



FREMANTLE HISTORY SOCIETY

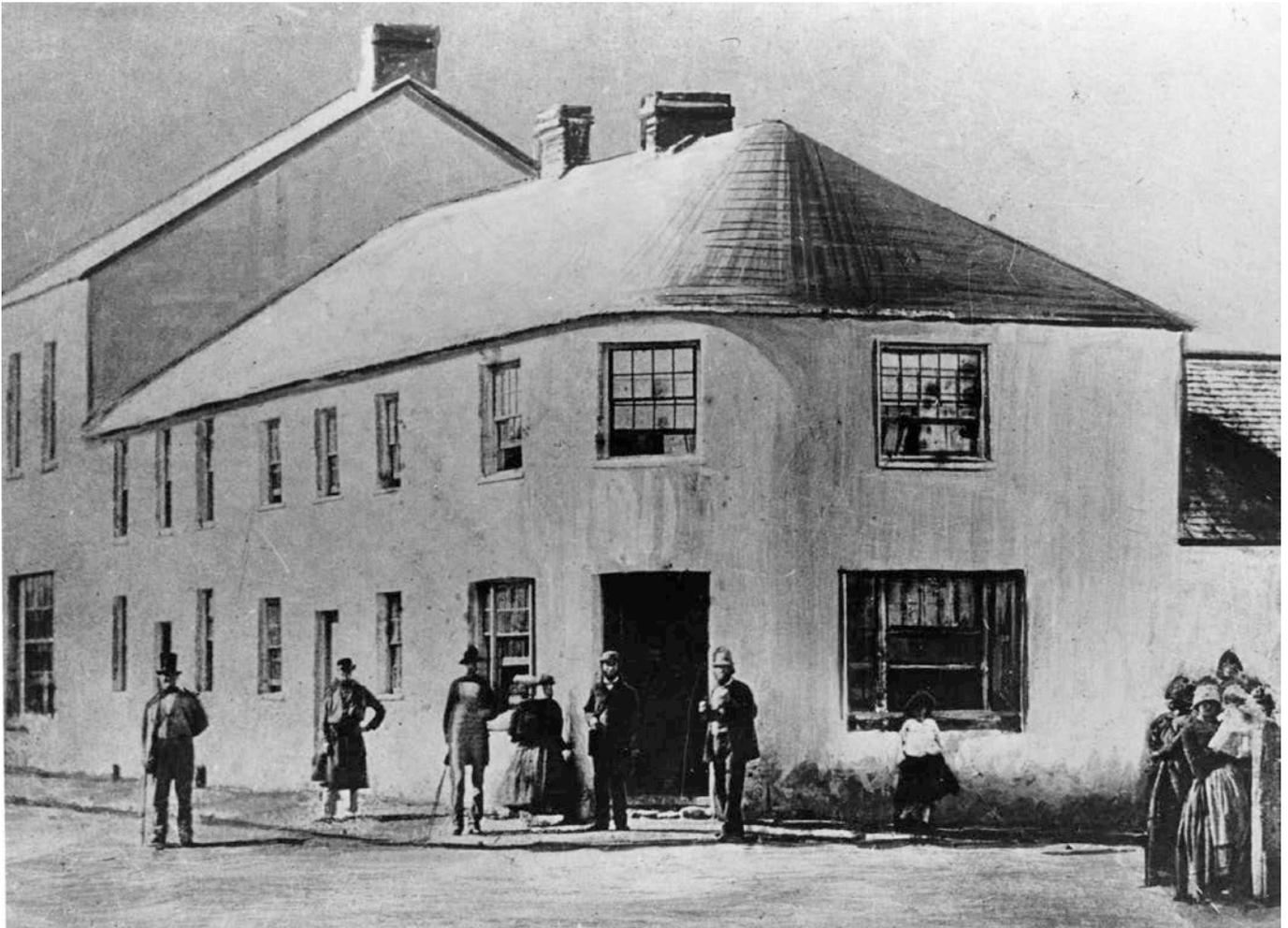
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Editors: Dianne Davidson, Anne Brake, Ron Davidson

