



FREMANTLE HISTORY SOCIETY

Established 1994

The Secretary, PO Box 1305
FREMANTLE WA 6959

Autumn Edition, April 2024

<https://fhs.org.au>

FREMANTLE OVAL PRECINCT REDEVELOPMENT

Kristi McNulty

The City of Fremantle is working to prepare a masterplan for the Fremantle Oval Precinct. You might remember a draft Conservation Management Plan (CMP) being released for public comment late last year. The Fremantle History Society submitted a response voicing concern that the draft CMP failed to address the complexities that derive from the Oval's very close proximity to the World Heritage Listed Fremantle Prison. However, Council has taken note of the responses and is rewriting the CMP. The public consultation stage of the development is now underway, and Council is looking to the community to give some indication of what uses *they* think should be there.

Many people are possibly not aware of the many activities and events that have taken place over the years at the area that is now Fremantle Oval. Before colonisation, Fremantle was known as Walyalup and was a meeting and dwelling place for Nyungar people, and a location for trade and ceremonies. It has a continuous association with Indigenous people to the present



Barrack Field 1889 showing Pensioner Barracks at left and Warders' Quarters centre day.

FHC 3414

Prior to the arrival of convicts in 1850, Fremantle Oval provided a path from Church Hill and burial ground, back to the town. In 1851 the site was gazetted as part of the Convict Establishment, a portion of the site used for growing vegetables for the Convict Establishment. The area adjacent to the Barracks was used as a drill and parade ground for the Enrolled Pensioner Guards and was known as the Barrack Green or Barrack Field.

From the 1860s it was used for recreational sports. In the 1880s the Victorian football code was adopted and Fremantle football teams played matches on the Oval. The facilities were shared by fierce rivals South Fremantle and East Fremantle Football Clubs, up until 1953.

Victoria Pavilion opened in 1897 and the following year the Cycling Club signed an agreement with Council to hold cycling and sports days at the Oval.



Port Derby between South and Easts 1910 FHC 2057



Five Mile Australian Championship 1927 FHC 1827

The Oval has been host to all manner of events and ceremonies in addition to sport. It has been the setting for significant military events. In 1900 a special rally was held to honour the Australian Contingents on their departure for the Boer War.



Children's victory celebrations 1945 FHC 416

A peace service marking the end of WWI was held November 1918; 1,350 returning soldiers were discharged there in 1919. Victory celebrations for the school students of Fremantle were held at the end of WWII.



Crowd watching maypole dance, Royal visit May 1927 FHC 222

The Oval was the setting for many royal occasions: in 1897 a combined sports and fair day marked the 60th year of Queen Victoria's reign. The coronation of King Edward VII was celebrated in 1902.

In 1927 5,000 school children performed a maypole dance on the Oval before the Duke (later George VI) and Duchess of York.

In 1954 Fremantle citizens and local school students gathered at the Oval to welcome Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip.

The Griff John Pavilion was built in 1960, and the Doig Pavilion in 1963. The William Street gates were demolished in 1985, and Parry Street constructed in 1986 with new gates to replace the original entrance and turnstiles. This significantly altered the presentation of the oval on the

approach from the town. The last major development was the development of the Dockers building in 1999, requiring the demolition of the Doig Pavilion.

Redevelopment of Fremantle Oval provides the opportunity to deliver significant sporting, cultural and economic benefits for the local community but it must be done very carefully. The Oval sits within the buffer zone of the Fremantle Prison, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The buffer zone should be seen as a part of Fremantle's historic network of green and open spaces. It should be protected and planned with the intention of achieving benefits such as combating urban heat and providing space for recreation.

The growth of central Fremantle will bring many opportunities but will also lead to increasing and competing pressures on the use of space. This means that as Fremantle develops and intensifies the quality of public realm and green spaces will become increasingly more important and must be protected.

The link to the survey is at: <https://mysay.fremantle.wa.gov.au/fremantle-oval-precinct-redevelopment>
We are being offered the opportunity to have a say in how this redevelopment will proceed. We encourage you take part in the survey. It will be available until 14th June 2024.

