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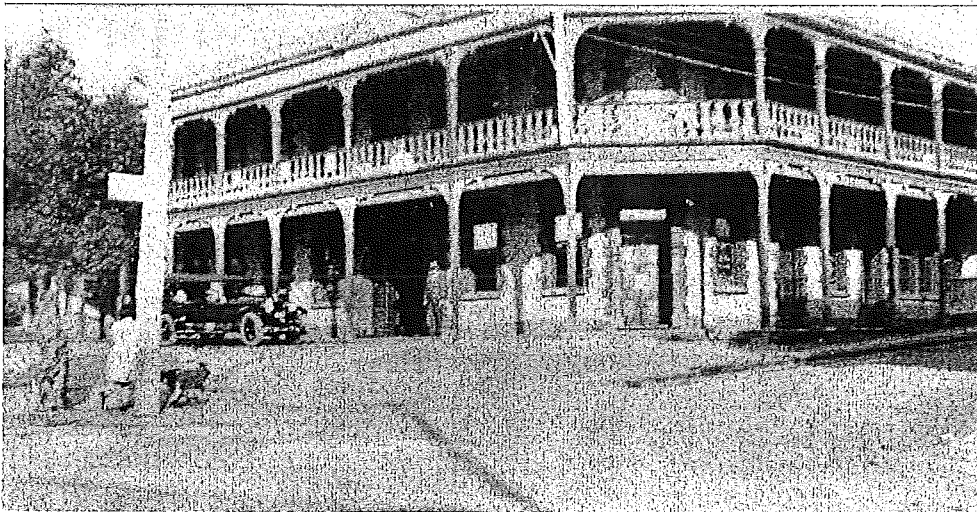
## FREMANTLE HISTORY SOCIETY

Established 1994

The Secretary, PO Box 1305  
FREMANTLE WA 6959

**Winter Edition  
2005**

Editors: Ron Davidson, Dianne Davidson



Plympton Hotel, 59 Canning Highway, 1920s  
Courtesy Local History Collection, Fremantle City Council Library

### **TALES AT THE TRADEWINDS**

Ron Davidson

It's on again - our Society's annual Pub Lunch, this time at Plympton Hotel (now the Tradewinds) on Canning Highway, East Fremantle. The date is 27 August and we'll be passing through several layers of history. It all started in 1897 when the East Fremantle site was one of a number of 'canvas cities' as would-be diggers waited for transport to get them to Kalgoorlie.

The Plympton was built in 1897, with William Frederick Samson, son of Lionel and father of Freddy Samson, as one of the original owners. It was also where the East Fremantle Council held its first meeting in August 1897 and, like the now defunct Royal George, it was a place where the workers of Plympton mingled with the managers and land-holders of Richmond ward.

A delicious lunch will be served in Trader Morgan's Restaurant at the hotel. Then our member Rusty Christensen, back from representing Australia at the hugely popular Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Nevada, USA, will tell stories about the Plympton and its characters. One of these will be Cornelius 'Toby' Regan who drank there for 65 years and ran Regan's Bakery in nearby

Sewell Street. You may have seen Toby at Port Beach. He swam every morning and when the mood took him could swim to Rottnest. Many other members of the Regan-Neesham-Miller and Shea clans drank there, often with riotous results. In 1972 the Plympton was bought by East Fremantle and East Perth football ace Jack Sheedy, who first came to know it when he sneaked there from his home in Sewell Street for what he called 'a little drink' – at age 16. In 1985 the hotel was expanded ahead of the America's Cup.

After eating, Rusty will take us through the old section of the hotel and give us some more stories.



#### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

##### *Executive:*

Dianne Davidson (President)  
9430 6096

Lisa Williams (Vice President)  
9430 7966

Alison Bauer (Treasurer)  
9432 9739

Kris Bizzaca (Secretary)  
0417 090 476

##### *Committee:*

Anne Brake	9336 5206
Ron Davidson	9430 6096
Marilyn Dimond	9335 3609
Sally May	0409 431 844
Loretta O'Reilly (wk)	9432 9739
David Tessler	9386 4348
Bob Woollett	9335 7451

Fremantle History Society's committee meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month.

