



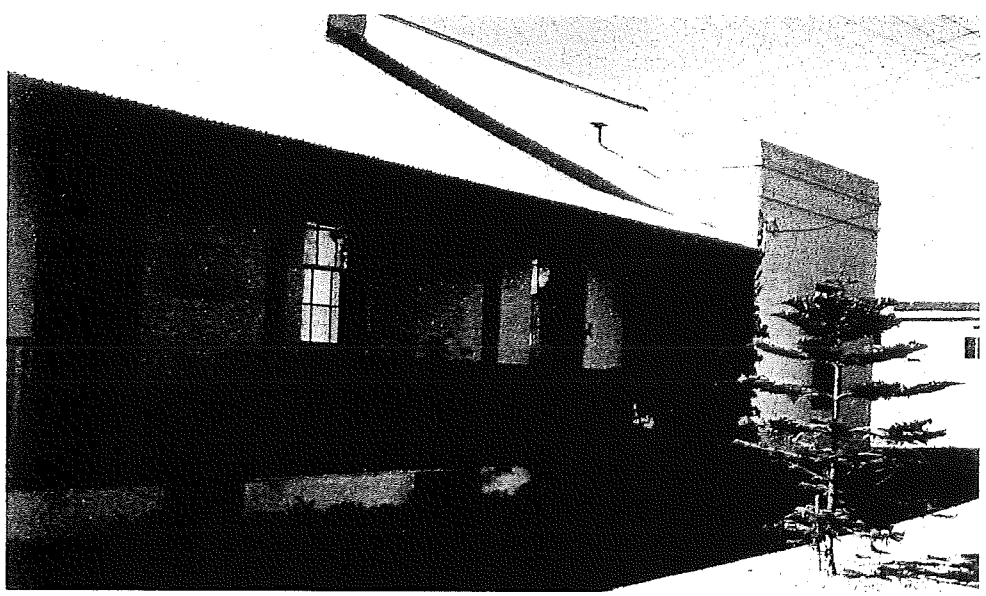
FREMANTLE HISTORY SOCIETY

Established 1994

The Secretary, 24 Fothergill Street,
FREMANTLE WA 6160

**Autumn Edition
2004**

Editors: Ron Davidson, Anne Brake



Corner store pictured in
1979 after the start of
restoration
Courtesy Fremantle
Local History Collection
4085

**HERITAGE WEEK
A CORNER STORE OPENS**

The 1860s corner grocery store, situated where Norfolk Street meets South Terrace, will be open to the public again as the Fremantle History Society's contribution to the Fremantle Heritage Week for 2004. Heritage Week runs from Sunday May 30th to Monday June 7th.

The corner store was originally opened by William Jose, a retired private with the Royal Engineers. The front room of the store, which comes to the street alignment, is now an elegantly furnished living room.

Our president Bob Woollett, who now owns this historic residence, will be giving the public a peek at his interesting house on Saturday June 5th between 2 and 4 pm.

This is one of a series of fascinating events on the Heritage Week program. The Local History collection and the Fremantle History Museum have a series of events which are described elsewhere in the newsletter. There is also Horses in the morning at South Beach; walking tours at the Arts Centre, on the Convict Trail, along the East Fremantle heritage trail, on the Aboriginal trail, and following the Arthur Head maritime trail; and the re-enactment of the landing for settlement near the new Maritime Museum. There is lots more.

Pick up a program and decide what you want to see and when it's on. The information is also available at www.fremantlefestivals.com.

Fremantle Heritage Festival Events at the Fremantle History Museum

Story of Western Australia's First Radio Station

2004 is the 80th anniversary of the opening of 6WF – WA's first radio station. Westralian Farmers Ltd set it up in 1924, and the Station broadcast to the rural community. Richard Rennie will talk about the station's early days.

DATES: Saturday 4, Sunday 5 June

TIMES: 2-3pm

COST: \$4

Richard Rennie (1870 –1936) Fremantle's Rough Diamond

RR was a building contractor, councillor, and rough diamond!

Involved in constructing many of Fremantle's (now Historic) buildings, Richard Rennie left a permanent mark on Fremantle. His descendant, also called Richard Rennie, will give a presentation on his relative's civic work.

