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Newsletter



From the President Christine Yeats



There is no question that the past two years have been difficult for each and every one of us, affecting our lives in ways we could never have imagined.

The same is also true of the more than 1000 historical societies, family history groups, keeping places, and community heritage groups across Australia.

They too have faced the challenges imposed by COVID lockdowns and very real threats and damage from fire and floods.

We are only too aware that many are still recovering from the impact of these challenges. History matters and we are looking at ways that we can work in partnership with our members across the country to assist in ensuring a positive future for Australia's historical societies in the post-COVID world.

To this end the FAHS will continue to honour its commitment to communicate with government and public officials to inform them about issues affecting historical societies and museums, and to advocate the interests of historical societies and museums.

We always welcome your advice on issues and matters of concern to you and your communities. As the incoming President to the FAHS it will be an honour and a privilege to listen to you and to work with you over the coming year,

How History Matters

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Why History Matters: Australia needs it



In 2020 FAHS introduced a new policy of sharing or rostering the collection and editing of its bi-annual Newsletter between its eight constituent organisations.

The first was undertaken by the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, the second by the Royal Historical Society of Queensland and this one by the Royal Western Australian Historical Society.

Specifically, long-term RWAHS and FAHS councillor, and former FAHS President, Dr Helen Henderson AM, initiated and undertook the work to produce this latest publication.

We have also been delighted with the volunteer work of Pauline Hitchins who has undertaken writing, editing and the general design formatting of recent issues of the Newsletter and, of course, until our last issue our former Executive Officer John Davies who meticulously checked everything and undertook distribution.

The theme of this edition of the Newsletter is Why History Matters. Its goals are to

emphasise to historical society members and to demonstrate to all Australians, notably including politicians and government employees at all levels, the immense significance of History in Australian culture, democracy and community wellbeing.

It is hoped this will assist and encourage local organisations and their members to engage in advocacy for History in their various spheres of influence, as well as to promote their ongoing and invaluable work collecting, preserving and disseminating our cultural heritage.

This Newsletter takes the form of a number of thematic chapters that emphasise different aspects of Australian cultural heritage and the practice and value of History. These have been written by people with expertise in those areas, to whom FAHS is deeply grateful.

The themes include such major issues as Indigenous history, law, public history, university education, the training of History teachers, school history, environmental history, heritage tourism, community archives

IMAGE ABOVE:

Subiaco Railway Station, Western Australia (1909).

Artist: John Campbell

Courtesy Royal Western Australian Historical Society.
Accession No. A1937.46

and museums, government museums, family history and genealogy and historical heritage.

There is a concluding brief guide to advocacy for historical societies.

Don Garden

FRONT PAGE IMAGE:

Swan River 50 Miles Up (1834).

Edwin Duncan etcher after artist John William Huggins

Courtesy Royal Western Australian Historical Society.
Accession No. A1938.46

Why Environment Matters in History



Reading the
Landscape
Number 1.

Rural landscape,
Tasmania.

What does this
image illustrate
about the impact
of post-1788 use of
the country and the
damage done to it?

(Image Don
Garden)

There has been debate in recent years about whether Australia's Indigenous people were nomadic hunter-gatherers or lived in a more stationary lifestyle and economy that featured forms of agriculture and aquaculture, and even large 'villages' made up of numerous substantial buildings.¹

This value-laden binary division between hunter-gatherers and sedentary economies is both an unfortunate distortion of how human societies have developed and, more specifically, of the complexity and diversity of Aboriginal society.

Human societies do not generally fit neatly into such categories, and that was certainly the case in Australia where our First Nations people lived and adapted for up to 65,000 years before the cataclysmic impact of Europeans.

Australia stretches from about 10 degrees to 43 degrees south of the equator, from the tropics in the north to cool latitudes in the south, especially in Tasmania.

The Australian climate is in most parts dry to arid, with the vast majority of Australia having an annual average rainfall of less than 600 mm, and only a few places, notably parts of Tasmania and the northern tropical fringe

experience much above 1000 mm. Large areas of the red centre of our ancient continent are worn flat, infertile and are arid or semi-arid desert. The coastal fringe, apart from large stretches in the west, tends to be better watered, have more fertile soils and regions of mountains and forests

Reflecting these environmental realities, Indigenous economies and cultures were quite diverse, varying considerably according to the part of Australia they occupied. Environmental factors shaped people's lives and technology, notably their climate, latitude, available food resources, and access to materials for such things as food, structures, weapons and art.

Our First Nations people, like all humans, both adapted to and were shaped by their physical environment and developed appropriate economies and lifestyles. Some adapted to resource poor and arid regions and were more likely to be largely nomadic, and some inhabited moister and/or cooler regions where a larger range of resources was available which enabled more stationary economies. Even in the latter it is a problematic and unsupported generalisation to infer conditions that enabled very large and

permanent population centres.

The same environmental influence is true of the colonial societies that followed the 1788 invasion by Europeans. The British colonists brought an expectation that they could create a new Britannia that reflected the patterns of economy and culture of their green and pleasant land.

What they found was not so convenient nor so appealing. It was foreign in appearance, its climate generally unfamiliar and challenging and its landscape vast and often unfriendly. Not to mention droughts, floods and bushfires which were to be so much part of life in Australia!

Nevertheless the colonists also survived and prospered by both adapting their expectations to meet environmental realities, and by modifying the environment to meet their needs. They were much more ruthless in pursuing the latter with their exploitative agricultural and other enterprises, and through the introduction of multitudes of alien species. Vast areas of Australia are now cleared and badly degraded, scarcely any of our relatively few rivers have not been dammed or diverted, and aspects of mining have destroyed our landscape and now cloud our future.

Why Environment Matters

Reading the Landscape
Number 2.

Gold Mine, Drake, NSW,
c 1905.

What does this image illustrate about the impact of gold mining on the environment, and what does it suggest more broadly about the consequences of mining?

(Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales [At Work and Play - 06827])



We have the worst national record of extinctions, notably of mammals. As we face the onslaught of climate change, the Australian environment has even less resilience than it did when European colonisation commenced.²

It is important for local historians to recognise why the environment matters in their history as, inevitably, it will have been a major factor in shaping what has taken place. It is very safe for me to postulate that their local industries, economy and lifestyle were, and in non-metropolitan regions still are, a reflection of the local environment.³

What were the environmental elements in your region, and how did they shape the economic activities and your local history and community?

While whales and seals were victims of the earliest environmental exploitation, it was the vast open grasslands that occupied so much of the south-east and south-west of the continent (often created and maintained by Aboriginal burning) that provided the conditions for Australia's first major export industry – wool for the British market. Squatters and other pastoralists expanded over vast areas and it is true that Australia 'rode on the sheep's back' for

several decades. Further away from the coast and in more arid zones beef cattle were better suited to the conditions.

From British arrival the growing of crops was critical, although it took many decades fully to understand Australian soil, seasons and climatic conditions and to adapt agricultural practices. With the rapid rise in population from the middle of the 19th century, the need for agricultural land resulted in various selection and closer settlement schemes that withdrew land from pastoralists and made it available as small farms. Very often, small farmers struggled to eke out a living, especially in the east when low rainfall was further reduced by El Niño droughts.

Irrigation was seen as a solution and from the late 19th century water channels spread across many agricultural zones. In the north, it was less frequently the absence of rain but heat, humidity and cyclones that could make life difficult for those who grew sugar, bananas and other tropical crops.

Australian rural populations are generally sparse because the environmental limitations of our

agrarian industries mean that they require a relatively small workforce. However, service towns were needed and one of the duties of early surveyors was to choose appropriate sites.

Why was a townsite chosen? Environmental factors were important: the site had a supply of potable water, it had materials such as timber, it was on a transport route or was convenient for transport, and it was considered scenic. These were elements in the selection of such places as Bathurst, Hamilton, Richmond (Tasmania) and Northam. Irrigation towns such as Mildura and Renmark were also chosen for more practical reasons, but environmental factors were the determinant.

The pattern tended to be different for mining towns whose sites were of necessity convenient to a mineral resource – and of course these are environmental elements. Mining has had a large demographic impact in our history, attracting immigrants and drawing large numbers of people into the hinterlands to mine gold, tin, lead, silver, bauxite, nickel, iron ore, coal and uranium, among others. This has resulted in the

Why Environment Matters

establishment of scores of towns and villages (many short-lived), including Burra, Castlemaine, Hill End, Charters Towers, Queenstown, Broken Hill, Kalgoorlie, Mount Isa and Mount Tom Price.

Other towns and communities have grown around such diverse 'resource' industries as fishing, timber cutting, dairying, orchards and in mountains and at the seaside for recreational resorts.

