



BOAB BULLETIN

No. 141

August 2017

NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETINGS

commencing 7.15 for 7.30 p.m.

Dalkeith Hall, 97 Waratah Avenue, Dalkeith

Wednesday, 2 August 2017

**“The wit, warmth, and wisdom of Geoffrey Bolton”
(Bill Bunbury, Adjunct Professor, Murdoch University)**

Wednesday, 6 September 2017

**“Development of Kimberley roads 1945 - 1990”
(Albert Tognolini, MRD engineer & Commissioner, retired)**

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.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

The Perth Institute of Contemporary Art, in partnership with Aboriginal Art Centre Hub WA, is currently hosting an exhibition titled [*When the Sky Fell: Legacies of the 1967 Referendum*](#). The pieces include saddles and satellite dishes, large-scale wall works, works on canvas in natural pigments, works on paper, and sculptural installations. The 27 Indigenous artists include four from Waringarri Arts (Kununurra), two from Mangkaja Arts (Fitzroy Crossing), eight from Warmun Arts (Turkey Creek) and three from Warlayirti Artists (Balgo Hills). Closing date **20 August**.

The Art Gallery of Western Australia, through the newly formed AGWA Members organisation, is planning a series of talks on Kimberley rock art. On Saturday **2 September**, [Mike Donaldson](#) will present two talks on its discovery and diversity. On the 16th, the speakers will be [Sven Ouzman](#) and [Peter Veth](#). The sessions will commence at 10 a.m. in the AGWA theatrette, with a 30 minute coffee break between talks. Contact Gabby at agwamembers@artgallery.wa.gov.au or phone her on 08 9492 6687 to be placed on a notification list for when the tickets go on sale.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

With 'The Season' in full swing in the Kimberley some Society members have recently returned from expeditions to remote parts, full of stories about wonderful weather and exciting discoveries. Other members are heading there as we go to press, searching for their Holy Grails, or just to enjoy the climate, people, and places.

Various University research teams are also currently in the Kimberley pushing back the frontiers in dating the ancient rock art and establishing finer resolution understanding of past climates. The early colonisation history of Australia has just taken another step backwards in time this week with news from University of Queensland researchers of human occupation in Arnhem Land extending back to 65 000 years ago, about 15 000 years older than indicated by earlier evidence. The Kimberley Visions project, coordinated by UWA researchers and Kimberley Society members Peter Veth and Sven Ouzman and including four PhD students, is investigating the ancient links between Kimberley and Arnhem Land cultures.

The Society's speaker program is always at risk of changes as advertised speakers have unexpected commitments in the Kimberley and elsewhere, especially at this time of the year. This is the case with our scheduled speaker for September who was to talk on the proposed Kimberley Marine Park. The replacement speaker will discuss the development of Kimberley roads in the years 1945 to 1990 (details on our front page). We will endeavour to re-schedule the Marine Park talk next year.

Mike Donaldson

DRAFT PROGRAM FOR THE REMAINDER OF 2017

- 4 Oct **Chris Nicholson**, Geoscience Australia, "Offshore oil & gas projects in the Kimberley" (subject to the availability of this interstate speaker)
- 1 Nov **Hon Peter Dowding SC**, "1917 – E J Stuart puts in a lot of effort to exonerate Louis de Rougemont" (a talk relating to the North-West Scientific and Exploration Expedition about which Stuart wrote in his 1923 book, *A Land of Opportunity*)
- 6 Dec **Katie Glaskin**, Assoc Professor, Anthropology and Sociology, UWA, "Crosscurrents: law and society in a native title claim to land and sea"

DESERT RIVER SEA: KIMBERLEY ART THEN AND NOW

Described as 'a ground-breaking six year visual arts initiative developed by the Art Gallery of Western Australia with funding support from the Rio Tinto Community Investment Fund', this project is now approaching its culmination. It has both online and physical components. The digital portal www.desertriversea.com.au displays more than 500 artworks. A Kimberley Aboriginal Art Trail Map can be downloaded and used as a self-drive guide to visit Bidyadanga Community Art Centre, Nagula Jarndu Women's Resource Centre, Mowanjum Aboriginal Art & Culture Centre, Marnin Studio, Mangkaja Arts Resource Agency, Ngurra Arts, Warlayirti Artists Aboriginal Corporation, Laarri Gallery, Yarliyil Art Centre, Warmun Art Centre, Waringarri Aboriginal Arts, and Kira Kiro Art Centre. A Visual Arts Leaders professional development program is enhancing artists' and administrators' knowledge of the curatorial side of exhibitions, and artists are being filmed at work. The project will conclude with a publication and landmark exhibition in 2018.

