



# ROYAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## SPRING 2023

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

Date	Time	Event	Presenter	Member	Friend
SEPTEMBER					
Wed 6	1pm – 2pm	RAHS Day Lecture – <i>My Grandfather’s Clock: Four Centuries of a British-Australian Family</i>	Graeme Davidson	Free	Free
Wed 20	1pm – 2pm	RAHS Special Lecture – <i>Garden Design Using Australian Native Plants: A History</i>	Stuart Read	Free	Free
OCTOBER					
Wed 4	1pm – 2pm	RAHS Day Lecture – <i>The ‘Girls’ Who Made Australia Laugh</i>	Sharon Connolly	Free	Free
Wed 11	6pm – 7.30pm	RAHS Online New Members’ Evening – <i>Scandals From Our Past</i>	Various	Free	Free
Sat 21 – Sun 22	2023 RAHS Conference in Wagga Wagga <i>The Way Ahead: Local and Community Histories for our Future</i>				
NOVEMBER					
Wed 1	1pm – 2pm	RAHS Day Lecture – <i>The Shipwreck: The True Story of the Dunbar</i>	Larry Writer	Free	Free
Thu 9	11am – 1pm	RAHS/WEA – <i>Preserving Treasured Legacies: A Workshop on Gathering Family Memories</i>	Various	\$32	\$35
Sat 18	10am – 3pm	Western Sydney Regional Seminar – <i>Unveiling the Untold: Crafting Compelling Local Histories</i>	Various	\$20	\$20
DECEMBER					
Wed 6	1pm – 2pm	RAHS Day Lecture – <i>The Convict Orphans of Van Diemen’s Land</i>	Lucy Frost	Free	Free

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



**RAHS Day Lecture – *My Grandfather's Clock: Four Centuries of a British-Australian Family***

**Wednesday 6 September 2023, 1pm – 2pm online via Zoom. Cost: Free**

A great-aunt's bequest – a 200-year-old grandfather clock – sends historian Graeme Davison on a journey deep into his father's family's past. From their tribal homeland in the Scottish Borders, he follows them to the garrison town of Carlisle, from industrial Birmingham to Edwardian Australia, and from the Great War to his own suburban childhood. This is the story of an ordinary family's journey from frontier warfare and dispossession through economic turmoil and emigration to modest prosperity. At each step, we are led to reflect on the puzzles of personal identity and the mystery of time. *My Grandfather's Clock* is a moving testament to the power of family history to illuminate the present.

**About the speaker:** Graeme Davison is Emeritus Sir John Monash Professor of History at Monash University. He has written widely on Australian history, and his publications include *The Rise and Fall of Marvellous Melbourne*, *The Unforgiving Minute: How Australia Learned to Tell the Time*, *Car Wars: How the Car Won Our Hearts and Conquered our Cities*, *City Dreamers: The Urban Imagination in Australia* and, as editor, *The Oxford Companion to Australian History*. His previous family history, *Lost Relations: Fortunes of My Family in Australia's Golden Age*, won a Judges' Special Prize in the Victorian Community History Awards.

**RAHS Special Lecture – *Garden Design Using Australian Native Plants: A History***

**Wednesday 20 September 2023, 1pm – 2pm online via Zoom. Cost: Free**

Landscape historian Stuart Read will talk on the history of Australian garden design using native plants, including waves of fashions (it didn't just start in the 1960s), players who were influential, and examples of gardens that remain so. You might be surprised how early and how widely natives were used. He'll delve into matters of fashion, treatment and shrinking gardens.

**About the speaker:** Stuart Read won a Pratt Foundation / International Specialised Skills Institute overseas fellowship, travelling to Spain in 2005 to study change management in gardens. He has long been involved with the Australian Garden History Society. Trained in horticulture and landscape architecture in New Zealand, he has worked since 1991 on Australian world, national and NSW heritage.

**RAHS Day Lecture – *The 'Girls' Who Made Australia Laugh***

**Wednesday 4 October 2023, 1pm – 2pm online via Zoom. Cost: Free**

Hundreds of Australian women graced the popular stage in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Despite the racism, sexism and other cruelties of vaudeville, it gave them space in which to live unusually public lives, and sometimes to test conventional ideas about how women should behave. Their stories speak to the treatment of women in earlier times. But they also show what is lost to our culture and our history when imported entertainments are permitted to overwhelm local artists and their work.

