

CABINET PAPERS RELEASED

Premier Releases 1971 State Cabinet Records



Archivist Damien Hassan with the display and guide he helped prepare for the launch of the 1971 Cabinet papers – both can be viewed in the State Records Office Search Room.

At an official launch held on 3 June 2002, the Premier Geoff Gallop announced that Cabinet documents 30 years old would be released to the media and public each Foundation Day.

The release of the 1971 Cabinet papers from their 30-year embargo was made by the Premier at a well attended function held at the Constitutional Centre. This launch was the first time the State Government has made the release of such documents a public event.

State Cabinet records are historically significant papers that record the decisions made by the Government of the day – in this case the decisions of the Brand Ministry and the Tonkin Ministry for 1971.

The 1971 State Cabinet records have been transferred from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet to the State Records Office of Western Australia, where they may now be accessed by the public. The complete set of 1971 State Cabinet records that have been released include: Cabinet Minutes and Decisions; Cabinet Record Books; Cabinet Index; Cabinet Agenda; Cabinet Accounts; Media Statements; and Speeches.

The State Records Office (SRO) has prepared a guide to the 1971 Cabinet papers which includes a subject-based index to all Cabinet Submissions made during 1971. A feature of the guide is an historical overview prepared by Professor Geoffrey Bolton of the events and issues that made news in 1971.

Agenda items considered by Cabinet in 1971 include the introduction of compulsory seat belts in cars, the introduction of daylight saving and the abolition of capital punishment.

CONTENTS

CABINET PAPERS RELEASED.....	1
COMMUNIQUE FROM CHRIS	2
PLANNING AHEAD	3
THE BUGTOOL : A NEW GUIDE TO LAND RECORDS	4
WHO'S NEW AT SRO?	5
DID YOU KNOW? PHINDERS KEEPERS	5
RECORD KEEPING NEWS	6
MISSING LINKS	6
HIDDEN TREASURES ORIGINAL CONVICT CERTIFICATES.....	7
PRESERVATION NOTES KEEPING CDS SAFE.....	8
PUBLICATIONS NEWS: STATE RECORDS COMMISSION STANDARDS.....	9
RECORDS ON DISPLAY WINNERS, GRINNERS AND SINNERS	9
SEARCH ROOM SNIPPETS.....	10
CAPTAIN STARLIGHT MAN OF MYSTERY	11
TRAINING UPDATE.....	12



Chris Coggin
Director: State Records

Recordkeeping Plans (RKPs) will no doubt be high on the agenda of Government agencies over the next couple of years, specifically the need for agencies to get them in. To that end, our Recordkeeping Services Team has been extremely busy delivering training courses on RKPs across the length and breadth of State. Taking into account presentations from other State Records Office (SRO) staff members, and members of the State Records Commission (SRC), something like 1000 people have had the opportunity of hearing the ins and outs of RKPs and what they should contain. At least five Government organisations (apart from the SRC and SRO!) have submitted their Plans. Two of those were new agencies, and as such had only six months in which to get them done. A feature about one of them, the Gordon Inquiry, appears in this issue.

The processing of retention and disposal schedules is an essential part of the RKP loop. The State Records Advisory Committee (SRAC) met for the first time on 29 May 2002, and was able to make recommendations to the Commission on the four schedules considered on that occasion. My warmest thanks to everyone contributing to the work of the SRAC. A lot of time is involved, and your input is most appreciated. (If readers want to know a little more about SRAC, please check the "State Records Commission" section of our website at www.sro.wa.gov.au.)

The critical importance of Cabinet records as a source of information and government accountability is well known. It was an auspicious landmark for the State when, as part of WA's foundation celebrations, our Cabinet papers for 1971 were launched by the Premier at a function in the Constitutional Centre on 3 June. A graphic display was

included in the celebrations. Do try to get to see it - it's now on view in the SRO's foyer.

Our Principles and Standards have recently been issued in an attractive loose leaf binder. If you would like one, please use the order form on our website or contact us by snail mail at our usual address.

The State Records Commission continues its proactive outreach program. Amongst such activities, the Chair has made a presentation to the Strategic Management Council (the State government's senior CEO's group), and the Information Commissioner addressed the AGM of the Australian Society of Archivists. Don't forget you can keep abreast of State Records Commission activities and happenings at the SRO by checking the "What's New" section of our website at www.sro.wa.gov.au.

