



FREMANTLE HISTORY SOCIETY

Established 1994

The Secretary, PO Box 1305  
FREMANTLE WA 6959

**Spring Edition  
2010**

**Patron: Dr Brad Pettitt,  
Mayor of Fremantle**

Editors: Dianne Davidson, Anne Brake



Catonment Hill, Local History Collection 2828

## **HERITAGE FOR SALE?**

**Dianne Davidson**

The old Artillery Barracks precinct in Burt Street has been on the Register of Heritage Places of the Heritage Council of WA since 1997, and on the Commonwealth Heritage List since 2004. The Heritage List describes its significance:

The buildings comprising the Artillery Barracks, although generally built in two phases, are visually cohesive as a group, linked by scale and unity of materials. The grouping is of aesthetic significance due firstly to the streetscape value of the quarters in Queen Victoria Street and secondly to the progressive streetscape values from the approach via Burt Street leading to the restricted entrance opening and finally into the relatively wide parade ground space. The grouping, built on high ground at one of the entries to the City of Fremantle, is of landscape significance and loosely calls up some of the traditional elements of a military barracks.

Despite this, the Department of Defence has been trying to sell off the entire precinct for housing development. Which raises the question of what protection is provided for places that are on the Commonwealth Heritage List.

When the Howard government scrapped the Register of the National Estate as a safeguard against inappropriate development or demolition, it created the new Heritage List which is extremely difficult to get places on but which supposedly provides full protection. What happened in the case of the Artillery Barracks? Can the Defence Department override the law? In the event the precinct has now been divided up, contrary to what would be expected under the existing heritage legislation. The City of Fremantle will get the Signal Station, the Navy Stores and Cantonment Hill, the WA Museum will take over the Artillery Barracks – and the Defence Department will presumably retain the houses in Queen Victoria Street (the ‘quarters’ referred to in the Heritage List description above). These have apparently been allowed to stand empty and decay for many years, again completely contrary to what is expected under national heritage legislation. It is scandalous that prime accommodation at the very entrance to Fremantle should be wasted in this way.

That said, it is a relief that at least the City of Fremantle now has control over at least some of this precinct, and we will hear more about how this came about at our April meeting, where Stephen Anstey will tell us about the long community-based battle over Cantonment Hill.

The Fremantle Artillery Barracks are rich in social, engineering and environmental history. Have you seen the statue of bomber pilot Hughie Edwards in Kings Square? The Barracks are where he arrived from White Gum Valley, just over the hill, to become a gunner with the Coastal Defence Corps. To be a gunner requires a special strength to lift

the shells before firing. A gymnasium helps with this process.

Hughie Edwards played a season with South Fremantle Football Club, then found himself in a social dilemma. He was offered a place in the Pilot Training Centre at Point Cook in 1935. Should a boy from White Gum Valley accept the scholarship? It was like joining an elite and leaving his own class. Lumpers offered jobs as foremen on the wharf were in a similar position. Hughie Edwards does join, ends up winning the Victoria Cross with the Royal Air Force and becomes equerry to the Queen and later governor of WA.



## 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

### Fremantle's Culture Feast

Most of us know about Fremantle's convicts, union unrest and the activities of the merchant princes during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. But what did Fremantle people do to entertain and educate themselves? Find out at our March meeting, when Professor Bob Reece will give us an insight into cultural activities in Fremantle during the 1860s to 1880s period – theatre groups, music, young people's groups, and, of course the activities of the Working Men's Association. The usual yummy refreshments will be provided!

**Tuesday 30 March, 7pm at The Meeting Place, 245 South Terrace, South Fremantle.**

### Cantonment Hill Community

Cantonment Hill activist Stephen Anstey will give us the fascinating story of the residents' battle to stop the Defence Department from selling off the Cantonment Hill precinct which also houses the Army Museum, the Navy Stores and the Signal Station. He will give a brief history of the precinct and its importance, and describe how the community achieved the sale to the City of Fremantle of at least a portion of the site. It was a long battle! Drinks and nibbles to follow.