If you have something you would like discussed at a meeting, please contact one of the members at the numbers shown above.

General meetings of the Society are generally held on the 4th Tuesday of the month. Details of these meetings can be found in your newsletter and reminders are placed in the local press. As we have started to have Sunday afternoon meetings occasionally, please be sure to check details.



#### COMING EVENTS

##### **Tales at the Tradewinds** (Cost \$20)

Join us for our annual Pub Lunch on 27 August at the Tradewinds (formerly Plympton) Hotel, 39 Canning Highway, East Fremantle (see lead story). Parking is available in either Sewell or Hubble Streets.

##### **RSVP by 22 August to Ron Davidson, 9430 6096**

##### **Fremantle Studies Day** (\$12 members, \$15 visitors)

This year our Studies Day will be held as part of the State Conference of Affiliated Societies of the Royal WA Historical Society, on Saturday 17 September at the Fremantle Town Hall. A flyer will be sent out at the beginning of September with full details.

Please note that, unlike registrations for the Affiliated Societies Conference as a whole, which have closed, it will be possible to register for the Studies Day until a week or so before the event.

### **A Penchant for Pistols**

Did you think, like most of us, that the famous William Nairne Clark vs David French Johnston duel which took place in Fremantle in 1832 was the only duel ever fought in the Swan River Colony? Not so, says Allen Graham, who has documented the surprisingly bellicose habits of the early settlers in a paper which won the Fremantle City Council's Heritage Week prize for unpublished work. Allen will give a talk at our October meeting on early duels in Fremantle, which will put the Clark vs Johnston conflict into its proper context.

**Tuesday 25 October at the Function Room, Shipwreck Galleries, Cliff St, Fremantle (our usual venue), 7pm.**



### **MEETING REPORTS**

In June 2005 the Fremantle History Society hosted two events as part of this year's Fremantle Heritage Festival.

The first of these took the place of the usual May meeting, and was held on Wednesday 1 June. **Danny Cusack**, historian, Society member and recent winner of the 2005

Margaret Medcalfe Award held by the State Records Office of WA (congratulations, Danny! Ed) gave a talk on the **Seamen's Strike of 1925**. To the great interest of listeners Danny described the 'tumultuous scenes' that occurred in Fremantle during the 1925 national seamen's strike and in particular at a public meeting held in the Fremantle Town Hall at which Nationalist senators George Pearce and Paddy Lynch spoke.

Danny is also the author of the recently published *With an Olive Branch and a Shillelagh: the life and times of Senator Patrick Lynch*.

On Monday 6 June well-known historical researcher and author **Ruth Marchant James** spoke to over forty members and festival attendees about **The Fremantles: a family of consequence**. The large crowd was entertained by Ruth as she gave a detailed presentation about Captain Charles Fremantle and the Fremantle family, its English history and its remaining connections with our port town. A vote was moved at the end of the session thanking Ruth for her participation in the Heritage Festival on behalf of the Society.

The Fremantle History Society takes this opportunity to thank Danny and Ruth for their entertaining and informative papers.

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

More than forty members and friends came out on a cool winter night for the Fremantle History Society's

annual general meeting at the historic Wesley Church in Cantonment Street on July 19<sup>th</sup>. The AGM represented a changing of the guard. President Bob Woollett, after five years at the helm, and committee stalwarts Elaine Berry, David Hutchison and Judith Cecil did not seek re-election. The Society's inaugural president Dianne Davidson took over again as president and Sally May, Marilyn Dimond and David Tessler are the new committee members. Following our sad loss of Ken Hopkins, Kris Bizzaca took over as secretary.

