

Mundaring & Hills Historical Society Inc

Newsletter AUTUMN 2023

LAKE LESCHENAULTIA

Lake Leschenaultia is getting a facelift this year. Funding has been approved to construct some new shelters for lake patrons. MHHS has been asked to provide some historical information for one of the panels and we thought our readers may be interested in what we found.

Lake Leschenaultia (formerly known as Chidlow's Well Reservoir), is a man-made feature which was constructed in 1897-8, to provide water for the steam locomotives at Chidlow Railway Station. The dam has an earthen embankment with a core of clay puddle. It had nearly 819 million litre capacity and a catchment area of 1480 hectares with a maximum depth of 9.3 metres.

Water from this reservoir was often used to augment the supply at railway stations other than Chidlow. 12 million gallons (54,000 cubic metres) were conveyed in rail tankers to Midland alone each year.

Unfortunately clearing within the catchment area caused increased salinity to the water and by 1930 the quality had deteriorated so much that the water was unusable for this purpose.

Because of this, the lease over the Reserve was negotiated with the Mundaring Roads Board and the Lake was re-developed as a recreation area and picnic ground during 1933. The Western Australian Government Railways (WAGR) resumed use of the Lake for a short period 1941-47, until salinity problems re-occurred and WAGR commenced use of the Goldfields Water Supply.



Group of Scouts at the Lake in 1947



Watercolour painting by Faye Jackson

The name Lake Leschenaultia achieved official recognition in 1949. Although the Chidlow Progress Association began to refer to the reservoir by its local name Lake Leschenaultia in 1932 in deference to the sparkling blue colour of the water and its similarity to the colour of the Leschenaultia flower.

During the early 1960s the Shire constructed a kiosk, caretakers residence and public toilet facility. During 1970 a caravan park amenities block was established as well as 10 powered sites, with further space for camping provided in 1973. It was found that the land was incompatible for caravans and by 1978 the caravan park was closed. Boats were made available in 1958. During 1973, trout stocks were introduced to the lake, however by 1998 it was decided that trout fishing was not compatible with the recreation themes being developed at the Lake.

The Lake is still a great place to spend an afternoon or longer if you like camping or even glamping!



Group of Scouts at the Lake in 1947

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land we are on, the Whadjuk and Ballardong Noongar people. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this region.

From the Curator's Desk

Minimalisation has been the catch cry for the last five years, and at fever pitch during the lockdowns when it was thought everyone had time to sift through their bulging cupboards and storage systems. If it couldn't be revamped or repurposed then recycled was the way to go. Unfortunately, now, so many precious items are discarded by those who perhaps do not realise their historical and cultural value.

Earlier this year MHHS received a small box which had been dropped at the local Salvation Army shop, an astute volunteer handed it in at the Museum. Inside was an absolute treasure. There were hand-made (crochet, knit, embroidered) babies bonnets, bootees, socks, a pair of women's gloves and the birth certificate of the woman, who made them (I will refer to her as Margaret).

Born in the 1930s and tracing her family through birth/death records and finally their memorial to her in the newspaper upon her death in 2017, it seems Margaret did not marry, she was well known for her hand crafts, her garden, and her generosity. She had relatives connected to the Mundaring/York Rail line from early 1900.

The message: to recycle with care, if you/your family live in the Mundaring Shire and have valuable historical items then contact MHHS before they hit the skip bin! Whilst not all items are taken into the collection at least you will be given information as to where they may be accepted.



Caring for your Collection

When MHHS accepts donations into the collection, we have a duty of care to look after them. This is one of the reasons, we have to be very careful when accepting donations. We have a strict Collection Policy and if an object is too large for us to look after properly, or doesn't have the provenance that is required, we will decline the offer. Provenance is very important in Museum Management. MHHS only collects items that have local provenance, which means it has been used or made in the Shire of Mundaring. If it doesn't fit the Policy guidelines, we ask the donor if they are happy for us to advise a more suitable recipient.

Depending on the structure of the donation, there are various methods of ensuring their safety. Firstly, check the item has no insects or infestations that could destroy it while it's in storage. If we put an item in our Collection Room that has a living insect in it, it can destroy other items in the room, Textiles, furs, woven and knitted fabrics are sealed in an airtight bag and placed in a freezer for up to 3 months. After this quarantine period, they are checked for any live insects then packed into the appropriate archival containers ready to go into the collection space.

Dust is also damaging to collections. Dust particles can cause damage by causing physical abrasion. It absorbs moisture and pollutants from the air which can contribute to chemical deterioration of objects such as corrosion and rot. Staining, discolouration and mould outbreaks are just a few problems that can occur when objects are exposed to dust. If any of these problems occur, removal can be extremely difficult especially on fragile or decorated surfaces

Collection spaces ideally should be light, temperature and humidity controlled. Although MHHS doesn't have the resources to have a purpose built Collection Room, we monitor the humidity and temperature with a heater and a water receptacle as appropriate for weather conditions

If you would like advice about keeping your precious heirloom safe, please don't hesitate to contact us.



Noongar Seasons

Bunuru or second summer runs from February to March. This is the hottest time of the year, with little or no rain.



Djeran or autumn runs from April to May. In autumn there is a break from the hot weather and nights become cooler and mornings damp with dew.

