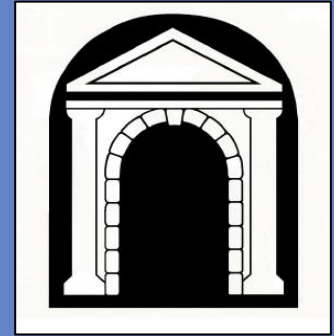


FREMANTLE HISTORY SOCIETY

Established 1994

WINTER EDITION, JULY 2024



FHS Annual General Meeting this month

The next meeting is the 2024 Annual General Meeting on Tuesday 23rd July at the Fremantle History Centre from 5.00 – 7.00 pm.

Dr. Steve Errington will present a short talk based on his recently published book: 'Locked up in Fremantle 1829 – 1856.

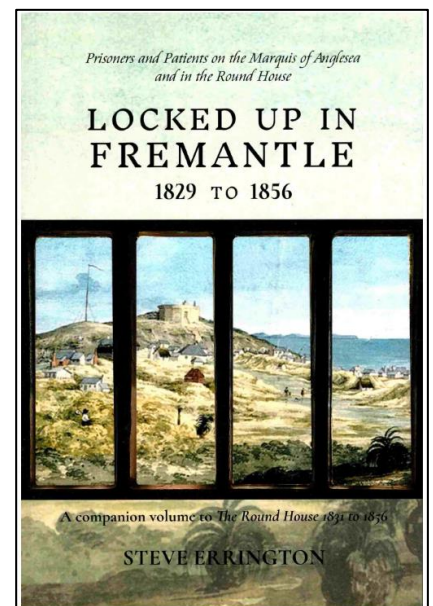
Refreshments available from 5.00 pm. Talk begins at 5.30 pm

Dr. Steve Errington is a former vice president of the Fremantle History Society and has published seven books on aspects of WA history including two histories of the Round House where he was for many years a volunteer guide.

Steve will discuss what the details tell us about law and order in our early years. Copies of both Round House books will be available at a discount at the meeting.

Following the talk we will hold the AGM.

President Jude Robison, will deliver her report for the year. Treasurer, Pam Harris will deliver the Treasurer's report. Committee members will be elected for the 2024-25 period.



MESSAGE TO ALL MEMBERS:

A gentle reminder that membership fees are due at the end of the month.

Please note that our bank account has now changed to the Westpac Bank in Fremantle.

Bank Details as follows:

Account Name: Fremantle History Society
BSB: 036-306 Account No: 604012

Payment by cheque can be sent to the PO Box 1305, Fremantle 6959.
Cash payments can be paid at the AGM on 23rd July at the History Centre.

OUR 30TH ANNIVERSARY COMING UP!

On October 12th 1994 over 50 people attended a meeting at the Reception Room of the Fremantle City Council to officially launch the Fremantle History Society.

Prominent historian, Bob Reece, gave the opening welcome and Dianne Davidson, the driving force behind getting the Society off the ground, spoke about the objectives and types of activities that might be pursued.

Thirty years later, having weathered battles and plagues, we are still going strong and have much to be proud of in our efforts to encourage the research and enjoyment of Fremantle's history.

Your committee organises ten general meetings a year which we endeavour to make entertaining and enlightening. This October marks the 28th Fremantle Studies Day, contributing a wealth of valuable research to the written history of the city through the Society journal: Fremantle Studies. There are now 12 volumes published and Volume 13 will be launched this coming Studies Day. The Society has now presented five researchers with history scholarships of \$2000, and then we churn out four newsletters each year.

In addition to the above achievements the Fremantle History Society maintains an active voice on important local issues. Not an overtly political organisation, the Society nevertheless speaks out against what it considers to be possible threats to the authenticity of this precious city, such as unsympathetic or inappropriate development proposals. The future of Fremantle Oval is a recent issue we have submitted a response to, as well as the reinstatement of the Fremantle History Centre in the Walyalup Civic Centre.

This coming Studies Day on October 20th and at other events throughout the coming year, we will celebrate our 30 year milestone. There will be stories told, memories shared, and of course, cake! We will let you know more as these events take shape.

We welcome your feedback, thoughts and suggestions.