I will be retiring in November, so this is my last Communique. My 24 years in the State recordkeeping industry have been an extremely busy and rewarding part of my career. I have been most fortunate to have worked over the years with enthusiastic and focused people - in SRO, the State Library and at all levels of government - with one overriding thing in common: the commitment to organize information, preserve what needs to be kept, and to make it available to people who need it. It is that overriding factor which underpins the work of records managers and archivists across the entire records continuum. The quality and extent of Government records that are in the State Archives Collection and also those which, still in agency custody, have been earmarked as future State Archives, is eloquent testimony to my assertion. I thank you all, and wish you everything of the best in the future.

Yours in recordkeeping

STATE OF THE RECORD

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The State Records Office invites submissions for articles and other content for inclusion in the *State of the Record*. All submissions, contributions, ideas, comments and suggestions, should be addressed to the Editor: State of the Record. Submissions can also be emailed to sro@sro.wa.gov.au or delivered in person to the Search Room Enquiry Desk.

The use of submissions will be at the discretion of the editor, who also reserves the right to edit all articles. Articles must be supplied with the author's name and contact details for verification and acknowledgment.

Views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the *State of the Record* or the State Records Office of Western Australia.

CABINET PAPERS RELEASED CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“These documents are an invaluable historical record of the decisions of the Government of the day as well as the economic and social development of our State,” Dr Gallop said.

“Many of the decisions made then still have relevance for the WA community today. Like WA today, the 1970s was a time of social reform and further gains in the economic development of the State.”

The cabinet papers display, designed by the Constitutional Centre to accompany the launch, is currently on show in the

foyer of the State Records Office. In addition to the display several of the media guides compiled for the release are still available and may be collected from the SRO Enquiry Desk while stocks last.

While looking at the display please feel free to lodge a retrieval request for the original items at the SRO Enquiry Desk and view for yourself, first hand, these remarkable records.

Damien Hassan

Archivist, State Records Office

PLANNING AHEAD »»

Over the last few months the State Records Office (SRO) has received several draft Recordkeeping Plans (RKPs) from government agencies keen to meet their statutory requirements under the *State Records Act*. One of the agencies to have met the RKP challenge was the Inquiry Into Response By Government Agencies To Complaints Of Family Violence And Child Abuse In Aboriginal Communities (aka the Gordon Inquiry), which recently presented its completed draft Recordkeeping Plan to the State Records Commissioners.

“Under the *State Records Act* standards published in March, the Gordon Commission had until September to formulate its plan,” explained the chairman of the State Records Commission, Des Pearson, who is also the Auditor General. “It is particularly impressive that Ms Gordon and her staff have accomplished that in such good time.”

“A fundamental reason for the passing of the State Records Act was to ensure that effective recordkeeping will enhance Government accountability, and this plan does just that.” Mr Pearson added that the achievement was a good model for other Government organisations to follow.

The draft Recordkeeping Plan has proven to be of an extremely high standard and is a credit to the Gordon Inquiry. Special congratulations go to Corrine Saunders, Records Manager for the Gordon Inquiry for an outstanding job.

The State Records Commission commends all those agencies which have submitted draft Recordkeeping Plans in compliance with the requirements of the Act, namely the Legislative Assembly, Gordon Inquiry, South West Health Service, Totalisator Agency Board and the Royal Commission into Police Corruption.

All government agencies are encouraged to submit their draft Recordkeeping Plans as early as possible, to avoid the inevitable last minute rush.

Anne Gill

Recordkeeping Consultant, State Records Office



(l-r) State Records Commissioners Kandy-Jane Henderson, Deirdre O'Donnell and Desmond D R Pearson receive the completed Gordon Inquiry Recordkeeping Plan from Sue Gordon (Inquiry Chairperson) and Corrine Saunders (Records Manager).

THE BUGTOOL : A NEW GUIDE TO LAND RECORDS

In 2001 two long time researchers, Bruce and Anne Buchanan, volunteered to tackle a research assignment on behalf of the SRO. The Buchanans bravely undertook to create a new comprehensive index to the vast collection of land records held by the State Records Office.

This was not a task to be undertaken lightly, but over a twelve month period the Buchanans proved that they had the wherewithal to endure the rigours of countless hours of scanning through microfilm, investigating finding aids and deciphering original land records to create what can only be described as an exceptional finding aid.

A small handover presentation was held at the State Records Office on 10 July at which Mr Buchanan gave an overview of the contents of the index and the many uses to which it can be put.

Christened *The Bugtool* in tribute to the difficulties faced by its creators, *The Buchanan Users Guide to Ownership and Occupancy of Land*, is a massive document spanning two volumes and over 500 pages.

