



FREMANTLE HISTORY SOCIETY

Established 1994

The Secretary, PO Box 1305
FREMANTLE WA 6959

**Summer Edition
2008**

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Fremantle Prison,
1895
Bartel & Williams
Photographers

WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION ANNOUNCED IN FREMANTLE

There was both good and bad news for the community when the Commonwealth Minister for Heritage and the Arts, Peter Garrett, chose Fremantle Prison as the site for his announcement that the prison, along with another ten Australian convict sites, chosen for nomination for World Heritage listing. He described them as 'some of the most meaningful places on earth'.

These places also include Norfolk Island, Port Arthur, the Hyde Park Barracks and the Cascades Female Factory (Hobart) where 166,000 convicts were received. Fremantle Prison received almost all of the nearly 10,000 male convicts to come here.

In making the announcement Peter Garrett praised the detailed work of State and Territory governments. What he didn't mention was the contribution of community groups and no

representative of these groups was present at the launch. Obviously no one had told the Minister how hard and for how long community groups had worked to shift the thrust of the development after decommissioning from commercialisation to heritage. The Fremantle Society was pre-eminent in this – yet no one from the Fremantle Society was invited to this historic occasion. Les Lauder wasn't told about Peter Garrett's announcement, even though from 1974-6 he managed to shift the future of the Prison from high rise apartments to preservation as heritage. Les is now a Fremantle City Councillor, but neither he nor any other Councillor was invited. The sole representative of Fremantle was the Mayor.

The Fremantle History Society made a massive contribution to the development of the crucial 2001-2002 Master Plan, yet it received no invitation either. Invitations and the organisation of the announcement were planned by the Commonwealth minister's office, and it was early days following the Federal election. But the State Minister's office should have done better.

In order to avoid future embarrassing snubs like this one the Fremantle History Society has decided to ask the relevant State Minister, Michelle Roberts, to reinstate the position of community representative on the Prison Trust Advisory Committee: such a representative did so much good work over more than a decade before the position was abolished in 2002. The definition of 'community representative' was altered to 'an elected member, either the Mayor or his nominee'. This is a distortion of what community representative is usually taken to mean. And clearly in this instance the result was that no Fremantle community members were invited to witness the culmination of all their hard work over the years. This is not good enough.

For more information and high quality images of the Australian convict sites, visit www.environment.gov.au/heritage/worldheritage



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
Val Cousins	0415 419 738
Marilyn Dimond	9335 3609
Cathy Hall	0407 086 300
Sally May	0409 431 844
Pam Hartree	9432 9739(W)
Andy Collins	9335 9848

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

February Fizzer

Unfortunately we have not been able to coordinate the necessary elements to pull a suitable meeting together for February. But we will be taking you to an old favourite for our March meeting.

Gambolling among the Gravestones

The History Society's visit to the Fremantle Cemetery a number of year's ago was very popular with over 40 people attending. If you were one of them we are inviting you back for a slightly different look at the 'dead centre of town'. If you missed out on the first visit, don't miss this one.

Instead of exploring the history of the people buried in the cemetery this visit will concentrate more on the ritual and symbolism of the historic and contemporary city of the dead. Recent additions to Fremantle Cemetery reflect not only contemporary responses to burial practice but also reveal the multi-cultural nature of Fremantle.

Meet at the **front entrance** to the cemetery on Carrington St at **10 am** on **Sunday 30 March**. Don't forget to wear a hat and sunscreen and bring some water.

Jewish Fremantle Revisited

Simchafreo: the Fremantle Jewish connection formed less than a year ago to explore the Jewish presence south of the river. To date the group has concentrated on Fremantle's Jewish pioneers and organised the inaugural Jewish Fremantle Walking Tour as part of the Fremantle Festival last year.

Ari Antonovsky and Felicity Newman are founding members of the group and both have agreed to address our April meeting. Felicity will set the scene with a discussion of the nature of Jewish Diaspora and the problems the early community faced in order to maintain Jewish social and religious life. The old Synagogue on the corner of South Terrace and Parry St is a major player in this story.

Ari will then recount the stories of a number of significant Fremantle Jewish identities some of whom are well known. Others have stories that have not been heard but

deserve to be because of the contribution they made to early Fremantle life.

Join us for this very interesting meeting at the Local History Collection, Fremantle Library at **7 pm Tuesday, 22 April**.