Roads and railways gradually extended across the nation to link these communities, but in most of the colonies/states, they radiated from the capital cities. Despite the wide scattering of people into the regions, the nature of the Australian environment and secondary industries, and the personal preferences of a large proportion of the population, have meant that many and then most people were concentrated into the small number of main cities.

Australia quickly became one of the most highly urbanised regions in the world and the sprawling capitals have stretched further and further across the landscape. Consequently, the 'environmental footprint' of the cities has spread far into the country as the cities draw in food, water and other commodities from across their region.

Life and work for most Australians has been suburban, and a significant number of historical societies operate in cities where they record the history and changing nature of their suburbs.

I am sure that members of local historical societies will recognise some of these environmental elements in their history.

Observing and studying your locality will enable you to 'read the landscape' so that you can interpret environmental influences and understand what

HOMES OPENINGS

PERTH

The 1972 range of Display Homes, which included three new designs for W.A., was opened to the public on July 3rd. The three new designs were the Denham, Delphic and Chisholm.

Five homes, including the Delphic, are located South of the River at Wilson, four homes, including the Denham and the Chisholm, are on display North of the River at Dianella and three homes are displayed at Sorrento, 13 miles from Perth on the Coast. Attendance figures were high, with over 4,000 people inspecting the new homes on the opening weekend.

A H & L Group Staff preview was held prior to the official opening at Dianella Centre.



and why environmental changes have taken place.

This will not only provide an enhanced historical understanding but might even motivate your society to work to defend its natural heritage. How much of your native flora and fauna still exists or is threatened? Can you advise your local council about areas that reflect your past and contribute to improved town/city development?

It is good to remember – the environment is not just a platform on which things have happened, it is a factor in shaping what has happened. It matters.

Don Garden

1 - Bruce Pascoe (2014), 'Dark Emu: black seeds: agriculture or accident', Magabala Books; Ian Keen (2021), 'Foragers or Farmers: Dark Emu and the Controversy over Aboriginal Agriculture', Anthropological Forum, DOI:

2 - Some examples of Australian environmental history: Don Garden (2005), 'Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific: an environmental history', ABC-CLIO; William J. Lines (1991), 'Taming the Great South Land', A&R; Tim Low (1999), 'Feral Future: The

Reading the Landscape
Number 3.

Opening of A.V. Jennings
display homes, Perth, July
1972.

What does this image illustrate about the realities and expectations of life for most Australians? How does this relate to the nature of the Australian environment?

(From A.V. Jennings
newsletter, provided by
Jennings family)

Untold Story of Australia's Exotic Invaders, Viking; Eric Rolls (1984), 'They All Ran Wild: The Animals and Plants that Plague Australia', A&R; Tim Low (2003), 'The New Nature: winners and losers in wild Australia', Penguin; Brian Coman (1999), 'Tooth and Nail: the story of the rabbit in Australia', Text Publishing.

3 - These are examples of regional environmental histories: George Seddon (1994), 'Searching for the Snowy: an environmental history', Allen & Unwin; Patricia Crawford & Ian Crawford (2003), 'Contested Country: a history of the Northcliffe area, Western Australia', UWA Press; James Boyce (2008), 'Van Diemen's Land', Black Inc.; Benjamin Wilkie (2020), 'Garriwerd: an environmental history of the Grampians', CSIRO Publishing.

Lake Leschenaultia, WA: Lessons in Salt Salinity

TOP: Lake Leschenaultia, circa 1960 – natural tree regrowth above the beach and recreational area after salinity levels declined following the Lake coming under the control of the Mundaring Road Board in 1948.

BELOW: Lake Leschenaultia, 2003 – The beach, jetty and dam wall with regrowth trees removed to make way for development of the area as a recreational area.

Both looking eastward.

Images: Mundaring and Hills Historical Society.



History helping to understand environmental change

Today large areas of Western Australia's eastern wheatbelt are useless due to high salinity levels in the soil.

Following WW2, numerous British and Australian soldiers were granted land to establish farms. Many of these were unsuccessful as the land was not suitable. By the 1960s thousands of acres of native forest had been cleared to the east of Perth. By the 1970s, soil salinity started to become a problem, making the land useless for farming purposes. Back at the beginning of the 20th century, the Western Australian government was aware of the correlation between tree clearance and salinity levels. Early evidence of salination could be observed in a dam constructed for railway purposes.

Western Australia's Eastern Railway line, which ran between Perth and Kalgoorlie, was completed in 1897. It serviced small communities to the east of Perth, but most importantly the State's eastern goldfields. One of the major problems with this line was a lack of water for operating thirsty steam engines. Numerous dams were constructed along the railway line.

The first lay 47 km to the east of Perth at Chidlow, at a site where several creeks intersected, and by 1899 a dam capable of holding an estimated 118,000,000 gallons (446,678,590.5 litres) of water had been constructed.¹

This dam eventually became a recreational area and is known today as Lake Leschenaultia. It is a popular destination for tourists and residents and is listed on the State's Heritage Register.

During the construction of the Eastern Railway, extensive tree clearing took place. The trees were used for sleepers and fuel. As a result of this clearance, salinity levels in the dam began to rise and by 1909 had reached the point which made the water unsuitable for the steam engines. In an attempt to ameliorate the salinity problem, drainage ditches were dug to try to divert salt water seepage away from the creeks that fed the dam. But salinity levels continued to rise.

The state government was obviously aware of the relationship between land clearance and a rise in salinity as additional land was purchased for the dam's catchment area and a tree planting program implemented to help reduce salinity. Ultimately these efforts

proved fruitless. By 1917, the continued high salinity levels made the water useless for the Railway Department. However, by this time water could be obtained from a pipeline that had been completed in 1903. It ran from the nearby Mundaring Weir out to the goldfields.

The history of the salinity problems experienced at Lake Leschenaultia should have been a red flag to the state government when tree clearing began in the eastern wheatbelt. The old adage 'history repeats itself' is well demonstrated here. Similar salinity problems were also experienced at the reservoir constructed for the Goldfields Pipeline. Lake Leschenaultia was not an isolated case. The history associated with historic sites is quite often highly relevant to today's problems. This is why history matters!

Fiona Bush

1 - Heritage Council of Western Australia, 'Lake Leschenaultia, Chidlow', 2005, accessed 31 July 2021.

Why do Indigenous Histories Matter

There is much about Australia that is unique.

We are the planet's smallest continent, and the largest island; our fauna and flora appeared wildly upside down to the early European visitors, and we still have extant pockets of the mega-continent Gondwana land ancient forests, some of the most the world's most extensive area of subtropical rainforest.¹

Many sites of our natural heritage have been granted World Heritage Status by UNESCO. Australia is also home to what is often called the "oldest living culture". I am proud to note I am a member of that culture, but also to celebrate my other heritages: convict and free settler. Australian Indigenous history has much to offer to the broader conceptual space of "Australian History".

Diversity and homogeneity

When Europeans colonised the continent of Australia in the 18th century they were setting foot onto a land that had been home to countless generations over 65,000 years.² They encountered over 200 different language groups, more than 600 different tribes, and cultures that differed from one another across every geographic zone (see AIATSIS Map). These groups lived along the coasts and hinterlands, travelled into the mountains; they thrived in the harsh deserts and lived in great numbers along waterways and rivers.

To the European Post-Enlightenment view they were simply 'the natives', and although these early explorers could not have missed the regional and cultural differences among groups they were instead labelled and homogenised as 'the Aborigines'. Far too many school curricula and textbooks continue to promote this view. I recently undertook a review of teaching resources available to primary school teachers. I noted that overwhelmingly the



vast scale of Australian history was compressed and the 65,000 years of history prior to European arrival was often minimised and reduced often to a mere paragraph.

Indigenous history after 1788

At a school curricula level the role of Indigenous people within Australian (post 1788) history focuses on a few key personalities, and culminates in the land rights, native title, and sovereignty movements. As a result, today, many people, and certainly most schools and institutions recognise the traditional owners of the land. Yet that recognition tends to act at a symbolic level. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people remain much more likely to have compromised health,

'The Australian Aboriginal' (1895).

Artist/photographer: Unattributed .

"Broader Britain" The Scenery, the Cities and the Industries of The Colonies & Dependencies of the Crown Gems of Natural Beauty in the New World. The Werner Company.

live in poverty, and face the judicial system.³ Despite all the work done on and about child removals they are still much more likely to see their children placed into out of home care.⁴

Now you might ask how would studying Indigenous history help with these shameful statistics. Understanding both the historical

Why do Indigenous Histories Matter



Street art of Australian Aboriginal boy in Fitzroy, Melbourne, Stockimo / Alamy Stock Photo.