CREATING COMMUNITY EDIBLE GARDENS IN THE KIMBERLEY



On a cold and wet evening on 5 July 2017, ABC's gardening guru **Sabrina Hahn** talked to the Society's members about her 13-year program helping remote Aboriginal communities to grow at least some of their own fruit and vegetable crops.

Sabrina was invited to be part of philanthropic group EON ('Edge of Nowhere') to provide horticultural advice to these communities. [Lombadina](#) was one of the first to be involved as the Government had previously had a large greenhouse established there that was not being used due to lack of training and advice about what to plant and when.

The project started in schools as community councils and local politics in some areas made it difficult to get garden areas allocated. Getting the school kids involved was also a great opportunity to educate them about healthy diets and hygiene, as well as where food comes from – not just from the community store. The remoteness of many communities means very high transport costs, particularly for fresh vegetables, and during the summer Wet Season it is often impossible to get regular deliveries. So, there are also sound financial reasons for growing your own food.

The program includes teaching the kids, and parents, how to prepare and cook the produce harvested. Due to low literacy levels in a lot of communities, many demonstrations are usually necessary to get the messages across, as there is little prospect of people following written advice.

The success of the program is largely due to EON's volunteers ensuring that Aboriginal children take ownership of the gardens; the kids do all the soil preparation, planting, weeding, and harvesting. If people are not interested, and don't show up or prepare the gardens, the volunteers go to other communities.

There are also trips into the bush to collect bush tucker, but the focus is on growing things that will thrive in the ideal winter climate: all manner of vegetables, melons, and fruit trees are tried. Being largely school-focused, the gardens typically lie dormant over the hot and wet summer holidays. Sabrina told of trialling peanuts in one early exercise, which was a great success until the Education Department outlawed peanuts in schools, even though there are no peanut allergies among Kimberley Aboriginal kids. Another suggestion was that the kids should wear gloves to work in the garden – even though most don't even wear shoes.

The program has projects in 13 Kimberley communities, and while not all are wildly successful, many are, and there are observable improvements in kid's health and positive attitudes towards the project. The mantra of healthy food, healthy eating, healthy homes, is proving very successful, and EON has attracted some financial support from the WA Health Department, Lottery West, and some corporates.

More on EON Foundation at <https://eon.org.au/>

Mike Donaldson

REST IN PEACE

On 22 June 2017, **Gilbert Marsh** passed away. He lived a quiet but fulfilling life and will long be remembered by his family and his many friends. As an earlier public tribute from the Kimberley Society said, he was a wonderful guy with an infectious smile, always keen to help wherever possible.

Born in Salisbury, England, on 22 November 1925, he was christened John but came to be known as Gilbert. After migrating to Western Australia with his parents and two siblings in 1928, he lived on a farm near Kulin, attended Harrismith and North Kalgoorlie primary schools, and then went on to Eastern Goldfields High School. Subsequent enrolment at the University of Western Australia (UWA) led to the completion of a Bachelor of Engineering degree in 1947.

From university, Gilbert went straight to the Main Roads Department of Western Australia where he worked on main road improvements in the Pinjarra District before joining the Bridge Branch in Perth. There, his most significant project was the design and construction, between 1947 and 1952, of two steel and concrete composite bridges over the Swan River at the eastern approaches to Perth. Those bridges are known as The Causeway.

In 1954 government approval was given for the construction of another bridge over the Swan at a location known as The Narrows. Gilbert designed and supervised the extensive reclamation work for the northern and southern approaches of that bridge. It opened in November 1959, by which time he was occupying the position of Bridge Engineer at Main Roads.

