

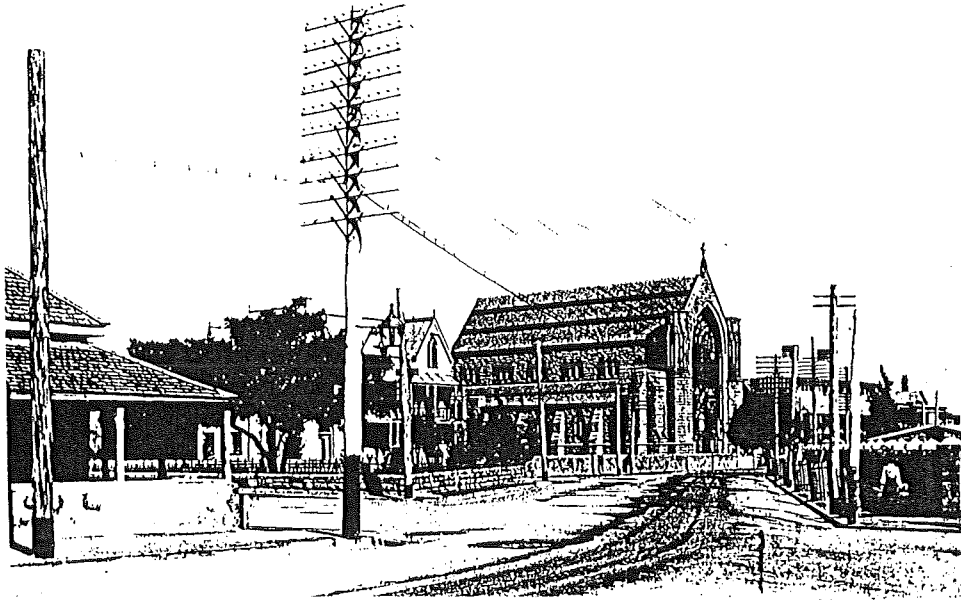


## FREMANTLE HISTORY SOCIETY

Established 1994

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

**Spring Edition  
1998**



St Patrick's Church, c 1908. Courtesy of Fremantle Local History Collection

### **Fremantle and the Coming of the Catholics - Alan Kelsall**

#### **Part 1: 1829 – 1915: the first Presbytery and the arrival of the Oblate Order**

In August 1829, the townsite of Fremantle was formally proclaimed by the Lieutenant Governor, Captain James Stirling, and the Surveyor General, John Septimus Roe, was instructed to plan the town. The 1831 plan included the bifurcation of Adelaide and Parry Streets at the northern entry to the town centre. By 1833, the stone quarry to the north east of the intersection was established, providing a ready supply of local limestone for building in Fremantle. Some quarrying took place at Lot 569, later the site of St. Patrick's Presbytery; however, the date at which it was carried out is unknown.<sup>1</sup>

In late 1852, Bishop Serra had a timber church constructed on the site adjacent to the cottage in Henry Street; it was recorded as "The Church of St. Patrick, in the town of Fremantle".<sup>2</sup> The priest travelled from Perth to Fremantle to attend to the Convict Establishment and the church.

Bishop Serra had returned to Perth in 1850 with seven priests and 32 novices of the Order of St. Benedict. In 1854, the Benedictines came to Fremantle to minister to the needs of the Catholic community. Following the construction of the Benedictine Monastery in Perth (now a portion of the Bishop's Palace), Bishop Serra determined to begin building at Fremantle. By January 1856, work had begun on the presbytery

<sup>1</sup>

Specification of Presbytery Fremantle, p. 5, refers to 'the Old Quarry Hole on the site'.

<sup>2</sup>

Serra to Mgr. Brunelli, 21 February 1853, in Bourke, D. F. *The History of the Catholic Church...* p. 56.

constructed of local limestone at Adelaide Street, and Salvado recorded that 'there were twelve Brothers working on the Priests' House in Fremantle'.<sup>3</sup> A well was sunk at the rear of the presbytery to provide fresh water, and a stable was constructed at the rear to the south-east of the presbytery, near Parry Street.<sup>4</sup> It had a galvanized iron addition at a later date; and after it was no longer required for horses, it was converted to a garage for motor vehicles, with the loft utilised for storage.<sup>5</sup> It was demolished in 1964, when a new masonry garage was constructed nearby.

