Founded 1926

HISTORY WEST

PUBLISHED BY THE ROYAL WESTERN AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

June 2022

GENERAL MEETING

The next meeting at Stirling House is on Wednesday 15 June at 6pm when Rob Sippe will present 'Promise Fulfilled: Grape Growing and Wine Making in the Great Southern Region of WA 1791 – 1966'. Refreshments available from 5.30pm; Bookshop open until 6pm.

Piesse vineyard and orchard, Katanning c1910-12. B2538209.5 SLWA.

Englishman George Vancouver planted the first grape vines at King George's Sound in 1791, albeit unsuccessfully. It wasn't until Sir Richard Spencer, Albany's second Government Resident, that growing vines succeeded, Spencer' son-in-law, George Edward Egerton-Warburton producing the region's first wine in 1862. The railway to Albany provided the opportunity for commercial wine production. The extraordinary Piesse brothers, Frederick and Charles, established a wide range of industries around Katanning and Wagin along the rail line, including 114 acres of grape vines and a winery at Katanning. Despite the wines winning medals in Paris and London as well as the Perth Royal Show the winery closed in 1922. Light rainfall and successive frosts significantly impacted its economics. The only other commercial winery in the region prior to the modern industry was Nalli's Roma Vineyard at Broomehill which operated c1916–1950s. Its demise too was primarily climatic: three successive black frosts in 1953-1955 badly damaged the vines.

Government viticulturalist Bill Jamieson arranged for Harold Olmo from the University of California to visit WA in 1955 and Olmo saw promise for fine dry table wines produced in the cooler Great Southern. Jamieson argued for a government-run wine grape trial planting around Mount Barker which occurred in 1966. The 1975 Rhine Riesling made from grapes from the trial vineyard won 9 trophies and 12 gold medals in Australian wine shows. Today the region is the centre of a modern table wine industry.

Rob Sippe graduated in science at UWA. For many years he ran the environmental impact assessment approvals process for the WA Environmental Protection Authority and published a number of papers internationally. He then became managing director of companies in the Marford Group before retiring in 2021. In 1974 he established (with family help) Redmond Vineyard, its first vines planted in 1975. The property, between Mount Barker and Albany, was sold in 1988. All the wines produced under that label won awards in wine shows.

Don't Forget to Register

History West Inaugural Lecture

Dr Mathew Trinca AM — 'Reading Western Australia in the National Past'
Thursday 9 June 2022 6pm for 6:30pm start.

Go to TryBooking link https://www.trybooking.com/BYZOY

The Royal WA Historical Society (Inc.) | 49 Broadway | NEDLANDS Western Australia 6009
TELEPHONE: (08) 9386 3841 | FACSMILE: (08) 9386 3309 | EMAIL: admin@histwest.org.au
FACEBOOK: facebook.com/histwest | WEB: www.histwest.org.au | ABN: 43 607 110 473
LIBRARY EMAIL: library@ histwest.org.au | MUSEUM EMAIL: museum@ histwest.org.au

Community Talk

Stained Glass in WA

Dr Fiona Bush, RWAHS Councillor, building heritage archeologist and historian, took her audience on a fascinating, speedy journey through stained glass history from Mediaeval England to today, focusing on the under-researched area of the window makers. Fiona pointed out that interest has concentrated on those the windows memorialise rather than on the makers — artists and craftspeople. She argues passionately that stained glass windows are works of art and should be treated as such. How many stained glass window artists have you heard about?

Our journey began at the great Gothic Cathedral of Canterbury with its mediaeval stained glass. In the centuries before most people were literate the windows served a teaching function — instructing congregations about the Christian gospel — the Annunciation of Mary, the birth of Christ, the crucifixion and resurrection, and Christ the Good Shepherd, the saints and the apostles. Only a small number of these mediaeval windows survived the Reformation under Henry VIII and then the Protestant leader Cromwell. Not until the Victorians revived the Gothic style in the 19th century did we see the return of stained glass windows and the beginnings of the industry in Britain. With different techniques and types of glass the industry boomed and exported around the world. There are numerous examples of imported windows in WA, the earliest at Government House installed in the 1880s. Then WA began to develop its own industry from the 1880s — Barnett Bros, Clarksons and Whittome Bros. The story continues to the present day.

Fiona is writing a book and probably two on this topic so we look forward to hearing more on the subject in the future. Everyone present enjoyed this first excursion and learnt a good deal.

Thanks to Pamela Statham Drew for chairing, Nick Drew for technical assistance and Val Hutch for the morning tea.

'I am the Good Shepherd' window in St George's Cathedral, Perth, an example of the English studio Clayton and Bell's work. The window was installed in the late 1880s.

'Behold the handmaid of the Lord' – Annunciation window in St George's Cathedral, an example of the work of WA firm, Barnett Brothers. The artist was Arthur Clarke and it was installed sometime in the 1930s.

'Her children rise up and call her blessed' – Nativity window in Christ Church, Claremont, made by the Melbourne firm Mathieson and Gibson. It was installed in the 1930s.

Tuesday Treasures

Travelling in Time - a story of clocks

Janelle Hauser

Exploring the Society's collection of clocks began with an expectation that we would find at least a few items made here, but this was not to be. Like their owners, our clocks have travelled here from other parts of the world or were imported here for sale. WA's gold rush inspired some talented jewellers but clock and watch making seems not to have been a priority.

An interesting find is a Medical or Automatic Memorandum clock. This kind of clock was often used in hospitals as a medication reminder. A reminder was written on one of the discs provided, the disc slotted into the top of the clock at the time required and then, when that time came around, the disc would fall into a tray at the bottom and an alarm would ring until the disc was removed.

Beautiful rather than practical, we have a wonderful Ansonia clock in Art Nouveau style donated by Miss Aileen Inglis in 1985 together with some other wonderful pieces. Dated between 1890 and 1910 the beautiful figure of a young woman in flowing robes is the main feature of this clock, as well as the decorative floral motif.

One of the oldest clocks in the collection comes as part of a mantle set. The clock sat centrally on the mantlepiece flanked by candelabra. They have been with the Society since 1946 when they were donated from the estate of Miss Florence Mary Teasdale Wittenoom. Family history has it that the Revd J B Wittenoom or a family member brought the set to WA aboard the *Wanstead* in 1830.

The clock's markings indicate that the Parisian company of Marbles and Algerian Onyx made it, and that Howell James of Regent Street was the London agent. As Howell James was in business from 1819 to 1911 the family story does fit this time frame. Constructed from a combination of marble and metal and with some gorgeous colourful enamelled decorations, this set is a great treasure to have in our collection!

