

Friends of

Mandurah Museum

BUILDING BRIDGES TO PEEL HISTORY

3 Pinjarra Road
Mandurah WA 6210

Friends of Mandurah Museum

Newsletter April 2024.

1924 The Year that Was. Like South Western Australia in 2024, during the summer of 1924, the south-west of W.A. suffered one of the driest summers on record, there were of course major concerns at that time also. Luckily for them, the May which followed had significant rainfall with much of it influencing the Easter break late April for children and their parents.

During that Easter, the Fremantle to Mandurah yacht race was run with the winner being 'Belle'. The yacht "Ventura" was wrecked off Rockingham on its return journey, all on board were saved. The race had been first proposed in 1913 but not run due to insufficient entrants. World War One intervened and it had only resumed some years previously. Run just four times the race was becoming a major attraction with the Mandurah Sports Committee having contributed all four of the cups which had been won.

Within our state, Diphtheria was prevalent with little prevention available and treatment dependent on skill and medical availability, it was still deadly. Vaccine for this disease was not widely produced at that time but its use was imminent and production of bulk amounts had been started. An epidemic of Diphtheria was announced by the then Chief Medical Officer of the Children's Hospital in early May 1924. Diphtheria at that time was life threatening and many parents of Mandurah must have been concerned.

Also, in Mandurah that Easter, Warwick House had changed management and was advertising accommodation. While in Perth, board and residence availability is overwhelming with a common cost being six shillings and sixpence per week, a not inconsiderable sum for one room with full board. From a working wage it would consume a large sum of their weekly earnings.

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Drowning of a Hero – Arthur Lakeman

By Robert Hiini

The official records and resting place of Gladys “Mary” McKay (nee Hitchcock) betray nothing of the trauma visited upon her and her companions one Sunday afternoon at “Ocean Beach” (Town Beach) Mandurah on 23 March 1924.

Newspapers at the time heralded a great tragedy in colourful, if occasionally lurid, prose:

“The scene of a thrilling drama,” wrote the *The Daily News* (24 March 1924); a “distressing bathing fatality ... when a young man, Arthur Donald Lakeman (23) [sic], lost his own life, gallantly succouring four ladies [sic]” (*Kalgoorlie Miner*, 25 Mar 1924).

Mary was among three women known to have been rescued from the water that afternoon; her husband, Arthur, 27, the sole member of their 10-person pleasure party who would not be returning to State Mill No. 2 at Dwellingup, where they had set out earlier that day.

The *Daily News* provided a rough and ready report of the details ascertained by its inquiring writer:

“Between 2 and 3 p.m. a party of ladies entered the water, and it is surmised they were not able to swim.

“Although the day was a fine one, a heavy surge beat upon the beach, and resulted in a strong undertow. Four [sic] of the ladies were suddenly swept off their feet, and quickly carried into difficulties.

“Arthur Lakeman was in bathers, and about to enter the sea for a dip. He plunged to the rescue, and put up a gallant fight against heavy odds, until others in the vicinity came to help him bring the ladies to safety. All four [sic] were rescued, and it is understood that Arthur Lakeman had brought in the last one and handed her over to the helpers waiting in the surf.

“Naturally, it did not occur to them that the rescuer himself was in a complete state of exhaustion, and in their anxiety to attend to the distressed women, Lakeman was overlooked, and it was not until a few minutes later that his absence was noticed.”

Two hours of fruitless searching followed until Arthur’s body was spotted, around 90 metres away, in the receding surf.

Until that day, Arthur and Mary had been resident in the mill town of Holyoake, having been married at Jarrahdale the year before.

Arthur had been born to Henry and Rose Lakeman (nee Batt) in 1896 at Jarrahdale; Mary, to Arthur and Florence Hitchcock (nee Purcell) in 1905 at Midland Junction.

Arthur had enlisted in 1916, serving in the 11th Battalion in France on the Western Front before - according to a voluntary researcher on the website *Find a Grave* - receiving shot to the back of the head, spending seven weeks in hospital before being returned to Fremantle in 1919.

