

The Sea Lion

Quarterly newsletter of the Irwin Districts Historical Society Inc

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Diary 2020

Committee meeting	10 July
Committee meeting	13 August
AGM & opening of new trolley shed	24 September



From the Chair
Graham Grundy

Welcome to the Autumn Edition of the Sea Lion. With COVID-19 currently under control here in the West, we see tragedy and disruption around the world as the pandemic takes its toll. The museum shut down has given us a rare opportunity to not only review our policies and procedures but to bring forward some major projects. Our amazing volunteers with the assistance of local business have constructed the new display shed and installed the trolleys and we will be working to complete the display in the coming months.

While that is the most visible part of our work, many others have been diligently working on our data collection by auditing the items in storage, digitising photographs, photographing the collection, creating archival storage items, transcribing a special diary as well as improving and enhancing data quality and the digital data storage and retrieval systems. Undoubtedly, one of the most productive times, which would not have been possible without the foundations laid by our many members and volunteers over the past 55 years.

We are looking forward to a bright future for the Society and I cordially invite you to be part of it, so as part of our response to the crisis, the Committee has taken the decision to offer free membership, so please join or renew as soon as

possible by downloading and returning the Membership Form from website.

NEWS



**Membership
Subscriptions for
2020-21 set at
\$0 (zero)**

With the end of June fast approaching, all memberships will fall due for renewal on 1 July. Due to Covid 19, the committee resolved to set the subscriptions for 2020-21 in all categories of membership (Ordinary, Associate, Household and Corporate) at \$0.

A membership renewal form will still be sent to you in the post, and you are asked to please complete and return the form to the Museum, either by post, email or in person. This is to ensure our membership register is kept up to date, as required in our rules, and to make sure we have all your contact details up to date.

You may wish to donate in lieu of paying a membership subscription this year. The renewal form provides details for doing so (and all donations will be gratefully received!). So, don't delay, renew as soon as your renewal form arrives in the post.



**Successful Covid 19
Recovery Grant from
Lotterywest**

We are thrilled to have been advised by Lotterywest on 24 June that Premier McGowan has approved a grant of \$4,000 to the Society. The grant is to compensate for the revenue lost when the Easter Market had to be



cancelled due to Covid 19, and also supports the \$0 subscriptions for the coming year. Cancelling the Markets, which has been our major annual fundraiser for over 30 years, was a difficult decision for the committee to make, not least because of the significant loss of revenue. The market income funds most of our annual recurrent costs, especially insurances, energy, water, phone, internet, and cleaning, so its loss was a major blow. It is a huge relief to have those costs now covered, and we will be looking to also reduce expenditures in energy and especially water use (how much lawn do we really need?).

Big thanks to Trish Parker for preparing the application, and to Lotterywest for considering our application, and of course to all the players of Lotterywest games who ultimately provided the funds. Lotterywest is the only lottery in Australia with a direct grants program, and the only one which supports local history and heritage projects.



Museums Re-open As From 6 June 2020

Both museums were formally closed to the public from 18 March, well before the Phase 1 restrictions came into effect on 27 April.

In accordance with Phase 3, we re-opened the museums on 6 June, and are operating to our usual 10am-12noon weekday timetable for the time being.

If you haven't visited a museum for a while, why not drop and get to know some of your local history?

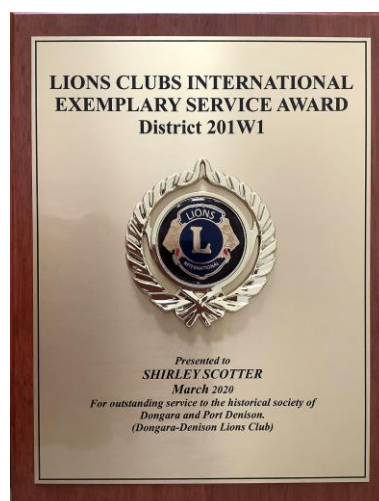


Lions Club Exemplary Service Award to Shirley Scotter

One really bright spot during the shutdown was the award on 1 May by the Lions Club of its Exemplary Service Award to Shirley Scotter, IDHS Hons, for "Outstanding service to the historical society of Dongara and Port Denison".

The committee's warmest congratulations are extended to Shirley on this wonderful recognition of her marvellous achievements

and contribution to the Society and local history.



AGM to be held on Thursday 24 September 2020

The 56th Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday 24 September 2020 at the Irwin District Museum (Covid 19 advice permitting). The usual business will be attended to, including receiving annual reports and electing office holders for the coming year. Remember, you need to have returned your membership renewal form by the beginning of the AGM to vote and otherwise participate in the meeting. Following the formal meeting, there will be a ceremony to dedicate the new trolley shelter – see story further on.



Committee Meetings during the Shutdown *Bruce Baskerville*

The committee met for the first time face-to-face on 11 June, but during the shutdown had continued to operate with formal meetings on 18 March (by email) and 24 April (by zoom). The March meeting decided on closing the museums to the public and set out the rules for 'back of house' volunteer access. The April meeting resolved to waive the subscriptions for 2020-21, agreed to make several grant applications, authorised commencing work on the trolley shelter, and approved reducing the term deposit to fund two major projects. In all of these decisions, the committee was conscious of its responsibilities to our members and also to the broader local community.

Getting the hang of the new technology took a little practice, but it also showed us new ways to meet and work. Where once we talked about the tyranny of distance, now it's about the triumph of technology over geography. The June meeting covered a large array of items, of which the key decisions were to seek advice on developing new income streams for the Society, to mark the Old Police Station's 150th birthday next year, to appoint Julie Nunn Keeper of the Museums, and to re-open the museums, while numerous reports were received from various committee members on activities during the shutdown. These are all covered in other items in this *Sea Lion*.