**Tuesday 27 April, 7pm. Venue to be confirmed.**



### 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](mailto:clare.davidson@aph.gov.au), or telephone Clare on 9335 8555.**



## MEETING REPORTS

### Christmas at Quinlan's

A large crowd gathered at Quinlan's Restaurant at the TAFE Beaconsfield Campus for a delicious Christmas dinner which covered the entire gamut of festive fare, even providing multiple desserts!

Afterwards Professor Bob Reece gave an entertaining and informative talk about eating and drinking in the early Swan River Colony – the early experiences did not sound inviting! We have included excerpts from Bob's talk in this newsletter, and will include more in later newsletters for the information of those who couldn't be there.

Thanks, Bob – perhaps someone would like to try the curry recipe?

### Celebrating Fremantle Writers

Despite the heatwave conditions a largish group of members gathered in Fremantle's West End at our February meeting to be introduced to the surprisingly little noticed writers' commemorative installations. Bob Woollett led the group from Pakenham Street to Cliff Street, stopping at the slabs dedicated to Tim Winton, John Boyle O'Reilly, Joan London and Kim Scott. He gave a brief overview of the work and

connection with Fremantle of each writer, mentioning that the City of Fremantle may expand the walk and include more local writers if funds became available.

After the walk a good number of those participating adjourned to the Orient Hotel for drinks and some convivial dining.

Thanks to Bob Woollett for a stimulating and interesting evening!



## **FOTOFREO 2010** ***The Clubs***

Commissioned by FotoFreo, this project will look at six of Fremantle's social clubs, which have played such a vital role in the community's history but are now facing declining and ageing membership. Award-winning photojournalist David Dare Parker will produce the exhibition and combine with writer Ron Davidson to produce a limited edition book, which will be launched during FotoFreo 2010.

*I am sitting at one end of the freshly painted bar at the Fremantle Workers Social and Leisure Club. It is lunchtime. The bar is busy over all of its 30 metres; as is the café and TAB which in another age was the club library and reading room. I ask my neighbour his name and whether he'd like a drink. His name is Arty and he declines the drink with grace. He hasn't had a drink since 1970. Why then does he keep coming to the heartland of Fremantle drinking? He tells me he is 86 and comes to the club whenever he feels like a chat. He chats of taking over his father's union ticket in 1957 and coming on to the wharf: lumping was a family business then unless you happened to be a footballer. He chats of 400 lumpers' bikes stacked outside the ferry terminal and not one was stolen; and how wharfies came over to the club for their schooners at lunch or smoko and of the some solid drinking 'until stumps (11 pm)' which destroyed Arty's liver. Also how Paddy Troy, the Fremantle workers'*

*saint, was black-balled from the club and who did the deed. 'There was no Commies in the Workers' Club' says Arty without explaining why. There were also no women and workers could wear their work hats up to the bar.*

*Now there are women everywhere. The club is flourishing again. However, when ships' cargoes started to be carried in containers rather than on men's shoulders, thousands of wharfies and woolies left town. Other clubs closed or became sad places...*

© Ron Davidson

[www.fotofreo.com/2010/exhibitions2010.php](http://www.fotofreo.com/2010/exhibitions2010.php)

There are a range of venues and exhibitions on over the festival which runs from 20 March – 18 April. Check the website for more details.



## **EDWARD BACK AND SON**

Peter Conole

The father was Edward Back, born at Folkestone, County Kent, in 1815. The son was Edward George Back, who in colonial times became the quintessential 'Freo' police officer. He was born there, served as a constable there, was in charge of the Fremantle district twice and died there. Considerable attention has been given to the family lineage. The Backs appear to have been a labouring family in origin, from the village of Kennington, in County Kent. As immigrants they prospered to a considerable degree in Western Australia. Inspector Edward George Back, the son of Edward Back and his wife Paula ('Poll') Susanna Curtis (1807-1885), was sixth in descent in the direct male line from Thomas Back of Kennington.

