

Friends of

Mandurah Museum

BUILDING BRIDGES TO PEEL HISTORY

3 Pinjarra Road
Mandurah WA 6210

Friends of Mandurah Museum

Newsletter December 2023.

MANDURAH CASTLE FUN PARK

George Kaspar was born on 5 June 1931, Sulzach, a town in Bavaria, Germany. As a child, George visited all of Bavaria's medieval castles and imagined that one day he would build his own.

Following WW2, in 1960, George and his family arrived in Melbourne, under the Australian Government Financially Assisted Program for Displace Persons. While employed as a migrant worker at BHP Newcastle Steelworks, George began building his first miniature castle in the front yard of his home. As he moved around New South Wales and Queensland, George continued to adorn his homes with miniature castles.

By 1971, George and his family moved to Kalgoorlie, Western Australia. Once again, he went about building a miniature castle in his front yard, which became an object of interest to the admiration of tourists and residents. The Shire approached Kaspar to build a much larger castle in the town's Hammond Park, which he agreed.

Completed in 1977, George and his son Roy, had built a scale replica of the Breitenstein Castle, which became a local attraction and gained national and international recognition. The castle still stands today in Hammond Park.

In 1979, George and his family moved to Mandurah where he was engaged by Kevin Parry, Esplanade Development, to build a Bavarian castle at Halls Head Estate. His plan was based on a scaled version of the Neuschwanstein Castle in the Bavarian Alps. It had been the home of King Ludwig II of Bavaria who drowned in 1886. The castle was to be one twentieth the size of the original, standing at 9.50 metres in height. Once completed, the castle's stark white and pale blue walls and soaring fairy-tale towers became a familiar landmark in Mandurah.

Index

Mandurah Castle Fun Park	Dorothy Olsen
Volunteer Heritage Outing.	Jan Baker.
Summer Holidays Spent in Mandurah.	Terry Lindley
Emily's Experience.	Emily Anderson
Regular Items.	
M.D.O. Report.	Nick Reynolds
Education Matters.	Kat Gauci.
Chairperson's Report & A.G.M.	Jan Baker.



After the Neuschwanstein castle, George and Roy went on to build a miniature inn and a chapel. Once consecrated, the chapel conducted weddings and church services. Kaspar then went on to build his Bavarian village, Oberammergau.

The castle opened in 1981 and the village in 1983. In 1988, new owners turned it into an adventure park, and it became known as the Castle Fun Park.

Over time the fun park included a merry-go-round, bumper cars, mini golf course, slides, climbing equipment, swings, sandpit, picnic areas along with other structures and activities. A skateboard track opened in 1988 and in 1989, a 450 square metre swimming pool in the shape of Australia with a fountain sprouting from the State of Tasmania. The developer's aim was to provide entertainment and a venue for both adults and children, in which one could spend an hour or days enjoyment.



The park's closure at the end of 1999 was a devastating blow to the people of Mandurah, who called on for the park to re-open.

After the park closed, the castle suffered neglect and became victim to graffiti, vandalism, the weather, bush fires, and at times inhabited by the homeless.

Since its closure, various developers have brought the Castle Fun Park. Its future remains uncertain. However, the passion and desire of the people of Mandurah, continues to this day to keep the fairy-tale alive.

The story of George Kaspar and the Castle Fun Park is the museum's latest addition to its library. Researched and written by Dorothy Olsen, *The Castle King (George Kaspar and Mandurah's Castle Fun Park)*, along with photos, is a journey down memory lane.

Dorothy Olsen



M.D.O Report.

I was fortunate enough to attend the annual WA State Heritage Conference which was held at the State Theatre, Northbridge on October 23 and 24 2023. The conference, the first since the initial Covid 19 outbreak, was worthwhile and rigorous with presenters talking on a wide range of topics from both First Nations and Settler perspectives. Strong viewpoints were given in the immediate follow up to the failed Voice referendum. Several First Nations presenters did not attend, although others did participate. The conference theme for 2023 was 'Our Shared Heritage: Culture and Continuum.'

