



ROYAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY WINTER 2021 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Book online at <https://www.rahs.org.au/events/> or call us on (02) 9247 8001

| Date | Time | Event | Presenter | Member | Friend |
|---------------|-------------------|---|-----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| JUNE | | | | | |
| Tue 1 | 7pm – 8pm | Finding Your Ancestors – Researching Aboriginal Family History in NSW #3 | Various | Free | Free |
| Wed 2 | 1pm – 2pm | RAHS Day Lecture – <i>Truganini: Journey through the apocalypse</i> | Cassandra Pybus | Free | Free |
| Wed 16 | 10.30am – 12pm | RAHS Excursion – <i>Reserve Bank of Australia Museum</i> | Donna Newton | \$5 | \$5 |
| Wed 23 | 11am – 1pm | RAHS/WEA Workshop – <i>Digging a Little Deeper: Biographical Research and Writing with a Twist</i> | Heather Garnsey & Susan Steggall | \$32 | \$35 |
| Fri 25 | 1pm – 2pm | RAHS Special Event – <i>Floating Prisons: Irish Convict Hulks and Voyages to NSW</i> | Anne McMahon | Free | Free |
| JULY | | | | | |
| Tue 6 | 7pm – 8pm | Finding Your Ancestors – Researching Aboriginal Family History in NSW #4 | Various | Free | Free |
| Wed 7 | 1pm – 2pm | RAHS Day Lecture – <i>Secret and Special: The Untold Story of the Z Special Unit in the Second World War</i> | Will Davies | Free | Free |
| Thu 15 | 1.45pm – 3.30pm | RAHS Excursion – <i>St Mary's Cathedral</i> | Donna Newton | \$10 | \$10 |
| Wed 21 | 1pm – 2pm | RAHS Special Event – <i>Cooking Up a Storm: Mina Rawson in Colonial Queensland</i> | Jodi Frawley | Free | Free |
| Wed 28 | 11am – 12pm | RAHS Special Event – <i>Managing Local Societies in Changing Times</i> | Christine Yeats & Suzanne Holohan | \$10 | \$10 |
| AUGUST | | | | | |
| Tue 3 | 7pm – 8pm | Finding Your Ancestors – Researching Aboriginal Family History in NSW #5 | Various | Free | Free |
| Wed 4 | 1pm – 2pm | RAHS Day Lecture – <i>Regina's Complaint: Philip Roth, Penguin and the end of the literary censorship system in Australia</i> | Patrick Mullins | Free | Free |
| Thu 12 | 10.15am – 11.30am | RAHS Excursion – <i>Justice & Police Museum: Murder Most Foul Tour</i> | Donna Newton | \$20 (Con.) | \$25 (Reg.) |
| Wed 18 | 11am – 1pm | RAHS/WEA Workshop – <i>Moving Image and Picture Research for Historians</i> | Joy Hughes & Graham Shirley | \$32 | \$35 |
| Wed 25 | 11am – 1pm | RAHS/WEA Workshop – <i>Tips and Techniques for Dating Historic Photos</i> | Gionni Di Gravio | \$32 | \$35 |

Unless otherwise indicated, lectures and workshops are streamed online using Zoom. Joint RAHS/WEA events must be booked through WEA (02) 9264 2781 or <https://www.weasydney.com.au>



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RAHS Day Lecture – *Truganini: Journey through the apocalypse*
Wednesday 2 June 2021, 1pm – 2pm online via Zoom. Cost: Free

Cassandra Pybus recounts that her ancestors told a story of an old Aboriginal woman who would wander across their farm on Bruny Island, in south-east Tasmania, in the 1850s and 1860s. As a child, Cassandra didn't know this woman was Truganini, and that Truganini was walking over the country of her clan, the Nuenonne. In writing *Truganini: Journey through the apocalypse* Cassandra Pybus has examined the original eyewitness accounts to write Truganini's extraordinary story. Hardly more than a child, Truganini managed to survive the devastation of the 1820s, when the clans of south-eastern Tasmania were all but extinguished. She spent five years on a journey around Tasmania, across rugged highlands and through barely penetrable forests, with George Augustus Robinson, the self-styled missionary who was collecting the survivors to send them into exile on Flinders Island. She has become an international icon for a monumental tragedy – the so-called extinction of the original people of Tasmania.

About the speaker: Cassandra Pybus is an award-winning author and a distinguished historian. She is author of twelve books and has held research professorships at the University of Sydney, Georgetown University in Washington DC, the University of Texas and King's College London. She is descended from the colonist who received the largest free land grant on Truganini's traditional country of Bruny Island. She was awarded the Centenary Medal in 2001 for outstanding contribution to Tasmanian and Australian literature and education. In 2020 she was shortlisted for the Nonfiction Book Award at the Queensland Literary Awards for *Truganini* and for the Nonfiction prize at the 2021 Indie Book Awards with *Truganini*.

