



Historical Society Matters

The newsletter of the Federation of Australian Historical Societies



History and heritage news from around Australia

From the President

Commemorations and orations, collection management and access, professional learnings and partnerships, new technologies, themed approaches, and the pleasure of creating and reviewing publications; a range of history and heritage activities are celebrated in this edition of *Historical Society Matters*.

The Federation is proud to share the achievements of each of its State and Territory constituents. This newsletter not only provides readers with success stories that generate satisfaction, but intentionally presents ideas for readers and their groups to consider emulating. Australia's history and heritage movements, if visibly energetic, inclusive and progressive, will more likely be resilient and attract moral and financial support from other groups in their communities as well as all levels of government.

The 50th Anniversary of Cyclone Tracy brought together leading Territory and national political as well as historical dignitaries, and the Canberra Day oration

annually attracts the same. The partnerships in each of the HSNT and C&DHS reports are refreshed to facilitate 'the next set' of collaborations.

The RAHS report attests to outreach activities that embrace many partners, collections and new approaches to local and family history research. The HTSA report reveals the 'behind the scenes' professional expertise essential to that research. And, Tasmania facilitates a different type of outreach through a fascinating technology platform that brings a walk through Launceston to life for anyone with a new app.

RHSQ presents an impressive suite of professional learning lectures and other events, as does RHSV, the latter complete with references to publications and other facets of March Women's History Month. RWAHS prompts readers to take a journey through the covers and contents of its near-century-old journal and to feel encouraged to contribute to the journal's future.

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[FAHS Facebook page](#)

The Federation of Australian Historical Societies acknowledges that the nation of Australia boasts the longest living culture and heritage of any part of the world. We pay tribute to our First Peoples, their heritage and their contribution to our contemporary society. We will endeavour to have First Peoples engage in our historical work and participating as members. We acknowledge the First Peoples as the original custodians of the land on which our societies work and operate.

These are only tastes of what can be found within. The items are testimony to the skills and dedication of history and heritage volunteers and staff Australia-wide.

Of note, I began writing this item in National Volunteer Week, 19-25 May. Its 2025 theme of 'Connecting Communities', while highlighting the contributions of volunteers (and paid staff who 'do so much extra for their passion') is equally the national FAHS message. Consider subscribing to the national Volunteering Australia newsletter so you, too, can access the organisation's connections, ideas and supports, including as preparation for the 2026 week: <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/get-involved/nvw/>. Remember also to visit the websites and Facebook pages of FAHS constituents or their associated parties, linked within for your convenience. Inform your national picture and,

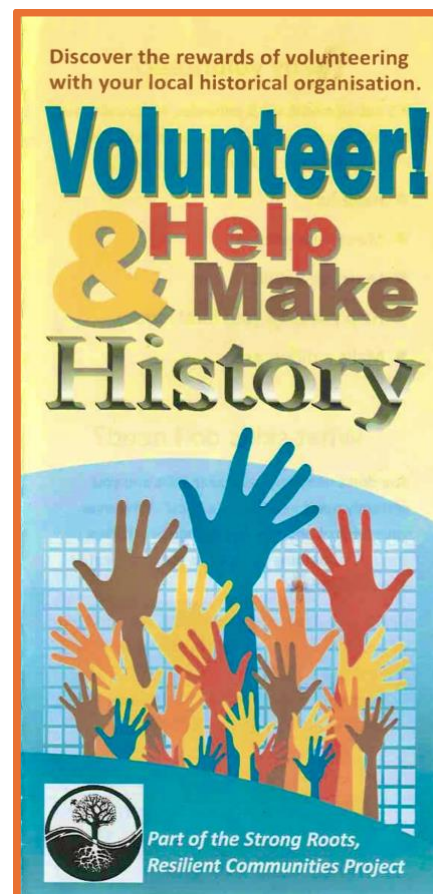
through Facebook, share for yourself your activities.

Finally, and concluding on the note of achievement, the criteria for nominations for the FAHS Fellowships and Awards of Merit have been reviewed and, as with this newsletter, will soon be promoted through each FAHS constituency. Nominations will close 15 September 2025. The Awards Committee looks forward to learning about your special people.

Thank you for all you contribute to the wellbeing of Australia's history and heritage.

Rosalie Triolo
FAHS President

Front page of a flyer developed by
Buloke Shire, Victoria, encouraging
volunteering for local historical
societies.



FAHS Constituents

- Canberra & District Historical Society: <https://www.canberrahistory.org.au/>
- Historical Society of the Northern Territory: <https://www.historicalsocietynnt.org.au/>
- History Trust of South Australia: <https://www.history.sa.gov.au/>
- Royal Australian Historical Society: <https://www.rahs.org.au/>
- Royal Historical Society of Queensland: <https://www.queenslandhistory.org/>
- Royal Historical Society of Victoria: <https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/>
- Royal Western Australian Historical Society: <https://histwest.org.au/>
- Tasmanian Historical Research Association: <https://thra.org.au/>

FAHS Office-Bearers

The following people were nominated by FAHS State and Territory constituents and elected at the FAHS Annual General Meeting in October 2024. Across 2025, they will be representing and working for your constituency as well as a stronger Australian history and heritage presence in national contexts.

President and RHSV delegate:

Dr Rosalie Triolo OAM FRHSV

Immediate Past President and RAHS delegate:

Ms Christine Yeats FRAHS

Senior Vice-President and HSNT delegate:

Dr Don Garden OAM FFAHS FRHSV

Junior Vice-President and RHSV delegate:

Ms Margaret Anderson FFAHS

Treasurer and RWAHS delegate:

Mr Nick Drew

Secretary and RHSQ delegate:

Dr Ruth Kerr OAM FFAHS

C&DHS delegates: **Mr Nick Swain and Mr Gary Kent**

HTSA delegate: **Ms Alice Beale**

RAHS delegate: **To be advised**

RHSQ delegate: **Mr Stephen Sheaffe AM**

RWAHS delegate: **Mr Michael Nind**

THRA delegates: **Ms Caroline Homer and Mr Bradley Wood**



Historical Society
of the Northern Territory inc

Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of Cyclone Tracy

HSNT Website

Many readers will remember the devastation of Cyclone Tracy which wiped out Darwin on Christmas Day 1974. The event changed people's lives, the direction of the city and local building codes.

To commemorate the occasion, many organisations held events, talks and displays leading up to, and on, the anniversary, some of the organisations being the Darwin City Council, National Trust NT, Museum and Art Gallery of the NT, Darwin Ski Club, Library and Archives NT, Darwin City Library and the Historical Society of the Northern Territory.

HSNT showed old film clips on Cyclone Tracy: "When will the Birds Return?" and "Life after Tracy". Books written by people who experienced Tracy first-hand were also re-published: *Ella Stack, "Is There Anyone Alive in There?" Our Cyclone Tracy, Darwin, Christmas, 1974*, HSNT, Darwin, 2013, and Susan Sayers, *The Not So "Silent Night": Cyclone Tracy Stories from Doctors, Nurses and Health Workers*, HSNT, Darwin, 2015.

The Museum and Art Gallery NT revamped its Cyclone Tracy display to include a replica of the damaged red Torana which had famously presented a white and blunt message about Tracy on it. Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese attended the displays.

