

# The Sea Lion

*Quarterly newsletter of the Irwin Districts Historical Society Inc*

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## Diary 2018-2019

Armistice Centenary	11 November
Committee Meeting	29 November
Xmas Sundowner	29 November
Committee Meeting	14 February



## From the Chair

Graham Grundy

Welcome to the first edition of *The Sea Lion* the quarterly newsletter from IDHS. Since taking office a couple of years ago I have not been able to continue Anne's newsletters, but this will be a resumption of our communication to you and I hope you will enjoy the first edition. Thanks to our new secretary Bruce Baskerville for taking on the editorship. Our museum is online at [irwinhistory.org.au](http://irwinhistory.org.au) and you can follow us on [Facebook on the Irwin Museum page](#).

Our annual Christmas get together will be a sundowner this year at the Museum on Thursday 29 November so I hope you can come along and enjoy some drinks and nibbles to celebrate another successful year and hear about our plans for a an exciting 2019.



## From the Editor

Bruce Baskerville

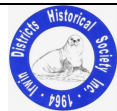
The name *The Sea Lion* recalls the Noongar name for the estuary area, Thungarra, meaning 'sea lion place'. It also reminds us of the Irwin district's rich maritime history and heritage.

This first issue is packed with stories, as well as Society news, a quick quiz, and a feature picture on the back cover. As spring turns to summer, I hope you find plenty to read and muse upon in *The Sea Lion*.



*A raft of sea lions*  
Photo: [DPAW WA](#)

## SOCIETY NEWS



## Annual General Meeting

Winter's-end, 2018

The 54<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Society was held on the back verandah of the Old Police Station on Friday 31 August 2018 with the first hints of spring (hay fever) in the air.

The main business was the receipt of reports from the outgoing president and treasurer, and the curator, and the election of office holders under the new constitution. The retiring president thanking all the retiring committee members for their service. An interesting point is that, under the new constitution, the old positions of president



and vice-president have been replaced by chairperson and deputy chairperson.

All positions were filled by acclamation, with the following results:

- Chairperson: Graham Grundy
- Deputy Chairperson: Bob Cail
- Treasurer: Di Knapp
- Secretary: Bruce Baskerville
- Ordinary Committee Members: Shirley Scotter and John Rossiter.

Dr Nan Broad was re-elected by acclamation as Patron of the Society.

The outgoing president reported on the year's key events. Two temporary exhibitions were held, Remembering Them and Submerged, and plans were underway for the convict exhibition with Greenough, Geraldton, Chapman Valley, Northampton and Lynton. The 35<sup>th</sup> annual Easter market day was a great success, attracting over 2000 people. The replacement of the Old Police Station fence was underway, with thanks to MEEDAC and Mitre 10. The Morning Tea at Russ Cottage was a great success, and won the Shire heritage award for the year. Planning for the Russ Cottage toilet was undertaken. The history database was being upgraded and a grant application had been made to re-house the historic photographs archive. A new constitution was adopted following changes to the Associations Incorporation legislation. The president's report concluded by thanking all the members, committee members Shirley Scotter, Di Knapp, Sally Connolly, Lois Spehn-Jackson, John Rossiter and Jean Amos for their support and hard work, as well as supporters Trish Parker, Bruce Baskerville and Freda Chandler.

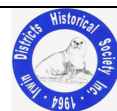
Due to the change in the financial year under the new constitution, which will now run from 1 July to 30 June, the Treasurer's Report covered the period from 1 December 2017 to 30 June 2018. Key income was from the market day, sales (books, research services, etc) and donations, while key expenditure items were repairs, signs and electricity. Overall, the Society ended the year with a healthy balance of \$10,391 carried forward for achieving our objectives (see inside back

page). Finally, everyone is reminded that memberships will now run from 1 July to 30 June under the new constitution.

The curator's report, also for the November 2017-June 2018 period, outlined a similarly busy year. There was a steady stream of family history requests and visitors to the research centre, and the exhibitions were a great success. The school history medals were presented, and the sundowner was well attended with a visit to the RSL and viewing of photographs of VC winners. Research was undertaken to identify the men who had not been listed on the war memorial, and it is anticipated they will be added for the armistice centenary. A display and events in the Town Park are being planned for Remembrance Day. Research is continuing of the 'End of World War One and Now' booklet for schools, as well as on convict biographies as part of the new convict exhibition. The oral history morning teas have been popular.