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



An 'early and important photographs' of Fremantle, by Stephen Montague Stout, convict., teacher, photographer and journalist, of William Pearse's butcher shop at the corner of High and Pakenham streets c1863.
Fremantle City Library: Local History Collection: Fremantle Society Image no. 6.25

BUMPER CROWD AT 17TH FREMANTLE STUDIES

Ron Davidson

Fremantle Studies Day 2013 – our 17th - was a day when records were broken. Despite counter attractions like the Blessing of the Fleet and the Seafood Festival more than 100 people attended. Ninety-two were formally registered but there was a number of 'extras'. The theme of 'Images and Evidence of Early Fremantle Life' was obviously attractive for the crowd which packed every seat in the lecture room in the Burt Street Artillery Barracks. There was a time

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS: come to our special lunch (see pg 3)

when the Studies Day struggled to top an audience of 20 or 30 participants. Now it is clearly part of public history.

The Studies Day began with Irma Walters' paper on Stephen Montague Stout, an early teacher, photographer and convict who made an art of self promotion. Even the Montague part of his name was added to the original Stephen Stout in an effort to draw pupils to his various 'educational institutions', as he called them. From the first day in Fremantle off a convict transport he cultivated a new persona which was to include photographer, journalist and generally cultivated person.

Recorded events in Stout's careers and his photos contribute to our understanding of early life in Fremantle. Irma is a former primary school teacher from Australind where she 'met' Stout, who was the first teacher there. John Dowson took up the important legacy of the early photographers Stout and lawyer Alfred Hawes Stone. Dowson, who is a photographic historian, reported that surprisingly few images exist until the 1890s. He presented a catalogue of rare and important photos surviving from the first forty years of the camera in Fremantle.

The next speaker was Notre Dame post-graduate student Simon Meath, an archaeologist who has been digging among the rocks of Cockburn Sound, just north of Peel town. Simon is a focused archaeologist who has worked on a number of research projects around Fremantle. Currently he is digging up evidence of the adaptive behaviour of the Meares family who camped on the site between 1829 and 1831 while waiting for a better offer of land. Shells found indicated that sea snails were an important part of the family diet – and French cognac. The audience was presented with evidence of behaviour not usually preserved on canvas or cellulose.

The final speaker, Steve Errington, taught chemistry at WAIT/Curtin University for 41 years before retiring to write WA history of the nineteenth century. He traced how within

three weeks of the arrival of the first private settlers on the *Calista* in August 5 1829 surveyor John Septimus Roe was laying out blocks in Fremantle and the first were allocated within a month. Houses, inns and shops began to appear. A post office, a weekly handwritten newspaper, a burial ground, a jetty and a gaol followed.

A highlight of the day was the sumptuous afternoon tea despite the bigger than expected crowd. Thank you Jenny Patterson, Fay Campbell and Joan Donaldson. Our president Anne Brake had to be away interstate and thanks to the presenters of papers was carried out by vice president Bob Reece. He also announced that volume 8 of *Fremantle Studies* would now be launched in mid-2014. And thank you Army Museum for providing a venue for the Studies Day.



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	
Madison Lloyd Jones	
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

Slap Up Turkey And Cranberries For Christmas Lunch – Yum

The Fremantle History Society's celebrated Christmas Lunch will mark a prize-winning year when it moves to George Street, East Fremantle, at noon on Sunday November 24. The George Street Bistro at 75 George St, which has a wide reputation for fine food is turning on a slap-up turkey spread with baked vegetables and gravy, as well as dessert. Yum. For the non meat-eaters there is salmon salad or frittata. All this comes for the very modest price of \$30 a head. Bring your friends. The bistro is licenced.

Where you will be eating was the commercial hub of East Fremantle with butchers, bakers, grocery shops, chemists and many workers cottages as well. On the bistro site was Baker Brothers who were butchers. However the whole block was cleared after a spectacular fire which destroyed the large butchering and ice-

making plant. The corrugated iron stables were also badly damaged but stayed on the deserted block for many years. The Press reported the fire brigades were hampered by lack of water at certain mains. The Royal/Royal George hotel and the Richmond trotting circuit were other features of the area.