Sir Peter Cosgrove launched military historian Tom Lewis' book titled *Cyclone Warriors*, about the defence personnel who came to Darwin to clean up and assist afterwards.

HSNT Facebook page

The most outstanding contribution to the commemorations was the "Cyclone Tracy Survivors Committee" which organised talks, displays, published *50 Stories: 50 Years*, and organised a reunion of survivors as well as commemorative sculpture at East Point where the cyclone entered. The sculpture

represents five decades and has the names of those who died engraved on it. The sculpture was unveiled early Christmas morning with Prime Minister Albanese and Governor General Sam Mostyn in attendance.

Bev Phelts
HSNT Vice-President

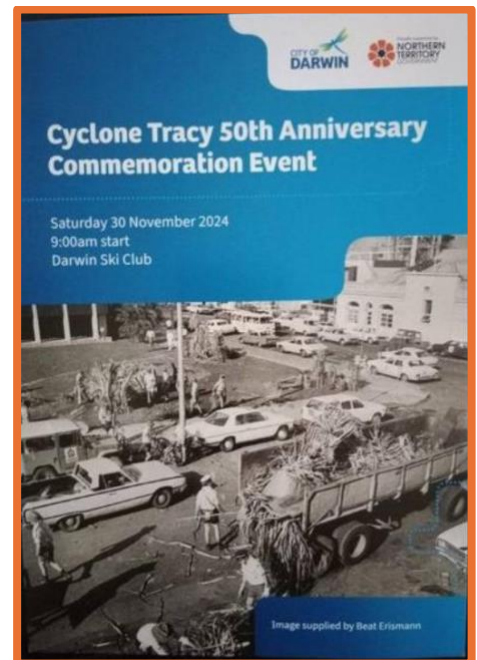


Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese and Member for Solomon, Luke Gosling, were shown around by HSNT member and History Curator, Jared Archibald. Photo: NT News 24 December 2024

Bev Phelts, HSNT Vice-President, with John Garner who originally painted on the Tracy 'icon Torana'.



Historian Tom Lewis with Member for Solomon, Luke Gosling, and Sir Peter Cosgrove



The sculpture representing five decades with the names of those who perished.



Engaging across Disciplines: Teaching Museum Collection Management as Collaborative Practice

HTSA Website

HTSA Facebook page

Each year since 2023, staff from the History Trust of South Australia and South Australian Museum have collaborated to present a week-long intensive in Collections Management as part of the University of Adelaide's post-graduate Museum and Curatorial Studies course. The intensive was originally co-designed and co-delivered, drawing on the presenters' combined half-century of professional practice across the disciplines of anthropology, archeology, museum studies and history, along with a decade of working together across institutional boundaries. The teaching was based in the collections, engaging students with objects, each other, a range of team members from each institution, and offering hands-on learning. The course intake was structured to ensure a range of students, including First Nations students.

The Collection Management course was born out of a desire to move past the assumption that collection management is a set of pre-defined steps that can simply be achieved by following standard museum procedure. As the editors of *Collections Management as Critical Museum Practice* have recently asserted, collections management requires deep disciplinary knowledge and ability to critically evaluate the values and ethics at its foundations (Krmopotich & Stevenson 2024: 1).

Seeing collection management as a set of standard procedures discounts the considerable professional skill and intellectual rigor required to achieve many of the tasks required in the profession.

The course was structured to follow the lifecycle an object may take through a museum collection. This process started with the object's selection, and moved through the accessioning process, on to how it is used and cared for, and finally the eventual process of decay, whether physical decay or the decay of relevance followed by deaccessioning. Throughout this, the teaching team touched on the policies, politics and practice that influenced how an item is managed. We drew on specific expertise within our institutions, including guest lectures on collections digitisation and the National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries.

Other priorities for the course included exposing students to collection management practices across different collection field. While the primary learning materials came from history and anthropology collections, opportunities for the students to hear from experts caring for natural history collections – specifically at the State Herbarium of South Australia – and archival collections – in this case those held by the South Australian

Museum – provided important insights.

The implication of managing a collection across time was also addressed, demonstrating the need for collection managers to have an understanding of practice from the beginning of museums and how that practice has evolved to contemporary standards. Understanding this framework is particularly important for anthropological collections with foundations in the colonial era.

Finally, the teaching team ensured the students saw collections as dynamic spaces that no longer fit neatly in to a 'back of house' realm. It is no longer possible for museums to only provide collection access through exhibitions and galleries, or more recently through digital access. With the dramatic shifts that have occurred in thinking around who controls collections, globally, museums and their practitioners are refocusing themselves as care-takers rather than owners. This means that collection managers are often the primary contact for community access to collections, in particular collections access that is not related to an institution-driven project or process.

While it is hard to know exactly what impact the course had, the feedback received from the

students has been overwhelmingly positive. One student describing it as

“... one of the best organised and conducted classes I’ve ever taken. Each teaching facet was delivered expertly and effectively.”

Overall, the students appreciated the chance to be in the collections and the mix of lectures interspersed with hands-on workshops. The opportunity to talk to and learn from a range of industry professionals was important to the students, as was the unfiltered view of collections management delivered during the week. Many students enjoyed the intense pace of the course while others wanted it to be longer.

The teaching team, once we recovered from the exhaustion of a

week-long intensive held in a collection environment, was satisfied with how the course had run. From the outset it was important to give the students a wide breadth of experience across institutions and disciplines which was possible because the course was taught out of multiple institutions, the combined years of professional experience and because of the broad networks maintained by the primary course lecturers. At the end of the day, the teaching team hopes the students came away with an appreciation that the field of collection management is dynamic, ever-evolving and complex. It is an honor to work with collections of such immense significance but, to do so with integrity, one needs deep knowledge in the field – and then the understanding develops

for what rules cannot be broken and what rules have a bit of flexibility.

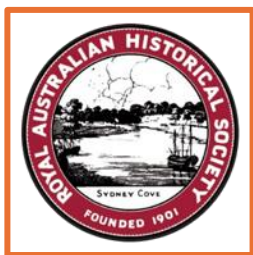
Reference

Krmpotich, C and A. Stevenson, 2024. ‘Introduction: Collections management is/as critical practice’ in Krmpotich, C and A Stevenson (eds.) *Collections Management as Critical Museum Practice* (pp. 1-22). University College London, London.

Alice Beale
HTSA Delegate with Mandy
Paul, Head of Collections -
History Trust of South
Australia



University of Adelaide Collection
Management students and some
of their teachers in 2023.



'Thinking Outside the Square' with the RAHS and its Research Community

[RAHS Website](#)

[RAHS Facebook page](#)

The Regional and Western Sydney Seminar Program is a vital part of the long-standing outreach initiatives developed by the Royal Australian Historical Society (RAHS). This program features skills-based training and local history research components tailored to the needs of historical societies and community groups throughout New South Wales. Support from Create NSW, through the NSW Government's Multi-Year Program and Devolved Grants, plays a key role in enabling the RAHS to continue delivering high-quality educational resources and training in local and community history across the state.

On 29 March, the RAHS, in partnership with the NSW Central Coast Family History Society, presented its first one-day seminar for 2025, titled *Looking Outside the Square: Exploring Business and Biographical Records in Family and Local History*. The seminar was presented by Adjunct Associate Professor Carol Liston AO and Christine Yeats FRAHS, who delivered four sessions: *Researching Business and Company Records for Individuals* (Parts 1 and 2); *The Historical Land Records Viewer (HLRV): Searching for Individuals*; and *The Biographical Database of Australia (BDA): Searching for Convicts, Soldiers and Others*.