For ease of use *The Bugtool* has been arranged around location, wherever possible and is divided between the Land section and the Leases and Licences section. The Land section facilitates enquiry by name, place or lot, while the Leases section facilitates enquiry by lease type and number – with some leases also being searchable by name.

The most impressive component of *The Bugtool* is the alphabetical guide to localities, towns and districts which forms the bulk of the document and allows researchers to easily find all identified land records available in the SRO relating to a specific area.

The Bugtool has already proven its worth and has superseded the existing Land Index as the primary finding aid for locating land records within the collections of the SRO.



Bruce and Anne Buchanan hard at work in the Microform Area.

The Bugtool: The Buchanan Users Guide to Ownership and Occupancy of Land / compiled by Bruce and Anne Buchanan, (2001-2002).

Living in Bunbury, the Buchanans made the long journey to the SRO Search Room frequently so that they could access all the available land records, both those on microfilm and in original format, and determine how best to incorporate the records within the guide. The SRO is proud to acknowledge the debt owed to Mr and Mrs Buchanan for the sacrifices they made in compiling this invaluable research tool.

Mr Buchanan described the experience as a “worthy intellectual challenge” and has already indicated that he would be willing to undertake another such challenge on behalf of the SRO.

The Bugtool is available for clients to view in the SRO Search Room.

heritage road trip

On 3 August, Damien Hassan of the State Records Office (SRO) and Jen Ford from the National Archives of Australia (NAA) gave a joint presentation/workshop to 20 participants in the town of Carnarvon. The presentation focused on the records both archival institutions hold for family and local historians, with special emphasis on records relating to Carnarvon. After the presentations, participants were given a tour of the SRO and NAA websites and how they may find information on these sites. Participants also got the opportunity to discuss their research individually with Damien and Jen, who provided advice on what further sources they could use to navigate past their genealogical “road blocks”.

It was pleasing to see that those who took part in this event were not only Carnarvon residents, but also tourists who

happened to be passing through town at that time. As such, information about the services and collections of the SRO and NAA should spread that much further.

It can be very difficult for people situated in remote locations to pursue their research when many of the resources they require may be located centrally in Perth. Workshops such as these not only enlighten people in regional communities as to what they may find at SRO, but also establish a network which can be nurtured and built upon over time.

This workshop was part of a continuing series of joint presentations that SRO and NAA have given to remote communities. Further workshops are planned for other regional centres.

WHO'S NEW AT THE SRO???

The State Records Office (SRO) has recently welcomed two new staff members to the Recordkeeping Services Team: Karen Eichorn and Jill Jones.

Karen Eichorn joined the Recordkeeping Services Team of the State Records Office in March this year. Karen works part time in an administrative role providing general administrative support to the Recordkeeping Services Team, the Director: State Records and the State Records Advisory Committee, an advisory committee to the State Records Commission.

Karen joins the team from the Women's Policy Office. Her role in SRO is a very busy one and Karen says she enjoys the challenges of this position and is very happy to be part of the team.

Jill Jones joined the SRO on 1 July 2000, filling the newly created position of Consultant: Recordkeeping Services. The experience Jill brings to this position is from a strong corporate administrative role, as well as a records management background - including the last few years as Co-ordinator: Corporate Information for the State Library of Western Australia. Recently, Jill completed her studies in a Bachelor of Science degree from Edith Cowan University.



New faces at the SRO Jill Jones (L) and Karen Eichorn (R).

As a Consultant for the Recordkeeping Services Team, Jill will be required to provide State and Local Government agency staff with best-practice recordkeeping advice, as well as be involved in the development of standards and the provision of training covering various aspects of recordkeeping for government organisations.

Jill is also delighted to have joined the SRO team and is looking forward to developing her skills in this position.

Did You Know ??? PHINDERS KEEPERS

The State Records Office (SRO) is committed to improving the range and scope of finding aids available in the Search Room to researchers. The most recent acquisition to the SRO's collection of finding aids has been the PHIND Index.

The Personal History Index for Former Child Migrants to Catholic Homes in Western Australia 1938-1965 (aka the PHIND Index) is a computerised index developed by the Christian Brothers, the Sisters of Mercy and the Poor Sisters of Nazareth that details records held in Western Australia for former child migrants to Catholic Homes between 1938 and 1965.

PHIND is intended to assist former child migrants from Britain and Malta to locate records about themselves that are held by church or government agencies.

The information available through PHIND includes details such as place of birth, parents' names if known, details of death, age at departure, shipping details, initial destination, religious order responsible and other information as available. The index also provides details on where other records of relevance to individual child migrants can be located.



