



BOAB BULLETIN

No. 143

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NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETINGS

commencing 7.15 for 7.30 p.m.

Dalkeith Hall, 97 Waratah Avenue, Dalkeith

Wednesday, 6 December 2017

Katie Glaskin (Assoc Professor, Anthropology and Sociology, UWA)

“Crosscurrents: law and society in a native title claim to land and sea”

Wednesday, 7 February 2018

Jeff Gresham, Tim Griffin, and Hamish McGlashan

“Seek and ye shall find”

Walking, canoeing, driving and helicopter adventures in the north Kimberley, 2017

Wednesday, 7 March 2018

Kevin Coate (Naturalist)

“The Kimberley Coast – naturally”

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

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

BRENDON DARBY – DUET

Until 17 December, [Linton & Kay Galleries](#), 299 Railway Road, Subiaco, will be hosting an exhibition in which **Brendon Darby** presents pairs of paintings – one representational and the other abstract – that depict landscapes. There are some from the Kimberley, several of which have already sold. His work is, as always, superb.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

I was recently in Melbourne to attend meetings and a workshop of the Science Advisory Council (SAC) of Kimberley Foundation Australia (KFA). I represent Kimberley Society as an ex-officio member of SAC. This annual event alternates between Melbourne and Perth as Universities in both cities are major players in the Kimberley research programs supported by KFA. There was a planning meeting of the SAC on one afternoon, and a full day workshop the following day that involved researchers from Universities in Melbourne (UoM, Monash, La Trobe), Canberra (ANU), Wollongong (UoW), Brisbane (UQ), Sydney (UNSW), Armidale (UNE), and of course Perth (UWA).

The number and scientific depth of these researchers is unprecedented in Kimberley research history. It is indicative of the remarkable success that KFA has achieved in the last decade in attracting not only the top research scientists in the country, but also the corporate funding necessary to enable major research programs to be proposed to the Australian Research Council. There are several current Kimberley research programs funded by ARC grants of over a million dollars, spread over several years. KFA has itself funded over \$3 million on Kimberley research.

Highlights of the workshop included:

- Environmental changes in the Kimberley over the past 15 000 years as revealed by cores from mound springs (Emily Field (UQ)).
- Past subsistence practices revealed by starch residues from yams and other plants found on grinding stones (Judith Field (UNSW) and Richard Cosgrove (La Trobe)).
- Preliminary dates from an ongoing investigation suggest very early occupation in the Drysdale River area (Peter Veth (UWA)).
- Documentation of over 200 new rock art and occupation sites in the Drysdale and King George river regions (Sven Ouzman, Sam Harper (UWA)).
- 3D modelling of a Drysdale River rock shelter and Wanjina site shows extensive modification of the shelter by humans. Sophisticated 3D techniques utilise some 700 million data points acquired by photogrammetry, laser scanning, and drone images (Bruno David (Monash) and J-J Delannoy (France)).
- Uranium-series dating of rock 'glazes' indicates formation at least 10 000 to 25 000 years ago. Funding for major new dating project now enables this program to extend for another four years (Helen Green (UoM)).
- Radiometric dating using C^{14} in mud-wasp nests over rock art confirms dates as old as 25 000 years (Damien Finch (UoM)).
- Kimberley landscape evolution being studied by cosmogenic isotopes including He^3 , Be^{10} , C^{14} , Al^{26} confirms Kimberley among the most stable environments on Earth with bedrock weathering rates 0 to 20 mm per 1000 years over at least the last half-million years (Tibi Codilean (UoW)).
- The same cosmogenic isotopes have been used to show that rock falls in some shelters with rock art are up to 200 000 years old, confirming the surfaces are old enough to have rock art dating back tens of thousands of years (Gael Cazes (UoW)).

Many of these research results will be published in scientific journals in the near future, and many papers dealing with aspects of Kimberley research have already been published. The KFA website includes a [list](#) of published articles, most of which can be readily downloaded.

