



## FREMANTLE HISTORY SOCIETY

Established 1994

The Secretary, PO Box 1305  
FREMANTLE WA 6959

Winter Edition, 2018

<https://fhs.org.au>



A much quieter scene 7 years after soldiers were welcomed home.  
Fremantle Oval, 1925, Fremantle History Centre, 1174C

### MARKING THE END OF FIGHTING IN WORLD WAR 1 - FREMANTLE

Papers at this year's Fremantle Studies Day will mark the end of fighting in the First World War and investigate the implications of this for the town of Fremantle. Studies Day will be held in the City of Fremantle Library's theatre adjacent to the Fremantle Oval. It is a fitting place to hear these stories, as the very first returned soldiers were brought to the oval to be feted and cheered by a grateful and relieved Fremantle public. The following article from the *Sunday Times* sets that scene:

*Sunday Times* 17 November, 1918 p2

*Not all the rejoicing during the week over the signing of the armistice and the wonderful deeds of the Allies that ended in victory, nor the intense demonstrations of thanksgiving and gratitude to the army of Australia, had exhausted the great treasure house of pride for the Boys of the Old Brigade. There was still an abundant reserve with which to greet the original Anzacs – the boys who fought through the Gallipoli campaign and when that terminated went on to France and Flanders to hold the Hun dragon in check. These men had been in the great conflict for nearly*

*four years, and must have fought in many battles. As we looked at them still undaunted, browned and burnt, with the strain of four years war on their tanned faces, the thought was insistent – ‘How often they must have ‘hopped over’ in the face of a hail of lead and iron! To come through it all, to be alive – what a miracle!’.*

*As the transport by which they came did not touch at South Africa there was no quarantine for these 800 Anzacs, and so they were free to land at Fremantle and feel once more the soil of ‘Aussie’ under their tired feet. They really are only on furlough, for they were to return to France, but the defeat of the Germans and the termination of the war has altered all that. They are home again for good and their fighting days are done – for ever.*

*On Friday morning bronzed veterans were paraded ashore at Fremantle and marched to the local Oval through crowds of cheering people. There was a contingent of 100 WA men on board but they were so anxious to meet and embrace their relatives that they were allowed to escape the public welcomes, and their desire can be well appreciated by all who have ever wandered afar and for long. They were soon spirited away to their homes. On the Oval the people of Fremantle gave the returned men a royal welcome that made them feel that once more they were amongst their own kin. The Mayor made a happy speech, in which he welcomed them back to the land of their birth or adoption. They were regaled and feted and cheered and pelted with confetti.*



At the recent annual general meeting the following committee members were elected. There are a few spaces still available on the executive and the committee. Anyone interested in coming onto the committee please contact one of the members noted below.

## **COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Executive:

Allen Graham (President)	0412 933 360
Pam Harris (Secretary)	0408 092 100

Committee Members:

Fay Campbell	0419 969 678
Cathy Hall	0407 086 300
Prof Bob Reece	9335 7892
Michelle McKeough	0419 043 217
Anne Brake	0438 445 141

Ordinary meetings are generally held on the 4th Tuesday (or Sunday) of the month. Details of these meetings can be found in your newsletter.

**Be sure to check details as meeting days and times may vary.**



## **COMING EVENTS**

AUGUST

Traditionally we have a pub lunch in August, but we moved that to February this year in order to support the newly re-opened Australia Hotel. So instead we are heading to the Mission for Seafarers.

Over the years the Mission has sought to help seafarers in all kinds of practical ways.

They are away from their families for long periods and may face loneliness and ill-health or injury. The welcome from the MTS Chaplains and volunteers may be the only onshore hospitality they receive.

Join Revd Canon Dennis Claughton as he tells us something of the work of this important Fremantle institution including stories of people who travel in and out of our port city as part of their seafaring journey.