*Group of child migrants newly arrived in WA, 1950.
(Battye Library; 005064D).*

PHIND is a confidential index due to the sensitive nature of the records involved. Access is only available to former child migrants or their nominated representatives. For information on accessing this index please contact SRO staff on (08) 9427 3433 or via email at sro@sro.wa.gov.au.

Record Keeping News

Intermediate Records Storage Available

One of the many services offered by the State Records Office (SRO) is the provision of low cost storage for intermediate (ie. non archival) records of State and Local Government agencies. Intermediate records stored by the SRO are housed in our Dianella Repository, and utilise the portion of the repository which is not suitable for the storage of archival value records.



Intermediate records housed at the Repository remain under the jurisdiction of the Government agency which transferred them. At present, agencies are charged five cents a box per week for temporary record storage. This charge includes the cost of record retrievals and refiling carried out for agencies by repository staff.

The charge quoted is based on a standard box containing conventional paper records. Arrangements however can be made for the storage of non-standard sized records and records in other formats.

*Patrick McCourt,
Repository Officer, retrieving material from
the Intermediate Records Repository at Dianella.*

For more information on storing records at the Intermediate Records Repository please contact Ted North on **(08) 9427 3360** or check the SRO publication the *Records Disposal Handbook*.

New Website Guidelines

In June 2002 the State Cabinet approved and released a new document intended to promote excellence in public sector websites, through good management, content coverage and design. The *Guidelines for State Government Web Sites* were prepared by the Policy, Planning and Coordination division of the Department of Industry and Technology (DoIT), after extensive consultation with both the public and private sectors.

Of particular interest is the chapter relating to "Electronic Recordkeeping and Archiving" which was developed in conjunction with the State Records Office and provides a useful first point of reference for those interested in the management of websites as State records. Also of significance is the "Metadata" section which provides a highly informative guide for the use of Australian Government Locator Service metadata on government websites.

It should be noted that under the *State Records Act 2000* all websites, intranets, extranets and other web based documents created by State and Local Government agencies are regarded as State records for the purposes of the Act and must be managed accordingly.

DoIT and the State Records Office are currently working towards the creation of further documentation specifically relating to the management of websites as State records.

Special congratulations to Fiona Reilly of DoIT for her hard work in developing the guidelines.

The guidelines can be downloaded from the Department's website at **www.indtech.wa.gov.au**.

For more advice on records management issues contact the staff of the State Records Office Recordkeeping Services Team on (08) 9427 3371.

MISSING LINKS

This section of the *State of the Record* is dedicated to highlighting some of the websites that our clients and staff have found to be interesting and useful.

Dead Persons Society

The website of the Perth branch of the Dead Persons Society (DPS) is a "must-see" for family history researchers, with detailed guides and indexes to cemeteries, convicts, shipping, and military records. The focus is primarily, though not exclusively, West Australian with many of the listings being transcribed directly from records held by the SRO.

<http://www.perthdps.com>

Electronic Privacy Information Centre (Epic.org)

Ever felt like you're being watched, or perhaps suspect someone is tracking you on the internet? Well this is the site for you!

<http://www.epic.org/privacy/tools.html>

Access To Archives (aka A2A)

A2A allows you to search the catalogues of nearly 200 archival repositories throughout England, and to arrange to see or to obtain copies of specific, useful archival documents. These archives are cared for in local record offices and libraries, universities, museums and national and specialist institutions across England, and contain records dating from the 900s to the present day.

<http://www.a2a.pro.gov.uk>

Hidden Treasures

ORIGINAL CONVICT CERTIFICATES

Genealogy researchers with convicts in their family tree will be well aware of the important role that little pieces of paper, such as tickets of leave and certificates of freedom, played in the lives of convicts.

After serving their time in the gaols and work parties of the Colony convicts of good behavior were rewarded with a Ticket of Leave, allowing them a kind of supervised probation, working for settlers or under their own recognisance at specified locations. Most convict researchers will know of Ticket of Leave registers, usually maintained by the local Police station, and the importance of these registers as tools for tracing the movements of convicts through the Colony. But how many researchers have actually seen what these certificates look like?

The State Records Office holds only a handful of these fragile documents, the majority having been lost as they were originally retained by the convicts themselves. In addition to the six Tickets of Leave (Acc 1519) held by the SRO, there are also sample copies of Conditional Pardons (Acc 1520 & 1533), Conditional Releases (Acc 1521) and Certificates of Freedom (Acc 1518).

Usually only photographic copies of these certificates are available to the public. However, for the next three months the SRO will be allowing clients to view the few surviving original certificates. While the certificates are unlikely to be of benefit to researchers looking for specific convicts, they do provide an intriguing insight into the lives of convicts in general.