Mike Donaldson

THE WIT, WARMTH AND WISDOM OF GEOFFREY BOLTON

On 2 August 2017, **Bill Bunbury OAM**, Presenter of [Hindsight](#), ABC Radio Social History Unit, spoke to the Kimberley Society about oral history interviews he had recorded with the late [Professor Geoffrey Bolton](#). The interviews, which commenced in the late 1970s, were done at intervals over four decades. A précis of the talk, during which Bill played extracts from Hindsight, follows. An [MP3](#) of the talk, which was first presented to the Friends of Batty Library in 2016, can be accessed via that group's website.

Recognised as Western Australia's most prominent historian, Geoffrey died at the age of 83 in September 2015. He and Bill had spoken two days earlier, reminiscing about shared journeys and Geoffrey's considerable help to Bill over many years. When Geoffrey's wife Carol then asked Bill to speak about him at his Memorial Service at St George's Cathedral in Perth on 5 October, Bill felt extremely honoured.

In his opening remarks to "The Wit, Warmth and Wisdom", Bill mentioned that he should have added "Width" to the title of his presentation—such was Geoffrey Bolton's range. That range was evident from the start of the talk, with the first extract relating the role of the [Trans Australian Railway](#) in the story of [Federation](#). Bill had asked for a sound level before they got into the interview, and Geoffrey had promptly reeled off an announcement for the train's arrival at Parkeston and the stations for which to change there. That sound level was transformed into an introduction to the Hindsight program. Bill said, "I couldn't resist this sample of both his prodigious memory for detail and his ability to deliver it. The only thing missing was the stationmaster's whistle."

In discussing his friend's long and productive life, Bill said, "Travelling with Geoffrey Bolton was an adventure in itself. At almost any spot on the Australian land mass there was a story to share, illustrated with unforgettable anecdotes." Then, moving on to Geoffrey's book [A Fine Country To Starve In](#), he played an extract from an interview and commented that Geoffrey's words at the start of the book 'capture both his lifelong commitment to history and his empathy for so called "ordinary people" who bore the brunt of events like the [Great Depression](#)'.

In quoting Geoffrey's anecdotes about his early years, Bill said:

The boy's father kept his job throughout the 1930s, so he was sheltered from the worst effects of the Depression. But, however peripheral, the Depression was indubitably a presence in his early consciousness.

Much later, when the boy was a young adult, he left Western Australia for eleven or twelve years, returning to teach history at the University of Western Australia in 1966.

In that affluent society the mineral boom was surging, and it was hard for some students to imagine the level of hardship and penury taken for granted in the 1930s. What, they asked, was a Depression like?

At the same time he noticed that the generation of his parents, those who were in the workforce (either as employees or as unpaid homemakers) during the 1930s, were beginning to grow old and die, their experiences unrecorded. As he said, "These experiences had somehow to be captured for the enlightenment of a generation who did not know what a depression was like."

That passage, for me, captures his early awareness that history helps us understand both the past and the future and Geoffrey's life and work exemplified that in spades.

As a relatively new ABC radio producer in the late 1970s, Bill wanted to make a series of radio features based on oral history about 20th century Australian history. He began with a program called 'They Said You'd Own Your Farm', and that was where *A Fine Country To Starve In* came in. Having already written that graphic account of WA during the Great Depression, Geoffrey agreed to record an interview

about [Group Settlement](#). The Depression had come hard on the heels of Group Settlement and had affected its outcome considerably. Bill used Geoffrey's comments as a narration framework in the broadcast, parts of which he played during his August presentation. He said:

Geoffrey's use of Oral History had inspired me to use it in its primary role – voices to be heard on the radio and I'd been fortunate in finding a pioneer in written history. But Geoffrey was also a natural on radio.

His presence on air, together with his astute and often non-judgmental comments on the achievements and the errors of our history enriched the ABC's Social History Unit's 'Talking History' and 'Hindsight' for the next 25 years.