From the sublime to the simple, another outstanding piece in our collection is this delightful little travel clock. It is a Carriage clock dated to the 1920s, engraved with the words 'Jean from Dad 29.7.27', and housed in a brown leather box lined with red velvet. We have no record of who donated the clock or who Jean or her Dad were, but the clock is such a special example of a father's gift to his daughter. It is not common for the case of a Carriage clock to survive – we have several examples of clocks with no cases in the collection.

According to the donor in 1956, this next clock belonged to the Henty family. It is housed in a wooden case with a design of leaves and flowers carved across the top and a cut-away at the front to show the pendulum. A note in the back of the clock advises that it is 'Late 18th Century, Gut cord Fusee mantel clock, Webster, London'. James Henty and his family arrived in the Swan River Colony in 1829 aboard the *Caroline* to claim a land grant of just over 84,000 acres. However James was unhappy with the quality of the land and, within two years, had moved to Tasmania and then later to NSW. It is uncertain why the clock remained in WA but it is an excellent example of a late 18th century timepiece.

The collection has a variety of modest clocks, often with no accompanying information. They have found their way to WA from somewhere, been useful to someone, and held enough value to have been kept and then donated to the Society. They speak for the many unsung heroes that, although we do not know their names, form part of WA's historical tapestry.

Forum: memories of school history

History West is pleased to report that Ian Abbott's account of some of his memories of school history has triggered others' recall, happy and unhappy. Many thanks to members June Rolfe and Jo Lupton for sharing their memories.

From Horatius to O'Connor

June Rolfe

I have happy memories of history at a small country state school in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Oh, the fun of bringing a penny to school to trace around and then write a sentence or two to illustrate our topic. I chose Christopher Columbus and needed several penny shapes to do justice to his ships the *Nina*, *Pinta* and *Santa Maria*, which I then carefully drew.

History could also be absorbed informally. We must have been the last generation of children using the Oxford Reading Books reprinted here by the WA Government Printer. The stories were set in the late Victorian, early Edwardian era when slates were used to write on and kind children might deliver a pie to one of their grandmother's old retired servants. Poems about frost and snowdrops widened our knowledge of far off places. Another teacher read epic poems to us and we were back in Ancient Rome with Horatius defending the bridge. Yes we did do Australian explorers but, because of the local connection, I found C Y O'Connor more interesting, thanks to one of our classmates reading his excellent essay on his hero to us all.

At the end of primary school I was keen to begin high school history.

A surfeit of explorers!

Jo Lupton

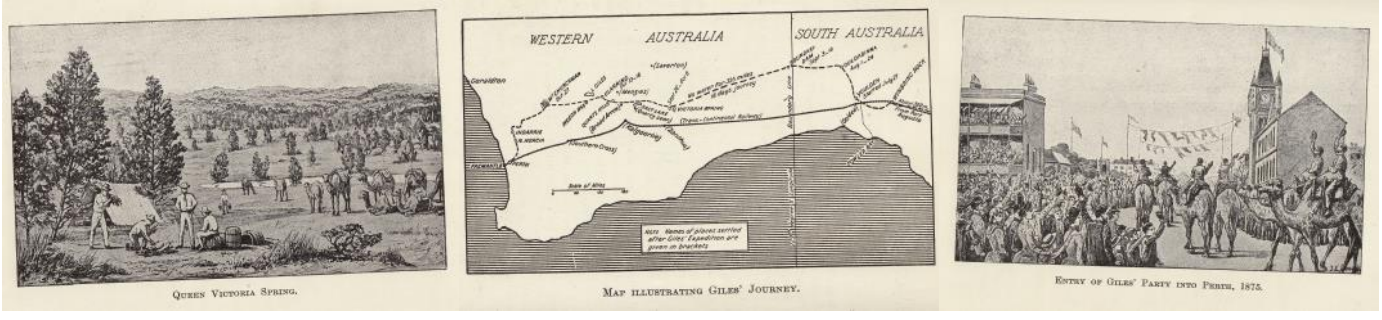
I started school at East Fremantle Primary School in 1944. In the 'Infants' Classes there was no such subject as History. However, when we moved over to the Big School to enter Standard 3, we were introduced to Western Australian explorers – just the ones who 'discovered' the North and Northwest like the Forrest brothers and the De Greys. The following year we learned about important WA people like C Y O'Connor and more about the explorers – especially John Forrest who had reached prominence as a political leader and representative of WA in the new Federal Parliament – and Edward John Eyre, who walked across the Great Australian Bight!

And so it continued. By Standard 6 (now Year 7) we had heard about the eastern states explorers who had opened up the country over there by finding ways across the Blue Mountains and the guy who 'purchased' the land that became the site of the City of Melbourne from the Aboriginal people for a few everyday items. We also began to learn about the Kings and Queens of England.

It seems that History had to be about achievements of certain people. Perhaps that is the origins of the modern adoration of celebrities. Social history was not offered in our primary school curriculum. By this time the boredom had set in and I did not like the subject much.

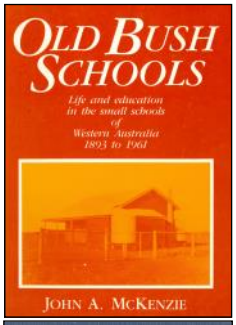
Then to High School – Princess May Girls High School in Fremantle – and the explorers again! But this time we had this textbook called *Australia Since 1606* so we learnt some more interesting stories about the Dutch, Portuguese and English – maritime explorers – before we got back to the Australian land explorers. In second year (now Year 9) we began to learn about the world outside Australia, the theme being wars — the Boer War, American War of Independence, World War 1, French Revolution and the expansion of the British Empire. Having just lived through World War II, with my father a photographic memory, this lot didn't appeal much either.

What has persuaded me to think and feel differently about History and do things like help to set up an historical society and museum in the small country town where I live and (later) to join the RWAHS? Well, when I went to Teachers' College, I began to learn more social history and chose the major subject of History in my second year, the aim of which was to write a thesis on a WA topic and enter it in the RWAHS Lee Steere History Prize. I loved spending every Friday afternoon in the Battye Library with Miss Margaret Metcalfe in charge. I didn't win the prize but learned a lot about the way our community had grown and worked since its inception. Then I was sent to Beverley to begin my teaching career – just the place (second to York!) to learn about the people who really made the History. So now I don't hate History – I am hooked on it!



