concerning it which were very old. Many of the pioneers were dead, but doubtless, from the few who remained much interesting information could be gained. Consolidated effort would result in the discovery of historical data which would be not only of interest to contemporaries, but would form the basis of local historical knowledge for our children's children. The object of the proposed society to save the history of the past from oblivion was to be commended.

Mrs Edith Cowan said that records of social, industrial, pastoral, and agricultural development should be preserved. Attention should also be directed towards the work of the brave pioneer women, without whom the State could never have been founded. She moved:

In the opinion of this meeting the time has arrived to form a society with the following objects: — (1) Collection, classification, and preservation of records and articles concerned with the history of Western Australia. (2) Publication of selected records from time to time, either in special bulletins or in an official journal of the society. (3) Inter-change of information among members of the society by lectures, readings, discussions, and exhibitions of historical treasures. (4) Encouragement of the study of Western Australian history. (5) Creation of a public opinion favouring the preservation of worthy historical relics and fit recognition of notable anniversaries in Western Australian history. (6) The promotion of social gatherings of members at determined intervals. (7) The securing of premises which could be used as a social centre for members and a repository for the documents of the society. (8) The establishment of branches.

Mr IT Birtwistle seconded the motion.

'Many of the old records have been wantonly destroyed', said Dr JS Battye. 'Thomas Peel, one of the earliest settlers, stored all his documents in a barn at Mandurah. Subsequently those documents passed into the hands of a local publican who removed the Western Australian stamps and burnt the records'.

'Western Australia', Dr. Battye continued, 'was destined to become one of the largest and richest portions of the British Empire. Doubtless after the passage of years Australia would become a nation responsible to itself. Documents and papers concerned with its early history would then possess added significance'. Some years ago he had been asked to look over a heap of so-called rubbish which was about to be consigned to the incinerator. Many interesting relics were salvaged from the 'heap



Governor Sir James Stirling.
(Government House Perth)

of rubbish'. One of them proved to be the original proclamation which James Stirling had held in his hand when he proclaimed the colony in 1829. Happily the practice of destroying records without careful scrutiny had been discontinued. Historical research had been attempted in several avenues but much remained to be accomplished.

After Messrs RS Sampson, MLA, K H Goodman, and HG Stirling, and Mrs R Farrelly had commended the proposed objects of the society to the meeting, the motion was carried unanimously.

It was resolved to seek the patronage of his Excellency the Governor (Sir William Champion), the Premier (Mr P Collier) and Archbishops Riley and Clune. The following officers were elected for the ensuing year:

— President Sir James Mitchell; vice-presidents, Sir Walter James, Dr JS Batty and Mesdames W Sampson and JD Rowe; chairman of council, Professor EAG Shann; council, Mesdames E Cowan, OBE, M Farrelly, E Chase and HK Maley, Miss E Ferguson and Messrs E Clifton, HG Stirling, S Knight, WB Solomon, E Lee-Steere, E Rose, MLC, and A Carson; secretary, Mr IT Birtwistle; assistant secretary, Mrs Cowan; research secretary, Mr Paul Hasluck; and treasurer, Mr RS Sampson.

Subscriptions to the society were fixed at the following rates: — Gentlemen (with journal), £1 1s per annum; ladies (with journal), 15s per annum; ladies (relatives of and resident with mem-bers), 7s 6d per annum, life membership, £10 10s.

On the motion of Mrs E Cowan, it was resolved to hold the second meeting of the society on October 15.

Happy Birthday!

Heather Campbell



Have you a story to tell?

Thing of stone or wood — Perth's first jetty 1829

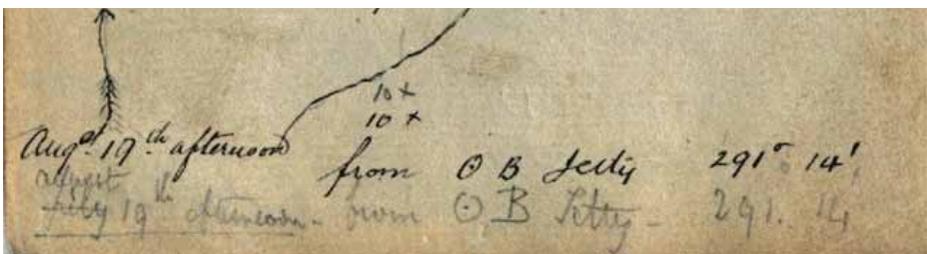
[Dr Michael O'Connor is a retired Digital Archivist, SROWA. In this, his second article, he explores the history of the first jetty constructed in the infant colony.]

We know that the ceremony to found Perth occurred on the afternoon of 12 August 1829. A tree was felled, there being no suitable material at hand for a foundation stone. But what did the European colonists do next? Among the early priorities were (1) housing the military and public services now resident in the new town, (2) surveying the townsite in order to set out streets, lots, and reserves for the expected deluge of colonists, and (3) facilitating the future movement of people and goods. Public servants were to be housed in tents at first, and the 63rd regiment were to live in barracks. Peter Brown (later Broun), Colonial Secretary, tells us that the following day 'The line of the new Barracks laid down by the Surveyor General'.¹ However Brown mentions nothing about Perth until September 5th, the day that Perth lots were declared open for selection.

The third priority would rely on the Swan River initially, as it took time to establish overland paths/roads from Fremantle to Perth. However there were problems of shallow water and muddy shorelines at the chosen landing place at Perth (now in the present Supreme Court gardens). Augustus Gilbert, sailing up from Fremantle to Perth, found there was:

... little depth of water in the approach to it, there being scarcely 18 inches in any part, but on enquiry I found the object was to place both ends of the Town near deep water & thus connect the passages above & below which is a very desirable object.²

While Gilbert makes no mention of a jetty, an early Survey Office field book suggests one had already commenced on the Perth foreshore below what is today Pier Street. This jetty, one of the first colonial structures in the new town, is recorded on the afternoon of 19 August 1829. Roe and/or Sutherland, surveying the foreshore from Perth westwards towards Mount Eliza, noted a bearing from survey point B back to a 'Jetty' of $291^{\circ} 14'$. Given the ready availability of jarrah trees and a lack of stone initially, it was probably a wooden structure erected by soldiers of the 63rd Regiment and government workmen.



