



FREMANTLE HISTORY SOCIETY

Established 1994

The Secretary, PO Box 1305
FREMANTLE WA 6959

**Spring Edition
2009**

Editors: Dianne Davidson, Anne Brake



The Hon Peter Garrett, Minister for Heritage, and Senator Scott Ludlum at Fremantle Prison

Photo: Dianne Davidson

FREMANTLE PRISON – MAJOR FUNDING FOR ‘HERITAGE JEWEL’

Dianne Davidson

Members will be aware that the Fremantle History Society has always taken a special interest in the appropriate conservation and historical interpretation of Fremantle Prison, which we regard as one of WA’s greatest heritage sites, and which is currently being considered for World Heritage Listing.

We have been lobbying hard for years to have community representation reinstated on the Prison Advisory Committee, and while so far this has not happened, we were successful in having a historian appointed to the Committee some time ago.

So we were delighted to be invited to a function at the Prison on 2 October at which federal Heritage Minister Peter Garrett announced grants of \$5.5 million for WA heritage places, including \$1.8 million specifically towards the restoration and conservation of the Main Cell Block and its

stairways, walkways and rails to improve safety for the 175 000 people who visit the Prison every year.

The Fremantle Prison Cell Main Block Conservation Project is also strongly supported by federal member for Fremantle, Melissa Parke, who has described Fremantle Prison as 'the largest heritage structure in what many regard as the best preserved 19th century townscape in Australia' and 'heritage jewel'.

We were particularly pleased when Peter Garrett specifically singled out the Fremantle History Society and the Fremantle Society, praising their past contributions to the Prison conservation policies and their continuing interest in its future directions.

Now if we can only get a community representative on the Advisory Committee!



COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Executive:

Dianne Davidson (President)	9430 6096
Anne Brake (Vice – President)	9335 5206
Pam Hartree (Treasurer)	9432 9739(W)
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
Peter Conole	9319 2191
Prof Bob Reece	9335 7892

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

Christmas at Quinlan's

Well, it's that time of year again! Prepare for another feast of Christmas fare – turkey, ham and all the trimmings including Christmas pudding, served at the celebrated Quinlan's restaurant at Challenger TAFE's Beaconsfield campus.

You will be welcomed with a glass of champagne, and entertained while we dine by Professor Bob Reece regaling us with stories of food and wine in the early days of the Swan River colony. We will also have our customary Christmassy raffle, with prizes including at least one Christmas cake!

Tuesday 1 December, 6.30pm for 7pm Quinlan's Restaurant, TAFE Beaconsfield Campus, 15 Grosvenor Street, Beaconsfield. \$25 including champagne welcome! RSVP Dianne 9430 6096 by Thursday 26 November.



MEETING REPORTS

Death Watch at the Davilak!

We met to mourn the passing of the Fremantle Social History Museum for our August meeting at the beautifully refurbished Davilak Tavern and enjoyed their thoroughly delicious pub grub.

Our vice president Anne Brake drew on her considerable expertise on museums to give us a fine synopsis of what role/s museums should play in the modern world while David Hutchison spoke about his experiences with museums and in particular the setting up of the Fremantle History Museum.

Many good ideas were floated at the meeting, which included lobbying politicians, councillors and various groups and organisations. We will keep you posted! (See also report on Our Stolen History below)

Cavorting at Clancy's

We certainly did! Large numbers of people turned up for the launch of Clancy's 21st birthday celebrations, and stayed on for the History Society's September meeting, with Joe Fisher giving a fascinating talk about the history of Clancy's and the surrounding buildings.

The talk was so interesting and informative that we decided to publish it in our newsletter – you will find the first instalment in this issue!

Thanks to Clancy's for making its premises available for this event.

Fremantle Studies Day

Over 60 members and friends filled the Reception Room at the Fremantle City Council for our annual Fremantle Studies Day on 25 October. **Andrew Pittaway** gave a moving talk on Fremantle's contribution to the Great War, and on the young men who enlisted, many of whom never returned, while **Bob Reece** gave us new insights into Fremantle's famous early historian, JK Hitchcock, his unassuming personality and encyclopedic knowledge of pre-gold rush Fremantle and its inhabitants.

