



BOAB BULLETIN

No. 153

August 2019

NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETINGS

commencing 7.15 for 7.30 p.m.

Mount Claremont Community Centre, 107 Montgomery Avenue

Wednesday, 7 August 2019

Angela Riganti (Geological Survey of WA)

“The glass-plate negative collection of the Geological Survey of WA”

Wednesday, 4 September 2019

David Dale (environmental scientist)

“Kimberley: the last 100 years”

Wednesday, 2 October 2019

Brad Durack (great grandson of Patrick Mantinea Durack)

“Research findings related to landing at View Hill in Sept 1885”

Wednesday, 6 November 2019

Mt Gibson Iron Ltd

“Iron ore mining at Cockatoo and Koolan Islands”

Wednesday, 4 December 2019

Kimberley Society Members

“Highlights from 26 years of the Kimberley Society”

Members and visitors are invited to stay for supper after the meeting.
The Society asks a \$2.00 hospitality fee from non-members.

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The future of the Society has been raised several times over the last twelve months. As there were no new nominations for any of the management roles for the Society at the last Annual General Meeting on 3 April 2019, the current Committee Members were re-elected to oversee the voluntary wind-up of the Society by the end of 2019.

The Associations Incorporation Act 2015 and the Kimberley Society's Constitution require that, to provide for an orderly voluntary wind-up and cancellation of the Incorporation of the Society, a Special Resolution to this effect is required to be put to Society Members at a Special General Meeting. At least 21 days notice to members is required for a Special General Meeting and this notice is provided below:

Notice of Special General Meeting.

A Special General Meeting will be convened on Wednesday 2 October before the Ordinary Meeting at the Mount Claremont Community Centre, 107 Montgomery Avenue, Mount Claremont, at 7:30 pm to consider the following **Special Resolution:**

The Kimberley Society to be voluntarily wound-up and Incorporation cancelled by the end of December 2019.

The Special Resolution is passed if it is supported by not less than three-fourths of the members of the Society who cast a vote at the meeting. Members may appoint an individual who is an ordinary member as his or her proxy and such appointment must be in writing, signed by the member making the appointment, and be given to the Society's Secretary before the commencement of the meeting.

The Committee has resolved that the Society can and will meet its debts and liabilities prior to winding up, and distribution of the Society's assets will be conducted in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Act 2015.

The Kimberley Society has been a very successful and stimulating organisation for 26 years and we can be very proud of the contribution made in many areas over this time. The website with its wealth of stories, book reviews, information, and images will continue as part of the National Library's Pandora program. We are currently working on a complete Index for the *Boab Bulletin* to be available with the final issue planned for December 2019. And we expect a *grand finale* at the final meeting in December.

Mike Donaldson

UNDERMINED: TALES FROM THE KIMBERLEY

[Screen Australia](#), in its promotion of this 90-minute documentary, carries this comment from the producer: 'Australia's vast and unspoiled Kimberley region is under threat, with mining, pastoralism and irrigated agriculture driving an unprecedented land grab. What will be left of over 200 remote Aboriginal communities?' Written and produced by Stephanie King and Nicholas D Wrathall, who also filled the role of director, it was released in August 2018. Albert Wiggan was a co-producer and headed the cast, working with Kevin Oscar, June Davis, Anne Poelina and Merle Carter. Premiered at the Melbourne International Film Festival, [Undermined](#) came fifth in the People's Choice award. It then won the Audience Choice Award at the Antenna Documentary Festival and was shown by invitation at CinefestOZ. A NAIDOC Week article about a free July screening in Victoria, in [Mirage News](#), said: 'the film is told through the stories of the people that live there, acting as a stark reminder of the importance to look at issues that are at once both complex and straightforward, and to hear, listen and understand those that know the realities of the situation far better than anyone else.' <http://underminedfilm.com/> offers a trailer and a teaser.

