



BOAB BULLETIN

No. 123

August 2014

NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETING

commencing 7.15 for 7.30 p.m. at

Dalkeith Hall, 97 Waratah Avenue, Dalkeith

Wednesday, 6 August 2014

Christine Choo (historian & social researcher)

**“The Broome Race Riots of 1907, 1914 and 1920”
(between Japanese and other Asians)**

Wednesday, 3 September 2014

Western Australian Dingo Association

**“Understanding the Dingo”
(Discussing the many myths and fallacies surrounding the Dingo)**

Members and visitors are invited to stay for supper after the meetings.
The Society asks a \$2.00 hospitality fee from non-members.



FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Kimberley Society has transitioned from The Palms Community Centre in Subiaco to the Dalkeith Hall with minor disruption to members. This move to Dalkeith is expected to be temporary until the City of Subiaco staff can move from The Palms back to their regular quarters in Lords Recreation Centre. In the meantime the Kimberley Society will function the best that it can with monthly meetings in Dalkeith.

To facilitate members locating the Dalkeith Hall a sign is being displayed on Waratah Ave (on the footpath outside of the hall) before and during meetings. This also is inviting the public to attend, and that may attract new members to join the Society. Parking is available on the street and off the driveway that goes around the hall.

During the winter months the Kimberley Society meetings are providing tea and coffee upon arrival. This is self-service so please venture into the kitchen to make yourself a hot drink to start the night.

The kitchen arrangements at the Dalkeith Hall require a bit of experimenting to provide the best and most convenient tea and coffee service after the meetings. Members and visitors are requested to be patient while the Society tries various methods to determine what works best.

Apart from Society having raised funds to install interpretive signage at the Old Halls Creek Post Office Ruins, the Council has recently approved financial contributions towards a research project by PhD student Ms Deborah Thiele (ANU) on 'Developing palaeoecological science in the Kimberley' and the Notre Dame University School of Medicine's Rural and Remote Health Placement Program (RRHPP) that provides a one week non-clinical placement in the West Kimberley for all second year Notre Dame medical students. These are directly in line with a Kimberley Society objective to 'encourage studies, particularly collaborative projects, which will enhance knowledge and understanding of the Kimberley's history, peoples, cultures, resources, natural history, heritage and environment'.

The Society's Council strives to provide interesting and informative monthly meetings and to effectively manage the funds achieved through its various income earning enterprises.

Jeff Murray

2014 SCIENCE ON THE BROOME COAST SERIES

Broome residents and visitors have already enjoyed the first three of nine science presentations in this series, which is hosted by Roebuck Bay Working Group and the Yawuru Land and Sea Unit. The next three, to be held at 6-7 pm on Wednesdays at Broome Public Library, Cnr Hamersley & Haas Streets, Broome, are:

August 13. DR STEVE SALISBURY: Digital Mapping of Western Australia's "Dinosaur Coast" - Mapping the ancient track sites of Roebuck Bay and the Dampier Peninsula.

September 3. ASSOC. PROF. RYAN VOGWILL & GAYAN GUNARATNE: Distribution and movement of groundwater of the Broome Peninsula – implications for Roebuck Bay (Ryan Vogwill) and Stormwater runoff, first flush effects and drivers of Lyngbya blooms (Gayan Gunaratne).

October 1. JEFF COOPER: Insights & secrets on the salmon that live in Roebuck Bay - Why are these fish special?

For more details see the Roebuck Bay Working Group [website](#) or contact the group's Project Manager, Kandy Curran, by [email](#) or Mobile 0400 003864.

KIMBERLEY DENTAL TEAM

On 4 June 2014, **Jan Owen** presented an illustrated talk on the Kimberley Dental Team ([KDT](#)) and told how she and her husband John became involved in this project. Jan was a keen member of the Madjitil Moorna Choir, singers of Aboriginal songs, who had been invited by an Aboriginal elder and school teacher, Doreen Green, to sing with the children of the Halls Creek District High School. Following this trip, during which Jan and John provided some dental screening for the children, they decided to found the KDT in 2009.

Through research they discovered that government funding for dental health was limited in the State Budget and virtually non-existent for Aboriginal dental health. Government dentists had no receptionist to handle appointments, filing or record keeping, which made their work load very high. A government dentist would visit the Halls Creek clinic once every 6 weeks on average.

