

A GUIDE TO
RESEARCHING
PEOPLE AND
BUILDINGS



CRANER



PAINT
STORES

ESTABLISHED

Green

WATER
PAINTS
OILS
TUNING
VARNISH

SIGNWRITER



ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide is designed to help you begin the search of the history of your house, or to find information about your ancestors..

CITY OF SWAN LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTION

The City of Swan has an interesting and unique background, which is documented in our Local History Collection. Housed on the first floor of the Midland Public Library, the collection includes a large number of books, newspapers, reports, photographs, maps and oral history tapes and transcripts.

The collection is a fascinating and comprehensive source of information about the people, buildings, events and places covering the City's early settlement days to the present.

Donations

The Local History Collection is constantly growing and donations are always welcome. We accept photographs, maps, research notes, books, letters, diaries, and sporting, church and business records. Any records related to the City of Swan which can be preserved are of interest to us.

INTRODUCTION

Uncovering the history of a house or building is more than just identifying when it was constructed. Buildings can be constructed, altered, moved, damaged, rebuilt and/or demolished.

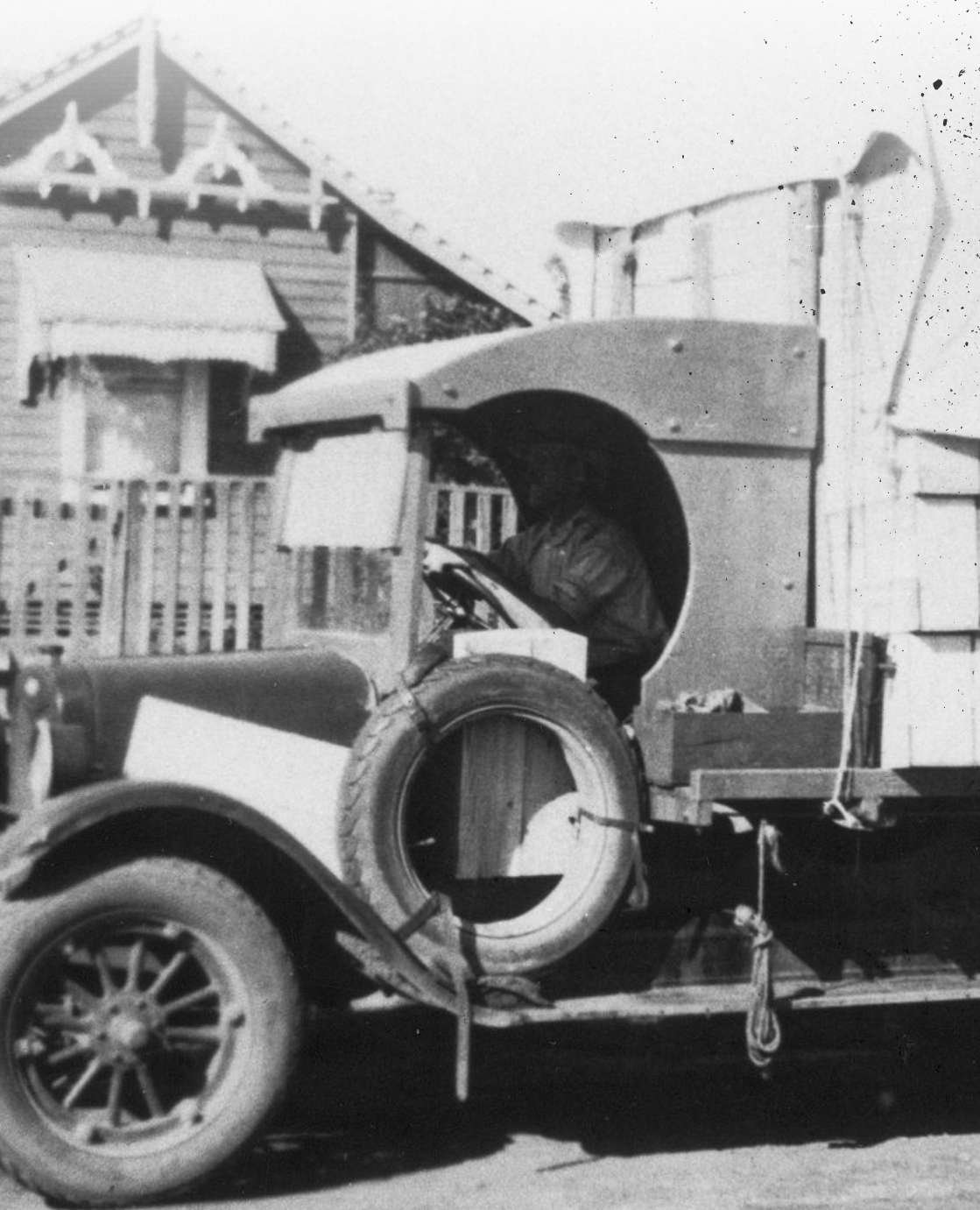
There are also the stories of the people that lived in them, rented them, died in them or grew up in them. People and buildings are irrevocably linked and to tell the full story of a building, we must understand the history of both.

