



## FREMANTLE HISTORY SOCIETY

Established 1994

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

*SUMMER* Edition  
1998

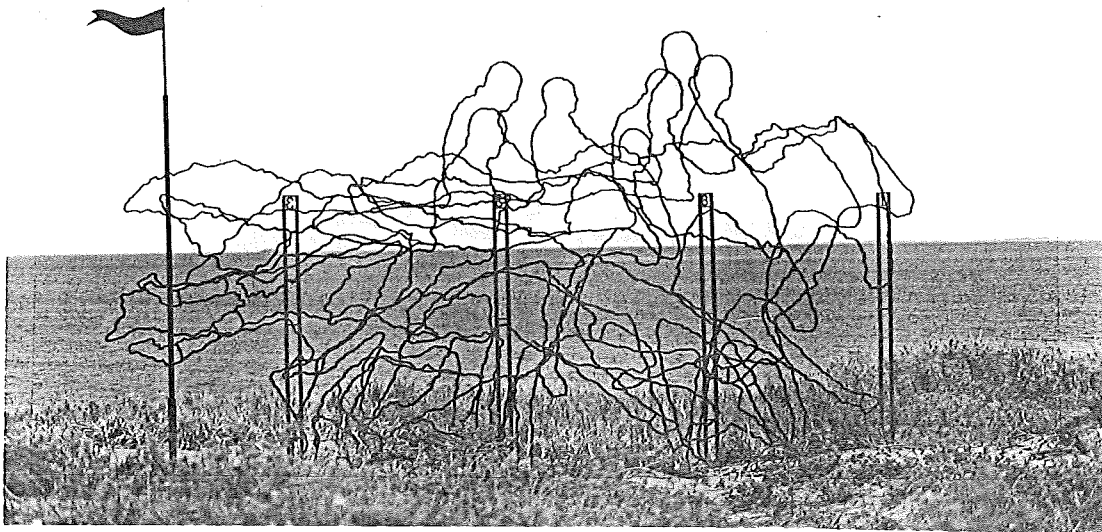


Photo courtesy Ken Stevens

Have you seen the Horse Memorial (pictured above) now installed in the dunes at Coogee Beach, just north of the South Fremantle Powerhouse? It's worth getting your feet a bit sandy to see it. The memorial was designed by Anne Neil of North Fremantle and funded by the Cockburn City Council. It incorporates historical information - seven ponies raced along this beach in 1833 in what is said to have been the first horse race in WA - and contemporary design techniques. Images of the seven ponies have been interwoven into a single, shadowy, skeletal structure through which the wind and sand blow. The memorial, called *Clear the Course*, captures the confusion and colour described in the *Perth Gazette* of October 5, 1833:

### FREMANTLE RACES

*This not inaptly termed October meeting, took place on Wednesday last, and 2<sup>nd</sup> inst., on the Downs near Fremantle, and presented both a novel and interesting spectacle. As the origin of racing in this Colony will probably be interesting to chronologists, we feel it our duty to record, that the sporting world are indebted to Captain Taylor of the Helen, who has lately imported a number of Timor Ponies, aided by Mr C. Smith and Mr J. Weavell, for the institution of an amusement*

STOP PRESS – The Fremantle History Society has secured a \$2000.00 grant from the Western Australian History Foundation – see inside for more details.

*calculated to excite a considerable emulation amongst the breeders and importers of horses. It may be expected from the general interest that was evinced to in the sports on Wednesday, that before long some steps will be taken to form periodical meetings. The spot selected for the race course has long been fixed upon as an appropriate site; it is about a mile and a half from Fremantle, on a slightly undulating plain skirting the sea, the adjoining hills affording a full view of the course; booths were erected on the brow of the hill, with their variegated flags, the ginger bread and nut stall and the lame fiddler, contributed much to the animation of the scene. The groups of fashionably dressed ladies and gentlemen promenading to and fro - the tilted carts - the busy din of preparation - the cry of "clear the course" - and at length the ponies being placed side by side at the starting post - the jockeys appropriately dressed - we can assure our Readers who were not fortunate enough to witness it, presented no contemptible display.*

*The Subscription Purse for 5 sovs Heats, one round a half-mile course:  
 Captain McDermott's - Dandy  
 Captain Taylor's - Doctor  
 Captain Taylor's - Teazer  
 Mr Samson's - More in Sorrow  
 Mr Leeder's - Bob  
 Mr Solomon's - Tinker  
 Mr Dowing's - Jacko Mackako*

We don't get writing like this nowadays. Eat your heart out, Tim Winton.

