



FREMANTLE HISTORY SOCIETY

Established 1994

The Secretary, PO Box 1305  
FREMANTLE WA 6959

**Spring Edition  
2008**

Editors: Ron Davidson, Dianne Davidson, Anne Brake



Joan Campbell's Pottery workshop, Bathers Beach, 1980  
Fremantle Local History Collection, 288A

### **Fremantle Studies Day** Dianne Davidson

The Fremantle Studies Day this year is shaping up to be another memorable event. Its theme will be 'Fremantle Icons' and it will examine some great Fremantle people and institutions. We managed to get together an outstanding team of speakers; former Prison art teacher Stephen Culley will start off the session with a talk about his fascinating time at Fremantle Prison and his interaction with its inmates, including Jimmy Pike who was the chief creative force behind another Fremantle icon, sadly now defunct – fashion star Desert Designs.

Historical archaeologist Gaye Nayton will discuss the findings of recent digs at Bathers Beach and the important historical information they can provide while Ron Davidson will explore the story of an Italian immigrant family which has also achieved iconic status – the Galatis, recently the recipients of a Heritage Award for their contribution to Fremantle. Finally Mike

Lefroy, a fifth generation Western Australian, will share with us the experiences of his ancestors when they landed in Fremantle to begin their life in the Swan River Colony.

Our Fremantle Studies Day this year will be also be held in a very special place – the Kidogo Arthouse on Bathers Beach. This historic building has had several identities since it was built in 1884 as a kerosene store by the Public Works Department on reclaimed land. It was judged to be a safe distance from the residential and commercial area (kerosene was prone to explosions) but close to the Long Jetty which had been built in 1873 and to the ships which unloaded the kerosene. In 1919 it became a shipwright's shed for the Harbour and Lights Department.

Its creative phase began in 1972 when it narrowly escaped demolition and became the studio and workshop of sculptor and potter Joan Campbell. During her 25-year tenure Joan became a local and national legend, attracting trainee potters from around the country to work in her beachfront workshop. She also worked to preserve Bathers Beach, and gathered large amounts of flotsam from there to incorporate in her beach-inspired collages and ceramic pieces. She also created a sculptural playground out of wood on the beach to celebrate her workshop's former association with the Long Jetty.

In its current incarnation as Kidogo Arthouse under the guidance of Joanna Robertson, who took over the building on Joan's death in 1997, it has become a very successful multidisciplinary centre organising courses, arts events, launches and exhibitions. We were fortunate to secure it for our 2008 Studies Day!

As usual, a luscious afternoon tea will be provided!

**Kidogo Arthouse, Bathers Beach,  
Sunday 23 November, 1.00pm for**

**1.30pm. \$12 members, \$15 non-members (members' price if you join on the day!).  
RSVP Dianne 9430 6096, 0403 026 096 or [ronaldi@iprimus.com.au](mailto:ronaldi@iprimus.com.au) by 19 Nov.**



## 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
Fay Campbell	9341 4102
Jenny Patterson	9438 3711
Cathy Hall	0407 086 300
Pam Hartree	9432 9739(W)
David Hutchison	9335 1594
Rusty Christensen	9364 4491

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

### Fremantle Studies Day

This year's Studies Day promises to continue the long standing tradition of revealing Fremantle's past in a range of divergent themes. For more information on this year's program see the lead story.

**Sunday 23 November 1pm, Kidogo  
Arthouse, Bathers Beach**

### **Christmas – a Fabulous Feast**

We are actually having our Christmas function in December this year! And we have been lucky enough to be able to arrange an actual traditional Christmas feast of gargantuan proportions. Those attending can gorge themselves on roast turkey with cranberry sauce, glazed ham, grilled snapper, spinach and ricotta cannelloni, roast potatoes and seasonal vegetables and salads. Then, if you can manage it, you get a choice of Christmas pudding with brandy custard (how could you resist?) or pavlova with wildberry coulis, followed by tea/coffee and after dinner mints. Christmas crackers will also be on the table!