Queen Victoria Spring. Map illustrating Giles' Journey. Entry of Giles' Party into Perth, 1875.

Crossing the Great Victoria Desert, Ernest Giles 1875 expedition, *Swan Reader Book V.*



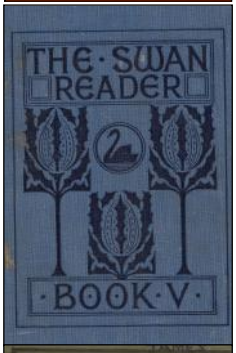
School Readers from last century

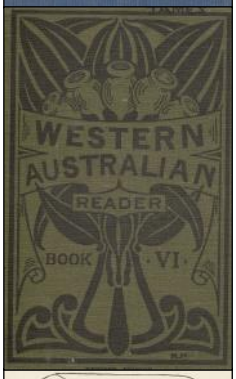
John McKenzie's 1987 book *Old Bush Schools: life and education in the small schools of WA 1893 to 1961* paints a vivid picture of primary schooling for children who grew up between the 1900s and the 1960s. Does any of this trigger memories for you?

> *What's the time Mr Wolf, Red rover all over, Tiggy tiggy touchwood*, and of course, *Hidey*. These organized games were part of the physical exercise syllabus and were a welcome break from indoor subjects since they were taken during school hours. The routine of school work was also broken by special activities such as half-day nature study excursions, school picnics, a one-day-of-the-year sporting event with a neighbouring school, or attending the local Agricultural Show which provided the opportunity for display of needlework, drawing, painting, hand-writing, mapping and manual models. There was the end-of-the-year concert with its days of preparation, the inevitable Christmas tree, the fancy-dress ball with its accompanying dancing lessons and the annual prize giving by some prominent local worthy. Commemorative days included Arbor Day, Anzac Day and Armistice Day, Empire Day, Goodwill Day.

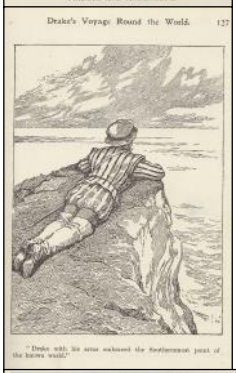
The school day usually included chanting the times tables and spellings, reading aloud around the class, recitation of poetry, and mental arithmetic challenges. Sewing was a constant in girls' schooling.

Two widely used reading series — the *Swan Reader* and *Western Australian Reader* —were created by the WA Education Dept to add Australian content to existing resources which were almost entirely English in origin. *Western Australian Readers* were first produced in 1916 and revised in 1932, and the *Swan Reader* in 1920. J Reford Corr who had been headmaster of Melbourne's Methodist Ladies' College compiled the Swan School Reader for the WA Dept. Do you remember reading from them at school?





They make interesting (and strange) reading today because of their tone and mixture of subjects – poetry, classical myths, English, Australian and even some American histories, travel stories, and excerpts from English and Australian literature. A big dose of England and a smaller one of Australia. There are a few items of biology on the structure of the eye, the life history of hornets and the behaviour of willy wagtails, kittens and eagles. And there are words of explicit moral instruction — 'Buy what thou hast no need of, and ere long thou wilt sell thy necessaries'. 'Experience keeps a dear school, but fools will learn in no other'. The *Swan Reader* was more richly illustrated than the *Western Australian Reader* — colourful illustrations of Captain Cook taking possession of New South Wales and Western Australian Wildflowers as well as others by WA artist A B Webb, and black and white sketches of famous English writers. The *Western Australian Reader* contained Study Notes at the end of each excerpt — 'What observations have you made on insects?' The idea was to provide something for everyone. For many of us fragments of poetry remain firmly embedded in our memories.



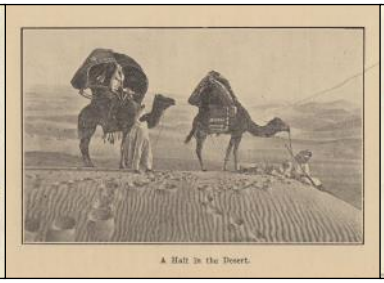
I love a sunburnt country,
A land of sweeping plains,
Of ragged mountain ranges,
Of drought and flooding rains.

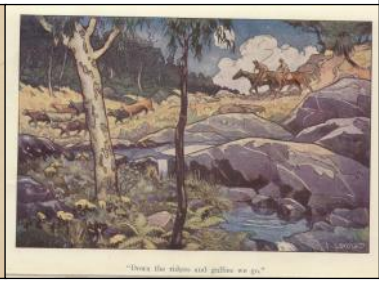
Listen, my children, and thou shall hear
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere

Oh, young Lochinvar is come out of the west,
Through all the wide Border his stead was the best;

Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!

O, East is East, and West is West,
and never the twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently
at God's Great Judgement Seat;





Welsh Wool Flannel

Many thanks to costume expert, Jo Pearson, for this story and for the insights she provides into colonial life.

The list of popular fashion fabrics is long — satin, silk, taffeta, muslin, velvet, linen — but it never includes wool flannel. Yet flannel was widely used and played an important role in the everyday lives of early Swan River settlers.

Flannel's history began during Tudor times when Europeans kept warm by wearing wild animal skins, fur-side close to their bodies. For some, rare furs like sable, mink and white lamb were worn, for warmth and to reflect wealth and status. For others with less means, wildcat, rabbit, squirrel, fox and otter were used. By mid-seventeenth century, furry wild animals had been hunted and skinned to the point of extinction. Then Welsh sheep farmers came up with a carding system that disentangled and softened sheep's wool while retaining its toughness. They created a short-piled fabric with the luxurious feel of animal fur and named it Welsh wool flannel.

Wool flannel was used extensively for clothing from the late 1600s. Its soft insulating quality made it suitable for men's underwear, drawers, waistcoats and shirts; and for females, shifts and under petticoats. Scarlet red flannel dyed with beetle shells was particularly popular with women, albeit more expensive than white, navy or black. Seventeenth century folklore linked its red threads to the Rowan tree, believed to ward off evil.

Redingote c1810. Red wool flannel. Kyoto Costume Institute Collection.

With Napoleon's rise, military-styled women's red wool flannel coats or redingotes became high fashion but perhaps not for everyone. In a letter to her sister dated 1798, Jane Austen grumbled that she'd had to pay for a fabric she thought was of inferior quality.

