



HISTORIC BAYSWATER

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Valma's cousin Sarah Moss wrote the following which forms part of the special Vale to Valma over the next few pages.

"Valma has shown me – and I suspect, many others – that the true value of life is not found in grand gestures or flashy accomplishments. Instead, she demonstrated that it is in choosing to live simply, resisting the pull of our increasingly complex world, and embracing change in ways that are meaningful to us personally. Valma's life was defined by her unwavering consistency in caring for others, by always being present, and by sharing small acts of love, kindness and thoughtfulness each day."

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Upcoming Events

"Volunteer Day" Fridays

Leighton (Halliday House) Volunteer morning
9.30am – 12.00pm.

BHS Members encouraged to support our Society by helping with display preparation and research on topics of interest.

Light refreshments and convivial discussion always available.

Members able to use resources for research, reading, writing about local history. Bring a friend.

Sun 28 June Open Day Special screening of "The Tunnel" Q&A and light refreshments.

View displays research local history and socialise.

Quality light refreshments available. 1pm-4pm

1-3pm The Tunnel: an award-winning documentary written and directed by BHS member Shireen Narayanan. It focusses on the impact of large scale infrastructure development on the history and heritage of a unique Perth community.

Sun 26 July BHS Members & Open House to the public 12pm-4pm \$5 admission, quality light refreshments also available.

12-1pm Special Ceremony to celebrate the acquisition of Gold Estates 1905 Map of Bayswater and Maylands which captures a unique revelation of Bayswater and Maylands.

This rare artefact is being added to the BHS Collection and made possible through the generous sponsorship of Steve Lay and Lay2 Real Estate. Special guests including Dan Bull MLA, Cr Cale Black and Steve Lay.

1-2pm Guest Speaker: Damien Hassan, Senior Archivist, State Records Office of WA – presenting: "Tales from the State Archives Part 3: Special Bayswater Edition".

Mon 31 August BHS Annual General Meeting

6pm start at Halliday House. Agenda and Committee nomination forms available from the Secretary. Light refreshments provided.

Vale to Valma Platt, granddaughter of Henry and Edith Halliday

It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of our longest serving member and dearly beloved Valma Platt on Thursday, 19th March, the day before her 99th birthday. Valma was born in Cottesloe on the 20th March 1927. Valma lived with her parents, mum Coralie (nee Halliday) and dad in Yarloop until the early 1930's. Valma's father was an English migrant and decided to relocate with his family back to his home in England.

As a testament to Valma's determination and independence of mind, in 1949, she returned for a holiday with her mother, to her birthplace, Perth. Another holiday followed in 1988, this time by herself. Soon after this Valma migrated to Perth. According to her nephew, Robert and friends, Valma was a devout Christian, with a real commitment to follow through on issues she believed in. She worked diligently to support overseas missions, including in Africa and Cambodia. Valma had a genuine empathy for those that had nothing. As a 13-year-old Valma endured the WW2 bombings of her home in England. It's hard to know the impact that constant wartime visions of destruction and fear had on a child such as Valma. Interestingly Valma had personally collected and kept a tin of bomb shrapnel collected from around her home over the early 1940's. In a small envelope were shrapnel that broke windows in her house.

She was enthusiastically involved in discussion groups such as 'Women in the Word.' Valma was an active participant in retreats and travel. Her cousin Sarah recalled the joy she showed when visiting the New Norcia Benedictine Monastery when involved with discussing faith issues with the monks. She was determined to live a simple life, to be herself, was quiet, caring, very organised, believed in hope, loved nature and learning new things.

Visiting in October 2024. Seen here with BHS Secretary Glen, Chairperson Monica with her dog Sunny, who welcomed our then 97-year young BHS member, Valma and her interstate nephew Robert.



