



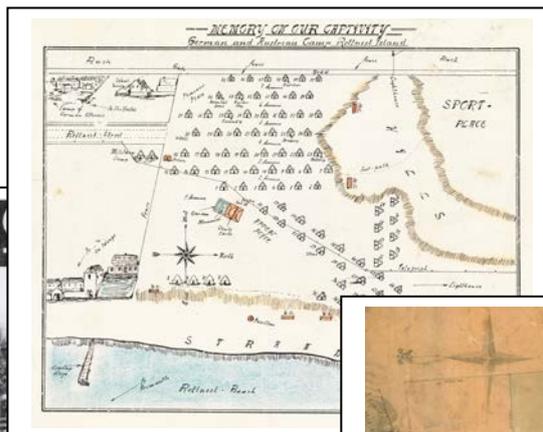
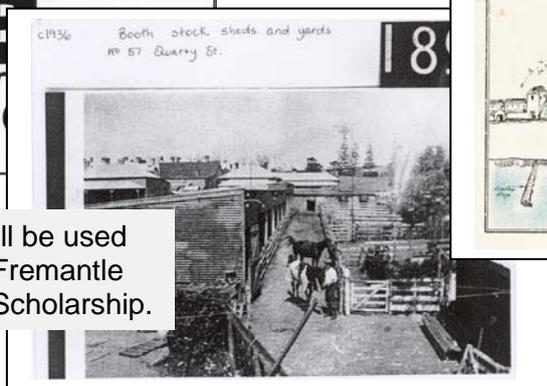
FREMANTLE HISTORY SOCIETY

Established 1994

The Secretary, PO Box 1305
FREMANTLE WA 6959

Winter Edition, 2014

Editors: Dianne Davidson, Anne Brake, Ron Davidson



A range of documents will be used to explore the history of Fremantle as part of the Research Scholarship.

SCHOLARSHIP TO SUPPORT RESEARCH ON FREMANTLE

At the recent Annual General Meeting, the Fremantle History Society committee was proud to announce the offering of a research scholarship as part of the celebration of our 20th anniversary.

Two thousand dollars is being offered to encourage new, high quality research into Fremantle's history and heritage. Enthusiastic students early in their career, to amateurs well versed in good research practice and every one in between are encouraged to apply for the scholarship. Submissions to the Fremantle History Society are due by 12 September. A group of eminent people including academics, local historians and community members will assess the applications and the recipient of the inaugural grant will be announced at this year's Fremantle Studies Day.

While the Society is able to support this 20th anniversary scholarship, we are hoping to work with other like-minded Fremantle organisations to offer the scholarship on a more regular basis in the future – maybe every 2 years. The final work will most likely be a monograph of up to 10,000 words although we are open to other ideas. It will be delivered at next year's Studies Day and will be printed as part of Studies Journal.

This is a very exciting initiative which strongly supports the objectives of the Society and will make a significant contribution to the understanding of our past. Further information on the scholarship and an application form are available on the Society's website (www.fhs.org.au).



COMMITTEE MEMBERS

We welcome two new committee members to our ranks Jennifer Dudley and Irene Burrough. After 19 years of dedicated work, Dianne Davidson is stepping down for a short while and we thank her most warmly for the incredible work she has done over those years as President, Secretary, committee member, newsletter and Studies Journal editor and founding member of the Society (in fact it was Di's idea we form in the first place). The second position on the committee was possible as we had a spare spot at our table.

Executive:

Anne Brake (President)	9336 5206
Prof Bob Reece (Vice – President)	9335 7892
Pam Harris (Treasurer)	9432 9739(W)
Madison Lloyd-Jones (Secretary)	0433844290

Committee Members:

Steve Errington	9367 5504
Fay Campbell	9341 4102
Jenny Patterson	9438 3711
Cathy Hall	0407 086 300
Peter Conole	9319 2191
Ron Davidson	9430 6096
Irene Burrough	9364 6527
Jennifer Dudley	

General meetings are held on the 4th Tuesday (or Sunday) 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

PUB LUNCH – The Nash

After what seems like an eternity, The Nash has finally reopened its doors. Now doing a flourishing trade once again in its iconic spot on the corner of Market and High Streets,

The Nash will be the venue for this year's Pub Lunch. Before the feasting begins, there will be a tour of the place so members can view at close hand, the incredible work that has had to go into reopening the doors after the catastrophic fire of 20XX.