To illustrate Geoffrey's background and early influences, Bill played an extract from *Historian at work* – Geoffrey Bolton. Beginning with his family history and ending with his time as a university student, it led to an extract about Geoffrey's book [Daphne Street](#). The family home was in that North Perth street, and Bill remarked that:

Geoffrey's sense of the past came to include its ambivalence and complexity as that extract suggests. The Depression was uneven in its effects.

But his early interest in history was also kindled by a good library at home.

And here we heard more from Geoffrey about the books, people and courses that led to him seeing history as a story, a continuous narrative that was supported by the experience of so-called 'ordinary people'. Bill then continued:

And what kind of history? The land of our enormous continent had much to say to him and especially the vast space of Western Australia. And he wanted to catch 'Living History' memories which could still be recalled.

In 1952, for his [Masters' thesis](#), he took himself to the Kimberley to record the story of North West pastoralism. In Broome his first call was to the writer [Mary Durack](#).

(Track 8—Meeting Mary Durack) Geoffrey: She was, as was a habit for many years, spending the winter up in Broome, and it was known that her father [M. P. Durack](#) who died only two years previously was one of those admirable systematic people who kept a diary every day of his life, from the time he was twenty-one until the time he died at eighty-five. And I wanted to get access to these things. Incidentally Mary kept up the same habit, so there would be a great treasure house in her diaries as well. And I called on her, and I think she was sitting at her desk when I first saw her; what you'd describe as a comely, friendly woman, about not quite forty, I guess, at that stage.

There were small children evident in the background but they seemed to wash round her feet without causing any great disruption in the conversation. And she was very kind, very interested in what I was trying to do; thought it was a great idea, and, far from worrying whether I was a trespasser on her patch, because she was writing [Kings in Grass Castles](#) at that time, gave me every help; and of course the diaries did turn out to be a great treasure trove.

But also, she was encouraging in two other ways. One was that she gave me introductions to people in the Kimberleys; and, if Mary Durack said I was all right, then I was all right. And the other thing was that I couldn't have anyone better to talk about the whole background. She knew it all, particularly in the East Kimberley, very well indeed, and she was a wonderful person to bounce ideas off.

At that point, Bill resumed the story:

Fifty two years later, in 2004, Geoffrey was again back in the East Kimberley.

We were recording the changes brought by the [damming of the Ord River](#) 40 years earlier.

(Track 9—Ord River 40 Years On) Geoffrey: Well it's a very odd experience because I was last here in 1952 when I was collecting material for a Masters thesis on the Kimberley pastoral industry, and of course that was well before the lake. [Argyle](#)

[homestead](#) was in its original situation, and it's an eerie experience to be on a boat in the lake sailing over a place which you last knew as a working cattle station, a homestead, with the bulldust and the ringers and the general activity.

Bill: It's an extraordinary experience to be standing here isn't it, because to our south, as you say, you've got drowned pastoral country, but if we turn round, and we can see beyond these mountains, we'd be looking at a vast area of irrigated river flats which have now been watered by the Ord. So in a sense the losing of the pastoral country to this dam is a creation of another kind of history, isn't it?

Geoffrey: Well, it is a history and hasn't been told very much until now; but the idea that there would be [agriculture](#) on the Ord was always there. Even as early as 1885 one of the very first surveyors commented that the Ord could very well be dammed, and of course the person who really brought the idea into practicality was [Kim Durack](#), the second son of old M. P. Durack, one of the pioneering family that had been here since the beginning of pastoral settlement, and Kim worked here for a number of years, and grew the first rice, and the first experimental plots of cotton, and various other things.

Back to Bill:

For me Geoffrey's knowledge of the Kimberley had already come in very handy in 2001. I was then making a 3 part radio series on the impact of the [1965 Equal Wage Case](#), called [It's Not The Money It's The Land](#).

In the first program I wanted to trace the way in which the Kimberley Aboriginal groups adapted to the pastoral industry in the late 19th century.

Geoffrey suggested interestingly that the Aboriginal people took up aspects of pastoralism as soon as the first white cattlemen arrived.