THE STORY OF WESTERN EDUCATION AT MOOLA BULLA NATIVE CATTLE STATION

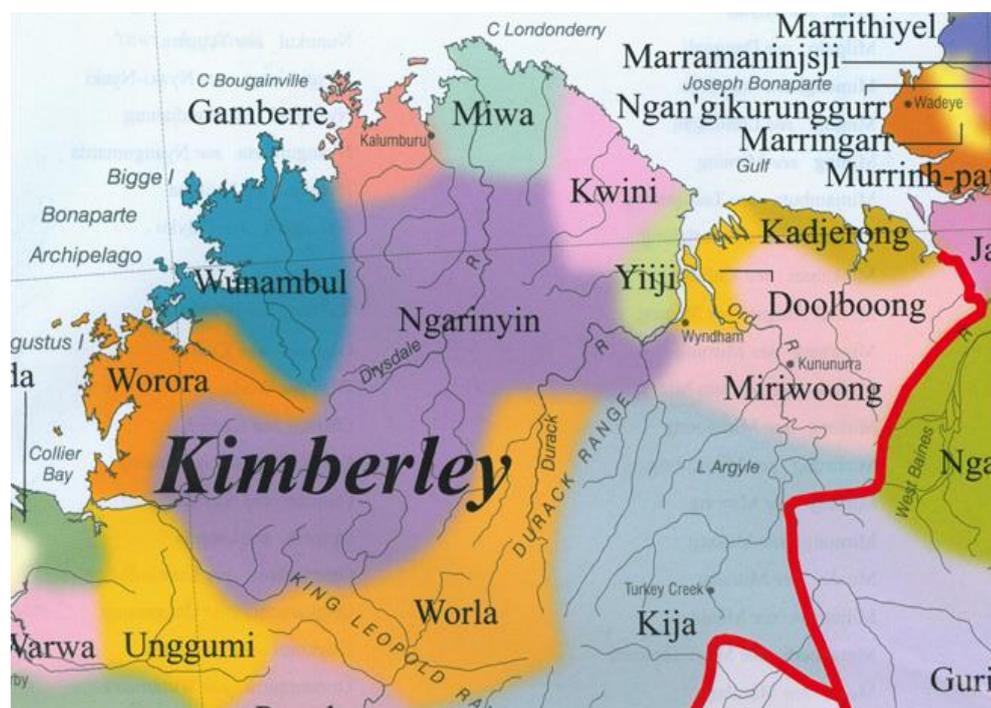
On 5 June 2019, **Rhonda Povey** shared some of her research findings on western education at Moola Bulla with a Kimberley Society audience in Perth. Rhonda, who is a PhD candidate at the Centre for Advancement of Indigenous Knowledges at the University of Technology Sydney, began her presentation with an acknowledgement of country. Her summary, which comes with a **cultural warning** that it may contain images, names and the words of people who are now deceased, appears below.

The Story of Moola Bulla Station

The old fellow who first told me about Moola Bulla was a Jaru man who at that time made a living selling his paintings. In his younger days he had been a stockman, and a proud one at that. He said he had worked on that one station, that Moola Bulla, for long-time without wages. He told me all about that station, how in 1910 Kija land had been taken over by the government to become an Aboriginal reserve.

Uncle said people were taken to there, from all over. He told me that Moola Bulla had been a ration or feeding station for Aboriginal people who had been dispossessed of their land. It was also a place for Aboriginal prisoners and a place where Aboriginal people who refused to 'sit down' were sent. Uncle told me lots of children were stolen from their families and taken to Moola Bulla. He'd been there as a kid too, and when I asked him about schooling, he had some 1 or 2 years maybe, not much, before he started work there, on Moola Bulla (Personal communication 2015).

Moola Bulla lies entirely within Kija country – that part of the country was then and still is known as Ngarrawanji (Farrer 1996). Moola Bulla was created on behalf of the pastoralists in response to cattle hustling by the local Aboriginal people. The idea of establishing a feeding station was first raised in 1901 by the Fitzroy Telegraph Master, C.J Annear (Aborigines Department 1901) and then taken seriously when broached in 1907 by Police Commissioner Hare (Department of Aborigines and Fisheries 1909). Arrests for taking 'a killer' were increasing. Travelling Inspector Isdell reported to the Chief Protector of Aborigines "Our native gaols are full to overflowing" (Department of Aborigines and Fisheries 1909, p. 3). No doubt so were the tensions increasing between pastoralists and Aboriginal communities who were often denied access to their country, as their traditional country became increasingly criss-crossed by pastoral boundaries.



