



CITY OF VINCENT  
**LIBRARY &  
LOCAL HISTORY CENTRE**

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# Local History News



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This quarterly newsletter focuses on North Perth, Vincent's biggest suburb both in area and population.

year for Freo, especially on hot summer days when I wait impatiently for the afternoon sea breeze to arrive, North Perth really does rock. Whoever keeps scattering those painted stones ('North Perth Rocks') around the suburb, thank you and please keep reminding us how lucky we are.

In the last few years, it's been my privilege to learn much more about the history of my own neighbourhood working in my current role. There is always something new to learn about people and places right under our noses. I often share these stories with family, friends and neighbours, sometimes a little too frequently for their liking. I'm looking forward to sharing tales of North Perth with a broader audience on our soon to be launched revamped local history webpages.

In the meantime, I hope you enjoy this North Perth edition of our newsletter.

Dr Susanna Iuliano  
**Senior Librarian, Local History Centre**

Full disclaimer, I have a special connection to North Perth. While I was born and raised in Fremantle, North Perth is where I've lived with my own family for the past 15 years.

We moved to North Perth because it offered a sense of space and community, while still being close to the city. It has a mix of old and new homes and places that give it character. Kids can walk or ride to school and play in the streets or parks relatively freely. It has all the perks of suburbia, without feeling sterile or soulless.

We chose well. Our family has thrived here and we're lucky to continue to call North Perth home. While I sometimes

Cover image: Town Hall for the Municipal Council of North Perth (State Records Office 54123 - Cons 1644 035)



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Plan of the municipality of North Perth, c 1910 (SLWA 33/15/1e)

# NORTH PERTH: A BRIEF HISTORY

## Early History

North Perth lies in a chain of seasonal wetlands important to the Whadjuk Noongar people for both practical and spiritual reasons. Wetlands in the area were camping areas and food sources, and their creation was associated with the Waugal rainbow serpent. There are two registered Aboriginal heritage sites in North Perth: Goonderup (near the Redemptorist Monastery) and Danjanberup (Smith's Lake).

With European colonisation, many of the wetland areas around North Perth became farms or market gardens. In the 1840s and 50s, John Smith farmed the area around present day Charles Veryard Reserve (See article in this edition). Thomas Farmer (after whom Farmer Street was later named) was another early land holder in the area. Farmer was a Wesleyan Minister and a vocal temperance advocate. After

he died in 1891, his wife Lydia sold part of his estate (Swan Location 653) to land developers including Solomon Herman and Thomas Whitton Williams.

The WA gold rush of the 1890s saw a dramatic expansion of Perth and growth of new suburbs such as North Perth. Selling former swampland required clever marketing. The developers gave the subdivisions fancy names such as 'Toorak' and 'Woodville' and the land was advertised as being 'high and healthy'. Proximity to good roads and transport was also a selling feature. The tram network which ran from the city to North Perth from the early 1900s to 1958 was an important feature in the suburb's early development.

As North Perth grew, so did the need for civic and public amenities.

**THE PERCY ESTATE**  
**TOORAK & WOODVILLE**  
 OF PART SWAN LOCATIONS  
 647 & 653  
 Close to City Boundary  
 HIGH AND HEALTHY  
 For Private Sale  
 ~BY~  
 S. HERMAN  
 AND  
 T. W. WILLIAMS  
 LAND, ESTATE, MINING AND GENERAL AGENTS,  
 HAY ST. PERTH

**TERMS**  
 1/4 Cash.  
 Balance in  
 3, 6, 9, & 12 MONTHS  
 NO INTEREST

CROSSLAND & HARDY  
 Licensed Surveyors

**Locality Plan**

The Percy Estate, Toorak & Woodville, 1897. (SLWA 55/14/55)



*Rosemount Hotel, c 1910. (COV PHO4196)*

Woodville Reserve was made a public recreation area in the early 1900s, with bowling greens and croquet lawns established in 1910, followed by tennis courts in 1915.

North Perth's first school opened in Albert Street in January 1899. It was originally called Woodville School after the earliest subdivision in the area. It was re-named North Perth State School in 1903 and later North Perth Primary School.

The Redemptorist Monastery and Church was built on Vincent Street

in 1903 and the surrounding land was subdivided for residential development (sold as the Monastery precinct). St Hilda's Anglican Church began conducting services in 1904 from a small wooden church on Glebe and View Streets, which was rebuilt in 1915 on the current site.

The North Perth Police Station was built in 1908 on Angove Street to house North Perth's resident constable. Further along Angove Street, the North Perth postal service operated from a shop on the corner of Woodville Streets (now Stomp Coffee) from 1902 – 1916.

No new suburb was complete without a hotel. North Perth had two - the Rosemount Hotel built in 1902 on the corner of Angove and Fitzgerald Streets and the Wanneroo Hotel (later North Perth Hotel) on the corner of Angove and Charles Street (then Wanneroo Road) from 1900.

As the number of residents and businesses grew, North Perth became a municipality covering the area north of Vincent Street to Walcott Street, plus much of present day Mount Hawthorn. The council met at the North Perth Town Hall (Lesser Hall) which was built in 1902, and the main town hall built in 1910. In 1914, the City of Perth took control of all the inner-city councils, including North Perth. The town hall complex was subsequently used by North Perth Primary School and a host of other community groups and local residents for civic, social, political and sporting functions. (See article in this edition).



*Students signing at official opening of Goonderup Place, North Perth State School, 1944. (COV PHO6152)*

## Post-war North Perth

Following WWII, a surge of British and European migration increased demand for housing and public amenities such as schooling in the area. A new primary school, Kyilla, opened in 1945 on Selkirk Street North Perth to cater to the growing community.