Work began in 1859 on a new church, also of local limestone, in Adelaide Street, to the south-east of the presbytery.<sup>6</sup> St. Patrick's Church, Fremantle, was completed in 1860, and dedicated on 5 August 1860 by Father Griver.<sup>7</sup> Later the service of Fremantle was taken over by diocesan priests, until the arrival of the Oblates in 1894. The church built by the Benedictines remained in use as a church hall after the construction of the new church in 1900; it was demolished to make way for the new church hall in 1955.

Around 1863, St. Joseph's Convent was built on lot 588 in Adelaide Street, Fremantle to the south of the presbytery and the church to accommodate the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition. They had come to Western Australia in 1855 at Bishop

Serra's invitation to provide a permanent teaching body with the Sisters of Mercy for the Catholic school established at Henry Street, Fremantle in 1847.<sup>8</sup> After the Sisters relocated to a new convent and school at Hilton in 1968, the convent was sold and the site re-developed as a shopping complex with a large area of peripheral car parking.

In 1878, a new Catholic school was built at Parry Street, near St. Patrick's Church.<sup>9</sup> It continued in use as a school for ninety years until the departure of the Sisters of St. Joseph, when it was converted to a hall. It has been in use since 1971 for St. Patrick's Care Centre.

The Oblate Order was initiated by Eugene de Mazenod in Aix, Provence, France, in the aftermath of the French Revolution with the formation of a group of priests who were to serve a mission by providing pastoral care to the people of Provence. With the expansion of his vision came the adoption of the name 'Oblates of Mary Immaculate' in December, 1825 and in February 1826, formal approval of the new religious community by Pope Leo XII.<sup>10</sup>

Following negotiations begun in late 1893, the Superior General of the Oblates agreed to a proposal for the Oblates to undertake a mission in Western Australia. It had been made by Patrick Cardinal Moran, Archbishop of Sydney, on behalf of Doctor Matthew Gibney, Bishop of Perth, who had recognised the need for more priests in Western Australia, as the population was increasing rapidly as a consequence of the gold boom. The population increased from 48,502 in 1890

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3 19 January 1856, Salvado Diaries, in Bourke, D. F. *The History of the Catholic Church ...* p. 59.

4 Metropolitan Sewerage Map No. 47, Copy of PWDWA 14250 July 1908, Fremantle Library.

5 *Fremantle News* n.d. cutting St. Patrick's Fremantle, Codex St. Patrick's Fremantle 1894-1918 Fremantle Cuttings.

6 Bourke, D. F. *The History of the Catholic Church...* p. 69.

7 *Ibid*, p. 71.

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8 *The Record* 29 August 1974, and 5 September 1974.

9 *The Record* 30 May 1968.

10 Cooper, Austin OMI *A Little by Ourselves. Oblates of Mary Immaculate Australia 1894-1994* (Mazenod Press, Mulgrave, 1994) p. 4.

to 81,579 in 1894, and was to more than double to 166,878 by 1898.<sup>11</sup>

The first three Oblates sent to Fremantle in 1894 were the Provincial, Matthew Gaughren, and two priests, Roger Hennessy and Daniel O'Ryan.<sup>12</sup> The first Oblates in Western Australia were Irish, as were many of the new immigrants in the 1890s; the majority of the Irish were Catholic, which prompted the first Oblate parish priest of Fremantle, Matthew Gaughren, to write "judging by the names in the shipping lists a very large proportion of the newcomers will be Catholic."<sup>13</sup> The proportion of Catholics in Fremantle of Irish descent remained high until after World War II, and as the Oblates were not successful overall in attracting Australian born brothers to the Order in the same period, the majority of the Oblates who lived and served at Fremantle continued to be from Ireland.

On arrival at Fremantle in 1894, the Oblates were accommodated in the church and presbytery situated at 45-47 Adelaide Street, Fremantle, constructed in the 1850s by the Benedictines. The limestone presbytery remained 'handsome' in appearance, but by 1894 it was in poor condition, "... liable to be blown away

in any storm", poorly furnished, and required urgent repairs:

"Simply the walls of a once substantial building. We then got it repaired at the cost of three hundred and eighty pounds four shillings. This much money was expended on the house itself, independently of any furniture. There were but two old beds in the house. We had not got a knife to use at dinner, nor a cup to drink out of, nor scarcely a chair to sit on."<sup>14</sup>