MEETING REPORTS

Festivities at the Fremantle Bowling Club

After an uncertain start and a late change of venue the History Society Christmas dinner at the Fremantle Bowling Club was a great success with 50 members attending. A feature of the evening was a journey through the club's history given by June Boddy. June is a veteran bowler, a former long-time Fremantle City Councillor for Hilton, and a former president of the Fremantle Society. June told us how the club was founded in 1896 with JJ Higham, a prominent citizen and real estate agent, as its president. Unlike Fremantle tennis, bowling was an egalitarian game with many lumpers coming over from the port to play, and some meatworkers. But no women.

An early job was to erect a picket fence to keep the cattle off the two greens situated at the corner of Ellen and Parry Streets. In 1905 a charming weatherboard club-house was built.

June then told us about the founding of the Fremantle Ladies Bowling Club. In 1928 the men proposed its formation. Membership was to be restricted to wives, daughters and widows of members. The playing time was as restricted as the membership and the women's club disbanded four years later.

It was 1957 when 39 women met to re-form the Ladies Bowling Club. June drew many laughs when she described the club's strict dress code: a white dress with its hemline 15 inches from the ground, a double petticoat and long white stockings which could only be removed when the lady

president left the premises. The stockings caused women bowlers to be known as the White Orpingtons. Each week the women's pennant bowlers had the ruler run over their hemline. In 1958 the bowlers moved to their present site with five rather than two greens. June said Fremantle bowling had passed its heyday and the club now depended for some of its income on corporate and other social days, and on hiring its hall – as we did.

Thank you, June. Thank you, Fremantle Bowling Club.



Ron Davidson with Alan Kelsall and Cathy Hall enjoy the 2007 Christmas festivities. Society members and friends in the background. June Boddy, our speaker for the evening is on the far right. (Di Davidson)



History Obliterated on Victoria Quay **Dianne Davidson**

Despite packed public meetings calling for imaginative development on Victoria Quay and rejection of the ING plan by the City of Fremantle on the grounds that it was contrary to the requirements of the waterfront masterplan, the ING development is now set to go ahead, with the WA Planning Commission giving the project a conditional go-ahead on 21 December 2007.

The Fremantle History Society has been part of the Victoria Quay Task Force which has been meeting for the last year or so,

and which has included representatives from the Fremantle Society, the Fremantle Inner City Residents Association (FICRA), South City Precinct, Gibson Park Precinct and South Fremantle Precinct. VQTF has been lobbying local member Jim McGinty, federal member Melissa Parke, the City of Fremantle, the Heritage Council of WA and, most importantly, Minister for Planning and Infrastructure Alannah McTiernan.

Apart from the sheer inappropriateness of the bulk and scale of this development, the VQTF has been most disturbed by the complete disrespect shown by the developers (and the Fremantle Ports) for the significant history of this heritage area. As part of the redevelopment of C-Shed into a restaurant/tavern complex it is proposed to build over the site where Tom Edwards received his fatal injuries during the riots on the Quay in 1919; the Immigration Building is also to be turned into a café/restaurant; and the historic CY O'Connor building, constructed during World War II at the command of John Curtin to provide facilities for the lumpers working on the wharf is to be demolished altogether. It is astonishing that a State Labor government should accept this destruction of what is largely the story of labour in Fremantle.

What is even more appalling is that when Minister McTiernan received a delegation from the VQTF to discuss our concerns, she showed clear hostility towards Fremantle and its residents, informing the delegation that Fremantle had too many political action groups and resident groups expressing their opinions. One would have thought that an active, involved and well-informed electorate was something to be treasured in a genuine democracy.

There are some faint glimmers of hope. The Heritage Council and the WA Planning Commission have laid down various conditions under which the development may proceed, including the requirement that the developers work with the Heritage Council and the City of Fremantle to satisfy

heritage demands. However, these conditions are relatively vague and unspecific, and ING has in any case lodged an appeal to the State Appeals Tribunal against even such vague conditions as being too restrictive. The VQTF is currently investigating the possibility of being part of the defence of the conditions imposed, some of which were the result of VQTF lobbying.



That Archway

In the last newsletter we published an appeal from Elizabeth Sutherland asking about the original archway which was the subject of a watercolour painted by her grandfather Ray Cargeeg.

We were able to solve her problem. Our superb Local History Collection advised us that the archway was part of the original convict bridge constructed around 1866, which was demolished around 1950 – the Collection has a photograph of the archway.