Survey fieldbook 'A', attributed to JS Roe.³

A jetty sufficiently complete to be visible for surveyors to take a bearing to it, less than a week after Perth was started, would indicate a remarkably swift construction (or at least commencement). No details of the jetty have been found in the Colonial Secretary Office records. Two Survey Office plans of early Perth show the jetty's location by faint pencil additions on the initial August 1829 plan,⁴ and on Roe's sketch of the Swan River for September–November 1829.⁵

By December 1829 the first Perth jetty was replaced or upgraded to a more substantial structure built partially or fully in stone. The Survey Office diary notes for 15 December that Walter Bourke was employed to carry 'boxes of mathematical instruments from Jetty to Office'.⁶ The March 6 1832 Quarterly report of Public Works by Civil Engineer Henry Reveley includes in a list of 'Third Class Works' a 'Jetty, Perth, Decr 1829' for which he recommends repairs of 'Raising & enlarging with same material & good lime mortar'⁷ [later crossed out]. A second report in mid-1832⁷ mentions that this jetty was constructed 'by Govt workmen'.⁸

From 1830 onwards the stone jetty/pier⁸ is mentioned by early diarists and appears on plans of Perth, and is likely the forerunner of this stone Pier Street Jetty photographed by AH Stone in the mid-1860s.



AH Stone. South over the Courthouse, and the Pier Street and Barrack Street jetties, Perth. (Battye Library, SLWA 6909B/52)

Michael O'Connor

Endnotes:

1. Brown, P. (1829) Journal of events connected with the Public Service, no.1. NA UK CO18/3 1 fol.4.
2. Gilbert, A. (1829), diary entry, 31 August 1829. Transcript of a diary of a man aboard HMS Sulphur, 8 Feb–11 Sep 1829, SLWA, Acc 6782A.
3. SROWA series 32 cons3401 HIL/01 p.11. (Digitised with funding provided by the Friends of Battye Library. Commenced c.2014).
4. See O'Connor, 'The earliest surviving survey plan of Perth, 1829' in *Friends of Battye Library Newsletter* no.184, November 2025.
5. Roe, JS (1829). Eye sketch of Swan River, Sept., Oct., Nov., 1829. SROWA series 50, cons3423 Exploration 134.
6. Diary Survey Office, October 1829–March 1830. SROWA series 1861 cons5000 224.
7. Reveley, H. (1832). 'Quarterly Report on the Public Works and Buildings in the Colony'. SROWA series 2941 cons36 21 f.126.
8. Reveley, H. (1832). *ibid.* series 2941 cons36 23 f.4.

Nomenclature nuances

[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.]

In Western Australia the naming of geographical features, towns, railway sidings, other places, and even roads has been controlled by the Nomenclature Advisory Committee attached initially to the Lands and Surveys Department. The Committee was first established in 1936. Now known as the Geographic Names Committee it is an independent advisory committee providing advice to Landgate and the Minister for Lands on complex or contentious geographic naming matters.

The first meeting took place on 27 July 1936 and the minutes of the meeting note:

The inaugural meeting of the Advisory Committee on the Nomenclature of towns, etc., took place at the Office of the Surveyor General (Mr. JP Camm) on Monday July 27, 1936, at 10 am. The committee came into existence as the result of representations by the Western Australian Historical Society that action should be taken to see that towns and places etc., were properly named and that, in this connexion, due regard should be paid to all historical and aboriginal features of the towns and places to be named. The Minister for Lands (Hon. MF Troy) agreed with the representations of the Society and accordingly he appointed the following as an Advisory Committee in the matter:

Chairman:

Dr JS Battye (Chancellor of the University, and Chairman of the State Archives Board)

Members:

Mr JA Klein, MSA (Director of Education)

Mr JA Camm (Surveyor-General)

Mr Paul Hasluck (Western Australian Historical Society)

Mr FI Bray (Chairman of Memorials Committee of Western Australian Historical Society and member of State Archives Board)

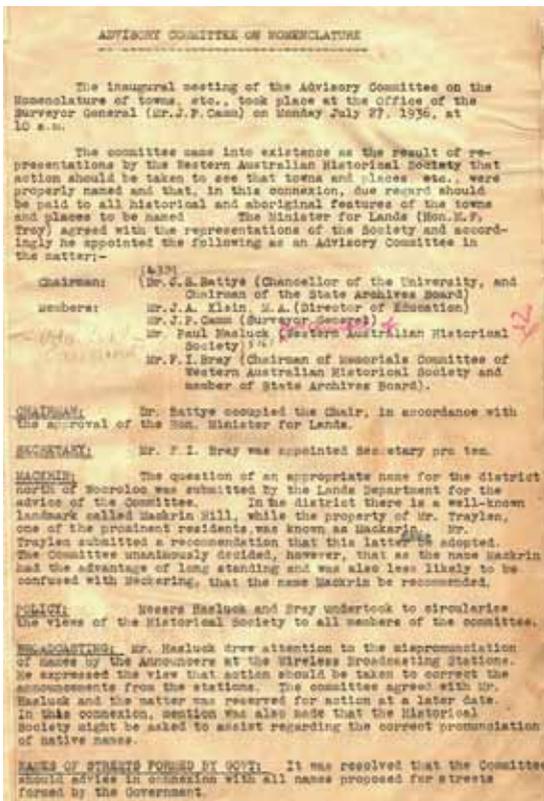
Dr Battye was the inaugural chairman, a role he held up until his death in 1954, and the meetings were regularly held in his office at the Public Library. From 1952-1954 meetings were held in his residence at 3 Francis Street, which became part of the Battye Library stacks and staff facilities some years later. Dr Battye's death was noted in the minutes of 11 October 1954. The link with the State Archives and, later, the Battye Library continued with the State Archivist. Mollie Lukis and