The 1950s saw the rise of cars and the demise of the trams, which had connected North Perth to the city from the early 1900s until 1958. The last number 22 tram, which ran along Fitzgerald and on to Angove, was marked with a parade of marching girls along Angove Street in February 1958.



*Marching girls mark the voyage of last tram in Angove Street, 1958 (COV PH01749)*



*Swimmers at Beatty Park 1960s*

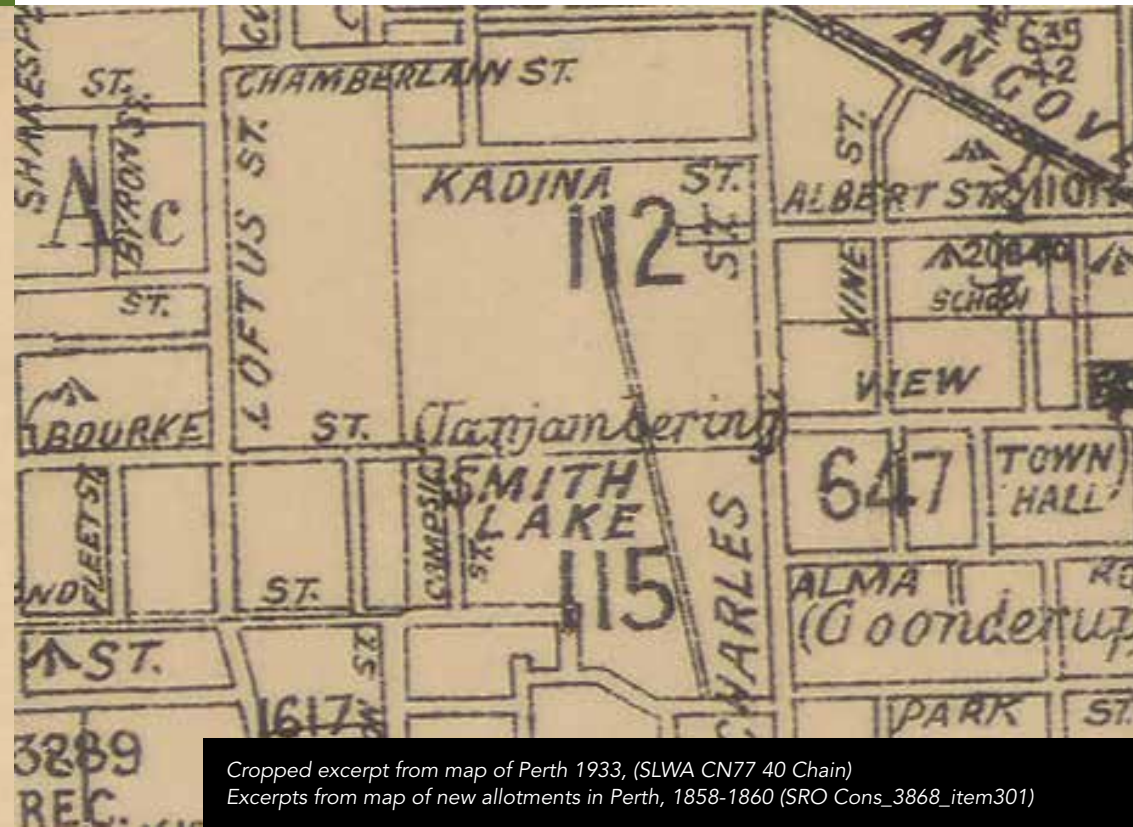
In the 1960s, the construction of Beatty Park Aquatic Centre for the British Empire & Commonwealth Games left a lasting legacy of a world class swimming pool enjoyed by generations of local residents and Perth swimmers for decades to come.

Throughout the 1950s and 60s, affordable land and house prices attracted many Greek, Macedonian and Italian migrants. During the 1970s and 80s migrants and refugees from Vietnam, Korea, Burma and other Asian countries also settled in North Perth creating a culturally diverse community.

The growing diversity of the community was reflected in institutions such as the North Perth Ethnic Music Centre, which operated from the North Perth Town Hall in the 1980s and 1990s. The Ethnic Communities Council of WA also established itself in North Perth from 1975 as the umbrella organisation for multicultural groups and communities in the state. It operated the Multicultural Wellness Centre from Woodville Reserve until 2016.

Today, North Perth is home to around 10,000 residents living in around 4000 households, (with over 900 dogs!).

# SMITH'S LAKE/ DANJANBERUP



Cropped excerpt from map of Perth 1933, (SLWA CN77 40 Chain)  
Excerpts from map of new allotments in Perth, 1858-1860 (SRO Cons\_3868\_item301)

Charles Veryard Reserve is located on a former wetland known to the local Noongar people as Danjanberup (or Janjanbering/Danjanbirup). Anthropologist and journalist Daisy Bates recorded the site of 'Janjanbering' in the vicinity of 'Monger's Lake' near a source of ochre which was a highly prized and tradeable commodity for Noongar people. The name later appeared on official public works department maps from the early 1900s until the 1930s. In a recent language and place naming workshop for the City of Vincent, Noongar Elders decoded the name Danjanberup as meaning footpath or pathway to the digging place, possibly referencing its proximity to either the ochre or food sources near Lake Monger/Galup.

European colonists named the area 'Three Island Lake' (because three islands rose out of the south-western edge of the lake) and later 'Smith's Lake' after local farmer John Smith. Smith was a discharged Sergeant in the 21st Regiment who was granted land at Three Island Lake in 1840. When Smith died in 1862, his son Bernard inherited the farm.

