

Local History News



East Perth: A brief history
Banks Reserve/Warndoolier

Lost Vincent: The Norwood Hotel

Stories from the Suburbs: Charlie's Tree

Heritage Hero: Anton Haynes

Can you help? East Perth Primary School Photos

Events & Programs



In this edition of the Local History Newsletter, we focus on East Perth.

I have a soft spot for East Perth.

Years ago, we bought our first home, a tiny semi on West Parade across from the brutalist architectural masterpiece that is the East Perth Terminal. While we never warmed up to the daily vista of brown brick, we grew to love the close-knit community.

Since starting in this role, I've been fortunate to delve deeper into different aspects of the area's history.

I've been especially fortunate to be involved in a project with Noongar Elders telling their stories of the Aboriginal community of East Perth in the 1950s – 70s. What many people saw from the outside as a poor neighbourhood, was a much loved home for Aboriginal people from many

parts of the state, alongside migrants and other working class people. The project, 'Moorditj Footprints' is now nearing completion and we look forward to helping the Elders share their stories.

Today, East Perth is home to an estimated resident population of 12,000 people, two thirds of whom live in the area north of the Graham Farmer Freeway that is part of the City of Vincent.

It has a rich colonial, industrial and Aboriginal heritage evident in places like the East Perth Power Station and Banks Reserve, whose history is featured in this newsletter.

I hope you enjoy this East Perth edition of the newsletter. Also look out for our weekly stories featured in the Perth Voice.

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

Cover Image: East Perth Football Club players in change rooms at Perth Oval, 1952 (COV PHO1748)





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CONTACTS & HOURS

Monday to Friday 9.00am – 1.00pm drop-in; 2.00 – 5.00pm by appointment

WEBSITE: library.vincent.wa.gov.au/local-history-centre

IMAGE LIBRARY: cityofvincent.imagegallery.me/

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122 Summers Street East Perth, 1900 (COV PH03482)

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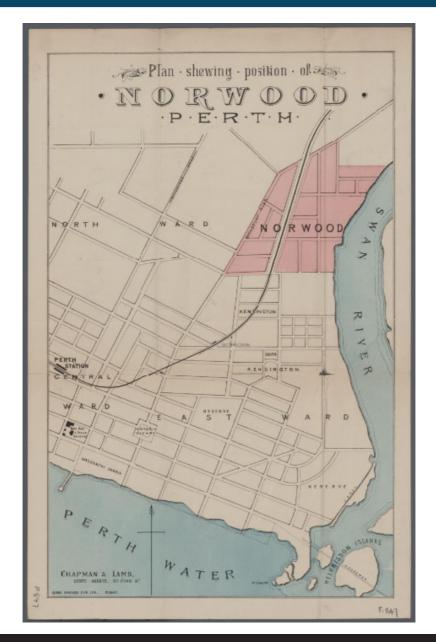
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Early History

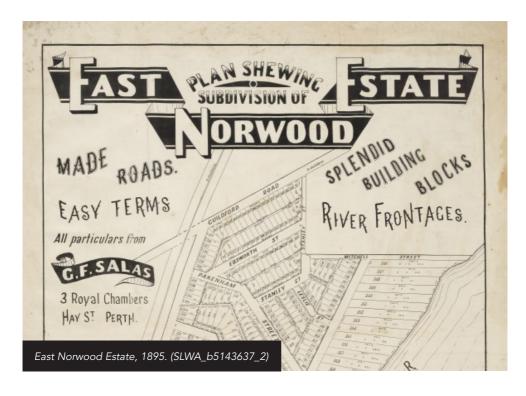
The East Perth area beside the Swan River near the Windan Bridge is a Registered Aboriginal Site (#3767) noted for its significance as a Noongar meeting place and camp site. 'Warndoolier' is the Noongar name that appears on early maps of the area between around present day Banks Reserve.

