



FREMANTLE HISTORY SOCIETY

Established 1994

The Secretary, PO Box 1305
FREMANTLE WA 6959

Autumn Edition, April 2022

<https://fhs.org.au>

VALE CARMEL MULLALLY

On 11th February 2022 Eileen Carmel Mullally passed away at Regis Aged Care, Greenmount, although she had lived most of her life in Bayly Street, North Fremantle.

Bayly Street was subdivided in the late 1890s as a residential area for people working in the vicinity, one of whom was Carmel's grandfather, Francis Herbert Edwards who worked at the State Implement and Engineering Works nearby. He and his wife Alice lived in a 3-bedroomed weatherboard cottage and somehow managed to find room for 11 children. One of their sons, Cyril Anthony Edwards, married and moved to Collie with his wife, Gertrude, in 1931. They had 8 children; Carmel was born in 1932. The family later moved to York and Bassendean.

Grandparents Francis and Alice Edwards passed away in the 1940s but electoral roll records show that their cottage, which was originally numbered 7 Bayly Street, was occupied by various family members up until the 1950s. Street numbers changed around 1954 and No. 7 became No. 28.



Carmel Mullally Fremantle Focus 1990



Bayly St in 1953 showing at least 30 homes. Intramaps, FHC No. 28 highlighted on the right side of the street.

On 17 April 1954 Mr. and Mrs. C.A. Edwards of 28 Bayly St. Nth Fremantle, announced the engagement in the West Australian of their elder daughter:

Eileen Carmel Edwards to James Patrick, only son of Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Mullally, Surry Hills, Victoria.

Carmel and James lived with her parents in Bassendean for the first years of their marriage, then in 1958 she bought the Bayly Street cottage from her father, where they lived until parting company in the mid-60s.

In November 1963 the greater North Quay area was rezoned for future port use under the then new Metropolitan Region

Planning Scheme. Over the next few years the Fremantle Port Authority gradually bought up the houses in the area, demolishing most of them to make room for container and pallet storage yards, until No. 28 was the only home remaining. But Carmel loved her cottage, loved being in North Fremantle and so near to the beach; she refused to leave. The Port Authority tried negotiating for a sale, making her several offers over the years, none of which would have allowed her to buy another property anywhere in North Fremantle. The battle stepped up a notch in 1990 when the FPA served a notice of intention to resume her land to supposedly improve road and rail access to the port, to which she responded “All of the reasons they have given me so far are nowhere near as important as what this house means to me”. She hired a solicitor and lodged an objection with the Department of Land Administration.



1993 No. 28 Bayly Street Fremantle History Centre

Starting to attract a lot of media attention, especially when she painted Help! Save me from Port Authority very visibly along the side of her house, her protest gained much support from friends and well-wishers. The appointment of Kerry Sanderson as CEO of the FPA later that year calmed the situation and in July 1994 Carmel told the *Fremantle Gazette* “The Port Authority ...no longer needed the land and had given up trying to shift her”. She was left to live her life in peace thereafter.

In 2007 No. 28 Bayly Street was listed on the City of Fremantle’s Municipal Heritage Inventory protecting it from demolition or major alterations, a mixed blessing perhaps as it still had only an outdoor toilet. In 2021 Carmel was moved into aged care and her family did sell the house to Fremantle Port Authority. A spokesperson for the FPA stated that it would not be demolished. The Authority would review the site and whether it could be integrated into port operations. Otherwise it would likely be offered for re-use in another location.

Oil storage tanks, sea containers, vacant land warehouses, and the constant noise from freight trains and trucks may not be everybody’s vision of paradise but it was Carmel Mullally’s. She told the ABC Perth in 2019: “I didn’t really do anything, just refused to sell” but what an inspiring example of the power of the individual standing up for their rights, no matter how great the odds.

