

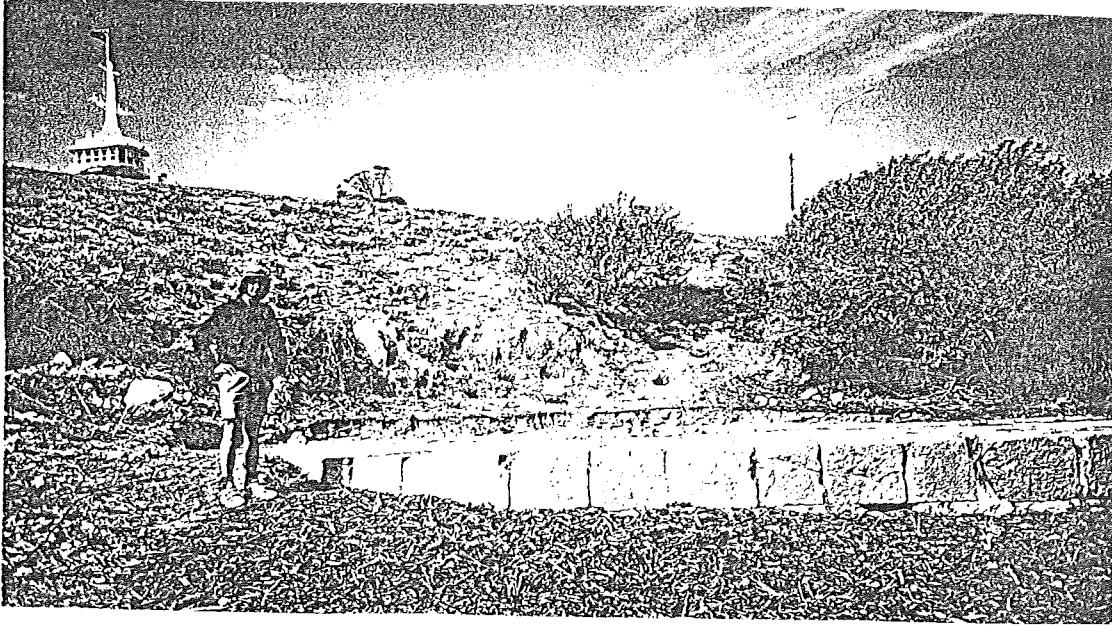


## FREMANTLE HISTORY SOCIETY

Established 1994

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

**Autumn Edition  
1998**



Shane Boyle with the recently revealed capstan  
Photo: D Davidson

### WEEDS PART TO REVEAL OLD CAPSTAN

When Shane Boyle, bush regenerator for the City of Fremantle, was given the task of managing Cantonment Hill, he noticed an area down on Beach Street opposite the No 3 Gate which he categorised as an 'eyesore'. The sandy bank was covered with straggly fennel and weeds, and looked to be badly in need of revegetation.

When he started clearing away some of the weeds an old limestone ring was revealed, with a hole in the centre into which a winch had once been fitted. Shane consulted the Local History section in the Fremantle Library, and found that he had uncovered the remains of an old capstan which had once been used to pull up the first dredge used on the river, the *Black Swan*. Apparently convicts, ten men on a bar, had been employed on the winch.

Shane felt that the capstan deserved to be better displayed. 'It's worth protecting and keeping,' he said. 'It's all part of our heritage.' He wants to make the area more attractive, and has begun some landscaping around the old landmark. He believes that another such monument exists on the other side of the river.

At the moment there is very little information readily available on the newly rediscovered capstan. Do any of our members have any information? If so, please let us know.

## Farewell Lorraine

The unthinkable has happened. People wandering confidently into the Local History Collection at the Fremantle Library expecting unhesitating answers to their most obscure and peculiar queries will find that Lorraine Stevens is no longer there.

Lorraine had become a Fremantle institution. Appointed to the Fremantle Library in November 1976, she was given the task of setting up a local history collection as part of her job. The collection grew from a three drawer filing cabinet and a shelf or two to a separate section of the public area. Very soon Lorraine was devoting herself to it full-time and in 1991 a special new annexe was opened in the library to house the Local History Collection. Local researchers, family biographers, oral historians, heritage experts and many others have consulted Lorraine over the years and have been impressed by her expertise and her helpfulness.

Sadly, Lorraine has decided to take early retirement, and to relocate to the south-west near Walpole, although at present she is indulging in her hobby of animal and bird-watching and photography during a six-month visit to South Africa with her husband. She will be very much missed in Fremantle, not least by the Fremantle History Society, of which she was a most efficient Secretary.

Lorraine's contribution to Fremantle's local history was recently acknowledged in the Fremantle Heritage Awards, when she was awarded the prize in the Local History Section.



