



# FREMANTLE HISTORY SOCIETY

Established 1994

The Secretary, PO Box 1305  
FREMANTLE WA 6959

**Autumn Edition  
2007**

Editors: Ron Davidson, Dianne Davidson, Anne Brake

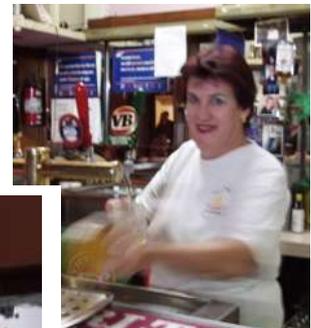
## THE NASH



The original Molly Maguires



Chris Mills and his mother Dorothy



Dalveen Briggs, doing what she has always done best.



There's always more information to find out.



Rusty Christensen was our amiable MC for the evening.

All photographs Anne Brake

## WAKES GALORE Ron Davidson

Fremantle History Society found it had not one but two wakes on its hands on Tuesday, 24 April, when more than 80 'mourners' turned out to celebrate the 100-year-plus life of the fire-ravaged National Hotel. It was generally judged to be our best general meeting yet.

In the Fremantle Club's lounge was the more formal function with former owners, bar staff, drinkers, Deputy Mayor John Dowson, and a newspaper boy providing stories, with well known Fremantle identity Rusty Christensen officiating. Michael Egan, who ran the hotel in the nineties couldn't be there, but sent a message to say he was present in spirit. He had told me earlier how drinkers were often known by their drinks; there was 'Guinness with a dash' etc. Upstairs was a very private world where 18 men lived in 18 rooms. Michael remembered that Fremantle History Society member Ken Burt (now deceased) was for years one of those and how Ken made frequent visits to council to raise current issues. A former barmaid during her student days, Kerry King, told me: 'I wanted to speak about Michael Egan's times at the National – but I

would have cried.' It was that sort of night. But you will find Kerry's reminiscences reproduced in this newsletter. Meanwhile down in the main bar another wake was happening, with the Molly Maguires, who used to pack the National with their Irish music on Sundays in the 1990s, partying and reminiscing together with their fans. Dalveen Briggs, a popular National barmaid in those days but now working at the Fremantle Club, raced from one group to the other to keep the drinks flowing. By the end of the night the groups had united for one big wake / party with Tony Cusack and Joe Brennan playing.

Star of the evening was 1940s newspaper boy Milton Baxter. He told the crowd how the National corner was the best spot for a paperboy; how he managed to get past the bar manager to sell papers in the bars; and how the sellers would shuffle with the change to extract a penny tip. He coveted then an old and ornate grandfather clock which was upstairs. Chris Mills, whose mother owned the National in the 1960s, got up next to say his mother Dorothy, who was in the audience, still had the clock and other original furniture from the hotel.

Society president Dianne Davidson said she hoped to see the National rise again as a functioning hotel, and urged the State Government to step in and provide additional funds if that should prove necessary. The society signed up a number of new members and the iconic Fremantle Club which has hosted a number of our better functions, reported good takings on what was normally a 'quiet Tuesday'.



## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Executive:

Dianne Davidson (President)	9430 6096
Anne Brake (Vice – President)	9335 5206
Alison Bauer (Treasurer)	9432 9739
Ron Davidson (Minute Secretary)	9430 6096

Committee Members:

Bob Woollett	9335 7451
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Fay Campbell	9341 4102
Val Cousins	0415 419 738
Marilyn Dimond	9335 3609
Cathy Hall	0407 086 300
Sally May	0409 431 844

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 at the numbers shown above.

General meetings of the Society are generally held on the 4th Tuesday of the month. Details of these meetings can be found in your newsletter and reminders are placed in the local press. Be sure to check details as meeting dates may differ from this.



## COMING EVENTS

### We Celebrate Heritage Week

The Society is involved in a number of events as part of this year's Heritage Festival. A few other events that feature our members are also included.

### The past holds many stories

FHS member Marg McPherson will describe the history of the Arts Centre site and its various uses from its establishment in 1864 through to 1946.