One of the most interesting presentations was given by Matthew Young, Director of Development Services at the Shire of Collie. The upcoming closure of coal mines in the area necessitates a transition to other economic activities. There is a community desire to reimagine Collie as a 'green place'. The 'Just Transition' plan to manage this was developed in 2018 and released in 2020. Heritage is a quadrant of the plan.

The Minningup Pool project is focused on an Indigenous heritage centre. The project had difficulties however. Elders consulted were supportive, but when the plan was released, others went to the Premier with complaints, including a lack of consultation. Lack of Elders communicating back down to the community was felt to be the issue. The project has been on hold now for five years.

Collie Fields Hotel was built 1901, but spent several years derelict recently. The Throssel Street revitalisation plan included a refurbishment and veranda replacement. This was achieved, but if done currently would cost much more than it did at the time with increased inflation and reduced availability of trades. Last year the project won a Heritage Council award.

The Central Rail Civic Precinct project will include a 3-4 million redevelopment of Collie Museum, which will be exciting to watch as it develops.

The railway roundhouse redevelopment project has been stalled over last couple of years, but this should be back running soon.

The Wanneroo Museum gave a presentation on their education box program, which is similar to our Museum's loan boxes. Two Anzac boxes were originally developed via grant funding approximately ten years ago.

They now have a Noongar box among others.

Two-week loan periods have proven too onerous for the Museum administration. The Museum has now moved to a one month borrowing time, with teachers responsible for the boxes being shared among different classes in the school. This would be a wise move for us to follow in Mandurah.

Nicholas Reynolds

Education Matters.

Origami with Sanny Ang-Things That Fly

What happens when you put storytelling and origami together? You get Storigami.

Join the amazing Sanny Ang at Mandurah Museum for an interactive lesson in origami.

While Sanny is telling a story, you fold the paper into various shapes that depict or illustrate the action, setting or characters. As the story ends, a surprise 3-dimensional figure is created. The theme for these sessions is, 'Things That Fly' where you can create a butterfly and aeroplanes.

Join in a free one-hour workshop during the January 2024 school holidays. All materials are provided, and the origami made, can be taken home.

Dates: 16, 17 & 18 January 2024

23, 24 & 25 January 2024

Times: Session one: 10:30-11:30

Session two: 12:20-1:20

This activity is suitable of ages 5+, however small children may need assistance from an adult. An adult must accompany children and bookings are essential, via Eventbrite. (Adults do not require a ticket to attend)

For more information, please contact us at museum@mandurah.wa.gov.au or 9550 3683



Volunteer Heritage Outing.

On Monday 5 December, a small group of volunteers gathered to undertake what has been our usual end of year heritage excursion and lunch. It was lovely to see Kat returned from holidays, refreshed and bright even 'though she had suffered from an ear infection on her return. Prior to leaving for her holiday Kat had organized the tour and, in her absence, Nick had kept up with the people supplying us with transport and tours.

Our first stop was at the Pinjarra Massacre site, where Nick was able to shed some light on the event. The museum is lucky to have a copy of Peter Harries thesis on this site and we often use it for information. The map was particularly handy for this



Following that we moved to Pinjarra Inn with Blythewood next to it. The new caretaker Karen and two helpers were there to assist. Pinjarra Inn has been refurbished and now provides a small meeting place with access to tea and coffee making facilities in an air-conditioned room. While the weather was good for us, I am sure on hotter days this would be most welcome.

There was a short talk about the Inn and its architecture, followed by more information regarding Blythewood and the McLarty family. After this, refreshed with tea, coffee, and fruit cake, we were free to wander through both buildings. They reflect the times in which they were built, and the furniture is of a similar period. Karen had pointed out to us that there was no bathroom, or toilet facilities provided either at the Inn or in Blythewood which had been lived in until circa 1940.

Like Edenvale, the gardens of Blythewood are a credit to their original owners and to the National Trust who now own it.



Top Right. Battle of Pinjarra plaque.

Top Left & Above. Blythewood Gardens.

Far left. Volunteer Allan Acott with caretaker Karen in Pinjarra Inn's former bar.

Left. 'Green Rose' to be seen at Blythewood & in the rose garden at St John's Church.