Old Police Station verandah conservation

The east verandah of the Old Police Station, like the rest of the building, will be 150 years old next year. Over the years, various maintenance and conservation works have been undertaken on the verandah, and some of the original material has been replaced. But, overall, most of the jarrah flooring consists of boards and bearers installed in 1871. The timber was cut from old growth trees in either the Vasse or Canning districts and shipped to Dongara. The trees were 300-400 years old when cut, making the timber now 450-550 years old, and an ancient and precious resource.

Weather has damaged some floor boards and bearers on the exposed eastern edge of the verandah, and these are to be replaced using timber salvaged from the old Moore's Store in Port Denison and donated by long-time member Don Barrett. The salvaged timber is of a similar age and origin, making it ideal for these conservation works where it will serve for at least another 150 years.

The rubble limestone dwarf wall supporting the floor and verandah posts will also have all the cement mortar, that was probably used in the 1950s to patch and repair the wall, removed and the wall will be restored with lime mortar and matching stone that is available on site. Historic stonework should never, ever be repaired with concrete, which invariably results in the destruction of the stone. Watch out for this work in progress over the next month or so. As usual, we will be engaging skilled local tradespeople for this work.



New Trolley Shelter Now Completed *Bruce Baskerville & Trish Parker*

The new trolley shelter for our three Midland Railway trolleys has now been completed. This was a major project, that had been some time in the planning and ready to go just when the Covid shutdown Phase 1 kicked-in. The lantana thicket on the southern side of the museum courtyard was cleared away, and a simple functional steel shelter has been built. Recycled rails, with sleepers, and ballast, were laid, and the trolleys were brought from Russ Cottage to their new home. The framework was then clad with the roofing iron and an 'apron' wall on the south side. The signals from the old Dongara Railway Station were installed beside the shelter, and for the first time in 45 years now stand proud and tall. The signals were rescued by a former IDHS president, the late Harry Leaver, as the old station was being demolished, and whisked away in the nick of time before the demolishers smashed them to pieces for Dongara rubbish tip. A large oleander was removed from the southern end of the Old Police Station, and the whole south side cleaned up, with a compact gravel surface adding to the railway yard character around the shelter. The lovely Ilyarri and the shady pepper tree now frame the shelter. This was a massive effort by members, volunteers and donors, who will all be recognised at a special ceremony to formally dedicate the shelter on the Queen's Birthday long weekend in September, but it is a real pleasure to acknowledge them now:

- Alan Smith
- Bob Cail
- Craig Forsyth
- Don and Len Whyte
- Don Barrett
- Doopa and Trish Parker
- Garrie Blay
- Lindsey Baskerville
- Dongara Concrete
- Meedac
- Men in Sheds
- Nufab



Midland Railway Trolley Shelter, from Go to Whoa!



One of the trollies on Russ Cottage verandah, 10 October 2018



Lantana on the site, 29 November 2018



Lantana gone, site prepared, and building gets under way, 11 May 2020



The frame emerges, 15 May 2020



On goes the roof, 22 May 2020



After 45 years, the signal stands again! 17 May 2020



The trollies in their new home, 19 May 2020



Finishing touches, 19 June 2020



FEATURE ARTICLES



2021: A Year for Two Sesquicentenaries

Planning is getting underway for a series of public events over Easter 2021 to mark the 150th birthday of the Old Police Station and Courthouse, which opened in 1871, and the 150th anniversary of the founding of local government in the Irwin District and Shire, with the first elections and first council meeting held in the Courthouse in 1871.

This will mark two very significant anniversaries in our history, and our activities will be focused on the museum over the Easter long-weekend.



Remembering Cliff Barrett, Fisherman *Don Barrett with Julie Nunn*

I am recording the memories of my father Cliff Barrett. They are the stories he used to tell us as we sat around the open fire at night on the Three Springs farm. One of his favourite stories involved fishing way back in late 1928 and it went something like this:

Dad came from South Australia to Arrino (near Three Springs) in 1927/1928 to share farm for three years on a property at Woobanaty. This involved clearing the land and then cropping it with wheat. While there, a few of the farmers (names unknown) got together and decided to plough a track through the sandplain from Arrino to Cliff Head so as to go on holidays and do some fishing. Dad loved his fishing. This track was a great achievement. They started off from Arrino with a powered kerosene, steel wheeled tractor pulling a twin disc plough which had to be greased up every few hours. Two trucks followed carrying fuel, water and provisions at a maximum speed of four kilometres per hour. Over the distance of sixty kilometres Dad was amazed how straight and accurate the driver was. He arrived spot on at Cliff Head. Note that Cliff Head was approximately 60km from Arrino through a direct route and 160km via road.

At the Cliff Head camp, they made a raft out of logs and drums to paddle just off shore to fish.

It appears they didn't have an anchor so they found a big stone and tied a piece of rope around it. They were very happy with their achievement and caught many small fish until one day when out fishing the southerly came up. Note: a stone under water weighs very little. They began drifting and being too far to swim they were in big trouble. Luckily for them they were seen from the shore and a person camping there had a dinghy. They were rescued - thank goodness - otherwise I may have never been born! Their raft just drifted out to sea and was never found.

Around 1936 the family were having a holiday at Port Denison when a cyclone came through. Sid Knowler's fishing boat dragged its anchor. Charlie the Cook, (as he was known) Sid's offsider, was on board. The sailing boat had no motor and was rapidly drifting towards the old jetty. Charlie ran up the jib sail only, and with great skill sailed past the jetty and came ashore on the north side. Many men gathered, including my father. They managed to get a rope attached, pulled the boat through the wash close to shore and saved it. I remember it well. I was five, in short pants, and with such strong cyclonic winds the sand really hurt my little legs.

Prior to the above, a fisherman fishing off the old jetty late one afternoon caught a fish while he was smoking. Taking the smoke out of his mouth, he put it down beside him on a jetty plank. After catching the fish, he discovered that his cigarette had fallen into a crack and he couldn't retrieve it. Next morning a section of the jetty had burnt down leaving a gap that I estimate to have been twenty five metres and about three quarters of the way out. They erected a swing bridge across the gap. It consisted of wire ropes and a hanging platform to walk across. Being so young I could not swim but I had to cross over and back - as you do when you are little. I was terrified when crossing as it swayed back and forth. There were gaps between the planks and I could see the angry, deep water below. Even now I can still picture this.

