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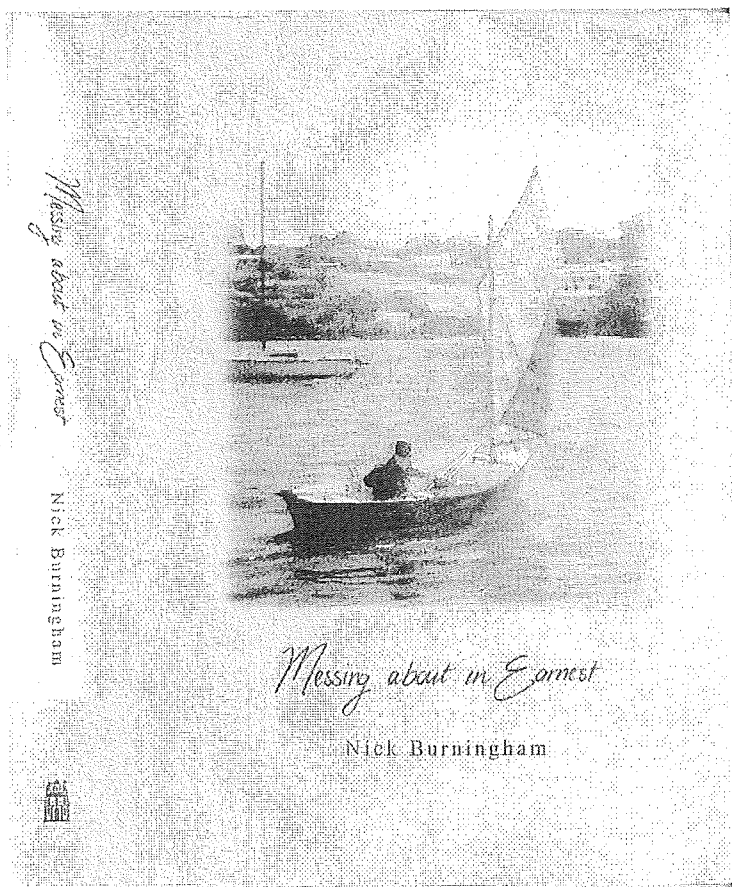
FREMANTLE HISTORY SOCIETY

Established 1994

The Secretary, 24 Fothergill Street,  
FREMANTLE WA 6160

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2003

Editors: Ron Davidson, Anne Brake



**JOURNEYS ON THE SWAN-NICK'S WONDERFUL STORIES**  
Ron Davidson

*Messing About In Earnest* is an intriguing voyage along Nick Burningham's stream of consciousness as he rows and sails up and down our rivers. In case you are wondering *Earnest* is small scow, good to row and with a single checkered sail which looks like a gingham tablecloth. In this much-repaired boat he conducts a series of expeditions to examine the Swan and Canning Rivers at extremely close quarters. It is a fascinating experience especially for those who've paddled these areas.

Nick starts his journeying at the harbour entrance but only after checking with Fremantle Ports that he won't be sunk by a giant container

ship. He notices some strangely shaped vessels along the way and writes:

*The designs of car carriers and livestock carriers seem to get more astonishing as sculpture every year. At the waterline they are now sharper than any dainty tea clipper or slaver and yet their topsides and superstructure are contrived to flare out in a huge bulging form like an over-inflated zeppelin floating over the water.*

Next Nick and *Earnest* are sliding under the Traffic Bridge. Here he slips into one of a number of quirky historical asides. This one is about bridges. Nick starts with the first, Fremantle Traffic Bridge, on which work began in 1864 and which was opened without ceremony in 1867. It was a structure of 42 feet to allow sailing ships to move underneath on the way to Perth. It was constructed from several hundred jarrah logs and was known punningly as the 'Bridge of Styx.'