The AAITAS map of Indigenous Australia can be found at:

<https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia>

Indigenous history must embrace sources that extend beyond the disciplinary boundaries of history, and move into archaeology, anthropology, linguistics, and sociology. It is at the interface of Indigenous history that these all intersect.

As an Indigenous historian I am fascinated by stories of and about the past. I am passionate about, telling the narratives of the past, building knowledge, understanding the sociology of that knowledge, and then in using this to create a fairer future. The study of Indigenous histories offers this opportunity.

Lynette Russell

context and the socio-cultural economics is one way that as a society we can begin to appreciate these inequities.

National Identity, national pride

The question of why Indigenous histories matter is an important one. Indigenous history has ramifications for how we see ourselves—our national identity—and the question and its answer affects how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and settlers or newcomers might interact and reconcile. I would even suggest that within the

Australian context asking and answering the question 'why do Indigenous histories matter?' can lead us to better engagement with Indigenous people, cultures, and histories. All Australians can share in and be proud of our remarkable millennia of history.

I argue that if there is to be a future for the past, for the study of Indigenous history we must include the deep past, the more recent past, and it is imperative that we show how these are connected, and how they are of concern to the future. In order to achieve this, the study of

1 - Wilson, Erica, Kerrie Stimpson, David Lloyd, and William E. Boyd. "Promoting Gondwana: Presentation of the Gondwana rainforests of Australia world heritage area in tourist brochures." *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 6, no. 4 (2011): 297-308.

2 - Clarkson, Chris, Zenobia Jacobs, Ben Marwick, Richard Fullagar, Lynley Wallis, Mike Smith, Richard G. Roberts et al. "Human occupation of northern Australia by 65,000 years ago." *Nature* 547, no. 7663 (2017): 306-310.

3 - Altman, Jon. "Beyond closing the gap: Valuing diversity in Indigenous Australia". Canberra, ACT: Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR), The Australian National University, 2018.

4 - Mendes, Philip. "Social justice in Australia: ending the over-representation of Indigenous children in out-of-home care and returning them to their communities." In *Handbook on global social justice*. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2018.

Family History Matters

Family History has become more popular helped no doubt by the easy accessibility of websites such as Ancestry, Find my Past and My Heritage.

It is quite exciting to trace your family back to a person of renown, or someone who has committed a crime and then been transported, a woman who helped change women's rights, a family who forged their lives in the goldfields often burying their babies on the way.

Families make communities, communities make states, states make countries.

Their stories take you straight into History...they make History.

Apart from the famous, history will enliven your family history. To discover that your grandfather, for about whom you can find little, lived through the 1930s and 40s and appears in War records, to then be able to read the diaries of his battalion.

He could have been one of the unemployed in the dreadful depression of the early 1930s and be recorded in welfare records — so history is vital for those wishing to record their family tree.



| DUPLICATE REGISTER OF MARRIAGE | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| BIRTHS DEATHS & MARRIAGES | | | | | | | | |
| 2271 | | | | | | | | |
| No. | When and where Married. | Name and Surname. | Under or above the age of 21 years. | Condition. | Rank or Profession. | Residence at the time of Marriage. | Father's Name and Surname. | Rank or Profession of Father. |
| | 21st April 1944 | George Rawlinson | above 21 | Single | Servant | Perth | George Rawlinson | Butcher |
| | Edith Catherine | Marjorie Coghlan | above 21 | Spinster | Housewife | Perth | Pat Coghlan | Teacher |
| Married in the <u>Scottish Presbyterian</u> according to the rites and ceremonies of <u>the same</u> | | | | | | | | |
| by me, after oath (or "declaration") duly made as by Law required. | | | | | | | | |
| This Marriage was solemnized between us, | | | in the presence of us, | | | | | |
| George Rawlinson | | | Marjorie Coghlan | | | Rev. G. Gibson | | |
| Marjorie Coghlan | | | George Rawlinson | | | William W. Miller | | |
| | | | | | | James Macdonald | | |

NOTE: Any alteration of the substance of this certificate will render the document valueless. Any person attempting an alteration is liable to prosecution.

Top: Dorrie Williams, Above: Rawlinson Marriage.
Images: Lorraine Clarke

Family History Matters

History also tells us that the church and their parishes were particularly important in the pre 20th century European world. You discover what religion your grandfather followed from family stories, baptism, marriage, or burial records. Churches kept records of social occasions, which could provide you with a different slant on grandfather, including his philanthropic views. He could even have been a square-dancer, a popular pursuit in church halls at that time.

If we go further back in history. You might notice that great-great grandmother had many brothers and sisters, and that she herself had a dozen children through the 1880s and 90s and that several of them died. History tells us that large families were the norm, prior to widespread acceptance of contraception in the 1960s, and that infant mortality was far from uncommon. Sanitation was rudimentary - your parents might remember the toilet up the back path and the dunny carts

taking human waste away in the night up the back lanes. This was common in Perth till the 1950s.

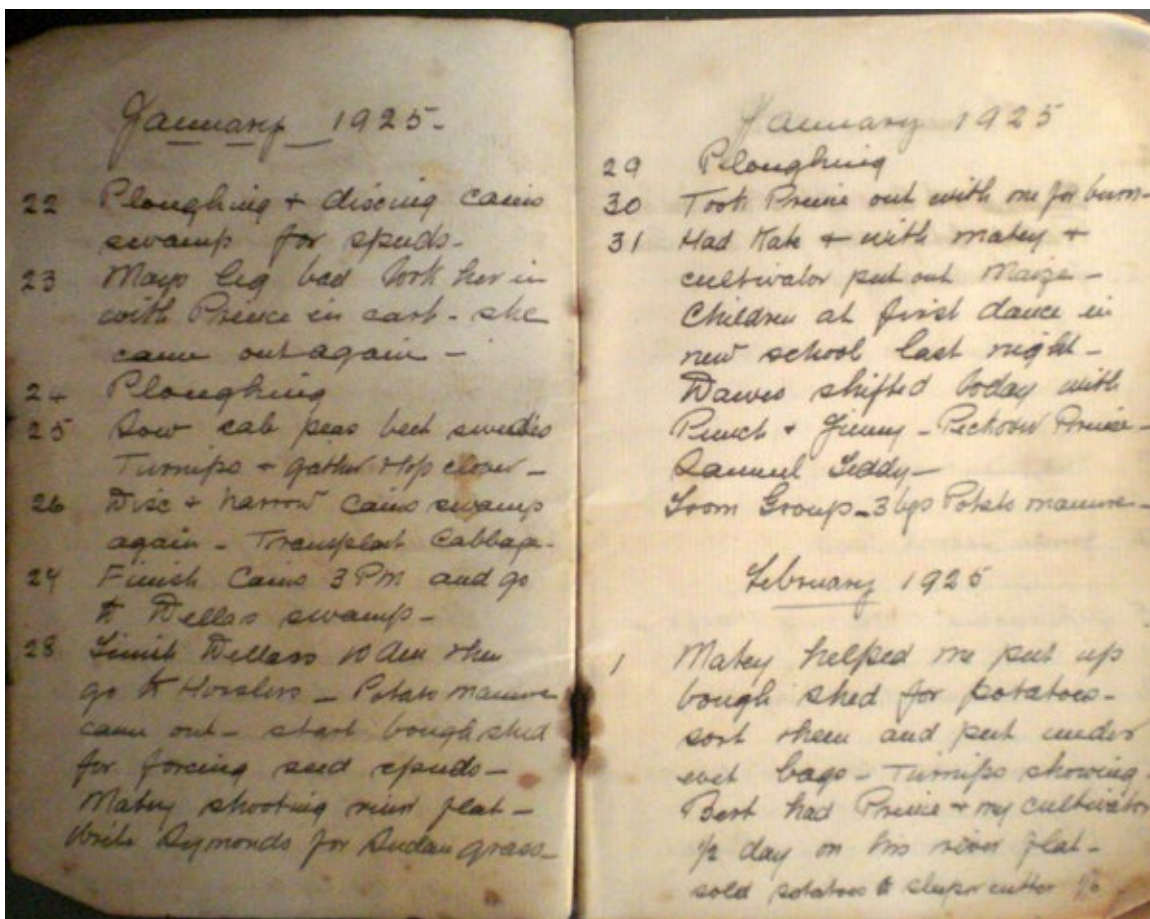
In the 19th and early 20th centuries there was no cure for many childhood diseases such as measles, whooping cough, mumps, German fever, and sepsis from infected wounds. Penicillin, the first type of antibiotic, was not discovered until 1928 – and even then, it did not cure the largest cause of adult deaths at that time – TB or Tuberculosis, sometimes called Consumption, was the major cause of young adult deaths—both male and female. TB was an infectious disease which generally affects the lungs, but can also affect other parts of the body and if left untreated, killed about half of those affected. Classic symptoms of active TB are a chronic cough with blood-containing mucus, fever, night sweats, and weight loss. It was called consumption due to the patient's weight loss. An intensive eradication campaign using

the vaccine BCG left Australia virtually free of the disease.

