

Friends



Building bridges to Peel history

Friends of Mandurah Community Museum Newsletter.

Issue Christmas 2009.

MDO Report

The lead up to the festive season has been a busy one for all of us here at the Museum. This continues to be the case with our upcoming exhibition celebrating the 60th anniversary of the foundation of the Mandurah Road Board in 1949. Apart from this, and our Hackett Street School display which we featured in our last newsletter, we have held two additional displays in the intervening period. The first was to mark United Nations Day. A grant funding opportunity was made available to a group headed by the Peel Multicultural Association who organised a display by the constituent members of the group representing the various immigrant cultures in Mandurah. With other cultures being represented it was thought that the history of European settlement in Mandurah should also be able to be showcased, which was a very nice gesture.

The 30th and 31st of October capped off the busy month of displays with the Museum's contribution to the Senior's Expo. Again, the Roy Whitehead photograph collection was the main feature, this time combined with our roll-up banners and promotional material for the Friends. We were lucky to be able to use both our own toucan board and the board provided by the Senior Citizen's centre for our display, thus doubling the display area available to us compared to other exhibitors. Aside from promotional material, friends calendars, newsletters, and membership forms were available. With our stall staffed by two people I think this was the most effective promotional event of the three that we had in October, enabling one-on-one interaction with the majority of those who took an interest in the display. Thanks to Jan, Cheryl, Nancy, Julia, Phyl, and Kristi for helping staff the stall over the two days.

Another area where we are moving forwards again is with our Indigenous Advisory Group. A meeting, lead by Harry Nannup, was held at the Museum on the 7th of December. The main aim of the day was to identify what Indigenous objects in the collection were of local origin and which come from further afield. The possibility of repatriating objects from other areas was discussed and will be an exciting project for the future.

So in conclusion I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New year, one filled with joy and perhaps a visit to the Museum to see our new Roads Board display!

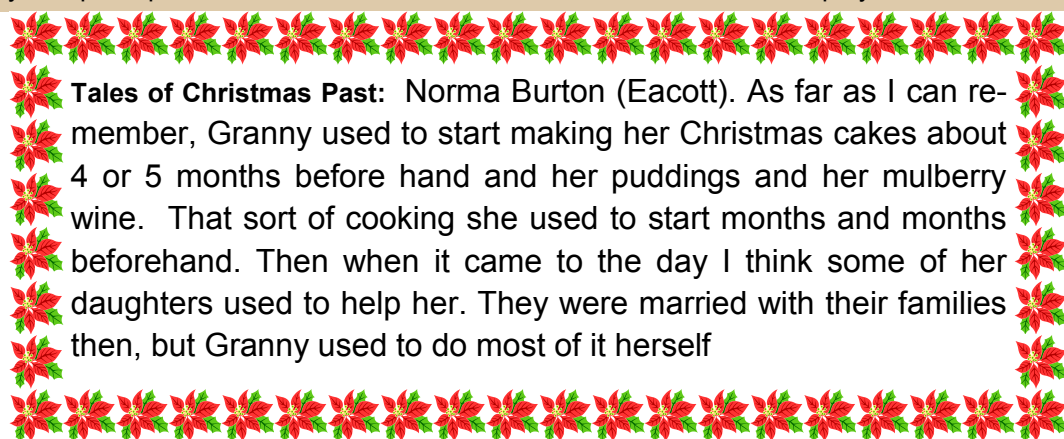
Special features

1953 Bridge. Comparing Narrows to Mandurah Bridge. Memories of bridge building. Tales of Christmas Past
Volunteer Awards
Julia Lindley.
Cheryl Brewer.

Christmas memory

Regular features.

From the MDO .
Nicholas Reynolds.
'Friends' Chairperson reports.
Musing - From the
Visitors book.
Education Matters!!
Katrina Pritchard.

**Tales of Christmas Past:** Norma Burton (Eacott). As far as I can remember, Granny used to start making her Christmas cakes about 4 or 5 months before hand and her puddings and her mulberry wine. That sort of cooking she used to start months and months beforehand. Then when it came to the day I think some of her daughters used to help her. They were married with their families then, but Granny used to do most of it herself



Volunteer Outing.