A visit from TV program 'Destination WA' resulted in a quick re-paint of the Russ Cottage signs! The Easter market day was successful with over 40 stalls, many already re-booked for next year. The local Court continues to sit every second month in the Old Police Station, with the necessary temporary relocation of the convict exhibition from the space. Good news this year is that Centrelink recipients are now eligible to undertake volunteer work in the museum. Finally, the loss of two Society stalwarts, Shirley Clarkson and Glenys Criddle, continues to be felt. RIP.

The meeting concluded with a light, and delicious, lunch prepared by members before the new committee retired to the Research Room for its first meeting.



## 1<sup>st</sup> Committee Meeting Report

The 54<sup>th</sup> Committee met for the first time immediately after the AGM. The main decisions made by the Committee were to continue looking at proposals for Russ Cottage toilets, to spend grant funds on the purchase of archival storage boxes for the photo collections, to role-over the current



term deposit for another six months, to consider whether income generated by Russ Cottage should be hypothecated (or set aside specifically for) Russ Cottage expenditure, to develop a procedures manual to clarify roles and responsibilities, to advertise Russ Cottage and Old Police Station opening times, to establish a new newsletter, and to develop a promotions and publicity strategy. The Committee also adopted a meeting schedule of the second Thursday of each month at 10am, commencing on 11 October.



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Committee Meeting Report

The 54<sup>th</sup> Committee met for the second time on 11 October in the Research Room. The main decisions made by the Committee were to participate in the Centenary of the Armistice commemorations, celebrate the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Midland railway line in 1919, and proceed with nominating the ruin of the sandhills obelisk for State heritage listing. All the walking tour and cemetery brochures are to be reviewed and updated, and it was agreed to establish a newsletter called *The Sea Lion*. These promotional activities will need to be better co-ordinated through a promotional strategy. The museum shop is to be revitalised with a focus on local products.

The Committee also agreed to thank MEEDAC and the Hon Shane Love for the completion of the new paling fence at the Old Police Station, and to continue exploring options for a toilet at Russ Cottage.

In administrative matters, the membership register is being updated in line with the requirements of the Associations legislation, so individual and corporate members may be contacted over coming weeks to clarify or update information, especially contact details. The term deposit at the bank has been rolled-over, and it was also decided to defer hypothecating Russ Cottage income until we have a clearer picture of the income over a sustained period.

The next committee meeting is to be held on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> November, at 2:30pm, to be followed by the sundowner at 5:30pm for 6pm.



## Welcome to new members

We extend a warm welcome to our newest members, and look forward to seeing them at future events and activities.

**Mr Hassan Mokak** of Woodbridge, near Midland Junction.



## Yuletide

The Chairperson and Committee  
of the Society

## Cordially Invite

all members and friends

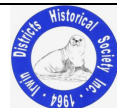
to a  
**SUNDOWNER**

In the back courtyard of the  
Old Police Station

to celebrate Christmas  
and the old and new years

**Thursday, 29 November 2018**

5:30pm for 6pm



## Russ Cottage Gardens: Blooming roses!

The grounds of Russ Cottage are looking green and inviting after the winter rain – and hard work by Bob Cail. Heritage roses have been planted on the western side of the cottage, with other new plantings around the back or southern side, and earlier heritage rose plantings have been identified. In addition to visiting the museum, the cottage grounds are perfect at the moment for a quiet stroll on the lawns, a picnic in the spring sunshine to



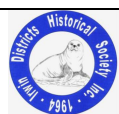
savour the verdant surrounds, or as a backdrop for family photos.



*Russ Cottage is looking a treat at the moment, and just-right for a visit.*

Photo: Bruce Baskerville 30 August 2018

## FEATURE ARTICLES



### Sir David Brand sculpture finally returns home *Graham Grundy*



*The bust of Sir David Brand in its original location, on the time-capsule stand, in the Shire Office reception area in 2007.*

Image: Orderinchaos, 12 July 2007, [Wikipedia](#)

David Brand was born in Dongara on the 1 August 1912 in Nurse O'Connor's lying-in hospital, opposite Russ Cottage. He left school at the age of 14 to work on his father's farm. During World War II he served in North Africa and Greece, including Operation Compass which captured Tobruk in 1941. After being wounded he was repatriated to Fremantle in 1942. He married Doris Elspeth McNeill on 20 March 1944 at the Mingenew Methodist Church. Following his discharge from the Australian Military Forces in January 1945, he took over the general store at Dongara (Brand's old shop is currently enclosed by the Dongara Sport & Tackle and Pisces Fish & Chips building).

