



## FREMANTLE HISTORY SOCIETY

Established 1994

The Secretary, PO Box 1305  
FREMANTLE WA 6959

**Winter Edition, 2013**

Editors: Dianne Davidson, Anne Brake, Ron Davidson

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



Davilak Hotel before trams, 1905  
Fremantle Local History Collection (710)

### **.THE DAV Pam Hartree**

The Davilak Hotel appears in the Fremantle Rate Book for the first time in 1903/04, along with a stable and stores. By this time the land was owned by Joseph and Robert Holmes who operated a butcher's shop on the corner of Market and Bannister streets, the first publican was George B Beard. The South Fremantle Tram Service, which commenced in 1905, terminated at Douro Road, not far from the Davilak Hotel.

In 1985 the manager of the hotel had the exterior of the hotel painted green and gold in support of the America's Cup bid. The hotel was also upgraded at this time. Circa 1996, the hotel was

converted to mixed commercial and residential use, with a bar, bottle shop, restaurant and ten apartments, some of which incorporate the original upstairs accommodation. Other apartments are situated at the rear of the property. Oldfield Knott Architects designed the redevelopment.

The building is listed on the City of Fremantle's Municipal Heritage Inventory with a level of significance of 1B which indicates that:

"The City of Fremantle has identified this place as being of exceptional cultural heritage significance in its own right within the context of Fremantle and its conservation is required. It is recommended that this place be considered for entry in the Heritage Council of Western Australia's Register of Heritage Places."

The name of the hotel has recently been changed to the South Beach Hotel. According to Patricia Brown, the original name "Davilak" is believed to have been taken from the name of Charles Manning's mansion called Davilak in the City of Cockburn. The mansion was built beside a lake known to the Aborigines as the devil's lake, corrupted to 'davilak', because they believed it to be haunted by evil spirits. However, there appears to be nothing to connect the Manning family with the hotel.

Over the years, the Davilak has been an important part of South Fremantle's social and urban fabric. For a time, one of the bars was called the 'Passion Pit' or the 'Virgin's Parlour' – it was a ladies' lounge for darts nights and get-togethers. Regular drinkers also formed their own football team. Denis Roberts, a retired Docker wrote about the hotel in an article in the Fremantle Herald in 1994 as follows:

There were several real characters who drank at the hotel. The local dog catcher used to warn the customers the day before his round up. Duly warned, they kept their pets indoors. Another fellow was an obliging postman who used to have a drink there after his round. I can

remember on one occasion he said to me: "I've delivered your mail, don't worry about it; they were only bills, so I threw them away."

This year's Pub Lunch will be at The Dav (now the South Beach Hotel). See **Coming Events** or **For Your Diary** for details and to book your place.



## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Executive:

Anne Brake (President)	9336 5206
Prof Bob Reece (Vice – President)	9335 7892
Pam Hartree (Treasurer)	9432 9739(W)
Dianne Davidson (Secretary)	9430 6096

Committee Members:

Steve Errington	9367 5504
Madison Lloyd Jones	0433 844 290
Fay Campbell	9341 4102
Jenny Patterson	9438 3711
Cathy Hall	0407 086 300
Peter Conole	9319 2191
Ron Davidson	9430 6096

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.

The Fremantle History Society committee consists of a **President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer** and no less than 2 and no more than 8 **committee members**. This hard working team organise all the

meetings for the year, Fremantle Studies Day and the production of the Fremantle Studies Journal. The committee also respond to a number of requests and lobby on behalf of the Society on a range of topics. And its fun!

If you would like to be a member of the executive of a committee member, we would love to have you. Complete the nomination form attached to this newsletter and return it to the Secretary at the address on the front page by **Tuesday 29 June**.



## COMING EVENTS

### PUB LUNCH - HISTORY WITH A ROAST

The Fremantle History Society pub lunch is something special this year. We will be eating in the dining room of the Davilak Hotel, now the South Beach Hotel at 396 South Terrace, South Fremantle (just north of Douro Road). Lunch starts at 12 noon on Sunday, August 25. The hotel in question was built in the Federation Filligree architecture of 1903 while the gold rush was still running apace and South Beach was becoming a major entertainment area. Horses trained on the firm beach sand and went by train to race at Ascot. Sometimes the horses waited outside the hotel while their trainers eased a troublesome thirst. The hotel has a number of pictures on its walls which reflect those times.