**About the speaker:** A former documentary filmmaker, television producer and chief executive of Film Australia, Sharon Connolly has been involved in making many landmark history programs since her first film, *Red Matildas*. In her first book, *My Giddy Aunt and her sister comedians*, she once more writes some remarkable yet uncelebrated women back into the stories of Australia.

**RAHS New Members' Evening – *Scandals From Our Past***

**Wednesday 11 October 2023, 6pm – 7.30pm online via Zoom. Cost: Free**

Join us for a New Members' Evening with a difference.

We will be presenting a series of short, light-hearted talks on scandals from the past. Prepare to chuckle as we explore the quirky and amusing side of history.

**Speakers:**

- Judith Dunn: *The Curious Case of the Amorous Dentist: A Victorian Style Melodrama*
- Christine Yeats: *Eliza Ashton's 'Radical' Views on Marriage*
- Sue Tracey: *Counterfeit Fivers: World War I*

**RAHS Day Lecture – *The Shipwreck: The True Story of the Dunbar***  
**Wednesday 1 November 2023, 1pm – 2pm online via Zoom. Cost: Free**

In *The Shipwreck: The True Story of the Dunbar, the Disaster That Broke the Colony's Heart and Forged a Nation's Spirit*, Larry Writer chronicles the tragedy when, in a ferocious storm at midnight on 20 August 1857, *Dunbar*, a magnificent sailing clipper, collided with the cliffs of outer South Head and 121 of the 122 passengers and crew perished. Larry reveals why the ship crashed, who was to blame, and follows the personal stories of its crew, the passengers and the sole survivor, James Johnson, whose miracle rescue defies belief. The effect on the fledgling colony is movingly told. More than a third of Sydney's population lined the streets as the funeral procession of the victims made its way at dusk from Circular Quay to Camperdown Cemetery. The aftermath to the shipwreck saw enormous and desperately needed changes to Port Jackson navigation and maritime safety, including the building of Hornby lighthouse that still stands overlooking the Heads, upgrading of the marine pilot service, and the construction of a telegraph line from South Head to the city.

**About the speaker:** Larry Writer is a Sydney-based author. As well as *The Shipwreck*, Larry's books include *Razor*, the saga of Kate Leigh and Tilly Devine and the razor gangs of Sydney in the 1920s and 1930s, which won the Ned Kelly Award for best Australian True Crime book of 2002 and was the basis of the top-rating 2011 *Underbelly Razor* series.

**RAHS/WEA Workshop – *Preserving Treasured Legacies: A Workshop on Gathering Family Memories***  
**Thursday 9 November 2023, 11am – 1pm online via Zoom.**

**Cost: RAHS Members \$32 | Non-Members \$35.**

**Bookings through WEA (02) 9264 2781 or online at <https://www.weasydney.com.au/course/PTLGFM>**

This workshop will guide you through discovering, collecting, and preserving the invaluable stories and experiences of your family's history and heritage. Our speakers will share their knowledge, techniques, and practical tips to help you embark on a fulfilling journey of preserving your family's legacy.

There will be tips on the following: Conducting meaningful interviews with your family members; Methods and mediums for documenting and preserving your family memories; Cataloguing your collected materials, whether physical or digital, to create a cohesive family archive; Understanding the importance of preserving intangible aspects of your family's culture, such as traditions, recipes, music, and language.

**About the speakers:**

**Pauline Curby** is a professional historian who has undertaken consultancies in oral history, environmental history and heritage, as well as writing commissioned histories. Her publications include *Seven Miles from Sydney: A history of Manly and Randwick*. Pauline won the 2010 NSW Premier's Award (Regional and Community History) and received the NSW History Fellowship in 2011. Pauline's oral history consultancies include: 'Telling it as it was' oral history project (2006–2017) – Sutherland Shire; Recording Ryde's Oral History Project (1997–1999); Australian Customs Service Oral History Project (2001–2002); 'A career in the Australian shipping industry' (2004). Pauline is President of the Sutherland Shire Historical Society.

