



Local History News



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In this edition, we continue our focus on Vincent's suburbs, shining the spotlight on Leederville.

By the 1930s, the southern end of Oxford Street was a bustling commercial hub with a range of businesses such as the Golden West Aerated Water Company, which operated on Leeder Street (now Carr Place) from 1906 until 1972. While the Leederville Hotel, operating since 1897, is still going, many of the other businesses around it have changed significantly.

While much has changed over the last century, the spire of St Mary's Catholic Church (built in 1923 on the site of the old Leeder family homestead), remains a prominent Leederville landmark. The sight of the tower overlooking Leederville evokes a strong sense of parochial pride and sense of 'home' for many local residents.

Whether you are a 'Leedy local' or visitor, we hope this edition gives you some sense of what makes Leederville a unique suburb.

Dr Susanna Iuliano
Senior Librarian, Local History Centre

In times past, Leederville was a larger suburb connected to Lake Monger or Galup as it was known to the Whadjuk Noongar people. Proximity to the lake and freshwater sources was an important defining feature of the area for Noongar people, and post-colonisation for farmers and Chinese market gardeners.

Named after early colonist and landholder William Leeder, it wasn't until the late 1890s that Leederville developed as a residential and commercial hub. Between 1896 and 1914, Leederville was its own municipality with a police station, school and post office servicing a population of around 3,000 residents. It was one of the first areas in Perth to experience the benefits of electricity, which transformed everything from transport to commerce in the early 1900s.

Cover: Leederville Hotel, c 1980 PH06467



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Diver at Beatty Park with St Mary's Church spire in background, 1962. (COV PHO2235)

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LEEDERVILLE: A BRIEF HISTORY

Leederville was named after William Leeder who arrived in the Swan River Colony in 1830 and was granted land in the area around Lake Monger. The lake was originally much larger than the present day Lake Monger which Europeans first called Triangle Lake and later Monger’s Lake. The area was known to the Whadjuk Noongar people as Galup (meaning ‘place of fires’) and it was used for food gathering, camping and for meetings and ceremonies.

At the time of colonisation, the land was the domain of Yellagonga and his people. “Monger’s Lake. To this place Yellowgonga removed his headquarters after the formation of the settlement” wrote Robert Menli Lyon, an outspoken advocate for Aboriginal welfare in the 1830s.

In the early colonial period, Galup/Monger’s Lake was the site of conflict and co-existence between Europeans and the Whadjuk Noongar people. (See article ‘Galup’ in this newsletter for more information). In 1832, the colonial government established a government food depot to encourage

Excerpt from Plan of the City of Perth (No. 7) 1897. SRO AU WA S235 (504980)

Yellagonga’s group to camp near Monger’s Lake rather than their preferred campsite at the foot of Mt Eliza taken over by the Swan River settlement.

Noongar people also continued to camp in the vicinity of Lake Monger and use the lake’s resources until the 1920s and 1940s, long after the original land holders John Henry Monger and William Leeder had moved on to greener pastures in York and Toodyay.

Early farmers were attracted to the area because of its proximity to Perth and the existence of a permanent fresh water supply. Development of the land

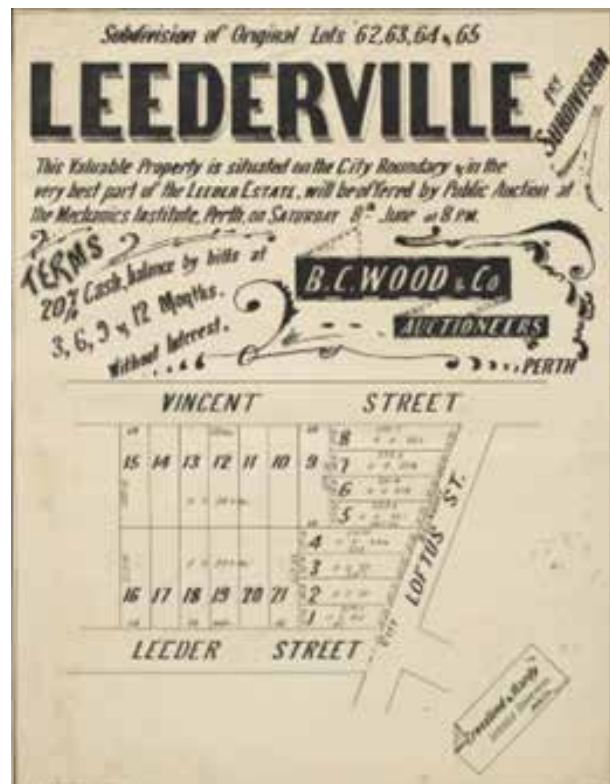
around Monger’s Lake by European colonists proceeded slowly until the late 1800s. Mid-century, an influx of convict labour (who helped drain wetland areas around Perth including Lake Georgianna south of present day Leederville Oval) stimulated growth in the colony. As the population and demand for food increased, the wetlands and surrounding areas north of Perth were used for market gardens, dairy and poultry farms. (See Chinese market gardeners article in this newsletter for more information).

In the late 19th century, two factors re-shaped the pattern of settlement in Leederville: the completion of the Fremantle to Guildford railway in 1881; and the gold boom of the late 1890s which resulted in a huge boost to the state’s population and wealth.