The duties of the Oblates in Fremantle were considerable; they were to "... attend to the spiritual wants of the Catholics between Fremantle and Claremont...", which included Catholics at Beaconsfield, Hope Valley, Coogee and Rottnest Island; also those Catholics in Fremantle Prison, the two asylums, the depot for the aged and infirm, and three fever hospitals.<sup>15</sup>

Following the departure of the Provincial, Mathew Gaughren, in 1895, Father Thomas Ryan was appointed Parish Priest at Fremantle in his stead.<sup>16</sup> Father Thomas Ryan aspired to build a church of 'great beauty', to replace the original church, of which Brother Michael Boland wrote in 1897: "The old Church in Fremantle is a disgrace to the Priests and people."<sup>17</sup> Fund raising efforts continued through the late 1890s, and by 1899 the parish had raised £1,136 towards the construction of the new church.<sup>18</sup> The

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11 Demographic Bulletin No. 67 (Canberra, 1949) pp. 154-155, in Cooper, Austin OMI *A Little by Ourselves. Oblates of Mary Immaculate Australia 1894-1994* (Mazenod Press, Mulgrave, 1994) p. 6.

12 Cooper, Austin OMI... p. 8. The appointment of so senior an Oblate as Gaughren to lead the Mission to Western Australia indicated the importance the Order attached to the Mission.

13 'History of the Oblates in Australia' *Cosmic* January 1970, p. 16 in Cooper, Austin OMI *A Little by Ourselves. Oblates of Mary Immaculate Australia 1894-1994* (Mazenod Press, Mulgrave, 1994) p. 6.

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14 Daniel O'Ryan to Tatin, 12 April 1895, Oblate General Archives, Rome in Cooper, Austin OMI... p. 8 and p.10.

15 Matthew Gibney, Bishop of Perth, to Provincial Matthew Gaughren, 23 July 1893; and Daniel O'Ryan to Tatin, 12 April 1895, Oblates General Archives, Rome, in Cooper, Austin OMI... p. 9.

16 Cooper, Austin OMI... p. 11.

17 Boland to Cox, 22 July 1897, Oblate Provincial Archives Camberwell, in Cooper, Austin OMI... p. 11.

18 *Record* 25 August 1994, p. 1. Support for the new church came not only from the Catholic community in Fremantle, and Daniel O'Ryan collected more than £800

foundation stone of the new St. Patrick's Church in Adelaide Street, Fremantle was laid on 17 March 1898. The church was designed by Michael Cavanagh. It was consecrated on 3 June 1900 in the presence of the Premier, Sir John Forrest.<sup>19</sup>

Cavanagh had moved from Adelaide to Perth to establish a practice in 1895, as he perceived the opportunities available in the wake of the Western Australian gold boom. His strong relations with the Roman Catholic Church and the Roman Catholic community proved useful in obtaining commissions. He designed numerous commercial, civic, residential and ecclesiastical buildings in Western Australia over a period of more than forty years. Buildings in Fremantle designed by Cavanagh included the Newcastle Hotel (now named the Newport) P & O Hotel (1896), Hotel Orient (1896), Manning Chambers (1906), and Fremantle Fire Station (1908).

Father Thomas Ryan was a member of the committee established to erect the W. E. Marmion Memorial Cross in Adelaide Street, Fremantle, located opposite the Presbytery (and close to the Proclamation Tree), which was unveiled by Sir John Forrest on 9 January 1902.<sup>20</sup> A reason given for its siting was that 'the church elders could always give an eye to its safekeeping.'<sup>21</sup> Father Ryan was recalled to Europe in early 1903; he departed from Fremantle on 20 April

1903.<sup>22</sup> Father Joseph Wheeler arrived on 28 May 1903.<sup>23</sup>

By late June 1909 all the patients at the Fremantle Asylum had been transferred to Claremont.<sup>24</sup> The Oblates had ministered to them from 1894. From December 1909, the former Asylum was in use as an old women's home, to whom the Oblates ministered.

... to be continued



## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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

|                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| Elaine Berry    | 9336 1906 |
| Bob Woollett    | 9335 7451 |
| Dianne Davidson | 9430 6096 |
| Anne Brake (wk) | 9335 9473 |
| Phyl Brown (wk) | 9430 7449 |
| Ron Davidson    | 9430 6096 |
| Alan Kelsall    | 9336 4573 |
| Kath Jordan     | 9335 8974 |
| Alison Gregg    | 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 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.