> I gave 2/3d a yard for my flannel and I fancy it is not very good; but it is so disgraceful and contemptible an article in itself that it being good or bad is of little importance.

Annoyingly, she didn't say what that 'contemptible article' was.

Unlike Jane Austen, Tasmanians in the 1830s held Welsh wool flannel in high esteem. Writer and artist Louisa Ann Meredith noted the unconventional way her female convict servants accepted marriage proposals. When they were being courted, it was not with gifts of jewellery or flowers, but items of clothing. Print gowns, new bonnets, shawls or a few yards of calico were signs the courtship was progressing nicely. But the clincher was a bolt of flannel – it did the trick every time. Women (of all classes) didn't wear under-drawers so wool flannel petticoats and under gowns acted as insulating barriers against outer clothing. The practical uses of wool flannel could seal a marriage proposal.

SALES BY AUCTION.

SALE AT PERTH.

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION, BY MESSRS. L. & W. SAMSON, At their Auction Rooms, Perth, on Wednesday, the 5th May, at 11 o'clock precisely,

FINE AMERICAN FLOUR in barrels
Prime Irish pork in ditto
Westphalia hams
Refined sugar
Soap in 56-lb. boxes
Superior sheeting calico
Welsh flannel
Fashionable prints
Russia duck
Gambroon
Blue and white spotted prints
Union check
Ladies' white silk stockings
Ladies' rose-wood work boxes
Superior cognac brandy and gin in hogsheads
Coffee mills
Fryingpans
Gridirons
White and brown biscuit in barrels

Perth, April 9.

Inquirer, 28 April 1841, p. 1.

TENDERS *in triplicate* will be received at this Office until Noon, on TUESDAY, the 6th Proximo, from any one desirous to supply the undermentioned Articles, for the service of the Convict Establishment, at the Depôt in Fremantle:—

112lbs Rosin
28lbs Black Paint
72 Pairs 2-inch Butts
72 Pairs 2½-inch ditto
36 5-Inch Bolts, flat, straight
36 Feet 2-inch Iron, square bar
200 Yards common Welsh Flannel
5 Cwt. Nails, 3-inch
500 Tacks, ¾-inch
500 Ditto, ¾-inch.

H. C. DARLING,
Assist.-Com.-Gen.

Commissariat Office, Perth, W. A., April 29, 1851.

Perth Gazette & Independent Journal of Politics & News, 2 May 1851, p. 2.

The high cost of flannel and its lack of availability was much lamented in the Swan River settlement. Henry Trigg, Governor Stirling's builder, always ready for business opportunities, saw financial advantages in its shortage. In two letters dated 1830 and 1831 he urged his wife: 'flannals be sure bring plenty of that', and 'Flannels are very dear here – everything you bring will gain you double the cost and therefore don't be afraid to purchase'.

George Fletcher Moore said he found little white flannel jackets very useful, worn like a waistcoat with a fold-over collar, but later recalled that they had shrunk and were too small to wear. However, he wrote of the urgent need for flannel, explaining that it was very scarce and expensive as settlers had not thought of bringing it to a warm climate and that 'some ladies as well as gentlemen can't do without it'. He had personal reasons for making that comment. He was one of those gentlemen who 'can't do without it'. His servant Letty required regular supplies of flannel to soak in sugar and soap to make up poultices for dressing his many boils.

In Australind in the 1840s, Louisa Clifton's need for flannel night shifts was, as Fletcher Moore said, entirely due to early expectations about the colony's warm climate. Assuming her new home would be bathed in permanent sunshine, Louisa was unprepared for seasonal massive rains. She needed insulating wool flannel night shifts for protection from rain seeped into her leaking tent. On her wedding day a dreadful storm raged for two days and nights, almost forcing cancellation of the ceremony. There had been early warnings about the weather. In a letter dated 1829, a settler wrote, 'I would not have any friend of mine come to this country without a marquee double-lined', writing this as he sat indoors under an umbrella.

Advertisement for 'The Welsh Flannel House'

In the mid-nineteenth century, the Industrial Revolution replaced flannel's wool content with machine-made cotton. The last word on Welsh wool flannel's demise, perhaps even its epitaph, came from a practical Scotswoman Isabella Ferguson of Houghton. In a letter dated 1867, she asked her daughter 'to go to Miller the saddlers in Dundee and ask him to make a good strong saddle… ask Miller if it could not be lined with soft leather instead of flannel which the moth always destroys so soon'.

Jo Pearson

References

Jane Ashelford, *The Art of Dress* (1996).
Fashion, vol 1, Taschen no. 25.
Louisa Anne Meredith, *My Home in Tasmania* (1852).
Ian Berryman (ed.), *Swan River Letters*, vol. 1.

A glimpse into the library archives

Mrs Parrett's dressmaking order and receipt book

Many thanks to Bevan Carter without whom we couldn't have correctly identified Mrs Annie Parrett and her family. Can anyone tell us any more about her life?

The Society's library holds an untitled manuscript dressmaking order and receipt book which belonged to Mrs Annie Parrett who migrated in 1913 from Manchester to Perth with her family — husband Albert and two children, daughter Evelyn and son Leslie. The notebook came into the collection via the Public Trustees Office after being found in the home of Shirley Jeanette Cockram, Mrs Parrett's granddaughter.

The order book reveals that Mrs Parrett (1883-1968) was a busy English dressmaker in the first decade of the 20th century. Her customers, almost all women, lived in Manchester and Liverpool and as far away as London. She made new clothes and also undertook clothing alterations.

In the notebook Mrs Parrett describes the family's migration, leaving Manchester on 19 December 1912 to embark on the *SS Gothic,* and arriving at Fremantle on 27 January 1913. 'Cousin Lois and Uncle Jim' met the family and took them home. However the next few weeks were difficult as both children had caught measles. They were a '…bad two weeks but [the children] get strong again'. The family quickly rented a flat in Perth and Albert, an engineering fitter, began work on 3 February at Hoskins Engineering, a building construction and maintenance firm 'only five minutes from where we reside'. He was paid £3-12-0 a week. Annie attended the Congregational Church in Perth and Church of Christ in West Guildford. And her order book shows that she resumed dressmaking for Perth customers.