References:

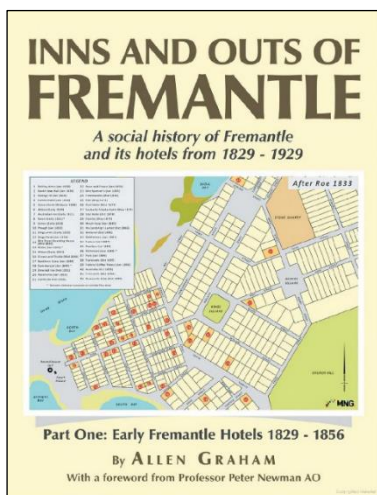
Griffiths Architects. (2002). *Fremantle Oval Parry Street, Fremantle: Conservation Management Plan*.

Kelsall, Alan. (2023). *Fremantle Oval CMP: Draft review comments*.

MEETING REPORTS

Inns and Outs of Fremantle: A Social History of Fremantle and its Hotels from 1829-1929 by Allen Graham – 27 February Walyalup Civic Centre

We have been trialling the Council's Eventbrite online booking system for the last few events, with varying results, however, over 50 people showed up this day to listen to Allen Graham's presentation about Fremantle's earliest hotel history, which is a very good crowd. Several new people joined the society also, which is great to see.



Allen talked about his 40-year journey as an author, beginning in 1983 when he first visited the Fremantle Local History Collection as it was known then - the great resources and easy access

to that material, thanks to wonderful Librarian, Lorraine Stevens. His original idea of a short, pictorial coffee table book quickly turned into a much larger – and longer project.

Far beyond a history of hotels, *Inns and Outs of Fremantle: A Social History of Fremantle and its Hotels from 1829-1929* provides a social history of the time. Stories about Foundation Day, inter-town rivalry, the elite and the not-so-well-to-do, scenes of riot and disorder and drunkenness, all feature in Allen's first publication, Part One: Early Fremantle Hotels 1829-1856, the first of three volumes. We look forward to Volume Two coming out.

Pensioner Guards: A forgotten history? Maeve Harvey – 26 March Walyalup Civic Centre

Maeve's interest in pensioner guards began when she and her husband moved to Coogee. Walking the dog in the Woodman Point area they would come across the ruins of an old cottage and heritage markers identified that it had belonged to a pensioner guard, Bernard McGrath. She has since spent a couple of years looking into this history, and has put together a very comprehensive and informative presentation.

The WA Census from 1848 reveals that the European population was 4,622, less than 1,000 in Fremantle and declining. This golden land of opportunity was not quite living up to expectations and British immigrants were finding the conditions hot, sandy and very harsh living indeed.

In the UK soldiers were returning home from numerous wars that were being fought at the time: the Crimean War, Opium wars in China, the Indian Mutiny, Napoleonic wars, to name a few. Returning servicemen were kept on military pensions (half pay). Many were partially disabled or veterans no longer able to perform active duties, but were still quite capable of garrison duty, and in 1840 there were over 15,000 enrolled pensioner guards serving in the far-flung corners of the British Empire, such as the Falkland Islands, Gambia, NZ and Tasmania.

In England the prisons were full. Fremantle needed population growth, and so began the transportation of convicts. The conditions of service for pensioner guards included: guard the convicts on the voyage, oversee the convicts at work, thwart any unrest amongst the prisoners. For their service they were promised a free passage for wives and family and a land grant.

From 1850 – 1868, 37 ships brought 9,721 convicts to Fremantle, 1,249 pensioner guards, their 800 wives and 1,400 children, and the free colony of Fremantle became a penal settlement. Maeve went on to talk about their standing in the community, individual guards such as Henry Dyson Naylor, Commanding Officer John Bruce and the North Fremantle village that became Bruce Town, and the eventual disbandment of the force in 1880. It was an excellent presentation.



Enrolled pensioner guards from: Enrolled Pensioner Force WA
<https://enrolledpensionerforcewa.org.au/epf-profiles/>

COMING EVENTS

In Defence of Fremantle - Shane Burke, Senior lecturer - archaeology and history, NDU

Fremantle History Centre, Ground Floor, Walyalup Civic Centre

151 High Street, Fremantle 6160

Tuesday 23 April 5.00 pm

The British laid elaborate plans to defend Fremantle even before Stirling arrived in 1829. His advance-guard, led by Captain Charles Fremantle, made perhaps the earliest of preparations. By the end of the first year, a fort had been erected on what is now Pakenham Street. More followed.