The cook is preparing roast pork and another roast at \$18 a plate. On the menu are also fish and vegetarian dishes. Come along and bring your friends but give **Dianne Davidson a call on 9430 6096 to book your place.**

**Sunday 25 August, 12 noon.**

### GARDEN ISLAND HISTORIC SITES

Join us on a fabulous trip to Garden Island with archaeologist Dr Shane Burke and Honors student Trent Hamersley, to explore

the remnants of the settlement there. As with many archaeological sites, the rewards are for those who are fit and/or observant. We will visit 2 sites. The first is part of the initial camp on the island and is where it was thought Stirling's House was located. The site includes the monument to the early settlers and ground probing radar has identified some burials.

However for those who are fit and able, there is a hill climb to the actual site of Stirling's house, strategically placed on an elevated site for good surveillance.

**Sunday 29 September.** Arrangements are still being confirmed but we will **depart Fremantle at approximately 1 pm**. There will be a cost for the bus/transport of around **\$15**. Sturdy shoes and appropriate clothing including a hat are vital. BYO water.

Call **Dianne Davidson (9430 6096, 0403 026 096, [dianne.davidson@gmail.com](mailto:dianne.davidson@gmail.com))** to register your interest. A more detailed flier will be circulated when the final arrangements have been confirmed.

### 2013 STUDIES DAY

This year's studies day is shaping up to be another great event. As usual there will be 4 papers. This year's theme will focus on early impressions of Fremantle, particularly images including rare photographs and maps.

The afternoon will be held at the Fremantle Army Barracks, Burt St Fremantle. Registration is from 1 pm and papers start at 1.30 pm. There will be a sumptuous afternoon tea and the launch of volume 8 of *Fremantle Studies*.

An afternoon not to be missed. Put the date in your diary – **Sunday 27 October from 1 pm. Cost \$12 members, \$15 non-members**

**RSVPs essential by 22 October:**  
**9430 6096, 0403 026 096,**  
[dianne.davidson@gmail.com](mailto:dianne.davidson@gmail.com)

## MEETING REPORTS

### South Fremantle Power Station a Great Hit

We got a really good response to the South Fremantle Power Station photos. About fifty people came to our 23 April meeting in the Fremantle City Council Reception Room where Pam Hartree gave a fascinating presentation of Andy Outh-Aut's evocative photo collection of this important site which he let the Local History Collection have at minimal cost. Andy also made himself available at this meeting to answer questions. It was a lively meeting, with many questions and issues raised about this monumental industrial cathedral. The meeting was included in the Western Australian Heritage Festival, co-ordinated by the National Trust. The festival was well promoted and included over 140 events throughout the state. We had a number of 'extras' at the meeting who had heard about it through the festival program.

### Fremantle Heritage Festival

As usual, the Fremantle History Society was active in our local Fremantle Heritage Festival with a number of events held by us or in conjunction with the Fremantle Society.

### South Fremantle Power Station (again)

A mid week rerun of the April meeting, this time in the Local History Collection, attracted another thirty-odd people. The stunning Power Station clearly has its dedicated admirers!

### Notable Convicts

Bob Reece presented an interesting talk to a group of about sixteen people at Fremantle's Round House. Although there was an icy wind blowing the content of the talk held our attention as Bob described how ex convicts, James Pearce and William Beresford, has established *The Herald* newspaper in 1867 which then ran until 1887. The paper was notorious for its

honest reflections of life in Fremantle and many of the characters that lived there. The editors also commented on issues in the colony generally which often elicited numerous letters in other papers of the time. If you would like to sample some of this publication the papers is now available online at

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/title/386>

### George Street Walk

This walk was well attended with approximately 40 people enjoying an informative talk by Stuart Wearne on the buildings and history of George Street. It was a lovely warm afternoon and Stuart walked the group slowly through the street to highlight the numerous historic shop buildings and cottages which have been preserved to maintain the character of one of East Fremantle's earliest commercial streets. The Town of East Fremantle has actively encouraged the preservation of the streetscape to ensure that their history is maintained.

Thanks to Bob Reece and Stuart Wearne for their presentations and for giving up their time on behalf of the Fremantle History Society.

### Court Houses

Starting at the Round House, the tour took participants to the old court house on Marine parade, the Henderson Street courthouse and to the present day courthouse where the University of Notre Dame Dean of law, gave people some insights into how the law has changed since the 1830s.

### The Bridal Train: Fremantle's Transnational Love Affair

With an audience of 70 Madison Lloyd-Jones, a PhD candidate at Notre Dame and a Fremantle History Society committee member, delivered a talk on Fremantle women marrying US servicemen during World War II. We learnt that 12-15,000 Australian women married (or were engaged

to) American servicemen during World War II and departed as war brides; 1000 of these came from Western Australia.

