



FREMANTLE HISTORY SOCIETY

Established 1994

The Secretary, PO Box 1305
FREMANTLE WA 6959

Summer Edition, 2016

Editors: Ron Davidson, Anne Brake, Dianne Davidson



Community members furthering the cause of history and heritage
(Courtesy Josh Wilson)

HISTORY AND HERITAGE HAILED BY THE COMMUNITY

Ron Davidson

Members may have seen this scene outside the Fremantle Town Hall on December 7th and wondered what the group was and what was happening. There was the Mayor and his deputy and Ron Davidson from our Fremantle History Society; Henty Farrar from the Fremantle Society and lots more. How many faces can you recognise? This was the first formal meeting of the Fremantle City Council's History and Heritage Committee and it comprised council officers and community group representatives. The City will take on the administrative and media functions of the group of 25. It is thought that the committee will allow the improved co-ordination and promotion of Fremantle's history and heritage. An example of how this might happen came at the meeting when it was decided to keep a running calendar of events so that clashes are avoided.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Executive:

Prof Bob Reece (President) 9335 7892

Steve Errington (Vice President) 9367 5504

Pam Harris (Secretary) 9432 9739(W)

Anne Brake (Treasurer) 9336 5206

Committee Members:

Fay Campbell 9341 4102

Jenny Patterson 9438 3711

Cathy Hall 0407 086 300

Peter Conole 9319 2191

Ron Davidson 9430 6096

Jennifer Dudley

General meetings are generally 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.**

We are always looking for ideas for meetings and encourage you to contact committee members with suggestions for places to visit or learn about.



COMING EVENTS

FREMANTLE PORTS

Ainslie De Vos from Fremantle Ports will take us on an interesting tour of their administration building, for the Fremantle History Society's monthly meeting on February 23rd. The tour will begin on the ground floor where there is a model of the Orient liner and later troop ship, *Orford*, which had close contact with Fremantle. There is also the Howard Taylor glass tile mosaic *Portunas*. Portunus was the Roman god of port and harbours and the blue swimmer crab.

On the first floor another Howard Taylor piece will be noted, *Eastern Mural*. The building has a strong history and many interesting features. We will also see B shed, the passenger terminal and look over the port at dusk from the observation deck.

It is difficult to predict what one will see: sometimes seabirds hunting, dolphins cavorting, or a cargo ship leaving so close to the windows it could almost be touched. There is endless variety on this visit. Not to be missed.

Join members and friends after the tour at Fishing Boat harbour for an informal dinner (at your own expense).

Tuesday 23 February. Meet at the front of the Port Authority building at 5.15pm for a 5.30pm start.

NO LATE COMERS PLEASE.

EARLY RELIGIOUS WORSHIP IN FREMANTLE

Our March meeting will be presented by Steve Errington who will explore early religious worship in Fremantle. Although Fremantle had a gaol built within eighteen months of settlement it took thirteen years to build a church. And even then it took the promise of government subsidies to get things started. Surprisingly, the first wasn't an Anglican church, the religious denomination of three-quarters of the population. The 1835 court house, built on the south side of the Round House, was used in turn by each congregation until they built their own church. It hosted Anglican, Wesleyan, Catholic, Presbyterians and Congregationalist services.

The arrival of convicts and their guards boosted the population, altered the religious make-up of the town and produced the second phase of church-building in the 1850s. The gold boom inspired the third and final phase which saw the erection of Church of Christ and Baptist chapels. By 1900 there were seven churches or chapels and a synagogue within the present town boundaries. Of these, five remain open for Sunday morning services.

Thursday (PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF DAY), 24 March 2016. 6 pm. City of Fremantle Reception Room – enter from Kings Square steps.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CONVICTS?

Join Prof Bob Reece and local historian Wendy Markmann at our April meeting. Bob and Wendy will provide details on the final resting place for convicts who worked in the Fremantle area.

Were they buried within the confines of the prison or was it at the Skinner Street Cemetery? The site of Skinner Street cemetery is now the playing fields at the John Curtin College of the Arts and adjacent to the Arts Centre where the talk will be held..

Tuesday 26 April starting at 6pm in the Matthew Pavlich Room, Fremantle Arts Centre, Finnerty St, Fremantle.



MEETING REPORTS

CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Around 30 of us enjoyed our Christmas get together at the George Street Quarter. A number of fans were set up to combat the warm weather as many a furrowed brow hunched over the historic photos trying to work out just what they were of or where they were taken.



