



ROYAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

WINTER 2025

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

Date	Time	Event	Presenter	Member	Friend
MAY					
Wed 7	1pm – 2pm	RAHS Day Lecture – <i>Charles Darwin in Australia</i>	Frank Nicholas	Free	Free
Wed 21	5.30 pm for 6pm – 7pm	RAHS/NAW Lecture – <i>Irrawang: The History and the Archaeology</i>	Various	\$20/ \$10*	\$25/ \$15*
Wed 28	11am – 1pm	RAHS/WEA Workshop – <i>Making Home: A Short History of Houses, Interiors and Gardens in NSW</i>	Matthew Stephens	\$35	\$39
27 May – 3 June		National Reconciliation Week – <i>Bridging Now to Next #NRW2025</i>			
JUNE					
Wed 4	1pm – 2pm	RAHS Day Lecture – <i>Stimulated, exhausted or inebriated? Investigating the Queen of Nations shipwreck</i>	Peter Hobbins	Free	Free
Wed 18	1pm – 2pm	RAHS Special Lecture – <i>On Max Dupain</i>	Helen Ennis	Free	Free
JULY					
Wed 2	1pm – 2pm	RAHS Day Lecture – <i>Worlds of Vulnerability: Vagrancy in nineteenth-century Australia and New Zealand</i>	Catharine Coleborne	Free	Free
Wed 16	1pm – 3pm	RAHS/RSNSW Joint Lecture – <i>Not just another gentlemen's club: The nineteenth-century origins and significance of the Royal Society of NSW</i>	Anne Coote	\$10	\$15
AUGUST					
Wed 6	1pm – 2pm	RAHS Day Lecture – <i>Eight Early Women Architects in NSW</i>	Bronwyn Hanna	Free	Free
Mon 11	1pm – 2pm	RAHS Special Lecture – <i>Fleeced: Unraveling the History of Wool and War</i>	Trish FitzSimons	Free	Free

Please check the venue details as some events are online and some are at History House, 133 Macquarie St, Sydney. Some History House events may be hybrid. Events marked with an asterisk (*) are streamed online.

Joint RAHS/WEA events must be booked through WEA (02) 9264 2781 or <https://www.weasydney.com.au>



RAHS Day Lecture – *Charles Darwin in Australia*

Wednesday, 7 May 2025, 1pm – 2pm at History House. Cost: Free

Early in 1836, Charles Darwin spent two months in Australia as part of his voyage around the world on HMS *Beagle*. This lecture will be based on Darwin's diary entries, illustrated with contemporary sketches and paintings by former fellow *Beagle* shipmates Conrad Martens and Augustus Earle. The complete story is told in the book *Charles Darwin in Australia*, co-authored by Frank and by his wife Jan, who, having worked in the pictures section of the State Library of NSW, was familiar with the relevant Martens and Earle illustrations.

About the speaker: Frank Nicholas has been an academic at the University of Sydney for 50 years. As such, he has spent decades telling other people's stories.

RAHS/National Archaeology Week Lecture – *Irrawang: The History and the Archaeology*

Wednesday, 21 May 2025, 6pm – 7pm at History House AND Online via Zoom

Cost: RAHS Members \$20 | Non-Members \$25 (at History House)

Cost: RAHS Members \$10 | Non-Members \$15 (Online via Zoom)

Just north of Raymond Terrace near the Williams River lies Irrawang, a site important for its early colonial industry and for being one of the earliest historical archaeological projects in Australia. James King was a colonial entrepreneur with interests in a number of ventures. King experimented with glass manufacture before he took a grant in the Hunter Valley to develop a winery. He then set up a pottery on his land to manufacture utilitarian wares. The pottery was moderately successful until the gold rush resulted in his labour decamping and the enterprise closed down.

In the 1970s, Judy Brimingham and the students from the Archaeological Society at the University of Sydney began to excavate the Irrawang site. The work at Irrawang also provided a key stimulus to the development of historical archaeology in Australia. Recently, members from the Industrial Heritage Committee of the National Trust have revived interest in Irrawang, largely because it has not been listed on the State Heritage Register. Although many know of the site, little is known about what happened there.