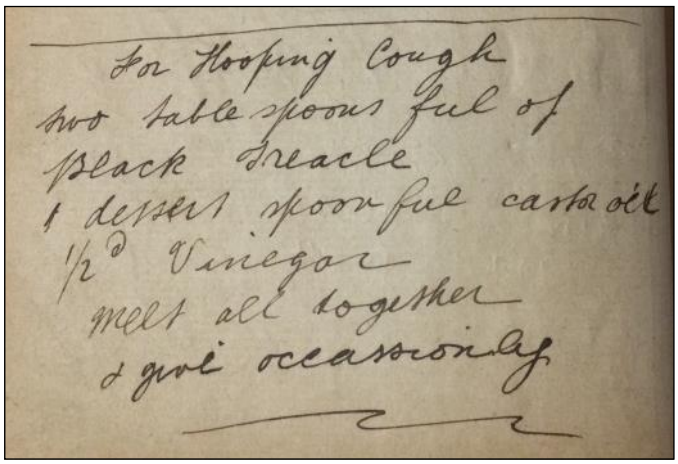
The order book gives us a vivid picture of Mrs Parrett's work — her clients' measurements, the variety of fabrics she used, the clothing accessories and her charges for various jobs. Her work as a dressmaker in this book dates from 1901 to 1936. The family moved to live in Bayswater and many of her customers came from the surrounding suburbs. Annie's life changed in 1938 with the death of her husband. We know little of her remaining thirty years. She did not remarry but lived in Mt Hawthorn and then in Claremont. Very likely she continued to dress make.

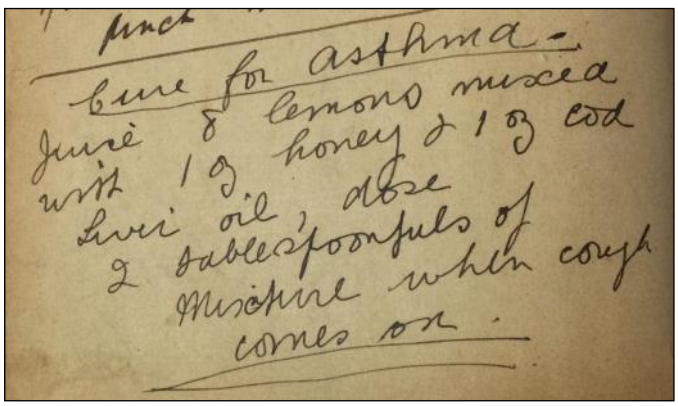
In these decades many women had their dresses made for them by individual dressmakers, often single women or widows who lived in rooms around the city and suburbs. Ladies' measurements were carefully taken and the clothing was bespoke. Women who could not afford to pay a dressmaker used patterns and made their own clothing as well as their children's. Sewing skills together with knitting, crocheting, embroidering and darning were part of most housewives' repertoire; and these skills were taught to girls from early primary school. So Mrs Parrett's clientele, apart from her family, would have been women of some means.

The notebook has another dimension however! Annie believed in home remedies for illnesses. This in itself is not surprising. Before the arrival of Medicare, private heath insurance and large numbers of GPs, people consulted doctors rarely and only for serious illnesses. GPs were few in number but, above all, too expensive for the average family. Local chemists, all compounding pharmacists in those days, were the health professionals most families consulted. However, just as likely would be the use of the mother's medicine chest containing a variety of tried-and-true family cures. Annie Parrett's cures were extensive — for example, for coughs, piles, bronchitis and weak blood. Attached are her treatments for asthma and whooping cough; and, if you are looking to be enlivened, you might like to try the following 'New Life' pick-me-up.

New Life

1 pint Best Rum
10 lemons (the juice)
10 new-laid eggs
1lb Demerara sugar
Mix & allow to stand 48 hrs.
Then take wine glass full 3 times day.
If too strong mix with 2 wine glassfull new milk


For Hooping Cough
two table spoons ful of
black treacle
1 dessert spoonful carbolic
½d Vinegar
melt all together
& give occasionally


Cure for asthma -
Juice & lemons mixed
with 1 oz honey & 1 oz cod
liver oil, dose
2 tablespoonfuls of
Mixture when cough
comes on.

Stories from the Storerooms

York Agricultural Society and the Burges brothers

Dr Dorothy Erickson

Winners' cups 1841. MA1960.47a-b

Two sterling silver cups with floral arabesque designs were 'Presented by the York Agricultural Society to Messrs Burges for the best Merino Ewes shewn at their Annual Meeting in 1841'. These cups were made by John Edward Terry & Co in London and have been donated to the Society by the Burges family of 'Tipperary', York. The maker John Edward Terry entered a maker's mark at Goldsmiths Hall in 1814 when he worked at 11 Foster Lane with Samuel Hennell whose daughter he married. In 1818 he moved to Hatton Gardens where he remained until about 1850. By 1851 he had moved to Sydenham, Lewisham in Kent, and died in 1859. Meanwhile his workmanship had been transported to the other side of the earth.

When the colony of Western Australia was founded some of the first inland districts to be settled were 'over the hills' in the Avon Valley. The Yorkshire District, as it was first called, was named for its perceived resemblance to the rolling moorlands and open wooded landscape of that English county. Aboriginal people had previously managed this land using firestick farming to create the lush pastures where kangaroos would graze making them easy targets. With colonisation sheep grazing became a favoured pastoral pursuit and settlers established properties some of which are still owned by the same settler families today. This includes our donors. The dispossessed original inhabitants became the responsibility of the 'Guardian of Aboriginals', James Cowan, Edith Cowan's father in law.

The township of York, the colony's first inland town, was established in 1831 and the York Agricultural Society, one of the earliest in the colony, was founded in 1840. Its objects included: 'the establishment of a fair for the exhibit and sale of livestock and wool, improvement in the breed of sheep and other stock by offering prizes for superior skills in the management of flocks and herds and the destruction of dingoes'. This Society soon became the mouthpiece for the influential Avon Valley settlers.

One of the most prominent families were the Burges brothers William (1806-1876), Samuel (1810-1885) and Lockier (1814-1886), sons of an Irish doctor Richard Lockier Burges and his wife Isabella of Fethard in Tipperary. The family arrived in the *Warrior* in 1830 and settled at first on the Upper Swan. Then, when a way across the hills was developed, they transferred to York in 1837 where 8053 acres were granted to them on the north side of Mt Bakewell that they named 'Tipperary'.