DATES: Sunday 30 May, Sunday 6 June

TIMES: 11am –12 noon

COST: \$4

Heritage Gardens of Samson House

The President of the Australian Garden History Society (WA) will reveal the many layers of history in Samson House's gardens. The House was occupied by the Samson Family over a 100-year period. Sir Frederick Samson, Fremantle's longest serving Mayor, was an avid rose grower and the garden is still appreciated by those walking by the Ellen Street property. The presentation will be followed by a tour of the gardens.

DATE: Sunday 06 June

TIME: 2-3.30pm

COST: \$4 – fee includes entry and tour of the house (allow at least 30 minutes) before or after the garden history presentation and tour.

NOTE: Bookings are essential – maximum 20 people

Samson House is located on the corners of Ord and Ellen Streets, Fremantle

Sound and Light Discovery Centre

Richard Rennie's very popular display of old sound and light technology and hands on exhibition has returned to the Museum in the upstairs galleries. Entertaining and educational, the display appeals to people of all ages. School and special interest groups are welcome.

Within these Walls

The Fremantle History Museum and Arts Centre has been home to many different institutions since its original use as a "lunatic" asylum. New interpretive signs – installed for the Heritage Festival - will give an insight into the people who lived and worked at the asylum. Visitors will discover what went on in the rooms that are now galleries and studios. The new signs enhance the Museum's exhibition *Within these Walls* which covers the many uses of the building during its 150-year history.

From Sunday 30th May – ongoing

Fremantle History Museum is located on the corners of Ord and Finnerty Streets, Fremantle

Open Sunday – Friday 10.30am – 4.30pm

Saturday and Public Holidays 1 – 5pm

Tel 9430 7966



COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Executive:

Bob Woollett (President)	9335 7451
Kristy Bizzaca (Vice President)	9361 9915
Beres Coley (Treasurer)	9335 9473
Ken Hopkins (Secretary)	9339 1865

Committee:

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

Fremantle History Society's committee meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month. If you have something you would like discussed at a meeting, please contact one of the members at the numbers shown above.

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



COMING EVENTS

FREMANTLE HARBOUR

Our May meeting promises to be extremely interesting. Patsy Brown will deliver her Ockham's Razor (ABC Radio National) presentation on the history of Fremantle Harbour and put it in the context of other colonial harbours in the world.

You can hear Patsy's presentation on **Tuesday 25 May** at the **Education Centre, Maritime Museum, Cliff St**, starting at **7 pm**.

Patsy's own version of how her talk came about is given below:

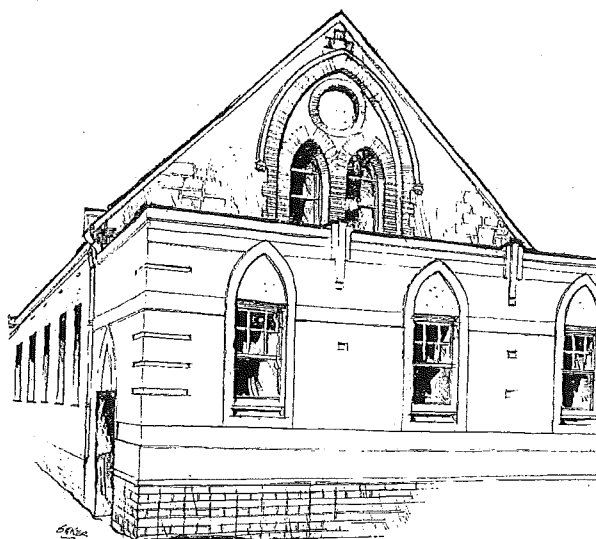
Listening to Ockham's Razor one morning it occurred to me that the history of Fremantle's amazing harbour would make a good story, offering, as it does science and philosophy and also suspense.

I wrote to the ABC with a proposal to which Robyn Williams replied that he would be 'delighted' to do something on Fremantle, as few people knew of its history. He suggested that, as Ockham's Razor was a national program, it would be a good idea to cite other Australian ports as comparisons, even though comparisons may be odious.

In the resulting talk I begin with Captain Stirling and pose the question as to why he chose Perth, and not Fremantle, as the colony's capital. I offer my thoughts on this matter, and would welcome arguments, contradictions or other suggestions.