With European colonisation in 1829, the area was parcelled up as Swan Locations A4 and A5 and granted to Walter Boyd Andrews, who became Chair of the Perth Town Trust, and Alfred Hawes Stone, a solicitor and early photography enthusiast who was appointed the colony's first Crown solicitor. Another early land holder in the area was coachbuilder John Summers who became a Perth City Councilor and after whom

Summers Street was named. In early colonial days, the river was the main means of transportation but the track that became Lord Street and Guildford Road was an important thoroughfare for pedestrians and horses en route to Guildford. In 1881, the Fremantle to Guildford railway began operating in the area with the East Perth Station (now Claisebrook Station) opening in 1883.



Plan showing position of Norwood, Perth MAP F847 NLA East Perth is an inner suburb of Perth located beside the Swan River and the central business district and the suburb of Highgate

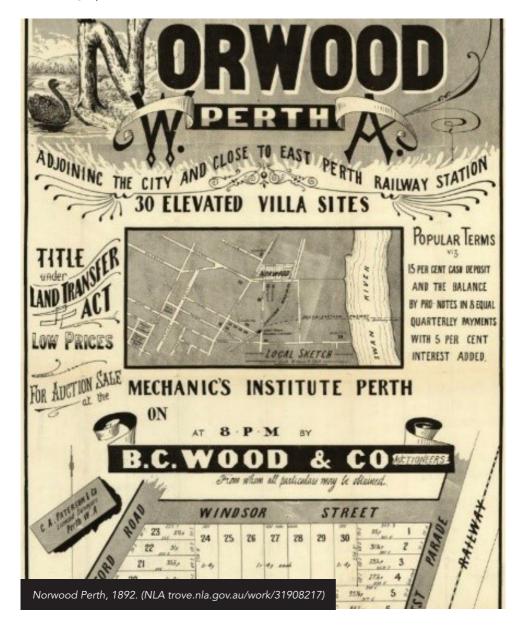


1890s - 1940s

The mining and investment boom of the 1890s stimulated residential development in Perth, including the East Perth area. The area between East Parade, Summers Street, Joel Terrace and Gardiner Street was subdivided and sold as 'East Norwood' (east of the railway) and 'Westralia' estates in the 1890s. The subdivision was carried out by the Perth (WA) Estate Company. One of the company owners was Zebina Lane, an engineer and mine owner in the Great Boulder Mines who invested his mining profits into land development in Perth.

The homes in these estates attracted more affluent buyers and tenants than the more polluted, industrial area which developed around Claise Brook around the same time. Claise Brook was home to factories, saw mills, foundries and brickworks alongside poorer quality housing which attracted battlers and more transient people. The Claise Brook area was also close to the Perth sewage works, the source of noxious odours carried across the suburb on easterly winds.

In 1916, the predominantly coal fired East Perth Power Station opened on Summers Street providing electricity for homes, factories and for Perth's growing tram network. Between 1916 and 1951, it was the state's only power station continuing operations until 1981.



In 1917, the WA Government Railways established the East Perth Locomotive Depot (known also as the 'East Perth loco sheds') on Summers Street. The East Perth Depot continued operating until the end of the steam railway era in the early 1970s.

The East Perth Power Station and the East Perth Depot attracted a large workforce who bought or rented homes in the area. During the Great Depression, those who found themselves unemployed and evicted from homes camped down by the river catching what they could eat in the river and brook down by Bank's Reserve.

During the inter-war and post-war periods, the area also attracted Aboriginal residents as it was on the outskirts of Perth's Prohibited Area. Between 1927 and 1954, Aboriginal people had to carry a permit if they wanted entry to Perth for any purpose, including work. While the official boundaries of the Perth Prohibited area came down in the 1950s, the East Perth area continued to be a hub for many Aboriginal people well into the postwar period because it was close to city services and jobs and offered cheap housing or hidden places to camp.





COOLBAROO LEAGUE GIVES SOLDIER HEARTY WELCOME



1950s - 2000s

After WWII, East Perth became a popular residential area for migrants from Southern and Eastern Europe who often lived with other family members in shared, cheap rental accommodation in close proximity to the factories and industrial workplaces where they were employed.