The resources available to research buildings and associated people are numerous. Many resources are now available

online. With the growth of technology, resources are not limited to formal repositories or providers of information. The internet and social media have opened up new streams for acquiring and exchanging information.

This guide is limited to describing resources that are frequently used at City of Swan Local History. With this guide, we will help you begin your own search to uncover the story of your house or family.









RESEARCH RESOURCES

There are two types of resources used to research the history of a building. These are resources that offer information about the building itself and resources that offer information about the people who are associated with that building. Some resources provide information on both.

Resources that might contain information about a building or property include:

- maps and subdivision posters,
- land titles,
- post office directories,
- council rate books,
- photographs, and
- newspaper articles and advertisements.

When seeking information about the people associated with a building or property, useful resources include some of those above, along with:

- online databases like www.ancestry.com
- ship passenger lists,
- electoral rolls,
- cemetery records,
- grey literature (unpublished writings), and
- births, deaths and marriages.



MAPS AND SUBDIVISION POSTERS

Maps and subdivision plans can provide information about what was once on a property. In some cases, they show that a piece of land was once part of a larger property. Some of the earliest maps and plans record the first transfers of Crown land to individuals and can provide a rough indication of dates of property ownership.

Resources like this may be found at:

- local history collections,
- Landgate,
- the J S Battye Library,
- historical societies, and
- The State Records Office.



AERIAL IMAGES

Aerial images show physical changes to buildings and property over time.

Landgate's Mapviewer tool displays current and historical aerial images, meaning you can compare images of the same area over different time intervals. Historical images go as far back as 1953.

This tool may identify:

- the birth of a subdivision,
- additions to a building, and
- the geographical history of land (e.g. a property might have once been swamp land or a quarry).

The Landgate Mapviewer can be accessed via their website www.landgate.wa.gov.au



LAND TITLES

Land titles record the transfer of property from one owner to another. By accessing the line of title deeds of a property, a complete record of the ownership of the property can be uncovered.

However, Land titles do not record improvements to a property, so they do not show buildings or changes to buildings.

Land titles can be accessed at Landgate.

RATE BOOK OF							
South							
WARD, TOWN OR INCORPORATED AREA.							
DATEABLE COLUMN							
PREScriptive and							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
No. of	Name	How Taken (If Rent)	Address	Occupant (If Rented)	Occupant (If Rented)	Occupant (If Rented)	Occupant (If Rented)
1	Doherty	Orange	7 Green St. (Rental)		Land	Orange	2
2	Douglas	E. B.	Harper				
3	Rivers	Miss Kate	Orange St. P. (Rental)				
4	Milner	Miss Rose	Orange St. P. (Rental)		Rent & Land		
5	Lee	Samuel	Orange St. P. (Rental)				
6	Payne	Phyllis	Water Street N. (Rental)				
7	Reister	Isabel	Op. 10 (Rental) - also				
8	Myrie	E. B.	7 E. - (Rental) - also		Land		
9	McNeil	Abraham	10 - (Rental) - also				
10	Stephenson	Mr. Maria	7 - (Rental) - also				
11	Quincy	John B.	Orange St. P. (Rental)		Orange & Land	Orange	
12	Lewis	Stephen J.	Orange St. P. (Rental)		Land		
13	Morrison	James	Orange St. P. (Rental)				