Land close to Perth, including the vast Leeder Estate which made up about 75% of the present suburb of Leederville, was subdivided and sold as residential lots. Promoted under names like Leeder Estate, Lake View Estate and Leederville Station Estate, advertisements stressed the special features of the area, its proximity to Perth, Lake Monger and later the Leederville train station (now West Leederville train station).

In 1895, Leederville was declared as a Roads Board District and became a Municipality in 1896. During this period, many public and commercial buildings were built including Leederville Primary School (1894), Leederville Post Office (1897), the Leederville Hotel (1897) and the Leederville Police Station (1898).

In 1900, development in Leederville was hastened by the construction and operation of a tramline from the city. Electrification for the tram network opened the way for local businesses and industries to benefit from electric power.



Real estate plan of Leederville, 1895. (State Library: slwa_b5143565_2)



The late 1890s and early 1900s also saw the construction and expansion civic and recreational amenities. In 1903, Lake Monger was made a public reserve. Another government reserve was created between Vincent and Richmond Street, the western end of which became Leederville Oval with tennis courts and cycle tracks as well as football facilities.

In 1914, when the Perth, North Perth and Leederville municipalities came together to form 'Greater Perth', Leederville had a mix of residential,

commercial and industrial buildings, well established roads and transport corridors, piped water (installed in 1911) and good public amenities and recreational facilities.

In the inter-war period, Saint Mary's Church Leederville was built in 1923 on the site of the old Leeder family homestead. In the 1920s theatre going and watching the 'talkies' were popular, one of the earliest venues being the New Oxford Theatre (now the Luna Cinema) built in 1927.

Leederville Government School, 1894. (COV PH04496)

Following a relatively stagnant period of the Great Depression followed by war, the suburb grew again after WWII with post-war immigration increasing demand for new and improved housing and commercial buildings in the area. New shops and office buildings replaced many of the older residences around Oxford and Newcastle streets. In 1948, a technical and trades school was built in Leederville as part of an army training scheme. This later became known as the Leederville TAFE (currently North Metro TAFE).



Couple on scooter outside 145 Oxford Street Leederville, 1952. (COV PHO1666)



In the 1970s, the Western Australian Water Authority built a new administration building on the site of the old Metropolitan Waterworks Pumping Station on Newcastle Street, which was replaced in 1980 by the John Tonkin Water Centre, which remains the head office of Water Corporation.

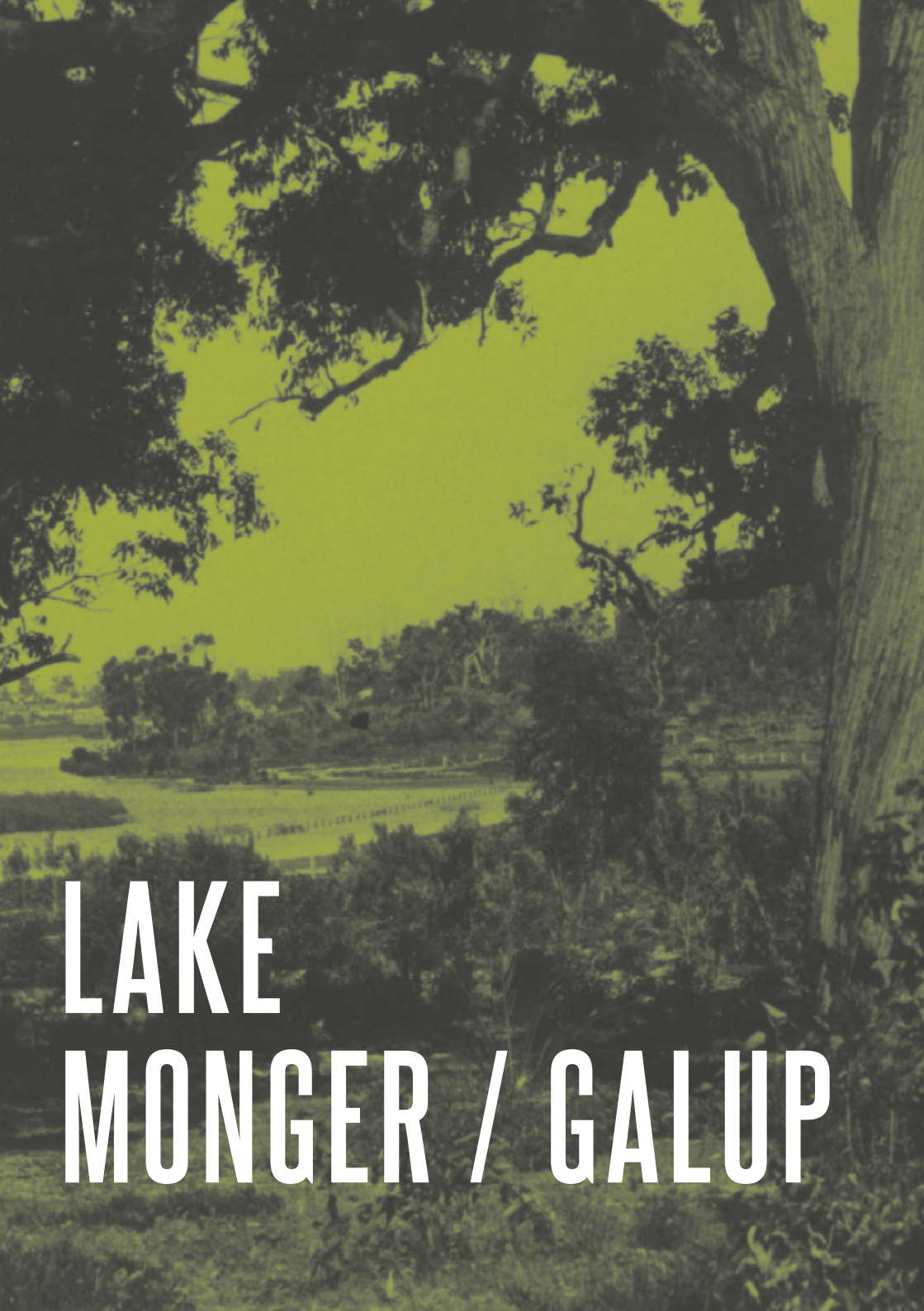
In the early 1990s, construction of the northern suburbs railway line had a flow-on effect for Leederville with residents gaining easy access to rail transport at the Leederville Station at the southern end of Oxford Street. The nearby shopping area on Oxford Street was also redeveloped into a popular café strip.