The certificates may be viewed in the SRO Search Room during normal SRO opening hours.



*Certificate of Freedom -
sample of one of the few surviving certificates,
1873, Acc 1518, WAS 2334*

✘ **Extensible Markup Language (XML)**

Ever wanted to know just what XML is and why its so popular with IT types and metadata fanatics? Well, find out from the source at the official site. Of particular use is the "XML in 10 points" section.

<http://www.w3.org/XML/>

✘ **Guidelines for State Government Websites**

Check out these new guidelines for the creation of State Government websites. Of particular interest is Chapter 9 on "Records Management and Archiving", which is applicable to both State and Local Government agencies and describes how websites must be treated as State records.

<http://www.indtech.wa.gov.au>

We are happy to receive any recommendations for websites to include in "Missing Links". Please email any suggestions you may have to sro@sro.wa.gov.au.

PRESERVATION NOTES

KEEPING CDS SAFE

There are many factors to consider when addressing the preservation of the ordinary everyday Compact Disc (CD). Regardless of the format be it CD-ROM, DVD, CD-Rewritable or any other form of optical media the same basic tenants of care apply.

There are two basic strategies for ensuring the long term preservation of information stored on optical media, such as CDs. The first is to ensure that only high quality storage media is used – as optical discs can be particularly prone to deterioration due to flaws arising in their manufacture. It is important to ensure that the disc is produced by a reputable brand and that minimum manufacturing standards have been met. High reflectivity and the dye used on the underside of the disc can be important indicators of the potential longevity of a CD - with cyanine, phthalocyanine and metal azo dyes seemingly proving to be the most durable.

The second strategy is to ensure that the discs are stored in appropriate environmental conditions and that they are handled with all due care. Most issues relating to the care of CDs are common sense matters; such as ensuring that the CD's are kept away from food, drink and dust, making sure never to touch the underside of the disc, and to always use the utmost care when handling discs so as not to scratch the surface in any way. Discs should never be bent or flexed, must be kept away from direct sunlight (ultraviolet light levels not to exceed $75\mu\text{W/lumen}$), and should always be returned to their cases after use.

It is imperative that the underside surface of the disc be kept free of dust and dirt. Where a disc has become dirty it should be cleaned as soon as possible using a non-abrasive lens tissue or soft cloth. The cleaning motion should never be circular (along the tracks) - always brush from the centre of the disc outwards. Liquids should not be

used if possible when cleaning discs; however, if necessary a photographic lens cleaning solution may be used sparingly in conjunction with a lens tissue.

Discs should be labelled on their protective packaging rather than directly on the discs themselves. Inks from pens and markers may contain solvents that can damage the disc and graphite dust from pencils may interfere with reading of the disc.

Optical discs should be stored at temperatures between $18\text{-}20^{\circ}\text{C}$ and relative humidity between 45-50%. In these conditions the natural deterioration of the items can be slowed. In some instances deterioration can be slowed further by lower temperatures. It is important that these environmental levels are stable. Fluctuations in temperature conditions can stress discs unduly and accelerate deterioration, and high humidity levels can result in mould damage in extreme cases.

With good care and maintenance a high quality disc is expected to last around 30 years, although some manufacturers claim lifespans of 100 years plus. The wisest option would be to migrate information to new media every 10 years and maintain two sets of discs – a master and an access copy – using different brand media and migrated at different times to increase the chance of survival.

There are a number of other issues that can affect the long term survival of electronic records stored on optical media. For more information on maintaining and preserving optical media see *Archives Advice 6: Protecting and Handling Optical Discs* produced by the National Archives of Australia and available from their website at www.naa.gov.au.

Paul Ferridge

Archivist, State Records Office



PUBLICATIONS NEWS

STATE RECORDS COMMISSION STANDARDS

On 5 March 2002 the State Records Commission *Principles and Standards* for State government recordkeeping were officially gazetted. The Standards are in effect Regulations for the *State Records Act 2000* and as such must be complied with by all State and Local Government agencies subject to Act.

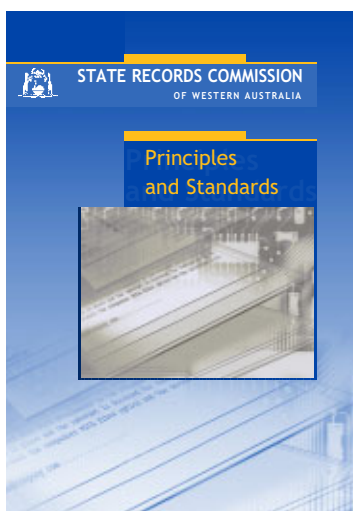
As part of its commitment to promoting best practice recordkeeping within Western Australia the State Records Commission, in conjunction with the State Records Office, has released the official published version of the Commission's *Principles and Standards*. As well as containing the six Standards released to date the binder contains additional space for future Standards to be included, as they are issued.