For those who have a copy of John Dowson's book *Old Fremantle* (2nd ed), you will find photographs on pp 59 and 61.



More About the Gourleys and That Headstone

David Hutchison

The Gourleys

Several people have told me, since the publication of my article 'Mystery of a Headstone' in the previous issue of this newsletter, that Robert Gourley was named Robin. He was christened David Robert. His father was Robert David Gourley. Records of the Fremantle Cemetery verify these names. However, on the Gourley family headstone he is listed as 'David (Robin)' confirming that he was also known as Robin. For historical accuracy I used his given name in my article.

I am grateful to Helen Muir for providing me with a copy of some notes on the Gourley brothers written by her late husband, Robert, and for allowing me to quote from them. The brothers obviously enriched the lives of young children who lived in the area.

(They) lived in a small whitewashed shack between the Naval jetty and the Oyster Beds. Rob was tall and genial. Harry was rotund and often tetchy. Their father had been renowned in Fremantle, famous for building the Semi Rater yachts, and all were instrumental in founding the Swan Yacht Club...The 'boys' continued yacht-building in a shed at the southern end of their block...Both the brothers were renowned for helping children not only use but also look after the river. Rob used a garden rake with a handle some 20 feet in length with which he would rake the bottom of the river for the full 500 yards of riverfront that their property commanded. Any child who was seen to throw anything into the river was severely scolded.

On virtually any day, on passing their house, one would find Harry sitting on a large baulk of timber outside their front gate. He had labelled his seat 'Mon Repos'.

They also taught the basics of rowing, sculling and sailing to those who showed interest, and we would spend hours in their workshop, or on the slipway alongside their jetty, watching them at their work. The workshop was decorated around the walls with half-models of yachts built on the premises...To the north side of their workshop was a white deckhouse they had salvaged from the P&O liner Orizaba that was wrecked on Coventry reef years earlier.

Between the house and the workshop, they tended a large garden fringed with plantain trees. The fruit they grew, sugar cane, guavas, oranges and bananas, were freely on offer, and we would fill our shirtfronts with what we couldn't eat, for the journey up the hill to come.

I regret that by the time I was appointed Curator of History at the WA Museum the

treasures of that workshop were not available.

The Headstone

I can confirm that the entry on Frances Scott's headstone, in the Fremantle Cemetery booklet *Founders and Felons: a guided tour of Fremantle's heritage*, has – as I suggested in my previous article – other errors. I have subsequently had several conversations with Des Lambert, and have also obtained a copy of his paper, 'The Lionel Samson story: a brief history of Australia's oldest family business' (*Early Days*, Vol 9, 74-85).

Des is a mine of information about the Samsons. He worked for Samson's in Cliff Street from 1937 to 1984 and carried out, during that time, extensive research into the Samson family. Des Lambert was not married to one of Daniel Scott's daughters. However, there were connections between the Samson and Scott families. Daniel Scott's son, Daniel Henry, married Caroline Samson, eldest daughter of the original Lionel Samson, who arrived in the colony on the *Callista* in 1829. Daniel's daughter Catherine (who later chose to spell her name Katharine) married Lionel Samson's son William Frederick (1853-1901). That William Frederick must not be confused with the later Mayor of Fremantle. Katharine was born in 1846 and lived until 1941. She spent many years in Melbourne. She returned to Perth in 1938 on the ANA Douglas DC2, *Bungana*. This was one of the first interstate flights by the new airliners. That flight symbolises the amazing changes Katharine would have witnessed in her lifetime.

Des believes that Ian Muir told Coultson (Tony) Scott Samson about the headstone and that it was he who arranged for it to be sent to Fremantle Cemetery. I had an interesting conversation with Tony Samson over lunch. He was born in 1919 and is a son of William Henry John Samson, Lionel's grandson. He has no recollection of being involved in the transfer to the headstone to the Fremantle Cemetery.

At present, I have no further leads.



And Yet More on THAT Gravestone...

Elaine Berry

Des Lambert worked for Lionel Samson & Son Pty Ltd for most of his working life and eventually became the Samson Family Archivist. He told me the story about the gravestone mentioned in David Hutchison's article in the FHS Spring Edition of the newsletter. Des never owned the house and certainly was not married to a descendent of the Scotts.