Readers of this newsletter will know that the South Fremantle area became the centre of race-horse training in WA. Each morning the horses clip-clopped down the South Fremantle streets for dawn gallops on the beach. The last such stable belonged to Dave Miller of

Douro Road. Pressures of development forced him out only last year. The last occupant of the 80-year old stables, Larry Foley's Darby The Dasher, won his last race just before the stables were demolished to make way for housing units.

The Fremantle History Society is planning to devote one of its monthly meetings this year to the subject of horses and trainers from the days when horse training was the major backyard industry in South Fremantle. Watch for further information.



#### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The following were elected as members of the committee of the FHS at the last annual general meeting.

Dianne Davidson	9430 6096
Elaine Berry	9336 1906
Anne Brake (wk)	9335 9473
Sally Rodgers	9339 7922
Lorraine Stevens(wk)	9432 9739
Ron Davidson	9430 6096
Helen Brash	9387 7453
Gina Wright	9331 3314

There is still room on the committee for further members and our constitution allows for co-opting of committee members. Anyone interested in joining the committee should contact Dianne Davidson on the number above.

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.



## Western Australian History Foundation

The Society has been lucky enough to be awarded a grant from the WA History Foundation to publish our Fremantle Studies Day papers. A small team has been working quietly to edit the papers from the 1996 Studies Day and prepare them for publication but the resources to actually publish have not been available. Now with this grant of \$2000.00 and perhaps some assistance from the City of Fremantle, a joint volume of selected papers from 1996 and 1997 Studies Days will be possible.

The WA History Foundation provides grants for individuals and associations which promote the study and understanding of Western Australian history. The Society is very pleased to have been chosen as a recipient of a grant.

Stay tuned for more information on this exciting project.



## COMING EVENTS

### FREMANTLE: A PLACE IN LITERATURE

Bob Woollett will present *Fremantle: a place in literature* at the February meeting of the Fremantle History Society. Bob who taught English and English Literature for many years will select from a wide-range of novels and autobiographies starting with John Boyle O'Reilly's *Moondyne*. Other authors to feature Fremantle include Patrick White in the *Twyborn Affair*,

D.H. Lawrence, Xavier Herbert, and many more recent contributors.

*Fremantle: a place in literature* will be held on **Tuesday 24 February at 7.30 pm**. Bob has made his charming home at **28 Norfolk Street** available for the occasion. Bob's home, built in 1862, is the oldest residence in Fremantle still used for that purpose.

### FOUNDATIONS OF FREMANTLE

The Fremantle History Museum's new exhibition, *Foundations of Fremantle*, tells the story of Fremantle's history, from pre-settlement Noongar life, the arrival of British settlers in 1829, depression and radical upheavals to the new world of the early twentieth century. It traces the development of Fremantle's character through the establishment of the port, the development of local agriculture and business, the spread of housing and, above all, the intimate experiences of everyday life.

The exhibition draws extensively on the Western Australian Museum's significant collection of objects associated with life in the first years of the Colony. The stunning pictures and writings of the early settlers feature prominently.

The Museum's exhibitions have been progressively updated since 1994, when *Within These Walls* opened to warm acclaim, followed by the remarkable *A New Australia: Post-War Migration to Western Australia*.

Some of the key objects in *Foundations of Fremantle* include an original list of instruments brought in London in October 1829 by Henry Edward Hall for his trip to the Swan River colony; a smallpox inoculator which was used in the first twenty years of the colony to administer the only smallpox vaccine available to the early settlers; and a gold and ivory necklace given to Miss Scott by "Bully"

Hayes, an infamous American sea captain - however Bully's intentions were not honourable, and Miss Scott's ardour was unrequited.

You can hear the full stories of these and other fascinating material on display at our March meeting. Deb Tout Smith, the curator of the exhibition, will give us an insight into this very interesting and comprehensive exhibition. This will be followed by the opportunity to view the galleries and then enjoy a cuppa.

The meeting will be held on **24 March** at the **Fremantle History Museum** starting at **7.30 pm**.

#### **AZELIA LEY HOMESTEAD**

The FHS has organised a special visit for members to Azelia Ley Homestead at Spearwood. The homestead, set in Davilak Park adjacent to Manning Lake, was classified by the National Trust in 1982.

The homestead was built for Azelia Helena Ley, eldest daughter of Lucius Alexander Manning, when she married around 1905.

The original building, which is now the rear of the house, was built of local limestone with red brick quoins. The main house is of solid brick construction with outside walls plastered. The roof was originally shingled but it has been covered by tiles.

The homestead now provides visitors with a glimpse into the history of the Cockburn area.

