



BOAB BULLETIN

No. 139

April 2017

NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETINGS

commencing 7.15 for 7.30 p.m.

Dalkeith Hall, 97 Waratah Avenue, Dalkeith

Wednesday, 5 April 2017

“Sea, sand and stromatolites: recent GSWA activities in the Kimberley”

Chris Phillips (Senior geologist, Geological Survey of WA)

Wednesday, 3 May 2017

“The past, the present, and the future: Aboriginal cultural heritage in the Kimberley”

Sam Lovell AM (Mentor to indigenous groups and communities in the Kimberley in developing tourism ventures)

Wednesday, 7 June 2017

“Captain Mizuno’s Fantastic Holiday: The Japanese non-invasion of Australia”

Greg Dodds (Vietnam War veteran, former Military Intelligence Officer and A grade Japanese linguist)

Wednesday, 5 July 2017

“Creating community edible gardens in the Kimberley”

Sabrina Hahn (ABC Radio's gardening expert)

Please note that, with many of our speakers involved in work-related travel, this program may change at short notice. Should a speaker not be available, the topic may differ on the evening.

Members and visitors are invited to stay for supper after the meetings.

The Society asks a \$2.00 hospitality fee from non-members.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Well, the WA election has come and gone, we have a Labor Premier, and in the Kimberley, Labor's [Josie Farrer](#) MLA has been re-elected with an increased majority, albeit with just 44.8% of the primary vote. 12 217 Kimberley people voted, representing 72.5% of the eligible electors. We wait with interest to see how the new Labor Government plans to address Kimberley issues including health, education, tourism, and the grand plans for the country's largest National Park. We hope to have Josie address the Society sometime later in the year.

Scientific research in the Kimberley continues at an impressive pace. In March, a team from The University of Western Australia's Centre for Rock Art Research and Management, led by Professor Peter Veth, spoke at the Society's meeting about their project documenting rock art in the north Kimberley and the intention to see what sort of cultural connections there have been in the past between the Kimberley, the Victoria River area and Arnhem Land. The UWA team is working closely with Balangarra people and a multi-disciplinary team from other Australian research organisations, and specialists from France.

This month we will hear about geological research being carried out by the Geological Survey of WA that includes geochemical, geochronological, and sedimentological studies. Much of GSWA's data, reports, and maps are available to everyone at no charge via web downloads.

On the weather front, the Kimberley has, and is still having, what they call 'A Good Wet', with Kalumburu getting over 470 mm of rain in February alone compared to the mean February rainfall of 290 mm. Kununurra had a record rainfall of 592 mm in January, compared to an average January total of 210 mm. The rivers are flowing, the waterfalls are pumping, and I have heard of several photographers who have chartered aircraft to fly over some of the falls in their peak condition. The rains have created havoc with the road network, and it may be some months before some roads reopen. At the time of writing (24 March) there is still water over the Great Northern Highway south of Roebuck Plains Roadhouse, and the Gibb River Road remains closed to all vehicles from the Blina turnoff (65 km east of Derby) to Pentecost River – that is most of its length.

On a more mundane note, our next meeting on 5 April is the AGM and we need to pass a Special Resolution to change our Constitution to the new Model Rules to conform with the Associations Incorporation Act (2015). Details are on the Society's website and they are summarised on page 7 of this newsletter. I hope to see many members at the AGM which will be followed by the geological presentation by Chris Phillips.

Mike Donaldson

NIGHT PARROT

In 2013, naturalist [John Young](#) rediscovered the night parrot, thought to be extinct for more than 75 years, in Western Queensland. Last year, a [survey](#) undertaken by the Australian Wildlife Conservancy and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service located small populations of the bird in the same locality. This year, Adrian Boyle, Nigel Jackett, George Swann and Bruce Greatwich, [four dedicated birdwatchers from Broome](#), located and photographed the night parrot in a patch of spinifex 2,000 kilometres from the Queensland habitat. Nigel, who is a warden at the [Broome Bird Observatory](#), told of the excitement of hearing calls in the night and how, on the following day, "one just burst out from under our feet from the spinifex".