In 1944, Brand became the first candidate in Australia to be endorsed by the newly-formed

Liberal Party for the seat of Greenough, and then the first Liberal elected to any parliament in Australia when he won a by-election. In October 1949 he entered the cabinet as Minister for Housing, Forests and Local Government. From April 1950 he became Minister for Works, Water Supply and Housing. He worked closely with the director of works (Sir) Russell Dumas to secure the 1952 agreement with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Co. for the establishment of a refinery at the new Kwinana industrial area.

Labor won the 1953 election, but after six years in opposition, the coalition regained office in 1959 and Brand was sworn in on 2 April as Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Tourism, posts he held for over a decade.



*The Hon David Brand MLC Premier and Member for Greenough cutting the ribbon to open the new Dongara-Denison Bridge on 14 November 1964.*

Image: IRME1771

Brand presided over a period of rapid development unparalleled since the 1890s gold boom. In 1960 the Commonwealth government lifted its embargo on the export of iron ore, enabling exploitation of large deposits in the Pilbara and the development of a major export industry. Agreement was also reached with Western Aluminium and Alwest Pty Ltd for the mining of bauxite in the Darling Range and for its processing at Kwinana and Bunbury respectively, and with Western Mining Corporation Ltd for building a nickel refinery; furthermore, a titanium oxide plant was established at Bunbury. Funds were secured from the Commonwealth for the main Ord River dam in the Kimberley region, for the east-west, standard-gauge railway link and for beef roads in the north. Oil and gas deposits were discovered in commercial quantities. The State's population rose rapidly to over one million and, after 1968, Western



Australia no longer sought assistance from the Commonwealth Grants Commission.

In June 1969 David Brand was appointed a knight in the Order of St Michael & St George (KCMG). In the same year, he arranged for the Queen to grant by royal warrant the official coat of arms of Western Australia.

On 3 March 1971 the Coalition government lost office. After eleven years, eleven months and one day as premier, Brand had exceeded by more than a year Sir John Forrest's earlier record. However, after 11 years in office, Sir David also had his critics, and by 1971 he was somewhat scared by controversies over Aboriginal and convict heritage sites he regarded as impeding his development agenda. This was symbolised by the demolition of the Pensioner Barracks. The RWAHS led a campaign to stop the demolition of the Barracks, and in October 1966 Brand lost a conscience vote in State parliament on the question. Demolition had already started, and the last-minute survival of the Barracks Arch rested on just 8 votes.



*Irvin Roads Board Members at the opening of the new Roads Board Offices, 12 April 1958. L to R: Jack Morgan, Frank Payne, Edward Dempster, Alec Leitch, Mrs Steele, David Brand (Premier), John Gillam (Chairman), Doris Brand, Jack Steele, Lynette Gillam, Harold Steele.*

Photographer: Cliff Barrett (Roads Board Vice Chairman)  
Image: IRME2165

Sir David was instrumental in the development of Dongara, opening the new Dongara Hall on the 8 August 1953, the new Roads Board (Shire) Offices on 12 April 1958, the new Dongara-Denison Bridge on 14 November 1964, the Dongara Reticulated Water Supply Scheme on 17 December 1965 (which was celebrated with a public drinking fountain in the forecourt to Dongara Hall, now gone), and the Denison Beach Shelter Shed on 21 March 1969. He also came to

support the Shire's heritage, and officially opened Russ Cottage, opposite his birthplace, on 23 January 1971.

David Brand opened the new all-weather Greenough River Bridge on 8 February 1953 (demolished 2013), which was the second reinforced concrete bridge in a country area, and a prototype for the Narrows Bridge in Perth. The Brand Highway was opened on 4 April 1975, and named the next year in honour of Sir David. Older readers will be aware how this completely transformed the transport links in the region, the biggest change since the Greenough River Bridge. The wide reserve on which the new highway was built was insisted on by Sir David in order to preserve the native flora along the highway to ensure it was a scenic tourist drive, which also helped conserve some of the natural sandplain heritage.