Andrew Smith provided an entertaining account of the trials and tribulations involved in starting a community newspaper, and the

various crises endured by the Herald as it gradually became established. Finally, **Kris Bizzaca** gave us a brief history of Fremantle Markets, and **Gena Binet** took us on a virtual tour of the Markets and the many structural changes they have experienced.



Members and guests at the Fremantle Studies Day Fremantle Council Offices. Photo: Dianne Davidson



Our Stolen History **Dianne Davidson**

We were not the only ones concerned about the loss of all WA Museum's social history museums in the metropolitan area. On 19 October the History Council of WA organised a major forum in the Perth Town Hall to call on the state government to reinstate proper funding for culture and the arts, including social history museums.

The meeting was very well attended despite the awkward time (4.30pm) which would have made attendance difficult for people in full time employment. The speakers emphasised the value of art and history in a civilized community, and the final speaker, Professor Geoffrey Bolton, delivered a scathing assessment of the lack of interest shown by recent governments in promoting cultural institutions and delivering facilities, in stark contrast to other periods in WA history when there were resource booms and a thriving economy and major cultural institutions were created.

Many strong comments were made from the floor agreeing with Professor Bolton's assessment of the dire state of affairs, and it was resolved to write to the Minister for Culture and the Arts outlining the views of the meeting.

YOU CAN HELP! The Minister is claiming that he has had no protest letters about the closing of the Fremantle Social History Museum or the closure of the State Library and the Art Gallery on certain days and public holidays. Please write to him or email him to demand proper funding for these cultural institutions. Write to Minister Day, 13th Floor, Dumas House, 2 Havelock Street, West Perth 6005, or email him at Minister.Day@dpc.wa.gov.au.



George Fletcher Moore: a star in Fremantle (Part 2) Bob Woollett

Moore's interest in Fremantle and its affairs are fully reflected in his diary and letters where there are numerous references to the port and its inhabitants. His impressions of the place soon after arriving in the colony, however, were far from flattering.

There are so many discontented and dissatisfied persons about this Fremantle (spelt with a double "e" as was common at the time) that I find it hard to prevent myself from infection

He later recalled that Fremantle at that time was a

miserable looking place – a bare sandy barren looking district of sandy coast, the shrubs cut down for firewood, the herbage quite trodden bare, a few wooden houses, many ragged looking tents and contrivances for habitations, one public house into which everyone crowded as an inn, a few cheerless discontented people with gloomy looks plodding their way through the scrub from hut

to hut to drink 'grog' and grumble out their discontents to one another.

But his view soon began to change. Writing to his father on May 2, 1832, he says:

Did I mention to you how much Fremantle is improved latterly. Comfortable stone houses rising in all directions. Water is found in great abundance and the sand is discovered to be possessed of surprising fertility. It seems to rest on a stratum of limestone at no great depth. The despised sands are more valued every day. An excellent inn has been lately built where they give comfortable beds, dinners &c. on very moderate terms, beds 2s, breakfast 3s.

And he continues the favourable picture of the port later in the year on December 21st:

Now there is a town laid out in regular streets of stone houses with low walls, and in some places palisades in front; two or three large well kept inns or hotels, in which you can get clean beds and good private rooms. The soil there is loam resting upon a stratum of easily worked limestone, and possessing a fertility almost exceeding belief, with abundant water near the surface.

The repeated reference to the nature of the soil and the water supply reflects Moore's keen interest as a farmer in the environment, as does his description of the track as he passed Blackwall Reach on one of his trips from Perth to Fremantle. It is, he writes: 'most beautiful as through the richest shrubbery.' Taken together, these pen pictures of Fremantle and its surrounds are among the most graphic and detailed we have of the area in the early years of the colony.

Moore faithfully recorded in his diary and letters, a number of incidents occurring in Fremantle or out in Cockburn Sound. The first of these was made on the morning of August 17th, 1832

a great sensation occasioned by a rumour that a duel had been fought between Mr. G.F. Johnston, merchant at Fremantle, and Mr.