Resources:

Newspaper articles, 28 Bayly Street, North Fremantle - Fremantle History Centre

The West Australian Death Notices: Edwards, Francis H. 19.05.1942 Edwards, Alice A. 20.07.1948

WA Post Office Directories

WA Today 15.02.2022

WA Births, Deaths, Marriages

AEC Electoral Roll records



MEETING REPORTS

Fremantle Hospital Museum – 22nd February

The Fremantle Hospital Museum sits quite hidden in the midst of the Fremantle Hospital buildings. I’m not sure that many of us even knew of its existence so it was great to have the opportunity to visit for the first meeting of the year.

The Museum was originally the hospital laundry; it was opened in 1917 and operated as the hospital laundry for around 50 years. The Social Club then used it until 1989 for storage and

various other functions. In 1989 it was repurposed as the Hyperbaric Medicine Unit, housing two hyperbaric chambers for the treatment of decompression sickness and serious infections. They were named George and Mildred and were used to treat thousands of patients. With the opening of a new hyperbaric service at Fiona Stanley Hospital in 2014/15 the laundry building once again became vacant.

Our guide, Ruth Letts, began her nursing career at Fremantle Hospital in 1973 and spent most of her working life there, rising to the role of executive director of nursing. She retired from that position in 2016, but her passion for the hospital service and the stories the records could tell, led her to throw her considerable energy into the preservation and organisation of the huge



collection of material that had amassed since the original hospital was built in 1897. She founded the Fremantle Hospital Museum and together, with a dedicated team of volunteers, works to ensure the history is safely sorted, recorded, stored and made available for future generations.

There is an impressive array of exhibits showing how much health care has changed over the years. We shuddered around cabinets of surgical instruments, needles and horsehair stitching, post mortem equipment, bed pans, and chuckled at lists of rules and expected behaviours.

One letter from first matron, Bessie Steele dated 1897 reads:

'I beg to report that three nurses in this institution viz. Hedemann, Combs and Canning have broken the rules by absenting themselves without leave until a late hour at night. It is not the first time that it has occurred but I was not made aware of the fact until this morning. I cannot tolerate such conduct amongst the nursing staff for one moment.'

A database has been compiled of all the nurses, doctors and other hospital workers who trained or came to work at the hospital. Photos, ledgers, journals and board minutes date as far back as 1898 and tell the story of Fremantle Hospital during those very early years, the staff, the buildings, the equipment purchased, the struggles of dealing with illnesses such as diphtheria, typhoid fever, scarlet fever, influenza and tuberculosis. All in all a very interesting museum collection brought to life by a most passionate custodian. Ruth was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia in 2021 for her service to nursing.

The museum is usually open Mondays and Wednesdays from about 10.30am to 4.30pm.



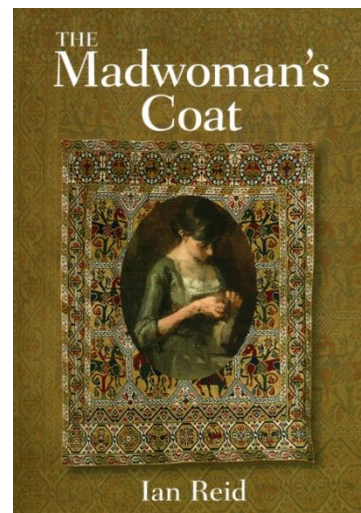
Ian Reid discusses his latest book: The Madwoman's Coat – 22nd March

There was a change in our programme for the meeting on 22 March. Unfortunately we have encountered some problems with the printing of Fremantle Studies, Volume 11 so the launch has been put off until the July AGM.

Local author, Ian Reid, has written many books, *The Madwoman's Coat* is his 5th historical novel and draws upon his research into the former Lunatic Asylum and Fremantle's colonial past.

It was an entertaining evening. To quote Ian: "My starting point in imagining this novel was the idea of an elaborate, enigmatic piece of embroidery as a means by which a talented woman, unjustly incarcerated, could tell her story in a way that reaches back into old Icelandic culture as mediated by William Morris's narrative poetry and his passion for craftwork."