He passes the Northbank development and wonders where the shops are. Then the motorboat drunks begin shouting at Nick, 'Get some technology mate' and the kids say more politely, 'Hello Mr Tablecloth sail'. Nick also gives us an insight into the colourful and often wild world of ferries and other river transport. Nick says the easiest way to travel in the 1830s from Fremantle to Perth was by whaleboat. The cost of three to four shillings was thought to be high and the whaleboats were crewed by drunks. Mrs Thomas Brown writes in a letter:

*The boatmen all bear a very bad character - there is said to be not one honest and sober man of that calling who plies the river. We ran aground full twenty times...*

There are some bizarre boats on the Swan: *In 1850 there is a misguided attempt to introduce a paddlewheel-propelled vessel - a whaleboat with hand-cranked paddles. It was unable to make any progress against the seas breeze and the labour of working the paddles is so severe as to preclude any chance of the scheme ever becoming successful.*

Nick's knowledge of river transport is amazing but it was good to find something I knew that he didn't seem to. Like in the early 1900s when the movies was a big attraction on evening river trips in Blackwall Reach. The rival riverboat carried a search light so the crew could leach the pictures from the outdoor screen. Later in the 1960s and in the spirit of the 1840s, the three Rottnest ferries, perfectly handicapped, would hit the traffic bridge channel locked together. There were screams and bumps. One morning the ferry *Islander* was found to be on fire while the ferry *Triton* was tied up safely nearby. Who could the arsonist be? Later that morning a small dinghy was found floating midstream. In it was an open petrol can and a dead man. The skipper of the *Triton* had died of a heart attack. That's the thing about our rivers - everyone has a story about them. Nick's collection is however something else again.

*Messing About in Earnest*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, \$29.95



## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

### **Executive:**

Bob Woollett (President)	9335 7451
Kristy Bizzaca (Vice President)	9361 9915
Beres Coley (Treasurer)	9335 9473
Ken Hopkins (Secretary)	9339 7399

### **Committee:**

Elaine Berry	9336 1906
Anne Brake	9336 5206
Jean Cecil	9335 2352
David Hutchison	9335 1594
Lisa Williams (wk hrs)	9430 7966
Ron Davidson	9430 6096
Loretta O'Reilly (wk hrs)	9432 9739

Fremantle History Society's committee meets on 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

### CHRISTMAS CAPERS

This year's Christmas party will be held at the Fremantle Tennis Club, cnr Ellen and Parry Sts - plenty of parking - on **Tuesday 2 December**. Members and friends will enjoy a very sociable sausage sizzle complete with suitable festive accompaniments. President, Bob Woollett, will compere appropriate festive entertainment.

Bob has extensive knowledge of literature and has undertaken similar assignments in

the past with great aplomb. Party goers are sure to be amused and delighted at his performance.

Festivities will begin at **7 pm**. Members \$10. Non – members \$12. **RSVP 9339 7399** by **Friday 28 November**.



Check the address label on this newsletter NOW! Are you financial? Those who's expiry date is July 2003 (you are the ones in red!) need to make sure you complete the attached form and post it in to ensure you continue to receive this quality publication and stay up to date with Society activities. If you expired in 2002 this will be your last newsletter unless you send in your form.



## MEETING REPORTS

### PUB LUNCH – ALEC STARS

Take 40 Fremantle History Society members and friends, a choice of roast beef or grilled snapper plus apple pie and ice cream, and a talk from Alec Smith on his home turf, and what do you have? The Society's annual Pub Lunch on August 23<sup>rd</sup>. Alec is always good value but at the Fremantle Hotel, where he lived in the same room for 30 odd years, he's even better.

Alec told us of the boom days of Fremantle pubs when there were large numbers of waterside workers, wool workers, passengers from liners, moving up and down High Street to keep barmaids busy. Alec mentioned that the first of the Americans to arrive at Fremantle were a battered lot, struggling to escape from the Japanese. They wanted to be saved and were not like the latter-day protectors. The richly-decorated dining room where we were eating was set up as a hospital which ultimately never held a patient. The windows were blacked-over and the walls reinforced on the outside with sandbags a metre thick.

Alec's parents ran the hotel and took care to introduce him to some of the hotel's celebrated patrons. Once Alec had been guarding an afternoon tea spread in the Virgins' Parlour (the ladies' lounge). He was into his third lamington when his mother brought Robert Menzies, then opposition leader, to meet her son. The great man, who had just suffered at the hands of a public meeting where the crowd was noisy and hostile, came across and shook Alec's hand. Then he spent considerable time removing coconut slivers and sticky icing from his fingers.

### FHS Tours the Fremantle Cemetery

Ken Hopkins

That Sunday turned out brighter than the forecast, as just over a dozen of us gathered for the September meeting. Unfortunately through a mix-up the guide was not to turn up till 3 hours later. Not knowing that, we set out to organise our own impromptu tour based on pooling what we knew individually.