Please reply to:

The Secretary
PO Box 1305
FREMANTLE WA 6959



<https://fhs.org.au>

COMING EVENTS

2024 Annual General Meeting (see front page)

Tuesday 23 July 5.00 – 7.00 pm

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

Annual Pub Lunch - National Hotel

Sunday 25 August 12.00 pm

98 High Street, Fremantle 6160

Please join us for the annual Pub Lunch. This year we will be dining at the National Hotel in the heart of Fremantle. The owner of the National, Karl Bullers, will give a short, informal talk about the hotel and its colourful history, then organise for us to take a look through some of the rooms available.

We will need to know numbers for the booking so I will send a reminder well beforehand and you can send me back your RSVP's.

Author: Kim Scott

Tuesday 27 August 5.00 – 7.00 pm

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

We wouldn't normally hold two events in the one month but this was an opportunity we thought shouldn't be missed.

Kim Scott's debut novel, *Benang: From the Heart* was the first book by an Indigenous writer to win the Miles Franklin Award. It presents an enlightening but heartbreaking narrative of the impact of colonisation on Australia's Indigenous people.

Join us for an engaging talk with Kim Scott and help celebrate the 25th anniversary of this groundbreaking publication.

2024 Fremantle Studies Day

Sunday 20 October 12.45 for 1.00 pm start

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

Our four speakers and their topics this year include:

Kiara Gormlie – Fremantle Soroptimist International. The story of the impact upon Fremantle that this women's advocacy group has had, and the power of uniting to bring about change.

Caroline Ingram – Margaret Cody, 2nd woman in WA executed for murder. Margaret's case illustrates the challenges working class women faced in the 19th century, and the way in which women, perceived not to conform to middle class values of femininity might be vilified in the press.

Nick Everett – Wobblies on the Waterfront. The Fremantle Industrial Workers of the World (Wobblies) in the conscription debate and subsequent upheaval on the waterfront 1917.

Lucy Hair - Colonial Surgeon/Asylum Superintendent Henry Barnett and his wife Annie.

We will send out more details closer to the date.

MEETING REPORTS

Defence of Fremantle

Shane Burke – 23 April

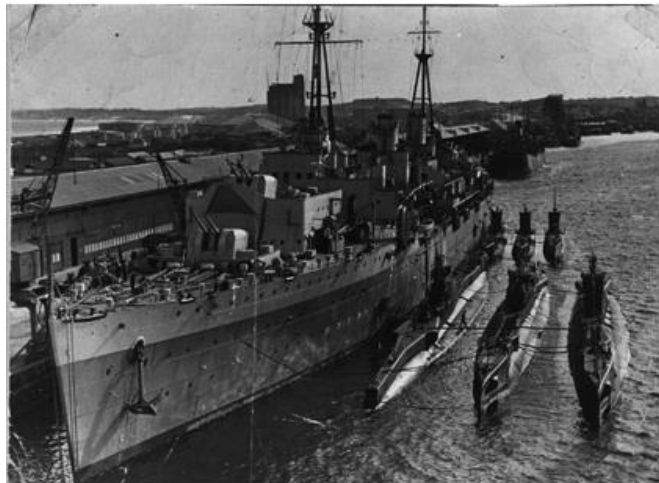
Shane's engaging talk provided an overview of the defence of Fremantle and adjacent coastal regions from early European settlement until after WW11.

Wearing his archeologist's hat Shane made use of early survey maps of Fremantle as a primary source of evidence for understanding both the layout of key streets and the properties owned by individuals. The first military establishment was built by the British (1830-1850) at the corner of High St and Pakenham St, the swamp at the bottom of the street used as a defensive measure.

Shane went on to talk of later defence establishments including the significant Arthur's Head battery with its 6 inch guns built in 1906. At this time the Federal Government recognised

Fremantle as Australia's only western port in Australia. There was some laughter when Shane told us that the chimneys of the power station built alongside Arthur's Head were in fact in the direct line of fire of the guns. As an outcome these powerful guns were relocated to Rottnest Island to become an important component of the defence of Fremantle. In view of a potential invasion by the Japanese, the Buckland Hill battery was built in 1941 and completed in 1942.

Fremantle went on to become the largest submarine base in the southern hemisphere.