His book, not unlike his talk, moved in seemingly disparate twists and turns, the threads coming together eventually in the end. The central figure, a talented Staffordshire embroiderer, is a perplexing and difficult character, but also an unfortunate victim of her time. Brazenly assaulted, her testimony is totally disregarded and, deemed by the magistrate to be completely deranged, she is incarcerated in the Fremantle Lunatic Asylum. A fate shared by many other innocent women of that era.



North Fremantle Town Hall – 26th April

2021 marked the 60th anniversary of the amalgamation of North Fremantle Municipal Council with Fremantle City Council in 1961. We were lucky enough to have long-time North Fremantle resident, Ann Forma, to speak to us about the history of the Town Hall and the municipality.



Guild Hall (left) and North Fremantle Town Hall (right)
2022 Kristi McNulty

The original Town Hall was built in 1902 and in addition to its municipal functions the building was used for community meetings, concerts, dances and balls. It also operated as a cinema for several different movie companies over many years. The Literary Institute, which is now the Guild Hall where our meeting was held, was built adjoining the Town Hall in 1906, a simpler architectural style but blended harmoniously with the older building.

Ann described milestones in the town's history, from the route the Nyungar people took to cross the river pre-colonisation, the subdividing of riverfront land for pensioner guard lots in 1851 and building the first traffic bridge in 1866. In 1880 the building of the railway line and bridge connected Fremantle to North Fremantle bringing about a period of increased growth in roads, housing and industry

From then up until WWI was the heyday of North Fremantle. Elegant houses, grand public buildings and facilities made it a desirable place to live. However, from the 1920s there was increasing industrialisation, oil storage, toxic waste from manufacturers such as the State Engineering Works, flour mills and soap factories. By the 1930s the residential amenity of the area was in decline. Post war expansion of the port resumed residential land, construction and realignment of major arterial routes decimated what was left.

When North Fremantle amalgamated with Fremantle in 1961 the Town Hall became redundant and was sold at auction in 1966. The building has served various functions since then: the West Australian Ballet Company 1977-1980 and Fremantle Community School in the 1980s. In 1993 it was sold to an antique dealer who ran his business in the Town Hall and lived in the Literary Institute next door. In 2015 the former Literary Institute changed hands once again to become the Guild Hall, a stylish event space; the Town Hall is a chic bridal boutique.

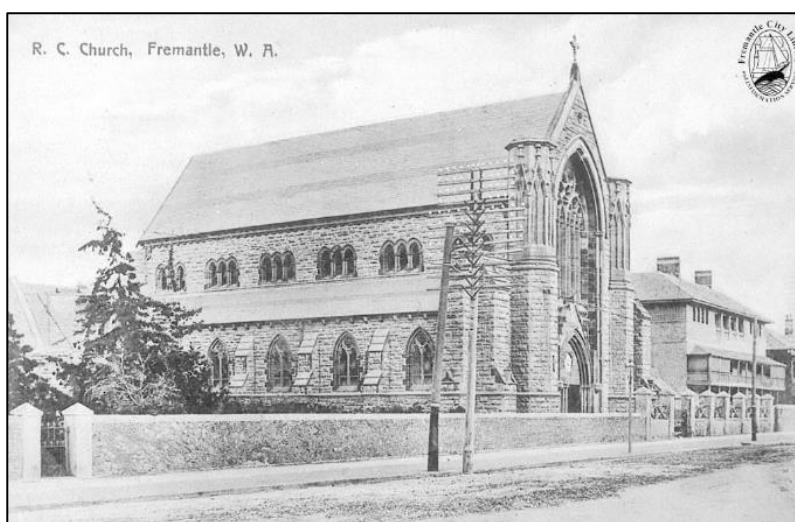
Ann finished her talk imploring the need to consider the community of North Fremantle alongside transport planning. The road-centric planning of the past focusing on fast movement of goods and vehicles has almost devastated North Fremantle and the Leighton Peninsula. Roads are essential but they must be sensitively designed to accommodate the place they serve without destroying it; creative, alternative strategies in the future could see all parts of the community coexisting as a single urban organism.

