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PRESERVE • PROTECT • PROMOTE

Historical Bayswater

Down Memory Lane

Bayswater Lifetime Resident Essie Stokes

In 2019, Mrs Essie Stokes celebrated her 100th birthday. She has been recognised as one of Bayswater's prominent senior citizens and was presented with an Honorary Life Membership of the Society at the recent AGM.

Essie has lived in the same house since 1919 that was built by her father Mr. Albert McGilvray, who owned the tannery located on Beechboro Road. He then went on to become a leading citizen of the Bayswater district and was elected Chairman of the Bayswater Roads Board between 1929 and 1936. McGilvray Avenue Morley/Noranda was so named in his honor. Essie's mother, Mrs. Daisy McGilvray was also prominent in community affairs, heading charitable committees and was a serving member of The Order of St John for 60 years.

Essie was a student at the Bayswater Primary School from 1925 to 1931. At the 125th Anniversary of the school in 2019, Essie was given the honour of ringing the school bell to commence the celebrations.

She married in 1943 and had four children who also attended Bayswater Primary School. Continuing her family's strong community links Essie became a member of the Parents and Citizens Association and held the position of secretary for six years.

Essie's family connection and contribution to the early development of Bayswater and its community play a significant role in the preservation of the history of Bayswater.

BHS acknowledges Mrs Helen Robertson née Stokes for this article.



Above: Essie pictured centre left at her Debutante Ball, c.1935 at the Bayswater Town Hall in Slade Street

Notice:

The Bayswater Historical Society advises that Issue 37 of *Historical Bayswater* contain images of long-deceased persons that may cause distress to our local Indigenous community, residents and members.

A Message From New BHS Chairperson - Terry Devereux

After living in Bayswater for most of my life it's time to make a contribution at the Bayswater Historical Society.

I joined the Society two years ago hoping that photographs collected at the Bayswater Primary School Centenary celebrations 26 years prior could be scanned and made available to the local community. I hope we might achieve this in the coming year along with many other things.

With COVID-19 restrictions easing it's been agreed to re-open Halliday House on Sunday, 27th of September and invite Society members and the community back. I hope that we can activate Halliday House and make it a welcoming place for our members and the community to come to learn, and share experiences.

It was a great turnout at the AGM last week and we thank all our members who were able to attend.

Membership is now due for the coming year and we look forward to your ongoing interest in helping Preserve, Protect and Promote the History of Bayswater. Please pay by EFT or complete the form and pay by cash if you need to.

** Please see attached membership form or can be obtained from the Secretary, please email bayswaterhs@gmail.com



Outgoing Chairperson Keith Clements with 2020-2021 Chairperson Terry Devereux. Photo by Geraldine Pillinger

BHS Annual General Meeting

The Bayswater Historical Society's Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held in the Bayswater Community Centre on Monday, 31 August 2020.

It was well attended by the current BHS Management Committee members, Society members and representative from the City of Bayswater, Mayor Dan Bull and Councillor Giorgia Johnson. We also welcomed a special guest on the night, Mrs Essie Stokes, a long time resident of Bayswater.

Lynn Deering, a BHS founding member and former Chairperson was presented with an Honorary Life Membership for her tireless work and stewardship since 1996. A second Honorary Life Membership was also presented to long-time Bayswater resident, Mrs Essie Stokes, 101 years young this year! Certificates of Appreciation were also presented to Society members Miriam Fawcett, Maggie Wade, Neil Ferguson, Christina Middleton, Wayne Swindells and Geraldine Pillinger.



A new Management Committee has been endorsed at the AGM:

Chairperson - Terry Devereux

Secretary - Glen Cookson

Treasurer - Ian Rathbone

Communications Coordinator - Christina Middleton

General Members - Keith Clements, Miriam Fawcett, Maggie Wade and Jill Duke Smith

No nominations were received for the position of Deputy Chairperson.

