

Mundaring & Hills Historical Society Inc

Newsletter Autumn 2024

CHARLES YELVERTON O'CONNOR

Charles Yelverton O'Connor engineer, was born on 11 January 1843 at Gravelmount, Castletown, Meath, Ireland was the first Engineer-in-Chief of Western Australia. Recruited by John Forrest, the Premier of Western Australia at the time, he was tasked with improving the colony's railways, roads, water supply, and harbours.

Prior to arriving in Western Australia, he began his training at the age of 16, when he was apprenticed as a railway engineer and 5 years later he emigrated to New Zealand to escape the deprivation of the potato famine. He was appointed Assistant Engineer for the Canterbury Province. In 1873, while in New Zealand he gained important experience in dock construction. He married Scottish born Susan Laetitia Ness and fathered 8 children. In 1891 Premier John Forrest appointed him Engineer-in-Chief of Western Australia, and he and his family moved to WA.

He became responsible for the construction of Fremantle Harbour and the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme supplying water to the Eastern Goldfields. O'Connor found that he was also required to act as general manager of government railways. He carried this dual responsibility for the next five and a half years.

FREMANTLE HARBOUR

When dealing with the construction of Fremantle Harbour he was asked to use plans which had been drawn by Sir John Coode. The plans showed problems with the harbour entrance which would be costly to rectify. However when O'Connor examined the data and collected more he found there was no serious issue and the harbour could be built with the resources available. Fremantle Harbour was then able to accommodate the large steamers carrying the mail. More than 100 years of continued use by heavy shipping, Fremantle Harbour has erased all doubt concerning



O'Connor's technical judgement.

In 1897, Lady Forrest opened the harbour, and in 1900 the mail station was relocated from Albany to Fremantle. The official seal of success was set when on 12 September R.M.S. *Himalaya*, the mail carrier outward bound from London, entered the inner harbour and berthed. The harbour of 1900 was larger than O'Connor had detailed in his first meticulous plans and was capable of extension.

THE GOLDFIELDS WATER SUPPLY SCHEME

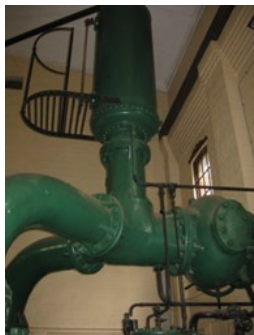
Runs 530kms from Perth to Kalgoorlie. In 1893, gold rushes in the Yilgarn region near Southern Cross resulted in an increase in population. The area was dry and barren and was in desperate need of water. Sanitation was primitive and scurvy and dysentery were common. In July 1896 John Forrest introduced a bill to the Western Australian Parliament to finance £2.5 million to construct the scheme. The pipeline would pump 5 million imperial gallons (23,000 M³) of water per day to the Goldfields from the Helena River near Mundaring Weir, pumped in eight successive stages through 330 miles of 30 inch diameter (760mm) pipe to the Mount Charlotte Reservoir in Kalgoorlie. The water is then reticulated to various mining centres in the Goldfields.

Cont'd Page 2

Cont'd from pge 1

Charles Yelverton O'Connor

In 1961, the West Australian Government decided to commemorate some of the State's historic past by establishing a museum. Standing only a few yards from the overflow waters of the Mundaring Weir was the old No 1 Pump Station or the Goldfields Water Supply. The museum graphically portrayed the history of gold discoveries in Western Australia, the urgent need for water and subsequent construction of the pipeline to the goldfields. The life of the great engineer, C Y O'Connor was realistically portrayed. At the start of the museum project, the old No1 Pumping Station was derelict, having been replaced in 1955 by an electrically operated station. It had stood untouched for 7 years; windows were broken, the walls were flaking and dust and grime lay thick on the oil stained floor. Of the three pumping units, two were removed and the original Worthington Simpson No 1 engine was cleaned and restored to its former condition.



Inside Pump Station



No 1 Pump Station



Laying pipes for the Golden Pipeline

Our New Curator

I recently moved into the Mundaring area and have fallen in love with it. The history of the area is full of rich stories from hard working pioneers to soldiers in training, and so much more in between.

I was previously employed at the City of Stirling for 22 years, commencing as a library officer then museum curator at the Mount Flora Museum. For anyone who has visited this museum will know of the panoramic views and beautiful coastal outlook. The role of a curator is varied and one of many privileges from listening to stories, assisting with research, and developing a collection that represents the local community. I conducted community and school group tours, organised events, and collaborated with community groups and local business on a variety of projects.

In my spare time I enjoy tending my small orchard, researching my family history, and spoiling my grandchildren. In the family we have chickens, a sphinx cat, two dogs, and a horse named Max. My claim to fame is meeting Phil Harding an archaeologist from the TV show 'Time Team' while visiting Wales.