We will meet on the first floor, which is where we will come back to for lunch. Meals range from soup of the day for \$8 through salad and light meals, sandwiches and burgers (all under \$20) and a variety of hearty bar snacks to have on their own or part of a shared plate. Drinks from the bar.

It's a pretty popular spot, so we will need to book our place. Please contact Madison on secretary.fhs@gmail.com or phone her on 0433 844 290 to reserve a place by Monday 18 August.

The Pub Lunch will be on **Sunday 24th August. Meet at 11.30 am** for the tour, to be followed by lunch.

SOUTH FREMANTLE POWER STATION

The Fremantle History Society has followed the fate of the South Fremantle Power Station with some interest for a number of years. Hassell Studios have been commissioned to prepare a Master Plan for the site, identifying sustainable options for the future of this iconic landmark.

Robina Crook from Hassell will present findings from the report at our September meeting.

Due to other commitments, we are still working out a suitable date for Robina's presentation but we will let you know the details as soon as possible for date and venue for what will be a fascinating meeting.

2014 STUDIES DAY

Fremantle Studies Day is becoming increasingly popular year by year. This year one of the papers listed for the Fremantle History Society event considers the twenty

year history of the Fremantle History Society itself. Our vice president, Murdoch history Professor Bob Reece, will show the way the society has created a better popular understanding of how Fremantle evolved from a few cottages at Arthur Head to a port city.

Another paper considers Fremantle's link with the Crimean War waged 1854 to 1856. Researcher Diane Oldham tells how 250 of the veterans came as warders to guard convicts and also formed the nucleus of the local police force.

Leigh Straw has an interesting paper: Outcast women, offending against the good order of Fremantle 1900-1930. Dr Straw tells how such offenders were depicted as drunks, prostitutes and vagrants. What the offenders thought of such depictions is a different matter. Dr Straw focuses on the voices from the courts.

In the fourth paper, Michelle McKeough concentrates on Fremantle in the Great War. Issues like patriotism and health are considered as Fremantle families respond to the considerable loss of husbands, brothers and sons.

Plan on staying after the papers and raising a glass to our 20th birthday which will be celebrated with the launch of our newsletter index, the announcement of the 20th anniversary scholarship and the launch of Fremantle Studies Journal Vol 8.

This year's Studies Day will be held in Victoria Hall, 179 High Street, on Sunday, October 12th. Papers start at 1.30PM (registrations from 1PM). It is anticipated celebrations will be completed by 6PM. Cost is \$12 for members and \$15 (join on the day for member discount) for others and includes afternoon tea and refreshments after the papers.

Booking is essential by Sunday 12 October to secretary.fhs@gmail.com or 0433 844 290 (Madison Lloyd Jones).



MEETING REPORTS

WA Heritage Festival / Fremantle Heritage Festival Events

A(nother) town like Fremantle

History Society President gave a richly illustrated talk on the town of Valparaiso on the Chilean coast. Like Fremantle, Valparaiso was a port city at its heyday in the Victorian era. It was built mainly on mining, but also on the export of a range of goods. From its early days it attracted a range of migrants from Germany, Holland, Spain, England and America. Sadly, Valparaiso went into decline following the opening of the Panama Canal which allowed ships to move between the great oceans without the treacherous trip around the bottom of South America.

This decline, however, was the saviour of many of the heritage buildings in the town which is now undergoing a renaissance with a thriving tourist industry built around those heritage buildings, a vibrant artist and cultural community and the return of boats now too big to go through the Canal.

Club crawl still popular

The Fremantle Club Crawl, sponsored jointly by the History Society and the Fremantle Society and again organised by Don Whittington and Ron Davidson, was a star of the Fremantle Heritage festival. More than 70 attended.