Margaret Medcalf attended many meetings during their tenure. Miss Lukis actually first joined the committee at the 5 July 1950 meeting as the representative of the Royal WA Historical Society, and continued representing as the State Archivist until her retirement was announced in the meeting of 18 May 1971. In the last of the digitised minutes, 5 December 2019, the late Leigh Hays of SRO was the representative. In fact, your scribe had the unintentional title of State Archivist bestowed upon him at the meeting of 22 March 1984.

However, at his next meeting, 7 December 1989, he was representing the Library Board of WA on behalf of Chris Coggin, then the State Archivist. Changes in recent years mean that the State Archivist is no longer a member of the committee.

Eight volumes of minutes covering from 1936 to 2019 have been

digitised by Landgate and made available through the State Records Office online catalogue. They can be found by searching Cons7683. Within each volume you can conduct keyword searching which is a great assistance for research. For example, within volume 01 (July 1936 – April 1942) when I open the digitised file and do a find in text search for 'railway' I get sixteen results. The discussions in this period included the naming of Mosman Park vs Buckland Hill – the WA Government Railways changed the station to Mosman Park from Buckland Hill from 1 November 1937; the 1937 approval of the names Watson, Reid, Nurina and



First page of the minutes of the inaugural Nomenclature Committee meeting, 25 July 1936. (SROWA Cons7683 01)

Coonana for stations on the Trans Australian Railway; and in October 1936 the committee approved the name 'Affleck' be recommended for a railway siding. There is no further information at all on this latter example and no WA siding ever carried that name. However, Dr Fred N Affleck is a well-known WA railway historian and advocate and his 2024 self-published book *Rails in the West : how Western Australia's government railway shaped the State, 1870-2000* was shortlisted for the SRO's Margaret Medcalf Award. It is available in the Battye Library collection.

As many of you will have discovered, general search results within the SRO catalogue bring up digitised items as well as archive item catalogue records. While it isn't possible to see exactly what mention has been picked up in the digitised record, you will see if the nomenclature minutes are in your search result, and this can lead to further research within the volumes as noted above. Although, the volume containing Whiteford (number 06) didn't work in this method. However, a City of Perth minute book of 1922-1923 containing the surname does show in search results.

Here are some more interesting examples of items discussed in the meetings.

A note in the minutes of 2 November 1949 was that Dr Battye would supply further names from mythology for Innaloo Estate street names. In March 1950 the names of Heimhall, Thrall and Edda were chosen. Of these three, Thrall Street is the only one in the current metropolitan street directory, close to Odin Road and Thor Street. Early in 1951 the Perth Road Board agreed to the use of names from the 1830 ship *Rockingham* passenger list, and at the meeting of 18 November 1954 seven passenger names from the ship were approved for use in North Innaloo. Unfortunately, the seven names are not named!

On Tuesday 14 May 1948 a new low level landing was opened on the Armadale suburban railway between Gosnells and Kelmscott. Known as 14 Mile stopping place, the name Seaforth was approved on 26 January 1949 and the WAGR applied the name in March. Although the name Seaforth existed in other states, the Post Master General's Department had no objection as 'it is unlikely that a post office will ever be established so close to the existing one at Gosnells'. The name came from the Salvation Army Boys Home that existed close to the station.

Further information on many of the names in the minutes can be found in the files of other departments. For example, in Lands & Surveys Department Cons211 there is file 1948/01171 Naming of stopping place

near Gosnells 'Seaforth', and this contains much correspondence and debate on the issue.

The issues of duplication and similarity were often at the forefront of discussions, with the Post Master General's Department comparing any WA proposal with names throughout the Commonwealth. At the meeting of 31 August 1936, the committee examined the index to the State's place names in the Surveyor General's Department and 338 duplications were noted. It was noted that many duplications were in surveying Trig. Station names and that 'as they were usually placed at high altitudes, such as the top of a mountain, etc. the name of such would be unlikely to have any postal use' also that 'there would be difficult departmental ramifications arising' by the alteration of such names. It was all proving too hard, however, and on 26 July 1937 after discussion, the Chairman 'stated that it appeared that many of the important names could not be altered without a great deal of inter-departmental work, whereas the unimportant did not matter'.

In 1949 the State Saw Mills proposed the name Boorara for the siding that would connect its railway from the new Shannon River Mill to the WAGR near Northcliffe. The construction camp was known as Boorara Camp and there was the Boorara Fire Tower in the vicinity, established earlier that decade. Consideration was given that there was already a gazetted townsite of Boorara near Kalgoorlie but 'as this place is no longer of any importance the name should be taken for the new siding which will be a permanent nature'. But later it was noted that there were still 18 freehold lots in Boorara townsite so Mr WV Fyfe, Surveyor General, suggested Terry for the siding, after Marmaduke Terry a pioneer surveyor of the South West who died in 1933, and this name was applied in June 1949. Incidentally, the 'permanent' Terry siding was deleted from WAGR records early in 1973 although the railway to Shannon Mill had been removed in 1963. A large collection of Terry's field books is held by SRO in Cons3401.

In January 1933 a siding on the Busselton to Flinders Bay railway was named Dianella. The siding was provided for the railing of lime sands required in the agricultural industry. The siding closed with the whole railway in 1957. In August 1958 Miss Lukis put forward Dianella, the name of a flower in the area, for a new postal district in what was then Perth's north. The WAGR did not anticipate any confusion arising from the new name as its siding had closed. Incidentally, well-known

Fremantle Dockers footballer, Nat Fyfe, has been known to truck lime sand from the present mine in the area to the family farm at Lake Grace.