The other survivors of that eventful Mandurah day were Cecilia Williamson and Arthur’s niece, Hilda Lakeman (both born 1911). (Cecilia was possibly the same Cecilia Williamson, “11”, who was in 1922 hit by a car in Victoria Park, although “not seriously injured” as per *The West Australian*, Thu 14 Dec 1922).

While the precise details are likely lost forever, a news report of several months later noted the verdict of an inquiry at Pinjarra courthouse: “That the deceased, Arthur Donald Lakeman, came to his death by drowning at Ocean Beach, Mandurah, on Sunday, March 23rd. 1924, while attempting to rescue Cecelia [sic] Williamson” (*South Western Advertiser*, 9 May 1924).

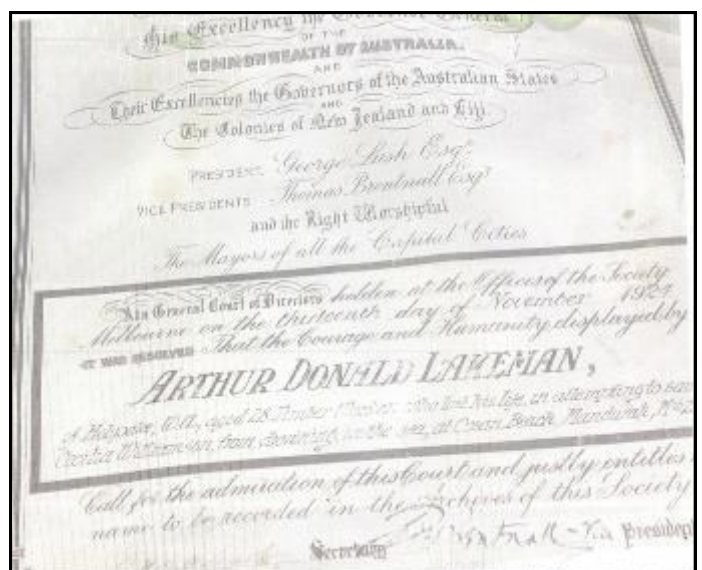
A letter “To the Editor” of *The Daily News* (27 March 1924) likely captured local sentiment at the time:

“Your report of the tragic circumstances surrounding the death of Arthur Lakeman at Mandurah on Sunday last demonstrates the silent heroism of one who paid the great sacrifice. “It would be unbecoming if something were not done to bring this brave action under the notice of the Royal Humane Society [of Australia], with a view to the presentation of a posthumous award, which could be treasured by the wife whose life he saved.”

Arthur was recognised by the Society in November 1924 for conspicuous bravery, with his name being recorded in its archives for remembrance and veneration.

His surviving co-rescuers - Frederick Wimbridge and Redvers Buller Huxtable, Arthur’s brother-in-law - were both awarded Bronze medals by the society. Wimbridge was presented with the award by the Governor of Victoria in 1925, being a “well known ex-West Perth football player” then playing for South Melbourne (*The Daily News*, 21 Aug 1925).

Mary rallied, perhaps out of necessity, or desire, or both, marrying Thomas James McKay in Perth the following year. The couple had five children. Mary died in Armadale, aged 86, in 1992.



Arthur Lakeman’s award can be found in the Archives of the Royal Humane Society of Australia.

Archaeological Dig

Join archaeologists as they explore the hidden secrets in the grounds surrounding Hall's Cottage.

Across three days the archaeological team will mark out and excavate two test pits. Community members are invited to participate in all aspects of the excavation and preliminary artefact analysis, including cleaning and sorting, under the guidance of professional archaeologists.

Small-scale, hands-on excavations, perfect to introduce children to archaeology, will also be available.

Test Pit Excavations

The test pit excavations will continue across three days. On Saturday and Sunday, community members can assist the archaeologists. Friday is a dedicated schools participation day.

Bookings are required to participate in the test pit excavation dig, and spaces are limited.

Saturday, 4 May: 10am -11am.

Saturday 4 May: 1pm – 2pm.

Sunday 5 May: 10am – 11am.

Sunday 5 May: 1pm – 2pm.

Small Scale Archaeological Dig Workshops

The small-scale hands-on workshops are designed for children 5-12 years old, and parental supervision is required. Children will visit four different stations through-out the workshop, learning what it is like to be an archaeologist.