From its earliest colonial days, Fremantle has played an integral role in the military defence of Western Australia. Using the tools of both archaeology and history, Dr Shane Burke will introduce guests to key defence installations in Fremantle and nearby coastal suburbs — some now forgotten — including colonial forts, coastal lookouts and World War II gun emplacements.

Drinks and nibbles will be served at both the April and May meetings around 5.00 pm, before the talk at 5.30 pm.

John Patience, Convict No. 2 – Mattie Turnbull

Fremantle History Centre, Ground Floor, Walyalup Civic Centre

151 High Street, Fremantle 6160

Tuesday 28 May 5.00 pm

It is remarkable that the John Patience story has not yet been told. By this, there are many, many 'stories' of convicts who were imprisoned in Fremantle Prison at the same time as John Patience. No doubt many of us became familiar with the awful goings on and the remarkable experiences of those imprisoned. In today's world, we can now actually visit the circumstances in which they were punished.

The May presenter, Mattie Turnbull, is the mother in law of a direct descendant of John Patience who has not had an opportunity to acknowledge his personal history. This history has many tangents, several of which were sad, but ultimately were by and large 'successful'. This 'success' was achieved as he was awarded a 'Ticket of Leave' quite soon after his imprisonment. This decision was not due to 'good behaviour' or some such criterion; and the presentation will offer the politics and the story of this success.

John Patience was convicted of burglary and sentenced to 14 years transportation in 1848 in Dorset in the South of England. These were strange times in the colonisation by the British across the world and the John Patience history is a valid part and parcel of these times, and to further spark interest, the John Patience story was Convict Number Two to Western Australia!

Fremantle Port Walk

Fremantle Port – details to be confirmed

Thursday 13 June 10.30 am – 12.30 pm

The Royal Western Australian Historical Society has kindly asked the Fremantle History Society to join them for a walking tour of the Port. Note that the date is Thursday 13th June instead of our usual 4th Tuesday of the month. It will be run by the Port Authority and we will let you know further details a little closer to the time.



FREMANTLE HISTORY CENTRE

On the 28th February the City of Fremantle announced the news we've all been waiting for:



Fremantle History Centre's future is secured!

The Centre will remain in what was the Wanjoo Lounge, on the ground floor of the Walyalup Civic Centre, where it has been temporarily housed for the past six months. The City of Fremantle announced its decision after reviewing the results of a community survey in which 76% of people said they wanted it to stay where it was, 15% suggested the Fremantle Town Hall and 9% suggested somewhere else in Fremantle.

The City received 172 submissions during the public engagement period with 70% being Fremantle and East Fremantle residents. 89% said it was 'extremely important' to have access to a physical collection to view, study, research and connect with.

So I'd like to send out a huge THANK YOU to our members, their families and friends, along with many other concerned locals. Your participation in the survey, along with numerous letters to Council members and the local paper, and our meeting with the Mayor and her executives, all contributed to this result and showed that the community really does value its local history collection.

And now there is a lot of work to do and Stewart is putting his considerable energy into turning the space into a functioning research/study area with as many resources as possible on-hand for people to use. The book shelves are in place and secured, the book collection is back. Scanning and copying stations are set up. The Newman Court frontage has been covered with a photographic film featuring a wonderful historic scene of High Street – it looks fabulous!



Fremantle History Centre, Newman Court frontage.

From left: FHS President Jude Robison, FHS Treasurer Pam Harris and Local History Librarian Stewart Alger

The official opening day is Thursday 18th April at 3.00 pm in the new Fremantle History Centre, Ground Floor, Walyalup Civic Centre. Former City Librarian, Betty McGeever, will be officiating.

Everybody who has responded to the survey will be invited, as will all members of the Fremantle History Society, along with the Mayor, Hannah Fitzhardinge and Councillors.

Thereafter opening hours will be: Monday to Friday 9.00 am – 1.00 pm, and by appointment on those days from 1.00 pm – 4.00 pm.