John Owen, an orthodontist with special interests in younger patients with disabilities, in particular indigenous health issues, re-established his general dental career after a break of nearly 30 years. He already had a helicopter pilot's licence, and initially he and Jan (formerly a dental nurse and dental health educator) based themselves in Halls Creek. They flew out to Aboriginal communities on invitation only. Jan emphasised that they had to gain the trust of the elders before anything could be done. They had help from volunteers, including university graduates looking for work experience.

Working out in the open was best in getting whole families, not just the children, to come to the mobile clinics. It worked because everyone could see what was being done, and it was amazing to find how interested many were in the dental procedures undertaken.



Frog Hollow (near Warmun) 2010



KDT Team May 2010

Experience shows that sending posters ahead to advise when the mobile dental clinic is due in the community is all that is needed. The members of the community make sure the message is passed on to all those who may not have seen the poster.

Once sufficient funds were raised a caravan was purchased and fitted out as a basic mobile dental clinic. However, after a road accident, it was decided that a Hilux with a canopy fit out would be safer and a separate accommodation van would be used.

Initially the bulk of the work involved extractions as most of the children had rotten teeth. Some of the very serious cases were flown to Perth for treatment. This damage is a direct result of the very high sugar content in the diets of young

children from all walks of life; not just indigenous children. The decay rate of indigenous adults over age 30 seen by the KDT is generally low however many suffer severe gum disease. Recently the Northern Territory Corp has taken charge of many community stores and this has seen a vast improvement in food quality and consequently in the diet of indigenous communities as a whole.



KDL mascot Craig the Croc with free toothbrushes

The main aim of the mobile clinics is to not only provide a check up for the whole family but to also hand out dental packs. The dental packs are handed out at schools each term and consist of toothbrushes, toothpaste etc, and, for approximately 4,000 children, this equates to 16,000 toothbrushes alone.

The new Child Dental Benefit Scheme will be beneficial in supporting KDT financially but the paperwork is making it extremely cumbersome to access.

Jan also made the point that support from the many volunteers and voluntary organisations like Rotary and the McCusker Charitable Foundation has made achieving their goal to improve indigenous dental health much easier.

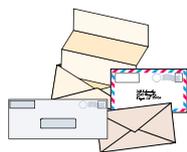
Susan Clarkson

REST IN PEACE

Emeritus Bishop John Jobst SAC, whose ministry in Broome extended from 1959 to 1995, passed away peacefully in Austria on 5 July. Born in 1920 and raised on a German farm, he joined the Pallottines on leaving school but, at the outbreak of World War II, he was drafted into the German Army. Serving as a medical officer, he was wounded at the Russian Front before spending time as a prisoner-of-war under the Americans. A return to the Pallottines seminary saw him ordained a priest in 1950. The Pallottines had been in the Kimberley since 1901, and they sent Fr Jobst to Beagle Bay to help the Aboriginal people there.

In January 1959, after a period as Spiritual Director of the Pallottine Novitiate in Sydney, Fr Jobst was appointed Vicar Apostolic of the Kimberley, a Vicariate covering 773,000 square kilometres. It had missions at Balgo, Beagle Bay, La Grange and Lombadina; mission parishes at Broome and Derby; and outstations at Halls Creek and Wyndham. Taking charge of this vast, sparsely populated area was both daunting and challenging. In his first Kimberley trip, covering 4,750 kilometres, not even 100 kilometres consisted of bitumen.

When the Vicariate was raised to a diocese in the mid-1960s, John Jobst became the first Bishop of Broome. He had already been instrumental in introducing policies under which Aboriginal people who accepted the Catholic faith were free to adhere to their traditions and mythology and to some of their initiation and marriage rites. As Bishop, he was a strong advocate of Indigenous land rights and remote schooling, and he was involved with the establishment of Notre Dame University in Broome. He also became known as the “flying bishop” in the Kimberley after the receipt of a single-engine Cessna 182 in 1967 allowed him to travel by air throughout his parish.