Jane Frances Scott was the daughter of the Harbour Master Daniel Scott and his wife, Frances. Her death is recorded in the records of the Alma Street Cemetery, as follows:

No 58	9 March 1833	Jane Frances
Scott	1-1/2 yrs	Infant Buried
by the Revd J B Wittenoom		

According to Des, Jane Frances Scott's gravestone was discovered in the 1980's when the stone cottage near Preston Point called Gourley House was demolished. It had been used as the hearth stone in the fireplace of the cottage. I understand Gourley Park is on the site of the old family home.

Someone with an interest in early Fremantle history gave the gravestone to Tony Samson. It was he with the help of Des Lambert who organised for it to be placed on the grave of Katherine Samson (nee Scott). Katherine died in 1941 aged 96, Jane Frances Scott was her sister. A rather nice touch I thought.

Des also tells the story of workmen lifting up paving stones in High Street and coming across old headstones, presumably from the Alma Street Cemetery. Early recycling perhaps?



Can You Help?

Andrew Pittaway, Archivist at the City of Fremantle is writing a history on Fremantle people who served in the First World War. A database of approximately 3000 names has been put together and he would like to hear from anyone who has information or photos on those Fremantle people who served in the Australian Imperial Force (including Nursing), Royal Australian Navy, Australian Flying Corps, or as Munitions Workers. He can be contacted during working hours on 9432-9583, andrewp@fremantle.wa.gov.au or after hours on 9317-6413.'



Notes from the Local History Collection Pam Hartree

Staff from the Local History Collection continue to be busy adding information in all formats to the collection. Photographs recently added include selected photographs from the Brent Sumner collection. These photographs are quite diverse and reflect events and places in the Fremantle area during the 1980s and 1990s. Online images continue to be added to the Council's website and they can be accessed at <http://www.freofocus.com/imqlib/html/default.cfm> .

Local History staff hosted a Tales of Times Past function in the main library in November. More than 50 people attended including elderly residents from the Fremantle area and international students from Phoenix College. Tales of Times past is a project coordinated by Vasanti Sunderland and provides a forum for senior storytellers to talk about their life experiences, in this case in the context of Fremantle's history, and encourages the audience to contribute their experiences. The morning function was very successful and enjoyed by all who attended and participated.

Microfilming of approximately two years issues of the Fremantle Herald and Fremantle Gazette was completed in early November. Early planning for the annual Heritage Festival in May has commenced and an interesting series of workshops is proposed.

Publications added since the beginning of November include:

Australian Archives (1987) *Australian Archives : material relating to Fremantle guide 1900-1987*

Stone, Georgi (2001) *Community Mural and Garden Project at Fred Notley Child Care Centre and Community Venue*

Families and friends of the First AIF Inc. (2006) *Digger : December 2006, No. 17*

GHD PTY LTD (2007) *Draft Fremantle Ports/Department for Planning and Infrastructure Kwinana Quay Project : environmental executive summary for the scoping document Offshore island Option & Land Backed option December 2007*

Royal Western Australian Historical Society (Inc.) (2007) *Early days: journal of the Royal Western Australian Historical Society, Volume 12, Part 6*

Uloth and Associates (2007) *Fremantle waterfront commercial development : traffic investigation*

Cox Howlett and Bailey Woodland (2007) *Fremantle waterfront : commercial precinct development application*

Stone, Georgi (2000) *Hilton Primary School 50th Anniversary Mosaic and Banner Project*

Western Australian Planning Commission (2006) *Leighton Oceanside Parklands landscape master plan: draft report*

Lindgren, Mia (2007) *Living with asbestos : the third wave*

Urban Economics (2007) *Mixed use waterfront development proposed for Fremantle : economic impact assessment*

Nevill, Simon (2007) *Perth and Fremantle : past and present*

Department of Transport (1999) *Perth metropolitan freight transport strategy : draft for public comment.*

O'Brien, Simon (2007) *A vision for the Port of Fremantle*



MEMORIES OF NORTH FREMANTLE & THE NORTH FREMANTLE AMATEUR FOOTBALL CLUB

Margaret McPherson (nee Wright)

My family's connection with North Fremantle began in convict days. Pensioner guard Thomas McCreery with wife and four children arrived on the *Runnymede* in 1856 together with 248 convicts and was given a grant of land on the corner of Alfred Road and Queen Victoria Avenue (later Stirling Highway) where the Croatian Church is today. His youngest daughter Catherine (one of eleven children) was my maternal grandmother.