In 1996, the newly created Town of Vincent built offices on the corner of Loftus and Vincent Street on the

site of a Government Reserve (and former rubbish tip). The Vincent Administration and Civic Centre is adjacent to the Loftus Recreation and Community Centre, which opened in 1988 and was refurbished in 2008.

Today, Leederville is a bustling commercial and residential hub home to approximately 3,500 residents. Compared to other suburbs in Vincent, Leederville has a higher proportion of young people aged 18 to 34 and of overseas born people who have recently arrived. The suburb also has more medium density housing which makes up just under half of the 1,600 private dwellings in Leederville (information from 2016 Census of Population & Housing; 2021 data is forthcoming).

Construction of the Mitchell Freeway in Leederville, 1975. (COV PHO2577)



LAKE MONGER / GALUP



Lake Monger has a significant place in the history of Leederville.

To Europeans, the lake was known as Triangle Lake or Large Lake and then in 1831 it was named Monger's Lake after early colonist John Henry Monger. The original footprint of the lake was a much larger area used for farming and market gardening. In the 1890s, Leederville Council put forward proposals to dredge and beautify the lake. In 1901, the Monger's Lake Board was established to manage the lake, which was declared a reserve for native game. Reeds were cleared and playgrounds and bathing sheds were built along the foreshore. In 1931, it was renamed 'Lake Monger' and remained a popular local venue for yachting carnivals, swimming regattas, bands and promenading along the shores.

*Exerpt from SLWA Chain Map CN77 40 Chain Perth, 1922.
Early Lake Monger c1914 COV PH00990*

After an accident in 1949, all boating on the lake was stopped and swimming discouraged. In the 1950s, a road was constructed around the lake and drainage pipes installed. A comprehensive plan for the lake was drawn up as part of Gordon Stephenson's 1955 Plan for the Metropolitan Region which saw land on the reserve set aside for future road construction. In the 1970s, construction of the Mitchell Freeway cut the lake off from the town of Leederville. After the restructure of the City of Perth in 1994, the lake came under the jurisdiction of Town of Cambridge who have since worked to manage and rehabilitate the lake's eco-system.

Today, Lake Monger is an urban wetland that attracts many thousands of locals and visitors every week. Few know its complex and buried history.

For tens of thousands of years before European colonisation, Lake Monger was a traditional Noongar camping and meeting place known as Galup (Kaarlup) - a place of fires. In 1830, it was also the site of a colonial massacre of Noongar people.



Image by Dan Grant of 2019 Galup performance. Courtesy of Same Drum Pty Ltd.



In 2021, the untold stories of Lake Monger/Galup were explored in a walking performance by Noongar theatre-maker Ian Wilkes and artist/filmmaker Poppy van Oorde-Grainger with an oral history from Noongar Elder Doolann-Leisha Eatts. The creative team ('Same Drum') have since created the 'Galup Virtual Reality Experience' to enable people who missed the original show to experience the performance.

Together with our colleagues at the Town of Cambridge, we have collaborated with Same Drum to produce a historic timeline to accompany the nine minute Galup virtual reality work which is being showcased at the WA Museum from 3 to 17 July 2022. The Galup VR experience will be accessible in the Vincent Local History Centre in late September. Further information about the project is available at: <https://www.samedrum.com/galup>

Caption Ian Wilkes performing Galup at Lake Monger, 2021.

LOST VINCENT

CHINESE MARKET GARDENS IN LEEDERVILLE



Chinese market gardens, 101-115 Oxford Street Leederville, c 1919. (COV PHO2236)

Colonists established the first commercial vegetable gardens shortly after 1829. During the 1880s, a number of Chinese immigrants had also begun to develop a stake in market gardening in the Colony and by 1885 there were 54 Chinese gardeners operating in the Metropolitan Area, some located adjacent to the lakes and wetlands in present day Vincent.

Their method of production was such that they needed access to an adequate year-round water supply and fertile soil so the areas of peat soils associated with lakes, swamps or former swamps were most suitable.

The seed they used was either imported from China or purchased locally and the vegetables grown included carrots, lettuces, cauliflowers, beetroot, eggplant, melons, pumpkins and many others, including the sugar cane which were so popular with the local children.

By the early 1900s, market gardens began to appear throughout Leederville situated on the wetlands between Monger's Lake and Oxford Street, in Newcastle Street and in Vincent Street. Most were run by Chinese migrants,

many of whom had previously worked in the Goldfields having come to Western Australia prior to Federation when their entry was restricted by the White Australia policy.

