

# Mount Lawley Matters

## Mount Lawley Society

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WEBPAGE : [www.mountlawleysociety.org.au](http://www.mountlawleysociety.org.au)

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**New members/ committee**

*The MLS would like to hear from members who would be interested in contributing to the newsletter.*

**Views expressed by members are not necessarily those of others or of the committee.**

Dear Members,  
I hope that this newsletter finds you well.

As Georgina and I plan for the renovation and extension of our Fourth Avenue bungalow, we are constantly reminded of the cost of preserving our built heritage. Owners of renovated character homes in our beautiful heritage suburbs are truly dedicated to preserving our heritage for future generations. They should be congratulated. The commitment of capital and time into preserving or extending an individual character

property is often greater than the cost of building a new home of equivalent volume. However the marginal cost of restoration a character dwelling over building a new home is generally expected to be recouped in a capital gain of the property. There is strong evidence to support this claim.

Notwithstanding the apparent financial benefits to the owner of restoring a character home, there are a number of other interesting effects that result from such activity. Firstly, a restored character property that is sympathetically extended to meet the needs and wants of modern life is arguably less likely to be demolished in the long term. Whilst the useful life of the built structure is not infinite, restoring a home extends the current life of the structure to a point in time where it becomes more valuable due to the inherent rarity of that building style.

Secondly, restoration of a character building is broadly a sustainable housing alternative. Our home has adequately housed three other families before ours. How many families collectively have our character properties housed over the past 100 years? I cringe at the sight of the obvious waste of demolition of a character property followed by the reconstruction of a new single house on the same plot. There are so many ways that this wasteful expenditure of capital, time and effort could be better applied to benefit the community.

Thirdly, there appears to be a "domino" effect of restoration along some streetscapes. This appears to be happening on Clifton Crescent around the corner of Regent Street West. Perhaps this is due to a sale of a renovated property that sparks the interest of neighbours or simply a bit of neighbourly competition! Whatever the cause, this apparent effect is largely positive for the preservation of our built heritage.

#### **Grant Success!**

The Society was recently awarded a grant for some \$5000 from the Lottery West to assist with the archiving of our historical photographic collection. The funds will go towards purchasing dedicated archiving software as well as some computing hardware to allow this project to be completed.

Thanks must go to Dawn Palm for preparing the grant submission. You may recall that Dawn also assisted the Society in their successful grant application to the History Council in 2009. Thanks Dawn - you are a real star!

The Committee is looking for volunteers to help us complete this project. We need a dedicated individual or individual(s) who will become trained in the use of the archiving software and will be responsible for maintaining our digital photographic collection. It is not a hugely time-consuming task but is guaranteed to be fascinating. Please email us at [mountlawleysociety@me.com](mailto:mountlawleysociety@me.com) if you are interested in becoming part of the team! Hope to hear from you soon!

Many local municipalities recognise the positive contribution to our community by individuals and groups of preserving our built heritage. The City of Stirling has called for nominations for their **biennial heritage awards**. This is a great initiative and the Society hopes you nominated if you or your neighbours had recently completed a renovation project

We hope you enjoy the newsletter !



## Comments from readers

**Original comment:** from Yvonne Geneve, President of the Art Deco Society published MLS newsletter June 2010  
*The 110<sup>th</sup> Art Deco Discovery Walk was held in Menora/Mt. Lawley at the end of May recently. The seventh in the area, it was organised, partly, in response to a request from the local press to respond to a heritage alert to overturn plans by the Stirling City Council to utilise the Art Deco theme in the restoration of Beaufort Street between Walcott and Queen Streets, Mt. Lawley.*

*This perfectly logical arrangement apparently upset Haydn Robinson of the Beaufort Street Network, who, backed by Town of Vincent councillor, Warren McGrath, said the Art Deco theme doesn't reflect the precinct's "hip and modern café culture" and that the plan will further divide Mt. Lawley along the Stirling and Vincent Council boundaries.*

*Notwithstanding the fact that Art Deco is not seen by some as "hip and modern" - (how more modern can Art Deco be? – it was (and still is) the essence of Modernism) – the Art Deco Society's response to this proposal points out that the Deco theme for Mt. Lawley was decided upon about 20 years ago when the Society was represented on the Beaufort Street Committee. Since that time many of the Art Deco buildings in Beaufort Street and other parts of Mt. Lawley have been classified by the National Trust of Australia (WA) and several including the Astor Theatre, Beaucott and Alexander buildings etc. have been entered on the State Register of heritage buildings – rendering the theme, we believe, more relevant than ever.*

*It is at least partly because of the unifying effect of the Art Deco character and detailing that the precinct has developed the "quirky and arty identity" that Councillor McGrath is so keen to project. It is the Society's belief that the Stirling City Council should be supported in their plan to further develop the Art Deco appeal of the area.*

### **Responses:**

**Cr Sally Lake, Deputy-Mayor Town of Vincent** ( These are my views, I am not speaking on behalf of the Council)

As a Town of Vincent Councillor I wish to explain why I don't support an "Art Deco" theme for the Beaufort Street streetscape south of Walcott Street. There are about five buildings between Bulwer and Walcott Streets which are recognisably "Art Deco" or of the 1930s era, including the Funeral Parlour and quirky Service Station at Bulwer Street. While these buildings are all architecturally valuable, there are many more buildings of different eras along the street, particularly of an earlier period. To choose "Art Deco" as the theme for the entire street could imply that the Art Deco buildings and architecture are somehow pre-eminent.

In workshops, our community has clearly expressed a preference for contemporary design to be the best of the current era, rather than imitation of past eras. Of course a good contemporary design can include elements of other eras, or it may not. The reality of the Beaufort Street streetscape is that it contains a variety of buildings of different eras which results in a pleasing and varied streetscape.

I consider that the public realm, the streetscape, should be engaging and exciting, bringing enjoyment and interest to the public and reflecting the successful and emerging businesses in the area which include world class dining, small bars, unique and stylish clothing and jewellery as well as the everyday retail and affordable dining which has been the backbone of the area for over a hundred years. Of course the City of Stirling is welcome to adopt a theme of its choice for its section of Beaufort Street, however I felt it was important that the Vincent Council clearly state that if a unified theme was preferred for Beaufort Street, then "Art Deco" was not the preference for the Vincent part.

**Cr Warren McGrath, Council Member for Town of Vincent—South Ward** (my personal views not necessarily the views of Council in regard to the art deco theme for upgrades of Beaufort Street) .