(Track 10—Aboriginal Stockyards) Geoffrey: Aborigines in the north were very quick to adapt western technology, and this ranges from being able to ride horses, which they'd never seen before of course, to the fact that, even before they came in, they looked at stockyards and said "we can build stockyards", and they were using them to impound cattle, which they had pinched from the interloping pastoralists.

Bill: Where they could capture cattle, they were setting up their own mustering set-ups.

Geoffrey: There was certainly evidence of that. That was reported by police and graziers, they'd find these stockyards that they hadn't built.

And, again, back to Bill:

One advantage of working with Geoffrey Bolton was not just his knowledge of place but also people.

Working at the Australian National University in Canberra he'd known historians like [Manning Clark](#) and the remarkable anthropologist of Aboriginal culture, [Bill Stanner](#). In yet another program – on Stanner himself I was grateful for Geoffrey's insight into the famous anthropologist's other skills.

(Track 11—Bill Stanner)

Another advantage of working with Geoffrey was his sense of the significance of location. He often had something provocative to say about any part of Australia he found himself in.

(Track 12—Alice Springs)

And here's a story about a much more far flung location.

In the 1970s, as part of Murdoch University's contacts with Asia, Geoffrey, in company with 3 fellow academics travelled through China.

As he recalled the journey it raised 'questions of protocol'.

(Track 13—Travel Through China)

Earlier in this recapture of Geoffrey Bolton's work I've illustrated his abiding interest in social history; which, by the way, extended to Environmental History, in his books [Land of Vision and Mirage](#), and [Spoils and Spoilers](#).

But he constantly reminded his readers and his listeners of 'Big Picture' History as well. In 1996 he helped me out with a radio series called Unfinished Business, taking a look at incomplete strands of Australian history; [Reconciliation](#) with the First Australians, the current [Constitution](#) and the often less well known story of [Republicanism](#).

In this context I wanted to know whether [Eureka Stockade](#) of 1854, played any role in this story. I assumed there might be just one link.

(Track 14—Eureka Meanings)

An illustration of his prodigious memory for detail.

One of Geoffrey's abiding interests was the growth of Australia as a nation. And he saw the first decade after Federation, as holding out promise, even if sadly and rapidly curtailed.

(Track 15—Bright Dawn)

Geoffrey was as ambitious for [history](#) as he was for his own contribution to its content; an issue I explored in his own work as an historian. How did he see the current state of his own discipline?

(Track 16—History Today)

And there was another useful lesson in the way he saw how historians ... could easily categorise people.

(Track 17—Victim History) Geoffrey: I think there was a tendency in the 1980s to write victim history. Younger historians very sensibly thought that there was a risk that history could be too triumphalist, that it could celebrate simply the winners and the successes, and, in some cases, I mean there was a thing called *The People's History*, which was brought out in 1988 in four volumes. Reading it, you might get the impression that the working class, that the Aborigines, the migrants never won, that they were always victimised. This struck me as condescending because so often, even the poorer, less unfortunate of us have strategies which enable them to survive, and enable them to make a go of it. And the challenge is I think, not to ignore or to pretend they didn't happen, the injustices, the foolishnesses, but also to remember the resilience of the ordinary person. And that's what I tried to do with *A Fine Country To Starve In*, and that's what I wanted to do in anything I write like that.

Given his innovative role at [Murdoch](#) I'd been asked to record his campus memories as part of the commemoration of Murdoch University's 40th anniversary.

I'd asked him about the choice of the Murdoch name. ... And as with Eureka...

(Track 18—Naming Murdoch)

So far I haven't included Geoffrey Bolton's work as a biographer. His work here examined the life and careers of [Alexander Forrest](#); later, Australia's first Prime Minister, [Edmund Barton](#); and much more recently, his biography of [Paul Hasluck](#), journalist, public servant, politician and Governor General.

(Track 19—But For A Lift)

I'd like to conclude with some personal memories.