Sir David died of hypertensive cardiovascular disease on 15 April 1979 at Carnamah and, after a state funeral, was cremated; his wife, daughter and two sons survived him.



*Lady Doris Brand and the bust of Sir David at the dedication in the Dongara Hall on 10 June 1982*

Image: IREME 2338

A bust of Sir David was dedicated on 10 June 1982 at a ceremony in the Dongara Hall, and for many years it was a feature of the Shire Office reception area. Following the completion of the most recent building works, I am pleased to report that the bust has now been reinstated in the Shire Council Chambers. The timber base on which the bust is mounted contains a time capsule, to be opened in the future.

The Society has in its collection the fuel bowser which was located in Moreton Terrace adjacent to Sir David's shop, and the desk from his office in the shop.



References: [Australian Dictionary of Biography, Volume 13](#), (MUP), 1993, IDHS Database Records



## Centenary of the Armistice 1918-2018

Bruce Baskerville

At the invitation of the Dongara RSL Sub-Branch, the Society will participate in the Centenary of the Armistice & Remembrance Day activities on 11 November. All IDHS members are invited to march (step-off time 10:45am – final details will be in a future issue of *The Rag*), and a wreath will be made and laid at the memorial. All members wishing to participate in the IDHS group can contact Bob Cail or Di Knapp for further information.

Armistice Day this year will mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the armistice that ended battlefield conflict at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour of the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month in 1918. The Great War came to a halt, although the Versailles peace treaty was not signed by victors and vanquished until 28 June 1919.

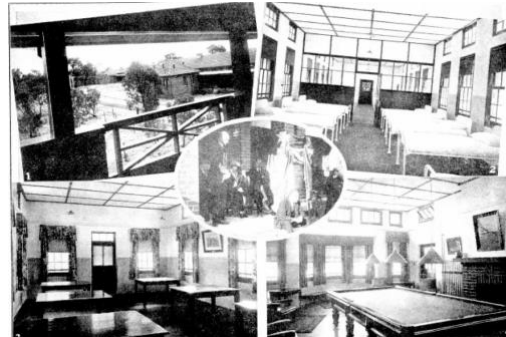


Cover illustration of a 'souvenir' to 'commemorate the winning of the Great War', produced in Dunedin NZ in 1919 and distributed to local school children

The Society has commemorated the Great War centenaries since 2014, with an ongoing exhibition at the Old Police Station, and extensive research projects that have revived the memories of the young men of Irwin who served for King and Country, and many of whom gave their lives.

As we have recently been reminded by Prince Harry and the Invictus Games, there were also many who returned wounded physically and mentally. Terms such as 'shell shock' and 'trench foot' come from this time, which was probably the first time Australians, and people in many other countries, experienced the

presence of so many young men with disabilities in their midst, and so many young men experienced such profound mental, emotional and bodily shocks. For these men, their families and communities, the war did not end in 1918 or 1919.



The caption for this picture was "Lemnos, the new home for mentally-afflicted ex-soldiers at West Subiaco". It illustrates a post-war reality for many veterans and their families. Western Mail, 15 July 1926: 6

"How do they fare, these men of the bed-ridden eve of the afterglow?" asked the *Sunday Times* in 1935. We still have centenaries unspoken to commemorate in the years ahead.

### References:

'Aftermath of War | the sick and suffering of to-day', *Sunday Times*, 11 August 1935: 1  
*Souvenir of The Great War 1914-1919*, Dunedin Peace Celebrations Committee, Dunedin 1919



## From the Exhibition: Vaughan Edgar Foss 2<sup>nd</sup> Division Artillery

Anne Jefferys

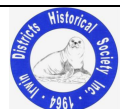
Born in Dongara in 1884 Vaughan Edgar Foss was the son of Charles Denroache Vaughan Foss and Alma (Ridley) Foss. Alma was his second wife; Charles married Joanna Brockman in 1868 - she died in 1871 and is buried at Greenough. The Foss family arrived at Swan River in 1849, when Charles' father had charge of 300 migrants who had arrived on the *Stag*.