The Nomenclature minutes are a fascinating read and provide much information about place name history. That they are digitised is a great advantage for researchers.

Incidentally, a keyword search of the State Library's catalogue 'nomenclature western' gave me 82 results on 13 January and it's a fascinating mix of geological, biological, Aboriginal, geographical, roads and places. A simple nomenclature search in SRO's catalogue gave 488 results with a similar wide variety of themes. Search 'naming' and you get 607 hits. The National Archives of Australia's *Recordsearch* catalogue isn't as easy to use for a state search but the terms nomenclature and naming give many results with files such as 'Naming of aerodromes' and 'Postal matters – naming of post offices'.

David Whiteford

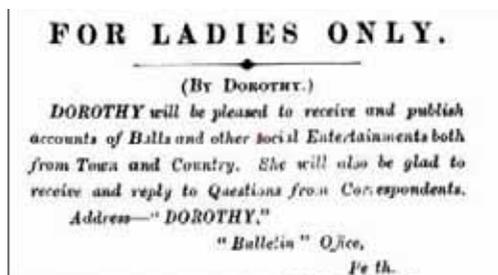


Dorothy – A good recipe

[*Brendan Kelly, a Bunbury based member of the Friends, is now a regular contributor to our Newsletter. In this issue he looks at items 'for ladies only'.*]

In January 1890, Fremantle based newspaper the *WA Bulletin* introduced a new page under the banner 'For Ladies Only (By Dorothy)'. The page's clever editor, Lilian Hart, created subheadings to entice readers, including 'Gossip', 'Fashion', 'Chit Chat', 'Novelties', and 'Odds and Ends'. Literacy rates among everyday people were steadily increasing and there was much to be reported. Women's interests emerged, but no other of Dorothy's topics had more practical importance than 'Recipes'.

The late 19th century populace of Perth and Fremantle remained devoted to the idea of the backyard garden. The *Western Mail's* regular columnist 'Hortus', under the



'For Ladies Only' *WA Bulletin*, 19 Jul 1890, p.7.

heading of 'Kitchen Garden', kept readers informed of seasonal activities. Monthly calendars exhorted home gardeners to dig, plant, water, fertilise, and harvest – potatoes, cabbages, cauliflowers, turnips, French beans, chillies, capsicums, and tomatoes. Melons and cucumbers were dusted with sulphur, to help prevent the ravages of the plant *fungus oidium*.

Every household kitchen benefitted from a good cookbook. The immensely popular *Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management* was much more than simply a guide to cooking; Mrs Beeton provided comprehensive guidance on all aspects of running Victorian-era domestics, cooking, cleaning, childcare and managing staff. In some Victorian homes, meals were prepared by cooks and servants; however no respectable kitchen would be without a decent recipe book. Newspaper recipes were clipped out, to be pasted into home cook-books.

As Perth and Fremantle prospered, there was a constant demand for fresh produce from housewives, cooks, and commercial kitchens. In-season, fruit could be eaten immediately or preserved. Meat and fish appeared on the menu, with plenty of vegetables. Pies were baked, soups made. Puddings, biscuits, and cakes became a sweet share of the diet. Newspapers performed a community duty, informing keepers of the domestic hearth of seasonal produce and how it could be best prepared.

Lilian Hart was a working journalist and at the same time the mother of four-year old Geraldine. She and her husband, Jerry Hart, rose to be prominent influencers through the newspapers. In a marriage of frenetic deadlines, the peeling of vegetables and preparation of basics were delegated. However, Lilian (as Dorothy) searched and sourced recipes from all over, which arrived from readers and through a network of well-to-do kitchens, where a good cook was a vital and respected senior employee.

Dorothy's page was read by many, also enabling Lilian Hart to hone her craft. From 1891, after the *WA Bulletin* folded, Lilian wrote in the *Western Mail*, under the penname 'Cora'. She was the outstanding newspaper woman of her time, spreading her influence to the people. Novel recipes were always prominent when catering to her readership. Selling newspapers depended on good journalism, but a new recipe helped. In turn, the increased circulation attracted advertising revenue.

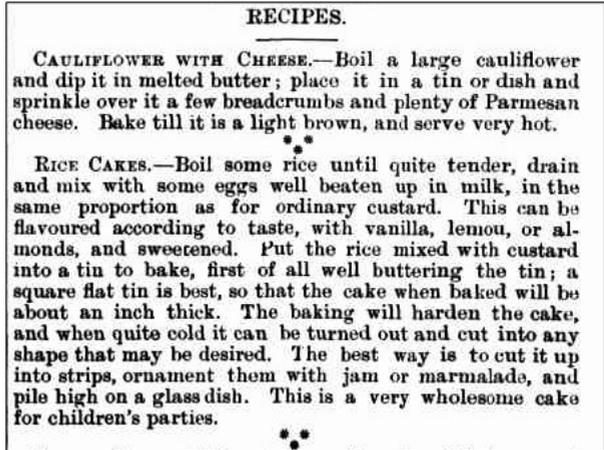
Lilian Hart, still short of her 27th birthday, is attuned to her own class and those around her. She moved in high circles but maintained a down-

to-earth connection. In the 1890's, Western Australia would relish an economic boom beyond imagination, due to the discovery of gold. The Harts produced popular journalism that sold newspapers. Lilian, writing for ladies (and many men), presented a progressive outlook for women, but one could not go past a good recipe.