WALKING (AND HELICOPTER) ADVENTURES IN THE KIMBERLEY 2016

At the Society's first meeting of 2017, on 1 February, several members contributed to our customary year opener with illustrated summaries of walking and exploration trips in the Kimberley over the last 12 months. Their notes and a selection of images appear below.

Mike Donaldson started by showing images of the Koralyi Wanjina art site near the Calder River, first recorded by the Frobenius Expedition in 1938. This remote site has been visited by very few people since 1938, and although the paintings have been degraded substantially by weather and animal activity over the intervening years, it is still essentially intact. The Frobenius members documented the associated mythology which included the Wanjina Warkalimara Yaobuda getting a sharp thorn in his foot as he crossed the Calder River. His followers got him a stick to use as a crutch and he made it to the Koralyi shelter with his attendants, resting his wooden crutch against the wall, and placing his mug (a conch shell) in a crevice. The Frobenius team were told these things must not be touched. The stick is still there, although it has fallen to the ground, and the shell is also lying on the ground in the shelter.

Frobenius Expedition photograph of Koralyi site from 1938.



The Wanjina Warkalimara Yaobuda and his attendants at Koralyi 2016.

There are many other smaller motifs at the site, and a surprise find was a 'bruised' petroglyph of at least 6 turtles on the flat rocks above the Wanjina shelter – these were not mentioned in the Frobenius report published by artist Agnes Shulz in 1956. There are also some red-ochred human bones on a rock ledge, and a rusty old tin.

Mike and his companions visited the site by helicopter and several other great art sites in the region were re-visited enroute to the Koralyi site. Five days were spent walking in the Koralyi area and although the country was ideal, just a couple of other (small) art sites were seen. When the helicopters returned, we visited a few more great art sites before heading back to Derby and home. Near the Isdell River, an extensive stone arrangement was spotted from the air, but time constraints precluded a closer inspection on the ground. Some great video was made of parts of the helicopter flight, and segments were shown as part of Mike's presentation.

Society member **Barrie Voorwinden**, visiting Perth from Wollongong, was on the helicopter-assisted trip with Mike Donaldson, and also with Jeff Gresham's group at Mariawala Creek. He presented some examples of image enhancement using the DStretch program developed by Jon Harman in USA, as well as some examples of image stitching whereby he used multiple images across the ceiling of a rock shelter to record an 11-metre-long painting of a snake. The DStretch algorithms are well known to enhance photographic images of very faded paintings, but Barrie also showed its application to petroglyphs with images of the six turtles at Koralyi.

