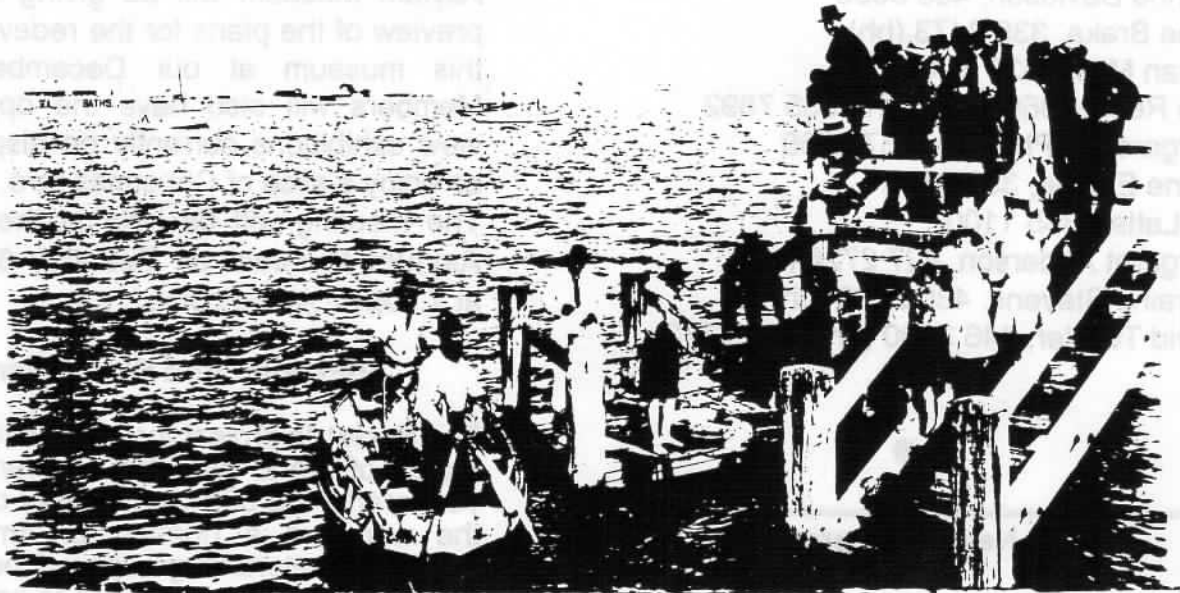


☼ Fremantle History Society ☼

Established 1994

The Secretary

Fremantle Prison, The Terrace, Fremantle 6160, Ph: 335 9473



At Long Last !!! Fremantle History Society Is Launched

At a meeting attended by over 50 people on Wednesday 12 October at the Reception Room of the Fremantle City Council the Fremantle History Society was officially launched. Interested locals and others from further afield were welcomed by prominent Murdoch historian and local resident Bob Reece. In his opening remarks Bob posed the question "Why hasn't a Fremantle History Society been established before this?". As well he paid tribute to the continuing work of the Fremantle Society particularly in regard to the conservation of Fremantle's built environment, over the past two and a half decades.

Dianne Davidson, the driving force behind the establishment of the group, gave a run down on the aims of the Society and offered some suggestions on the types of activities that may be pursued.

The level of interest from those in attendance was indicated by the discussion that followed with people making further suggestions on possible future projects and an indication of some of the work that is currently being undertaken in the Fremantle district.

The guest speaker for the night was Vicki Miller who is the photographic archivist for the *West Australian*. Vicki's presentation of material from the newspapers vast photographic archive focused mainly on images of Fremantle but she also demonstrated how much of the history of Western Australia was linked with Fremantle through its port.

The evening concluded with a sumptuous supper generously provided by the City of Fremantle Council.



Committee Members

The following are members of the interim committee of the FHS

Dianne Davidson, 430 6096
Anne Brake, 335 9473 (bh)
Suzan Miles, 339 3145
Bob Reece, 360 2392 (bh), 335 7892
Margaret McPherson, 337 2668
Lynne Eastoe, 339 6329
Bill Latter, 335 1100
Margaret Anderson, 427 2726 (bh)
Lorraine Stevens, 430 2266 (bh)
David Tessler, 446 3990 (bh), 387 4772



New Members:

Marilyn Diamond
Maurice Stack
Margaret Fay
Phoebe Freeman
Jan Gibson
Allen Graham
Joy & Len Levitzke
Richard Mackay-Scollay
Alan Quinton
Sally Rodgers
Arthur Wilson
Alice Smith
Leone Stella
Erica Harvey
Michael McGinley
Michael Seats
Doreen Sinclair
Ron Davidson
Anne Rimes
Ron Kennedy



Coming Events

Fremantle Asylum Museum

Margaret Anderson, Director of the Fremantle Asylum Museum will be giving us a sneak preview of the plans for the redevelopment of this museum at our December meeting. Members will also have the opportunity to view exhibitions currently on display as well as enjoy a slice of Christmas fare. The meeting will be held at the **Fremantle Asylum Museum on Tuesday 6 December at 7.00pm**. All welcome.