William White, a warder from Pentonville Prison England with his wife and four children, arrived in 1863 on the *Lord Dalhousie* with 270 convicts. Their fifth child was born in Fremantle 1864. The eldest son William White jnr was my maternal grandfather

Following their marriage in 1883 William and Catherine occupied a house in Johanna Street till 1897 when they moved to John Street. It is through my grandfather William White that my first tenuous connection to the

North Fremantle Amateur Football Club was established. He, like Mayor Congdon, was a member of the first North Fremantle Council elected in 1885 and he served on the council till 1922 – at that time the longest serving member of the council. His son William White Jnr was also elected to the council serving with his father for many years. William Snr. would not only have been involved in the decision to start the football club, he would have supported the motion. Like Mayor Congdon he was very ardent in his support of North Fremantle community and left a section of his John Street property to be kept *in perpetuum* for the people of North Fremantle to have access to the river. Unfortunately this property restricted certain development in the area and by devious means its status was changed, allowing development of Pier 21.

Grandfather White moved to Thompson Road in 1910 where he died in 1942. He had a family of three boys and eight daughters. Four of the daughters had connection to the football club. Elsie's son Les Tobin played in the 1936 A grade premier team, Ethel's son Ron (Trizzie) Lawrence played for Ex-Scholars going on to East Fremantle League, Glad's daughter Shirley married John Parker, son of Arthur Parker and the second youngest child Margaret married Wilfred Wright in 1927 (my parents).

From 1929 on when my father first played for North Fremantle the connection to the football club became an important part of our lives. Between 1931 and 1935 Dad played for both East Fremantle and South Fremantle League teams before returning to North as Captain/Coach. Life in the house was structured around football training, the match itself and the review of how the game was played, lost or won. Dad was a fairly quiet man at home, but I believe he was capable of saying what he wanted and felt to the team in no uncertain terms at training and on the field.

Training nights were held whatever the weather; we did not own a car so Dad like most of the boys would either ride their bikes to and from or else walk home. What should be emphasised is that the team and officials supported the club without any financial reward. They turned up to training and to the match because they loved the game and the friendships that developed. Many a young girl spent a Saturday night nursing the bruises of her boy friend instead of going to the pictures or dance on a date!

Not a drinking man Dad promised the 1941 team if they made Premiers he would have a drink with them at the hotel – I think it was the Rose Hotel. He must have had more than one drink – I remember he was so sick and spent most of the evening vomiting in the garden while Mum kept telling him it was his own fault. It was such a rare occasion to see Dad this way which is why I think I have never forgotten it.

Sunday mornings after a game our kitchen table would be cleared, Dad would get out his famous liniment, which he made himself, ready to massage carked legs, muscle problems, sprains. I remember Wilf Mathews, Bill Haddow, the Onley boys, the Dearle boys amongst others who graced our kitchen table. Laurie Tetley will never be forgotten – not only was he a very supportive club member, a perfect gentleman, but I think every girl saw him as their “White Knight” of romance.

One of the special events of the year was the wind-up held in the Guild Hall next to the Anglican Church in Hevron Street. Mr. and Mrs. Horan who lived in Bay Road had a small band and usually played at any local events. She was a wonderful pianist and very talented lady who made silk flowers and costumes for every occasion including the football wind-up. During the evening the players would put on a Revue as part of the entertainment. I can remember the last time it was held (probably 1940-1941) when these big hairy- chested men were up on the stage of the Guild Hall dressed in pink tu-

tu's with football socks and boots doing the Dance of the Fairies. It was hilarious.

I am enclosing a photo taken by my cousin Les Tobin showing Dad in an Irish Jig costume, which was the theme for the windup in that year. I think the wind-ups changed after the war as I don't recall going to similar ones again.



William Wright dressed in an Irish jig costume, North Fremantle Football Revue, 1936 (Margaret McPherson)

After the war Dad became involved coaching Ex-Scholars grade and my brother Bill (or Wilbur as everyone called him) also began his football career with North Fremantle. He later played for East Fremantle League. Once again the kitchen table was used, but this time the Conway brothers, Dennis (Dinny), Jimmy and Frank – all of whom became League footballers were occupants.

Ex-Scholars had a different atmosphere about it. Possibly because they were mainly young boys, also the war was over and life

was no longer doom and gloom. Bill Houlahan, our next door neighbour, had a trucking business, was an ardent North Fremantle supporter which was rather fortunate as he supplied a truck every week to take supporters and sometimes players to the away-from-home matches.