Edward Back arrived in Western Australia in the 1830s as a crew member on the 'Fanny', a vessel owned and skippered by Anthony Barnabas Curtis. Anthony was also an Englishman, the son of William and Mary Curtis. He had first arrived in WA in 1830 and, after father William passed away in

1835, brought some of his relatives out to the colony on the 'Fanny', including his mother and sister. Edward Back became acquainted with Anthony's sister Paula Curtis, later to be known to family and friends alike as Poll Back. Edward married her at Fremantle in September 1837. They had a very large family, ten children in all, the last of whom was born in the year Poll turned 48.



*Edward Back the mariner, 1815-1886  
courtesy Gloria Bell*

Edward was a skilled seaman and sailing master and had no trouble earning a living. He held the position of Acting Harbour Master at Fremantle in 1842 and 1844 and acquired the courtesy title of 'captain'. He obtained an appointment as Port Pilot of Rottnest Island in 1846. The stern and rough-edged Henry Vincent, Superintendent of the Native Establishment on Rottnest, built a cottage for the Backs in Thompson Bay. At this time in the colony's history there was not much in the way of incoming or outgoing vessels to deal with, so Edward Back was required to do other work. He became a fisherman in order to provide

additional food for the prisoners on the island.

Edward left the job in 1857 and returned to Fremantle. He became a publican for a while, a profitable line of business during times of economic growth and population increase. He leased licensed premises in Fremantle, the Stag's Head Inn, which was also Curtis property. Edward Back died at Fremantle in June 1886, one year after Poll Back.

Edward George Back was born in Fremantle on February 2, 1839. He acquired trade skills as a carpenter, associated himself with the Congregational Church established at Fremantle in 1853 and married at a fairly early age in 1861. His bride was Mary Ann Tourner (died 1899), the daughter of master tailor William Tourner, who had a rather colourful career while working for the Convict Establishment from 1854-1872. They had two sons – Edward William Thomas Back (1862-1945) and Ernest George Back (1868-1942) - and one tragically short-lived daughter, Eliza Catherine Back (1864-1867).

Edward George acquired property in Fremantle in 1865, but then decided to move sideways into steady employment as a colonial police officer. He was sworn in as a Constable in January, 1867. An interesting sidelight on the event is the identity and standing of the man who recommended him – Charles Symmons (1804-1887), at the time Resident Magistrate in Fremantle, a former Chief of Police in WA and one of the most noteworthy men in the colony, with family and personal connections in Britain reaching up into the highest echelons of the Victorian Age power elite.

Over the next seven years Officer Back served at Perth, Newcastle (Toodyay), Northam, Fremantle and in the Vasse District in turn, mostly as a mounted trooper, but also as a foot patrol man or lock-up keeper. He acquired a reputation as a policeman of unflinching moral and physical

courage. In 1867 Edward George, another constable and five prisoners took serious risks while putting out a bush fire near Toodyay. On another occasion, this time at Northam in 1872, Back distinguished himself during a major flood and was commended for 'praiseworthy conduct in assisting to save lives'.

In 1869 he had the pluck to arrest a wealthy and influential citizen, C.I.Monger, for offences related to irresponsible distribution of alcohol. The charges were dismissed, but the presiding magistrates criticised Monger and praised the police for doing the right thing. In passing, it is worth noting that Officer Back was commended or rewarded several times in his career for taking action against sly grog sellers and the like. Puritanism on his part was not at issue – some 'spiritous liquors' were real rot-gut and alcohol abuse in the colony caused anxiety in medical and governmental circles.

Edward George was promoted rather speedily and seems to have been identified as a an intelligent organiser – he was placed in charge of the Vasse District as a Lance Sergeant in 1874 and moved to York with the same rank in 1879. There was an unpleasant incident there when a Constable Andrews, a notorious 'tippler', made a violent attack on Back and bit off part of his lower lip. The constable was dismissed and sentenced to a term in prison for the business, but Back suffered some disfigurement and took to wearing a small beard to cover the scars.

