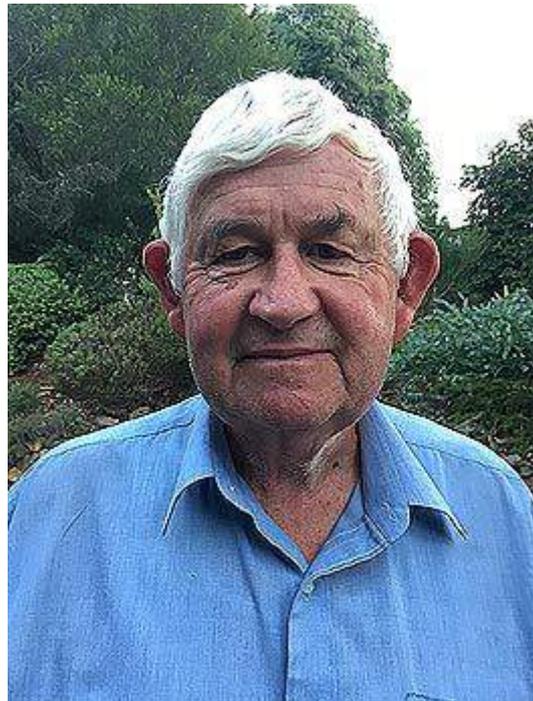


*Brian de Garis:*

I was born in Guildford, brought up in Bayswater, and attended Bayswater and later Maylands Primary Schools. After winning a Secondary Schools Scholarship I had five happy years at Perth Modern School before completing the Leaving Certificate, winning an Exhibition for English and History. These were the subjects in which I subsequently majored at the University of Western Australia, eventually completing a First Class Honours Degree in History and later an MA, with a thesis about an early Western Australian Premier, Sir Hal Colebatch.



After being chosen as the Western Australian Rhodes Scholar for 1962 I went to Wadham College in Oxford, where I played a lot of college cricket and tennis and worked on a doctoral thesis on the history of the federation movement in Australia. In 1965 I returned to Perth with an English wife, Jenny, and took up a lectureship in History at the University of Western Australia. I remained at UWA until 1990, being successively promoted to Senior Lecturer and Associate Professor and having a spell as Dean of the Faculty of Arts from 1981-1985. UWA gave me leave for the two years 1969 and 1970 to take up a Research Fellowship at the Australian National University in Canberra, where I continued my work on the federation movement, including visiting the archives in all states.

Although the federation movement and the development of national politics was my original interest, for a long time I was the only university lecturer in history in Perth specialising in Australian history and so I inevitably become involved in many projects concerning Western Australian history and supervised many postgraduate theses in this area. Later I was joined by Tom Stannage and together we founded a Centre for Western Australian History based in UWA, of which I was the first Director; and later the Western Australian History Foundation, of which I became Executive Officer. I was also the first Director of the Charles & Joy Staples South West Region Publications Fund. So the history of this State has been a big part of my life, though over the years I taught courses on almost every aspect of Australia's history, including its art and literature.

In 1990 I accepted an invitation to become Professor of History at Murdoch University, in succession to Geoffrey Bolton, with whom I had previously worked for a time at UWA. And at Murdoch I remained until my retirement in 2007 with the exception of a two year appointment as Keith Cameron Professor of Australian History at University College Dublin from 2000-2002. Whilst at Murdoch I served as Dean of Social Sciences, 1995-7, and Head of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities, 2004-07.

The political history in which I had originally trained having gone somewhat out of fashion, in my later years of teaching I developed courses in new areas including the History of Popular Culture in Australia and the History of the Australian Environment.

Over the years I have served on a few non-academic bodies including membership of the Board of Secondary Education (1983-4) and its successor, the Secondary Education Authority (1985-7), as well as the Council of the National Trust of Western Australia (1983-86). Later I was a member and then Chair of the Library Board of Western Australia (1994-2000) a role I enjoyed and reluctantly resigned in order to accept the offer of two years in Dublin. Western Australia has a wonderful statewide network of free public libraries of which it can be very proud.

I am currently President of the Balingup Progress Association.

Jenny and I bought a small property at Balingup in 1981, which we still own, and spent innumerable weekends and holidays there over the decades while we were still working in Perth. Because of that I have had an association with the Golden Valley Tree Park more or less from the beginning, which has deepened since we came to live in the area full time in 2007. In 2014 we planted a Dragon tree (*dracaena draco*) there we had grown ourselves and now watch its progress with interest.

The Tree Park is a great facility for the local community, most of whom enjoy walks there through the changing seasons and take visitors there for barbeques or picnics, not to mention the annual Spring Picnic, which is a highlight of the year. But it also becoming a focal point for tourists and is certainly the biggest and best arboretum in the State.