

# Autumn 2002 Newsletter

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## MORE 'HISTORY MYSTERIES ON THE TRAIL'

Last year MHHS ran a pilot 'History Mysteries on the Trail' project at Parkerville School with the support of the Department of Training. It received a fantastic response from the staff, students and parents of the school as well as the members of the public who participated.

A recent substantial grant from the Office of Multicultural Interests will now allow us to extend the project to Glen Forrest, Mount Helena and Darlington primary schools.

Experienced teacher and qualified tour guide, Tricia Rawlings, has been contracted to work with students from the extension programmes of the three schools.

The students will investigate the histories of their localities and lead groups of adult walkers on interpretive tours encompassing key heritage sites in their respective villages.

The Hills Community Support Group's 'Getaway Club' will supply the walkers and funds allocated from the Shire of Mundaring's programs grant to the Society will assist in covering the cost of interpretation materials.

The benefits from the project are very diverse. Younger and older persons gain insights into the history of the region. Just as importantly, it provides a very effective means of promoting understanding between age groups in the community and promoting a positive image of ageing. (The walks also help keep everyone fit too, of course!)

**Shelley Bertola, President**

### **Welcome To New Members:**

Lyla Elliott, Jack White & Mona Andreou

## MONTHLY MEETINGS

Held at the Glen Forrest Station Master's House, cnr.  
Railway Tce and Burkinshaw Rd

**Wednesday 6 March** at 7.30 p.m.

Followed by Guest Speaker, **Bill Walker** at 8 p.m. –  
**The Maritime History of North-Western  
Australia. 1863 to 1914.**

**Wednesday 3 April** at 7.30 p.m.

Followed by Guest Speaker, **George Crafter** at 8 p.m.  
– **The Postal History of the Mundaring  
Region.**

**Sunday 19 May** at 3 p.m.

Followed by Guest Speaker, **Graham Millar** at 3.30  
p.m. – **The Military History of the Mundaring  
Region.**

**Light refreshments provided. Members and non-  
members welcome**

## Membership Subscriptions

I wish to become a member/ renew my membership.

Fees (inc. GST)

- ❖ Senior/ pensioner - \$12
- ❖ Senior/ pensioner - couple - \$18
- ❖ Single - \$22
- ❖ Couple - \$28
- ❖ Company/ institution - \$30

Return to Treasurer, Jane Bullock, MHHS, PO Box  
334, Mundaring WA 6073 or drop to Mundaring  
District Museum

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## CARING FOR THE COLLECTION

The Society gratefully accepts donations of objects and photos from the public related to life in the region.

We take our responsibility seriously to care for and display these donations appropriately within the limits of our resources.

To assist these efforts, we have submitted an application to the Lotteries Commission's 'Community Cultural Grants' program for the following items.

These include:

- A new computer to manage our photograph collection and run advanced graphics applications.
- Steel shelving and archival quality boxes for collection storage.
- Fire resistant lockable cabinet to store high value collection items.
- Portable display system.

## ON-LINE INFORMATION

Thanks to Karin Hoffmann, Derek Harper and Bill Day for undertaking maintenance on our existing computer and for getting us on-line.

Our e-mail address, for those who wish to contact us is [mhhs@iinet.net.au](mailto:mhhs@iinet.net.au)

We can now focus on developing our own website.

Here are a few other interesting websites you may wish to visit:

Birth Certificates Of the Nation - The most significant constitutional documents in the National Archives of Australia - ([www.foundingdocs.gov.au](http://www.foundingdocs.gov.au))

Darlington Village in Western Australia - A virtual tour of the village, including aspects of its history - ([www.users.bigpond.com/THOMASPWJA](http://www.users.bigpond.com/THOMASPWJA))

Florabase - Dept of Conservation and Land Management's collection of information and images on WA's unique flora. - ([www.florabase.calm.gov.au](http://www.florabase.calm.gov.au))

## WINTER MEETING TIMES

Dark, wet winter nights are not attractive to venture into. With this in mind, we have decided to experiment with our meeting times.

The May, June and July General meetings will be held instead on the third Sunday of these months, beginning at 3 p.m.

## MUSEM DISPLAYS

A display on the major heritage sites of Glen Forrest village can be viewed at Mundaring District Museum until the end of April.

The display will be transferred to Glen Forrest Primary School for one day only (9<sup>th</sup> April) to support their 'Celebration of Seniors Day'.