This session hosted by Dr Iain Stuart and with contributions from Felicity Barry, Stephanie Moore, Isabella Trope and James Cole, aims to present what is known about the site's history and archaeology. Being a hybrid presentation, we hope to also have contributions from key individuals who worked on the site.

RAHS-MHNSW/WEA Workshop – *Making Home: A Short History of Houses, Interiors and Gardens in NSW*

Wednesday, 28 May 2025, 11am – 1pm at History House

Cost: RAHS Members \$35 | Non-Members \$39

Bookings through WEA (02) 9264 2781 or online at <https://www.weasydney.com.au/course/RAHS25.02>

This workshop is an introduction to the sources that help us understand the history of houses, interiors and gardens in NSW. The range of research material in terms of architecture and interior and garden design is extensive. You will discover the many tools available to help you interpret the range of housing stock that survives both in urban and country areas. You will be introduced to the historical contents of these houses, ranging from door fittings to kitchen furniture and wallpapers to tiles, using trade literature, pattern books and objects from the collections of the Caroline Simpson Library, Museums of History NSW.

About the speaker: Dr Matthew Stephens is research librarian at the Caroline Simpson Library, Museums of History. His particular interests are early domestic libraries and music-related collections and how they help us understand the history of the home and its residents in NSW.

Please note: RAHS members should contact WEA first to check if their member number has been added to their student record before they enrol.

RAHS Day Lecture – *Stimulated, exhausted or inebriated? Investigating the Queen of Nations shipwreck*
Wednesday, 4 June 2025, 1pm – 2pm at History House. Cost: Free

Why did Captain Samuel Bache drive his fine clipper ship, *Queen of Nations*, onto Towradgi Beach in 1881? Was he really drunk as his crew insisted? And what about the captain's scandalous past involving a sailor who turned out to be a young woman? Dive into the drama and tragedy of sailing to nineteenth-century Australia in this lively presentation.

About the speaker: Dr Peter Hobbins has the entertaining job title of 'Head of Knowledge' at the Australian National Maritime Museum in Darling Harbour. It doesn't mean that he is a know-it-all, but he is in charge of the museum's curators, maritime history library and magazine, *Signals*. Peter's background is in the history of science, technology and medicine, where he has researched various ghoulish subjects including snakebite, pandemics, quarantine, aircraft accidents and shipwrecks.

RAHS Special Lecture – *On Max Dupain*
Wednesday, 18 June 2025, 1pm – 2pm at History House. Cost: Free

Max Dupain's photographs – especially of Sydney – helped shape the image of modern Australia. Helen Ennis will discuss Dupain's views and his legacy, and the challenges his voluminous archival resources pose to a biographical approach.

About the speaker: Helen Ennis writes on Australian photography and her latest book, *Max Dupain: A Portrait*, is her third biography. She began her career as Curator of Photography at the National Gallery of Australia, and from 2014–18 was Director of the Centre for Art History and Art Theory and Sir William Dobell Chair of Art History at the Australian National University. Helen is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Humanities and in 2021 was awarded the J. Dudley Johnson Medal by the British Royal Photographic Society for her contribution to the history of photography.

RAHS Day Lecture – *Worlds of Vulnerability: Vagrancy in nineteenth-century Australia and New Zealand*
Wednesday, 2 July 2025, 1pm – 2pm at History House. Cost: Free

Historians have used vagrancy as a window onto historical processes, including economic processes, labour and human migration, urbanisation, and responses to poverty, such as welfare and legislation. Patterns of vulnerability were based on social difference and the politics of mobility and identity. These have become deeply entrenched in the social and cultural order over time. Using the theme of vulnerability in histories of vagrancy and the regulation of mobility helps to create a stronger relationship between law and the social institutions of the period, such as asylums, benevolent homes, immigrants' homes, hospitals, charities and other places. This presentation describes the different aspects of the profile of those more vulnerable to police surveillance and regulation and offers a reminder of the socio-economic factors at play in creating definitions of unauthorised mobility that are also relevant in our present moment.