British warship and submarines in Fremantle 1945
FHC LH3637

While much of the machinery of the defence effort has been dismantled or weathered away, some artefacts of the defence remain, some simply too heavy to move. Examples include the gun emplacement at the western end of the South Mole which had been established to protect entry to the Swan River, tunnels at Rottnest Island, installations at Mosman Park, remains of the submarine nets erected between the North and South Moles. Shane emphasised the importance of keeping these artefacts as a primary source of evidence of the defence of Fremantle.

John Patience, Covict No. 2

Mattie Turnbull – 28 May

Mattie her husband and two children first lived in Booragoon when they came to Australia from Scotland. Then they discovered Fremantle, loved its eccentricity, particularly South Beach, and have lived there ever since. Their daughter, upon graduation, found a job in Geraldton where

she met and married a local farmer, Peter Patience. He told them the story of his forebear, John Patience, and thus began Mattie's journey into this family history.

John Patience of Dorset UK, was convicted in 1848 of the theft of £30. Sentenced to transportation, he was one of the seventy five convicts to arrive on the first transport ship, the barque *Scindian* which arrived in Fremantle on the 1st June 1850.

John must have been a model prisoner because on 4th May 1851 he was awarded a Ticket of Leave, allowing him his freedom and to work. He found a job firstly in Perth with the government, then moved north to Champion Bay in Geraldton where he found work mining but moved into farming. He ended up growing and supplying provisions back to the prison at Fremantle.

Although John Patience had a wife and two children back in England, he claimed to be a widower so he could marry again, twice in fact. Ellen, who supported him in his Ticket of Leave period, but died in 1854 and then Anne Criddle, who survived him by 27 years. John died in 1870 in Greenough, aged 55.

Timber, Johns and Sing-a-longs: the origins of the Sicilian fishermen of Fremantle James Paratore – 25 June

It was a packed house as around 70 people turned up to listen to James' talk, and so good to see quite a number of Fremantle's Sicilian/Italian community there too.

James began by voicing strong support for the sister city relationships, the relevance of which has been questioned by some of late. Fremantle shares sister city status with Molfetta and Capo D'Orlando among others, but with these two particularly, we share such strong cultural links and his talk illustrated this so well.

So what brought the Sicilians to Fremantle? After the unification of Italy in 1870 there was much unrest, the southern provinces in particular suffered heavy taxes. An exodus of migrants sailed to other countries for a better life.

Safety Bay-Cockburn Sound were already known by the locals to be top fishing spots. The Sicilians settled in the Point Peron-Rockingham area. They kept to themselves initially;

there was conflict but also respect between the different cultural groups.

Sicilian fisherman from Capo D'Orlando Members of Rockingham Fishermans Co-Operative
Photo taken 1905



B.R. - Emanuele Basile 13 yrs, Calogero Basile, Unknown, Salvatore Migliori, Calogero Larosa, Emanuele Basile, Giacomo Iannello 16 yrs
M.R. - Phillip Bombara, Cono Iannello, Santo Basile, Calogero Iannello, Francesco Basile, Salvatore Basile
F.R. - Francesco Merendino, Carmelo Vinci, Antonio Migliori

A loose fishing co-operative was organised: the Rockingham Fishing Co., the first of its kind in W.A. The boats belonged to the company, the fishermen pooled their capital and sold their catch in one block. Fremantle provided a reliable market. Resentment and anger, fueled by the rise of fascism in Italy, began building against the migrant fishermen, so they began moving away to Fremantle where they settled along Marine Terrace to be near the water. Many returned to Italy to serve in the war, however, the co-operative they had formed existed in one shape or another for 40-50 years.

Throughout his talk James gave us little extracts taken from people's personal memoirs which gave some wonderful detail. For example, from the fishing camp at the Point Peron - Rockingham area:

'Singing, firelight, star-studded night sky, the gentle wash of waves on a silver beach.'

And *'One or two white men but the rest of the camp is Italian – swarthy, blue-eyed fellows lending their surroundings the atmosphere of some fishing village in the Mediterranean.'*

The Fremantle Oval Precinct Redevelopment

In December last year the City of Fremantle released a draft Conservation Management Plan of the Oval, for public comment. 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. Council then requested further community input, what would the people like to see happen in this particularly valuable and central space? The FHS submitted a supplement to the initial response.