Following the article 'Art Deco Discovery Walk No. 110 – Menora/Mt Lawley' in the June 2010 Mount Lawley Society Newsletter 332, I'd like to briefly provide the Society with my reasons for not supporting the City of Stirling's approach of using an art deco theme in its streetscape upgrade. My preference is for a common theme to exist for installation of features such as street furniture, art and bus shelters. While the City of Stirling is welcome to adopt a theme of its choice for its section of Beaufort Street, I felt it was important that the Vincent Council clearly state that if a unified theme was preferred for Beaufort Street, then "Art Deco" was not the preference for the Vincent part.

I'd like to state that I am an admirer of art deco architecture and highly value the original buildings north and south of Walcott Street in this style. It is for this reason that I don't necessarily support erecting new structures and buildings that attempt to imitate or be built as art deco. My personal opinion is that by building new structures in the art deco style next to original art deco buildings we potentially devalue or at least confuse interpretation of the historical context of those buildings; particularly in the long term. The Heritage Council of WA recently advised the Town of Vincent on a development adjacent to a heritage building that a new design that does not mimic the architectural details of the heritage building would be a more sympathetic and favourable approach. It is for this reason, and as I have received some feedback the art deco theme was not necessarily widely supported by Beaufort Street businesses, that I have reservations in regards to the City of Stirling's approach. I do however completely support and commend the City's efforts to upgrade the Beaufort Street streetscape and anticipate that the Town of Vincent and the City of Stirling will cooperate further on initiatives to enhance and promote this area, including the protection of art deco heritage buildings.

## Crossing the line: early policing around Mt Lawley #6

*By Peter Conole, Police Historian*

As noted in the fourth article of this series, in 1940 Inglewood Police Station became the centre of a new law enforcement sub-district which also incorporated the North Perth and Maylands stations. The move reflected the impact of suburban expansion further north of the line and made reasonable provision for the protection of the Mount Lawley community. For a time the situation seemed rather stable, although crime prevention activity remained heavily dependent on the judicious use of road patrols.

Economic and social changes north of the line made the next step inevitable. In March 1965 architectural plans were completed for the building of another new police station in an additional 'powerhouse' suburb, Morley. Records indicate that Morley Police Station opened on November 22, 1965 in Russell Street, with a staff of only one sergeant and one constable. A public statement of the time noted that *'the office sets a new trend in Police Stations and is surrounded with trees and lawns'*. During the 1960s the station included three offices, a store, lunch room and interview room. The attached photo, a fairly recent one reflecting additions of the 1990s, demonstrates the earlier emphasis on landscaping.



*Police Commissioner Richard Napier, senior man in an age of expansion*

The small initial staffing level changed for the better every year or two. Commissioner Richard Napier of the WA Police fully understood the impact of rapid urban growth in terms of traffic control and preservation of the public peace and he applied pressure on a fairly sympathetic State Government to help build for the future. The police Annual Report for 1969 makes very interesting reading. Mr Napier was horrified by the staggering road accident death toll – 320 in the past year – and sounded alarm bells about future traffic chaos. He predicted a growth in the number of motor vehicles in WA to 500,000 within five years, applauded moves to strengthen the Traffic Act, noted the introduction of 'breathalyser testing' and appealed loudly for extra resources. Personnel mainly, but cordless radio communications and extra police stations and vehicles were also big on his agenda.

By 1973 Morley had taken over from Inglewood as the centre of a police sub-district servicing the needs of Mount Lawley and the surrounding suburbs. Oddly enough, there seems to have been some doubling of jurisdictions. When spelling out the strengths and limitations of his current position in July 1973, Sergeant Mervyn Gardner of Morley revealed that while the station was included in Bayswater Shire, he also had to gather data from - and make provisions for - the fringes of the City of Stirling.

The sergeant's careful, well presented report paints a vivid picture of dynamic growth and change. He had five constables and a police cadet at his disposal, while six detectives were operating within the sub-district. In addition, there were two full-time Police and Citizens Youth Club managers. The police at Maylands, Inglewood and North Perth were all within the Morley district or division and were dependent on the local police 'capital' for relief staff and additional needs.

Some issues gave senior staff of the WA Police much food for thought. The Morley divisional road patrols covered several suburbs, two major shopping centres, factories and industrial sites. During the past year 700 new houses and nearly 30 factories had been built in the district and additions or improvements made to 1300 other houses. The Target and Kmart shopping complexes were making huge profits, as were two large hotels. Sergeant Gardiner pointed out for good measure that 19 schools and pre-schools centres coped with 9000 youngsters and that his officers were now expected to look after fast-growing Dianella as well: *'it will be seen that Morley is a boom district and it is indicated that it will continue so to be for some time to come'*.

He claimed the existing staff levels were simply inadequate to cope with increasing work loads. Apart from patrol work, dealing with complaints and incidents, making arrests, following up with paper work and the like, Sergeant Gardner and his constables had to provide relief or substitute staff around the place when constables were sick or on leave.

They were fortunate in one vital sense. In supreme control of the Perth Central (or Metropolitan) District was Superintendent George Nicolson, who presided over this old WA Police jewel in the crown from 1972 to 1974. Morley and various other sub-districts sheltered under the wings of the Metro jurisdiction. Officer Nicolson was a hugely popular and respected gentleman in blue, with an illustrious career extending from hard frontier service around Wiluna to the port town of Geraldton, then to the 'urban frontier' in more recent times. He had been placed in charge of the Police School in the 1960s and had presided over major changes in training style and curriculum development.



*Superintendent George Nicolson at the height of his career*

George Nicolson checked out the situation at Morley by way of on-the-spot visits and noted that *'my personal observations of the position reveals that all members of the Station staff are working to capacity...I have visited the Station during an evening and have found the Officer in Charge in attendance working intermittent duty'*. Additional comments ended with a statement of support for staff increases. The police Planning and Research section had reservations, as the provision of an extra 'day relief' constable was not a permanent solution, whilst every other city sub-district had similar problems.

Nevertheless, despite this rather deflating delay, efforts to improve local conditions were never abandoned. Superintendent Thomas Blackman took charge of the Perth Central District in 1975 and soon approved an additional request for relief staff for both Inglewood and North Perth stations. That paper battle also ended indecisively, as no less than 25 other urban stations demonstrated they had higher work loads!