Joining forces to identify photos

We have some of the photos on page 4 for those who weren't able to make the lunch – answers on page 10. Alison Bauer was our winner, although I think there may be a few who aren't convinced of the identification

of some places. Let us know over the coming newsletters, as the pictures appear,

if you have any stories about any of the properties or have good reason to doubt the answers. This will help enrich the Fremantle History Centre collection.



WORKING LIFE AT THE BASE HOSPITAL, FREMANTLE

Peter Conole

Medical practitioners, orderlies, stretcher-bearers and nurses served overseas with the 1st AIF from 1915 onwards but they did not work in a vacuum. Many soldiers were sent home in a very battered state and received extended treatment and care in their homeland. The first port of call for thousands was Fremantle and the No 8 Australian General Hospital on our port town's South Terrace. It was commonly referred to as the Base Hospital.

Journalists got a nasty shock when they checked out the condition of the first 500 men who returned on the hospital ship *Kyara* in July 1915: "beds of disabled, feverish, bandaged and shell-shocked survivors were stacked from floor to ceiling". Worse was to follow week after week and the newspaper headline "Another hospital ship arrives" must have become monotonous (see Gare, D. and Lloyd-Jones, M. *When War came to Fremantle, 1899-1845*. Fremantle Press, 2014, pp36-40)

What was life and labour like for the care givers? We do have at least one first-hand account of the best and worst of it. Mrs Joan Quartermaine did WA and the nation an enormous favour two decades ago when she decided to sort out and publish a large collection of family letters (*Boans to the Battlefields*, printed by Victoria Park Copy Centre, 1995). They were those of her aunt Geraldine Rice (*nee* Howlett) and all of them were written to her by admiring and hopeful young men. They worked with Geraldine in Boans Brothers, a major Perth business firm at the time.

From 1914 onwards many Boans men left WA to fight in the Great War. Some took a one-way journey to the Front. However, for our purpose only a single story will count. It is that of Geraldine's ardent young beau Edward Ceil (generally known as Ceil) Rice, the most articulate, witty and passionate of her correspondents. He and other soldier admirers called her Gell.

In November 1917 she won the competition for Boans 'most popular lady'. Ceil Rice was hanging out for news of the result in some French battlefield hellhole: "aching all over with the cold, its a cow" (letter of Ceil Rice to Gell, December 18, 1917). There were winter delays in getting letters from Gell; he received none at Christmas time or for New Years Eve and a parcel she sent went missing.

News finally arrived in February 1918 when one of Ceil's mates managed to obtain a letter and a copy of the *Sunday Times* and passed them on to Ceil. Another of Gell's friends from Boans, Lance Corporal Private Jack Tindall of the 28th Battalion, also found out that way and stated the obvious in one of his letters: "Well Gell who is the favourite now, is it still Ricey?" (letter of Jack Tindall, February 2, 1918).

Ceil Rice arrived late on the Western Front by a rather round-about way that makes for quite a story. Back in 1915 tales of both heroism and horror reached the WA community from Gallipoli. As previously discussed local authorities - especially medicos - knew what to expect and set-up the Base Hospital in Fremantle. The place required staff of all kinds. There was never a shortage of volunteers.

Ceil left Boans and began work as an orderly at the Base Hospital on August 18, 1915. He wrote to his Gell twice on the same day, in between hectic bouts of duty. He was to work 12-hour day shifts, sometimes including night service, but did get some leave: "12 hours a week, but I think you must take it all at once" (second letter of August 18, 1915). The pay was

acceptable to Ceil: "you know we only get five shillings a day but you don't spend much more than ten shillings a week" (letter of September 9, 1915).

The work of an orderly could mean almost anything and it can be assumed that a high proportion of the young men involved already had some first aid training. The legendary Sergeant John Smith of Perth Police Station ran many first aid courses well before war broke out. About 800 of his 'graduates' became the bedrock of the Australian Army Medical Corps (AAMC) in the conflict. Ceil Rice may well have taken a course or two but he does not say so.

On August 28 Ceil wrote that soldiers about to leave for the front were not allowed to visit "as there are a lot of diseases on board and they are frightened of it spreading in the hospital". His letters give us a very explicit understanding of working life at the base hospital. Ceil 'humped' wood and stones, scrubbed and wiped dishes in the kitchens, cleaned windows, washed, dried and dressed helpless patients, took their temperatures and did bed pan duty.

He also carefully boiled and cleaned surgical instruments and made sure the operating rooms remained in a sterile, pristine condition. The risk of catching an infectious disease was obvious to all - and ten times more dangerous in an age when antibiotics had not even been thought of, let alone invented. As Ceil noted "There is a terrible lot of sick here. I hope I am not the next though honestly I do not feel too good..." (letter of August 29, 1915). Ceil was alright - he remained in robust health. (to be continued...)