Old Swan Yacht Club  
Fremantle Local History collection 3987

This fantastic feast will be available at the Swan Yacht Club, which has a long and varied history. It started with a meeting at the Plympton Hotel in 1904 and soon had an enthusiastic membership which included the celebrated Gourley family, who owned a slipway beside the small weatherboard clubhouse which for the next 60 years was the Swan Yacht Club. The building of the Stirling Bridge in the 1960s forced the Yacht Club to find a new site and it has prospered in Riverside Drive near the Leeuwin Depot. It now has an extensive clubhouse and facilities with commanding views over the

Swan River. Just the place for our great Christmas party!

However, this year we are forced to change our usual booking pattern. Members wishing to attend are asked to book and send in payment with their bookings (booking form included with this newsletter). This is because the Yacht Club will charge us for the number of people we book in regardless of whether or not everyone actually comes.

**Sunday 7 December 12.30pm, Swan  
Yacht Club, Riverside Drive, East  
Fremantle. Cost: \$31. RSVP Dianne 9430  
6096, 0403 026 096 or  
[ronaldi@iprimus.com.au](mailto:ronaldi@iprimus.com.au) by 1 December**



### **MEETING REPORTS**

#### **Feast at the Freo Club**

Well, we didn't! Sadly, we had to give our August meeting a miss – not enough members booked to make it worthwhile. We were hoping to support this iconic Fremantle institution and help it to survive in troubled times...

Our sincere apologies to those who did book for the pub lunch, were looking forward to it and expressed their keen disappointment that it had to be cancelled!

Hopefully next year we will be able to recapture the spirit of the Society's traditional pub lunch.

#### **From Pong Alley to Winged Keel**

Some forty members and visitors gathered in the congenial surrounds of the North Fremantle Bowling Club for the Society's September general meeting. In introducing the speaker for the evening, Gerry MacGill, the President of the North Fremantle Community Association, explained that Richard Hartley's research into 150 years of industrial work in North Fremantle and the

subsequent publication of his report had been made possible by a Lotteries Commission Grant which had been made to the Association in 2007. Richard began his informative talk by outlining the sources and methods of his research and by emphasizing the value of the oral accounts by four people who had worked at various levels in local firms. He then went on to give an account of the diverse industries and trades which had operated in the area, ranging from the assembly of cars and trucks through the tanning of hides and scouring of wool to the manufacture of shoes and army boots. A lively session of questions and comments from the audience followed the talk, and the evening was convivially rounded off with the customary drinks and refreshments.

### **Fertile Soil: 50 Years of the City of Fremantle Art Collection**

A large gathering of Fremantle History Society and Fremantle Society members met at the Fremantle Arts Centre for this very special event. City of Fremantle art curator Andre Lipscombe opened the evening with a very interesting talk about the nature and extent of the City's art collection, which elicited some equally interesting questions from the audience. Almost the first was an enquiry about the likelihood of there being a permanent gallery in the foreseeable future to display the very extensive collection; regrettably Andre was pessimistic about this, with lack of finance as usual being the main obstacle.

Andre's talk was followed by a tour of the exhibition which included informative commentary on the specific works on display.

This was a very enjoyable and entertaining evening, and we thank Andre and the City of Fremantle for organising the gathering, and for the generous refreshments provided!

Fertile Soil will be on until 23 November. Entry is free and the Fremantle Arts Centre

is open 7 days a week. The exhibition is supported by a beautifully produced book and an audio program which includes a range of interviews with key artists.

The exhibition was 50 years in the making - don't miss it if you haven't seen it yet!



Andre Lipscombe gives members and friends a tour of the exhibition  
Photo: Dianne Davidson



### **THE MELVILLE HISTORY SOCIETY 2008 MURDOCH LECTURE Robin Reid**

The 2008 Murdoch Lecture, on Monday 22 September, was hosted by the City of Melville at the Civic Centre, in honour of the Melville History Society's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the granting of City status to Melville. It was a huge success. Introduced by our President Barbara Dudding in the presence of His Worship the Mayor Russell Aubrey and Deputy Mayor Harvey Everett, and an audience of between 80 and 90, Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Bolton in his inimitable way presented the Occasional Lecture entitled 'Three Cheers for the Suburbs!'