The main purpose of the publication is to provide a means by which future *Principles and Standards* issued by the Commission can be grouped together into a single binder, rather than agency staff being required to refer to a number of Government Gazettes.

The published version of the *Principles and Standards* may be purchased from the State Records Office at a cost of \$20 (GST inclusive). For order forms please refer to the "Recordkeeping Publications" section of the SRO website at www.sro.wa.gov.au or phone Doug Carrie on (08) 9427 3365.

New Publications Order Form

A new Recordkeeping Publications Order Form has been released, incorporating a revised pricing structure. The new order form, along with details of all available SRO recordkeeping publications, can be obtained via the SRO website at www.sro.wa.gov.au or by phoning Doug Carrie on (08) 9427 3365.



The new published version of the State Records Commission *Principles and Standards*.

RECORDS ON DISPLAY WINNERS, GRINNERS AND SINNERS

Inspired by the "Sinful City of Perth" article featured in the last issue of *State of the Record*, this latest display explores the history of Western Australia's seedier side – and presents material relating to gambling, bookmaking, hotels and licenced premises, drunkards and brawlers, and all manner of other vices.

Some of the stories highlighted in the exhibition include the controversy over the introduction of pinball machines to licenced premises, the dispute over Sunday trading hours for hotels, reports of late night street brawling in Perth, and many other such tales as relayed through the records of the State archival collection.

The records on display include items created by the Police Department, the Premier's Department, the Totalisator Agency Board and even the Royal Commission on Betting, among other agencies, and comprise materials such as plans, files, correspondence, photographs and a range of other archives drawn from the collections of the State Records Office.

"Winners, Grinners and Sinners" is on display from late September and replaces the previous exhibition on wartime records, "Homefront, 1939-1945". The records are on display in the State Records Office foyer, so please pay us a visit and take a first hand look at these remarkable examples of WA's chequered past.

The image shows a typed police report on a form from the Western Australia Police Department. The form is dated 2/3/40 and is from the Metropolitan District, Liquor Branch Station. The report is by P.C. A.M. Cooper, P.C. No. 1704, and is relative to 'Women soliciting prostitution in Roe Street.' The text of the report reads: 'I have to report that whilst investigating a recent complaint in Roe St. I had occasion to pass along the street in front of the brothels every day last week. In most of the brothels there were women sitting at windows looking out on to the footpath. Every day I was hailed by these women in terms of endearment and invitations to come inside, such as:- "Hello honey, come on in, it won't take you long". And similar greetings.'

Police report of PC A.M. Cooper on the presence of brothels in Roe Street, March 1940. (SROWA: AN 5, Acc 430, Item 78/1938)

SEARCH ROOM *Snippets*

New Shipping Index

Earlier this year the State Records Office (SRO) was presented with a copy of the *Passenger Arrivals in WA 1898-1925* computerised database by the Western Australian Genealogical Society (WAGS).

Compiled by Ann Spiro on behalf of the WAGS, this easy to use database contains over 440,000 entries relating to passenger arrivals in Western Australia between 1898 and 1925. The information has been drawn from the records of the WA Branch of the National Archives of Australia and can be searched either by passenger or ship name.

The information available through the database includes name, title, ship, place of departure, destination, nationality, date of arrival and other comments such as the passenger's age and profession.

The index can be accessed by Search Room clients through the public access terminal located opposite the Enquiry Desk.

Access Advice

What's an *Access Advice* you ask? *Access Advice* is a bi-monthly information sheet distributed to clients in the Search Room as a means of highlighting new additions to the collection and advising of preservation work that may impact upon services to clients. *Access Advice* is produced by the Search Room Coordinator and posted on the Enquiry Desk for the benefit of researchers. The *Access Advice* is also available on the "What's New" page of the SRO website for researchers to download at www.sro.wa.gov.au/whatsnew.

Sandwich Seminars

As part of our commitment to Customer Focus, the State Records Office is running a new series of lunchtime seminars. Called Sandwich Seminars, held every two months, the new format is designed to be informal and relaxed with more opportunities for discussion and debate.

The Sandwich Seminars have been very well received. Staff and researchers relax over a spot of lunch and chew over various topics of interest or concern, with the informal and relaxed atmosphere generating some interesting questions.

