



# WASFR NEWS

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## GOOD NEWS! FREEDOM AT LAST

### RESUMPTION OF MEETINGS

Just what we have been waiting for ! Our monthly meetings will resume on Friday **10 July 2020** after the forced suspension of meetings due to COVID-19.

We must still remain vigilant; therefore the Committee has put the following precautions in place:



- Hand sanitizer and antiseptic wipes will be provided;
- You can bring your own cups for morning tea if you wish; otherwise, disposable cups will be provided;
- Tables and chairs will be arranged to comply with social distancing regulations;
- If you are at all unwell, **PLEASE** stay at home.

We look forward to seeing you in July. Our Guest Speaker will be: Kevin Smythe who will discuss *"History of the Catalinas on the Swan River at Nedlands"*.

### NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

NOTICE is given that the Annual General Meeting of Western Australia Self Funded Retirees Inc. (WASFR) will be held on Friday, **14 August 2020** at 10a.m. at the Cambridge Bowling Club, Howtree Place, Floreat.

The guest speaker for this meeting will be Erika Jellis who will talk on *"A Sneak Peek at the New Museum"*.

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FOR SOME, THE BIGGEST WORRY ABOUT A PANDEMIC SUMMER...



### BUSINESS

Confirmation of the Minutes of the 2019 AGM

President's Report

Financial Report

Election of Office Bearers

General Business

**PRESIDENT’S REPORT**

Morning Everyone. Hasn't the past 3 months been interesting ! Most will agree, but I also think that most of you will just be glad that the main part now seems to be over. I am loathe to add to the many reports, both on TV, the Radio and in the daily newspapers that deal with this pandemic. Most of us have just about reached the point where we are getting tired about listening to/reading about the statistics from around the World - mind you, I still take notice, and at the same time give Thanks to the powers-that-be that we, in WA, seem to have been very lucky. At the time of writing we have yet to hear when WA's interstate borders will be opened - and when the 100 limit can be extended. However, it is great that we can now sit down and have a coffee and also that the Gyms and Libraries are open, so it shouldn't be too long before we get back to "normal". Mind you, there is still a concern that Australia could have a second outbreak, and that is something we should try to avoid at all costs - the test will be when Australia opens its' international borders and we get an influx of people from other countries.

As you have seen on page 1, WASFR is back in business and we have our next general meeting at the Cambridge Bowling Club on Friday 10th July - so please come along.

Although there have been no general meetings since 13th March, your Committee have still been corresponding via email and the phone, so, really, there hasn't been a great deal of change. Obviously, we have not tried to contact politicians (they have many more important matters to consider), but that will change shortly. We did meet with the Member for Curtin, M/s Celia Hammond, on 19th March and had a very fruitful meeting with her. We were able to discuss most of the issues in our 2020/21 Federal submission and it was pleasing to discover that M/s Hammond was across most of the issues. We also raised the matter of reducing the mandatory drawdown rates for superannuation and, once again, M/s Hammond indicated her support. We wrote to the PM on this matter (as did several other organisations), and it is now history that they have been halved for this year, and for next year.

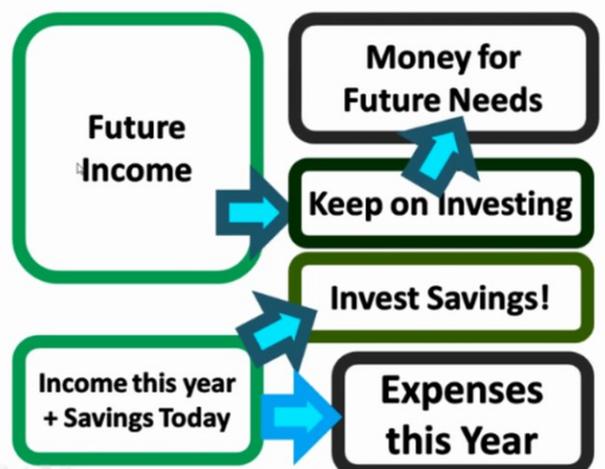
**Retirement Income Planning**

Planning for a Financially Successful Retirement



Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the Review into Retirement Incomes will now not submit their final report until 31 July 2020. This is only a small delay and many of us are curious to see what they come up with. As previously advised, this Committee will not be making any recommendations but they are expected to offer some relevant "observations" - which we hope the government will seriously consider. Only time will tell. Note: Details of our submission are in the last edition of WASFR News.