FREMANTLE; BEGINNING OF PEACE

Sabrina L. Bednarski

Many people are aware that Melbourne and Sydney were the main ports for receiving European displaced persons (DPs) following the Second World War. Some may not know

that Fremantle was also one of those ports. While fewer numbers disembarked here, the city was intimately involved in one of the most significant periods of immigration history. It is also a credit to Fremantle City Council that it supported the Polish Relief Committee as early as February 1940. The International Refugee Organisation (IRO) sponsored almost 200,000 DPs to resettle in Australia between 1945 and 1954.

Fremantle welcomed twenty-five of the IRO ships carrying DPs from German and Italian assembly camps. Thousands of them were Polish, like my paternal grandparents – Feliksa Smolińska and Jan Bednarski. During WWII, Nazi Germany sought to unequivocally destroy Poland and its people. The destruction of the state left Poles vulnerable, outside the law, and utterly without hope. It was within this context that almost three million Polish-Jews were systematically murdered – mostly in mass shootings. Between two and three million Poles were abducted and enslaved in Germany. Millions more were displaced as that catastrophic war was fought on their land.



Jan Bednarski and Feliksa Smolińska
Courtesy S Bednarski

The 8th of May 1945 was the end of war but not the beginning of peace for about thirty million DPs. Many Poles, as well as others, could not return to their homeland. My grandparents spent the next five years in DP camps throughout Germany and Italy before they arrived in Melbourne in 1950.

November 1947 saw Fremantle's first arrival of DPs on board the *General Stuart Heinzelman*. After six years of war, two years in IRO camps, and a month long voyage at sea, these people could now begin their peace.

For thousands of Polish survivors of war, Fremantle was their first sight of Australian land. How did the dry grass, naked hills, and iron warehouses compare to the bright green countryside and centuries old streets and buildings of Europe? Perhaps they were just pleased to see places completely without the scars of warfare. The 'New Australians' were given tea and oranges at the docks before being processed in the customs shed at Victoria Quay. Most of them did not speak English, the lingua franca of the war having been German.

For six years the people of central Europe were stripped of their humanity, security, and peace. Many DPs chose to come to Australia because it was as far as they could physically get from Europe. By some accounts, arriving at Fremantle was a jarring experience; one fraught with anxiety and culture shock. For others it inspired a sense of wonder and anticipation, like explorers eyeing off a new continent. Upon revisiting the Fremantle docks in their later years, it is hoped that the prevailing sensation was one of pride. Pride in themselves for their success, pride in their heritage, and in their Australian lives. This country would not be the same without them.



FREMANTLE HISTORY CENTRE

Pam Harris

History Centre staff continue to make information available online. Recently work has been commenced to enable access to the index of street names for Fremantle and East Fremantle and a historical list of past mayors and councillors has also been created. Other achievements include the indexing of the Murray Edmonds slides. These slides were digitised previously and

are now available online. Murray Edmonds was Assistant or Deputy Town Clerk at Fremantle City Council from 1966 to 1974 and he and other Council officers took these photographs between 1963 and 1982. They are valuable as they show buildings before demolition or development. Similarly, a large collection of photographs and papers donated by Les Lauder relating to his involvement with the Fremantle Society from its inception in 1972 were organised. The collection includes many photographs of significant buildings taken in the early 1970s and they are also valuable in terms of indicating change in the last 40 years

The collection relating to Druid organisations in Fremantle has also been assessed and will be indexed and to the collection in the near future. Other donations include photographs from the Waghorn family and a set of cartoon postcards relating to Fremantle, probably published around the time of the Second World War, which were found on a property verge as part of the City's bulk waste collection program. Although not politically correct by today's standards they certainly reflect the fashion in postcards at the time.

Preparations for the 2016 Heritage Festival, which will be held between the 27th May to the 6th of June, has commenced. History centre staff is working with the Festival's team to coordinate events for the festival including a project using extracts from the oral history collection. The Local History Awards will be held this year as it is now a biennial event. The call for entries has been publicised and the entries close on 1st April 2016.

The History Centre continues to assist the Fremantle History Centre in the Deckchair Theatre archive project. The 2014 Community Heritage Grant has been acquitted and a comprehensive significance assessment has been completed by consultant Kris Bizzaca. The significance assessment will assist the Fremantle History Society in making decisions regarding the future of the archives.



HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW FREQ?