Bookings are required to participate in the Small Scale workshops, and spaces are limited.

Saturday 4 May: 11am -12pm.

Saturday 4 May: 2pm – 3pm.

Sunday 5 May: 11am – 12pm.

Sunday 5 May: 2pm – 3pm.

All bookings are with Eventbrite.

Hall's Cottage is located on the estuary and is the perfect place for a picnic. Coffee will be available for purchase.

This is an outdoor activity, so remember to be sun-smart. Wear a hat, bring a water bottle and don't forget the insect repellent.

Archaeology can be messy, so wear comfortable clothes, closed in shoes and bring some garden gloves.

This is a rare and unique opportunity to discover some of Mandurah's history and work alongside professional archaeologists.



Mandurah Museum Archaeological Dig at Halls Cottage

Join archaeologists as they explore the hidden secrets in the grounds surrounding Hall's Cottage. This interactive event provides a unique opportunity to get a hands-on experience with professional archaeologists. Across three days community members are invited to participate in all aspects of the excavation and preliminary artefact analysis, including cleaning and sorting, under the guidance of professional archaeologists.

There'll also be children's activities including small-scale excavations, artefact displays, a refitting station and recording and drawing activities.

Dates: 3-5 May, 2024

Time: 9.30am - 4pm

Where: Halls Cottage, Leighton Place Halls Head

Bookings Essential. Visit mandurah.wa.gov.au for more information.





Bullet casing found during Dalrymple School dig in 2020.



In January 2020, the second archaeological dig for the museum was conducted in the floor next to the door leading into Dalrymple School.

Volunteers and children joined trained Archaeologists to find and record artefacts found beneath the flooring in the museum. Several of those items found can be viewed through windows in the replacement flooring.

Editors Comments. With apologies for the late arrival of this newsletter, however, we do come to you with a bumper edition. We have not this year featured war times or service although there is a mention of 1944 which was a very big year.

In this newsletter is a special article written by volunteer Robert Hiini relating to a tragic event which took place just 100 years ago this year. While little was known about Arthur Lakeman's tragic sacrifice by the museum, I was approached last year by relatives who was trying to find out more. They only had a small piece of a copy of the award presented posthumously. In my search for information after they left, I was stunned to find out how much was written during that period of time about his rescue of four people and his subsequent drowning. Rob Hiini agreed to continue the research on this event and we are pleased to be able to bring that article to you.

The museum apologises for the late notice relating to the Archaeological Dig, but I will send out a flyer also which should reach you as I type this. We look forward to you reading our newsletter and possibly letting us know whether you have enjoyed this one.

Jan Baker.

April Holidays 2024

Make a Wooden Flying Bird

Children visited the Mandurah Museum to create and decorate their own wooden 3D flying bird during the April school holidays.

This activity was suitable for 5-12 years. A workshop was held each Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at 10am in both weeks of the holidays. The workshop was free and tickets were booked through Eventbrite.

The workshop involved following instructions, reading instructions, sanding, painting, using fine motor skills to thread string and tie knots. I was impressed with the variety of painting techniques the children used to make their birds.

I was extremely happy that all sessions were fully booked, however it was disappointing that 33% of the families that had booked didn't show up.

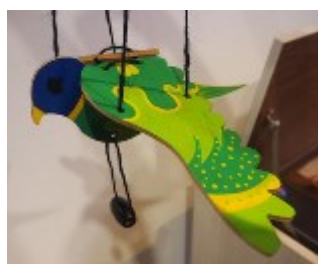
Several families visiting the museum, who didn't know that the workshop was on or came not realising they had to book or took the chance that they would be able to join in when they arrived were able to participate due to no shows on the day.

I am delighted that 96 children made a bird, attended by 50 adults who assisted.

The feedback from participants was very positive, they were all happy with their bird creation.

A warm thank you to the Mandurah Men's Shed for making the wooden bird parts for the children to construct.

A special thank you to Museum Volunteers Linda Jackson and Debbie Stasiw who assisted children on the tricky threading and tying knots involved in making the wooden bird. I very much appreciated your help.



