

*Dr Francis Aubie  
“Ali” Sharr OBE  
1914-2002*





Claire Forte (Acting CEO and State Librarian)

As we reach the end of 2002 we can reflect on some great achievements during the year. We are very excited that the items purchased from the Freycinet collection at Christie's auction have arrived at the State Library and plans can now

proceed to showcase the collection to the community early in 2003.

We are also pleased to offer a new online reference service to the community. *AskNow!*, a nation wide interactive chat reference service accessible to Western Australians through the State Library's web site, has been piloted over several months by Australia's national, state and territory libraries. The collaborative service takes advantage of the time zones across the country to enable all Australians to receive online assistance from a reference librarian in real time. This new initiative of the Council of Australian State Libraries (CASL) will be officially launched in Sydney in January. Judging by the success of the service to date, it will continue to be a popular way for the community to be assisted through the online information maze.

Amidst all the excitement and celebration over the last few months, we have also been saddened by the deaths of Ali Sharr, the first State Librarian and his wife Flo, also a long serving employee of the Library Board. Ali and Flo will be greatly missed by their many friends and colleagues.

We wish all our readers a peaceful festive season and a wonderful year ahead in 2003.



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## Freycinet items arrive from London

Seven items from the Freycinet collection, purchased for the State at auction in September, arrived at the State Library on 10 December.



The Hon Sheila M'Hale, Minister for Culture and the Arts (left), helps State Library staff Stephanie Baily and Patrick Moore unpack Heirisson's 1801 map of the Swan River.

The Hon Sheila M'Hale, Minister for Culture and the Arts, WA State Library Custodians and other dignitaries

including representatives from some of the major donor companies, previewed the items as they were unpacked by State Library conservation staff.

"Their significance to our history will make them a valuable and treasured asset for the State", Ms M'Hale said. "The items will be exhibited to the public in the State Library early in the New Year, and I encourage everyone to take the opportunity to view these historic works".

The Minister thanked the WA State Library Custodians for co-ordinating the fundraising effort, and the known and anonymous donors who made the purchase possible.

## Mollie Lukis Award 2002

State Library staff were delighted that Mollie Lukis could personally present the Mollie Lukis Award to well-deserved winner, David Jones. Because David had been doing work on wool industry records, after presenting the Award Miss Lukis reminisced about some of the station records she was associated with as the State Archivist. Her entertaining and informative recollections were enjoyed by all. She served as Archives Officer and State Archivist for 26 years, retiring in 1972.

The citation for the Award was:

*As coordinator of the Wool Project, David Jones has been an energetic and skilful proponent of those aspects of archival work which are the subject of the Mollie Lukis Award. His enthusiasm and hard work has resulted in a better arrangement of existing collections, the appraisal of and significant additions to collections and an increased profile for the Battye Library's services in the broader community.*

*cont. on p.3*

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COVER: Dr Francis Aubie Sharr OBE, first State Librarian of Western Australia's library service, died recently in Perth. His untiring efforts in his 23 year career as State Librarian are celebrated in an obituary on page 3 of this issue.

## WA mourns loss of library visionary

The library community has lost one of its leading visionaries, Dr Francis Aubie "Ali" Sharr OBE and his wife Florence. Dr Sharr passed away after a short illness on November 16, following his wife's death a week prior.

Ali Sharr was the Library Board's first State Librarian and executive officer, from 1953 until his retirement in 1976. In his 23 years in office, Ali Sharr created library services to rural and remote areas of Western Australia, with the number of public libraries associated with the Library Board growing from zero to 152. He transformed the State Library to a world class repository of information, and created the first publicly accessible Music Library in Australia. During 1962-63, Dr Sharr served as an advisor to the government of Nigeria for UNESCO's library development program, and from 1969-70, he was President of the Library Association of Australia .

In the Library Board's annual report of 1975-76, the Board recorded the following resolution in appreciation of Ali Sharr's services to libraries:

"Resolved that the Board place on record its deep appreciation of the invaluable service rendered by Mr

F.A. Sharr as the first Executive Officer of the Board and the first State Librarian over his continuous period of 23 years.

"Distinctive features of the library service of Western Australia over those years were in very large measure due to the imagination and efficient administration of Mr Sharr. He was also able to attract and associate with him in what was largely pioneering work throughout the state of Western Australia a group of professional librarians from outside and inside Australia. The high reputation which the library service of Western Australia now enjoys throughout the world is a tribute to the achievement of the first State Librarian and his senior colleagues.