I speak of the various plans put forward to change the unnavigable river into a port. I took into account Robyn's advice about widening the discussion and in research into maritime history discovered that several colonial ports had problems similar to those in Western Australia. In solving Fremantle's particular difficulties I stress the importance of an unsung hero, namely AJ Diamond. The colourful indictment of the port written by Captain Shaw is also included.

The conclusion of the talk is that Fremantle is arguably the finest man-made harbour in the world, and that the work of CY O'Connor cannot be praised too much.



CHURCH OF CHRIST

History Society members will be exploring rich threads of Fremantle social and architectural history when we visit the Church of Christ in High Street for the June general meeting. The Church was built in 1898. However, its origins go back some years earlier when a small group of young men met at their bachelor quarters in Henry Street and later at the Protestant Hall with a view to establishing a chapel. After they had been organising for four years, Mr F

Illingworth offered them the High Street block of land on condition they raised a similar value in cash within six months. This they did.

After WW I a memorial hall was added to the back of the chapel and in 1939 a front porch was built. This reduced the noise of trams which rattled past the church from 1905 to 1952..

Meet at the Church of Christ, 217 High St, Fremantle on Tuesday 22 June at 7 pm.

ITS OUR 10TH BIRTHDAY

Who can believe that its now 10 years since the Fremantle History Society was originally formed? Well it is actually a couple of months early, but it seemed fitting to recognise this important milestone at our AGM. As part of the evening's activities, Di Davidson, who managed to rally troops together to establish the Society, will give a snap shot of the history of our Society and maybe suggest a few ideas for our future.

This year's annual general meeting will be held at the Victoria Hall and will also include a presentation on the history of the hall as well as an opportunity to have a good look around. Recent conservation work won a prize in the heritage awards at last year's Fremantle Heritage Festival and members will get a better understanding of the nature of the work during the night's activities.

A delightful supper will be provided to help celebrate this important occasion. Don't miss it.

Victoria Hall, Tuesday 27 July at 7 pm.



MEETING REPORTS

WANDER AROUND WOODMAN'S POINT

Those who did not get to the Fremantle History Society's February meeting at the old Woodman's Point Quarantine Station missed a treat. It was a perfect summer

evening when CALM staff member Tony Edelston and historian Wendy Durant gave us a talk about the station which opened in 1876 and covered eight hectares, and closed in 1979 with fifty-three hectares. They then took us on a tour of the site. We wandered through a collection of buildings and equipment. There was the wonderful woodwork without nails in the dining room which held more than one hundred diners. The woodwork was mainly done by ship's carpenters and it attracted the admiration from all our would-be carpenters

Particularly interesting were the rows of showers which came in for heavy use during the influenza pandemic of 1919-1924. At the end of each row of showers was a bench where travellers placed their belongings to be fumigated in a large autoclave which is still in top condition. By the 1950s thousands of European immigrants were sent through the three stages of showering along with their belongings, as part of a campaign against foot-and-mouth disease. The showers must have been a chilling reminder of concentration camps for those with Jewish origins.

Later in the fading light we headed through tuart trees and rare coastal scrub to reach the cemetery. Suddenly we were confronted by a granite spire which marked the grave of Sister Rosa O'Shane, one of two staff who died from influenza in 1919. Closer to the beach we examined the crematorium. A day or two later, a friend told me that, in the seventies, the crematorium was put to another use. Kids from Fremantle and the surrounding areas crept through the barbed-wire fences which separated the surrounding explosive dumps from the Quarantine Station and also lined the beach. They caught snapper, skipjack and big whiting, which swam in to feed on the mussel racks put there by the CSIRO to monitor heavy metals.

The kids needed a reliable place in which to hide when the guards made their frequent patrols of the area. You've guessed it - the crematorium.

When the Quarantine Station was about to be opened in 1876, the Fremantle *Herald* thundered against the decision. The site was too close to Fremantle and the strong prevailing winds would blow 'pestilence' over the unfortunate residents.

We must come back to Woodman's Point again - with a bigger crowd next time. It's a special place.