In a nutshell, achieving a balance between development aspirations and heritage conservation is crucial to the success of the Fremantle Oval Precinct Masterplan, ensuring it supports sustainable growth while respecting and enhancing the Prison's World Heritage status and historical integrity.

The full document will be included as an attachment with the newsletter.

Fremantle Renaissance: The Work of Frederick William Burwell

Maeve Harvey

With its Victorian streetscapes and ornate buildings Fremantle has a unique feel to it and is rightly regarded as one of the best preserved examples of a 19th century port town. However it was not always so. Prior to the gold rush in Western Australia, the streets of Fremantle looked very different. Many of the pre 1890s buildings, which were plain Georgian limestone structures are now gone, replaced by more ornate and stately buildings.

In the late 1880s and early 1890s as news spread around the world about the gold finds in the Yilgarn there was a huge influx of new arrivals into Fremantle. Among them were many hopeful gold prospectors and merchants who arrived to cash in on the booming economy of the 'Roaring Nineties'. The arrival of so many resulted in a demand for buildings to house the people and new businesses and hotels to cater for the needs of an increasing population.

Because of this many architects were also attracted to Fremantle. The old buildings were demolished and these men designed the buildings that make Fremantle what is it today. One of the architects was called Frederick William Burwell. His name is not well known but perhaps it should be as many of his buildings are part of the fabric of Fremantle.



High Street Fremantle from the Round House in the 1870s prior to the gold rush era Photo BL 100025PD

Burwell was born in Scotland in 1846. He studied architecture under the prominent Scottish architect James Matthews in Aberdeen. At the age of 23 he moved first to Melbourne then to Invercargill, New Zealand which in the 1870s was in the throes of a gold rush. He quickly established himself as a prolific architect. The *New Zealand Historic Places Trust* notes that



Dee Street in Invercargill, N.Z. seems strangely familiar (Google maps)

“Burwell is noted for designing many buildings in Invercargill, which transformed the center of the town in the 1870s” As his commissions in New Zealand declined in the 1880s Burwell moved back to Victoria where he ran his business from premises in Collins Street, Melbourne. A search of the newspapers at the time shows that he was a busy man, responsible for the design of many residential buildings, factories and terraced houses.

However things did not go well for him and the *Herald* of Melbourne on June 3, 1889

lists Burwell as one of the creditors who became a victim to insolvency after a firm he did work for was liquidated. This event and the depressed state of the Victorian economy in the 1890s may have been what prompted another move, this time to Fremantle.

Burwell and his wife Annie arrived in 1896, a time of great progress and prosperity in Fremantle. Initially he went into business with his uncle, David Ross and had offices both in Perth and

Fremantle, but by 1897 following a dispute with his uncle, he set up on his own in Mouat Street, Fremantle.

Burwell was obviously good at what we would call 'networking' and quickly became involved in the life of the town. In 1897 he was selected from among five applicants to be the Consulting Architect for the Fremantle Municipal Council and moved his office to the town hall.

Although he was in his 50s when he arrived in Fremantle his prolific output did not abate. He was appointed by the committee at the first general meeting of the Fremantle Bowling and Lawn Tennis Club to draw up plans for a new club house on Ellen Street. The original building is long gone but the Club is still in the same location. He was subsequently on the committee and much involved with the Club's activities.

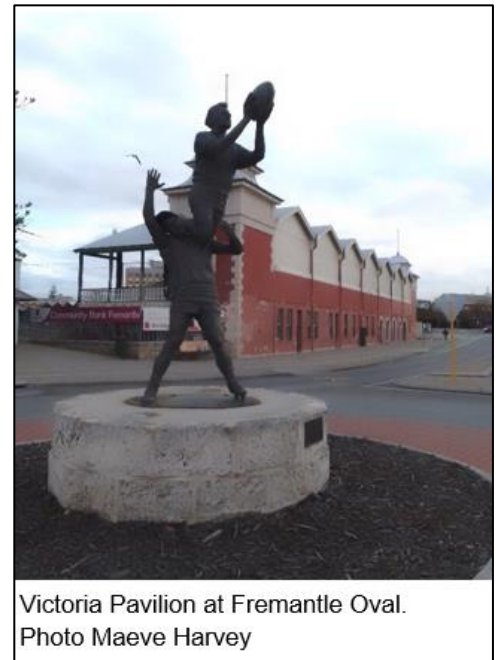


Fremantle Bowling and Lawn Tennis Club 1905

FHC 1157

Burwell's design was also the one selected for the new Victoria Pavilion at the Fremantle Oval. The *West Australian* reported on Saturday 23 January 1897 that "thirteen designs having been received for a pavilion on the Fremantle Oval it was decided to award the prize of £25 to Mr. F. W. Burwell, of Fremantle".