I would like to mention, although it has nothing to do with fishing, that there was a public well with a water trough for stock at the side of the road on the north side of Southerlys - which was MacKentys-Slopers in my young days. The well was small and shallow, the trough



round, and about half a metre wide. A hand pump was attached to the inside of the trough so you could pump fresh water for your cow or horse at any time. Again, being young and daring I reckoned I could walk around the outside wall of the trough. Yes! I fell into the dirty, smelly water and got the shock of my life as it was only a foot deep. A few years back when you looked up William St you could see a depression in the middle of the bitumen road which marked the well site. The depression has now disappeared.

Getting back to fishing... in 1950 Dad retired from the farm and bought the house owned by Mr Field, a very old resident of Port Denison. The house was located in the lane way behind the Sea Rescue building. Dad teamed up with another ex-farmer (name I cannot recall) who lived almost opposite the Bowling Club. The farmer owned a sailing boat which he used for fishing to supplement his income. This gave Dad the knowledge of sailing and the waters and reefs out of Port Denison. He then purchased his own sailing boat called the *Monsoon* which had a twelve horse-power Morris marine engine.



LFB D1 Monsoon at Denison, 1959
IRME2167

The boat was located in Fremantle so Dad paid an experienced sailor to assist him to sail to Denison which took a day, a night and a part

of the next day. Dad was very relieved when they arrived. I looked over their logbook or chart and was amazed how they had charted their course. Drawn to scale they marked a line on the page noting compass direction, time of travel and estimated speed of sailing. When wind direction changed they had to change course and the same was recorded again. This happened all the way up the coast. What got me was when sailing, the boat would be drifting off compass course by the pressure of the wind on the sail and tide movement. The only true direction of travel was worked out by taking the compass reading off the boat's wake and then reversing that direction, also estimating the speed of travel, not getting a true distance of travel like when using the stars and the sun to navigate. No depth sounders, GPS or satellite navigation in those days of sailing.

Dad took up dhuie fishing with the *Monsoon* selling most of his fish to Boris's Café at Three Springs. He packed the fish in wet seaweed placed in old wheat bags and they were then freighted by train on the Midland line. Boris was always pleased to receive Dad's fish as they arrived as a good product.

Dad's way of fishing was as follows. Octopus was used as bait. They were skinned and the tentacles bashed between two bricks to make them tender then salted to keep them fresh so he could use them at any time. Fish hooks had no eyes but had flattened ends so the gut line (animal gut or cord) was tied in a special way so as to not slip over the flattened end. This hook held the bait straight out (horizontally) on the trace making it easier to hook fish. Using heavy cord or gut line required a heavy sinker to keep the line on the bottom. These were made by making the shape of a mould in the ground by another sinker and pouring melted lead from old batteries into it. Batteries in those days held a lot of lead.

Dad always warned me when pulling in a big fish caught on the bottom hook not to grab the line between the hooks - as there were two hooks on the line - and if the fish turned you couldn't stop it and your hand would get caught on the top hook.

Frank Money, an old Denison fisherman, told me he once sent a catch of fish to market by train and only received a bill for freight so he started catching crayfish (as rock lobsters were then called). Dad altered the *Monsoon* to catch

crayfish by making a winch out of an old car differential and placing two plough discs opposing each other where the wheel went, to make the winch. It was powered by a cooled 3hp petrol engine and pulled the rope of the craypot lifting it from the seabed. They were pulled by hand prior to this. This was before winches were made professionally.

The *Monsoon* was the first registered crayfishing boat in Port Denison. Licenced Fishing Boat Denison 1 (LFB D1). Dad also had a boat called the *Ansara* which was registered for crayfishing too. The *Monsoon* having a mast and cabin was restricted in the number of pots it could carry out to sea. Boats like this relied on other boats with larger deck space to carry their hundred pots or more out for them. There was no restriction on the number of pots that you could set when Dad first started crayfishing. No skipper's tickets, no licences, only a fishing inspector to control the size of crays. We all knew the inspector and Dad told stories of how the fishermen tried to avoid him when bringing in undersize crays (kackers). One way was to get someone to hang a sheet out on a clothesline when he was about. Seeing this the fishermen would dump the kackers out at sea. No two way radio then.

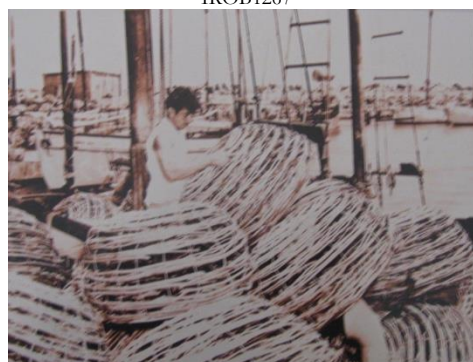
The bait used was any found road kill, the smelliest a speciality. There were foxes, cats, kangaroos, rabbits, chooks, sheep heads, cow hide, cow hocks to name a few. When hair was discovered in cray meat all bait carrying fur or hair was banned. Fish is the main bait now and that is mostly imported.

In early times fishermen made their own cray pots. There were round stick pots (you needed skill to make them) wire pots, wooden batten pots - all different shapes and sizes with no escape gaps. Now they have regulated sizes and escape gaps for the smaller crays to escape.

Dad and other fishermen sold their catch to Lionel Criddle our local carrier who was an old timer and well known resident. Live crays were held in holding pots close to shore and taken out to the Dongara station when trains were available. Lionel put them on the Midland steam train which went straight to Midland Junction. From there they were carried on the government train to the processing factory at Fremantle. To keep them alive on the long journey I believe the crays were packed in dry seaweed in jute wheat bags.