It began with drinks at the Navy Club while guests took in the great view across the port and some rich club mementoes. Then down High Street to the Buffalo Club which is always a favourite for club crawlers. The talking deer was in good form chatting with club manager Leo Amaranti. Leo then took us upstairs where he was the star of a question and answer session. As always he sat on a throne made of glue and spent matches by a club member nicknamed

'Matches'. Then we went around Henry Street to the Workers which was celebrating its 100 years in operation. It all seemed the same in clubland: but somehow different.

Annual General Meeting

This year's AGM was held at the Kidogo Art House, originally the old kerosene store and known to many as Joan Campbell's pottery studio. Joanna Robertson very kindly opened her doors to the Society free of charge – we are very grateful to her for her generosity.

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.

This was followed by a fascinating session with Jack Kent, now international award winning architect who was involved in the 1970s in a number of Fremantle heritage projects including the preparation of a conservation plan and the implementation of conservation works at the kerosene store while Joan was still in residence. Jack was prompted by questions from Ron Davidson and it was obvious from the depth of questions these two had chewed the fat on Fremantle heritage over many years.



Jack Kent at the 2014 AGM (Pam Harris)

As always it was followed by a delicious supper. But probably the most astonishing thing of all one the number of people who

braved foul weather to attend the meeting. The committee was humbled by this display of support – thanks everyone.

Fremantle History Society President's Report 2014

Anne Brake

It is with much pleasure I present the Fremantle History Society's 2013-14 President's Report. I would like to start by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land we meet on, the Noongar people, and pay respect to their Elders, past and present.

I would like to thank Joanne Robertson of Kidogo Art House for generously allowing us to hold our annual general meeting here on one of the most significant sites in Western Australia. Part of the heritage precinct made up by Arthur Head and Bathers Beach, this area has recently been under threat by development applications which the committee believe are inappropriate to this important place. We are not opposed to development. We have supported, with certain cautions, what were seen as controversial developments at the time including the development of the skate park at Fremantle Park. It would seem the current proposal, however, is an insult to logic and common sense as well as a threat to the heritage values of the place. We have voiced our concerns to the City of Fremantle. In liaison with FICRA, we have continued to monitor the application to the state government and are awaiting their guidance to prepare a submission to the Minister to voice our concerns. We will keep you posted.

In October this year, your Society turns 20 and a series of events are planned to celebrate over the coming year. Later in the meeting there will be an important announcement in this regard but for now, I would like to use my report to acknowledge both the membership, who have remained constant supporters, and the hard work of the various committees over that time. It takes a bit of effort to keep our Society

going with 10 general meetings a year, including our signature event, the Fremantle Studies Day, as well as producing a quarterly newsletter and every two years or so, another volume of Fremantle Studies. Our committee members bring a range of skills and life experiences to the table along with warm and generous hearts, and together create a formula that keeps us ticking steadily along and they make life for me as president a fair bit easier than it could be.

Our 2013 AGM was held at Stirling House, probably better known to most as the North Fremantle Primary School. Now in the hands of the National Trust, the site was waiting news on a future compatible reuse. Finding potential lessees who are also able to contribute to the often significant work that needs to be done to heritage places to make them useful in the 21st century can be tricky, but the Trust has done just that with the Schools of Early Learning who are turning the place into an early childhood education centre – a very compatible reuse. At last year's meeting, Trust Senior Architect Kelly Rippingale gave members an overview of the history of the site including its use as a halfway house for people coming out of prison, as Australia's first bail hostel and then as residential accommodation for Clontarf Aboriginal College.

One of the highlights of the Society's calendar has always been the Pub Lunch. Last year's was at the beautiful Davilak Hotel, now known as the South Beach Hotel. This Federation Filigree hotel was built at the height of the gold rushes when South Beach was becoming a major entertainment area. Members enjoyed roast beef and Yorkshire pud or a seafood spread for their lunch. People praised the collection of historic photographs but were less enthusiastic about the change of the original name. Simone McGurk, our local state member, joined us for a short while.

Sadly, our planned trip to Garden Island was not possible. Instead members enjoyed a visit to the Fremantle Army Museum.

Curator Robert Mitchell, gave members a comprehensive tour through the excellent exhibitions that have been developed at the Museum.