TO THE EDITOR

The notes in the June issue of the *Boab Bulletin* concerning the book *Fighting The Kimberley* rekindled a few memories of the Kimberley days. I can recall hearing some talk about some local involvement in the VDC during the War. Bluey O'Malley, Frank Willmington and Clarrie Wilkinson were names that came up. I heard stories that plans were made regarding blowing up bores and watering points etc should the Japanese actually invade the Kimberley. Edgar Birch told a great story of fleeing the Wyndham airstrip trying to tear off a conspicuous white shirt after firing a shot at a strafing Zero.

During the time I was head-stockman on Gordon Downs in 1950 we were called upon to give the storekeeper a hand to clear out a forgotten corner of the main storeroom and we stumbled across a forgotten stash of small arms obviously left over from the wartime VDC activities. After removing a good deal of dusty gear we were surprised to come across several boxes of .303 rifles, a Bren gun complete with spare barrel, a number of bayonets. The white ants had made some inroads into the woodwork on some of the rifles but other than that all the firearms were in working order. The Bren gun attracted a good deal of interest amongst us, it was in perfect condition and there was some discussion about "trying it out" however wiser heads prevailed and the Bren and its barrel were taken into Hall's Creek and handed over to a surprised Const. Jack Purkiss. The .303 rifles were distributed amongst some of the nearby stations.

We found out that later there had been a box of hand grenades included in the original "arsenal" but had been removed and after a futile effort to blow a hole in the ground to erect a small windmill the unused grenades were buried somewhere along Soakage Creek (which runs through the old station area) out of harm's way. So far, as long as I know, no one has stumbled over them.

Cec Watts

Editor's Note: Great to hear from you again Cec. I hope you're also finding time to write your memoirs over there in the Sunshine State.

GORDON DOWNS STATION

This station is said to date from 1895. While little is known of its early history, it seems to have been among the stations established by Nat Buchanan and the Gordon Brothers. Their holdings stretched from Flora Valley Station (near Halls Creek) to Wave Hill Station (in the Northern Territory). The boundaries of Gordon Downs changed over time, with some of the leases in the Territory and others in the Kimberley. Changes in its ownership included the involvement of Nat Buchanan's son Gordon, Tom Cahill (a former manager of Wave Hill), and the Farquharson Brothers (owners of Inverway Station in the Territory). In 1914, the British company known as Vestey's bought Gordon Downs. It remained part of the Vestey aggregation until the family sold Gordon Downs and Flora Valley to cattleman Peter Sherwin in 1980. At that time, the stations were carrying about 30,000 head of cattle. Sherwin's empire grew to 16 stations, stretching across to Queensland, but, within a decade, Robert Holmes à Court gained control of Sherwin Pastoral Company. The Holmes à Court ownership continues, with the Gordon Downs lease now part of Heytesbury Cattle Company's Flora Valley Station. Heytesbury owns six cattle stations.

AWARDS

On 30 May, when the winners of the 2014 Western Australian of the Year Awards were announced, the Aboriginal Award went to **Lena Nyadbi**. Her fellow finalists for that award were Dr Robert Isaacs OAM and Mr Jim Morrison. The award recognises 'Excellence in professional and/or personal achievements and contributions to the Western Australian community, and recognition as an inspirational role model of the Aboriginal community'. The finalist profile presented by [Celebrate WA](#) read:

Born 1935 in Thildoowam country, now known as Lissadell Station, **Lena Nyadbi** is one of a small group of preeminent artists working at Warmun Art Centre, Turkey Creek, in the remote east Kimberley region of Western Australia. Lena is a leading contemporary Aboriginal artist, internationally recognised for her extraordinary installation on the roof top of the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris. Lena's work is represented in significant public collections throughout Australia and overseas. She is a remarkable artist who simultaneously keeps her heritage alive while creating dynamic and innovative artwork that is critically recognised by the international art community. Her two major Ngarranggarni (Dreaming) stories and the subjects of her painting are from her family's country, Dayiwool Ngarranggarni (Barramundi Dreaming) and Jimbirla Ngarranggarni (Spearhead Dreaming). As a senior artist and cultural custodian, Lena is constantly passing on her knowledge of Country and culture to young Gija people, preserving important ritual knowledge for future generations.