**Tuesday 29 May, 10 - 11 am, 1- 2 pm.  
Fremantle Arts Centre, 1 Finnerty St  
FREE**

### Talbot Hobbs' Fremantle (1887-1938)

Come and enjoy a multi-media presentation which is the foundation of a witty look at the life and times of the celebrated Fremantle architect and World War I soldier John Joseph Talbot Hobbs, who was responsible for designing some of Fremantle's iconic buildings. On **Tuesday 29 May** at 6 pm at Scots Church (**cnr South Terrace and**

**Parry St**), one of Talbot Hobbs' masterpieces, architect John Taylor will show and comment on Fremantle as it was in Talbot Hobbs' day. This will be accompanied by occasional observations by Lieutenant General Talbot Hobbs himself, complete in his scarlet military uniform (played by his grandson Peter Hobbs). This light-hearted commentary on Hobbs and his activities around Fremantle, backed by contemporary images of Hobbs' Fremantle, was a hit when John Taylor brought it to the ICOMOS conference at Fremantle last year.

Drinks and refreshments after the show!

**FREE**

**Please note: no parking at the Church itself, but ample parking available in the streets nearby.**

### **Societies' Sundowner**

Join members of both the Fremantle Society and the History Society at a sundowner on the balcony of **Kulcha** – built in 1899 as the Fremantle Literary Institute on **Friday 1 June from 5 – 7pm. 1<sup>st</sup> floor, 13 South Terrace (above Dome)**

**FREE to enter. Drinks at own cost, nibbles provided.**

### **Fremantle: a personal love story**

Ron Davidson's *Fremantle Impressions* has been a best seller in bookshops over the last couple of months. It is an affectionate look at the port city, which has been more than five years in the making. The idea for the book came in 1948 when he was a kid from South Perth, driving down Phillimore Street and he suggested that his father should honk a group of lumpers who were sauntering in front of their car. His father's reply, 'You don't honk Fremantle people,' set him thinking - for the next 50 years. *Fremantle Impressions* is the result. On **Sunday 3 June** he will talk about his personal attempt to capture Fremantle and its personalities; storytellers, photographers, sporting personalities, artists and community activists.

Ron will be bringing along copies of *Fremantle Impressions* for signing and sale. The book's publisher, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, is generously offering 25% of any sales as a fund-raiser for the Fremantle History Society.

### **Sunday 3 June 11am Fremantle Town Hall Atrium. FREE**

#### **Neither here nor there**

Enjoy an all day concert on **Monday 4 June** held in ten different heritage venues around Fremantle – join Fremantle's pi ensemble in a musical journey around the city as they improvise short concert pieces inspired by the ambience of each venue. Fremantle History Society members will provide a brief talk about each place before the music begins!

9-9.30am	Kidogo Arthouse, Bathers Beach, 42 Mews Rd
9.40-10am	Whalers' Tunnel (below Round House)
10.15-10.45am	Notre Dame's Old Court House, cnr Marine Tce & Mouat St
11.15-11.45am	Phillimores, cnr Mouat & Phillimore St
12-12.30pm	Moore's Building, 46 Henry St
2-2.30pm	St John's Church, Kings Square
2.40-3.10pm	Fremantle Town Hall Atrium, Kings Square
3.40-4.10pm	Scots Church, cnr South Tce & Parry St
4.20-4.50pm	The Commissariat, Fremantle Prison, 1 The Terrace
5-5.30pm	Fothergill's Bed & Breakfast, 20 Ord St

#### **Cost**

**All day pass – adults \$50, concession \$40; morning or afternoon pass – adults \$30, concession \$25; single performance – adults \$8, concession \$6.**  
**BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL: 9430 7667**

## AGM

While the organization of the AGM is in hand, its not confirmed as yet – a flyer will be sent out to give you all the necessary information.

Keep **Tuesday 24 July** free!