The 24th of November was the date set for the Museum's annual Christmas outing and historical tour 2009. This year, after some suggestions and consulting with our group of volunteers it was decided that we would take a combined tour of the Bullcreek Aviation Heritage Museum and the Army Museum of WA in Fremantle. Previously, our tours have focused on the Peel and surrounding regions in an effort to increase our combined knowledge of the history of our region. This year we decided to do something different and see how other, larger, growing volunteer staffed museums "do things". The two sites visited were great examples and gave us all lots to think about in our own future context. The Aviation Museum was impressive, both in physical size and sheer number of significant aircraft, objects, and stories that were being told in the space. It's a testament to the dedication of the organisation and its volunteers that such a collection has been amassed. The extent can be shown by the fact that the museum contains the largest collection of aircraft engines in the southern hemisphere. One "gem" in the collection that particularly struck me was a piece of the UK's Blue Streak rocket, as tested at Woomera and recovered in the early 1960s. This is of international significance and would be of great interest to all visitors. So the lesson here is "Tell the world about those gems in your collection!". That's something we all need to remember. Despite the hot day inside the hangar, all enjoyed the displays. I think many of us will be back in the near future to spend a few more hours amongst the wonderful displays.

Lunch this year was provided in the RAFFA clubhouse next to the museum, and we were all thankful for the air-conditioning! Lunch consisted of potato and leek soup, a choice of either fish or roast beef and vegetables for main, followed by tiramisu. Everyone agreed that both fish and beef were excellent, something that can be a concern when ordering a carvery style meal with limited choices. But there was no need for concern here.

Our final stop was the Army Museum. The Museum itself is the largest military collection outside of the Australian War Memorial and, like the Aviation Museum, could well take a whole day to absorb in detail. Covering, as it does, Western Australia's military history from 1829 to the present day, such a large collection cannot be displayed in its entirety in the six galleries that the museum currently has. So fortunately, the museum is now in a position to expand over the whole barracks site, doubling its floor space. This process will go on over the next few years, with the important first steps being the fundraising and Interpretation Planning that they are currently undertaking. This is the important lesson to be learned from our visit here. Interpretation Planning is the key! So while we were all having fun, we were taking mental notes on what we need to do, back at our own Museum.



1953 Bridge. *With so many vehicles crossing the town bridge and many events such as the Christmas Pageant passing over it "Building Bridges" decided to visit the current bridge which is now over 50 years old and due for replacement shortly.*

Planning for a replacement bridge in Mandurah had commenced soon after the end of World War Two by the State government under the then Premier Sir Ross McLarty. The new bridge would have to be capable of handling the increased traffic flows expected after the improvement of Mandurah Road. Sir Ross, whose electorate encompassed Mandurah, made transport infrastructure one of his government's main priorities.

The design of the new structure focused on avoiding the possibility of toredo worm damage that had sealed its predecessor's fate. To this end, the piles were to be made entirely from reinforced concrete. As an economy measure, the remainder of the bridge structure was to be of jarrah, with the exception of the two navigation spans which utilized rolled steel joists to support the timber decking above. The concrete component of the construction amounted to 21 'bays' with 25 ft. between each pile.

Demountable Bailey bridge sections were used during construction. This was a new technique for the time developed from transportable bridges used in World War Two. This method enabled the construction of the gantry over the pile casting yard, and the outriggers which carried the pile frames out over the water to be mounted in their final positions. A 5 ton winch, also mounted on the outriggers, was used to drive the piles into the estuary bed. The wooden components of the bridge amounted to 4,800 linear feet of round logs and 310 tons of sawn jarrah.

Construction began in 1950, and lasted until early 1953. A description of how this was achieved has been provided by Mr. W. Hough who worked on the bridge. Once construction was completed the old bridge was demolished, with gelnite being used to destroy any remaining piles.

In January 1953, Sir Ross McLarty along with senior officers of the Main Roads Department met with the Mandurah Road Board to discuss the construction of fishing stages below the new bridge. The \$2,300 cost of the stages would necessitate the raising of a loan, so a public meeting of ratepayers was held on February 5 in the Hotham Valley Hall. After receiving a favorable reception at the meeting, the matter of the loan was put to a referendum on February 7. After receiving approval of the ratepayers at the referendum the stages were constructed, and continue to be a well used feature of the bridge.