WEBSITE UPDATE

Since April, the following Book Notes (previously published in the *Boab Bulletin*) have been added to our website:

Birch, Reginald. [Wyndham Yella Fella](#)

Blundell, Valma & Woolagoodja, Donny. [Keeping the Wanjinias Fresh](#)

Bridge, Ben. [Travels and Adventures of Ben Bridge](#)

Bridge, Peter J. [Fighting the Kimberley : The 3 Australian Corps Kimberley Guerilla Warfare Group](#)

Byrne, Geraldine. [Tom & Jack: A Frontier Story](#)

Holman, Janet. [Legend of the Kimberley: The Life and Stories of Lawson Holman](#)

Kreczmanski Janusz B & Birnberg, Margo. [Aboriginal Artists : Dictionary of Biographies](#)

Laurel, Hylton. [The Cowboy Frog \(Kawupayi Walak\)](#)

Mjoberg, Eric. [Among Wild Animals and People in Australia](#)

Ngarjno, Ungudman, Banggal & Nyawarra with Jeff Doring (ed.). [Gwion Gwion : secret and sacred](#)

Preston, Diana & Michael. [A Pirate of Exquisite Mind: The Lfe of William Dampier](#)

Shedley, Don & Meg. [Black & White Best Together : The Bethel Story](#) (page 9, this newsletter)

Tickner, Neville W. [Last of the Packhorse Stockmen : Warwick Edwards : the city kid goes bush](#)

Young, Howard. [Crocodile Coast Crash](#)



KIMBERLEY SOCIETY DRAFT PROGRAM FOR THE REMAINDER OF 2014

<u>Date</u>	<u>Speaker</u>	<u>Topic</u>
1 October	Adam Cross	Life on the rocks: the unique flora and ecology of Kimberley sandstone rock pools
5 November	Donna Mak	Best memory of medical school: The Kimberley
3 December	Daryl Moncrieff	Joint management of lands in the Kimberley

Please note that, with many of our speakers involved in work-related travel, this program may change at short notice. Should a speaker not be available, the topic may differ on the evening.

THE MOWANJUM CENTENNIAL : 100 YEARS OF A WONDERFUL PEOPLE

On 5 March 2014, the Kimberley Society heard from **Dr Peter Graham AM**, a retired ophthalmologist who is recognised internationally for his delivery of eye health care services in remote communities. In presenting an overview of the Mowanjum community's history, and fondly recalling some of its people, Peter told of Royal Flying Doctor Service work in which he conducted clinic visits to remote Aboriginal communities in the mid-1950s. That took place before he and his wife Gwenyth worked in Indonesia, where two of their three children were born. They returned to Perth in 1969 but kept in contact with old friends, especially the "Mowanjum Mob", during many return visits to the Kimberley.

Mowanjum community is on the Gibb River Road about ten kilometres south-east of Derby. Several hundred people live there. They are Worrorra, Ngarinyin, and Wunumbal people who came together in the early 20th century at Port George IV (Kunmunya Presbyterian Mission) and Walcott Inlet (Avon Valley Station, later known as Munja).

To provide context for his talk, Peter drew on books that record the Mowanjum people's history. The earliest was the rare but recently republished J R B Love's *Stone-Age Bushmen of To-day, Life and Adventure among a Tribe of Savages in North-Western Australia* (Blackie & Son Limited, London, 1936). Maisie McKenzie's work, *The Road to Mowanjum* (Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1969) chronicled the years during which the missionaries and Aboriginal people moved from Kunmunya to Wotjulum (on the coast) and then to the original Mowanjum site (now part of Derby Airport). The most recent book, *Mowanjum : 50 Years Community History*, was published by the community in 2008. Its historical component provides background and context for images, recollections and stories gathered by the community.

Other books written by Mowanjum people tell of their culture and life in their community. Those books include *Visions of Mowanjum : Aboriginal Writings from the Kimberley* (Rigby, Adelaide, 1980) by Daisy Utemorrah, Elkin Umbagai, Buruwola Algarra, Jean Wungunyet, and David Mowaljarlai. More recently Valda Blundell worked with Donny Woolagoodja and other Mowanjum people to produce *Keeping the Wanjinias Fresh : Sam Woolagoodja and the Enduring Power of Lalai* (Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle, 2005).

Mowanjum, in addition to its residential area, has a [Community Resource Centre](#) and a spectacular [Art & Culture Centre](#). The community also has outstations on the Kimberley Plateau and the coast, and in the Buccaneer Archipelago.