Stick pot in our museum collections
IROB1267



*Stick pots being loaded at start of 1960 season,
Fremantle Fishermen's Harbour*
Photo courtesy Cervantes Historical Society

When Dad retired from fishing, the *Monsoon* was sold to Sonny Healy who was also living at Port Denison. It was later operated by Donald Healy. It met its end at Cliff Head when moored on the moorings the heavy keel necessary for sailing fell off. You would not believe that the keel had been secured with steel bolts, not stainless when it was built. After drifting ashore at Cliff Head the *Monsoon* was burnt.



Remembering Dongara Railway Station *Lionel Criddle in 1975*

Don Barrett's memories in the story above sent me into the archives to retrieve the following reminiscence by the late, and still lamented, Lionel Criddle, published in the *Dongara-Denison News* of 11 October 1975.



Anyone travelling along the main road would not recognise where the old Dongara Railway Station once stood, now that it has been bulldozed and the site cleared up, but to me recalling nostalgic memories of the same, with the Midland Railway and the WAGR over 50 years it is another matter.

While waiting for the passenger trains, many thorny problems of the day were debated in the office, with a good fire in the winter, and a cool breeze on the platform in the summer. Taking part would be the Stationmaster, Policeman (who met the train), schoolmaster, my Father, and Railway executives and Foster Clarkson who met all the trains to collect his West Australian bread and often brought over an orange from his orchard!

In those days it meant a 5am rise to catch the train to Geraldton for Doctor, Maternity or any other cause, and back at 9pm. On many occasions we would travel to Denison picking up passengers for this train, and in the evening rail up to 20 bags live crayfish, packed in dry seaweed, and deliver 1 ton ice from the train to the fishermen at night, plus passengers, also bread which came out and was sold by Miss Healy, as there was no baker operating in the town for a few years.



Dongara Railway Station in 1937
IRME1640

The main occasions were Government Workshop employees coming to Denison for the Christmas holidays up to 20 families, with their big old fashioned trunks with goodies.

At school holiday times the 50 boarders at the Dominican College had to go to the station at 5am, boarding a train north to the Goldfields and south, and the trains crossed over here, and going both ways what a bedlam!

Ike and his mother used to catch the train to Bookara each pension day with supplies. We

used to send poultry in crates to Cue, Nanine, Day Dawn and Meekatharra, also eggs during the hey-day of the Goldfields. On one occasion a wooden leg in a chaff bag belonging to an identity that used to plough firebreaks for the Railway began to move, it was found there was a nest of rats in it.

I only recall one accident, a passenger had some money blow under the coach, he went in after it but unfortunately the train started and almost severed his leg, the train was held until the ambulance arrived from Geraldton, and the local CWA nurses attended.

Old Station Masters I recall are John Thomas, Alby Stokes, Kevin O'Dwyer, Roy Kameson, Ray Falconer and Phil Brakjovich. Conductors Percy McPherson, Ernie Norman, Bill Thompson, Wally Evans and Clarrie Dee.

During this time we conducted the mail contract to the Post Office and Railway Station. My most worrying time was losing a mail bag, but I was relieved to hear some honest person handed it in at the post office in Geraldton.

During the whole of this time, we never had electricity at the Station, only a Tilly lamp and later gas.

Note: Ex-Stationmaster Phil Brakjovich died recently aged 88 on 22 May 2020 in Bellevue, near Midland. He was recorded in an oral history interview by Midland District Historical Society just a fortnight before his death.

FAMOUS IRWINISH WOMEN - THIRD IN THE SERIES -



Isabella Waldeck: Recognition of Nan Broad's story

Nan Broad's story on the remarkable Isabella Waldeck of Bonniefield that appeared in the last (summer) issue of *The Sea Lion* has been picked up by the Royal Western Australian Historical Society, and will be published shortly, in an abridged form, in the RWAHS newsletter, *HistoryWest*.

Congratulations to Nan, it is heartening to see that inspirational stories from our past are widely appreciated on a bigger stage, especially

when those stories come from our conscious efforts to write women back into Irwin's history.



Herstories

Anne Jefferys

In the patriarchal society of nineteenth century Western Australia it is difficult to find the names of women who may have contributed to the state other than as child bearing machines. Even at times that very feminine and female occupation was sometimes anonymous. Notices in the *West Australian* advised readers Mrs John Smith had given birth to a son maintaining that anonymity.

Historians who wrote the early histories of the State rarely mentioned women. The relative invisibility of women in past times in WA has been largely due to the fact that most historians were male who concentrated on the state's importance, its development and economic prosperity. Kimberley, Crowley and Battye were influenced by the society in which they lived. Men governed, judged, preached and explored. Men attended levées at Government House, and filled long lists in the *Government Gazette* of the day as testament to their 'greatness'.

In many cases where a woman is mentioned, it is in the last line of a biography: "Mr Charles Glasebrook Morris who married 'Guiliva, daughter of Mr G Bertoli of Lake Marmal, Victoria", is an example used by Battye. Another is Emma Withnell "mother of the north west" who shared her husband's hardships while establishing a station in the Pilbara, and shares this fact through her husband's biography, not her own.

It would seem the perpetuation of the invisibility of women in WA history is existent in the education curriculum. How many students are able to name a dozen women who contributed in some way to the history of the state. In 1979 the book *Reflections* was published documenting the lives of 150 women who had contributed to the state. Several women's organisations such as the Country Womens' Association, Girls Friendly Society, Girl Guides and the National Council of Women have all at some time documented their history.

The story of women in Dongara and Irwin mirrors the rest of the state. Little is known of the wives of the leading men of the district, Mrs Francis Pearse, Mrs SF Moore, Mrs EW Clarkson. Dongara residents may be familiar with the names of these men, but what of their wives? An obituary published in the *West Australian* on 8 November 1919 listed Mr Pearse as 'having married Miss Snook'; (her name was Emma). EW Clarkson married Sarah Ann Grant and SF Moore married Eliza Mary Johnstone. All three women, as well as having 25 children between them, were active in the district, laying foundation stones, running Sunday schools and being help-meets to their busy husbands all of whom served as directors of the Irwin Road Board. Mrs Moore had the added sadness of losing a son, Reginald Johnston Moore at The Nek, Gallipoli on 7 August 1915. Little is known of the lives of these women or their personalities, although they must have been pretty resilient to cope with child bearing, privation, heat and the wind!