Prior to this we heard from our inaugural President, Wendy Birman, a summary of the Society's achievements over the past 25 years since the Steering Committee was officially appointed in 1963 by the Melville

City Council to bring it to life. In this she highlighted the activities of members in research, oral history and photograph collection. She also noted our penchant for being involved in Celebrations, beginning with the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 1984 of the Applecross District Hall, and acknowledged the mutual benefits of cooperation and coordination that existed between the City of Melville and the Society. This was followed by the presentation of Foundation Members Certificates by His Worship the Mayor to members Pat Barrett-Lennard, Wendy Birman, Barbara Dudding, May Flanagan, Alison Harris (in her absence), John Jones, Noray Jones, June Powell, Maurice Powell, Robin Reid and Jenny Shalders.

Our President then presented an Honorary Life Membership to Dr Lenore Layman who, as a Senior Lecturer in Social Studies at Murdoch University, had been associated with the Society both in the presentation of our annual Murdoch Lecture and as a friend for many years. In reply Dr Layman paid a special tribute to the contribution made to the Society's research in Melville history by the late Anne Reid.

Professor Bolton's address was indeed fitting for both anniversaries of the City and the History Society, as it encompassed a short history of the writing of local histories. This traced the path that flowed originally from the writings of amateur historians in local History Societies, to freelance professional historians such as Uren who wrote the first Melville history in 1976, then to individuals like Stannage within academia, and finally to historian teams such as Cooper and McDonald who wrote Melville's history in 1989, *A City for all Seasons*. In this, the creation of a Chair of History in the 1930s at the University of Western Australia and a History Department at the Western Australian Museum in the late 1960s were a contributing factor. Whilst a few historians had initially considered the suburbs of little historical interest, this was not the case; they (the basis of our City) held the nucleus of our social history. In

conclusion Professor Bolton admitted that originally he had intended to use the title *Two and a Half Cheers for the Suburbs*. Having completed his research he decided they were really worth the extra half!

Our wonderful evening listening to this great speaker was completed with the provision of light refreshments afterwards, by the City of Melville.



#### **VISIONS FOR VICTORIA QUAY** **Dianne Davidson**

In June I attended a 'consultation session' arranged by the then newly appointed Victoria Quay Planning Committee, the purpose of which was ostensibly to gauge community attitudes to possible future developments on Victoria Quay in addition to the proposed ING commercial/office development. It seemed a reasonably positive meeting, with representatives of various organisations encouraged to present their views. At the time it was announced that there would be a follow-up workshop in September.

Since then there has been a change of government and the projected workshop did not eventuate. However, Fremantle Ports is now announcing a public 'briefing' on future development of the western end of Victoria Quay, to be held under the auspices of the same Planning Committee which is headed by State Planning Commission chair Jeremy Dawkins. This will be held **9am-1pm on Saturday 15 November in the Fremantle Ports' Transport Shed near the Maritime Museum on the Quay**. We urge anyone interested in the Quay to attend – RSVP is required (no due date given) to Jo (9430 3308) or by email [rsvp@fremantleports.com.au](mailto:rsvp@fremantleports.com.au).

In the meantime I was also invited to meet with Lovell Chen Architects who are preparing a heritage interpretation plan for the West End of Victoria Quay. This was a

somewhat open-ended session, which left me unclear about the process and aims of the plan. Alan Kelsall (who attended the meeting with me) pointed out to the Lovell Chen representatives that what was needed first of all was a detailed history of the Quay, without which it was difficult to see how it could be adequately interpreted. It has been made clear from past experience that such history as exists in the records of the Heritage Council at present is woefully inadequate. However, Lovell Chen were insistent that new history research was not within their brief, though they were interested in hearing 'stories' about the Quay and its traditions.

We were assured that the whole process was only in its initial stages, and that further and more detailed community consultation would take place. We can only hope that this takes some form other than the 'community consultations' staged by ING and the Ports over the commercial development!



## **2008 STATE HISTORY CONFERENCE OF AFFILIATED SOCIETIES**

**Bob Woollett**

This year's conference was held at Katanning over the first weekend of September. The hosts for the occasion were the Katanning Historical Society, which was the first country branch of the Royal WA Historical Society to be formed and is celebrating its 70<sup>th</sup> birthday this year.