Nonetheless, the point had certainly been taken in terms of future needs and the situation gradually improved up to 1979, when a commissioned senior man was placed in charge of the Morley sub-district. This officer, a World War II veteran and a policeman of wide experience in several branches, was Senior Inspector (later Superintendent) Fred Gilmore. In his time the subordinate staff at Morley station alone expanded to three sergeants and seven constables. It is not clear whether similar increases were introduced for the other four stations which now made up the sub-district: Bayswater, Inglewood, Maylands and North Perth.

An interesting aspect of this era of gradual resource improvement and consolidation for policing in the 'Mount Lawley hinterland' was an increased use of specialised police vans, useful for conveying persons under arrest. They were vital for sector patrols and more were needed whenever the number of staff in the suburbs received a boost. After cool consideration of various personnel requests from several sub-districts, in July 1981 the Planning and Research section recommended that Perth Central station should no longer share patrol work with the Morley suburban staff.

The Morley officers were therefore left to their own devices and Senior Inspector Gilmore complained strongly about the implications. He could make do without extra personnel, but sedan cars were not enough for patrol work. On notably volatile and difficult nights, a police patrol van was essential. He got his way, doubtless to the relief of many locals.

A year later proper staffing of police stations in the northern suburbs became an even more urgent issue and quickly turned into open political disputation, focussed sharply on the Mount Lawley community.

## DEMOLITIONS

**538 William Street.** This 1911 house was demolished only a couple of weeks ago. Sir Charles Court's first wife, Rita Steffanoni was born in the front bedroom of the house . The block of flats next to it (called Stedon, Ste from Steffanoni) were built in the early 1950s) were on the tennis court for the house.



*538 as it was*



*and as it is now*

**Character Retention Guidelines ( City of Stirling)** At its meeting on 12.11.2002 Council considered a report on the Heritage Protection Areas (HPA) of Mount Lawley, Menora and Inglewood, and resolved to proceed with a review of the Area Guidelines. In March and July 2003, a number of workshops (one involving community representatives and two involving Councillors) occurred as a part of this process in order to determine the scope and direction of the review. Council endorsed a number of key principles including 'there should be a more flexible approach to the demolition of less significant buildings (i.e. post 1950's intrusive buildings) where replacement buildings meet the Guidelines. However, demolition of 'character' buildings is still discouraged and should be subject to assessment (not be 'as of right'), even where the proposed replacement dwelling is of an acceptable design'. Based on this direction, revised Guidelines were drafted in late 2003 but were subsequently discarded in favour of a revised policy format based on 'deemed to comply' standards. This revised document, which became known as the 'Character Retention Policy', was advertised for public comment in July 2004. Significant concerns were raised about the 'deemed to comply' format, and as such, Council at its meeting on 19 April 2005 resolved to not proceed with the Character Retention Policy and continue the review based on the direction/principles previously endorsed. At its meeting on 25.10.2005 Council considered a report confirming the direction of this second stage of the HPA Guideline review. Council resolved "that the second stage review proceed in accordance with the issues previously identified, plus those additionally identified in this report..." which included 'provide greater demolition control, and ensure that demolition is not 'as-of-right'. Based on this direction, revised Guidelines were drafted and became known as the 'Character Retention Design Guidelines'. These Guidelines followed the direction endorsed by Council to protect character, discourage demolition, and identified construction periods where demolition may be appropriate (post 1950's). At its meeting on 21.3.2006, Council endorsed the Guidelines for the purposes of advertising. At the conclusion of the public advertising period, comments on the issue of demolition generally expressed the view that the demolition provisions contained in the Guidelines did not adequately protect properties in the HPA's and that the City should impose further restrictions on allowing demolition to occur. Given this, and that Council has also expressed the desire to tighten demolition controls, minor changes to wording of the Guidelines to include stronger language were affected. The Character Retention Design Guidelines for the HPA's of Mount Lawley, Menora and Inglewood were subsequently adopted by Council at its meeting on 18 July 2006. It is worth noting that a review of a number of the City's decisions in relation to demolition of residential dwellings within the City's HPA's have been sought at the State Administrative Tribunal (SAT). To date, the SAT has affirmed the City's decisions and dismissed all applications for review. The advice provided by the City's heritage architects has played a significant role in defending the City's decisions at the SAT. Recent examples where the SAT has affirmed the City's positions include applications for demolition of Lot 548, House Number 6, Regent Street West, Mount Lawley and Lot 76, House Number 7, Fourth Avenue, Mount Lawley. However, it is also important to note that each individual application must be assessed on its own merits.



**120 Walcott St** The property has been only slightly modified and many of its original character features remain. Walcott streetscape between North Street and Field Street (more than 20 dwellings) is entirely intact. This is rare and should be preserved. Once again the City of Stirling Council has voted to preserve our built heritage.

The owner has gone to SAT to appeal the decision.

**The Guildford Community** continues to apply pressure on the authorities and owners of the Guildford Hotel to ensure an appropriate restoration of the building is undertaken. There was a rally in mid-August at which over 1200 people at-

tended to demonstrate the depth of community anger about the situation. Since then, a spontaneous "smelly socks" situation has emerged to festoon the hotel safety fencing - letting all and sundry know that the Guildford Hotel is "on the nose". At the last count there were over 600 smelly socks strung succinctly on the fencing and more being added daily. It is rumoured that the council has issued a work order to the owners to remove the offending material forthwith.

To assist our community, we ask members of the Mt Lawley Society to assist by emailing the Premier and/or the Heritage Minister and complain about the plight of the Guildford Hotel, request a review of Heritage Legislation that is blatantly failing ask what he will do to avoid the Guildford Hotel following the path that befell our other local Midland hotels, namely the Council Club (arson 1990, demolished 1994), the Stockman's Hotel (arson 1996, demolished 1998) the Railway Hotel (arson 1999, demolished 2004) Will it be the Guildford Hotel (arson 2008, demolished ????)

The emails can be sent to [wa-government@dpc.wa.gov.au](mailto:wa-government@dpc.wa.gov.au) and marked for the attention of the Hon Colin Barnett or to Heritage Minister at [Minister.Castrilli@dpc.wa.gov.au](mailto:Minister.Castrilli@dpc.wa.gov.au) and marked for the attention of Hon John Castrilli.