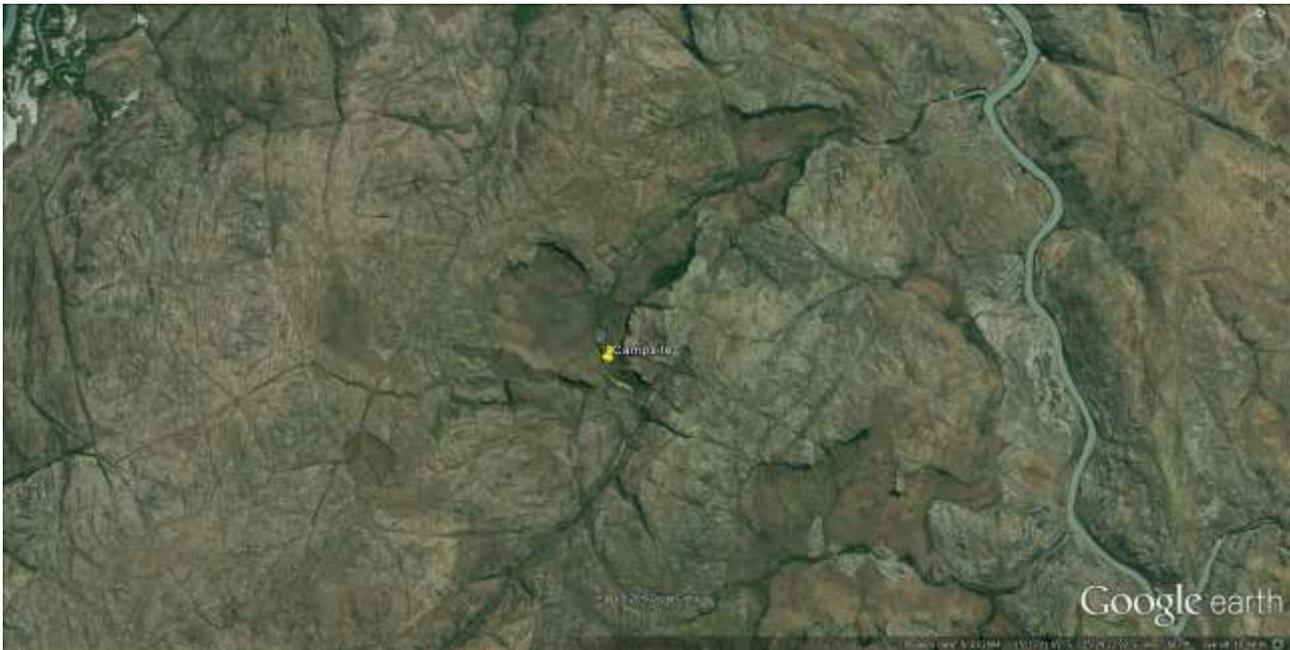


Standard digital photograph of Koralyi turtle petroglyphs.



Same image with DStretch ywe filter.

Jeff Gresham gave an illustrated talk entitled “Mariawala Meanders: A Trip into the Unknown” about an expedition to a remote area on a tributary to the Roe River, approximately 60 km SSW of the Mitchell Plateau airstrip. The decision to go into this area was based on an analysis of Google Earth images and 1:50 000 topographic maps coupled with the fact that there were no records that Europeans had explored this area. The tributary was unnamed but the name ‘Mariawala Falls’ appeared on the 1:50 000 maps and was applied to a small waterfall close to our proposed campsite. The party subsequently applied this name to the tributary. This location is within the Prince Regent National Park and permission to enter the area was received from DPAW and the Traditional Owners.



Google Earth image showing approximate campsite location and part of the tidal section of the Roe River.

Jeff gave some historical background about the first European exploration of the Prince Frederick Harbour based on details from Marsden Hordern’s book *King of the Australian Coast*. HMC *Mermaid*, under Phillip Parker King’s command, entered the harbour on September 10, 1820. Using whale boats, King and the ship’s doctor, Hunter explored to the north along the Hunter River to the Hunter Falls while Roe and the botanist Cunningham explored to the south along the Roe River. From these rather cursory expeditions a very valuable map of the harbour was generated.

After flying to the Mitchell Plateau airstrip from Broome, the party of 11 helicoptered into the area on June 6. The landscape was spectacular with 100 metre vertical cliffs of King Leopold Sandstone completely surrounding the campsite area.

A campsite was established and from this base a number of day walks were made. The first was to investigate the Mariawala Falls that were marked on the map. However major rock falls in the gorge as the waterfall was approached blocked access and we were all intrigued as to why a name had been applied to such a small and relatively insignificant topographic feature.

Another day was spent walking up a small creek west of the campsite to a most delightful plunge pool below a small waterfall. The pool was a magnificent natural swimming pool and a quiet afternoon was spent enjoying this beautiful, tranquil environment.



Beautiful sandstone cliffs formed a dramatic backdrop to the campsite

A number of other days were spent exploring the area for Aboriginal rock art sites. The country was very rugged and the distances covered were not great. There were very few art sites close to the watercourses and it soon became apparent that most of the art sites were in shelters and overhangs at the base of the cliffs. Accessing these involved scrambling up steep, boulder strewn and spinifex infested slopes to the base of the cliff then traversing along the base in search for sites. It was all good fun but very physically demanding – particularly given the demographic of the group. The average age was 67!! However we were rewarded, thanks largely to the efforts of some of the younger, fitter members of the party with the discovery of a number of major shelters with a variety of spectacular art sites.