While we're here -

The Fremantle History Centre needs your help



Newspaper readers – can you assist the Local History Centre by collecting news stories relevant to Fremantle, people or places? Please record the source and date of the news item. You can bring them along to our meetings or deliver to the History Centre. The articles will be scanned by volunteers and added to the collection.

Stories from the Fremantle Herald are not required as it is collected digitally.



Vale Barbara Dudding

Many members of the Fremantle History Society would have known Barbara Dudding and been very sorry to hear that she has just passed away. In addition to the myriad of projects she was involved in, Barbara contributed much to the Fremantle local history collection over the years. She was also a very active member of the Melville History Society, and President, Penhale Martin, has written a moving tribute and kindly allowed us to publish it in our newsletter:

It is with great sadness I note the sudden death of Barbara Dudding, who was our President and Acting President for a total of seventeen years. She has been a member of the Melville History Society since its inception and has served it unstintingly throughout. Her quiet unassuming presence has brought reassurance to our ebbs and flows over our forty years. Always one of the first to be involved in any of our ventures, and more often than not, one of the last to leave. Her last time on the Museum Roster was March the 10th. There was absolutely no hint of failing health, though her constant frustration was her hearing loss. We always relied on her knowledge and memory and her passing has left a very deep void.

She was an active member of her local Book club, the Mission to Seamen, her Spinning Group at the Atwell Gallery and of course her great joy was her family and her garden. We pass on our deepest sympathy to her family and share in their loss.

The following contribution comes from FHS member, Tim Grant, who worked as a volunteer at the Fremantle Prison Museum in 2019. During his first meeting with the curators there he mentioned he had photographed a mural painting workshop in the prison many years ago. This was the first they had heard of these murals and asked Tim if he could find out and document what he could about this little-known story from Fremantle Prison's more recent history.

Fremantle Prison Mural Workshop 1984

Tim Grant

Gary Cook and Annie Gladden (now de Monchaux) had recently arrived from England via Israel, upon completion of a large mural for Mandy Rice-Davies (Profuma affair).

They already had completed a number of murals locally - including in Subiaco, Victoria Park, Atlantis Marine Park and the still existing Piccadilly Arcade dome - before they began leading workshops in the Fremantle Prison in 1984.

Within a year of arriving they met Steve Culley, art teacher at the Fremantle Prison, and volunteered their knowledge to teach prisoners the art of mural painting (an art form they felt was not widely practised in Australia's 1980s). Contrary to the "Shackles" article at right, little if any publicity was generated and they were not paid. Their primary goal was for the prisoners to be able to express themselves artistically without any fear of censorship from the prison authorities.

A wall space was requested from the prison authorities with their guarantee that there would be no censorship and that the paintings would be allowed to remain. The workshops were advertised as 'no previous artistic ability required', and ran for 6 (or 12) weeks, with around a dozen enthusiastic prisoners choosing to sign up. Gary sketched out the outlines of archways and did a small mural as a demonstration. They saw their role as guiding the inmates and to support their ideas in terms of how to best execute the artwork, but in no way to interfere with the prisoner's visions or wall spaces.

THE MURAL

Two wimps from pommy land, one a sawn off bloke, the other a horny arsed mossel, came up with a publicity scheme, with which they will exploit the crims so as to get heaps of free publicity for their business, which is - painting murals on pubs, cafes, etc': But all the same it's a bloody good idea and expression for the crims to each paint a slice of life, as he sees it, into a montage of images, a collective for eternity....or at least for years after this rat-hole is no longer used to cage men and try to enslave their minds.

The blokes in the art class are throwing their painted ideas up on the gym' walls, in the hobby area, for the mural, but anyone is invited to come forward and participate.

Shackles: A Quarterly Rort 1984
Clipping from a prisoner newsletter

Annie reflected "...the men were extraordinary and became very passionate and dedicated to the project." The Aboriginal contingent had the use of about half the room on which to paint their murals. These were all traditional Dreamtime-themed which Gary found difficult to relate to, whereas the images produced by the other inmates were more accessible to this newly arrived pommie. But Gary was very impressed with the technical ability of each of the inmate artists. He said "Apart from drawing and painting the architectural illusion of the archways, I did not have to do anything else."