After the AGM business was completed, the Rev. Owen Roberts took us on a tour of the church's history on the site, which started in 1841. There were stories of the early chapel which was replaced by the present church in 1889. He told of the importance of welfare in the church's operations particularly during the Depression.

Members all admired the polished jarrah beams in the imposing domed ceiling and how one day a large slab of the ceiling fell down. We also had revealed to us, in a cupboard, a remnant of the frieze from the church's original decoration. The new President, Dianne Davidson, moved a vote of thanks to Owen Roberts and the Wesley Mission.

Then we went upstairs into the Wesley Centre for our usual sumptuous refreshments.



## **STATE CONFERENCE OF AFFILIATED SOCIETIES OF THE ROYAL WA HISTORICAL SOCIETY 16-18 SEPTEMBER**

**Bob Woollett**

Members are welcome to attend any part of the Conference on the Saturday and Sunday (see brochure sent out with the last newsletter for details) but most people, apart perhaps for being available to help on the Saturday and Sunday mornings, will probably just be interested in attending the Saturday afternoon session, which is being run as a traditional Fremantle Studies Day, starting at 1pm. A special registration for that will commence at 12.30pm and, although it will be possible to pay on the day (\$12 members, \$15 visitors), bookings are essential. These can be made by using the Conference Booking form (also sent out with the last newsletter) or by phoning 9335 7451.

The Working Group overseeing the arrangements for the Affiliated Societies Conference being held in Fremantle in mid-September has met regularly during the year and plans are generally materialising well. I would like to pay tribute to Kris Bizzaca, Jacqui Sherriff, Geoff Higham and Margaret McPherson for their enthusiasm and dedication to the task, and to thank Judy Cecil, Joan Donaldson, June Hutchison and Fay Campbell for their sterling work on the Catering Sub-Committee.

Negotiations for sponsorship are still under way, but we are indebted to the Fremantle City Council for their

major assistance in holding a Civic Reception on the Friday evening and providing the venue of the Town Hall for the proceedings on the Saturday, and to the West Australian Maritime Museum for making the Shipwrecks Gallery Function Room available for the farewell morning tea on Sunday morning. I would also like to acknowledge the generous donations of our Conference Centurions, Elizabeth's Secondhand Bookshops, Fremantle Markets, and Councillor Les Lauder. The response from members to the request for help over the weekend of the Conference has been reasonably good, although further assistance is still required in the following areas:

1. Provision of ten more plates of home-made cookies or similar for the morning tea on the Sunday.
2. The need for two or three people to run a raffle. Initial approaches have been made to a number of firms to donate prizes but these need following up by phone and other avenues. Arrangements then need to be made to run the raffle stall on the Friday evening and throughout the Saturday.

Please contact Bob Woolett on 9335 7451 if you can help in either of these ways.



## **FREMANTLE STUDIES VOL 4**

The fourth volume of our official journal has now been completed and is in the process of production. It is scheduled to be launched at the September Conference by the Mayor of Fremantle, Peter Tagliaferri. As usual, it will be packed with interesting and informative papers relating to the personalities and places which have created the unique social and environmental mix that is our Fremantle!



## **MEETING WITH MINISTER FOR HERITAGE**

Fremantle History Society representatives David Hutchison and Ron Davidson met recently with the Minister for Heritage, Fran Logan, to discuss a letter from our committee largely concerning the absence of expertise in history in the management of the Fremantle Prison heritage precinct. The letter raised questions regarding the need for heritage and social history skills in a senior position in the Prison management which has become vacant; the present lack of community involvement with the prison and an apparent disinterest in the Fremantle City Council's Heritage Week; the need for an implementation program for items in the Prison Master Plan; and for formal training of prison guides. The Minister was generally sympathetic to our concerns. However, David and Ron were concerned when the minister said the prison was a very black place and that gun towers

might be pulled down and the razor wire on walls reduced.

Ron and David contested this pointing to the intactness of the site being of the greatest significance. David mentioned that time softened such sites. Ron noted that those wishing to demolish the Roundhouse (until recent times) mentioned the 'blackness' of the site.