Many Western Australian war brides had to take the train to eastern cities to then embark on a long sea voyage to the US. Betty Kane was one such woman; her story has been immortalised by her grandchildren Vikki Thorn and Donna Simpson, both members of acclaimed Australian folk rock band, The Waifs, in their song 'The Bridal Train'. Extraordinarily, Donna Simpson volunteered to perform her song 'The Bridal Train' with her music student from South Fremantle High School, Grace Canny. It was a moving performance and enriched the talk.

Madison shared stories of very happy and life-long marriages; stories of divorce; even stories of wives and fiancées making the long and arduous journey to meet their husbands and never being collected. And there were even stories of those wives that were abandoned before they even managed to leave their home towns, sometimes left with a child to raise on their own. The experiences of these war brides were sometimes sad, sometimes happy, and almost always complicated.

(Madison's talk was officially a University of Notre Dame event)

### **Labour history tour popular**

The Fremantle Branch of the ALP turned on a labour history tour in a Fremantle 'tram' as their contribution to Fremantle Heritage Week and it was planned by Don Whittington and Ron Davidson. The tour took in the site of Tom Edwards' death blow during the May 1919 wharf riot, between B and C sheds. It was noted that one of the tram travelers was the grandson of the president of the Fremantle Lumpers Union, Bill Renton. Tom Edwards was struck with a police rifle-butt when he came to Renton's assistance when Renton was under attack from police. Edwards died the following week. Renton led the Edwards funeral cortage with a bandaged head and

mounted on a large black horse. There were many other highlights on the tour.

The Esplanade Hotel was identified as where Cecelia Shelley from the Caterers' Union led a long-running strike and where Paddy Troy installed seats on the hotel verandah where his members - the Seagulls who would take any job - waited to be picked up in comfort. Across Collie street is the old Fremantle Trades Hall the centrepiece of many stories. There was also the Federal Hotel (now called Rosie O'Grady's) where the Fremantle ALP held their first meetings in the 1890s. The end of Cliff Street is now where the weighbridge is now but between the wars was the Cage where foremen picked up their waterfront labour for the day. The labour history trip looks like being expanded and becoming an important part of Fremantle Heritage Week.

### **Club crawl still popular**

The Fremantle Club Crawl, organised by the Fremantle History Society and the Fremantle Society, showed it had staying power when Don Whittington and Ron Davidson provided its third outing at Heritage Week. The attendance was still good - around 40. The crawl started at the Navy Club with its sweeping views across the West End. Next came the Fremantle Buffalo Club where Leo Amaranti answered questions from his throne-like chair. He had been around the club for more than 50 years and knew every bolt-hole and story. He provided a demonstration of the one-antlered singing deer. The crawl ended at the Workers Club which had a provenance stretching back to 1914 but had been resurrected only recently because on the devotion of Don Whittington. Don gave an arousing account of how it was done.

### **Annual General Meeting**

This year's AGM was held at the old North Fremantle Primary School, now known as Stirling House. The building has had a number of uses over time including a bail

hostel and most recently as a residence for Aboriginal boys from regional WA attending Clontarf Aboriginal College in Manning Rd, Waterford. Kelly Rippingale, Senior Conservation Architect for the National Trust gave an illustrated overview of the history of the building and then people were able to have a look through the old building.

Kelly's presentation was followed by a delicious supper.

The evening started with the business side of things. A copy of the President's report follows and the new committee is listed at the front of the newsletter. There is still a place on the committee outstanding and we encourage members to put up their hand to join the others on the committee. New blood, ideas and enthusiasm are always welcome.

## **2012-13 PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

**Anne Brake**

It is with much pleasure I present my 2012-13 President' Report of the Fremantle History Society. I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land we meet on and pay respect to the Elders past and present. I would also like to thank the National Trust for allowing us to visit this significant heritage place for our annual general meeting. Kelly Rippingale, Senior Conservation Architect with the National Trust will give us some history of the building after the AGM formalities and there will be a chance to have a look through the building before our supper.

The Society is now 19 years old. Over the year's we have been recognised with a variety of awards for the hard work put in by your committee and other members. This year was no exception with the Society winning not 1 but 2 awards in this year's Fremantle and East Fremantle Heritage Awards – the 'significant contribution to Fremantle's heritage by an individual or a group' for the incredible effort to bring together 75 newsletters over the past 19 years without missing a beat and the Local

History publications award for volume 7 of Fremantle Studies. Well done to all concerned.