Burwell was one of the leading architects in Fremantle and won many awards and praise for his work. His commercial buildings were in the Federation Free Classical style and he designed warehouses in Pakenham, Newman and Henderson Streets.



Victoria Pavilion at Fremantle Oval.
Photo Maeve Harvey

In 1880 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects (London) and was mentioned in the 1889 Queen's Birthday honours.

Between 1900 and 1907 he designed many of Fremantle's Renaissance style buildings. A full inventory of his work would fill many pages but the most well-known of those that remain include the Sail and Anchor Hotel (formerly called the Freemason's of which Burwell was a member), Fowler's Building on Henry Street, the highly decorative Central Chambers on the corner of High and Pakenham Streets, Owston's Buildings on High



Detail of the Central Chamber's building

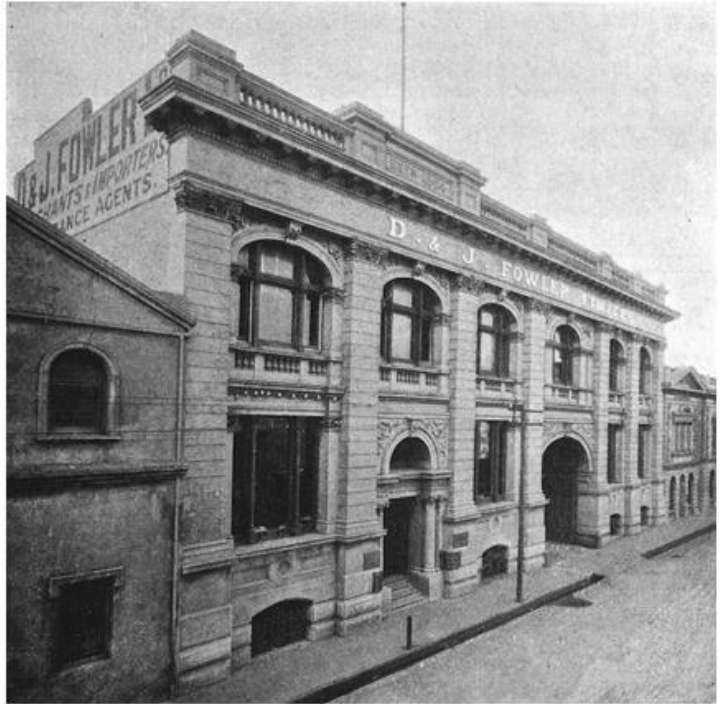
Photo Steve Wells

Street, the former Falk Building (Customs House) on the corner of Phillimore and Henry Streets, the Caledonian Hall on Quarry Street as well as several churches.

The building he designed for D. & J. Fowler (another Scotsman) is the largest architect-designed warehouse in Fremantle and is a rare example of this type of decorative building. At the time most warehouses were much plainer. It's worth having a look at the banksia leaf and other detail on the building if you are passing by.

Among the many residential properties he designed were some of the houses on Tuckfield Street on Cantonment Hill, one of which, *Simla*, (demolished), high on the hill overlooking the river, was where he and Annie lived. He was a very busy man and employed local carpenter John McNeece to assist him. McNeece went on to design many of Fremantle's significant buildings himself.

Burwell did not confine his work to Fremantle. He designed the Coogee Hotel (now the Coogee Common) and the Coogee Agricultural Hall (demolished), some shops and residential buildings in North Fremantle, the Presbyterian Church at East Fremantle (demolished). He also designed one of my favourite places for coffee, Patisserie La Vespa on South Terrace (formerly a butcher's shop). Outside of the metro area his work includes the Palace Hotel at Wagin and the Federal Hotel and Scots Presbyterian Church at Katanning.