RAHS Excursion – *Reserve Bank of Australia Museum*

Wednesday 16 June, 10.30am – 12pm at 65 Martin Place (corner of Martin Place & Macquarie Streets).
Cost: RAHS Members \$5 | Non-Members \$5

The Museum tells the story of Australia's banknotes against the background of the nation's economic and social development, from colonial settlement through to the current era. The Museum Educators provide an interactive presentation exploring the security features, production process and lifecycle of Australia's banknotes and a guided tour through the Museum displays, explaining how the story of Australia's banknotes has unfolded against the backdrop of the country's broader history.

RAHS/WEA Workshop – *Digging a Little Deeper: Biographical Research and Writing with a Twist*

Wednesday 23 June 2021, 11am – 1pm via Zoom | Cost: RAHS/WEA Members \$32 | Non-Members \$35
Bookings through WEA (02) 9264 2781 or online at <https://www.weasydney.com.au/course/DLDBRWT>

Biographies - third person account of someone else's life story - include basic information about the person's life. This includes details such as parents' names, birthplace, education, and interests. Biographers should not rely on dry facts alone. Successful biographies also explore family relationships, as well as the impact of major events in the subject's childhood and the events happening around them and how these influenced their lives. By digging a little deeper you are sure to discover more about your subject and this in turn makes for an interesting biography.

About the speakers:

- **Heather Garnsey** is a recognised face and voice in Australian family history. Best known for her work as Executive Officer of the Society of Australian Genealogists (SAG) for 35 years, she's spoken at seminars, conferences and congresses throughout Australia and overseas. She retired from this very full-time position early in 2020 hoping to finally spend more time on her own family history.
- **Dr Susan Steggall** is an author and art historian. She has written a memoir, *Alpine Beach: A Family Adventure* (1999) and short biographies on grandparents and great-grandparents. Her biography *A Most Generous Scholar: Joan Kerr, Art and Architectural Historian*, was a Non-Fiction winner in the 2013 Society of Women Writers NSW Book Awards.

RAHS Special Event – *Floating Prisons: Irish Convict Hulks and Voyages to New South Wales*

Friday 25 June 2021, 1pm – 2pm online via Zoom. Cost: Free

During the years 1823 to 1837 men in Ireland who had been sentenced to transportation were held in two prison hulks: the *Surprize* and the *Essex*. 12,000 prisoners from the two hulks were transported to Sydney. They came on 61 convict voyages of hired merchant ships controlled by naval surgeons. *Floating Prisons* portrays life on these hulks. Punishment was harsh. Diet was at starvation level. Clothing was flimsy. Faction fights erupted at night so that guards dared not enter the prisons below decks. The prisoners set alight to both hulks. Australians who have Irish prisoner ancestors tend to know the ships on which they came to the Colony but may not be familiar with the hulks or the Irish penal system of the disturbed 1820s.

About the speaker: Anne McMahon is already admired for her last book bringing new light to convict transportation to Van Diemen's Land. She is a graduate of the University of Tasmania and the ANU. Her thirty-year academic career was at the University of Canberra.

RAHS Day Lecture – *Secret and Special: The Untold Story of the Z Special Unit in the Second World War*

Wednesday 7 July 2021, 1pm – 2pm online via Zoom. Cost: Free

While war raged across the globe, the Japanese were facing a series of audacious operations across their occupied territories, undertaken by the highly secret Special Operations Australia, more popularly known as the Z Special Unit. Operational areas included PNG, Timor, Borneo, Sarawak, the Molucca and Celebes, Singapore, even Indochina. This general history will cover the majority of the operations between 1942-1945.

About the speaker: Will Davies is a graduate historian from the ANU in Canberra and holds a PhD from that university. He started work at the Commonwealth Film Unit in 1972, worked at the BBC and in Hollywood in the 1970s before setting up his documentary production company LOOK FILM PRODUCTIONS in 1977, one of the most prolific documentary production company during the period 1983-2003. Between that time and his retirement in 2010, he made many documentaries, mainly for the ABC and SBS.

RAHS Excursion – *St Mary's Cathedral* | Thursday 15 July, 1.45pm – 3.30pm at 2 St Mary's Road (corner of College St & Macquarie Streets). Cost: RAHS Members \$10 | Non-Members \$10

Built on land given to the Catholic Church during the earliest days of colonisation (1820), Australia's largest Cathedral is regarded as one of the finest examples of an English-style Gothic revival building in the world. There are many notable architectural features in the Cathedral's design including the sandstone interior and façade, its beautiful stained-glass windows and the high central nave. If you love history or architecture, the building and its interior will offer lots of interesting discoveries.