## 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
Ron Davidson	9430 6096
Helen Brash	9387 7453
Gina Wright	9331 3314
Kath Jordan	9335 8974
Alison Gregg	9432 9739

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.



## COMING EVENTS

### Boom... goes the gun!

Susanna Bessell Brown of the Fremantle Tourism Association will give members some background into the Round House 1 o'clock gun tradition and the group of

people who have brought it back to life  
- the Fremantle Heritage Guides.

The meeting will be held on Tuesday  
26 May at the Maritime Museum  
meeting room, Cliff St, Fremantle at  
7.30 pm.

### **New eyes look at our local history**

No-one knows better than Alison Gregg what a hard act to follow Lorraine Stevens is. Alison's new role as Local History Librarian at the City of Fremantle Library is a new direction for her and for the library. As strong users of the local history collection, Fremantle History Society members should not miss this meeting when Alison shares her ideas on the role of local history collections in the community and her vision for the Fremantle collection in particular.

The meeting will be held at the City of Fremantle Library on Tuesday 23 June at 7.30 pm.

### **The old His Majesty's Hotel is the new Phillimore's Café and Bar**

Our July meeting is something a bit special. Rodney O'Byrne, the part owner of Phillimore's is offering Society members and their friends a behind the scenes tour of the remaking of the old His Majesty's Hotel.

In the redevelopment, the feel of the old hotel was retained while ensuring that staff and visitors have the benefits of modern technology in food and beverage preparation and presentation.

Following the tour members will be able to enjoy a fabulous Sunday lunch with the warmth of the log fire to keep Fremantle's winter weather outside where it belongs.

The tour and lunch will be held on Sunday 26 July. Members will be sent a circular with full details including the sumptuous lunch menu and associated costs closer to the time.



## **MEETING REPORTS**

### **FREMANTLE: A PLACE IN LITERATURE**

The Fremantle History Society gathered in the charming front room of Bob Woollett's house at 28 Norfolk Street for *Fremantle, a Place in Literature*, the title for the February general meeting. The house was built in 1862 and is the oldest residence in Fremantle which is still used for that purpose. The evening was one of surprises. One was how good a dramatic reader Bob turned out to be. The second was the range of authors who used Fremantle as their setting - D H Lawrence, Xavier Herbert, Patrick White and many others. The third surprise was just how many rooms opened up as members toured the multi-level house.

### **FOUNDATIONS OF FREMANTLE**

The Fremantle History Museum's location in one of Fremantle's most important historic buildings, the Asylum, is a fitting place for this important community facility. The museum has been a leader in the area of museology – the technical jargon for the art of being a museum – in the past and the current exhibitions continue that tradition.

Deborah Tout Smith, the museum's curator, gave a fascinating presentation focusing on the many stories behind the development of their latest exhibition *Foundations of Fremantle*. Deb included stories on many of the more fascinating objects in the exhibition and some of those that didn't quite make it to the showcase. She also described some of the decision making processes that the

team who put the exhibition together went through. These included decisions such as what colour to paint the walls and the showcases – not an arbitrary aesthetic decision – and how best to illustrate the process of archaeology and at the same time create a context for material found in the well of Samson House.

Members were then given the opportunity to go through the exhibition while Deb was on hand to answer their many questions.

### **AZELIA LEY HOMESTEAD**

The April meeting to the Azelia Ley Homestead coincidentally fell on the Cockburn Historical Society's open day. Members were dressed in period costume and a jazz band entertained the many visitors to the Manning Reserve and the homestead throughout the afternoon. There were even horse and carriage rides for those who really wanted to capture the feel of yesteryear.

The homestead's story is a fascinating one and many pieces in the collection relate to the Manning family. The collection also includes many items relating to the history of the Cockburn area. At the back of the homestead in the 'Old Wagon House' are a number of vehicles and machines which tell the story of the market gardening that was practised in the area until the old gardens were replaced with roads and houses in the 1970s.



### **Convict makes good...**

The following piece is an extract from *Building a State: The story of the Public Works Department of Western Australia 1829 – 1985* by JSH Le Page. The convict referred to in the article,

James Flemming, was convicted of *falsehood & forgery* in Glasgow in 1862 and was given a 7 year sentence. He was transported in 1864 and was given his Ticket of Leave in 1865.

"A telephone system for Perth and Fremantle was suggested in 1882 by James Flemming, who had been the principal proponent for the telegraph network and had become Superintendent of Telegraphs. Strangely the response was initially very negative, despite the matter being raised from time to time in the Legislative Council.

When the telephone finally did proceed with the ordering of equipment by the Works Department in 1886, James Flemming was not to see it happen, having died on June 21<sup>st</sup> 1885 at the age of 49... Flemming, the exconvict who made good in no uncertain fashion, must be regarded as the pioneer of the telegraph and telephone in Western Australia.