After 11 nights in the bush the helicopters arrived on schedule and successfully landed on a helipad that had been prepared in the boulder strewn creek bed. Eleven rather tired but happy walkers bade farewell to an isolated but beautiful part of the Kimberley and all came away with happy memories of the time they had spent together.

On returning to Perth some research was carried out to find out how the name of Mariawala had been applied to a very insignificant waterfall. Various sources indicated the name Mariawala referred to the Hunter River area on the north side of the Prince Frederick Harbour and had special significance to the Aboriginal people of that area. A search of GEONOMA indicated that the name had been lodged by Andrew Burbridge in 1990. Burbridge had been involved in the 1974 biological survey (see Miles & Burbridge, 1975) of the Prince Regent Nature Reserve and he was also involved in a survey of rain forests in this area in 1989. He recalled flying over the area in a helicopter with Traditional Owner, Geoffrey Mangalamara during that survey and it would appear they decided to call these rather insignificant falls the Mariawala Falls. They did not land or do any work in the area and given the apparent clear connection of the name Mariawala to the Hunter River area the name would appear to not have any direct connection to this area.

References for “Mariawala Meanders: A Trip into the Unknown”

Hordern, M. *King of the Australian Coast: The Work of Phillip Parker King in the Mermaid and Bathurst 1817-1822*. Melbourne University Press, 1997, 441pp.

Miles, J.M. and Burbridge, A.A. *A Biological Survey of the Prince Regent Nature Reserve, North-West Kimberley Western Australia in August 1974*. Wildlife Research Bulletin, 1975.

Kimberley Society (Inc)

Notes to explain the need to change the Society’s Constitution by Special Resolution at the AGM on 5 April 2017

1. The Associations Incorporation Act (2015) requires all incorporated Associations such as Kimberley Society to either accept the new Model Rules or modify their existing Constitution to conform with the new Act by 2018.
2. The new Model Rules are broadly compatible with our existing Constitution, and we can modify some of our Membership Categories to be in line with the new Rules. Most of these changes are of a minor nature.
3. The Society needs to approve a Special Resolution at the AGM to adopt the new Model Rules, a copy of which is available on the Society’s website. To view this go to the website, www.kimberleysociety.com.au, click on the “About the Society” tab then go to the “General Meetings and Seminars” page. The PDF for the new Model Rules contains 35 pages and might be slow to load.
4. Changes from the Society’s Constitution, which has been in operation since 1993, to conform with the Model Rules under the new Act include:
 - President becomes Chairperson
 - Management Council becomes Committee
 - One Deputy Chairperson instead of two Vice Presidents
 - A person must not hold 2 or more offices at the same time
 - Membership to consist of Ordinary Members with full voting rights, and Associate Members with no voting rights.
 - In order to ensure that all of our Members retain full voting rights, we need to record Concessional Members as Ordinary Members while continuing to offer them a discount.
 - We will continue to offer a discount to members who join as part of a family.
5. We also propose changing the number of Committee Members that constitute a quorum from the current 5 to 4 to ensure efficient management of the Society.

Mike Donaldson
President
Kimberley Society

REST IN PEACE

On 10 March 2017, the art world lost one of its stars when **Mary Taylor Macha AM**, 94, died. Resident in Subiaco, WA, in her final years, she had a colourful and productive life that included travelling and working throughout Australia.

Tributes flowed before, during, and after a Karrakatta cremation service and a wake that celebrated Mary's life. At the wake, Fred Chaney, Peter Dowding and others spoke of her unmatched role as a champion of Aboriginal artists from the Kimberley. A eulogy from anthropologist [Kim Akerman](#) recalled 46 years of friendship and collaboration. He and Mary met in the old Native Welfare's Native Trading Fund, which sought to encourage the preservation of Indigenous material culture and arts while contributing to the local economy – particularly in remote areas – by providing an outlet where artefacts and works of art could be sold. In the Kimberley, Kim was one of a handful of people from Native Welfare, Social Services, Aboriginal Affairs and the Education Departments who helped Mary obtain stock. Whenever she visited the region, they found ways to take her out communities to meet up with the artists whose works she so admired.