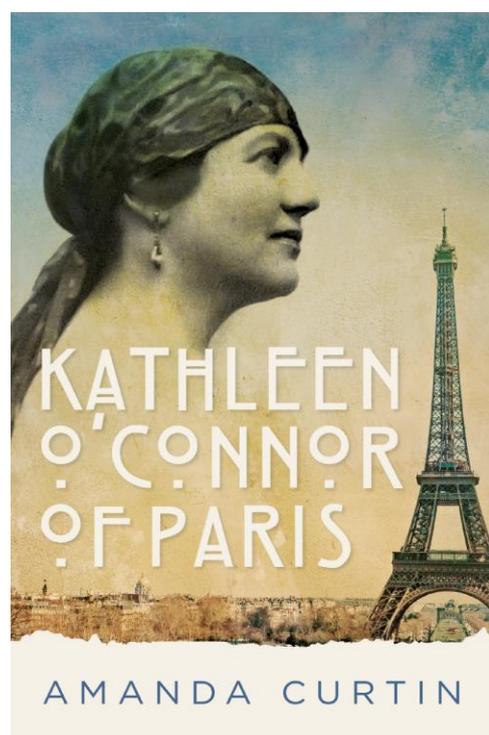
**Flying Angel Club, 76 Queen Victoria St, Fremantle, Tuesday 28 August, 6.00pm.**  
Revd Claughton's talk will be followed by the usual conviviality – cash bar operates.

## SEPTEMBER

**Being there – Kathleen O'Connor in Paris**  
Sunday 23 September, 2.30pm, Fremantle Arts Centre

Join exhibition curator Andre Lipscombe for a guided tour of the important exhibition *Being there - Kathleen O'Connor in Paris*. The exhibition commemorates the fiftieth anniversary of the death of artist Kathleen O'Connor (1876-1968). O'Connor, daughter of CY O'Connor, was born in New Zealand and came to Western Australia with her family in 1891. Stifled by conservative WA she established her career in Paris where she settled and embraced the bohemian lifestyle in the artists' quarter in 1908.

This exhibition brings together for the first time recent acquisitions, private loans and the entire holding of drawings and paintings in the City of Fremantle Art Collection, the largest holding of the artist's work in a public collection in Australia.



To coincide with the exhibition a historical novel by Amanda Curtin titled *Kathleen O'Connor of Paris* and published by Fremantle Press, will be launched. Look out for author's talks.

Join us at the **Fremantle Arts Centre** on **Sunday 23 September** at **2.30pm**. Andre's tour will be followed by afternoon tea.

## OCTOBER

### FREMANTLE STUDIES DAY

This year's Fremantle Studies Day marks the centenary of the end of fighting in the First World War. Germany formally surrendered on 11 November, 1918, and all nations agreed to stop fighting while the terms of peace were negotiated. It wasn't until June 28, 1919, when Germany and the Allied Nations (including Britain, France, Italy and Russia) signed the Treaty of Versailles that the war formally ended.

The war was both universal and personal. Stories abound of the impact it had on nations, communities and families. Our 2018 Studies Day explores some of these. Papers will include:

**Dr Leigh Straw:** *The Suffering Begins: Returned Soldiers, families and the aftermath of World War 1 in Western Australia*

**Allen Graham:** *The Fremantle hotel trade during World War One*

**Baden Pratt:** *Hell for Leather: North Fremantle Football club and the Great War*

**Dr Michelle McKeough:** *Repatriation: A debt of Gratitude*

**City of Fremantle Library Theatre,**  
**Sunday 28 October, 1.00 – 5.00pm.**  
**Members \$15, Non-members \$20.**  
**Afternoon tea included.**



## MEETING REPORTS

### Robyn Mck Campbell (1934-2017) (May)

Although it was a wet old evening, around 40 members turned out to honour Robyn Campbell at the Fremantle Arts Centre at our May meeting. Rob's long time business partner Ingrid Van Bremen gave a richly detailed account of the life of a man whose dedication could not be questioned but who sometimes did not see eye to eye with those around him. The legacy of his passion and dedication is all around us in the heritage fabric of Fremantle through his own work and those who he inspired, taught and mentored.

Prof Carmen Lawrence did the honours in 'unveiling' from the relative dry of the stage, the commemorative plaque which has been installed in the courtyard at the Arts Centre. President Bob Reece was the driver for the commemoration and bringing both the City of Fremantle and the Fremantle Society on board to fund the fabrication and installation of the plaque.

A small exhibition by Ingrid of Rob's work was also on show.

### Princess May School (June)

Despite the wet and cold weather a group of around 30 members enjoyed an informative visit to the former Princess May School in Parry Street Fremantle. Visitors enjoyed a tour of the building with its well-worn jarrah staircase and amazingly high ceilings. The building has been adapted to suit its new use as the Fremantle Education Centre but still retains its character as a fine example of a turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century school. Thanks to Fay Campbell who provided an informative and entertaining talk about the early history of the school. Former students who attended spoke about their memories which added colour and humour to the talk.