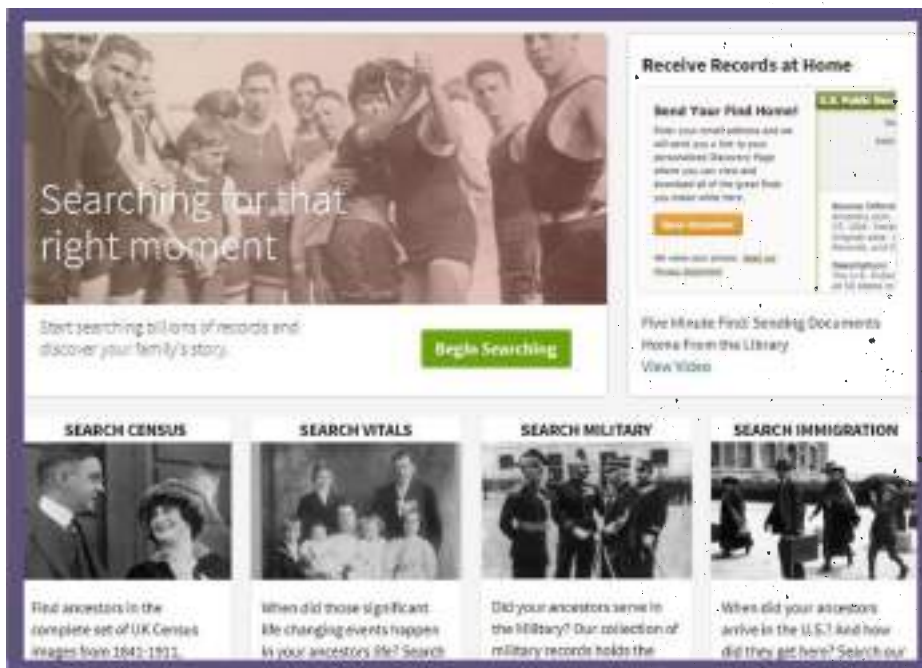
COUNCIL RATE BOOKS

Rate books recorded the property taxes levied by local councils. The books recorded the name of the owner of a property, the address of a property and might also have captured information such as activities that occurred on a property. For example, a property might be described as a residence, a post office, an orchard, a piggery and so on.

In the case of properties that were rented out to tenants, the owner's place of residence is also likely to be listed. Note: rate books list the owners of properties, not the occupants.

Rate books might be found at:

- local history collections,
- Council offices, and
- the State Records Office



ONLINE DATABASES

Online databases such as Ancestry.com combine multiple sources so that you can search for information about people from one site. Ancestry.com is freely available online at public libraries including the State Library.

Some of the resources available via Ancestry.com are:

- family trees, and
- births (1841-1932), deaths (1841-1971) and marriages (1841-1936). These are also freely available at www.justice.wa.gov.au
- electoral rolls,
- passenger lists,
- census information,



MUNICIPAL INVENTORIES AND STATE HERITAGE RECORDS

The State Heritage Council website lists buildings that have State Heritage value. Local councils are required to have a municipal inventory that lists buildings of local heritage value. Sometimes buildings may be on both these registers.

Information on these registers includes date of construction,

details on the construction, statement of significance and the level of protection that should be afforded to the building.

In Australia, inclusion on these registers does not guarantee protection to a building.



CEMETERY AND BURIAL RECORDS

Online cemetery and burial records provide information about the date of a person's death and the location of their gravesite or memorial. The Metropolitan Cemeteries Board (MCB) holds records for most Perth cemeteries.