*Moorabool looked "tired" but was solid in construction and sat well on the corner with a good street setback. The small portico and verandah was supported on turned posts, and decorative plasterwork embellished tuck-pointed brickwork. Four spacious rooms, a bathroom and kitchen had high ceilings; there were three fireplaces; the hall, and front room with cast iron fireplace, had deep cornices and ceiling roses. There were sash windows, finely reeded architraves and high skirting boards; dated carpet covered five inch wooden floorboards. All of this needed work (and more than a paintbrush!). Indeed little had been done in recent years. A rear skillion section, small, light-framed extension and detached washhouse were impractical and in a poor state...and the house was dark. The bathroom was inadequate. **Continued.....***



**In May 2001** we sought an architect's appraisal. Since the house was tenanted our initial meeting was (with thermos flask), in the adjacent Memorial Gardens and resulted in our briefing Ian Dewar of Ian Dewar & Associates. Moorabool was modest in comparison to the fine, large homes on the elevated ridge to our north and immediately we valued Ian's honesty; "It's not a Mt. Lawley icon but, (noting the slate doorstep and pointing to interesting window detail we'd not noticed), it's worthy...I think you should do it!". A Design Report and probable costs sought to "preserve as much of the existing as possible and to build new elements which are generally compatible with the old", and included provisions for work to be staged in accordance with time and finance; (we'd worked with an architect before and enjoyed similar flexibility throughout the project). Later we appreciated Ian's fairness and sensitivity – he understood our particular commitment to this house, and reminded us of it at difficult times, and for all practical purposes, council policies for this precinct demanded that the character of existing dwellings be retained.

Two things were clear to us: Firstly, the rear area should relate to an almost six metre side setback with its N/W orientation promising winter warmth and sunlight both inside and out. In this area the original kitchen had been refitted at some stage but did not make any use of the garden, and its N/W aspect was wasted. Secondly, the large roof-space was of great future value but not essential to us; (we were near retirement and downsizing)!

We needed a rear extension to accommodate a kitchen with our large central table, and an adjoining sunroom/cosy space for reading and T.V., a laundry, and parking for two cars. Heritage guidelines and sound architectural advice spoke against the addition of an "en suite bathroom" on the N/W side and it was decided to make use of an adjacent pantry to extend the original bathroom and provide a hall cupboard. A small powder room was included in the generous, new and now indoor laundry area.

We moved from Darlington to "Moorabool" in February 2002, having decided to live in the house throughout renovations; "the builders prefer it for security"...We were without a kitchen for seven months and a bathroom for almost one month and learned the ways of the temperamental gas water heater, the significance of "O" rings and washers from Mt. Lawley Hardware – "you're wasting your money on plumber's tape", and dealt with rats and white ants. Our vocabulary expanded to include corbels, strikers and newel posts and we imagined timber blinds and filtered sunlight at the long windows!!

Ivy, plumbago, and wisteria were rampant whilst unkempt rose bushes grew up through a Hills' hoist, immobilising it utterly. Our contributions to "The Readers Mart" were frequent; we sold the hoist, a metal carport, a garden shed, doors and a sash window that perfectly fitted its new home and we were especially happy to farewell the old bathtub from its resting place in the front garden. "You just need a horse", teased Ian. And perhaps we needed more bedrooms...one hot afternoon as precious, new granddaughter Hannah slept in the old dining room and two daughters (visiting) wanted to rest, eyebrows were raised when I insisted that our *hills* home meant maintenance!

In April it rained, splashing rhythmically from the hall ceiling, down the chimneys and down the hill to the blocked corner drain. We were apprehensive as tenders were higher than expected and we worried as we waited for building approval - the roof was original and precarious. H.I.H. collapsed at this time; insurance companies "tightened up" and the existing structure, our home during extensions, was deemed insecure during re-roofing. Custom Constructions Pty. Ltd. won the building contract and began work in July; there were 68 variations to the original contract and a number of "on the spot" decisions. Work was sound and we were generally pleased; Craig Robertson the builder, (always in cord shorts), was direct and experienced; to gentle carpenter Greg, pondering on bathroom architraves as a cement truck neared: "if the.....door isn't on now, we won't get it on when the concrete is poured!"

At the same time, power went underground in the First Estate; surrounded by sand and red ribbon, our verge was undermined for cables and constant machinery sent us often to the nearby Dome for respite. In late May the huge Japanese Pepper tree that dominated the N.W. aspect was removed, exposing a pretty double chimney we'd not seen; autumn, then winter sunlight flooded the side rooms – glorious! A new deciduous tree, well positioned, now gives a generous, screened courtyard summer shade and winter sun.

We quickly demolished the rear skillion section and lived in the front rooms, sleeping in each in turn, and undertaking restoration and painting whilst rear extensions proceeded and a new custom orb roof was fitted above us! This was not easy and much about making the best of things; we met many marvellous people and came to understand Ian Dewar's oft stated "it's the process really"... We scraped many layered paint, from Oregon Pine and Douglas Fir timbers, with a revolutionary scraper proffered by Brett from Bonanza Paints. He reminded us (from the Rubaiyat) that "the longest journey begins with the first step" and later well understood our needs for the old pressed tin that lines the front verandah: "yes fine; like gossamer"... We microwaved meals and learned much about diplomacy for our activity was very public!! On an unfenced, untidy, truncated intersection we were mostly encouraged by local passersby, for our "front garden" had clearly been a way of shortcutting a corner; later we spoke with the City of Stirling towards better function and safety here and record our appreciation for the consideration we received.

Mindful of the roof-space potential, our request for a stair and small mezzanine or landing above the new, larger kitchen and laundry led, in addition, to the provision of a generous loft storage area. We make very good use of this space and it will undoubtedly be developed by some future family...this is a nice feeling, and all about "heritage". The mezzanine with its N/W facing dormer window is well lit and warm in winter – a remarkable small space! "Moorabool" is discreet among many larger homes, and although not wanting to appear "the poor cousins", our thinking at outset was that the house would hold its own by way of its heritage appeal and we believe this is already the case.



An original parapet wall about the original kitchen was extended and repeated in the small extension of this area that linked it with the new courtyard via French doors as it became a sunroom/T.V. room. The old kitchen chimney breast and fireplace was retained and has been fitted with a wood burning stove for winter heating. Traditional factors – high ceilings, the SW facing central hall and passageway, sash windows and a fanlight encourage summer ventilation largely without air-conditioning, and this is complemented by a 6 metre raked ceiling and functional sash windows in the rear extension which extends from the passageway at an original, worn jarrah threshold.