First stop for many was the Bon Scott memorial seat and plaque, with fresh flowers that has been added in the last few hours! Next we travelled through the Pioneers' Walk that has been almost completed, and is a real showpiece compared with how the material was formerly arranged in two straight rows along the grass. Finally back to the pavilion via the original main road and hence past a few prominent gravesites.



Geoffrey Higham was especially valuable being able to fill out many of the stories about the sites we came across, and knew a

great deal about his family plot. Others contributed at a few other sites as well. Together, we were an amazing, although limited, resource.

The places that we stopped at and discussed included:

The **Shipwreck Memorial** for those lost in 1899 when the *Carlisle Castle* and the *City of York* were both wrecked within 24 hours during a fierce winter storm. Paid for by public subscription, it is a large block of marble shaped like an anchor and chain covering a cross. The *Carlisle Castle* was carrying heavy iron goods and hit Coventry Reef and sank off Penguin Island, with all 22 people on board lost. It was not even known it had been lost until a day later. The *City of York* was lost off Rottnest through a confusion over signals between pilots on the island and the ship. Though very close to the island many were lost including the captain, because of the rough conditions.

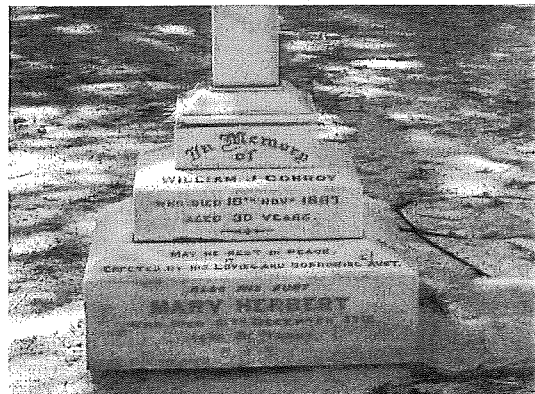
John **BATEMAN** (1824-1909) and Walter **BATEMAN** (1826-1882) the sons of John Bateman Sen. ship owners and merchants. John Snr. was an early hardware merchant, ferry operator and hotel owner.

Daniel Keen **CONGDON** (1838-1907) pharmacist, draper and mayor. He was mayor during the Jubilee celebrations at the newly opened Town Hall, and helped detain William Conroy after Conroy shot Councillor Snook. The Town Hall clock (costing £210 out of the £14,000 total) was reputed to chime: "Dee Kay Congdon, Dee Kay Congdon."

George Bland **HUMBLE** (1839-1930) was a school master and town clerk. Born overseas, in WA he started as teacher at Greenough in 1862. Later he was headmaster of Fremantle Boys School until 1889. Humble was the town clerk part-time as well as a teacher and later he became a full-time council officer. Humble was prominent in the Wesley Church in the Masons and Fremantle football. He was a member of the Fremantle Cemetery Board and a Major in the Fremantle Volunteer Rifles. [He may have been George, but he was neither *bland* nor *humble*!]

William **CONROY** (1857- 87) a hotel keeper arrived in 1878. He operated hotels in Perth and Fremantle including the Victoria 1885 and then the National which opened in 1886. At Queen Victoria's Jubilee celebrations in the newly opened Town Hall Conroy tried to enter a ball he was not invited to but was ejected by stewards including Councillor John Snook. Conroy later shot Snook over what I believe was a family money matter.

Snook, 79 years old, died three months later after recovering enough to work in his garden and drive his carriage. Daniel Condon the Mayor, and Lance Corporal Murray who arrested him both testified that Conroy was not drunk, which negates with the oft-repeated story that he was. Conroy was tried and convicted of murder with a recommendation for mercy. Governor Broome was asked to exercise the royal prerogative of mercy but he hated Fremantle and refused. Conroy was the to hanged on 18<sup>th</sup> November 1887 the last person executed at old Perth Gaol in Beaufort St, the gallows shifted to Fremantle in 1888. The executioner bungled the job and Conroy died of strangulation after kicking for some minutes at the end of the rope.