The work of the society can generally be broken into 4 main areas – advocacy, meetings, events and projects.

We continue to work to advocate for history and heritage in Fremantle, being careful to maintain our independence from and difference to the Fremantle Society. Our strong partnership ensures many voices are heard with our various strengths adding to the breadth of our effort. This year's advocacy has maintained pressure on the State Office of Heritage and the Heritage Council with relation to the reassessment of the Amenities Building on Victoria Quay. This important building – potentially the only public building with direct contact to war time Prime Minister John Curtin, hardly rated a mention in the initial assessment and was given low heritage significance. Since then, and due to pressure from the Society, both the original consultant team and the Heritage Council have agreed there had been an omission and further work has been done. The outcome of this is the upgrading of the level of significance to important. We are still waiting for the documentation to go out for comment as we believe there are still some omissions but in general, we are pleased with the outcome.

Staying with the Heritage Council, the Society has supported the registration of the Christian Brothers College and made recommendations for additional documentation associated with the extension of the curtilage (boundaries) of the Hollis Park (South Fremantle) registration.

The Society remains concerned with regards the lack of community consultation by the Fremantle Prison and the Fremantle Prison Trust. There has not been a community representative on the Trust for many years and their role in the management of the site seem to have dwindled considerably. While their

Interpretation Manager attended one of our committee meetings to build the community connection, there has been no follow up. The Society also remains concerned about the emphasis on the convict past over the 20<sup>th</sup> century history although we congratulate and commend the Prison team on the recent Aboriginal incarceration exhibition which won them an award at the Fremantle Heritage Festival.

Letters were sent expressing our disappointment at the demise of Fotofreo and Deckchair Theatre Company. These two important institutions carry the spirit of Fremantle and reflected important elements of our history and heritage. It is hoped Fotofreo may be able to be resuscitated but Deckchair, sadly, has gone for good.

On a brighter note, we have supported the revitalisation of the Workers Club which was on the brink of closure until Society member Don Wittington took on the task of 'saving' the Club. He has been assisted by a number of people along the way, but I think it is fair to say much of the success of the Club now can be attributed the hard work and many hours Don continues to put into the place. Our advocacy for the City to be more active in its maintenance of the Town Hall was rewarded. A letter was sent to the mayor following our April meeting last year generated by a unanimous motion to contact the City to ask for action. Two million dollars was allocated to urgent works to the building in July last year.

The Society continues to have a good working relationship with the City. The Mayor is our Patron and his door is always open to the Society to discuss concerns. The Society is also approached by various members of staff with regards assorted issues. The committee did not support a proposal from the City to change the traditional Foundation Day lunch when asked. The proposal would have seen the lunch abandoned and replaced by a less formal event to be held on 2 May with a focus on Captain Fremantle. The Society believes the Foundation Day lunch is a part

of Fremantle's heritage and honours the work of everyday people rather than just one man.

Your President was asked to comment on a Visioning paper for the heritage of Fremantle by the then newly appointed Heritage Co-ordinator, Alan Kelsall . The Committee also wrote to the City with regards the lack of action on the establishment of boundaries for the West End precinct which was supposed to be part of the work of the West End Precinct Working Group. This group fell into abeyance with the change of personnel at the City and I was pleased to be accepted as a member of that working group when it was reactivated. I am sad to report that work has once again stalled.

I have also represented the Society on the Port Precincts Planning group, at the Kings Square Visioning workshops and presentation, the Fremantle 2029 workshops and a community meeting with regards the rationalisation of Stirling Highway Reservation (Metropolitan Regional Scheme Amendment 1210/41.

The Committee also wrote to the City supporting the development of a youth plaza but rejecting the proposed location in Esplanade Park preferring a site to the south of the park utilising the Italian Club carpark.

Other activities across the last year have included the launch of the Fremantle History website and more importantly, the launch of the Fremantle History Society website. The former is an initiative of the City and Notre Dame which the history society has links to. The latter is our very own website which has been the work of our treasurer, Pam Hartree. You can find it at [www.fhs.org.au](http://www.fhs.org.au). It is hoped past Fremantle History Society newsletters will be available through the website in the future. A recent project has seen the back issue converted to PDFs which allows them to be posted on the website and other electronic media. The team at the Fremantle Local History

Collection continues the wonderful job of indexing our 75 newsletters – no small task and we thank them greatly for it.

You will see our web address on the new Society banner behind me. This helps to promote ourselves at various events and provides a backdrop for photo opportunities providing even more promotional momentum.