Other than the addition of cornices and ceiling roses in three of the original spaces, electrical work – "chasing in" of wiring, installation of new light switches to complement original door furniture, additional power points, noiseless bedroom fans, and careful retention of the original, functional hall switchboard – the existing house (except the bathroom) remains unaltered. An old pantry window replaced the much weathered bathroom window and old hearth tiles and a pressed tin segment are wonderful reminders of original details. The once poorly repaired front gable gained stucco and batons, finials and the verandah balustrade were renewed; missing leadlights were replaced. Restoration of this area is yet to be completed. Front fencing was necessary and is a continuation of a courtyard screen wall; low, brick piers with steel infill give a sense of "boundary" and are in keeping with the original characteristics of a small home. *(to be continued)*



*Kitchen pushed out to North ,keep chimney winter 2002*



*Parapet old and new*

## THE TWINNING OF THE ASTOR (Astor part four) by Yvonne Geneve

The Astor Twin Cinema redevelopment at the corner of Beaufort and Walcott Streets, Mt. Lawley for the proprietor Orno Selva and Mave Pty Ltd. and Entrevision Cinemas was completed in time for the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Congress on Art Deco held in Perth in October 1993. Philip McAllister, long term member of the Art Deco Society of WA and architect for the 1989 refurbishment of the Astor as originally designed by William T. Leighton, was again contracted for the work.

The bright new venue made its debut as a venue for the Art Deco Society to announce the forthcoming congress to members of the National Trust of Australia (WA), the newly formed Heritage Council of WA and members of the press. The Deco-Revival styled auditorium was also the scene of the closing ceremony for the Congress, which awarded both the architect and cinema managing director, Ron Regan.

As mentioned in the earlier parts of the Astor story, the Art Deco Society was instrumental in preventing the demolition of the theatre and Ron Regan was the entrepreneur who ensured the revival of the building as a viable cinema by putting his own money and expertise into its refurbishment and programming.

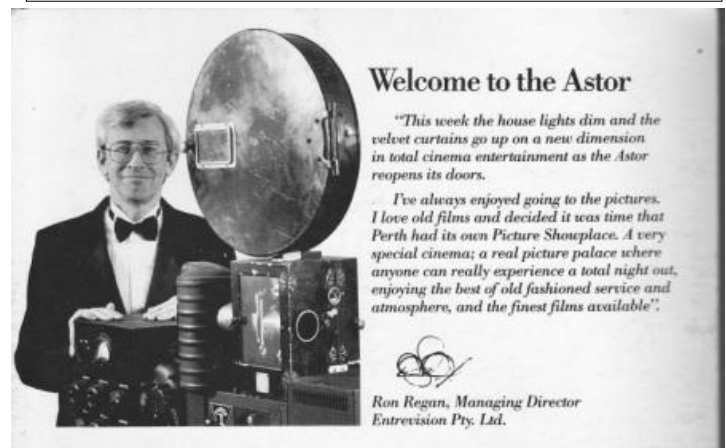
The new twinned cinema continues the colour scheme of the main theatre with graduated tones of blue separated by recessed bands of silver, soft white curtaining and bold red carpeting, seating and proscenium. The round columns repeat the motif in the main auditorium.



Auditorium of the twin cinema showing columns and seating



National Trust CEO Tom Perrigo at the media conference to announce the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Congress at the Astor twin



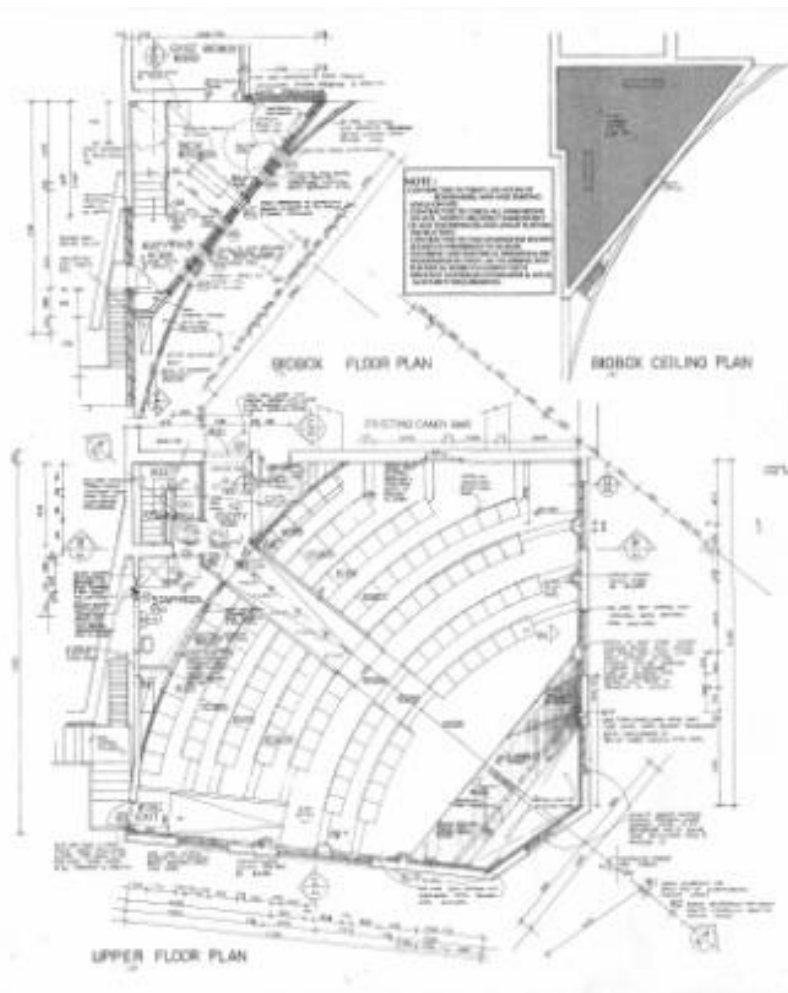
Former Managing Director of the Astor Ron Regan



The working contract for the twinning included selected demolition and removal of areas of structure in the original building that previously provided an apartment, and protection of existing property on or adjacent to the site including trees to be retained as well as protection of power lines from interference or damage. The architect was further required to preserve and protect selected parts of the National Trust listed property, including the external parapet wall, existing glazed and steel-framed windows and the existing timber floor.