"Members of the Library Board are also aware of the respect in which its State Librarian has been held by his professional colleagues in other parts of the Australian Commonwealth and of their appreciation of the contribution he has made to the standing of the profession throughout the Commonwealth. The Board recognises the consequential benefits which have resulted from this for library services in Western Australia."



Dr Francis Aubie "Ali" Sharr in 1990.

After his retirement, Ali Sharr was awarded several honours for his work, including an OBE in 1977, the LAA's H.C.L. Anderson Award for outstanding contribution to library services in 1980, and an honorary Doctor of Letters from Curtin University in 1991.

Ali and Flo Sharr will be missed by their many friends and colleagues in the State Library.

*Dana Tonello  
Public Programs  
State Library of Western Australia*

### Mollie Lukis Award 2002 (cont.)

*The project's primary aims were twofold: appraising and improving access to existing collections about the wool industry in the Battye Library Private Archives, and seeking new material. David's work was excellent in both areas.*

*He appraised and arranged a number of important collections, including the Rubin collection, being the combined records of De Grey, Mulyie and Ettrick stations, administered as a single entity by the De Grey Pastoral Company. Overall, 276 boxes of records were classified, dated, sorted, housed and described.*

*To develop the collection further, potential donors needed to be identified and contacted. David, in consultation with historians and industry contacts, researched and developed a list of*

*names, then contacted them by letter, phone, and in person. Information sheets were produced: "Donating to the Wool Story Archive" and "Guidelines for Donors". These contacts resulted in donations of material from, among others, Elders, Australian Wool Handlers, and the West Australian Wool Buyers Association. The collections received were appraised and processed, often including preservation work, and placed in proper storage.*

*An important part of the Wool Project was publicity. David organised media contacts and provided information which was subsequently used in rural newspaper stories in wool growing areas.*

*David Jones' work on the Wool Project has added considerably to collections of information held on this industry which*



Mollie Lukis with 2002 award recipient, David Jones.

*has been so important in Western Australia's development. David's enthusiasm, skill and hard work on the project has ensured its success and promoted the services of the Battye Library. The range and depth of primary materials in the State Library would be very much the poorer without the deeply committed work that David has done.*

# Milestone for the Friends of the Battye Library

On a cold Monday 6 July 1981, the Friends of Battye Library was formally established with a prime objective to assist and promote the interests of the Battye Library with an emphasis on the acquisition, preservation and use of archival and documentary materials. When the Public Records Office (now the State Records Office) which is responsible for State Government records, became a separate branch, the Friends' aims broadened to include the new office as well.

In recognition of the vital role the Friends play and the importance of the work done by members and volunteers, a 21st birthday celebration was arranged for 22 October as the last meeting of the year. Guest speaker for the evening was Western Australia's eminent natural and social historian and botanical artist, Rica Erickson, AM Hon DLitt. FRWAHS. Rica gave a lively and interesting talk on her life's work and her many years of association with the Battye Library. At the conclusion of the address, Dr Ronda Jamieson, Director of the Battye Library, presented a brief demonstration of the website which has been created to honour Rica which can be found at [www.liswa.wa.gov.au/erickson/index.html](http://www.liswa.wa.gov.au/erickson/index.html).

Chris Coggin, retiring Director of the State Records Office was thanked for his contribution to the Battye Library and for his unflinching support of the Friends. He has been a key player in the collection and preservation of Western Australian archival records since his appointment as State Archivist in 1978 through to his prime role in establishing the State Records Office.

The evening also contained some delightful surprises. The first was an announcement by Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Bolton, President of the Friends, that Rica is the first recipient of the Friends of Battye Library's 'Gem of Time' award which has been set up to honour Western Australia's living treasures. This recognition is for those



ABOVE: Prof. Geoffrey Bolton (President, Friends of Battye Library and honorary life member) and Rica Erickson (Gem of Time) at the celebration for Friends of Battye Library's 21st anniversary.



RIGHT: Battye Library's Director, Dr Ronda Jamieson, and Gillian O'Mara (Vice-President, Friends of Battye Library) light the candles on the Friends of Battye Library's 21st birthday cake.

who have made a long-term and significant commitment to the aims and objectives of the Battye Library and/or the State Records Office. The second was the conferring of honorary life membership of the Friends of Battye Library on Professor Bolton and Dr Pamela Statham-Drew as a tribute to the work they have accomplished on behalf of the Friends over the years.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the State Library's acting CEO, Claire Forte, invited members and guests to sit down to a 21st birthday dinner to round out the celebrations for the Friends' coming of age and congratulate Rica Erickson for being the first 'Gem of Time'.