From the 1850s, the arrival of convicts to colonial West Australia provided a source of labour for farms, and also for large scale public works including drainage of the wetland areas north of Perth through to Claise Brook.

Gradually the area of the lake diminished as it was further drained (often using convict labour) and developed for farming and market gardening. While draining reduced or removed the surface water of the lake, the groundwater level remained close to the surface. In 1891, the lake was still deep enough in parts for a boy to drown after capsizing on a makeshift 'cabbage tree punt' which he had been playing on with a friend in the lake. (The West Australian, 23 March 1891).

In the early 1900s, land to the south of Smith's Lake was offered for sale as part of the 'Lakeside Estate'. The area in and around the lake and to the north (Swan Location 112) continued to be used for farming and market gardening. The Royal Agricultural Show of 1900 recorded farmer George H Coombes of Smith's Lake as winning the prize young sow award. (Western Mail, 10 November 1900) More common were smaller market garden plots often leased by Chinese market gardeners from European land owners.



Lakeside Estate North Perth, c 1905 (SLWA 55/15/16)

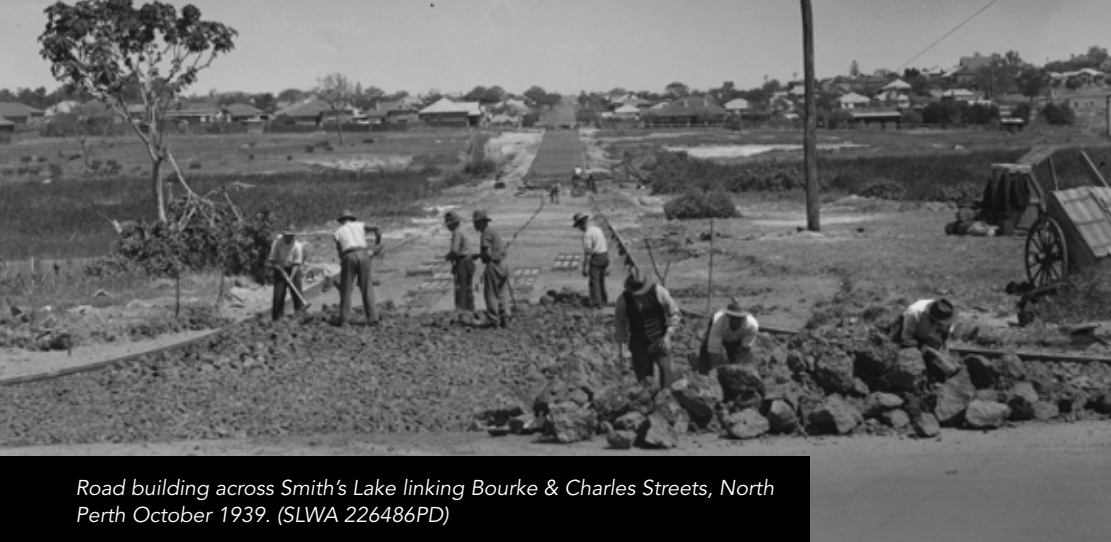


Wing On of North Perth with local children in his vegetable delivery cart, c 1947 (COV PH01079)

A list of Chinese market gardens in Perth from 1928 included around 16 Chinese market gardeners around Smith's Lake. Many locals recall Chinese market gardeners living and farming in the area up until the late 1950s. Dorothy Delves, who lived at her grandmother's property on Charles Street backing on to Smith's Lake remembers gardener Wing On who leased land from her grandmother and delivered his produce to locals in the area with his horse and cart. The Gooley family were also well-known market gardeners in the area who farmed in the area up until the late 1950s when the City of Perth resumed their land.

Between the wars, the City of Perth gradually acquired much of the area as recreation reserve, and also for the purpose of extending Bourke Street east to connect Charles and Loftus Streets. It was not until 1939 that this extension was undertaken and completed connecting North Perth to Leederville.

In this period, the southern end of Smith's Lake was used as a dumping ground for old vehicles, and reportedly old military equipment including a rusted old tank and Bern-gun carriers. Many locals recall playing in the swamps and market gardens and scavenging rubbish from the dumps as children. Brian Mouchemore, (born in 1946) recalls;



Road building across Smith's Lake linking Bourke & Charles Streets, North Perth October 1939. (SLWA 226486PD)

*Smith's Lake was, I suppose, my primary discovery when I was a little kid. I wandered down the end of the street and found this great area...with lots of bird-life and things going on and you know, the whole populace of young children in the area were always at the lake.*

*Through the centre of Smith's Lake there was a drain which we used to get into, particularly in summer. It was fairly fresh spring water and we used to get in there and sometimes the water would be 18 inches to 2 feet deep and we could swim in there and slide on the slime on the side of the drain. Towards the southern end of this drain, there were a few large ponds with springs in them and we used to swim in those.*

*At the other end, the northern end of Smith's Lake, there were two rather large Chinese gardens. One belonged to the Gooeys and the other one, which was on Charles Street, was owned by Wing On and his brother. They were operated quite extensively and we used to go on little sorties into these areas and pull up carrots and pinch various vegetables to try them out. We also used to go and buy sticks of sugar cane off the Chinamen (Brian Mouchemore).*

In the early 1950s, the North Perth Progress Association and the headmaster of the North Perth School suggested that the City of Perth turn the 'eyesore' of Smith's Lake into playing fields, recreation reserve and sporting complex. However, the Perth City Council proceeded to re-plan, reclaim and resume land

in the area with a view to subdivision and residential development. Seventy-six residential and 10 commercial lots were created, along with Charles Veryard Reserve (named for former City of Perth Councillor from 1927 – 1964). The oval became the home of the North Perth Cricket Club and Old Modernians Hockey Club.