Di Watts, CEO of the Fremantle Education Centre (FEC) also spoke about the development of the Education Centre and

the following from their website provides an overview of their mission and vision. "FEC is a not for profit organisation returning all our resources to the community. The Centre helps organisations and individuals to focus on their future needs and aspirations. We provide consultancy services for an eclectic array of local, national and international programs that support and improve learning. Our vision is to alleviate poverty and helplessness through being recognised as a community leader in nurturing individuals to reach their potential. Our mission is to empower individuals to contribute to community and quality of life" See <http://fec.org.au> for more information.

The group then moved on to Clancy's Fish Pub for refreshments. It should be noted that Clancy's was previously part of Princess May School, it was the domestic science building. It is good to see it is still serving a similar purpose in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



Fay Campbell at the Princess May School visit (P Harris)

### AGM and Kings Square Revealed Revisited (July)

Twenty members, their friends and guests attended this year's AGM. Bob Reece's President's Report, included in this edition of the newsletter, provided details of the Society's activities over the last 12 months. The committee are an active bunch and are always pleased with the support given by members.

A special resolution to update the FHS constitution was passed to bring it in line with legislative change. The new version will be registered accordingly.

The formalities were followed by a fascinating talk by Fiona Hook whose company, Archae-Aus, undertook the archaeological digs in Kings Square and Newman Court associated with the redevelopment of the Council buildings. Several areas were excavated including the site of the original St John's Church, a hall and adjacent newsagency near the corner of Newman Court and Queen St and the site of a blacksmith's shop and the Centenary Building both on the corner of Newman Crt and William Street.

As well the evidence determined from the excavations the team also undertook extensive historic research using documents, newspaper articles and photographs to help piece together the history of the area.

It is hoped some of the footings from the original church may eventually be revealed and interpreted as part of the redevelopment project.



Everyone enjoyed drinks and nibbles following Fiona's talk.



## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT, AGM 24 JULY 2018**

**Bob Reece**

Last year's Annual General Meeting of the Fremantle History Society was held on 26 July at the City of Fremantle Reception Rooms and was attended by about twenty-five Society members. After the formal business was completed, Dr Lenore Layman gave a lively presentation on community history and its value. The membership of the Committee changed with Allen Graham being elected Vice-President in place of Steve Errington and former City of Fremantle Councillor Rob Fittock elected as a member. Anne Brake and Pam Harris continued as Secretary and Treasurer respectively. A serious accident to Anne's arm made her work doubly difficult and we salute her determination and spirit in pressing on. Dianne and Ron Davidson continued to make a valued contribution to the Society's work, despite health and relocation issues. They would be delighted to be visited by members at Regis in Harvest Rd, North Fremantle.

Monthly Committee meetings were held from 5.30 pm every second Tuesday of the month, first at the Fremantle History Centre, by courtesy of Fremantle City Council and Local History Librarian, Pam Harris, and later in the year at the Library's temporary offices at what had previously been the Fremantle Dockers club rooms. The 10 April Committee meeting was held at Anne Brake's home in North Fremantle.

I would like to thank the Committee for their work over the last year, which produced such good outcomes. In particular, I want to mention Greg Luke and Cathy Hall who took on the daunting task of revising the FHS rules as required under Western Australian government legislation.

### **General Meetings**

The monthly general meetings for members organised by the committee were as varied as ever, commencing in September 2017 with a fascinating tour of the impeccably

restored Dalgety's Building on the corner of High and Cliff Sts., arranged by Greg Luke.

At the February 2018 lunch meeting, which was to have been held at the Australia Hotel, Allen Graham gave an impromptu talk there instead on Fremantle pubs before we moved to Clancy's nearby for lunch.

At the April meeting, members met at the Atwell Arcade and were addressed by City of Fremantle Heritage Officer, Alan Kelsall, on the history of heritage and development in Fremantle since the late 19th century. This was followed by developer, Gerard O'Brien, who outlined his concept of the City's future to an interested audience. Members then adjourned to nearby Culley's tearooms where there was further discussion over refreshments.

May saw the Society pay tribute to Arts Centre conservation architect Rob McK Campbell whose premature death in October 2017 brought to an untimely end a stellar career guiding Fremantle through a crucial period of heritage appreciation and conservation. On a stormy night in Fremantle, his professional partner architect, Ingrid Van Bremen, launched an exhibition of his original Arts Centre drawings inside the Arts Centre and Professor Carmen Lawrence unveiled a commemorative bronze plaque testifying to Rob's outstanding work on its conservation. The occasion was a good instance of close co-operation between the City of Fremantle, the Fremantle Society and the Fremantle History Society, each of whom contributed to the cost of the plaque.