## MEETING REPORTS

### Fabulous Fishing Harbour

When head of the Maritime History Department of the WA Museum Sally May takes you for a walk around the port area you see things you haven't noticed before and discover Fremantle facts you haven't known. For the February general meeting Sally took us exploring the natural coastline around the Fishing Harbour and gave us a history of the many jetties, moles and harbours. What surprised many of us was how early fishing and later pearling became important in the development of Fremantle. Most of those attending afterwards adjourned to Cicerello's to sample some delicious, latter-day products of the Fremantle fishing industry.

### A New Look at an Old Friend

Members and friends stood beneath the recently reinstated gable finials at the Fremantle Arts Centre (Asylum) March meeting, and heard conservation architect Jeff Considine telling of his long research and the use of the latest technology to reveal the shape and form of the original finials. Looking upwards we could see how the slender finials were restrained from falling, with steel rods. The original finials were removed in the early 1900s. Before Jeff, History Society member and historian of the Arts Centre Margaret McPherson told of her research on the site and some of the interesting/tragic/humorous stories it revealed.

Both speakers fielded a number of questions, many of which showed a considerable knowledge of restoration issues.

### April Meeting – Wake for the National Hotel

(see lead story)



## FOND MEMORIES OF THE NATIONAL HOTEL

Kerry King

I remember the Nash fondly. I worked there, pulling pints at break-neck speed, under the helm of the (in)famous Mick Egan and (the somewhat more subdued) Robbie for four years while at Uni. To me it was like home. Not always the most respectable home, but familiar and well-worn. That was back in the early nineties, before the West End became synonymous with Notre Dame. The regulars carved a path between The National, His Majesty's, the Buffalo, The Fremantle Hotel, the P & O and Clancy's. At the end of a night Mick used to give food away to men who lived on the streets and tried to make me give the drunken regulars lifts home. I did on occasion, although I recall one of them pissed himself in the front of my car. Mick always liked to remind me, particularly when I was cursing another Tuesday evening baby-sitting a sloshed and incoherent pensioner, that one day one of those men could very well be my father. One of them, Eddie, (always gentlemanly) who I regularly had to call a cab for, insisted that the taxi take him to Ivanhoe. He lived in the block of flats where the grand old Ivanhoe used to stand on the corner of Ord and Hampton. Still Eddie's historical wistfulness was a welcome reprieve from endlessly calling taxis for sailors to send them to 205 South Terrace. It's sometimes hard to convince sailors, especially when you're working alongside a skimpy, that you don't offer *those kinds* of facilities upstairs.

The Nash was stately, yet grimy and run down. It was never quite the same after it was restored in later years, the aim to erase

its patina. It had smelt of a hundred years of tales and beer, of stories told from a harbour town on the edge of the world, transients and sailors blowing in and out, anecdotes rendered over and over again, until rumours festered into fact. Myths and legends blurred, not only of the customers, but of the pub. It heaved and groaned. Solid wide staircases, fading carpet, yellow stained walls, one floor rising in the sky, each higher than the next, culminating in a tower. Sometimes we'd steal up there, late at night, to drink staffies among the pigeon shit. You could hear the harbour and the seagulls. There were whisperings of hauntings. At night, when all the cleaning was done, the doors locked and the lights turned off, Mick and I would sometimes sit in silence at the bar and have a few, and watch the fights and romances breaking out in quick and equal succession on High Street, secure in our darkness, peering outwards. He'd tell me tales of how Fremantle *used* to be. The Fremantle he missed. That time is the Fremantle *I miss*.

The Nash was like a family and, working there, one became something of a Freo identity. Although I've not been there for well over ten years, I'm still often accosted by an old regular who wants to know why I'm not pouring their pints anymore. I've moved on, I tell them. Yet, I am fixed in a moment in time as the person they confided in daily. The girl who welcomed their stories of the war, their marriages, their children, their losses, their joys, how it was they'd ended up in the pub, why it was that no-one came to visit. I can still, to this day, walk down the street today and identify old customers by what they drank – a middy of super, a pint of the black stuff, a pony of gold with a dash of brandy on the side, a can of VB. Anyone who has worked in a bar knows the job is part counsellor, part booze. They have an intricate relationship. I miss that family and I miss that Fremantle. Rough around the edges, diverse, proud, honest. I miss Mick dancing on the bar on St Patrick's day, shouting 'rare up', and his endless rewording of popular songs...too shocking to repeat. While Robbie was something less of a crowd puller, he kept the ship (and its

unruly crew) on even keel. He was the kind of man you wanted to be around. The good old days...Jonathon Cope on occasion, Shebeen on a Sunday and later the Molly MacGuires. The days of the upstairs bar with Declan, Brian, Corrie and also, on occasion, Henry.