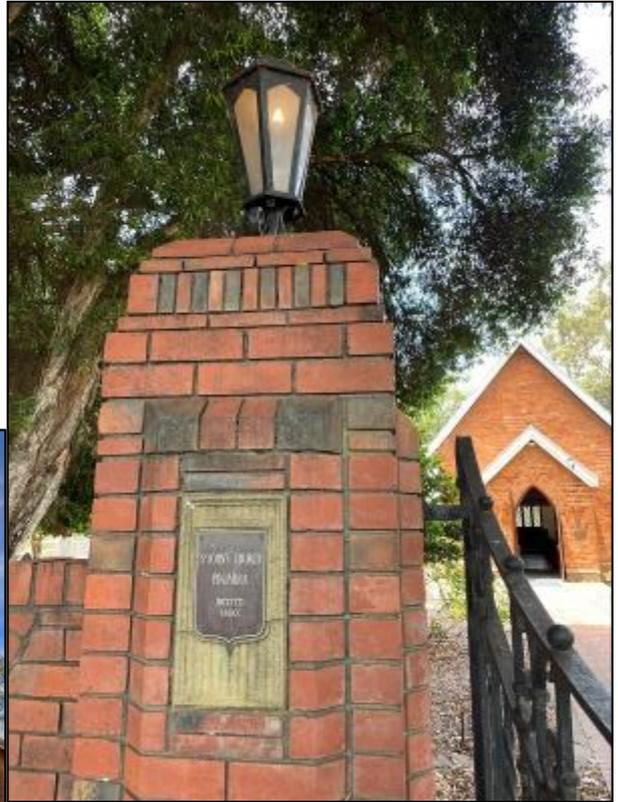
Volunteer Heritage Outing.

We left there reluctantly and went back into Pinjarra where Merv Beacham was waiting to show us St. John's Church. This church is no longer used by a congregation but has been refurbished and is now available for weddings and other ceremonies. With Merv as our guide, we wandered the cemetery seeing many of the old names which volunteers have become familiar with. After walking through the heritage rose garden, we were also able to see inside the old schoolmaster's house which is used by the Pinjarra Historical Society.



Left St. John's Church.

Above Entry to churchyard and cemetery.



Our final destination for the day was another historic building in the Peel area. We lunched at the Ravenswood Hotel. They had made a smaller area available, while many of us are frequent visitors to the Ravenswood, this was the first time we had seen into some of the smaller spaces within the hotel. The room does look onto the river area and is furnished with older style items.

Ravenswood was originally owned by Adam Armstrong who had worked for Thomas Peel in his office prior to migrating to Western Australia. However, it was not until Armstrong had sold this original place to Captain John Thomas, with the home being raised by fire in 1862, that the Thomas's built Ravenswood Hall. This building remained a family home until Captain Thomas obtained a liquor license in 1906 and the building became Ravenswood Hotel.



Left. Education volunteer, Linda Jackson, was able to bring two of our oldest volunteers to the Ravenswood Hotel

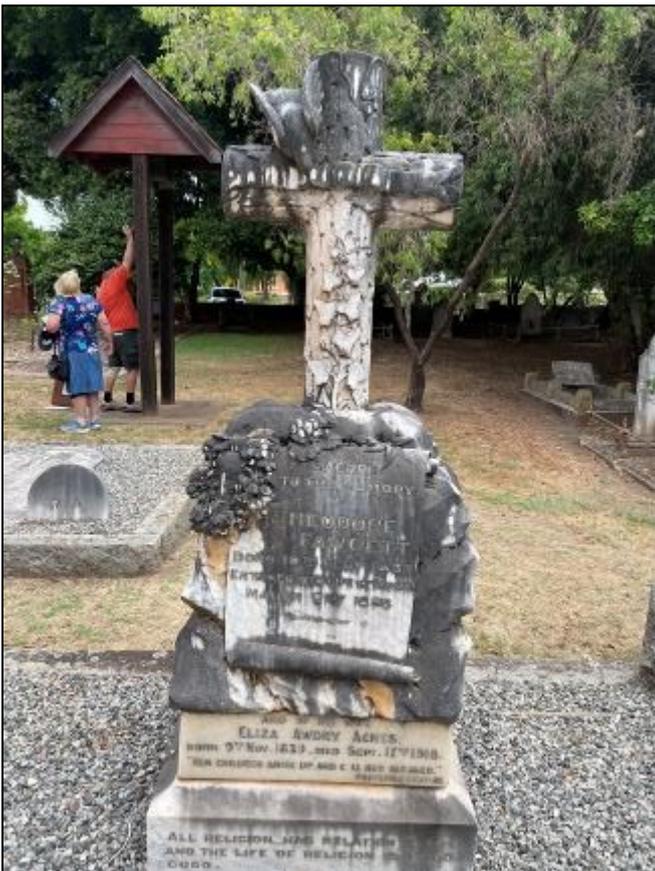
Volunteer Heritage Outing.