The Christmas knees up will be on Sunday 24 November. **Intending diners need to register at 9430 6096 by 21 November.**



MEETING REPORTS

Pub Lunch finds a home

Investigations were held to see if the state's oldest licensed hotel, the Railway in North Fremantle, might provide a good pub lunch for members on August 25th. Some members remember the Railway as the home of the massive \$5 breakfast, but we found we would have to bring our own food these days. So we decided on the Sunday roast at the Davilak (Devil's Lake) in South Fremantle. We worried that the name had recently been changed to the South Beach Hotel: the Fremantle History Society is an advocate of not changing old names, and this was emphasized in a letter we recently received from long-time member Coralie Solomon.

Bookings were slow to begin with but eventually 25 people fronted up to roast lamb and Yorkshire pudding or local fish. Simone McGurk, the newly elected State member for Fremantle, made a quick visit before leaving for the State ALP Conference. The committee wrote to the licence holder praising the growing collection of historic images around the hotel walls but suggesting that the Davilak name be reinstated. The Dav first appeared on the Fremantle Rate Book in 1903/04 and was a centre of the South Fremantle racehorse and entertainment industry and from 1905 the South Fremantle train service terminated nearby.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS: come to our special lunch (see pg 3)

For the next pub lunch we must consider the National which will reopen shortly. Remember the wonderful wake we held for the National in April 2007!

Fremantle Army Museum

Retired Colonel Robert Mitchell, curator of the Army Museum, showed an enthusiastic crowd of members through the recently opened World War 2 galleries and gave a sneak preview of the World War galleries being prepared for opening at our September meeting.

Robert's encyclopaedic knowledge of all things military and of the rich collection held by the museum added great depth to already detailed exhibitions. From large floor to ceiling 'wall paper' of news articles of the day, through photographs, extraordinary objects, some incredibly personal, and on to the dioramas they are famous for, the exhibitions covered the many faces, literally, of this extensive war.

While members enjoyed this comprehensive tour, many would be planning a return to go through the exhibitions in more detail and to view the now opened World War 1 display.



Robert Mitchell, Curator, Army Museum of WA
(Anne Brake)

The Army Museum is open Wednesday – Sunday from 11am – 4pm.



WA Studies edition on Fremantle planned Ron Davidson

The *Studies in West Australian History* board have shown an interest in doing a Fremantle edition of their journal. The leaders of the move, Deborah Gare and Shane Burke from Notre Dame, are now working on a formal proposal to the *Studies* board with the aim of a late 2014 publication date. Studies of women in Fremantle seem likely to be well represented but community history may be a problem. We will see.

There is also a proposal for another edition based on the contribution to local history of Tom Stannage who died suddenly in 2011. I remember when Tom was not just a history star but a footy star who acted as a ball magnet. Back in the sixties when Perth and Fremantle people flocked to local games 55,000 watched Tom star in a grand final. He would drift down his flank to stand unnoticed in the goal square. The ball followed... There was horror expressed when Tom went to Cambridge to complete a PhD. What a waste of talent, said the Swan Districts Football Club supporters. Tom's major work will remain *The People of Perth*, a social history. With its stories of the lower orders it was not the history the burghers of the city expected. They had sponsored it.

And talking of footy Fremantle History Society committee member Steve Errington has just published *Southerners Forever More*, based on the first 60 seasons of the historic South Fremantle Football Club. There have been unexpected difficulties with distribution but we hope to have a review in the next newsletter.



Serendipity and the Historian Bob Reece

Writing about someone for whom there is no surviving image is like being in a room when all the lights have gone out and you have to feel your way gingerly in the dark.

Was this elusive person short and dark or tall and fair? Did their face reveal anything of their personality that might help to explain their actions?