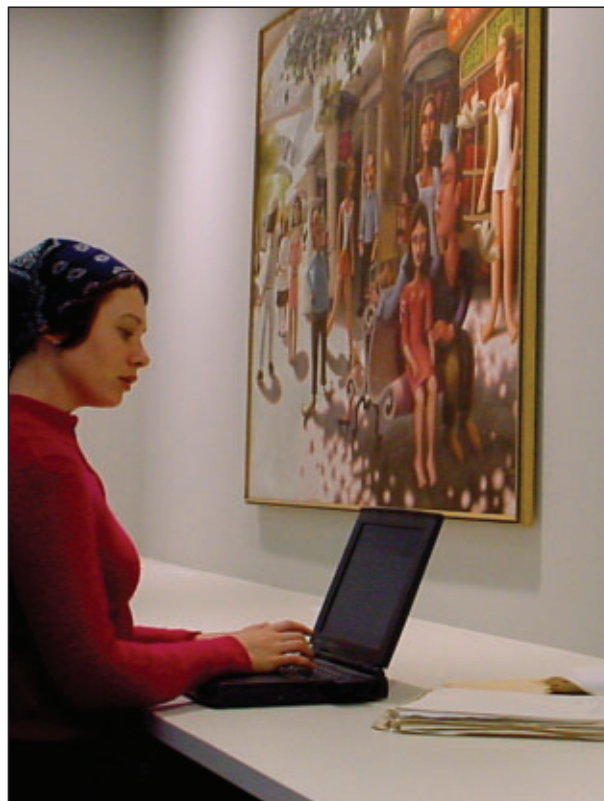
The next Sandwich Seminar will be held on Thursday 21 November and will be looking at information of use to those whose research interests extend to schools.

The Seminars begin at 12.30pm and run for approximately one hour. Lunch is optional (you may either bring your own or contribute \$5 to the kitty). For more information, or if you have a particular topic of interest that you would like presented (or even to present a seminar yourself!), please call Lise Summers on 9427 3436. Bookings may be made on 9427 3360, by email at sro@sro.wa.gov.au or in person at the Search Room Enquiry Desk.

Search Room or Art Gallery?

You would be forgiven for mistaking the State Records Office for an art gallery, following the recent installation of art works in the Search Room. The paintings and sculpture are part of the WA Art Gallery's collection and are on loan to the SRO.

The artworks are by Western Australian artists and have been made available to the SRO through the Department of Culture and the Arts, as an initiative to improve accessibility to the State's artistic heritage. Members of the public are welcome to stop by the Search Room and appreciate these interesting and unique pieces.



One of the new art works on display in the Search Room for researchers to enjoy.

Tales from the Collection

Captain Starlight Man of Mystery

Although Captain Starlight was the name attributed to the character in Rolf Boldrewood's (aka Mr T.A. Browne's) fictional novel "Robbery Under Arms" it was a widely held view at the time that the character was based on the exploits of a real bushranger, although the identity of this bushranger was unknown. Captain Starlight was something of an Elvis Presley of the day, with many stories circulating as to his true identity and the circumstances surrounding his demise.

According to correspondence in WA Police Department files a claim was made by Inspector Treadgold in 1939 that Captain Starlight had not died in a shootout as claimed in "Robbery Under Arms", but had served out a term in prison before being released and travelling to Perth to take up a position as a minor public servant.

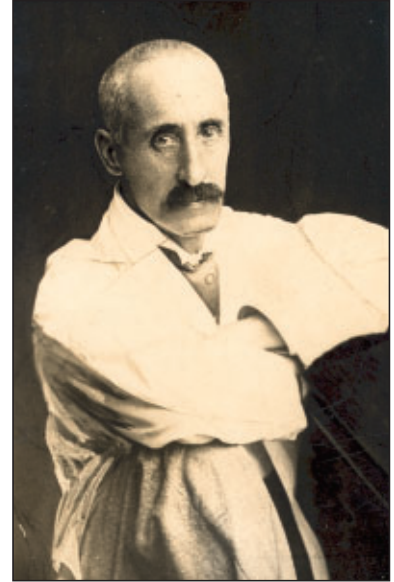
This fascinating story first came to light following the unfortunate demise of Major Patrick Francis Pelly, a civil servant with the Mines Department who died after mistakenly swallowing poison in 1899. Routine inquiries into the death soon had local police convinced that Major Pelly was not a Major at all, but in fact a Captain ... Captain Starlight the notorious bushranger of the 1860s.