Arthur Dearle who worked for Houlahan's for many years was in charge of the truck. He was a delightful person, always ready with a joke, full of laughter, and a really one-eyed barracker. Going to the match Arthur would shout to people walking on the road or in cars letting them know how good our team was and if we won everyone on the return journey (within ear's distance) would know. We were strong supporters and at times perhaps not good losers, but the boys knew we would always be there for them.

Every morning on his way to work Arthur would stop and call out to my mother telling her it was time for her to go and get "Billy's" (meaning Dad) breakfast. They always answered him with a Good Morning Arthur.

North Fremantle was a unique place. We were in a sense isolated by the river and expanse of Buckland Hill, had our own council and were to some extent an independent group of individuals, but a united community. The North Fremantle Football Club had a name for aggressiveness, supporters were one-eyed and to some outsiders we were a lower-socio-economic community. From my personal experience with the club I considered us to be a rich community, for I doubt if there was another football club that could match the decent, hardworking, kindest men that formed North Fremantle Amateurs and Ex-Scholars from 1930's to 1950's.



Larry Still Calls High Street Home

History Society member Larry Foley sent us this picture of High Street in the early 1940s, along with a lot of memories. His father was

George Foley who in the twenties opened at number 50 as a tobacconist, sold lottery tickets and was a turf commission agent which meant starting price (illegal) bookmaker. George was killed when he rolled his Buick 8 in 1935. Larry's mother Muriel, with three young children to care for during the Depression, took over the business. As Larry puts it she 'did not know which end of a horse to feed' but soon learned, with some coaching from Larry's Uncle Dan. Each race day she could be seen listing horses and jockeys in coloured chalk on large display boards. Who were her customers? Larry says everyone: politicians, police, businessmen and, most importantly, lumpers and woollies. One and threepence each way was the most popular bet. Ten shillings each way was huge. Meanwhile the Foleys lived over the shop and Larry saw life on the lively street at close quarters.

During the war the commission agents were shut down. Most operated behind closed doors. Mrs Foley didn't like the idea. Instead, another SP bookie, Jack Caird, asked her to run a sweet shop called the Everton Toffee Shop at 58 High Street, next door to his betting shop. This did well and Muriel became famous world wide.



"Poppa" Reale outside the Fruit Palace, c 1940 (Larry Foley)

Larry has good memories of the Empire Fruit Palace run by a lovely Sicilian Salvatore Reale – Poppa Reale to the kids. Poppa introduced Larry and many of his friends to spaghetti. He made ice creams and lemon squash and also sold them at City Beach, as Bathers Beach was known.

Sadly Salvatore had visited Italy not long before the war started and was interned because of this.

Larry sent us many other memories, some of which we will share with you next time!

(Many of you must have similar memories to Margaret and Larry – please send them to us if you do. We would like to make members' reminiscences a permanent part of this newsletter!)



Vale Eric Silbert Ron Davidson

Eric Silbert – bomber pathfinder, author, businessman, scholar – died on 9 December 2007. He spent the bulk of his 85 years living and working around Perth; he even became that city's deputy Lord Mayor. But he remained a Fremantle boy. Remember our monthly meeting in 1996 when he took Fremantle History Society members on an entertaining (but still scholarly) stroll among Fremantle's Jewish personalities and their businesses, and of their religion. He covered the big names, like Lionel Samson and the civic-minded Elias Solomon; but quickly moved to others like the Sallingers who sold clarinets and sheet music in High street, and the Rappeports who had tearooms noted for Esther Rappeport's 'best ice cream in Fremantle'. The Rappeport children went to Richmond Primary School dressed European style with long coats and hats and long socks. We felt a little sorry for them – as Eric did. Then there was Abraham 'Izzy' Orloff, the Fremantle photographer and amateur fisher whose studio was opposite the Town Hall.

In many ways these characters were outshone by Eric, the Fremantle boy and story teller, and his adventurous Fremantle friends. Eric was born in 1922. His father Berel had arrived from Poland when he was 14 and spoke only Yiddish. He soon realised the name Berel was too similar to Beryl. His friend suggested Barney would be a good

substitute. His mother Minnie was a Masel and arrived in Fremantle as a child from Poland. Eric grew up in what he wryly called a Fremantle Jewish ghetto. Barney built a house in Ellen Street opposite Fremantle Park. Next door were the Tates who ran a wine saloon in High Street. Just around the corner were the Robbins whose shops sold guns and tobacco.