You would all be aware of the Alliance for a Fairer Retirement System (AFRS) which was created 2 years ago. This alliance of similar organisations grew from the Labor Party's (then) policy on franking credits, and negative gearing. Once these issues were put to rest with the re-election of the LNP, many of us expected that the AFRS would disappear. Not so. The 11 members of the group continued to show strong interest in the many issues that affects retirees and lodged an extensive submission to the Review into Retirement Incomes in February this year. They have now followed this up with a shorter, auxiliary submission covering 5 items (a) revaluation of assets by Centrelink to account for extraordinary market falls, (b) a further reduction of Deeming rates, (c) reduction of the rate of the Pension Loan Scheme, (d) adjustment of the pension assets test Taper rate and (e) extension of eligibility for the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card (CSHC). Unfortunately, 3 valued members of this group have now withdrawn their services - mainly due to their Boards asking that they concentrate on more relevant matters relating to their existence (the SMSF Association, Australian Shareholders Association and the Stockbrokers & Financial Advisers Association). The AFRS will continue to present relevant submissions to the government under the leadership of the Chief Advocate for National Seniors Australia, Ian Henschke (who appears on television, and in several newspapers, quite regularly).



The Royal Commission into Aged Care and Safety is drawing to a close with the closing date for submissions now being 31 July 2020. Their final report is still due on 30 November 2020, although it would not be a surprise to see this date stretch out a bit further. It is possible that, with the problems surrounding this Coronavirus, the government may be forced to delay strong consideration for any recommendations regarding Aged Care for a short time. We sincerely hope this does not happen.

As you know, the WA government has been focusing most of their energies on combating this pandemic (for which we are thankful). Recently they set up a series of "*State Recovery Round Table Discussion Groups*" that are designed to seek comments/recommendations from a total of 19 different groups - some examples are Youth, Women, People with Disabilities, Aboriginal Advisory Council, Housing, Local Government, Older People/Seniors, Tourism, Regional communities, Transport etc. etc. WA Self Funded Retirees was invited to be one of the 22 organisations who met on Wednesday 10th June to discuss problems that have occurred with Older People/Seniors. Many different comments were offered but it was pleasing to see that the needs of the elderly are not being ignored. Only 51% of those surveyed felt positive towards their future and the introduction of TeleHealth was not as popular as was intended. It was stated that 52% of Aged Care establishments are not financially viable and that, in the future, there may well be a need for some amalgamations to take place. The comment was made that forced isolation had not been helpful to those elderly people suffering from Alzheimers' disease and that there seems to be a growing problem with elderly people who are not computer literate. As we know, there is a need to ensure that everyone (especially those over the age of 50), appreciates the importance of having (a) a valid Will, (b) an Enduring Power of Attorney, (c) an Enduring Power of Guardianship and (d) an Advanced Health Directive. Once these Round Table groups have met there will be a combined report submitted to the WA government and it will be interesting to see what develops.

The WA Seniors Alliance (WASA) has been in abeyance for the past 4 months but we expect to ramp up visits to WA politicians when this current crisis calms down - although that may not be for a few more months. The WASA will continue to present their annual submission to the WA government before Christmas detailing some issues that we feel need to be addressed.

Perhaps it is worth mentioning that we should be celebrating the 10th anniversary of the creation of WA Self Funded Retirees Inc. We were legally created on 25 May 2010 and had our first AGM, followed by a general meeting, on Friday 16 July 2010. Those of you who were members at that time will recall that there was a degree of angst around the fact that we had chosen to break away from an Australia-wide organisation (the Association of Independent Retirees (A.I.R.) Ltd.) and go out on our own. In hindsight, it does seem that we made the right decision. We have been able to consolidate our concerns about improving the benefits of superannuation and taxation plus other issues such as Aged Care and travel on public transport. We have persevered with working with other similar organisations, including A.I.R., and now feel quite comfortable in regard to the future. Our involvement with the Alliance for a Fairer Retirement (AFRS) has been of great benefit in relation to improved recognition from State and Federal politicians.

Some of you may recall a chap named Ron Davenport. Sadly, Ron passed away on 12th June after a long battle with medical problems. Ron joined the Perth Northern Suburbs Branch of A.I.R. in 1999 (just a few months before I did), and later became their President. Ron was a tireless worker and became the WA President of A.I.R. when Jeff Trew stepped down from that position. Ron went on to become the National Secretary of A.I.R. and served in that position for many years. A strong commitment to his work and he had a way of encouraging people to come around to his way of thinking. Will be sadly missed.