We had a most enjoyable lunch with much laughter, being joined there by several of the volunteers who were unable to undertake the full tour.

The volunteers gave their thanks to Katrina for her early arrangements made before flying off for holidays and to Nick for ensuring all arrangements remained on track. A vote of thanks went to the City of Mandurah for providing the funds for the tour and lunch.

It is noted that over the years, these heritage outings have been the source of much enjoyment, but also with the more serious side of providing a greater understanding of the history of our area.

Jan Baker.



Top Right, Nick and Volunteers at the Pinjarra Battle site.

Left. Cemetery at St. John's Church.

Above. Katrina returned looking wonderful. She was missed.

Emily's Experience. Over the past 6 weeks I have had the opportunity to temporarily step into Kat's role as Education Officer. It was an interesting change of pace with some unique challenges, managing some large groups of children, and their supervisors as they went through the museum and completed their rotations through the activities. There were some excursions that went better than others with ink spills and rotation confusion when group numbers were suddenly changed at the last minute and suddenly there were three or four groups instead of five. Unfortunately, the hot weather created difficulties when undertaking the heritage walks, including the unfortunate cancellation of one walk and others being cut short to help keep the kids relatively comfortable.

While there were some days that were difficult there were others that went very smoothly with extra time left over as the school groups efficiently transitioned from Halls Head cottage to the Museum and vice versa. Our volunteers have been very helpful while I was standing in for Kat, special thanks go to Debbie and Linda who helped teach me how the excursions are run and assisted with the activities, heritage walks and the last-minute substitutions in location of the old-fashioned games staying all day at the oval near Halls Head Cottage to set up and run the games. Acting as a stand in for Kat I have learned a lot about the older buildings around the museum and foreshore. I have also gained a greater appreciation for all that our education officer Katrina does and how well she does it.

Welcome back Kat, hope your trip was fun.

Emily Anderson.

Editor. Emily can be found at the museum on Friday. She has taken over the role of accessioning new acquisitions as well as reviewing those currently acquisitions. She was asked to fill in during the six weeks of Katrina's absence.

Mandurah in the late 1940's and early 50s was in an era of post-war optimism and a time when people were starting to embrace the joy of leisure and holidays. The town had always had a laid-back coastal vibe, but back then, things were simpler. The tiny fishing village, always a place for inland farmers, goldfields miners and weary workers from Perth, to holiday, was rapidly becoming a tourist destination. "Flats" for holiday rental, hotels and camping grounds were abundant. For many, Easter, or their annual two weeks leave, were often spent in its delightful setting.

Days fishing, picnicking, and swimming from the beaches or in The Estuary were an idyllic escape for the whole family. Dads could relax, Mums, mostly non-working, probably found it more difficult to prepare meals, but the children had "freedom". Freedom to roam, make new friends or be taught the art of fishing, prawning, and crabbing by their dads.

For our family it was a camping experience to enjoy the only break Dad had in a year of hard, physical work. We would set up a canvas tent amidst coastal dunes where the salty breeze carried the sound of waves or along the banks of the Estuary out at "The Sticks" near where the Halliday's house, built on Sutton land circa 1900, once stood (It became known as "The Chimneys" after the homes destruction by a bushfire and the limestone chimneys of its smokehouse survived to stand sentinel for many years.). Here we would listen to the gentle lapping of waves along an estuarine shore and find shelter under the then quite lush vegetation. Not the degraded salt affected remnants that stand today.