After a Civic Reception at the Art Gallery and a convivial curry supper at the Katanning Club on the Friday evening, over a hundred delegates and visitors gathered in the impressive Town Hall the next morning for the Welcome to Country by Gabriel Hansen, a Noongar Elder, and the official opening of the conference by the local Shire President. Four talks of historical interest were given during the day: '70 Years of Katanning Historical Society' by Ainslie

Evans; 'One Teacher Schools in the Katanning Area' by Marilyn Hamilton; 'The Herald Print Press' by Ainslie Evans (stepping in for Arthur Todd who was indisposed); and 'Art of the Morribank Centre' by Gabriel Hansen.

During the Business Session motions were passed directing a letter to be written to the local Shire Council urging them to retain the Roller Flour Mill building in the main street and accepting offers from Albany and York to host the 2010 and 2011 State Conferences. The City of Cockburn Historical Society, the hosts for 2009, presented a professionally produced DVD and pamphlet outlining the arrangements for next year's Conference and highlighting some of the attractions of the area.

On the Saturday evening the Conference Dinner was held in the attractive setting of the Function Room at the state-of-the-art Recreation Centre. Alep Mydie gave an informative and amusing talk on 'Christmas and Cocos Islanders in Katanning' and a group of girls from the community entertained us with a graceful display of traditional dancing.

On the Sunday visits were made to a variety of places of local interest, and the weekend's programme concluded with a farewell gathering and sausage sizzle at Wake's Garage, in operation until the turn of the century and now a privately owned museum with the most amazing collection of machinery and spare parts.

Joan Donaldson and I were privileged once again to fly the Fremantle flag at the Conference, and would like to thank the Society for the generous support of the expenses involved. Fremantle's support of the Annual Conference may not have many tangible benefits, but it is good for us to have this contact with other societies from around the State and join with them in promoting the cause of history in Western Australia.



## **'WHO IS CONNIE HERBERT?' WHERE DO I START?**

**Ron Davidson**

'Who is Connie Herbert?' a recently signed-up member asked me. She had just read Connie's beautifully written sketches of her early days in Fremantle in the 1920s and 1930s, in the last two newsletters. She knew about Connie's ocean coming up to her backyard, the smell of the freesias in spring; tea at the Fremantle station, and the finely drawn cake man.

Where do you start when asked about Connie? Connie was always a great performer at the Society's meetings. This was the case at our memorable 2002 Christmas dinner at the Fremantle Club. Wally Maker, the club manager, had been telling diners about Fremantle drinking habits and places in the 1950s. He mentioned the Melbourne Wine Saloon in High Street as the drinking place of the less fortunate. Connie was on her feet. 'I worked there then,' she said - and the stories flowed. A few days later we were shocked to hear that Connie was dead.



The Doherty family, c 1940  
Courtesy Deidre Herbert

Born Connie Doherty, she was one of eleven children (three others died in infancy). This photo taken c1940s shows ten of the children around the family Studebaker

outside their home at 78 Carrington Street, Fremantle. The youth on the left of the photo is the eldest son Eamon, now 85. Next to him is the mother, Mary Doherty, holding her youngest son Daniel (69). The children in the back row are, from left, Dermott (80), Brian (dec.), Connie (then 16 and spending a lot of her time helping her mother) and Rita (76). The little boys seated on the car are Leo (72), Gerald (74), Roderick (70), and Raymond (dec.) Only the eldest daughter Mena (dec.) is missing. She had already married and started her own family. The man in the suit is the father, James Doherty, who worked as a lumper.



Connie Herbert (nee Doherty)  
Courtesy Deidre Herbert

This portrait shows Connie at 21 or 22 when she worked at Pellew's celebrated haberdashery department.

We still miss Connie who represented so much that was good – and interesting – about the old Fremantle!



## **THAT DRATTED DINGO AGAIN!** **Ron Davidson**

The beloved Dingo Flour Mill controversy has flared up again. On 25 October the *West Australian* announced that the

Leighton silo with the dingo portrait would be placed on the State's permanent list of heritage places. This was good news: the dingo sign is significant for many people. The article went on to say – presumably from the Heritage Council's documentation – that the dingo was originally painted by Ted Pulham in 1940.