Mary **HIGHAM** (1819-83), a merchant, arrived in Fremantle with her husband John and two sons in 1853 . They opened a small bakery and confectionery, and Mary had four more children in the next five years. When John died when he was 41 she started an emporium at the corner of High and Market Streets. Her company broadened into cattle, pearling and shipping.

Joseph **JOHNSTON** (1814-1892) a well known Congregational clergyman, was born in England. Johnston was sent to Fremantle

in 1853. His church involved many of the major merchants even though most were not Congregationalists. Rev. Johnston's Congregational Church building in Adelaide St was finished in 1877 and was later renamed the Johnston Memorial Church. It was demolished in the late 1960s after the Uniting Church was formed and the property was deemed superfluous.

William 'Old Bill' **WATSON** (1864-1938) started a well known food factory and retail outlet. He arrived in 1895 with his family, a little capital and a horse and cart. Initially he had several shops including tearooms. Watson had learned about pigs in Victoria and changed to manufacturing bacon, hams and smallgoods at a factory and abattoir in Hamilton Hill, plus making butter and cheese under the Watsonia label. Watson was elected as the independent Federal member for Fremantle in 1922 and again in 1925 when he defeated John Curtin, who was later a pallbearer at his funeral.

Charles Yelverton **O'CONNOR** (1843-1902) is marked by a very prominent Celtic cross paid for by Public Works Department staff. He arrived in 1891 and organised the building of a new inner harbour at the mouth of the Swan started in 1892 and completed in 1897. He was also in charge of the government railways and is remembered for his very effective pipeline for getting vital water over 500 kilometres uphill to the eastern goldfields.

Daniel **SCOTT** (1800-65) captain and boat hirer. He was the colony's first harbourmaster and had an office onboard the wreck of the *Marquis of Anglesea*.

The self organised on the spot tour was quite enjoyable, but any return visit would benefit by including many other sites planned into the tour, including Moondyne Joe, Martha Rendell, Tom Edwards and William Marmion as we did not run across these.

#### **FREMANTLE STUDIES DAY** David Hutchison

This year's Studies Day was adjudged by several people as the best ever. The

audience enjoyed hearing about 'ordinary people' going about their lives in Fremantle, and engaging with society with some passion. The papers spanned the years from the earliest to most recent times and were entertaining as well as informative. We were able to tap into a rich vein of Fremantle history.

**Prof. Bob Reece**, of Murdoch University, needed no introduction to most of the audience who would have known his book, written with Bob Pascoe, about our city, *A Place of Consequence*. He spoke about Fremantle's first Anglican priest, The Revd George King. George King, an Irish Protestant missionary priest arrived in Fremantle in October 1841 and served there and at the Murray River. A man of great energy, he was responsible for the building of the first St John's Church in Fremantle in 1843 and temporary places of worship in the Murray settlements. In late 1841, he established a vocational school for Aboriginal children in a house at the foot of Arthur Head. He had remarkable sympathy for the Aboriginal people and said that the Aboriginal children were just as educable as the white children. However he lacked adequate support from the colonial government and settlers and from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Local tradesmen did not like the idea of Aboriginal competition. With few prospects for financial improvement and physically exhausted, he left reluctantly for Sydney in January 1849. He strictly followed his own church principles and, because of his Irish background, was a strident critic of the Catholic Church.

**Geoffrey Hingham**, a descendant of an early Fremantle merchant family, spoke about 'A person of remarkable energy', his great-great-grandmother, Mary Higham, who came to Fremantle with her husband and children in 1853. At this time the port town was boosted by the transportation of convicts. The most visible business people were importers and merchants. Mary Higham, as a woman, was an anomaly amongst the men. After the death of her husband, Mary Higham took over his

business. Geoffrey's paper reviewed her successes, noting some differences from her male competitors, and investigated how she may have overcome the inherent disadvantages of a woman in business in a period when ladies appear to have been seen but not heard.

**Prof. Geoffrey Bolton**, one of our eminent historians, also needed no introduction. He spoke about 'The Fremantle larrikin, Harry Marshall'. Geoffrey wove an intricate story of the way Marshall rose in society from humble beginnings by enterprise and close association with the expanding Australian Rules football community. Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, respectable Western Australians were troubled by the larrikin element in Fremantle, many of them children of ex-convicts and pensioner guards. Early devotees of Australian Rules football and recruits to the infant trade union movement, they offered a vigorous proletarian challenge to the landed and professional classes who were cautiously steering Western Australia into self-government. In the late 1880s and early 1890s they found a hero in Thomas Henry (Harry) Marshall, a sportsman and small businessman whose too enterprising methods brought him into several brushes with the law. When, in 1894, the voters sent him into the conservative Legislative Council, the *West Australian* was scandalised, describing Marshall's return as 'a reproach to the whole colony'. He did not last long in politics and ended his days, still a popular larrikin, on the Murchison goldfields where he died in December 1909.

