

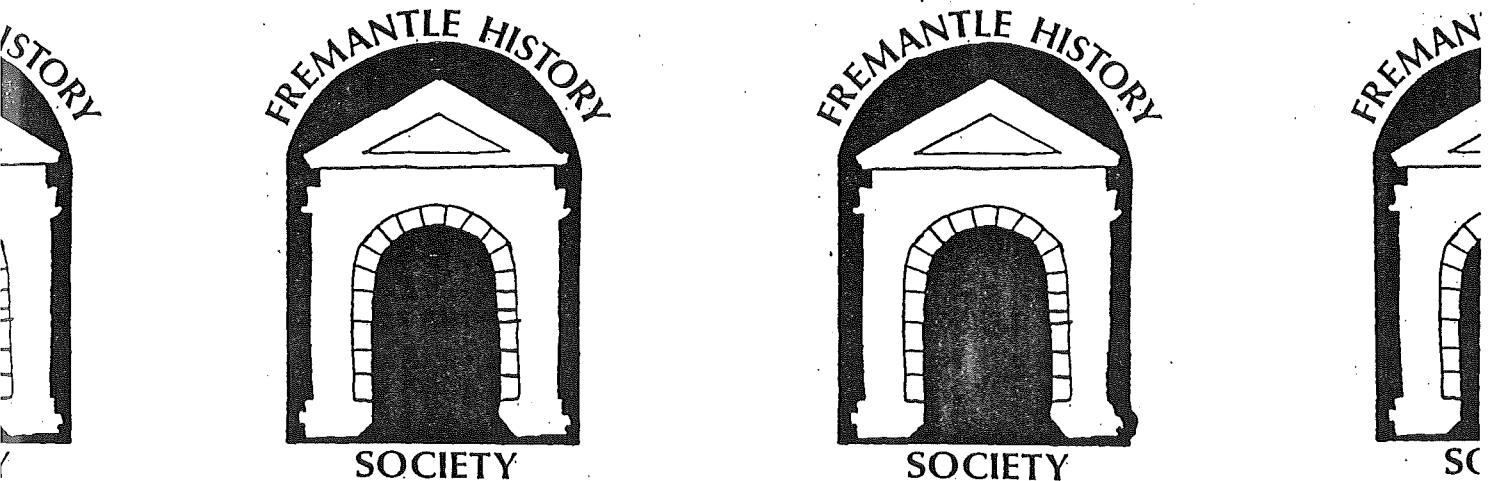
⊗ Fremantle History Society Inc ⊗

Established 1994

The Secretary

Fremantle Prison, The Terrace, Fremantle 6160, Ph: 335 9473

Autumn Edition, 1996



AT LAST! THE FREMANTLE HISTORY SOCIETY HAS A LOGO

Some time ago we asked a class of Art students at the John Curtin Senior High School to take on the project of designing a logo for the Fremantle History Society.

A number of interesting designs resulted and a Selection Committee was given the difficult task of evaluating them and deciding on the winning entry. After much debate the logo pictured above was chosen; its clean, elegant lines and many-layered "gateway" symbolism were considered most appropriate for our needs.

The winning design was the work of Melinda Ricci. Melinda wins an inscribed copy of *A Place of Consequence* by R Reece and R Pascoe, as well as a First Prize certificate and a year's free membership of the Fremantle History Society.

CONGRATULATIONS MELINDA!

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The following are members of the committee of the FHS

Dianne Davidson	430 6096
Elaine Berry	336 1906
Margaret McPherson	337 2668
Anne Brake	(wk) 335 9473
Suzan Miles	339 3145
Deborah Tout-Smith	(wk) 427 2725
Michael Seats	335 2890
Bob Reece	335 7892
Sally Rodgers	339 7922
Lorraine Stevens	(wk) 430 2266
Ron Davidson	430 6096
Milton Jones	337 2331

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 on the numbers indicated.

General meetings of the Society are held on the 4th Tuesday of the month. Details of these meetings are found in your newsletter and reminders are placed in the local press.