So medical history can give us insights into our family's life style but historians are interested in the whole picture. A future young historian will know that 2020 was the year the COVID virus brought the world to a standstill. They will know how many people lost their jobs and whether this was similar or worse than the depression of the 1930s and other pandemics of the past. Historians will have noted the way technology was used at that time and its drawbacks. They will have gathered evidence of what it felt like to wear a mask, to be counted into shops and to find aisles bare of certain goods - like toilet paper!

All this can fill out a family story, we must ensure history is recorded, both good and bad for the future.... history matters!!

Pamela Statham Drew
Lorraine Clarke



Pages from the diary of Richard Walters Williams.

Photo: Lorraine Clarke

Focussing on Local History at Fabrik SA



Premises of the Woollen Mill at Lobethal, approx. 1872.

The woollen mill was built in the old premises of the FW Kleinschmidt brewery. In 1870 equipment from a tiny mill in Hanhndorf was moved into Kleinschmidt's, along with new machinery.

Photo courtesy of State Library of South Australia. B12411.

Local history matters to communities when local people are invested in the telling of important aspects of a shared community past.

In developing an Interpretation Plan for Fabrik, drawing on the deep local history of the Mill was

always going to be key. Working locally was a foundation of the project – placing a high value

The History Trust of South Australia has recently completed a community-based project in the Adelaide Hills, cleverly and meaningfully involving the local community to develop an Interpretation Plan for parts of the former Onkaparinga Woollen Mill at Lobethal.

The site is now home to a number of commercial businesses, the Onkaparinga Woollen Mill Museum and Fabrik, an arts and cultural space developed by Adelaide Hills Council.

The former Onkaparinga Woollen Mill has a profound influence on the town of Lobethal and the wider region. A high proportion of local residents worked there, there was a large and diverse migrant workforce and generations of families drew their livelihoods from the Mill. Closed in the early 1990s after 120 years of operation, famed in the wider public consciousness for the iconic Onkaparinga blanket, the Mill site remains dominant today as a defining feature of Lobethal's history.



Many people have milestone stories about their Onkaparinga blankets – presents for 21st birthdays, leaving home, weddings etc.

This Onkaparinga cot blanket is a family heirloom of an Adelaide Hills local. It was brought by the staff of the place where its owner worked when she left to have her first baby in 1972. It was used for all three of her children.

Blanket courtesy of Barb Haesey. Photographer: Pauline Cockrill

Continued

Focussing on Local History at Fabrik SA

on the input of local people to encourage the sharing of their stories was pivotal.

A series of community engagement events were planned but, with various COVID restrictions for almost the entire term of the project, focus changed to more individual and small scale approaches.

One of these was to work with Fabrik staff to host an Historian in Residence every Tuesday throughout April 2021 in the former Blanket Room of the Mill.

Ex-Mill workers were invited to share stories with the History Trust's Community History Officer, Pauline Cockrill, as well as bring along photos or objects relating to the Mill. The event was publicised through the free Along the Grapevine newsletter, The Courier newspaper as well as social media accounts.

Holding the event at a set time at the Mill but in a social setting, with refreshments on offer and Mill memorabilia to view, proved to be a successful way of engaging with the community. Although some people came individually, the best days were when people stayed to chat as a group.

Research had shown that the Mill was central to the community and that many generations of families had worked there.

However, the close camaraderie was palpably obvious during these meetings as stories and photos were enthusiastically shared, family connections explained, and work practices recalled and expertly outlined.

One contact led to another, and another. People were excited to tell their stories. Stories fed into each other and wound around picking up the small, unexpected and sometimes quirky aspects of local history that may not come to light with another approach. Social media was used as both a way to make connections and as

an important research tool.

The Interpretation Plan produced is brimming with truly local content – former workers and others from Lobethal and environs will readily see themselves and their families in the final products.

Because of Fabrik's use as a textile-themed arts and cultural identity for the Adelaide Hills this involvement will be ongoing,

expanding the 'Mill community' over time and creating new local history.

The Fabrik project shows just how important and enduring local history can be to communities and how local history can shape significant community endeavours. It provides an inspiring example of local history done really well.

Amanda James



The Historian in Residence sessions proved to be a successful method of community engagement and worked best when several former Mill workers were gathered together.

Photographer: René Strohmeyer.

Public History Matters

History projects undertaken collaboratively by academically trained historians with community volunteers and state history/heritage organisations matter because they bring together knowledge, skills and resources to produce better history, history that is both informative and engaging.

Calls for universities to work more closely with industry and undertake research with practical applications are not new. In 1913 at the establishment of the University of Western Australia, its eight foundation professors were all expected to work in areas judged useful and play leading roles in the developmental and intellectual life of the State.

Edward Shann, foundation professor of history and economics, embraced these expectations of community engagement with enthusiasm.¹ Generations of historians have followed Shann and others of his time; although 'Public History', newly named, was not given an official life with its own tertiary learning programs until the 1980s.²

Only a few of these 'Public History' courses have survived the current troubles in university funding and management; let's hope that the threat abates soon! Nonetheless, public history practitioners are today active in heritage offices, museums, libraries and private collections as well as freelancing in the community sector.

The academy and community have plenty to teach each other and together we are better able to offer wider and deeper understandings of the past – in its complexity and diversity.

This is not easy; nor do I claim that the history sector has all the answers. 'The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there'. This oft quoted metaphor is all very well but provides no easy comfort. Many people now find much of the past so ugly and offensive, particularly on matters of race where racism's results resonate in the present, that anger and rejection are the response.

Family history makes sense in this environment but beyond

that what? Existing accounts of the past, acceptable in their own time, are frequently no longer so. History is at something of a crossroads as public feelings and truths collide in often rancorous and overwhelmingly moralistic discourse demanding 'truth-telling'.

Public history helps to chart a way forward. For example, in the development of government and other organisations' policy; understanding public health issues.

Public historians have disciplinary skills in library, archival, oral and place-based research and writing practices that offer well-evidenced interpretations.

Without these skills to explore all the evidence (from that stored in great quantities in archival repositories to that gathered by communities in oral recall and that to be found in direct engagement with place and its environment) sound history cannot be formed.

The local knowledge and community outreach of voluntary associations and the interpretive skills of state organisations are also needed.

This combination of strengths recognises the diversity of histories to be told while providing a practice that is both well evidenced and empathetic.

Well done, such public history can continue to celebrate the past of our communities while still illuminating their darker legacies.

Lenore Layman

1 - Lenore Layman, 'Making a Difference: Tom Stannage and the UWA tradition of engagement', Deborah Gare and Jenny Gregory (eds), 'History from the Other Side: Tom Stannage and the making of Australian history', *Studies in Western Australian History*, no 29, 2014.

2 - Robert Weible, 'Defining Public History: Is it possible? Is it necessary?' *American Historical Association Perspectives on History*, March 2008. <https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/march-2008/defining-public-history-is-it-possible-is-it-necessary>



Economist and historian Edward Shann is commemorated by the Shann memorial lecture and the memorial sundial and seat in the sunken garden at the University of Western Australia. Image by Emma Farmer - Sony Ericsson S700i Phone Camera, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=737884>

Why University History Teaching and Research Matters ¹

Over the past 50 years, Australia's universities have become increasingly embattled.

At my own university, there were 10 historians teaching 604 students in 1965, now there are nine teaching more than 1334 students.² The situation is worse in many other universities, after years of restructuring and cost cutting, with resultant reductions in academic staffing.

Yet History continues to attract students with a deep curiosity about the past and its impact on the present. Many of the brightest cap their undergraduate major with an honours year, and others go on to doctoral research. What is it about History at university that attracts these students?

There are many reasons for studying history. Some relate to the need to gain valuable

employment skills. Others to the development of a well-rounded informed citizen.

University history students develop high levels of written communication and critical analytical skills that enable them to consider and analyse evidence and craft it into a logical and reasoned argument.

Their understanding of the contemporary world may be transformed. They discover that it is impossible to understand the social, cultural, political, economic and environmental circumstances of the present adequately, without understanding the historical basis for the way things are today.

They learn alternative ways of being and knowing — through the lens of the past, but also through the lens of those with whom they share their learning journey. History at university allows for a level of personal reflection and self-reflexive practice that builds knowledgeable and empathetic students who have the ability to work constructively with people from a wide range of backgrounds. The study of history encourages tolerance, respect and empathy.

Today, history can be consumed through more popular sources than ever before. Much information is found on history channel docos, YouTube, social media, or presented in television documentaries. These often jump to conclusions on the slimmest of evidence. Little context is provided to balance so-called 'facts'.