Fremantle And World War Two

The Society's project for 1995 is to look at the impact of World War Two on Fremantle. Next year marks the 50th anniversary of the end of the war and a number of American and Australian veterans' groups will be organising reunions and other activities to commemorate their time here. Although the war is a major event in the memories of the older generation, for younger people it is just about as remote as World War One. There is a need to pass on those memories across the generations so that there can be a greater awareness of the significant things that have happened here. To create a greater awareness of that period and the changes that it brought to our port city, the project will involve a number of activities:

Oral History

Alice Smith and her group of hard-working volunteers from the Fremantle Society have already recorded valuable recollections from the period, some from people who are no longer with us. We want to add to this bank of knowledge about how ordinary people coped with new challenges and changes. What was it like dealing with the Americans? How was social life affected by the war? How did people cope with rationing? How seriously did people take air raid precautions? How did

people feel when the Japanese bombed Broome? What was it like being an Italian in Fremantle during the war? There are so many questions that can be asked. We are looking for people who would like to talk to us about their wartime memories. We would also like to find people who are interested in the helping with the interviewing and recording process.

Photographs

We would like to locate and look at private material which might eventually be copied for the City Library's local history collection and perhaps for the Battye Library collection as well. A photographic display of Fremantle during the war could be a possible outcome of this.

Letters

Some families must have bunches of old letters and documents from husbands, brothers, sons and daughters serving overseas or in other parts of Australia which can give us a good idea of what it was like. We are very interested in seeing material, documenting its whereabouts and perhaps making use of it in an exhibition, together with the photographs.

Buildings

A number of buildings in Fremantle, including the gaol and the old convict asylum (now the Arts Centre), were used for military purposes. Other buildings like Lysaght's in Short St. (which stored submarine spare parts) were important for wartime logistics. We would like to record the way in which Fremantle and Rottnest fitted into the war effort.

The Outcome

In the course of the year, we would like to arrange two or three public sessions on wartime Fremantle, in association with a display of photographs, letters and documents and other memorabilia like ration cards, badges, uniforms and so on. The final product would be an illustrated booklet for public distribution.

How Can You Help?

We are planning a meeting at the Fremantle Prison on **Tuesday 15 November at 7.00 p.m.** for anyone who has any ideas or can

assist with information and material for the project or would like to help in any way in organising next year's activities. Margaret McPherson will be chairing this meeting. If you want to get in touch with Margaret beforehand, her telephone number is 337 2668

The following ideas for meetings next year are to be confirmed. If you have any suggestions for future events please contact one of the committee members.

Treasures Of Long Jetty

Early in the New Year John Carpenter and Dina Garrett will be presenting a talk about Long Jetty and the 'treasures' which have been recovered in archaeological work on the sea bed around the site of the jetty. Until the blasting of the river bar in 1894 and the building of Victoria Quay, Long Jetty was the focus of economic and social life in the port. John and Dina will talk about its importance and show us the range of wonderful objects tossed or lost over the side which were recovered during their underwater 'dig'.

The session will start at the original site of Long Jetty near Joan Campbell's pottery, Bather's Bay, and move on to the Maritime Museum. John Carpenter is a maritime conservator employed at the Maritime Museum and Dina Garrett is a freelance maritime archaeological consultant.

Allen Graham, a member of the Society, has offered to present his research on Fremantle's hotels as one of our social functions in the New Year.

Lorraine Stevens, City of Fremantle Local History Librarian and Archivist has offered to give members a guided tour of the Library's local history and research collections and show us to how to make the most of these valuable tools.

We are hoping Naval historian Antonia MacArthur will be available to tell us about

her research and involvement in the *Endeavour* replica project.

As part of the focus on World War Two, Greg Colgan, a local scriptwriter who is involved in making a documentary on the submariners will present a talk accompanied by slides and a video about his research. He is interested in hearing from anyone who had contact with the Americans in any way. Greg can be contacted on 360 5900 (bh) or 457 2703 (ah).



FHS General Meetings

Tuesday 15 Nov - do you have any ideas for next year's World War Two project? Come to the meeting at the Fremantle Prison at 7.00pm.

