

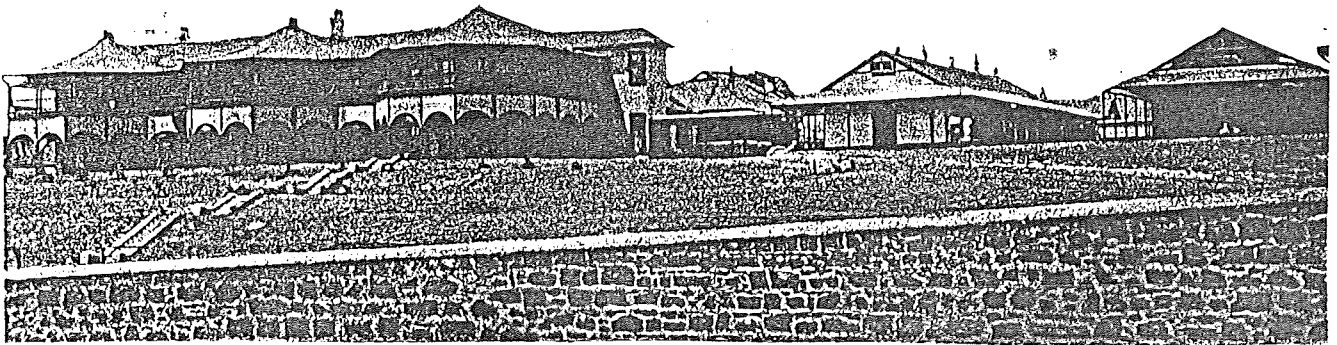


## FREMANTLE HISTORY SOCIETY

Established 1994

The Secretary, Local History Collection  
Fremantle City Library, PO Box 807,  
FREMANTLE WA 6160

**Summer Edition  
1997**



Public Hospital, Fremantle, WA, c 1897  
Fremantle Prison Collection

### FREMANTLE HOSPITAL CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

On 22 January 1897 Matron Bessie Steele, her five nurses and the patients from the Wesley Home Pensioner Hospital in Point Street began their walk to The Knowle on the corner of South Terrace and Alma Street, to establish the Fremantle Public Hospital.

Despite the hot summer day Matron Steele and her nurses probably had to carry their utensils and equipment to their destination. The patients were more fortunate; they were carried on stretchers, and on arrival they were accommodated in spacious and airy wards on the upper floor of The Knowle. During their convalescence they would be able to take advantage of the 10 ft wide balcony which wrapped around the building and allowed patients the full benefit of the Fremantle Doctor while enjoying a wonderful view of the harbour.

The Knowle was originally built in 1852 as a family home for the Comptroller General of Convicts, Colonel Edmund Henderson. It was a splendid and luxurious building, and its location allowed Henderson to observe the daily activities of those under his command. He was only a few minutes walk from the Prison, and from his verandahs he could see the warders' cottages and the manoeuvres of the Pensioner Guards on their parade ground (later Fremantle Oval).

After Henderson's return to England in 1863 The Knowle was used by the Prison authorities as administration offices. When the department moved to Perth the building became a home for invalids (usually ex-convicts), and later it was used to relieve the overcrowding at the Fremantle Asylum. It was owned by the British Government, which was reluctant to spend money on its maintenance, and eventually the grand mansion became derelict.

There had been agitation for years over the need for a hospital in Fremantle, and in 1895 the Forrest Government transferred The Knowle to the Fremantle Town Council, promising to renovate it and make it suitable for use as a hospital.

There was some delay over commencing renovations, but eventually plans were drawn up by architect J Herbert Eales and work started under the direction of R Bushby from the Public Works Department. The area of the building was extended by a third with the addition of a new southern wing and two isolation wards were built outside. By 1897 the new hospital was ready, with a dispensary, an 'operating \*\*apartment' and a new kitchen as well as matron's quarters, nurses' rooms and ward space to accommodate 52 patients. A fresh water supply was obtained from the Prison, where elevated tanks had been installed so that adequate pressure could be maintained.

To celebrate its centenary Fremantle Hospital staff decided to re-enact the walk by Matron Steele and entourage on 22 January 1997.