At first, with a shortage of labour for tillage pursuits, the settlers focused on pastoralism, including grazing sheep and raising horses. The Burges diaries tell of growing wheat, barley, oats for hay, peas and potatoes. The sheep grazed uncleared or new cleared land and were tended by shepherds or hut keepers and penned in moveable folds for their containment at night. The Burges brothers had over 1000 sheep by 1840 and were intensely interested in stockbreeding so it must have been with gratification that they won the silver cup for best merino ewes in 1841. In 1846 they also won the second prize for wool. With their expanding flocks, new pastures were required and, when the Champion Bay area was opened up in 1851, William and Lockier moved north to become pastoralists of that area. Samuel remained to develop 'Tipperary' and found a dynasty.

Samuel Evans Burges, c1880. P1999.3851A

Samuel married Vittoria Ellen Jane Meares, daughter of nearby property owner Irish Captain Richard Goldsmith Meares in 1843, and they had seven children. The estate's buildings soon included a flour mill, livery stables, carriage shed, storerooms, living rooms, ballroom and servants' quarters, and became a Western Australian showplace where governors came to visit and in 1954 Queen Elizabeth. Samuel employed nearly 100 ticket-of-leave convicts from 1862-1881. It was his descendants who donated the cups to the Society.

A portion of the old homestead at Tipperary Farm, 1955. Mercer, *Land Annual*.

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Don McLeod: fighting for Aboriginal rights

Dr Peter Gifford

The library holds several books and articles exploring Don McLeod's life in the Pilbara with Aboriginal people. His own book — D W McLeod, How the West was lost: The Native Question in the Development of Western Australia, 1984 — tells of his goals and struggles. Here is his life story thanks to Peter Gifford's meticulous research.

Donald William McLeod was born on 8 May 1908 at Meekatharra, son of William McLeod, a Tasmanian-born miner, and his wife Hannah, née Morrison, from Beverley. One of a family of eight children whose mother died when he was aged four, he was said to have been among the first 'white' children born in the remote mining settlement. His father died of thirst in 1932 while prospecting in the Onslow region. After primary education in a Geraldton convent, Don left Geraldton High School at 15 and worked as an outback prospector, mechanic, well-sinker, seasonal worker and miner. Contact with Aboriginal people was unavoidable and sympathy for their plight gradually developed. In 1937 he crossed segregation boundaries by obtaining medical treatment for an Aboriginal man. From then on he took part in discussions with senior Aboriginal men in the Pilbara over grievances including the loss of their land without compensation, failure of 'white' station owners to pay proper wages, and restrictions on travel. He was the only non-Aboriginal man invited to a law meeting in 1942 at Skull Springs, near Nullagine. There is some evidence that McLeod went through Aboriginal initiation, becoming a 'law man of high degree' at this meeting. Its major purpose, however, was to plan for a post-war strike in the pastoral industry.

McLeod insisted that the strike – in support of a minimum payment of 30/- per week for Aboriginal station workers – should not take place until after the war ended, so that the strikers could not be accused of sabotaging the war effort. McLeod by this time had formed left-wing political ideas; he was a member of the Communist Party 1945-47, but later told a journalist he had left over failure to secure Party nomination as a parliamentary candidate. McLeod remained grateful for support from the Party and 'anywhere he could get it', including, for a period, the Australian Workers Union as an organiser.

He assisted senior Aboriginal men led by Dooley Bin Bin (Winyirin) and his kinsman Clancy McKenna (Warntupungarna) in organising the Pilbara pastoral strike – the first of its kind and one of the longest lasting in Australia – which began on International Labour Day, 1 May 1946, involving more than 600 Indigenous people on 25 stations and some employed in the towns of Port Hedland and Marble Bar. All three were among many arrested who served prison terms, including periods in chains for the Aboriginal leaders, before the strike partially ended in August 1949. The strikers had received some financial assistance from left-wing unions and other sympathisers, but sustained themselves mainly by hunting kangaroos and goats, gathering pearl shell and setting up a buffel grass seed market through sympathetic organisations in Sydney.

The idea of not returning to the stations but achieving self-determination through their own exertions in mining and using the profits eventually to obtain their own pastoral properties had begun to take shape in 1944. It received mass approval in 1945 when Aboriginal people gathered in Port Hedland for the annual race meeting.

On 22 April 1953, at a camp near Marble Bar, McLeod 'discussed the aboriginal problem as he saw it' with the SA Museum ethnologist, Norman Tindale, who formed the opinion that: 'Some of … [McLeod's] ideas evidently appeal to the aborigines and his organisation is now so strong and so powerfully centred in the aborigines' own councils that they must conform'. McLeod, said Tindale, had 'got the idea of helping the aborigines and "organised" them.' His camps were 'the cleanest I have ever seen' and 'all matters are discussed in councils'. The Aboriginal participants worked tin, gold, columbite and wolfram, and received their food and clothing from the organisation. Owing to a downturn in metal prices, however, McLeod concentrated the men on tin leases at 'Pilkingurra', about 60 km west of Marble Bar; meaning that only skeleton groups of five groups or families remained at the other sites.

By the end of 1950, there had been more than 200 men and women, now known as the Strelley mob, involved in mining ventures. This number had risen to at least 600 two years later, by which time the profits from mining with hand tools and then 'yandying' mineral ores such as tanto-columbite and in particular wolfram, had reached £A500,000. That amount – at least $A26 million today – was sufficient to purchase Yandeyarra and two other Pilbara station properties.

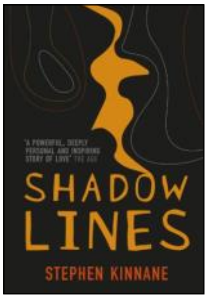
However, while Aboriginal control of several Pilbara station properties was maintained into the 21st century, the decision in 1960 by the Menzies government to lift the embargo on iron ore exports had the effect of squeezing Aboriginal people out of the mining industry as international mining capital flooded in. In the first phase of the boom, there was little or no attempt to give Aboriginal people a share through royalties or even proper employment in the new large-scale mining industry. That changed to some extent in the 21st century when the passing of native title legislation enabled some Pilbara Aboriginal groups to negotiate compensatory agreements with mining companies.

McLeod meanwhile had followed up a long-standing idea by attempting to obtain government redress for WA's Aboriginal people through a legal challenge to the removal in 1897 by Premier Forrest of section 70 from the proposed State constitution. This section had sought to provide a minimum standard of legal protection for the indigenous population; in financial terms, a minimum grant of £5,000 per year, or one percent of the new State's annual gross income when that exceeded £500,000. Forrest had expunged the section when he took over control of Aboriginal affairs from the Imperial government. Had McLeod's challenge been upheld, then successive State governments would have been liable for millions of pounds (and dollars after 1966) owing to Aboriginal people over a century. Perhaps unsurprisingly, McLeod's arguments were rejected by WA's Full Supreme Court in 1996, but he did manage to bring them to national and international attention. McLeod, who never profited personally from his work on behalf of Aboriginal people, died in virtual penury at South Guildford at the age of 90 on 13 April 1999. He never married.