COMING EVENTS

ST. PATRICK'S BASILICA

47 Adelaide Street, Fremantle 6160
22nd May 3.00 pm

The Basilica is the second church to stand on the site. The first phase of development was carried out by the Benedictines, starting in 1856 with the construction of a presbytery, followed in 1859 by a church and then a school in 1889. The school, fronting Parry St. is the only building remaining from this period. The present church was built by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in 1859-60. The presbytery was built in 1916.



St. Patrick's Church in Adelaide Street c1916 FHC ref. 1770

Fay Campbell will talk about the many-layered history of the Basilica and will include an overview of the associated buildings, as well as the contribution made by the Irish and Italian communities to the social life, all part of the changing story both of the Basilica and of Fremantle.



TREASURES FROM TROVE – The beginnings of Fremantle Hospital

Heather Campbell

By the 1890s Fremantle needed a hospital 'where severe injuries might be promptly dealt with instead of the sufferers being taken to Perth, and undergoing the shaking of the twelve miles railway journey.' Even if they arrived there, Perth Hospital 'was not large enough to accommodate ordinary patients, and patients were sent away for want of room'.¹ A building at Fremantle was utilised as a Government Hospital, 'but besides its utter unfitness for the purpose, it is altogether inadequate to the calls which are made upon it'.

¹ *Inquirer and Commercial News*, 14 August 1891, p.3.

The Knowle, once residence of the Comptroller-General under the Imperial Government, was vacant though 'in a terribly dilapidated condition, ... [but] could be very easily made, not only habitable, but comfortable and commodious. ... from a sanitary, or in fact any other point of view, a better site could hardly be obtained in any part of Fremantle or suburbs'.² Work continued apace and in December 1896, Dr Hope, the resident medical officer, announced the new hospital at The Knowle was nearing completion.³ In January 1897 'after many months of vexatious delay', patients from the old Fremantle Government hospital were moved from 'inadequate quarters' in Point-street to the Knowle, adjacent to South Terrace and Alma-street. 'The patients were carefully conveyed on stretchers from one building to the other, and were installed in the beautifully airy and fresh wards at the Knowle.' Dr Hope invited local dignitaries to inspect the new quarters:

'They examined the building from top to bottom, and expressed hearty appreciation of what they saw. The Knowle stands in extensive grounds which exhibit an amount of rise and fall that will enable beautiful ornamental gardens to be formed. In front a fine view of the harbour is obtained. To see the Knowle as it was, and to inspect it as it is, is to marvel at the transformation which has been accomplished. The old building has been so added to and improved and decorated that it has been converted into as good a hospital of its size as could be wished. Of the old structure twelve rooms remain, whilst a new wing, together with kitchens and out-offices have been added, making over 30 rooms altogether. On the ground floor there are fifteen rooms, exclusive of the kitchen, scullery, larder, and pantry. These fifteen rooms consist of, amongst others, four wards, an operating apartment, dispensary, office, visitors' room, and matron's sitting and bedroom. Upstairs there are 5 wards, nurses' bed and sitting rooms, and several others. Outside are to be found two isolation wards and a convenient laundry and wash-house.

Special attention has been paid to the sanitation of the Knowle, all the drains being so arranged as to lead to a far-away corner of the grounds, whilst numerous ventilating shafts carry off foul odours at a high elevation. No drain is connected with the building, each and every one leading to surface sinks outside and thence to a big dry well. A fine supply of water is obtained from the ordinary source at the prison, where elevated tanks have been specially erected so that an adequate pressure could be obtained. In two or three places gas stoves are provided so that the nurses can obtain hot water quickly, whilst hot and cold water are laid on to the baths, sinks and other places.