The beauty of the Nash not only lies in its now precarious and mostly destroyed architecture, but the mark of the characters that frequented and lived in it. Many old chaps used to live upstairs. When the first new owner (not the present owner) took over from Robbie and Mick, men who had lived there for years were suddenly out on the street, homeless. They were no longer the desirable Fremantle demographic. Others had to be carried out. They died there. The list of names is long and no doubt people all over Fremantle are currently reminiscing and mourning the damage to a building that was far greater to them than its structure, impressive though it was. It will always stand in my memory as a special place and time. A small urban shrine, not only to its erection in the heady days of the gold rush, but to those who lived and worked in it and those who helped hold up its bar, not least of all Dougie Taylor.

My sincerest hope is that what is left of it can be saved.



Kerry (front right) with the Molly Maguires and the Sunday crowd.

## LETTER FROM A PAPER BOY

Dear Mrs Davidson

It was with a sense of disbelief, then anger, when I first heard verbally about the tragedy concerning the destruction of the National. Unfortunately verification of the disaster came via the channel two television news.

I read with interest your 'Letter to the Editor' of the Herald, and although it's early days as far as a rescue attempt is concerned, my thoughts are, how on earth could it be possible to bring it back?

My first recollection of the National is walking past the hotel with my dad. He showed me the very impressive glass emblem of the Richmond Brewery, 'Tiger' beer, encased in a wooden frame which formed a barrier just inside the main entrance off the corner of High and Market Streets. This barrier prevented patrons from walking straight into the hotel, but obliged them to side step around the 'Tiger' sign. That was in the days when it was not considered appropriate for passers by to be able to see who was knocking them back at the front bar. Similar but smaller 'Tiger' sign barriers were at the other two entrances, one on High Street, the other on Market Street.

My next encounter with the National was as a newspaper boy, who during the years of 1949-51 graduated through the ranks of the team of paperboys employed by the Soames News Agency of High Street. My first stand was from outside the Newcastle Club Hotel, then to the P & O Orient Hotel, followed in turn by Barney Silbert's, then Ford's corner. At last I gained the pinnacle of my newspaper-selling career, of achieving through the most sales the sole right to sell from the National corner, which was without a doubt the best corner in Fremantle.

I spent nearly two years after school working under the shelter of the verandahs of the National, summer and winter, and all the time bare footed. Of course there were

times when I could explore the hotel, for there was an unwritten law that allowed paper boys to troll through the bars but keeping as unobtrusive as possible in case an unfriendly barman would yell 'get the bloody hell out of here'. However, the lure of some potential Daily News purchaser and/or the chance of a tip from some half-sotted drinker who had quite possibly forgotten he had already bought a copy.

The things that I always vividly remember are the huge staircases with such elaborate hand rails, great for sliding down, wide treads with carpet locked into place with shiny brass bands. The enormous grandfather clock which stood guard on the first floor landing up from Market Street residents' entrance. Going back there about twenty years later to make sure I had not been dreaming, there it was, and it stood at least two and a half metres tall, its huge body, elaborately carved and embellished with what appeared to be emblems and foliage of Scottish origin.

Other highlights were the cellars, stacked with wooden kegs, and the ever-present smell of spilt stale beer, and the scuttle of rats as you approached their domain. The cast iron spiral staircase which stood off the main wall. This was an external structure, which ran from the top floor to the ground level in the back yard and provided a real giddy sensation after a quick descent. The turret was another favourite because it housed not only leather chairs but as well an amazing piece of technology, a coin operated mantel radio. Not that I ever was one to put money into it, my earnings were not so easily come by so I always made sure that my pay was put to good use. Last but not least, the beautiful full width verandahs on each level, resplendent with their incredible and delicate looking cast iron fittings, that represented panoramic views over the High Street traffic as it passed either up to the Monument or down to the Roundhouse. The Market Street view was to the station and Tinny Thomas' Stone Ginger Beer caravan, or back along to the juncture of South Terrace. It was always a challenge to successfully land a paper aeroplane on

the roof of a passing tram, slowly crossing the multi directional tram lined intersection.