Photos from the AGM

BHS wishes to acknowledge and thank Society member Bill Ragan for supplying the photos from the AGM



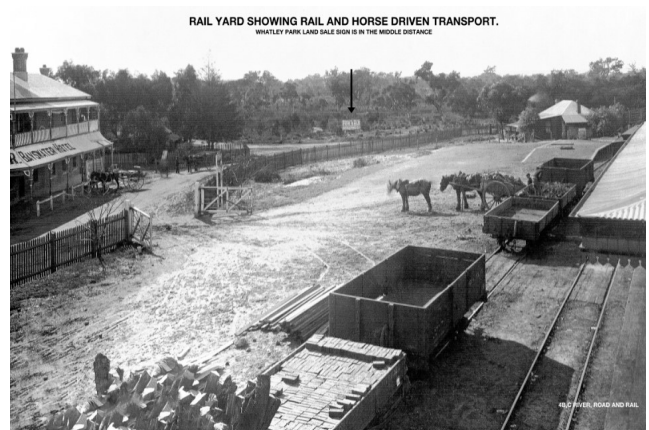
Bayswater And Its Rail Story

by Geraldine Pillinger

As plans and consultations are underway for the State's development of Bayswater's new station, it is a good opportunity to have a look back at the origins of the Bayswater railway and its impact on the story of Bayswater.

According to the definitive book on Bayswater, Catherine May's *Changes They've Seen*, the idea of a railway to link the Eastern Districts with the Fremantle port was first put forward in 1870 by James Drummond Jr. of Toodyay.

Just over a decade later, in 1881, the railway was built. However, not before a 'battle of the routes', with much debate over whether south of the river or a route along the north, namely Perth to Guildford should attract a railway line. It seems budget and a sense of expediency won, with the Legislature committing to the cheaper option of the north route. Here lies the beginnings of a major push for subdivision of the original land grants and land sales in the Bayswater area with proximity to the Fremantle port making the area more viable. Once decided upon, the Perth to Guildford line took two years to build.



It was both the WA gold rush and the needs of the growing pioneer community that pushed the next stage of the railway development. After many years of the children of Bayswater enduring long trips to schools in the Perth district, local families petitioned the Board of Education and a school was opened in 1894. The citizens of the school soon formed a Road Board with the goal of improving roads and construction of a railway siding. A proper railway station followed the duplication of the railway line in 1896,

...continued next page

which was carried out to cater for the enormous volume of traffic from the Goldfields.' The role of the railway line was a huge boon to Bayswater and the areas along the railway.



It seems at some point, Bayswater was to have a branch line to Busselton too. In 1886, there was a push by businessmen for this to happen and Parliament approved for a railway line, originally touted to be a Bayswater to Busselton line but stopping short of reaching the River, (towards the river end of King William Street). However it did prove to be influential in the development of the foreshore, and industries such as Walkenden's 'W.A. Brick Co' brickworks and around Lake Gobba, a claypit for the brick company. The chimneys and now historic beehive kilns are a familiar sight today on the Ascot foreshore.

It was horse racing that added the next chapter to railway in the Bayswater area. A racecourse had been established on a farm across the river and the West Australian Turf Club took what was a failed project, as an opportunity to have the railway extended across the river. In 1897 a railway was constructed to the Racecourse from the north route line. From 1898 until 1956 Bayswater was the junction station for the Belmont spur line to the Ascot Racecourses, lasting until its removal in 1957. The racecourse and nearby riverside were popular recreational spots for Perth residents making day trips via the train. Whilst vehicle transport has long taken over, with the Garrett Road bridge built nearby, the sounds of the Ascot races still waft across the river and the riverside is a much loved part of living in Bayswater today.

Of course, a story of Bayswater railways and its people must mention the Western Australian Government Railway (WAGR) workshops, relocated from Fremantle to Midland in 1904 and bringing many new residents to the area. The Bayswater Rate Books showed many of the residents in 1906 with the occupation "loco shops".

The sight of railway workers with their Gladstone bags and hats would have been a common sight over many decades at the Bayswater train station. At a time where passenger railway carriage was the most important passenger carrying service, the railway workshops were not only instrumental in the building and maintenance of WA's railways and engines but in the establishment and growth of Bayswater and the Eastern suburbs.



The next chapter is at play with the Bayswater train station in planning transformed into a four platform station, with the existing Midland line, the Forestfield-Airport link, followed by the Morley-Ellenbrook link – all adding a significant chapter to Bayswater and its rail story.



Photo courtesy of Metronet

This article is deeply indebted to the book *Changes They've Seen: the City and People of Bayswater 1827 – 1997* by Catherine May.

**Copies of the book can be purchased from the Bayswater Historical Society.

Please email the Secretary on bayswaterhs@gmail.com.

History of Reconciliation Week

by Glen Cookson

National Reconciliation Week (NRW) started as the Week of Prayer for Reconciliation in 1993 (the International Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples) and was supported by Australia's major faith communities. The process of Reconciliation formally began as a result of the Report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody in 1991. The government formed the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, setting a 10-year timeframe to advance a national process of reconciliation.