Once again, the Society was active in the national heritage festival which in WA is branded the Western Australian Heritage Festival. Organised by the National Trust, the festival is held in most states during April and May – the other states hold their events later in the year. This year's event was a presentation by Pam Hartree on the South Fremantle Power Station. Pam's presentation included a history of the building with some remarkable and evocative images juxtaposed against the very powerful photos of Andi Outh-Ath, a local photographer who 'sold' over 200 of his images of the power station to the library at a very minimal cost. Andi's photos have been taken of the now derelict building and he was there on the night to talk about his work. The meeting attracted a number of people from outside the membership which was very rewarding.

We also participated in this year's Fremantle Heritage Festival. Events included a mid week rerun of the very successful South Fremantle Power Station talk, Notable Convicts by Vice President Bob Reece at the Roundhouse; the George St Ramble led by Stuart Wearne; The Bridal Trail: Fremantle's transitional love affair by Madison Lloyd Jones (really a Notre Dame event, but we are claiming Maddi as one of ours!), and the Club Crawl and Court House tours; the latter two joint initiatives with the Fremantle Society.

The Society was very ably represented at the Affiliated Society's conference, run by the Royal Western Australian Historical Society, by Bob Woollett, Fay Campbell and Joan Donaldson.

One of our greatest achievements this year was hitting the milestone of delivering our 75<sup>th</sup> newsletter. The first newsletter went out in Spring 1994 and we have delivered 4 newsletters a year since then. The 75<sup>th</sup> was an opportunity to revamp the look of the newsletter and provided an opportunity to look back on some of the Society's achievements and milestones as well as our regular items. There was space for some reminiscing and to look back at some of the fun we have had over the years. Many thanks to designer Michael Adeane for the new look and for putting together the very successful edition.

Our other main activity is our meetings. A number have already been mentioned. Others included our regular August 'Pub Lunch' which was held at the Workers Club. On a very cold and blustery September evening a small number of us attended a great fireside (literally) talk by John Longley who looked back on the America's Cup era. There was the Christmas lunch at Eat Greek with the infamous history quiz put together by Bob Reece and last year won by our founding President, Dianne Davidson. Gina Pickering from the National Trust started the 2013 calendar with a presentation on a venture which focused on the Swan and Canning Rivers. The Rivers of Emotion was a project which began with a symposium but its main focus was an interactive website where people could record stories relating to their connections to the river. There was also the opportunity to upload video, sound and images of the river. The project has now been completed and the resulting material will contribute to an interpretation plan for the riverpark being developed by the National Trust for the Swan River Trust.

In February we visited the offices of Terra Rosa, a local group of archaeologists who work across the state and who are very interested in exploring the notion of cultural heritage significance and how it is represented through the archaeological record.

Our biggest meeting or event each year is the very successful Studies Day. Last year we gathered in the lecture room at the Fremantle Army Barracks for four very interesting papers – ‘The Rev James Brown – Anglican chaplain at Fremantle Prison in the mid 1850s’ by Alex Grose; ‘Fremantle : Port to Abeyance’ by Alexandra Ludewig which provided an insight into the internment of Germans on Rottnest Island during the first world war particularly through some wonderful photos and art work from the internees; ‘Negotiating the Civic heart of Fremantle’ by Shaphan Cox exploring the tensions which occur in shared public spaces like Kings Square; and finally ‘The Kaiser’s Spy on Queen Victoria Street’ by Sebastian Boch who questioned whether or not the German Consulate, Carl Ratazzi had been a spy in our midst.

The Studies Day also saw the launch of volume 7 of *Fremantle Studies*. This is a major achievement by the Society and I would like to thank all concerned, particularly the people who contributed their papers. A huge thanks goes also to Fremantle Ports and the Fremantle Society for sponsoring the publication of volume 7 and to Ainslie De Vos from Fremantle Ports who launched it. And we cannot forget to thank the Army Barracks for the splendid venue. Special thanks also go to the editorial team which included Madison Lloyd Jones, Dianne Davidson and Pam Hartree.

Finally, the very important task of the thank yous. Firstly to the City of Fremantle for their ongoing support of the work of the history society and the Mayor’s willingness to open his doors or respond to emails and letters. The City has also made their reception rooms freely available to us for various meetings. The Local History Librarian and Society Treasurer, Pam Hartree, warmly hosts our committee’s monthly meeting and the reception rooms were made available to us for last year’s Studies Day. Kristy McNulty, who works with Pam, is also very generous with her time and support of the Society. We want to

thank them both for their ongoing help and the work on the indexing project.