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19 during his visits to the Goldfields, November 1897-March 1899. Cooper, Austin OMI... p. 11.

20 Codex St. Patrick's Fremantle 1894-1918, 1894, p. 8.

21 Codex St. Patrick's Fremantle 1894-1918, 9 January 1902, p. 34.

22 H. M. Grose, recollections of the unveiling, in a letter to Rev. Father, Presbytery, Fremantle, 3 May 1958. St. Patrick's Fremantle Codex Fremantle Cuttings.

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22 Codex St. Patrick's Fremantle 1894-1918, 15 and 20 April 1903, p. 41.

23 Codex St. Patrick's Fremantle 1894-1918, 28 May 1903, p. 41.

24 Codex St. Patrick's Fremantle 1894-1918, 9 June 1909, p. 84.



## COMING EVENTS

### Yuletide Festivities

*The roses are in bloom in the gardens.  
A gentle breeze stirs the afternoon air.  
People walk slowly along the wide  
verandahs ...*

Fremantle History Society members know how to have a good time and this year's Christmas celebration promises to be another successful social event. It will be held in the grounds of one of Fremantle's favourite historic venues – **Samson House** (Ord St, Fremantle).

Members and their friends can enjoy a light lunch, a glass of wine and convivial company on the spacious verandah of this beautiful old home following a once-over of the house (honestly now ... how long is it since you last visited!).

This festive occasion will take place on **Sunday 29 November** from **12 noon**. Members - \$10.00, non-members \$15.00. RSVP Dianne Davidson 9430 6096 or Elaine Berry on 9336 1906 by Wednesday 25 November.

**Please note: no food or drinks are to be taken into the house.**

## MEETING REPORTS

### AGM – Samson's Buildings

Fremantle History Society members were surrounded by history when they gathered at the premises of Lionel Samson and Son in Cliff Street for our annual general meeting on Tuesday 25 August. Lionel Samson is the oldest family business in Australia, having been founded in 1829 and around their cellar were still examples of the plant used for the bottling of spirits from

casks. Samson's big money earner was however the export of flour.

Retiring president Dianne Davidson reported on the society's activities for the year. A highlight was a \$2000 grant from the WA History Foundation for the publication of Fremantle Studies Day proceedings and some significant talks given to members. Dianne also foreshadowed the start of research for the Old Fremantle Families Project, in conjunction with the Fremantle Local History Collection Oral History Unit.

She announced she would not be nominating for president again and thanked everyone for their cooperation during her term as inaugural president of the Fremantle History Society. Elaine Berry, who had been vice-president, was elected as the new president.

Des Lambert, who started work at Lionel Samson in 1937 as an office boy on twelve and tuppence a week, then brought the firm to life with stories of life with the multi-faceted operation. He became company secretary in 1950 and retired in 1984.

Des also told members the history of the buildings on the site. The building in which we met was the first Samson building there, while the second one was burnt down in 1895. The fire also got into the historic Samson cottage, but it was saved by the efforts of the Fire Brigade and prisoners from Fremantle Goal.

### Walking Tour of Notre Dame University

Unfortunately severe weather kept most members at home on Tuesday 22 September when Geraldine Byrne, Promotions Officer at Notre Dame, took us on a tour of the recycled heritage buildings which house the University. For those who were able to join us the tour was a fascinating one. Members recalled when the Bateman's building was a hardware store with an extraordinary

range of tools and materials; at least six types of solder. Now the building without massive change is the library. We also visited the old Sandover building, built for the major engineering and hardware company, and the Lilly building. The conversions had been done with a minimum of intrusion to the original structure.

A pleasing feature was the presence of old plant and machinery scattered about the campus. These included old lifting devices, a biscuit maker, and a custard mixing machine which still provided a rich aroma of vanilla from its woodwork - 70 years on. Such machinery gave us an idea of the scope of the Bateman trading enterprise which also included a number of cargo ships to transport their manufactured goods.

Materials for the production of a chapel came from the site, and incorporated in the furnishings was – most appropriately - an original carpenter's bench.

We hope to make a return visit one day when the weather is milder.