2020 marks the twentieth anniversary of the reconciliation walks of 2000, when people came together to walk on bridges and roads across the nation and show their support for a more reconciled Australia. Much has happened since the early days of the people's movement for reconciliation, including greater acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights to land and sea; understanding of the impact of government policies and frontier conflicts; and an embracing of stories of Indigenous success and contribution.

On this journey, Australians are all In This Together; every one of us has a role to play when it comes to reconciliation; we collectively build relationships and communities that value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories and cultures.

Understanding the history of Reconciliation Week may enable both non indigenous and First Nations people a greater empathy and respect of one another. WA's Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Ben Wyatt said his government is continuing to come to terms with its role in some of unpleasant and mostly not discussed, yet significant WA historical events.



Prisoners in neck chains, Wyndham, WA (1898-1906). Photo from State Library, Victoria

"The recognition of the truthful telling and commemorating of our state's history continues to grow," he said. "Commemorating known massacre sites is part of that collective process of owning our state's history."

Reconciliation WA (RWA) CEO, Mr Andrew Vlahov said his key message was "it's OK for non-Aboriginal



Reconciliation WA chief executive Andrew Vlahov and the organization's Aboriginal co-chair Carol Innes

people to not know, but it's not OK to ignore. Your obligation as a West Australian is to learn a little more, take one step in your own reconciliation journey and make progress. The reconciliation conversation needs to become mainstream."

RWA co-chair, Ms Carol Innes, a Noongar woman, said it was crucial to understand many of these wrongdoings had been in living memory. This includes the fact that Perth was a prohibited area for indigenous people between 1927 and 1954 for Aboriginal people under the Aborigines Act 1905 (WA). The only exemption was for holders of a "native pass" that could prove "lawful employment".

"The biggest part of what happened to us is our identity and our cultural practice in ways were forbidden. Everything around was exclusion." Ms Innes encouraged West Australians to have conversations about reconciliation among their own families.

Mr Vlahov pointed to research which showed broad support for the concept of reconciliation in the community but said the conversation now needed to move beyond the "why" to the "how". "Reconciliation plans into every workplace in WA. That's our goal. These things can happen. This is not me trying to climb Mount Everest backwards," he said.

On recognition and constitutional enshrinement of a "voice" to government as called for by the 2017 Uluru Statement from the Heart, both Mr Vlahov and Ms Innes described it as "absolutely fundamental to the nation moving forward". "Australia needs to recognise the absolute gift that Aboriginal culture has given to this country. And in my humble opinion we haven't," Mr Vlahov said.

The dates for NRW remain the same each year; 27 May to 3 June. The City of Bayswater Reconciliation Action Plan can be found at: www.bayswater.wa.gov.au/community/reconciliation

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Photography by Terry Devereux

The Bayswater Historical Society Inc. was formed in 1991. It is a non-profit organisation which aims to preserve the history of Bayswater district; protect the records and objects relating to the area; promote public interest in and support for the preservation of historic records, buildings and sites.

Halliday House is Bayswater's historic home and is used as the Society's base and museum. Halliday House is re-opening on Sunday, 27th September 2020. COVID-19 safety measures will be in place and must be adhered to by all visitors to the house.

Historical Bayswater is the society's newsletter and welcomes contributions such as stories and photographs relating to the history of Bayswater to be included in future issues. Please forward all enquiries addressed to the Secretary. *Historical Bayswater* wishes to acknowledge our contributors for their items included in this issue.

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Proposed International Latitude Station Memorial

Last month, BHS Secretary Glen Cookson along with local community member Damien Hassan met with representatives from the City of Bayswater, Mayor Dan Bull, and Councillors Lorna Clarke and Giorgia Johnson for an opportunity to discuss the possibility of creating a memorial to acknowledge the 1905 site of the International Latitude Station, a scientific and historic significance at Hamilton Reserve on the corner of Hamilton and Station Streets here in Bayswater.

The Latitude Station carried out a great many scientific research in early 1900s but has remained a somewhat overlooked history of Bayswater.

Discussions are continuing and the Society hopes to recognise the area as an historically significant site, not just for the City of Bayswater, Perth and Western Australia but for the whole of Australia itself, for its part in a major international scientific project of the early 20th century.



Photo courtesy of Councillor Lorna Clarke