Not so. In the Autumn edition of our newsletter we published a letter from Ailsa Maley who had just read my book *Fremantle Impressions* and confirmed that the belief that Alan Bond had painted the original dingo was an urban myth. Ailsa also sent a paper by Mona Rankin headed 'My Dad and the Dingo' which we published. Mona's paper makes it clear that it was her father Les Nash who drew up the dingo on the silo wall then painted it while working for Davies Sign Service. She said Ted Pulham had painted a smaller dingo on a water tank on the site in the 1920s.

We have sent on Mona's paper to the Heritage Council of WA.



#### **FROM THE LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTION** **Pam Hartree**

It is hard to believe that I have now been working with the Local History Collection for over a year. As usual we have been busy with a steady stream of visitors to the collection as well as email and telephone enquiries. In August the collection was promoted at the Family History Fair at the State Library of WA when I presented information on how the collection could be used for family research. We have just completed our latest display which focuses on the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Blessing of the Fleet. Please call in and have a browse the next time you visit Fremantle.

In the last newsletter which featured a c1890 photograph for identification. We have since discovered that the photograph

was of Fremantle Customs Officers from 1908.

The collection continues to grow and some of the recent additions to the collection are listed below:

Challenger TAFE Maritime Centre, Victoria Quay, Fremantle : heritage report/ Palassis Architects, 2004  
LH 387.1 PAL

The changing Cockburn coast : Aboriginal and European heritage in the Cockburn region/ Western Australian Planning Commission  
LH 994.11 WES

Cockburn Coast reborn/ Western Australian Planning Commission  
LH 711.5 COC

Community perceptions survey/ Catalyse  
LH 352 CAT

Documentary and site investigation of former site of Saint Joseph's Convent and College, Adelaide Street, Fremantle/ Hocking Planning & Architecture  
LH 726.58 HOC

The esplanade, Fremantle : draft conservation plan/ Chinnery, Robin  
LH 712.5 GRI

How autonomy was lost : a history of stevedoring at Fremantle, 1880 to 1950/ Fletcher, Thomas Anthony  
LH 387.164 FLE

Interview with Camilla (Cammie) Morgan [sound recording] / interviewed by Margaret Massie.  
OH/MOR

Interview with Kav Temperley [sound recording] / interviewed by Marnie Richardson.  
OH/TEM  
Mary Tondut : the woman in the Catalpa story/ Cowan, Richard.

LH 994.03 COW

Municipal heritage inventory update : South Fremantle (Stage Three)/ Sherriff, Jacqui  
LH 363.69 SHE

North Port Quay [videorecording]/  
Benchmark Projects Australasia  
LH 711.5 BEN

Old Port Arthur Head, Fremantle :  
archaeological conservation plan/ Nayton,  
Gaye  
LH 363.69 NAY

Pre-construction archive record :  
Fremantle waterfront commercial precinct,  
Victoria Quay/ Philip Griffiths Architects  
LH 387.1 PRE

Railway Hotel, North Fremantle Western  
Australia : interpretation plan/ Bodycoat,  
Ronald  
LH 728.5 BOD

A report of an archaeological survey of the  
former St. Joseph's Convent site : Adelaide  
Street Fremantle/ Burke, Shane  
LH 726.58 HOC



### **GLEANINGS FROM THE *HERALD* 9** David Hutchison

During October and November 1867 the *Herald* continued to be critical of the way the Home and Colonial governments were negotiating the details of representative government. It was critical of the more conservative line of the *Inquirer*. In its editorial of 9 November 1867 it commented:

We resume our *Hebdomadal* [weekly] duties and shall endeavour to place before our readers in as condensed a form as is consistent with clearness, the present position of the all-absorbing question of *selecto-election*

It feared that the processes of election for some members of the Legislative Council

would be too restricted, particularly in defining eligibility to vote. A letter signed 'A Working Man' in the next issue shows that the paper reflected some popular opinions:

There is another rumour going about the town that the Tory Clique, Newman, King and Co., will attempt at the meeting on Monday next to carry their resolution restricting franchise to 10 pound householders. I therefore hope that the inhabitants generally will be at the meeting when it opens and by an overwhelming majority defeat their intentions.

