

RWAHS 58th History Conference of Affiliated Societies
1 – 3 September 2023

Speakers and tour guides

Elder & Custodian Sandra Hill

Sandra is our Elder and Custodian for this region, which is in Pibulmun/Wadandi Country, and Sandra is our main resource for Bibbulmun Culture and information. It is thanks to her that we now have a significantly better knowledge of First Nations people of this region. Sandra contributed much of her family history including her story as one of the Stolen Generation and also a family member of one of the early settlers of this region, which was totally unknown before.

Sandra is passionate about sharing her family's stories and the history of the First Nations peoples of this region so that the history isn't just from a 'white' perspective. Sandra is a keen advocate of Culture, cultural inclusion and teaching the community of Bridgetown-Greenbushes about her Culture.

Earlier this year, Sandra was asked to sit on the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes' inaugural Cultural Inclusion Advisory Committee and this helps to strengthen the bond between the Shire officers and the community, so that decisions involving cultural matters are inclusive of First Nations people. Sandra's contribution has again been outstanding: her understanding of, commitment to and willingness to share her First Nations Culture and Arts has allowed Bridgetown to make significant progress.

Peter Hall – orcharding in Bridgetown

Peter spent the early years of his life on a farm in Bridgetown during those post war boom years. In the early 70s, the family sold the farm and moved to Perth, where he completed his secondary education and obtained a degree in civil engineering from UWA.

Peter retired in 2022 following a 43-year career in the engineering industry, half spent overseas while undertaking projects in 20 countries. He now enjoys spending time with his granddaughter, cooking, family history research, bee keeping, comradery at his local Mens Shed, and helping out at the Bridgetown Historical Society.

At Federation there was considerable interest in Western Australia's orchards providing the new State with an export industry. Bridgetown was one of several districts where apple and pear orchards had been established successfully. The presenter will share his experiences growing up on the Blackwood Park farm then owned by his grandfather E. G. Hall, and where vines and fruit trees had been grown since the 1860s. EG's fruit earned him many prizes at the local show, as well as a gold medal at the 1931 UK Imperial Fruit Show. During WWII, Italian POWs were engaged throughout the district, including at Blackwood Park, to harvest the fruit for export. By the early 70s the industry was in decline, a result of the UK joining the common market.

Philippa Rogers – Railways to Bridgetown

Philippa Rogers is the President and life member of Rail Heritage WA. In 2022 she won the Award for Voluntary Individual Contribution at the WA State Heritage Awards.

In my 20 minute presentation 'WA Railway History and Bridgetown' I will be presenting an overview of the development of railways in Western Australia with a particular focus on the South-West and Bridgetown. A significant milestone, in 2023 it is 125 years since the railway was opened to Bridgetown and yet despite the rails still in place, trains are no more. However there are still lots of stories to share about railways in the district.

Pat Scallan, OAM – From tin mining to Lithium

Pat was a Greenbushes resident for 25 years, where he was the General Manager of the Talison Lithium mining operations and was involved in the evolution of the products mined and their uses. Initially going to Greenbushes as part of his '5-year-plan', he got very involved in the Community, being a Shire Councillor for nearly 20 years and was on many community, local government and regional government committees. He was awarded an OAM for his service to community. He has been and still is the Chair of the Greenbushes Discovery Centre since 1986 and has been part of the development of the Centre with its 25 kms of walk trails, Heritage amble and the indoor interactive displays. Pat is currently working on a project with the Shire to relocate the Greenbushes Railway Station from the old North Greenbushes site into town to be restored and used as one of the new interactive displays.

He oversaw the Centennial of the Federation celebrations and both the Centenary of the Bridgetown Catholic Parish and the Greenbushes RSL celebrations.

Summary of presentation 'MINING IN GREENBUSHES FROM TIN TO LITHIUM':

Tin was first discovered in Greenbushes in 1886 and has been continuously mined or processed during this time. It is called an environmentally green metal with its uses having changed significantly over this time from food storage to electronic solder applications. Mining high tech Tantalum took precedence during the second World War and has also had a myriad of uses and well as some dark times during the African blood Coltan days. However, Lithium in the form of Spodumene is now the primary product mined at Greenbushes by Talison Lithium who supplies 40% of the world's lithium requirements.