Fifteen people made up the procession, including nursing staff dressed in nineteenth century nursing uniforms. The Police Department loaned 1st Class Constable Cusick (also wearing appropriate period costume) to represent the police who would have helped to carry the patients and supervise the move. Susanna Bessell-Browne from the Fremantle Tourist Association carried the banner announcing the Heritage Walk and represented the Mayor and other dignitaries who were present at The Knowle to welcome the Matron and her staff. The patients were represented by James McPherson (aged 8) and his sister Kristen (aged 10) who have links with the hospital through various relatives.

The Fremantle History Society also took part in this historic walk - Society members Lorraine Stevens, Elaine Berry and May Flanagan joined the procession in period costume as Fremantle residents and workers.

We offer our best wishes and congratulations to the Fremantle Hospital in its centenary year.



### 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
Sally Rodgers	339 7922
Lorraine Stevens	(wk) 430 2266
Ron Davidson	430 6096

Milton Jones 337 2331  
Helen Brash 387 7453  
Linley Batterham 364 2356

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 generally 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. As we have started to have Sunday afternoon meetings occasionally, please be sure to check details.



### **NEW MEMBERS**

**Tom Hollow  
John Cilma Hamilton  
Colyn Henwood  
Dorothy Masson  
Fremantle Tourism Association**



### **COMING EVENTS**

#### **Uglymen's Association**

Rita Farrell completed an honours thesis at Murdoch University on this voluntary, welfare group with the most intriguing name. The group operated from 1917 - 1939. Many may remember Uglyland on what is now Pioneer Reserve, Fremantle. Rita will present a history of the Uglymen's Association at our first

meeting for the year which will be held on Tuesday 25 February at the WA Maritime Museum, Cliff St, Fremantle commencing at 7.00 pm.

#### **Buckland Hill Battery Tour**

On Sunday 23rd March there will be a tour of the Buckland Hill AckAck Battery. The Royal Australian Artillery Historical Society (RAAHS.) who are charged with the restoration and presentation of this World War 2 Coastal Defence area will provide guides to take us over the installation and into the tunnels underneath same. Some of the first men stationed here were sent on to Darwin and became part of Australia's history by being the first Australian Army units to engage with the enemy attacking Australia's shores.

As on our previous tours a bus will be in the parking areas next to the Round House, Fremantle to take the group to Buckland Hill and return - we will pick up at 9.30 am. to be up at the battery by 10.00 am. There is a parking area at the site, however buses are not allowed to go right up to the installation. It is only a few minutes walk, but if anyone is unable to walk the distance, please let us know. The RAAHS will arrange for transport to take any passengers the extra distance.

The charge for the tour is \$7.00 for members and \$8.00 for non members, which will include the cost of the bus and morning tea. A small booklet put out by the RAAHS on the history of the site will be available for \$2.00. All seats must be booked and paid for in advance. Numbers are limited to 36.

Contact Margaret McPherson -  
telephone 337 2668 for bookings **no  
later than March 11th.**

### **Among the Tombstones**

Our April meeting will take place on  
Sunday 27 April and will be another  
weekend affair. Set in our fair  
*Necropolis*, the afternoon's tour will  
focus on the final resting place of  
some of Fremantle's famous and  
infamous characters.

Afternoon tea will be provided  
following the tour. Please assemble  
outside the Fremantle Cemetery  
(Carrington St) office just inside the  
gates on Samson Ave (also known  
as Main Drive) for a 2.00 pm start.



### **MEETING REPORTS**

#### **Christmas Party**

A most enjoyable Christmas function  
on 26 November wound up the  
Fremantle History Society's activities  
for 1996. Members were escorted  
through Bob Woollett's beautiful old  
home and regaled with its history as  
well as enjoying delicious food and  
wine. The Mayor of Fremantle,  
Jenny Archibald, joined our  
celebrations as our guest, and  
special interest was provided by an  
additional tour through the home  
and studio of Bob's neighbour,  
textile designer Gemma.  
(Check p 8 of this newsletter for a detailed  
history of 28 Norfolk Street)

Our grateful thanks go to Bob for  
opening his home to us for this  
delightful evening.



### **For your Diary**

**Tuesday 25 February - Uglymen's  
Association** - Rita Farrell will  
enlighten us on the development of  
this unusually named charity. 7.00  
pm, WA Maritime Museum, Cliff St,  
Fremantle.