*Jennie Carter,  
Team Leader, Battye Archival Collections  
State Library of Western Australia*

# Online answers available Australia wide - just AskNow!

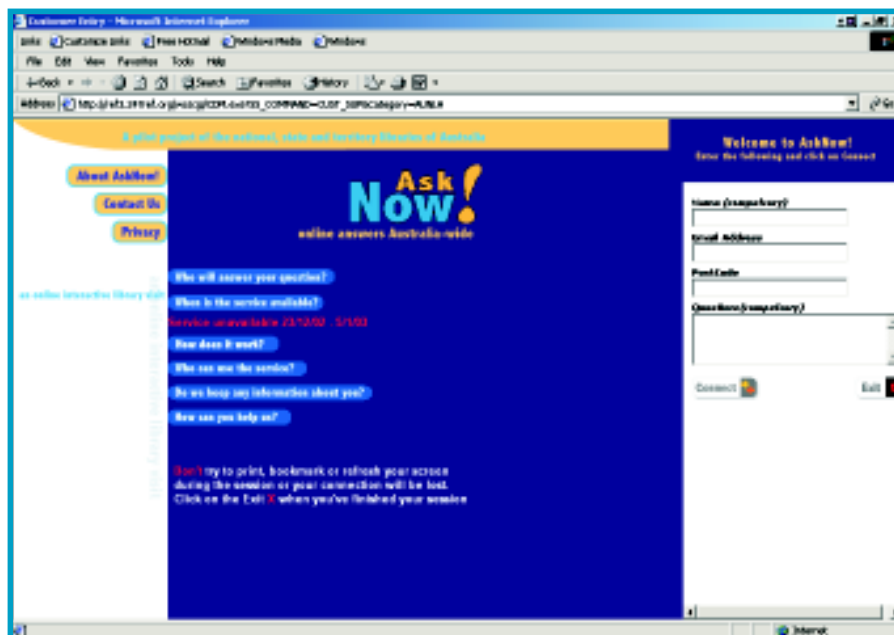
A new Australian interactive chat reference service went live on 26 August 2002 and is available from the websites of Australia's national, state and territory libraries. The service enables members of the public, wherever they may be, to ask a question online, in real time, and receive an answer from a reference librarian while they wait.

AskNow! is a collaborative 12-month pilot, staffed on a time-share basis by librarians from the National Library of Australia, the State Libraries of Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Tasmania, South Australia, Western Australia, the Northern Territory and the ACT Library and Information Service.

A key feature of the live reference/chat software, which distinguishes it from email transactions is that the online transaction occurs in real time. It allows the librarian to search for information on the World Wide Web and immediately share the found pages with the client while they wait. Clients can be guided through their search, as inquirer and librarian view the same web pages. Help in searching library catalogues, the Internet, and eventually online databases, becomes more useful and efficient.

A by-product of such a service is the potential for the development of a national knowledge base. This could be used to save repeated staff effort in responding to frequently asked questions and perhaps offered as a searchable database to end users in the future.

In the last two years, interactive chat software applications have increasingly been used in the library environment to service existing clients in a more timely manner, to build relationships with new clients and demonstrate that the skills of library staff are transferable to the online environment. It is important that



ABOVE: The AskNow home page.

leading Australian libraries enter this new realm of reference service delivery.

AskNow! will increase service provision to clients and is being offered as an additional service to the on-site, email, letter/fax and telephone reference services already provided by the participating libraries.

Clients of the service can expect a consistent, high quality and professional service with an appropriate response. AskNow! staff will attempt to answer ready-reference questions within 10 minutes. Complex questions, or ones requiring more time or resources, may be referred to an email service for further assistance and a fuller response.

Enquiries are treated confidentially and service providers ensure the client's right to privacy.

A formal evaluation will be conducted of AskNow! mid-way through the pilot and again in August 2003. It will include assessment of service sustainability; issues of standards and best practice; assessment of staffing

levels, skills and training; participant and end-user feedback; analysis of service use and potential partnerships. Opportunities for other libraries to join the service will be considered after the mid-term evaluation.

AskNow! is available 6am to 5pm Western Standard Time, Monday to Friday, and can be accessed by logging on to the State Library of Western Australia's website at [www.liswa.wa.gov.au](http://www.liswa.wa.gov.au) selecting the "Ask a Librarian" link and then clicking on the AskNow! icon. Alternatively you can go to [www.asknow.gov.au](http://www.asknow.gov.au) and log in.