**David Worth**, a post-graduate student at Murdoch University, spoke about 'Project Iceberg: Fremantle's response to visiting nuclear warships'. He was active in this movement and presented an overview of the anti-nuclear activities based in Fremantle between 1978 and 1988. These activities were linked to previous peace activities in the city and the impact of the development of Murdoch University. He focussed on the well-organised opposition to the visits by nuclear-powered and nuclear-armed warships to Fremantle Port by the group

'Project Iceberg'. This social movement built on the wide support provided by Perth residents to the Palm Sunday peace marches held between 1982 and 1990 and coordinated by People for Nuclear Disarmament (WA). Many of those who participated in these protests have maintained their activism on peace and anti-nuclear issues and have supported the present anti-Seaswap group, Fremantle Anti Nuclear Group (FANG). Another important outcome was the election to the senate of Jo Vallentine in 1984 on an anti-nuclear platform and the development of The Greens.

We will all look forward to reading these papers in Volume 4 of our journal *Fremantle Studies*



## RECORDING OUR PAST

For some time the Local History Collection at the City of Fremantle Library has required a tape recorder with a facility for copying tapes. This was a vital need for the oral history program. The committee decided to purchase such a machine and after some difficulty in securing one, it has finally been purchased. The recorder will be presented to the Library by our President, at the Library's annual general meeting on Wednesday 26 November at 8.00 pm.

The guest speaker for the evening will be Alec Smith who will talk about growing up in Fremantle.



## PRESERVATION OF IRREPLACEABLE MATERIAL IN THE BATTYE LIBRARY HERITAGE COLLECTIONS

Ronda Jamieson

At the recent Fremantle Studies Day, members of the Fremantle History Society were alerted to the many preservation problems in the Battye Library heritage collections. These include photographic negatives, film, newspapers and oral histories. Electronic publications and

websites, computer discs, rolled maps and plans and photographs are also at risk. Paper-based materials in the private archives collection need preventative and conservation treatments, but there is more time.

Preservation of traditional formats has always been labour intensive and beyond existing resources to deal with. The addition of digital formats and the acceleration of deterioration in older formats is increasing the gap between what can be saved and what needs to be done to prevent permanent loss of what is often the only copy of much of the material in these collections. Photograph negatives and film collections are particularly vulnerable because of the use of nitrate and acetate film stock.

The Friends of Battye Library has formed a Historic Records Rescue Consortium (HRRC) whose President is the President of Friends, Dr Pamela Statham Drew. Many community organisations are represented on the consortium, including RWAHS, WAGS and the State Library Custodians. HRRC will be applying for a Lotterywest grant to preserve the most at risk collections in the Battye Library. The main concentration will be photographic negatives, films in the State Film Archives, and newspapers that are at risk because of brittle paper. It is also hoped to digitise microfilmed newspapers and photographs to make the images available through the Internet, and to include high-value research material from the State Records Office in the same program.

If you support this work being done, Pamela would love to hear from you. The address for HRRC is PO Box 216, Northbridge, 6865.



## **SURFING THE NET**

Have you visited the Fremantle Library Web site yet? As well as being able to search the library's catalogue from the comfort of your

computer chair, it is possible to access a selection of the Local History Collection's extensive photographic collection. From the council's website [www.fremantle.wa.gov.au](http://www.fremantle.wa.gov.au) follow the links to the Local History collection via Community Facilities and then to the Fremantle Library. You will find photographs of *people, places and events from early Fremantle to the present*. It is also possible to order copies on line.

Over 500 photographs are already available. The next 500 will soon be up on the net and another 500 are currently being digitised. This is a gradual process as funds and person power becomes available.



## **NATIONAL NOTORIETY**

The Council of the National Museum of Australia decided to present a medallion to those people who have made a significant contribution towards the development of the museum in the years leading up to its opening on Acton Peninsula in Canberra on 11 March 2001. The medallion was designed by the Royal Australian Mint in collaboration with the National Museum. Only 100 medallions were produced.