Map of traditional country in the Kimberley region (www.abc.net.au/news/2016-11-16/indigenous-language-map/8029486)

In post-contact history, Moola Bulla was formerly Nicholson Plains, Greenvale and Mary Downs Station. The area was purchased by the Aborigines Department in 1910 and thereafter known as a 'Moola Bulla Cattle Station', a 'Native Station and Settlement', a 'Feeding Station' or a 'Native Station' (Clement 1989). Over the 45 years of its existence, Moola Bulla fulfilled several functions, as Uncle has described above. In 1955, Moola Bulla was sold and the 233 'inmates' as they were then called, evicted, given 48 hours to leave. The Aboriginal occupants, who were traditional owners and third generation residents, were transported by road to the United Aboriginal Mission in Fitzroy Crossing, whilst others set up temporary camp outside the boundary of the station on the fringe of the newly established Halls Creek (Kimberley Language Resource Centre 1996).

The children of Moola Bulla

Many children lived on Moola Bulla between 1910 – 1955. Children were born on Moola Bulla, or "arrived to live there under a variety of circumstances, mostly beyond their control" (Povey and Trudgett 2019, p. 79). Some children were stolen from their families and country and removed to Moola Bulla, whilst other children already living at Moola Bulla were removed from their families. The removal of Indigenous children from their families has a long history stretching back to early days of colonisation (Hetherington 2002; Jebb 2002).

Government policies and practices impacted on the everyday lives of Aboriginal children in the East Kimberley. In 1905, the Chief Protector of Aborigines in Western Australia became the legal guardian of all 'half caste' Aboriginal children, with an associated right for their removal, and police and protectors were instructed to collect all 'half-caste' Kimberley children for placement in mission or institution (Choo 1997, p. 21). By 1910, when Moola Bulla was opened, Travelling Inspector Isdell was tasked to remove all 'half caste' children from Fitzroy Crossing and remove them to Moola Bulla (Choo 1997). The compulsory removal of 'half caste' Aboriginal children continued to intensify and in 1930 all removed children were sent to Moola Bulla; previously some were sent to Moore River, Forrest River and Beagle Bay (McDonald 2001). Children continued to be removed from their families and country and placed on Moola Bulla through to the closure of the school in 1955.

Aboriginal perspectives

Research on which this paper is based explores the living experiences and perceptions of Aboriginal children being taken to Moola Bulla for schooling. Frank Byrne, interviewed by Charlie McAdam in 1995, recalls how his mother hid him from the Native Welfare Department the first time they came to steal him away to Moola Bulla:

They come for me twice, the first time they come my mother rolled me up in a swag (Frank Byrne cited in McAdam and Tregenza 1995, p. 57).

However, the second time,

.... the manager he knew where I was and the next time they came back he came with them. So my mother, she had to let me go, like them other feller I suppose.... (Frank Byrne cited in McAdam et al. 1995, p. 57).

While many children were stolen from family and country throughout the East Kimberley, some children were removed from their families when living at Moola Bulla. Many children lived with family in camp on the flat, or further away in the bush, often near the creek (Byrne, Coughlan and Gerard 2018). Ethel Walalgie was born on Moola Bulla and grew up there in the early 1950s. Her story was collected as part of the Moola Bulla Oral History Project run by the Kimberley Language Resource Centre:

Long time I was born at MB and grew up there. but before we went to school we used to stay out in the bush with our grandfather at a place called Red Billabong ... My grandfather used to get sugarbag for us, or goanna, that shows he used to grow us up, with our bushfood (Walalgie 1996, p. 178).

1 This paper acknowledges that the use of racially biased language is offensive to Indigenous people. The terms 'half caste' and 'full blood' are only used within an historical context.