The sites lend themselves well to being linked as a trail and the Society will cooperate with the Mundaring Tourism Association to build on this potential.

A selection of George Crafter's extensive collection of postal memorabilia from the region will also be on display during the last three weeks of April.

## 'HARMONY DAY' GRANT

At the time of going to press, we have just been awarded a second grant by the Office of Multicultural Interests.

The funding will support a 'Multicultural Morning Tea' at Parkerville Primary School.

MHHS members will go into each classroom paired with migrants from a variety of national backgrounds around the region.

The students will interview their visitors in order to discover some of the positive contributions migrants have made to community life over time.

At the conclusion of the session, students in national costumes and staff will join the visitors for the 'Multicultural Morning Tea'.

## Recent Acquisitions

Recent additions to the collection include:

- ❖ Items from Wells Mundaring General Store (1920's-50's); Women's Land Army trousers (1940's); Mundaring State School concert costume (1920's). Donated by Nelly Wells.
- ❖ Butter making implements (1940's). Donated by Gerard Van Didden.
- ❖ Linen map of WA local government boundaries (1930). Donated by Tim Gregory.
- ❖ Ephemera from the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. Donated by Jan Storer.
- ❖ Photographs of the rediscovery and renovation of Bilgoman Well (1980's). By Ron Mitchell. Photos of Glen Forrest (1950's). Facilitated by Mary Richmond.

## The First Parkerville State School

One of the tasks I perform as a historical archaeologist is writing site assessments for organisations such as the Heritage Council of WA.

Normally this involves researching existing buildings in various states of integrity and condition.

It was while working on the site assessment for the second Parkerville State School (now the 'Brownie Hall' in Riley Rd.), that I discovered correspondence relating to the first State School. This was located at the western end of Spring Street. The site now contains new homes and a number of white poplars. To an observer, it is difficult to believe that a school ever existed there.

Yet, materials in the archives of the State Records Office provide clues as to how the school came to exist and what it looked like. They also provide a good reminder that while men were readily attracted to the Hills in search of an income, the education of the children who sometimes accompanied them was certainly not guaranteed.

The town of Parkerville was first gazetted in 1895, a couple of years after the Eastern Railway had been completed. However, settlers were slow to take up the land in the area until the City of Perth established a granite quarry in the town on the corner of Riley and Clifton Roads.

The quarry attracted a variety of workers to the area and this in turn led to permanent settlers moving into the district establishing farms and orchards.

At first, the only education available for the children of the settlement was at Lion Mill (now Mt. Helena). As Parkerville historian Lyn Beard has pointed out, this was not a very suitable arrangement:

"They had to catch the train daily to Lion Mill. However, as the earliest train did not leave Parkerville until 10:30 a.m. and arrived at Lion Mill at 11 the children did not reach school until nearly lunch time".

For a brief period, the situation was alleviated somewhat by Miss Bertha Towle, who began to offer private tuition for a small weekly fee in a lean-to attached to Nic Scherini's store.

However, the number of families in the area was continuing to expand quite quickly. In November 1897, the manager of the quarry, John Webster was requested by the residents to write to the Education Department asking that they provide a school for Parkerville. He noted that there were at least 40 children within a one-mile radius of the school.

The Department wrote back requesting the residents to clearly identify on the attached form who the children were. Now that the residents had jumped this hurdle, an Inspector came and visited the settlement and Departmental plans were prepared during February 1898.

Another obstacle then arose. The Department found that they had no money to build a new school and wrote back notifying the residents of the problem. "No

problem", the parents said; "You give us £40 and we'll build the school for you." "Done", said the Department, "but you need to provide a rough sketch plan of what you propose to build."

A block of land was identified which was found to have a natural spring, and a committee formed to collect subscriptions from the residents. Members included: John Webster (Chair), George Sexton (Secretary), C. Lee, William Ottey and G. Longmuir.

A design was submitted to the Department. The building was to be 30 x 22 feet, with walls 11 feet high. The walls would be clad with upright boards, 1 inch thick, with lathes over all the seams. Three windows would be placed down one of the long sides and an 8 feet wide lean-to porch was to be placed across the front of the building. The gable roof would be clad with corrugated galvanised iron. The Department found the plan to be adequate. (Some appreciation of the appearance of the building can be obtained from the diagram on the next page.)

Sexton brothers agreed to provide the timber and the residents set to and assisted in the construction of the timber framed building. By the end of December 1898, the residents had completed their school.