Discussion shifted to possible changes to the Heritage Act. The society representatives advocated the need for wide community consultation before any change. They also stressed the need for the Heritage Council to be relatively independent and that the process of heritage registration should be based solely on heritage significance. It should be separated from subsequent economic issues. The minister seemed to disagree on this latter point.

The final point was the proposed commercial development by Fremantle Ports on Victoria Quay. Ron and David mentioned specific concerns including the importance of the Immigration Building. The minister mentioned that harbours did not come under the Heritage Act and that the society could write to him suggesting that they should.



#### **VALE KEN HOPKINS**

**Bob Woollett**

It is with great sadness that I have to report the untimely death of Ken Hopkins on 22 June after a long

battle with illness and a brief time in intensive care in Fremantle Hospital. I would like to pay tribute to a doughty supporter of the Society and its affairs, and record our deep sympathy to his brother Geoff on the loss of a stalwart brother and companion. I first met Ken when we were both teaching at Christ Church Grammer School and he was a very successful teacher of chemistry. He made an early switch to information technology and spent three years establishing an IT course at the Broome campus of the University of Notre Dame Australia. Later he established IT courses on NDA's Fremantle campus and wrote the TEE curriculum for the State Education Department.

As our Secretary Ken, assisted by his extensive skills with the computer, carried out his duties with intelligence and efficiency, and made an art form of the mundane task of writing up the minutes of our Committee meetings. He was also a sagacious and witty participant in our discussions and an assiduous researcher into aspects of local history which led to interesting articles in our newsletters on George Hubble and Fremantle's Vanishing Pubs, and his becoming a knowledgeable guide on the Fremantle Cemetery Heritage Trail. And never to be forgotten, of course, was his impressive debut as a new member back in July 2000 when, bedecked in wig and gown, he cut a substantially fearsome figure as the Judge in the Mock Trial of the 19<sup>th</sup> century duellist William Nairne Clark. Ken will be sadly missed.

## FOR YOUR DIARY

**Saturday 27 August, 12 noon –  
Annual Pub Lunch, Tradewinds  
Hotel, 39 Canning Highway, East  
Fremantle. (\$20, drinks at the bar)**

**Saturday 17 September, 12.30pm  
– Fremantle Studies Day,  
Fremantle Town Hall.**

**Tuesday 25 October, 7.00 pm –  
Allen Graham's talk on early duels  
of Fremantle. Shipwreck Gallery  
Function Room, Cliff St, Fremantle  
(our usual venue)**



## CLEAR OUT YOUR BOOKSHELVES !

Here's a great opportunity to make some space on your bookshelves, and help the Society at the same time.

The Society will hold a small second-hand book sale during the conference at Fremantle on 17th September. If you have books you no longer need, relating to WESTERN AUSTRALIA and/or HISTORY, we'd really appreciate your donation. The conference is an opportunity for country members of affiliated societies, who don't often have a chance to peruse the various sources of pre-loved books in Perth. There will be limited space (and limited volunteers) so we cannot display all types of literature, but any books or magazines with WA or

history as a theme will be appreciated.

Please bring them to a meeting, or speak to Bob Woollett or Geoffrey Higham regarding delivery before the conference weekend.



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2004-2005 Bob Woollett

The year began with an auspicious celebration of the Society's tenth birthday at the AGM held in the Victoria Hall on 27 July and attended by some 50 members and visitors. Following the formal proceedings of the meeting, Chris Patterson of Palassis Architects gave an illustrated talk on the history and ongoing restoration of the Hall and Dianne Davidson, the inaugural President of the Society, spoke about the organisation's first ten years. Surrounded by six members of the original committee, Dianne then cut a cake which was colourfully and appropriately decorated to mark the occasion.