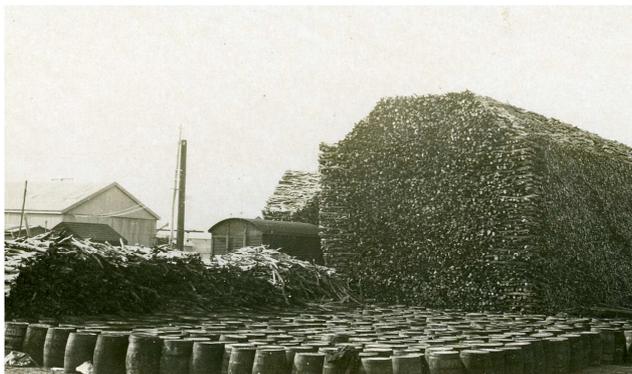
The quiz at last year's Christmas Party involved recognizing people, places and events in photographs from the Fremantle History Centre Collection. Try your luck over the next few newsletters as we test your knowledge, and your memory.
(answers pg 9)



Where is this?



What is this building used for now?



What is the valuable export?



STATE LISTING FOR THE WEST END OF FREMANTLE

The State Heritage Office's executive officer, Graeme Gammie, made a particular tribute to the Fremantle community when he announced the sending of 400 letters to landowners, tenants and others saying it intended to place the historic West End on the State Heritage list. He said the Fremantle community had worked tirelessly to protect the area over 50 years. The area is bounded by Market and Collie Streets and the railway line from Bathers' Beach to the Station.

This will be the biggest heritage project undertaken by the Heritage Office and will provide new protection for the architecture and culture of the area. Mr Gammie described the move as "a no brainer" because the West End had such an important story to tell of the State's early history and development. It includes 250 buildings and stretches over 200,000 square metres.

The Fremantle City Council recommended the listing process which started when Fremantle City Council thought about World Heritage listing for the city in the 1970s. The changes to Commonwealth Heritage legislation all but ruled this out. A long and protracted process of determining the boundaries of the West End included the establishment of the West End Working group and the commissioning of a report on a proposed boundary.

Our sister community group, the Fremantle Society, has maintained an interest in Fremantle listing and recently society president, John Dowson, criticised the fact that the council had ignored the recommendation of its own committee, to increase the size of the "West End". John thought Kings Square and the Prison should be included. Mr Gammie said the Heritage Council has done its own study and come

up with the same boundaries as Fremantle City proposed to the Heritage Council.

John Dowson's letter below outlines his views on the proposed boundary as the President of the Fremantle Society. The FHS Committee will consider the proposal in the coming weeks. There is the opportunity to comment on the proposed listing and its boundary. Further details, including a map of the proposed registration is at <http://www.stateheritage.wa.gov.au/state-heritage-register/fremantle-west-end> . Enquiries can be sent to westend@stateheritage.wa.gov.au

Heritage Listing of the 'West End'

Fremantle's heritage is a key economic asset that requires proper appreciation.

The proposed listing of the area west of Market Street by the State Heritage Office as a 'place' shows a failure of Fremantle Council to follow the expert advice of its own committee which was set up in 2009 to progress the protection for the West End Conservation Area as defined in policies going back 26 years.

The West End Committee recommended that the area to be listed be the whole of the West End Conservation Area which includes King's Square and the World Heritage Listed Prison, along with Fremantle Railway Station. At the time that recommendation had State Heritage Office support.

Fremantle Council have chopped that area in half and put at risk the future of what is Fremantle's greatest economic asset- its heritage.

Listing only half of what the experts recommend is like putting half a roof on your house.

The Fremantle Society wants the proposed area to be expanded to cover the West End Conservation Area as gazetted along with the Railway Station and thus have resolved to ask the State Heritage Office to review the current process.

Heritage Listing by the State Heritage Office

gives recognition to places and allows more places to apply for a grant from a meagre pool of money available.

While heritage listing shows the importance of a place, it matters little if the State Heritage Office are weak and do not support the heritage values ascribed. State Heritage Office weakness was shown when they approved the overscaled ING proposal for Victoria Quay despite the area being listed by them as a heritage precinct since 1999. That development did not proceed for financial reasons. State Heritage Office weakness was also shown when they raised no objections to disastrously insensitive developments now going up at Atwell Arcade and 8 Pakenhman Street in the West End Conservation Area.

The Fremantle Society will not stand by and see our future prosperity damaged by a lack of safeguards for the valuable heritage of our city centre.

*John Dowson
President, Fremantle Society*



GRILL'D – LOCAL MATTERS



Pam Harris received a cheque for \$100 from Grill'd. We thank them for their community spirit.