Valma was the granddaughter of Henry and Edith Halliday. Henry and Edith built Heritage listed Halliday House in 1893. Henry was a Master Builder, community leader, and committed Baptist church leader. Social life crystallised in the late 1890s with the formation of church congregations. The Baptist congregation was the first to emerge united in church 'fellowship' in 1896. Before this, the Law-Davis family had walked to Perth each Sunday in order to observe their faith. The first small congregation consisted of the Halliday and Law-Davis families, Mr De Souza and Mrs Stone. Halliday House was the first indoor meeting place, but the small group also met at the olive tree in Slade Street. The congregation quickly set about building a church on the rise of Guilford Rd above King William Street. It was not only the first church in Bayswater but also the First Baptist Church building in WA



Halliday House c1900



Guildford Road Baptist Church c1906



Valma right with her sister Norma taken in Bexleyheath, London 1935



Valma left with her sister Norma in 1941. The soldier is unknown.



Valma Platt and BHS Secretary Glen Cookson with a rare collection of Halliday family framed photos and assorted precious artefacts. Valma generously donated all these items to the BHS. This was Valma's last visit to the house built by her grandparents and where her mum grew up.

Below are Valma's grandparents, her mum and her at 21. Valma could vividly recall visiting her grandparents in the early 1930's.



Edith Halliday



Henry Halliday



Coralie - Valma's mother



Valma at 21

When the Bayswater Road Board was established in 1897, their first meeting was held in Halliday House. Valma's grandfather, Henry Halliday was the first Chairman of the Road Board, serving from 1897-1899. The Road Board, established in 1897 to manage local infrastructure, was gradually expanded and officially became the City of Bayswater in 1983.



Valma's birthday outing at Point Walter, 20 March 2022

L-R: Sarah (cousin), Valma, Josephine Taylor (cousin), Robert (nephew) and Gwendolyn Dawlings.

Valma Platt: A life in dates 1927-2026

20th March 1927 – Valma was born in Cottesloe, Western Australia.

Early 1930s – Moved with family to Yarloop.

November 1932 – Travelled by boat to England.

1930s–1963 – Lived in Bexleyheath, Kent. Attended Woolworth Road School, played in the Percussion Band during King George V & Queen Mary's Silver Jubilee (1935). Appears in school photos from 1940 and 1943.

29th April 1949 – Departed Tilbury for a nine month holiday around Australia with her mother, Coralie.

1963 – Moved to Romford, Essex.

1966 – Visited Israel. Served in missionary work in Singapore and Java.

Throughout Valma's career she worked with Missionary Societies, Banks, and Charities supporting children, the disabled, and Christian causes.

1970s–1980s – Travelled extensively across England, Europe, and worldwide as part of her voluntary work and for leisure.

March 1987 – Retired from professional work.

1988 – Holidayed in Australia.

1990 – Emigrated to Perth, WA.

1999 & 2000 – Participated in missionary work in remote Aboriginal communities near Newman, WA. Most likely Jigalong.

2000 – Returned to Israel for a visit.

2002 – Missionary visits to Malawi and Zambia.

Year unknown – Mission work in Cambodia; sponsored a child through the mission.

Throughout her life- Travelled extensively exploring new places, supporting missions, visiting and with friends.

Valma travelled to Rome at least 6 times.

7th April 2026 – Honoured at Mount Pleasant Baptist Church service (testimonials).

19th March 2026 - Valma passed away leaving a legacy of service and adventure.



Valma on left with her sister, Norma



Valma visiting Cambodia

Valma's nephew, Robert Dawlings, and her legacy

Appointed as Valma's Executor, Robert generously shared her personal records, photographs, and memorabilia with the BHS, ensuring that her story and contributions would not be lost to history. The Society deeply appreciates his efforts, which enable future generations to connect with Valma's experiences and values.

Valma's life was profoundly shaped by her years in England during World War II. It is difficult to fully imagine the challenges she faced growing up amid such uncertainty and hardship. Yet, her eventual return to Australia, her regular visits to her mother's family home, and her active involvement with the BHS testify to her enduring commitment to community and to ensuring that the lessons from history remain alive. Through her actions and the continued stewardship of her family, Valma's spirit of service and remembrance endures.

Valma's Values Reflected in Her Letters and Memorabilia

A closer look at Valma's personal letters and memorabilia reveals the depth of her character and convictions. Through her correspondence and the keepsakes, she preserved, Valma consistently expressed her vision of living a simple and meaningful life. Her writings highlight a steadfast commitment to her spiritual beliefs, which guided her daily actions and interactions with others.