Finally, you may be interested to know that the Town of Cambridge is organising a "Xmas in July" for Friday 24th July. It will be held at the Wembley Hotel, commencing at 11.45am. The cost is \$45 per head and it promises to be a joyous occasion - you may need to consider a taxi. If you wish to attend please contact the Cambridge Senior Services Team on **9285 3136** before the end of the month.

That's all for now. Stay safe, obey the restrictions that are imposed, and we all will live happily forever after !

Ron de Gruchy

## ANTARCTICA, THE SOUTH ATLANTIC AND TIERRA DEL FUEGO (2010)

by Edward Goodchild

Back in early 2008, we decided to fulfil a long-held ambition to visit Antarctica and booked a cruise aboard the *MV Explorer* for the following Antarctic summer season. However, events intervened when our ship sank a week or so before our trip! I was browsing the news on the internet at lunchtime a few days before we were due to leave when I saw a headline along the lines of "Expedition Ship Hits Iceberg in South Atlantic". My first thought was "...it can't be the *Explorer* can it?". Of course it was, and over the next few days we saw it heel over and sink on the TV news — it was rather poignant to see what would have been our cabin become submerged and disappear. Fortunately, we got a full refund.

Undeterred, we leapt at another chance when we were offered a half price deal on a the second ever cruise on the newly refurbished *MV Plancius* for the following season. This included a three-week cruise aboard the *MV Plancius* from Ushuaia to the Falklands, South Georgia, South Orkneys, South Shetlands and Antarctica, following approximately the route shown on the map.

We planned a four week trip around this three-week cruise to give us time to explore the area around



Ushuaia before the cruise (and to make sure that our baggage had time to reach us before the cruise should it go astray en route). The *MV Plancius* is one of the small, "expedition" category ships with a maximum of 110 passengers — there were 95 aboard for our trip. Since there is (or was at that time), an international agreement that no more than 100 people should land in Antarctica at any one time, it allowed all the passengers to land at once for the whole of the landing period rather than having two or more shifts with shorter individual landing times. Sadly, most operators seem to be moving to larger, more luxurious ships and retiring the smaller ones — although there are still a

few ships in the 90 to 150 passenger range still operating.

We spent the best part of three days walking in the Tierra Del Fuego National Park, a few miles west of the town, and a fascinating day taking the ski lift and walking on up to the glacier above the town. Then it was time to board the ship and depart down the Beagle Channel heading for the Falkland Islands.

We landed twice in the Falkland Islands. The first stop was on Carcass Island, NW of West Falkland, where we enjoyed the hospitality of the owner family. We saw a variety of native birds (geese of various types, petrels, snipe, oystercatchers, rock shags, striated caracaras, Austral thrushes and elusive sedge wrens plus many others), and their farm which is even more isolated than some of the Kimberley stations. We then sailed on to Stanley where we opted first to go out "camp" to see a colony of Rockhopper penguins and then walked around the town before re-embarking for the two and a half day voyage to South Georgia.

Throughout this leg of the trip, the ship was accompanied by petrels and at least three species of albatross skimming the waves and soaring over the ship to take advantage of the up draughts. We also saw several pods of dolphins and, as we neared land, some seals. Approaching South Georgia, we circled the Shag Rocks for a while, seeing (at some distance) the eponymous shag colonies and three Southern Right whales.



South Georgia was a highlight and we were very lucky that, out of eight planned landings, only one, the last, had to be cancelled due to the weather and one changed to a more sheltered location (normally they only manage four or five landings as the weather can change very quickly). We spent nearly four days around the island, including a visit to the Gruitvicken whaling station and Shackleton's grave. We saw huge numbers of king penguins and southern fur seals, along with smaller numbers of chinstrap and gentoo penguins, prions, skuas, albatrosses (flying and nesting), Elephant seals and a very few Macaroni penguins. We were very surprised on our last landing to see some reindeer which were introduced to South Georgia in the nineteenth century to provide meat for the whalers and which still flourish in parts of the island today. Unfortunately, the South Atlantic weather ran true to form on that last day — after a warm, calm morning ashore in St Andrew's Bay, a storm blew in and forced the cancellation of our last landing to see a colony of macaroni penguins. From virtually still air while we were approaching the bay, the wind picked up rapidly, reaching 65 knots (and gusting much higher), within an hour. Instead, we set off into the storm for the South Orkney Islands. Not many people came down to dinner that evening!