Then the quibbling about payments began. The Department sent out their Inspector who valued the building at £65. "Ah" said the Department, "if it had been valued at £80 we could have given you the total of £40, but as it is.....£32 should be sufficient."

As one can imagine, the residents were a bit upset about this and Sexton brothers in particular as they had supplied all the materials. The brothers argued that the building had been under-valued and its real value was £87 10s. 9p. The Department finally relented and gave the full £40 to Sexton brothers. With a collective sigh of relief, the building was officially opened on the 27 January 1899.

Fiona Bush



Miss Bertha Towle, the first teacher at the first State School

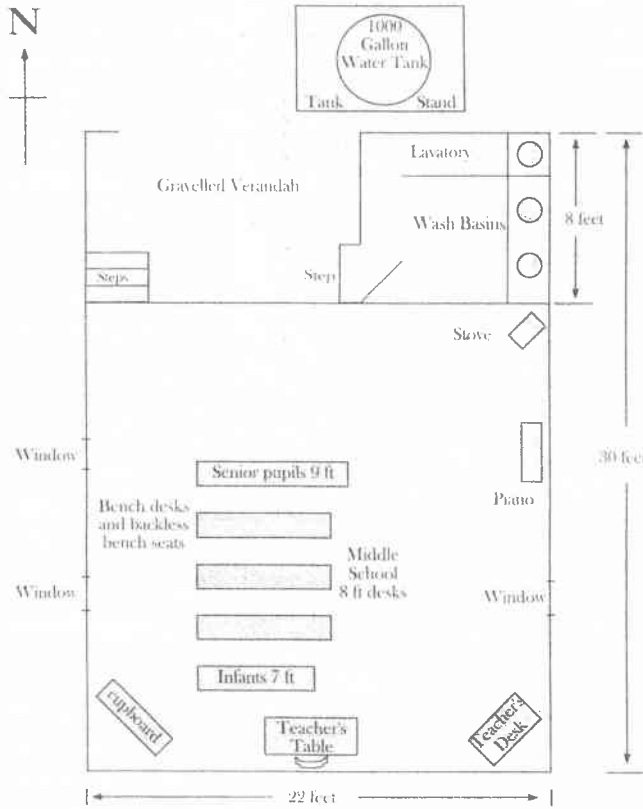
*Image courtesy Lyn Beard/ Jim Hain (MHHS collection)*

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## The First Parkerville State School

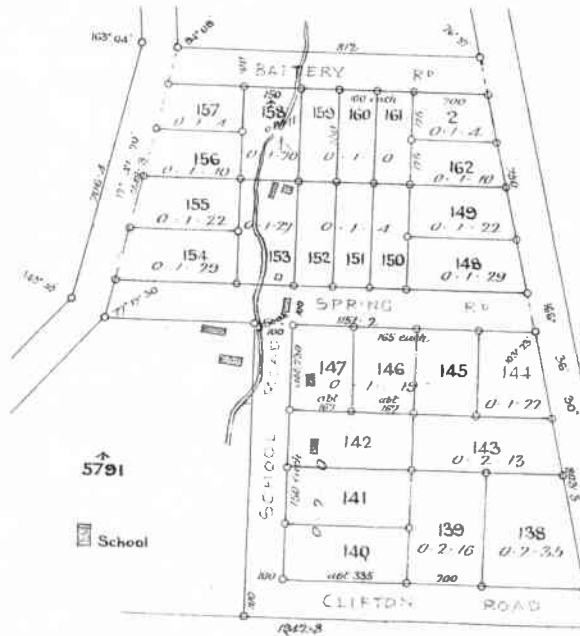
Plan of the school submitted to the Education Department August 11<sup>th</sup> 1904  
when a second window of the East wall was applied for.

(Image courtesy Lyn Beard/Jim Hain)



Enrolment 26 pupils in 1904

### Location of first school (Site map courtesy DOLA)



## Snippets

### Natural Heritage Project

Discussions have been held with Janette Huston, Eastern Hills Catchment Management Project Education Officer, to develop a school based natural heritage project for the Shire's Centenary Year, 2003. The Society will assist Janette in encouraging schools to work with Friends Groups, Catchment Groups and older residents. The students will look at significant areas of bushland and watercourses near their schools, the changes that have occurred over time and why these have occurred.

### Student Work Experience

Where possible, we try to provide 'real world' opportunities for young students to develop their skills. Thanks to Matthew Beaton for the great job you did with our new brochure!