Beyond her personal faith, Valma's letters and collected items also demonstrate her practical support for those in need, especially in developing countries. She did not merely observe the challenges faced by others but actively sought ways to contribute and uplift those less fortunate. Her legacy, as seen through these cherished documents and mementos, stands as a testament to her compassion, humility, and dedication to service.



8 April 2026: at Halliday House, Robert Dawlings with wife, Gwendolyn and daughter Rhiannon looking over Valma's 1940's collection of WW2 shrapnel and her mother's 1914 artwork.

Valma's Enduring Lessons and Presence – extracted summary from Sarah Moss

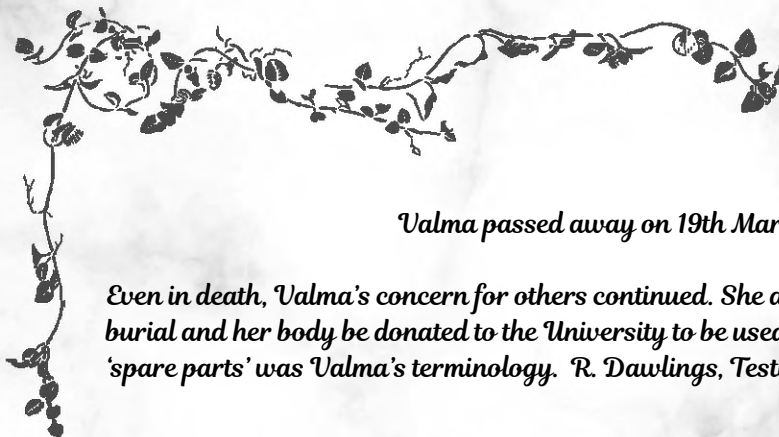
Valma has shown me – and I suspect, many others – that the true value of life is not found in grand gestures or flashy accomplishments. Instead, she demonstrated that it is in choosing to live simply, resisting the pull of our increasingly complex world, and embracing change in ways that are meaningful to us personally. Valma's life was defined by her unwavering consistency in caring for others, by always being present, and by sharing small acts of love, kindness and thoughtfulness each day.

Though we now bid farewell to Valma in body, her spirit remains with us. She lives on in our stories, in our shared laughter, and in those quiet moments when we feel her presence close by.

Thank you, Valma, for the love you gave so freely. We miss you deeply and will always carry you in our hearts.



Valma with cousin Sarah Moss,
at Halliday House, July 2024.



Valma passed away on 19th March 2026.

Even in death, Valma's concern for others continued. She directed that there be no funeral or burial and her body be donated to the University to be used for 'spare parts' or science. Note: 'spare parts' was Valma's terminology. R. Dawlings, Testimonial

References:

Documents, photos, conversations and notes from Robert Dawlings and Sarah Moss
Notes taken by Glen Cookson from Mount Pleasant Baptist Church service 7 April 2026.
Testimonials from Mount Pleasant Baptist Church service 7 April 2026.
Historic Bayswater BHS Newsletters and record book.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halliday_House

"The Tunnel" will be shown again on 28 June 2026

On the 22 June 2025 the Bayswater Historical Society was proud to host a special screening of "The Tunnel," an acclaimed documentary that has garnered awards for its powerful storytelling and keen insight into the preservation of local heritage. Written, directed and produced by BHS member Shireen Narayanan, this film delves deep into the heart of a Perth community shaped, and in many ways, scarred, by the construction of the Northbridge Tunnel. Through personal accounts and evocative archival footage, "The Tunnel" gives voice to residents whose lives and homes were irrevocably altered, placing a human face on the intangible cost of urban progress. The screening proved very popular and is being shown again on 28 June 2026.




In 1996 Liberal Premier Richard Court resurrected a 30-year-old freeway plan linking the eastern and western suburbs of Perth, Western Australia. The most contentious aspect of the freeway was a 1.6 km long tunnel through the centre of Northbridge, an inner-city heritage suburb of Perth. The Tunnel erased 10 city blocks of irreplaceable heritage and damaged century old homes.