In 1961/62, Gilbert used a Gledden Fellowship from UWA to spend 12 months in the UK expanding his knowledge of soil mechanics. That experience was put to good use in the design and construction of the interchange between The Narrows Bridge and the Mitchell Freeway. The interchange opened on 30 November 1973, almost nine years after workers built the first of the sand drains devised by Gilbert.

In his 28 years as Bridge Engineer at Main Roads, he designed many other bridges, some of them in the Kimberley. He was also on hand to remedy flood damage and other disasters. After retiring in 1985, Gilbert did occasional consulting work and continued to represent WA on the Bridge Committee of the National Association of Australian State Road Authorities. In 1992 the Australian Road Federation presented him with the John Shaw Award for Meritorious Contribution to Roads. Then, in 1999, Engineers Australia recognised his eminent standing within their profession by awarding him the John Connell Gold Medal. They also accepted a nomination for his inclusion in the National Engineering Oral History Program.

In his retirement, Gilbert stayed fit, played tennis, and participated in activities linked to nature. He contributed to the classification and conservation of the state's flora by working as a volunteer for the Department of Conservation and Land Management (now Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions). Much of that work was done on numerous Landscape expeditions in the company of fellow Kimberley Society member Daphne Edinger. After collecting plants on the biological and biodiversity surveys, it was not unusual for the two of them to assist with the identification of the plants at the Western Australian Herbarium. Other expeditions were undertaken with the Western Australian Naturalists' Club for which Gilbert served as the treasurer for many years. He also filled that role for the Kimberley Society for six years from 2006.

Gilbert was predeceased by his wife Phyllis in 1994. He leaves their son Lloyd and their daughter Alison.

Don Young and Cathie Clement

BOOK NOTES

***The Kimberley: endemic frogs, reptiles, birds & mammals* by Craig Ward with Ian Morris. Published by Severe Pty Ltd, 2017. 188 pages, 295 x 210 mm, soft cover, mainly full-page, full colour images. Foreword by Chris Done.**

Available from [eternal endemism](#) or selected bookshops. RRP \$49.95.



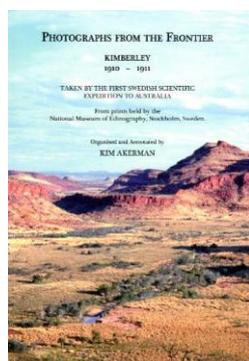
This is the second in a series of books planned by the authors to present wonderful images of endemic animals – the first was on the Wet Tropics. The photographs of all the Kimberley's endemic frogs, reptiles, birds, and mammals are nothing short of spectacular, and there are enough equally spectacular images of the wonderful Kimberley landscape to give context.

There is a short Introduction that covers aspects of this biodiversity hotspot, including the land, sea, and adjacent islands, as well as comments on threats and conservation. The book is arranged into chapters for each of the animal groups with a few pages devoted to general description of the group, followed typically by a two-page spread with a full-page photograph of each endemic species and a facing page with text description, scientific and common names, conservation status, and photographer credit.

There are many creatures here that will be unknown to most people and it is quite remarkable that the photographers have managed to obtain such incredible pictures of such rare or elusive critters.

There is a useful Glossary, a detailed Bibliography, and a comprehensive Index.

Anyone with an interest in Kimberley fauna will want a copy of this book on their shelf.



Photographs from the frontier, Kimberley 1910 – 1911: Taken by the first Swedish scientific expedition to Australia. From prints held by the National Museum of Ethnography, Stockholm, Sweden. Organised and annotated by Kim Akerman. Published by Hesperian Press, 2017. 158 pages, 165 x 240 mm, soft cover.

Available from [Hesperian Press](#) or selected bookshops. RRP \$55.

This collection of wonderful images of Aboriginal people, Australian bushmen, landscapes, and members of the Swedish Scientific Expedition to the Kimberley in 1910-1911 has not previously been available. The book supplements Mjoberg's book of the expedition published in Swedish in 1915, also available in English from Hesperian Press (published 2012) as [Among Wild Animals and People in Australia](#).

Kim Akerman's footnotes link the images to other publications. The images provide a unique record of Kimberley people in 1910.