Eric told us with some glee how he had been mentioned in police records by the time he was two. Already venturesome, Eric had toddled off and couldn't be found. The police were called; then the fire brigade; then a police tracker, who eventually found him. He was enveloped in a herd of sheep, which stock agent George Booth used to occasionally agist on Fremantle Park.

Later Eric went to nearby Christian Brothers Fremantle then spent a year at Aquinas. It was standard practice for bright Jewish boys to attend Christian Brothers schools: Perth had few affordable schools going to matriculation. Then WW2 broke out and Eric joined the air force at 18. He was sent to Britain with six friends to join Bomber Command, then the elite Pathfinder who lit up the way for the bombers which followed. Eric was the only one to return. He brought back a Distinguished Flying Medal, the Polish Military Cross and some terrifying memories of war. He also had a satisfying memory. While in Britain, he discovered that some British women felt it their patriotic duty to see that the handsome young airmen did not die as virgins. Two days in a London hotel with a particularly patriotic woman took care of this problem for Eric.

On returning Eric married Joan Tate who was the niece of the Tates next door. He worked at Barney Silbert's until it was taken over by Betts and Betts in the 1960s. The south-east corner of High and Market – 'the centre of Fremantle' – remains Barney Silbert's Corner. Eric moved to Perth, became a city councillor for 17 years where he became interested in recycling. He was also a member of the University of WA

Senate. Eric wrote a number of books, including one with Joan on the liberal Judaic movement in WA.

Eric is survived by his wife Joan, four children and two grandchildren.

(Eric's article on Jewish personalities in Fremantle and the Fremantle synagogue can be found in the Fremantle Studies Journal Volume 1.)



FOR YOUR DIARY

Sunday 30 March – Gambolling through the Gravestones. Bring a hat, sunscreen and water and join members and friends as we explore the fascinating ritual and symbolism of death in God's acre. Meet at the front entrance to the Fremantle Cemetery at **10 am**.

Tuesday 22 April – Jewish Fremantle Revisited. Ari Antonovsky and Felicity Newman, founding members of *Simchafreo: the Fremantle Jewish Connection* will give a background to this extremely important group in the history of Fremantle. **7 pm, Local History Collection, Fremantle Library.**



HAIL TO A REMARKABLE CHIEF

Professor the Hon David Malcolm AC QC KCSJ, former Chief Justice of Western Australia will deliver the National Trust's 2008 CY O'Connor lecture on Thursday 13 March.

As Western Australia continues to earn a reputation of a boom state, Prof Malcolm compares the extraordinary growth in infrastructure under the visionary leadership of Sir John Forrest and CY O'Connor with the legacy of Sir Charles Court in the 1960s as Minister for Industrial Development and the North-West and then as premier. Can

we sustain or aspire to such boom times again?

This is the 4th time the National Trust has presented the O'Connor lecture. The purpose of the event is to celebrate the legacy of O'Connor, particularly his far sightedness, his innovation and his integrity. Past speakers have included Dr Jim Gill, Chief Executive Officer, Water Corporation; Jeremy Dawkins, Chair, WA Planning Commission (and great grandson of CY O'Connor) and Prof David Dolan, Curtin University.

This year's event will be held at the Italo-Welfare & Cultural Centre, 209 Fitzgerald St, North Perth, 5.30 for a 6 o'clock start.

RSVPs are essential (last year was booked out) – phone Julie on 9321 6088. Entry by donation.



WHAT MAKES A SITE SACRED?

This will be the question pondered by Father Abbott Placid Spearitt of New Norcia at this year's International Day for Monuments and Sites. An initiative of ICOMOS (International Council for Monuments and Sites) the day has been celebrated for the past 18 years and provides an opportunity to highlight the issues surrounding heritage places. In response to this year's topic, Religious and Sacred Sites, the WA ICOMOS group has decided to explore the vexed area of the meaning of the word 'sacred' and what it means to different people, particularly in a state, even country, where many see sport as their 'religion'.

This year's talk will be held at St Bartholomew's Church, East Perth Cemeteries, Bronte St, East Perth on Friday 18 April at 6 pm. RSVPs essential. Contact Anne Brake on 9212 1116 for further details.

ICOMOS members \$10, non-members \$12.