Substantive promotion to Sergeant came in 1881 and then, in April 1884, he received the commissioned rank of Sub-Inspector and command of the police sub-district based on his home town, Fremantle. Edward George Back had 'arrived' – he now stood among the handful of very senior police officers in WA, one of the earliest locally born men to achieve such exalted status. The remainder of his fine career clearly demonstrated that in his case merit had triumphed.

**(to be continued)**



### **We Have a Patron!**

The Mayor, Dr Brad Pettitt, has agreed to be our patron, and we welcome him in this new role and look forward for a productive collaboration!



### **Goodbye to a Fremantle Legend Ron Davidson**

Mick Vodanovich's funeral on 8 February was Fremantle writ large. The service was conducted by Father Ted Miller; there were priests and jockeys, many of them called Miller; and Mick's first violin teacher. And the Mayor of Fremantle was there looking very young. There were also accordion players and violinists, and music everywhere. Father Ted's father trained Jack Vodanovich's horses; Jack was Mick's father.

Mick died after a short illness. He was an entertainer and a pubkeeper and a showman. They used to call him Fremantle's Mick Edgeley although it was thought he gave himself the name. He took over His Majesty's Hotel which he called His Lordship's Larder after the original building on the site. He wanted this tough pub to be a place where judges, workers, priests, nuns, sex workers, actors, acrobats and architects could be comfortable with one another, There must be no swearing. Mick served some of the best meals in town but was really the victim of his own success. His rates went up, so he moved to the Federal. He invented green beer for St Patrick's Day. And the same thing happened. When I last talked with Mick he thought he was getting close to returning from Spearwood to Fremantle even though he had his doubts

about the 'new' Fremantle. He said it was a foreign country. He never made it.



Mick Vodanovich, 2002 (Fremantle Gazette)



## **Clancy's Fish Pub and Surrounds (Part 2)** **Joe Fisher**

### Establishment of the Fremantle Girls School

The teaching of girls in Fremantle dates back to at least 1854, but the first school was not built until 1877. The ceremony of laying the first stone was attended by a large crowd, and the building still stands today opposite the Fremantle Markets. As seems to be a recurrent theme, it was only twenty years later, in 1897, that a new school was again considered necessary. In a letter from the secretary of education it was suggested that there was ample room for an entirely new girls' school to be built on the site occupied by the Fremantle boys school. The contract for the school was let for the outlandish sum 6543 pounds 18 shillings and four pence. Plans were drawn up, but due to a delay caused by some problems with the pesky quarry workers no progress was made before 1900.

Finally building got underway and it was intended that the Fremantle Girls School should be opened in July 1901 by the Duchess of Cornwall and York (who would later become Queen Mary). The speed of construction seems fairly impressive today, but shock and horror – the building wasn't

completed until the following month. The building took 14 months. Due to travel commitments the Princess wasn't available to open it but was asked to bestow a name on it, so in a fit of commendable modesty, she proceeded to name it after herself: The Princess May Girls and Infants School. The building was subsequently opened by the Governor, and he praised the architects, builders, and even presumably the recalcitrant quarry workers for having designed and built such a handsome building. I think it is still a handsome building and it will be magnificent if and when the restoration works are completed.

Although the school was originally started as a primary school there was almost immediate pressure on for some secondary education to be included. Although there doesn't appear to be any record of numbers of students, Fremantle's rapidly rising population started to put pressure on the teachers and classrooms by as early as 1911. In 1914 there were 14 teachers, including two household management teachers, a teacher of book keeping, and a swimming teacher. Subjects included English, Maths, Geography, Music, Drawing and the unappealing sounding Drill.

Although overcrowding was a problem, there were no major physical alterations made to the main building. By 1928, all primary school classes were relocated to the South Terrace Primary School, and years seven to nine became the sole focus for the school. By 1946 it was formally reclassified as a high school.

By the 1950s the building was becoming overcrowded again, and unions and parents were pressuring the government to come up with alternatives. In 1957, John Curtin High School opened and the Princess May school became an annexe of JCHS. Thus ended the very fine tradition of being 'A Princess May Girl'.