We are very proud to report that our committee member, David Hutchison, was awarded one of these prestigious awards. David has long been a supporter of public access to our historic record through a variety of media – publications, exhibitions, public programs, historic sites and the like. He is best known in Fremantle for his work in establishing the Fremantle History Museum at the old Lunatic Asylum, Finnerty Street in the 1970s. His contributions to museology, however, have had a much wider influence and it is fitting that his work be recognised in this way.

Congratulations David.

## HEROES AND VILLAINS REPRINTED

*Heroes and Villians* ; a booklet detailing a heritage walk at Fremantle Cemetery, is being reprinted in an expanded form and should be available early in 2004. The History Society has been involved in this project from the start, following our successful cemetery walk some years ago. More recently the Fremantle Cemetery Board worked with us to establish a list of interesting graves then contracted the Society to produce a set of mini-biographies based on that list. Recently, the Fremantle Cemetery Board was amalgamated with the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board and it was decided to reprint the guide. A couple of imperfections were corrected: CY O'Connor was honoured by the Queen not knighted and someone used Michael Samson's photo rather than Sir Frederick's. The reprint will include more photographs.



## CONSERVATION MOVES TO RESCUE FREMANTLE BOYS

Ron Davidson

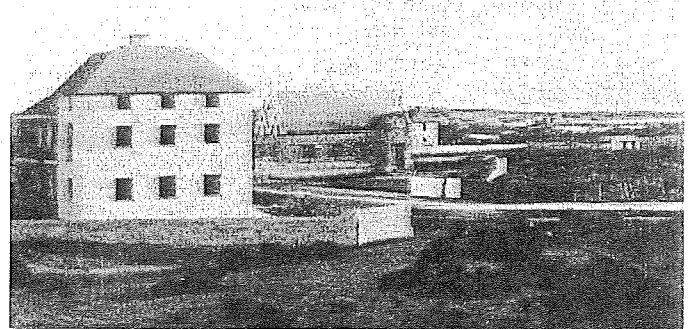
The Fremantle History Society's AGM has already yielded a result by helping draw official attention to the plight of the Fremantle Boys' building where the gathering was held. The building is now occupied by the Film and Television Institute. FTI is one of Fremantle's most important early buildings and conservation architect Phil Griffiths, who was at the time acting chair of the Heritage Council, and who wrote the conservation plan, told us about the building's conservation needs at the AGM.

During discussion it was noted that 2004 would be the building's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the History Society decided to draw attention to the need for funding for conservation work. John Dowson, the Fremantle Society president, who was also present, said he would make a separate but similar report.

After the meeting the History Society wrote to the Minister for Works, Nick Griffiths. He responded, pointing to the complex web of agencies responsible for the building's maintenance. He said the Department of Planning and Infrastructure was aware of the building's condition and would shortly meet with the Fremantle City Council to address these problems. Minister Griffiths said would refer our letter on to the relevant minister, Alannah Mac Tiernan.

This is obviously a socially important building and many stories about the school were aired by some of its old scholars at the AGM. A number mentioned Jerry Dolan, teacher and football coach and finally Labor politician. Jerry supervised a continuing competition to see who could be the first to kick from the school grounds, across Queen Victoria Street, and into the Convent. Legend says the first to do this was later East Fremantle superstar of the 1950s, Jack Sheedy.

John Dowson has recently provided some interesting details of the old Fremantle Boys building. The original floorboards were planking salvaged from a sailing ship, secured in their new position with hand-made nails. John also discovered that the school staggered its lunch break with that of the Roman Catholic School opposite in a bid to reduce the number of fights.



This c1868 photo of Fremantle Boys School is included in John Dowson's book *Old Fremantle*. The book includes 240 photographs of Fremantle taken between 1850 and 1950, and 25 000 words of text, some of it taken from old newspapers. Prof George Sedden will launch the book at the Maritime Museum on 28 November.

14 of the best photographs from John's book have been combined into an Old Fremantle calendar which is on sale now.

#### DR MICHAEL LOUIS: 1929-2003

Michael Louis, although not a member of the Society, attended many of our meetings and events with his companion May Flanagan. His friends were shocked to learn that he had died shortly after joining us at our Winter Pub Lunch.