Mrs Eliza Moore, née Johnstone, in 1871
IRME2498

Lesser women, that is wives of ticket of leave men fared even worse. Ellen Hunt was born in England in 1846 and the daughter of a pensioner guard. She married George Booth, convict number 768, in Geraldton in 1861. George and Ellen farmed on 100 acres, tillage lease no 5010; six children were born of the marriage, George drowning at Irwin in unknown circumstances. Ellen was left with this large family to support, the eldest child was just 8 years of age. From accounts in police occurrence books, the police called regularly on Mrs Booth during those years of widowhood. Ellen managed the farm until John Webley, convict number 9344 came calling; and they married in 1876, Ellen having 10 more children. The family lived at Shady Grove Strawberry, until Ellen's death on 1 June 1889,



aged just 45, possibly worn out from child bearing.

Ellen's sister Elizabeth Hunt married Mark Kail Fripp in 1859. It was quite common for daughters of pensioner guards to marry ticket of leave men, as they generally lived nearby. Elizabeth and Mark had nine children over a period of several years. Life was hard. Mark was not a successful farmer and in the late 1870s became a carter in Dongara. In 1887 their house burnt down and later that year Mark was kicked by a horse and died from injuries. To maintain the family's finances Elizabeth moved the family to Geraldton, where she ran the Emerald Boarding House, then the Swansea Guest House. In 1902 Elizabeth moved to Perth where she died in 1928.

So, we know a little of these women, but what colour was their hair, were they sweet tempered, did they resent the constant pregnancies? The minutiae of their lives has been lost to history.

The wives of free settlers fared little better. Mary Cardwell the second wife of William, a sometime labourer employed by the Irwin Road Board, was the widow of Frederick Joseph Brady. She was the daughter of William and Ellen Dee, and married Brady in 1876 in Dongara. Four children were born before Brady died in 1886.

William Cardwell's first wife was also Mary who had died in 1884. Mary Brady and William Cardwell were married in 1888. Four more children were born of the union, including twins, both of whom died soon after birth in 1894. The following year Mary was declared a lunatic and admitted to Fremantle Lunatic Asylum on the advice of Dr George Hill Bartlett. Whether or not Mary was a lunatic is debatable. Most likely she was suffering from post-natal depression, a condition which has only been recognised in recent times. She walked out of the asylum and returned to Dongara, living until 1921. William died at the Mt Eliza Depot for Old Men on 30 August 1896 of heart disease.

A few women attracted entries into police occurrence books. Such was the case of Charlotte Brown at Yandanooka in 1899. Charlotte was a servant at the home of Mr Lee Steere when the body of an infant child was discovered in Charlotte's bedroom. It seems

the baby was born without help, but died. Not knowing what to do Charlotte placed the newborn's body in a box where it was found a day or two later. The police were called and Charlotte arrested. An inquest was held, the funeral for the child conducted at Dongara cemetery. Charlotte was committed for trial but discharged a month later. In all of this drama, there was never any mention of a Mr Brown.

Women have formed a part of all Western Australian social groups since 1829. Some were ladies of leisure, some domestic servants. Most of these women have disappeared with the mortal evidence of their existence; some letters and diaries are left, although scant reference can be found in government and newspaper records. But despite the lack of documentary evidence, women had a positive influence on society and the communities in which they lived, and can no longer be left out of our histories.

References

Births, Deaths & Marriages of WA website.
Fremantle prison website
IDHS records
Dongara Police Station Occurrence Books
Trove Newspapers Online

Women to be featured in future 'Famous Irwinish Women' include Mignon Trevor, opera singer, and Helena King, Australian plants advocate.

NATURAL HISTORY



Beekopers Reserve: Past and Future *Bruce Baskerville in 1985*

This series looks back a generation to the mid 1980s, and reprints articles from the *Dongara Denison News* or *Rag* (the title varies at this time) that still have resonances today. This is the second in the series.

When Is A Reserve Not A Reserve?

by Bruce Baskerville, originally published in the *Dongara Denison Rag* on 17 October 1985.

Reserve number 24496 is a large area of about 70,000ha that stretches along the coast from Denison Airport southwards to near Green Head. It is generally known as Beekopers Reserve, and about one third if it is within the Shire of Irwin.

24496 has three. Main types of plant communities. In the Denison to Cliff Head area, the dunes are either bare, or covered mainly by wattles and melaleucas. The Cliff Head to Freshwater area is covered by Dongara Mallee (or Cliff Head Gum), and is the only Mallee formation outside the south-east of the state. Southwards to the shire boundary, the sandplains are covered by various Banksias, Dryandras, Grevilleas and Eucalypts, such as the Illyarrie.

From the airport, the reserve follows the sand hills along the coast in a narrow section until it crosses the Coast Road [now Indian Ocean Drive]. This is its narrowest point, being only just over one kilometre wide.



The Coast Road, southwards near Cliff Head, through wattle thicket, 1986 | Photo Bruce Baskerville

From here the reserve widens considerably as it passes over the sandplains between the coastal dunes and the Arrowsmith River before reaching the shire boundary. There are two gaps in the reserve in this southern section. About 4,800ha along the coast from just north of Freshwater Bay south to Gum Tree Bay are excluded, and a large rectangular section of about 1,200ha of sandplain south of Arrowsmith Siding is also excluded. The Cliff Head settlements are within the reserve, while the Freshwater and Knobby Head settlements are not. The Eneabba Railway Line enters and leaves the eastern boundary of the reserve a number of times, and the Coast Road passes through the narrowest section of the reserve for about nine kilometres.