Clarke who acts as attorney, and that Mr. J. was mortally wounded. The seconds were Mr. Yule and Capt. Graham. It arose out of disputes about law matters, debts, executions, officiousness, &c, &c. Johnston had exec'n against Clarke who gave him great abuse in language; the other sent a challenge and had the satisfaction of being shot.

Moore does not go on to record the sequel. Clarke and the two seconds were charged with murder at the Quarter Sessions in October, but were found not guilty, mainly on the evidence, supported by witnesses, that the victim declared, before he died 24 hours after the event, that he did not hold them responsible for what had happened.

In 1837, Moore reported two boating incidents in Cockburn Sound. In July the weather was extremely stormy for some time and several boats belonging to the whaling companies were damaged. 'A rumour of a most melancholy nature is now current', he writes, 'to the effect that one boat with six men in it has been lost, and no lives saved. I trust this is only an unfounded report.' Unfortunately, he hoped in vain. Six men from the Northern Fishing Company were drowned when their boat broke from its mooring on Carnac Island and capsized near the Stragglers Rock during a heavy squall. No trace was found of the missing men but their boat was subsequently found on the beach north of Fremantle. Later, on Saturday, September 23rd, he recorded a second incident.

A melancholy accident occurred here this week. A young gentleman (Mr. Creagh), who came out in the *Hero*, was drowned. He had gone out boating for pleasure; the current drove the boat on the bar at Fremantle, and the boat upset. There are some circumstances connected with his history which make it more to be deplored that he was cut off just now. He was a son of Colonel Creagh of Limerick.

The practical nature of Moore is illustrated by his comment, immediately following his

account of this tragedy: 'wheat has become very scarce again. The price is 16s. a bushel.'

Two years later on Friday, August 16th, Moore's diary tells us about an escape from Rottnest Island.

Ten native prisoners contrived their escape from Rottnest Island in a boat. It is quite incomprehensible how they managed to do so. The only remaining inhabitant of the Island has been brought out of it, and will soon be ready to leave it, when the entire establishment will be put upon a different footing. I went down to Fremantle with the Governor on Thursday to make enquiries about it.

This investigation led to the removal of the gaoler, Lionel Welch, and the appointment of Henry Vincent, the constable and gaoler at Fremantle, as the Superintendent of the Native Establishment on Rottnest Island. The burgeoning whale industry in Fremantle was of great interest to Moore and the subject of frequent comment by him.

Saturday night, 10th June – This day will be memorable in the annals of this colony for the killing of the first whale. At Perth, great firing was heard in the direction of Fremantle, and it was supposed that ship had arrived, but a messenger came in breathless haste to say the boats had struck a whale and were engaged with it. This was all that was known when I came away, but everybody was running about, elated with the news.

But there was a downside to the business and a week or so later he was writing:

The whale has been mismanaged, for want of proper tackle to turn it, so they have only got the blubber off the upper part, and the rest is spoilt, and smells so strongly that the inhabitants of Fremantle begin to find that there are disagreeables attending whaling also.

In spite of this, prospects for further development of the industry were good and a note of optimism prevailed:

I went to Fremantle on Thursday with the Governor and some others, to examine a jetty and proposed tunnel which has been projected to be cut through a hill there, giving an easy access from the sea beach to the main street. The plan is quite practicable, and not very expensive, for the distance is only 80 yards, and the rock is soft limestone.

And later in July, he writes confirming his positive outlook:

Whale fishing here is very encouraging, and the prospects extremely promising. Two whales have been killed within the last week, and a whale calf also, besides the mother or cow whale, being wounded so severely, that it is thought she will be taken also.

(to be continued)



JOHN STOKES OF OLD FREMANTLE

Jean McDonald & Peter Conole

John Stokes was an interesting citizen of colonial Fremantle and the founder of a family notable in various ways during early federation times.