Kim noted that WA interest in Aboriginal art in the 1970s was minimal and how Mary, as the manager of the state branch of the federally funded outlet Aboriginal Traditional Arts, persuaded MacRobertson Miller Airlines (MMA) in 1974 to fly the growing collections of Kimberley stock to Perth free of charge. The following year, after a field trip enabled her to meet some of the great Wanjina artists living at Kalumburu, Mary had [Father Sanz](#) ship beautiful, large Wanjinas painted on bark to Derby ready to go on to Perth, courtesy of MMA. Among those artists was [Alec Mingelmanganu](#) who, with guidance from Mary's husband Vaclav, moved from working on bark to canvas. At Kalumburu, Mary was entranced by the "Cyclone Tracy" dance created by Geoffrey Mangalomarra. She acquired the dramatically large thread-cross *palmarra* dance ornaments, and then commissioned further sets that went to institutions, museums and galleries.

Ornaments used in dances in other Aboriginal communities, e.g. by [Roy Wiggan](#) on the Dampierland Peninsula, also caught Mary's eye. In 1996, to the great delight of an audience at a Kimberley Society meeting, she displayed some of those artefacts when her friend [Pat Vinnicombe](#) spoke on "Contemporary Aboriginal Paintings from Turkey Creek".

Kim recalled Mary wanting to expose the uniqueness and ingenuity she found in Aboriginal material culture to the widest possible audience. That led to examples of the unique Dampierland *kalwa* or double raft being housed at the Royal Maritime Museum, Greenwich, the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, the National Maritime Museum in NSW, and the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory. Wally Caruana and Judith Ryan were foremost among the art curators who appreciated the finds she brought to their attention. [Alistair McAlpine](#), [Janet Holmes à Court](#) and [Thomas Vroom](#) were among the collectors who valued her advice.

Nyikina artist '[Butcher](#)' [Joe Nangan AM](#) was one of the many artists who painted pictures for Mary. In hundreds of naturalistic watercolours and sketches, he depicted his vast body of mythological and historical knowledge. Only a few days before she died, Mary was giving Kim directions for the production of a small book of Joe's works that would celebrate their association.

The space available for an obituary here is far too short to do justice to Mary's years of work as an advocate for Kimberley artists and a collector of their art. Another Kimberley identity, [Susan Bradley](#), has fond memories of going with Mary to visit people such as [Paddy Jaminji](#) in Wyndham in 1975. She also saw the support that Mary lent to the establishment of [Waringarri Arts](#) in Kununurra, which gave the Warmun artists their first retail outlet and place to promote their work. An observation from Susan is a fitting end to this small tribute:

If it hadn't been for Mary in the early days encouraging Warmun people such as [Rover Thomas](#), [Jack Britten](#), [Queenie McKenzie](#), [Paddy Bedford](#) and others to actually paint to tell the stories of their country, supplying them with canvases etc., helping them source their ochres and flying them to Perth to stay and paint at her home, the Warmun art movement would never have got off the ground – and Australia would have been the poorer.

AWARDS

Recipients of the Medal (OAM) of the Order of Australia in the General Division on Australia Day this year included two people who are well known to Kimberley Society members.

William Hedley (Bill) Bunbury, who spoke to the Society in 2015 on the topic "[Noonkanbah 1980: a dispute revisited](#)", received his OAM 'For service to the broadcast media, and to the Indigenous community of Western Australia'. In the service recorded in his biographical note for the Honours List, key elements are:

Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC):

Broadcaster and Television Presenter, 1969-2007.

Author of a range of publications including:

'Invisible Country, Southwest Australia: Understanding a Landscape' (Perth, The University of Western Australia Publishing, 2015)

'Till the stream runs dry: A history of hydrography in Western Australia'. (Perth, Department of Water, Government of Western Australia, 2010)

'Caught in time: Talking Australian History'. (Fremantle, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 2006).