Mike Donaldson

REMOTE BACKPACKING IN THE KIMBERLEY

On 3 May 2017, **Michael Cusack** used a PowerPoint presentation to take the Kimberley Society audience on a virtual walk through their favourite region. Michael and his wife **Wendy** joined the Society as founding members and, despite living in the south-west of WA at the time, they attended the first meeting. Since then, having been at many of our talks, they know just how much the members enjoy seeing the Kimberley through the eyes of those who are game and fit enough to venture afar.

The evening's collection of images came from the many walks undertaken by Wendy, Michael and their group from 1988 to 2012. We don't have room here for many images but a few more of them are included in our online summary.

The talk started with rough 4-wheel driving photos in which abandoned station tracks were used to reach remote places. From there the group backpacked or, quite often, flew by helicopter to the start and from the finish of their walks.

The images then moved on to cover hardships that included crossing rivers that had round sandstone rocks, fast water, and thick pandanus along the edges. There was also high cane grass, thick spinifex, wild cattle, salt water crocodiles, snakes, paper wasps, kangaroo ticks and annoying green ants.

Next were some of the beautiful spots that enticed the walkers to visit most of the north-west Kimberley's rivers with their pools, cadjebuts, reflections, sunsets, river gums and often huge sandstone gorges and waterfalls. Those, Michael said, were usually chosen for their camps, which could be on sand or on smooth rock.

Some of the images were of places identified by [Joseph Bradshaw](#) in his exploration expedition of 1891. They look no less remote now than when he saw them.

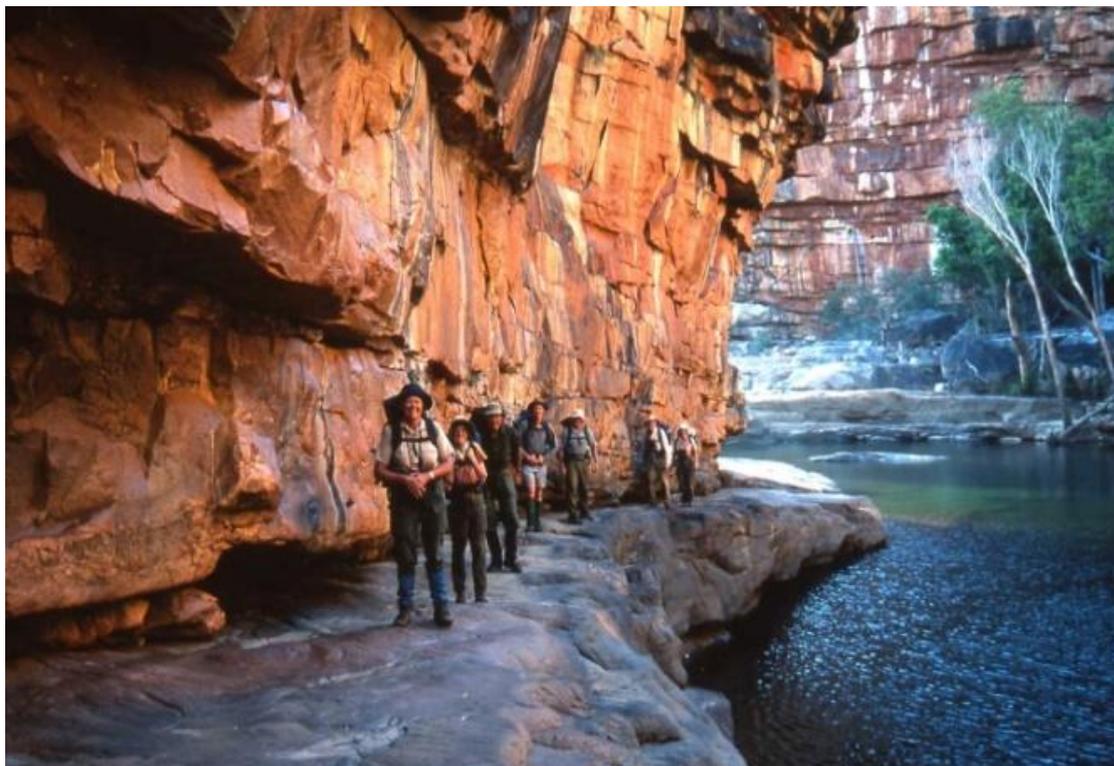


Bradshaw camp 20, off the Moran river. He called them a cascade of 75ft. Now called Pinadhy Falls.