Several years later in 1969, the City of Perth built the Len Fletcher Sports Pavilion (named for local resident and North Perth Ward councillor Leonard Fletcher) at the southern end of Smith's Lake on Kayle Street for use by several indoor sports including gymnastics. The pavilion, leased by Gymnastics WA, was demolished in 2002 and replaced with a multi-use sports centre at Loftus.

In the late 1990s, a Smith's Lake Precinct Group was formed to coordinate efforts to rehabilitate the former lake and wetland. In 2002, planting, artworks and interpretive elements (signs and oral histories incorporated into a 'speaking rock') were installed at Smith's Lake, the first stage in development of the former Vincent Wetlands Trail linking all the former wetlands in the Vincent area.

Today, all that remains of the former wetland is the compensating basin on Bourke and Kayle Streets, and the



The 'speaking rock' at Smith's Lake

signs of subsistence and cracking in some buildings in the vicinity due to the impact of unstable foundations. The Smith's Lake Drainage Reserve is heritage listed on the City of Vincent's Municipal Heritage Inventory (Place 11441).

To learn more about the history of Smith's Lake, read A Short History of Smith's Lake (2001) by Sally Lake online or in the Vincent Local History Centre. Also available online are the recollections of local residents Brian Mouchemore; Barbara and Neville Fletcher; Barry Chapman; Norma Crofts; David Drewett and Reg Wertheimer.

# IF HALLS HAD EARS: THE NORTH PERTH TOWN HALL



Official opening of the North Perth Town Hall (Lesser Hall), 30 June 1902. (COV PHO484)

**If walls could talk, the North Perth Town Hall could provide enough content to fuel a podcast series multiple times over. No other building in North Perth quite captures the changes and diversity of the North Perth community over the last century like the grand hall on the hill in View Street.**

A recent deep dive into State Records Office files relating to the North Perth Town Hall revealed some fascinating untold stories about the hall.

The North Perth Town Hall is made up of two buildings constructed separately in the early 1900s. The smaller of the two buildings, the North Perth Lesser Hall, was designed by Henry Prockter and built in 1902.

In its heyday as a council chambers and offices, the Lesser Hall (or 'Mayoral Parlour' as it was also known) hosted fortnightly meetings where local concerns - from roads to rubbish collection - were thrashed out by councillors and residents. Prockter was also involved in planning the larger adjoining Town Hall constructed later in 1910, although his original plans for a much grander triple fronted building facing View Street were never realised.

After the North Perth Municipal Council was absorbed in the greater Perth City Council in 1914, the civic buildings were hired out for a range of different community, social and sporting activities.

The North Perth Town Hall was often used for school concerts, meetings and even as overflow classrooms for the nearby North Perth School. In 1916, the Education Department proposed to buy the buildings and adjoining land to expand the school, which was then bursting at the seams. Perth City Council was keen to offload the asset, but the sale was opposed by residents of the North Perth Progress Association who won the day and saved the hall. (The Daily News, 13 September 1916).



Wedding party at the North Perth Town Hall, 1915. (COV PHO4653)

In subsequent decades, the town hall was hired out for private weddings, balls and concerts, church services, charity events, film screenings, dance lessons, wrestling matches and table tennis tournaments. It was also used as a polling station for federal elections, and even for a time as a drop-in customer service centre for the WA Sewerage and Drainage Department. The Lesser Hall also provided a meeting place for a wide range of local community groups including masonic lodges, church and school groups and social welfare organisations.

Among the more unusual events hosted at the North Perth Town Hall was an opera recital held in October 1939, featuring Egon Pollak, a baritone from the Palestine Opera Company.

Pollak was also the coach of the touring national Palestinian soccer team who became stranded after the outbreak of war and 'sang for his supper' while exiled in Australia. The multi-talented Pollak sang in five languages but made a point to exclude all German songs from his Australian recitals in protest against German aggression in the war.

During WWII, the North Perth Town Hall was commandeered by the Civil Defence Council as a First Aid Post. The adjacent park next door served as a public air raid shelter with bunds and slit trenches. After the war, the hall was handed back to the council in 1944 and the park was re-levelled and reopened as a children's playground.

Although the hall was a little worse for wear after the war, its size and location made it an attractive venue for many actual and would-be users, including the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's State Symphony Orchestra (the forerunner to today's WASO). In 1951, the ABC approached Perth City Council with a proposal to relocate their music library and rehearsal facilities for the orchestra from St George's Terrace to the North Perth Town Hall. Perth City Council declined the proposal.

Decades later, the North Perth Town Hall became the headquarters for a very different type of music organisation, one that reflected the increasing multi-cultural character of the area. Many post-war European migrants were attracted to the relatively cheap housing on offer in the inner-city residential areas in and around North Perth. In the early 1980s, musician Linsey Pollak established

the North Perth Ethnic Music Centre, a community arts organisation that reflected and celebrated the diverse music traditions of the different ethnic groups that lived in the area. From 1982 until 1996, the centre was based at the North Perth Town Hall where they would host music workshops and the regular Friday night 'Café Folklorico' performances and dances. In 2020, the story of the North Perth Ethnic Music Centre was captured in the 'Music in Vincent' series produced collaboratively by the City of Vincent Local History Centre and the State Library of WA and available online at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=zv\\_1JJ8UKfk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zv_1JJ8UKfk)

Today, the North Perth Town Hall continues to be used by a range of diverse groups, from regular church groups and community groups such as the Vincent Repair Café and the Vincent Community Kitchen.