Our planned landing a couple of days later in the South Orkneys had to be cancelled because of the seas kicked up by the storm were still too high.

Onwards, past numerous icebergs, varying from a few to huge ones several miles wide towards Antarctica. Another residue of the storm was a barrier of pack ice across the mouth of the Bransfield Strait which changed our itinerary slightly so that we visited Barrientos Island in the South Shetlands in place of a research base on the tip of the Antarctic Peninsula as our first stop. Thence through the English Strait into the Bransfield Strait (south of the ice barrier) with spectacular views of the setting sunlight on the icy peaks.



Next morning, Neko Harbour was our first landing on the Antarctic continent after passing through the spectacular Errera Channel. Although the landing area in Neko harbour is small with little scope for roaming freely, the three hours ashore passed all too quickly watching the gentoo penguins, viewing the amazing scenery and waiting for the glacier to calve, which it does frequently — but not while we were there. We saw our only adelic penguin on the beach here — they breed in colonies much further south on the peninsula and are seen very rarely this far north. On the way back to the ship we had a very close encounter with two Humpback whales (a mother and calf), which actually swam under our zodiac and surfaced a few feet away to blow (they have very bad breath!). They then proceeded to

circle the ship for nearly an hour giving us time to get many (mostly not very good) photos. Next was a zodiac cruise around beautiful Paradise Bay and a landing at an abandoned research station.

The return leg took us first to Deception Island (a small harbour with a very a narrow entrance, enclosed in a volcanic crater). The crater is still active with mud flows occurring approximately every 40 years — our visit was in the 40th year since the previous flow but, fortunately, the mud didn't flow while we were there. Our final stop was at Hannah Point on Livingston Island, seeing colonies of chinstrap and gentoo penguins, harassed by skuas and petrels, and numerous elephant seals lying on the beach for their annual moult. Finally, the dreaded Drake passage crossing back to Ushuaia. In the event, the crossing was unusually smooth.

Although the voyage included a number of days at sea, we were never bored. Apart from the opportunities to watch the wildlife and see the many and varied ice formations and icebergs, the ship's expedition crew gave very interesting talks on a diverse variety of interesting and relevant topics, such as Shackleton's expeditions, Scott and Amundsen's race for the south pole, giant kelp, penguins, evidence for climate change (much more controversial back in 2010), Southern Ocean seabirds, ocean currents around the world, the history of whaling, and more.

The trip was a nature lovers dream with stunning scenery and wildlife. Each day was better than the last and neither of us wanted to come home. The highlights, obviously, were South Georgia and the Antarctic Peninsula — we could have spent a lot more time in both and hope to return there one day.



## Institute of Ear Science

*by Lize Coetzee, Audiologist and Head of Clinical Services at the Lions Hearing Clinic*

Lize's talk was in two parts: the first part covering the Ear Science Institute Australia and the second outlining the range of hearing deficiencies, their impact and available treatments.

### The Ear Science Institute Australia

The Ear Science Institute Australia is a not-for-profit organisation providing hearing health care, education and research into hearing disorders and treatment. Based in Perth, the Ear Science Institute Australia is a World Health Organisation Collaboration Centre (one of six such centres, globally, dealing with hearing), and has scientific collaborations worldwide. In addition to basic research into hearing disorders, it provides:

- Hearing clinics at 14 locations, seeing some 15,000 patients
- Trials of hearing aids to ensure that they perform as advertised
- Cochlear implants and other surgical hearing improvement procedures
- Clinical trials of the "ClearDrum" eardrum repair/replacement device. This is an artificial eardrum developed by the Institute. It is made from biocompatible silk which is expected to be less invasive than conventional surgical repairs and promises faster healing. Being transparent, it also allows doctors to check for disease behind it
- Research into the growth of artificial organoids from stem cells. This is particularly focused on growing artificial cochlear from a patient's own skin cells. Although such research is carried out in various laboratories internationally, the Institute is the first to be able to grow a cochlear-like organoid with functioning nerve cells. Although many years from being able to be implanted into a patient, this work is allowing researchers to test drugs for their effects on the cochlear and, thus, on hearing
- Hearing education and awareness. This includes both community hearing awareness and training for medical students at all WA universities (except, currently, UWA, where the curriculum is under review)
- Regional ear health clinic programmes
- Charitable fundraising to help support the ongoing research activities.



