

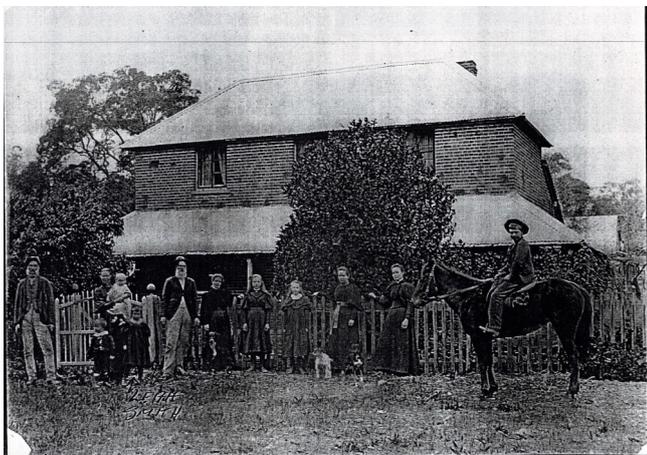
Happy 60th Birthday Helena Valley!

The MHHS recently received some delightful photos of Helena Valley, sent to us by Richard Moore, a resident of the area between 1942 and 1986. These photos prompted further research into the early history of this area and the discovery that the suburb was 'created' on 22 February 1961.

This relatively recent legal recognition is despite the fertile river lands along the banks of the Helena River being some of the earliest selected by European colonists. While Samuel Talbot and Henry Camfield, both of whom arrived on the *Caroline* in 1829, obtained land grants in the Helena Valley, neither man did much to work these leases themselves.

Talbot left the colony and for 60 years his grant was neglected. Camfield leased his property out to various tenants and it became known as Clayton Farm. It was left to Richard Smith, one of Camfield's former indentured servants, and his wife Mary, to develop a thriving farm on the banks of the Helena River. Richard and Mary lived at Clayton Farm from at least 1846, purchasing it outright in 1853.

Using clay from the site, they built a brick cottage (c. 1850s) and then in 1861 a two-storey house. These buildings are still extant and represent the only



Smith Family, Clayton Farm,
Helena Valley, 1898.

remaining early Colonial buildings on the Helena River. Commercial brickyards later developed in the area, taking advantage of the excellent local clay.

In 1906, the Smith family's association with Helena Valley ended, with the sale of Clayton Farm to Katherine Samson, who then subdivided the land to be sold as small orchard blocks. Following WW1 sales of the Clayton Farm blocks 'took off', with returned soldiers receiving discounts on the purchase price. At the same time, James Morrison, who owned much of Talbot's original grant, subdivided the land. Consequently by the 1920s the area contained many small farms and orchards.



Fyfe Street, Helena Valley, June 1958. Photo
Courtesy Richard Moore.

Originally, the locality was part of three different Shires. However, by the 1920s locals started referring to the area as Helena Valley and in 1927 the Helena Valley School opened, followed by the Helena Valley Tennis Club in 1936. The original school building still remains tucked within the much larger complex.

Helena Valley was finally legally defined as a suburb in 1961, following a submission by Paul Seaman, a lawyer and later QC, who lived in the district. This brought the whole area into the Shire of Mundaring.

Today, Helena Valley consists of a variety of different sized housing lots with subdivision continuing through to the present day.

From the Curator's Desk:

When Barry Came to Mundaring

The best aspect of my role as the museum's curator is seeing the treasures that are sent/brought into the Society's offices by visitors from near and far. Before revealing their photo/document/ artefact, these visitors often preface their comments to me with 'You might not be interested in this, but. . .'. Invariably I **am** interested, often very!

In recent weeks, a delightful assortment of items have been donated to the MHHS including a wedding dress and bridesmaid's dress from the 1960s, a pager from the Parkerville Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade, and a 1978 Calendar from Errington's Drapery in Mundaring. One of the more intriguing items, however, is the typescript of the inaugural C. Y. O'Connor lecture, given in Mundaring on 10 March 1984 by the Hon. Barry Jones MP, Minister for Science and Technology. While lecture notes might seem a little ho hum, as with most items in a museum collection it is the item's story that is of significance.

Barry Jones
when Minister
for Science and
Technology,
1983-1990.



The typescript was donated to the MHHS by Brian Hunt, a former resident and Councillor in the Shire of Mundaring. The idea for the lecture, says Brian, came to him following his attendance at the Murdoch Oration, given by High Court Judge, Michael Kirby. Why can't Mundaring have one of these, he thought? Naming the event to honour one of WA's most distinguished engineers with, of course, strong connections to Mundaring made sense, as did the date of the address, 82 years to the day after O'Connor's death.

While the event was organised by the Rotary Club of Mundaring, it came to fruition with the assistance of

the national capital,
Sir John Forrest was his essential patron and after his transfer *to greater prominence*
in ~~Melbourne~~ ^{Melbourne} in January 1901 as Commonwealth Minister for Defence O'Connor was far more isolated. The rising Labor party singled him out for attack in the State Parliament.

This was ironic because as Engineer-in-Chief he had introduced the eight hour day for Government employees.

One of O'Connor's last tasks was to survey the Trans-Australian railway route pursuant to the agreement which formed the basis of Western Australia entering the Federation.

In March 1902, his biographer says, he was assailed by an 'utter weariness of spirit', deep depression complicated by insomnia and neuralgia. The pipeline to Coolgardie was not yet finished. He was shattered by accusations of financial impropriety.

-82 years ago today-

On 10 March he rode out into the sea off Fremantle Beach, near his home and shot himself, "The position has become impossible", he wrote "I feel my brain is suffering ... - I have lost control of my thoughts".