Vaughan Edgar Foss, born 1884, when his mother was probably visiting her Dongara family, farmers at Irwin. He enlisted at Belmont on 23 May 1916 and embarked from Melbourne in November 1916, arriving at Plymouth in January 1917, spending Christmas at sea. On arrival in England Vaughan developed measles, then mumps, so his departure to the front was delayed until 1 September 1917.



Vaughan was promoted to Gunner in the 2nd Division Artillery, and was killed in action on 11 August 1918. He is buried at Heath Cemetery Harbonnières in the Somme, France.

For Gunner Foss' full biography, see our [World War One webpages for 1918](#).



### Midland Railway Line birthplace under threat

*Bruce Baskerville*

With the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Midland railway line in November next year, the 132<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the beginning of the line looms in February – and the site of its birth is threatened by neglect and mammon.

On 1 March 1886 Governor Sir Frederick Broome turned the first sod for the Midland railway line in what is now the Midland town centre. Until the 1965 the railway line crossed the 'first sod' site. When the Midland Railway Co was taken over by WAGR in 1964, this line was closed-down and mostly removed, and the site became part of a park called Tuohy Gardens vested in Midland Junction Municipal Council. In 1986 Governor Professor Gordon Reid unveiled a plaque celebrating the centenary of the sod-turning, and the plaque was installed in Tuohy Gardens next a section of the surviving railway track in the park.



*The turning of the first sod for the Midland railway line, 1 March 1886*

Image: City of Swan Local History Collection, item P355

In 2000, the MRA, a state redevelopment corporation took control of the park, hoarded-up the site, removed all the park landscaping and left the area barren and abandoned, the plaque stranded and vandalised. Now, the land is for sale to the

highest bidder as a commercial development site.

The Midland District Historical Society has made representations to the Minister for Planning asking for reconsideration, but received no joy. Our Society has supported the MDHS's efforts. The MDHS has now nominated the site for State heritage listing.



*Some of the only known surviving evidence of the Midland Railway Company in Midland: old rail lines rising to the surface in the abandoned Tuohy Gardens – which is now up for sale.*

Image: Bruce Baskerville 7 October 2018

Some railway lines remain on the site, pushing up through the bitumen, as does a row of trees planted by the Company in the 1930s as part of a beautification program, but no other buildings or infrastructure of the Midland Railway Company survive in its namesake town. Not unlike Dongara, where the railway station built by the company and opened in 1892 was summarily demolished by the Shire in 1974 when the new railway line to Eneabba was constructed, rerouting this section of the line through Dongara away from the old station. For reasons unknown, the history and heritage of the Midland Railway Company has for years received short-shrift from the powers that be.



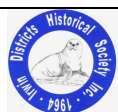
*Dongara Railway Station, built 1892, when it was described as "one of the prettiest stations in the colony", demolished in 1974*

Image: IDHS Collections, framed photo, OPS Research Room; Reference *Victorian Express*, 25 March 1892: 3

Fortunately, the Society has several important objects in its collections from the railway, including three trolleys and a set of signals and their original signal pole. Restoration of these

and other Midland railway objects will be a focus for 2019.

## FROM THE ARCHIVES



### Pell Bridge Shirley Scotter

Each issue will feature an image from our extensive collections, selected by Curator Shirley Scotter.

John and Esther Pell and family arrived at Irwin River in 1867, from Sam Phillip's "Culham Farm" at Toodyay. With the break-up of the "Cattle Company", Phillips became owner of the property he called "The Grange". A small cottage was built on the bank of the Irwin River for the family, and for the first time in 1868, "Pell's Crossing" appeared on local maps.



*Looking eastwards over Pell Bridge, 1904*

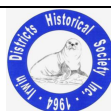
Image: IREME, photographer unknown

This 1904 pastoral scene shows a herd of horned cattle on the right watched by a group of men, one astride a horse. The river valley is well-wooded, as is the high ground on the skyline, while the dirt road shows criss-crossing cart wheel tracks. Notice how the bridge is only one lane wide, with generous splayed post and rail approach barriers to stop travellers falling into the river, and also how the bridge is much lower than the road compared to present day.