The wards are splendidly airy and bright rooms, opening by means of French windows towards the sea. Around the whole front a 10ft balcony runs, forming one of the best features of the building, and providing a promenade and lounge for convalescents where they may reap the full benefit of the invigorating sea breezes. Two entrances are provided, one, which is approached from Government Terrace, and the other from Alma Street. A party of prisoners from the Fremantle gaol are at work making a carriage-way from Alma-street, whilst the men have also been utilised in the placing of fittings and beds in position, the work having had to be carried out at high pressure in consequence of the transference of patients being rendered imperative by the expiry of the tenancy of the old hospital.

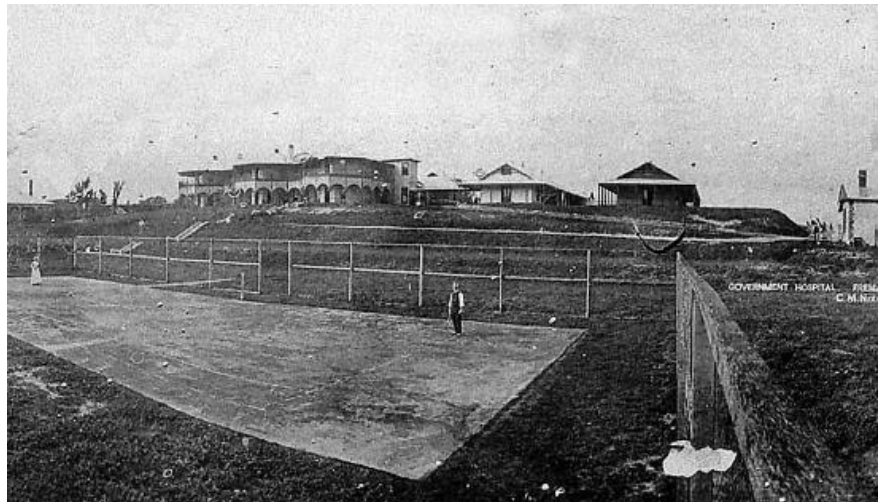
The furniture and fittings are all new, but it will be some little time yet before the fitting up is completed. So much for the inside. The work of renovation has been carried out under the supervision of Mr. B. Bushby, of the Works Department, who has ably fulfilled his duties. The plans provide for a far more extensive building than now exists, should such

² *Daily News*, 20 May 1896, p.2.

³ *West Australian*, 16 December 1896, p. 5.

become necessary.⁴ The Estimates for 1897-8 allowed for further repairs and additions to The Knowle, including a tennis court.⁵

By March 1898 many of these improvements had been completed. A new ward had been built 'at the rear of the main building, and facing Alma-street [and] ... and was an immense improvement on the small structure which hitherto did duty in Point-street.' The Knowle, however, was still 'totally unfitted for an important hospital conducted on modern lines; and ... was never intended ... [to] be the permanent public hospital of Fremantle. It was devised to meet the pressing needs of the time'. When finance was available for a new 'first-class' hospital, the Knowle building would become the administrative portion of the new institution.



The Knowle, The Government Hospital, showing the tennis court c.1897, C M Nixon FHC reference LH001118

'The accommodation was so drawn upon by the patients soon after the building was ready for occupation that the house surgeon and the members of the nursing staff were compelled to keep within extremely narrow limits in the matter of private quarters. The board of management was soon made acquainted with this state of things, and the upshot was that ... a request was made to the Public Works Department to erect as early as possible a temporary ward close to the main portion of the hospital. ... very little time was lost in putting in hand the work of erecting the ward upervisor Stokes was placed in charge of the building operations [and] ... such excellent progress did Mr. Stokes make with the undertaking that on Monday last Dr Anderson, house surgeon at the hospital, was able to set up 22 beds in the ward. ...