Grill'd in South Terrace Fremantle is part of a franchise chain of restaurants selling various types of hamburgers. Last year the company approached the History Society to see if we wanted to be involved in their Local Matters charity program. Essentially they provide an amount of \$500 each month

and it is shared amongst three community organisations. These are chosen using a voting system in which the customers are given a token to vote for the organisation they consider is most worthwhile.

Although the Fremantle History Society didn't receive the highest votes we did receive a donation of \$100 from Grill'd for participating in the program. It is good to see businesses promoting local organisations and the money will assist in providing our newsletter and other events.



The following piece was submitted by Rusty Christensen and so beautifully captures his love of and gift for storytelling. As with Peter's piece, you will be able to read this piece across 2 editions of the newsletter.

After much thought, this is an historic piece about an old iconic Fremantle institution called UGLIELAND which was razed circa 1950 so it is now long gone and has been replaced by Pioneer Park. The writer does not know which pioneers it commemorates but its position would suggest a lot of working class men (and women) for it's proximity to the wharf and its environs, the overseas shipping terminal from where many migrants or 'New Australians' and their families entered the 'Promised Land' it is also straight across the road from the railway station and what was in the era of tams in Fremantle, the terminus.

The title is "Did you know?"

Two men are standing on the site and one says to the other "Did you know that where we are standing was once known as Uglieland?" "No Blues," said his companion. "And did you know that the Fremantle Railway Station was down at the end of Cliff St until it was shifted up here in 1905?" "No I didn't know that either Blue. There're lots of things I don't know about this town." Fred responded, "You grew up in this place Blue,

so tell me about this Uglieland; did you have to be ugly to get in to the place?" "No Fred, very few that I ever met knew much about its origins apart from being founded and built after World War 1 to raise funds for returned wounded and shell shocked ex-servicemen and I don't know if the Ugly Men's Association even existed before then."

Blue continues, "the site itself has a history. There have been some digs recently which uncovered the foundations of some houses and shops on it but of course they had been buried by the landfill that most of Fremantle has had, bearing in mind that in its original untouched state Fremantle was no more than a swampy limestone peninsular that has had to be built up over the years". "That's most interesting Blue, but what about Uglieland itself?" Fred responded, "Yeah, I'm sorry about all that but when I get talking about old Freo I kind of lose my place. Actually the building itself wasn't a thing of architectural beauty; the perimeter was surrounded by a high (over 4 metres) timber framed fence clad with flat iron which, as the fence became older, became loose in the winter gales and flapped around in the breeze, creating quite a hazard until they were refastened to the fence!"

I was but a wee lad when I went in there one evening with my father and, as I recall, for a lad of a tender age it was an experience that has stayed with me all of those years. It was something like a boxing tent at the Royal Show only larger. There was a spruiking bloke up on a platform and another one banging a big drum out the front of the boxing area which, along with wrestling and the many side shows and dim lights, was the impression of Uglieland that I was left with." (to be continued...)



Grant Opportunity - Stronger Communities Grants - Round Two Now Open

The Office of Melissa Parke MP now invites eligible groups across the federal electorate of Fremantle to lodge Expressions of

Interest (EOI) for Stronger Communities Funding – Round Two.

The grants are provided through the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development and coordinated by the member of Federal Parliament in each electorate. A total of \$150,000 is available in each electorate for this round.

- grants range from \$5,000 to \$20,000 for small capital projects that deliver social benefits by improving local community participation and cohesion and/or contributing to a vibrant + viable community;
- must demonstrate matching funds or in-kind support on at least a \$1-for-\$1 basis; +
- must be an incorporated not-for-profit organisation or a local government authority.

Detailed information is available at <http://investment.infrastructure.gov.au/funding/scp/>

If you choose to advance a project for consideration, please submit your EOI to kath.longley@aph.gov.au by close of business on Monday 29 February 2016.

In accordance with government requirements, the Fremantle electorate's consultation panel will conduct a preliminary assessment of EOIs and invite selected applicants to lodge formal online applications.



FEBRUARY – Fremantle Ports – Tues 23 February, 5.15pm, Fremantle Ports, Vic Quay
March – Religious worship in Fremantle, Steve Errington, **THURSDAY** 26 March, City of Fremantle Reception Rooms,
APRIL – What happened to the convicts, Prof Bob Reece, Wendy Markman, Tues 26 April, Fremantle Arts Centre

Photo Quiz Answers:

- 1 Broom handles - Fremantle Brush Factory
- 2 The Left bank Bar and Café
- 3 Sandalwood