Brendan Kelly

Sources:

- Brendan Kelly, 'Cora – A presswoman of repute', *Early Days* Vol.107, RWAHS, 2023.
- Brendan Kelly, 'Lilian Hart as Dorothy' (unpublished MS), 11 August 2025.
- Brendan Kelly, 'Dorothy at *The Bulletin*' (unpublished MS), 15 August 2025.



'Recipes', *WA Bulletin*, 19 July 1890, p.7.



Remembering Lenny Sexton (1911-1979)

[Julie Martin has written articles for the newsletter on her early working life as a librarian, including personalities of the time and working in Northbridge. This time she covers one of the interesting personalities who frequented the Perth Railway Station]

Chances are, when you've visited the Perth Railway Station, you've noticed underfoot a cluster of black and terrazzo tiles embedded in the paving along Platform 5. One of these tiles reminds us that '*riding camels on this platform is strictly prohibited,*' a common occurrence apparently when the station opened in 1880!

But the tile that caught my attention and sent my memory scampering off into its many recesses reads like this:

Lenny Sexton is remembered in perpetuity for as long as the story is told and retold.



Those of us who passed through or frequented Perth and the train station in the 1960s and 70s will remember Lenny. Almost everyone, it seems, who worked in Perth or travelled through it in those days knew him.

But, for those who don't know his story, it's worth retelling because it's more than Lenny's story. Without the sustained kindness and generosity of the people who worked at the

Central Railway Station at that time, or who passed through it each day, there would be no story, and a reminder of those qualities in today's seemingly selfish world would not go astray.

Mabel Sexton was a mere twenty-one when she gave birth in 1911 to her second child, Leonard Alfred Sexton. Doctors later informed her of Lenny's uncertain future; he had what was to become known as Down Syndrome and would need special care for the rest of his life.

Mabel and her husband, Alf, were battlers in every sense of the word, moving from district to district wherever Alf could find work, and they must have wondered at the black cloud that followed them. Within three years of Lenny's birth, the world was gripped by World War I, and the Sexton children now numbered three. Alf, too old at thirty-eight to enlist, continued his itinerant work, hoping that things would improve. However, unbeknownst to them, the Great Depression and another World War loomed.

We have it on good authority that when Lenny's siblings attended Kelmscott School in the early twenties, the headmaster, Ernie Haynes, a man of foresight and compassion, invited Mabel to bring Lenny along so he could socialise with children his age. In time, when his classmates went on to high school in Perth, Lenny accompanied them, waiting at the railway station until school was out, then returning home with them.

And so began Lenny's fascination with trains.

During the Second World War, the family suffered another blow. Alf, now sixty-seven, passed away unexpectedly, leaving Mabel and Lenny to manage in a tiny, rented house in East Perth, then a rough and tough

neighbourhood. The other Sexton children had married and moved away. Lenny, pint-sized and dressed in short pants, long socks, a blazer, and a peak cap (and whenever the weather called for it, a raincoat), took up residence on a wooden bench outside the Station Master's Office, and the railwaymen looked after him. His mother, now the breadwinner, would bring him to the station each morning and collect him on her way home in the evening. Over time, when it came to Perth trains and their movements, Lenny developed savant-like abilities. If you needed a departure time, Lenny could tell you within a second. Heading to Fremantle? He'd tell you which carriage to board for the best exit. The only time Lenny, the human timetable, was caught out was the day the train drivers went on strike. The absence of any trains passing through the station was beyond his comprehension.

What then became a regular fortnightly occurrence is best described by those who were there.

Pay days were a sacred tradition for the railway men and women. The aroma of coins and paper notes would mix with coal smoke and fresh bakery goods from the concourse kiosk. After payday envelopes were handed out, Ben Bransby would take up a quiet collection: loose change from station staff, guards, drivers, and ticket sellers, all happy to chip in a little something.

Then came the moment everyone loved. Ben would glance down the platform, spot Lenny approaching with that familiar purposeful stride, and call out:

'Pay Day, Lenny!'

At the sound of his name, Lenny would beam – his smile wide, eyes sparkling, and his stride turning to a skip. He'd take the envelope with both hands, nodding his thanks to every face he passed. It was never much – just enough for a few meals, a warm jacket perhaps – but the gesture meant everything.

He didn't ask for it. He never expected it. But he accepted it with the quiet dignity of a man who'd earned his place on the platform, not through title or pay grade, but through kindness and consistency.

Lenny was not only well-known at the station; he also loved to wander through Boans and Foys, waving and smiling at the shop girls. Occasionally, he could be found in Coles' cafeteria, where the staff turned a blind eye to his drinking his tea from a saucer.

Mabel passed away in 1970 when Lenny was fifty-nine, and it seemed his days at the Central Railway Station had come to an end. However, an

aunt who lived in North Perth took him in, and he was able to return to his wooden bench outside the Station Master's office. There he remained, announcing the arrivals and departures of the trains until 1977, when his aunt died.

His death two years later at the Mt Lawley annexe of RPH was reported by both the *West Australian* and the *Daily News*, and his cherished friends at the railway station published their farewell message on the day of his funeral.

A tribute to the memory of 'Lenny', revered associate of all railwaymen at Perth station, both past and present.

This knowledgeable observer will be missed by many of our patrons as well as ourselves. From the present staff. Perth Railway Station.

Lenny's remains were interred in a grave in a far-flung section of Karrakatta, a section now earmarked for renewal. The grave's grey stones and cement railing will likely disappear, but no matter, Lenny Sexton is immortalised at the place where he found respect, purpose, and friendship – the Perth Central Railway Station.



Plaque on the bench outside the Station Master's Office, Perth Central Railway Station

Julie Martin



Reg Appleyard and the Conservation Through Reserves Committee

[Dr Alex George AM, eminent botanist and conservationist, has been a member of the Friends for years and has written widely on botanical history topics. In this article he pays tribute to Professor Reg Appleyard and the CTRC. (note: Reg's obituary appeared in the November 2025 issue of our Newsletter.)]