MANY YEARS A THIEF

There was a good crowd at the Education Centre, Maritime Museum, Cliff Street, for the March general meeting, *Many Years a Thief: the story of John Gavin*. David Hutchison told the sad story of Gavin, the first European to be executed in Western Australia. He also read extracts from a novella he has written based on the last days of Gavin, one of the Parkhurst boys. Andrew Gill attended the meeting and provided a number of discussion points. Andrew has made a professional specialty of the boys from the Parkhurst Reformatory, who were brought to the colony in the 1840s for rehabilitation. He argues they were our first convicts.

LEIGHTON BATTERY VISIT

Ken Hopkins has provided us with a detailed account of the very interesting visit to Leighton Battery. The not very well known complex is normally open to the public on the first Sunday of each month and is well worth the trouble and small cost. Groups with special interest like ours can have special tours arranged at other times.

Sunday 18th April was a very pleasant autumn morning in the Boundary Rd car park even as the group of around 16 Fremantle History Society members patiently awaited the arrival of an eminent person who had actually arranged the tour. Eventually Bob arrived with a country guest in tow and we entered the World War II tunnel complex associated with the Leighton Battery. A short description in the main rooms at the surface preceded us splitting into two groups to enter the tunnels. Those

rooms have many memorabilia and models of the original guns.

The two groups each led by an experienced guide from the Artillery Historical Society started at opposite ends of the 400 metres of tunnels and passed each other in the middle about 45 minutes later. The complex was constructed from 1939 to 1942 and formed part of the defence of Fremantle Harbour, forming a crossed triangular system with the Rottneest battery and the guns on the harbour moles.

Surprisingly the tunnels are quite easy to negotiate even for the less active. There are some stairs which in places are moderately steep but not a real problem. Certainly there was no evident feeling of claustrophobia. At one stage we were about 18 metres below the surface. The only slight problem was seeing what the guide was actually describing at some points because of the restricted space. In one place the tunnel has been left in its raw unlined state through the limestone. Roots from the vegetation on the hill above, not growing there during the World War II days, enter through the roof. Elsewhere the tunnels are lined with brick and the rooms have wooden ceilings and huge wooden support beams.

As well as the observation post with peep slots at the surface level and deep ammunition storage places, the complex includes small stand-easy rooms where there are tiers of bunks about as closely packed as on a naval ship and a first aid room with a concrete table for stretchers. A mock-up of what the observation post once may have been like is included in the complex.

The two ammunition rooms have remnants of the anti-static rubber compound that once covered the floor and pictures of the men in felt boots attending to the shells and cordite propellant packs. There are several examples of shells and many well captioned photographs and a model explaining the construction of the enormous gun barrels. A vertical shaft which had cranks is a restored version of how the shells got to the surface guns from the deep ammunition rooms. In

another vertical shaft a large fan draws down air for ventilation.

The guns that are actually there are ones similar to the original ones that were removed for scrap in the 1960s after decommissioning. Those guns could fire a 100 pound projectile over half the distance to Rottnest. The rangefinder and positioning systems for getting the guns on target was also quite interesting all pre-computer technology of course.

The stories of how the complex was rediscovered in an abandoned, filled-up and vandalised state and set aside as the open space for the Buckland Hill housing development was also quite absorbing and brought home the fact that people after the war wanted to get rid of the memories, not preserve them. The artillery history association has restored the complex very well, and photographs show how the tunnels were in the pre-restoration state. There are further plans for audio mock-ups of the sounds in the near future.



A DOUBTING THOMAS COMES TO 'FREEMANTLE'

Bob Woollett

Just after writing the article about the spelling and pronunciation of Fremantle for the last edition of the newsletter, I was lent a book entitled *The land of gold*, published in 1896, in which the name of the port was spelled with a double e. Subtitled *The narrative of a journey through the West Australian goldfields in the autumn of 1895*, the book was written by Julius M Price, Special Artist Correspondent of the *Illustrated London News*, and includes a chapter which describes a visit to 'Freemantle' with the aim of inspecting "Mr O'Connor's harbour scheme".

The author travelled down the River Swan from Perth in the government steam launch, accompanied by Mr Dillon Bell, the engineer in charge of works and, in the ornate style of the period, speaks of enjoying the trip "in the bright Australian sunshine with the river

banks clothed in their perennial verdure". After a brief stop at Rocky Bay to observe the quarrying and blasting of the limestone being used in the construction of the harbour breakwaters, they passed under a "curious old wooden bridge which resembled some large centipede" and "came in sight of the broad expanse of water which it is proposed to convert into a spacious harbour".