### Basic Research

The Institute's is conducting basic research in two main areas:

- Computer modelling hearing disorders at the cellular level to better understand them and to evaluate novel therapeutic approaches, including drug and genetic treatments.
- Development of stem cell cultures to study ways to stimulate aural hair cell and nerve cell regeneration.



As an example, research into inner ear stem cells has helped identify mutations associated with hearing loss due to Usher's Syndrome (a major, incurable genetic disorder causing hearing and visual impairment), suggests that gene or stem cell therapy may offer a cure.

### Education

The Institute provides education and training of all medical students from Curtin and Notre Dame universities in the areas of hearing impairment and treatment. The training is given by top-class ENT surgeons in the Institute's own dedicated surgical laboratory. They also provide top-up and refresher training for qualified ENT physicians and surgeons.

## Remote Communities

The Institute conducts clinics in remote communities in the Pilbara, not only to provide treatment, but also to educate the residents on the importance of ear and hearing health. Typically, the Institute makes six such trips per year.

## Lions Hearing Clinic and Ear Science Clinic

Between them, these two divisions of the Institute provide the range of clinical services available to the public.

**The Lions Hearing Clinic** deals with hearing assessments and non-surgical hearing remedies, including supply of hearing aids and advice on mitigation measures. It also covers tinnitus services.

Being part of a not-for-profit organisation, the clinic owes no allegiance to, and has no obligations to, any supplier or manufacturer so they are able to recommend and supply the best available device to suit any particular individual's needs and circumstances. This is backed with ongoing testing to ensure that they only recommend devices that actually work as specified.

**The Ear Science Clinic** deals with surgical treatments for hearing disorders, including cochlear and other implants. It also covers treatments for balance disorders.

All profits from the clinics are used to support research into hearing deficiencies and to support community services.

## Hearing Loss

Hearing loss is common worldwide, and this is reflected in Australia where one in six people suffer some form of hearing loss rising to 50% of those over 65, and 70% of those over 70. This can have a significant impact on those affected. In particular, it can lead to social withdrawal and isolation, anxiety, stress and depression, especially in older people. This has been shown to be a significant causal factor in the onset of dementia (in fact, hearing loss is the greatest modifiable risk factor and its timely treatment could reduce one's chance of getting dementia by up to 9%). Hearing loss can also affect physical health, typically tiredness, low activity rates and even unintended weight loss. Physical frailty has been shown to increase markedly for those suffering from it.

Despite this, it takes seven years on average for people to act on their hearing loss. The consequences can be reduced significantly, and quality of life improved by detecting and acting on hearing loss early, certainly earlier than seven years after the symptoms start. The key is to recognise the symptoms early. Typical early signs include:

- Constantly saying "what" in conversation,
- The impression that other people are mumbling,
- Difficulty in understanding what is being said on the telephone,
- Needing the TV volume higher than other people do,
- Miscommunication,
- Reduced social activity due to no longer being able to participate fully. This may include either withdrawal or a tendency to dominate a conversation to avoid feeling left out,
- Unexplained lethargy, sadness or depression.

# Say Again



The Lions Clinic publish a "5 Minute Hearing Check" pamphlet (made available to attendees of the meeting) containing a brief self-questionnaire to give a quick indication of hearing loss.

## Treatment Options

If any of these early signs become apparent or if one's score on the "5 Minute Hearing Check" exceeds 4 or 5, then it is time to act.

The Lions Clinic provides an initial screening free of charge. This is a quick check to determine whether there is, indeed, some loss of hearing. It can take place in a clinic or using questionnaires such as those handed round during the talk. While this can show that there is a problem, it is not sufficiently thorough or detailed to indicate how the loss can be treated. For this, one needs a full diagnostic hearing assessment which the Lions Clinic provides for \$100 (free with a pensioner or DVA card).

This is a thorough examination of one's hearing ability which will identify whether medical treatment is needed or whether the condition can be managed with a hearing aid or even just by changing ones' communication habits. The range of options available include:

- Advice on communication strategies to avoid the social disadvantages of mild hearing loss. Such strategies include limiting background noise, and:
  - for the person with hearing loss: facing the speaker to see their expressions and gestures
  - for others: to speak clearly, re-phrase anything that the listener hasn't heard correctly and face the listener
- Medical intervention for medically-treatable conditions, including the use of antibiotics, steroids or surgery. If such a condition is detected, the Lions Clinic will provide a referral to an appropriate Ear, Nose and Throat specialist.
- The use of hearing devices (also known as hearing aids), for those with more permanent and significant hearing loss. These come in a variety of forms, fitting either behind the ear or partially or totally within the ear canal. The Lions Clinic will help in the selection of the most suitable devices to suit each individual's circumstances, lifestyle and the physical configuration of their ears.
- Assistive listening devices, including earphones for the TV, telephone amplifiers or voice-to-text converters, personal sound amplifiers (coupled with earphones) and various forms of alerting systems.