Today, the Brand Highway turn-off is just across a more recent Pell Bridge, and it would be a brave person who would linger mid-road on horse-back at this spot now!



## NATURAL HISTORY



### QI: five things about Rainbow Bee-eaters

Bruce Baskerville

If the Irwin shire had an official bird emblem, my vote would probably be for the rainbow bee-eater (*Merops ornatus*). I remember, come spring, they used to dig their tunnel-nests in the sand bank on the corner of St Dominics Road and Parker Street and further along St Dominics Road. The sand bank's gone now, but here's some tips from Birds Australia that might help you spot one of these pretty birds somewhere else around town.



*A rainbow bee-eater in flight.*

Image: Brett Donald, 11 November 2005, [Wikipedia](https://www.wikipedia.org/)

Their eggs are laid in a chamber at the end of a nesting tunnel, which may be up to 1.5 metres long, dug into a sloping bank of soil or sand, especially banks of rivers, sand dunes or a roadside cutting, and even the walls of quarries. Each tunnel is dug out with the birds' long, curved bills, then scratched out with their feet. Sometimes they share these tunnels with other burrow-nesting species.

The characteristic *drrrrt* call of the Rainbow Bee-eater, usually given when in flight, is sometimes almost indistinguishable from a similar call commonly given by Singing Honeyeaters.

Living up to their name, Rainbow Bee-eaters really do eat bees, catching them in mid-air. The unfortunate bee is then usually wiped on a branch or other perch to remove the sting, before it's eaten. Around Townsville, the pellets of undigestible bee bits and pieces they



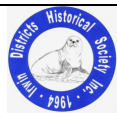
regurgitate are being examined to look for evidence of exotic Asian Honey Bees.

When on migration, Rainbow Bee-eaters form flocks, sometimes comprising up to 500 birds, which often fly at very high elevations, meaning that some may pass by without being noticed, but they're often given away by their characteristic calls, which can often be heard as they fly overhead, including when they fly over at night.

Once, a wayward Rainbow Bee-eater flew all the way to Japan, and a few 'vagrant' bee-eaters have also been seen on islands of Micronesia, but they usually don't travel that far. Rainbow Bee-eaters mostly breed in southern and eastern Australia, and after they've finished, they migrate to northern Australia for the winter months, often bolstering local populations there, though good numbers also often make it to New Guinea and eastern Indonesia. Records further afield are few and far between.

Reference: [Birdlife Australia e-News, October 2018](#)

## HOW OLD ROAD NAMES ARE SO EASILY LOST



### Pettit's Lane or Pettit Road? *Bruce Baskerville*

Recently, while driving around the Bonniefield area I turned into Pettit's Lane – or I thought I did.

The GPS device on the dashboard insisted I had turned in Pettit Road. I have never heard of such an address, at least not in that area. I have always known that long, straight, undulating thoroughfare as Pettit's Lane, gently rising and falling between paddocks and fields.

Pettit's, or Pettit, Lane has been marked on local maps since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The name commemorates free emigrant Robert Pettit, who arrived in Dongara in 1865 and obtained a Tillage Lease beside the lane. The ruins of Pettit's two-storey stone house and palm trees survived on the site for over 130 years before disappearing sometime between 1996 and 2004, despite being listed in the Municipal Heritage Inventory as Item #109. Pettit employed 9 ticket-of-leavers (convicts) on the farm in the 1860s. He died in Dongara

in 1916, shortly after one of his grandsons, [Walter S Pettit](#), was killed by shell fire on the Somme. Walter Pettit is recorded on the Villers Bretonneux, Canberra and Dongara war memorials.

As well as being such memory aids, old place names are important historical landmarks in their own right. That it was called a 'lane' rather than a 'road' over a century ago tells us something about the way people back then saw and understood their local landscape, and how they gave directions and found their way around. Old place names contribute to our sense of place, and should not be discarded without a thought.

Has the old name been casually abandoned, or has a multi-national just unilaterally re-named a line in their map software? Who seems to have decided to re-name this lane, and why? That is a question I hope to be able to answer in the next issue of *The Sea Lion*.