Our visit has been scheduled for **3pm** on **Sunday 19 April**. For those who wish to make their own way there, please assemble at the homestead at 10 to 3. Anyone who would like a lift

should call Di Davidson on 9430 6096 or Anne Brake on 9335 9473 (office hours). The homestead is located in Azelia Rd, Hamilton Hill.

Entry is \$1.00 and there will also be a small fee for afternoon tea.



#### **NEW MEMBERS**

Australian Customs Service  
Judy Carter  
Doe Brokenshire



#### **MEETING REPORTS**

Christmas Party – Old Courthouse

About 35 members enjoyed the Society's festive celebrations at the newly reconstructed Court House on Marine Tce. Geraldine Byrne of Notre Dame University provided members with a potted history of the place including some of the lucky finds that were made to furnish the place with appropriate fittings. She also described how problems like rising damp were being dealt with.



#### **Do you remember?**

Do you remember Locke's Furniture Factory? Mick McGinley, a long standing member of the Society, does. Last year we asked if anyone had any information on the South Fremantle firm. Someone had contacted the Society looking for information on Locke's because they had bought a piece of furniture, which still had a Locke's Furniture label attached.

In his rambles through the daily papers of the 1940s in search of other things, Mick

found a front page article on the fire that destroyed the building in the early hours of the morning of Thursday 11 January 1940.

The building, which was located in Mandurah Road was completely destroyed. Flames leaped 60ft into the air once the blaze reached the polishing workshop, which contained stocks of methylated spirits, varnish, stain and a small quantity of petrol. Luckily for the owners, C and H Locke, it was covered by insurance

Near by houses and shops were threatened by the inferno – ‘residents became panic-stricken and began a general removal of furniture from homes’. Furniture and fittings from houses and shops were piled up in the street. Mr Verrity, proprietor of three shops on the northern side of the factory, was reported as saying “Everybody wanted to help me. My stock was taken out and I do not know where it has all gone”.

Mick’s comments on the article included *Didn’t the local people show a fine community spirit in helping to liberate the endangered stock from the nearby shops and houses? I could – nearly - imagine a court report in the old Fremantle Advocate some weeks later which might have included something like this*

*“Your honour, the charge against the defendant is that, subsequent to the conflagration at the premises of Lockes Furniture in Ada St South Fremantle on 11<sup>th</sup> ult., the said defendant was observed by Constable Periwinkle to be walking unsteadily in a southerly direction on Hampton Road and upon interrogation was found to have a wardrobe concealed about his person...”*



### Interested in registering your interests

From time to time, the Society gets requests for information on specific subjects. This is often general in nature, but sometimes requires further research, perhaps even paid research.

The Society is interested in keeping a register of people who may be able to assist with these enquiries. If you have a particular area of interest or specialist knowledge to do with Fremantle, for instance labour history, or the convict era, and would like to be contacted should we receive a request in that area, then please send your details, including name, address and contact phone, fax and email details to Lorraine Stevens, Secretary, Fremantle History Society, Fremantle City Library, PO Box 807, FREMANTLE 6160.



### JIG SAW COLUMN

Did you know that January 30th could be considered a significant day, as it links three famous men?

In 1882, on this day, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, US statesman and President, was born at Hyde Park in New York. He died in April 1945, a day before he was to deliver a speech declaring, "The only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today."

On 30th January 1948, Mohandas Karanchand (Mahatma) Gandhi, who invented the concept of 'passive resistance', was shot and killed on way to a prayer meeting. His assailant was a fanatical Hindu, a member of his own religion.

January 30th 1965 was the day that the funeral of Sir Winston Churchill, Britain's

wartime leader and senior statesman took place in London. It was televised around the world - his death closing an era that was a very traumatic time in British history.



#### For Your Diary

**Tuesday 24 February - Fremantle in Literature** – Bob Woollett will open our eyes to the way writers describe our port city. **28 Norfolk St, Fremantle, 7.30pm.**

**Tuesday 24 March – Foundations of Fremantle** – Deb Tout Smith will take you into the heart of the exhibition with fascinating insights into many of the stories of our town. **Fremantle History Museum, 7.30pm.**

**Sunday 19 April – Azelia Ley Homestead** – a special visit to this fascinating place has been organised. **Azelia Rd, Hamilton Hill – 3pm.** Anyone wanting a lift can contact Di Davidson or Anne Brake.



#### President gets honours

January was a good month for Fremantle History Society president, Dianne Davidson.

Firstly, her book *Women on the Warpath* (University of WA Press, 1997) has been short-listed for the non-fiction section of the Premier's awards. Her book details the life and times of the early WA feminist group the Women's Service Guild. Earlier the West Australian's reviewer Pat Jacobs had praised the book saying that it represented "history at its best".