This documentary is a compelling, modern-day David and Goliath tale that follows a small group of inner-city residents who took on the combined might of corporate and government interests. What begins as a simple case of residents fighting for compensation for the damage to their homes turns into an epic struggle for justice.

The documentary reminds us that when corporate and government interests marry there is a very real danger that accountability will be undermined; as well as environmental principles and individual rights sacrificed. It is a story of lies, missing files, delaying tactics and intimidation. A personal and inspirational story that still resonates today.




Developed and produced with the assistance of ScreenWest and Lotterywest

"When you embark on any undertaking where you are journeying into the unknown, and the chances of success are minimal you become a warrior."

Shireen Narayanan
Writer Director Producer

"When many Australians have given up believing that they can influence politicians and business for the public good, THE TUNNEL shows us that a group of well-informed and determined citizens and a committed journalist can reveal the facts and effect change. Shireen Narayanan has a gift for storytelling and her engrossing documentary has great contemporary relevance." Sue Murray, Executive Producer Ten Canoes, Mysterify, Charles Country



"This film is a true and inspiring story for today...a blueprint for others who have their own battles to fight against injustice... It should be required viewing for all who are concerned about such issues – and all who are party to them. And for anyone who loves to see, for once, the people have a win; to see government made accountable; and anyone who rejoices when justice and hope and belief conquer adversity."

John Gordon, Barrister Past-President Australian Lawyers Alliance



History of the Aboriginal Flag

Designed in 1970 by Luritja Artist, Harold Thomas, the Aboriginal Flag was first flown publicly on 12th July 1971, in Adelaide. Created as a symbol of unity and a rallying point for land rights, it gained national prominence in 1972 at the Aboriginal Tent Embassy.

The flag's powerful design is deeply symbolic:

Black: Represents the Aboriginal people of Australia.

Red: Represents the red earth, the red ochre used in ceremonies, and the spiritual relationship to the land.

Yellow: A central yellow circle representing the sun, the giver of life.

Key Milestones:

1995: The Australian Government formally recognized the flag as an official "Flag of Australia" under the Flags Act 1953.

1997: The Federal Court officially recognized Harold Thomas as the author and intellectual property rights holder of the flag's design.

2022: The Commonwealth of Australia acquired the copyright to the flag, ensuring it is freely reproduced for public use while protecting its authenticity.



NAIDOC Week 5th to 12th July 2026

The National NAIDOC Committee has announced this year's theme: 50 Years of Deadly:

"For five decades, NAIDOC Week has celebrated the voices of our communities – steady, unapologetic, and proud. Each year, its themes have called for truth, celebrated culture, honoured resistance, and reminded the nation of who we are.

Fifty Years of Deadly marks a milestone. It's a tribute to the people who built this movement. the Elders who stood firm, the organisers who made space, the artists who turned resistance into expression, and the communities who keep showing up, year after year.



NAIDOC has always been more than a week – it's a platform, a protest, a celebration, and a statement of survival.

This moment is about looking back at the stories, the marches, the languages, the art, the leadership. At the strength it took to get here. It's about recognising how far we've come, not by chance, but because generations of people refused to be silenced.

It's also about the here and now, who we are today. Grounded in culture. Strong in our identity. Leading change across every field, from health and education to media, business, and the arts. We're telling our own stories, in our own way, on our own terms.

And it's about the future. The next 50 years. The young ones growing up proud. The return of language. The return to Country. The fight for justice continuing with new tools, new voices, and the same fire.

Fifty Years of Deadly is a marker, not just of time passed, but of the momentum still building. It's proof of what our people build when culture leads and community comes first..." (Ref: 1)

References:

1. <https://www.naidoc.org.au/about/naidoc-theme>
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7dybimiRBw>
3. About Us — ANTAR
4. <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/aboriginal-flag>

Membership News, from our Chairperson Monica

Thank you to all of our members who have renewed their yearly membership (1 Sept – 31 August). Financial members are eligible to vote on all AGM (Monday 25 August) motions.