Finally in June, Committee member Fay Campbell gave a talk on Princess May School and Di Watts spoke about its current use.

### **Fremantle Studies Day**

This red-letter event in the Society's calendar was held at the Fremantle Army Museum Auditorium in Burt St on the afternoon of 28 October 2017 and focused on cultural institutions which have given

Fremantle its reputation as a centre for the arts in Western Australia. Papers were given by Jane Fraser (Fremantle Press), Pam Harris (City of Fremantle Library), Sheridan Coleman (Fremantle Arts Centre) and my own paper on Fremantle cultural institutions in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Newsletter**

During the year, the editorial team consisting of Ron Davidson, Anne Brake and Dianne Davidson brought out four issues of the *Newsletter*. More contributions from members were strongly encouraged and it was decided to continue sending the *Newsletter* out in the post to members without internet facilities. Heather Campbell has been doing great work in mining Fremantle's old newspapers with the assistance of the NLA's Trove programme.

### **Fremantle Studies**

The 9<sup>th</sup> volume of *Fremantle Studies* was launched at the AGM by Dr Lenore Layman. It contains the papers given at Fremantle Studies Day in 2013 and 2014, expertly edited by Anne Brake and her hard-working team including Heather Campbell and Pam Harris.

### **Deck Chair Theatre Archive**

Pam Harris, Anne Brake and Cathy Hall continued their sorting of this unique collection of records, temporarily stored at what was Woolworth's in Adelaide St until a professional archival listing is done and a permanent home is found for them.

### **Public Role**

The History Society continued to take a firm public stand on issues relating to history and heritage in Fremantle, notably the ultimately successful efforts by Sunset Events to develop a tavern-cum-restaurant at J Shed, Bathers' Beach within the Arthur Head A Class Reserve, albeit on a slightly more modest scale than planned.

### **Social Functions**

Our Christmas event in November was a tour of rarely-opened Samson House and its fascinating time-capsule of contents,

introduced by a talk on the gardens by expert, John Viska, and followed by drinks and nibbles on the verandah framed by massive Norfolk Island pines.

### **Life Memberships**

Pursuing our policy of acknowledging members who have made outstanding contributions to the work of the Society, the Committee nominated David Hutchison as last year's recipient, the citation being read by Steve Errington at the 2017 AGM. Unfortunately, David passed away later in the year after a long illness but his name will always remain associated with Fremantle's history.

Vale, David.



### **THE GREAT WAR**

**Dr Michelle McKeough**

We will be marking the end of the Great War at our studies day in October. But as the newsletter is an August issue, it might serve to visit the beginning of the war, in August 1914.

When war was declared in Europe on 6 August 1914 there was, as we can imagine, an immediate reaction in Fremantle. Reserves were mobilized and there was a rush to enlist. At the first Municipal Council meeting after the declaration of war, held on 12 August 1914, the councillors voted to send a 'formal resolution of support to the King', and according to the historian JK Ewers, this vote was 'carried with acclamation and the singing of the national anthem'.

A similar endorsement was made at a large meeting of the Trades Hall Association on 18 August 1914. There, the workers of Fremantle voted as a body that the Association 'affirms its loyalty to Australia and to the British Empire' and expressed their view that they had 'the patriotic duty of defending their country during the present crisis'. Frank Rowe, the secretary of the

Lumpers Union, told the meeting that already, 'over 200 members of his union had applied to go and fight for their country'.

By September there was a profusion of military men in the town; the Citizen Reserves had been mobilized and the 86<sup>th</sup> Infantry had been installed on Fremantle Park. The presence of these soldiers, meant that around 250 men were on duty in and around Fremantle, prompting the *Sunday Times* to comment that, 'with so many soldiers in our midst Fremantle is getting the appearance of a real live garrison town'.

By the end of October, Fremantle's men and boys boarded ships for Albany, from where they would be shipped to 'the great theatre of war'. And yet, the enlisted soldiers and their families commonly felt that they were going off to a great adventure. Indeed, at the end of his term as Mayor in 1918, William Wray would reflect back and recall that in those first months of war, 'its effect was little felt by us, living in comparative security and feeling quite sure that we had no cause for alarm'. The next few years, as we will hear in the Studies Day, would sadly prove quite the opposite.