With the defeat of Sir Ross McLarty's Liberal government in the election of February 14 1953, the honour of officially opening the bridge fell to the new Minister for Works, Mr. John Trezise Tonkin on April 17 1953.

Bill Hough. *That was... well at the finish of it, when we finished the Mandurah Bridge we then went along and we had to pull the old one down and we blasted all the piles. We had to put... in the old days it was just bike tubes, filled them up with gelnite and pushed them down the poles and then blew the poles off.*

Hackett St. School 70 year Anniversary Celebration 17th October 2009. By December 2008 we had lots of people interested in a re-union but no one really wanting to do the organising so I approached the school principal Mr Tim O'Keefe to ask if the school was interested in running an event. He was very interested and said he would ask the P & C when they commenced in 2009, if they would like to take it on. In Feb, thanks to helpers, Jan Baker and Phyl Hardy, we held a morning tea at Parkland Villas which was attended by some of the 1939 class who said they would love to meet again, so I knew we had to do something.

Eventually the current P & C met and said they would look at running it, but they had a very small school now and only a few P & C members. As I was able to promise lots of help from Nicholas, his faithful Museum volunteers and past P & C members from many years ago they were happy to go ahead and said they would provide afternoon teas and drinks to raise some money for the school. We proceeded to go ahead and meet with their suggested small Committee once a month. Tim O'Keefe, the president, Mandy Yates, Bev Kelly and Mel, myself and two others.

Nancy Pollard (Drysdale) had offered to help on a Committee and had the time, plus other friends willing to help her on the day. Nancy offered to run a raffle which she did with great success from buying the tickets to gathering prizes and presenting them most attractively.

Wenny Laidler (Watts) offered to go on a committee and to get lots of past students involved. Wenny already had lots of photos and files of her class reunions and carried on copying and naming donated photos. Wenny also joined the Historical Society and copied for and from them, thanks a lot Wenny, fabulous job.

Mr O'Keefe asked if I would be willing to put my name down as a contact, so I also volunteered to contact as many media outlets as I could think of. Sadly people still say they didn't hear about it, guess it's because some families and friends don't keep in touch and it is word of mouth which really helps these sorts of functions. We ran information and adverts on country & city ABC, local radio, local newspapers, city newspapers, and 'Seniors' publications. We did have quite a lot of response with phone calls and offers of help on the day, the phone ran hot some days, so I was pleased when some times it was someone my husband Keith knew from school and he was able to also chat to them. I had some emails and student memories come from Victoria and even overseas.

Anniversary Day was very hot which put some visitors off; however we still had a big crowd with an attendance close to 900 people. Some did manage to come in by the side gate and not fill in their details and family and friends of students didn't give their details either so hard to estimate an exact number. We do know Mike Richards came from Brisbane, some from Geraldton, Albany and Denmark, Wongan Hills, Katanning.

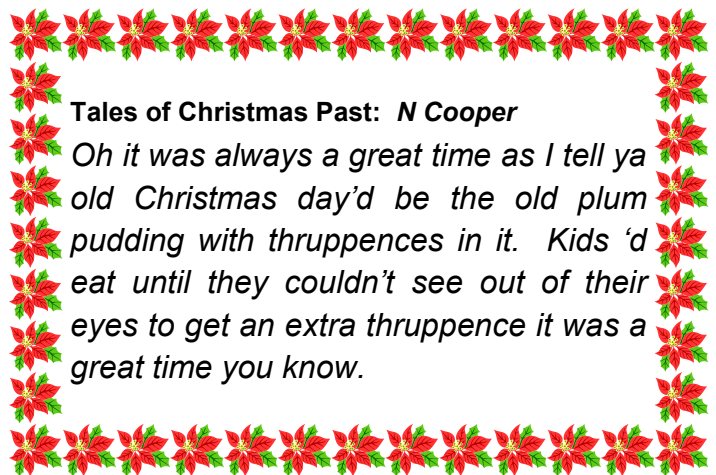
The Principal opened the ceremony along with Mr David Templeman MLP who asked the 1939 students to come up and cut the cake. Ten of them did this, however there were more of this age group there. We were also entertained by the school choir who sang so well and looked really smart in their uniform. Thanks must go to their leaders for the great performance.