The arms of the Native Welfare Department reached into the camps on Moola Bulla. Ethel was stolen from her grandfather's care:

And after that the welfare² bloke came and said for us to come to school, come to school ... and then we was in the school now, we didn't go back to our grandfather (Walalgie 1996, p. 178).

The theft of children from family and country as told here can be seen as representative of other stories not included in this current paper; all storytellers interviewed in the research project have spoken of the living experiences of trauma of their removal.

Moola Bulla was a renowned adult prison, a place for punishment, control and surveillance. Oral histories and research interviews give accounts of imprisonment at Moola Bulla. Aunty Daisy was born at Cherrabun on Walmajarri country. Her father was arrested for leaving his job, sent to Moola Bulla for punishment. The family (mother, father and children) was transported to Fitzroy Crossing police station on the back of a truck:

... the policeman came and picked up father because he'd run away (from a job) They put my father in jail Then we went to Moola Bulla to live. We stayed there for good. Me and my brothers and sisters grew up there and we forgot about our country (Andrews 1996, p. 148).

A number of the families who lived in camps at Moola Bulla were the traditional owners of the land, the Kija people, others were extended families of older generations who themselves had been stolen (Byrne et al. 2018). Eileen Cox (nee Walalgie), a Kija woman, was born at Moola Bulla in 1946 and on her grandmother's country. Her father was a stockman and her mother a domestic servant who helped Mrs. George, the then manager's wife. Interviewed for the Moola Bulla Oral History Project, Aunty recalls:

I can remember when I was about 5. We used to go to school there with Mr. and Mrs. Gill our teacher We used to live down the camp then ... My grandparents built that (house), and my mother and father and grandparents, and my aunty and uncle all used to live in that house (Cox 1996, p. 176).



Moola Bulla School 1952, showing students and teachers, Mr. and Mrs. Gill, standing in front of the bough shed school house (National Archives of Australia A1200/19).

Children were also taken to Moola Bulla by their families, in search of a western education. Maggie a Jaru woman, was born at Turner River Station:

Then up until 1937, I think it was about maybe 17 October when Dad decided to take us to school, to Moola Bulla. ... well dad took us to Moola Bulla himself. Actually, as I can remember, he took us in his own car, he took me and Mary and left us in Moola Bulla, trying to get an education back there. (Scott 1996, p. 126).

2 It is common practice in the Kimberley to refer to gubernatorial powers as 'welfare', whether they be agents of the Aborigines Department, the Department Native Affairs, Native Welfare Department or Travelling Inspectors. Note however that police are always identified eponymously.

Maggie's story, told to Therese Carr as part of the Moola Bulla Oral History Project, demonstrates her father's aspirations for western education for Maggie.

Aboriginal living experiences at Moola Bulla

By and large, the living experiences of the circumstances of schooling for many children at Moola Bulla are stories of loss, trauma and hardship, yet not of victimhood; they are, simultaneously, stories of great strength survival, resilience and resistance. This is evident in the telling of their stories throughout this paper.

That Moola Bulla was inadequately prepared to care for the influx of children is evident throughout oral histories and testimonials given by the Moola Bulla Aboriginal community. Diet was limited and children relied on collecting their own bush tucker whenever possible (Povey et al. 2019). For many years, children were inadequately housed. Children slept outside and then under the main house to keep dry in the wet season. Aunty Maggie remembers:

When we first went there they gave us one dress, government dress, you know, and one government blanket that had 'Government' written on it, and one government towel, and we used to sleep out in the backyard, you know ... (Scott 1996, p. 127).

When a dormitory was built in 1940 the girls were at least given shelter from the weather. Stolen generation girls were separated from the boys who stayed in the main camp. Aunty Jane sets down her living experiences of the little comfort provided to children:

And we was in the dormitory, and we used to be lined up, you know laying down, no mattress those days just blankets ... No bed, just the floor we used to sleep on. We never used to have a bed there (Long 2018).