New members

Melinda Ricci
James Maxwell Cook
Josephine Outram
City of Fremantle
Robert Besford
Natasha Georgiou
G Warren Smith (ACT)
Joe Dockray (USA)
Graham Nowland
Jacqui Sherriff

Robert Besford has the honour of becoming the Society's 100th member. To recognise this important milestone, Robert has been presented with a certificate. Currently working at the Fremantle Prison cataloguing their collection and assisting in general curatorial activities, Robert has lived and worked in the Fremantle area since 1955. His family migrated to Australia from England in 1952. They lived firstly in Victoria before settling in Fremantle. Rob attended the Fremantle Boys School from 1954 - 56 and moved to John Curtin Senior High to complete his schooling in 1957. His various positions have included R P North and Co and William Crosby. Congratulations Robert!



The Society's membership is not only growing in size but also in global coverage! We now have 3 members resident in the United States and one from the Australian Capital Territory. All have either lived or worked in Fremantle at some time and retain a deep affection for the place. The Society's newsletter provides them with interesting information on the history of Fremantle helping them to 'keep in touch'.



COMING EVENTS:

The place no one wanted to know - the hidden history of the Asylum buildings

For many years the history of the Asylum has been ignored. Recent research has shown that as well as being an Asylum the building has had a

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rich and chequered past including use as an old women's home and headquarters for the American forces during the second world war.

Margaret McPherson will give us an account of some of that history within the walls where it actually happened. The meeting will be held in the Fremantle Arts Centre, Corner Ord and Finnerty St Fremantle on **Sunday 26 May at 2.00 pm. Note change in time**

Growing up in a Fremantle Pub

Well known Fremantle personality, raconteur and illustrator Alec Smith will entertain us with memories of his childhood in the West End of Fremantle. Alec's family ran the Fremantle Hotel in Alec's formative years and he has many stories to tell of the town and its characters.

He will share these with us at the WA Maritime Museum meeting room, Cliff St, 7.00 pm, Tuesday 25 June.

AGM

The Society's second AGM will be held on 23 July at 7.00 pm in the meeting room at the Fremantle City Council Chambers (enter via stairs in St John's Square).

Members are encouraged to have a say in how the Society's run by nominating for a place on the executive or the committee. Nomination forms are attached. Please return to the Secretary on or before 25 June (nominations can be handed in at the June meeting)



MEETING REPORTS

The Army Museum of WA

Phillip Griffiths was employed to prepare a Conservation Plan of the Artillery Barracks, Fremantle. He presented his findings at this joint meeting of the Army Museum and the Fremantle History Society in February. Phil's research included a comprehensive survey of the changing uses of the buildings and additions to the site.

Members were also invited to view the various displays in the buildings which included a very moving representation of life in POW camps. Members who have not yet visited the Barracks are encouraged to do so.

Have your own say

This general meeting, held on 26 March, produced a wealth of suggestions about future activities for the Society. These fell into three main categories:

* **Tours:** Organised tours for members to Fremantle pubs, schools and aboriginal sites were suggested, as well as trips to other places of interest such as Guildford and Rottnest Island. In addition members thought some general meetings could take the form of meals at various historic sites or other venues of interest.

* **Research Projects:** Many fascinating subjects for research came up, including histories of entertainment (cinemas, theatres, dance halls etc), businesses, Masonic Lodges and other clubs, burial sites, customs and shipping, schools, Jewish settlement,

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and individual Fremantle streets, their houses and occupants. Members were also interested in finding out about Fremantle personalities/local identities, Fremantle ghosts, changes in the Fremantle economy in the last 30 years and Aboriginal links with Fremantle.

* Talks: Several possible topics were put forward for speakers at forthcoming meetings. Members wanted to hear about the architectural styles of Fremantle buildings, Fremantle pubs, and the history of the Jewish people in Fremantle. They were also interested in learning more about Pietro Porcelli, the Italian sculptor responsible for the statue of C Y O'Connor.

Panel discussions were a popular suggestion, with sport in Fremantle and personal recollections of life here proposed as possible themes.