Dancing to a performance of 'Nostos Boys' at Café Folklorico, North Perth Town Hall, 1985. (COV PHO6138)

# LOST VINCENT: THE BEATTY PARK KIOSK



Beatty Park Pool kiosk and manager's residence, 1962. (SLWA 340570PD)

Beatty Park has undergone many changes over the last sixty years. The diving towers and outdoor children's learner pool are long gone. So too have the original Beatty Park kiosk and pool manager's residence which were located outside the centre on the site of the present day carpark. Designed by Perth architects Jeffrey Howlett and Donald Bailey, the sleek modernist circular kiosk and pool manager's residence conveyed the same confident, forward looking design aesthetic evident in Howlett & Bailey's grander landmark projects of the era such as Council House (1962) and the Perth Concert Hall (1973). Former Beatty Park Manager Rod Hounslow moved into the residence with his family in 1966.

*"There was a house in the grounds and I brought my family there. I have three daughters – Gemma, Peta and Susan – and they all lived and went off to school and university from that house at Beatty Park. It was in a very pleasant location and there was plenty of shade from the Moreton Bay fig trees. It has all gone; it is a car park now." (Rod Hounslow)*

Hounslow, interviewed for Beatty Park's 50th anniversary in 2012, also recalls the popularity of the adjacent kiosk.

*"The people that ran the kiosk were Steve and Nancy Boyatzis. As well as the milk shakes, soft drinks and ice creams, they had good hot food. You could sit down and have a cup of coffee and a pie and sauce. Chips were always there of course..."*

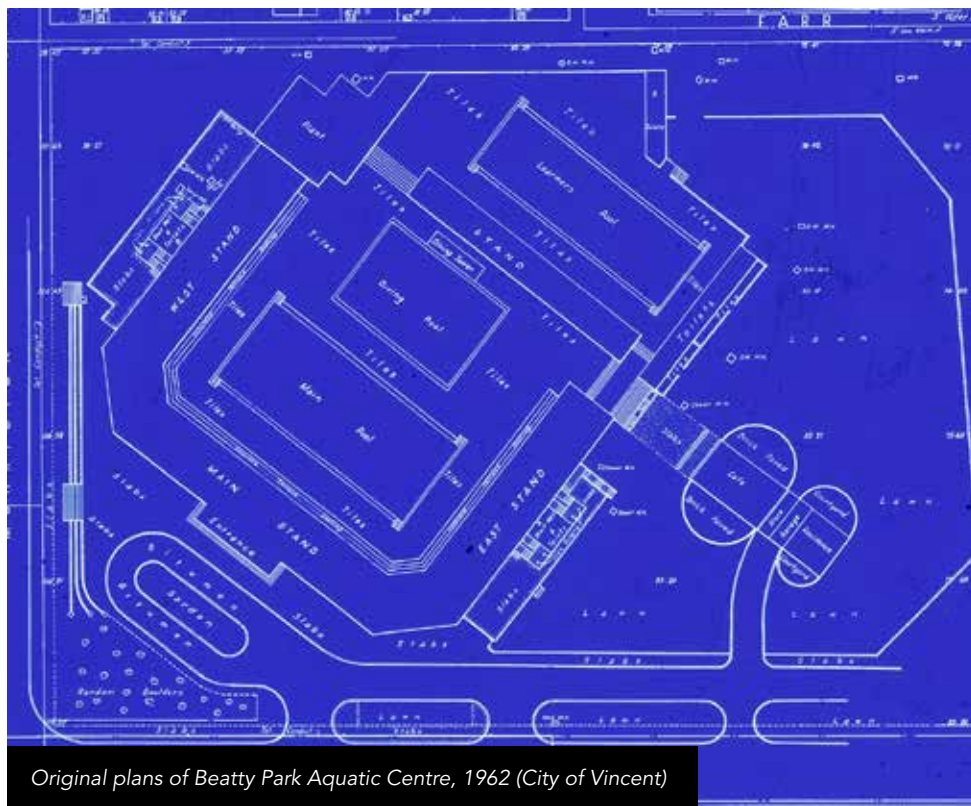
Many other local residents and pool users have fond memories of the original Beatty Park kiosk which was also a popular area for local teens to congregate.

*"A highlight was eating ice-cream on the grass area and flirting with the boys" (Nicole)*

*"On weekends, my friends and I would walk to the park to meet up with other friends, swim, sun, bike and be seen wearing the latest bikinis. Then we would go to the kiosk down the steps at the bottom of the pool and sun ourselves back on the grass, or eat our sausage rolls with sauce." (Grace)*

*"There was a whole kiosk and that was where all the kids would hang out. These kids were from different suburbs and there would be the cool kids and the cigarette smoking kids and the ugg-boot wearing kids. They were a lot tougher really than this side of town. I always remember going down there, 'Oh I'll have a drumstick please' and then just getting the hell out of there..." (Peter)*

The kiosk and pool manager's residence were demolished as part of the Beatty Park refurbishment in 1994. Given the resurgence in popularity of mid-century style in architecture and furnishings, the buildings would not have looked out of place today.



Original plans of Beatty Park Aquatic Centre, 1962 (City of Vincent)

## STORIES FROM THE SUBURBS:

# THE RESCUE OF ELIZA LOCKYER BY ANDREW DUCKWORTH

This story comes from local history enthusiast and fireman Andrew Duckworth whose book about the North Perth Volunteer Fire Brigade – *Suburban Bravery* – included the story of Eliza Lockyer rescued from a well in Pansy Street, North Perth in 1907.

Police Constable James Strapp and firemen Captain Frederick Maller and Andrew Robertson played a key role in the rescue and were awarded bravery medals by the North Perth Council and the Royal Humane Society of Australasia for their efforts.