The Bateman Survey of Native Affairs in 1948 is telling. Bateman's report showed a lack of any specific government policies or practices in education for Aboriginal children. Furthermore, it was an indictment of condition at Moola Bulla. Bateman argued "To refer to Moola Bulla as a native institution in its present run down state is palpably absurd" (Bateman 1948, p. 11) noting a lack of institutional buildings, poor quality staff quarters, and the absence of an adequate school building. It is salient to note here that Bateman's primary concern is not about the welfare of children, but about the conditions of Moola Bulla as an institution and the inadequate conditions provided for the staff and workers.

Moola Bulla School - A proper bad lie

In the East Kimberley, Moola Bulla officially became the site for a government school in 1929. The proper bad lie is that schooling was available and being consistently delivered at Moola Bulla (Povey et al. 2019). This proper bad lie spread throughout the East Kimberley, yet, the school was only intermittently open – it operated for only 18 of the 45 years of the existence of Moola Bulla.

The proper bad lie of available schooling is potent when we consider children who were removed from family and or country, for schooling. As we have seen already, the abduction of children was frequent, sanctioned by police, Protectors of Aborigines, station managers and on occasions endorsed by non-Aboriginal fathers. This is the proper bad lie, that children were removed from family and/or country under the guise of attending school at Moola Bulla.

So impressive was this lie, some families either relocated so their children could attend school or sent their children to Moola Bulla specifically to gain a western education. We have already heard from Aunty Maggie whose father drove her to Moola Bulla for school. Also, though rare, and often under duress, mothers took their children to Moola Bulla as the best of the limited and poor choices available to them, and with an expectation that their children would go to school. In another complex story that mentioned a mother having travelled to Moola Bulla with her children, I was told:

My mum first took us to, umm, Moola Bulla for schooling. After my father died ... then she decided to bring us to Moola Bulla for school. So Uncle bought us over to Moola Bulla and my mum, and they put us in ... she stayed with us for over a week, until 3 of us, 2 of my other sister and myself, til we settled down (Achoo 2018).

By relinquishing their children, mothers believed their children would gain a western education and in a way that meant they were at least able to ensure their children could remain on country and maintain strong connections with extended family who were a part of the existing

Moola Bulla Aboriginal community. Yet as we have seen, families had educational aspirations and looked to Moola Bulla, mostly only to be thwarted.

Johnny Ross was born in 1940 at Alice Downs; he was stolen from his mother at a very early age (*Stolen Generation Testimonies: Johnny Ross 2009*). Johnny believes his non-Aboriginal father was complicit in his abduction:

I was taken to Moola Bulla and I think my dad had a lot to do with that. They said he had a lot to do with it because they said he wanted to get me some education and things like that (*Stolen Generation Testimonies: Johnny Ross 2009*).

Johnny's non-Aboriginal father endorsed the government policy of educating selected children. Once again, it is worth drawing attention, firstly, to the fact that Johnny was too young to attend school when he was abducted; secondly, Moola Bulla school was closed in 1943 and reopened in 1950. In 1946 Johnny was transferred to Beagle Bay mission for schooling, after spending his early childhood living in poor conditions and separated from his mother. Johnny tells an important story, one that interrogates the benefits of child removal policy, especially under the auspices of western education. Johnny's story also reminds us of the capricious existence of many of the Moola Bulla community.

Conclusion

A common thread across interviews and oral histories is deception; parents were told their children were being taken away for the purpose of schooling, and that schooling was ongoing and consistently delivered. It is as I call it, a proper bad lie. The availability of teachers has been identified as the biggest challenge to the consistent delivery of education (Rumley and Touissant 1990). This doesn't mediate the fact that children were still removed and sent for schooling, to a cattle station that was under-resourced and ill-prepared to take on the responsibilities and accountabilities of the role of an institution for educating children.

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NEW KIMBERLEY WOMEN'S FOOTBALL COMPETITION

In [The West Australian](#) on April 23 this year there was a front page article, which continued on to pages 4 and 5, by Rhianna Mitchell who is the Social Affairs Editor.

She described at length the Central Kimberley Football League, writing that "something magical is taking place". The current movement grew out of the Yungngora women at Noonkanbah Station starting a football team last year. The league currently includes teams from [Yungngora](#), [Bayulu](#) (Fitzroy Crossing), [Wangkatjungka](#) (Christmas Creek), [Yakanarra](#), [Muludja](#) and [Mowanjum](#) just outside Derby.

