



Friends of Mandurah Community Museum Newsletter

April 2020

[Exhibition to commemorate the 77th anniversary of that daring Australian raid on Singapore Harbour.](#)

Dark Victory-Operation Jaywick due to open, 1 April at Mandurah Community Museum

On the night of 26 September 1943, men from Special Operations Australia's top-secret Z Special Unit, paddling three folding canoes, carried out a daring and successful undercover raid on enemy ships in Japanese occupied Singapore Harbour. They had sailed 3,960 km from Exmouth, Western Australia, deep into enemy territory aboard the captured Japanese-built fishing boat *Krait*.

This is the story of *Krait*, the men of Operation Jaywick, and of one Singaporean woman caught up in the nightmare that followed.

This exhibition, documentary film and virtual reality experience from the ANMM, explores the intricate and at times serendipitous nature of planning Operation Jaywick.

The Australian commando raid on Japanese occupied Singapore Harbour surprised an incredulous Japanese military. They sought retribution on Singaporeans rather than believe they had been attacked from Australia. As a result, Mrs Elizabeth Choy, among others, was captured, interrogated and tortured over a period of 193 days.

Dark Victory-Operation Jaywick is presented by the Australian National Maritime Museum and produced in association with the National Museum of Singapore. This exhibition is on a two year national tour across regional Australia.

More information is available on the ANMM website.
<https://www.sea.museum/2019/01/09/operation-jaywick>



From the Editor. While I apologise for the delay in sending this newsletter and also for the smaller issue, I am sure you will all understand the constraints in which it is published. Many of you who have asked for a print copy but who have email addresses will receive at least this issue by email. When the shutdown is over we will resume mailing out to those who wish it.

We started putting this issue together prior to the museum closing, and for that reason I have left in the article about the exhibition we were expecting to mount during April. The exhibition was not to be, however, there is valuable information on line about Operation Jaywick and we urge you to access this. Sadly a follow up operation similar to Jaywick was a disaster and allied lives were lost.

For those of you who are beachcombers, there are two stories regarding finding lost items. The first is an article written by Ross Kirkpatrick which was published. While Ross mentioned the finding of a mine, the story he wrote was about his son also named Ross finding a bale of rubber on Melros beach. Our second story is also related by local Neil Morfitt who told it to me during an oral history interview. He and another, (presumably Ross Jnr), found a bale of rubber washed up during the war. Rubber at that time was precious, and members of the Home Guard soldiers came to collect the bale.

We hope to be able to bring you the next newsletter by July. Until then – **STAY SAFE.** **Jan Baker.**

Special features

Information on Jaywick Operation.
Beachcombing Neil Morfitt's memories.
Tale of a Bale Reprint a of Ross Kirkpatrick story.
Comparing Covid-19 to previous pandemics.
Nicholas Reynolds.
Anzac Day 2020 Jan Baker.

Regular features.

From the MDO . Nicholas Reynolds.
Maritime Moorings Dave Austin
Chairperson's report. Jan Baker.

TALE OF THE BALE By Ross Kirkpatrick.

In 1942 Mandurah was a small seaside town of about 500 permanent residents. It was about 50 miles South of Perth, the capital city of Western Australia. In 1999 it has become a City of 40,000. Industries and communications have caused the change. Retirees have also found a pleasant place to live, and business people have good roads and frequent bus services to travel to work.

Its beaches are a big attraction. They are along Indian Ocean Coastline. A very popular winter pastime is beach ambling, because of the winter storms, prevailing currents and the lie of the land. Much flotsam and jetsam makes winter walks along the beaches quite exciting and sometimes rewarding.

On a beach about ten miles South of the town and at the end of a bush track, is a lonely beach. It winds through the sand dunes and is a hard drive in an old Chev Ute of 1930 vintage. The beach is a little known spot for most, but is a favourite spot for "the locals".

A mine as big as the pictured one makes a pretty exciting discovery. The telephone call reporting the find to the Army and the arrival of a disposal squad adds to the interest. The son of the fisherman in the picture (Reg Dawe) gave his name Melros to the beach. It was on this beach that the "Tale of the Bale" begins. The mine find gives some idea of the size and weight of objects sometimes brought onto the beach by the vagaries of wind and wave. So the discovery of a bale of rubber on the same beach is possible. My son (Ross Kirkpatrick) and I by the same name used to make trips to Melros Beach regularly during the winter, when the flotsam and jetsam made really interesting finds.