D & J Fowler Building c1900

FHC LH1032



Former Falk Building 2024

Photo Google

Although Frederick Burwell was just one of many architects who contributed to the rebuilding of Fremantle in the 1890s, his work stands out for the impressive quality and decorative style of his designs. He certainly left his mark on the town.

In 1908, after just twelve years in Fremantle, he sold his house on Tuckfield Street and he and Annie returned to Melbourne. He died seven years later at the age of 70 at his home which was called *Cimiez*, after an area of Nice in France known for its art and architecture. Clearly architecture was his life and to him we owe at least in part the ornate streetscapes of Fremantle.

References

Taylor, Dr. John J., *Frederick William Burwell (1846-1915)*, Western Australian Architect Biographies, <http://www.architecture.com.au/>.

Fremantle History Centre File B/Burwell, F.W.

Daily News (Perth, WA: 1882 - 1955), Wednesday 5 May 1897, page 4.

The West Australian, Saturday 11 December 1897, page 11.

The Argus Melbourne, Wednesday 27 Oct 1915.

The West Australian Saturday 23 January 1897, page 3.

The West Australian, Friday 25 September 1896, page 6 BOWLING AND TENNIS.

Heritage Council of Australia. <https://inherit.dph.wa.gov.au/public> [Fowler's warehouse](#)

Vale Garry Gillard

Kristi McNulty

Fremantle local, History Society member, and self-appointed collector of Fremantle's history, Garry Gillard, sadly passed away 14th July.

Garry was one of the first students to enrol at Murdoch University when officially opened in 1974 and made history as its first graduate, receiving his Master of Philosophy in 1977. He spent the next few years working at universities interstate and overseas, returning to Murdoch to undertake a PhD on Sigmund Freud, and thereafter worked as a teacher-researcher.

He was passionate about history, Fremantle's history in particular, so this was a natural direction in which to channel his energies toward the end of his working career. He began gathering together a collection of images and information from Western Australian collecting institutions such as the Battye Library and the Fremantle History Centre, and *Fremantlestuff* appeared on the web in 1995. He created pages about places, people, 'stuff' – thousands of them, and created links between buildings, people and publications about them.

He may have driven history centre librarians' crazy with his total disregard of copyright but one couldn't criticise his motives. He did it for no personal gain, only the great personal satisfaction of having all that information in the one, accessible place for all to use. Freetopia, as it is now called, is truly an amazing resource for anyone interested in Fremantle history. He would be terribly disappointed in me if I didn't here include a link to his website: <https://freetopia.org/>

Garry took it upon himself to publish the Fremantle History Society newsletter, all 117 issues, on his website. The papers from the society journal: Fremantle Studies, are available in full up until volume 10, and there are pages detailing each Studies Day event and the papers delivered.

His other passion was the cinema which he channelled into the creation of another website: Australasian Cinema: <https://australiancinema.info/index.html> Garry collected together notes and reviews, many his own, about 800 Australasian films and 700 films from other countries.

Actually he did have another passion and that was language. Michael Barker wrote in the *Fremantle Shipping News* last week that Garry abhorred grammatical and factual errors,



Garry Gillard 2016 Taken by his daughter Katherine
<https://www.garrygillard.net/family/garrymichaelgillard.html>

appointing himself as a regular, self-appointed, additional, volunteer proof reader, and I can absolutely vouch that is true. I knew that if I had made so much as a tiny typo in this newsletter, I would be informed of the error within an hour of sending it out, although he was equally quick to eat humble pie when I corrected his mistakes.

Garry had been diagnosed with bowel cancer when he was 70. He told a friend that if he made it to 80 he would be happy, and he did just that last November. The invitation read in typical Garry-fashion: *'If I'm still alive next Tuesday – and to my surprise, it seems quite likely, I'll be 80 years old...I'll probably be here all day as usual, but the best time to call in would be around beer o'clock. There will be bubbly!'* It was a really good party, Garry's circle of friends are an interesting lot, and it was great to see him so lively and so happy.