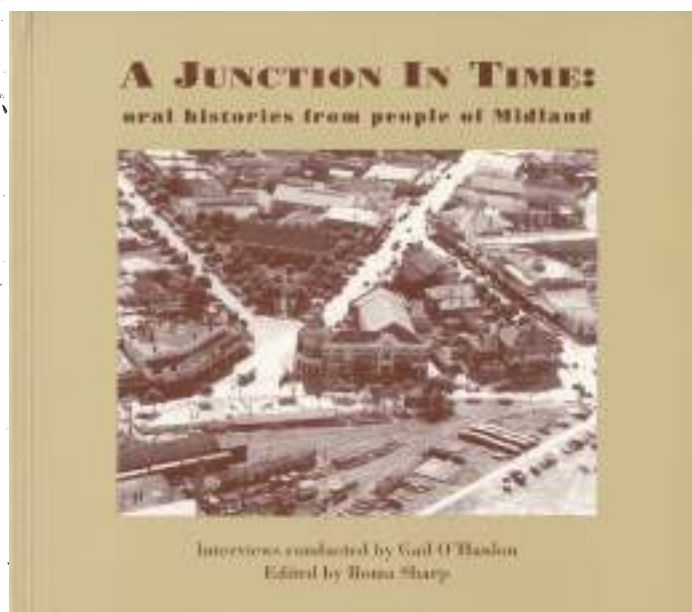
However, as MCB did not begin to take over management of metropolitan cemeteries until 1989, many older records are missing.

Websites such as ozburials.com can provide valuable information about older

gravesites that may not be held by MCB.

They may also include an image of a gravesite which could provide further details of the person's nearest family members.

For records not online, cemetery and burial records could be found in local history collections, at diocesan archives and historical societies.



BOOKS, REPORTS, CONSERVATION PLANS, GREY LITERATURE

Homes that are of historic value have often been the subject of books, reports, conservation plans, amateur studies, or writings that have not been published (grey literature). These items are frequently located in local history collections. Published items will be found at the State Library

but more often than not, grey literature will only be found at the local level.

These items can also be a blend of information about the house and the people who have lived in, owned or interacted with the house. These items are often family histories.



PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs are a useful source of information about houses and those who have lived in them. A group photograph in which the people are identified is one unexpected way in which researchers might find an image of someone who lived in the house that is of interest.

A house in the background of a photograph is another

unexpected way that information about a house might come to light.

On occasion there might even be a specific photograph of an individual or a home.

Images such as these can be found at local history collections, historical societies, the J S Battye Library and many other locations.

A black and white photograph of a group of thirteen people, likely a church choir or confirmation class, posed in two rows. The front row consists of seven women and girls seated, and the back row consists of six people standing. They are all dressed in light-colored, formal attire. The background is a simple, dark, textured wall.

Reading.—*See* a *COPIES*, 122, 14, page 1.
 122, 14, page 1.
 122, 14, page 1.
 122, 14, page 1.

Boston—Johns Hopkins Univ. 112 St. (1900)
 Eastern Avenue, Cambridge, Mass.
 100. Agricultural Museum, Phoenix
 Ave. and Highway

Often, unexpected gems of information can be found in old newspaper articles or advertisements. An article might be an announcement of a birth, death or marriage in which information about a house address might be given.

Until the current era of preserving people's privacy, information about people was freely mentioned in newspapers. Today such sources are far less likely to identify people or their addresses.

City of Swan



SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media like the Remember Midland page on Facebook provide a new kind of tool for researchers.

Appeals for information and exchanges of information on Remember Midland are creating a unique collection and a community of people with

the same desire to understand the history and social fabric of Midland and surrounding suburbs.

LIST OF RESOURCES

Ancestry.com

Visit your local library or the State Library of WA for free access or visit www.ancestry.com.au

Battye Library

State Library of Western Australia
25 Francis Street
Perth Cultural Centre, Perth WA
9427 3111
slwa.wa.gov.au

City of Swan Local History

Midland Public Library
45 Helena Street, Midland
9267 9029
jude.carr@swan.wa.gov.au

City of Swan administration

For records/archives
2 Midland Square, Midland
9267 9267
www.swan.wa.gov.au

Department of Justice

Search births, deaths and marriages
Level 10, 141 St Georges Terrace, Perth
1300 305 021
www.bdm.justice.wa.gov.au/_apps/pioneersindex/default.aspx