The school was used for education purposes well into the 1960s, and in 1970 a

proposal was developed to use the building as a Community Education Centre. In 1975 a certain Mr Kim Beazley, now of course ambassador to the United States, opened the newly renovated building. Until then little in the way of any adaptive work had taken place at the building but in the following years, to create more space, a series of mezzanines were inserted and new toilet blocks created. Although these were intrusive, fortunately it appears they did not interfere too much with the original layout and now in 2009, plans are in place to remove these structures and bring the layout of the building back fairly close to the original plans that were drawn up some 105 years ago – a rather pleasing result.

**(to be continued)**



### **Eating and Drinking in Early Swan River Colony (excerpts)** **Bob Reece**

During the first phase of settlement, lasting perhaps for two or three years in some cases, the settlers were dependent on the supplies of food and drink they had brought with them, or which they could buy from later arriving ships. A small band of merchants in Fremantle and in Perth were on hand to service this fledgling market and there was also a government store of flour and salt pork which was distributed to different locations, but for which settlers had to mortgage their properties. There were to be no free lunches at Swan River.

Seventeen ships arrived between June 1829 and late 1831 bringing passengers and supplies, but thereafter the number dramatically declined due to jaundiced reports of the colony's progress (or rather, lack of progress) that had been received in Britain from disillusioned early arrivals. Prices of all imported foodstuffs consequently rose and this, together with the chronic shortage of coin, caused considerable hardship for a time. The two

imports that provided the settlers' staple diet during these first few years were flour (often rancid and weevilly) and salt pork and beef - the former coming from the wheat fields (contemporaries would have said corn fields) of England and the latter from the pastures of south-eastern Ireland. Irish pork exported from Cork and Waterford had fed the early British settlements in North America and the slave colonies of the Caribbean as well as the British army and navy during the Napoleonic wars. It had also been, of course, the standard shipboard fare, together with ship's biscuits (known as 'hard tack'), of the passenger vessels which disembarked these early hopefuls on the beach at Fremantle, Garden Island and other places to the north and south.

**(to be continued)**



### **George Fletcher Moore: a star in Fremantle (conclusion)** **Bob Woollett**

Throughout his diary and letters we see Moore visiting Fremantle for a variety of reasons. Sessions of the Civil Court were regularly held in the town and these, together with other items of Government business, required his presence and occasional overnight stay. The long awaited arrival of a ship often necessitated a trip to the port to collect supplies of food and stores. As he wrote on one occasion, the cost of freight from Fremantle to the Swan Valley (four pounds, ten shillings a ton and two pounds, two shillings and sixpence for two casks of flour and one of beef) made the alternative prohibitive. "Is it not frightful?" was his aggrieved summary of the situation. Although he often complained of their infrequency, letters from home were very dear to him and journeys to the port to ensure their early collection were readily undertaken. Similar trips were often hastily made, when he received news of a ship's impending departure for England, to ensure the safe dispatch of his letters in the opposite direction. These, in addition to



expressions of affection for member of his family, frequently contained lengthy lists of requests for food supplies of various kinds and sometimes, rather ungraciously to my mind, bitter complaints when his wishes went unheeded or were slowly attended to.

I must say, I am greatly disappointed that you did not send me some flour. We might have starved over and over notwithstanding your sympathies. I wrote in my very first letter to entreat you to send me some slop clothes and provisions, foreseeing as any body might do that these things must be dear and difficult to be got in a new colony. Yet here after the lapse of a year I am paying one pound a pair for shoes and one shilling a pound for flour and ten guineas a barrel for pork when a supply which would have been \\cheap with you would (I hoped) have enabled me to avoid it. You will tell me I have no right to expect any further assistance. 'Tis very true, but when I find so much readiness to assist me expressed, I can not help wishing that some of it was acted upon.

At this point he realises he may be overstepping the mark and goes on to offer an apology, albeit a qualified one.