Dianne went to Canberra late in the month on an ArtsWA creative development grant to study the personal papers of Bessie Rischbieth at the National Library. Bessie was for many years the Women's Service Guild president and in the twenties and thirties probably the best known name in the Australian woman's movement.

#### Congratulations, Dianne.



From J.K.Hitchcock, *The History of Fremantle*, 1929, page 51:

*The Fremantle Herald was established in 1867, and for many years was regarded as the leading organ of public opinion in the colony. It was founded by James Pearce and William Beresford, associated with whom were James Roe and A.H.K. Cole. Beresford had at one stage been Anglican Dean of Cork and Roe had also been an Anglican clergyman. The ripe scholarship of these two men, combined with the journalistic ability of Pearce and Cole, placed the paper in a leading position. Beresford's scholarly articles, together with his pungent facetia under the heading of Chips by the Sandalwood Cutter were the literary sensation of the time, making the Herald a power in the land, and a paper to be conjured with. The Herald always advocated a progressive policy and persistently stressed the need for harbour works, the construction of railways, and the introduction of responsible government.*

*An incident in the early history of the Herald is worth recalling. In one of its earlier issues some miscreant, activated no doubt by the desire to bring about the downfall of the paper, secured the insertion of some original poetry. Both the editor and the compositor failed to notice that it was an acrostic, the first letters of each line, read downwards, forming a sentence of an obscene nature.*

\* The *Herald* combined with the *Inquirer* in 1887. It later reappeared as the *Fremantle Herald* before closing in 1915. The current *Fremantle Herald* hit the letterboxes in 1989.



## WHEN IS HISTORY HISTORY

Anne Brake

It has been 10 years since the Fremantle Prison was the scene of a riot which left a repair bill of over 1 million dollars and psychological and physical scars on the five men taken hostage during the ordeal.

The Fremantle Prison Trust has decided to mark this 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a program of events which has already seen an ecumenical service in the Prison's Anglican Chapel. An exhibition and a number of public lectures will also be held.

The service, led by the two ministers of religion who were stationed at the Prison at the time of the riot has already generated a variety of responses. For many, the Prison is a place of "history" and they do not recognise the riot as part of that "history" or part of the work that we should be doing.

For others, this is a sensitive issue and the scars are still raw – for them ten years ago is still too close. There hasn't been the passing of time that softens the pain

So is this "history"? What makes "history"?

History is not just something that happened a long time ago. Nor is it something that happened to other people. And I suppose most importantly, it isn't just about important

people, or the right kind of people. History is made anywhere, any place, any time by anyone. What makes it history is the analysis and interpretation of the information that remains about the event or incident and what this tells us about the society or world we live in.

Unlike many people interpreting and presenting history, those of us working on the Fremantle Prison riot exhibition are still able to contact people who were involved in this actual event. Not just the inmates, not just the negotiators but also the prison officers who were on duty, the people who counselled those who, for what ever reason were caught up in the event, the legal people who represented the men at the trial, the list goes on. If we had left this "hot" topic alone for another ten or twenty years, our opportunities for information gathering would have been severely restricted.

Another issue that we have to face when tackling a subject such as this is the notion of objectivity. It is vital to attempt to ensure the information presented is as comprehensive as it can be. Biases, whichever way they fall, must be avoided if possible, in the need to present as clear a picture as possible of the event and its aftermath.

See for yourself if the Fremantle Prison riot exhibition team has been successful in its attempts to present "history". The exhibition is scheduled to open in early April in the Gatehouse of the Fremantle Prison. Watch the papers for details.



## MY TRIP

Margaret McPherson

October 1997 saw me jetting off to England to fulfil a dream of over 50 years. I had always wanted to go to the 'mother' country, and soak up the wonderful historical sites and sounds, that I had

read about for so many years. My trip had been planned, mentally, over this time and I knew exactly, what I wanted to see and do. Life, however, does not always follow your dreams. My companion on this trip was an ex-Brit, who wanted to go home for the last time and visit relatives; she was not the least bit interested in history. Strange to say, this was actually a blessing in disguise.

Her relatives and friends knew I was into history and did their best to take me to places in their particular area that would be of interest. I discovered that the British live every day with their history, that it is part of their breathing, that apart from some very tourist orientated places, Britain is history - you cannot separate one from the other, or the people from it, either.

Where else could you have a lovely picnic lunch by a river watching the Canal Boats go up and down (history in itself), then be casually asked " Do you want to go for a stroll across the road? King John signed the Magna Charter over there. This is Runnymede" Or stay in a house, that is over 100 years old, and is actually one of the first houses built, in the concept of a housing estate, for middle income people. We in Australia had thought this was a new idea! This house also had a resident ghost, a woman, about whom I was told the night after I met her.