*Gabrielle Reynolds*  
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**Ask  
Now!**

# PANDORA's Box? *Open it online and see!*

The Battye Library is responsible for preserving the State's documentary heritage. A vital part of this heritage comprises published works, which increasingly are being made available electronically over the Internet. Immediate action is needed if the significant portion of Western Australia's documentary heritage that is being produced online is to be archived and preserved. The State collection should also form part of a nationally accessible collection.

In June 2001, Ronda Jamieson, the Director of the Battye Library, met with representatives from all State Libraries and staff of the National Library of Australia in Canberra to discuss participation in the PANDORA Archive. The Archive preserves and provides networked access to the online documentary heritage of Australia. The State Library formally became a PANDORA partner in August 2001. While Brian Stewart, the Team Leader for Battye Published

Collections, was the project leader for the development of a discussion paper on the collecting of electronic publications in early 2000, the new partnership was the catalyst for the development of a formal selection policy for the development of a collection of online electronic publications. The Library Board approved the selection policy in October 2002.

While work on developing policy was underway, staff in the Battye Library were busy training and beginning the time-consuming process to obtain permissions and archive electronic publications and websites through the PANDORA Archive maintained by the National Library of Australia. Glenda Oakley has been the PANDORA co-ordinator and she has taken on the challenge of building the WA electronic collections with enthusiasm. This has involved a great deal of consultation with our National Library partners, particularly over technical issues. The

support of the National Library staff has been very much appreciated. And the response of Western Australian authors and website administrators to Glenda's requests to archive their publications or sites have been very enthusiastic. Here are some of the comments received:

- *Wow!! That's fantastic!*
- *I went in expecting links to my novels and found all those other references. Amazing how they have been cross-referenced.*
- *Thank you very much for providing such a professional resource. I feel very special!*
- *Best wishes to you and your library team. Please pass on my thanks to all involved.*
- *My comment is "I'm totally chuffed. Looks great on both sites." I commenced the site to provide primary source material for art students and maybe, just maybe, write a form of art history. Thanks to you, SLWA and NLA and PANDORA, I've done just that!*



LEFT: The PANDORA home page.

BELOW: Librarian Glenda Oakley, Battye Library's PANDORA co-ordinator, is currently building the Western Australian contribution to the website.



Already a variety of Western Australian publications, ranging from websites for the 2001 State election through a variety of government publications to art sites, are available on the PANDORA site. To see these, connect to the State Library of Western Australia's catalogue at <http://www.liswa.wa.gov.au/> and do a keyword search on 'Pandora Electronic Collection Western Australia'. To see all the catalogued titles do a title search on 'Pandora Electronic Collection'.

The full PANDORA archive is available on the PANDORA archive site at <http://pandora.nla.gov.au/index.html>. And while you are there take a look at some of the wonderful resources which are available, such as the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games, Centenary of Federation and many others.

*Brian Stewart  
Team Leader, Battye Published Collections  
State Library of Western Australia*

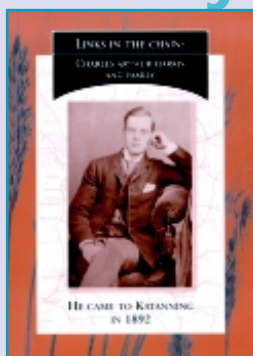


### Kittyhawk Pilots

Cyril Ayris

This is the story of Flying Officer Stan Watt and some of his fellow brave WWII pilots who pressed attack after attack through the heaviest anti-aircraft fire the Germans could muster. It is also the story of their remarkable aeroplane, the Kittyhawk, which made the transition from fighter to dive bomber with outstanding success.

Stanley Milton Watt, Crawley WA, 2002



### Links in the Chain: Charles Arthur Harris and family

compiled by Marolyn Hamilton

Twenty gold sovereigns were stolen from Charlie Harris during his voyage from England and he arrived with little money at Fremantle in 1891, aged 23. Unable to find work at his trade of baker and confectioner, he walked from Perth to Albany, almost dying of thirst on the way.

Encore Publishing, Dianella WA, 2002

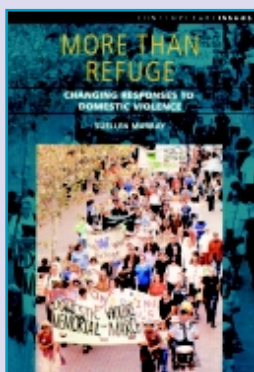


### Mool-nya-moonya Dreaming

Julie Tuckey

The story of two children growing up on a cattle station in the Hamersley Range of Western Australia and who are of mixed blood. The boy, Toby, has problems coming to terms with his Aboriginality, and as they seek one journey after another into the Aboriginal dreamtime stories, Toby is able to find and accept who he is.