'It's not the money it's the land: Aboriginal Stockmen and the Equal Wages Case' (North Fremantle, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 2002)

'Timber for gold: Life on the Goldfields Woodlines 1899-1965' (Fremantle, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 2002).

'Unfinished Business: Reconciliation, the Republic and the Constitution' (Sydney, ABC Books, 1998).

'Rabbits & Spaghetti: Captives and Comrades: Australians, Italians and the War' (Fremantle, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1995).

'Cyclone Tracy: Picking up the Pieces' (Fremantle, Fremantle Arts Centre Press 1994).

'Rag, Sticks & Wire: Australians taking to the Air' (Sydney, ABC Books, 1993).

'Reading labels on Jam Tins: Living Through Difficult Times' (Fremantle, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1993).

Co-Author with Ros Bowden, *'Being Aboriginal: Comments, Observations and Stories from Aboriginal Australians'* (Sydney, ABC Enterprises, 1990).

Bill also presented an earlier talk to the Kimberley Society in May 2005, on the topic "[It's not the Money It's the Land](#)". In both talks he treated the audience to excerpts from the oral history he recorded in his interviews for ABC Radio.

Jack Miller Fletcher, who spoke to the Society in 2009 on the topic "[To Dam or be Damned: The Mighty Fitzroy River](#)" received his OAM 'For service to the primary industry sector in Western Australia'. In the service recorded in his biographical note for the Honours List, the Kimberley components are:

Co-founder and Managing Director, Australian Land and Cattle Company (ALCCLO), 1967-1985. (Developed 7 cattle stations comprising 4.2 million acres, stocked with 100,000 head of cattle and 1,500 horses, feed yards. ALCCO exported 37% of all beef products produced from the Kimberley region in Western Australia).

Director, Derby Meat Processing Company (DEMCo), Broome and Derby, Western Australia, since 1991.

Co-Founder and Director, Bodoquena Ply. Ltd., 1991.

Involved in the Port of Broome becoming a deep water port, 1980.

Co-founder, Looma, an Indigenous community in the West Kimberley, 1970.

OCCASIONAL FOOTBALL ARTICLE – SEASON 2017

The football season will be started by the time this newsletter comes out. However there are several Kimberley players who could be making their debut for their respective clubs.

Firstly for the Fremantle Dockers, [Joel Hamling](#) should easily be selected to boost their backline. He was traded from the Western Bulldogs at the end of 2016. He is the first Kimberley player to ever play in a winning Grand Final, so that makes him unique.

Carlton selected [Sam Petrevski-Seton](#). He was their No. 1 selection last year. The website afl.com notes that he is back in full training and should be ready for selection soon. He suffered a strained quadricep in February but still acquitted himself well in a pre-season game with 11 possessions, two marks and seven tackles.

For West Coast, Category B Rookie [Francis Watson](#), who is from the Kimberley, has already played in a pre-season game and in the East Perth game against West Perth, accumulating 26 possessions, including nine marks and two tackles, and receiving a dream team rating of 104, which may mean something to those who follow the fantasy teams but it means nothing to me. In his first effort against Greater Western Sydney in Narrandera on 18 February, he featured in the headline “Watson Best in Rookie Battle” in a [West Australian](#) article by Shayne Hope. The sports reporter thought that Watson was “arguably the best performer”, holding down a defensive post and providing some rebound from the back.

On 20 March the [West Coast website](#) said that Watson was “electrifying from the first bounce and amassed a staggering 24 disposals before the half time siren sounded”. I doubt he will be in the starting 22 but he is obviously off to a good start and played some very good games for Claremont last year.

If I have neglected any other Kimberley players please let the Editor know.

Jack Vercoe

COUNCIL 2016-2017

President:	Mike Donaldson
Vice-Presidents:	Hamish McGlashan and Jeff Murray
Secretary:	Geoff Owen
Membership Secretary:	Elizabeth Gresham
Treasurer:	Jeffrey Gresham
Councillors:	Michael Cusack, Sven Ouzman, Roger Passmore and Margaret Shugg

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