Excuse this ugly page, it really looks ungrateful, but no degree of management short of turning off my servants and turning servant myself, could enable me to support myself and my people long on a capital which you know was but five hundred pounds at first. Pork, butter and American flour are the cheapest things with you, the dearest with us, and shoes also.

At other times he shows he is more acceptive of the difficulties in getting supplies and correspondence to the colony. Writing on Christmas Eve, 1831, he says:

I go tomorrow to dine by invitation with Capt. Whitfield at Guildford, the day after to Perth, the day after to Fremantle. There is neither beef, pork nor flour in the colony now. If a vessel do not soon arrive, the scarcity will be felt severely. We gave been expecting ships these two months. There seems to be some magnet at the Cape which detains them.

A week later, after a ship has arrived with a batch of letters for him, his grumbles are put totally aside and he is over the moon:

Blessed and praised be God. You were all well up to the 10<sup>th</sup> June, the date of your last letter my dear Father. I have received 3 from you, 2 from Rose, 3 from William. What has become of Joseph and Sam? But I must not be too greedy.

Convivial and friendly by nature, Moore generally led a busy social life, entertaining friends and neighbours at the Hermitage, or visiting them in their homes in Perth or nearby. Occasionally this aspect of his life took him to Fremantle.

On Sunday, 10<sup>th</sup> March, 1833: "Dined in Fremantle, spent the evening at Mr. Leake's, plenty of music played by Mrs. Leake who has just arrived and brought a grand piano with her."

Earlier on, Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> June, 1831:

Next morning to Fremantle. Could not return that day – took tea at Mr. Leake's, introduced to Mrs. McDermot who was staying there. Spent a very pleasant evening. Mrs. M. played on the piano many airs from Don Giov[anni] and [Le] Nozza [Nozze] di Figaro, accompanied by Mr. Louth's flute. There is a Miss [Anne] Leake, about 16 years of age. She is not handsome but amiable and supposed to have a fortune. Of course she has many lovers. Two most assiduous are Capt. Bannister [the Government resident in Fremantle] and Doctor Harrison, the former of whom is supposed to be the choice of the Father.

Moore enjoyed the company of women and at times mused ruefully on his bachelor status, as he did on one occasion in 1832:

I think often seriously of marrying if I could get a wife but fear that I am too old to marry. Am I too old? Where has my youth gone to? So long as I was with my father, I thought I was a boy, a poor dependent boy, not able or not permitted, or not taught rather, to rely on myself and act on my own judgment.

Moore did eventually get married – in 1846 to Fanny, the step-daughter of Governor Clarke. Their friendship did not enjoy a propitious start when, after meeting her, Moore referred to her as 'a very fat and not very young lady'. But his view changed and they proved a fairly compatible couple,

although Fanny's mental health was often a matter of serious concern.

One permanent and visible link between Moore and Fremantle was forged through members of his family. His younger brother, Sam, together with his wife Dorah, nee Dalgety, arrived in W.A. in April, 1834, on board the "Quebec Trader", and, after initially living with George in the Hermitage, settled on a nearby property called Oakover. Sam established the first merchant business in the colony and in 1840 opened a branch in Henry Street, Fremantle. Sam died in 1849 but his son, William Dalgety Moore, after initially working on a station up North, took over the business in Henry Street in 1862 in conjunction with his brother, J.H. Monger, Jnr. William became one of the most successful general merchants in the town and was one of a group later to be styled by the writer, Pamela Brown, 'the Merchant Princes' of Fremantle. The older part of the premises can still be seen today and the entire complex was bought by the City Council and extensively restored in 1986-7. It now operates as the Moore's Gallery, managed by the Art Foundation of W.A. A descendant of Sam's, Richard K. Moore, has recently written a comprehensive history of the Moore family which contains sections on Sam, George and William under the title 'Builders of the State'. He also delivered a paper on William at the Fremantle History Society's Studies Day in 2000, and this was subsequently published in Vol. 2 of the Society's Journal.