The only hope I think we have of replacing it as it was would be if the Council hold original copies of the plans for the structure. As much as I would like to see a full authentic restitution (sic) made, I don't think the present owners will come to that party simply because of the many millions of dollars that it would amount to.

Pity it had not been a church or cathedral!

However, now to another urgent matter. I would like to draw your attention to the long neglected, ignored and in a parlous state of disrepair, of a historical gem. This building if I may use that term goes unrecognised and unpromoted. Virtually everybody passing by have no idea of what they are looking at. I am referring to the river barge capstan platform situated on the south side of the river in between the Fremantle traffic bridge and the main bridge. The structure is as far as I can ascertain was built prior to the first traffic bridge, to ferry boats and barges across the Swan, yet there seems to be little or no information available to accurately date it. There is no plaque nor any indication that it exists. I had spoken to the council about its condition but nothing appears to have occurred. I am hoping that your society can urge some sympathetic and architecturally accurate remedial work, using proper mortar (not cement) on it before it degenerates too far, and another and far earlier structure (than the National) disappears forever.

PS If you hold any relevant information on the capstan platform, would you oblige me with some details?

Yours sincerely  
Milton A Baxter

**(Note from the Editors: we too would like more information about the river barge capstan, which we featured in our newsletter some years ago. If you have any details about its date of construction and its general history, please let us know!)**



Milton entertained us at the Wake with his wonderful stories of the Nash.



#### **GLEANINGS FROM THE HERALD 4** David Hutchison

The editorial in the issue of 15 June 1867 continues the campaign for an inner harbour:

*In addition to its numerous drawbacks, Western Australia has the misfortune to possess for its principal Port a most inconvenient harbor in which during the winter months, when the North-West winds present in full force, it is no unusual thing to see a ship drag her two anchors after her for considerable distance, or even for chains to part altogether, and sometimes for the hapless vessel to run ashore...the least that ought to be done by the authorities would be to lay down convenient moorings, at which ships might ride out without danger of being blown away ...We venture to say that a Breakwater, carried from Whaling Jetty Bay [Bathers Bay], head in the direction of Carnac, for a distance of a mile and half, is an achievement quite within the means of the colony...the removal of a portion of the Lighthouse Hill [Arthur Head] for construction of the Breakwater would make ample room for Quays and Bonding Stores...*

Note the spelling of 'harbor' and 'labor' at that time, at least in this newspaper.

There is further comment in the editorial in the next issue, of 22 June 1867

*The Bar at the mouth of the harbour has been inspected, and the Commissioners have recommended further precautionary measures. The late storm caused serious damage to the sea wall projecting from Rous Head. We are fully impressed with the feeling, that these works, although affording a convenience for cargo boats to and from Perth are but makeshifts and that ultimately the only secure and least expensive undertaking would be a Breakwater as intimated in our last issue.*

During these years, the paper often reported damage to ships at anchor in Gage Roads, sometimes with tragic consequences, as in this item of 29 June 1867:

*On Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> inst., one of the most awful and appalling accidents happened that has ever occurred in the history of the colony. While returning from the Strathmore which he had boarded in answer to signals of distress, and within a comparatively short distance of the shore, within little more than an hour from the time he left his house in answer to the call of duty the Harbor Master—Captain James Harding—and four of his crew had met a sudden and untimely end.*

The paper had regular reports of social and cultural events, such as this in the issue of 6 July 1867:

*We are happy to announce the commencement of the “Penny Readings” in Fremantle for the winter season in the Reading Room of the Working Men’s Association in Cliff Street.*

The Association had one of ‘a number of buildings’ on the site at the corner of Cliff Street and Croke Lane, now occupied at 37-45 Cliff Street by the former Elder Shenton Building, one of J. Talbot Hobbs’s designs. This building now houses the offices of the modern Fremantle *Herald*.