Over \$800 dollars from the raffle was given to the P & C. However they were most surprised and very grateful for the amount of cakes and sandwiches donated by our ladies. The very hot day and maybe lack of signage meant not as many people sat and enjoyed a coffee so the P & C froze most of the left overs to have at later school functions with the children.

The Museum display boards were there and thanks again to Nicholas Reynolds from the Museum who spent all afternoon with a slide show running in one of the classrooms. Phyl Hardy also assisted collecting short audio memories of the school for the museum. Next door we had lots of albums of photos, and files of admission forms and history copied from the State Records Office and State and Battye Libraries. Also on display was some sewing from Marilyn Edwards (Cooper) and work books, plus Colin Warne's old school case. Wenny had the display boards borrowed from the Historical society on the verandah here and she had her files open collecting more names or corrections.

Lots of people made a point of thanking us for helping get them together after many years and said how much they enjoyed the afternoon catching up with friends and looking at the Photo displays. So the Committee was very pleased with the way things went. I have collected and copied all comments made and will pass them on to the next lot of organisers. Please feel free to pass on any other comments as they are all valuable.

On behalf of the School Principal and the P & C committee, thank you to every one who contributed in any way with your attendance, work, donations, etc. You all made it the great event it was.
Eleanor Kay



**NEW EXHIBITION OPENING:-
60 YEARS LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
18TH DECEMBER 2009
MANDURAH COMMUNITY
MUSEUM**

Friends of Mandurah Community
Museum

Holiday Homes and Shacks of Mandurah 2010



Calendar available at the museum
\$7.50

Comparing Narrows Bridge to Mandurah bridge.

The Narrows Bridge was the first major public infrastructure to be built after World War Two was built from 1957 to 1959. Narrows was opened 13th November 1959 by Sir Charles Gairdner, as a 4 lane bridge. It made history being the largest precast, prestressed concrete bridge in the world. Construction of the northern interchange for this bridge necessitated the reclamation of a large amount of land from the river. The structure was named a national engineering landmark by the Institution of Engineers, Australia, in November 1999. Plans for a second Narrows Bridge were mooted during the 1970s, but did not eventuate and it was thought in the late 1990s to be the busiest section of freeway in the country. Work commenced on a second bridge in the last days of the 20th Century and early this decade a railway bridge was constructed through the middle of both bridges.

In 2009 it was estimated that the Narrows, now expanded to a second bridge carries 180,000 vehicles per day.

As previously written the first bridge at Mandurah town was constructed in 1894 at a site previously used as a ferry crossing. That bridge was replaced in 1953 with a 2 lane bridge and also like the Narrows a new method of bridge building.

In 2006, traffic over Mandurah bridge was estimated at 12,000 per day.



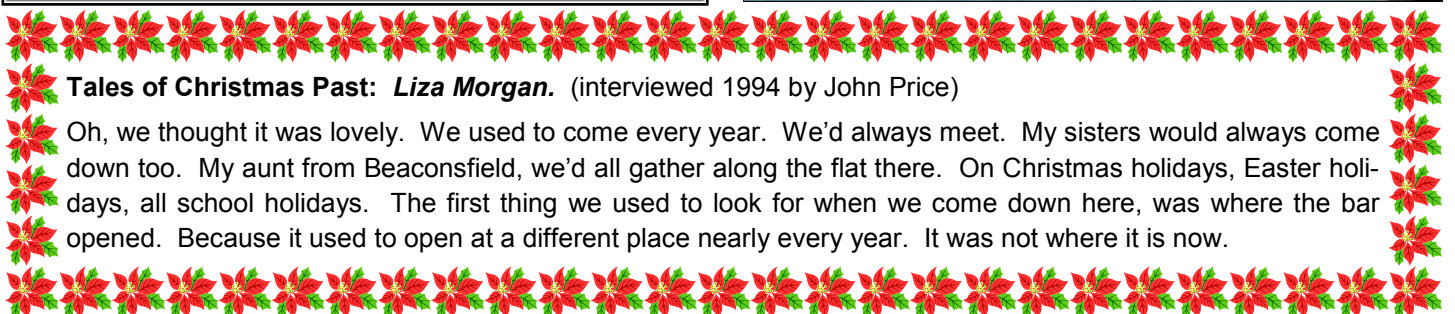
Above photo of Perth looking to Narrows, taken early am 2001, with first generation of digital camera to use floppy disc.