Certificate of bravery awarded to Constable James Strapp, 1907. (COV PHO5915)

The following excerpt is from a dramatized account of the event written by Andrew Duckworth.

North Perth in 1907 was going ahead rapidly. Tram services, street lighting, public facilities and mains water on the way. The police station in Angove street was soon to be built and staffed by Constable James Strapp but for now policing for the North Perth district was carried out from James's house on Albert Street.

Constable James Strapp, regimental number 152, had joined the force in 1894, He had been North Perth's solitary officer since 1903, so he knew the neighbourhood and its characters very well. Blue eyed and 5' 11 ½, he was an imposing character on the beat.

Constable Strapp arrived on his police issue bicycle out of breath. Before he left, he had the foresight to ring for Fred Maller at the fire station on Fitzgerald Street. Maller was a veterinary surgeon and also Captain of the North Perth Volunteer Fire Brigade. The well was narrow and about 60 feet deep and not properly lined all the way down. *"This will be very tricky. Hurry up Fred Maller"* he thought.

Quickly James stripped to the waist and secured the well's rope around a large nearby Jarrah tree. James readied himself. As he was mentally preparing a commotion developed at the side of Mr's Locker's house.

*"Fire!" the cry went out, "Her house is on fire!"*

James barked orders as he stepped to the darkened edge and felt his pulse quicken.

*"Augustus, get buckets and tackle the fire. John, race down to the fire station and let them know we're going to need lots of trained men and the brigade ambulance."*

Gripping the rope tightly, James descended. It was hard to hang on but there were some footholds. It was narrow, about two feet wide, so pushing against the side provided some purchase. Getting down was never going to be the problem. Going the other way would be.

Eliza Locker was in agony. Her legs both had compound fractures as you would expect from a woman in her sixties who had eked out an existence on a subsistence diet of bread and other basic staples. As James approached in the musty darkness, he could hear her laboured breathing. A lantern illuminated the carnage. She was doubled over, bloodied and broken. Her fibula was protruding from behind her knee and she was half submerged in the muddy water.

*"This is bad. This is very bad" thought James who was momentarily shocked. Then his years of training kicked in and he steadied himself. He asked, "Liza, did Henry Abrahams push you?"*

Henry Abrahams had been removed from the premises about two hours earlier due to a breach of the peace. The two were always at each other

but this time it was over the top. Many of the neighbours had complained this afternoon.

Eliza gasped, *"I did this you fool, now let me die. Get away and let me die."*

She was pale and her breathing had shallowed. Two things were for certain. Eliza was not getting out easily and James Strapp couldn't get her out on his own. It was then that Captain Frederick Maller and the North Perth brigade arrived...

**A STRANGE CASE.**

Last night, at North Perth, an elderly woman, Mrs. Eliza Lockyer, set fire to a house in which she was living and then jumped down a well 60ft deep, measuring only 8ft by 2ft. Constable Strapp arrived on the scene in answer to a telephone message, and descended the well, a most difficult feat, owing to the narrowness and damp slippery state of the walls. As the space was so circumscribed he was unable to bring the woman to the surface. A fireman named Robinson then descended, and succeeded in making a "fireman's chair" with a rope, and brought the woman to the surface. She was sent to the hospital, where she was found to be very badly injured. Her condition is extremely critical.

*The Mount Magnet Miner, 23 March 1907.*



### Epilogue:

The superbly trained brigade horse made light work of raising the injured woman from the well. Fireman Andrew Robertson's job was difficult though; trying to keep her from being dragged against the uneven walls of the well, protecting her injured limbs and most importantly not letting her fall on top of him. Her removal occurred at approximately a quarter to nine at night, less than two hours after the alarm was raised.

Once out of the ground, Eliza Lockyer's injured limbs were bandaged and splinted by the fire brigade ambulance crew. The considerable crowd who had gathered erupted into cheers. Eliza was then conveyed to Royal Perth Hospital in a state of shock and unconsciousness. Her injuries were severe, too severe for recovery. Her legs were amputated

below the knee in a vain attempt to save her life. The doctors said she rallied briefly but she had given up the will to live. Eliza Lockyer didn't want saving. Her life had been harsh and unrewarding.

The well (which today is under the carpark off Pansy Street behind the Charles Street shops) was condemned by the North Perth Council and filled in. Constable Strapp, Captain Maller and senior fireman Robertson were praised for their bravery in the newspapers and awarded bravery certificates by the North Perth Municipal Council, and later by the WA Governor and the Royal Human Society. A sad post-script to the story is that Captain Maller was killed in the line of duty, not even a year after the well rescue in January 1908 while attending a fire on the corner of Charles Street and Wanneroo Road.