Exotic Bird Hunt

The Exotic Bird Hunt was challenging and took time to complete. It involved finding the bird, writing its name correctly and matching numbers with letters to decode the message. Once this was complete, children could enter the draw to win a LEGO set. This free activity was available to do at any time during museum opening hours.

165 Exotic Bird Hunts were completed over the two weeks of the April school holidays. Thank you to the Museum Volunteers at the front desk for explaining to children how to complete the hunt, to enter the draw and providing clues when needed. The lucky person to be drawn from the box was 6 year old Peter Cooney. He was thrilled because it was the first time, he had won anything and he loves Lego.

Curious Community Collectibles-Honey Month May is National Honey Month

Honey Month has been held in Western Australia since 2012 and getting bigger every year. Beekeeping is a career that is declining in numbers through a retiring workforce. With this in mind, one of the driving forces behind Honey Month is to develop an interest in beekeeping by the younger generation as well as to educate the public to support WA honey and their beekeepers. Bees are also under threat by disease, climate change and through dwindling forest resources. It is important for the community to appreciate and understand the importance of bees in Australia as our master pollinators and how important they are to our food diversity in Australia.

On display is a selection of local honey, beeswax products, a collection of honey pots and some equipment used by beekeepers Bryan and Kate from the Australian Bee Company.

For more information about the events on during Honey Month visit: bicwa.com.au



Do you have a collection you'd like to share with our community?

The Mandurah Museum is seeking expressions of interest from those with interesting collections that would look great on display. If you are interested, please contact the Museum by emailing museum@mandurah.wa.gov.au or phoning 9550 3683.

We can't wait to see what you've been collecting!

Celebrating Women's History Month. Significant Mandurah Educators from 1870s to 1970s.

March 8th saw the museum opening their third special exhibition recognising the contributions of women within the Mandurah – Peel area.

For many weeks prior to this event, volunteers and staff had been researching and collecting information and items to enhance the exhibition. Then preparing and editing the collection ready to display to the public. As always this research provided us with much additional knowledge of life within the Mandurah area as experienced by the women.

We were so pleased to find one of those teachers featured were still living in Mandurah. While now in her 90s, Maisie Luff was able to be present with her daughter. Maisie taught at the 'Hackett Street School' for many years and has been an active member of the community both during those teaching years and since.

We were pleased to see Maisie return with some her friends to view the exhibition.

Pictured Jan Workman with Maisie Luff in front of the panel describing Maisie's contribution to education and the community.



Our guest speaker was Jan Workman, who has also taught for many years, later being involved in a supervisory role. Having come to Mandurah in 1990 to teach as Deputy Principal at Greenfields Primary which was very new at that time. During this time the district Education Department office was based in the museum building. Later after being promoted to principal, she led the Carcoola PS in Pinjarra.

Having become involved in being Education Project Manager for both John Tonkin High School and Halls Head High School, she honed further skills. Jan worked as principal for some time and then became a District Supervisor, and in 2003 won a job with AUSAid to assist developing countries and specifically with providing an education system in Fiji.

Returning to Australia she became District Director for West Coast District which involved very long driving each day. Jan returned to Mandurah and active teaching to head up the South Halls Head Primary School, another new one, this involved six months of planning and preparation.

In short, Jan's talk showed she had taken part in a very interesting and changing period within State and especially Mandurah education. A time when the addition of multiple schools, both public and private happened due to significant population growth. It would appear that she had chosen a career which was both productive and diverse and she had enjoyed doing this very much.

The Exhibition opening was also well supported by members of Margaret Kirkpatrick's family including son Ross, and many other Friends who remembered some of their times here at school and also had memories of several of the teachers featured.

We are in debt to Ross Kirkpatrick for his kind loan of artefacts from his mother's art and teaching days which are now in his possession.

The exhibition has been extended past its planned closure and it is still possible to view into May. we hope many of you have been able to visit or will come and see it prior to the conclusion of this year's special celebration of women's contributions.