What stood out for Gary was the segregation that existed between the Aboriginal inmates and everyone else. They even had their own Aboriginal teacher supervisor. One Aboriginal inmate

told him stories from his ancestors, explaining that they knew the white man was on the way, coming in boats. They had the power to interrupt their voyage and stop them from coming, but didn't because they knew that the coming of the white man was inevitable. All they could do was to accept it there and then.

Meanwhile, Annie would take large bags of nuts and many rolls of soft toilet paper, explaining it was for the paint brushes but leave them on the table tennis table at the end of each day. It was what the men indicated they wanted, and the guards seemed to turn a blind eye.

One of the main prisoner artists thought to have been involved was Dennis (Noz) John Nosworthy (1951-2015). Annie could only recall working closely with someone who had stabbed a person outside a Northbridge souvlaki shop, another who had killed his wife and that there were no sex offenders involved. When the sex offenders did go through the workshop area into the exercise yard, the art boys stopped painting and stood around Annie so she couldn't be seen. At first she had no idea of what was happening and was very touched after they explained.

In July 1984 Annie sought permission for myself, a local photographer, to enter the prison and photographically record the final artwork. I had been turned down on previous requests to record the workshops, but was eventually given a short pass with strict instructions not to photograph anywhere but Gary's mural wall. At that time I worked almost exclusively in black and white but for archival purposes I took some colour film.

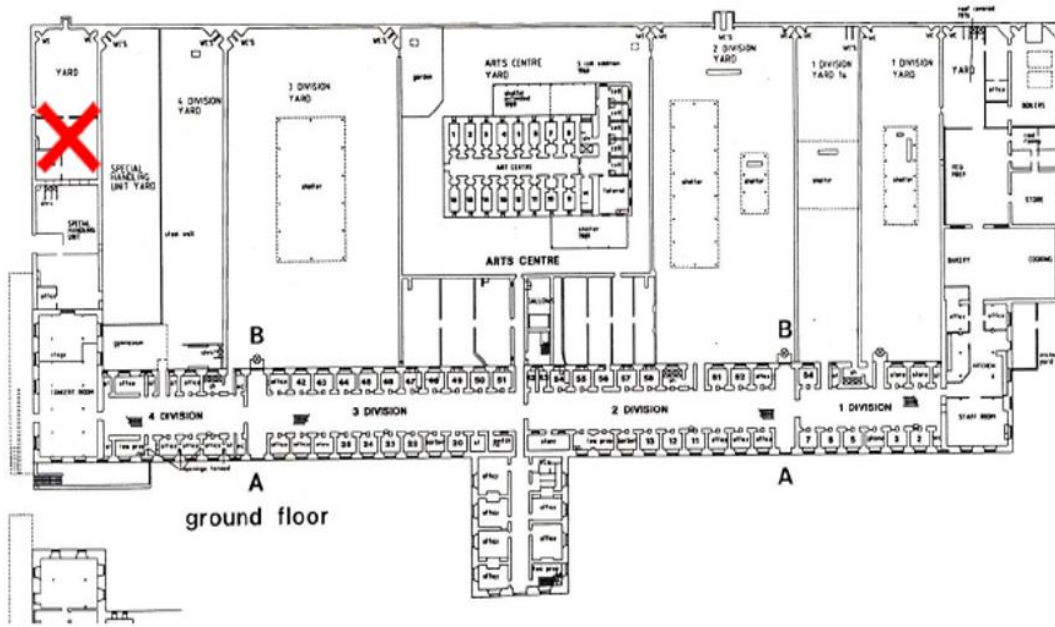
It is not known how long the murals actually remained on the walls. By the time the Fremantle Prison Trust was established in 1992 it appears there were no photos or records of the existence of any of the artworks. However, with access to the prison records and grounds and being free to closely examine them, I was able to verify with 100% certainty that the Special Handling Unit had been the location of the murals.



Annie and Gary sitting in front of completed artwork

Photo: Tim Grant

In a 1993 Trust report the Special Handling Unit was classified as being 'of little significance'. It appears the murals were painted over between 1991 and 1993 where a photograph shows the SHU with white walls. In another 1995 report it states that 'New works were being done (to the SHU rooms)', also that SHU was being renamed Exhibition Room 2 and then became part of the Interpretation Centre.