Faintly in the strong wind and the splashing waves I heard Ross's excited yell. "Dad come here!" the tone made me hurry I could see a heavy object bouncing in the surf. We quickly dragged it well up on the beach.

It was a bale of raw rubber bundled very tightly in sheets. One end was dome shaped from rubbing over rough reefs. One side was charred black from heat of a flame or a fire and there was a spike piece of something protruding from one side of the bale and another piece of the same material was in the other side of the bale but had been driven right into the bale.

We stood the bale on the flat end and got to work cleaning off seaweed and other sea growth of various kinds. Then we were able to get a good look at the spikes. The protruding spike was the bill of a sword fish, but we couldn't get the other piece out of the rubber without breaking it. We satisfied ourselves it was of the same shelly substance as the longer piece of six inches and of the same substance.

We lifted it with much puffing back to the Chev Ute and made for home. Next day the bale was put on show in Mandurah town and was seen by hundreds of people. All this happened in 1951.



Neil Morfitt on Beachcombing.

Do you remember finding some rubber?

Oh, yes, well that was rather funny. Well when the islands of course were taken by the Japanese of course Malaysia fell, and Malaya then produced raw rubber, that's where the rubber came from, so they had a.... there was a reward for any rubber that was found on the beach. Well the rubber was in big bales in quite large bales stacked on top of one another with pieces pressed together. It was raw rubber but it was... I think they must have sort've semi smoked it in the heat or something because it was a brownish colour, it was very soft.

There was up in the post office there was a sign out a reward of \$2 paid for any rubber found on the beach, for the recovery of rubber on the beach and Dave and I found, Dave Greenham and myself, found one going towards just back this way from Peel House down there on the beach. It would actually be, probably, in the bay somewhere near Singleton now. So of course we couldn't move it at all. It was too big for us to move so we came back and the next day we told, it must have been probably the weekend, and on the Monday we told Mr Goode at school about it and he informed some of the local home guard at Pinjarra and there job was to pick up anything like that and a couple of days later two of these home guard soldiers came down in a truck and escorted us down the beach.

So we tried to get the truck in as close as we could but because of there was no roads in the sandhills we had a fair way to walk. They'd brought a carrier with them. It was what they used to use on the Pinjarra Railway Station to cart the parcels and things in. So their idea was they reckon they could pick it up in this. Anyway that came down and we found it on the beach and we looked at it for a while and they must have decided well it was too big, you couldn't lift it to get into here so they must have decided they were going to cut it in half.

So they'd brought an axe with them and we were standing around and a bit out of the way and next thing, I'm not quite sure, one of the soldiers he takes a mighty swipe at this bale of rubber with the axe and hit it fair in the middle. Well the recoil of that axe was something to see. It just flew out of his hands (laugh) and shot over his back and shot out the back (laugh). You know how a golf ball goes when you hit it with a golf stick well this axe didn't even touch the rubber but boy did it bounce. But if they'd probably started from the side and gradually worked in they might have been able to cut it but they only took one hit and they realized then that they weren't going to be able to cut it in half to be able to shift it. But apparently they came down a little bit later on. I don't know how they shifted it. Whether they had more men to carry it or some way of getting it there but they did get it and we received the pound each.

Photo Left. Kindly donated by Ross Kirkpatrick Junior who found the bale of rubber.

Ross Kirkpatrick dressed as Groucho Marks.

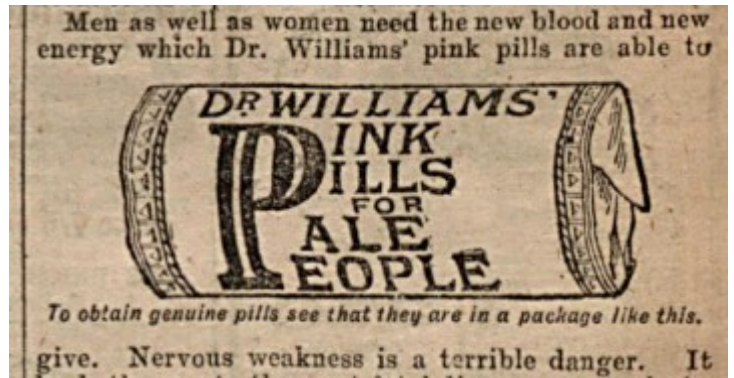
MDO's Report

As I sit down to write this report from home, I don't think anyone reading this would disagree that the last two months have been the most extraordinary in the history of the Mandurah Community Museum. Since the unfortunate, but very necessary, closure of the museum to both the public and volunteers during the last full week of March, the virus situation has continued to change its effects on the museum, much like has with all our lives.