John was born in County Wicklow, Ireland in 1835 or 1837, the son of a cabinetmaker named Henry Stokes and his wife Mary (nee Hopkins). He went to sea at the age of fourteen and returned to volunteer for the British army. John joined the 63rd Regiment of Foot, probably at Dublin in early 1854. A high proportion of new recruits for the regiment were Dubliners, many of them teenagers without a second of military experience among them.

The regiment and its 'lads' did their home city proud and won renown at the battle of Inkerman, the siege of Sevastopol and the capture of Kinburn in the Crimean campaigns of 1854 and 1855. The young soldiers suffered badly from exposure and illness during the first winter of the campaign - by early 1855 only a tiny handful were fit

for duty. But they were resilient and the great majority recovered and fought on.

At some stage during the fighting of this war Private John Stokes of the 63rd was badly wounded in the head. He was lucky to survive – in terms of scale, it is worth noting that the Crimean War cost the lives of more combatants than the American Civil War of the 1860s, which lasted longer.

Stokes was not simply used up and discarded. He received a number of decorations for his war service and was made a military pensioner after returning to Ireland. There was nothing to prevent him obtaining extra work when the time was right. Like many battered soldiers, he was fit and game enough for a great deal. But the injury was a serious business – perfectly believable family traditions record that the bullet was removed from the old wound by a Fremantle surgeon as late as about 1885.

John Stokes converted to the Catholic faith in 1856 and married Elizabeth Pyman at Howth, County Dublin in 1857. In 1865 he signed up to serve as a pensioner guard. That is, he joined the Enrolled Pensioner Force (EPF), detachments of which had been arriving in the colony of Western Australia since 1850.

The EPF was no innovation – the British Army had for generations been granting pensions to soldiers who completed specified periods of service, or who suffered from disabilities contracted on military service. Organizations like the EPF were special units of the army and were paid as regular soldiers out of army funds. They were particularly useful for garrison duty and the maintenance of public order.

That made them of real value to WA – the EPF was the bedrock of local defence planning, provided guards for convict ships coming from England and many members added to the local supply of artisans and skilled labour. The army encouraged married pensioners with families to join up

for WA – they were recognized as valuable settlers. Stokes and his wife and two children left Britain on 26 May 1865 on the *Racehorse* and arrived at Fremantle in August.

For his services as a guard, John Stokes was obliged to remain in Western Australia for seven years, be available for duty as needed and attend Parade each Sunday. The service also eventually entitled him to a grant of land. In the case of Fremantle, this is where Stokes and many other veterans become relevant. The movements of these veterans around Fremantle port and adjacent future suburbs require further study.

The number of EPF men on garrison duty at Fremantle increased gradually to keep up with the influx of convicts - thirty men in 1850, about ninety three years later. They had a pensioner barracks in South Terrace and a parade ground close to the port; it is now Fremantle Football Oval. Within a few years as many as 25 fairly comfortable pensioner cottages were built at North Fremantle.

John Broomhall (in his classic work *The Veterans*) records that John Stokes purchased Fremantle Location S40 of five acres for one pound per acre in December 1867. In October of 1881 Stokes applied for North Fremantle Location 50, next to his own property. During 1885, Stokes received a five acre grant on what was the fringe of present day Fremantle and Beaconsfield. The cottage built on land granted to Stokes can still be seen in South Street, Beaconsfield. There is evidence that he and his second son James Stokes (1862-1917) ran a dairy at the location. In 1905 James gave up that business and took up farming at Rockingham.

John Stokes of the EPF was in the public eye just once in his years in the colony. In June 1897 he and the surviving Fremantle pensioners were invited, along with all other elderly comrades, to a Banquet held in St.

George's Hall, Perth as part of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebrations. John died in March 1900.

The children of John and Elizabeth Stokes had mixed fortunes in life. The oldest son, Henry Stokes (born 1857 or 1858), was educated at St Joseph's Catholic school in Fremantle and married Mary Taylor in Perth in 1882. He joined the colonial Police Force in 1879 and had a varied and sometimes checkered career.