Although not particularly associated with Fremantle, there are two aspects of George Fletcher's life in the early days of the colony of which it is incumbent on me to make some mention. The first of these is his involvement with Aborigines and his keen interest in their culture and traditions. Soon after arriving, he said that these people were not "as despicable" as he "first supposed" but were in fact "active, bold and shrewd", and although he was a firm believer in the rights of owning property and stock, his

statement in 1831 that "perhaps these uninformed creatures think they have as good a right to our swine as we have to their kangaroos", is often quoted as evidence that his underlying attitude to the original inhabitants of the land was far more liberal than that of most of his fellow settlers. He became friendly with some of the older men in the area of the Swan Valley, like Weeip and Gear and the Hermitage became an important meeting place for rival tribal groups. He was deeply concerned about the public execution of one of their leaders, Midgegooroo, in May, 1833, and expressed admiration and respect for this son, Yagan, whom he met soon after and dubbed 'Wallace of the tribe'. A graphic account of Yagan's own death at the hands of the two Keats brothers, as reported to Moore, is given in his diary entry for Friday, July 12<sup>th</sup>. Moore went on to learn the local dialect and in collaboration with Governor Hutt, later in 1842, produced the first Aboriginal dictionary. This contained the word 'Wardagadak', meaning 'a hero, a great warrior, a man of renown or authority' – a name by which Moore was known among the Nyungar people.

The Hermitage was re-named 'Millendon', the Aboriginal name for the area and from May, 1833, at least two Aboriginal boys were employed throughout the year as shepherds on the property.

A second important aspect of Moore's life to be only briefly mentioned here, was his interest and participation in a number of expeditions of exploration and discovery in the young colony. In October, 1831, he accompanied Ensign Dale on his second exploration of the Avon Valley, personally traced the link between the Avon and Swan in 1835, and in the following year, together with Henry Bull and Edward Lennard, he went further North, discovering and naming the Moore River. Later in October, 1836, he accompanied Surveyor-General, John Septimus Roe, on a major 40-day, 1,000 mile trek to the North and West of York, and was disappointed to find no evidence of an

island sea, so confidently described by some of his Aboriginal contacts. In 1838, his attention turned to the South, when he accompanied Governor Stirling on a voyage to Geographe Bay and explored areas around Collie and the River Preston.

In 1842, Moore went to the United Kingdom on two years' leave and on his return in 1844, quickly threw himself back into his work as a government lawyer, independent farmer and member of the colony's Temperance and Agricultural Societies. But Fremantle seems to have played a smaller role in his life as an increasing amount of his time was spent in these activities and in carrying out his duties on the Legislative and Executive Councils. His influence on the Legislative Council began to decline markedly, when he failed to prevent the imposition of an excise duty on the import of goods into the colony and opposition, led by Messrs. Leake and Nash, grew on account of government's refusal to change its land regulations. After a difficult 18 months as Colonial Secretary in 1846-7, he was accused of putting the interests of Government above those of his fellow settlers and with Governor Fitzgerald's arrival, he found himself increasingly on the side-lines of any decision-making. At the start of 1852, Moore requested another period of leave on the pretext of visiting his seriously ill father in Ireland, but he was also concerned about the health of his wife and had generally become increasingly disillusioned with the direction in which the colony was heading. As he wrote at the time: "The whole aspect of the colony seems to be unhinged ... the gentry are going down the hill most fearfully; their servants, and the working men and butchers, public house-keepers and retail dealers are rising on the ruin of others."

Back in England, Fanny's medical condition declined, she refused to return to W.A. and Moore resigned his position as Advocate General. His request for a pension was refused. Fanny died in 1863, but Moore never returned to the colony, developing

instead, various business interests in London and settling for the life of a Victorian gentleman in his terrace house in the desirable location of Brampton Square. A photograph of him taken in 1870, shows him to be very much the part, wearing a winged collar and frock coat and carrying a top hat. He died on 30<sup>th</sup> December, 1886, at the age of 88. It had been a rather sad end to a distinguished colonial career.

But in discussing that career with you today, I hope have done enough to show that, by his interest in its affairs and insightful observations as revealed in his diary and letters, George Fletcher Moore can justly claim to be a star in the firmament of Fremantle's early development.