They also encourage the idea that there is a singular truth, in contrast to history at university which explores different perspectives and encourages students to question and debate established sources.



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History explaining the present with Dr Ethan Blue at University of Western Australia.

Courtesy Dr Ethan Blue.

University History Teaching

While online tools for historical research are easily accessible and offer valuable pathways, students learn to treat them with caution. In the case of popular family history, for example, many genealogy websites include a great deal of information provided by those researching their family history, but this is often not based on solid evidence. Exploration of family history at universities is based on deep, reflective training that, where possible, provides reliable answers.

Universities are important sites for historical research. There are few other environments that support the kind of sustained long-term research and writing undertaken by postgraduate students and early career researchers. Before publication all historical research generated within universities is peer reviewed anonymously. This ensures that published material is of a high standard, so that readers can be confident

the research process is sound, even if they don't agree with the findings.

Historians at universities conduct research that asks new questions of the past that are relevant to the present. Their academic debates keep historic issues alive and bring them into the public arena — the History Wars debates are an excellent example. The impact of university historians on Aboriginal history (frontier conflict, stolen generations etc) has been transformative for many Aboriginal people and society more generally. In a world where increasingly everyone's opinion (no matter how ignorant and unformed) is regarded as being as valid as anyone else's, we still need 'experts' — people who have read deeply, thought and written upon topics and are able to provide considered analysis rather than a quick response. Where else would you be able to draw on a community of scholars to provide such a reasoned

critique than in the University?

The scope of history spans millennia, its object of study is humanity, its sources are everywhere and everything. Its endeavour is unashamedly vast, daunting and challenging. It means engaging with the wonders and horrors of the past, and joining in its telling and retelling. A university that does not provide the opportunity for the study of history is unimaginable.

Jenny Gregory

1 - In preparing this short paper I have canvassed academic colleagues and post graduate students to gain a broad spectre of views. Thanks to Professor Deborah Gare (NDU), Associate Professor Andrea Gaynor (UWA), Claire Greer (UWA), Dr Shino Konishi UWA/ACU), Anthony Lunt (UWA/HTAWA) Professor Jane Lydon (UWA), Dr Bri McKenzie (Curtin), and Associate Professor Bobbie Oliver (UWA/Curtin). I also thank Dr Giuseppe Finaldi (UWA) for crafting an earlier version of the final paragraph of this paper.

2 - Brian de Garis, 'The Department of History in the University of Western Australia, 1913-65', Fred Alexander—a Tribute: Studies in Western Australian History, vol.VI, 1988, p.17.



University of Western Australia students enrolled in a new family history unit visit the State Records Office of Western Australia with Professor Jane Lydon. The SRO provided an introduction to selected State archives. The records they chose were Justice-system related: open access Convict, Police, Court and Prison records, and some probate and divorce files.
Courtesy Professor Jane Lydon

Why School Teaching of History and Specialist Teachers of History Matter

High quality school teaching of History matters. Study of History at all year levels develops knowledge and skills applicable to diverse life contexts, including contexts without apparent connections to knowledge of the past.

Competent teaching of History and engaged learning by students ensures academic student success at any year level, with the knowledge and skills transferrable to historical studies in future levels as well as other curriculum areas. The knowledge, skills and a genuine interest can then foster students' choices to elect, and achieve well in, tertiary level historical studies.

Of course, not all Australian school students wish to become, or will develop the knowledge and skills, to become historians; yet, this is not reason to deprive them of high quality History education experiences.

History education develops young people's abilities to question and think critically about the world around them, research and understand the past with wisdom, solve problems by contemplating possible futures, make informed decisions, and communicate effectively.

A high quality History education supports lifelong learning, fosters informed and positively active local and global citizenship, and develops skills applicable to a vast range of careers. Beyond utilitarian purposes, it can also foster a profound and enduring leisure-time interest.

Many readers of this article, especially more mature ones, might recall being taught by teachers of History qualified to teach it. I, for one, was blessed during my government schooling by many. While much within me was, personally, innately

fascinated by the discipline and world of histories (especially Australia's), having teachers with History majors or minors as well as 'History method' (now 'History Education') accreditation, enhanced my experience.

On entering the teaching profession in the early 1980s, I was determined to be as good as my former teachers. The History teacher colleagues I then encountered also had disciplinary backgrounds and accreditation, and supported me well; indeed, qualifications were essential in the minds of school leaders, their communities, faculties of Arts and Education, and governments.

Economic rationalism and crucial decisions by governments and other education authorities have since intervened. History is not the only discipline to have been affected as the latest Australian Council of Educational Research (2016-17) reveals, but it has been significantly affected. While faculties of arts and probably the wider Australian community



High quality History education brings to life many pasts, places, peoples and perspectives.

Photo: Rosalie Triolo



History Teacher conferences may be well attended, but support from many more parties is required.

Photo: Rosalie Triolo

Continued

Specialist History Teaching in Schools

would prefer to think that only the best students with majors or minors might be destined for specialist pre-service preparation in faculties of education before entering schools, fewer authorities share the priorities.

In 2021, few faculties of education nationally offer History Education specialist programs. Most offer wider Humanities

programs with generalised attention to teaching large cohorts of teachers in efficient, grand sweeps of 'humanities' with minimal if any attention to specific sets of historical knowledge and skills. While most State/Territory teacher registration authorities require pre-service teachers to graduate with two 'specialisms', there is no requirement thereafter for

schools to employ 'specialists' to teach in the areas. Once employed, teachers might be asked to teach anything and, if they agree, do so.

To be fair, this does mean that teachers who might have a knowledgeable recreational interest in one or more histories but who attended universities that did not cater to them, might ask to teach History, and teach it well. This is far preferable to situations where some teachers teach History because they have opted or been directed as a timetable-filler, without the knowledge, skills - or passion - that more likely ensure a better student experience.

Certainly, History teacher associations Australia-wide, which have needed to become self-sustaining because they no longer receive government support, offer their best possible professional learning through events large and small as well as publications but, school budgets can limit how much professional learning any teachers, qualified, interested, or not, receive.

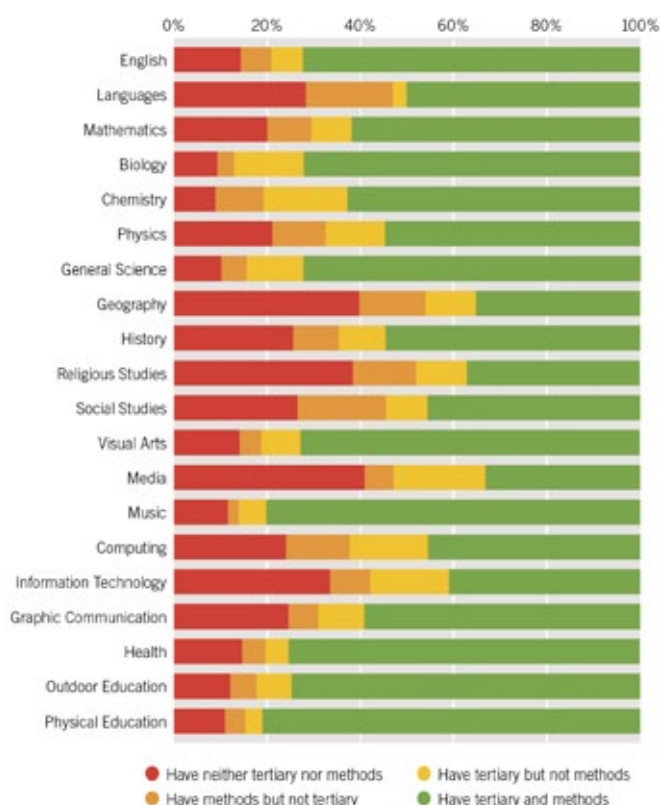
There is the further challenge that while History education is supposed to be compulsory in most secondary school jurisdictions to Year 10, some schools work around the 'requirement' by offering it as an elective 'after Year 8'. In such conditions, History is unlikely to be offered at the senior levels. The status and importance of History education is further diminished in a school community.

For those of us who know already that 'school history matters', now is the time to start seeking the views of different parties named above and, if not happy with the responses, to start acting for change.

Rosalie Triolo

Out-of-field teaching

A new Australian Council for Educational Research report looks at the extent to which secondary school teachers in Australia are teaching subjects they haven't specialised in during their studies. It includes data on the proportion of Years 7-10 teachers teaching out-of-field in 20 subject areas.



Source: Weldon, P (2016). Out-of-field teaching in Australian secondary schools. Policy Insights Issue 6. Camberwell, VIC: ACER.