Henry served as a constable in Perth and Guildford for about five years, then far away at Newcastle (Toodyay), Bridgetown and Coolgardie. By the time he arrived on the Goldfields Henry had been promoted to corporal (1892) and sergeant (1894) in turn and seems to have been respected for his organizing ability and intelligence.

There had been a couple of slip-ups, such as an incident when he was reprimanded and fined after prisoners escaped from his custody at Victoria plains, but nothing too serious. He was placed in charge of Coolgardie Police Station in a difficult, volatile time for policing work in the area – a sure sign the hierarchy recognized his potential.

However, he could be quarrelsome and had been firmly but unofficially cautioned in 1886 for writing an abrasive letter to the Superintendent of Police about the condition of his horse. Then came disaster at Coolgardie, where he seems to have crossed swords with the notable Warden and Resident Magistrate of the Goldfields, John Michael Finnerty. He was severely reprimanded for being very disrespectful to the Warden. Worse was to follow.

In June 1895 Sergeant Stokes and three constables went to attend a boxing tourney in an Athletic Club on official duty, but were prevented from entering. Events escalated to the point where the sergeant and his men were forcibly ejected from the premises. Henry Stokes tried to prosecute by

summons, but the case was dismissed by Warden Finnerty. The grounds? He found that the organizer of the tourney had the right to remove persons he believed were being objectionable. In this case, some police officers.

Sergeant Stokes was transferred to Albany later in the year and during the period 1898-1900 was in charge of the entire Plantagenet District. Normally the position would have gone to a commissioned officer (eg, an inspector) but by now Henry Stokes may have lost any chance of reaching higher rank.

He continued in the service until his final transfer – to Fremantle, where for a few months in 1918 he presided over the police station in his home town. After World War I he moved to England and is believed to have died there in about 1949.

Mention has already been made of his younger brother James, the dairy man, who married Harriet Cox in Fremantle in 1883. Their son Harold John Stokes (1894-1974) served in the 1st AIF during World War I, as did his cousin Albert Stokes, a son of former policeman Henry Stokes.

William Stokes (1865-1952), third son of EPF soldier John Stokes, was the first Fremantle-born member of the family. His marriage to Annie McGuire in 1896 may have caused rueful discussion in some quarters. She was the daughter of a successful and respected farming man, James McGuire, a Justice of the Peace and Chairman of the Dardanup Road Board.

In his younger days McGuire had played a critical role in helping the Fenian political prisoner John Boyle O'Reilly escape by sea from WA to the United States in 1869. It is quite likely that by the 1890s the basic facts about the incident were known widely in the colony - police sergeant Henry Stokes must have been aware his uncle by marriage had committed a huge indiscretion in his youth.

John's short-lived daughter Elizabeth Stokes (1868-1898) married a widower named Elias Solomon in 1887, soon to become a very famous and influential Fremantle personality. Elias Solomon triumphed in business and politics and became the first Federal Member of Parliament for Fremantle after Federation in 1901.

Sadly for John Stokes, another of his offspring died also before him. Joseph Stokes was a promising architect and building contractor who played a role in the early planning of Fremantle Hospital before 1897. He passed away in 1899, aged only 26.

References: The key works for family relationships and brief life summaries are a paper by Healy, R. *The Stokes of Fremantle and addendum Elias Solomon*, Perth PR Stack, Call Number PR14514/STO/1-020 and the various entries in Erickson, R. *Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians 1829-1888*, Vol.IV, R-Z, pp2951-2954. Broomhall, F. *The Veterans* (Hesperian Press, 1989) is likely to remain the standard work on the EPF. See B265-266 for John Stokes and *Enrolled Pensioner Guard Profile – John Stokes* (Enrolled Pensioner Guard Special Interest Group, 2007).