He was a considerable scholar. After obtaining his MA at the University of Western Australia he did postgraduate studies at Manchester University, obtaining a PhD. in Middle Eastern Studies. On return to Western Australia he lectured for three years in the History Department at the University of Western Australia and subsequently lectured for the Technical Education Service and at Curtin University.

In his retirement he gave popular lectures for the Mature Age Learning Association. Despite an eyesight problem, a handicap during his career, he was an omnivorous reader with an abiding love of literature. He was also a talented amateur actor, with notable performances in several of Shakespeare's plays produced by the University Dramatic Society.

He was a good friend to many, a kind and gentle man, with a dry wit often employed effectively against pomposity. We extend our sympathy to May Flanagan.



#### VANISHING PUBS #1

Ken Hopkins

"The Australian pub is one of the most socially significant, historically valuable, architecturally interesting and colourful features of Australian Society", wrote JM Freeland.<sup>1</sup>

Since the early days of the Swan River colony the providing of accommodation,

food, liquor and social interaction has been an important part of Fremantle's fabric. Within six months of settlement the colonial authorities had issued licences and collected fees, and imposed penalties for breach of newly created rules of opening and trading. The conditions in the early colony were harsh and many early commentators mention how these places provided relief and solace.

Some of those early hostelries, run from the meagre homes of the settlers as true *public houses*, disappeared without trace very quickly. Other hotels that followed later are still traceable through the historical records, and a few have remnants that are still visible. Today the process continues in the West End of Fremantle, as society no longer needs or supports the hotels as it did in the days of itinerant populations, poor transport and the huge and rapid growth of population caused by the gold rushes. In a series of articles in this newsletter, we propose to look at some of these vanished and vanishing establishments.

#### COOGEE HOTEL:

How many times have you driven down Cockburn Road past the Coogee Beach reserve and passed the derelict building opposite it on the eastern side of the road? Lot 51, No 358 Cockburn Road is one of the vanished hotels, the former Coogee Hotel. Its origins become clear if you stop and look at it more closely. Over the moulded plaster former main entrance is the faded inscription "Licensed to sell fermented and spiritous liquors."

The site was acquired by Letita Powell on 26 August 1890. Letita died in 1901 and the Coogee Hotel was built in 1901 for her husband Walter Powell. Powell was a Fremantle merchant and importer of fancy goods with a shop and three rooms next door to the National Hotel from 1886 to 1890. When his wife died intestate he moved to the Coogee property in what was then the Fremantle Road Board district on which he had served from 1887 till 1900<sup>2</sup>. Nearby, to the north, is the former Coogee Post Office built by one of Powell's family,

Mr Burnett, in 1928. The hotel was a substantial stone construction similar to a large residence in the Georgian Revival style. The walls are of coursed smooth faced solid limestone with brick quoins and the hip roof is clad with corrugated iron. Bullnosed corrugated iron verandahs surround the building on three sides. In the Azelia Ley homestead nearby to the east over the limestone ridge on the former Manning estate you can see photographs of both Powell and his hotel in its early days. The Azelia Ley building is open to the public on Sunday afternoons. Some sources say that Powell had in mind some of the fabulous hotels of the French Riviera, and wanted to model his hotel on those<sup>3</sup>, but others suggest it is simply typical of the small hotels constructed in Western Australia around that time. They suggest that the Riviera idea came from the gardens, the vine covered courtyard and playing fountains which surrounded the single storey building in the picketed and later walled yard. A cellar was located under the front bar, and its entrance can still be seen from the roadside verandah.<sup>4</sup>



The first licence is recorded as being granted to Tom Gillum (Gilham) although he may have been simply Powell's manager. The licence was later transferred to Tom Hall.<sup>5</sup> It later became famous as the *honeymooner's hotel* and was very popular, rivalling the quaint Osborne Hotel in the Claremont area. It acquired this status because it was the first stop on the stage coach from Fremantle to Mandurah. It also served as a drinking place for the workers at

the nearby lime-kilns which contemporary photographs show were very labour intensive and probably could have sustained the hotel by themselves, market gardens, the nearby abbatoir run by Alexander Forrest and others and the railways as there was a railway station close by on the opposite side of Cockburn Road. Internally the building has many of its original features like fireplaces, panelled doors, moulded skirting boards and architraves.