The seminar focused on researching individuals through non-traditional sources, such as business records, many of which are now accessible online. The theme, 'looking outside the square', encouraged participants to expand their research practices by incorporating sources not always associated with genealogical or local history research. Carol and Christine

explored key archival collections held by institutions such as the Reserve Bank of Australia, State Library of NSW, National Library of Australia, Museums of History NSW (State Archives Collection), National Archives of Australia, the Noel Butlin Archives, University of Melbourne, as well as the BDA and HLRV. Both presenters provided practical guidance on accessing and interpreting these diverse records, which often contain valuable information about individuals and their activities.

In addition to the regional seminar program aimed at local and family history groups, the RAHS hosts a year-round lecture series at its headquarters, History House in Sydney's CBD. These events include workshops on various historical research topics, many of which are delivered in partnership with the Workers Education Association (WEA), an independent, not-for-profit adult education provider founded in 1913. These workshops attract a broad audience and further enhance the RAHS's educational reach.

A significant development in recent years was the 2017 privatisation of the NSW Land Titles Office, granted under a 35-year concession to Australian Registry Investments, now operating as NSW Land Registry Services (NSW LRS). This transition was accompanied by a major digitisation initiative, resulting in public access to more than 19 million images of historical land records via the HLRV. These include maps, plans, land grants, Old System deeds, Torrens Title documents, indexes, the General Register of Deeds, the Miscellaneous Register and Primary Application Records.

The RAHS responded proactively to these changes, using the opportunity to expand and enhance its training programs for community historians, with a renewed focus on land title research. While the RAHS had long incorporated land records into its workshops, the digitisation and increased accessibility of these materials enabled the Society to meet growing demand for specialised training in this area.

Importantly, the HLRV contains more than just land ownership information – it offers researchers a rich source of personal data. The RAHS has adapted its workshops to reflect this, incorporating strategies for identifying and tracing individuals within land records. For instance, records relating to name changes, which often appear in dealings documents or memorials, are valuable for tracking individuals whose identities may have changed due to marriage, migration, or legal circumstances. This expanded focus was evident in the March seminar, where sessions demonstrated how researchers can construct biographical narratives using these under-utilised resources.

The workshops now guide participants through identifying personal information in documents such as Old System deeds, grants, and Torrens Title dealings. These records may contain names, occupations, dates, addresses, and signatures, all of which can be used to build timelines and contextualise individual lives within broader historical narratives. By teaching participants

how to interpret such details, the RAHS has broadened the utility of HLRV beyond its traditional use for land research, making it a powerful tool for family historians, biographers, and social researchers alike.

These expanded workshops have substantially enriched the RAHS's educational offerings and delivered lasting benefits for its members. The practical, skills-based nature of the training ensures that researchers leave with improved capabilities and greater confidence in navigating and applying land record data to their projects. Moreover, the RAHS's leadership in this area has enhanced its reputation within the wider

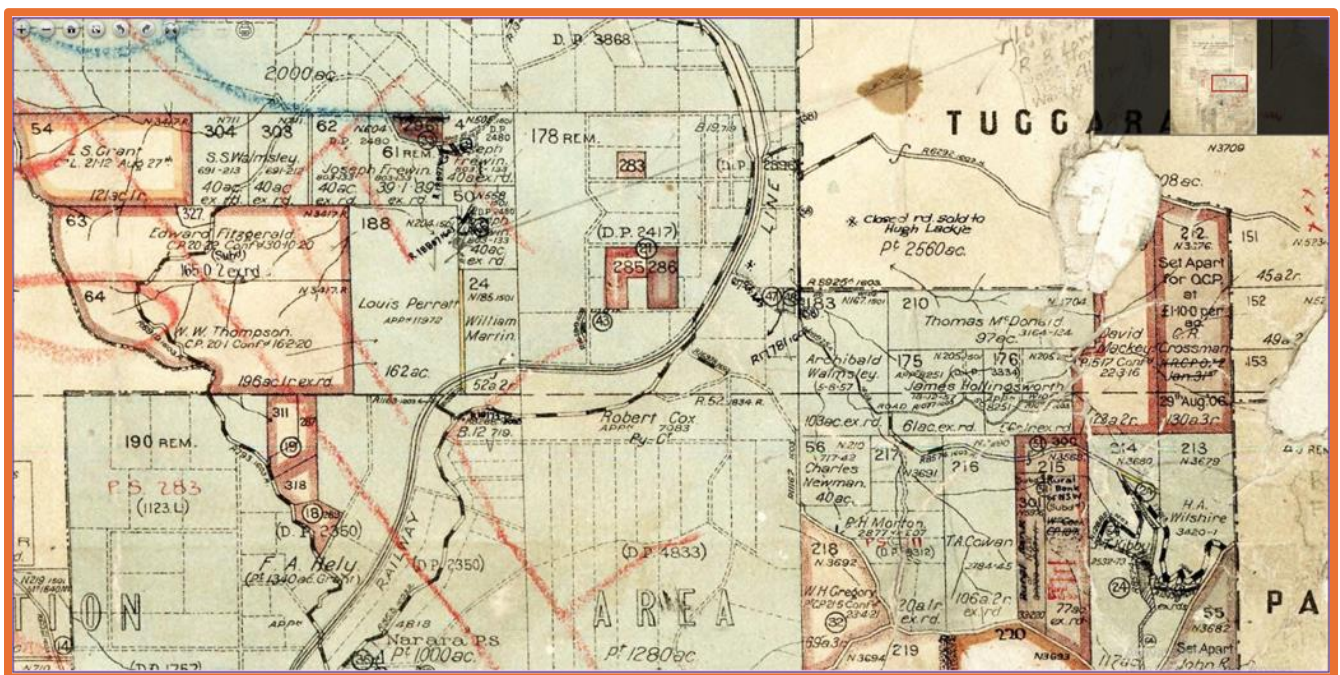
research community. By co-hosting and facilitating workshops across the state, the Society has attracted new members and built strong partnerships with local historical organisations. These collaborations reinforce the RAHS's role as a central hub for historical research and training.

The Society's ongoing commitment to making historical data accessible and useful aligns with its broader mission to support historical inquiry and heritage preservation throughout New South Wales. The ability to interpret and apply records like those found in the HLRV ensures that important stories—especially those that might otherwise remain hidden –

are uncovered and shared with a wider audience.

Ultimately, the RAHS's response to the privatisation and digitisation of the NSW land titles system demonstrates its adaptability and dedication to community-focused historical research. By turning a potential challenge into a catalyst for growth, the RAHS has strengthened its educational leadership, expanded its training programs, and empowered researchers across the state to engage more deeply with their local and family histories.

Christine Yeats
Immediate Past President and
RAHS Delegate



Section of Parish Map – County of Northumberland Parish Gosford Edition 12, 1929 (HLRV)

Adjunct Associate Professor Carol Liston AO, RAHS President, Rod Horton, President of the Central Coast Family History Society and Christine Yeats FRAHS, RAHS Senior Vice President, 29 March 2025.