The proprietor was responsible for the cinema seating, floor coverings, projection sound equipment, curtains and screen and associated equipment. Special attention was given to the plaster work, ceilings and glazing to create an ambience as much as possible consistent with the main Astor auditorium. In the process the architect was required to connect the bio box for the new cinema to the projection room in the earlier theatre, allowed for the supervision of both auditoriums by one projectionist. (see plan below)

In 1993 cinema complexing was new to Perth. It must be recorded, however, that as early as 1971 Garry Leighton, son of the Astor's 1939 refurbishing architect, designed Perth's Cine Centre and, much later, was also responsible for the large multi cinema complexes at Innaloo and Morley City. In the interim period, Cinema City also made an appearance in the city. Nevertheless, Ron Regan and his architect were in the forefront of the concept of the twinning of an existing theatre complex at the Astor. This successful partnership was later responsible for the popular Cinema Paradiso complex at Northbridge.



*Partial architect's plan of the twinned cinema and bio-box*



*Frequent visitors to the Astor Theatre, ADSWA members (L to R) Annelle Perotti, Yvonne Geneve, Ron Facius with its refurbishing architect, Philip McAllister.*

## Dates for MLS Committee Meetings and Members Social Drinks 2010

8pm, First Monday of each Month at the Mount Lawley Bowling Club, Rookwood Street, Mount Lawley

October

Members Social Drinks

November

Ordinary Committee Meeting

December

AGM (Time and Venue TBA)

Members are welcome to attend all meetings and social functions!

### ITEMS OF INTEREST

The Heritage Council of WA has placed the **Inglewood Hotel** on the State Register of heritage places on an interim basis

This will now be considered for entry on the State Register by the Heritage Council



**TOWN of VINCENT STREETSCAPE POLICY;** The MLS has submitted the following comments to the ToV on the streetscape

**SUGGESTED DEFINITION OF STREETSCAPE** This is an area consisting of at least two adjacent entities (property, tree, garden, etc) in at least one street, sharing at least one attribute of value under the Municipal Heritage Inventory definition guidelines. Thus, the streetscape could be:

A complete street, of both sides, or one side.

A group of two or more adjacent houses.

A group of properties coming together at a street corner.

An oval (or other shape) of properties in (say) a Radburn Town Planning Scheme.

A group of adjacent properties with a common significant history.

A group of properties with a common significant garden. And so on.....

### **PROPOSING A STREETSCAPE**

A submission for registering a streetscape can come from one or more of:

Member of the public

Interested association

Consultant hired by the Municipality

Residents/owners of the properties, or their neighbours.

### **ASSESSING THE PROPOSAL**

This would be done by council officers/consultants as for MHI assessments.

### **TIMING AND URGENCY**

Where the streetscape is being properly maintained and under no perceived threats, the processes outlined in the Draft Residential Streetscape Policy would be implemented. During this implementation, a protection ban is to be applied.

Where the streetscape is under (urgent) threat of damage, demolition, etc, then emergency protection measures are to be taken, using existing emergency powers of the Municipality.

### **SPECIAL CASE OVERRIDES**

If the proposed Streetscape does not survive the 4-stage Approval Process, and is judged by the municipality officers and consultant appointed by the Municipality to be highly significant, and negotiations among affected stakeholders are unsuccessful, then an appealable overriding acceptance of the proposal can be put in place by the Municipality.

## Historical Photographic Collection – Second Release

Good news! A second release of 57 historical photographs of Mount Lawley and surrounds have been loaded onto our website:

[www.mountlawleysociety.org.au](http://www.mountlawleysociety.org.au)

Take the time to browse through these amazing photographs. All photographs on our website are available to purchase. Make sure you get your order in early to avoid the Christmas rush!



### **Adair Pde in the 50's by Gill Egan**

April 1954 saw a change of address for the Egan family. We moved from 311 Walcott Street, North Perth to 50 Adair Parade, Mt Lawley.

Building our new house had taken nearly 2 years as the builder, Les Lillyman, had to wait for building materials to become available. The post-war restrictions meant that our house size was 'regulated' but we now had a huge garden.

Moving in was momentous and I can remember walking down Adair Parade from Walcott Street carrying a small case filled with my bits and pieces salvaged from the rubbish bin – things my parents had hoped I would not notice had been thrown out.

It wasn't long after we moved in that I became aware of the person whom we nicknamed "German Joe".

Travelling on an open dray pulled by a large, brown horse, "German Joe" sat on a plank seat, hunched over the reins. In my memory he was always dressed in a dark brown, heavy coat and a large hat and never looked left or right or acknowledged anyone as he went.

As he travelled he muttered constantly and we had no idea who he was or what he was saying. I think it was this muttering, as much as anything else, that persuaded us that he had to be a German and, therefore, somehow dangerous!

Summer and winter, rain or sunshine he would come over Elstree Avenue and continue down Adair Parade until we lost sight of him. Later in the day he would return and disappear over Elstree Avenue and go on into the pine plantation.

As children we made up all sorts of stories for ourselves to explain "German Joe" and sometimes managed to scare ourselves into hiding as he went by.

Looking back I wonder who he was and where he lived. Was he a returned soldier who was suffering what we would now call 'post traumatic stress'? Did he really live in isolation in the middle of the pine plantation? Was he someone who came to Australia as part of the post-war refugee resettlement program?

For me these questions remain unanswered but the image of "German Joe", on his daily, solitary journey, with only his horse for company, remains clear to this day.

### **Ron Elsegoods glass slide collection**

Ron's son Russell attended the Mt Lawley Society Photographic Exhibition to show us a box of glass slides that his father Ron had obtained when, with the increasing popularity of television, Goldfields Pictures Ltd decided to close its chain of theatres. The company operated suburban and country theatres, including the Astor, the Civic and, among others, the Rosemount Theatre. At its height, Goldfields Pictures had the largest chain of theatres in WA. Ron was involved in the picture business from the time he was a teenager in the era of the silent films. He rose to be the Manager Director of Goldfields Pictures Ltd. The original, wooden box in which the slides have been kept for nearly a century, is one of the very few mementos left to Ron's children and grandchildren. Most of the slides are of Perth, including at least a couple of Mt Lawley. While it is difficult, if not impossible, to date all of them, some appear to date from the late 19th or very early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Some are labelled, others are not. The passage of time has damaged some, but most are in remarkably good condition for their age. Quite a few photographs appear to have been hand painted.