Since one's hearing tends to deteriorate over time, there may come a time when hearing aids are no longer enough. Some people also find that they cannot use hearing aids much or at all due to persistent ear problems and infections. In such situations, the clinic may recommend a hearing implant. Three types are available, cochlear implants, middle ear implants and bone conduction implants, each of which supports a different level of residual hearing.

Lize's final message was *"Don't wait for seven years before acting to address hearing loss"*.

*E. Goodchild*




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## *A LITTLE BIT OF HUMOUR*

A doctor that had been seeing an 80-year-old woman for most of her life finally retired. At her next checkup, the new doctor told her to bring a list of all the medicines that had been prescribed for her. As the doctor was looking through these his eyes grew wide as he realized Grandma had a prescription for birth control pills. *"Mrs. Smith, do you realize these are birth control pills?" "Yes, they help me sleep at night."* *"Mrs. Smith, I assure you there is absolutely nothing in these that could possibly help you sleep!"* She reached out and patted the young doctor's knee and said, *"Yes, dear, I know that. But every morning, I grind one up and mix it in the glass of orange juice that my 16-year-old Granddaughter drinks. And believe me it definitely helps me sleep at night."* You gotta love Grandmas!



## An early 1900s teenagers work experiences in WA – could we do this?

By Sid Breeden

We go back on a journey to early 1900s life in our south-west. Western Australia was still coming to terms with Federation and with a population of just 323,206 many experienced hard working lives that no doubt helped develop our state. The following portrays part of one teenager's experiences before going to war on the Western Front "for King and Country".

Built in 1882, Augusta's Flinders Bay had a 335 metres long jetty not far from the Tallamup settlement, now called Colour Patch. Those days there was a little known connection to Caves Road, Busselton and Perth.

Today in supermarkets frozen Western Australian wild caught fish is a normal expectation but 106 years ago everyone depended upon fresh fish. Caught by professional net fishermen brothers Ben and Phil Mouchemore and their tight-knit small band of employees, the natural earth coastal track, later named Caves Road, was their fresh fish highway for supplying Flinders Bay fish to the Perth Markets.

One employee was my father Arthur Breeden who from age 16 drove the catch from Flinders Bay to Busselton along the 80 miles coastal track via Yallingup. Firstly by 1913 Model T Ford van with solid rubber tyres, then a 1914 Overland car with sleeve valve engine and high pressure pneumatic tyres.

On arrival in Busselton Arthur would get ice from the only ice makers in town, Fouracre and Wass butchers in Prince Street then, after icing, load the fish onto the train to Perth.