At the ABC I sometimes helped high school students seeking work experience. On one occasion I told a 15 year old girl that as part of my working day I was meeting Professor Bolton for lunch at a nearby café to plan a program and I was sure he wouldn't mind if she came and listened in.

He didn't. We discussed the radio feature but he also took time to ask her about her interests, what she wanted to do with her life and gave her good advice about career prospects.

She said to me as we walked back, "I didn't know University professors were like that. He could have been my grandfather."

And wherever you went in his company there was the same ease of communication and friendliness. We were sometimes invited in a country town to give a talk about what we were doing there.

Geoffrey could not only talk at any length without notes and, while he sometimes knew more about the place than the locals, he never showed it.

Swinging his long legs over a table he could regale them with yarns they hadn't always heard before.

And he could while away any long car journey with snatches of bush poems and comic limericks.

He was at ease with people from any background; always a natural teacher; one who made you aware of complexity and ambivalence. But you never felt you were being lectured, simply being interestingly entertained.

I was greatly privileged to have worked with him, learnt from him and to have enjoyed his wit, **width**, warmth and wisdom.

Thank you for sharing my memories of a remarkable historian and a gracious and kindly human being.

Cathie Clement (drawing on Bill Bunbury's script)

REST IN PEACE

On 5 October, the Society lost another long time member when **Keith Abercromby** passed away at the age of 90. An obituary written by John McIlwraith, published in *The West Australian* on 20 October 2017, provided an interesting account of Keith's life. It has been used in writing this tribute.

Born in Perth, Keith had an idyllic childhood that included roaming in bushland and sailing. He joined the RAAF towards the end of World War II and then did an engineering degree at the University of Western Australia. A job with the North West branch of the Public Works Department followed and he went north by road to spend months gaining experience in the type of work done there.

After marrying in 1954, Keith and his young wife Ric spent six years in the Kimberley. The challenges he faced included difficulties communicating with Perth and delays in having materials shipped up for projects. The bonuses included the hospitality, cheerfulness and willing help that he encountered while undertaking construction in Aboriginal communities. Those people, in turn, no doubt appreciated the enthusiasm and ingenuity that Keith brought to his work.

Other PWD posts followed the Kimberley years. Keith was the Resident Engineer when the Logue Brook Dam was constructed to provide additional water for the Harvey Irrigation District. Opened in October 1963, it cost £760,000 and had a capacity of 5,358 million gallons. Keith and Ric also spent seven years in Albany.

After he retired in 1987, Keith continued to work as a consultant and as a member of the UWA Senate, for which he was awarded the Chancellor's Medal. He and Ric toured in their caravan but he also found time to work for the Save the Children Fund and Sir Charles Gardiner Hospital.

Keith stopped coming to meetings some years ago but, before that, he was a regular. Quiet and unassuming, he was always friendly and happy to chat about a book he had read or another topic of mutual interest. He is survived by Ric, their daughter Leigh and son Andrew, seven grandchildren and one great grandchild.

Cathie Clement

DEVELOPMENT OF KIMBERLEY ROADS 1945 - 1990

On 6 September 2017, **Albert Tognolini**, a retired Main Roads Department engineer and Commissioner, presented an illustrated talk to the Kimberley Society. A condensed transcript follows. The [full transcript](#) is available on our website.

Why 1945 and 1990? Well, 1945 was the year Main Roads took charge of all works on Kimberley roads. And 1990 was the year I retired from Main Roads. When I joined Main Roads in February 1950, having just graduated as an engineer, the seal on the Great Northern Highway stopped a few kilometres past [Miling](#), which is only 200 kilometres from Perth. On the North West Coastal Highway, the seal stopped a few kilometres past [Northampton](#). Much has changed since then.

In the early years of North West settlement, the development and maintenance of roads was the responsibility of the Roads and Bridges Branch of the Public Works Department (P.W.D.). There was little money available for road improvement works.