Boab on the Roe river, where Bradshaw camped in 1891, and surveyor Brockman in 1901.

While walking, the group used a small handheld Codan Radio, by which they could keep in touch with the Flying Doctor, in case of emergency. Half way along, they gave themselves a food drop. Walking mainly along water also reduced the need to carry so much weight. Each evening they used their billy to cook.



Spectacular walk in Garimbu Creek.

They saw many beautiful flowers and orchids along their walks. They also did bird counts each trip, seeing a great variety of them as well as some snakes, mainly harmless, water monitors, goannas, lizards and frogs.



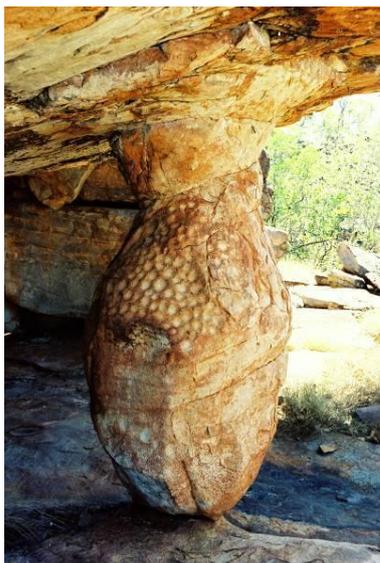
Dendrobium orchids along rivers.



Blue winged northern kookaburra.

After covering the natural history, Michael displayed and talked about the various styles of Aboriginal art they found. The earliest art consisted of cupules. Then came very old animal infill art.

Michael and Wendy became involved with Kimberley rock art after meeting Grahame Walsh on one of their trips. They then helped to locate the art that Bradshaw sketched and described in 1891.



Cupules.



The rock art and the Bradshaw sketch of 1891.

Named Bradshaw art by the Frobenius Institute, and now called “Gwion Gwion”, these works have been divided into sequences over the years. Examples are Tassel, Sash & Clothes Peg figures. The backpackers have also seen many drawings of thylacines. Those animals became extinct in the Kimberley about 4000 years ago. Two other events from around that time were the arrival of dingoes in Australia and the commencement of Wandjina art. Crocodiles and yam Wandjinas were among the many styles of Wandjina art found by the backpackers.

VALE

Phillip Playford AM (27/12/1931 – 12/7/2017)

Phil Playford passed away peacefully this week, aged 85 years. He was an Interim Councillor of the Kimberley Society and helped in its establishment in 1993. He was one of the speakers at the official launch of the Society on 1 December 1993, and addressed the Society on several occasions over the years.

After graduating in geology from UWA, Phil worked with several oil exploration companies including WAPET and Abrolhos Oil in the 1950s. While working in the Shark Bay area he heard of ship wreck remains at the base of cliffs and in 1954 found the Zuytdorp wreck site. He was subsequently involved in several expeditions and research on the site, culminating in publication of his book *Carpet of Silver* in 1996. While working in the Kimberley's Napier Range in 1956–59 he recorded Aboriginal rock art and tape-recorded stories and songs related to him by Aboriginal people from the area. He published a paper on the rock art in the Royal Society of Western Australia's journal in 1960, and amplified that with his contribution to the Kimberley Society's publication *Rock art of the Kimberley* in 2007.

Phil joined the Geological Survey of Western Australia (GSWA) in 1962 and subsequently spent 30 years in various roles within the Department of Mines, mainly assessing and promoting the State's sedimentary basins for their fossil fuel. One of Phil's first recommendations in the GSWA was to ask the Minister for Mines to encourage WAPET to drill an exploratory well on Barrow Island, and the subsequent discovery of oil in commercial quantities in 1964 marked the dawn of petroleum production in Western Australia. He was Director of the GSWA from 1986 to 1992.