The most recent large-scale work on the Crimean War gives due credit to the 63rd Regiment – Fletcher, I. and Ishenko, N. *The Crimean War: a clash of empires* (Spellmount Ltd, Staplehurst, 2004). For Sergeant Henry Stokes, *WA Police Record of Service of Henry Stokes*, Reg.no 7. The role of James McGuire in the escape of O'Reilly is described in Barry, L. *The Dramatic Escape of Fenian John Boyle O'Reilly* (The National Gaelic Publications, WA, 2009)



LOCAL HISTORY QUARTERLY REPORT SEPTEMBER 2009

Pam Hartree

The Local History Collection was especially busy in the last few weeks of September when students from the University of Notre Dame visited the collection to research the history of Fremantle for an assignment. We have also been busy assisting readers to research their family history, this aspect of our service is becoming increasingly popular

and readers have been taking advantage of our subscription to Ancestry.com and various other online resources to locate details of family members. We have also had various readers undergoing significant research for large projects, examples of these include the history of the Silbert family and their shoes stores in Fremantle and significant research on convict built structures in Fremantle. These long term projects are always very time consuming for staff but the collection benefits with additional information which is uncovered as a result of the in depth research which is undertaken. The digital microfilm reader has proven to be invaluable for these projects as extracts from rate books and historical newspapers can be scanned and saved for use in documents.

In July we had a meeting of oral history interviewers to discuss current and future projects. One project which has been adopted is to interview primary school children about their impressions of Fremantle. It will be useful and interesting to have a child's perspective of Fremantle as it is today. Suggestions for other interviews to be conducted in the new financial year were also discussed. The project to digitize the oral histories has also commenced for this financial year.

New additions to the collection include:

Burke, Shane
A report on the archaeological excavation of Fremantle town lot 44 : Cliff and Croke Streets, Fremantle
LH 930.1 BUR

City of Fremantle (2009)
Local identity and design code: Central Fremantle
LH 711.4 DOM

Dominiczak, Jacek (2008)
Local identity code for central Fremantle : source and design code
LH 711.4 DOM

Ferguson, Julia (2009)
A guide to a short walking excursion through the west end of Fremantle looking at how geology has influenced architecture
LH 994.11 FER

Kornberger, Jennifer (2007)
I could be rain
LH 821A KOR

McKenzie-Smith, Graham (2009)
Defending Fremantle Albany and Bunbury : 1939 to 1945
LH 940.54 MCK
Murray, Sandra (ed.), Calvert-Borshoff, Karin (Photographer) 2009
Captured : Freo Prison 1991
LH 365.994 MUR



Celebrating Women in Fremantle

On the initiative of federal member for Fremantle, Melissa Parke, a group has been meeting for some months to discuss possible ways of celebrating contributions made to the Fremantle community by women.

The group is now organising a public workshop and calling for suggestions about whom to celebrate and how. The workshop will be held on **Saturday 5 December, from 1pm to 4pm** at the Film and Television Institute, 92 Adelaide Street, Fremantle.

If you have any ideas about ways of celebrating women in Fremantle, or suggestions about who should be celebrated, come along and contribute! **RSVP clare.davidson@aph.gov.au, or telephone Clare on 9335 8555.**



CLANCY'S FISH PUB AND SURROUNDS Joe Fisher

The buildings in the Princess May Reserve are a product of the convict period of WA

development, the gold boom period and World War 1.

The principal components of the Reserve were built in stages with the main phases of construction taking place between 1854 and 1914. The first plan that deals with the whole area indicates a stone wall surrounding the entire site, the three existing buildings, drying grounds for the household management centre, shelter sheds, a teachers house, a picket fence separating the boys' and girls' schools and, in an obvious attempt to provide a safe environment, a rifle range of all things. It appears to further enhance the inviting atmosphere of the area; most of the surfaces appeared to be gravel, with softening elements of asphalt laid down along the pathways. By the fifties some trees had appeared to eventually provide some aesthetic comfort to the inhabitants.

The surviving buildings are what used to be known as the

1) Fremantle Boys School, which now houses the Film and Television Institute. It was built in 1854 and was the first building to be established and is possibly one of only a handful of buildings of this age in Australia that has been in almost continuous use since it was built. It is constructed mainly of stone and has what are known in the trade I believe as Victorian Tudor architectural motifs.

2) The Princess May Girls School. The Princess May School was built in 1901, and is a two story building with a belvedere in the Federation Free Classical style. It now houses the Fremantle Education Centre, appropriately enough.