In 1899, the Western Australian Directory lists Chinese Gardens on Bourke Street between Oxford Street and Mongers Lake. The smaller streets off Oxford Street, Muriel, Bouverie and St Johns Road (later Bennelong Place) all had Chinese gardens, many until the 1930s. Wing Hing and Wing Yung gardened in St Johns Road from 1909 until 1930. By 1935 Wing Hing had opened a greengrocers shop in William Street.



While the Chinese gardeners sold direct from their gardens to some of their neighbours, their most common method was to sell their vegetables door-to-door with a horse and cart in the same way that the earlier Europeans had sold their produce.

Some of their European neighbours in Vincent were very against the traditional Chinese methods of gardening and there were moves to close them down. One such move in 1910 took the form of a 'suggestion' to the Perth City Council by the Australian Natives Association [ANA] for the 'compulsory purchase of all Chinese gardens in Perth, by the Government'. The idea was dropped following a change in government but the ANA continued with its efforts over the next few years. So did other groups. In June 1928 the Leederville Progress Association argued that the Chinese gardens should be resumed because the 'progress of that part of the district was being retarded owing to the presence of these gardens,

Chinese market gardeners with the Lee Family, Melrose Street Leederville 1950. (COV PHO624)

which are considered to be a menace. The conditions of living of the Chinese were disgraceful.'

By the mid-1920s there were still at least 13 separate gardens in the Vincent area but changes had already begun to occur as a result of the post-WWI immigration and refugee schemes. These schemes led to restricted entry for Chinese migrants and increased competition from Southern European (Italian and Croatian) market gardeners which impacted on the older established Chinese gardeners who continued to use their traditional and labour intensive methods of gardening.

There were few Chinese gardeners left by the 1950s and the continued development of Leederville, including infrastructure for the 1962 Empire Games and the construction of the Mitchell Freeway contributed to the decline in land available for market gardening.

This early Chinese presence and the gardener's influence on the development of areas in Leederville and North Perth is remembered today in a recording of an early Chinese resident's memories in the talking rock at the Smith's Lake wetland on Kayle Street, North Perth.



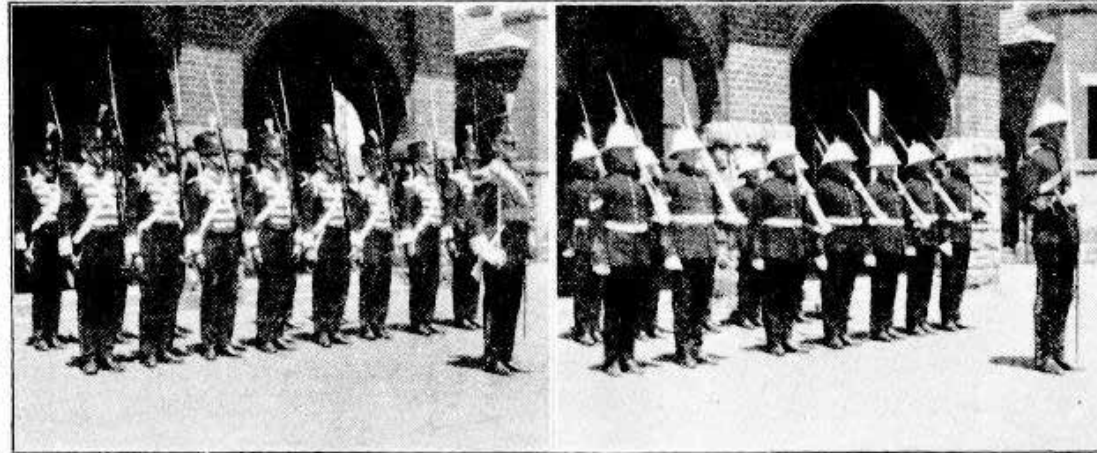
Chinese market gardener Wing On with horse and cart, North Perth c 1947. COV PHO1079)

LEEDERVILLE OVAL



RP Fletcher stand at Leederville Oval, 1960s. (COV PHO1341)

PREPARING FOR MILITARY TATTOO.



A military tattoo will be held at Leederville Oval on November 28. A feature will be the contrasts of old and new military uniforms. Last week volunteers representing the 3rd Regiment (left), which was associated with the foundation of Western Australia, rehearsed with representatives of the Royal Australian Artillery. The detachments were respectively commanded by Lieut. G. G. Robertson and Major Meredith.

Leederville Oval was originally part of a wetland chain that was drained in the mid to late 1800s to allow the expansion and development of Perth. The area was initially used for market gardening, dairy farming and poultry farms with the area east of Loftus Street used as a sanitary site and rubbish dump for Perth during the 1890s.

On 6 July 1900, the site was first vested in the Leederville Municipality as Reserve 3839 as the (recreation grounds). However, it was not until 1915 that the oval was developed and a timber and brick grandstand built. It was officially opened by Western Australian Premier John Scaddan as the home of the West Perth Football Club on 24 July, 1915.

Numerous other sports also used Leederville Oval including athletics, tennis, baseball, softball and professional bicycle racing. During both world wars, the military also used the oval for cadet drills, with the Leederville Drill Hall being only a little further west on Vincent Street.

In 1933, Leederville Oval was the venue for a more unusual military event. On the evening of 28 November 1933, over 1,000 members of the armed forces

The Western Mail, 23 November 1933.

ARMY-NAVY TATTOO. A BRILLIANT PAGEANT.

Mock War at Leederville Oval.