GUEST SPEAKER

Bill Cutler who grew up and Mundaring Weir entertained us at our recent General Meeting with tales of carefree days living at the Weir. The family lived in a corrugated iron house supplied by the water authority on the side of the hill overlooking the Number 2 pump station. The iron walls were whitewashed to help deflect the heat and glare of summer. Before Bill’s father George married Jean Cosgrave he had bought a block of land on Mundaring Weir Road not far from the Number 2 Pumping Station, cleared it and planted an orchard while living in a tin shed. After his marriage he applied for a job at the Pumping Station but, instead of getting a job over the road, they were sent to Number 6 at Ghooli, east of Southern Cross. Bill was born while they were at this posting.

A couple of years later George and his family were transferred back to Number 2 to live at the pumping station and close to his orchard which, in his absence, had been cared for by his uncle Jim Wilshusen who lived in Mundaring. Life was hard for Bill’s father working his shifts and continuing to tend his orchard. When they were settled, their family cow provided them with milk, cream and butter. A Coolgardie Safe was the only refrigeration method, so ice-cream was not an option in those days. Bill’s younger sister Jan was born after their return to Mundaring.

Bill started school at Mundaring Weir although he only attended for a year after which he was big enough to ride to the Mundaring School. The Weir School was built in 1898 to cater for the 70 plus local children of school age living at the settlement during the weir construction. The Weir Progress Committee agitated the Education Department to supply a school and thanks to the generosity of the local Jacoby brothers a school was built. They helped make it possible by offering an acre of land to the Education Department. The school was closed in 1959 and later became part of the Youth Hostel Association (YHA) network.

Bill and his younger sister were sent to Sunday School every week at the Church of the Epiphany in Mundaring with a sixpence for the plate and a penny for spending at the local store. Bill soon worked out that the sixpence was better spent on himself and the penny was enough for a church contribution. I am not sure whether it was Bill’s accounting technique that helped him in his adult life working with the bank. He started work at the bank as a teenager and rose through the ranks to work firstly in country Western Australia and then all over the world. He met his lovely wife Cathy at the bank when she was 18 and although he was sent to the country soon after they met, the romance survived by copious letter writing. Still going strong after being married for over 50 years.

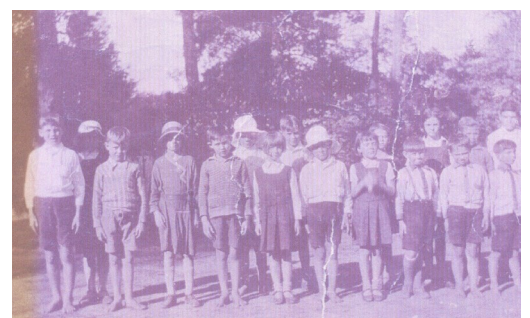
MHHS member Helen Spencer (nee Fathers) also grew up in the Mundaring Weir community and came all the way from Cottesloe to listen to Bill.



Mundaring Weir School Students 1946



Helen Spencer (Nee Fathers) with Bill Cutler on Saturday 18/3/23



Mundaring Weir School Students 1933/4



Mundaring Weir School Children 1939



Mundaring Weir Schoolhouse 1959

Upcoming Events 2023

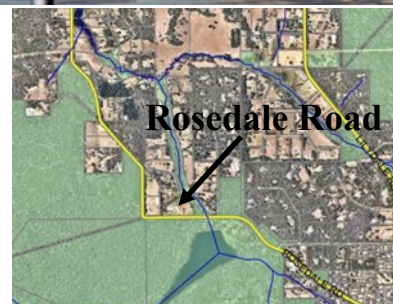
DATE/TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
18th March 2023 2pm	General Meeting	Boya Community Hall Scott Street Boya
18th March 2023 2.45pm	Guest Speaker Bill Cutler 'Growing up on the Pipeline'	Boya Community Hall Scott Street Boya
5th April 2023 4pm	Mhhs Executive Meeting	Mundaring Stationmasters House 3060 Jacoby Street Mundaring
17th June 2023 2pm	General Meeting Guest Speaker To Be Announced	Boya Community Hall Scott Street Boya

WHERE DID YOUR LOCAL STREETS GET THEIR NAMES?

Rosedale Road runs north from near the old Chidlow Station site, passes by Lake Leschenaultia and continues on past rural properties to the boundary of City of Swan.

The name relates to 'Rosedale', a farm and orchard established by Charles Cook at the end of the road in 1897. It comprised extensive grapevines, a variety of fruit trees, as well as pigs and bees, all benefitting from the rich soil around Cook's Brook which runs through the area.

Charles Cook was also very active in the community serving as Road Board Member for Chidlow 1903-08, held positions in the Progress Assn, and other local Societies and Clubs. He was appointed the local Justice of the Peace in 1907.



MUNDARING & HILLS HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

DON'T FORGET FEES DUE BY 30TH JUNE 2023

(ABN 25 028 478 748)



MUNDARING STATION MASTER'S HOUSE

3060 Jacoby Street, Mundaring
(PO Box 334, Mundaring WA 6073)
MONDAY AND FRIDAY: 9.30am - 4pm
WEDNESDAY: 9.30am - 1.30pm

MEMBERSHIP FEES

Senior/pensioner: \$15 (Couple \$20)
Single: \$25 (Couple \$30)
Company/Institution: \$35
Account: Mundaring & Hills Historical Society
BSB 633-000 Acc No 122609431
Please quote your surname reference



MUNDARING DISTRICT MUSEUM

7225 GT Eastern Highway Mundaring
(Inside the Visitor Centre)
MONDAY - SATURDAY: 9.30am - 4pm
SUNDAY: 10am - 2.30pm