3) Clancy's Fish Pub. This is the old Household Management Centre, which again has certain symmetry with its current use as a place where food and beverages are dispensed in a sort of friendly 'householdy' sort of manner.

In the sixties another educational facility was built in the shape of John Curtin School, and the buildings were left vacant and fell into disrepair. In 1970 the FBS was described as 'deserted and ravaged by vandals' – a circumstance which is repeated at present with the current state of the old Elders Wool store just over the road. This has been empty since we have been here. The outstanding memory I have of this building apart from its gradual decay is a piece of graffiti that simply states 'smash the cistern', obviously penned by a frustrated yet not particularly ambitious anarchist.

The Fremantle Council under pressure from concerned citizens sought a commitment from the state government to find new uses for the buildings and to conserve the area. This was achieved with the birth of the then Perth Institute of Film and Television, which is now FTI, the Fremantle Education Centre to our left and most importantly of all, the creation of what was to be the first tavern license as distinct from a hotel license which was issued to what was first called Clancy's Tavern. Given that my name is Fisher it was then renamed, with startling originality, Clancy's Fish Pub.

For some strange reason I find myself 21 years later giving a talk on a history which I certainly until very recently knew little about. I am heavily indebted to a Conservation Plan report by the architects Considine and Griffiths for any historical knowledge that you may receive tonight.

So, a little bit of history. Way back in 1833, only a few years after WA was settled, schools assisted by the government of the day were opened in Perth and Fremantle to 'all denominations of Christians'. By 1850, there were rumblings of discontent due to the lack of suitability of the rooms for education purposes, as indicated by the master of the Colonial school in Fremantle who not only had to teach 78 children by himself in fairly average conditions, but the possibility of a further 22 pensioner guards' children highlighted the inadequacy of the

facilities. The upshot of this was that in 1852 the legislative council voted that the princely sum of 600 pounds be allocated to the new school.

Drawings were prepared and signed by a James Austin, and the plans were probably influenced by William Sanford who was also responsible for the Perth Boys School. Sanford apparently had a passion for Victorian Tudor and Victorian Gothic architecture which also apparently has its roots in 16th century fortified houses of Scotland and England, fortified structures being, I assume, thought to be suitable for housing small children. Thus the Fremantle Boys' School is an example of Victorian Tudor Architecture.

The school was finally built in 1854 and was the first building to be established in the park and is possibly one of only a handful of buildings of this age in Australia that has been in almost continuous use since it was built.

Additions, alterations and modifications were made to the school on a regular basis in response to the increasing population. At one stage in the 1870s the Governor of the day expressed his concern, in what is a theme that seems to be familiar to us today when he wrote that 'some Protestant parents were sending their children to the private Roman Catholic schools in Fremantle because of a lack of space'. Again in a depressingly familiar tone, in the 1890s a government report found that out of 73 schools 44 were found to be in poor repair, and in order to change this considerable sums of money would need to be spent.

By 1900 the school housed 200 kids and new latrine blocks, shelters and Head Teacher's accommodation were all constructed; these have since been demolished. All through the early part of the 20th century the population growth exerted inexorable pressure on the space and eventually the school had to house students

in other buildings in Fremantle. In 1954 the foundation stone of John Curtin School was laid. The school was partially opened in 1956 and boys from the Fremantle Boys' School were transferred there. The FBS was officially closed in 1955, but was used throughout 1956 and was still in use when girls from the Princess May school transferred there. After this the Boys' School and the Girls' Schools were referred to as annexes for John Curtin School.

(to be continued)



FOR YOUR DIARY

Tuesday 1 December – Christmas at Quinlan's. **6.30pm for 7pm.** TAFE Beaconsfield Campus, 15 Grosvenor Street, Beaconsfield. **\$25 including champagne welcome! RSVP Dianne 9430 6096 by Thursday 26 November.**

The Fremantle History Society committee wishes all our members, friends and supporters a very happy and safe festive season and peace and joy in the New Year.