I would like to thank all our meeting speakers, including the Studies Day presenters, who gave so freely and generously of their time to prepare and present the high quality papers we have come to enjoy. Also to those from past Studies Days who worked with the editorial committee to get volume 7 out.

To those who have contributed to our newsletter, I say thank you and I encourage any of you who haven’t to pick up pen or put fingers to keyboard. We welcome contributions from you all. A special thanks goes to Ron and Dianne Davidson for their stalwart contributions to the editorial team and for much folding and sticking on of labels and stamps to get it out to you.

To all those who have opened their venues to us for meetings including the National Trust for tonight’s meeting I say thank you. In advance, I would like to thank Kelly Rippingale for her presentation and tour tonight.

To the hard working committee – Vice President Bob Reece, Secretary Dianne Davidson, Treasurer Pam Hartree and committee members Bob Woolett, Madison Lloyd Jones, Cathy Hall, Ron Davidson, Jenny Patterson, Fay Campbell and Peter Conole. We were also very fortunate to second Steve Errington onto the committee midterm and we thank him for his contributions since then. All have their various roles but I would like to make special mention of Jenny and Fay who keep us well sated at every meeting. I would like to make special mention of Joan Donaldson who has helped Jenny and Fay at every meeting and function we have had for several years now. Thank you Joan.

And finally to you, our members for your ongoing support and encouragement. Without you there wouldn’t be a Fremantle History Society so don’t forget to renew your

membership and encourage friends and family to join if they haven't.



## A LITERARY LEGEND RETIRES

Ron Davidson

In the summer of 1978 a young man with shoulder-length hair, a Curtin degree in English and a considerable radical provenance was being interviewed for the position of editor of the newly arrived Fremantle Arts Centre Press (FACP). The interviewers, Ian Templeman and Clive Newman, liked what they heard: Ray Coffey obviously loved stories and showed a particular sensitivity in his dealing with them. The job was his. Now, 35 years later, he leaves the world of book publishing. It is so much richer and owes Ray a huge debt. When he started at the Press it fell very much under the umbrella of the Fremantle Arts Centre: Ian Templeman was both Director of the Centre and CEO of the Press, which had got off to an uncertain start with the anthology, *Soundings*. *Soundings* included poems by Dorothy Hewitt, to which Lloyd Davies, lawyer and Dorothy's former husband, took a particular dislike. (Lloyd's dislikes were always particular and intense.) The book was withdrawn.

During his time as editor then publisher Ray shepherded onto the bookshelves a string of modern classics – *My Place*, *Reading the Country*, *Rhubarb* and against international competition, FACP won the contract for Elizabeth Jolley's *Milk and Honey*. Then there was *A Fortunate Life*. The poetry editor Wendy Jenkins thought this manuscript, handwritten in battered exercise books, had potential. She took it to Ray. No one thought just how massive its potential was. Like sales of 700 000 copies in a dozen languages. Ray was always good with understatement and irony, particularly with his titles. The chosen title, *A Fortunate Life*, reflected this. Meanwhile FACP was restructured to become a more independent operation called Fremantle Press. To

achieve this Ray and Clive (General Manager) sometimes had to call in the political savvy of local member Jim McGinty.

But Ray was more than an editor to the stars and publisher of hits. I first met him in 1987 with *The Divided Kingdom*. My literary provenance was limited having failed English 1 at UWA a record three times. But I was confident Ray would not let me come to any harm. Our friendship grew over a number of titles like *High Jinks at the Hot Pool*, *Anything but Ordinary: the nine lives of Cecile*, and *Fremantle Impressions* when our joint interests in footy, Fremantle stories and strange people coalesced. We met regularly over long blacks and talked about the issues mentioned above. I also wanted to know why he lived in the northern beaches rather than in Fremantle. He seemed so like a Fremantle person and his uncle did play for East Fremantle and ran a High Street pub. He never told me but I suspect that being harangued by rejected Port authors 24 hours a day was more than he could stand.

There were occasional shocks. In 2008 he told me he would leave Fremantle Press. It was almost unbelievable but some were happy. They worried about the stress Ray was always under. He would become publisher for the WA Museum: their books soon showed Ray's mastery of the big picture. Quite literally, in books like *Voices of the West End* and *110 Degrees in the Waterbag*. He was not however the ideal civil servant. Recently I asked how things were at work. His answer stunned me. He was about to become a carpenter. The biblical association appealed. He would 'do kitchens'. Meanwhile Clive Newman, the other half of the 'odd couple of Australian publishing', lowered his work load from General Manager to Sales, Distribution and Rights Manager. These are tough times in publishing but Fremantle Press's budget remains on target. And Ray has his first three kitchens lined up.