Views of the area near where we camped—as it is today. Trees dying, sand banks being eroded.

As water was a precious commodity and the local bore water undrinkable. Dad, who had a truck, would cart down a tank of rainwater a few days before Mum and I arrived. He would lay down tarpaulins and erect a borrowed canvas tent filling it with our camping gear as we had little room in our family car to carry such equipment. No fear of it being damaged or stolen when left in those days.

The camping gear was very basic, but sturdy compared to today—simple tents pitched on soft ground, a cozy campfire on which to cook our fresh caught fish and boil a kettle, and a trusty kerosene pressure lamp for the evenings. A couple of folding chairs and a camp stretcher or 2 for comfort. I can remember the rough grey ex services blankets that most people used for bedding, ground covers or wrapping tired children in. Very common in the days post war; They lasted for years!

While some families built an extensive array of tents that could house large families, ours was a basic one room affair. It was supported by a rope between two river gums, and I recall Dad digging a shallow ditch around the outside to limit flooding should there be a downpour. Looking back, I wonder at the risks of pitching a tent under those rather dangerous, limb shedding trees but I imagine the desire for shade in those summer months outweighed them.

Our holiday actually began when we left Armadale and headed south in our old Jowett soft top. Dad drove past the salt lakes and down the rough limestone littered Mandurah Road that made any loose articles clatter and clash. There was a store by Lake Walyungup (meaning place where Noongars talk) that specialised in fruit and vegetables, and we would stop and stock up. At times the journey seemed endless, but the excitement grew when I could hear the squawking "Caw, caw, caw" of the Mandurah crows and smell the familiar, acrid smoke from all the home and campfires, that seemed to pervade the Mandurah atmosphere.

I can clearly remember the joy in stopping at the end of town and running across the narrow footbridge that led to the Peninsula Hotel. Mum would follow more sedately, and Dad would drive round and meet us at the pub. After he had met up with some of his mates from previous years and had a few beers he was ready to continue. Mum and I would queue at the Bakery for fresh bread, and we would finally head for "The Sticks" and our camp.



*Above showing a fairly current view of the Lakeside Fruit & Veg Store.
To the right sections of bumpy, limestone -based Mandurah Rd that still existed in the early 1950's.*

To do this it was necessary to drive over the First Mandurah bridge and down the Coast Road.. The bridge was nearing the end of its life and had to be carefully traversed. Being a one way (planked single lane) thoroughfare, as tourist traffic increased, particularly in holiday periods, there was a manned, Stop- Go set up in the middle to assist flow. All very exciting to a young lad. By 1954, the new 'old bridge' (two lanes) was in service.



Above Town baths and the Peninsula Footbridge in the background.

To the Right typical grey sand tracks found all round the Estuary.

Having crossed the bridge, the next adventure was to negotiate the sand track that led to the Estuary. It was notoriously boggy, and we rarely made a trip without trauma. The track started out quite firmly as it went across the salt flats, which were damp and compacted, but once on higher ground the grey sand, when dry, became soft, so Mum and I often had to alight to reduce the weight in the car and be available to push while Dad tried to steer through the worst of the boggy sections.

As a youngster, my days were filled with exploring and playing with other camp children - the only limitation I had was that I was not to venture near or into a dilapidated building to the west of the camps as it was dangerous. I remember it being in the vicinity of the current Mandurah Quay.

From the sandy cliffs along the shoreline that seemed huge to me as a young child, I could view the coming and going of the local fishermen, watch the antics of what we called porpoises but today are more correctly termed dolphins and view the other bird life diving into the shallow water to catch their meals. Seeing the dolphins herd schools of fish into the shallows to catch them more easily still enthralled me today as all the other birds swarm around waiting for the “easy pickings”.

I remember vividly the day dad was offered the loan of an old clinker in-board fishing boat from “Pop” Clarrie Batt whose daughter married my Uncle Stan. We journeyed to Soldier’s Cove where Clarrie and his wife Agnes were staying, then headed off in the boat to explore the Estuary. It was a wonderful experience until after heading through the channel by the Chimneys we found ourselves in open water and a strong wind came up.