The article goes on to mention how the participation of teams in the Fitzroy Valley more than doubled over the last two years, and last year there were no forfeits compared to 13 the previous year.

The logistics of this competition are daunting. As well as having to travel hundreds of kilometres, they practise on essentially dirt ovals and not everyone owns football boots. There was an example from last year when Yungngora Blues wanted to travel to Fitzroy Crossing for a match, but the bus charter fell through. Apparently getting there involved an \$800 taxi fare but the game was supported by hundreds of local fans and the Blues defeated the Lady Hawks from Mowanjum by 76 points.

There is an interview with [Cecilia Umbagai](#), a well-known name in the Mowanjum Community. She is the 21-year-old captain of the team and describes how playing sport gives women and girls in the community a chance to develop their personality and confidence. This is in a Community with a background of a high suicide rate which, as we know, is a significant problem in the Kimberley. This participation in football clearly gives these girls an opportunity to participate in a movement that is not only growing in the Kimberley but Australia wide.

I remember some years ago when Ross Kelly spoke about the [Clontarf Foundation](#) and its involvement in male Aboriginal youth in the Kimberley. What a successful program it has been using this as a vehicle to get people to high school to complete their certificates. Ross mentioned that they had tried a basketball program for girls but this wasn't nearly as successful as football was for the boys. Now, with this incredible boom in the participation of women from all walks of life in Australia in the sport, it will be interesting to see if Clontarf will get involved in girls' football.

I went to a few games of women's football when one of my daughter's friends decided to play for the East Perth Seconds about 2 years ago. I had never been to a girls' football game before and I enjoyed it immensely. The enthusiasm and the skills of the players was most impressive.

Jack Vercoe

REST IN PEACE

Broome identity **David Dureau** passed away on 19 June 2019. Dave was born in Perth in 1934, the eldest son of Dorothy and Keith Dureau (of the firm Brown & Dureau). In 1940, the family moved to Melbourne, where Dave completed his education at Geelong Grammar. He later obtained a degree in agriculture in New Zealand, before returning to Australia five years later. During the 1960s he worked as an abalone diver at Eden, NSW and then as a mother-of-pearl diver in the Torres Strait. In 1970, he boarded the lugger “John Louis”, sailing from Thursday Island to the Kimberley. In the pearling industry, Dave was one of the first users of hookah gear – light breathing apparatus connected to an air supply on deck: a system used by abalone divers in NSW. This proved so successful that by 1974, the pearling industry had converted almost entirely to the hookah method, replacing the cumbersome bronze helmets, canvas suits and lead-weighted boots.

At Broome, Dave became skipper of the lugger “Centurion”, working the Eighty-Mile Beach grounds, but was later sacked for demanding equal pay for all his crew, as Aboriginal men were then paid less than other races.

By this time, he was dating Elsta Foy, a young mother of two boys, who had a coffee shop near the Commonwealth Bank. They were soon inseparable, taking up a large horticultural block at Cable Beach. Dave then established his gardening business, advertising in the “Broome News” through the 1980s under the unforgettable headline ‘STOP THS MAN’.

Dave’s funeral service took place at his block, after which he was buried in the Broome Cemetery, alongside two boab trees. His grave was decorated with pearl shells and bougainvillea bracts, while local musicians Stephen Pigram and Donny D’Antoine strummed “Saltwater Cowboy” and “Kimberley Dreaming” to a hushed crowd. An evening wake, hosted at Goolari Media, was enlivened by a slideshow with tributes from relatives and friends.

Steve Arrow recalled Dave’s unique, unhurried style as a diver, gliding serenely to the sea-bed and his famed ability to locate shell missed by others working up ahead of him.

Tim Willing recalled Dave’s pivotal role in the Broome Botanical Society during its activist heydays of the 1980s and 1990s, which were instrumental in the creation of Minyirr Park, the protection of gubinge groves and vine thickets, as well as the plant book *Broome and Beyond*, co-written with botanist Kevin Kenneally. Tim also mentioned some of Dave’s epic bushwalks through remote regions of the Kimberley and his keen eye in locating new plant species.