Fremantle Studies Day is without doubt, the highlight of the year. Designed to showcase original research into Fremantle's colourful history, the 2013 event focused on early impressions of Fremantle. John Dowson, Irma Walters, Simon Meath and Dr Steve Errington presented papers on early photographers and their photographs, an investigation of how the archaeological record can 'paint pictures' when no photographs or paintings survive and a paper which showed how to gain an understanding of early settlement through surveyors' notebooks and maps. Studies Day was once again held at the Fremantle Artillery Barracks. We would like to thank Mr Henry Frejolic for allowing us to use the space free of charge and particular thanks to Robert Mitchell, Colonel retired and curator of the Fremantle Army Museum (as already noted) for his attention to detail on the day and as a most generous host. A small donation was given to the Museum as thanks.

Traditional turkey and pudding was the order of the day at the Society's Christmas lunch held at the beautiful George St Bistro. As well as the delicious food and glass of bubbles, members tackled this year's quiz with enthusiasm – the winner being Society stalwart, Wendy Markmann.

In February 2014, Assoc Prof Deborah Gare shone a spotlight on the significant Mary Ann Friend Diary, acquired by the State Library of Western Australia with the assistance of the Australian government through the National Cultural Heritage Account. Assoc Prof Gare has played an important role in the acquisition and understanding of this important document which provides valuable insight through both text and drawings, of the early days of WA settlement.

Earle Seubert, gave us a fascinating tour of the old Woodman Point Quarantine Station in March. Opened in 1886 after smallpox outbreaks, the station handled a range of serious epidemics including cholera, smallpox, even bubonic plague. The Friends of Woodman Point Recreational Camp have developed a fascinating museum on site and run regular tours of the place. They work closely with the Department of Parks and Wildlife and the Department of Sport and Recreation with conservation and interpretation tasks on site and support groups that use the extensive facilities.

Our April meeting began on the busy platform of the Fremantle Railway Station. Although a hundred commuters hurried past, this would have been nothing compared to earlier days where men clambered on their way to the goldfields at the first Fremantle Railway Station built in 1881 next to Cliff St in 1881, or later the this station built in 1907 to support CY O'Connor's Fremantle harbour. Alan Kelsall took us through the history of this fascinating site that once boasted an island platform with a subway tunnel to access it.

The Society has always been a keen participator in the Fremantle Heritage Festival, being an important player in aborting moves to amalgamate the festival with the Fremantle Festival held later in the year. In 2014, the City of Fremantle brought the heritage festival forward to include it in the broader umbrella of the National Trust's Western Australian Heritage Festival. This gave the festival a much higher profile being able to hook into the state and even national advertising possible through the National Trust's month long event, although this was tempered by the limited distribution of an excellent Fremantle Heritage Festival program. This year's contributions included a talk by yours truly on the city of Valparaiso on the Chilean coast. Valparaiso, like Fremantle, developed as a Victorian port city, but following the opening of the Panama Canal, the port fell on hard times and artists moving into the cheap run down accommodation. Toward the end of the

twentieth century, a people's movement however, saw the place revitalized and it now boasts a strong tourism industry and a return of boats grown too big for the Canal. It has also achieved World Heritage listing. Like Fremantle, many of the buildings have remained, avoiding the developers' demolition ball and maintaining a reasonable amount of authenticity in the streetscapes of the main city. Once again, the joint Club Crawl, hosted by the Fremantle Society and the Fremantle History Society and led by the 2 Godfathers, Don Wittington and Ron Davidson, attracted good numbers.

Michelle McKeogh gave our June meeting, giving us a snapshot of Fremantle in the years of the depression and a window on how the local government responded to the devastating impact of the times on what became quite overwhelming numbers of people.

I am always amazed and grateful to the people who speak at our general meetings. It takes some time to prepare for a presentation, no matter how well you know your material, and then there is coming along on the night (or day) to do the presentation. All of our presenters are incredibly generous of their time and expertise and we cannot say enough to thank them for that generosity.

As well as our meetings, the Society distributes 4 newsletters a year. While we have a few folk who contribute, we would really like to have more voices on its pages. Unlike the Studies Journal that does need some rigor to the writing, the newsletter is much lighter, chattier and inclusive. Even if you just have a short anecdote or a story to tell, do put pen to paper and send it in.