At the outset Peter acknowledged, firstly, the Mowanjum community, who had given consent for his use of images or names of deceased people, and secondly, the Floreat Uniting Church, who have supported Mowanjum for many years. Their support is a continuation of the Presbyterian connection. It was during the earlier phase that Peter became aware of the people who became known as the "Mowanjum Mob". His mother, as part of the family's involvement with the Presbyterian Church in Cottesloe, used to contribute old clothes to the Christmas Box of the Kunmunya Mission.

Peter's personal contact began in 1954, when he and Gwenyth married and made their first home in Derby. His job description was "Flying Doctor, Leprosarium Doctor" and, in the language of the day, "Native Hospital Doctor". That period predated the move to Mowanjum. When people visited Derby on their lugger from Wotjulum—for work or medical treatment—Gwenyth and Peter got to know them.

The first of the people Peter recalled was Elkin—named after a beautiful sea shell by her parents Ruby and Njimandum. Born in 1921, she was lucky to survive at birth

and it was only due to her parents' later intervention that she was able to marry a man of her own choosing (Sam Umbagai). Elkin went on to become a strong and influential leader as well as one of 150 women whose lives and contributions to WA were featured in the book *Reflections* in 1979. Elkin and Sam's daughter Heather became a nurse and was not only the first woman to be voted into the all-male Mowanjum Council but was also its first chairwoman.

Other Mowanjum people about whom Peter spoke included Elkin's brother Alan Mungulu—another outstanding leader—and his wife Gudu, one of Mowanjum's matriarchs. Then there was Pudja—also a leader—and her husband Albert Barunga (a British Empire Medal recipient); Yertigal and his son Brian; Paddy Morlumbum, his son Samson and granddaughter Joy, who became a stalwart of the Christian Council leaders of Mowanjum; David Mowaljarlai; Laurie Utemorrah; Sam Woolagoodja; Jack Bear (once a stockman out Mt House way); Daisy Utemorrah; and Alison Burgu. One of the interesting stories attached to the images involved Vera Maru (shown at a Christmas Dinner at Kunmunya in the 1930s), her son Yertigal (the gardener at Gwenyth and Peter's Derby home), and Yertigal's son Brian (who spent weekends with them in Perth after winning a bursary to Scotch College).

Some of the photographs were taken many decades ago, by people such as J R B (Bob) Love, while others were taken by Peter during and since 1954. Bob Love and his fellow missionaries featured in the talk, as did other non-Aboriginal people who helped to make Mowanjum what it is today. The young couple Robert and Frances Wilson were the first to point the way. With an assistant named G B Segrott, they built a house and got to know the Worora. Bob Love joined them in 1914 and contributed a great deal. Peter also spoke of later church input and the sequential moves that brought the community to Mowanjum. His overview made it clear that a lot of disruption and disappointment occurred during and because of those moves.

The move to Derby, and the selection of the name Mowanjum, which means "settled at last", should have brought those moves to an end. But, with land needed for airport expansion, the final move had yet to be made. With that decision, Peter said, one of the elders couldn't resist suggesting another name change to Maranggam, which means "never at rest".

In the meantime, Bud Crockett (an American cattleman) had worked with the community to set up a viable business at Pantijan and other outstations. Bruce Godwin, a farmer from Victoria, had also worked with the people for ten years, donating a tractor, ute and plant—all of which he drove there with his brother-in-law.

Attending the May 2013 Centennial in Derby gave Peter a chance to join old friends in their celebration of a significant anniversary of the beginnings—after millennia of nomadic bush life—of modern community at Kunmunya. And that was the story he and Gwenyth shared with us, '100 Years of a Wonderful People'.

Cathie Clement

FREE PUBLIC LECTURE

Topic: 'An evidence based approach to explaining change in Kimberley rock art'

Speaker: **UWA Winthrop Professor Peter Veth**

Date: Wednesday 27 August 2014 at 6.30pm

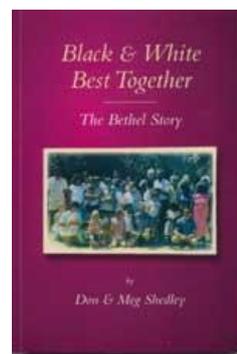
Venue: Royal WA Historical Society, Stirling House, 49 Broadway, Nedlands

RSVP: [Email](#) to History Council of WA

BOOK NOTE

***Black & White Best Together : The Bethel Story* by Don & Meg Shedley. Hesperian Press, 2007. Soft Cover, 276 pages, illustrated, maps, ISBN 0 85905 405 5, RRP \$35.00.**

On 2 June 2014, Megan Ruth Shedley passed away. The death notice inserted in *The West Australian* by her family described her as the loved wife of Don, mother, grandmother and great grandmother of multitudes. The *West's* online Guest Book held a photo of Meg and Don in Kununurra in 1974.