Peter Mitchell outlined Dave’s part in forming the Kimberley Conservation Group and his commitment to preserving Broome’s cultural heritage. This included his celebrated arrest in 1999, trying to prevent the demolition of the divers’ quarters on Dampier Terrace: former residence for many Japanese and Malay pearling crew.

Martin Pritchard, on behalf of Environs Kimberley, aptly described Dave as “a warrior for Country”: an inspirational founder of the conservation movement in the Kimberley. In 2011, aged 76, he bravely stood in front of a bulldozer and riot squad in defence of his beloved vine thickets at Walmadany/James Price Point.

Liz Janney’s tribute – Why the RED socks? – noted that this was his symbol to identify with the pindan soil and outside work, as opposed to the long white socks favoured by the “verandah pearlers”!

Dave will be greatly missed by all, but especially Elsta, his son Andrew, stepson Jeffrey and their extended families.

Tim Willing

PHILLIP PARKER KING – LEGENDARY SURVEYOR OF THE AUSTRALIAN COAST: PROGRESS TOWARDS THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF HIS VOYAGES

On 3 July 2019, Chris Done, a former CALM Regional Manager in the Kimberley, and Andrew Burbidge, a prolific Kimberley wildlife researcher, enlivened the audience with a summary of Phillip Parker King's Kimberley coastal surveys and the plans in place for a 'Mermaid Tree' Bicentenary. Part of the project brief for Phillip Parker King and the 'Mermaid Tree' Bicentenary is reproduced below to convey the essence of the presentation. The appendices mentioned in the opening paragraph are based on *Australian Dictionary of Biography* entries, and a fourth appendix is being drafted for [Bungaree](#), an Aboriginal man from the Sydney area, who accompanied King on his 1820 expedition.

In the period 1817-1822, [Phillip Parker King](#) (Appendix 1) commanded a series of voyages of exploration and hydrographic survey around the Australian coast. The main vessel used in the work was His Majesty's Cutter *Mermaid*. In September-October 1820, as the *Mermaid* was leaking and needed repairs, King careened it at Careening Bay in the Kimberley, now within the Prince Regent National Park. During the period the crew were ashore, 'HMC Mermaid 1820' was carved into the trunk of a large boab. Also while ashore, [Allan Cunningham](#) (Appendix 2), botanist/naturalist aboard the *Mermaid*, collected many plants new to science. Also on the *Mermaid* was [John Septimus Roe](#) (Appendix 3), who later became Western Australia's first surveyor general.



The tree was sketched by Aeneas Gunn who visited with Joseph Bradshaw in Bradshaw's schooner *Gemini* in 1893, and then apparently forgotten until 'rediscovered' in 1973 by a group of Perth scientists who were conducting a biological survey of Kimberley islands. Paul Wilson from the WA Herbarium, who wanted to re-collect Cunningham's plants, some never seen since, drew the group's attention to the possibility that the tree and its inscription may still be there. The 'Mermaid Tree' is now a 'must see' destination for most of the cruise ship passengers on Kimberley coastal cruises.

In 2020, it will be 200 years since the inscription was made. It also marks 200 years since the mid-point of PP King's Australian survey work.

King went on to do similar work for the Royal Navy in the extreme south of South America, and his exploits and work there have been recognised in Chile, whilst his Australian endeavours remain almost totally unknown to most Australians. King went on to become (amongst many other achievements), the first Australian born (Norfolk Island - 1791) person to become a Flag Officer of the Royal Navy.

A small committee is promoting and guiding progress towards commemorating the achievements of King and his crew during the bicentenary period, particularly in the Kimberley of Western Australia. The committee consists of Colin Ingram and Peter Sharp (Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions WA (DBCA) (DBCA's Head Office), Craig Olejnik (DBCA Broome), Brian Abbott (PP King descendant and author), Andrew Burbidge (one of the 1973 're-locators' of the iconic Mermaid Tree), and Chris Done and Richard Diggins (who first proposed the commemoration). Gerard King and Jeremy King, descendants of PP King, have attended meetings of the committee, as have Nathan Greenhill (DBCA Coordinator Recreation, Planning and Design Unit) and Catherine Belcher from the WA Museum.