### Floral Emblem

The Shire's Centennial Committee has accepted the joint Wildflower Society/ Historical Society suggestion of *Gastrolobium villosum* ('Crinkle Leaf Poison') as the floral emblem for that year. This attractive plant has had major historical and environmental significance in our region. Its story will be featured in our next newsletter.

### Information Services

The regular supplying of historical information to individuals, community groups, businesses and government agencies is one of our many services.

A good recent example was where Maureen Tie researched and compiled a list of suggested faction/house names for Mundaring Christian School, at their request.

We have now acquired the Geographic Names Database for the Shire of Mundaring region from DOLA. It covers the origins of names of streets, reserves and natural features, and should be a very useful tool in the future.

### Rose Garden Plaque

The Society planted two 'Peace' roses in the Mundaring War Memorial rose garden during 1995, which was 'The Year Australia Remembers'. Subsidies from the Eastern Hills Sub-Branch of the RSL and MHHS member, Marj Holmwood, have now allowed us to purchase a brass plaque mounted on a granite plinth as a further tangible reminder of that milestone. Thank you to Charles Wynton (a WW2 veteran and MHHS member) for installing the plinth between the roses.

### Revised Strategic Plan

Brian Marshall, our Museum Coordinator, has been hard at work revising the Society's Strategic Plan, which was originally produced in 1999. All our volunteers deserve a pat on the back for the level of progress we have made in meeting the objectives of the plan.

### Heart of the Hills Festival

MHHS will be staffing a historical display at this event, which is coordinated by the Mundaring Arts Centre. It will be held on Saturday, 6<sup>th</sup> April. If you visit the festival, please stop and have a chat.

### Bilgoman Well Talk

It was standing room only at February guest speaker, Ron Mitchell's, talk on the rediscovery of Bilgoman Well. It was pleasing to see representatives of the W.A. Convict Society in the audience on the night.

### No. 1 Pump Station

Yes, the old steam pump station at Mundaring Weir has been reopened while redevelopment work is being done. It is open on Sundays from 12 - 5 p.m.

### Congratulations

The 2001 Chidlow Show was the worthy winner of the Shire's 'Community Event of the Year Award'. Chidlow Progress Association and MHHS member Ruth McCole produced a display on Chidlow's history which attracted a great deal of interest on the day.



## Can You Help?

### Office/ Administration

An extra person with basic word processing skills to help around the office would be smiled upon.

### Writers

Like to try your hand at writing anything from a longer article for the Mundaring Magazine to a 1-2 sentence snippet for the Hills Gazette's 'Did You Know' column? We attempt to get all suitable contributions published.

### Interviewers

MHHS has a number of subsidised places available at an oral history workshop to be held at Joondalup Library on Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup> April. The number of places is limited, so early expressions of interest are recommended. In return for the subsidy, those who attend will be asked to perform a certain amount of interviewing of subjects in our area.

### Attendants

We have a dedicated group of museum attendants who are rostered on 1 to 2 mornings per fortnight. However, like the rest of us, they go on holidays, become ill, etc. from time to time.

For this reason we like to keep as broad a pool of volunteers as possible. If you are interested in working as an attendant, either on a regular or relief basis, please contact the Museum Coordinator, Brian Marshall, on 9298 8944.

The most important qualification for the job is not an encyclopaedic knowledge of the Shire of Mundaring - (Most enquiries have to be referred for research) - it is simply being comfortable having a chat with visitors.

## *Volunteer Profile*

### **Meg Lowe**



Meg showing old-fashioned toys to a young visitor at Mundaring District Museum

Meg Lowe was raised in the Golfields and went on to a long teaching career, much of it in remote areas, such as Big Bell and Winchester.

Her natural empathy with very young children and cheerful personality now combine to make her an indispensable part of the MHHS team who undertake school visits.

Meg also fills the attendant position for the Saturday morning shift at Mundaring District Museum.

She has a wealth of anecdotes relating to the Darlington area, where she has lived for around the last 30 years. Her recollections of life in the Goldfields (in many ways the 'sister' region of Perth's Eastern Hills) are also fascinating for visitors to hear.

Among her other interests, she is a member of the Hills Community Support Group's 'Getaway Club' and regularly attends the 'School for Seniors' in Mundaring.

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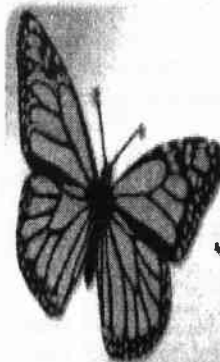
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