Tim Clynych CEO Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes

Tim has given 20 years of dedicated service to the Shire of Bridgetown Greenbushes as CEO.

There have been many exciting projects delivered to our communities in Tim's time as CEO. He has led the team that has delivered, or are currently delivering, the new Bridgetown Library, the Bridgetown Aquatic Centre, Youth Precincts in both Bridgetown and Greenbushes, the Blackwood River Foreshore development, the Warren Blackwood Stock Route and the Bridgetown Railway Station Restoration.

Tim has been an active contributor and played an effective role in the Warren Blackwood Alliance of Councils over its lifetime and has continued to offer strategic regional initiatives to the group.

Above all, Tim is a passionate supporter of our two towns and their communities and has given over a large portion of his life to seeing the Shire thrive. We say thanks and goodbye to Tim on good terms and wish him well in whatever path he now chooses to follow.

Dr Sally Paulin – Recycling a Mill town

Sally Paulin is Chair of the Friends of Donnelly Village Inc (FODV). In 2010, FODV recognised that the holiday village could not be separated from its past as a thriving timber mill town and the people who lived and worked there and who still retain and revisit these memories as part of their ongoing life stories. FODV now has an extensive collection of photos, stories and artefacts dating from 1948-1978 when the Donnelly Mill was operating, in their museum in the old school. Sally will talk about the journey of buying and recycling a timber mill town, its history and, also, about current efforts to revitalize the old Mill.

Sally has a PhD in Sustainability and is an Honorary Research Fellow in the Business School at Murdoch University.

Emily Smith – History of The Cidery and Cider Production

Bridgetown's Historic Town Status owes much to its rich apple history. As Western Australia's major apple exporter in the early 20th Century, its legacy is a district rich with Heritage houses and a stunning main street with Heritage buildings reflecting the wealth generated from apples.

The Cidery was developed by three English families in 2000 who certainly embraced the theme "Looking Forward Looking Back" in researching the opportunity for a new business to celebrate Bridgetown's history and welcome a growing tourism industry.

The Cidery is Western Australia's first boutique cider producer proudly recognising the contribution of the early pioneer families to establishing a world-renowned apple industry in WA.

Dr Erica Shedley – Walk and Talk in Dorothy Scott Bushland Reserve

Erica was born in Bridgetown and lived her early years on the family farm in Winnejup, east of Bridgetown. She completed Senior High School in Perth then studied at the University of WA and University of New England in NSW to complete a Science Degree in Botany, Ecology and Horticulture. Erica and husband Chris then moved back to the family farm, growing merino wool and cropping, and later developing a small vineyard and winery, and raising four children. With the downturn in the wool industry, Erica returned to study and completed her Honours in Biological Science at Murdoch University, and her PhD in Botany and Ecology at UWA. Erica worked in Natural Resource Management, as Research Forester in the plantation industry, then as Regional Leader for Nature Conservation and Research Scientist for the Department of Parks and Wildlife, her main research interests being Fire Ecology and management of Threatened Flora. Erica also conducts private Bird and Wildflower tours throughout the south-west through her business [Southern Flora](#). This business operates from 79 Blechynden Street, Bridgetown, and offers a wide range of south-west native species to encourage a greater awareness of our amazing flora.

We will go for a short walk through Dorothy Scott Reserve and hear about Dorothy Scott, an early feminist who went to finishing school in Switzerland, worked in the Land Army in World War 1, purchased and worked her own farm in Bridgetown, and was passionate about wildflowers and gardening. Enjoy a stroll among some large old Jarrah trees with colourful understorey species, including Wattles, Peas, Orchids, *Tetratheca*, Clematis, *Hibbertia*, *Conostylis*, *Dampiera*, and many more. Learn about their ecology and management in a small residential bushland reserve.

Bevan and Jennie Carter – Discovering your ancestors.



Bevan has Science and Education degrees from the University of Sydney and qualifications in computing from Curtin University. He has lectured at TAFE in both the UK and in Western Australia and also taught senior high school maths and science. Bevan was mayor of the Town of Bassendean from 1997 to 2001 and from 2003 to 2005 was president of the WA Genealogical Society. He is currently convenor of the convict SIG group.