Kununurra events are discussed at length in *Black & White Best Together*. The book commences with the early part of Don Shedley's life. Born in 1922 and educated in Perth, he served in the RAAF during the Second World War and then did a degree in Agricultural Science at the University of Western Australia. Meg Dolling, born in 1923, was a school teacher in South Australia before she married Don in 1946. Several years later—his studies completed—he joined the Entomology Branch of the Department of Agriculture.

After working extensively with insect pests in Perth, Don was sent north in December 1964 when Kununurra began growing cotton commercially. The posting was initially worrying because he and Meg were not only active in the Churches of Christ and the Applecross Christian Endeavour Society but also provided a home for Aboriginal girls who came from the country to the city for secondary education. As it happened, the feared disruption did not eventuate. In Kununurra, Don heard of more Aboriginal students who needed Perth accommodation, and that led to the formation of an independent mission known as Bethel Incorporated.

Black & White Best Together tells the story of Bethel, which, between 1965 and 1985, had three student homes in Perth and four properties in Kununurra. Meg and Don Shedley went north 'without a denominational tag' but saw Don's Department of Agriculture posting as a calling 'to minister to the aboriginal people'. The book tells of the successes and failures encountered in that calling. It is candid in its discussion of conflict created by religious affiliations, departure from church policy, and enticement of people away from Catholicism.

Of particular interest in the book is the listing of people who lived in Bethel homes. Basil Green from Halls Creek, for example, boarded in one of the Perth homes from 1966 to 1970 before doing a law degree in Queensland and becoming a barrister. He is now known as Ribner Green. Maria (Marianna) McCarthy from Fitzroy Crossing boarded in Perth from 1973 to 1975. Now known as Marmingee Hand, she has two tertiary degrees and was awarded a Centenary Medal in 2001 for service to the development of sport in remote Indigenous communities. Other former boarders contributed stories to the book, telling of their schooling and later careers.

More than half of *Black & White Best Together* is devoted to coverage of Kimberley events, mostly in or around Kununurra. Some small sections discuss Aboriginal families and communities while others discuss activities that include farming and broom making. The book ends with notes made by the Shedleys as they drove from Kununurra to Perth in October 1999, bringing their years in the Kimberley to an end.

In reading this book, the thing that stayed with me was the realisation that Bethel, by enabling many Aboriginal children to pursue further education, strengthened the communities to which those children belonged. The comprehensive index of names allows the reader to identify both those children and many of the other people who worked with, or had contact with, Bethel between 1965 and 1985.

Cathie Clement

DAMPIER PENINSULA PLANNING STRATEGY

A draft Strategy to guide land use and development on the Dampier Peninsula has been released for public comment by the WA Planning Commission. It 'provides a comprehensive land use plan that integrates the important cultural, economic and environmental characteristics of the Peninsula whilst respecting procedural rights under the Native Title Act 1993'. Its aim is 'to manage the area's growing population, economic development potential and tourism opportunities while respecting its valuable cultural and environmental heritage'. In complementing the draft Shire of Broome Local Planning Strategy, it seeks to manage growth in the region, promote compact settlement and consolidate growth in areas where key services and infrastructure are already established. The advertising states that: 'The strategy will enhance the amenity of residents, provide a range of tourism and recreational opportunities for visitors, allow for sustainable economic growth in such areas as agriculture and aquaculture and protect the land's cultural, heritage and natural resources values.'

Submissions close 5pm, Monday 1 September 2014.

See [PlanningWA](#) for full details.



CONTRIBUTIONS WANTED



All things Kimberley: news, articles, book notes, obituaries, letters, etc.

COUNCIL 2014-2015

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Vice-Presidents:	Roger Passmore and Mike Donaldson
Secretary:	Frank Woodmore
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[Our website](#)

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