The end of an era – but Ray disliked clichés.



## **FREMANTLE 2029 – COMMUNITY VISIONING PROJECT**

**Ron Davidson**

Fremantle is starting a visioning program to determine how our city will or should look in 2029, the two hundredth birthday of white settlement. Anne Brake and I were the Fremantle History Society reps at the big launch in May in a packed Town Hall. In June and July there were workshops to determine what participants valued most about our community and place and how these might be protected (for issues read problems). In August the workshops shift from individual to collective community solutions - what are our community visions for Fremantle. At the time of going to press the date of the August workshop is not available. The final meeting for 2013 will be held in September but the visioning will be continuing into the new year. This is a high tech operation and details can be found on [freo2029.com.au](http://freo2029.com.au)

I have noticed there is a very large elephant in the various meeting rooms. No one is talking about the impact the Barnett Government's linking of Councils which have. It will be massive. There seems to be the view that the way to achieve vibrancy is to say the word many times. Likewise the word conversation.



## **A SPECIAL THANKS TO BOB**

Long time committee member Bob Woollett is stepping down from the Fremantle History Society committee. He first joined the committee in 1998 and since then has been a stalwart, taking the helm for 5 years from 2000 – 2005 providing a quiet but constant finger on the pulse of the activities of the history society. Bob's commitment to Fremantle has been a long one. His house in Norfolk Street, one of Fremantle's oldest shop residence combinations, was his sanctuary for many years. Many members

will remember visiting the house for meetings and a Christmas party or 2. He also brought a literary focus to the society with some wonderful presentations of Fremantle in word and print. He has been our connection to the Royal Western Australian Historical Society, representing us at their conferences for many years. He led the team that ran the very successful RWAHS Affiliated Conference in Fremantle which not only included the business of the meeting but a wide range of associated activities and even a set of cards reflecting significant Fremantle places. Amongst his contributions over the past few years has been the successful raffles held at each meeting which raise significant funds for the Society's activities. This is a task we are happy to say he will continue with.

From the committee and all our members  
Bob, a very hearty and heartfelt thank-you.



## **LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTION NEWS**

**Pam Hartree**

It has been a busy time since the last newsletter with the Heritage Festival and the Local History Awards at the beginning of June. The library organised five events for the Heritage Festival and they were all very well attended.

The Local History Awards were also very successful with a total of eleven entries. The winners were the Fremantle History Society for Vol. 7 of Fremantle Studies (Published Award) and Dr. Bob Reece for his unpublished work on Henry Willey Reveley : Swan River Colony's first architect. Two of his buildings are still standing, one of which is the Round House which is such an important Fremantle landmark. I would like to thank our judges this for this year, Pamela Statham Drew, Dr. Simon Stevens and Tania Heyne. They had the challenging task to read and assess all the entries and we appreciated their time and contribution.

Oral history recording has slowed over the last few months as our new staff member

Tania Heyne has been in training to carry on the interviewing from Lorraine Stevens who has now retired. Tania is working on a project with the One Stop Shop called Still Me 2. Several people who attend activities at the One Stop Shop are being photographed and interviewed about their lives in Fremantle and is planned that the materials produced will become part of an exhibition at Kidogo Arthouse during Senior's Week in November.

Recently I was fortunate to attend a training course in Sydney for two weeks which looked at Managing Historical Materials, I found both the theoretical and practical aspects of the course interesting and relevant to the collection here and many of the skills I have learnt will be applied to this collection to ensure its preservation for the future.

After waiting expectantly for what seemed like many months the early Fremantle newspaper, The Herald 1867-1886, was finally launched on the National Library's historical newspaper database. The ability to keyword search this newspaper to research Fremantle's history for this period provides a wonderful resource to uncover many new aspects of Fremantle's history.



## **THE IMPERIAL WATER POLICE IN FREMANTLE (PART TWO)**

**Peter Conole**

From its foundation in 1851 until 1876 the Imperial Water Police in WA was commanded by superintendents who had experience in maritime matters or were of upper class origin. George Clifton (1823-1913) served two terms, 1851-1853 and 1854-1864. He was of aristocratic origin and had powerful local relatives and patrons. He took time out in 1853 to work as a senior official in the Convict Establishment. Among the highlights of his career was a heroic and successful effort to rescue government funds (in gold sovereigns) and stores during the wreck of the 'Eglinton' in 1852. He

attracted further public and official praise for his pursuit and recapture of a boatload of armed convicts in 1859, an exploit that ended near Dirk Hartog Island.