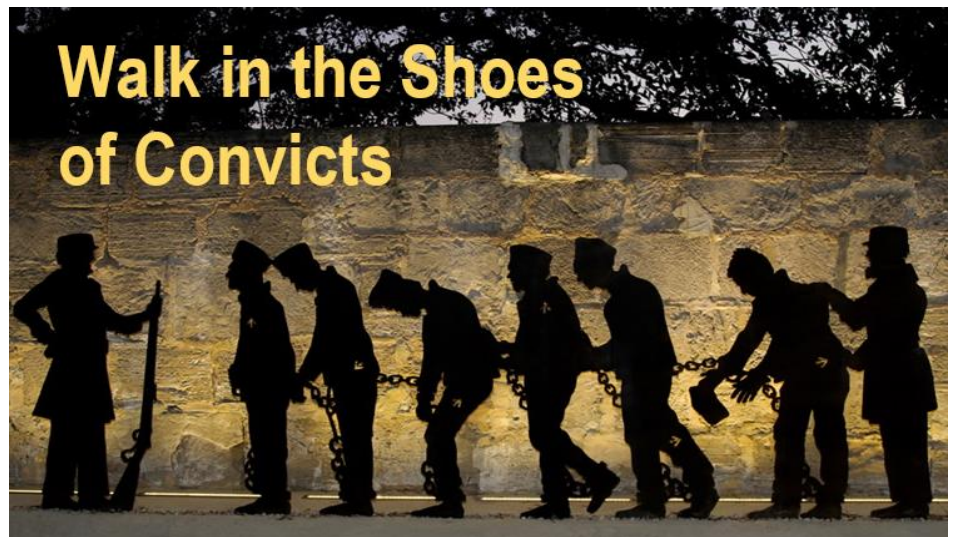
Floor layout of Fremantle Prison showing location of murals.

Fremantle Prison:
Building Management Authority of W.A.
Kerr, J.S.

Fremantle Prison presents 2024 Australian Heritage Festival events:

Enjoy the rich folklore and stories of our port city's convict history as one of Fremantle Prison's experienced Tour Guides takes you for a walk in the shoes of the convicts.

Envisage the experience of embarking at South Jetty, South Bay in 1850, arriving at the Convict Establishment to serve your time. This special walking tour of Fremantle, from Bathers Beach to Fremantle Prison, is being offered as part of this year's Australian Heritage Festival.



Once you have registered your interest and have received confirmation, please ensure you are ready to meet our Tour Guide at Bathers Beach.

Approximately 1 hour, this tour is suitable for infants but there is a lot of walking involved. The tour goes ahead regardless of weather.

Departs Saturday 27 April
Price Gold coin donation
Bookings Essential – 9336 9205 or email events@fremantleprison.com.au

Women on the Inside



What were the social, economic, cultural and political challenges for women over 100 years ago?

Fremantle Prison incarcerated women prisoners from 1886 until 1970.

Who were the women imprisoned on site?

What were their crimes?

How big was a cell in the Women's Prison?

Join this 1 hour tour to explore the female experience at Fremantle Prison.

Departs Saturday 11 May

Price \$22.00 adult, \$19.00 concession, \$12.00 child

Wheelchair access approximately 60%

Bookings essential – 9336 9200 or <https://ssl2.connectintouch.com/wp.dll?Axis/FremantlePrison>

John Fisher and his brother Joe have been involved in the hotel business since 1981 when John bought the Seaview Tavern. He had no knowledge of running a pub whatsoever, but enlisted his brother's help and eight years later, both having worked an average 90-100 hours a week to transform the Seaview, they sold it and bought Clancy's Tavern in Fremantle in 1988. Today, three generations of the Fisher family work in the Clancy's business, which over the years has expanded to Canning Bridge, City Beach and Dunsborough. Here John shares his thoughts on Fremantle.

Comments from the Heart

John Fisher

20 September 2019

I have a long association with Fremantle. Though I have never lived here, in my childhood my father was partner in a business called Raffles Paints which was established in 1952 in Blinco Street (now a workspace/café for artists). The business supplied industrial paint all over the state.