Later the racecourse at Woodman's Point was closed because the ordinance store was to be moved there from its former site closer to Fremantle. This racecourse was on the sea side of Cockburn Road just north of the Quarantine Station and was one of many before they had to be registered with the West Australian Turf Club. As a result Powell built a private racecourse next to his hotel on the northern side and offered the Coogee Cup and other substantial trophies to continue to attract owners and trainers to the area. It also attracted several amateur riders. The derelict building still shows the extensive stabling that this required. This hotel also provided refreshment for the South Coogee cricket club whose members trekked over the sandtrack to it after the games on the weekends in summer. The players came from several families in the area and some of those cricketers later played first grade cricket; the names are recognisable.

The hotel closed in around 1927 a few years after the death of Powell on 26 January 1923, and the licence was surrendered shortly after by the family who had no interest in continuing to run the hotel. Other factors influencing the closure were the requirements for racetracks to be registered, and the increase in motor car usage making the stage coach stop superfluous. It was vacant for many years, and later around 1931 to 1942 was used as an Anglican holiday camp for orphans. Still later after the war it became the Saw Anglican Children's Home housing about one hundred children at some times. The building became vacant again about 1967 after the closure of the Home and in 1969 was the headquarters of

the Coogee Progress Association. The site passed to the Crown in 1971 and then to the Commissioner for Main Roads in 1981. For many years recently, the building was held by the Metropolitan Region Scheme Reserve for a controlled access highway along the route of Cockburn Road.

More recently some restoration has been planned by architects, Bernard Seeber, recognising the historical significance of the turn of the century pub. It has also been recognised as important by the National Trust, and is on the Cockburn Municipal Heritage Inventory. The plan included retail, office and restaurant uses, with the nearby post office as a caretaker residence.<sup>6</sup> This has included restoration of the bullnose verandahs which had been replaced by skillions earlier, but this has now also ceased. One tall brick chimney appears to be in danger of collapse. The eleven year lease expired in September 2001.

1. Freeland, J.M. *The Australian Pub*. Melbourne University Press, 1966
2. Berson, Michael, *Cockburn: the making of a community*. The Town of Cockburn, 1978
3. Hocking Planning and Architecture, *Coogee Hotel and Post Office conservation plan*. Main Roads Western Australia, 1999
4. Ball, Julia; Kelsall David; & Pidgeon, John *Statewide survey of hotels 1829-1939, southern region, Western Australia Vol 1 Part 2*. prepared for the Cultural Environment Committee, National Trust of Australia (WA), 1997
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## SNIPPETS FROM THE LHC

Loretta O'Reilly

It has been busy in the Local History Section for the past few months and we have now almost bought the collection up to date with the backlog constantly diminishing. The

'Blue' heritage files (Municipal Inventory) have been scrutinised and with the acquisition of five metal cabinets have been able to be spread out for easier access for staff members.

A recent acquisition to the collection is a monograph titled *Micro-Breweries to Monopoly and Back* presented to us by Geoff Spiller, the author. Geoff spent quite some time here at Local History researching the book. He could be seen poring over old PWD maps to pin point the lots on which the breweries were built. One thing we found surprising was that there were three breweries, the Fremantle Brewing & Ice Company, the Castlemaine Brewery and the Phoenix Brewery in very close proximity to each other on the corner of Putney Street and along Riverside Drive. One brewery was only eight town lots away from the other. This book is a must for history researchers. It is a well written, account of breweries in the Swan River Colony of 1829-2002. Surprisingly the breweries seemed to start off very auspiciously and then, after a few boom years, fade into obscurity and sometimes bankruptcy.

A second book we acquired is a beautifully bound facsimile copy of *Twentieth Century Impressions of WA*. Previously we had a 1901 edition which was getting very fragile. The new copy is robust and able to be copied.

The Local History continues to host school students, Fremantle Technical school students, University students, genealogists, researchers and staff endeavouring to provide the historical material they need for their various assignments.

## For Your Diary

**Tuesday 2 December**, Christmas Capers. An evening of entertainment with a distinctively Christmas flavour. **Fremantle Tennis Club, cnr Ellen & Parry Sts, 7 pm.**  
**RSVP 9339 7399 by Friday 28 November**