### **THE CARCERAL COLONY**

**Pam Harris**

In July a seminar was held at Fremantle Prison to discuss recent scholarship in Western Australia's penal history. It was a full day with local, interstate and international speakers presenting 12 papers.

The first paper presented by Hamish Maxwell Stewart provided an excellent overview of transportation from the British Empire in the context of British colonial activities at the time and illustrated that convicts were sent to various locations depending on where labour was needed. Secondly Bill Edgar questioned the assumption that Western Australia's convicts were cruelly treated and suggested that the convict system was in fact forward

thinking and benign. The argument was based on research of statistics and evidence which looked at the convicts' lives after they had served their sentence and how their contribution stimulated the economy of a struggling colony. The third paper in the first session by Louis Marshall was an examination of the health effects of physical and psychological punishment in the West Australian convict system. Louis compared the detailed records of convict punishments with Fremantle Prison hospital admissions and mortality rates. It became evident from this statistical research that solitary confinement had detrimental health effects on the convicts as opposed to physical punishment such as floggings.

In the second session Sean Liddelow discussed the archaeological research undertaken along the York Road, in particular in the area of the Bilgoman Well which was used by a camp by convicts working on repairing and upgrading the road in the 1850s, the research is providing new information about this aspect of convict history. Another interesting paper was presented by Denise Young, the research examined the contribution of the convicts from NSW who assisted with the first settlement in Western Australian at King George Sound. Little research has been done in this part of the garrison settlement's history from 1826 to 1831 and provided insight into the daily lives of the convicts during this period. The final paper of this session was from Shane Burke which focussed on convict activities in the Swan district and illustrates the importance of this region in providing food for the colony during the middle colonial period.

After lunch Bruce Baskerville discussed research into the convicts who were convicted of sodomy, buggary or an unnatural offence with a man. The subject area is difficult to research but Bruce has discovered some commonalities in terms of where these men lived and differences in their future where some became successful businessmen and others paupers. Moss Wilson from the Department of Planning,

Lands Heritage discussed how heritage places connected with convicts have been identified and recorded. Moss also announced the latest initiative of the department, the 2018-2019 Convict Assessment Program and is seeking nominations of places from the public that may be added to the State Register. The final paper for this session was a joint presentation from Luke Donegan and Olympia Cullity from Fremantle Prison. They discussed the challenges involved in the management and interpretation of the convict built prison which is a member site of the Australian Convict Sites World Heritage Property.

The first paper of the final session was presented by B'geella Romano who discussed her archaeological analysis of graffiti and inscription at Fremantle Prison. Of interest was how the spatial positioning of the graffiti identified the public and private spaces within the prison. Sean Winter's research proposed that convicts were an integral part of the culture of the 19<sup>th</sup> century colony in Western Australia. This challenges what has commonly been believed, that they were an isolated group and separate from mainstream society. Finally Katherine Roscoe provided an interesting analysis of indigenous interaction with convict labour regimes. The paper is based on research undertaken on the use of indigenous labourers for the construction of the infrastructure on Rottnest Island (Wadjemup).

In conclusion the day was extremely stimulating, thought provoking and enjoyable. The papers will be published in a special edition of Studies in Western Australian History in 2019. Thanks to the University of WA, Centre for WA History, Fremantle Prison and the Heritage Council for the organisation and sponsorship of the day.



## CONVICT AND CONVERT: JOHN HENDERSON AND PAWNBROKING

Steve Errington

John Henderson (1818-92) was a convict who made good and became a respected citizen of Fremantle. Formerly a sailor, he arrived in Fremantle as a passenger on the convict ship *Dudbrook* in February 1853. The convict register noted that his right arm bore tattoos of hearts containing the initials 'JH' and 'AL' - he had married Ann Lamb in Leith, Scotland in 1840 and they had three children.

By May 1854 John had his ticket-of-leave. He took a job as sailmaker with the Commissariat and by March 1857 had his Certificate of Freedom and was able to bring out his family. Their youngest child had died but Ann arrived in Fremantle on the emigrant ship *City of Bristol* in August 1857 with their son Laurence and daughter Marion. Their daughter Janet was born in Fremantle in 1859. Sadly, the loyal and patient Ann died of a 'long and severe illness' in June the following year.

On 2 January 1871 at a ratepayers meeting held in the Oddfellows Hall, John topped the count when the Fremantle Town Trust committee was elected. But on the same day the Legislative Council voted to abolish Town Trusts and replace them with Municipal Councils.