**Sunday 23 March - Buckland Hill  
Battery Tour** - Join the FHS and  
RAAHS on a tour of the AckAck  
battery. Bus leaves the Round  
House, 9.30 am. **BOOKINGS  
ESSENTIAL.** Telephone 337 2668  
**before 11 March.** Charge - \$7.00  
members, \$8.00 non-members.

**Sunday 27 April - Among the  
Tombstones** - visit the 'dead centre'  
of town and find out more about the  
resting places of some of  
Fremantle's best known identities.  
Tour will leave from the Cemetery  
Office on Samson Drive (Main Drive)  
at 2.00 pm.



#### **From Incarceration to Conservation - Fremantle Prison 5 years on**

The Fremantle Prison closed as  
Western Australia's only maximum  
security prison in November 1991.  
On 24 January 1992, the site was  
opened to the public as a tourist  
destination.

Over the five years following its  
transformation into one of Western  
Australia's premier heritage sites,  
there has been much activity on the  
site, some obvious to the general  
observer, some not quite so  
apparent. Most of the work has been

focused on two main areas - 'conservation and future use'. Major projects have included the redevelopment of the old Prison hospital into the Fremantle Children's Literature Centre complete with Writer in Residence accommodation; the redevelopment of New Division into the Fremantle Business Enterprise Centre, a joint project of the local, state and federal governments; and the use of the West Workshops and the former Women's Prison by the WA School of Art and Design, TAFE.

The ownership of the site remains with the WA Government and is vested in the Minister for Works (currently Mike Broad). The day to day management of the Prison is undertaken by the Department of Contract and Management Services (CAMS), previously the BMA. As well as the administration and professional support offered through the head office in Dumas House, West Perth, there is a Complex Manager, a Curator and an Administration Officer on site. A contractor is currently working with the Curator to catalogue the Prison's collection. Advice on the overall management of the Prison is provided to the Minister by the Fremantle Prison Trust. The Trust consists of representatives from the local community including residential and business, the Aboriginal community, the heritage industry, the WA government and the tourism industry.

It is the role of the CAMS staff to ensure that all works that are carried out at the Prison comply with the conservation policies that have been established for the site as well as the legislative requirements of the

WA Heritage Act and the City of Fremantle Conservation policies. This ensures that there is minimal interference with the original fabric of the buildings and the significance of the place is not compromised. Although there has been redevelopment of several buildings at the Prison, these have all been carefully monitored and documented. The purpose of these redevelopments is to create a multi use site for the community and to bring revenue into the site to help support other activities.

The tourist operator's lease is possibly the most significant partnership at the Prison. The Fremantle Prison Guardians run the tours at the Prison and also organise functions and special events. A recent initiative to help celebrate our 5th birthday has been the introduction of a heritage walk. This is a self guided tour around the grounds of the Prison using the latest audio technology. The walk takes visitors to areas not currently covered in the other tours.

Other initiatives are planned to help celebrate the Prison's fifth year of operation. These will be covered in future editions of this newsletter and in the local press.



## BOOK REVIEWS

Two recently published books on Fremantle have markedly different focuses.

One is Patricia Brown's *The Merchant Princes of Fremantle* (UWA Press, \$24.95). It centres on Fremantle's very rich, powerful and

sometimes troubled merchants during the final decades of the nineteenth century. They left names like Higham, Pearse, Lilly, Manning and Samson on Central Business District buildings.

The Princes (and one Princess) travelled the world - often in their own ships - looking for trade and the opportunity to make more money. They also wanted to impose their attitudes and prejudices on the lesser residents of the city.

Patsy Brown shows they were probably more successful with the first activity than the second. As the century came to an end groups like the Lumpers Union and the Tobacco Twisters Union were providing counterweights to the merchants' influence. This process was being assisted by Arthur Diamond, an unusual socialist Prince.

Some Princes turned to alcohol and opiates to ease their anxieties about this course of events.

Patsy Brown provides rich close-ups of the origins and personalities of the Princes and the social context of the city

In ***South to Sillytown*** (Fremantle Arts Centre Press, \$14.95), Bill Marks shifts the focus to working class South Fremantle, then commonly known as South Beach, where he grew up in the 1920s.