Electoral rolls

Access through a database such as ancestry.com or visit the Battye Library

State Library of Western Australia

25 Francis Street
Perth Cultural Centre, Perth WA
9427 3111
www.slwa.wa.gov.au/find/guides/family_history/australia/western_australia/electoral_rolls

Landgate

1 Midland Square, Midland
9273 7373
www.landgate.wa.gov.au

Metro Cemeteries Board

PO Box 53, Claremont,
WA 6910

1300 793 109

www2.mcb.wa.gov.au/NameSearch

Post Office Directories

trove.nla.gov.au

Remember Midland Facebook

www.facebook.com/remembermidland

State Heritage Office

Level 2, 491 Wellington
Street, Perth

6552 4000

inherit.stateheritage.wa.gov.au/public

State Records Office

Alexander Library Building
James Street West Entrance
Perth Cultural Centre

9427 3661

sro@sro.wa.gov.au

Swan-Guildford Historical Society

119 Swan Street, Guildford

9379 1829

www.swanguildfordhistoricalsociety.org.au

Western Australian Genealogical Society Inc.

6/48 May Street, Bayswater

9271 4311

membership.wags.org.au

Midland and Districts Historical Society

0438 884 719

www.facebook.com/historymidland

historymidland@gmail.com

FURTHER READING

How to trace the history of your house by Des Regan and Kate Press. (Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin, 1990).

Tracing your house history: a guide for family historians by Gill Blanchard. (Pen and Sword Family History, 2013).

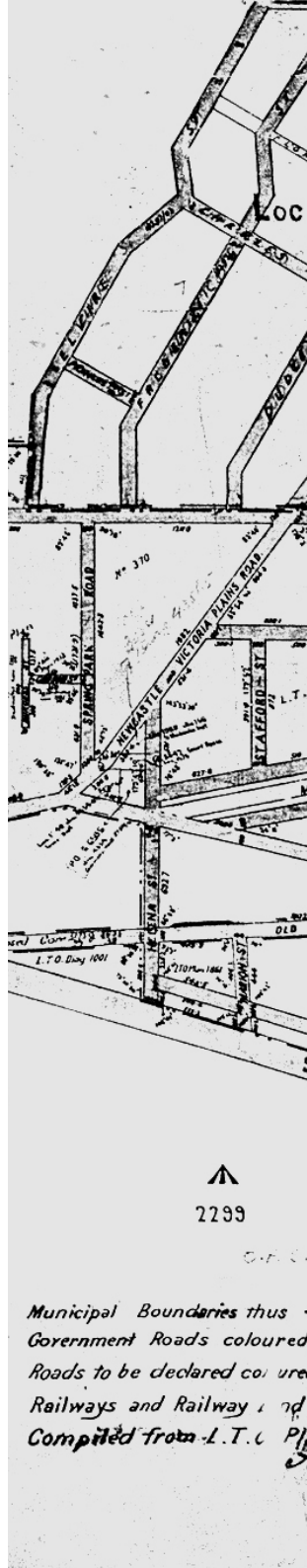
The official guide to Ancestry.com by George G. Morgan. (Provo, Utah: Ancestry Pub, 2008).