I would like to offer special thanks to my fellow editors and writers of much of the material for the newsletters, Dianne Davidson and Ron Davidson.

And thank you to all those who have in the past – I encourage them to do so again.

The history society has long been an affiliated member of the Royal Western Australian Historical Society. Each year we are represented at the Affiliated Society's Conference. Last year's was held at Bunbury. Faye Campbell, Joan Donaldson and Bob Woollett from the Society all attended.

The history society continues to upgrade its communications with the recent addition of a Facebook page. Our Facebook page will not only have notices of upcoming meetings and photos of various Society activities, it will also include history titbits and encourage you the members, to ask questions, raise points or tell stories to each other in another way to keep our history alive and relevant.

Many of you probably took the opportunity to sticky beak on a real live television star when Baldrick from Black Adder or maybe better known as the host of Time Team, Sir Tony Robinson was in town. Looking for material for their upcoming season, Tour of Duty, which will focus on WW1, Tony and his team have been travelling across Australia to meet people with stories to tell and memorabilia to display. A great day was held at the Fremantle Army Barracks on 25 May and many thanks go to Pam Harris who spruiked the Society's wares and sold a fist full of Studies Journals during the afternoons events.

This year's advocacy has continued to focus on the all but stalled Port Precinct Enabling Plans project which was supposed to be submitted in the first few months of the year. I sit on this committee and still find it very difficult to get any answers to what is happening. The hold-up appears to be the Perth Transit Authority, as all plans proposed included major amendments to the rail/bus interchange. It is understandable this would take some time to sort through, but I am a little surprised that this wasn't identified much earlier in the process and the project timing developed accordingly.

Remaining with Victoria Quay, we have continued to put pressure on the State Heritage Office with regards the documentation associated with the Amenities Building. Following news Fremantle Ports had been sent a letter saying the registration documentation had been updated and feeling a little miffed that the history society hadn't, I wrote to SHO asking for clarification. The Director agreed that new research 'demonstrates that the level of cultural significance previously ascribed to the Waterside Workers Amenities Building can no longer be supported'. While this is good news as the building now has been assigned similar significance to others on site and is in essence, protected, this is still not reflected in the public documentation of the place on the register.

Our thank you list is always long and as ever starts with the City of Fremantle. The City continues to support us through free venues for both our committee meetings and a number of our general meetings. Many places are not able to offer venues at no cost due to mounting insurance and security costs. Short of passing these costs to our members we continue to search for no or low cost venues and are very grateful to those sites who have been able to offer this for us. Along with the City, but also separate to it, is Pam Harris, our treasurer, but many of you would know her, and her colleague Kristy McNulty, as the incredibly generous and helpful librarians at the Fremantle History Centre, previously the Fremantle History Collection. I would like to acknowledge them both, answering questions and sending images at a moment's notice for an overdue newsletter or ensuring the Society's profile is maintained at the Centre and further afield.

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 who are very close to getting volume 8 out.

To the hard working committee – Vice President Bob Reece, Secretary Dianne Davidson, Treasurer Pam Hartree and committee members Steve Errington, Madison Lloyd Jones, Cathy Hall, Ron Davidson, Jenny Patterson, Fay Campbell and Peter Conole. 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. Another special mention is to Joan Donaldson who has helped Jenny and Fay at every meeting and function we have had for several years now. Thank you Joan.

It is with some sadness though, that Dianne Davidson will not be on this coming year's committee. The formation of the history society was Dianne's idea and she has been a staunch supporter, worker and advocate for Fremantle's history and the Society since its inception. Sadly, her health has meant she is not able to participate at committee level just at the moment although she has indicated she will still assist with the newsletter and the like. She will be sadly missed on the committee and we wish her a speedy return to health and return to the committee table.

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.