## EXHIBITIONS

### CONVICT TRACKS



### Convict Tracks of the Victoria District *Graham Grundy*

In cooperation with four other Midwest museums, the IDHS launched permanent exhibition *Convict Tracks of The Victoria District*. The last 108 British convicts arrived in Fremantle on the *Hougoumont* on January 9 1868 and this series of exhibitions examines the convict system in the British Empire with reference to South East Asia and Western Australia and each of the contributing districts, Irwin, Greenough, Geraldton, Chapman Valley, and Northampton.



*Part of exhibition in the OPS Day Room (now used as the occasional court room).*

Photo Hassan Mokak, 27 June 2018



*A rare item: the ticket-of-leave for Benjamin Jones, with panel explaining ticket details.*  
Photo Hassan Mokak, 27 June 2018

Over 2000 Ticket of Leave men were sent to the Victoria District and we have traced the tracks of over 700 who lived and worked in Upper and Lower Irwin. As well as documenting individual stories we have mapped events and structures relating to the convict system in the Irwin District.

## HERITAGE

### STATE HERITAGE NOMINATION



#### The Second Obelisk in the Denison Sandhills

*Bruce Baskerville*

The Point Leander Obelisk, and now Fishermen's Memorial, is well known to local residents and visitors, but what about its twin located on the sandhills above the western boundary of the Golf Links?

Examples of 19<sup>th</sup> century obelisks built for maritime navigation were in the harbours at Melbourne, Newcastle (NSW) and Colombo, as well as Fremantle in WA, and were painted in various combinations of red and white. The pair of obelisks at Port Denison are rare examples of such obelisks, and sadly the Sandhills Obelisk was subject to casual but official vandalism in the late 1970s. Nevertheless, it remains an impressive historic

monument with the air of a romantic ruin only adding to its significance.

The State Heritage Office has been calling for nominations to heritage list convict sites as part of the commemorations of the arrival of the last convict ship in 1868. The Point Leander Obelisk, built in 1869, is already listed on the State Register of Heritage Places, and these pictures are part of the nomination we are preparing for the Sandhills Obelisk.



*The sandhills obelisk ruins, as seen from the golf links.*

Photo: Lindsay Baskerville 4 September 2018



*Ascending the sandhill to the obelisk ruin, from the rubbish tip side*

Photo Bruce Baskerville 22 September 2018



*Section of the obelisk pyramid, pushed down the sandhill slope*

Photo Bruce Baskerville 22 September 2018



*A matter of scale: Lindsay Baskerville standing on the inner walkway of the base*

Photo Bruce Baskerville 22 September 2018



*The outer ledge, inner walkway and hollow interior of the obelisk pyramid*

Photo Bruce Baskerville 22 September 2018

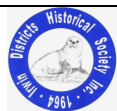


*View from the Sandhills Obelisk to Point Leander Obelisk (top-left corner)*

Photo: Lindsay Baskerville 4 September 2018

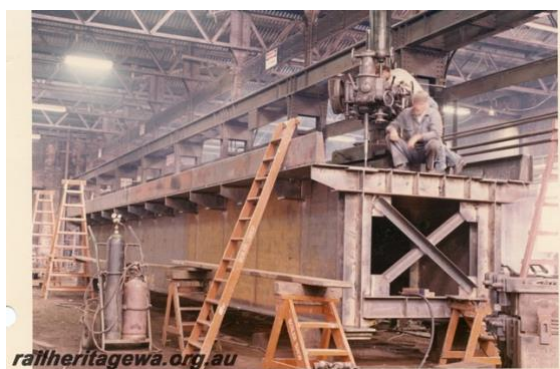
## TEST YOUR LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

### WHAT IS THIS?



**Do you know  
what this is?**

This historic photo from Rail Heritage WA's collections shows something being constructed – but what is it?



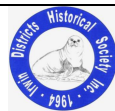
03755

Hint: It is being built in the Boiler Shop, at the WAGR Workshops at Midland, and is part of a prefabricated structure that still spans the Irwin River, but which is rarely seen except by the adventurous Rambler.

Send your answers to [idlhs@midwest.com.au](mailto:idlhs@midwest.com.au).

See the next issue of *The Sea Lion* to find out the winner(s) and the answer.

## ADVERTISING AND NOTICES



### *The Sea Lion:* rate card

Advertisements and notices may be accepted for placement in *The Sea Lion*, at the editor's discretion and in accordance with any guidelines issued by the IDHS Committee, for the provision of history-related goods or services, or goods and services that may be of relevance to our readership.