These slides used to be shown at picture theatres through a magic lantern projector. (*The Magic Lantern was the forerunner of the modern slide projector. Slides were placed in a lantern slide projector to be viewed on a wall or screen. In the 1890s, the invention of the carbon arc lamp, followed by electric light, provided a safe method for displaying the*

*lantern slide image. Use of lantern slides lasted throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century and until the 1950s when their popularity began to decline with the introduction of the smaller 2x2 transparencies*)

The collection will be donated to the Battye Library where the originals will be stored in purpose-built cabinets. Digitised copies will be made for ease of reference.



## RENOVATION 18 Almondbury Rd by Darryl Ryan

As much as we would have loved to have started work on the house immediately, we decided on a long settlement.

There was just so much to do.

There was no electricity, gas or water connected to the property. It wasn't merely a case of contacting the Water Authority, Alinta Gas or Synergy to have those essential amenities reconnected. The previous owner, we were told by a neighbour, had wanted to demolish the house and presumably, because it is on a corner block, subdivide it and build his dream home. This would come – of course, with the obligatory 6 bedrooms, 4 toilets and 3 bathrooms and a 4 car garage. Needless to say, it would be 2 stories high (or 3 story if he could convince the council that the 3<sup>rd</sup> story was in actual fact only a "loft") with the requisite "city views" and a pool.



Not surprisingly, he was a lawyer. If that was not bad enough, the wretched fiend specialized in corporate law. In keeping with his despised breed, he drove a new black Mercedes 4WD. Naturally, it had never been off-road. Like many of his arrogant kind, whilst he knew and practiced the law, he sincerely believed the law did not apply to him, or if it did, he had the connections and ability to get around it.

And so he commenced demolition. He completely removed the power board, ripped out the gas box, tore up the pipe which brought the precious water, the life blood, to the house. His bulldozers tore the trees from the ground, crushing the shrubs and annuals, the creepers and the ivy that had once provided a cool and protective blanket around the house's foundations. His excavator removed the pool, leaving a huge pit, the perimeter of which came right up to the edge of the old limestone pillars which supported the already rickety verandah. By the time we had put in our offer, the pillars had started to subside into the crater left by the pool, pulling the verandah boards and substructure away from the walls. The carport and pergola were smashed to the ground. Because the house was going to be demolished, the workers were not careful. The urn, that had stood at the end of the graceful, curving steps leading to the front door, was knocked to the ground and unceremoniously dumped into the truck. The winding concrete path that had survived over 90 years of footsteps, wheelbarrows, lawnmowers and tricycles, cracked and crumbled under the weight of the machines. When the excavators, bulldozers and trucks had left, all that remained was the dirty white sand, some shattered tree roots that were too close to the fence to be removed and rubble.

Although he was pleased with his progress, the lawyer was not very pleased when the neighbours complained and the council told him that he could not, despite his most elite status in society, demolish the house, because as it happened, the house was in a "heritage protection area."

The lawyer was utterly outraged. Dumbfounded, it had not occurred to him that the worn out old house he wanted to knock over had any "heritage value." For Christ-sakes – it was OLD and only had two bathrooms! Moreover, he did not know of, nor did he care for the history of the suburb. He wanted somewhere that was exclusive, close to the city and cappuccino strip and close to Perth College for his daughters - not a damned museum piece. What was it with these people? Hadn't they heard of progress? And didn't they know that he was a lawyer?

Apparently, for the next 3 years, he fought with the council and his neighbours to get his way. He used his clever lawyer arguments, cited legislation and regulations, by-laws and precedents to try to convince the philistines in the local council to give him what he wanted. He alienated himself from everyone along Almondbury and Clotilde Streets and beyond. He paid no regard to the cost. He was used to winning and having his way. It would only be a matter of time until he got what he wanted.

In the meantime, the old house sat empty. Without the essential services, it could not be rented out. As a matter of principle, the lawyer refused to do any more. The weeds grew, the rubbish collected in the yard. Junk mail and the local papers spilled out of the letter box and lay strewn on the ground. The drunken young men threw their empties over the red brick wall and the bottles lay randomly in the pit where the pool once was. A couple of street kids decorated the double gates with their tags, the white graffiti contrasting against the dark green shade cloth that covered the gates. The verandah inched toward the sandy abyss. School leavers, running wild, finally free from their classroom prisons and demonstrating their newfound independence, in ecstasy, threw eggs at its dark and expressionless windows. Dust whirled and soiled the neighbours' swimming pools.

No-one was sure what the reason was, but after years of fighting, eventually the lawyer changed his tack. He suddenly decided he wouldn't demolish the house, but rather, he would get his way by building a second story. The plans were elaborate. A garage would be excavated underneath the front of the house. Many of the internal walls would be removed, including the fireplace in the grand dining room, to make way for an open plan kitchen living area. The limestone pillars, which had faithfully supported the old verandah would go, as would the three original chimneys, to make way for the second story. Naturally, the French terracotta Marseille tiles, proudly embossed with a turtle on their front lips – the symbol of its maker, would also have to go. They were so dirty, covered in moss and lichen, dusty, some were even cracked or broken. The views from the upstairs rooms would be magnificent. He saw himself sipping a Cab Sav from the new second story verandah, leaning against the freshly painted handrails crafted from the best rainforest timber money could buy. Imported from Indonesia. Standing on his polyurethaned boards.

When the neighbours saw the plans, most were appalled. They said it would be a monstrosity. The objections came from all angles. The lawyer dug his heels in. He did his homework. He tackled each and every objection, had his architect modify the plans over and over and over and over. We were told he spent thousands of dollars. Each time they came back from council, he sent them back with subtle modifications. It was a war of attrition. One year passed, and another and yet other. Finally the day came. As the lawyer knew they must, the council wearily approved his plans for the extension. He had won. He had really won.

Ironically and perhaps not unpredictably, his long suffering wife didn't see it that way. Eight years had passed and the place was a dump. She had had enough. She had grown tired of hearing about his battles with the council and the snooty neighbours. The proposed extension was going to cost a small fortune. She was sick of it and she was quite comfortable where she was in the western suburbs. For tax purposes, the house had been put into her name. Now she wanted a divorce and she wanted the house sold. Unlike the council, she did not have to listen to him or negotiate. She made it clear that since he had wrecked the house, he could arrange for the sale of the blasted thing. In early 2009 the house was on the market.