The ordering of the telephone equipment prompted *The West Australian* of March 8<sup>th</sup> 1886 to acquaint its readers with the intricacies of this latest piece of technology:

*Western Australia is ... now determined not to be behind in making use of that other nineteenth century marvel, the telephone .... It may be truly termed one of the best labour saving machines ever invented. By it the merchant converses with the broker a few blocs away .... The retail dealer asks the wholesale man of the city what his prices are; and, if need be, the invalid may lie at home with the telephone tube to her ear and listen to every word of the sermon preached in the distant church.... The switchboard will be worked by girls whose voices are better adapted to the purpose than those of boys .... It has not yet been decided what shall be the rent charged to subscribers; ... but should there be a fair number of*

*them, say a hundred in each town  
(Perth and Fremantle) it will probably  
be fixed at the low sum of £16 ...  
When the public come to know the  
great usefulness of such an institution,  
they will not hesitate, we think, to give  
it their patronage.*



### **NEW MEMBERS**

Elizabeth James  
Bruce Bott  
William & Rosalind Bell  
Kath Jordan  
Gwyneth Dunlevy



### **Fremantle Accord**

Last year we sent out to all members a questionnaire compiled by the National Centre for Research into the Prevention of Drug Abuse at Curtin University. The Centre was doing a study of the impact of the Fremantle Accord between the Fremantle City Council, licensees and police to promote responsible management of alcohol service. The study had been commissioned by the Council.

The Centre had a good response from members of community groups, and has now completed its report. Its findings are not encouraging. It discovered that:

'Those measures which most directly relate to the objectives of the Accord, the refusal of service to intoxicated patrons and the checking of identification show only slight improvement, while those relating to assaults occurring in or in the vicinity of the designated premises show no

improvement and in the case of night-clubs significant deterioration. Nor in the area of public and business perception is there clear evidence of significant changes. Fremantle is not yet judged to be a significantly safer place by those who frequent it or those whose work requires that they service it. The most pervasive perception of those consulted is that as yet there has been no significant change.' (From 'The Fremantle Police-Licensee Accord: Impact on Serving Practices, Harm and the Wider Community' National Centre for Research into the Prevention of Drug Abuse, Curtin University, February 1998)

To those of our members who completed and returned the questionnaire: thank you very much for your contribution to this worthwhile community project!



### **Alma Street Cemetery Park**

The refurbishment of the park on the site of the old Alma Street Cemetery is advancing apace. The old park there has become very run-down and, lacking adequate lighting, it has been regarded as unsafe at night. The Fremantle History Society became involved in the project early when Curtin University student Chloe Senior came to a Society meeting last year. She sought information about the cemetery and comment on her early ideas for a monumental centrepiece to commemorate those who were buried there.

The South Terrace primary school and Precinct Four have been involved in the planning for the park and the Fremantle City Council has made money available for the work. Chloe has put forward a developed design and David Kaesehagen from Ecospace is planning the landscaping. It is hoped to incorporate some of the original vegetation of what was originally rolling dune country.



## Fremantle Heritage Awards

On Saturday 25 April the Fremantle City Council presented its revamped Fremantle Heritage Awards, which had been expanded from the single award given to a nominated building to ten awards in various categories. The winners were:

Built Environment:	Brian Klopper
Aboriginal Heritage:	Jack Davis
Maritime Heritage:	Duyfken 1606 Replica Foundation
Artistic Heritage:	Deckchair Theatre
Literature:	Imelda Pearl Smith
Sporting Heritage:	George Meiers
Local History:	Lorraine Stevens
Cultural Diversity:	Le Gioie Delle Donne
Natural Environment:	Friends of North Fremantle Foreshore
Cultural Tourism:	WA Maritime Museum



## Robb Jetty, Cattle and Death

For more than 70 years cattle from the Kimberley arrived at Catherine Point, south of Fremantle. At first they were pushed off the ships and made to swim ashore. When they arrived on the beach mounted stockmen drove them

through the dunes to the slaughter yards nearby.

At the turn of the century Robb Jetty was built - eventually stretching 265 metres out from shore - and the cattle walked along it and through a race to the abattoir and death.

This practice continued until a section of the jetty was burned and later demolished. Stock were brought in by train and truck, until the decision was made to close the abattoirs in 1993.

As part of a project by the City of Cockburn, sculptor Tony Jones has designed an evocative commentary on the life, experiences and death of animals in the area. The sculpture stretches across the cycle track on a line between the remaining few stumps of the jetty piles and the abattoir site. It is enigmatically titled the *Human Race*, and comprises a race with metal images of cattle attached. You can walk through it and reflect on what has happened to animals on this site.