SKINNER ST CEMETERY

Bob Reece

On 28 July, Mayor Brad Pettit hosted a morning tea at the Fremantle City Council Chambers to honour the work of the Friends of the Eastern Gates Lookout volunteer group over the eleven years since its instigation. In particular, he singled out for praise Wendy Markmann (*nee* Shaw) who

has been working for years to commemorate the old Skinner St. cemetery, closed in 1935, that was in-filled and used as the site for a barracks for the nearby anti-aircraft gun emplacements during WW2. Wendy's association with the area goes back to 1948 when her family was housed there in the old barracks. A grant made by Lotteries West and administered through the Council recently enabled the restoration of the convict-built limestone retaining wall along Finnerty St. by recently arrived Venetian building conservation specialist, Piero Caselatti, who has already worked on many of Fremantle's old stone walls and buildings. The convenor of the volunteers, Bevan Bessen, also paid a fitting tribute to Wendy's work and the transformation of the area from a rubbish-strewn wilderness to a little oasis of native vegetation. Barry Wells, the late ex-headmaster of John Curtin College of the Arts, was another important supporter of the project. Wendy has contributed two articles on the Skinner St. cemetery to the *Newsletter* and plans a third piece paying tribute to the tireless work of local resident and RAHS member, Kate Caldwell, whose determination to trace the names of all those buried at Skinner St. has provided posterity with a fairly comprehensive set of records. These have been deposited with the Fremantle City Library's Local History Centre, to which will be added copies of Kate's historical correspondence with the then Council pleading for the proper recording of the site.



ANOTHER FOOTBALL STORY

Steve Errington

JJ 'Boss' Simons came to Fremantle from South Australia in 1896 as a 13 year old, when the gold rush was in full swing in Kalgoorlie and Fremantle. Simons soon got a job riding a pushbike around the port city. He was an office boy for Alfred Sandover, one of Fremantle's many big hardware merchants. Their warehouse was 13-19 Mouat street and now houses the vice

chancellery of Notre Dame Australia. By the time Simons was 21 he was Sandover's office manager. The following year, 1905, he formed the Young Australia Football League (YAFL) as a counter to what he saw as subversion of the 'Australian game' by soccer-obsessed British school teachers. It was a short step in 1908 for the YAFL to become the Young Australia League. The YAL was at one stage 'bigger than the Boy Scouts in Australia'.

The Fremantle History Society received a letter recently from Jan McCallum the head curator of the Boss Simons Memorial Museum and Library at 45 Murray Street Perth. She offered visits to the museum for groups or individuals. She can be contacted for further information on 9325 5911 or yall@iinet.net.au.



CAPTURING THE ENEMY

An engaging theatrical performance that'll take you on a journey back to WWI (1914) when the Department of Defence commandeered Rottnest Island for use as an internment and Prisoner of War camp and a supporting photographic exhibition will finish on Rottnest Island in August

Check the Rottnest Island website for details.

<http://www.rottnestisland.com/events/rottnest-after-dark-series-2014>



OFFICIALDOM AND CONVICTISM (PART ONE)

Peter Conole

Despite copious discussion of the WA convict system, any claim there is a 'consensus view' or 'dominant paradigm' about the subject should be rejected. The focus in this brief series is on certain controversies about convictism as they evolved in colonial times. Discussion is worthwhile because the creation of the

Convict Establishment soon reshaped and re-directed Fremantle forever. In January 1846 a petition organised by W.S. Stockley, manager of a local firm, pleaded for the introduction of convict labour into Western Australia. It reached the Secretary of State for the Colonies in London via the Governor. The memorial included various arguments in favour of such a system, but the key elements focussed on the need to develop public works and related infrastructure to achieve long term benefits.

The petition was published in the *Perth Gazette* of January 2, 1847, possibly to test local opinion. The most senior representatives of the Crown came to fairly firm positions and stated them bluntly. Governor Andrew Clarke wrote and forwarded a despatch to London on the same day stating his belief that most colonists were opposed to the request for convicts.

Clarke's successor Acting Governor Frederick Irwin, unfairly labelled as a martinet of a man in assorted works, was even more vehement in presenting the negative case. The *Perth Gazette* of June 5, 1847 reported his hostility as expressed in an opening address to the Legislative Council. He was to a large degree influenced by the efforts other colonies were making to end their own convict systems. He asked WA folk to remember their eastern brethren were 'struggling to free themselves from this system as from a pestilence'. Furthermore Irwin believed that if convicts were introduced the free settlers would find 'they have obtained their object at a dreadful sacrifice.'