By way of a conclusion, it might be appropriate if I emphasize as I did at the beginning, his talent and sensitivity as a writer, this time by quoting the first stage of a poem he wrote in May, 1830, showing as it does, his strong attachment to his family who were the inspiration and recipients of the incomparable picture of daily life in the young Swan colony which he has handed down to us.

#### FAREWELL LINES

Addressed to my sister on leaving home to emigrate of Western Australia:

Think of me when first the sun  
Paints with gold the Eastern sky  
And when his daily course has run  
Remember me and think me nigh.

**SOURCES:** The Millendon Memoirs (Ed. James Cameron); The Irish in Western Australia (Ed. Bob Reece); The Moores of Derry and Oakover (Richard K. Moore); Sir James Stirling (Pamela Statham-Drew)



#### Local History News February 2010

A Local History Day in was held in November last year and all staff attended and benefited from the various speakers

who spoke on topics such as the acquisition of digital materials and the use of digital imaging software and GPS systems to illustrate layers of history of specific sites, this technology is also used for cultural mapping. Staff also attended the Oral History Conference which was held at Notre Dame University. Once again the speakers were interesting and stimulating and provided useful professional development particularly on the use of oral history in the interpretation of history. Staff also attended a lecture by Hilary Silbert at the Royal West Australian Historical Society. Hilary conducted most of her research for her paper on Barney Silbert at the collection.

Planning is in progress for the 2010 Heritage Festival and nomination forms are now available for the Local History Awards and the Heritage Awards. Closing dates for the awards is the 4<sup>th</sup> May 2010 and the festival will be held from 28<sup>th</sup> May to the 7<sup>th</sup> June 2010

A valuable and useful acquisition to the collection is a colour map of Fremantle dated March 1865. It provides an interesting snapshot of the time and illustrates the changes to Fremantle as a result of the public works completed by convict labour during the 1850s.

The collection continues to grow and the development of procedures and work flows to streamline the processing of photographs is continuing. A database has also been developed to assist in property research and eleven oral histories were converted to digital format.

Recent additions to the collection include:

Suicides and settlers : their place in 19th century West Australian social history / Claire McIntyre (2008) LH 362.28 MCI

Pioneer Park reserve : heritage interpretation plan / Mulloway & Paul Kloeden, (2009) LH 363.69 MUL

Peter Tagliaferri, Mayor 2001-2009 : [videorecording] farewell DVD (2009) LH 352 TAG

Paupers, poor relief and poor houses in Western Australia, 1829-1910 / Penelope Hetherington (2009) LH 305.569 HER

Our exiles to the fatal shore : a narrative concerning the first arrivals and their descendents / William Streat (2009) LH B/STR

Monuments and masons : cemeteries at Karrakatta, Fremantle, Guildford, Midland / Leonie B. Liveris. (2009) LH 363.75 LIV

The Meeting Place Community Centre : future directions study 2006-2010 / Mary Del Casale LH 361.6 DEL

The Long Jetty excavation : 14 July to 20 August, 1984 : a report on the Long Jetty excavation / compiled by Dena Garratt with contributions from Mike McCarthy ... [et al.]. (1994) LH 994.11 FRE

Housing ourselves : the development of the First Fremantle Housing Collective / by members of the First Fremantle Housing Collective. (1987) LH 344.1 FIR

Fremantle Studies Day 2009 [sound recording] OH/ FRE

Fremantle Library 1949-2009 [CD] : Photo presentation LH 027.4 FRE

Feature & photographic survey : strata lots 6 & 8 Ord Street, Fremantle Prepared by Anna Perry B. A. in association with Kensington Design (2009) LH 728.3 PER

#### FOR YOUR DIARY

**Tuesday 30 March: Fremantle Culture Feast – Prof Bob Reece. The Meeting Place, 245 South Terrace, Fremantle. 7.00pm**

**Tuesday 27 April: Cantonment Community – Stephen Anstey. Venue to be confirmed.**