Aboriginal people continued to live in and around East Perth, particularly on the southern side of the railway line in older houses around Bennett, Royal, Brown and Kensington Streets. Aboriginal people also camped in the area in locations such as the 'Bull Paddock' (present day Claisebrook Cove) and 'Millar's Cave' that had been part of Millars timber yard off Lord Street near the present day St Bartholomew's House.

The East Perth area was also home to many Aboriginal social and welfare institutions such as Bennett House (known as the East Perth Girls' Home from 1931 – 1952), a government hostel that provided short term accommodation for Aboriginal children and women from the country. Bennett House, which operated at 191 Bennett Street until 1981, was a transit hub for many Aboriginal people from the stolen generation.

East Perth was also important for the Coolbaroo League which operated from 1947 – 1960 as an advocacy group for Aboriginal rights. Coolbaroo dances were held at various locations including Edward Street and later Beaufort Street near Weld Square. Many Coolbaroo League leaders went on to form social welfare organisations that were based in the East Perth area such as: the Aboriginal Advancement Council at 201 Beaufort Street; the Aboriginal Medical Service, formerly at 154 Edward Street (now Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service at 156 Wittenoom Street); and the Aboriginal Legal Service, formerly on James and later Nash Street, East Perth.

By the 1970s, Aboriginal people started moving out of East Perth to outer metropolitan suburbs. Local manufacturing industries (such as Brisbane & Wunderlich of 105 Lord Street) also started leaving the area. The old railway depot closed in 1968 to make way for the new Transport Complex on West Parade, and the East Perth Power Station closed in 1981.

In the 1990s, the Graham Farmer Freeway was constructed to allow for an east-west bypass of the Perth CBD. It officially opened in April 2000 and comprised of the freeway itself, the Northbridge Tunnel and the Windan Bridge. It was named after high profile football star of the 1950s – 1970s Graham 'Polly' Farmer, who began his career with the East Perth Football Club. It further cut the East Perth area in half, the northern part which came under the jurisdiction of Vincent, a new council formed after the de-merger of Perth City Council in 1994.





In 1991, the East Perth Redevelopment Authority (EPRA) was established to guide and stimulate the revitalisation of the area. In the following decades, EPRA undertook a number of projects including the redevelopment of the Claisebrook Drain into a canal waterway fringed by residential and commercial buildings. EPRA were also involved in discussions over the future redevelopment of the former East Perth Power Station.

In 1994, the East Perth Power Station buildings were assessed by State Heritage and placed on an interim register. The site was permanently entered in state heritage register in 2016 (Site #3318) recognised for value as the first state government operated public electricity utility in Australia. Debate began (and continues to this day) over how to sustainably preserve the heritage of this large industrial site.

Since the State Government cleaned and stabilised the 8.5 hectare site in 2004, there have been various proposals for its use - from museum and gallery space, to stadium or mixed commercial and residential development. In 2019, the State Government set aside \$30million to relocate the Western Power Switchyard and prepare the site for future development. In 2020, it named Australian Capital Equity and Minderoo Group (the private investment companies of Perth business magnates Kerry Stokes and Andrew Forrest) as preferred developers of the site, re-named 'Koomba Kalark' (Noongar for 'place of big fire'). The deal attracted widespread media attention

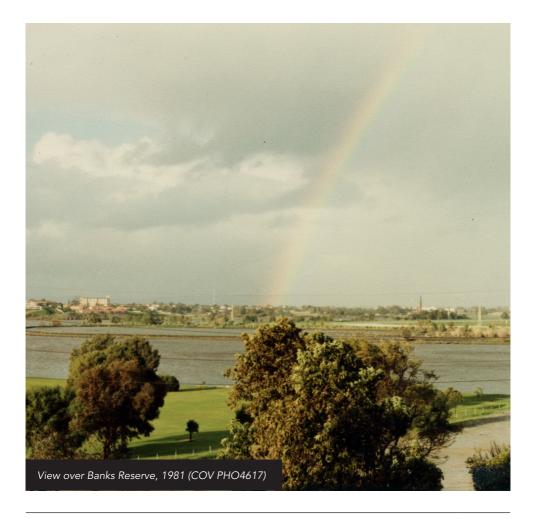
for its nominal cost to the developers (\$1) which the State Government justified given the huge cost of site remediation. The agreement with the Koomba Kalark developers expired in 2023 and Development WA is now reviewing other options to revitalise the long neglected site.