In truth the idea of a Convict Establishment had fairly early roots in WA, but the concept was neither loved nor nourished till much later. J.S. Batty in his carefully documented history of Western Australia (published 1924) traced lobbying for the introduction of convict labour back to the year 1831. One astounding letter by an eccentric and frequently untruthful settler named R.M. Lyon claimed that 'settlers to a man have

changed their opinion since they encamped within the shores of Australia' and would readily support a petition to introduce convict labour.

Another rather shady character - the politician and coloniser Edward Gibbon Wakefield - also entered the fray on behalf of convictism in the early to mid-1830s, while Henry Labouchere claimed in the House of Commons (*Hansard: Third series, Volume 10, p507*) that WA colonists had made a successful application for convict labour in 1833. That was false and involved confusion in regard to a petition for the introduction of some by a handful of Albany people in 1834, a request that was gently pushed to one side by Governor Stirling in a letter to Thomas Spring Rice, Secretary of State for War and the Colonies. Stirling is worth quoting: 'the Petitioners cannot with propriety be complied with ...because in founding the colony of Swan River...it was an engagement that no convicts be sent here' (P.Statham-Drew, *James Stirling*, UWA Press 2003, p273).

Frederick Irwin seems to have been miffed by some of the agitation and he took certain advocates of convictism to task in his book *The State and Position of Western Australia* (London, 1835). The work is worthy of solid examination, as it was the first large-scale published description and account of the colony. Irwin dismissed Labouchere's misguided comments out of hand. He also supported Stirling by pointing out that the Albany petition received no support from settlers in other parts of the colony. The importation of convict labour then remained off the agenda for years.

However, the *Inquirer* reported that the York Agricultural Society raised the subject on April 17, 1844. The Governor of the day expressed reservations and a fresh petition never got off the ground. Press coverage remained hostile (see the *Inquirer*, July 23, 1845 and the *Perth Gazette*, July 26, 1845). From there we can safely move forward to 1847 and the aftermath of Frederick Irwin's rejection of the idea of convict importation.

To cut a long story short, there was actually a perceptible groundswell of opinion for 'trying out' a limited type of convictism. A serious economic recession and associated labour shortages were the key issues. Charles Fitzgerald, the incoming Governor of WA, was asked by the Secretary of State to inquire whether colonists would accept the importation of offenders convicted of minor offences, along with their wives and families. The men would receive tickets of leave when they arrived, enabling them to obtain varied employment. A proportion of them were expected to be artisans.



Charles Fitzgerald

There is no point in blaming Fitzgerald for what followed, as when he asked for the importation of 100 ticket-of-leave men in October 1848 he made no mention of an expansive Convict Establishment. However, in February 1849 (*Perth Gazette*, February 24, 1849) a well-attended public meeting resulted in a formal request to convert 'this colony into a regular penal settlement'. Fitzgerald was obliged to send the petition to Earl Grey (Secretary of State for the Colonies) in London. He disliked the idea himself and wrote frankly that few people 'would from choice select a convict settlement as a residence for themselves and their families'.

Many locals opposed the idea of convicts completely or believed that the London authorities would send out first offenders as part of an apprentice-style scheme. Instead an Order in Council of May 1849 converted WA into a full penal settlement obliged to receive felons of any sort. The document was not published in WA until much later (Government Gazette, November 6, 1849) and shook up many people, including officials. An assurance was given that convicts would be matched by the recruitment of equal numbers of free settlers. That particular issue became problematic later. In passing, it is worth noting that the Perth Gazette (November 9, 1849) believed the Secretary of State in London had taken advantage of Fitzgerald to the colony's detriment.

(to be continued)



FREMANTLE HISTORY CENTRE (LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTION) NEWS

Pam Hartree

A decision was made recently to change the name of the collection to the **Fremantle History Centre**. We have new signage and a new brochure to promote significant events in Fremantle's history called Fremantle Past and Present has been produced to promote the change and the collection.

The 2014 Heritage Festival and Local History Awards were successfully completed. Two events were held in the library including our ever popular Researching Your House History by historian Kristy Bizzaca. A talk about preserving and organising family photographs and documents by Franco Smargiassi was also popular. For the first time an event was held at the Meeting Place and a small group enjoyed the presentation by Pam Harris about Unlocking Fremantle's History using the Local History Collection.