The first serious attempt to improve Kimberley roads started in 1921, when, on August 1st, [Major Geoffrey Drake-Brockman](#), an engineer, was appointed State Commissioner for the North West. During this time the roads and river crossings steadily improved. In 1922 Drake-Brockman decided to drive from Wyndham, via Ord River and Nicholson Stations, to Halls Creek and then via Fitzroy Crossing to Derby. The purpose of the journey was to see the condition of the track and meet the people at the various stations. The journey was to be made with two cars. The party left Wyndham on 21 May. The Ford broke down near Ord River Station; the Dodge some distance east of Fitzroy Crossing. A hired vehicle then did the section to Derby, arriving on 25 June. The journey had taken thirty-five days.

Between 1926 and 1945 legislative changes abolished the post of Commissioner of the North West and established a [Main Roads Board](#), which absorbed the P.W.D. Road and Bridges Branch. In [1930](#) the Main Roads Board was replaced by a newly created Commissioner of Main Roads. That led to roadworks in the Kimberley being carried out by the North West Branch of the P.W.D. using funds allocated by Main Roads. Two notable works were structures across the Fitzroy River; one at [Fitzroy Crossing](#) in 1935 and the other near the mouth of the river at [Langi Crossing](#) in 1938.

The [1935 structure](#) across the Fitzroy River at Fitzroy Crossing was built using reinforced concrete piles and deck. A report I have read states that a decision had been taken to build a concrete crossing with the top 'just above the level of the existing sand bed'. The structure would have fifty-two 3.6 metre spans with a deck width between kerbs of 2.4 metres. The deck would be supported on 104 reinforced concrete piles driven into the river bed.

The 1938 low level bridge at Langi Crossing was constructed using timber piles and deck. This bridge had thirty-seven 6.1 metre spans. In February 1940, a flood washed away twenty-one spans of the bridge. A report at the time stated that 'the broken portion is approximately 100 feet downstream'. A decision was made to reconstruct the [bridge](#) by salvaging the superstructure timbers and using longer piles. Reconstruction was completed late 1940.

During the 1939–1945 war years, large motor graders were used to maintain the existing tracks, which at that time were being extensively used by military vehicles. In the next few years, there was a shortage of road construction equipment and it was difficult to get men to work in outback areas

In 1945, Main Roads took over responsibility for the improvement and maintenance of roads in the North West. A District Headquarters was established at Carnarvon.

Ron Duncan was appointed District Engineer. Duncan Road in the Kimberley is named after him in recognition of his dedicated and outstanding service.

The 1949–50 Annual Report stated that, 'In the North West and Kimberley areas, very substantial improvements have been effected on almost all of the roads that suffered during the war period'. One major project was the road linking Derby and Fitzroy Crossing. This road was originally located close to the Fitzroy River passing through [Liveringa](#) and [Noonkanbah](#). It was rebuilt near its present alignment between 1948 and 1950.

During the 1950s there was a general awakening of interest in the development of Northern Australia. One major project was the improvement of the Wyndham – Nicholson track. This project was made possible by a special Commonwealth Grant, provided under the [States Grant \(Encouragement of Meat Production\) Act 1949](#). Construction work started in 1951 and, by 1956, four hundred and twenty kilometres had been formed, sections gravelled, and some creek and river crossings constructed. The total expenditure was \$1,578,000. [Ivanhoe Crossing](#) on the Ord River was constructed as part of this project. Work on that crossing started in 1952 and was completed in 1953.

In 1958 the low level crossing of the Fitzroy River at Fitzroy Crossing was improved. I have already mentioned that the 1935 low level crossing was built with the deck 'just above the level of the sand bed'. This resulted in the structure having a low point at the eastern end. As a result, relatively small river flows made the crossing impassable. The new 1958 structure was built level. This meant that, although still low level, the crossing was open to traffic for longer periods.

Late in 1959 Main Roads decided that a separate Kimberley District should be created with its administrative office at Derby. The new Kimberley District became operational in January 1960. I was the first District Engineer, Kimberley.