Indian Ocean Books, WA, 2002

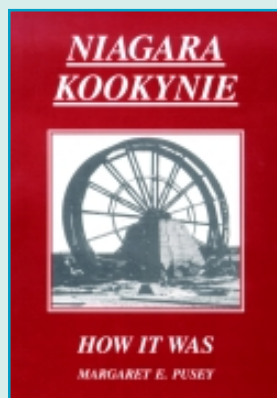


### More than Refuge: changing responses to domestic violence

Suellen Murray

Women's refuges in the 1970s did more than just provide crisis accommodation; they worked to politicise domestic violence. Politicians and bureaucrats began to take notice from the 1980s and, over time, service responses improved. The author uses Nardine Women's Refuge in Western Australia as a case study.

University of WA Press, Nedlands WA, 2002

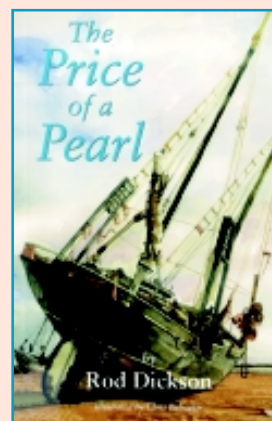


### Niagara Kookynie: how it was

Margaret E. Pusey

This book is the first release of memories collected from the people who were Niagara and Kookynie, Western Australia. It is a journey into the home life, school days, tragedies, plagues and mining accidents. A compilation of photographs, mining details, humorous and sad tales ensure it will become a treasure for Goldfields families.

Self-published, Kookynie WA, 2002



### The Price of a Pearl

Rod Dickson

In 22 individual stories, mostly unpublished, Rod Dickson has attempted to portray the hardships encountered by the thousands of men who were engaged in the pearling industry during the early part of the 1900s in the north-west of Western Australia.

Hesperian Press, Carlisle WA, 2002

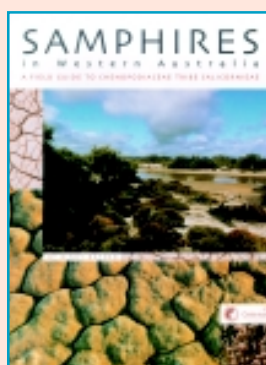


### A Radio Active Life

Harry Atkinson

Born legally blind, Harry Atkinson was first licensed as a radio amateur in 1937 and was an active ham until his death in 2001. He began as a roving reporter for the Wireless News before embarking on a career in country broadcasting. This is his story.

Self-published, Geraldton WA, 2002

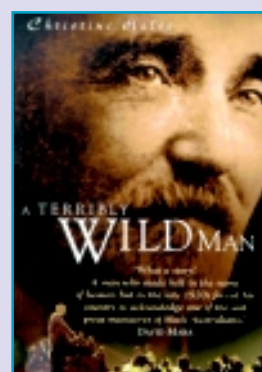


### Samphires in Western Australia

Bindy Datson

Samphires are an easily overlooked and much maligned succulent plant, often found growing in inhospitable places such as saline wetlands and tidal estuaries. This new field guide to *Chenopodiaceae* tribe *salicornieae* describes each species in simple terms and with the aid of simple keys.

Department of Conservation and Land Management, WA, 2002



### A Terribly Wild Man

Christine Halse

Ernest Gribble's life teemed with trials and contradictions. Once described as the first 'successful' missionary to the Aboriginals, Gribble would die in obscurity, mourned only by those he had spent his life trying to protect. Christine Halse's biography reveals the humanity of this complex, tragic figure - a man whose life echoes the tensions that haunt Australia's past.

Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest NSW, 2002

All of these books can be found in the Batty Library

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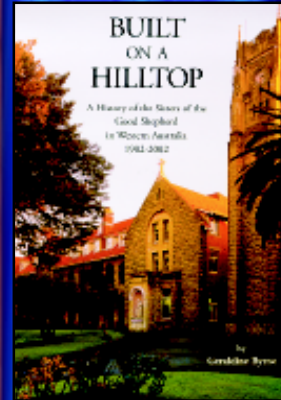
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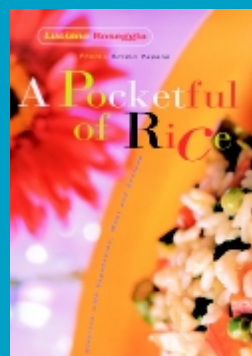
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