In March that year John was chosen (from a field of eight) by the new Fremantle Town Council for the position of Supervisor and Inspector of Weights and Measures and Inspector of Nuisances. He resigned this position in about June 1874 after he had started his own business.

On 1 January 1874 John Henderson opened a pawnbroker's shop in Pakenham Street, near Collie Street in Fremantle. His choice of business was an interesting one, to say the least. The crime he committed back in May 1851 was to break in through the ceiling of a pawnbroking office in Leith and steal a drawer full of silver watches, gold

rings, gold chains, brooches, silver spoons, a silver pencil case and six shillings sterling. For this and two previous convictions he was sentenced to 14 years transportation. He duly gained his Certificate of Freedom in June 1865.

John immediately commissioned Stokes and Martin of Melbourne to mint some one penny tokens. These not only publicised a business but became part of the general coinage. His featured a kangaroo and emu coat of arms on the front or obverse and an



Henderson's 1874 one penny token

unidentified building and the year '1874' on the reverse. It is not known if the building is an image of his business. Alfred Davies, another Fremantle pawnbroker, is the only other Western Australian businessman to issue penny tokens, in 1865 (see article in the Autumn 2017 newsletter).

In 1866 Marion Henderson, daughter of a convict, married Water Police Constable George Forsyth in Fremantle. In January 1874 Forsyth, then a port pilot, and a noted amateur painter of Rottneest and Fremantle scenes, was elevated to Harbour Master. It is from a biography of Harbour Master Forsyth that we learn something of the life of his father-in-law John Henderson. The manuscript *And Ships Lay in perfect Safety – a biography of George Andrew Forsyth 1843-1894*, was written by R.K Forsyth, a descendant. The Fremantle Local Studies library has a copy.

Several years after issuing his first penny token Henderson ordered another supply from the same Melbourne source. This later

version had a modified reverse with the words 'one penny token' replacing the year. This 1878 version is significant as it is the last ever issued in any of the Australian colonies. The Fremantle Local Studies collection has copies of both versions.



Henderson's 1878 one penny token was the last issued in the Australian colonies.

In later years John served as Collector for the Fremantle Roads Board. He had remarried in 1863. His bride was Emma Barton, a young woman who had arrived on the 'bride ship' *Burlington*. In 1891 his Fremantle-born daughter Janet married, in Singapore, Arthur Malet, son of a magistrate of the Indian Civil Service and grandson of a Baronet. John Henderson died on 13 December 1892, probably not knowing that he would appear in the next issue of *Burke's Peerage* as father of the bride.



## TREASURES FROM TROVE – ATWELL ARCADE

Heather Campbell

After our visit to the new building encompassing Atwell Arcade, it seemed timely to peep into its history, courtesy of Trove, of the planning stage in 1928.

### ARCADE FOR FREMANTLE

Plans are being prepared by Messrs. Allen and Nicholas, of Fremantle, for an arcade to be built for Mrs. S. Atwell. The arcade will

run from High-street to Cantonment-street, Fremantle, and will have the opening on to High-street at about the position of a private right-of-way between the Market-street intersection and the Town Hall corner. The Cantonment street entrance will be about where the Starr Bowkett Society's offices are now located<sup>1</sup>. With the alteration of premises abutting on to the arcade it is estimated that the work will cost about £15,000. It has also been reported that a project for the building of an arcade on the opposite side of High-street, with a T-piece to open on to Market street is under consideration. [*West Australian* 27 Oct 1928, p. 4]



Atwell Arcade, 1987, FLHC, LH005342

## For Your Diary

**August: Mission to Seafarers.** Join Rev'd Claughton to learn more about the important work to offer comfort and care to those who call the sea their work place. **Tuesday 28 August, 6pm, 76 Queen Victoria St, Fremantle**

**September: *Being There* – Kathleen O'Connor in Paris.** Join curator Andre Lipscombe for a tour if this fascinating exhibition. **Sunday 23 September, 2.30pm. Fremantle Arts Centre, Finnerty St, Fremantle**

**October: Fremantle Studies Day.** Papers will commemorate the centenary of the end of fighting in the First World War. **Theatre, City of Fremantle Library, Fremantle Oval. Sunday 28 October, 1.00 – 500pm.**

<sup>1</sup> A Starr-Bowkett Society was a co-operative, non-profit-making financial institution which provided interest-free loans to members. It operated on the principle of self-help. It no longer exists today,

but in 1928 it shared 5 Cantonment Street with an estate and insurance agent. The Society's secretary in Fremantle at the time was S Chipper.