The author was impressed with the scale of the project but was concerned about the slow rate of progress. It seemed to him that little had been achieved in the three years since work had commenced. The northern breakwater was only half finished and the one to the south had not even been started. Picking up, one suspects, on local criticism, he goes on to express serious doubt about the scheme's basic feasibility, quoting seafarer's dislike of the recent "encircled western coast" and questioning whether Mr O'Connor's plans for the harbour had taken into account "the ever increasing dimensions of the modern steamships". After watching a couple of torpedoes and two or three dynamite charges being exploded at the rock bar stretching across the mouth of the river, the party set off on the return journey to Perth and the writer was left to ponder in sceptical mode "if ever this now so quiet and deserted water course would become the animated highway the colony so fondly hopes and whether 'Freemantle' would ever be the port of Australia".

On a brighter note and in an interesting postscript to his visit, the author describes how, on their way back to Perth, they "stopped at a charming little riverside resort called 'Osborne' – the Osborne Hotel on Freshwater Bay – where he was the guest at a banquet given by the Press of Western Australia "which would have done honour even to a London chef" and which in the true manner of the time, consisted of seven courses with a choice of four entrees, five "joints" and eight sweets!



**THE ROYAL WESTERN AUSTRALIAN
AFFILIATED SOCIETIES' CONFERENCE
9 – 11 SEPTEMBER, 2005**

Our offer to host the above event in Fremantle for about 100 delegates from around the state has been accepted and a working group has been formed to start planning for the weekend. It is hoped that every member of the FHS will be available to help with arrangements on at least one day of the three days, so please make a careful note of the dates in your long term diary.

The aim is for the working group to have the basics in place by the end of this year and then help establish and hand over to a Conference Committee which will oversee the final arrangements and run the event. Anyone interested in serving on that committee as a co-ordinator or acting as an assistant in some way is asked to contact Bob Woollett on 9335 7451 in due course.

Areas of responsibility will include publicity, sponsorship, registrations, conference folder, secretarial and typing, accommodation liaison, catering (including the Friday evening reception, lunch and morning and afternoon teas and conference dinner) and the conference program (including Saturday's talks and RWAHS business and Sunday's visits and walks to places of historical interest).

In the meantime, if you have any suggestions or ideas on any of these aspects, do not hesitate to contact one of the working group – Kristy Bizzaca (9361 9915), Jacqui Sherriff (9472 1436), David Hutchison (9335 1594), Geoff Higham (9310 1186) or Bob Woollett (9335 7451).



**ACTIVISM – ANIMAL WELFARE IN
FREMANTLE**

Community Access Gallery
Fremantle History Museum

People Against Cruelty in Animal Transport (PACAT) is celebrating its 10th anniversary.

To mark the occasion they developed an exhibition which was opened by the Hon Jim Scott, MLC and is on show at the Fremantle Museum until the end of April.

Activism gives an insight into the group's concerns with various aspects of the live animal export trade and explores animal welfare, economic alternatives and environmental issues. The main theme of the exhibition is 'action' and highlights the various activities of the group, its supporters and the general public – over 100,000 Australians have signed a petition calling for an enquiry into the trade, the second largest ever tabled in Federal Parliament.

The exhibition combines local history with visual art and includes work by artists Anne Neil, Yvette Watt and Willem Van Dordrecht.



**MICK MCGINLEY - WE'LL
BE MISSING YOU**

Ron Davidson

Mick McGinley lived at a number of addresses but - as he loved to tell Fremantle History Society members - he always regarded Fremantle as home. This meant he would regularly take the long bus trip from Dianella to attend our monthly meetings even when he seemed sick. Mick died in January and these meetings won't be the same again.

Mick McGinley was born in 1926 and grew up among the struggling families of South Fremantle during the Depression. Like so many Fremantle Irish-Australians he went to Christian Brothers in Ellen Street and barracked for South Fremantle. Many of South's post-war football heroes were at CBC with him in the thirties.

After serving with the RAAF in New Guinea, Mick went to Canberra with the Customs Service. Then he decided to become a high school teacher and worked at Cyril Jackson and Perth Modern. He retired from teaching when his wife Daphne was diagnosed with leukaemia and he cared for her full-time. Daphne died in 1987.