Phil produced many high quality GSWA reports, and his extensive research on the Devonian reefs in the Kimberley's Napier and Oscar Ranges is widely recognised as some of his most important work. Understanding of the geological environments he documented in great detail continues to play an important role in modern oil exploration around the globe. His monumental GSWA Bulletin 145 on the Devonian reef complexes, published in 2009, was completed many years after his retirement as he continued working with GSWA as an Honorary Associate.

Phil Playford was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia in 1998. He contributed a huge amount to Western Australia during a long and fruitful career in the resources industry, and to the wider community through his research and publications on history and Aboriginal culture. He is already sadly missed.

Mike Donaldson (with help from GSWA)

Jimmy Chi (1948 – 26/7/2017)

Born in Broome in 1948 to parents whose ancestry combined Bardi and Nyul Nyul with Scots (his mother) and Chinese with Japanese (his father), James Ronald Chi displayed the cultural diversity for which Broome is known. Famous for writing the musical 'Bran Nue Dae', which was later turned into a major motion picture, he was named as one of Western Australia's Living Treasures in 2004.

The song 'Bran Nue Dae' dates from 1977, four years before Chi formed the band Kuckles, which carried that song and others on to the stage in 1990. His second musical, 'Corrugation Road', is about an Aboriginal patient in a mental hospital and, like 'Bran Nue Dae', it drew partly on his own experiences. That and his incisive portrayal of the racial inequality he saw at first hand makes his work unforgettable.

Jimmy Chi is survived by his partner, three children, and his sister Maxine.

Cathie Clement

SUN PICTURES

On Saturday 26 August 2017, [Sun Picture Theatre](#) in Broome will hold one free and one ticketed event in celebration of its 100th Anniversary year. Hailed as the World's Oldest Operating Picture Gardens, it will be unveiling pavement plaques in front of the theatre in Carnarvon Street at 4 p.m. The evening festivities will run from 7.30 p.m. till midnight. Tickets for that event, priced at \$75.00, include entertainment and supper. A cash bar will be available. People who are in Broome can buy tickets at the theatre now. Others can phone 08 9192 1077 for booking inquiries.

The owners of the Sun, Marisa Ferraz and her husband Ross de Wit, take great pride in the theatre. In 1999, Marisa engaged Considine and Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd to prepare a Conservation Plan for Sun Pictures. That hefty document, compiled by [Philip Griffiths](#) and Cathie Clement, recorded the background, history, physical condition and significance of the theatre and, based on that information, it provided the guidance necessary to ensure that future decisions about the place would be made with regard to its cultural heritage significance. Assistance from the Heritage Council of Western Australia allowed restoration of the foyer and a partial floor replacement to be done in 1999–2000. Funding from the Federal Government saw conservation works to the roof completed in November 2000. Further works have also been done since then.

As an additional tribute in the 100th Anniversary year of Sun Pictures, the notes that follow offer a few glimpses of the place's history. This material has been drawn primarily from the Conservation Plan.

The first owner of the land on which Sun Pictures stands was the Japanese storekeeper Yejiro Yamasaki. He was about thirty-one years of age when he bought it in 1903, having come to Western Australia from Japan in 1894. His wife Tai, eight years younger, had arrived in 1895. Yamasaki was a highly regarded member of the Japanese Club in Broome and, in 1909, a newspaper credited his store with carrying the finest stock of Japanese goods in Australia.



Yamasaki's store, 1907, [Western Mail](#) advertisement, Perth.

Yamasaki went overseas in 1908, 1910 and 1911, and his wife accompanied him on at least one of those trips. What became of them after that time is unknown.

Early in 1913, Lot 388, on which Yamasaki's store stood, passed to Edmund Harold Hunter. Known as Ted, Hunter was from Melbourne but had both pearling and property interests in Broome.

In 1913, Broome had two venues that screened silent films. Mr Passmore showed two hours of 'electric pictures' three times a week at the Continental Gardens Picturedrome, which was in the hotel from which the place took its name. Across at the Roebuck Bay Stadium, which had been renovated in 1912, A J Orr advertised his Empire Pictures as the 'Pinnacle of Perfection'. Popular American films exposed the

audiences to entertainment quite unlike the British and Japanese offerings that had once been their standard fare.