The same issue carried a report of a meeting at the Emerald Isle Hotel, on Monday, 1 July, of

*the Subscribers to the fund raised for presenting substantial marks of the admiration they felt for the courageous daring of John Tapper, Thomas O’Grady, James Casey, Robert Johnson, Ross Hunt and George Trevor Butcher in proceeding to the rescue of the Harbor Master and his crew, capsized on their return from visiting the Strathmore, which had signalled for assistance in the evening of 23<sup>rd</sup> June. The Rev. J.G. Baxter, Chairman of the meeting...presented John Tapper with a handsome and valuable watch, on the inside of which was inscribed ‘PRESENTED TO JOHN TAPPER IN FREMANTLE, W.A., IN MEMORY OF THE 23<sup>RD</sup> OF JUNE AND OTHER OCCASIONS’...Mr Tapper received it in silence far more impressive than any words...We predicted last week, that, for want of proper means to render assistance to vessels in harbour, we should have some day to witness the destruction of both life and property. Never was prediction fulfilled so fatally and so speedily.*

The illuminated address presented to Tapper on this occasion is in the Western Australian Museum’s History Collection.



### **The Blocks: an account of life in the Fremantle area in the early 1900s (Pt 3) Rusty Christensen**

Of course the tradesmen travelled by horse and cart using the well worn triple tracks in the sand which the experienced horses knew and would move from customer to customer without the driver being in the cart. In my recollection, there were eight corner shops in the area – probably more earlier – with four more on the north side of Marmion Street, plus many more in the town of East Fremantle. Thomas Wynn had the only butcher shop on the corner of Marmion and Onslow Streets, another was built in the late thirties on the corner of Marmion and Amherst Streets. Baker Bros was a large

wholesale butcher and meat processor in East Fremantle on the corner of George and Hubble Streets. It was destroyed by fire circa 1935.

The two largest shops were Brennan's on the corner of Edmund and Forrest Streets (it is still there) and Sharpe's, corner of Holland and Onslow Streets. It was family run and a local landmark. They carried all manner of lines, groceries, hardware, a gallon licence to sell wine, a Shell hand pumped petrol bowser on the Onslow Street side, a wood yard, and to cap it off, a regular penny picture show in the rear among the firewood. I vaguely remember going there with my siblings. I recall seeing Will Rogers in one of 'the flicks' as they were called because of the flickering nature of the projection.

Times were tough in the blocks, and people helped each other get by. As a child, I contracted diphtheria; the doctor had told my mother to get me to the infectious diseases hospital in Shenton Park ASAP. Our family had little or no money. Mr Sharpe took my mother, me and elder sister, who also had the condition, up to the hospital in the truck in which he delivered the firewood, and didn't charge for the trip.

Another horse drawn service was the night soil cart. Long before sewerage and septic tanks the sanitary contractor known as 'the dunny man' called each week in the wee small hours to exchange the full pans for phenyl smelling empty ones. Phenyl was a universally used cleansing agent and disinfectant with a distinctive smell. The outhouses, toilets or 'dunnies' were mostly wooden framed structures, clad with weatherboard with a corrugated iron roof, with a hinged flap at the back to remove or replace the pans. The contents of the pans were called 'night soil', I daresay because it was collected under cover of night for obvious reasons.

These structures were sited close to the boundary or as far away as possible from the dwelling to allow access for the contractor. They had a wide variety of designs. Some were a part of the backyard

laundry or the 'wash house'; others were free standing and in the more affluent properties built of brick with a curved corrugated iron roof. They all had a standard ledge and braced door with some kind of a fastener on the inside to secure the door in the spirit of 'first in best dressed, or was it undressed?' Behind some doors a cut down Hessian sugar bag was secured, being refilled when necessary by old papers, books, magazines and other paper products, to be read in the peace and seclusion of the dunny, or put to a more practical purpose in the absence of a toilet roll, which in the times I write of was unheard of.