Another unfortunate development came on March 30th. Following on from the closure of the museum both myself and Katrina were stood down from our employment with the City of Mandurah until such time as the museum reopened. This was certainly not the result of there being no useful work to perform as a result of the building being closed to the public, as anyone with an understanding of museum work will surely agree. So many of the jobs that both staff and volunteers perform are not related to the customer and visitor service side of what we do. In fact, as other museums around the State began to close in late March a few of us curators were emailing each other and saying with our tongues (at least slightly!) in our cheeks, that we were looking forward to the amount of work we were all going to get done without all those people pouring through the doors. But in light of the reduction in council revenues which were expected, tough decisions were made.

From that point, and very rapidly, the museum entered three weeks of hibernation. An improvement in the situation occurred from Monday April 20th with the City of Mandurah announcing that they would be reactivating myself, the Museum Development Officer for three days per week working mainly from home. I'm glad to be able to check on the museum once in a while but the situation there regarding both security and having an eye on the place is taken care of by the City's Rangers who are using part of the building as overflow offices to aid them in social distancing. Now there's a new phrase we've all been introduced to in the current times....

So that's the latest on the situation for our museum. Thanks to those who have expressed their support and I'll keep everyone informed as soon as we have any news of a date for reopening. It's been interesting in that museums and galleries have been mentioned as potentially some of the first institutions allowed to re-open. So watch this space!



Watch out for quacks with fake cures! That's something we've all seen before.

The Corona Crisis itself is interesting to look at in terms of the history of other pandemics humanity has experienced. A term that I keep hearing is "unprecedented". As in "These unprecedented times" or "This unprecedented situation." The first thing that makes me think of is the 1918 Spanish flu outbreak. That was well presented to the museum volunteers in terms of its history when we toured the Woodman's Point quarantine station for one of our Christmas study tours a couple of years back. So many of the elements we're experiencing today were highly visible in the crisis caused by the troop ship Boonah returning from South Africa with infected Australian soldiers. Quarantined ships carrying the virus, other ships being made to feel unwelcome and told not to come to WA, emergency capacity building by the WA health department, community concerns about quarantine and the heroism of medical and nursing staff were all parallels with today.

Another rather 'precedented' element of our current situation that was brought to my attention is the use of modern technology to help us pass the time while social distancing. This was another aspect that also occurred in 1918. While now it might be Netflix and internet video streaming, back then it was the Pianola. See below for a 1918 ad from the US during the lockdown for that pandemic capitalising on people stuck at home and looking for a technological marvel to ease the boredom!

So in our own time of isolation let's keep ourselves safe and we'll all be back at the museum when the world's up and running again. **Nicholas**



**TO STOP SPREAD OF
INFLUENZA
STAY AT HOME**

Amuse Yourself With One of the
Best
Player Pianos
We Sell for One Hundred Dollars
Less Than Same Grade Offered
Elsewhere

Education Matters. As Katrina is not currently at the museum, we will hope to bring you Education Matters (and it does) in our next newsletter.

**Community Collectables -
Doll Collection of Kerry Stone.**

The collectable display case which houses the Community Collectables is an ever popular site. Many people take time to look at the collections and reminisce about their own memories of the items.

March's collection of dolls showcases dolls dressed in costumes from around the world. Many of these dolls were purchased in 1983 from World Vision.



Neil Morfitt on Beachcombing during WW2.
(Cont. from pge 2.)

Was there anything else of note that you found on the beaches, Neil?

Yes, we found some small model aircraft. They were made out of wood. They were beautiful models of aircraft. They were used for identification. They were all made out of wood and they were beautifully constructed but we never ever found a full one. We'd find a fuselage with the tail attached or the wings and they were painted blue so they would have been American aircraft and they were models of American aircraft from carriers that I learned after in pictures of planes. They would have been something like the Hell Cats and the Douglas dive bombers and things like that off the aircraft.