In 1865 over 1000 colonists signed a petition seeking some elected members on the Legislative Council. The Home Government acceded in 1867; the Council was expanded to eighteen members, twelve of whom would be elected by property owners. The *Herald* welcomed the first election of Fremantle members in its editorial in the issue of 23 November 1867:

A day to be marked in the history of Fremantle has passed away, but the recollection of it will remain while the Colony exists. For the future, the 18<sup>th</sup> of November will be marked in the calendar as a red-letter day, indicating an epoch in our municipal and political experience.

An almost lyrical account of the building excitement before the meeting follows. At the meeting the result of voting for nomination of non-official members of the Council resulted as follows: Bateman 209, Newman 112, Manning 99, King 2.

It was doubtless much noisier than the Perth election but there is more independent spirit manifested in Fremantle at all times than at Perth, and that may account for it.

However, the paper continued to campaign for responsible government and commented in its editorial of 21 December 1867:

That our present form of Government is defective, inoperative, and odious to the Colonists is admitted on all sides...

In the same issue, there was a significant report of the last batch of convicts:

The *Hugemont* [sic] is on her way hither freighted with criminals of more than ordinary guilt. She is the last vessel in all probability that will bear to this colony a consignment of crime, and the inhabitants may congratulate themselves that the leper spot of convictism which has so long made this colony a bye word among communities is about to pass away.

Early in 1870 there was at last some action on the proposal for an inner harbour. The editorial of 1 January of that year reported the arrival of Mr Doyne to report on Harbour development. The paper advised him not to take too much notice of the sluggish flow of the river and added:

...we may, however, for example inform Mr Doyne that in 1864, every house and every object in North Fremantle, with the exception of one high chimney, were under water.

There was also an article, the eighth in a series, about the convict system, suggesting that there had been some change to the system of assigning convicts to employers:

The general principles of our present system in regulation of Road Parties or Out Stations, appear to be analogous to those of the system substituted for Assignment by Lord Stanley and Sir James Graham, and known as the Probation Gang System...

There is reference to evidence laid before the Lords' Committee, from Despatches of Mr Latrobe, the Acting Governor of Tasmania when that system was in operation there:

...the chief causes of its failure appear to have been the extreme distance of many of the Out Stations from headquarters; inefficient and improper supervision (as must be the case with all systems officered by prisoners and warders willing to take rank with them); unsuitable accommodation for prisoners at night – no provision for separate confinement being provided, and the

absence of all moral helps, and restraints to check the growth of irregularities and demoralization. The system was found defective in the reclamation of the convicts as well as in the profitable application of labour, and was laid aside by the Government of Earl Grey and Sir George Grey as fraught with disastrous consequences to discipline and to morals.



#### FOR YOUR DIARY

**Saturday 15 November** – public briefing on future developments of the west end of Victoria Quay. **9am – 1pm, Fremantle Ports' Transport Shed, near the Maritime Museum on Victoria Quay.**

**RSVP: Jo 9430 3308 or [rsvp@fremantleports.com.au](mailto:rsvp@fremantleports.com.au) .**

**Sunday 23 November** – 2008 Fremantle Studies Day. Four fascinating papers focusing on icons of Fremantle. **1 for 1.30pm – 5pm. Kidogo Arthouse, Bathers Beach.**

**\$12 members; \$15 non-members  
RSVP by 19 Nov to Dianne 9430 6096, 0403 026 096 or [ronaldi@iprimus.com.au](mailto:ronaldi@iprimus.com.au)**

**Sunday 7 December** – Deck the halls with boughs of holly at the **Swan Yacht Club, Riverside Drive, East Fremantle.**

**\$31  
RSVP by 1 December to Dianne 9430 6096, 0403 026 096 or [ronaldi@iprimus.com.au](mailto:ronaldi@iprimus.com.au)**



The committee wishes its members are happy and safe festive season.