Teacher

Weldon, P (2016), Out-of-field teaching in Australian secondary schools. Policy Insights Issue 6, Camberwell, Vic.: Australian Council for Educational Research.

Local History - Important to Tourism, The Economy and The Community

Today, tourism, heritage preservation and culture are likely to overlap.

Whereas in the past, tourism promoters saw their role as delivering a ready-made package, today's tourists are more discerning and wish for a more tailored product which takes in their hobbies and interests.

Long gone are the days when tourists skimmed the surface of a country town, visited coffee shops and stayed in a nice hotel.

Tourists today want to have a greater depth of understanding of a new place, town or area—and this includes its cultural background.

A site which develops the potential for cultural heritage tourism gives the opportunity for the tourist to gain a greater understanding of the place and its people. It does not just bring benefits to itself but to further preservation because gaining an understanding of preservation of one site leads to the understanding of preserving other such sites.

Tourism is a large part of Australia's gross domestic product, and cultural tourism can have a tremendous impact on local communities, both economic and social.

Many societies have house museums which reveal the lifestyle of successful pioneers of the area; others conduct museums which show what drove the local economy – an early farm, woollen mills, fishing and coastal trading, an early airfield, transport museums and timber getting.

All of these can be offered to tour companies as components of a tour.

Entry fees for each of these tour components add to finances of



Interpretive sign written for local Council by the Parramatta Historical Society.
Photo: Judith Dunn.

societies but also adds to the economic health of the local area.

Tourists stay longer in the community to take morning tea or eat lunch. Museums need to be fitted out with display

areas, they may need to be air conditioned, maintenance is constant, seating areas can be created - all increasing job opportunities in the area.

Coach companies often welcome a good local guide on

Continued

Local History - Important to Tourism, the Economy and the Community



Friends of Bella Vista Farm preparing to serve afternoon tea for an Anzac Day Service.
Photo: Judith Dunn.

may not have a long-time memory of local history and heritage issues. Historical society members can sit on Council Heritage Committees and are the keepers of local stories, oral history, knowledge of properties, sites and reserves. Reference to the historical society may assist in appropriately naming parks and reserves and stop incorrect plaques being erected.

Historical societies may undervalue themselves and not always realise their worth. We need to collectively understand we have a major place to play in the lives of our members, to our communities and to heritage tourism.

Sources:

- National Trust (undated). Tourism + Culture + Heritage = Sustainable Economies
- Yass & District Historical Society (2017). Whole Histories, Keeping the Stories Alive.

Judith Dunn

board to tour the area and set the local scene. If the guide is sufficiently fluent of speech and with a good depth of knowledge, this too can develop into repeat bookings and a delightful part time job.

Historical societies are also important socially, both to members and the wider community.

Meeting and working alongside like-minded people, friendships can develop and loneliness can be dispelled. Many people are isolated today by technology be it phone, tablet or computer.

Researching and writing can expand knowledge and keep members mentally active.

New skills can be learnt due to the increasing amount of technology used in a modern society.

Attending meetings can develop camaraderie and a sense of belonging.

Assistance to council staff can be beneficial where staff turns over quite quickly, especially in cities. This means the council



Afternoon tea provided, tin plates and mugs with pots of "Cocky's Joy" (golden syrup). Damper to be added to each plate.
Photo Judith Dunn

Why History Matters to the Law

The Law is never-endingly engaged in searching the past. Law comes from two sources. One is by enactment from a statutory enactment of a legislative authority, in our system known as Parliament. The other is from the common law and the long history of judicial decisions which pronounce the law on a particular matter.

Reference to the past is encouraged by the doctrine of precedent. The principle of it is that where a prior decision is 'on all fours' with what is at issue, the prior decision will be a binding precedent determining the issue. The requirement of being 'on all fours' is not always easy to comply with, so that there is room for argument on whether or not the precedent is a binding authority.

When a person is admitted to the legal profession of a jurisdiction, there is a choice they must generally make. It is whether to practice in relation to criminal law or whether to act as a civil lawyer. Let us look first at the life of a lawyer concerned only with the criminal law.

In Western Australia we have a criminal code. All the major crimes are contained in that code although separate Parliamentary enactments may augment the scope of it. For example, a state enactment on a

particular crime may define and fix penalties in relation to acts deemed to constitute it. When a person is charged with an offence either under the Code or any additional legislation, the offence with which they are charged will be identified in the charge documents served on them. They will either then seek legal advice or legal aid will provide them with a legal practitioner. That advisor will then ask the person charged (the accused) to tell him all about the circumstances referred to in the charge. Either then or at trial they will hear all that the prosecutor says he or she knows about the same circumstances.

Those pictures of the evidence will more often than not go before a jury but they can also go before the judge. Whether it is the judge or the jury they will have to decide what aspects of the evidence they believe beyond reasonable doubt. In doing this they are making findings of fact on the history of the circumstances alleged in the prosecution and defended by the accused. This has to be done in order for them to decide whether the charge is proven to the requisite standard of proof. In the case of a judge, he will either read his findings to the Court or publish his findings for all to read. The history of the matter and of the law arguably

applicable to it does not only matter, it is vital. Without it, there cannot be a conviction or an acquittal.

In civil matters the standard of proof is not so high: It just has to be established that the circumstances alleged are more probable than not. There will be a judge presiding to whom it falls to consider all the evidence tendered and to find what is established to that standard. Then, on the foundation of the story as so found, the judge must make a judgment on what the plaintiff is entitled to, if anything. The working out of the facts on the basis of the rules of evidence is absolutely fundamental to the matter being resolved. Again, it is the history of the matters at issue which is being examined along with the law which those facts make potentially relevant. For example, if the dispute concerns contractual relations between the parties, the history of their communications will be explored if it is said to have any bearing on whether or not they reached an agreement or what it was they did agree upon.

History involves the observation, interpretation and recording of past events and people. The law is one method by which history is ascertained. It is more highly rule based than that may usually be the case for the writing of history but it cannot be doubted that lawyers in practising law in all its forms are engaging in a search for truth in relation to past events. When they consider the evidence brought forward by all sides and find the facts, they are determining the history which matters for the resolution of the dispute in question. The findings on matters of the past determine whether or not in a civil case the plaintiff is or is not entitled to the remedies he or she sought.

**Robert Nicholson Legal
adversaries, the Supreme Court,
Western Australia.**

Cartoon left: Simon Fieldhouse.



Heritage and Emotion in Heritage

A heritage place is a piece of embedded history. A place becomes part of our heritage as, over history, we develop emotional attachment to it. It is the site of various personal and community experiences or it is a landmark we note as we navigate. Sometimes it is a significant part of our culture. Ultimately, we preserve built heritage to give ourselves bearings. Places that we live with and love, that are part of our mental universe, remind us that we are links in an ongoing human chain.

Concern for heritage is a relatively recent phenomenon. It might be dated to 1831, when Victor Hugo published 'The Hunchback of Notre-Dame' to save the cathedral. This campaign was successful because, as the success of the novel showed, people across France and indeed across the world felt an emotional attachment to Notre Dame. Most heritage attachments, however, develop at the local level.

In 1840 the inhabitants of the Alsatian town of Turckheim successfully petitioned King Louis Philippe not to raze the city walls



The East Gate of Turckheim (Haut-Rhin, France), saved in 1840

and gates which, they said, had always framed their lives.

We today live in a less solid and certain society than our forebears. We rarely live out our lives in the homes of our parents. The buildings that have framed our lives become even more important. Historic places serve as landmarks anchoring us to the world around us. They give us something solid to hold onto, a sense that we have a place in an unfolding history.

The Australia preservation movement began after World War II to save grand historic homes in NSW. In Victoria the National Trust was founded in 1956 with the initial aim of saving Como House, a landmark and a witness to the colony's origins.

In both ways it gave meaning to people's lives. The statement of significance for Como on the Victorian Heritage Register cites both its architectural merit—'a rare and evocative example of late Georgian architecture'—and its 'important historical associations with the pastoral industry and early Melbourne'. It is a place's history that gives it meaning. Otherwise it is only an example from an architectural textbook.

By the 1960s, the Trust had gone beyond grand mansions and was seeking to preserve all kinds of buildings, not just grand historic houses like Como, public buildings and churches, ordinary, typical homes, workers' cottages, factories. Preservation became a quest to save a spectrum of our past.

The preservation movement spilled out beyond the Trust and finally achieved heritage legislation (Vic 1974, NSW 1977). Professionalisation followed and the term preservation gave way to heritage.

Professionals naturally tried to move away from emotional judgments and to develop

objective criteria that could justify heritage protection. Soon, however, it became clear that abstract arguments for architectural merit or technical innovation were of little interest to most people and might lead people to switch off.