Book Reviews

Stephen Kinnane, *Shadow Lines*, Fremantle Press, 2020. In Library.

Reviewer: Rhuwina Griffiths



This is a well-researched and informative account of the lives of Stephen Kinnane's maternal grandparents, Jessie Argyle and Edward Smith. Originally published in 2003, when it won the West Australian Premier's Book Award for Non-Fiction and the Stanner Award in 2004, this edition has been reissued in 2020.

Jessie, or Gypsy as she was known as a child, was part Aborigine and part white, and was born on Argyle Station in the East Kimberley. She was removed from her family in 1906 when she was five years old. The recently enacted 1905 Aborigines Act meant that children like Jessie, of mixed race, could be taken to missions thousands of miles from their homeland to be 'educated' into a predominantly white culture. Jessie grew up at various locations in WA, including the Swan Valley Mission and the Moore River Aboriginal Settlement. Stephen's description of what it must have been like to be a defenceless child in these institutions is harrowing. Jessie's adult life was spent mainly in Perth, and it was here that she came under the control of the Aborigines Department led by A O Neville. Stephen's account of Neville's diligence in his role of 'guardianship' over the population of Aboriginal people is another chilling episode in the book.

By contrast, Edward Smith arrived in Australia from the UK to make a better life for himself. His courtship and eventual marriage to Jessie provides an uplifting element to the narrative.

A high point of this book, apart from the tale of how two people from very different backgrounds met, fell in love, and married, is the extensive research that the author has undertaken. One witness whom Stephen interviewed is 'Baby Jones', whose parents at one time ran the Swan Mission. She is 86 when they meet. This is how she remembers Jessie. 'She used to have long hair, fair skinned she was, and very sturdy.

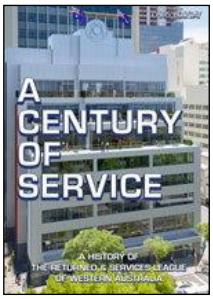
However, Baby Jones doesn't differentiate between her unconstrained life and that of Jessie. As Stephen writes, 'simply by having her parents [Baby] was not one of them. She got to keep the name her parents had given her and live the choices in life they would make for her. When she turned 16, she would not be sent out as a domestic servant'.

History, as we know only too well, is multi-faceted and one person's version of events is not necessarily another's. Stephen notes, 'in tripping over the threads of the past you have to respect the experience of witnesses [but] you cannot confuse one telling of a story as the only telling'.

For anyone with an interest in the recent past of the Aboriginal people in WA or the conditions in so many of the institutions into which they were placed, this is a deeply moving account of their history and incredible resilience.

Chris Holyday, *A Century of Service: A History of the Returned & Services League of Western Australia,* Hesperian Press, Carlisle, 2020. In Library.

Reviewer: Tom Goode



From a Soldier's Welcoming Committee in 1915 to Veteran Hubs in 2020, Chris Holyday has compiled a comprehensive history of the Returned & Services League (RSL) of Western Australia. This is a history with diversions; the author has taken licence to tell the history utilising poetry and anecdote from contemporary writers.

The early chapters describe the surge in community support as the casualties of the Gallipoli campaign began. This support was expressed in the form of the Soldier's Welcome Institute in Government Gardens as a club for soldiers and a base for the organisation, a role that has been carried forward over the years to the latest (2020) ANZAC House in St Georges Terrace. While the Soldiers Welcome Institute was the start of the RSL, Holyday includes other examples, such as the donation of ambulances, the building of ANZAC Cottage and the work of the Ugly Men's Volunteer Workforce Association.

Holyday's account of the first ANZAC day notes the differences between the community's gradual acceptance of the day as a significant national day and the soldier's view as one of a time for reunion with mates. The florid tone of the speeches, as quoted from contemporary newspapers, is neatly contrasted by the inclusion of insights from the soldier's point of view. The difficulties of the veterans in the interwar period are treated in similar style with a strong undertone of bitterness in the items selected.

The role the RSL played in mobilising the Volunteer Defence Core is included, along with correspondence on a proposal to enlist Aboriginal workers from stations in the north of the State. Unfortunately, this account of the history seems to end shortly after World War II. The need for accommodation for returning veterans becomes the focus, with the remaining pages devoted to details of the building and rebuilding of ANZAC House.

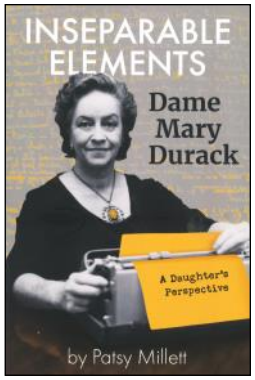
As a history of the Returned Services League, I felt there were some important aspects left unexplored. To be a returned serviceman one had to have left Australia to serve overseas. This defined eligibility for membership until after World War II. Holyday has provided insight into the way the League adapted to become a hub for accessing veteran services but his history overlooks the challenges caused both by an aging membership as the numbers of World War II veterans dwindled and by the eligibility of a new generation of Vietnam veterans.

This book is an important source of material for students studying social change in WA. The examples provided show a pattern of individual charity coalescing into formal organisations which

increasingly rely on government handouts to support their work. This change is evident in this history as the RSL goes from an organisation offering direct support to the veterans in 1916 to the equally valuable and necessary function of enabling veterans to access the full range of government services today.

Patsy Millett, *Inseparable Elements. Dame Mary Durack: a daughter's perspective*, Fremantle Press, 2021. In Library.

Reviewer: Lenore Layman



This biography of the historian and creative writer Mary Durack by her eldest daughter traces the second part of Mary's life from her marriage to Horrie Miller in late 1938 to her death in 1994. Author Patsy Millett advises that the book is 'as much a montage of the main players in her life as a biography of Mary Durack Miller'. And indeed a great retinue of players circle the central figure — Mary's mother, siblings, husband, six children and their spouses, Catholic clerics, friends, fellow authors, a multitude of writers demanding assistance with their manuscripts, and a constant stream of community and government emissaries requesting engagements. These characters are vividly (often tartly) drawn, reflecting the author's view that far too many importuned their way into her ever-obliging mother's life and wasted her creative time with their dependence. The picture that emerges is of a talented writer burdened by excessive, time-wasting obligations, with an uncooperative and ultimately demanding husband, devastation at the untimely deaths of two of her daughters, several siblings portrayed as egregiously opportunistic and grasping, and a leech-like gaggle of literary hangers-on. It is an affronting picture.