In 1960 the primary road system of the Kimberley consisted of the Great Northern Highway from Pardoo to Wyndham and the Wyndham – Nicholson – Halls Creek Road. The road was renamed Duncan Highway in 1961. Its classification was changed from Highway to Road in 1976.

Although the primary road system was, in many places, not much more than a five-metre wide track, motorists could be reasonably sure, during dry weather, of completing their journeys without being held up because of road conditions.

Road transport of cattle between Broome and Fitzroy Crossing had started in the 1950s. In 1961 the Prime Minister, [Robert Menzies](#), made an announcement which was to have a profound influence on Main Roads activities in the Kimberley, 'that the Commonwealth Government would provide financial assistance for the development of "[Beef Roads](#)" in Northern Australia.'

The first few years following creation of Main Roads Kimberley District was a period of great activity. Personnel had to be recruited. The technical, clerical and senior construction personnel such as supervisors, foremen and gangers were mainly transferred from Southern Districts. Offices, stores, plant workshops, soil testing laboratories and staff houses had to be built. Plant had to be mobilised and a radio communications system established. Looking back, I think the people who transferred from Southern Districts did so because they wanted to be part of what was going to be a very exciting time in the history of Main Roads.

Commonwealth Government financial assistance was a very important factor in the improvement of the Kimberley road system. In October 1961 the [Western Australian Grant \(Beef Cattle Roads\) Act, 1961](#) was approved. It provided for Commonwealth

Government grants of \$1,000,000 for the improvement of roads (between Wyndham and Nicholson, and Wyndham and Halls creek via Turkey Creek) and construction of bridges over the Ord River (at Bandicoot Bar) and the Dunham River (near its junction with the Ord). Under the Act, the Commonwealth contribution towards the construction of the two bridges was limited to one half of their cost, and the State was required to spend at least \$1,000,000 on roads in the Kimberley. Further grants from Commonwealth and State continued in this way until 1974. These funds permitted major upgrades to all the main highways with deviations, realignments and new bridges. Details of those works appear in the longer online version of this summary.

The policy adopted for the construction of improved roads was based on the proven principle of stage construction.

- Stage 1. The road is cleared and lightly formed. At watercourses the road is graded to the stream-bed level.
- Stage 2. The necessary earthworks, initial base course and some culvert construction is carried out. In practice the first two stages are often carried out together.
- Stage 3. Culvert and bridge construction is completed.
- Stage 4. Completion of the base course, priming and sealing.

It was decided that the improvement of “Beef Roads” would be implemented in stages.

- Stage 1. Construct and seal, including the construction of bridges on the larger watercourses, the Broome to Fitzroy Crossing and Halls Creek to Wyndham sections of the Great Northern Highway.
Construct and seal, including the construction of bridges on the section of Victoria Highway between the Great Northern Highway and Kununurra.
Commence construction of a road through the King Leopold Ranges, with the aim of having a track completed to a stage by May 1963, which would allow operation of a refrigerated semi-trailer.
- Stage 2. Complete construction of a sealed road between Port Hedland and Broome.
Complete construction and sealing of Victoria Highway from Kununurra to the Northern Territory border.
- Stage 3. Complete the construction and sealing of the Fitzroy Crossing to Halls Creek section.

The aim of constructing a road from Derby through the King Leopold Ranges was to give access to Mount House and Gibb River Stations and [Glenroy Air Beef Abattoir](#). The most difficult location job was the selection of the alignment of the Derby – Gibb Road where it passes through the King Leopold Ranges. I remember reading a report of an investigation made in, I think, 1950 of possible locations for a road across the King Leopold Ranges. One possibility mentioned in the report was Gardiner's Gap. We investigated Gardiner's Gap and decided that, although it was a possibility, there had to be a more suitable location. We finally decided on a route through [Inglis Gap](#). The next problem was how to get down on the north side of the range. The solution was the section we called the Bench.