Sharing Many Histories: The Busy Events Schedule at RHSQ

[RHSQ Website](#)

[RHSQ Facebook page](#)

The Royal Historical Society of Queensland is convening many events across 2025.

Monthly lectures that are delivered on the second Wednesday of each month are a staple. April's lecture was an excellent paper on religion with the recently launched Queensland Atlas of Religion. On 14 May, Marc Serge Riviere delivered a lecture on Matthew Flinders, discussing if Flinders was a British spy or a victim of an unfortunate chain of events. After circumnavigating Australia in the *Investigator*, Flinders' ship on return to England struck a reef off the Queensland Coast (Wreck Reef). Eventually, another ship landed in Mauritius carrying the survivors of the first ship accident and the French Governor ordered that Flinders be arrested and imprisoned where he was held for almost a decade.

On 17 May 2025, a larger conference to commemorate the transfer of the first European settlement at Redcliffe to the Brisbane River in 1825 was being held. The conference was titled the 2025 Moreton Bay Settlement Conference. Twelve lectures were delivered, and other papers will be presented for publication only. Gaja Kerry Charlton gave the Welcome to Country.

On 6 June, the annual dinner at Tattersalls Club will be held with the presentation of the John and Ruth Kerr Medal. The State

Librarian of Queensland, Vicki McDonald, will be the guest speaker. This event is held jointly with the Professional Historians Association (Queensland).

On 13 June, Dr Jim Griffin and John Rostron from the Queensland Communications Museum are presenting a joint paper on the 1960's super-highway that modernized telecommunications in Queensland and connections to the world.

The second conference will be held at the University of Queensland on 20 June 2025, to commemorate the century since eminent Professor Raymond Dart, a Queenslander, published a very significant paper in South Africa concerning the discovery of Taung and human evolution. Dart was a visionary scientist and his paper was one of the most important published on this topic. The presenters include Professor John Pearn, Emeritus Professor Laurence Grafton and Professors Michael Westaway and Jackson Njau.

In July, Paul Granville, a volunteer at the RHSQ, will deliver a lecture on the history of real estate development in the metropolitan inner south: Shady Real Estate in Brisbane.

On 19 August, Professor Kay Saunders and others are organising a function at the Commissariat Store to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the publication of

Raymond Evans' book *Exclusion, Exploitation, and Extermination: Race Relations in Colonial Queensland*.

On Saturday 6 September and in conjunction with the United Service Club Queensland, a conference is being held to commemorate the 80-year anniversary of the ending of WWII in the Pacific. A committee has been formed with representatives from the RHSQ and related military organisations in Queensland. A formal dinner will be held on the Friday evening, the conference on the Saturday and a boat trip to Fort Lyton on the Sunday.

On 11 October, a conference is being organised at City Hall to commemorate the centenary of the merger of the shires and towns in Brisbane into the Greater Brisbane Council Area. There will be 12 distinguished speakers, and others who will present papers for publication only.

At RHSQ's AGM to be held 20 November, Ray Kerkhove, who has published extensively on Indigenous history, will present the Clem Lack Oration.

All RHSQ committees, including the museum and library committees, perform their functions with enthusiasm and dedication. All is going well.

Stephen Sheaffe
RHSQ Delegate



Finding Women: RHSV in March Women's History Month, and Beyond

[RHSV Website](#)

International Women's Day is celebrated on 8 March and, for this reason, March is chosen by some historical organisations as the calendar reference of 'Women's History Month'. For the background to this dating, a visit to the United Nations IWD website reveals a fascinating timeline of significant developments for equality through to the choice of the date. More alarmingly, however are some of the details of current inequalities and abuses:

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/womens-day>

Separately, but related, the International Women's Day website summarises that, at the current rate of progress, gender parity globally will not be fully achieved until 2158, a time incomprehensible to most of us in Australia. IWD's 2025 theme has, rightly, been called 'Accelerate Action':

<https://www.internationalwomensday.com/Theme>

This article, although reporting on Royal Historical Society of Victoria events, publications and members' activities, presents them intentionally to reader-members nationally as actions worth emulating.

WHM at RHSV

The concept was revived by RHSV in 2019 with support from councillors, staff, volunteers and several interested Victorian organisations. RHSV has played a leading role in promoting the month as the following activities by only some of the dedicated parties across February-April 2025 and in recent years reveal.

Lectures

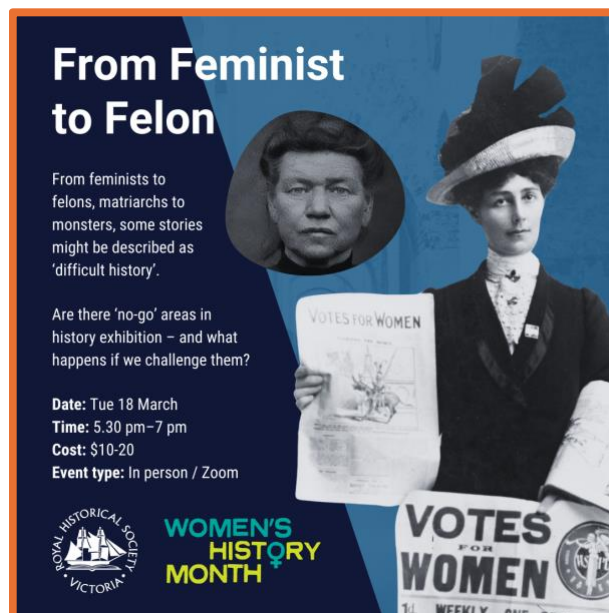
Since 2019, RHSV has hosted the Women's History Lecture as part of its Distinguished Lectures.

The 2025 speaker was Margaret Anderson FFAHS, a RHSV Councillor and delegate to FAHS. As Old Treasury Building Museum's Director and with senior museum experiences in South Australia and Western Australia, her 'From Feminists to Felons: Exhibiting Women's History' began with 1970s museums as traditionally masculine preserves of exhibition and employment. Yet, women's stories of all kinds soon followed in the footsteps of feminist as well as equity-minded public historians rewriting the landscape. Women's stories began to be presented in exhibitions, including 'difficult histories'. Women can be found in all OTB Museum exhibitions and presentations:

<https://www.oldtreasurybuilding.org.au/whats-on/exhibitions/>

WHM lectures over time (and which RHSV or the presenters have published elsewhere) have been:

[RHSV Facebook page](#)



2024 Professor Joy Damousi AM FASSA FAHA, 'Women Humanitarians and War Child Refugees in the C20th'

2023 Iola Mathews OAM, 'Flos Greig: Australia's First Woman Lawyer'

2022 Distinguished Redmond Barry Professor Emeritus Janet McCalman AC FAHA FASSA, 'Unprotected: Aboriginal, Convict and Poor Women in Colonial Victoria: Or how everything bad was made worse by being female'

2021 Carole Woods OAM, 'Vera Deakin in War and Peace'

2020 Professor Lynette Russell AM, 'What the Little Bird Didn't Tell Me'

2019 Professor Marilyn Lake AO, 'Vida Goldstein and Maud Wood Park'

The above women have been powerful women's history contributors and mentors over extensive careers to many of us at RHSV and historians at all levels of the community history and heritage movement, especially women.

Projects and Events Elsewhere in Victoria

Beyond RHSV's Drill Hall, yet still via February-April 2025 promotions, reports and meetings, other historical and heritage organisations have contributed to WHM.