However the author makes clear that Mary Durack did not see her life as her daughter did and that the mother-daughter relationship was sometimes 'embattled' by this disagreement. Mary reflected:

> I could never absolutely abandon mundane things and become abstracted, as one really needs to do to succeed in the writing game…Perhaps I enjoyed life too much, enjoyed just being a person with lots of people in my life. I could have been more disciplined, perhaps less outgoing and more ruthless (p.329).

Becoming drawn into historical research and writing might also have been an unfortunate turn. 'Only wish I had gone on developing as a novelist', she wrote in 1973 (p.287). Nevertheless she was an agent not a victim of her life's trajectory, Mary insisted.

For the reader these life tensions provide a vivid picture of the immediate context in which Mary Durack wrote her histories — *Kings in Grass Castles* (1959), *The Rock and the Sand* (1969) and *Sons in the Saddle* (1983); also *To Be Heirs Forever* (1976). As well, the long-term hold that 'the North' exerted on her identity and life remained strong. She visited as frequently as she could and was always willing to involve herself in Kimberley projects (chiefly in Broome). We catch glimpses throughout of the emotional and spiritual connections to the North that she felt until death and the sense of loss caused by the sale of the family's pastoral holdings in 1950. Brenda Niall's perceptive and empathetic biography *True North: The Story of Mary and Elizabeth Durack* (2012) captures this wider context by exploring Mary's life before marriage and motherhood, and is an interesting history to read in conjunction with this new biography.

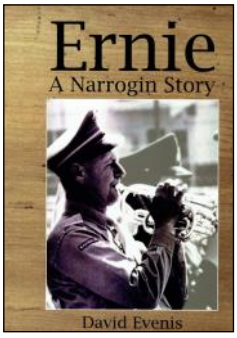
The book touches on several of Australia's key cultural changes in the decades from the 1950s to the 1980s. The transition from well-intentioned white leadership of Aboriginal cultural presentation to Aboriginal leadership is seen in microcosm in Mary's changing involvement in the Aboriginal Theatre (later Cultural) Foundation. Relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians, and the understandings and attitudes that underpin them, changed profoundly in this period leaving an older generation of sympathetic supporters like Mary very much vestiges of another time. The author is sympathetic and clear-eyed in describing this shift. There was a similar shift, also touched on in this book, in the life of the Catholic Church's mission system. Not only was Mary's generation aging but a settled world was being dismantled around them. Undoubtedly less painful was another cultural change closer to home — the shift from amateur to professional control of the State's literary life. An entertaining (if often brutal) sketch presents the world of the amateurs led by the Federation of Australian Writers with its many recognisable characters; and the account of the early years of the Stockman's Hall of Fame is also lively.

This book benefits greatly from the author's meticulous research among an avalanche of personal papers – diaries, journals, letters, unpublished writings as well as published sources. Mary's story is confidently told because extensive research supports it. And all who value WA history should be grateful to the author for bringing order to the private papers and therefore making their contents more accessible for all.

Finally, the biography reminds us that there are ethical challenges in tackling family history. In the past it was uncommon for biographers who were also family members to expose painful family secrets and private conflicts to a public audience. This reticence is disappearing and Patsy Millett tears away the privacy of family members no longer living. 'I have throughout allowed him a cloth to cover himself' (p.87), she writes of her father, leaving a reader to wonder at what has been withheld given the harsh portrait she paints. Many historians suggest that the dead are owed only the truth. However this decision is a question of personal ethics which are influenced by ties that bind us (strongly, weakly or not at all) to our remembered dead.

David Evenis, *Ernie: A Narrogin Story,* David Evenis, Rivervale, 2020. In Library.

Reviewer: Pamela Statham Drew



This well-crafted family history traces the life of the author's father Ernie, beginning at his infancy. His grandparents had wed at an early age before the First World War that separated them for some time. Grandmother Catherine had four children by the time war broke out and another two followed, the author's father being the sixth child. Grandfather came back from the war a changed and violent man, throwing grandmother and the children onto the mercy of the Salvation Army.

This exposure gave son Ernie an introduction to music and a passion that would never leave him. Subsequent chapters follow Ernie as a boy, a soldier in World War II and returned serviceman, railwayman, volunteer, musician and bugler with 'a final note'. It is a clever way of bringing out the essence of the man. Ernie was clearly affected by the war he would never speak of. He fought in the jungles of Papua and, like many others, succumbed to malaria, was transferred back to Cairns, treated and then sent back to PNG, finally leaving in February 1946.

Returning to Narrogin must have been a shock but music was his 'passion and joy'. This background helps explain Ernie's complex mix of soft-hearted father and hard taskmaster. He quickly found work as a railwayman, passing exams to become a guard. At weekends it was footy and the band. Through footy Ernie met his bride. Phyllis, the youngest of the Criddles, who thought Ernie 'quite a catch' with his guards uniform and his car! They were married in November 1953. Ernie qualified for a war service home loan, to be paid off at £10 per month. Their first child, the author, was born in March 1953, Greg in 1957, and Shirley in 1960. Ernie was away a lot and money was scarce so Phyllis took cleaning jobs, worked at times in the local pharmacy and the newsagency, and sold Avon products in her spare time. Through Ernie's railway connection the family had picnics and holidays in Albany and elsewhere. They had a club and the band in which Ernie took a prominent part – it was like a large family. Ernie had connections outside the railway too. He volunteered for the St Johns Ambulance, passing exams to keep up with change. He was honoured with his thirteen mates as citizens of the year in 1975. He loved being on duty with his ambulance mates on speedway racing nights and hardly missed one through the 1970s, especially when his sons were competing.

In retirement Ernie turned to bowls and golf and still regularly played with the band on Friday and Saturday dance nights – his favourite tunes being the Glen Miller dance hits. When needed, the dance band morphed into the town band to play on official occasions. It was always Eric who played on Anzac Day, his bugle sounding the call at 11 am (usually in the middle of main street) and the 'rouse'. Then it was on to other Anzac Day services throughout the town. Ernie was an active member of the community until the last months of his life. He died in June 1989.

Community Officer: Lesley Burnett
Editor *History West:* Dr Lenore Layman

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