The reserve is known unofficially as Beekeepers Reserve because a Beekeepers Advisory Committee has some authority to manage it, and Beekeepers are licenced to locate hives in the reserve. The reserve was declared in 1956 for the Protection of Flora, and this is still its official purpose. JS Beard, the author of a 1976 survey of vegetation in the

Dongara area, states that the reserve was created simply because it was totally unsuited to agriculture, and not out of any intrinsic concern for the plants of the area. It would seem that since well before 1956, the reserve has been used for many different purposes, although none of them seem to have involved active conservation or protection of the plants and animals living within it.

In 1976, the Environmental Protection Authority issued its System 5 report. System 5 covers the Northern Sandplains, including the Shire of Irwin. This report continued the ambiguous attitude shown towards the reserve by blandly recommending that the purpose of the reserve is changed to “Apiculture (beekeeping) and the Protection of Flora, and the matter of vesting and control be resolved on an administrative basis.” In 1982 the EPA issued another report on the status of the System 5 recommendations. An agreement had been reached between the EPA and the Under-Secretary for Mines stating that “...conservation reserves should be open to responsible mineral exploration, with any discovery being the subject of an Environmental Review and Management Programme (ERMP), Mineral exploration to be subject to conditions agreed upon between the EPA and the Under-Secretary for Mines in consultation with the concerned (Local) Authority...”. In other words, public servants will decide whether or not exploration and mining will be carried out in Nature Reserves, with the closest thing to any public participation being through “consultation” with the local council. In view of this, the report notes that some areas of 24496 “...have high potential for gas and some potential for oil, coal, limestone and lime sand. Mineral exploration conditions will be those agreed to by the Under-Secretary for Mines...”. There is no mention of protecting the plants and animals living in the reserve supposedly set aside for that purpose.

This reserve is by far the largest in the shire (about 23,000 ha), and the few other reserves (total about 2,000 ha) are tiny in comparison. Despite its official purpose being the protection of local trees and plants, the reserve has been used for many purposes other than that. Roads and a railway line intersect the reserve with little regard to the plant life – e.g. the unique Dongara Mallee ‘forest’ has been cut by the Brand Highway, Coast Road and the

railway line. Beekeeping continues even though there is increasing debate over the effects of these feral bees on our local Australian bees and plants. And now, mineral exploration and mining will be allowed in the reserve with more roads and tracks through the bush, and more disruption of wildlife and plant communities, in an area supposedly ‘reserved’ for their protection.



*Old gypsum mine, east of Cliff Head, with
Dongara Mallee woodland in background,
June 1986 | Photo Bruce Baskerville*

This reserve belongs to everyone – the “public”, and as such needs to be properly managed on our behalf for the protection of its wildlife inhabitants. This area is also reserved for future generations so that they will always be able to enjoy the bushland that so many people now take for granted. As a part-owner of the public reserves in this area, it is your right to insist that short-term financial considerations do not over-ride the needs of future generations and their environment.

Below this story, the editor back in 1985 added the following rejoinder:

Beware!!! Now that the warm weather is here, the snakes are out and about and are particularly venomous.



PRACTICE



Metadata: How To Retain Information In Your Digital Images

Graham Grundy

You may recall a couple of years ago the Government proposed to monitor your Internet access using ‘metadata’ and when questioned most politicians had no idea what that actually meant.

Simply metadata is *the data that tells you about the data* and usually hidden from the user. For example, when information is downloaded to your computer over the Internet each package of information contains routing data, where it came from and where it’s going to.

Your image files also contain metadata and if the image is taken on a smart phone it is quite extensive, but the good news is you can add your own information. Image metadata is now called Exif.

Here’s an example of image Exif (Exchangeable Information File) from a smartphone.

Exif Metadata:

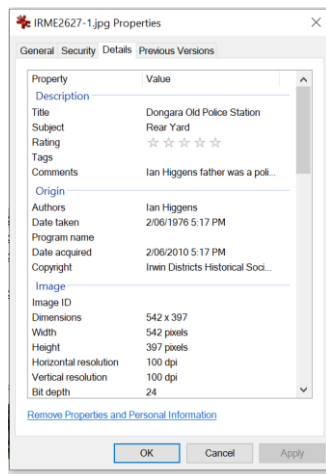
Image Width: 4032 pixels
Image Height: 3024 pixels
Number of Components: 3
Component 1: Y component, Quantization table 1, Sampling factors 1 horizontal 1 vertical
Version: 1.1
X Resolution: 72 dots
Thumbnail Width Pixels: 0
Image Width: 4032 pixels
Description: Vietnam
Model: N10
Y Resolution: 72 dots per inch
Software: Google
Artist: Graham Grundy
Copyright: Graham Grundy
Comment: The famous gorges
Subject: Holiday
Exposure Time: 1/2500 sec
Exposure Program: Program normal
Exif Version: 2.20
Digital Date: 2018:11:18 13:52:43
Shutter Speed Value: 1/2500 sec
Brightness Value: 5.42
ISO-Aperture Value: 11.5
White Balance: Unknown
Focal Length: 4.2 mm
Sub-Sec Time Original: 214477
Unknown tag (0x0000): "Pano", "Long", "Short", "Normal", "Wide"
Color Space: sRGB
Exif Image Height: 3024 pixels
Scene Type: Directly photographed image
White Balance Mode: Auto white balance
Scene Capture Type: Standard
Interoperability Version: 1.00
GPS Latitude: 10° 51' 52.11"
GPS Longitude: 107° 11' 14.80"
GPS Altitude: 15.04 meters
GPS Processing Method: GPS
XMP Value Check: 0
Detected File Type Name: JPEG
Detected MIME Type: image/jpeg
File Name: HCB0100.jpg
Modified: Thu Jun 04 11:46:22 +0800 2020