Of course, Hampton Court, Westminster Abbey, the Tower, Buckingham Palace and York Minster together with Canterbury Cathedral are all obligatory and wonderful. They are also very tourist orientated. There were so many people in Westminster Abbey, that my friend and I actually gave up and left, as we couldn't get through the crowds to really see anything. In this way, some of my dreams were

shattered - I had imagined peace and reverence, instead it was noise and the hard sell. Everything had a price.

In London, they anticipate 20 million people will visit in the next year, and I think I met half of them. Don't ask for directions in London, most of the people you talk to are visitors and like you trying to find their way around. However, stay with an Oxford Don, whose forte is history and you will be taken on some wonderful walks around London - Soho walk, Dickens walk, Shakespeare walk and so on. These can all be found in a little book, with clearly marked directions, which even I could follow, and all the history is wonderfully described. For book lovers, Charing Cross Road and the streets nearby are a must and I wished I had more time, just to browse. There were hundreds of wonderful old books just waiting to be bought. I did manage to bring home two or three (sneaked them in the front door, as my husband has said "No more books")

The London taxi cabs are reasonably cheap, and because the traffic is so intense, the roads narrow, and have to be circumnavigated, you can see quite a bit of London while driving from point to point. You can see how the city has evolved and you are so thankful that the British haven't been stupid and destroyed their heritage, but have protected it. History, however, isn't all about age and preservation. Sometimes it can also be about improving while destroying - history in the making. North Shields, situated at the mouth of the Tyne River, was/is a very depressed area. Badly damaged during the war, the ruins were left for many years, without any effort to clean up the area. Shipyards that were the lifeline of the town closed, the fishing industry had declined - the father of the family I stayed with, had not worked in twenty years. His family have been in and out of jobs, depending on what was available -



there were many more like them.  
Drugs and crime flourished.

In the last few years the government has invested \$40 million in the area. A wood yard, 4 miles long and about the same in width, that had previously been used for all the timber associated with the shipbuilding industry, was cleared and a housing estate built on it. An underground river flowing into the Tyne was brought to the surface and a park, with entertainment area, was built with the river flowing around it. All the area around the river and the houses was landscaped. Best of all the residents kicked out the drug pushers and will not let them back. Industry from Germany has been encouraged and two factories are now being completed, as well, a new marina and shopping centre catering for visitors from Europe has been established.

A new era of history is beginning in North Shields, a new way of life for many, but the statue of Stan Laurel, of Laurel and Hardy fame, a source of local pride, still stands in a park, in the street where he lived. North Shields is also proud of the fact that Hadrian's Wall ends just outside the city; you learn that you never go past a collection tin, that is raising funds for Sea Rescue, without contributing. Despite the loss of the shipbuilding industry, this is still very much a seafaring town. The old and the new history co-existing side by side, in what is a new start for an old town.

Other memories, such as lunching in a tavern built in 1506, and looking at an original witches' dunking stool outside the window, sleeping in a Georgian house in an antique four poster bed complete with curtains and warming pan and enjoying a meal in a lovely Welsh pub, while looking at the hills surrounded in a magical morning mist,

these are treasures I would not have had, doing the trip my way.

Edinburgh, a city steeped in history, its castle awe-inspiring, built on a huge volcanic hill, should definitely be visited. Whilst there I decided to try and find a pen-pal I lost contact with over 30 years ago. I went to Markinch in Fife, where he had lived. It is a lovely village, small and doesn't appear to have changed much over the years. I was able to find and recognise his house from a photo I received many years ago. I only spoke to a couple of people in the village and luckily one knew my friend. By the time I was able to contact him back in Edinburgh, he had received eight phone calls telling him I was in Scotland. Small world! We are now corresponding again.

England is changing, the European merger will see to that. But its real history will remain, because that is an integral part of the British public's persona. Buildings are only a visual concept of what was the past. By their daily living in an environment that just personifies history, the people of the United Kingdom will never lose their heritage. I was very lucky to be able to stay with my friend's relatives, all over England. I saw and learned so much - history in small places like Deal, near Dover, and Saughall, just out of Chester and Purley in Surrey. I am so glad I didn't do it my way.



**Membership Fees for July 1997 - 98 are now overdue. For those who haven't paid, please send your remittance to:**

**Anne Brake  
Treasurer,  
Fremantle History Society  
c/- Fremantle Prison  
The Terrace  
Fremantle 6160**

**Ordinary - \$10    Family - \$15  
Organisational - \$20    Conc - \$5**