One eminent professional wrote, 'While many would feel the pressure to become even more rigorous, others now suggest that we, as heritage professionals, may have lost touch with the sentiments that inspire community love of a place and therefore action for its protection'.¹ 'Community love of a place', emotional attachment to a place, or 'social value', all these terms attempt to describe why heritage matters.

In recent years, heritage professionals and the heritage movement have become increasingly concerned with social value or emotional connection to place, seeking to elucidate the ways that a place makes a difference to those who orient themselves around it, either in their daily lives or in their broader culture.

In their Conservation Principles, both Historic England (2008) and Historic Environment Scotland (2009-11) speak of 'emotional links', 'emotional evidence' and 'emotional impact'.

In making heritage decisions, they look to see if place 'has generated a deeper attachment' or 'emotional association'.

In December 2020, the International Committee on Monuments and Sites resolved to 'promote people-centered approaches, the connections of people with heritage and places,...when addressing local, national, and international heritage policies and practice'.

Victoria has pioneered the use of 'social value' as a criterion for heritage protection. In 2019 social value was added to the

Heritage and Emotion in Heritage

official criteria for heritage as Criterion G. (See the list of Criteria below.) Social value was defined as 'association with a community', which clearly involves history and emotion, for the association has to be one that generates emotion over time.

Within a few months of its adoption, Criterion G played a major role in the controversy over Melbourne's Federation Square. Fed Square Pty Ltd had proposed to increase revenue by replacing part of the Square with a new Apple Store. The National Trust and the Royal Historical Society of Victoria opposed the proposal because the new building's design clashed with the Square and sought heritage protection.

But a major factor in the decision to grant protection was an enormous public outcry. People flooded social media with stories of community occasions in Fed Square. These stories constituted the history of the community's emotional attachment to the Square. Heritage Victoria received a record number of submissions - 754 - and all but three strongly supported protection. This was proof of the 'strong or special association with a particular



Federation Square, Melbourne, from Flinders Street Station (2017)

present-day community' required to satisfy Criterion G.

Like association with a community, 'association with ... a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history' (Criterion H) also plays an increasing role in heritage decisions in Victoria.

These two criteria imply community participation. Community input, however, is still restricted. While Councils may listen to residents in planning and heritage matters, developers can appeal and community concerns get short

shrift. But professionals are now recognising the need to take account of the community's expressions of history and emotion and we can hope for further progress.

The emotions and sense of history that drove the people of Turckheim and the founders of the various Australian National Trusts are being reawakened.

Charles Sowerwine

1 - Chris Johnston, What is Social Value? Australian Heritage Commission; Canberra: AGPS, 1992, p. 3.

Heritage Assessment Criteria (Victoria) ¶

- A. Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history. ¶
- B. Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history. ¶
- C. Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history. ¶
- D. Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects. ¶
- E. Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics. ¶
- F. Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period. ¶
- G. Strong or special association with a particular present-day community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. ¶
- H. Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history. ¶

Why It Matters to Advocate for History and Heritage

Across the nation there are over 1,000 voluntary community history and heritage societies with a total of more than 100,000 members, most of whom volunteer time and skills to understanding, recording and preserving the histories of their local districts for this generation and for those who come after.

Although many, many hours of volunteer work are provided and there are some federal, state, territory and local government funded projects available, there is need by many societies for additional financial assistance to enable them properly to administer and record local history and related heritage collections – and especially to digitise their moveable cultural heritage collections both for preservation and for everybody to access.

This brief article offers some

suggestions to assist historical societies to encourage all levels of government to value and financially support those organisations.

In the context of local history societies the Federation encourages you to take action via three broad pathways, namely:

Contribution – the emphasising of the invaluable contribution that societies make to their communities and our culture.

Advocacy – the act of speaking on the behalf of or in support of another person, place, movement or thing.

Promotion – the publicising of a product, organisation, or venture to increase public awareness, support for and understanding of local history.

Contribution

The starting point is to make clear to your society members and to your wider community how important your work is, and what benefits you contribute to your region. Your society may already be doing these, or may do so in the future:

- Building stronger communities bonded by a shared understanding of local history and heritage and an exchange of knowledge and experiences.
- Collecting and preserving extraordinary numbers of moveable cultural heritage items (documents, photographs, ephemera, etc) that encapsulate your local history and heritage.
- Digitising your collections for their preservation and to make them available through websites and other electronic platforms to all Australians.



Australia-wide community action successfully pressured the Federal Government to provide the National Archives of Australia with a special grant to enable it to digitise some of the film and audio collections that were falling into decay.

Photo: Don Garden

Why it matters to Advocate

- Contributing to local economies by creating rich visitor experiences, notably in history museums and heritage walks, and especially in regional Australia where cultural heritage tourism attracts many visitors.
- Helping to tell everyone about the longest living culture in the world and its role in your region.
- Promoting research on local history subjects, both as part of the work of the society and by responding to queries from the general public.
- Developing pride in local and national identity and achievement through the 'publishing' in hard copy, electronic and oral forms of your local history, biographies and stories.
- Advising your local government on issues of history and heritage.
- Defending the preservation of built heritage sites from inappropriate development and demolition.
- Fostering of volunteering for social cohesion and wellbeing. The social, cultural and mental health benefits of volunteering are well known.
- Supporting the health, mental health and well-being of older Australians by providing active and rewarding activities and skills, and facilitating social engagement, especially among older members.
- Contributing to lifelong learning, from providing history education to school students, to developing digital skills for older Australians.

Advocacy

Advocacy can be undertaken by historical societies in a number of ways, for example:

- If it is appropriate, arrange face-to-face meetings with or write to your local and federal MPs to inform them of the contributions made by your society and of your need for ongoing funding to supplement day-to-day organisation running costs and/or greater access to government community grants for specific purposes.
- Develop a mailing list that includes your local, state and federal politicians, local businesses and other potential supporters and send them electronic newsletters and other publications. You need to be recognised to be supported.
- Provide a brief document setting out why the funding is needed, your organisation's membership, financial situation and services provided to the community (for example, ongoing accumulation of museum artefacts and archival documents with museum open to the public, importance to local tourism, talks and tours relating to local history and heritage and publishing papers and books on local history and heritage). Support your arguments emphasising the History Matters message. This can be done by referring to one or more of the articles in this newsletter.
- Arrange face-to-face meetings with or write to your local and federal MPs regarding some heritage or history issue in your local district which you believe requires local, state or federal attention. You may wish to support your argument by stressing the History Matters message by referring to one or more of the articles in this newsletter. A copy of the 'The Value of History Statement', a joint initiative by the History Councils of New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia and Victoria and accessible at:

<https://www.rahs.org.au/value-of-history-statement> could be attached.

- Respond to proposals calling for written submissions or media reports relating to a government proposal that has a bearing on History and Heritage, particularly if it may affect your organisation or local community. These submissions, giving your reasons, may be brief (a one or two-page letter) either expressing support for or disagreement with the proposal. Again support your arguments emphasising the History Matters message. This can be done by referring to one or more of the brief articles in this newsletter or by including a copy of the 'Value of History Statement'.
- Always continue to acknowledge and thank those responsible for support you are already given – premises, small special purpose grants, equipment, etc.
- For hints on how to write an effective advocacy letter refer to: <https://breastfeedingniagara.ca/community-action/how-to-write-an-effective-advocacy-or-action-letter/>

Promotion

The promotional work done by historical societies relates to raising public awareness and understanding of their local histories and movable and built heritage. Some of the ways they do this are listed below but there are probably others:

- Providing talks for members and the public on different related topics.
- Publishing articles on research findings in their journals and/or newsletters/e-Bulletins.
- Making their museum displays open to the public on a regular basis.

Why it matters to Advocate

- Offering guided walks around local built heritage sites.
 - Responding to queries from members and the public about specific aspects of local history.
 - Distributing pamphlets and booklets promoting your society and what it has to offer to the community and the public.
 - Inviting local identities, particularly seniors, to give public talks about their past experiences of living in the district.
 - Reaching out to local newspapers by encouraging them to publish interesting stories about your events, achievements, latest museum or archival acquisitions.
 - Encouraging local television channels and radio stations to conduct regular interviews on various aspects of local history, coming events, exhibitions or any other of your organisation's activities.
 - Undertaking outreach awareness-raising activities at local fairs, farmers' markets, agricultural shows, etc.
 - Wherever possible speak prolifically, backing up your arguments, on the 'History Matters' message particularly as it relates to how public awareness of local history benefits the community. You could support your message by using one or more of the articles put forward in this newsletter. Heritage training guides for historical societies published by the Federation provide additional information. These can be accessed at: <https://www.history.org.au/heritage-guides> You may wish to distribute copies of the 'The Value of History Statement' (see above) to members of the local community.
 - Invite schoolteachers to bring their students to your museum. Suitable activities can be arranged in consultation with the teachers. See for example, Local History and Schools Curriculum Guidelines [for Historical Societies] at: <https://www.history.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Local-History-and-Schools-Curriculum-FAHS.pdf>
 - Use social media (eg. Facebook) with images and stories from your collections, promote events and publications or to give details of your organisation.
- If your society has implemented some advocacy or promotional initiative which has been successful you are invited to send a brief paragraph describing what you did for inclusion in the Federation's eBulletin.
- Just email the eBulletin editor
Christine Yeats:
christinehistory@gmail.com

**Helen Henderson
Don Garden**



Guildford Hotel, Western Australia (2021) restored and opened for business in 2016 after it was gutted by fire in 2008. This outcome was achieved by public advocacy which ended the lengthy wrangling between the owner and the government over the height of a proposed residential at the rear of the hotel.