We found that some members have taken up various projects on their own initiative - Jan Green is interested in the history of the Base hospital, for example, and Tony and Lesley Gibbs are doing some research on the houses in their street. If you have a particular research interest, let us know about it; there may be others interested in the same area, or members who have information which may be useful.

If you would like to add any topics/suggestions/ideas to the above, or wish to particularly endorse one of the suggested projects, please fill in the attached form and send it to us. **WE WANT TO PROVIDE ACTIVITIES IN WHICH MEMBERS ARE GENUINELY INTERESTED!**

Gateways Project

At the Society's April meeting Di Shaw of Working Bodies shared some of the many interesting stories she has uncovered as part of her research into the history of the Fremantle Port. Di has been engaged as a consultant by the Fremantle City Council to do the groundwork for a project to commemorate the centenary of the port. The final outcome of the project will be a series of artworks located throughout the port precinct.

The main themes of Di's research include migration and work at the port. Members were moved by the some of the stories and expressed the hope that Di's research would eventually become available for general access through the Fremantle Local History collection.

For Your Diary

Sunday 26 May - The place no one wanted to know - the hidden history of the Asylum Buildings. Margaret McPherson will present an interesting and colourful history of the uses of the old Asylum buildings. Fremantle Arts Centre **2.00 pm**.

Tuesday 25 June - Growing up in a Fremantle pub. Alec Smith will entertain us with his memories of childhood in one of Fremantle's pubs. Maritime Museum, Cliff St, 7.00 pm.

Tuesday 23 July - AGM. Nominate now for your position on the committee or the executive. Meeting Room, Fremantle Council Chambers, enter from St John's Square, 7.00 pm.

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HISTORY SOCIETY TOUR OF DEFENCE SITES

Margaret McPherson

Two tours took place on Sunday 10 March to various defence sites in Fremantle, and both were very successful thanks to the members who supported this new venture.

There was a small hiccup in the first tour when we found that a triathlon was in progress in Fremantle and our route was blocked off. However, Michael Seats and Robert Woollett swiftly reorganised their thinking and overcame that difficulty.

Michael and Robert gave talks during the tours, and these had been exceptionally well prepared: comments from the passengers were full of praise. We were fortunate also to have Des Lambert, the official historian of the Anti Aircraft Battalions, with us as a special guest and he offered his knowledge of the sites freely, adding to the interest. Starting from Arthur Head and the West End of Fremantle, the tour continued to the Prison, Scotsman's Hill and the Monument before moving on to Finnerty Street.

At the Fremantle Arts Centre and the History Museum tour participants learned about the American occupation of the site during World War II. Both Deb Tout-Smith, curator of the History Museum, and Melissa Harpley, co-ordinator of the Arts Centre, had staff organised to assist us in our tour of both buildings and their support was much appreciated. A stop was allowed for

refreshments at the Arts Centre and this was taken advantage of by thirsty travellers and hoarse guides.

From the Arts Centre the tour continued to the Artillery Barracks in Burt Street. What a wonderful group of people! We were given a personal tour, which included the newly opened trenches - they alone are worth a visit. The Prisoner-of-War gallery is also excellent and renders a poignant message. Milton Jones was on hand to greet us at the Barracks and explain some of the history before we entered the building.

Thanks must go to Michael, Robert and Milton for their unstinting effort over several months; to the Fremantle City Council who were very supportive, especially Peter Fogliani who helped with our brochure; and to all the members who came along on our inaugural tour and brought their friends.

We have been asked to provide further tours, and to include other areas. August has been tentatively set as a possible time for this, but we will let you know the exact date in plenty of time.



PHOTOGRAPHIC DISPLAY

"Fremantle During World War II" was the theme of a display held in the Fremantle Library during March. Organised by Society members and Library staff, it featured photographs, oral history extracts and war memorabilia. Items such as ration cards, aircraft/shipping identification books and instructions for air raid wardens were kindly loaned by Margaret McPherson

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and Mick McGinley. The display sparked a great deal of interest and was featured in the *Fremantle Gazette*.