### NEW MEMBERS

Nick & Jenny Archibald



### VIEWES OF FREMANTLE (from J K Hitchcock's *A History of Fremantle* (1929)).

'The town bears somewhat of the untidy unfinished look inseparable from half completed streets and unpaved footpaths. There are no continuous rows of shops, but all the minor stores and fruit and fish stalls are scattered

about in all directions and do not make nearly as good a show as if collected into a regular compact street. This gives the town a bare and deserted appearance as if no business were transacted, which is really not the case, although the trade is not a lively one.' From Mrs Millett's *An Australian Parsonage* (1863)

'Fremantle consisted of one principal street made up of hotels and stores, and a few Government buildings, including the Imperial convict depot, a lighthouse, and a number of private dwellings, all glaring in whitewash. A few churches made up an apparently sleepy but really flourishing township, which might be described as a city of public houses, flies, sand, limestone, convicts and stacks of sandalwood.' From Henry Taunton's *Australind* (1876)



### Your Committee

At the AGM the following were elected

#### Executive:

|                 |                       |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Elaine Berry    | <i>President</i>      |
| Bob Woollett    | <i>Vice President</i> |
| Dianne Davidson | <i>Secretary</i>      |
| Anne Brake      | <i>Treasurer</i>      |

#### Committee members:

|              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| Ron Davidson | Phyl Brown   |
| Alison Gregg | Alan Kelsall |
| Kath Jordan  |              |

In this and the Summer issue of the newsletter we would like to introduce you to the committee members.

#### Elaine Berry – President

Originally from South Africa, Elaine arrived in Fremantle via New Zealand and North Queensland in 1983. She fell in love with the place and decided to stay. In 1989 she began working at Samson House and became an expert on the Samson family.

She now works in the education section of the WA Maritime Museum. Through her work and her general interest in the town her knowledge of Fremantle history has expanded considerably. Elaine also takes people on walking tours of the historic maritime and west end precinct.

**Dianne Davidson – Secretary**

Dianne has lived in Fremantle since 1976, having moved to Western Australia from Melbourne in the late 1960s. She has a Honours degree in History from UWA and has written articles and books on various aspects of social history. She has a special interest in women's history and is currently writing a biography of prominent West Australian feminist Bessie Rischbieth.

Dianne has taught history and English at UWA and Curtin Universities.

Her deep interest in history led her to found the Fremantle History Society in 1994 and become its inaugural President.

**Alison Gregg – Committee member**

Alison moved from heading the Education Department Library to take over the reins at Fremantle Local History Collection following Lorraine Stevens' retirement in March 1998.

Alison has a longstanding interest in local history. She is a former secretary of the Gascoyne and Eastern Goldfields Historical Societies and last year was National President of the Local Studies Section of the Australian Library and Information Association.

Her PhD thesis was on the development of children's library services in WA, with a major chapter on Fremantle's pioneering role in providing free library services for all the community.

**Kath Jordan – Committee member**

Kath Jordan (then Power) came to live in Bellevue Terrace in the late 1970s and fell in love with Fremantle. At that time she was associated with Lorraine Stevens and the Library's oral history project.

Kath moved from Fremantle in the early eighties and has lived elsewhere including a couple of years in Sydney and three in the United States. She has since moved back to live permanently in Fremantle, which she declares is her favourite place in the world. She has taught English literature at Curtin, when it was still WAIT, at the University of Western Australia and at Methodist Ladies' College. She is now a free lance lecturer and writer.



**For Your Diary**

**Sunday 29 November – Yuletide Festivities at Samson House** – join members and their guests at the annual knees up and reacquaint yourself with this important piece of Fremantle's history. 12 noon onwards. Members - \$10.00 Non-members \$15.00.

RSVP Dianne Davidson 9430 6096 or Elaine Berry 93361906.



**Fremantle at War 1939-45**

Milton Jones

The port of Fremantle during the Second World War was one of the most strategically situated ports in Australia. Its situation makes it the gateway to Australia and the first and last port on the west coast of the continent. As the cheapest bunkering (oil) port in the southern hemisphere, it was a priority call

for vessels arriving or leaving western Australia.