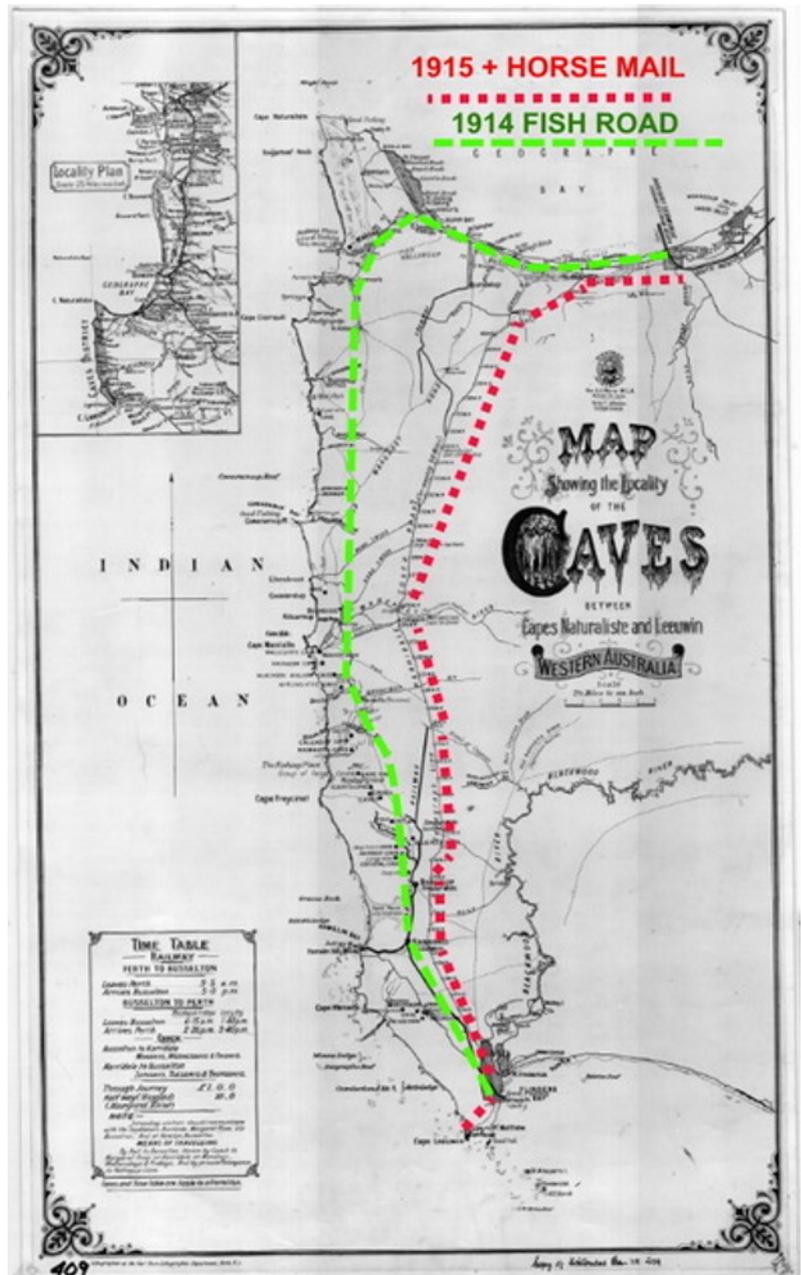
Becoming bogged or punctured was part of Caves Road travel and could delay arrival in Busselton. If Arthur was late the train would wait knowing the importance of South West fresh fish reaching Perth Markets for next morning.

Some may wonder why the inland Coach Road, after 1902 known as Millars Track, was not used. Back then only horses and bullock teams used this track making it unsuitable for motor vehicles.

In August 1915 Phil Mouchemore took over the Busselton to Cape Leeuwin Horse Mail Contract from the well-known Chris Abbey. Changing from driving fresh fish Arthur, just on age 18, drove the Busselton to Cape Leeuwin horse mail along the inland Millars Track that today approximates Bussell Highway.

Official start time 8:00am made it impossible to reach Cape Leeuwin in time so an unofficial 6:00am commenced his 14 hours journey.

Continued Page 10



Mostly alone he set off in a two horse buggy from Busselton Queen Street Livery Stables carrying five mail bags and passing the time memorising Masonic Lodge rituals.

First stop was Margaret River Post Office, then Tom Higgins Livery Stables for a change of horses and a sulky for the trip onwards to Augusta. Bullock teams always gave way to the Royal Mail but today the mind boggles trying to imagine the commotion of lumbering bullocks pulling off the track then the mail horse and cart manoeuvring past.



From Augusta the journey to the Cape Leeuwin Lighthouse settlement entailed another change of horse to either horseback or Spring Cart, typically arriving at 8:00pm for an overnight stay.

4:00am next morning Arthur left the Leeuwin for the reverse journey back to Busselton arriving 14 hours later at 6:00pm. First stop Augusta Post Office before it opened so a key hidden under a piece of bark allowed him inside to take the mailbag on board.

The Horse Mail days were long, hard and regimented. It is difficult to imagine today's teenagers working under such conditions for their primary source of income.

This work continued until Arthur left for the Western Front with Western Australia's famous 16th Battalion. His fishing mates Ben Mouchemore, Jim Smart and Tom Patterson also enlisted and all four names are amongst others inscribed on the Augusta War Memorial.

After returning from WW1 and recuperating from severe war wounds, Arthur for a time in the early 1920s drove the Motor Mail from Busselton to Cape Leeuwin along the coastal Caves Road for Contract holder Percy Bignell then later through the Group Settlements on the now much improved inland Millars Track.

After marriage in 1925 Arthur joined the family business establishment and became a successful respected Busselton identity. Despite his early hard life and permanent war wounds he lived to age 81.