**Heather Garnsey** joined the staff of the Society of Australian Genealogists (SAG) in 1984 and was its Executive Officer from 1988 until her retirement at the end of February 2020. Heather is an Honorary Member and Fellow of the Society of Australian Genealogists, an Honorary Fellow of the Heraldry and Genealogy Society of Canberra and was the joint recipient of the AFFHO Award for Meritorious Service to Family History in 2015. She holds a Masters degree in English History and SAG's Diploma in Family Historical Studies. In her retirement, she is enjoying having time to spend on her own family history research.

**Christine Yeats** is an archivist, historical researcher and active supporter of local historical societies. Christine has undertaken a range of consultancy projects including significance assessments, biographical and local history research. She is President of the Federation of Australian Historical Societies, Senior Vice-President of the RAHS and a member of the Professional Historians Association (NSW & ACT). Her recent publication is *Handy Guide: Convict Records of NSW: The Human Stories of the Transportation System* (2021).

**Western Sydney Regional Seminar – *Unveiling the Untold: Crafting Compelling Local Histories***  
**Saturday 18 November 2023, 10am – 3pm at the Western Sydney Records Centre. Cost: \$20.**

Are you eager to dive into the fascinating world of local history research? Do you want to uncover untold stories and shed light on the past of your community? If so, then join us for this seminar on researching and writing compelling local histories. In this seminar, we will explore the essential techniques and methodologies for conducting thorough and captivating research into your local area's history. We will guide you through the process of unearthing hidden treasures, gathering reliable information, and piecing together a narrative that will captivate readers and preserve the heritage of your community. You will have the opportunity to learn from historians, archivists, and researchers who have honed their skills in uncovering the past.

**About the speakers:**

**Dr Iain Stuart** is President of the Royal Australian Historical Society. Iain is a graduate from Latrobe University, Monash University and the University of Sydney, where he wrote his dissertation on 19th-century rural landscapes. He has worked for the Government Heritage Agencies in Victoria and NSW and as an archaeological consultant on various projects since 1993.

**Judith Dunn OAM** is a Councillor of the Royal Australian Historical Society and author of eight books on Parramatta's local and community history, including her most recent, *Then and There Lying Dead: Murders, Accidents, Inquests and Incidents in Sydney's Greater West 1803–1950*.

**Dr Matthew Stephens** is Research Librarian at the Caroline Simpson Library, Museums of History NSW. He has had a long-term interest in early book and sheet music collections in NSW, in their owners, and the stories they tell. His publications include *Hannah Snell: The Secret Life of a Female Marine, 1723–1792*, and he was contributor and co-editor of *Sound Heritage: Making Music Matter in Historic Houses*.

**Emily Hanna** is Lead Archivist, Collection Discovery at Museums of History NSW. For many years, Emily has helped people to access the NSW State Archives Collection across a range of channels, including the reading room, enquiry services and talks.

**RAHS Day Lecture – *The Convict Orphans of Van Diemen's Land***  
**Wednesday 6 December 2023, 1pm – 2pm online via Zoom. Cost: Free**

One of the largest convict establishments in Van Diemen's Land housed children. Between 1828 and 1879 some 6,000 children passed through the Orphan Schools, most 'orphaned' not by the death of their parents but by the convict system. They were convict orphans. Unless they were retrieved by their mothers or by another family member before they were about 12 years old, they left the Orphan Schools as indentured 'apprentices'. During the final two decades of the orphanage, almost a thousand children were sent out as unpaid workers under conditions like those of assigned convicts. Once they turned 18 and were free to leave the colony, many sailed across Bass Strait to make new lives for themselves elsewhere in Australia and New Zealand. Only in recent years have their descendants begun to uncover the stories of these children who concealed from their families the stigma of growing up a 'convict orphan'.

**About the speaker:** Lucy Frost is Emerita Professor of English at the University of Tasmania. She has long been interested in the experiences of women and children in colonial Australia, beginning with her first book, *No Place for a Nervous Lady: Voices from the Australian Bush*. Since moving from Melbourne to Hobart in 1997, her research has focused on the experiences of convict women and their children. During her years as a director of the Cascades Female Factory Historic Site, she co-founded the organisation thriving today as the Female Convicts Research Centre, of which she was the founding president. At present, she is Chair of Digital History Tasmania, dedicated to preserving Tasmania's historical records and heritage and promoting access.