According to the bottle blonde real estate agent, who was precisely well presented, poised, prim and proper, in February that year, no less than five offers were made on the house – two of them at the asking price! Regrettably and more than likely due to the GFC (otherwise known as the Global Financial Crisis) understandably, the offers did not go through. Some couldn't get finance. Others made their offer subject to finance, but couldn't sell their own homes. It was tragic. The sweet, sweet promise of a massive commission grew, blossomed and withered before the agent's perfectly made up eyes. Life was so unfair. Banks these days were uncooperative, insensitive and unreasonable. The European holiday would have to be postponed. The market had gone stale. The "for sale" sign removed. The weeds had long turned brown and bleached yellow under the hot summer sun.

We set the settlement date for the 11<sup>th</sup> December 2009 – the day Ali started school holidays. That would be 3 months away. Ali would have 6 weeks leave and I had saved enough holidays to take 5 weeks off. Work would commence in the summer.

The days flashed past like children on a carnival merry-go-round. I spent lunchtimes and evenings getting quotes, organizing trades people. Ali and I would often walk from our existing home over to Almondbury to look at the house and make sure everything was alright.

The house sat patiently.

Toward the end of November, less than two weeks before settlement, I succumbed to a horrible cold. My head ached, my nose ran and my nostrils had been rubbed raw by the constant blowing and wiping. I couldn't think straight and was incredibly tired. My very sympathetic doctor wrote me a certificate stating I was unfit for work for 5 days. At a time when I most wanted to get things organized for the house, all I could do was languish in bed.

After days of sleeping, our door-bell rang. It was our neighbour, Camille. She was about to travel to Europe for an extended period of time and wanted to see the new house before she left. In my stricken state, I had forgotten we had made the arrangement. It was around 5.30pm, however, I was still in bed. Ali answered the door. I was sorely tempted to suggest the Ali go with Camille on her own and leave me to my misery, however, I hadn't seen the house in a while and we would not see Camille for quite some time, so I dragged myself downstairs.

Normally we would walk over to the house, however, due to the circumstances, we decided to take our ute. As it has a dual cab, Camille sat in the back and Ali drove. As we reached the round-about at the intersection of Almondbury and Clotilde, the house loomed in the twilight. "It's wonderful," Camille exclaimed and her enthusiasm lifted my spirits.

I turned and was about to speak to Camille, as Ali pulled up along side the house. Before I could say anything, Ali said with an alarmed voice, "Daz – where are the French doors?"

"What?"

"The French doors – they've gone!" Sure enough, as I peered from the car window, I could see curtains moving in the evening breeze that came up from the street and the empty space where the French doors once had been.

I sprang from the parked ute and went straight up to the gates. There was a strong chain and padlock attached to the gates, however, they were never locked. Walking through, within a split second I could see what had happened.

Fresh tyre tracks lead into the block, back around the side of the house. From the deep ruts and bits of wood, it was obvious the vehicle had been bogged in the sand and the thieves had frantically placed the shelves from an old bookcase under the wheels to get themselves out.

While I was taking this in, Ali had gone up to the verandah and looked through the dining room window.

"Daz – they've taken the fireplace!" We both ran to the drawing room windows and could see they had also taken the fireplace from that room.

I could see the shock and disappointment in Ali's face. I was absolutely stunned.

I looked back into the drawing room and noticed that the solid, four panel doors were missing. My heart sank and I felt a sickness in my stomach, like an urge to dry reach. A walk around the verandah verified that all the internal doors had been removed, including the leadlight above the passage. Poor Camille didn't know what to say, except, "Ali, Darryl, I'm so sorry."

There was nothing we could do, as we were not yet the owners of the house. I called the real estate agent and told her of our discovery. She said she would contact the owners and ask them to call the police. She assured us she would arrange for the house to be made secure and would ask the owner to lock the gates.

After we had said goodbye to Camille, Ali and I went home. I was going through a myriad of emotions – I felt violated, angry, helpless, tired, devastated. Ali was heartbroken. The leadlight, fireplaces and doors were original and irreplaceable. They made the house unique and were an essential part of its character. I would never have dreamed that someone would steal the fixtures from the



It was agreed with the real estate agent that we should get quotes to replace what had been taken – 9 internal doors, the French

doors, a pair of lead light doors and two leadlight windows. I made telephone calls to cabinet-makers, lead light businesses, Subiaco Restorations, hardware stores. It was a task I performed without relish. For Ali and I, the joy of settling on the house had been spoilt and the gathering of the quotes a burden. We both felt very low.

On the Saturday morning before settlement was to take place, I got up early and said to Ali I was going out. I had thought long about the burglary. What would someone do with all that stuff. They might use it in their own house – but that was unlikely, as the doors and leadlights would probably not be the right size. You could sell them in the paper or Quokka, however, that would be dangerous, as the seller would have to provide his contact details. I decided that the only realistic option was to sell to a salvage yard. I got on the internet and printed out a list of all the salvage yards in the Perth metropolitan area. I reasoned that even if I didn't find the stolen items, I could look around to see if I could find something similar that we could use as replacements.

I went to Victoria Park, Welshpool and Bayswater. I saw doors of all shapes and sizes, some from the 70's, some from the 50's, mission brown ones, one with sailing ships carved out in frosted glass. One had once hung on an outside dunny, the toilet roll holder still attached. Nothing suitable for our house.

Time was running out. Most of these places shut at 1.00pm and by now it was already coming up to 12.00pm. I had time for one more in Bassendean. This salvage yard consisted of a massive shed. Like a cathedral made of tin, it towered above the surrounding factory units.

I was starting to get hot and thirsty and I was ready to go home. I walked listlessly through the barbed wired gates and made my way to the gaping entry way which had been created by the opening of an enormous sliding door.

## MLS Committee 2010

**Paul Hurst : President**

**Brendon Atkinson : Treasurer**

**Beth McKechnie : Secretary**

**John Wreford**

**Jan Wilkie**

**Ian Merker**

**Charlotte Christo**

**Barrie Baker : Historian/ reports on City of Stirling/ Town of Vincent matters**

**John Baas :Represents Ratepayers Assoc**

**Rebecca Atkinson**

**Sheila Robinson**

**Neil Hogkinson and Jenny Hewitt: Inglewood representatives**

Committee meetings are held 1st Monday of the month at the Mount Lawley Bowling Club at 8.00pm.

## WELCOME TO MLS NEW MEMBERS

Bruno Zimmerman

Susan Yagmich

Simon Plunkett