Photo: Fiona Bush

Contributors



Fiona Bush

Dr Fiona Bush, OAM has worked as a building archaeologist and heritage consultant in Western Australia for over 30 years. She has a broad spectrum of heritage interests but two of her passions are industrial heritage and colonial buildings. She is an active member of the Mundaring & Hills Historical Society, Vice-Chairperson of the Royal Western Australian Historical Society and their representative on the National Trust of WA's Council and a long-time member of the Trust's Classification Standing Committee. She served on the State Heritage Office's Register Committee for 14 years. She is currently writing a book on the stained glass studio of Gowers



Lorraine Clarke

Lorraine Clarke as a professional genealogist has researched for many authors and family historians, as well as publishing Australia's Last Convicts, reprobates, rogues and recidivists; Convict Records of Western Australia – a Research Guide (update 2016); Deaths in Western Australia – A Genealogy Guide). Lorraine consults and researches for Probates, Government inquiries (England Child Abuse Inquiry, Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry). She has consulted and researched the most comprehensive biographical database on the inhabitants of the East Perth Cemeteries (over 9800 burials), making it freely available via www.eastperthcemeteries.com.au; consultants for Outback Grave Markers. Lorraine has a regular radio spot "Genealogy 101" on 720 ABC Perth.



Judith Dunn

Judith Dunn OAM FPDHS, is a councillor of the Royal Australian Historical Society and of FAHS. She is also Past President and Fellow of Parramatta and District Historical Society (NSW) and is an active member of four other affiliated societies, two of which she chairs. Judith instigated the Historic Graves Committee at Parramatta and is still its convenor after 36 years, overseeing seven historic cemeteries. Judith has written seven books and her long time passion is researching and documenting historic cemeteries.



Don Garden

Associate Professor Don Garden OAM FFAHS FRHSV has served several terms as the President of the Federation of Australian Historical Societies and Immediate Past president of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria. He is a member of a number of local societies and is a councillor of the Canberra & District Historical Society and a committee member of the Sandringham & District Historical Society. He taught history and environmental history at the University of Melbourne for many years and has published in the areas of local and regional history, education, biography and environmental history.



Jenny Gregory

Jenny Gregory AM FRHS, is Emeritus Professor of History at The University of Western Australia, after a career that included time as Head of the School of Humanities, Chair of History and Director of UWA Press. She is author of numerous publications in the fields of urban history and heritage, with a special focus on Western Australia. She is currently on the boards of the History Council of WA, National Trust WA (after years as Chair and President), UWA Convocation, and the WA History Foundation, she has been awarded for her contribution to her profession and the community.



Helen Henderson

Helen Henderson AM FRWAHS. Prior to her retirement, Helen was a Senior Researcher in Epidemiology in the Health Department of WA. She has a PhD in Anthropology. She was elected to the Council of the Royal Western Australian Historical Society in 1996 and became Vice-Chairperson in 2001 and served in that position until 2017. She remains as a Councillor. She has been actively involved for varying periods in the History Council of WA; the Historical Records Rescue Consortium; Museums Australia (WA); and the Federation of Australian Historical Societies of which she has served as President, Vice-President, and Secretary. She co-authored with her late husband, Bill, a biographical account of Augustus Oldfield, an important botanical collector in Australia in the mid-nineteenth century.



Amanda James

Ms Amanda James History SA (History Trust South Australia) has a Grad Dip Museum Studies from Flinders University. She has almost always worked with community museums and history groups and currently leads projects and programs for this sector through her work at the History Trust of South Australia. Her considerable experience extends across collections and museums management, interpretation, standards, public programs, online projects, skills development, community engagement and strategic planning. For the History Trust Amanda manages the Museums and Collections (MaC) development and funding program, coordinates the Trust's annual MaC Grant and South Australian History Fund (SAHF) grant schemes and provides strategic and practical support to South Australia's community history network. She has a keen interest in the sustainability of regional museums and collections and the value of these in preserving and presenting South Australian historical stories. She has been a member of the Federation of Australian Historical Societies' Council since 2015 and is a member of the National Standards Taskforce currently revising the National Standards for Australian Museum and Galleries (NSAMG).

Continued Contributors



Dr Lenore Layman

Dr Lenore Layman is a retired historian who worked for many years at Murdoch University after a variety of prior employments. She is busy with community history projects, mostly with the Royal WA Historical Society where she is a Councillor and the newsletter editor. She is also active in the Society for the Study of Labour History, and is secretary of the WA History Foundation which makes yearly grants to WA historical research projects. Her most recent major publication is *Asbestos in Australia: From Boom to Dust*, and she was the historian member of the team which produced the Australian Asbestos Network website on the health disaster of asbestos use in Australia. Lenore was recently honoured to be awarded a FFAHS and AM.



Robert Nicholson

Robert Nicholson AO was born in Western Australia to a legal family established by his grandfather, father and uncle. After practising law for around 20 years he was appointed to the Commonwealth Administrative Appeals Tribunal. Two years later he went to the Supreme Court of Western Australia then 6 years later the Federal Court. Retiring in 2007 he became active in the Western Australian Historical Society, becoming President twice and being one of its representatives on the Federal Historical Society. He has published a biography of his grandfather.



Charles Sowerwine

Charles Sowerwine, FAHA, FRHSV, is Emeritus Professor of History at the University of Melbourne and author of *France since 1870: Culture, Society and the Making of the Republic* (3rd edn; London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018). He has been a member of the RHSV Council since 2013 and has chaired its Heritage Committee since 2016. He has been a member of the National Trust (Vic) since 1973 and was involved in the first heritage study of Fitzroy in 1979. He collaborated in the development of the National Trust's Advocacy Toolkit and wrote 'Melbourne 2010-18' and 'Melbourne in the 2020s' for the RHSV's Melbourne's Twenty Decades (2019).

Lynette Russell



Professor Lynette Russell AM is an award-winning historian and Indigenous studies scholar. She is a descendant of the Wotjabaluk people of western Victoria and is currently Kathleen Fitzpatrick Laureate Fellow at Monash University. She is the author or editor of 17 volumes with several more in train. Lynette is the only Australian scholar to be elected to both the Royal Historical Society (London) and the Royal Anthropological Institute (London). In addition, she has held two fellowships at Cambridge University and one at All Souls at Oxford University.

Contributors



Pamela Statham Drew

Pamela Statham Drew's main research interests are in early Australian economic history, which she pursued as the only woman in the Economics Department at UWA from 1966, publishing a number of books and articles. She retired from UWA in 2006 as Associate Professor, and since then has written four books on WA history including recently a book on Sandalwood, *Santalum spicatum*. Pamela was a founding member of the Friends of Battye Library (1981) and President for many years; a Councillor of the Royal WA Historical Society since 2008 and still Convenor of their Readings and Publications Committee, responsible for all speakers at general meetings and the Journal, *Early Days*, that carries their edited contributions.



Rosalie Triolo

Dr Rosalie Triolo is Senior Lecturer in History Education, Monash University. She is a Fellow and Councillor of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, the Immediate Past-President and on the Board of the History Teachers' Association of Victoria (HTAV), has been active with HTAV for over 30 years, and is an elected or invited member of other Victorian and Australian historical and education bodies. Histories of World War One and Australia are her specialist areas. She has published scholarly works, professional learning and classroom resources for primary, secondary and tertiary audiences, and presents regularly at state and national events. Four of her publications have been distributed to every Australian school.



Christine Yeats

Christine Yeats is currently President of the Federation Australian Historical Societies and was the President of the Royal Australian Historical Society from 2018-2021. She is Immediate Past President of the Independent Scholars Association of Australia (ISAA), Immediate Past Chair of ISAA NSW, Convenor of the Assessment Sub-Committee of the UNESCO Australian Memory of the World Committee and Jessie Street National Women's Library Board Member. Christine is an archivist, researcher and professional historian with a particular interest in women's history.



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