Traversing the wide waters of the Estuary on a quieter day than we chose.

Clinker boat similar to the one we borrowed but in this case steered by members of the Dawe family.

There was water spraying everywhere and Mum and Dad became quite concerned for our safety. It is incredible how “rough” the

Estuary can turn! They shunted me under a tarpaulin in the bow from where I could just see their concerned faces as we made it back to Soldier’s cove. They returned the boat, and we didn’t use it again.

Memorable trips into town, once a week, meant fresh bread, ice, and the occasional treat from Sutton’s corner store.

We would use the town baths taking a leisurely swim in the calm waters.

While my parents did the shopping or whatever else adults did when in town, I used to spend time looking into shop windows or on the fishing platforms under the bridge.

By far the most desirable shop window was Tuckey’s as it was full of fishing tackle and snorkelling equipment. All too expensive for my limited pocket money.

This was followed by a drink of ginger beer which we bought from Terry’s Ginger Beer and Icecream shop in Pinjarra Road. A very popular spot for both townsfolk and visitors alike, all enjoyed the local brew.



Evenings around the campfire were the heart of the experience. The crackling sound of the fire, the stars shining brightly overhead, and the laughter of fellow campers. It was a time when people cherished the simple pleasures of nature and each other's company.

The lack of modern amenities only added to the authenticity of the experience. No smartphones, just the soothing sounds of unspoiled nature, natural beauty and the camaraderie of friends and family. What a tranquil and picturesque way to spend a camping holiday in Mandurah during the 1950s.

Note photos are from the museum’s archives as in those early days we didn’t own a camera. Terry Lindley

Chairpersons Report & A.G.M.

We have been a little quiet over the last year. There have been several exhibition openings which the Friends received invitations to. One such exhibition was that of our Women's History Month which once again featured women in Mandurah who have contributed to the wellbeing of all its citizens.

Once again, a booklet had been produced and we sold copies of this. The Friends books have been an attraction and the use of the eftpos machine both for ourselves and to support the museum is a welcome device.

We continue to hold funds to provide a new display case and also a special display souvenir cabinet for items which the museum sells as well as our own items. Unfortunately, we continue to be delayed in this endeavour due to the need to comply with the Council's Building Manager. We hope this may be resolved early in the new year.

I wish to thank all the committee members for their assistance over this year and especially to give my appreciation to Eleanor Kay who stepped down after many years of assisting in a variety of roles including Vice Chair, and Chair. I also wish to thank Kay Tuckey who has decided not to continue in the committee.

Our A.G.M. was held on 9th of November with reports supplied by myself, the Treasurer and Nicholas in his capacity as M.D.O.

The Election of Office Bearers was carried out and we were able to obtain a new secretary, at the moment the Vice Chair position is vacant.

The Office Bearers of your Committee are as follows:

Chair Jan Baker.

Vice Chair (Vacant)

Treasurer Christine Steer.

Secretary Debbie Stasiw.

Committee members Phyl Hardy Dorothy Olsen Jim Tuckey

Michael McGhie (Maritime representative.)



Over the past year we have sought to elect a new Patron. We are very pleased to announce that Mr Adam Bassett-Scarfe has accepted this role. We would like to welcome him to our group and also thank him for agreeing to undertake this role.

Jan Baker.



Wishing everyone a very Happy Christmas,

Full of joy and good will.

And a safe and eventful New Year.

May 2024 bring all that you wish for.



**Mandurah Museum,
3 Pinjarra Rd,
MANDURAH WA 6210.**

Telephone: 9550 3680.

Email: museum@mandurah.wa.gov.au

Internet: www.mandurah.wa.gov.au/Facilities/Museum/Friends

**Friends of Mandurah Museum,
3 Pinjarra Rd,
MANDURAH WA 6210.**

Meetings 4 times per year as notified.

The mission of the Friends is to provide assistance and support to the Museum in all its endeavours.



WISHING ALL OUR FRIENDS AND VOLUNTEERS
A WONDERFUL CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY AND SAFE
NEW YEAR.