Your ongoing support of the important work undertaken by the Bayswater Historical Society is appreciated. Membership fees and donations support our Strategic Plan of preserving, protecting, and promoting our local Bayswater history. \$13 Conc. \$20 Adult \$30 Family.

Membership Benefits

Membership provides a social place for Bayswater residents to connect in a local, safe and comfortable space, such as:

- Access to regular engaging and interesting volunteer opportunities.
- Discounts to a range of publications, research materials, and premise hire.
- Access and opportunities to contribute to our “Historical Bayswater” newsletter.
- Research activities with a focus on our local Bayswater community history.
- Access to our peak body, History West (Royal WA Historical Society), newsletters, open days and special events.

Recent Achievements and Projects

Recent advocacy work initiated by the BHS and supported by the MHPA has resulted in the City of Bayswater creating a new History Heritage Officer staff position for 3 days per week. Further, the BHS has secured grant monies to upgrade our ICT capability, kitchen facilities, storage and archiving space.

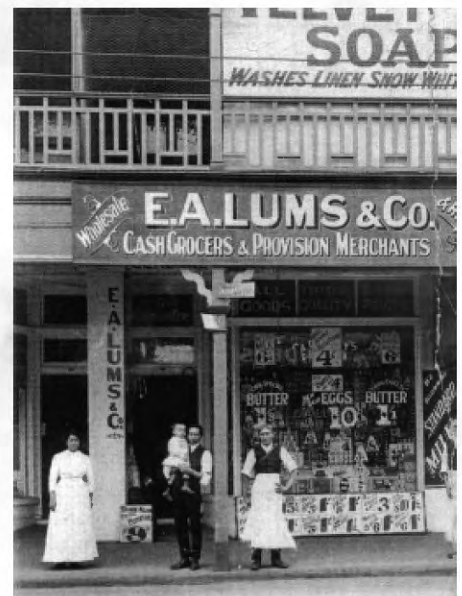
We are very grateful for the support of Steve Lay and Lay2 Real Estate for their sponsorship, allowing BHS to purchase an original 1905 Gold Estates map of Bayswater and Maylands. We look forward to celebrating the unveiling of this rare artefact on Sunday 26 July, 12 – 1pm - more details to follow.

BHS has recently been awarded a “Better Bayswater Grant” to develop and present 3 different historical walking tours around the Bayswater Townsite and in nearby streets. People, Parks and Places: Bayswater Historical Walks, will cover 3 different areas of historical interest and will be presented for FREE later in the year.

We have also commenced project work with the Chung Wah Association, exploring the Chinese history and contribution to the City of Bayswater. Look out for our 15 October 12.30-2pm, event - Guest Speaker: Kaylene Poon (Chung Wah Association Historian) with a presentation about the Chinese History and contributions to the City of Bayswater and beyond.



From the 1890s, Chinese migrants made a major contribution to the food supply of early settlers and the wider Bayswater community. They established significant market gardens across the area between Bayswater and Perth, using fertile wetland soils and intensive growing methods to produce fresh fruit and vegetables. These gardens became an important local source of affordable, reliable produce and helped support the growth of surrounding businesses, markets and households.



**The Bayswater Historical Society Museum is open Friday mornings
9.30 am - 12.00 noon and on the 4th Sunday 1pm - 4pm each month
February to November, or by appointment.**



On 29 September 1992, the City of Bayswater purchased Leighton in order to preserve the site due to its significance to the history and heritage of our community. Later, the City called for expressions of interest from individuals and community groups interested in using Leighton. The successful applicant was the Bayswater Historical Society. The BHS opened Leighton as a museum to the public in 1993.

Leighton (Halliday House) is included on the City's Municipal Heritage list and is a Category 1 Heritage Location. <https://bayswaterhistoricalsociety.org.au/halliday-house/>

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

Leighton (Halliday) House is a historic home within Bayswater and is used as the Society's base and is a museum open to the public on certain dates. Please check our website and facebook for open dates.

The Bayswater Historical Society welcomes contributions to future newsletters, such as stories and photographs relating to the history of Bayswater. Please forward all enquiries addressed to a member of the Society.

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Layout/copy editor Marion Garstone.*

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