Brunswick Historical Society shared news of its project, 'Women Publicans of Brunswick'.

Prahran Mechanics Institute held its inaugural Florence Bartleman Lecture. Named after PMI's first professionally employed female librarian in 1907, 2025's lecture by Thea Gardiner, 'The World of Mab Grimwade', told the story of Mabel Kelly. Kelly's narrative has been largely shaped through marriage to Russell Grimwade and his papers, rather than through the mining of other sources, as discovered and promoted by Gardiner. Kelly's own energies and philanthropy were revealed.

RHSV Publications

Patrick Ferry, project manager with the National Archives of Australia's Digitisation Services Team in North Melbourne, contributed to RHSV's *History News* with an article commemorating 2025 as the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II. He foregrounded how women enlisted in the Australian Army Nursing Service and Australian Army Medical Women's Service at RHSV's Drill Hall. Some paid the ultimate sacrifice:

Wilma Oram (VX58783), Mary Cuthbertson (VX38746) and Vivian Bullwinkel (VX61330) ... enlisted at the Drill Hall. In February 1942, they were being evacuated from Singapore aboard the S.S. *Vyner Brooke* when it was sunk by the Japanese. After making their way to Bangka Island, Mary Cuthbertson and Vivian Bullwinkel were amongst a group of nurses who were brutally attacked, then gunned down by the Japanese at Ranji Beach. Vivian was the only survivor of that massacre.

Like Wilma Oram, she endured atrocious conditions and treatment in prisoner of war camps for the rest of the war. Major Alice Appleford (V500148) was Assistant Controller of the AAMWS in Victoria and one of the most highly decorated female officers in the Australian Army. As Sister Alice Ross-King, she had been awarded the Military Medal in World War I for her 'great coolness and devotion to duty' under fire when her casualty clearing station was bombed by the Germans.¹

Women's records can be accessed freely online via NAA: <https://www.naa.gov.au/explore-collection/defence-and-war-service-records>

April's edition of *History News* included Nicole Davis, 'The Story of Melbourne's Lanes: An Author's Journey'.² Based on RHSV's latest publication of similar title, it included reference to Melbourne City Council's current priority of naming lanes after significant Victorian women. Some recent additions have been Amphlett Lane after singer Chrissy Amphlett; Jane Bell Lane after a former matron of the Royal Melbourne Hospital; Madame Brussels Lane in the Queens Place development; Lilardie Place after First Nations activist Margaret 'Lilardie' Tucker; and, Heagney Passage for activist Muriel Heagney.³

While male names dominate, Davis gives credit to 19th and early 20th century authorities who named some lanes

after women. In 1885, Lucas Place was renamed Dawsons Lane after resident Mrs E Dawson; Nicholson Lane was named c1895 after Mrs Ann Nicholson; and Stubbs Lane was named c1907 after Mrs Pauline Stubbs, another publican, being the New Zealand Hotel licensee.

Two stand-out book promotions during WHM were Maree Coote's *Daughters of Melbourne: a Guide to the Invisible Statues of Melbourne* which explores women's under-representation in statuary, and Margaret Ann Spence's personal tale, *Cold War in a Hot Kitchen: A Memoir of Mid-Century Melbourne*, reflecting on growing up with her autocratic grand-mother, self-denying mother, and aunt all within an historically accurate and interesting context of 1950s Australia.⁴

RHSV Recognition of its Women

RHSV continues to honour women who have contributed to its life across time in its Biographical Dictionary, created by Cheryl Griffin and constantly updated:

<https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/search-collection/rhsv-womens-biographical-dictionary/>

Conclusion

History News editor, Sharon Betridge, explained in April:

This year we celebrate 50 years since International Women's Year. And, I often receive comments that *History News* focuses on men in history and includes limited content on the role of women; this imbalance is simply a result of the contributions received. Therefore, it seems appropriate that in 2025 we try to improve our focus on the role of women in Victoria's history ... If you, individually, or your society would like to support this push ... please send your contributions.⁵

Sharon's invitation is surely warmly applicable to all Australian history and heritage societies and their contributors nationwide.

¹ Patrick Ferry, 'Stories from the Archives: Honouring the Women who Enlisted at the Drill Hall', *History News*, April 2025, RHSV, pp 5-7

² Nicole Davis, 'The Story of Melbourne's Lanes: An Author's Journey', *History News*, April 2025, RHSV, pp 14-15

³ Weston Bate, Richard Broome, Nicole Davis, Andrew J. May & Helen Stitt, *The Story of Melbourne's Lanes: Essential but Unplanned*, RHSV, Melbourne, 2024

⁴ Maree Coote, *Daughters of Melbourne: A Guide to the Invisible Statues of Melbourne*, Melbournestyle Books, South Melbourne, 2022; and, Margaret Ann Spence, *Cold War in a Hot Kitchen: A Memoir of Mid-Century Melbourne*, Wakefield, South Australia, 2024

⁵ Patrick Ferry, 'Stories from the Archives', *History News*, April 2025, RHSV, pp 6-7

Rosalie Triolo
RHSV Delegate



Heritage at your Fingertips: Exploring Launceston's History Through Digital Innovation

THRA Website

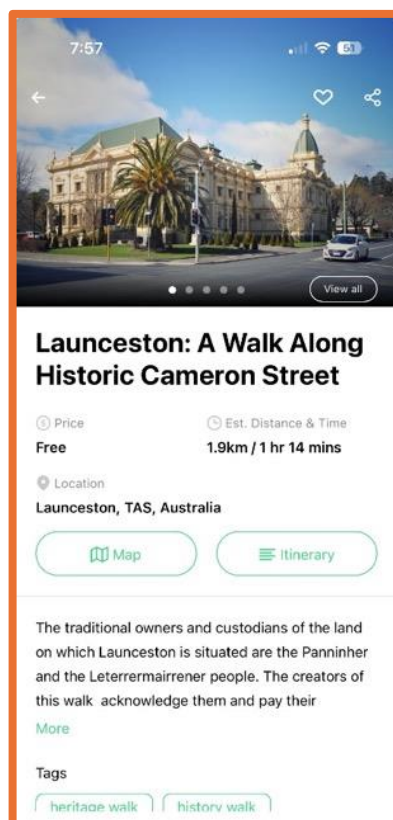
In an age where digital technology shapes how we interact with the world, Australia's third oldest European settlement is improving the way residents and visitors connect with local history. Established in 1806, Launceston in Tasmania possesses a rich architectural heritage that spans several significant eras and styles. Now, thanks to a successful collaboration between local historians and app developers, exploring these historical treasures has never been more accessible.

A Walk Along Historic Cameron Street

Cameron Street runs through the heart of Launceston's original town centre, intersecting with the civic centre and connecting the city's great public buildings and parks. Dominated by Georgian buildings until the 1880s, the city gained a greater Victorian flavour following the late 19th century mining boom on the West Coast. This thoroughfare became the logical starting point for the Launceston Historical Society's first digital walking tour.

The route from Albert Hall along Cameron Street to the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery showcases numerous architectural gems, including the imposing Crown Mill and the iconic Launceston Post Office with its distinctive clock tower. Each building represents a chapter in the city's evolution and contributes to Launceston's unique character.