(Pictured below, Neil as a young boy during floods in Mandurah, mid 1940's).



Raffle Report from the Treasurer.

Once again a framed, colour photograph of the Old Mandurah Bridge was generously donated by Roy Bolton. The estimated value was \$500. The Permit number for the raffle was LS213944219.

A total of 160 books of tickets (800 tickets) were produced and circulated for sale. A total of 384 tickets were purchased with a value of \$768. Ticket sales were severely affected by the sudden change to our community caused by the Covid-19 virus. Closures and a request to stay home meant that the opportunities to sell tickets had all but disappeared. As a result, a total of 416 tickets remained unsold.

The raffle was drawn on Wednesday, 15 April 2020 as required by the Permit. Ian Bassett-Scarfe drew the winning ticket number 176 and the winner was called by Jan Baker to advise him of the win. As he lives in the metropolitan area Jan liaised with him to arrange delivery of the prize. The result will also appear in the Public Notices of the Mandurah Mail as is required by the Permit.

The (net) funds raised was \$658.82. I would like to thank everyone who assisted in making the Raffle the most successful that it could be during this unusual time.

Christine Steer.



Apart from my dog Cuz (who doesn't understand social distancing, we were able to maintain our distance while drawing the raffle. Pictured Ian Bassett-Scarfe, Julia Lindley, Phyl Hardy and far right Christine Steer.

Below. Ian Bassett-Scarfe draws our 2020 Raffle.



Anzac Day 2020, and my memories of the past. As a child this day was always special. Both my grandfathers had served in WW1, Dad's father Stanley, in the airforce as a mechanic. Mum's father, Harry, joined up for the war at the age of approx. 41 or 42, believed to be in the year of 1914. He spent 3 years and 9 months in France driving a horse-drawn munition carriage. Catherine his wife did volunteer work, understood to be nursing. My father served in WW2, initially considered disabled, he was refused acceptance to the airforce. After being told he was unsuitable for that he was also rejected for the A.I.F. due to his only having one eye. Later as times worsened he was called up but deemed unsuitable to leave Australia. Because his parents ran railway refreshment rooms it was decided he must be able to cook. He ended his war as a cook-sergeant in the Northern Territory.

So we as children accompanied Dad to all the first marches after the war, later, we also marched as part of brownies, scouts and St. John's Ambulance which Dad also had joined and was a superintendent. I loved marching to the Pipe Bands. I suppose as we were growing up it became less important and we missed many of them until once again my own children were in Scouts and served as the honour guard overnight for the war memorial at Midland.



I am pleased now that I accompanied Dad to his final march just the year before he died. By that time we had moved to Mandurah and I had started volunteering at the museum. Shortly into the 2000's the Mandurah Museum commenced opening early on Anzac Day to allow people gathering for the march to visit the museum, either before or after. We have seen these crowds increasing over the years and have been able to present many memorable exhibitions at the museum during the month of April.

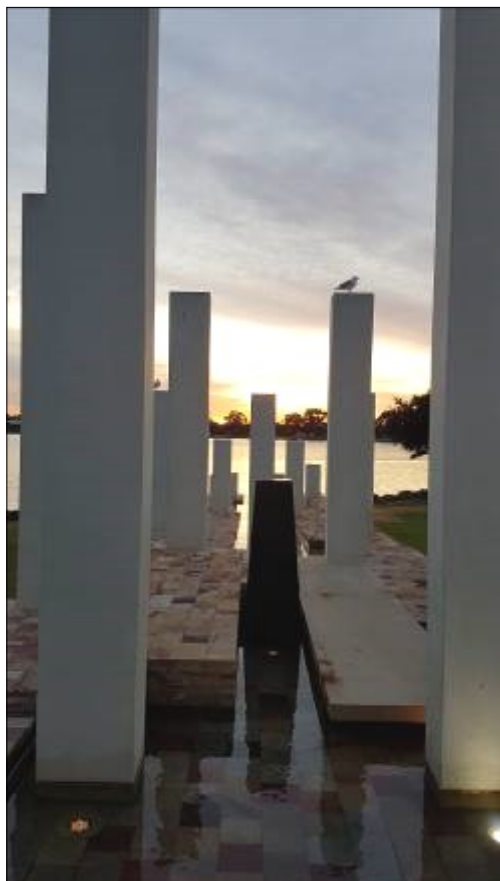
In 2005, the current Mandurah War Memorial was opened and I went there to take photos of what I felt was one of the most moving war memorials I had seen. I decided at that time to return in 5 years to record the changes to the very small olive trees and rosemary bushes. 2020 is the 4th time I have recorded the changes to the War Memorial and its surrounds.