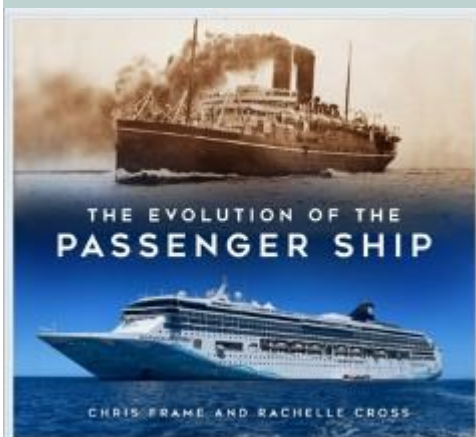
Jan Workman addresses an audience filled with Friends and Volunteers, many of whom had special memories of schooldays. The fact that we were sitting in a schoolroom which is over 100 years old now makes it even more special. This small room has seen so many changes in the history of its life in schooling for 39 years is a testament to the builders and educators who taught here. Our museum has served in various roles and we are proud to support its ongoing uses.

Writers in the Library at the Museum. Chris Frame. This museum once again hosted a writer in the library - actually the Museum. Mr Chris Frame is a well known Maritime author of a series of books celebrating ships. Mandurah Libraries organised a talk by him and thought the museum would be a perfect place for him to do it.

Chris talked about migration through to luxury holidays. Passenger shipping has played a central role in the collective human story. They have been at the forefront of innovative technology, leading to vessels capable of greater speed and safety, new luxuries, and increased scale and size.

From the earliest days of using ships to transport people, through the development of the giant passenger transportation industry, to the huge cruise ships we see today, this book provides a fascinating glimpse into some of the most important evolutions that had a significant impact on passenger shipping.

Chris Frame's book *The Evolution of the Passenger Ship* explores the way ships were shaped over time and how they in turn helped to shape the world around them. For many of us attending it was a reminder of cruising both far in the past and in more recent times. There were among the audience several people who had migrated on passenger ships to Australia.



We were pleased to see so many people attend and everyone really enjoyed his presentation. The light lunch provided by Libraries was also much appreciated.

National Volunteer Week

Date: Wednesday 22, May 2024

Event at Mandurah Museum to honour and acknowledge any heritage volunteers, organised by **Mandurah Environment & Heritage Group**.

Time:

10.00-11.30 Mandurah Heritage Walk Tour.
Guided by Museum Volunteer David Austin.
11.30-12.15 Museum Tour with Michael McGhie.
Includes the Putt Putt Motor exhibition featuring marine engines and a slideshow in the Schoolroom.

12.15pm Buffet lunch.

1.00pm Speeches, Awards and Q&A.

Please RSVP for catering purposes by Thursday, 16 May.

VOLUNTEER



**Volunteers are unpaid,
Not Because They are
Worthless,
But Because they are
PRICELESS.**

From the Chair.

I would like to apologise for the lack of meetings, both Committee and General up to this month of 2024. We had planned a General Meeting during the March Exhibition opening, however time constraints at the opening, a meeting was not possible. We thank all that did attend for doing so and hope you enjoyed the presentation.

Due to illness of my husband and the absence of our Treasurer and other committee members our planned meeting for April did not go ahead. However in this newsletter are invitations to several events happening both here and at Halls Cottage, we hope you are all able to visit some of these .

Jan Baker.

1944, World War Two April/ May news.

The Allies had landed in Italy but it wasn't until June in 1944 that Rome was liberated. During this period also the Third Ukrainian troops liberated Odessa.

With D Day looming during April the Royal Navy and R.A.F. Bomber Command were laying mines in the English Channel in preparation.

Closer to home, there had been naval and air attacks on Sumatra by the British Fleet in the Southern Ocean.

Princess Elizabeth, born 21st of April 1926, (pictured below in official photo) had now reached her Royal Majority which was recognized during such turbulent times. At her 'coming of age', she was now able to take part in the Counsels of State. She had only eight years to become used to the fact that she would be the presumptive Queen. Following this time, only another eight years to prepare for becoming Queen, before her father King George VI died.



before her father King George VI died.

**Mandurah Museum,
3 Pinjarra Rd,
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Email: museum@mandurah.wa.gov.au

Internet: www.mandurah.wa.gov.au/Facilities/Museum/Friends

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Meetings 4 times per year as notified.

The mission of the Friends is to provide assistance and support to the Museum in all its endeavours.