Tuesday 6 Dec - meeting at Fremantle Asylum Museum - will give members the opportunity to find out what the future holds for this institution as well as enjoy a Christmas drink. All welcome. 7.00 pm.



Calling all hoarders!

Its Spring, the season for clean up and turning out cupboards! The history department of the West Australian Museum will be delighted to relieve hoarders of any Mills and Ware memorabilia from the pre-1950 period for their planned exhibition about this Fremantle factory.

Phone Phil on 427 2728 if you can help.



Letters to the Editor

We would like to hear what you have to say on issues relating to the research and practice of history in Fremantle. Address letters to 'The Editor, Fremantle History Society, 24 Fothergill St, Fremantle 6160.

Dear Ed,

In reference to Bob Reece's enquiry as to why Fremantle lacked a historical society, put to the inaugural meeting of the Fremantle History Society, I would like to offer an opinion. There really wasn't any need for one. As a child accompanying my mother to town (Freo), I became accustomed to standing while she talked to almost every second person. A lot were relations - my mother was one of 12 and my father the eldest of six. Freo people knew each other, they knew who was married to whom and the family of both parties. They also knew which skeletons were hidden in which closets.

Jobs were obtained by knowing the employers, who in turn knew the family backgrounds. If legal, political, council matters occurred Freddie Samson, Frank Gibson, Bert Fraser or John Tonkin could be called upon for advice. No titles such as Sir or MLC were used - they were referred to and considered as friends by the majority of locals.

As for histories of buildings and localities, there was always someone who knew about them. I still have an interview done for the school magazine with Mr Leighton (Leighton Beach) in the 40s. Sadly with the demise of the older generations a lot of this oral history was lost, mainly because we thought we knew it.

Demographic changes, decline of the wharf and a new perspective of Fremantle have arisen resulting in a need to retain its history. It is up to the society to save the wonderful ambience that made Fremantle such a special place to belong to.

Margaret McPherson



International Submarine Convention

World War II Fremantle Submarine Veterans will be holding a convention and reunion at Fremantle, **20-24 March 1995**. This convention is part of several celebrations to commemorate the 50 years since war ended.

In March 1942 Naval Supply Depot 137 was established with the arrival of submarine tenders and navy personnel as part of the relocation of the seventh fleet of the US Navy. Submarines based at the Philippines were on their way to Fremantle where they would remain until 1945.

The Women's Home in Finnerty St became Receiving Barracks NSD 137 and was to become home to 19 US officers and 670 enlisted men.

If anyone wishes to attend the convention or know more about it contact Mike Pearson 221 1037.



Current Research

If you are working on a research project relating to Fremantle write and tell us - please keep it brief!

History of the building known as the Fremantle Museum and Arts Centre

Margaret McPherson

I have been researching the history of this building for nearly three years, and it has become a compelling and fascinating project. Originally built in 1865 as a Lunatic Asylum it quickly became a place to deposit various social problems of society. Alcoholics, prostitutes, women who suffered post natal depression, elderly senile ex-convicts and badly diagnosed medical cases were placed

with mentally disturbed inmates. It became a place of shame and degradation.

November 1909 saw the building designated as a Poor House and become a Women's Home. Originally elderly, destitute women were placed here, but mentally retarded younger people, some incapacitated women and later prostitutes were again lodged in the building.

A Maternity Training School - the first in WA - was also established in 1909 in the west wing (now the Arts Centre). Accommodation consisted of a delivery room, ward, nursery, doctors consulting rooms and nurses' rooms. The upper floor provided quarters for 5 nurses and the matron. The school was closed in 1916 with opening of King Edward Memorial Hospital.

Once again conditions deteriorated with meagre funding available. Oral histories suggest a kind and caring staff despite the declining circumstances.

In 1942 the women were moved to Woodbridge in Guilford and the building was taken over by the American military.

This research is being incorporated in an exhibition to be opened in December at the Fremantle Museum and in a booklet to accompany the exhibition.



Local History Fremantle City Library

Lorraine Stevens

Did you know that male and female swimming areas were segregated at South Beach in the 1890s, or that goats were creating a nuisance in 1913 by eating the washing from clothes lines in North Fremantle, leaving only the pegs?

These are some of the interesting snippets of information that can be discovered by browsing through Fremantle City Library's

Local History collection. As the library serves both the Fremantle and East Fremantle municipalities, material is collected on both areas.

Originally closed to the public in 1976, the collection has grown to include some 500 books and reports, over 120,000 pamphlets/ephemeral items, 50+ maps, 3000 photographs and 275 oral history tapes.

In 1993 the collection moved into spacious new premises which were officially opened by the Honourable John Dawkins on 8 November. In its new quarters, material is housed in proper conditions, thus ensuring its availability for future generations.