About the speaker: Catharine Coleborne is a Professor of History at the University of Newcastle. Her most recent book examines the histories of colonial vagrancy across different Australian colonies and New Zealand: *Vagrant Lives in Colonial Australasia: Regulating Mobility, 1840–1910* (Bloomsbury). Her scholarly work has ranged across histories of mental illness and institutions, colonial families and health, and museums, collections and exhibitions of psychiatric histories and objects. With Dr Effie Karageorgos, she is pursuing a new history of mental health aftercare funded by the Australian Research Council. In 2025 she is a Visiting Fellow at the State Library of NSW and later in the year will be a Fellow at the National Library of Australia.

RAHS-RSNSW Lecture – *Not just another gentlemen’s club: The nineteenth-century origins and significance of the Royal Society of New South Wales*

Wednesday, 16 July 2025, 1pm – 3pm at History House

Cost: RAHS/RSNSW Members \$10 | Non-Members \$15 (includes afternoon tea)

The Royal Society of New South Wales is a twenty-first-century organisation with a long history in the intellectual culture of Sydney and beyond. In this talk, Anne Coote will discuss the origins of this learned society, its character and social position in nineteenth-century New South Wales, and the significant contribution it made to the development of an active colonial research community.

About the speaker: Dr Anne Coote is a professional historian and an associate of Macquarie University’s Centre for Applied History. One of her research interests is the cultural history of science in colonial Australia. Anne has published academically on popular science journalism, the trade in natural history specimens at a local and global level, and the intersection of commercial species collecting with ideas about class. Her book, *Knowledge for a Nation: Origins of the Royal Society of New South Wales*, was published in 2024.

RAHS Day Lecture – *Eight Early Women Architects in NSW*

Wednesday, 6 August 2025, 1pm – 2pm at History House. Cost: Free

This lecture offers short, illustrated summaries of the lives and careers of eight of the most prominent and interesting early women architects to practice in NSW before 1960, as discovered in my PhD research (University of NSW, 2000). Florence Taylor, Marion Mahony Griffin, Ellice Nosworthy, Rosette Edmunds, Heather Sutherland, Winsome Hall Andrew, Eleanor Cullis-Hill and Eva Buhrich. Women architects can disappear from history, but they can also be recovered.

About the speaker: Dr Bronwyn Hanna is a heritage consultant who trained as an Australian architectural historian in Sydney. She has worked for government, industry and community groups on the history and significance of many heritage places, including the Sydney Opera House and Hyde Park Barracks. She has published two co-authored books about women architects and two long art history reports about heritage places (Hill End and the Dandenong Ranges), as well as many shorter articles on the built environment. More recently, she undertook 23 oral history interviews with pioneering heritage professionals about their contributions to the Burra Charter for the National Library of Australia.

RAHS Special Lecture – *Fleeced: Unraveling the History of Wool and War*

Monday, 11 August 2025, 1pm – 2pm at History House. Cost: Free

Not all about wool is warm and fuzzy ... *Fleeced* exposes how heightened demand for wool in wartime existed historically in an international vortex of negotiation, intrigue and anxiety, and the unexpected effects of all this on how we dress today. The nineteenth-century rise of industrial manufacture of woollen fabrics and Southern Hemisphere sheep husbandry supported an enormous increase in the size of twentieth-century armies. Wool was also central to frontier war in Australia and elsewhere. By the dawn of the twentieth century, Sydney was the centre of the world’s wool market, and this trade shaped the fabric of the city. Pulling at threads of family history and finding objects that let us unpick the nuances of our story are key strategies of *Fleeced*.

About the speaker: Trish FitzSimons is adjunct professor at the Griffith Film School, Griffith University. She is a documentary filmmaker and exhibition curator with a passion for social and cultural history. Her intellectual and creative interests had not included textile history prior to this shared research project with Madelyn Shaw. Letters written by her grandfather between 1904–07 to her great-grandparents in Australia as he learned the wool trade in the UK and the US were one impetus to this book. Interview has been a defining component of her practice for the last 40 years, in documentary films, books and exhibitions.