Bill's stories are about the battlers and larrikins who lived in the small cottages around Mandurah Road (South Terrace). The larrikins were drawn to the area by the prospect of quick money generated by the

hundreds of racehorses stabled and trained there.

Bill's father Percy was a racehorse trainer who believed in making good things into certainties with substantial doses of cocaine, heroin or strychnine. Bill started by disliking his father because of the uncaring way he treated his wife and family of nine.

Bill tells a sad story about how this dislike turned to hatred when his favourite horse, the gentle jumper Autumn Day, crashed into a brush fence at the racetrack and broke his back. Autumn Day had mistakenly been doped twice, once by Percy but also by a stablehand. Percy was unworried: Bill was devastated.

These two books represent different approaches to writing history. Patsy Brown's is polished social history: Bill Marks' is unadorned story telling. Both make interesting reading, particularly for a Fremantle enthusiast.

Ron Davidson

***Fremantle: A people's place - Short stories about Fremantle in the 1960s***, by Denis Roberts, published with the assistance of the City of Fremantle, 1996.

Denis Roberts' lively tales provide an insight into the Fremantle of only 30 years ago. Because many of the publications that tell stories about the Fremantle of yesteryear tend to look further back than this, the 'so close and yet so far away' nature of this work gives it a special edge. The face of Fremantle is changing rapidly and while many of the venues, inevitably watering holes, of Denis' stories are still around, the

clientele and the atmosphere has long gone - for better or for worse?

The book comprises nineteen short (very short) stories with quaint illustrations. They are told straight from the heart and their intimate style leaves you feeling as though you could have been there. For a new comer like me, it has given me background into some of the many names I hear spoken of or see immortalised in the streets and buildings of the town. For long time locals it will remind you of stories long forgotten but remembered with a smile.

Mainly autobiographical in nature, the stories inevitably revolve around the pubs and similar spots inhabited by Denis and his mates from the Ship Painters and Dockers Union and other blue collar workers. Life was hard for many in the times when permanent jobs were hard to come by and many men rolled up each morning to the labour call for the docks. Some of those who missed out on a day's pay drowned their sorrows in one of the local pubs. It is from this life that Denis' stories are drawn.

The stories are rich in detail and sometimes in their prose - *In the afternoon the 'Fremantle Doctor' soughed through the columns of Norfolk pines, magpies swooped over the broad expanse of the reserve and the low murmur of the sea provided a gentle accompaniment* - adding to their charm.

This very inexpensive publication (\$5.50 at the Local History Collection, Fremantle Library and

other local outlets) is a must for any confirmed and would be locals.

Anne Brake



## FREMANTLE TOURISM ASSOCIATION

Fremantle now has its own Tourism Association.

Despite the fact that Fremantle has become an increasingly popular destination for tourists, there has hitherto been little in the way of co-ordinated promotion or monitoring of tourism at the port. To remedy this a meeting held in December 1995 between the Fremantle City Council, the Fremantle Chamber of Commerce and various tourist industry representatives decided to form a unified industry body to manage and develop the visitor industry in Fremantle.

In the latter half of last year Susanna Bessell-Browne was appointed Executive Director of the new Fremantle Tourism Association, and the Association was formally launched at a breakfast on 19 November 1996. At the launch the new Executive Director expressed her hope that the new body could work closely with the Fremantle History Society to ensure that tourism strategies are appropriate to the history of the port and its people, and the FTA has joined the History Society as a corporate member.

We welcome the FTA to Fremantle and look forward to a long and fruitful association.



Could anyone with information on the Loakes Furniture Factory, 7 Ada St, Sth Fremantle send it to Anne Brake, C/- Fremantle Prison, The Terrace, Fremantle.



### **ABOUT 28 NORFOLK STREET**

*(From Documentation of Places for Entry in the Register of Heritage Places by the National Trust)*

28 Norfolk Street, Fremantle, is a limestone house constructed for William Jose in 1862 as premises for a grocery store. During the 1880s a warehouse was extended onto the store at the location of 26 Norfolk Street, which later became a private residence. The entire building, which is a two-storeyed house, is currently split into two strata titled living units.

During the early 1860s the town of Fremantle was growing economically and socially because of the influence of the Convict Establishment, which had begun in 1850. The west end of Fremantle was the most densely populated by the local inhabitants, since it was close to the main employment areas of the port, the commercial centre, and the Convict Establishment.