The new ward is situated at the rear of the main portion of the hospital, with which it is connected by a covered passage ... floored with cement. The ward is built of jarrah frame, with corrugated galvanised iron sides and roof, and a pine floor. It consists of one large room ... and a room for the sister in charge. It is surrounded by a verandah ... and off the eastern end it has a small kitchen, a bath room, and two lavatories. The front door faces out on to the harbor, and commands a splendid view. This door has been so constructed that it is possible to have it open in all weathers, the force of the wind being broken by spring glass doors placed a few feet away inside, thus obviating a draught while admitting a full current of air, and giving a full view. The matter of ventilation has been specially attended to, and in the ward the air is at all times almost as fresh as it is outside in the open. Immediately above the floor-line ventilators larger than those generally used in public buildings have been placed; the windows have been so constructed as to admit of air, at any time without fear of a draught. ... The ceiling ventilators give egress for the vitiated air and a simple, though excellent, arrangement ensures the prompt clearing away of the air as soon as it rises through the ventilators. This arrangement consists in a free

⁴ *West Australian*, 23 January 1897, p.3.

⁵ *West Australian*, 17 November 1897, p.3.

current of air being given right across the building between the ceiling and the roof ... The whole place has been made as cool as it could be possible to make a building constructed of such material.

The outer walls are... of corrugated iron, while the inner walls are of rippled galvanised iron. The space ... between the two walls has been packed with sawdust, and the exterior wall, as well as the roof of the verandah, and that of the main building, has been coated with Taylor Bros. refrigerating paint. As a further means of preventing the conducting of heat into the building the roof has been underlaid with felt, so that on the whole, extensive precautions have been taken to obtain as far as possible a cool atmosphere in the ward. On the other hand provision has been, made against excessively cold weather by setting up two of Metter's stoves in the centre of the floor. ... The new structure, although providing space for 22 beds, gives really only four extra beds for the hospital; as three of the small wards in the main building had to be transformed into bedrooms for the house surgeon and the nurses. ... It has been decided, however, to erect another ward exactly similar in every way to the one above, described, and when this is done one of the wards will be set apart for fever cases.'⁶

No wonder we get lost trying to find our way around the modern Fremantle Hospital!!



The Everyday life of a Fremantle Girl: 40s, 50s, and into the 60s

Beth Powell

We were entertained with Beth's reminiscences of growing up in Fremantle in the last issue. They continue here.

Each Saturday morning we travelled into Fremantle by tram to attend the Willy Weeties Club at the Hoyts Theatre. The theatre was located at the corner of Queen Victoria Street and High Street and was later renamed the Oriana. Queuing to get in was all part of the fun. The man at the entrance wore a very official uniform with a smart conductor type hat, an important figure to us as we presented our club card to be clicked and we then raced up stairs to get a good seat. Boo-ing, hissing, cheering, stamping were activities almost better than viewing the cartoons and picture themselves. Hop-a-long Cassidy was a favourite of mine and I remember cheering loudly as he and his horse came to the rescue of a damsel in distress who was quite often tied to a railway line. Following the conclusion of the picture show one of the most memorable experiences of my childhood occurred. It was off to the Fish and Chip shop across the road from the theatre and opposite St John's church. Our sixpence from our money box was clasped firmly in hand. The hot and salty



Oriana Cinema 1950

State Library of WA

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oriana_Cinema

⁶ *Daily News*, 26 March 1898, p.8.

chips were wrapped in newspaper and shared with my sister on the way home. We sat in the open end of the tram of course!

For my secondary education I attended Princess May High School and later the second year of the new John Curtin Secondary School for what was then called 4th and 5th year. Memories of Princess May abound. Losing my prefect's badge for talking on the landing outside the Headmistress Ms Anderson's office; the sound of one of the more notorious teachers stamping



Princess May High School 1985

FHC ref. E000241

up the iron fire escape steps as a quick route to her after lunch class; the fear of ghosts which were supposed to haunt what is now the Fremantle Arts Centre when this building was used as an annexe for Princess May; singing fervently as a member of the school choir as the Royal Yacht Britannia carrying Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh cast off from the wharf. The words of 'Will Ye No Come Back Again' rang out across the harbour. Oh! How British we were then!