There were my terror stricken visits to the dentist (followed by a soothing milkshake), or buying school shoes at Barney Silbert's with my mother. I loved the aroma of Fremantle and the connection to the Fishing Harbour, the European flavour infused by the mainly Italian and Portuguese fishing families, the enticing scent of the ocean, the seductive tang of frying fish wafting from Cicerello's Fish and Chips shop and the screeching of hungry seagulls. And I used to take my own children down to Cicerello's from the early 70s.

We left the port of Fremantle by ship on two occasions, 1957 (Naples) and 1963 (Southampton), to travel to Europe. We threw streamers to our relatives and friends farewelling us from the wharf. My grandmother and great aunt also travelled by ship (to England and South Africa) and we were there to bid them farewell and to welcome them on their return.

So my early memories of Fremantle were of a busy and engaged city with interactive street life and bustling retail outlets.

In 1980 I purchased the Seaview tavern in South Terrace and was introduced to a new Fremantle experience. My brother Jim and his wife Marion had bought an old colonial cottage in Louisa Street, South Fremantle. These times represented an evolution in Fremantle's history and culture from a working man's and European fishing based tradition to being embraced by an emerging baby boomer generation.

This scene was very much reflected in the changing environment at The Seaview. Our customers came from many walks of life – working men, wool buyers, Portuguese fishermen, other fishing industry types, musicians, artists, hippies and young professionals. As we used to call it – “a kettle of different fish”. It was great fun.

We experienced the excitement of the America's Cup and the invasion of various yachting crews, foreign media (heavy drinking of sake with a Japanese media gang springs to mind), tourists invading Fremantle generally, and the Seaview specifically. It spurred on lots of development in Fremantle, which boosted the local economy in the short-term. But unfortunately this surge was not to be sustained.

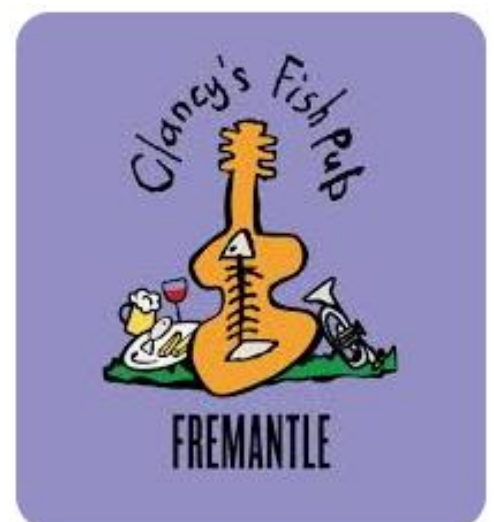
However I believe the direction Fremantle is taking now is positive. Further residential development will provide the inner city with a permanent population. This creates a need for goods and services and hospitality - encouraging more small businesses to service these needs - which can be accommodated in a historical, urban setting.

The renovation of existing buildings and their revitalisation into a form suited to 21st century needs is essential and should be pragmatic and profitable. With great architecture and sensitive construction, function, history and culture can be combined. The development of King's Square, Atwell Arcade and the Manning Buildings and the renovation of the Town Hall represent examples of architecture that respects the old whilst embracing the new.

Fremantle is a beautiful city which fortunately remains fairly intact, having survived the ravages of the nickel boom of the 1960s which changed the face of Perth City. This heightened the sense of belonging and the territorial feeling that exists amongst the Fremantle faithful.

I love Fremantle. My potted history reflects my sentiments towards the city from a sensory perspective and my links to the cultural and historical value of this beautiful city.

John Fisher



COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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Maeve Harvey	0417 324 461
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Ordinary meetings are generally held on the 4th Tuesday (or Sunday) of the month. Details of these meetings can be found in your newsletter. Be sure to check details as meeting days and times may vary.

FOR YOUR DIARY

Tuesday April 23, 5.00-7.00

In defence of Fremantle

Fremantle History Centre, Ground Floor, Walyalup Civic Centre
151 High Street, Fremantle 6160

Tuesday May 28, 5.00-7.00 pm

John Patience, Convict No. 2

Fremantle History Centre, Ground Floor, Walyalup Civic Centre
151 High Street, Fremantle 6160

Thursday June 13, 10.30 am – 12.30 pm

Fremantle Port Walk with the RWAHS

Fremantle Port – details yet to be confirmed