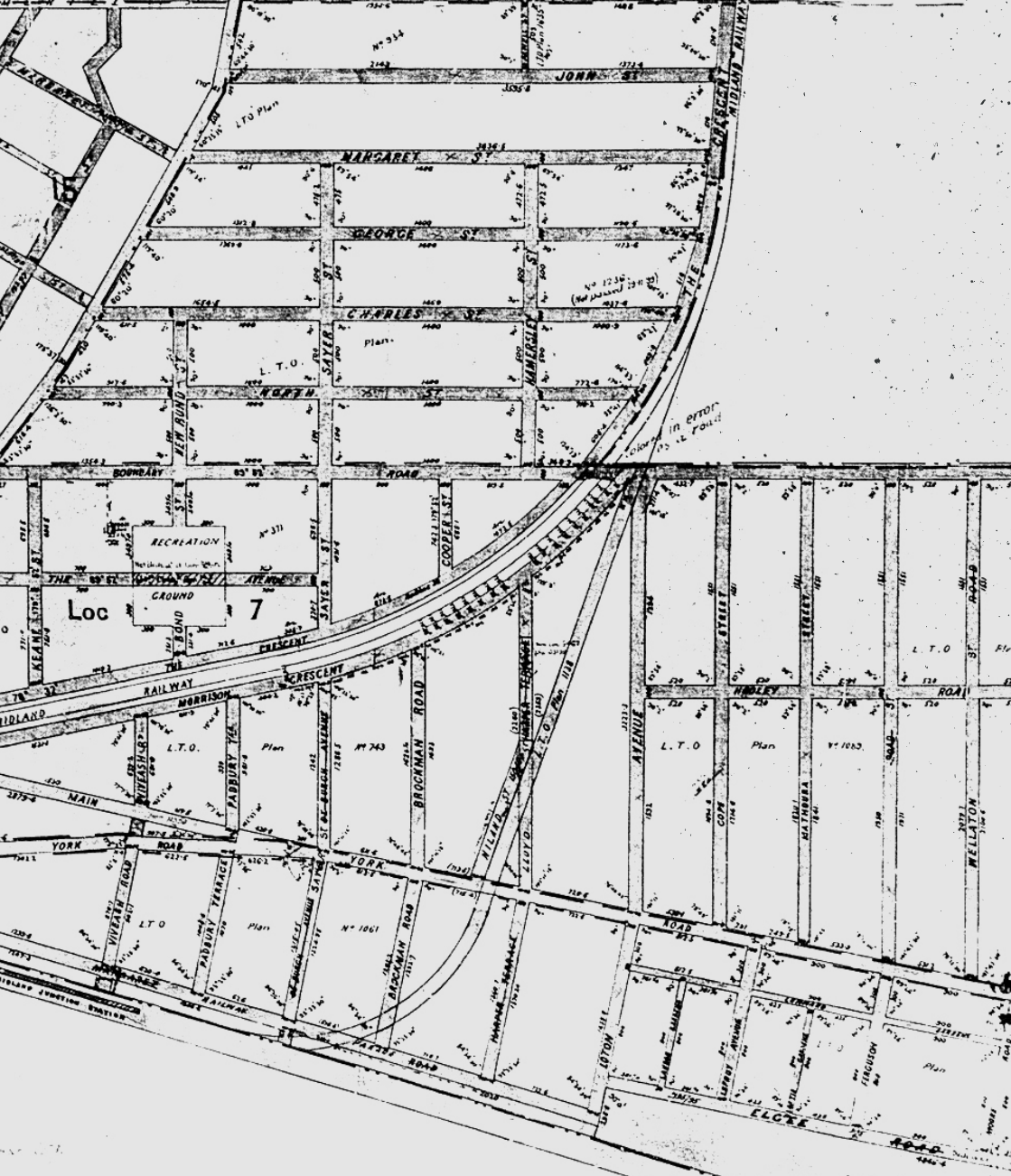
Tracing your family history in Australia: a national guide to sources by Nick Vine Hall. (Albert Park, Vic: N.V. Hall, 2002).

Family history: digging deeper by Simon Fowler. (Stroud, Gloucestershire: History Press, 2012).

The genealogist's internet by Peter Christian. (London: The National Archives, 2012).

Finding families: the guide to the National Archives of Australia for genealogists compiled by Margaret Chambers. (Sydney, N.S.W.: Hale & Iremonger in association with the Archives, 1998).





25 Gazetted 17.2.57. (252 Amendment)

brown. ■
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Red. ■

ans
Y. Cadden,
1.12.59.

RECORD TRACING OF STREETS PROPOSED TO BE DEDICATED WITHIN THE MUNICIPALITY OF HELENA VALE

See Corr 2435 p. 4.

RECORDED
JUL 1971

Dept of Land Admin

www.swan.wa.gov.au



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This document can be made available in
alternative formats on request.