The tour was originally developed for National Trust Heritage Month in May 2013 as a downloadable resource and has evolved significantly. In 2021, Catherine Pearce of the Launceston Historical Society undertook the task of rewriting the tour into a format for inclusion in an app, *Cya on the Road* (as in 'see ya on the road'), a platform which hosts walking tours from all over the world. Ron Camplin from City Park Radio recorded the accompanying commentary. This technological update transformed a popular but static resource into an interactive experience for the digital age.



THRA Facebook page

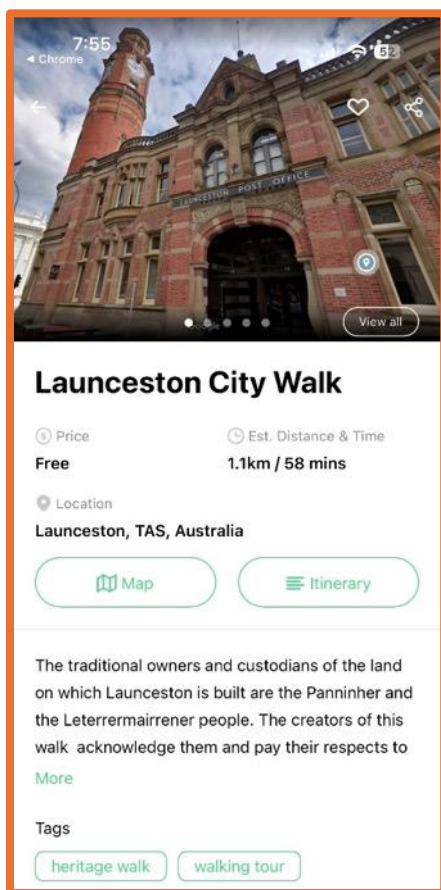
Launceston City Walk

The success of the Cameron Street tour catalysed the development of a more extensive walking experience. The idea for this second walk, the Launceston City Walk, arose four years ago when Amanda McEvoy from then Cityprom (a business and Council marketing body now rebranded as Launceston Central) approached the Historical Society after experiencing the Cameron Street tour with her child's school.

This new initiative aligned perfectly with two important objectives: the Cityprom strategy to revitalise the city centre, and the Launceston Historical Society's mission to increase awareness about the city's heritage buildings.

Launceston Historical Society executive members, Wendy Roberts and Catherine Pearce, took on this ambitious project, researching and writing the script with valuable input from society members, particularly President Marion Sargent. Ron Camplin from City Park Radio once again lent his voice to the narrative, creating continuity between the two tours.

Rather than focusing on a single street, this expanded tour visits architectural highlights across several city blocks, providing a more comprehensive view of Launceston's historical landscape. The authors prioritised historical accuracy while ensuring the content remained engaging and concise.



Digital Footsteps

The transformation of these walking tours through digital technology has fundamentally changed how people engage with Launceston's history. The digital revolution has transformed information access, making local history more interactive and engaging. This technological adaptation enhances public awareness and appreciation of the cultural significance embedded in the cityscape.

Buildings that locals might take for granted or that tourists are seeing for the first time are brought to prominence and significance through such interpretation. Things seen but previously unnoticed become visible and appreciated. The technology acts as a lens through which both residents and visitors can rediscover their surroundings.

One of the most significant advantages of these digital tours is

their flexibility. Unlike traditional guided tours with fixed schedules, users can embark on these self-guided audio tours whenever they please and proceed at their own pace. Whether someone has just an hour to spare or wants to spend an entire afternoon exploring, the app accommodates individual preferences.

The accessibility of these tours is particularly noteworthy. The *Cya on the Road* app is free to download, making Launceston's heritage accessible to everyone. The Launceston Historical Society pays a modest monthly subscription of \$12 to ensure the walks remain free and advertisement-free for all users.

Remarkable Success

The popularity of these digital walking tours has exceeded all expectations. The two Launceston walks receive hundreds of views each month and were viewed over 8,000 times in 2024 alone. This impressive engagement demonstrates a substantial interest in local history when presented in an accessible, modern format.

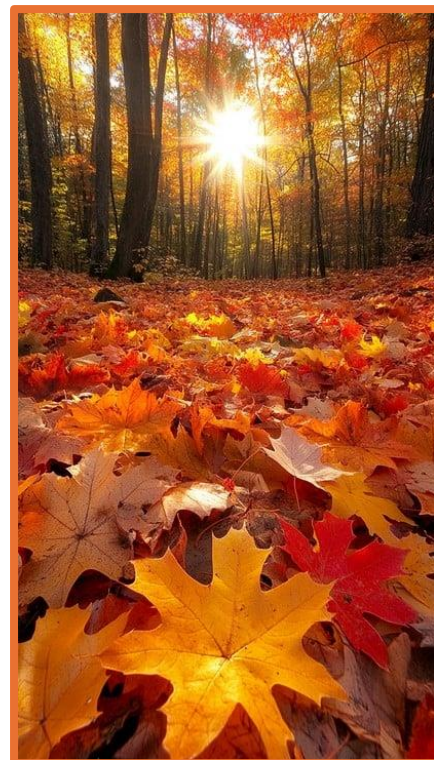
Perhaps most remarkably, these tours took first and second prize in *Cya on the Road's* top 20 walks of 2022, outranking even a walk featuring the Sydney Opera House, which finished in third place. This achievement underscores how technological innovation can effectively satisfy, generate, and promote interest in history and heritage.

As heritage conservation faces increasing challenges in our rapidly changing world, initiatives like these digital walking tours represent a promising approach to fostering public engagement with that past. By embracing

modern technology to showcase historical treasures, Launceston has created a model that other Australian communities might well consider emulating.

For those interested in experiencing these award-winning tours, visitors and residents can access them by downloading the free *Cya on the Road* app. It can be found in the App Store or GooglePlay by entering Launceston into the search box. Launceston's free Wi-Fi service can also be used to access the app, allowing visitors to conserve their own data.

Bradley Wood
Launceston Historical Society
Delegate





Early Days: Enjoying its Past, Present and Future Days

[RWAHS Website](#)

[RWAHS Facebook page](#)

RWAHS's Journal, *Early Days*, is the only annual journal for Western Australian history and is a major component of the RWAHS's activities. It has a rich and diverse content that is always worth looking back on, as many communications between RWAHS members have indicated over the years.

This item encourages readers to look back on past editions and shares an interesting pictorial history. It also promotes an exciting opportunity to enjoy learning more about Western Australia's history and contribute to the State's historical record. The current editors have decided to retire and are seeking replacements. The search is now on for the enjoyable dual roles of text editor and production designer.

Retrospect

Following RWAHS's founding in September 1926, monthly general meetings produced research papers that were published from 1927. A publication, titled "Journal and Proceedings", was initially produced as a small booklet before being transformed into an art deco confection. In 1938, *Early Days* was adopted as the headline title at the same time. More austere covers and a smaller size followed in 1949.

The cover burst into colour in 1999, and the production values have been dramatically improved since then. Colour illustrations commenced within the journal in 2016 and have become a standard feature.

A good account of *Early Days* from 1927 to 1996 can be found in *Early Days* 1996.

Further Developments

In recent years the production run has dropped below four hundred as more members either ask for an 'electronic version only' or do not request a copy. These factors contribute to lower costs and stock holdings.