The committee is planning an event in two locations to celebrate the carving of the tree and the achievements of King and the *Mermaid's* crew. The first location will be Careening Bay, with the commemoration to be held on Friday 25 September 2020. The current boardwalk and signage will be upgraded and two young boabs, cuttings from the Mermaid Tree taken and grown by Chris Done, will be planted either side of an extended walking track. The committee is currently interacting with possible sponsors to help fund this event.

The second location, confirmed since the Kimberley Society talk, will be at the WA Maritime Museum in Fremantle. The committee proposes that the two events be held at the same time, hopefully with a video hook-up via satellite. The involvement of a TV station and/or film crew would be welcome.

The committee is currently liaising, or will liaison, with:

- Wunambal Gaambera traditional owners
- The Royal Australian Navy
- The Royal Australian Mint
- Academia
- Australia Post
- Kings Park and Botanic Garden (part of DBCA)
- The Western Australia Museum
- The WA Parks Foundation
- The Kimberley Society
- Kimberley coastal cruise operators
- King and Roe descendants
- News media
- Possible sponsors

The committee proposes that a suitable permanent memorial be designed and built for the Perth event, possibly a plaque with details of the 'Mermaid Tree' and King's achievements, as well as acknowledging the contributions of Roe and Cunningham and the Traditional Owners of the site. There should be comprehensive information available at the Perth event.

It is possible that our events could be part of a larger, national commemoration of PP King's achievements, which included:

- Accurate mapping of many previously uncharted, or poorly charted sections of the Australian coastline, particularly northern Australia including the Kimberley, but also the inside passage west of the Great Barrier Reef and parts of Tasmania.
- Important scientific discoveries made during the journeys.
- The achievements of senior crew members, particularly Alan Cunningham (botanist and scientist) and John Septimus Roe (surveyor).

For further information or to register your interest in the project please contact Colin Ingram – colin.ingram@dbca.wa.gov.au – phone 08 9219 9938.

LAND CLEARING ON YAKKA MUNGA STATION

In early June, [Shanghai Zenith \(Australia\) Investment Holding](#) cleared large areas of [land](#) at Yakka Munga Station, south of Derby. On discovering this, the Nyikina Mangala people, who hold [native title rights](#) over that country, wrote to three WA Government ministers demanding that the work be stopped. By 19 June, when 14 Traditional Owners blocked the Yakka Munga entrance gate in a [protest](#), it was estimated that [120 hectares](#) had been stripped. A [stop-work order](#) was issued and the government is investigating the matter. Shanghai Zenith had not negotiated with the native title representative group, Walalakoo Aboriginal Corporation, as it is obliged to under the Yakka Munga Station and Nyikina Mangala [Indigenous Land Use Agreement](#). Nor had the company applied to the government for a [clearing permit](#) for works exceeding maintenance of the lease. The scale of the intended works was such that Charles Hull Contracting is said to have been expecting its contract to run until [October](#).

OCCASIONAL FOOTBALL ARTICLE

[Francis Watson](#) from Balgo finally made his first AFL appearance in Alice Springs on 20 July 2019 against Melbourne.

His effort was impressive for a first game player. *The West Australian* on 22.7.19 rated him a 7 which was equal to [Elliot Yeo](#) and [Jeremy McGovern](#) with a comment that he was composed in debut in defence. He finished with 14 disposals at 86% efficiency. He also took three marks and had made at least two tackles.

In the post-match interview, which I saw on Channel 7, he mentioned a lot of family had come down from Balgo and Halls Creek so they would have come down the so-called [Tanami Highway](#) which is the quickest way to Alice Springs from Balgo. It was an impressive debut. To balance the ledger [Joel Hamling](#) was instrumental in Fremantle's victory against Sydney with one behind at Optus Stadium on the same weekend.

Jack Vercoe

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