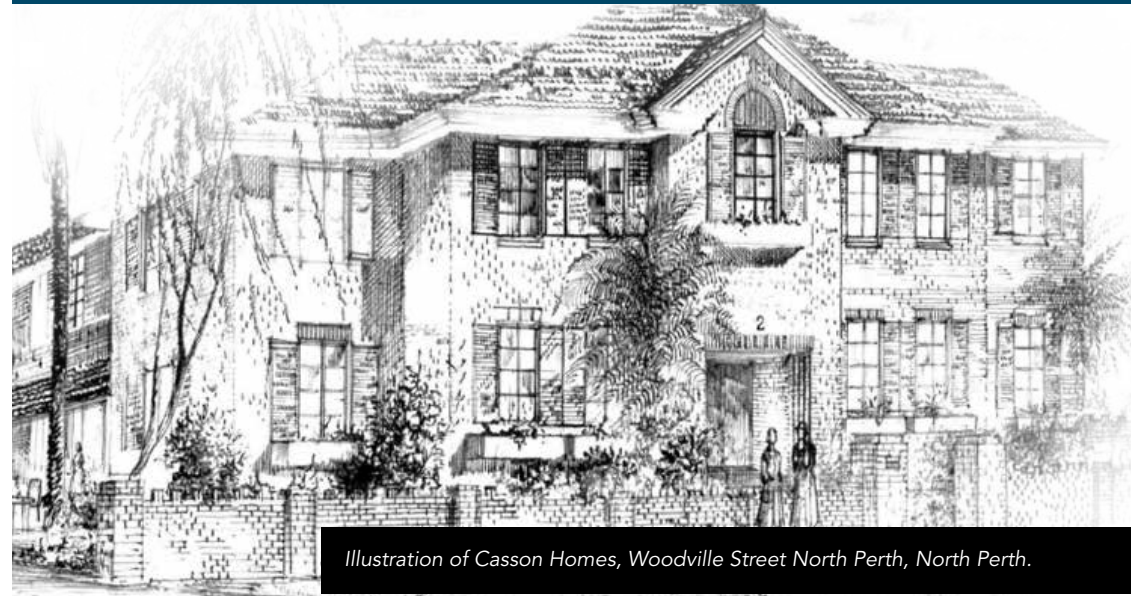
# CASSON HOMES:

## A CENTURY OF CARE

This year, Casson Communities celebrates 100 years of providing residential mental health services in North Perth. Many locals will have walked past Casson House on Woodville Street, or St Rita's Nursing Home on View Street, without knowing the story of this family run organisation and its long-standing connection to North Perth.

In 1922, Susan Adelaide Casson founded the Mental Hospitals After Care and Comforts Fund Association Inc. to try and meet an urgent need for ongoing community care for people discharged from mental institutions. Susan's interest in the welfare of people suffering from psychiatric illness was developed during her time as a member of the Board of Visitors at the then Claremont Mental Health Hospital. Since its inception, Casson Homes has continued to operate under the guidance of a member of the Casson family.

In 2016, the late John Casson, grandson of founder Susan Casson, commissioned local historian Cate Pattison to write a history of the Casson Family and Casson Homes in Western Australia. The following is an extract and introduction from Cate's work published in 2017 and shared with the Vincent Local History Centre:



*Illustration of Casson Homes, Woodville Street North Perth, North Perth.*

*Susan had started life torn from her family home in Ireland and grew up in a Melbourne orphanage, with limited formal education and certainly no social privilege. Widowed as a young woman with four small children, her disadvantages in life had been many, however she went on to become one of Western Australia's leading female social reformers in the first half of the twentieth century with strong personal connections to many of the State's leading political and medical men and women of the day.*

*Susan's work has been continued by her daughter Matilda Gard, grandson John Casson and now great-grandson Nick Casson, who have all quietly devoted their lives to the objective of providing a welcoming home and daily dignity for people struggling to live with long-term mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression, anxiety and other conditions. Many people who have passed through this organisation have spent the majority of their lives at Casson House and been nursed through their final years at St Rita's Nursing Home. Over nearly 100 years, the Cassons have developed their own style of residential mental health care, resisting the dominant drivers of commercialism and excessive governance, in order to provide the sort of service that experience has taught them is in the best interests of their residents...*



Grandson John Casson, who was active in the management of Casson Homes from the 1970s, was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia Medal for service to the community in 2003. The award was a fitting recognition of his work in providing residential mental health services for people living with mental illness.

John Casson passed away on 24 August 2020. We were fortunate to have interviewed John in 2009 and a transcript of his interview is available in the Local History Collection or online at: [www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100063509174818](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100063509174818)

Cate Pattison's history of Casson Homes is also available in the Local History Centre and online at: [www.cassonhomes.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Casson-Homes-Incorporated-1922-2018-by-Cate-Pattison.pdf](http://www.cassonhomes.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Casson-Homes-Incorporated-1922-2018-by-Cate-Pattison.pdf)

*Portrait of Susan Casson, 1929. (SLWA 9267B Vol 142)*

# HERITAGE HERO:

## VALE DEAN EVANS

*North Perth Bowling Club, 1908. (COV PHO5847)*



*Season open day at North Perth Ladies Bowling Club, 1976. (COV PHO5848)*

We were saddened to hear of the recent death of Dean Evans, a long-time member of the North Perth Bowling Club. Dean was passionate about history and bowling. In 2019, he shared a treasure trove of photographs documenting the growth and development of the North Perth Bowling Club with the Vincent Local History Centre.

Our sincere condolences to his family and to his mates at the North Perth Bowling Club.



# ITALIAN AUSTRALIA CHILD CARE CENTRE

*Miss Italy 1973, Christine Bertelli, with children from the Italian Australian Child Care Centre, 1973.*

**Tucked away on Barnet Street in North Perth, the Italian Australian Child Care Centre has been caring for kids for over fifty years. It was established in the early 1970s to provide low cost child-care for Italian migrant families in the North Perth area.**

The 1950s and 1960s were the heyday of Italian migration to Western Australia, with many Italians settling in and around North Perth. Italian migrant women were keen to work outside their homes to help their families make ends meet and get ahead. Low cost child-care helped make it possible for many Italian migrant women to enter the workforce.

The Italian Australian Child Care Centre (initially named: Asilo Nido, Emma Majoli), was built by the Italo-Australian Welfare & Cultural Centre between 1970/1971, with its first intake of children in 1972.

The centre was built after many years of community fund raising events with proceeds from the annual 'Miss Italy Quest' vital to its establishment.