A total of 22 entries for the Local History Awards were received. The winner of the published award was Steve Errington for his book about the history of the South

Fremantle Football Club called *Southerners Forever More: the Triumphs and Tribulations of South Fremantle's First Six Decades*. Second prize went to Leigh Straw and third prize to Jane Hall. Ian Darroch also received a commendation. The unpublished award was jointly won by Deborah Gare and Jessica Barratt for their papers entitled 'Divorcing Bridget Taafe : the Mad, Bad and Sad Women of Fremantle, 1850-1900' and 'Committed' respectively. In the multimedia category CUSP (Curtin University Sustainability Policy Institute), won first prize for their website Nyungar Wardan Katitjin Bidi – Derbal Nara (People's Ocean Knowledge Trail of Cockburn Sound & Districts). Second prize went to the Oral History Records Rescue Group and commendations were awarded to University of Notre Dame, School of Arts and Sciences, Fremantle Community Men's Shed and Dr Shane Burke. The awards were held at the Esplanade Hotel and entrants and invitees enjoyed the event. The winning entries can be viewed in the Fremantle History Centre and some of the entries have copies in the main library and are able to be borrowed.



Spicer Building, William St, was demolished in 1970
(Fremantle Library History Centre. ES00125)

Despite these activities taking a lot of time and organisation data continues to be added steadily to ContentDM and the collection has nearly 700 images. A current set of photographs being indexed includes images taken between 1963 and 1982 by Murray Edmonds, Deputy Town Clerk and other Council Officers of Kings Square, Queensgate, the Spicer's site and the Salvation Army Citadel. They are interesting for comparison in the context of the future planning for these sites.

Over the last few months oral history interviews have been conducted with members of the Fremantle Workers' Club as part of their 100 year celebrations. We have also interviewed Agnieszka Keira, retired City Architect and are in the process of interviewing Don Whittington.

There are always surprises working in the history centre, whether it is an interesting new fact about Fremantle's history, an amazing photograph or people with interesting lives. Late one Friday I had a visit from a gentleman named Bill who sings for the Australian Opera Company, during the conversation he offered to sing and with that he burst into operatic song and managed to wake everyone up in the workroom, he sang with a very loud and powerful voice that had to be heard to be believed. It certainly made my day!

FOR YOUR DIARY

Pub Lunch at The Nash – Sunday 24 August from 11.30. RSVP to secretary.fhs@gmail.com or 0433 844 290 by Monday 18 August.

South Fremantle Power Station Master Plan preview – Details on date and venue for the September meeting to be confirmed. Stay tuned.

Fremantle Studies Day – Victoria Hall, Sunday 19 October, 1PM – 6PM, Members \$12, non members \$15.
RSVP essential by Sunday 12 October to secretary.fhs@gmail.com or 0433 844 290

MEMBERSHIP FEES NOW DUE

PLEASE FORWARD AS SOON AS POSSIBLE OR PAY AT THE NEXT GENERAL MEETING.

Your membership fees enable us to keep the Society running and to offer the great opportunities we do. We are particularly proud we are able to offer the research scholarship as a way of celebrating our 20th anniversary. This will have a lasting legacy and make a major contribution to the understanding of and access to Fremantle's history. Your support has allowed this to happen.

To help make our money works harder, please supply email details so we can begin to cut back on mail outs.

And keep an eye on both the blog (fhs.org.au) and our Facebook page for news, snippets and conversations to join (start one of your own!).



HOMER NODS

There are times when Homer nods and gets things wrong. Such a day happened on our visit to the old Woodman Point Quarantine Station for the FHS March meeting. We reported 'there was a problem with disposing of bodies of those who died of infectious diseases; they were burned on the beach using railway sleepers as fuel; and that later cremations took place in a 'thirties crematorium'. Our guide Earle Seubert read our autumn newsletter and wrote to tell us we were wrong on several counts: that there was only one such cremation, of a plague victim; and that was near not on the beach. The fuel had been banksia and pine logs not sleepers. And the thirties crematorium was in fact first used in 1901 and was Australia's first.

Homer will be more careful in future.