Rocket flares and the flashes of machine gun and rifle fire revealing the desperate defence of a stronghold against an attacking force advancing under a deafening barrage of artillery fire, and the final assault by bayonet in the ghostly fog of smoke candles, formed one of the many vivid incidents in the Naval and Military Tattoo held on the Leederville oval last night.

In an area illuminated by lights aggregating 40,000 candle power, more than 1,000 men, representing all arms of the naval and military forces of Western Australia, after months of intensive training, presented one of the most colourful and spectacular pageants seen in Perth. It was a triumph of realism. Not a moment was without thrilling incident. The stage management was especially perfect in the dramatic alternations of darkness and light. Bursts of applause from a crowd of more than 6,000 people, who completely circled the oval, echoed every moment.

Punctually at eight o'clock, a troop of light horsemen, red and white pennons waving from their lances, escorted his Excellency the Lieut.-Governor (Sir James Mitchell) on to the arena. A band played the national anthem, and followed with a jaunty air as the 50-strong guard of honour from the Royal Australian Artillery—a brave show in full dress uniforms—held the present for the inspection. Then the Guidon of the 10th Light Horse Regiment and the Kings and Regimental Colours of

colourful and spectacular pageants seen in Perth...not a moment was without thrilling incident."The entertainment included horses and chariots galloping in formation and was concluded by a mock battle (with rifles and cannons firing blank ammunition) between British soldiers and Zulu warriors followed by Canadian North West Mounted Police rescuing Canadian colonists in covered wagons from so-called 'redskins'.

During WWII, football, cricket and athletics continued to be played on Leederville Oval. It was also the venue for various war fundraising and recruitment efforts including the Red Cross and the Women's Australian National Service (WANS) who held a summer camp at the oval in December 1941.

After the war, the stadium and track were upgraded for use as a subsidiary athletic venue for the Seventh British Empire and Commonwealth Games held in 1962. The original timber and brick grandstand was partially demolished to make way for new facilities including a main grandstand, opened on 22 August 1959 by Governor Sir Charles Gardener. It was named the 'Fletcher' stand in 1963 in honour of the former President of the

West Perth Football Club, R.P. (Dick) Fletcher, who was club president from 1946 to 1962.

In 1993, West Perth played their last game at Leederville Oval to a crowd of 20,000 spectators before moving to their new home ground in Joondalup. In 1994, the newly formed Vincent council operated temporarily from the Leederville oval grandstand while new administration offices were being built nearby. Later in 2003 and 2004, Leederville oval became home ground of the East Perth and Subiaco

Football Clubs. In 2006, the Town of Vincent sold the naming rights to the grounds which today is also known also as 'Medibank Stadium'.

staged a military and naval tattoo and 'mock war' for a crowd of over 6,000 spectators. The tattoo included soldiers and naval officers from a range of WA battalions and units from different eras participating in a coordinated demonstration of skills accompanied by music from various army and navy bands. The event was described in the local newspapers as "one of the most



West Perth Football players at their last game on home turf at Leederville Oval, 1993. (COV PHO2035)

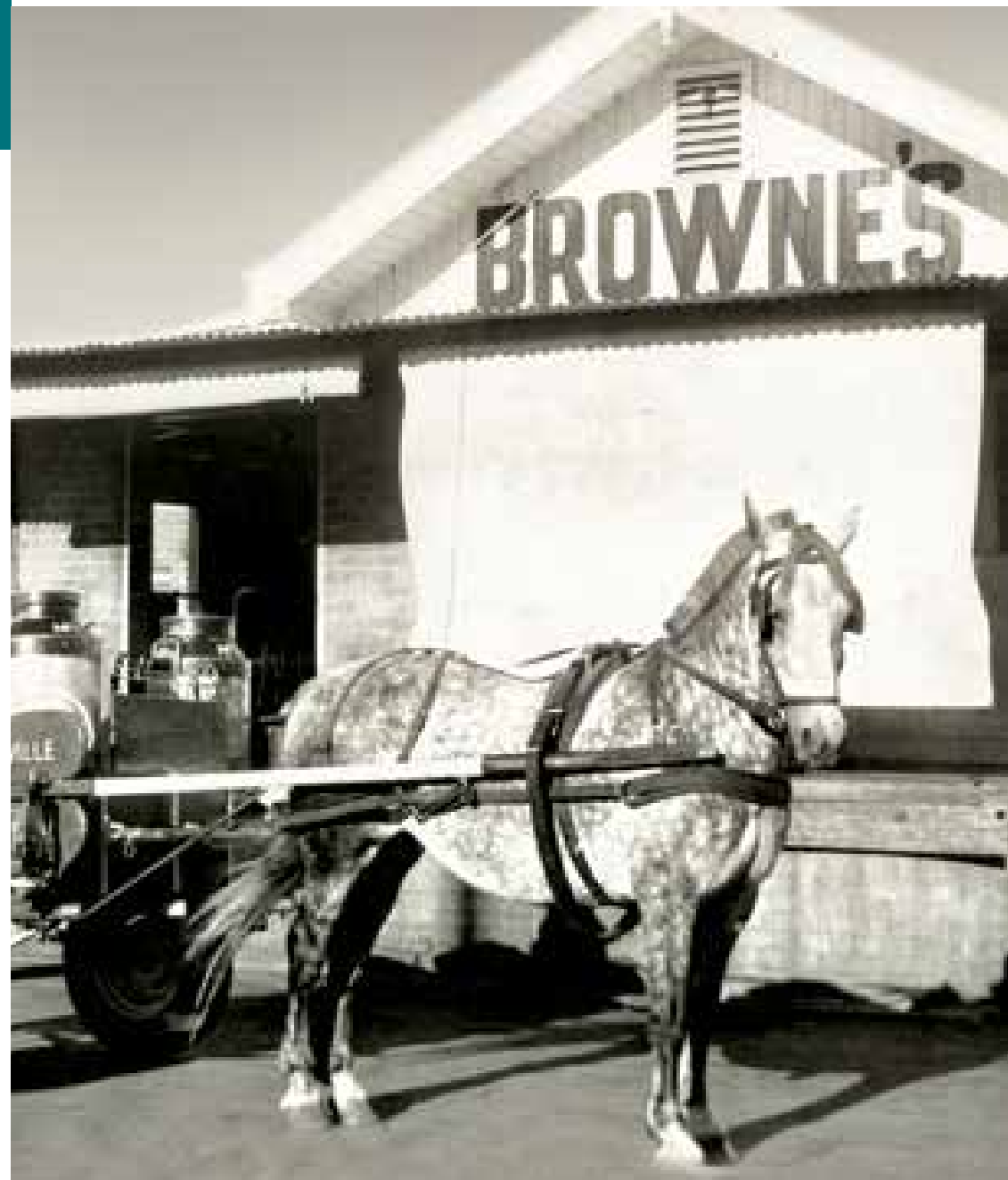
Sunday Times (Perth, WA: 1902 – 1954). Sunday 19 May 1935, page 5