With the outbreak of World War II in Europe in 1939, many of the world's passenger ships were taken over and converted to armed merchant cruisers, troop ship and hospital ships, which sounded the death knell for the regular interstate and overseas passenger services. Fremantle became a regular port of call for troop convoys carrying Australian and New Zealand troops to the Middle East. The first of such convoys arrived in the port in January 1940 and comprised eleven large troop transports including the well known P&O passenger liners *Strathaird*, *Orford*, *Orion*, *Orcades*, and *Ortonto*. Other liners which had not previously visited the port, such as CPR's *Empress of Japan* and *Empress of Canada*, also visited Fremantle. The total tonnage of the eleven vessels was 217 938. The convoy was escorted by the Australian heavy cruisers *Australia* and *Canberra* and the Royal Navy battleship HMS *Ramillies*. All these vessels were accommodated in the inner harbour and took on fuel, water and provisions.

In April a second convoy, which was much smaller in size, consisted of *Strathaird*, *Neuralia*, *Ettrick* and *Dunera* and was escorted by HMS *Ramillies* and HMAS *Sydney*.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> May a very famous convoy arrived, as it included the mammoth liner *Queen Mary* and other large vessels *Aquitania*, *Empress of Britain*, *Mauritania*, *Andes*, *Empress of Canada* and *Empress of Japan*. Due to the limitations of Fremantle's inner harbour the first vessels mentioned could not enter and therefore had to be fuelled and watered whilst at anchor in Gage Roads. The three largest vessels had passed through Fremantle the previous month on their way to form

the convoy. The escorts were cruisers HMS *Leander* and HMAS *Australia*.

The 4<sup>th</sup> September saw another convoy arrive consisting of *Aquitania*, *Orcades*, *Mauretania* and *Empress of Japan* with HMAS *Canberra* as escort. A further convoy arrived on 21<sup>st</sup> September of comparatively small vessels and berthed within the inner harbour escorted by HMAS *Canberra* and *Perth*.

Additional convoys including the liners *Queen Mary* and *Aquitania* continued to pass through the port during the remainder of the year.

Up to 26<sup>th</sup> March 1943 the *Queen Mary* visited the port on no less than 19 occasions and the *Aquitania* on 20 occasions in their journeys to and fro as troop carriers.

The world's largest liner, *Queen Elizabeth*, called at Fremantle nine times between 16<sup>th</sup> February 1941 and 24<sup>th</sup> April 1942.

As a defence measure, warships, such as HMAS *Perth*, *Adelaide* and *Sydney* were based in Fremantle for a comparatively lengthy periods.

The first convoy for 1941 arrived on 3<sup>rd</sup> January and comprised the vessels *Queen Mary*, *Aquitania*, *Mauretania*, *Dominion Monarch*, *Awatea* with HMAS *Canberra* as escort.

The three largest vessels, together with *New Amsterdam* formed the next convoy that called at Fremantle on 10<sup>th</sup> February, the escort being HMAS *Australia*, *Hobart* and *Sydney*. A few days later *Queen Elizabeth* arrived to take up duties as a troop transport of Australian and New Zealand services personnel.

In April, five of the world's largest ships constituted the only convoy calling at the port during the month. The vessels in this group included the *Queen Elizabeth*,



*Queen Mary, Ile de France, New Amsterdam* and *Mauretania*. No other convoy arrived until September 1941, when apart from *Aquitania* it only consisted of medium size Dutch passenger vessels.

The next convoy to call consisted solely of the two Queens *Elizabeth* and *Mary*.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> February 1942 the first convoy of United States troops called at the port. The ex-interstate Australian vessels *Katoomba* and *Duntroon* plus American transport *William Holbrook* escorted by the cruiser USN *Phoenix* and the aircraft carrier *Langley* also arrived to load fighter aircraft which had been flown across Australia in March 1942 following the fall of Singapore to the Japanese. Vessels crowded with refugees arrived at Fremantle taxing accommodation in the Fremantle inner harbour while as many as 30 ships were anchored in Gage Roads. It was a common sight during this period to see up to as many as four vessels of substantial size berthed side by side. During the fortnight ending 20<sup>th</sup> March, 103 vessels, naval and merchant and mainly seeking refuge, arrived at the port.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> March an anti aircraft regiment of the US army landed at the port from the vessel *Monterey* and established a number of posts in and around the harbour to strengthen local defences. After a period of three months, the regiment was relieved by Australian Army anti aircraft units.

At north wharf the US Navy submarine depot ships *Holland* and *Black Hawk* were accommodated. Fortunately prior to the outbreak of the European war construction of a 2000 ton slipway at Fremantle had commenced and with the help of the Commonwealth government and US Navy, was

completed in September 1942. The slip was used for small merchant vessels but mainly for submarines.