Below photo of Mandurah Bridge from Dalrymple Park taken 2003 with first generation digital camera to use card.



Doug Heedes. (problems building the bridge?) *Not really, there's only one time one of the, when they were driving one of the piles, it snapped off, so they had to drive another one, so if you look at the piles in line you'll see one's on a bit of a slope, because they couldn't go down because of the pile was there under water, so they had it on a bit of a slope.*

.....After the piles were driven into the river bed, I had to join extra pieces of rod to hold the concrete going across the bridge. I had just tacked the rod on when I slipped so grabbed the rod for support but it broke and I landed in the river".



Tales of Christmas Past: Liza Morgan. (interviewed 1994 by John Price)

Oh, we thought it was lovely. We used to come every year. We'd always meet. My sisters would always come down too. My aunt from Beaconsfield, we'd all gather along the flat there. On Christmas holidays, Easter holidays, all school holidays. The first thing we used to look for when we come down here, was where the bar opened. Because it used to open at a different place nearly every year. It was not where it is now.

Education Matters!

The school year is coming to a close for Christmas. Over the past few months I have been working towards completing educational materials for teachers and students as a way of introducing Time, Continuity and Change in the classroom. These kits are portable and contain teachers' notes, student activities, resource materials and hands on objects suitable for student participation. They include: A Wash Day kit, Past School Days kit, Objects from the Past, Children's Games from the Past and the Caravan Box Kit.

The plan is to promote these kits in schools at the beginning of 2010 with the hope of making teachers aware of the educational value of our Museum and as a result, increase school group visitation.

In late November I attended a meeting at the Fire & Emergency Services Education & Heritage Centre in Perth. This meeting was for Education Officers to discuss and share information and plans for 2010. I met the Education Officers from the WA Newspaper, Perth Zoo, Barking Gecko, Art Gallery, Scitech, National Trust and many other organisations. It was interesting to listen to what other organisations provided and what issues and challenges they face.

The Fire & Emergency Services centre showcases the history of fire brigades in WA, this is the old Fire Station opposite Royal Perth Hospital in Murray St. It is well worth a visit, the building has been refurbished and the collection of fire service appliances and memorabilia on display are very interesting. The all-hazards gallery was very interactive. It looked at the elements of fire and water.

Wishing everyone a Christmas filled with joy and happiness.

Katrina Pritchard



Marilyn Giles with a Canberra bomber.



Walter Homewood and Nicholas Reynolds

Now Hear This! During 2009 oral history volunteers have continued to collect the memories of people of Mandurah. While we are always collecting general memories this year Eleanor has concentrated mainly on those people with memories of the Hackett St School's early days as well as trying to take some of those memories of people who moved from the old school at the Museum's current site. I have tried also to gather memories specific to Local Government and also early in the year took two histories which will sit in the City's "My Suburb" collection these being of people from Madora Bay.

Mary Ann Jebb is proceeding with the third Indigenous Oral History Project and to do this is using one of the Museum's recorders. Both of these recorders have been of great value and the quality obtained by the digital medium is wonderful when compared to the tape medium, however we continue to save a tape copy just in case the electronic medium should fail us. Of course all this also consumes time.

Next year we will be collecting histories for the Smart St Mall Project (see advertisement) and these must be finished by March so that the artisans can work their magic with the memories. We also intend to further enlist the very oldest residents who haven't given us their recollections of attending the old school, which we now call Dalrymple's, this school is encapsulated in the Museum. 2010 is the 110 anniversary of the official opening of that school. Lastly we continue to work on our 'Hotels of Mandurah' project which should conclude by the middle of next year. With all these plans you can see it will again be an extremely busy year and we ask for any one who is able and willing to undertake interviewing for oral history to please contact either Nicholas or Jan.

We cannot conclude this year without acknowledging personally and individually all those people who have so willingly allowed us into their homes and given us some of their personal memories. Mandurah Community Museum wishes to thank the following people.

Lil & Roy Adam.	Paddi Creevey.
Violet Gowan.	Mary & Kelvin Hicks.
Mary Lyon.	Bill & Netta Patterson.
Bruce Scott	Lloyd Tuckey.
Allan & Norma Withers.	



Nancy Taylor, Phyl Hardy & Margaret Green inspect planes at the Aviation Heritage Museum, Bull Creek.