At four other general meetings held during the year Jeff Austin spoke of the early tramway and railways in Fremantle, and three visits were made: to the Claremont Museum in Victoria Avenue; to Fremantle Prison to hear Jean McDonald and Colin Jamieson talk about the pensioner guard settlement in North Fremantle; and to the Metropolis Night Club in South Terrace, formerly the Dalkeith Opera House, where the owner, Jamelia Gubgub, told us about her family's involvement with the building and Ivan King, the archivist for His

Majesty's Theatre, entertained us with a history of the place and some interesting insights into the theatre world of Perth.

Our two social gatherings were well attended and much enjoyed by members and visitors alike. The Winter Pub Lunch was held in Bibik Chan's restaurant at the Swan Hotel in North Fremantle and after an excellent meal Richard Rennie of the Sound and Light Discovery Centre at the Fremantle History Museum spoke about his great grandfather of the same name, who became one of Fremantle's most prominent building contractors in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and who built the impressive Swan Hotel. The end of year gathering took place at the Grosvenor Restaurant at the TAFE in South Fremantle, where members and friends enjoyed a delicious three course buffet, prepared and served by hospitality students at the College. Jennifer Navard, Director of the Statistical Planning Department, gave a talk about the history of technical education in the area, and stalwart member Rusty Christensen reminisced in his inimitable way about Christmas and shopping in Fremantle in days gone by.

Committee member David Hutchison once again efficiently organised a very successful Fremantle Studies Day in October, devised on this occasion as the Society's contribution to the Year of the Built Environment. Four papers concerning issues about the conservation and interpretation of the City's heritage were presented by Jeremy Dawkins, Chairman of the

State Planning Commission, David Dolan, Professor of Cultural Studies at Curtin University and Chairman of the National Trust (WA), Geoffrey London, Government Architect and Professor of Architecture at the University of WA, and finally our own Committee member Anne Brake, Manager of the National Trust's Golden Pipeline Project. We are indebted to the speakers for their willing participation in the proceedings and engaging delivery of their papers. We also thank Graeme Henderson, Director of the Maritime Museum, for readily providing the venue for the occasion, and Museum staff member Mike Brevenholt for his expert technical assistance. During the break for afternoon tea the Mayor of Fremantle, Peter Tagliaferri, launched Volume 3 of the *Fremantle Studies* journal and warmly praised the Editorial Committee for its successful publication.

The Society played an active role in the annual Fremantle Heritage Week held at the beginning of June. Kristy Bizzaca was again chairperson of the organising committee and, together with Loretta O'Reilly, was a member of the Awards Committee. The Society proudly sponsored the Prize for the Primary School Competition and also provided copies of the *Fremantle Studies* journal to acknowledge the dedicated work of the Awards Judges. David Hutchison led a group on his now traditional Walk in the West End, and Kristy Bizzaca conducted a successful workshop in the Local History Collection on how to trace your family history. And

finally the Society sponsored two talks in the historic setting of the Town Hall; member Danny Cusack spoke about the British Seamen's Strike of 1925 here in the port, and visitor Ruth Marchant-James gave us a fascinating insight into the history and achievements of the Fremantle family.

The Committee has continued to take an interest and action in a number of wider heritage issues. In March, in conjunction with the Fremantle Society, we hosted a workshop conducted by Tracey Rich, the Education Officer of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Unit, on the scope and effect of the federal government's recent heritage legislation. A letter has been written to Fran Logan, the Minister for Heritage, Works and Housing, expressing concern about the lack of community involvement and apparent lack of people with historical knowledge or expertise in the management structure of Fremantle Prison and in the decision making process. Arrangements have been made for representatives of the Committee to meet the Minister on 20 July to discuss this issue. A follow up letter has also been sent to the Fremantle City Council, stating the Society's disappointment with the draft plan for the Synagogue Precinct in South Terrace which has now been drawn up but which fails to address our concerns previously expressed about sight lines and height of proposed buildings.