Below are some extracts from oral history interviews conducted last year and used in the display:

Declaration of War:

"On the night that it did come over there was a hushed silence in the theatre. I do not think anybody really thought it would happen. We were all hoping it would go away. Unfortunately it did not.

Everybody just did not seem to be able to think clearly for a long time. I think it took a long time before it struck home that it was really on.

I felt the whole world was on my shoulders at the time. I felt not upset, but it was the unknown, I had never experienced a war. I did not know what was going to happen. My father and mother had been through World War I so they had some idea, but I did not have any. It was the unknown quality that frightened me."

Precautions

"Mainly blackouts. We had to blackout all the windows. Mum dyed curtains and put them up. Everyone was frightened that they would be in trouble with the wardens if even a clink of light was showing. I do recall one little instance, I had a little kitten called "Blackout". I used to go around the yard calling "Blackout, Blackout." I'm sure people living nearby thought someone had gone quite mad."

Rationing

"We had tickets. We would buy sheeps' heads, lambs fries. The fishermen would come to the front door and we would buy snapper. We would buy these sorts of things to stretch the rations.

My children and pupils from Beaconsfield School had penfriends in England. They would send food parcels every now and again through the school. Sugar was one of the main things they wanted.

Yes, we were rationed but we were not hard up for coupons. My mother was a very good manager. We always had cooked meals. We never came home to bread and jam or bread and dripping like I hear other people say. We always had a big pot of soup for lunch or dinner and a cooked tea and sweets."

The Americans

*"They were stationed at Hillcrest Maternity Hospital and the old people's home. Each family more or less adopted an American, we adopted two. I can still remember their names, Royal Dana Decamp and Earl Bates Miles. We thought their names weird, still to each his own. I did a lot of knitting, socks, pullovers, balaclavas, mittens, jumpers and children's jumpers and at one time made Dana a pullover and he gave me a book, *The Saint Omnibus*. Being an avid reader I was thrilled to bits. My mother was a tailoress and used to do sewing and alterations for the Americans and somehow she ended up with a pure silk parachute and so us girls wore pure silk underwear. The Americans also gave us Coke and we put pennies in it to*

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see them become all shiny and new looking. I never liked the stuff and still don't."

Scare

"In 1942/43 there was a raider offshore, and we really felt frightened. The air raid siren went off in the middle of the afternoon. I was at Lamings at the time and I told old Laming I would have to go home.

The Americans were here then. As I was walking home an open-backed vehicle flew past me with Americans on the back with rifles in their hands and they were waving them about and shouting "Get off the streets, get off the streets". I kept walking because I was an official (an air raid warden) and was going to be on duty. When I got home, my mother was in the dining room and my sister was down from the country to have a baby. My mother had made her get under the table, this solid table we had and placed a blanket over the top of that.

That was the only time I felt frightened. We were all frightened, we really thought we were going to be attacked."

End of the War

"When we heard the wonderful news that the war was over we were ecstatic, full of joy and thankfulness that it was all over. I was grateful that I was going to see my husband. My husband's regiment was one of the last to leave the islands. He was getting malaria a lot and on the way home they had to take him off at Port Pirie and they didn't think he

was going to live because he was very ill with malaria.

I was down at the station waiting for him with all the other wives and children, when two of his mates came up and told me what had happened. Of course, I was brokenhearted, very, very upset, but again I was anxious he would be made well and brought home. It must have been three to four months before I saw him because he was such a sick man. He came home a very sick man and had malaria for many years even to the day he died."



FREMANTLE STUDIES DAY REPORT

Deborah Tout-Smith

The Fremantle Studies Day was successfully conducted at the Fremantle History Museum on the afternoon of 4 May. Over 60 people attended.

The programme opened with a fascinating paper by Bill Latter on Xavier Herbert's novel *Disturbing Element*. Part of the story is set in Fremantle in the early years of the century. Bill examined the novel's links to actual people and events, drawing attention to corroborative evidence such as police records and court cases. Slides were used to illustrate places mentioned in the novel, including the Ratazzi residence, home of one of Herbert's girl friends and now the Flying Angel Mission for Seamen.