Open Monday to Friday from 9.30 am to 5.00 pm, people are welcome to call in or telephone 430 2239 if they have a query. Staff are also interested in any material that people may wish to donate or allow staff to copy that relates to Fremantle/East Fremantle families, businesses, buildings or events.



Tribute to an Italian Pioneer

Everyone knows that Fremantle has a large Italian population which has contributed greatly to its character and ambience. They may not be aware, however, just how early this contribution began.

A new housing development off Thompson Road in North Fremantle is about to honour an early Italian pioneer, Nicoletta Sulustri, by naming one of the streets after her. Nicoletta was the first Italian woman in Western Australia, arriving in Fremantle in October 1850 as the wife of one of the Pensioner Guards who accompanied the first shipment of convicts.

She was born in Ancona in 1814, and met her husband, James O'Byrne from Kilcolman in County Mayo, when he was serving in the

British Army on Corfu. She married him at the age of 15 and returned with him to England before accompanying him in 1839 to Hobart

Town on the other side of the world. He was discharged as Unfit for Further Service Abroad in 1846 and returned to London, but four years later he was back in the Antipodes, escorting the convicts on the transport "Hasheny".

Nicoletta and James had eight children, with two being born after their arrival in Fremantle. The family settled here permanently, but James died in 1871, leaving Nicoletta to face a widowhood of twenty-one years. She died in 1892 at the age of 77.

The descendants of the O'Byrnes plan to be present when the name goes up on the street which will commemorate this courageous woman.



We need your ideas for a logo

The Fremantle History Society needs a logo that will reflect the nature of the Society and link it to this thriving contemporary city. Our history is not just in the past. Fremantle is and always has been a cosmopolitan city with great diversity. This diversity resonates in the people, the buildings, the culture of this port city.

If you have the skills put them to work to give the Fremantle History Society a 'look'. If you have any ideas send them to the interim secretary (address on the front of the newsletter) or contact her on telephone 335 9473

We are counting on you to encourage family and friends to join up now!

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FREMANTLE HISTORY SOCIETY
The Secretary
Fremantle Prison, The Terrace,
Fremantle WA 6160

The Fremantle History Society aims to

- encourage community involvement in the study of Fremantle history and cultural diversity through research oral history, and writing.
- disseminate information about Fremantle in a variety of ways in particular through public forums and liaison with other history and heritage groups and schools in the area
- promote the identification and preservation of historical evidence relating to Fremantle
- encourage the commemoration of important events, places and people in appropriate ways
- arrange social gatherings for its members

Membership fee of \$..... paid to the Fremantle History Society on/...../.....

NOTE: The Association's financial year begins on 1 July each year.

PLEASE RETAIN THIS SECTION AS A RECEIPT AND FOR YOUR OWN RECORD

✂

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME:

ADDRESS:

.....POSTCODE.....

TELEPHONE: (BH)..... (AH).....

OCCUPATION:.....

SIGNATURE/S.....

DATE :

Please circle the appropriate category:

Ordinary membership	\$10	Organisational membership	\$20
Family membership	\$15	Student/pensioner/unemployed	\$5

DRAFT OBJECTIVES OF THE FREMANTLE HISTORY SOCIETY

The Fremantle History Society aims:-

- a.
 - i) To encourage the study and public awareness of Fremantle history and cultural heritage in all its diversity
 - ii) To encourage the research and writing of Fremantle history at a range of levels
 - iii) To promote the recording of oral recollections of people who have lived and worked in Fremantle
 - iv) To disseminate information about Fremantle history in a variety of forms - public lectures, meetings, newsletters and other publications, walking tours, exhibitions, etc
 - v) To promote the identification and preservation of historical evidence in the form of records, documents, photographs and objects relating to the Fremantle area
 - vi) To liaise with other history and heritage groups in the region, including the Fremantle Society; to encourage networking between local libraries, museums and schools; and to create links with other organisations whose broader interests impinge on Fremantle history and cultural heritage
 - vii) To encourage the commemoration of important events in Fremantle history, the erection of memorials to significant people and events and suitable signs and notices at places of historical interest
 - viii) To encourage a greater knowledge of Fremantle history in the area's schools and other educational and cultural institutions
 - ix) To monitor, comment on and provide information on history related issues in the Fremantle area
 - x) To arrange social gatherings of members and friends to promote the Society's work
- b.
 - i) The property and income of the Society shall be applied solely towards the promotion of the objects of the Society and no part of that property or income may be paid or otherwise distributed, directly or indirectly, to members, except in good faith in the promotion of those objects