The erstwhile Captain Starlight, aka Frank Pearson. (SROWA: Acc 684, Item 2, 1900)

Police files reveal that the deceased man was in fact one Frank Pearson, a horse thief and confidence trickster who had borrowed the "Pelly" name from a former cell mate, the real Major Patrick Edward Pelly. Major Pelly appears to have been the last of a number of aliases taken by Pearson who was also known as Frank Gordon, Dr Pearson, and Rutherford).

The records show that Frank Pearson was a bushranger and horse thief in New South Wales during the 1860s. His most notable exploit was the bailing up of a Shearer's Public House in 1868, which resulted in a shootout in which a policeman was fatally wounded. Pearson served 16 years for the murder and had apparently boasted later to Pelly in prison that he was the inspiration for Captain Starlight.



The real Major Patrick Edward Pelly, Pearson's one time cell mate. (SROWA: Acc 684, Item 2, 1900)

The final word on the matter went to the author of "Robbery Under Arms" who claimed in correspondence contained on the files that Captain Starlight was a composite character created from the exploits of a select number of bushrangers. It appears then that Pearson was in fact one of a handful of individuals whom the character was based on, although the most prominent would seem to be Captain Midnight, a bushranger operating out of Queensland.

The events surrounding the investigation into the demise of the bogus Pelly and the associated file on the history of the bushranger Captain Starlight are contained in Police files 1693/1940 and 1818/1900. Those who wish to investigate this fascinating case further may request to view these files in the SRO Search Room.

(Sourced from Police Department, Correspondence Files – Captain Starlight, Acc. 684, Items 1 and 2).

Paul Ferridge

Archivist, State Records Office

TRAINING UPDATE

Last Chance For Recordkeeping Plan Seminars

The *State Records Act 2000* requires all State and Local Government agencies to create a Recordkeeping Plan, as part of the process for authorising the disposal of records. In accordance with Section 20 of the Act government agencies now have two years, from the date of publication of the State Records Commission Standards, to submit a draft Recordkeeping Plan to the SRO.

To assist agency staff to come to grips with these new instruments of accountability the SRO has been conducting a series of free RKP training seminars. These seminars provide an important introduction to *State Records Commission Standard 2: Recordkeeping Plans* and give practical guidance for agency staff in their efforts to produce recordkeeping plans.

The next free RKP training seminars will take place on 17 October at the Alexander Library Building. This is likely to be the last of the free training seminars to be held.

All records managers, CEOs and other information professionals involved in the management of State records who have not already attended a Recordkeeping Plan training seminar are strongly advised to attend. Bookings are essential and can be made by phoning Doug Carrie on (08) 9427 3365.

Those who cannot attend the seminar may obtain copies of overheads used in the Recordkeeping Plan training from the "What's New" section of the SRO website at www.sro.wa.gov.au.

It is anticipated that the SRO will introduce a new Recordkeeping Plan workshop as a standard fee paying course, to replace the current RKP training seminars.

New Training Calendar

The State Records Office *Training Calendar 2002-2003* has now been distributed to all State and Local Government agencies. Officers interested in attending these courses are encouraged to return the Expression of Interest forms for courses they would like to attend as soon as possible. Completing and returning the Expression of Interest form will ensure that agency staff receive a Booking Form, and further information, approximately one month before the selected training course.

Demand for training courses is always high and places are limited. It is strongly recommended that the "Booking Form" is completed and returned as soon as possible, to avoid disappointment.

The training courses have been developed with the aim of promoting best practice recordkeeping in government organisations. Officers from all levels across government are encouraged to attend the courses, particularly with the requirement for agencies to prepare their Recordkeeping Plan in accordance with the *State Records Act 2000*. Courses are also available for Commonwealth agencies, private sector organisations and students.

For more information on training courses and to obtain a copy of the *Training Calendar 2002-2003* see the State Records Office website at www.sro.wa.gov.au or contact our Publications Officer Doug Carrie on (08) 9427 3365 or by email at sro@sro.wa.gov.au.

C O N T A C T I N F O R M A T I O N

Visit Our Search Room at:

State Records Office of Western Australia
Search Room
Ground Floor
Alexander Library Building
James Street West Entrance
Perth Cultural Centre
Perth WA 6000

Mon – Fri : 9.30am - 4.30pm

Phone : (08) 9427 3360
Fax : (08) 9427 3368
Email : sro@sro.wa.gov.au

For Recordkeeping Advice contact:

Recordkeeping Services
Mon – Fri : 8.30am - 5.30pm
Phone : (08) 9427 3365

Postal Address:

The State Records Office of Western Australia
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