The first trip down the new road by a semitrailer loaded with beef carcasses was made on 13 May 1963. We had achieved the target date set in 1961, and the beef was delivered to Derby. But it was only a track. A great deal of improvement work has been carried out since, and it can now be called a road – [Gibb River Road](#).

During the five years July 1961 to June 1966, approximately 260 kilometres was sealed in sections of the Great Northern Highway between Broome and Fitzroy

Crossing, south from Wyndham, and on the Victoria Highway between the Great Northern Highway and Kununurra. By 1966 most pastoral properties had reasonable access to an improved arterial road.

A sealed road will not last indefinitely. Sections can fail and have to be reconstructed. The bitumen slowly deteriorates and has to be resealed. In fact, sections of road sealed early in the programme were being resealed before the completion of seal between Fitzroy Crossing and Halls Creek.

Over time we found that more bridges were needed and other drainage structures needed improvement. This has been the case with the sealed roads in the Kimberley.

Since 1974 there has been no legislation providing special financial assistance for "Beef Roads". Instead, the improvement of roads in the Kimberley was continued using both Commonwealth Funds, provided under various Acts, and State Funds.

On [September 7th 1986](#), at a spot 100 kilometres west of Halls Creek, the sealing of the Great Northern Highway was completed. This meant that motorists could drive right around Australia on a sealed road.

The development of Kimberley Roads is not confined to the primary road system. Over the period 1945 to 1990, Main Roads has been involved in many other works including:

- ✚ Construction and sealing of streets in all the Kimberley towns.
- ✚ Construction of a sealed road to the main Ord River Dam.
- ✚ Construction of Ord Irrigation Area farm access roads.
- ✚ Construction of the Kununurra Airstrip for the Queen's visit March 17th 1963.
- ✚ Improvement of Station Access Roads.
- ✚ Improvement of the Broome – Cape Leveque Track.
- ✚ Improvement of the Gibb River – Kalumburu Road.
- ✚ Improvement of the Gibb River – Wyndham Road.

I cannot finish this address without making a comment about the people that I worked with during my time in the Kimberley. The engineers, surveyors, draftsman, clerical staff, supervisors, soil testers, foremen, plant mechanics, gangers, plant operators and construction workers.

They were all competent and dedicated and keen to do their best.

I could not have asked for a more supportive team.

Here with me tonight is Mike Wallwork. Mike has a keen interest in Western Australian history. He spent a few years in the Kimberley as a Main Roads engineer. As a result he has a particular interest in the history of the Kimberley. Mike has assisted me in preparing for tonight's presentation. He has been a great help in gathering information on various matters. Thank you Mike.

Since leaving the Kimberley in June 1964 I have been back twice. Once to attend the opening of a new Main Roads Office in Derby. And a trip by road to Kununurra and back in the year 2000. This trip was with my wife and our friends Tom and Joan Pedersen. Tom had been an engineer with Main Roads and had spent time in the North. My wife used to say it was not so much a holiday trip but a long one month road inspection.

All I can say is that, in preparing my address for tonight, I have had a month refreshing my memory, not only of the four and a half years I spent in the Kimberley, but also my memory of the history of Main Roads.

Albert Tognolini

CHANGE IN MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES IN 2018

At the Society's AGM on 5 April 2017, a Special Resolution was passed to bring our Constitution into line with new Model Rules for Incorporated Societies, as required by the Associations Incorporation Act (2015). The new Model Rules are broadly compatible with our existing Constitution, but we had to modify some of our Membership Categories to be in line with the new Rules.

So that all members of the Society have full voting rights, we had to do away with our Family Membership and replace it with a discounted rate for a 2nd family member who will be recorded separately as an Ordinary Member with full voting rights.

We also have a discount rate for Ordinary Members who are pensioners or students, previously classified as Concessional Members. Membership subscriptions rates remain unchanged despite these nomenclatural changes.

The new categories of membership are shown on the renewal slip attached to this newsletter.

Other changes 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.

These changes will become apparent at the next AGM.

Mike Donaldson
President
Kimberley Society

COUNCIL 2017-2018

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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