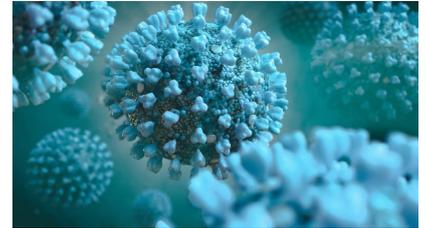


Hope you have enjoyed this insight into one teenage lad's working-life in years gone by.....

## THE BLACK DEATH AND COVID-19

*This is a shortened version of an article written by Trevor Steele of Adelaide in March 2020, translated from Esperanto by our Vera Payne.*

**The current epidemic:** Currently the whole world is occupied by a pandemic. Countries are trying to isolate themselves and within each country citizens are advised and ordered to stay home. The number of infections and deaths grows daily. The economic consequences are yet to be determined. But if we neither become ill nor lose family or friends, the virus is to date more of a nuisance than a gargantuan worry.



Try to imagine, though, a situation in which that huge majority does not survive and indeed the death toll in many places is 100%. There have been such grand-scale catastrophes in historical epochs, one of them in the Middle East in the 6th century. But the best known such epidemic was that of 1346-1355, "The Black Death".

Here is a little of the report of the Italian write, Boccaccio: Citizens avoided one another; neighbour ignored neighbour, relative almost never visited relative. The misery of the lower-and for the most part of the middle-classes, was even more lamentable. Mainly they stayed in their homes, either through poverty or in the hope of staying secure, but they died in their thousands.

It is thought that the 14th century epidemic also originated in China and was carried along the Silk Road through India, Persia and present-day Turkey. At that time there was a port on the Black Sea called Caffa. The territory, ruled over Ottoman Turks, also held a fortress of commerce-minded Genoese. A Mongol army, after a campaign in an eastern, plague-infected country, marched into Caffa. Many of its soldiers had died as victims of the plague. The blame was put on to the Genoese. A primitive form of biological warfare was used: the corpses were catapulted across the walls of the fortress. The horrified Italians tried to protect themselves by throwing the bodies into the sea, but then the throwers became ill, so the rest fled to Constantinople. Consequently, the sickness raged in that city and the Genoese were ordered to leave immediately. Genoa was one of the biggest trade centres at the time, its ships travelling to many ports around the Mediterranean – and carrying the infection.

**Some figures:** In Florence, 70,000 of 120,000 died. In Paris, 50%; In Hamburg and Bremen, 50%; in London 30-50%; in the whole of Europe, the estimate is 30-60%, in Egypt, 40%, and the Middle East almost 30%. If the current pandemic were to kill similar percentages thousands of millions would perish.

Kinds of plagues and origins: Three ways of becoming sick, and often dying, have been established: Bubonic: attacks lymph glands and creates very painful bubos which burst, exuding pus and blood. Mostly victims die within a week.

**Pneumonic:** the bubos are not visible, but lung infection causes acute pain. Spread by coughing and sneezing. Almost all die within two days.

**Septicemic:** circulates through the blood. Death comes so quickly, with no symptoms. Many "go to sleep" and do not wake up. Nobody survives.

**Reactions:** Nowadays we have a much better understanding of illnesses, remedies and evasion. But what would we do if we had no idea of any of those? In the 14th century, when religion mostly ruled human life, the belief was that God punished bad people for their sins. Tolerance of false doctrines was another catalyst for His anger. Perhaps this was the coming of the end of the world?

**Unintended consequences:** Historians believe that the Black Death to a large degree weakened the Catholic Church. A huge percentage of the clergy died. Education had been a monopoly of the Church; lay teachers who took on the job did not as strongly serve it. And the Church's prestige was lowered because it showed itself to be incapable of protecting its people.

**Final thoughts:** The Black Death shook the feudal social system. Today, the world needs reforming even more. Will the corona-virus be a catalyst for inevitable change, such that our planet remains a liveable location for man and other animals? Difficult to imagine, but to be hoped for.

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**MEETINGS:**

Meetings start at 10.00 am and are held at Cambridge Bowling Club, Floreat Sporting Precinct, Floreat, on the Second Friday of each month, excluding December and January.

**DISCLAIMER**

*Please note that nothing written or spoken in the course of WASFR meetings, talks given, or in any publication is to be construed as advice to members or visitors.*



***YOUR COMMITTEE NEEDS YOU.***

***HELP US TO FILL THESE CHAIRS.***

***TALK TO RON, SHARON OR MARGARET***

***IF YOU WISH TO GET INVOLVED.***