Today, the Perth-East Perth-Claisebrook area (inclusive of both City of Perth and City of Vincent areas) is home to approximately 11,798 people (ABS 2021): with 7,331 (roughly 60%) resident in the area north of the Freeway that is part of the City of Vincent. Significant portions of the area have undergone gentrification, which is reflected in the higher socio-economic and education indicators for the population.

(See: abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/503021295).

It remains home to numerous heritage sites including the former East Perth Power Station, the East Perth Railway Station and the East Perth Cemeteries which contains the graves of many early colonial families.

BANKS RESERVE WARNDOOLIER





Banks Reserve is located where Walter's Brook meets the Swan River on Joel Terrace. The park is adjacent to the State Heritage listed East Perth Power Station (#3318) and is also a Registered Aboriginal Site (#3767).

The stretch of land between Claisebrook and Walter's Brook was known to the local Noongar people as 'Warndoolier' and Walter's Brook itself is noted on oldmaps as 'Jal'yeendip' (Harrison 2000). The Noongar meaning of Warndoolier may relate to women (wana/warn is a women's digging stick) and also a misty or foggy place ('dooly' is mist or fog) (Moodjar Consultancy Place Naming Workshop, City of Vincent, February 2022).

The whole East Perth area, including the foreshore around Banks Reserve, has a long and continued history of importance to Noongar people, as well as other Aboriginal people who camped in the area in more recent times. The Swan River is one of many rivers Noongar recognise as being created by the Waugal, the water snake responsible for shaping the landscape during the nyitting (cold times). This area was also used by Noongar people for camping from pre-colonial times up until the 1970s. It was also an area for play known as 'the mucks' for its shallow, muddy riverbank. From the 1940s to the 1970s, a pipe from the East Perth Power station poured out warm water to the Swan River, making it ideal for swimming and play for children from many different backgrounds.



After European colonisation in 1829, the area was called 'Walter's Brook' after landowner Walter Boyd Andrews. Walter's Brook was used to demarcate the northern boundary of Perth and flowed into the river from the inland chain of swamps that at one time ran across the Vincent area.

In the late 1890s, the area became known as the Swan Street Reserve taking its name from the former road that entered the park. In the early 1920s, the Perth City Council erected men's and women's bathing sheds at the reserve. In 1931, the area was filled in by the Health Department

with sand from Joel Terrace and grassed and reticulated. The Mount Lawley Sea Scouts Hall, built with timber donated and salvaged from a weatherboard house demolished in Leederville, opened on the reserve in 1933. The riverbank in front of the hall was renamed 'Port Lovegrove' (after the Chief Scout Commission Dr FT Lovegrove) and was used for regattas and scout rallies. Later in the 1930s, the Swan Street Reserve was also used as a practice ground for the Mount Lawley Baseball Club and as a base for rowing and sailing activities. In 1940s, the grounds were also used for training of the RSL Defence Corps.



Map of the townsite of Perth in 1841 with Walter's Brook marked top right (SRO Series235 Cons 386)

SEA SCOUTS' NEW HALL

Opening on Saturday

Saturday will be an important day in the history of the Sea Scout movement in W.A. The new hall at Swan-street reserve will be opened officially, and the training boat "Penguin," will be launched

The Chief Scout (General Sir Talbot Hobbs) will arrive at 3 p.m., and will be received by the Chief Commissioner (Dr. Lovegrove) and other officials, after which Sir Talbot will declaus the hall open.

Swan-street reserve is situated between Joel-terrace and the Swan River, and was very largely reclaimed from swamp land.