In 1971 the State Government established the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA). One of its first actions was to set up the Conservation Through Reserves Committee (CTRC) with terms of reference to review national parks and nature reserves throughout the State and make recommendations regarding existing and proposed reserves.

The Committee first met on 15 February 1972. It established a technical subcommittee to undertake the groundwork, with members representing the natural sciences – zoology, botany, geology – and a full-time secretary.

Professor Reg Appleyard accepted the position of Convenor of the subcommittee, and in this capacity also became a member of the CTRC. It quickly became clear that the task required considerable time, and arrangements were made for the members to be seconded from their employment for three days a week during 1973, but meetings continued to be frequent thereafter.

Besides intensive work in an office of the EPA in the city and also at UWA, the subcommittee undertook several major field trips to see at first hand the areas under consideration. They included low-level flights over the North-West, Kimberley and South-East regions, supplemented with on-ground excursions. A ground survey was also made through the far South-West.

Although not a natural scientist, Reg Appleyard was a sympathetic and firm chairman. Having no background in this field he came with no preconceived ideas, but showed a ready capacity to understand the natural environment, its importance, and the need for national parks and other conservation reserves to protect it.



Members of the Subcommittee canoeing on the Canning River above the Riverton Bridge, 8 February 1978.

The CTRC's first report, *Conservation Reserves in Western Australia*, was submitted, in two volumes, to the Environmental Protection Authority in August 1974. It covered most of the State but deferred the Kimberley Region and Darling (Perth) Region pending further research. These were submitted in 1977 and 1983 respectively. Most of the

CTRC's recommendations were accepted by the EPA and transmitted to the Government, who accepted almost all recommendations. The declaration of new national parks and conservation reserves greatly augmented WA's conservation estate, a legacy that remains today and into the future.

Reg Appleyard's contribution to the committee's work is one of his important legacies.

Alex George



News from the State Library

Dialogues 2029 – George Fletcher Moore digitisation

The State Library has commenced a program of work towards the 2029 commemoration of 200 years since the colonisation of Swan River that includes collection research, curation and public programs over the next four years. As part of this work, staff have undertaken a collection audit into private archive holdings to identify a range of early archival materials for digitisation and conservation. This includes highly significant archives, such as the private archive collection of Swan River colonist George Fletcher Moore. The State Library has digitised the entire collection of Moore's precious handwritten letters and diaries that provides insight into the early years of the Swan River Colony. George Fletcher Moore's collection is now accessible through the State Library's catalogue.

Albany Then and Now: historical panoramas of Menang Noongar Boodja

Museum of the Great Southern

Exhibition closes 1 June 2026

The State Library has partnered with Curtin University's HIVE (Hub for Immersive Visualisation and eResearch) and the Western Australian Museum to develop an exhibition for the Great Southern Museum in Albany as part of Albany 2026, commemorating 200 years since the colonisation of Albany. The exhibition features a rich range of historical panoramas from the State Library, presented through an immersive digital experience with audio narration by members of the community



Panorama of Albany from Mt Melville, photographer Melvin Vaniman, 1904.
Battye Library, State Library of Western Australia, 1495B

including Menang Elders, and local historians. The exhibition showcases change and continuity in the Albany landscape by contrasting contemporary images with historical images of Albany. The stories of Albany are many and varied and reveal different perspectives on the history of Albany. The State Library facilitated research to identify and enable digitisation of perhaps the most well-known panorama of Albany, Robert Dale's 1834 Panoramic view of King George's Sound, part of the Colony of Swan River. For the first time, this exhibition brings together five digitised versions of Dale's panorama, held by several private and public collections. The exhibition features contrasting versions of Dale's panoramic etching and aquatint, each with variations in hand-colouring and some significant differences such as the presence and absence of the British flag. The Dale panoramas held by Art Gallery of Western Australia, National Library of Australia, Janet Holmes à Court Collection, and two versions of the Dale panorama held by Kerry Stokes Collection are contrasted within the exhibition narrated by Menang Elder Lynette Knapp and botanist Stephen Hopper. As part of the State Library's partnership, the Storylines team presented a number of workshops with the Menang community on Storylines, featuring digitised State Library collections connected to Albany and the broader Great Southern region.

WA Reflections

The State Library and Screenwest partnered to deliver a third season of WA Reflections featuring four films made in response to the State Library's collections:

A Search Beyond the Stars: A history of WA's space exploration and its significant achievements along the way

The Road Ahead: A heartwarming story of the life and legacy of disability pioneer, Dr Arnold Cook, his guide dog Dreena and the guide dog movement.

I've Never Seen a Straight Banana: A bold journey of self-discovery where an emerging performer sets out to honour the legacy of acclaimed vaudeville entertainer and male impersonator Effie Fellows

Love, Rock En Masse: A documentary that explores the groundbreaking collision of rock music and religion in 1970s Perth through the iconic rock masses at St George's Cathedral.

The films have been shown over the summer during the Perth Festival at UWA Somerville and the filmmakers are also keen to feature them at Film Festivals in the coming months. The State Library will feature the films on our website shortly.

A Recipe for Life: The Food That Shapes Us

Exhibition closes Sunday 19 April

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. 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. Video oral histories are featured 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.

Scones, Stories and Secret Recipes

A Deep Dive Into the CWA Cookbook and Country Cooking

Presented as part of *A Recipe For Life: The Food That Shapes Us*

State Library of Western Australia Theatre, 18 April 2026, 10am / \$15

Presented as part of *A Recipe for Life*, the State Library's latest exhibition exploring WA's food heritage, this panel conversation will explore the enduring influence of both the Country Women's Association (CWA) and its iconic cookbook the *CWA Cookery Book and Household Hints* on WA's food landscape. Join leading WA food writer Max Veenhuysen and a panel of experts for a morning tea (and of course scones) as they discuss the CWA's impact on West Australian palettes. This event will also delve into the State Library's extensive collection of Royal

Agricultural Society material, including Perth Royal Show cooking competition records, which chart the all-important relationship between agriculture and the food on our tables.