Another reminder of the Robb Jetty Abattoir is the 28 metre brick chimney which has been heritage listed. All the other buildings have been demolished.

The Robb Jetty site takes its name from George Robb, captain of the *Leda* which anchored just south of Catherine Point in 1830 and unloaded livestock.

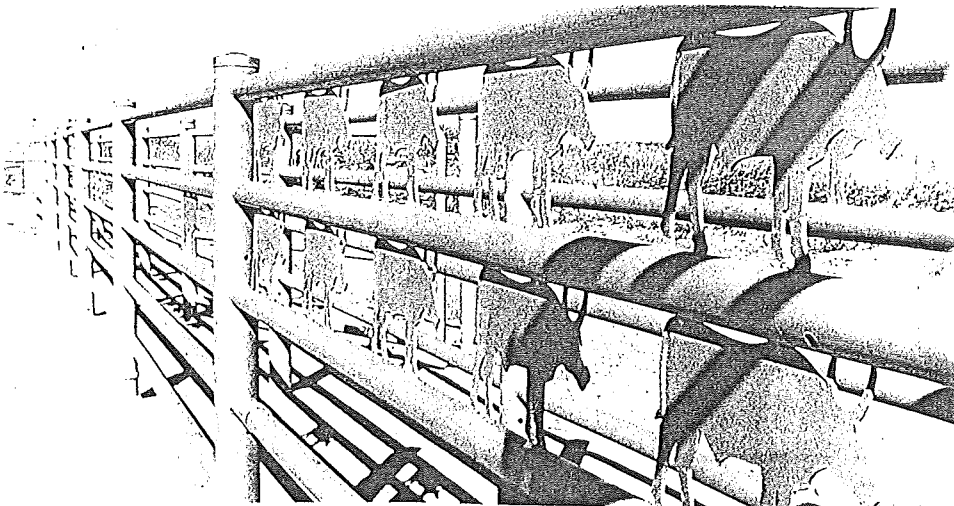


Photo courtesy  
North Coogee  
Landscape Project  
Cockburn Council

(Anyone interested in the history of Robb Jetty can consult the Robb Jetty pamphlet file 338.17 at the Fremantle City Library Local History Collection. This includes a piece by A J Lange: 'Robb Jetty and Its History' (unpublished)



### For Your Diary

**Tuesday 26 May – Boom ... goes the gun!** Susanna Bessell Brown will provide a background in the Round House tradition of firing the 1 o'clock gun. **Maritime Museum meeting room, Cliff St, Fremantle, 7.30pm.**

**Tuesday 23 June – New eyes look at our local history** – Join Alison Gregg as she speaks about the future of local history collections and Fremantle's local history collection in particular. **Fremantle Library - 7.30pm.**

**Sunday 26 July – The old His majesty's Hotel is the new Phillimore's Bar & Cafe** – join members and friends for a tour of this historic Fremantle pub, followed by a taste of its hospitality. Enough to warm any winter day. **Phillimore's Bar & Café, 2 Mouat St, Fremantle – 11.00 am.** More details on this fabulous day later.



### Conditions on board a convict ship

Rob Besford

In *The Veterans* (1985/1989), a history of the enrolled Pensioner Force, the former British Army men who became guards/warders at the convict establishment (later, Fremantle Prison, FH Broomhall observes that a diary

kept by Corporal John Gorman from 50<sup>th</sup> regiment, on his way out here aboard the *Midden* in 1851 "...throws light on the day to day life ... on a convict ship bound for the Swan River colony, though one has to read between the lines to envisage the hardships of such a voyage." This extract from the diary follows:

*August 22 [1851] – Expect soon to see the Crux Australis. Wash'd Kate [his wife, still recovering from the birth of their twin daughters on 2 August] & children doing well [;] the children have slight eruptions of the skin, but they are dying fast [the eruptions, not the children!]. Obligated to go & sleep on deck, thro the infernal Rats dancing a polka over me, which is anything but agreeable, particularly when they promenade between the Blankets. Oh how pleasant to feel their icy feet & perhaps a nibble...*

Reading between the lines required? ... Well yes; just a slight tragedy he omits to mention: it seems one of the twins died, since entries after this make reference to only one child.



### Paddy Troy Memorial Essay Competition

Sponsored by the Maritime Union of Australia and run by the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History, the competition is for a 3 000 – 5 000 word essay with prize money of \$500.00. There are no restrictions on who can enter (except the members of the committee of the ASSLH, Perth Branch) Three topics are set for this year's entrants to tackle. Entry forms and conditions of entry information are available from the Secretary, Perth Branch ASSLH, PO Box 8351, Perth Business Centre 6849 or by ringing Andrew Gill on 9328 7877 or 9228 0848. Entries close on 1 July.