Clifton returned to England and ended his working life as Governor of Portland Prison. He further made his mark as a penitentiary system reformer and botanist. His first successor in WA, Lionel Lukin (in office 1853-1854 until Clifton resumed the job), was a grandson of the mariner and technologist who invented life boats. Lukin held other government positions and settled in the Avon Valley, where he prospered as a pastoralist.

Henry Duval, another former naval officer, followed Clifton from 1864 to 1867. He resigned to become Superintendent of a major prison in Ceylon (Sri Lanka), where he died in 1872. John Frederick Stone (1839-1909) began his duties as the last Superintendent of the Water Police in 1867 at the young age of 28. Stone was the son of the colonial Attorney General and a nephew of Alfred Stone, previously head of the WA Police and a prominent lawyer and magistrate in his own right. John Stone's powerful connections will have had some bearing on his elevation to high office, but he proved to be a capable and energetic leader. In 1876 he had the bad luck to be the senior man of the Water Police at the time of the celebrated escape of Fenian political prisoners on the 'Catalpa'. Nobody blamed Stone for the fiasco. However, he moved sideways anyway to take up a position as Comptroller of Prisons.

During the heyday of the Imperial Water Police most members of lower rank were experienced seamen, often former navy personnel, as was the case with a couple of the most senior men. The organisation used rowing vessels or small sailing craft for their work and gradually expanded operations to cover ports like Albany and Geraldton.

In the course of a shake-up of the law enforcement system following the 'Catalpa' fiasco the WA Police obtained control of the

Water Police in 1876. Police Commissioner Matthew Skinner Smith handed over executive matters to newly promoted Sub-Inspector William Mills, a self-made man if there ever was one. Mills joined the outfit in 1860 and served at all the key port towns in the colony. He was the Coxswain at Fremantle in the mid-1870s and yet another member of the group that tried to halt the Fenians. Mills worked on until 1881, amid signs he was unhappy with the workload and in poor health.

After Mills returned to England on extended leave and failed to return, Commissioner Smith took over the organisation completely in 1883. The general duties officer in charge of Fremantle administered the Water Police and a coxswain took direct care of operational matters. The word 'Imperial' was now redundant. William Hopkins, discussed in the 75<sup>th</sup> Special Edition of this Newsletter, was typical of the type of experienced mariner who emerged in leadership roles.

A man who became famous in WA history, Charles Yelverton (C.Y.) O'Connor, arrived as Chief Engineer of the colony in 1891 and started work on the construction of major harbour facilities in Fremantle. A steam powered launch *Cygnat* was sent out in the same year for him to use as a government vessel during his harbour development work. This vessel was built on the Thames to a design by the firm of Simpson and Strickland of Dartmouth. A newspaper report of 1897 reveals that during official celebrations to mark work progress the launch conveyed public officials and guests around the port.

By then George Phillips, Commissioner of Police, realised that the Police Force of the day needed a motor powered vessel for use by the Water Police and he pressed for one to be made available. He obtained the steam launch *Lawyer* in 1898 but noted in subsequent annual reports that it was in poor repair. The vessel had been involved in a major accident in about 1889 and still not much of an asset. In his 1901 report the

Commission included an estimate of 1000 pounds for a replacement launch.

After the completion of the Fremantle harbour works and the suicide of CY O'Connor in 1902, Commissioner Phillips acquired the *Cygnat* for WA law enforcement purposes.



#### FOR YOUR DIARY

**Pub Lunch at The Dav (now South Beach Hotel) – Sunday 25 August from 12 noon.**

**Garden Island Historic Sites – Sunday 29 September leaving at 1 pm. Cost around \$15 – to be confirmed**

**Fremantle Studies Day – Sunday 27 October. Fremantle Army Barracks, Burt St, Fremantle. Registrations from 1 pm. \$12 memb, \$15 non-memb.**

RSVP for all these events to **9430 6096, 0403 026 096, [dianne.davidson@gmail.com](mailto:dianne.davidson@gmail.com)**

#### The Bridal Train (extract)

All the girls around Australia  
Married to a Yankee sailor  
The fare is paid across the sea  
To the home of the brave and the land of the free

From west to east the young girls came  
All aboard the bridal train  
It was a farewell crossing of her land  
She's gone to meet her sailor man

No time for sad goodbyes,  
Well she held her mother as she cried  
And then waited there in the Freo Rain,  
To climb aboard the bridal train