Data Precision: 8 bits
Image Width: 4032 pixels
Component 1: Y component, Quantization table 1, Sampling factors 1 horizontal 1 vertical
Component 2: Cb component, Quantization table 1, Sampling factors 1 horizontal 1 vertical
Resolution Unit: inch
X Resolution: 72 dots
Thumbnail Width Pixels: 0
Image Height: 3024 pixels
Model: N10m
Y Resolution: 72 dots per inch
Resolution Unit: inch
Date Time: 2018:11:18 14:12:14
YCbCr Positioning: Center of pixel array
Title: Vietnam
Author: Graham Grundy
Rating: 2020 (value)
F-Number: F1.8
ISO Speed Ratings: 100
Image Date: 2018:11:18 13:52:43
Component Configuration: YCbCr
Aperture Value: F1.8
Exposure Bias Value: 0 EV
Metering Mode: Center weighted average
Flash: Flash did not fire
Sub-Sec Time: 214477
Sub-Sec Time Original: 214477
FlashPix Version: 1.00
Exif Image Width: 4032 pixels
Sampling Method: Not defined
Exposure Mode: Auto exposure
Focal Length: 39.21 mm
Rating: 2020 (value)
GPS Latitude Ref: N
GPS Longitude Ref: E
GPS Altitude Ref: Sea level
GPS Time Stamp: 08:52:55.000 UTC
GPS Date Stamp: 2018:11:18
Number of Tables: 4 Huffman tables
Detected File Type Name: jpeg
Detected File Name Extension: .jpg
File Size: 1105601 bytes

Most of the Society’s images are scanned copies of originals, the metadata is not nearly as extensive, but you can record your important information, such as title, description, date taken and copyright. If you are old enough, you can remember writing on the back of a photo, and this is exactly the same in the digital age, and just like the backing note it stays with the photo.



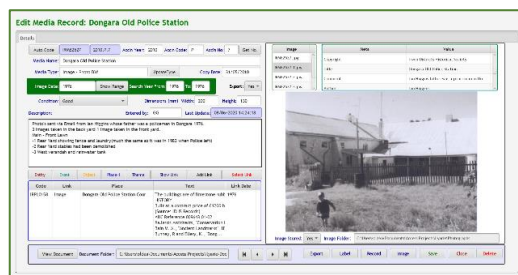
To record your photo metadata (Windows) simply right click the image file, select Properties and go to the Details tab, where you can type in the information and then click Apply.



Editing in Windows

For Mac, choose a photo, the right view will display all photo metadata, then Click the Edit Exif Data button.

The Society's database has been upgraded to show image metadata, so it can be verified against the database record.



The Society is currently rescanning its collection to meet national standards and adding metadata, if you would like to assist with this project please contact the Museum.



The Kitchen Fridge: conservation of a 1950s domestic machine

Bruce Baskerville

Many of you will have noticed the old fridge in the museum kitchen, and perhaps thought it has seen better days. Indeed it has. But the fridge still works, and needs some TLC. Research reveals it is a Kelvinator Magic Cycle, made in 1955, when its big feature was automatic self-defrosting. It was the top of the

range model and retailed for £255 (\$8,900 in 2020 values). Today it is suffering from decaying door seals, some missing shelves, corrosion of the exterior cabinet and other problems.



*Australian Women's Weekly,
7 September 1955*

The fridge when new, and below in its current condition.



The kitchen is maintained as a 1950s/60s domestic kitchen in a police residence, the only such example in WA, and the fridge is integral to telling that story. Therefore, we are currently having a professional report prepared by museum conservator and metals specialist Vanessa Wiggin for expert conservation works, and hope to soon have the old fridge back in good working order. Then, there's the gas stove ...



Object photography *Julie Nunn*

Julie Nunn describes the process for photographing the objects in the museum collections.

Objects to be photographed are checked with the IROB Number list attached to each of the storage boxes, which are kept in the cells. The objects are then photographed individually or grouped, or as a series depending on the number of items attached to that object number.

Once decided, the object(s) are set up with the IROB numbered tag in a light box (pictured) and photographed with an iPhone. The background colour in the light box can be varied depending on the colour of the object being photographed - red, white, dark blue and black - to give definition and contrast.

Once the items in each box are photographed the photos are edited (at home) on an iPad. The photos that were originally taken on the iPhone at the Museum are automatically transferred onto the iPad as soon as compatible wifi connection is made. The original photos are edited and duplicated. The duplicate has the IROB Number added with the iPad editing tool and saved. Both photos are then emailed to the IDHS website and saved for future reference.

The photos below show examples of these steps.

BELOW: Light box example. Betty Armstrong's Liquor Carriage ready for photographing, in lightbox on red background - sadly minus any liquor!



TOP RIGHT: 1929 WA Centenary Hand Painted Fan from the Criddle Collection. Not yet duplicated and without the IROB Number added to the image.



BELOW: Fan made from black ostrich feathers. Tortoise shell handle. Duplicate photo with the IROB Number added at top, original photo at bottom.



BELOW: Christening outfit. White Broderick Anglaise Jacket with Knitted White Bonnet, showing original photo, and duplicate photo with photo number added.



RIGHT: Porcelain and Fabric Doll, using dark blue background for contrast. Original photo at top, and duplicate photo with the IROB number added at bottom.





Digital Data Access – Recording the Past *Graham Grundy*

With so many ongoing projects and public inquiries to respond to, data accessibility is a key factor in providing the information needed. Since 1992, the IDHS has been building a database of information but ours is different to many museum-based systems which are primarily collection management software which cater principally for object or image recording.

The development of regional museums in Western Australia began in the 1960s and 70s when Historical Societies moved from research into collecting organisations which needed display space for their collections. Typically, IDHS started in 1964 doing research and publishing, but then renovated Russ Cottage as a house museum in 1971, and that's when the objects and photos were donated in large numbers. With no digital technology, donations were recorded in a ledger, but since everybody knew everybody else, some details were omitted, simply because it was considered common knowledge.



The Dent Organ | IROB0202

Thinking about objects in our museum, let's take a simple example from the IDHS collection, the pedal organ. There are probably hundreds if not thousands around the world, so why do we need to keep one in Dongara? The short answer is because we know its history, or to use the technical term it's provenance. Recording the organ as an object in the database is a digital version of the original



ledger, a good start but it's not enough to tell the story.