Book online through the State Library website.

Seeds of a Story: A Writing and Research Workshop

Saturday 14 Mar 2026 1:00 – 4:00pm / \$35

Seeds of a Story, a writing workshop featuring acclaimed author Amanda Curtin will provide an immersive afternoon of discovery, inspiration, and creative exploration. This unique workshop invites you to uncover the hidden stories within the State Records Office and the State Library of Western Australia.

Over an afternoon, Amanda Curtin will share insights into her research and writing process and writing advice. Participants will also learn more about the rich Archival and State Library collections, followed by behind-the-scenes tours of both institutions. There will also be time to write, reflect, and work with your fellow participants.

Whether you're a budding writer or a curious researcher, *Seeds of a Story* will help you plant the first ideas for your next great narrative.

Book online through the State Library website.

Graham 'Polly' Farmer collections for State of Origin

Photo: Graham 'Polly' Farmer in the Grand Final East Perth versus East Fremantle. Polly Farmer's famous mark against East Fremantle's Jack Clarke. (Battye Library, State Library of Western Australia, BA3282/1-13.)

The State Library holds material of significance to the history of the State of Origin featured during the State of Origin match between Western Australia and Victoria on Saturday 14 February at Optus Stadium. Graham 'Polly' Farmer played in 31 games for Western Australia (also played for



Victoria, when with Geelong) and coached the 'Black Swans' after he had retired from playing. The State Library featured collections relating to Polly Farmer as part of 'Polly Farmer: Origins of an Icon' containing photographs and memorabilia from the collection.

Recent Acquisitions

Laurie and Whittle's wall map of Asia - 1799

The map is based on Laurie & Whittle's earlier map of 'Asia' (1794), but here augmented with two further sheets to include eastern Africa and "New Holland". The updated and revised edition published includes discoveries by Vancouver and Peyrouse. The map increased from a four sheet to a six-sheet map to reflect the new discoveries in Australia. The southern two sheets show the Australian continent prominently, albeit incomplete. Two inset maps placed within the Australian continent; one of King George III Sound (showing the discoveries by Vancouver in 1791) and discoveries in Tasmania (of the D'Entrecasteaux Channel and the River Derwent) by John Hayes in the Duke are illustrated. Australia's east coast is charted to show the recent discoveries by Captain Cook in 1770 and annotated thus. A gap is shown between Tasmania and the mainland and reflects Cook's charting of the coastline, rather than giving speculation to the existence of a strait between the two. The southern coast is completely uncharted apart from the very western portion.

John Bowyer Forrest River Mission photographs

Collection of 58 slides by John Bowyer, an Anglican priest who spent time as Chamberlain at the Forrest River Mission c1963. The collection includes images of Aboriginal people at the mission, activities such as swimming and sports, images of rock art and scenery.

Beresford Bardwell World War I diaries and letters

A digitised collection of diaries, letters and photographs related to Beresford Bardwell both before and during his service in the First World War. Following his enlistment in the AIF shortly after the declaration of war in August 1914, Lance Corporal Beresford Bardwell (1890-1961) saw extensive action across the entire course of the First World War, in campaigns that have since become famed for their Australian involvement, including the landings at Gallipoli and the crucial recapture of Villers-Bretonneux. His documentation of these events is meticulous, both in letters and diaries that were also intended to be read by his family upon his return home, with the mundanity of life among soldiers

contrasting sharply with his accounts of internationally significant events, such the departure from Lemnos Island for Gallipoli and the sinking of the German battleship Emden.

Fungimentary: The Magic Mushrooms of Balingup

Multi award winning (Australian made) ‘guerrilla’ independent documentary. It undertakes a highly entertaining tongue-in-cheek investigation into the impact of the sudden discovery of Magic Mushrooms growing in an ‘Enchanted Forest’, near the tiny rural town of Balingup, in south-West Australia.

Artwork from The Children’s Literature Centre

Eight children’s illustration artwork by Alison Lester, Bronwyn Bancroft, Elizabeth Stanley, Kim Gamble, Margaret Wilson, Narelle Oliver and Peter Gouldthorpe. Purchased for addition to the Peter Williams Collection.

Kate Gregory, Battye Historian



State Records Office News from the Archives

Margaret Medcalf Award 2026

Dr Caroline Ingram was the winner of the 2025 Margaret Medcalf Award for her work ‘Death at Butterabby: the case of Belo and Mumbleby and Aboriginal women’s place in the nineteenth-century criminal justice system’.

Nominations for the 2026 Margaret Medcalf Award are now open. If you prepared a work in 2025 that utilised State archives (or know of someone who did), please consider nominating for this year’s Award.

Further details and the nomination form are available on the State Records Office website: www.sro.wa.gov.au

Nominations close on 24 April 2026, with the Award event to be held later in the year.

The 1834 Pinjarra Massacre

On 28 October 2025, the WA Governor Chris Dawson issued an apology for the 1834 Pinjarra massacre. This apology received extensive media coverage and was widely praised as a symbol on ongoing reconciliation with traditional owners.

As part of his research into the massacre, the Governor visited the State Records Office earlier in 2025 and viewed official records held in the State Archives collection that reported what transpired in 1834.



WA Governor Chris Dawson visiting the State Records Office in 2025.

These documents included Colonial Secretary's Office correspondence now being digitised as part of a Friends' supported project. The Governor acknowledged the value of these documents in his apology and how important they were to him in his research. These documents still carry enormous weight and resonance, almost 200 years after they were written.