In March, July and September 1942, several convoys passed through the port, this time returning Australian troops from the Middle East for defence against the Japanese aggression. Hospital ships which regularly called at Fremantle in the course of the year were the *Maunganui*, *Wanganella*, *Manunda* and on one occasion *Oranji*.

Throughout 1943 a number of United States transports entered Fremantle Harbour with troops enroute to India and elsewhere; the vessels generally sailing singly without any escorting warship. However, on the 18<sup>th</sup> February a convoy arrived carrying US Army personnel, the vessels employed being *Queen Mary*, *Aquitania*, *Ile de France*, *New Amsterdam* and *Queen of Bermuda* with escorting cruisers HMAS *Gambia* and *Devonshire*.

At different times during the year, US Navy submarine depot ships arrived to exchange duties with similar vessels based at Fremantle.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1943 the first of the US Liberty ships arrived at the port, these ships nearly all bearing family names, all newly launched, all having made the journey direct from the west coast of the USA to Fremantle in about six weeks, were all engaged in the transport of vital war equipment and stores to be supplied to Russia through Iranian ports.

Up to 30<sup>th</sup> June 1943 more than 200 Liberty ships and other newly constructed vessels employed in ferrying goods from the US west coast to Iran called at Fremantle. In the main these vessels only remained in port long enough to load stores and water although on a few occasions repairs were required. There were at times as many as seven Liberty ships in port at the one time, which

naturally caused great strain on harbour accommodation.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1944 the US Navy's floating dock ARD10 arrived in harbour. This unit relieved the pressure on the south slipway, being better able to accommodate the larger US Navy submarines now being constructed and based in Fremantle.

Almost as soon as the floating dock arrived a state of alarm occurred over the whole state and this craft, together with several others, was dispatched to Cockburn Sound. There was an exodus of US Navy units to Albany, however after a week the tension died down and all units returned to the inner harbour.

Despite this state of alarm the work of loading and discharging vessels had to continue with the utmost dispatch. Should the necessity have arisen all lighting on ships and the wharf would have instantly been extinguished and the harbour merged into blackout conditions that prevailed all along the coastal area.

In May 1944, the Royal Navy submarine depot ship HMS *Maidstone* and several submarines arrived at Fremantle to form a British base for submarine attacks on enemy shipping. Further submarines arrived later during the year and thus formed a sizeable task force to build up at the port. As a number of Royal Netherlands Navy submarines had become based at the port and placed under the US Navy's seventh fleet command, there was now a very powerful force of submarines operating out of Fremantle against the enemy.

In December the Royal Navy's battleship HMS *Howe* accompanied by three destroyers passed through the port being the first units of the powerful

British Pacific fleet being despatched to assist in operations in the Pacific.

In the financial year ended 30<sup>th</sup> June 1944 exports increased by 233 000 tons on the previous financial year. The pilotage services of the port increased considerably during the year due to the additional services over the Degaussing Ranges (mine protection), adjustment of compasses, engine trials, etc in the outer harbour.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> February 1945 a large and powerful section of the Royal Navy passed through the port, comprising the battleship *King George V*, the aircraft carriers *Indomitable*, *Illustrious*, *Victoria* and *Indefatigable*; cruisers *Argonaut* and *Euralus* and eleven destroyers. However only the smaller vessels entered the inner harbour. On the 9<sup>th</sup> February the 22<sup>nd</sup> mine sweeping flotilla, consisting of seven Australian corvettes arrived in the port after very lengthy service overseas in the European theatre of war.

The large aircraft carrier HMS *Formidable* accompanied by several destroyers visited the port on the 4<sup>th</sup> March and berthed in the inner harbour.

On 11<sup>th</sup> April the Royal Navy submarine depot ship HMS *Adamant* arrived to exchange duties with HMS *Maidstone*. A further aircraft carrier HMS *Implacable* with destroyer escort arrived at the port on 1<sup>st</sup> May. With VE Day occurring on 9<sup>th</sup> May 1945 resources at the port were expected to be strained to the limit, however Japan capitulated and VJ Day arrived three months later. The early departure of the US Naval units very shortly thereafter relieved the expected strain of the port.

A 2<sup>nd</sup> hand book and ephemera sale is to be held on **Saturday 12 December 1998** at the Royal WA Historical Society's headquarters, Stirling House, 49 Broadway, Nedlands.