Mick became a fervent advocate of republicanism after the sacking of the Whitlam Government in 1975. In January 1982 at the Subiaco Library, Mick organised what was to become the first meeting of the Australian Republican Movement. It was eight years later that Malcolm Turnbull, Thomas Keneally, Neville Wran and others in the East went to set up an Australian Republican Movement under the same name. They were surprised to find that one existed already.

Mick campaigned vigorously for the republican cause during the 1999 referendum. He was saddened by the loss but said that, if he didn't survive until the next referendum, he wanted to be raised from his grave so he could cast his vote - for republicanism, of course.

State Cabinet Minister, John Kobelke, delivered the eulogy for Mick at Karrakatta Cemetery. 'Mick was', he said, 'a remarkable man whose love and friendship left an imprint on all who knew him'. We'd like to think so.



For Your Diary

Tuesday 25 May, 7 pm: Patsy Brown will deliver her Ockham's Razor presentation on **Fremantle Harbour** at the **Education Centre, Maritime Museum, Cliff St Fremantle**

Tuesday 22 June, 7pm: another in the Society's visits to historic churches in Fremantle. Meet at **Church of Christ, 217 High St, Fremantle.**

Tuesday, 27 July, 7 pm. Join in the celebrations of our **10th birthday** at the **AGM.** Festivities will be held at **Victoria Hall, High St, Fremantle.**



EMAIL REMINDER SYSTEM

Just before the Leighton Battery tour we tried the first experimental email reminder for meetings.

Those people who had provided an email address with their application were contacted in a group mailing. About 45 emails went out and 9 undeliverable returns came back. We presume those email addresses have changed, or have not been entered correctly into the membership database.

Any member who did not receive one of these reminders and would like to be added to the reminder list can email the Secretary: hopkinsk@ozemail.com.au



FROM THE LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTION

Loretta O'Reilly

The Properties Department of the Council has just given the Local History Section about five hundred maps/plans to add to our collection. We also acquired a bigger and higher map cabinet to store them in! We are currently processing these treasures and are excited about the prospect of being able to provide more information with greater accuracy than before.

The Fremantle Heritage Festival is going to feature largely in the planned activities for this area. We have a photographic exhibition of past winners of the Fremantle Awards over the years, a WAGS day when we will have volunteers from the WA Genealogical Society from 10.00am until 2.00pm helping people with their genealogical queries, an oral history workshop and an aboriginal family history day. These are all happening during the Fremantle Heritage Festival week running from May 30th until June 8th. Watch out for the programme to follow these events and come along! All are free!

A year long campaign is currently being run by LISWA to bring to the attention of the public the plight of the declining book allocation and funding to Public Libraries.

A series of advertisements on television, a letter writing campaign to local members, displays in the library, different themes adopted each month in the libraries, petition signing and stickers for car bumpers etc., are only a few of the activities being employed to generate awareness of the current reduced support of our library system. Do write a letter to your local politician or the Minister for the Arts so that our message gets home to them!



LET THE HERITAGE DEBATE BEGIN ...

Differences in opinion regarding the worth or otherwise of saving Fremantle's built environment go back some time as described here in an extract from JK Hitchcock's *The History of Fremantle*, 1929.

There are few in Fremantle to-day who would recall the town of fifty years ago. So strong was the infusion of new blood during the early years of the gold rush, and so many of the pioneers have passed away, that, to those who remain, the town of those bygone days belonged to a different age as it belonged to a different century.

It is natural enough that little of the old town has survived. There would be little of it that would be tolerated to-day, and it is scarcely a matter of regret that the new has almost obliterated the old. For many, however, it is not a matter for great rejoicing to see ancient landmarks disappear under the Juggernaut of progress.