The second paper, presented by Tony Fletcher, explored the Fremantle waterfront during the second world war. The broad-ranging paper included

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details of troop ship convoy arrivals and departures during 1940 and 1941, the arrival of refugee ships from Asia after Japan entered the war and correspondence between the Fremantle Harbour Trust and various military authorities about diverse matters including the implications of the introduction of government control of the waterfront from 1943-4, the efforts and productivity of the Fremantle lumpers during the War. Tony also examined the fatal shooting of unarmed civilians by military personnel on the Fremantle waterfront during 1942.

Following afternoon tea Ann Delroy provided an intriguing insight into women's work at the Arnott, Mills and Ware biscuit factory from the turn of the century until its closure in 1992. Issues including the gender division of labour and its shift during wartime and women's 'double day' were illustrated by fascinating photographs from the 1930s, 50s, 70s and 80s.

The theme of women's work was continued in the final paper of the day presented by Patricia Brown. Entitled 'She eateth not the bread of idleness: Women and Work in Fremantle in the changing world between 1900 and 1940', the paper explored the changing possibilities for women in the workforce and the extent to which these possibilities were accompanied by an increasing empowerment of women. It considered the relevance of education, women's place in the family as an economic unit and the attitude of employers and the wider society to women in the workforce.

The afternoon was concluded with a discussion of future directions for the Fremantle Studies Day. It was agreed that the Studies Day should become an annual event and that a half day on Saturday was a successful format. However, it was suggested that an optional tour or other event might also be offered to form a full day program. It was also proposed that a panel discussion might be included when the Day becomes a larger more established event.

Some consideration was given to the idea that a theme should be set for future Studies Days. Suggestions included voluntary organisations and the waterfront, the latter of particular relevance in 1997, the hundredth anniversary of the opening of the harbour in Fremantle. Suggestions for speakers included at least one person from local industry, someone with first hand experience and someone representing other aspects of life in Fremantle such as an artist or performer.

Di Davidson extended thanks to the speakers and the chairs, David Hutchison and Anne Atkinson, as well as Margaret Anderson for providing the venue and the working group for organising a successful day.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR East Fremantle calling...

Dear Ed

The Town of East Fremantle will be publishing a history of the town next

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year as part of its centenary celebrations.

A committee of three councillors is overseeing the project and is currently examining more closely the work of three writers who have been short listed for the project.

The book will encompass key aspects of East Fremantle's history including its social history. It is hoped to include many anecdotes from the town's long standing residents.

If members have any information which may be relevant to the project or any other memorabilia (photographs, letter, etc) relating to the town could they forward them to the Council at the Town Hall on Canning Highway.

Robyn Travers
Centenary Book Project

Dear Ed

The Town of East Fremantle will be celebrating its centenary on 2 April 1997 and is in the process of gathering information on what life was like during those years. The Council hopes to build a display of old photographs and history showing the development of the town over the past 100 years.

Residents and members of the public are asked to check to see what photographs or memorabilia they have showing streetscapes, buildings, sporting activities or cultural events in East Fremantle. Council is prepared to have suitable photographs copied and included in the centenary display. The

original would be returned to the owners.

For further details on this project and other centenary events that are planned for 1997 your members could contact Mr Vic Andrich or Mrs Hilary Hodgson at the Town of East Fremantle Council office, 135 Canning Highway, East Fremantle on 3391577.

Vic Andrich
Town of East Fremantle



JIGSAW COLUMN

Calling all the jet-setters out there! Have you spotted any interesting signs in your travels? If so, drop us a line and we will include them in the next newsletter.

Here are some examples:

In a Zurich hotel: "Because of the impropriety of entertaining a guest of the opposite sex in the bedroom it is suggested that the lobby be used for that purpose."

On the door of a hotel in Moscow: "If this is your first visit to Moscow, you are welcome to it."

In a Paris hotel lift: "Please leave your values at the front desk."

Last but not least, in a Bucharest hotel lobby a sign notified guests that: "The lift is being fixed for the next day. During that time we regret you will be unbearable."

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