I have been working off and on for a year on a biography of Henry Willey Reveley, Swan River Colony's first engineer and architect, who was responsible for all government buildings and other public works from the time of his arrival on the *Parmelia* with James Stirling in June 1829 until his departure in November 1838. All that now survives of his work is Fremantle's iconic Round House lock-up and Perth's old Court House in the Supreme Court Gardens.

All that we know of Henry Reveley's appearance to his Swan River contemporaries is one 'old settler's' description of him as 'a tall, stalwart-looking young man'. He could certainly stand up to the threats of the contractors who came to him complaining bitterly about the government's delay in paying them for their work on government projects.

Not only is there no surviving image of Reveley or of his talented and beautiful wife, Amelia Cleobulina *neé* Fielding, but there are very few letters. Of his three private letters, one of 1833 is to Amelia's nephew, 'Joe', gives a detailed account of Swan River as a desirable place to settle. The other two letters are of the early 1850s to his friend and business partner, Alexander Sutherland, about property matters. We know that he wrote a handful of letters to his parents in Plymouth but these have not survived.

The State Record Office of Western Australia holds his substantial correspondence on official matters, but this does little to reveal what kind of man he was other than to indicate that he did not suffer fools gladly.

Amelia had no children, and with a maid to help her around the house she ought to have had plenty of leisure time for writing letters home to her parents and siblings, as

many literate middle-class people in the colony did. Nevertheless, no letters survive and we consequently know nothing of the Reveleys' private lives. The fact that her brother, Copley Fielding, was Britain's leading watercolour landscape artist and that her portrait-painter father taught her how to make miniatures suggests that she might have done some painting while she was in the colony. Until recently, however, none of her work has been identified.

And here begins the serendipity. I was already familiar with a delightful naive-style painting entitled 'My House and Garden in Western Australia' of the Reveleys' St. George's Terrace establishment in the National Library's Nan Kivell collection that had been attributed to Henry (who wrote the letter on the reverse side of the painting). Although it was not signed, on looking at it again it seemed to me highly likely that it was Amelia's work.

Then a few months ago I learned from my friend Dr Pamela Statham Drew that RWAHS veteran June Shenton Turner's son's collector friend had just acquired an 1836 watercolour of Perth's second Government House designed by Henry Reveley. Even from a poor scan of the image I could see that it was a fine piece of work, picturing the elegant building (demolished in 1886) from the river in golden light with Aborigines fishing with spears in the foreground and white children playing on the grass behind them. It was signed 'C.A.R.' (Cleobulina Amelia Reveley). All that the owner's London dealer could tell him of its provenance was that he acquired it from a fat little man who found it in a scrap book.

This was an unexpected thrill, but then a few weeks ago as I was somewhat aimlessly scanning Google for 'Cleobulina Amelia Fielding' in the hope that something might turn up when I found an entry on UK Ebay for an 1840 watercolour portrait by her of a man identified as Henry Reveley which had been sold to someone last November for what I thought was a rather modest sum.

Whether or not the present owner can be traced is something I am still trying to establish.



The elusive painting of Reveley as it appeared on Ebay

Once again, the scan supplied with the item was of poor quality but it portrayed with charming effect a handsome man aged about fifty with lively eyes and a longish face emphasised by long sideburns, wearing a beautiful and elaborately tied (lovingly, by the artist?) black silk cravat. The cravat came as no surprise because I knew from one of his letters from Elba in Italy to the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley in 1823 that Henry Reveley had a *penchant* for cravats and was something of a dandy.

Reveley, who lived with his parents in Italy from 1801 until his return to England in 1823, had become a close friend of Shelley and his wife Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin when they came to live at Livorno ('Leghorn' as the English called it) on the coast of Tuscany in May 1818. Reveley's mother, Maria, had been a bosom friend of Mary Wollstonecraft in London in the 1790s when Henry was growing up and taught Shelley Spanish so that he could read the works of the famous playwright Calderon. And Henry

involved Shelley in helping to finance the building of a steamboat he had designed to ply between Genoa, Livorno and Marseilles. That story is a saga in its own right.