The internal fittings of these edifices was as varied as there were dunnies, from a dirt floor with a basic wooden seat atop the pan, to ones with a cement floor, lined and a built in pine wooden seat extending wall to wall with a central hole. The dark spaces each side of the pan were great spots for redback spiders and other undesirables to live and breed in. (to be continued).



## WE CELEBRATE OUR AUTHORS

Even a near-record heat wave on Wednesday 7 March failed to stop 150-plus invitees packing the courtyard of the Fremantle Arts Centre for the launch of Ron Davidson's latest book, *Fremantle Impressions*, by Carmen Lawrence. The crowd bought all 100 copies of the hard-cover book, which Carmen described as "multi-layered, fascinating and evocative, and interested in the disadvantaged."

Since the launch the book has enjoyed good sales and was the New Edition Bookshop's book of the month from March-April. Ron, our long time committee member, appeared on Stateline and the Fran Kelly Breakfast show on Radio National. An enthusiastic Fran called the Fremantle Arts Centre Press production 'a lovely book'.

The Melbourne Age took what was for them, the unusual step of having their reviewer,

Dianne Dempsey, review a book based on distant Fremantle. She began:

*As both a history of Fremantle and modern day guide book this glossy hard back, featuring hundreds of sepia photographs, breaks with the usual convention of chapters and index. Ron Davidson, a Fremantle resident and former Perth journalist, writes exactly what his title suggests – impressions of the city. He takes a broadly geographic approach and takes the reader on a walk around Fremantle, allowing the buildings and landscapes to trigger historical and social digressions. While this anecdotal approach may frustrate a reader looking for a particular name or topic it certainly gives you a feel for Fremantle's rich and distinguished history*

*The story that carried the most resonance for me is that of the lumpers or wharfies. Much of Fremantle's prosperity came at the expense of these lumpers whose labour was vital if Fremantle was to develop as a harbour city...*

She went on to select her favourite images: a truck loaded with prams setting off in 1948 for the annual Lumpers picnic, 'creating what looks like a huge pyramid monument to procreation'.

Our other celebrated author, David Hutchison, has written a novel based on the tragic story of the Parkhurst Reformatory boy who was hanged for murder near the Round House, *Many Years a Thief*. The novel has been published by Wakefield Press in Adelaide, and was released there in April and selected as 'Lead fiction title' on the publisher's flyer *New Releases April 2007*. Eminent WA historian Geoffrey Bolton has written glowingly

*This is an excellent novel. Perceptive, subtle and moving in its insights, the narrative moves to its inexorable conclusion with a surely controlled touch. By a long way the most compelling work based on Western Australian history that I have read.*

Professor Bolton is scheduled to officially launch *Many Years a Thief* in Fremantle on 14 June.

#### FOR YOUR DIARY

#### **Fremantle Heritage Festival 27 May – 4 June 2007**

Fremantle History Society helps celebrate this important festival.

**Tues 29 May – 10 – 11 & 1 – 2.** Society member Margaret McPherson gives you an insight into the history of the Fremantle Lunatic Asylum.

**Fremantle Arts Centre. FREE**

**Tues 29 May – 6 pm.** John Taylor takes us on a journey through the world of Talbot Hobbs one of Western Australia's most famous architects.

**Scots Church, cnr South Tce & Parry St. FREE**

**1 June – 5-7 pm.** Members and friends of both the Fremantle Society and the Fremantle History Society can enjoy a drink and the company of others at the sundowner on the balcony of the old Fremantle Literary Institute, now Kulcha. **Kulcha, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, 13 South Terrace (above Dome). Free - includes nibbles but drinks at your own cost.**

**3 June – 11 am.** Ramble through the streets of Fremantle without leaving your seat. Ron Davidson gives you his view of our famous port city.

**Fremantle Town Hall Atrium. FREE**

**4 June – all day.** Neither here nor there is an opportunity to reflect on our past through a different medium – music. Hear a short history of 10 significant Fremantle buildings and then let pi-ensemble take you on a different journey through their improvised music.

**Various venues (see pg 3) FEES APPLY**

**24 July – AGM – details to be circulated.**