2020 is also one of the most difficult years for people to acknowledge the contribution of so many servicemen and women. Forced by Covid-19 we were unable to attend a dawn service or any other service or march. It was possibly a start of a new tradition, with many of us listening to the dawn service while standing or sitting in our drives with candles lit and sleepy birds just starting to wake.

Two days later I attended the Mandurah War Memorial at 6.30 am to document the fourth series of photos. By now the olive trees appear suitable gnarled and the rosemary bushes have been well pruned. I am hoping that by next year the Dawn Service can resume. I also wonder whether there will be a new tradition of candles lit in driveways right throughout Australia.

Written by **Jan Baker**



2020 What distinguished the wreaths this year were the number of informal "special wreaths" & bouquets. Also candles in holders, many made by children. (2020 see below).



Maritime Moorings.

The museum's maritime team hopes everybody is keeping safe and well in these troubled times. I think we will pull through this if everybody behaves in a sensible way and follows the advice to minimise contact. Remember King Henry V111 survived the plague by shutting himself away in his rooms and avoiding contact with others. He also slept in a different bed each night, but I don't think we have that luxury.

David Austin

A young Australian sailor that had been shipwrecked and marooned alone on a deserted island for months awoke one morning to see something floating towards the beach. It was a barrel and clinging to the barrel was a beautiful young lady. She came ashore and walked seductively towards him and said, "I have something you have been dreaming about for months". The young bloke became immediately excited and said, "Oh my god, don't tell me there is beer in that barrel".



So here we are in limbo. We are pleased that Nick has been returned to work for at least three days a week and hope the Council will recognise his skills and the requirements for the museum to continue ticking over and possibly bring him back full time shortly. We would also like to wish Katrina all the best and hope that she too will shortly be reinstated to her full duties, at the moment she remains stood down.

I spoke to Katrina on the phone during a group Skype call, plus Julia has seen her out walking Gypsy, she is well and sends her best wishes to all.

Jan Baker.

Since photographed in 2015, there is a new plaque added to the Vietnam row. This commemorates the Battle of Long Tan in 1966.



Report from the Chair. On a brisk, clear day on the 15th of April, several members of your committee met to draw the raffle. I hasten to say we did practice physical distancing while being able to talk a little. We had been worried about how to draw the raffle while obeying most of the State Government's requirements. There is a small park on Butternut Parkway in Seascapes which is quite near to several of us. That is where it was held. As mentioned before, Roy Bolton Photography had generously provided us with the prize of a print of the Old Mandurah Bridge at dusk. This is a lovely print and many of us were hoping to win it.



Ian Bassett-Scarfe, a member of Friends and local businessman kindly agreed to draw the raffle as an independent person. Our winner was Dave Serukai from Como. He was rung immediately to inform him of his good luck.

I spoke later with Dave who mentioned that they had purchased several tickets after walking along the foreshore through the Foreshore Markets. They had seen Roy Bolton's prints and had been impressed. Continuing on their walking they then visited the museum where they found the raffle on display. They purchased tickets which were sold to them by some of the weekend crew.

Dave also informed me that his partner was involved in the presentation of the new Aspire apartments in Bunbury which open shortly. It is thought that the print may be suitable as part of the showcasing for that property. If it is used they hope to credit Roy's photography in a Facebook post.

There is information about the tickets sold and profit provided by the raffle earlier in this newsletter.

On other news, your committee had met prior to the shutdown which has affected all of us. Our plans were to have special event which included a General Meeting at the opening of the Anzac Exhibition. This was to be opened by Andrew Hastie and the Friends planned to draw the raffle at that event. Needless to say this did not go ahead. (continued left)

**Mandurah Community 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

Opening hours.

Tuesday to Friday. 10 am to 4pm.

Saturday & Sunday. 11 am to 3pm.

Closed Mondays and Public Holidays.

**Friends of Mandurah Community 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. The 'Friends' also seek to promote the heritage and history of Mandurah, and to assist other like minded bodies.

Membership of the Friends is by a yearly membership fee of \$10 due each August.