The SRO would also like to acknowledge the assistance of Senior Researcher Mark Chambers from the Aboriginal History WA unit who carried out a check of official records looking for any new insights into the 1834 events. In his research, Mark found that James Stirling twice makes reference to the massacre taking place at 'Dunlanup'. This remains puzzling as we have not found any other record that identifies the place or position of Dunlanup, nor have we found it on any historical plan.

Digitisation of Colonial Secretary's Office records

Digitisation of the Colonial Secretary's Office records continues in 2026. At time of writing, the first 210 volumes of correspondence have been digitised, covering the period 1829-1851. This project is being funded through the Friends of Battye Library's Sholl Bequest.

Research Sector Support

In October 2025, SRO staff attended the launch of the *Two Centuries of Chinese Heritage* exhibition at the WA Museum Bulla Bardip. The

SRO has contributed digital copies of many records for this exhibition and the related Chinese Heritage Portal project operating from UWA. These records included extensive sets of files from the late 1800s / early 1900s of people of Chinese nationality seeking to enter or re-enter Western Australia.

The Chinese Heritage Portal project builds on the research material amassed by Dr Anne Atkinson in the 1980s and 90s. The website for this project is at: <https://www.chinesewa.net/>

In December 2025, the SRO caught up with Dr Jacinta Walsh, lecturer at Monash University in the Centre for Indigenous Studies, to discuss the future digitisation of historical Kimberley police records held at the SRO. These records contain extensive references to Aboriginal people.



Photograph of J Hee on *Immigration Restriction Act 1897* certificate.

Living in the 80s

The SRO has started digitisation of extensive sets of Tourism Department photographs and slides from the 1960s to the 1980s. This will be a long-term, ongoing project, although do check SRO's Facebook for a glimpse of some of these images.



Alan Bond greeting well-wishers.

As these photographs were taken or commissioned by a State government agency, they are State records under the terms of the *State Records Act*.

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.friendsofbattyselibrary.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

What we did on Australia Day 1889

Australia Day 2026 was also the 137th birthday of the State Library. Its forerunner, the Victoria Public Library, was opened without ceremony at 2pm on 26 January 1889, a Saturday. The building was leased: the recently abandoned headquarters of the Western Australian Bank in St Georges Terrace was all the colony could afford.

The choice of date worked out well for present staff of the State Library – they get a day off on their anniversary which is always a public holiday. But the choice of date was not a coincidence: 26 January 1889 was a public holiday in all Australian colonies. Obviously, the holiday wasn't actually called Australia Day as there was officially no country of that name. And yet, the *WA Government Gazette* in announcing the public holiday said it was to 'commemorate the Foundation of Australia'.

In the four east coast colonies it was called Anniversary Day, the name adopted by Western Australia the following year. Many Anniversary Day events were arranged for the Monday holiday on 27 January 1890.

As we know, the Commonwealth of Australia wasn't formed until 1 January 1901, the first day of a new century. 'A new country for a new century' we were told, when we school children were given our 1951 Jubilee medals. This made perfect sense to nine-year-old me so I was shocked in 2000 when some people thought that you could start a new millennium before finishing the old one.

Back in 1889 the Victoria Public Library proved very popular. It was free, but William Townsend, librarian, published some rules – readers could take books from the shelves but had to replace them before they left (rule 4). No conversation was allowed in the Library, except in undertones (rule 6). Rule 7 was a bit odd – 'no person shall be permitted to sit in the room with his hat on'.

Townsend's worthy successor Basil Porter went blind suddenly, and in August 1894 James Battye, Assistant Librarian at Melbourne Public Library, was brought over to take charge.

The first step towards a permanent home on James Street was taken in 1891 when a small geology museum was opened in the old Perth Gaol. In 1895 this started to grow. A north-south gallery stretching to Francis Street was attached to display fish, insects, and stuffed birds

and animals. At the opening there was talk of an art gallery – a copy of a famous Rembrandt painting was on its way to Perth.

By then, gold had been found in Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie, and Western Australia was no longer poor. It was decided to celebrate Queen Victoria's 1897 Diamond Jubilee by erecting a substantial home for the Library and Museum/Art Gallery on James Street, alongside the old gaol. Late in 1897, after the St Georges Terrace building was sold, the Victoria Library was hastily shifted into the basement of the unfinished Jubilee building at the corner of Beaufort Street, expanding on to the ground floor when it was completed in 1898.

In 1901 James Battye gave the future King George V a tour of the Library named after the then Duke's grandmother. The Duke had just laid the foundation stone for the Art Gallery extension along Beaufort Street. The 'Victoria' part of the name was dropped in 1904 to eliminate confusion.

When more Library space was needed, the plan for a grand frontage facing James Street was abandoned, and a tee-shaped building emerged. A north-south building running alongside Museum Street was opened in December 1903. To this, Hackett Hall was attached (way out of alignment with the corner building), opening in 1913.



Perth Public Library in about 1905 with the old gaol in the background. (Battye Library, State Library of WA, 010133PD (detail).

The name honoured Sir John Winthrop Hackett, president of the Library Trustees, who had been involved since the first moves in 1887. The southern section of the 1903 building was incorporated as a book-lined opening off Hackett Hall.



The southern end of the 1903 Public Library building survives as a side-room off Hackett Hall. (Author photo)

The entire block is now occupied by the museum but, happily, the Library share of the Jubilee Building, part of the 1903 building and Hackett Hall still survive in the new museum.

Steve Errington

Information about our meetings, upcoming events, and other useful information and resources can be found on our website at <https://www.friendsofbattylibrary.org.au>. Do let us know what you think at info@friendsofbattylibrary.org.au.

Lorraine Clarke and Cherie Strickland (webmasters)

Membership Subscription (Annually from 1 July to 30 June - GST inclusive). Please see subscription form on page 39 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 Secretary,
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 is co-located with 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.