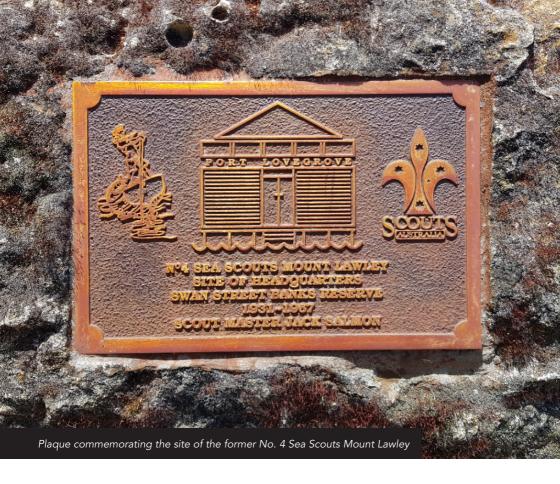
The Daily News, 2 March 1933

New Sea Scout Training Boat Launched



Yesterday afternoon the Headquarters Building and The Penguin, of the No. 4 Group Sea Scouts, were officially handed over at the Swan-street Reserve, East Perth.

The Sunday Times, 5 March 1933



In 1963, the area was renamed Banks Reserve after Perth City Councillor Ronald Frederick Banks who represented the east ward on council from 1955 to 1968.

In 1967, the original scout hall was replaced by a brick scout hall used by the No, 4 Mount Lawley Sea Scouts up until the 1990s. It was then leased to various tenants including a children's playgroup for many years.





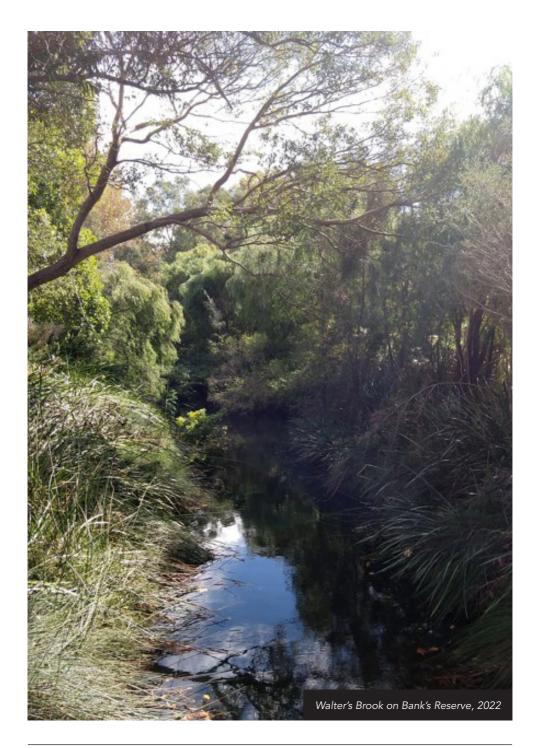
In 2000, the park was upgraded with native plants and an amphitheatre with terraced seating for summer concerts. A half basketball court was installed along with public art in the form of three limestone sculptures by Aboriginal students from Central TAFE.

The Banks Precinct Action Group formed in 2005 and was active until 2013 in addressing issues relating to the upkeep and redevelopment in and around the area. A shared-use path between Banks Reserve and Bardon Park in Maylands was constructed in 2006, the Vincent section of which was named the Tony Di Scerni Pathway after founding chairman of the Banks Reserve Precinct Group.

In 2010, Banks Reserve was the site of a reconciliation ceremony and in 2012 a plaque was erected recognising it as a 'place of reconciliation' known by the Noongar name 'Warndoolier'. Between 2012 and 2014, the City of Vincent undertook restoration works on Walter's Brook including stabilising the banks and replanting to improve the quality of water entering the river.

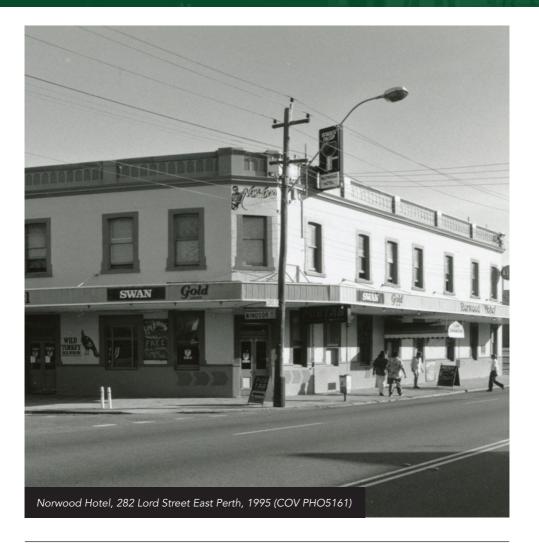
In 2018, Vincent developed a new Banks Reserve Masterplan to guide future development of the area. The report recommended increased revegetation, an upgrade of the playground area and removal and replacement of the Banks Pavilion with a new community/commercial facility to be developed at some future point. After some community protest, the pavilion building was demolished in November 2021. Vincent is currently working with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions to develop an 'interpretation node' as part of the Swan Canning Riverpark.