SHOW ME A SIGN

As promised in the last newsletter, we continued to bring you text from the developing signage program around Fremantle as part of our celebrations of the Year of the Built Environment. We hope this encourages you to go and see the signs in situ for yourself as they are wonderfully illustrated with historic photographs and maps.

location: Market Street / Pioneer Park facing north

early map showing "Market Place"

A "market place" was originally intended for where the railway station is now. The market never eventuated, but this explains the origin of the street name.

photo: 8164 Fremantle City Library

Fremantle Railway Station, opened 1907

The railway line from Fremantle to Guildford via Perth opened in 1881 and the original Fremantle station was located at the end of Mouat Street. The present station was opened in 1907 to serve the new harbour (1897) and the growing town (which had been moving eastwards since the 1890s). It is built of Donnybrook stone and brick and has interesting architectural features, including a decorative archway with a semi-circular fanlight and sculptured black and white swans.

photo: 1429 Fremantle City Library

Fremantle Railway Station

The station was surrounded by neat and attractive lawns and gardens and a fleet of horse drawn cabs carried travellers to further destinations.

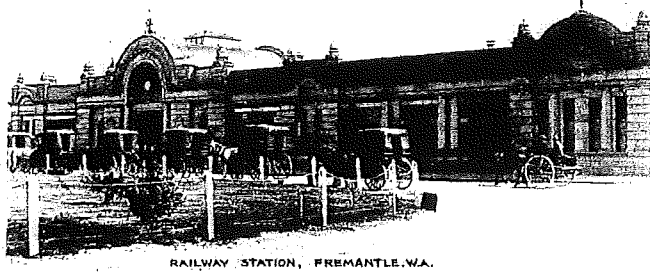
The State government closed the Fremantle rail line in 1979, however public pressure forced its reopening in 1983. The station was renovated prior to the 1986-87 Americas Cup yachting challenge.

photo: West Australian Newspapers

Market Street and the railway station 1920s

The drinking fountain and horse trough, next to the pump house (built 1912), were provided by John Taylor of London as a memorial to his two sons who died in Western Australia. The terracotta memorial was prefabricated at the Royal Doulton factory in Lambeth, England, and shipped to Fremantle in 1905.

"Tinny" Thomas's ginger beer stand (visible in the photo beyond the pump house) provided customers with a cool refreshing drink. After a hard day's work on the wharf, lumpers enjoyed a pint of this brew, which was said to have its own special "kick".



c 1910, Fremantle LHC 1429

location: Market Street / Pioneer Park facing south

photo: 5-6 Fremantle Society, neg sheet D row 2

Market Street c1918

Most of the buildings in this photo remain today. The Post Office opened in 1907, renovated 1984. Note the "Moorish" appearance of the building on the corner at 2-6 Market Street, built 1916.

Trams ran in Fremantle from 1905 to 1952.

Pioneer Park (to your right) was opened in 1940. Previously it had been the site of "Uglieland", a fairground set up in 1922 by the Ugly Men's Voluntary Workers Association to raise funds for widows and children of servicemen killed in World War 1. From 1936 to 1940 the site was used for open air pictures.

location: Market Street / High Street facing west

photo: 4-8 Fremantle Society, neg sheet I row 4

High Street 1894

High Street in 1894 had substantial limestone buildings with verandahs and decorative wrought iron lace balconies. The streets were lit with gas lamps (electric lighting was introduced in 1905) and

dominated by pedestrians and horse drawn traffic.

Little remains of this scene today. High Street was extensively rebuilt between 1890 and 1912, creating the character that is uniquely Fremantle today. Only the Roundhouse (1830) survives to remind us of the early days of the colony.

photo: no. 1890 Fremantle City Library

High Street, construction of tramlines 1905

Jarrah wood blocks in the roadway had to be removed for the construction of tram tracks in 1905. The blocks had been laid in 1897-1898; the first time they had been used in Western Australia. The remaining blocks were finally replaced by a concrete roadway in 1954, although some are occasionally still dug up during road works.

During the 1890s, building activity in High Street accelerated due to the discovery of gold in Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie. Hotels, shops and other businesses were established to cater for immigrants flocking to Fremantle on their way to the "fields". The palatial three storey (plus attic) National Hotel was built in 1902 on the site of an earlier hotel of the same name.

photo: no. 1657 Fremantle City Library

High Street c1920

Most of these buildings remain today, however their verandahs were removed in the 1950s (because they were considered unsafe and unsightly) and generally replaced with cantilevered awnings. In recent times, a number of buildings around the city have reinstated their verandahs.

(Many thanks to Ian James of the City of Fremantle for his prompt and generous assistance in bringing you this information on the sign project)