The Committee has worked energetically and efficiently through

the year. Three members of the Committee are not seeking re-election, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their commitment and significant contributions over the years. Firstly, Elaine Berry, who has been a Committee member since 1996, including terms as President and Vice-President, and who has provided valuable liaison with the Maritime Museum and played an active role in the distribution and sale of our *Fremantle Studies* journals. Secondly, Judy Cecil who has carried out the somewhat thankless task of coordinating our catering arrangements with admirable resolve and dogged goodwill and who has been a willing volunteer to act as Minutes Secretary on a number of occasions. And thirdly, David Hutchison whose well-informed, well-considered views on a range of issues have enhanced our deliberations, and who has coordinated the last five Fremantle Studies Days with commendable diligence and consummate skill. Beres Coley unfortunately had to resign as Treasurer midway through the year for personal reasons, and we are grateful to Alison Bauer for gallantly stepping into the breach and, despite her lack of experience, coping well with the responsibility. Anne Brake has again been a driving force in the area of the Society's publications, ensuring, with Ron Davidson, that the high standard of the Society's newsletters is fully maintained and, together with co-editors Kris Bizzaca and Dianne Davidson, achieving the triumphant publication of Volume 3 of the *Fremantle Studies* journal and the

successful completion of the preparatory work for Volume 4. And finally Lisa Williams' advice and support as Vice President has been useful on many occasions and much appreciated.

My five year term as President draws to a close today. It has been an interesting and rewarding experience and I thank you for your encouragement and support which has helped make it so. I wish my successor similar good fortune and I look forward to a period of further prosperity and achievement for the Society in the years ahead.



### **SNIPPETS FROM LOCAL HISTORY**

Loretta O'Reilly

Local History has been quietly busy doing what it does best; assisting readers in their research etc. The last quarter has seen student groups, genealogists, family researchers, architects, Council staff, authors and real estate agencies visiting on a regular basis. The Local History showed a marked increase in usage statistics over the last year with over 3,500 queries successfully completed.

Our Oral Histories for loan project continues but the response has been disappointing. We originally processed 35 tapes concentrating on the twin themes of World War II (to celebrate the 60 year anniversary) and migration (to celebrate the many heroic migrant stories in Fremantle).

If any members wish to have the first hand experience of listening to recorded history using the Oral History medium feel free to borrow one of these tapes. (They are available from the front desk of the Library.)

A new format of the *Tracing Your Ancestors* folder has been designed and updated so that all information is current.

The senior Librarians recently visited six metropolitan libraries to assess décor, layouts, different methods of administering service, Local History collections, staffing etc., as an exercise in future planning. With a new library being planned in the next ten years or so it is important to ensure that informed planning takes advantage of the latest technology as well as the best facilities available within the budget in mind. The Librarians bought back many ideas and innovations and we are in the process of modifying the present library so we can make best use of the space and facilities we currently have at our disposal.

The Local History is currently looking out for any books on Fremantle or its early history for the book store at the Fremantle History Conference being held in September. If anyone has books they would like to donate we can pass them on.



**MEMBERSHIPS NOW DUE!**  
(Form attached)



**Fremantle History Society  
(ABN 92065886400)**

The Membership Coordinator, FHS  
PO Box 1305  
Fremantle WA 6959

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.

**FHS membership categories and fees:**

Ordinary membership	\$20	Organisational membership	\$40
Family membership	\$30	Student/pensioner/unwaged	\$10

NOTE: FHS fees are due on 1 July each year. New memberships paid after April will carry over to the next year.

**Membership fee of \$.....paid to the Fremantle History Society on.....  
PLEASE RETAIN THIS TOP SECTION AS A RECEIPT FOR YOUR OWN RECORDS**

✕

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

.....POSTCODE

TELEPHONE (Home).....(Work).....

EMAIL:.....

OCCUPATION.....

SIGNATURE/S.....

DATE.....RECEIPT: Yes/No

Please circle the appropriate category:

Ordinary membership	\$20	Organisational membership	\$40
Family membership	\$30	Student/pensioner/unemployed	\$10