LOST VINCENT THE NORWOOD HOTEL

Research by Friends of Local History volunteer Michelle Vercoe



The Norwood Hotel stood on the corner of Windsor Street and Lord Street (formerly Old Guildford Road) for over a hundred years from its opening in 1898 to its demolition in 2008.

The hotel was built in 1897 by contractor Samuel Moore. The original brick and iron Federation style hotel had 17 bedrooms, four sitting rooms, two bars and a drawing room, kitchen, laundry, stables and wrap around verandas. Construction began in May 1897 and was ready for painting by August 1897. Moore sought a publican's licence on 17 August 1897, but by May 1898 he applied to transfer his licence to the Empire Hotel (Murray and George Streets Perth) and by December 1898 was facing bankruptcy. The hotel went into the receivership of Thomas Coombe who ran a financing company which leased the hotel to Swan Brewery Company. From 1898, the Swan Brewery operated the hotel under a succession of different publicans including Robert Howson, Septimus Hughes and David Mulcahy.

In 1903, the pub was bought by competitors the Stanley Brewery Company (which later became the Emu Brewery) who continued leasing it to David Mulcahy who remained publican until 1911. From 1912 onwards, there was a frequent turnover of publicans at the Norwood.

As with many Federation era Perth hotels, the Norwood served more than food and drink. It also provided accommodation for the many newcomers arriving in Perth en route to the Eastern goldfields looking to find fortune in the early 20th Century. The Norwood was also used as a meeting place by various politicians and clubs, such as the Perth Harriers' Club and the East Perth branch of the Perth Ratepayers Association. Given its proximity to the East Perth Locomotive Depot, which operated from 1917 until the early 1970s, the Norwood was a popular drinking place for many railway employees. In the 1920s, it was also the finish line for the Beverley to Perth and Northam to Perth Road Race attracting thousands of thirsty cycling enthusiasts who gathered to cheer on the winners.

In 1926, the Stanley Brewery Company how owned the pub changed its name to the Westralian Hotels Ltd. In 1928. extensive alterations were made to the Norwood including extension of the public bar, reinforcing of veranda posts and partial tiling of the exterior. Architectural plans show the ground floor consisted of a public bar, a saloon bar, two parlours, a billiard room, two stores, an office, toilets, kitchen and wash house and the manager's private residence. Upstairs was the quest accommodation. Further alterations were made in 1937, with yet more updates in the 1950s and 1970s.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the hotel was run by Steve Spanbrook. During the 1980s and '90s, the Norwood was "a hot bed of indie culture hosting such acts as bluesman Dave Hole and punk band The Saints". (Perth Voice, 16 February 2008).

In the In 1999, the National Trust and the Town of Vincent assessed the hotel's heritage value as part of a State-wide Survey of Hotels 1829 – 1937'. Given that much of the original building and details having been removed in alterations or destroyed by vagrants, it was not considered to be of state heritage significance. It was however listed on

Vincent's Municipal Heritage Inventory and continued to operate as a hotel until 2001, when it was renamed 'Jackson's'.

After the hotel's closure in 2001, the building fell into disrepair and was used as a squat and drug den. In 2003, a proposal for a three storey mixed residential and commercial development was submitted but did not eventuate. The building was removed from the Municipal Heritage Inventory in 2006 and knocked down in June 2008. At the time of its demolition, many locals bemoaned the loss of another old Perth pub on the online blog "The Worst of Perth' ("Jackson Bollocked' January 4 2008).