To do that, the software for small a small museum should be designed to add the provenance, who owned or used it, where was it used, the photos of the people and even their family history needs to be recorded to give meaning to the object.

Of course, not all objects can be fully documented, but wherever possible it should be.

By adding the object's provenance, you start creating a database of history, not just a list of objects. Recording provenance has other advantages too, you have the ability to look at things from a different perspective, for example you can search for a person and find all the objects and images in the collection associated with that person, or look at a place and find all the people who owned or lived at the place, objects associated with it and images of that place.



Sophia Dent-Ellery-Mitchell, c1895
IRME1205

And the pedal organ story? It was brought to Western Australia in 1829, and was here on 1st September 1829, the day that the first European child, Sophia Dent was born on the beach at Fremantle. The organ belonged to her parents, Thomas and Elizabeth Dent.

Sophia married two times, inherited the organ and later was Postmistress at Irwin. She is buried in the Dongara cemetery.

FROM THE ARCHIVES



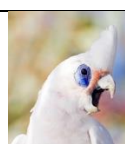
Police Station Residence and Cells, 1976



The back yard of Dongara Police Station in 1976, police residence to left (south wing), police offices and cells on right (west wing), and bathroom and wash house in central lean-to.

IMRE 2627-2

THE CAVORTING CORELLA



Battleship ahoy

While lazily drifting around near the bridge to Denison the cavorter spied something silently morphing in old Dongara town.

She swooped down and flew all around, inspecting it with a beady eye. The black swan on its prow she's been secretly admiring for years, especially as it has been clothed in white, just like her. But now, that old vessel marooned on the corner was changing colour. Little bit by little bit, peeling old ivory was transforming into naval bluish grey. What's happening, she wondered?

TEST YOUR LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

WHERE IS THIS?



Do you know where this is? Autumn 2020 Quiz

Summer 2019-2020 Question: Where and what was the sign?

Answer: Blue Wave was a fishermen's co-operative established as Cray Boats Co-op then renamed Blue Wave Fisheries Co-op in 1985 before being wound up in 1992. The sign shown in the quiz was formerly located on the Blue Wave jetty at Cervantes, where three fisher co-ops each had separate jetties and depots. The sign is now in the collections of Cervantes Historical Society, and can be seen

in the fishing exhibition in their museum at 18 Cadiz Street, Cervantes.

Autumn 2020 Quiz:

The picture below shows something restored in the 1980s, and now the only surviving one of its kind in Dongara – what and where is it?



See the next issue of *The Sea Lion* to find out.

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.



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.

[Notice]



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Will be held at the Irwin District Museum
On Thursday 24 September 2020
(Pending Covid 19 advice)

[Notice]



Museum Opening Times

Russ Cottage

cnr St Dominic's Road & Point Leander Drive
Monday/Wednesday/Friday
10am - 12 noon
Entrance by donation

Irwin Districts Museum & Research Centre

Old Police Station, 5 Waldeck Street
Monday to Saturday
10am – 12 noon
Entrance by donation

"Maintaining the identity of the Irwin District"



The Irwin Districts Historical Society Inc., Office Holders for 2019/2020

Patron

Mr John Fitzhardinge

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Graham Grundy

Deputy Chair

Bob Cail

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Secretary

Bruce Baskerville

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Shirley Scotter

Nan Broad

Julie Nunn

Joy Heitman

John Rossitor

Jean Amos

Collections Curator

Shirley Scotter (Trish Parker *pro tem*)

Keeper of the Museums

Julie Nunn

Database & Website Manager

Graham Grundy

The Sea Lion Editor

Bruce Baskerville

Membership subscriptions, 2020/21

Associate \$0, Individual \$0, Household \$0,
Corporate \$0.

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Registrations

- WA Incorporated Association A0690104G, registered 19 March 1970
- Australian Business Number (ABN) 88 965 371 802, registered 29 May 2000
- ACNC Registered Charity, same ABN, registered 3 December 2010

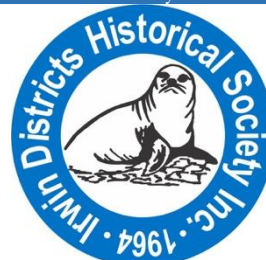
Affiliations



Honours

Irwin District Museum: Winner, Irwin Shire 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



- I. To Encourage the study and writing of the history of the Irwin Districts.
- II. To maintain the identity of the Irwin Districts by preservation and restoration of buildings and settings of historical significance.
- III. To encourage the use of sympathetic architectural patterns when new buildings are constructed.
- IV. To discourage the disfigurement of premises, streets and open places by unsightly and inappropriate advertisements, poles, wires and unseemly structures.
- V. To encourage the conservation of aspects of the natural environment as it affects the character of the Shire of Irwin.
- VI. To collect, classify and preserve records and objects relating to the history of the Irwin Districts. Records may include physical and digital records.
- VII. 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.
- VIII. To exchange information among members of the Society, by lectures, readings, discussions and public exhibitions of historical materials.
- IX. To promote public interest in and support for the preservation of historical relics, including buildings and sites, the recognition of notable anniversaries in Irwin Districts' and Western Australian history, and the erection of memorials to outstanding persons and events.
- X. The founding, subsidising or contributing to scholarships or prizes to promote this object
- XI. To establish and maintain a library, reading room, historical museum and Web presence.
- XII. To join with other associations having similar objectives to pursue common aims.
- XIII. To recognise and honour achievement in advancing these objectives or for outstanding contribution to the study and writing of Irwin Districts and other histories.

Boat Building on the Swan River, 1949



This picture was taken by professional photographer Alan Gough, adjacent to a boatbuilder's slip near the Coode Street Jetty in South Perth. The original caption identifies the car on the left as a Vauxhall Wyvern, loaned by Attwood Motors for the photo shoot, but says nothing more about the boat or its builder. Gough made numerous attempts over four dawns to capture this perfect autumn morning.

*Image from cover of 'Road Patrol', January 1950
Courtesy Royal Automobile Club of WA*