It was during this period that William Jose purchased Fremantle Town Lot 168 on 17 October 1862, for £50.0.0. William Jose was born in Cornwall on 7 June 1819. He arrived in Australia in 1852 via America with his wife Letitia (nee Ruddle). His children were born in Australia. They included Henry Thomas (b.1854), David Samuel (b.1858 d.1919), Richard, Elizabeth Jane, and William John. Jose erected a

grocery store on Fremantle Town Lot 168, the building now known as No 28 Norfolk Street. His sons were his store assistants and Henry Thomas later had a store at Geraldton in the 1870s. William Jose died on 23 June 1875. His sons carried on the business.

In the 1880s the store was extended to include the building now known as 26 Norfolk Street. The shop front and parapet had been built on the east corner of the building (corner of Norfolk Street and Norfolk Lane). During this period 26-28 Norfolk Street was part owned by William Jose's widow Letitia and her children Matilda Ann Sainsbury, Elizabeth Jane Harvey, William John, Henry Thomas, and David Samuel.

The whole property was transferred to the widowed Matilda Ann Sainsbury of Guildford in 1889. She was one of the daughters of William Jose. It was most likely during this time that No 28 Norfolk Street ceased being a shop to become a private residence. After 1895 there followed a succession of owners; John George Thompson, cordial manufacturer (1896), John Joseph Higham, gentleman (1897), Harry James William Higham, grazier (1899), Harry Norman Higham and William John Ashburton Higham (1917). Peter Ebenezer Wood, who was a builder, took residence in 1927. It was during this time that the overhang roof at the rear of the building was replaced by a verandah, open on No 26 side and closed on No 28 side. In 1930 Nikola Zanze took residence. Mrs C Fletcher in 1935 turned No 26 into a boarding house. This continued until 1939 when a Mr A Zanich took residence.



The Post Office Directory indicates that in 1940 the property was split into two residences. No 26 belonged to Mr A Zanich, and No 28 belonged to Jas Crouchley, caretaker of Scotts Church. While Crouchley stayed in No 28 the owners of No 26 changed to Mrs Elsie Dale (1945), Mr Toma Bucat (1946), Mrs Alice Tognolini (1949). In 1970 the entire property was owned by Southern Motors Pty Ltd until its present owner Robert Trevor Woollett, schoolmaster, obtained the land title in 1973.

Robert Woollett conducted major renovations in 1974. Bathrooms and kitchens were installed, front and rear verandahs were restored and the roof reclad, all with the help of a National Estate Grant. The garden at the rear was terraced and landscaped. A covenant with the National Trust of Australia was placed on the title.

The property was divided into two units and strata-titled in 1979. Further renovations in No 28 saw the wall between the two rooms on the north east side removed to form one larger room. Gabrielle Baillieu was owner of No 26 from 1980-1986 and Robert Trevor Woollett owner of No 28. In 1988 a car bay was erected in the north corner of No 28, and in 1993 it was converted to a stone and corrugated iron roofed garage.



### RESEARCH YOUR HOME!

Do you want to find out about the house you live in - when it was built, who built it, who lived in it before you?

There are many ways to find answers to these and other questions you may have. A surprising amount of information can be gleaned from sources such as Rate Books, Council building plans and even sewerage maps! The Fremantle Local History Collection has a very helpful pamphlet available entitled *Researching the History of Your Home*, which lists a large number of possible sources.

Pick up a copy and start collecting information about *your* home and don't forget to let us know what you discover so we can share it with our readers!



### FROM THE LOCAL HISTORY DESK

Work has commenced transcribing the proceedings of our meetings, thanks to a grant provided by the Fremantle City Council. Geraldine Stack, an experienced audio-typist has been employed to complete the work. Once typed the talks will be edited ready for publication.

#### SNIPPETS FROM THE PAST

*The Weekly Times*, 21 January 1888

"The prisoners who assisted the Fire Brigade at the recent fire behind the Prison by working the manual engine have had seven days of their sentence remitted as a recompense for their labours"

*The Evening Mail*, 2 July 1907

"One o'clock gun prematurely goes off 6 minutes early. Sensational confusion in the town."