Pictured below is 'Miss Italy 1973' Christine Madaschi (nee Bertelli) with children from the Italian-Australian Child Care Centre. Over the last five decades, many thousands of children and families have been cared for at the centre. If you have memories of attending the centre, please get in touch with the Vincent Local History Centre.



*Italian Australian Child Care Centre, Barnet Street North Perth, mid-1970s.*

Peak family home at 91 East Street Mount Hawthorn, under construction by Plunkett builders, 1949. (COV PH0928)

# CAN YOU HELP?

## PLUNKETT HOMES

**Next year, Plunkett Homes celebrates 120 years of building homes in Western Australia.**

Thomas Plunkett started Plunkett's Joinery in Smith Street, Highgate in 1903. The family business branched out into home building in the 1920s and '30s and the company played a key role in the residential development of Mount Hawthorn, North Perth, Mount Lawley and Highgate, as well as suburbs outside of Vincent including Claremont, Nedlands, Melville and Woodlands. By the 1950s Plunkett's had opened their own timber mills, joinery and brickworks and were building over a 1000 homes per year.

The Peake family of Mount Hawthorn were among the many Mount Hawthorn families who chose to build their family home with Plunkett. Harold and Mary Peake lived in a tent next door to the construction site on East Street for six months while their home was being built in 1949. Harold Peake who was interviewed by the Vincent Local History Centre in 2002 recalls:

*"Our house commenced being built by Plunketts in February 1949 and was completed in August 1949 at a cost of £1,700 for the house. In those days we paid £38 for the block... it took almost six months."*



Mary Peake holding baby Janice outside the tent where the family lived in 1949 while their home was being built next door at 91 East Street, Mount Hawthorn in 1949. (COV PH09281)

If you live in a home built by Plunkett, the company would love to connect with you as part of their anniversary celebrations. Either contact the Vincent Local History Centre or directly contact Lisa Marie from Plunketts directly on **(08) 9202 9090** or [history@plunkettgroup.com.au](mailto:history@plunkettgroup.com.au)



# LIBRARY & LOCAL HISTORY CENTRE

## EVENTS & PROGRAMS

### OCTOBER

#### TALK: FOR A BETTER LIFE: YUGOSLAVS ON THE GOLDFIELDS OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA 1890 – 1970 WITH DR CRIENA FITZGERALD OAM

**WEDNESDAY 12TH OCTOBER 2022 | 10AM – 11.30AM**

Join historian Crien Fitzgerald for a talk on the experiences of Yugoslavs on the goldfields of Western Australia from the 1890s to the 1970s.

Dr Fitzgerald is an honorary Research Fellow in the School of Design at UWA. Her latest book, 'For a Better Life' explores how migrants from the former Yugoslavia helped shape the gold mining industry in Western Australia.

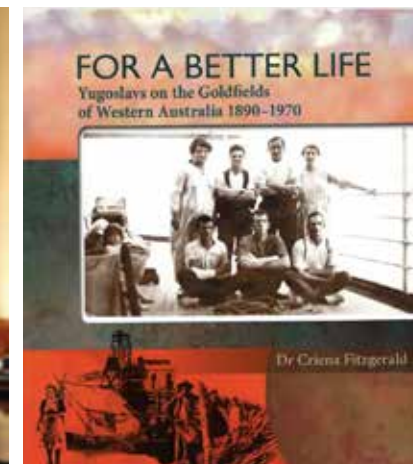
**Where:** City of Vincent Library Local History Centre

**Presenter:** Dr Crien Fitzgerald

**Cost:** Free

**Bookings are essential as places are limited.**

**Email:** [local.history@vincent.wa.gov.au](mailto:local.history@vincent.wa.gov.au) or call **9273 6534**



## NOVEMBER



### **EVENT: BEATTY PARK RETRO FAMILY FUN DAY**

**SATURDAY 26TH NOVEMBER 2022 | 2 – 6PM**

To celebrate Beatty Park's 60th anniversary, you're invited to an afternoon of retro fun!

Bring the whole family for a swim and enjoy all the retro-themed entertainment, including mermaids, gogo dancers, bubble artists and hula hoopers, living status, a retro photo booth and craft and sensory space. All the fun will go down with groovy 60s and 70s tunes.

**When:** Saturday November 26, 2022: 2 – 6pm

**Where:** Beatty Park Leisure Centre

**Cost:** Regular entry fees apply, games and activities are free.

## DECEMBER



### **WORKSHOP: SCAN THE CLAN!**

**WEDNESDAY 7TH DECEMBER 2022 | 10 – 11.30AM**

City of Vincent Library Local History Centre

Would you like to make digital copies of your precious family photos? Join us for a workshop in which you will learn how to scan a photograph and create a digital file. Use the scanned image to make a digital Christmas card you can send to your family and friends. Bring a treasured photograph and a USB to save your image.

**When:** Wednesday 7 December 2022: 10 – 11.30am

**Where:** City of Vincent Library Local History Centre

**Presenters:** Susanna & Catherine

**Cost:** Free

**Bookings are essential as places are limited.**

**Email:** [local.history@vincent.wa.gov.au](mailto:local.history@vincent.wa.gov.au) or call **9273 6534**



# What are you looking for today?

Search by Keyword or Album



## IMAGE LIBRARY

Did you know the City of Vincent Local History Collection Image Library contains over 6000 photos of people, places and events in the suburbs of Vincent?

You can browse by suburb, subject or keyword at:  
[www.cityofvincent.imagegallery.me/site/welcome.me](http://www.cityofvincent.imagegallery.me/site/welcome.me)



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### Local History Centre

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