RAHS Special Event – *Cooking Up a Storm: Mina Rawson in Colonial Queensland*

Wednesday 21 July 2021, 1pm – 2pm online via Zoom. Cost: Free

Famous cookbook author Mina Rawson also wrote a series of reminiscences published in the 1920s. In this series, she focuses on her 'frontier' years in the Great Sandy Strait. Between 1880-1883, Mina and her husband Lance attempted to establish a fishing station at Boonooroo. There they lived alongside local Aboriginal families, who did their best to help them out. This is a history of friendship, conflict, resilience and survival.

About the speaker: Jodi Frawley is Principal Historian with Stonehouse Research, which specialises in environmental history work. She is currently working on a novel about Mina Rawson's life.

RAHS Special Event – *Managing Local Societies in Changing Times*

Wednesday 28 July 2021, 11am – 12pm online via Zoom. Cost: \$10

This session will look at two of the topics of interest that were identified from the survey, which we conducted after *An Introduction to Managing Local Societies in Changing Times* was held on 28 April. They are:

- Strategic Planning: easy steps to enjoying the journey and learning from it
- Engaging with the younger set: how to attract new members and supporters

RAHS Day Lecture – *Regina’s Complaint: Philip Roth, Penguin Books and the end of the literary censorship system in Australia* | Wednesday, 4 August 2021, 1pm – 2pm online via Zoom. Cost: Free

In 1970, Penguin Books Australia decided to publish Philip Roth's fourth novel, *Portnoy's Complaint*, a worldwide bestseller about a man obsessed with his mother and his penis. Banned in Australia for its supposed obscenity and depictions of sex, *Portnoy's Complaint* was deliberately chosen in order to challenge Australia's notorious system of literary censorship. The book was smuggled into the country, printed in secret, and 75,000 copies were shipped to more than two thousand booksellers across Australia and for sale on the cusp of spring. In doing so, Penguin and the sellers who took the book on spurred court trials in nearly every state, and managed to deal the censorship system a considerable blow. This talk will trace how the background to Penguin's decision; how court trials and the accompanying publicity played out; and the effects of the trials on the censorship system.

About the speaker: Patrick Mullins is a Canberra-based academic and writer. He is an adjunct assistant professor at the University of Canberra and the author of two books: *Tiberius with a Telephone: The Life and Stories of William McMahon* (2018), and *The Trials of Portnoy* (2020).

**RAHS Excursion – *Justice & Police Museum: Murder Most Foul Tour*
Thursday 12 August, 10.15am – 11.30am at corner of Albert & Phillip Streets, Circular Quay.
Cost: Concession Price \$20 | Regular Price \$25**

Step into the dark side of Sydney’s past with a visit to the Water Police station and courts that once made up one of the city’s busiest legal hubs. Crooks and cops, thugs and judges, locals and drifters, the guilty and the innocent have all left their stories here. Delve into Sydney’s sinister history in this tour of the historic courts. Hear the stories of two murderers: the bushranger Captain Moonlite and Henry Louis Bertrand, the ‘mad dentist of Wynyard Square’, in the courtroom where they once appeared.

**RAHS/WEA Workshop – *Moving Image and Picture Research for Historians*
Wednesday 18 August 2021, 11am – 1pm via Zoom | Cost: RAHS/WEA Members \$32 | Non-Members \$35
Bookings through WEA (02) 9264 2781 or online at <https://www.weasydney.com.au/course/MIPRH>**

With a focus on 19th and 20th century picture sources in NSW and the Australian sources of moving image, we examine the sometimes-complex issues of access and reproduction.

About the speakers:

- **Joy Hughes** is a professional historian who has undertaken extensive picture research to inform the restoration of heritage buildings and gardens and for reports, books and exhibition.
- **Graham Shirley** was a director, writer, and researcher on Australian historical documentaries. He has published on Australian film history.

**RAHS/WEA Workshop – *Tips and Techniques for Dating Historical Photographs*
Wednesday 25 August 2021, 11am – 1pm via Zoom | Cost: RAHS/WEA Members \$32 | Non-Members \$35
Bookings through WEA (02) 9264 2781 or online at <https://www.weasydney.com.au/course/TTDHP>**

Examine the different methods of arranging and dating photographs adopted by archivists and allied professionals for historical research. The presentation draws on many years of experience working on archival photographic collections relating to Newcastle and its environs in the University’s Special Collections (Archives), Auchmuty Library.

About the speaker: Gianni Di Gravio, OAM is Archivist at the University of Newcastle, Chair, Hunter Living Histories, Australian Society of Archivists Rep on GLAM Peak Australia. Over the past quarter century, he has used emerging technologies to digitise archives and cultural resources in all their myriad forms and formats and connect them with people and communities, in order to help create a better meaningful future for all.