Whether or not more paintings by Amelia Fielding will turn up (including one that she is known to have painted of Mary Shelley and a much-needed self-portrait) is in the lap of the gods, but at least I can now put a face to the man I am writing about. For some mysterious reason, it makes the task a lot easier. Knowing what he looked like does not unlock his personality for me but it is a valuable aid to the imagination and to the momentum a biographer needs in order to get the job done.

Bob Reece's essay 'Henry Willey Reveley: Swan River Colony's First Architect' won this year's Fremantle Local History Award for the best unpublished manuscript.

CONGRATULATIONS Bob.



Some Fremantle history thoughts

Ron Davidson

I always thought I was the expert on Ernest 'Shiner' Ryan, Australia's first payroll robber to use a car, then burglar, artist, husband of *Underbelly* star Kate Leigh, and Fremantle folk hero in the fifties. And my father was the Shiner expert before me. So it was a surprise when I read the UWA centenary publication *Seeking Wisdom*. It told how, when the med school started in 1957, Shiner Ryan's body was offered to the medical school after Kate declined to collect it. She refused permission for it to be cut up by students but by then the Professor of Anatomy, David Sinclair, had embalmed Shiner. The press then told the story of their folk favourite. Alerted to the internment of a celebrity a vast crowd came to Fremantle Cemetery including the mayor of Fremantle, Fred Samson. When I last looked Shiner's grave was still unmarked except for the number 464.

And memorialisation – ugly word - is an issue in Fremantle again. Someone wants to erect a memorial to Captain Charles Fremantle; others for Fremantle women. I thought of the towering tribute to ‘the workers’ at the entrance to Port Adelaide completed in 1921. On top of the towering granite plinth is a white marble statue to Justice, sculpted in Italy. It needs to be said the workers commemorated then were men. There weren’t many women on the waterfront. The statue reminded me of Pietro Porcelli’s gracious peace memorial at the old Midland Railway Workshop.

Anne Brake and I spent a pleasant Saturday morning at the Open Gardens of neighbours Gerard and Sue McCann and Ken and Debbie Alexander in Hamilton Street, East Fremantle. We will write more about the history of this wonderful display of flowers, vegetables and herbs in a later newsletter. Gerard said on the day: ‘It is wonderful to share the gardens with so many people. We feel honoured to be custodians for the time being of this lovely piece of land’.



Ron Davidson in the Alexander’s beautiful garden
(Anne Brake)



World History comes to Fremantle **Madison Lloyd-Jones**

From 3 – 5 October 2013 Assoc Prof Deborah Gare, on behalf of the University of Notre Dame and in partnership with the Australian Historical Association, successfully hosted a World History Association conference. Themed ‘Empire,

Faith and Conflict’, the conference attracted delegates from all over the world and the quality of papers was truly exceptional. Some of the session themes included: ‘Holy War: Faith, conflict and empire in a post medieval world’; ‘Anglicanism and the British Empire’; ‘The (Mis)Use of Faith in Conflict’; ‘The Australian Frontier’; and ‘Women of Empire’. From this broad range of sessions, let alone papers, it is clear that the problems of empire, faith and conflict are to be found in all periods and genres of world history.

Fremantle was a perfect location for a history-focused conference with delegates having the opportunity to explore the city’s heritage precinct with a walking tour of the West End; rooms and facilities used throughout the conference had their own rich history – for example,

- morning and afternoon tea were served in Notre Dame’s Fairweathers Bar, once the Fremantle Hotel;
- a special curator’s sunset tour of the Shipwrecks Gallery at the Maritime Museum of Western Australia was provided by Prof Michael McCarthy; and
- Dr Shane Burke provided the opportunity to participate in an archaeological dig and excavation of Peel Town.

The conference was part of a very active World History Association Symposia program. The next 2 symposia will be held in Hanoi (29-31 Dec 2013) and Barcelona (26 – 28 March 2014). For more information go to www.thewha.org.au



FOR YOUR DIARY

Sunday 24 November, 12 noon – Join us for our Christmas repast at the George St Bistro, 75 George St, East Fremantle. RSVP to Dianne Davidson – 9430 6096 by 21 November.