Since his retirement from teaching and local government commitments, Bevan has concentrated on environmental, family history and WA historical research and publishing. He is the author and co-author of several works, among them: The vanishing floral heritage of the Swan Valley, Robert Brown botanist with Matthew Flinders, Nyungah land: records of invasion and theft of Aboriginal land on the Swan River 1829-1850, From Norfolk poacher to Northam farmer: the life, time and descendants of Robert Carter and Phoebe Oxbury.

Jennie has qualifications in history from the University of Western Australia and in library and archives management from Curtin University. She worked at the State Aboriginal Affairs Department, where she established the Aboriginal Family History program, before joining the J S Battye Library of West Australian History in 1998, first as the manager of the State Library's archival collections, then as Director of the Battye Library, and lastly Battye Historian/Librarian. After leaving the State Library she and Bevan established a historical research consultancy. Jennie is the author of Bassendean: a social history 1829 to 1979, and author with Bevan of Settlement to City: a history of the Armadale district and its people which was published by the City of Armadale in 2011 and King Eddies: A history of Western Australia's premier women's hospital (2016). She is currently co-editor and designer of Early Days.

Karen Hill, Visitor Services Manager Bridgetown-Greenbushes Visitors Centre

New Visitor Services Manager, Karen Hill, has settled in well since starting in the role in October at the Visitor's Centre last year.

Karen recently made the tree change to North Greenbushes from Perth and is loving the slower pace of country life.

Her previous roles have provided her with a wealth of experience well suited to managing the Visitor's Centre and promoting our region.

Her most recent job was with the City of Perth with the Arts, Culture and Heritage team where she managed the Boorloo Heritage Festival as well as other council projects that centred around showcasing the natural, built and cultural history of the area.

Preceding this Karen worked with the Western Australian Museum, Boola Bardip and was involved in interpreting the state in stories for the new museum.

Coming from the Museum which Karen describes as a giant Visitor's Centre, she now looks forward to showcasing Bridgetown and Greenbushes, creating a sense of place for both visitors and the local community.

Beverley Rebbeck

Land Operations Officer/Land Branch

Department of Indigenous Affairs

Board member Noongar Language Centre

Beverley Rebbeck is a Noongar Woman. Her father's country is the Kaniyang and her mother's country is the Wilman from the south-west, of WA. Beverley has worked in Aboriginal Affairs throughout the State of WA, with all levels of Commonwealth, State and Local Government programs and has had the opportunity to work with many Aboriginal People and Aboriginal Communities. Beverley has a strong commitment to Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management, Reconciliation and the preservation of Aboriginal Oral Histories and Languages.

Jordanna Rebbeck – Kaniyang Ground Stones

Jordi is a proud Kaneang and Wilman woman of Noongar Nation with Swiss-Italian heritage. She studied anthropology at UPenn and then archaeology at UWA and has spent several years learning from matriarchs in her community. Jordanna is passionate about WA Aboriginal histories and bringing social science ideas into the everyday.

Presentation: Kaniyang Ground Stones is a research project that aims to understand the relationships people have had historically and presently with ground (grinding) stones on Kaniyang Country in the Middle Blackwood River Valley. It uses the latest methods in landscape archaeology and environmental anthropology to investigate *“What's life like for these ancient stone tools? And how have we been interacting with them over the past 200 years?”*

Step into a time journey with Earth/Boodjar, Kaniyang clan, colonisation, agriculture, and climate change to understand how our relationships with stone tools have changed over time, and why these tools live such long, dynamic lives.

Richard Allen – The amazing life of Bridgetown's Joseph Smith

Richard lives in Bridgetown and has been Secretary of the Bridgetown Historical Society since 2016. His interests include all aspects of Bridgetown history, and history in general, but is particularly fascinated with sleuthing online and discovering what has been hidden away, tucked in archives that are slowly being digitised. Joseph Smith is a prime example of an enigma whose back story has only recently emerged.

Richard is a strong advocate of telling stories as a way of interesting people in history. He is the tour leader of the popular Bridgetown Ghost Walks held each year in July and conducts private History Walks on a regular basis.