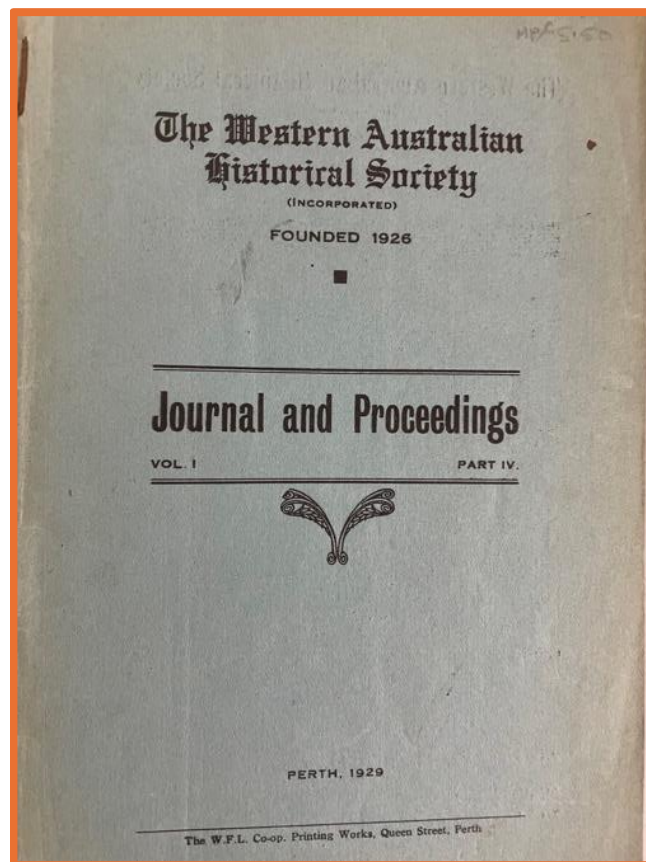
As part of RWAHS's building relocation (see the last edition of *Historical Society Matters*, No. 57) surplus copies of *Early Days* have been disposed of leaving a

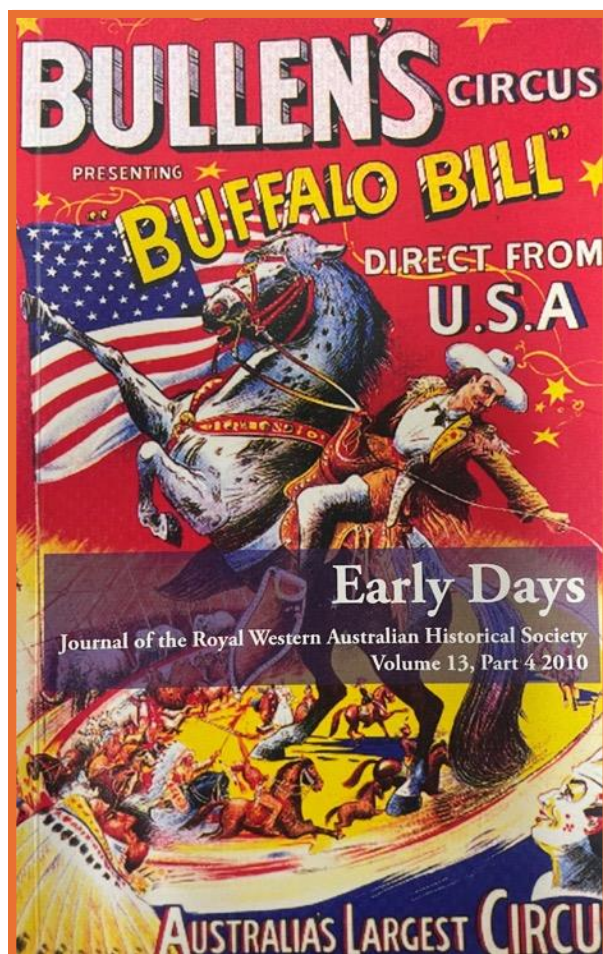
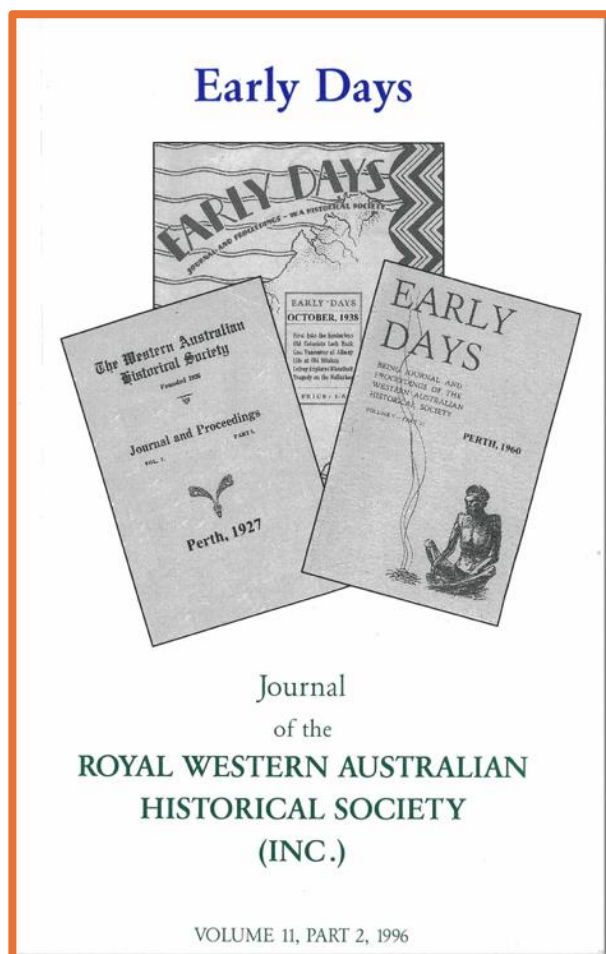
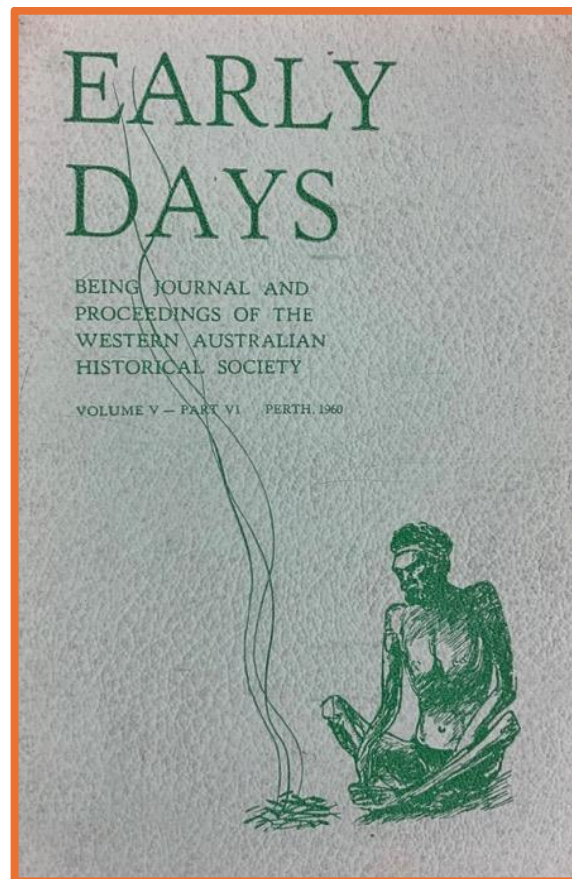
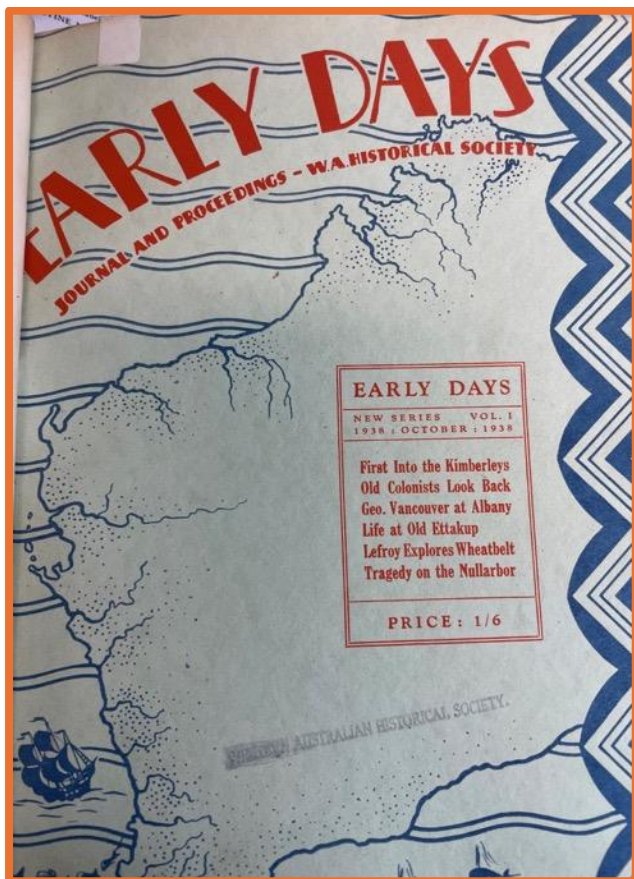
manageable hard copy stock as a reserve alongside the complete set in the Society's Library holdings.