In 1903 Forrest opened the East Goldfields Water Supply and water was available at 3/6^d per 1000 gallons.

Extract from Barry Jones' Speech. 10 March 1984 at the Mundaring Administration Building

many others including Gavan Troy, MLA for Mundaring, and David Malcolm, future Chief Justice and Lieutenant Governor of WA. The lecture was held at the newly opened Shire of Mundaring Administration Buildings and members of the O'Connor family were part of a packed audience.

Barry Jones' lecture is an erudite analysis of the challenges posed by technological change and the reluctance of Australian industry to invest in research and development—an unsurprising argument given Jones' portfolio and his reputation for being a 'technology zealot'. Email me if you would like a copy!

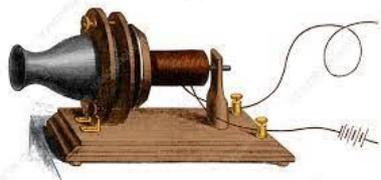
A fascinating aside to the lecture is the observation made by Brian Hunt that Barry, **whilst presenting the lecture**, scribbled away at his notes making corrections, converting miles to kilometres, adding information—brain and mouth working independently. These alterations can be seen in the extract above, where Barry's speech writer had written that the capital of Australia in 1901 was Canberra. No, it was Melbourne! Following the success of this first O'Connor lecture, a second was planned for 1985 with Phillip Adams as the speaker. Alas, nothing came of it.

So, if you have any items pertinent to the history of the Shire of Mundaring that you no longer want, please send them my way!

Significant Events in March

March 3rd 1847 is the birthday of Alexander Graham Bell. He is the inventor of the first practical telephone. On 7 March 1876 Bell was granted his telephone patent and on 10 March that same year he made the first ever telephone call. His assistant Thomas Watson was in an adjoining room and Bell was speaking through a primitive mouthpiece with a connecting wire. His first words through this apparatus were “Mr Watson, come here, I want to see you”.

From this:



Bell's first telephone -image courtesy of Science Photo Library

To this:



Image courtesy of unsplash.com



Barbara Dale-Smith at the Mundaring Telephone Exchange

Mundaring's first telephone exchange opened on 14 September 1912. The exchange comprised a large board (switchboard) with many cords with plugs. Incoming calls would light up the board and when answered by the operator, the caller would be connected to the requested number. A busy switchboard operator could have over a hundred cords to be connected.

What has our Prez been up to?

Apart from chasing up containers for change all over Mundaring, Jenny had time to attend an Oral History training weekend on the 6th and 7th March, thanks to \$1600 received from Ken Wyatt's Office. Here are her musings:

“Jeff Murray and I attended an Oral History Training weekend in order to increase accredited volunteers in this field. It was an engaging two days. Our presenters were Elaine Rabbit from Broome and a local soon to be retired Doug Ayres. Their presentations were sprinkled with humour and the way they interacted made time slip by so quickly. On the second day we were tasked with a twenty minute interview of an unknown member of the group. My partner and I experienced many of the pitfalls of an oral history where our lack of preparation caused major problems. Our recorder was found first to have a flat battery then a faulty recording card. When these were replaced we commenced only to find as we were outside, the rustle of leaves in the trees blocked out our voices so we shifted location. At this point across the road a fellow started tuning up his sports car, later another householder started hammering, later another commenced mowing the lawn (it was Sunday). At this point we decided to make our own sound room in the car! The car had been parked in the sun for three hours so was a real hot box. After parking under a tree, winding down the windows, we joined the group for lunch. After an hour and a half we still didn't have any interview recorded! Thankfully after lunch recordings in the car were perfect!”

Upcoming Events 2021

DATE/TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
Saturday 20 March, 2pm	General Meeting	Boya Community Centre 119-135 Scott St HELENA VALLEY
Saturday 20 March, 3pm	Guest Speaker: Richard Offen Perth During World War 2	Boya Community Centre 119—135 Scott St HELENA VALLEY
Wednesday 7 April, 4pm	Executive Meeting	Mundaring Stationmaster's House 3060 Jacoby St Mundaring
Thursday 29 April, 4pm	Last Day of 'Head for the Hills: Chidlow's WW2 Army Camps	Mundaring District Museum 7225 Great Eastern Highway Mundaring
Sunday 18 April	Opening of National Trust's Australian Heritage Festival	Check website for details nationaltrust.org.au/ahf/
Wednesday 19 May	Closing of National Trust's Australian Heritage Festival	
Saturday 22 May, 9.30am	'Open All Hours' Exhibition	Mundaring District Museum 7225 Great Eastern Highway Mundaring

WELSH GLEN —GLEN FORREST

Welsh Glen is a cul-de-sac on the north side of Strettle Road, not far from Hardey Road in Glen Forrest. The name Welsh Glen was chosen to honour surveyor GJ Welsh who surveyed many Glen Forrest town lots around 1911 when the settlement was known as Smith's Mill.

MUNDARING DISTRICT MUSEUM
7225 Great Eastern Hwy Mundaring
Next to the Visitors' Centre
MONDAY - SATURDAY
9.30am - 4pm
SUNDAY
10am—2.30pm

**MUNDARING STATION
MASTER'S HOUSE
OFFICE HOURS**
MONDAY AND FRIDAY
9.30am - 4pm
WEDNESDAY
9.30am -1.30pm

MEMBERSHIP FEES
Senior/pensioner \$15 (Couple \$20)
Single \$25 (Couple \$30)
Company/Institution \$35
Acc: Mundaring & Hills Historical
Society Inc
BSB 633-000 Acc No 122609431
Please quote your surname in reference