A funeral service will be held at Fremantle Cemetery on Tuesday 30 July at 12.15 pm

A TREASURE FROM TROVE - War Memorials – Fremantle and Kings Park

Heather Campbell

In 1920 it was hoped to erect a State War Memorial. The front of the Central Railway Station was suggested as a good site, but the idea was 'mislaid'.¹ In 1921 Sir Talbot Hobbs raised the subject at the Annual State Conference of the Returned Soldiers League, held in Perth. The Premier James Mitchell asked that a concrete scheme be laid before him for consideration.²

The people of Fremantle however had been considering the matter for some time, thinking that as Fremantle was the 'door to Australia', the last sight of their home country for many fighting men, the memorial should 'take the form of a monument to those of the State who fell during the war' and would be ideally suited to be the State memorial. By 1922 they had formed a representative committee ... which had already finalised a number of matters. 'The assessors had recommended that the design submitted by Messrs. Wilkinson and Ross, of Claremont, be accepted ... and that the memorial should be 'on a most commanding position on Monument Hill, a height which dominates the Port. A sub-committee was formed to solicit the help of the Federal and State Governments and to make personal appeals to firms and individuals, in the State and elsewhere.'³

Numerous events were held to raise money for the memorial and the project 'rapidly progressed'. By October 1922 the Fremantle Council had agreed to assist with the construction of a roadway leading up to the site to facilitate carting of construction material.⁴

From then on the site of a State War Memorial became the subject of much animated discussion. The RSL supported a memorial in Perth, the capital 'on the highest point on Mt Eliza in Kings Park'.⁵ Fremantle still considered it had the most appropriate site and continued with its plans, however early in 1924 Fremantle Council was invited to appoint a representative to attend a meeting of the memorial committee at the Perth Town Hall to discuss plans for a State Memorial in Perth.⁶

'Debate became spirited at times' at the meeting. 'The Mayor of Fremantle suggested a State memorial on Monument Hill' and said 'he would like the Premier to have a look at their plans of a memorial. The Premier did not express a desire to do so' and the impasse was not resolved.⁷



Design for Fremantle War Memorial. ... The design is that of Messrs Wilkinson and Ross of Claremont and the estimated cost £7,000. [Western Mail, 27 April 1922, p. 7.]

By April 1924 it was announced that King's Park was the chosen spot for the State War Memorial. 'It will stand right up on the hill, in such a position that it will be seen at a distance of some miles. Twenty-five thousand pounds are to be raised entirely by voluntary subscriptions and contributions. Fremantle people felt a bit sore at first, when they heard of this State Memorial ... as they had already had plans drawn up for one of their own. And a rather imposing one too. But now they have decided to just "carry on."'⁸

Anzac Day 25 April 1924 came and went and, as in previous years the Anzac service at Fremantle was where, 'Tribute was paid to the gallant Australian soldiers by a large crowd which gathered on the Fremantle Oval Naval and military units were drawn up facing a flag-draped dais on which was a wreath ...' and was attended by 'His Excellency the Governor (Sir Francis Newdegate), accompanied by the Hon. Lady Newdegate...and the Naval Band rendered the National Anthem...'

Eventually both the Fremantle War Memorial on Monument Hill and the State Memorial in Kings Park reached fruition, with the Fremantle Memorial on Monument Hill unveiled on Armistice Day 1928 and the State War Memorial being unveiled and dedicated on 24 November 1929.¹⁰



Unveiling of Fremantle War Memorial
Orloff A, 11.11.1928 FHC Ref: 316

Endnotes

- 1 'Soldiers and Sailors', *Sunday Times*, 28 Nov 1920, p. 5.
- 2 *Great Southern Herald*, 1 Oct 1921, p. 2.
- 3 *West Australian*, 24 April 1922, p. 8.
- 4 *Daily News*, 18 Oct 1922, p.4.
- 5 *Listening Post*, 22 June 1923 p. 13.
- 6 'News and Notes', *West Australian*, 23 Jan 1924, p. 6.
- 7 *Daily News*, 7 Feb 1924, p. 6.
- 8 'City Notes', *Midlands Advertiser*, 18 April 1924, p. 1.
- 9 *West Australian*, 26 April 1924, p. 11.
- 10 *West Australian*, 7 Nov 1929, p. 16.

YOUR COMMITTEE

Executive:

Judith Robison (President)
Allen Graham (Vice Pres.)
Pam Harris (Treasurer)
Kristi McNulty (Secretary)

Committee Members:

Fay Campbell
Tania Heyne
Alan Kelsall
Mattie Turnbull
Beth Powell
Maeve Harvey
Stewart Alger

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Web: <https://fhs.org.au/>