Definitely a fun place when known as the Norwood Hotel and the licensee Steve Spanbrook was in charge. I worked there, mostly in the Public Bar, by choice. Very old fashioned bar, concrete floors, suitable for the clientel. Got to know their special needs as soon as they walked in the door. Steve liked the younger girls to work in the lounge bar. East Perth Footballers used to come in during the evenings and as a group seated at one end of the lounge bar, they would drink with Steve. (Bonny)



I worked at the "Norwood" for a few years in the early 90's and it was a no-man's land. I met many people from all walks and had my little eyes widened.... it was an educational experience to say the least. I met so many different people and have lots of great memories, I will be sad to see the Norwood in Rubble. ('Barwench')

As a kid in the sixties the Norwood was a great place. It served the best lemon punch after the Buffalo Club in Mt Lawley. It was a great pub (Kevin)

In 2015, the site was redeveloped by Finbar into the Norwood Apartment complex comprising 59 apartments, gym, pool deck and resident's lounge.

STORIES FROM THE SUBURBS:

CHARLIE'S TREE

By Friends of Local History volunteer Liz Millward

A South African Cape Chestnut tree, used by the supporters of the East Perth Football Club as a vantage point at football games at Perth Oval, became a barometer in accurately predicting Grand Final wins for the club. "Charlie's Tree" was named for CJ (Charlie) Chandler a legendary supporter of the Royals in the post war years. Charlie was a member of the 2/16th Battalion in World War II and everyone would know he had arrived at the game when they heard his war cry, "Fight on East Perth – Fight on Digger" given in his loudest voice. It was Charlie who noted that the Cape Chestnut burst into blossom every time East Perth won one of its three grand finals in the 1950s. If it didn't flower, the Royals would not win, claimed Charlie.

In 1961 East Perth were red hot favourites to win the flag. The following verse appeared in the program for their annual ball: About Bloomin' Time

'Neath the spreading Premiers tree Charlie Chandler stands,
Plucking strange exotic blooms with strong and sinewy hands,
"Bloom on, digger, bloom again", Charlie Chandler pleads,
And the faithful tree to such earnest plea graciously concedes,
For Charlie's tree is our tree too, it's bloomed whene'er we've won,
In '56 and twice more since and now in '61.





Unfortunately the flowery prose proved to be wishful thinking the tree did not flower and the Royals lost to Swan Districts.

From the 1960s onwards, Charlie's Tree faltered in its predictions. In 1996, the tree burst into magnificent bloom in October – too bloomin' late as the Royals had lost the Grand Final to Claremont three weeks earlier! In 2000, when the Royals won their first premiership in 20 years, the tree failed to bloom. It also failed to blossom in 2001 and 2002 when East Perth claimed two more premierships.

In the early 2000s Perth Oval was redeveloped as a rectangular ground for rugby and soccer. In 2003 the Royals relocated to Leederville Oval, the former home of their traditional rivals the Cardinals (aka West Perth), who moved to Joondalup. Charlie's Tree was lost in the redevelopment at Perth Oval, but the club planted a new tree at Leederville oval in 2005 as a symbolic replacement. Unfortunately, the Royals haven't won a WAFL premiership since 2002. The Royals will be hoping the new tree will be in full bloom this year as they search for their 18th premiership.

HERITAGE HERO: ANTON HAYNES (1947 - 2021)

Anton Haynes was a long term local resident of the Norwood precinct area that is based around Summers Street, east of Lord Street. He was the former Garden Coordinator for the Norwood Neighbourhood Garden and instrumental in foundation of the Norwood Neighbourhood Association.

Anton was a passionate advocate for his local area and community, and a local history enthusiast committed to recording and sharing the history of the area.

Over the last few decades, he donated various photographs of the area to the City of Vincent Local History

Collection, including images of the former Norwood Hotel and Norwood Shoe Repairs.

In 2014, he co-wrote a brief history of the Norwood precinct with Simon Hehir. The publication, 'A Slice of Norwood', is an engaging and personal reflection on the history of the area. Anton and Simon's work available in hard copy from the City's Local History Collection or online at: librarycatalogue.vincent.wa.gov.au/client/en_GB/search/asset/4041/0

Vale Anton Haynes.