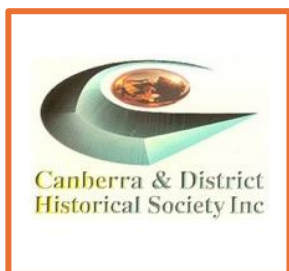
The Society is working with the State Library of Western Australia on a plan to digitise past copies and make them publicly accessible through their catalogue. At present, the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology has the journal online at INFORMIT.

For those who enjoy working closely with Western Australia's history and its historians, here are roles for you.

Michael Nind
RWAHS Delegate







Celebrating the Naming of the National Capital: The 2025 Canberra Day Oration and Story behind it

[CDHS Website](#)

[CDHS Facebook page](#)

This year's Canberra Day Oration was delivered at the National Library of Australia on 12 March by former Chief Minister of the Australian Capital Territory, Gary Humphries AO.

The naming of Canberra occurred on 12 March 1913 and there has been a long tradition of celebrating the day. There have been many speeches since then but it was only decades later that the idea of a separate Canberra Day Oration arose and yet more years before it became a regular event thanks to the Canberra & District Historical Society. So, how did this regular event come about?

The naming of the national capital of 'Canberra' has been celebrated in many ways including street parades, re-enactments, exhibitions and civic events. Speeches of varied formality have featured at most events but usually introducing an event rather than being the event in its own right. The Canberra Day Oration took decades to emerge.

As far as can be ascertained, something called the 'Canberra Day Oration' did not appear until 1961, some 48 years after the naming of Canberra. C&DHS President, Richard Reid, located a report that the Canberra Day Celebrations in that year included the 'first Canberra Day Oration' to be given in Civic Square by the Minister for the Interior, Gordon Freeth. C&DHS was involved in the celebrations, putting on an exhibition at the Tourist Bureau.



2025 Canberra Day Oration by Gary Humphries AO:
'Has ACT self-government been a Success?'

Subsequently, a variety of talks were given on Canberra's anniversary about its naming, and some were specifically billed as a Canberra Day Oration.

In March 1963, on the occasion of the visit of HM Queen Elizabeth II to celebrate the Canberra Jubilee, a mere 30 minutes were devoted to addresses about the original Canberra Day. There was a 'narration' by the actor James Condon, and addresses by the Prime Minister (RG Menzies) and HM Queen Elizabeth.

In 1967, there was explicit involvement of C&DHS when its president, Mrs RN (Pat) Wardle, spoke about 'Canberra Day – 1967'.

There appears to be little mention in the press until 1981 when the Canberra Day Oration was delivered in Civic Square by the Minister for the Capital Territory, Michael Hodgman AM QC, originally from Tasmania.

The following year, C&DHS was involved in Canberra Festival Week. The then president, Lyall Gillespie, was informed that the festival would include an oration. That oration was introduced by the president of the ACT House of Assembly, Peter Vallee, and delivered by the Chairman of the Law Reform Commission, the Hon Michael Kirby AC CMG.

The opening of the new Parliament House fell on the 1988 anniversary of Canberra Day. The event included a re-enactment of the laying of the Foundation Stones of the Commencement Column and the naming of the city in 1913. Several speeches were made about that day including by the Chairman of the Parliament House Construction Authority, Alex Morokoff, the Governor-General, Sir Ninian Stephen, the Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, the Minister for Arts and Territories, Gary Punch, and finally by Lady Stephens. On this occasion, there was no specific Canberra Day Oration.

Some four years later the Canberra Day Oration was delivered by journalist, Peter Leonard, and Michael Stanier, a 1992 Rhodes Scholar and winner of the 1991 Tillyard Prize, at Glebe Park as part of ACT Heritage Week.

After this rather erratic history, the Canberra Day Oration became a regular event from 2002 when it was taken over by the C&DHS. The publication celebrating the 50th birthday of CDHS, *Canberra History 1953-2003* stated that

To mark the day in a relevant fashion and give it proper significance the society, in 2002, reintroduced the Canberra Day Oration.

From then on, a veritable 'Who's Who' of the national capital have been Canberra Day orators, including politicians, academics, journalists, authors, senior bureaucrats and even artistic performers (such as Robyn Archer, creative director for the celebration of the centenary of the naming of the national capital). The significance of this event has clearly attracted high profile orators.

Regarding the 2025 oration, the speaker, Gary Humphries AO, had had a long career in politics at the Territory and national level. He was one of the first Members of the ACT Legislative Assembly when the ACT was made self-governing in 1989 and held a number of senior positions in the government including as the ACT's Chief Minister. He was also a Senator for the ACT from 2002 to 2013. Currently undertaking a PhD about ACT self-government, it was appropriate that his oration be about the success or otherwise of self-government in the ACT.

His conclusions? Despite what people have thought about the performance of particular governments, the system of local government has worked well. There is satisfaction with the preferential electoral system (modelled on Tasmania's Hare

Clarke system) and the small unicameral Legislative Assembly with responsibility for functions covered by State and local governments in other jurisdictions.

The Canberra Day Oration in its current form, held in partnership with the National Library of Australia, is now, officially, a 23-year-old tradition with much earlier roots, an eminent speaker list and of high profile not only on C&DHS's calendar but on the calendars of many regular ACT attendees.

Nick Swain
ACT Delegate

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