The outbreak of war crippled Broome's pearling industry but Ted Hunter continued to prosper. He is said to have won a fortune from pearls as a young man and, in 1916, he would have been approaching his fiftieth year. It therefore seems likely that, faced with limited scope to sell pearl shell, he looked for business opportunities outside of pearling.

With the aim of creating an experience far more appealing than a film night in either of the two hotel gardens, Hunter had Claude Hawkes design Sun Picture Theatre. He then spent thousands of pounds building the big picture drome and gardens to accommodate hundreds in the audience. On the opening night (Saturday, 9 December 1916) many people had to be turned away. The next evening, a show was given in aid of the Red Cross Funds.

The roofed section was designed to protect Wet season audiences but there were still times when tidal flooding inundated the theatre. While that no doubt shocked more than one visitor to the town, the locals simply lifted their feet. If Carnarvon Street was flooded, gallant lads and men could be seen carrying girls and women to higher ground. It was not until 1974 that the construction of a levee bank across the marsh put an end to the regular flooding.



Tidal flooding at the theatre. Sun Pictures collection.

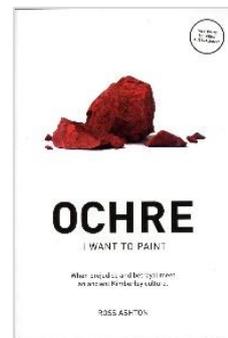
A multitude of stories can be told about Sun Pictures, and some of those will be heard on 26 August. An evening spent viewing a film at the Sun is memorable, as is any unanticipated roar from a plane on its descent to the nearby airport. So, if you have free time in Broome, check out the Sun and its colourful past.

FILMING IN THE EAST KIMBERLEY

[Bunya Productions](#), with funding support from Screenwest, Screen Australia, and Create NSW, will bring money, jobs and excitement to the East Kimberley with the filming of a six-part mystery. The Sydney-based company has a strong production record with feature films that include *Mystery Road*, *Mad Bastards* and *Satellite Boy*. Using a script by [Michaeley O'Brien](#), the *Mystery Road* series will be directed by [Rachel Perkins](#) and produced by [David Jowsey](#) and [Greer Simpkin](#). Described as 'a spin-off from Ivan Sven's internationally acclaimed and award winning feature films [Mystery Road](#) and [Goldstone](#)', it is about the disappearance of two young station hands on an outback cattle station. One is a local indigenous footy hero. The other is a backpacker. The lead cast is [Aaron Pedersen](#) (as Detective Jay Swan) and [Judy Davis](#) (as local cop Emma James). Filming is due to commence this month. The series will premiere on the ABC in 2018.

BOOK NOTE

***Ochre – I want to paint* by Ross Ashton. Published by Freshwater Publishing, 2017. 214 pages, 130 x 195 mm, soft cover. RRP \$19.95. Available online [here](#) or at Lane Bookshop, Claremont, WA.**



Kimberley Society member and enthusiastic Kimberley walker and rock art finder Ross Ashton has written a novel. It is his first novel and draws on his experiences in walking in the Kimberley, discovering ancient rock art, his geological knowledge, and thoughts about Aboriginal connections and culture. He assures me that all the characters are completely fictitious, as are the places and events – but I wonder if this is even possible in any writing such as this.

The story is about four (fictional) modern bushwalkers, each with their own inner demons, thrown together on a walk through (fictional) Kimberley tribal lands. They are joined by a ‘troubled indigenous boy’ and they share in the various issues – personal, geographic, environmental, and cultural – that go along with such a trip.

Ross describes the book as his journey overcoming prejudice: ‘*Ochre* is about how you overcome prejudice by exposing yourself to the people you are prejudiced against’ he said in a recent interview.

The book is well written and should be of interest to many Kimberley Society members.

Proceeds from the book go towards Indigenous scholarships at Perth’s Christ Church Grammar School which is where Ross is launching the book on 16 August at 7:30 pm. If you are interested in attending, RSVP to tscott@ccgs.wa.edu.au or (08) 9442 1705.

Mike Donaldson

COUNCIL 2017-2018

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