I am delighted to take on the role of curator for the Mundaring & Hills Historical Society and look forward to working together in preserving and capturing our local history and heritage. I am in the office each Wednesday and Friday so if you are passing, please come in and say hello.

TRACY

**INTERNATIONAL
MUSEUM DAY**
18 MAY

Your Mundaring - Darlington

Surveyor Chauncy dug a well in 1846 calling it Bilgoman. This area later became the depot for the convicts who were labouring on the York Road.

Darlington takes its name from the range of hills where the township is located, the Darling Range, with the addition of the English suffix 'ton', meaning town. The Darling Range was originally named General Darling Range, after General Sir Ralph Darling, the Governor of the New South Wales colony. The name Darlington was first used by Dr Alfred Waylen, the Chief Medical Officer of the Swan River Colony, who, in 1883 purchased three blocks of land, totalling 150 acres, in the heart of Darlington, and set about establishing 'Darlington Vineyard'. Around 1890, Darlington also gained a surveyed road (Darlington Road) connecting the settlement to the York Road at Bilgoman Well. This became the site of a camp built to accommodate the convict road gangs in 1854. It consisted of barracks with room for 70 hammock beds, a cookhouse and accommodation for the warders. Post 1900 saw an influx of Italian migrants who worked in the vineyards. The Ah Ling and Co., a market gardening enterprise brought in Chinese workers to work in the market gardens around what is now the Hillsden area.

After 1913, Darlington became the home to weekenders, guest houses and second homes.



Miss Joyce's class on top of granite outcrop in Darlington in 1918

In 1915, a General Store and Post Office were established in the townsite. Despite its early formation and settlement as a wine producing area with many buildings both grand and simple, Darlington would not be officially gazetted as a town until 1st December 1939. Connection to the electricity grid and scheme water did not happen until 1924-25.

Darlington retains its charm as the home to Artists, Sculptors, Potters, Textile Artists, Stained Glass Fabricators and many more artistic enterprises.



Margaret Bracks Darlington - 1928

Noongar Seasons

Bunuru - February to March



The Noongar Season 'Bunuru' represented by the colour orange as it is the hottest time of the year.

Traditionally this was and still is a great time for living and fishing by the coast, rivers and estuaries. Because of this, freshwater foods and seafood make up major parts of the Noongar people's diet during Bunuru. Bunuru is also the time of the white flowers with lots of white flowering gums in full bloom, including jarrah, marri and ghost gums. A striking flower to look out for is the female zamia (macrozamia riedlei). Being much larger than its counterpart, the huge cones emerge from the centre of the plant with masses of a cotton wool like substance. As the hot and dry weather continues, the seed cones change from green to bright red, indicate they're ripening and becoming more attractive to animals, particularly the emu, that will eat the toxic fleshy outer layer.



Upcoming Events 2024

DATE/TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
Saturday 2pm 16th March	General Meeting	Boya Community Centre 135 Scott St BOYA
Saturday 2.45pm 16th March	Guest Speaker—Bill Cutler C Y OConnor	Boya Community Centre 135 Scott St BOYA
Wednesday 10th April -4pm	Executive Meeting	Mundaring Stationmasters House
Saturday 15th June—2pm	General Meeting	To Be announced

WHERE DID YOUR LOCAL STREETS GET THEIR NAMES?

GUGERI STREET

...is a little street about 100 metres long between Jacoby St and Phillips Rd in Mundaring, just west of Sculpture Park. It is named after Peter Anthony Gugeri who was born in London in 1845, arrived in WA in 1871, became a prominent business man in Perth and a Perth City Councillor. He died in 1930.

Peter was the first to take up land in the area when he established a vineyard and orchard on 120 acres about 2 kms south east of present day Mundaring in 1883. He named the property 'St Bernard'. About 10 years later the Jacoby brothers bought the property and renamed it 'Mundaring Vineyard'.



On 9th August 1884 Peter wrote in his diary : My son - Andrea Francis William Joseph born at 11.30 pm Hay St, East Perth. My son appeared to have been registered as Andrea Francis William GUGGERI with double g's to the name — I may mention this is the correct way of spelling the name — But my father dropped one g making it read GUGERI — I remember the pronunciation of my name in England was like GARJERY — not like West Australians pronounce it — GOODJERY .



MUNDARING & HILLS HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

(ABN 25 028 478 748)

(08) 9295 0540 | mhhs@mundaringhistory.org | www.mundaringhistory.org



MUNDARING STATION MASTER'S HOUSE

3060 Jacoby Street, Mundaring
(PO Box 334, Mundaring WA 6073)
MONDAY AND FRIDAY: 10.00am - 4pm
WEDNESDAY: 10.00am -1.30pm
E: mhhs@mundaringhistory.org
Ph: 9295 0540

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