CAN YOU HELP?

EAST PERTH PRIMARY SCHOOL PHOTOS

EAST PERTH SCHOOL APRIL 1960



Did you or anyone you know attend the former East Perth Primary School on Wittenoom Street, East Perth?

We are hoping to hear from former students who have school photos, particularly from the 1960s and 70s era.

The school was built in 1895 at a time when East Perth was primarily residential, coupled with 19th century cottage industries such as stables, saddleries and small workshops.

It operated as the government school for the East Perth area until the 1970s, when it was converted for use as the Children's Court.

If you have any old East Perth Primary school photos (similar to the one pictured), please contact us. We'd love copies for our Local History Collection and to share with the Noongar Elders we are working with as part of the Moorditj Footprints project many of whom attended the school but have no photos of their time as students.



LIBRARY &L LOCAL HISTORY CENTRE

EVENTS

APRIL

TALK: THE PRIVATE LIFE OF A WAR MEMORIAL

WEDNESDAY 26 APRIL 2023 | 10 - 11.30AM

Join local history legend Anne Chapple OAM and film maker and writer Dawn Farnham for a behind the scenes talk on the making of a documentary about three generations of Porter family women and their special connection to ANZAC Cottage of Mount Hawthorn.

Where: City of Vincent Library Local History Centre

Presenter: Dawn Farnham & Anne Chapple

Cost: Free

Bookings are essential as places are limited.

Email: local.history@vincent.wa.gov.au or call 9273 6534



MAY

TALK: GREAT AUSTRALIAN PLACES

WEDNESDAY 24 MAY 2023 | 10 - 11.30AM

Join local author and historian Graham Seal for a storytelling tour of great Australian places, from iconic destinations to little-known corners of this vast continent.

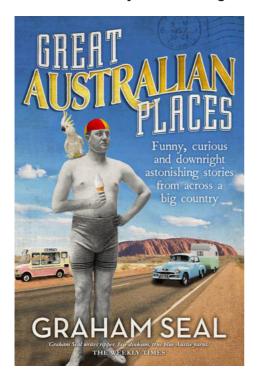
Where: City of Vincent Library Local History Centre

Presenter: Graham Seal

Cost: Free

Bookings are essential as places are limited.

Email: local.history@vincent.wa.gov.au or call 9273 6534





TALK: UKRAINIAN REFUGEES IN WESTERN

WEDNESDAY 21 JUNE 2023 | 10 - 11:30AM

Thousands of Ukrainian refugees have arrived in Australia since the war in Ukraine began in February 2022. These recent arrivals have joined an older more established Ukrainian community who migrated to Western Australia as displaced people and survivors of Hitler's forced labour campaign during WWII.

Join Dr Lesa Melnyczuk Morgan, a member of the local WA Ukrainian Community, for this talk on the history of the Ukrainian refugees in Western Australia.

Where: City of Vincent Library Local History Centre

Presenters: Dr Lesa Melnyczuk Morgan

Cost: Free

Bookings are essential as places are limited.

Email: local.history@vincent.wa.gov.au or call 9273 6534



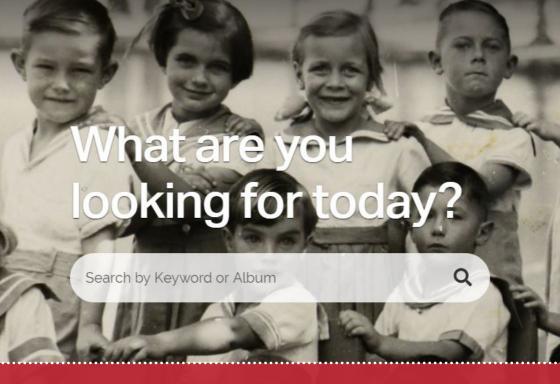


IMAGE LIBRARY

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



Follow the City of Vincent Library on Facebook

Local History Centre

www.library.vincent.wa.gov.au

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