THE LEEDERVILLE BOLTER

In 1952, Vince Carbone was working as a young tow truck driver at Master Motors, 359 Oxford Street. The 1950s was an era of burgeoning private car ownership with 70,000 vehicles registered in Western Australia compared to over 2 million today. Business was booming for Master Motors when young Vince got the call to attend a tragic and unexpected accident at the New Oxford Theatre (the present day Luna Cinema). That year, there were 7,510 accidents reported on WA roads between different cars, trams, carts and pedestrians. While Vince had attended all sorts of accidents, he'd never been called to remove a horse and cart from a cinema before.

The accident happened on a Sunday before Christmas. Milkman Nick Mostert, a Dutch migrant, was delivering milk with a horse and cart for Masters Dairy when the horse was spooked by a car and bolted, crashing through the window of the New Oxford

Theatre (now the Luna Cinema). The milkman was able to jump clear of the cart and escaped unhurt. However, the horse smashed through the glass window and impaled itself on a shaft of wood from the cart and died on the scene.



Browne's Dairy Horse and Cart, (COV PH0 2764)

Vince, who got the call to remove the horse and cart from the cinema recalls, "It used to be joke that our company was the only one to ever take a dead horse from a theatre after a cowboy movie..."

Local reporters put their own spin on events, reporting the first thing police saw when they arrived on the scene was the distraught Dutch milkman and a movie poster for *Pandora and the Flying Dutchman*.

Local dairy companies like Brownes and Masters continued to deliver milk by horse and cart until well into the 1960s. Many senior residents recall the sight, sounds (and smell) of work horses on our suburban streets and the occasional catastrophic collisions between horses and vehicles.



Article in the Kalgoorlie Miner, 22 December 1952, p 5. ticket stub from the 1950s. (COV PH03077N)