Today as we sit in Clancy's Fish Pub eating our fish and chips it is hard to believe that this is where our Domestic Science ironing classes took place. Take one hot iron off the hot plate, rub the iron on the board which held the resin, and then the beeswax. And then we proceeded to iron an article of clothing previously doused in the correct proportion of starch to water. I recall that a man's collar should be doused in the starchiest starch of all and dirty marks from the iron were impossible to avoid. Cooking classes were held in the same building. I recall the joy of making suet roly-polly pudding and then cooking it in a jam tin. When I took my effort home it bounced across the floor of the chook pen. Even the chooks weren't interested.

For the Junior Examination taken at the end of 3rd year my given task for the Domestic Science exam was to make puff pastry from scratch and follow this by making an egg custard using a double boiler. I was off to a bad start when I neglected to put water into the bottom saucepan. Realising my error, I remember walking to the sinks as unobtrusively as possible to pour water into the offending saucepan. I did so however without considering the heat in the pot. Great was the sizzling and steaming. I was certainly noticed. And then it was to start making the puff pastry from scratch.

I went on to attend Claremont Teachers' College with my first teaching appointment being to East Fremantle Primary School. The daily walk up East Street from Canning Highway kept me neat and trim. I taught a year 2 class of children in the lovely old limestone building on the Chalmers St side of the school grounds. The classrooms were large, the children's desks made up of a fold-up seat and a fold-up desk-top, with an ink well largely stuffed up with blotting paper or marbles or hairclips, a large nail hammered onto each side of the desk-top on which their cloth school bag was hung. The school bag was used to hold pads and reading books, exercise books, rulers, pencils, sharpeners, scissors, coloured pencils, lunch, and often left-over lunch from the previous day. Two children shared a desk, the desks screwed to the floor in neat rows. Pads and exercise books were covered in brown paper often decorated with the previous years old Christmas cards.

My first class was made up of forty-eight children who were largely migrants from southern Italy and other eastern European countries. I have a school photo taken of one of my classes with one very young teacher barely distinguishable amongst the rows and rows of students. The attendance roll resembled a roll call for the United Nations. I recall how quickly the 'new kids' learnt to speak English. All the above factors combined to present a challenging teaching and learning environment. Particularly memorable was the wonderful, but then unfamiliar, aroma of the children's lunches. Garlic, basil, cheese, salami! From the school playground we had a clear view of the migrant ships coming into the harbour. We knew that there would be a long line of children arriving at our doors the next day as these 'new Australian' families settled into East Fremantle..... and Fremantleand beyond.

These are but some of the memories of my early life in Fremantle. Echoes of the past still resonate through my life today. This, however, is another story.

FOR YOUR DIARY

May 22nd Sunday, 3.00 pm

St. Patrick's Basilica
47 Adelaide Street, Fremantle 6160

June 2022 TBA

July 26th Tuesday, 5.30 pm

AGM and tour of the new Civic Centre
Followed by the launch of Fremantle Studies
Vol.11 by the Mayor Hannah Fitzhardinge
Fremantle Library
Walyalup Civic Centre
151 High Street, Fremantle 6160



COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Executive:

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Committee Members:

Fay Campbell 0419 969 678
Pam Harris 0408 092 100
Tania Heyne 0419 197 116
Alan Kelsall 9336 4573

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



Square

In line with the current trend to move away from cash the Fremantle History Society now offers the convenience of electronic payments.

The Square Reader allows you to do a contactless, tap and pay transaction for memberships, donations or purchases at any Society event. All major credit and debit cards are accepted. Digital receipts can be sent directly back to you via SMS or email if needed. |

Please see Treasurer, Terry Murphy