- Rates: a quarter page \$25, a half page \$50, a whole page \$100, or multiples thereof.
- Content: Advertisers need to supply the final advertisement in either a jpg or pdf format.
- The Society will not endorse, or accept any responsibility for, claims advanced in any advertisement.

All inquiries should be directed to the editor at [idlhs@midwest.com.au](mailto:idlhs@midwest.com.au).

[Notice]



### **Museum Opening Times**

#### **Russ Cottage House Museum**

cnr St Dominic's Road & Point Leander Drive

*Entrance by donation*

#### **Irwin District Museum & Archives,**

Old Police Station, Waldeck Street

*Research & copying fees may apply*

*"Maintaining the identity of the Irwin District"*

## DISCLAIMER

Opinions and assessments expressed in *The Sea Lion* remain those of their authors, and do not necessarily represent the policies or views of the Irwin Districts Historical Society Inc.



## The Irwin District Historical Society Inc., Office Holders for 2018/19

### Patron

Dr Nancy Broad

### Chairperson

Graham Grundy

### Deputy Chairperson

Bob Cail

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### Secretary

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### Ordinary Committee Members

Shirley Scotter

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### Irwin District Museum & Archives

#### Curator

Shirley Scotter

#### Russ Cottage Co-ordinator

Bob Cail

#### Database & Website Manager

Graham Grundy

#### *The Sea Lion* Editor

Bruce Baskerville

### Membership subscriptions

Subscriptions for 2018/19 are \$10 for an individual member, and \$50 for a corporate member.

### Address for all correspondence

The Secretary

Irwin District Historical Society Inc

PO Box 347

DONGARA WA 6525.

### Email

[ids@midwest.com.au](mailto:ids@midwest.com.au)

### Website

<http://irwinhistory.org.au/>

### Incorporation

The Irwin District Historical Society Inc is incorporated in the State of Western Australia, Registration Number A0690104G, registered on 19 March 1970

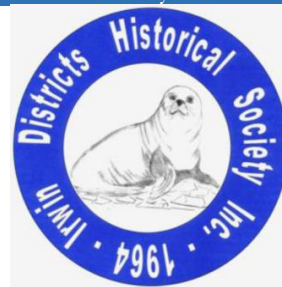
### Affiliations



### Honours

Irwin District Museum: Winner, Shire of Irwin Heritage Award 2002, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2012 | Runner-up, Museums Australia (WA) Museums Award 2003 | Museums Australia WA Public Program Award 2008

## Objectives of the Society



(1) To encourage the **study and writing** of the history of the Irwin District.

(2) To **maintain the identity of the Irwin District** by preservation and restoration of buildings and settings of historical significance.

(3) To encourage the use of **sympathetic architectural patterns** when new buildings are constructed.

(4) To **discourage the disfigurement** of premises, streets and open places by unsightly and inappropriate advertisements, poles, wires and unseemly structures.

(5) To encourage the conservation of aspects of the **natural environment** as it affects the character of the Shire of Irwin.

(6) To collect, classify and preserve **records and objects** relating to the history of the Irwin District. Records may include physical and digital records.

(7) To **publish** articles and selected records in special bulletins, or in an official journal of the Society or by any other method approved by the Society.

(8) To **exchange information** among members of the Society, by lectures, readings, discussions and public exhibitions of historical materials.

(9) To **promote public interest** in and support for the preservation of historical relics, including buildings and sites, the recognition of notable anniversaries in Irwin District and Western Australian history, and the erection of memorials to outstanding persons and events.

(10) The founding, subsidising or contributing to **scholarships or prizes** to promote this object

(11) To establish and maintain a **library, reading room, historical museum and Web presence**.

(12) To join with other associations having similar objectives to pursue **common aims**.

(13) To **recognise and honour achievement** in advancing these objectives or for outstanding contribution to the study and writing of Irwin Districts and other histories.

*One Place | Many Names*

*Thungarra  
Sea Lion Country  
Thungarra Estuary  
Irwin River Mouth  
The Lagoon*



Irwin Shire Municipal Heritage Inventory Item #052 'possibly of State significance'  
*Photo: Bruce Baskerville, 23 August 2007*