**ACCIDENTS AT
WEEK-END**

Sensational Bolt

**MILK CART IN
LEEDERVILLE**

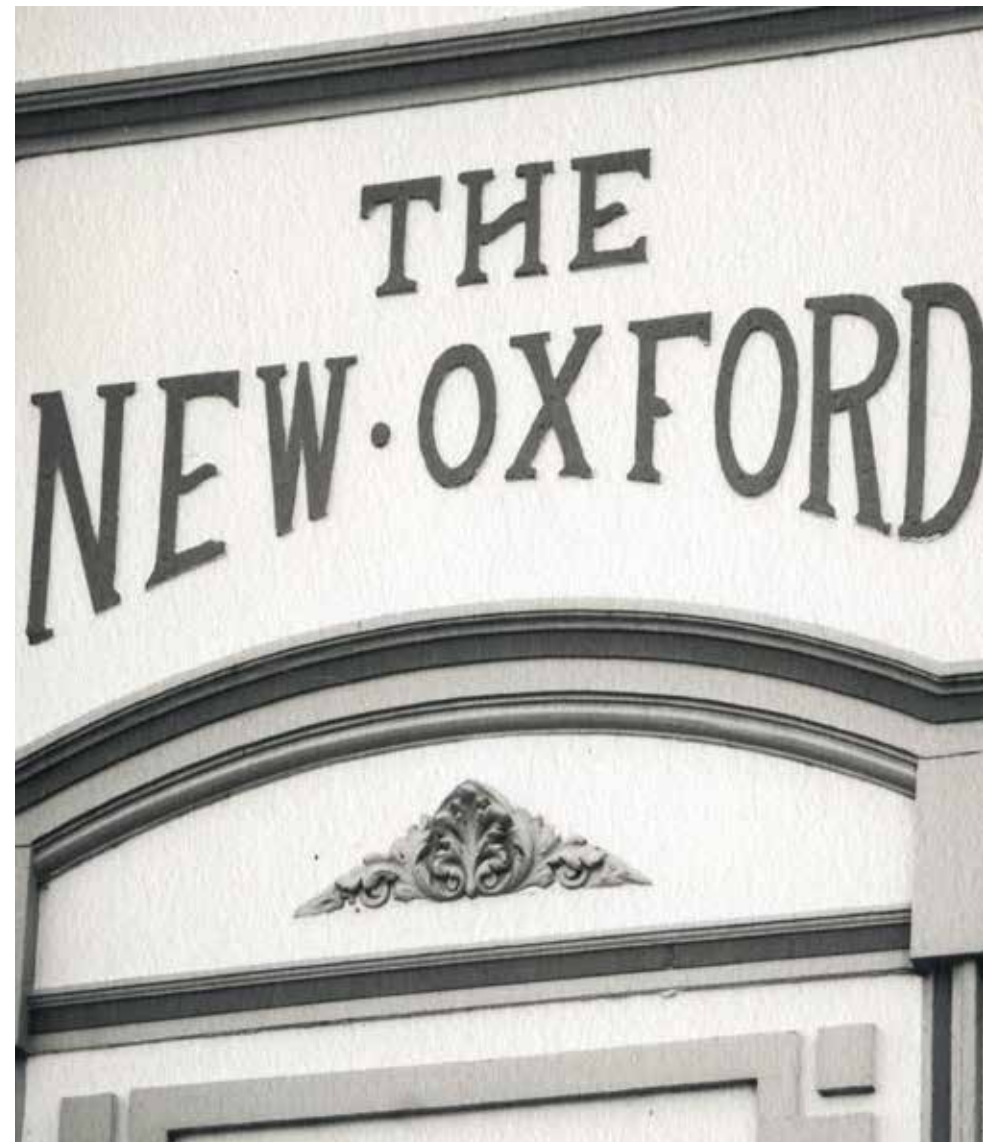
Perth, Dec. 21. — When a horse bolted after it had been frightened by an old model car early this morning, it mounted a footpath, dragging the milk cart it was pulling, and smashed into the front of the new Oxford picture theatre, Leederville.

Crates of milk, broken bottles and glass littered the footpath and roadway and one bottle flew through the window of a neighbouring residence.

The cart was being driven west in Vincent street, Leederville, by Nick Mostert, of Havelock street, West Perth, an employee of Master's Dairy Pty. Ltd.

When the horse crashed through the window a shaft of the cart penetrated its neck and it died immediately.

Mr. Mostert told the police that when the horse bolted he knew that it would attempt to take the corner at Oxford street so he jumped clear.



Façade of the New Oxford Theatre, 2012. COV PH06343

In this edition, our heritage hero is Ron Lindsay who grew up at 240 Vincent Street from 1942 – 1964. Ron has recorded his memories of boyhood in the Leederville area for the benefit of his grandchildren. He shared his vivid and candid recollections in several Local History Awards submissions, winning the Geoff Bolton award in 2020 for his engaging and hilarious 'Feral in an Inner Suburb'.

The memoir is filled with tales of adventure and misadventures of young Ron and his mate Kev. The two friends played in the swamps and rubbish tips around Lake Monger, where they swam, caught gilgies and made camps. When Ron was eleven, he and Kev built a plywood canoe ('The Swift').

"It was the pride of Monger's Lake and it returned a handsome threepence ride from kids who queued for their turn. Of course the word was that the middle of Monger's Lake was bottomless and indeed kids had drowned there. The truth was that although some of the lake edges were deep treacherous mud, the centre was only about a foot deep and firm sand. This little sh-t once stepped out of the canoe in the middle of the lake, laid in the shallow water and commenced to thrash about until people on the shore showed concern, then I stood up and waved to them."



'The lake' was full of delicious gilgies which thrived in the roots of floating lily weed which had been introduced (possibly from the carp ponds in their adjacent gardens) in the swampland west of Oxford Street. There was also copious large carp (koi) in the lake. Before the freeway was built, much of the area between Oxford Street and Monger's Lake was swampland drained by ditches running into the lake. We often took a gallon tin each to the lake and brought them home full of gilgies which were about the same size as Swan River prawns. We cooked them in Kev's Grandma's copper which was in the washhouse at the rear of their deep back yard (without her knowledge of course)."

- Ron's delightful and engaging memories of his childhood in Leederville are available in the Vincent Local History Centre or online at: 'Feral in an Inner Suburb' (https://librarycatalogue.vincent.wa.gov.au/client/en_GB/search/asset/1122/0)
- 'So you grew up in Leederville did you sonny?' https://librarycatalogue.vincent.wa.gov.au/client/en_GB/search/asset/2503/0

Ron Lindsay and friend 'Kev' in their boat on Lake Monger, 1950. (COV PH0617)

HERITAGE HERO:

RON LINDSAY

EVENTS & PROGRAMS

JULY

TALK: DEBESA WITH CINDY SOLONEC

WEDNESDAY 27TH JULY 2022 | 10.00 – 11.30AM

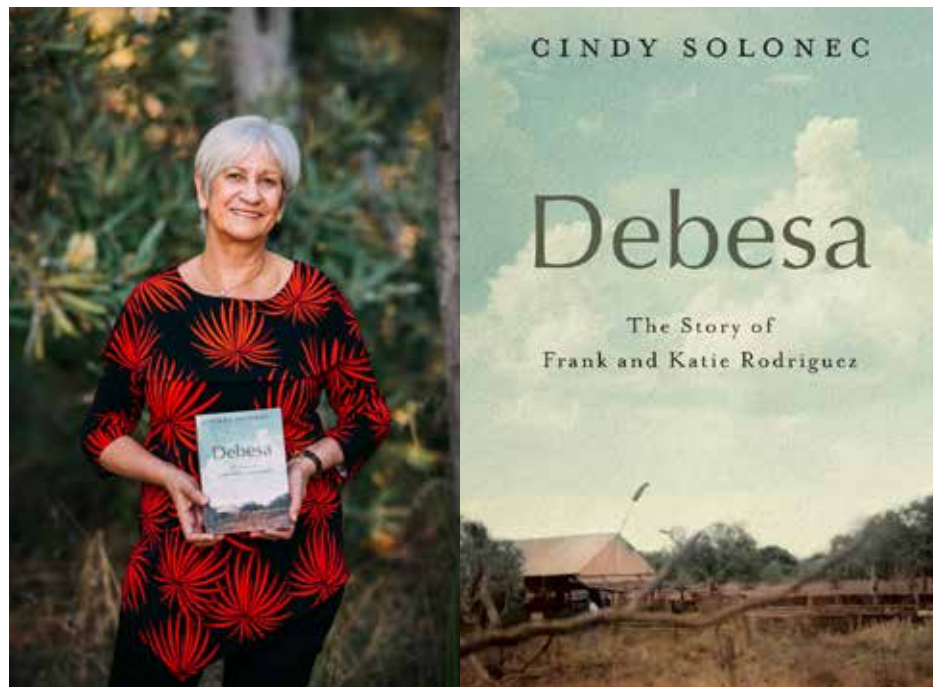
City of Vincent Library Local History Centre

Join Dr Cindy Solonec, a Nigena (Nyikina) woman, to hear the story of her family's life on Debesa Station in the West Kimberley. The book is published by Magdala books and was short listed for the 2022 WA Premier's Prize for an Emerging Writer.

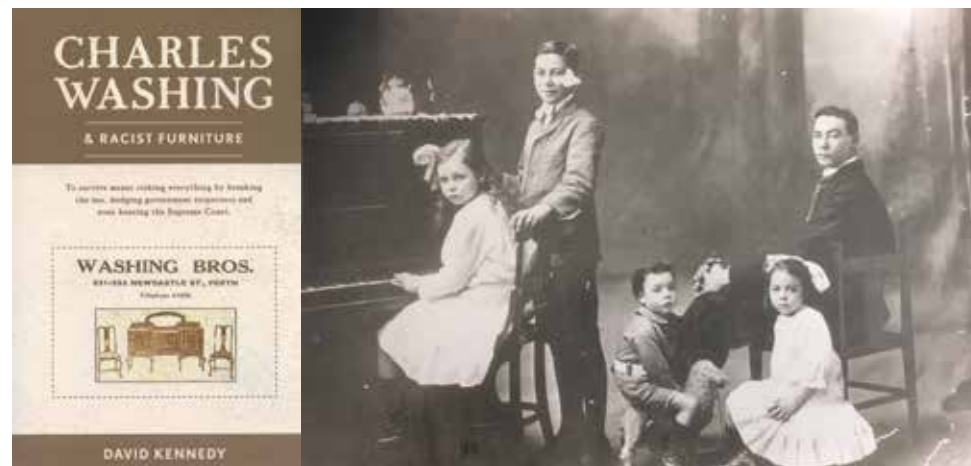
Cost: Free

Presenter: Dr Cindy Solonec

Bookings Essential as places are limited: Online or call 9273 6534



AUGUST FAMILY HISTORY MONTH



TALK: CHARLES WASHING & RACIST FURNITURE WITH DAVID KENNEDY & KAYLENE POON

WEDNESDAY 17TH AUGUST 2022 | 10.00 – 11.30AM

City of Vincent Library Local History Centre

Join author David Kennedy and historian Kaylene Poon in a talk about the difficulties experienced by early Chinese immigrants in Perth.

Brothers David & Michael Kennedy discovered their hidden Chinese roots when researching their family history. David was inspired to write the story of his secret ancestor, Charles Washing, who established Washing Bros furniture company in Newcastle Street Perth in the early 1900s.

Cost: Free

Presenter: David Kennedy & Kaylene Poon

Bookings Essential as places are limited: Online or call 9273 6534

SEPTEMBER

TALK: GALUP

THURSDAY 8TH SEPTEMBER 2022 | 4 – 5PM

City of Vincent Library Local History Centre

Lake Monger is an ancient wetland in the heart of suburban Perth in Western Australia. Its Noongar name is Galup (Kaarlup) – a place of fires, and for tens of thousands of years it was a traditional camping and meeting place. In 1830, it was also the site of a colonial massacre of Noongar people.

In 2019 a multi-artform project called Galup began, which explores untold histories of the lake through performance, virtual reality and online educational resources. The Galup project is guided by a team of supportive Noongar Elders and produced by not-for-profit production company Same Drum. The performance and virtual reality productions were created by Noongar theatre-maker Ian Wilkes and artist/filmmaker Poppy van Oorde-Grainger with an oral history from Noongar Elder Doolann-Leisha Eatts.

In this talk, Ian Wilkes and Poppy van Oorde-Grainger will discuss the project and introduce the innovative 'Galup Virtual Reality Experience'.

Cost: Free

Presenter: Ian Wilkes and Poppy van Oorde-Grainger

Bookings Essential as places are limited: Online or call **9273 6534**





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