



FREMANTLE HISTORY SOCIETY

Established 1994

The Secretary, PO Box 1305
FREMANTLE WA 6959

Winter Edition, 2019

<https://fhs.org.au>



This year's speakers chatting with Society members and friends – Bobbie Oliver with Linley Batterham and Anne Brake, Paul Reilly and Charlie Fox with Mayor Brad Pettit and Cate Pattison talks to Lucy Hair (Pam Harris)

STUDIES DAY 2019

Judith Robison

About 45 members, friends and interested others attended a very successful 2019 Studies Day on Sunday 27 October. The topic of this year's Studies Day was labour history and the venue – the MUA building in North Fremantle - perfectly suited the themes explored in the four papers.

The day began with a paper by our 2018 Research Scholarship recipient, Cate Pattison, on the State Implement and Engineering Works in North Fremantle. Cate traced the history of the 'Imps' from its establishment in 1913 to its closure in 1986, interspersing her talk with photos and extracts of interviews by former workers. Several previous employees of the Engineering works attended the talk and took the opportunity to renew old acquaintances.

Charlie Fox next presented a paper on the History of Chinese Seamen in Fremantle. There is a long history of Chinese seamen working on ships operating from Fremantle port and this reliance on sailors from China increased during World War 2. Unfortunately, the Chinese were not paid at the same rates as other seamen resulting in a strike in 1942. The killing of two seamen by Australian troops on the wharf and two by Dutch troops had implications for Chinese-Australian relations and the laws governing employment of both Chinese and Australian maritime workers.

Afternoon tea, following the first two papers, provided time to chat, sample the delicious food and wander around the MUA building examining the many historical photographs and banners displayed and visiting the colourful murals, depicting industrial action in the carpark under the building.

Following afternoon tea, Paul Reilly's paper explored Political Activism in 1930s Fremantle. This was a time of financial and political instability with the Great Depression and the rise of European Fascism leading to World War 2. Fremantle was not immune from the turmoil of the times with high unemployment leading to successful community and industrial action and vigorous anti-fascist activism in support of the Republic during the Spanish Civil War. Left-wing unions such as the Lumpers and the Communist Party and the Labor Party were active within the Fremantle Trades Hall. Paul used a series of photos from the period to illustrate his talk.

The last paper of the day was delivered by Bobbie Oliver and focussed on the 1998 Patrick's Strike and its implications. The strike was called when Patrick Stevedores sacked their 2000 strong workforce throughout Australia and attempted to replace them with non-unionised labour. At the Fremantle wharves picket lines of unionists and their supporters prevented trucks from entering the wharf and police were mobilised to intimidate the strikers. The ultimate victory for the unionists, although a compromise, ensured the MUA continued its role on the waterfront. Bobbie illustrated her talk with dramatic photos of the port confrontations and thanked the MUA for granting access to their records.



Mayor, Brad Pettit, with contributing authors, Pam Harris and Mary-Ann Goodlich at the launch of *Fremantle Studies* vol 10.

The afternoon concluded with the launch of *Fremantle Studies* volume 10 by the Mayor

of Fremantle, Brad Pettit, who spoke about his enthusiasm for recording the history of Fremantle and offered to meet with the Society to facilitate consultation.

Details on how to purchase your copy of volume 10 of *Fremantle Studies* attached.



COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Executive:

Allen Graham (President)	0412 933 360
Pam Harris (Secretary)	0408 092 100
Anne Brake (Treasurer)	0438 445 141

Committee Members:

Fay Campbell	0419 969 678
Cathy Hall	0407 086 300
Heather Campbell	0408 175 246
Judith Robison	0434 571 666
Stewart Alger (ex officio)	9432 9592

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.



MEETING REPORTS

PUB LUNCH – The Local
August

A happy crowd enjoyed the delicious fare at The Local, previously the Seaview Hotel, for our annual August Pub Lunch.

Fay Campbell presented an overview of the history of the place which members Don Whittington and Jon Strachan added to with colourful stories of their personal encounters with the pub, touching on a few urban myths relating to the business across the street.

FREMANTLE PRISON PROTEST AND UNREST EXHIBITION

September

Many thanks to Olimpia Cullity, Curator at Fremantle Prison, who gave us a fascinating insight on the development of the exhibition, Protest and Unrest, on the cusp of taking maternity leave. While the riot and fire in 1988, which led to the prison's closure in 1991, probably remains in most people's memories, there were a number of skirmishes in the Prison's history. The Prison's collection, newspaper articles, diary entries and the evocative images of Karin Calvert Borshoff, taken just before the Prison's closure, all contributed to the richness of the exhibition. A compilation of video imagery, including interviews, also accompanied the exhibition.

As our numbers were limited we were given the chance to view some of the Prison's prized objects including very rare convict uniforms.

FREMANTLE STUDIES DAY

October

As well as the fabulous line up of papers and the launch of volume 10 of *Fremantle Studies Journal* covered on pages 1 and 2, this year's Studies Day included a 25th birthday celebration for the Society. Beginning in 1994, we have encouraged the research and enjoyment of Fremantle's history and heritage. And there is much to be proud of including 10 general meetings and 4 newsletters a year, 23 Fremantle



Anne Brake, Ron Davidson and Bob Reece
blow out the birthday candles (Lucy Hair)

Studies Days and 10 volumes of *Fremantle Studies Journal*, 3 fabulous Fremantle history scholarships and the many friendships that have made and renewed through our events.

Bob Reece, who chaired the original meeting to determine if there was an interest in forming a society, and Ron Davidson and Anne Brake, original committee members, blew out the candles. Thanks to Pam Harris for the delicious birthday cake.



COMING EVENTS

Christmas at Freo.Social

This year, we celebrate Christmas at Freo.Social located in the Artillery Drill Hall on Parry St.

The Drill Hall was first constructed in 1895/6 to on a section of the original convict grant provide facilities for the town's volunteer artillery corp. It was the first purpose built military hall in Western Australia. Across more than 100 years it has provided space for practicing drill as well as various other leisure pursuits most notably housing the Fly By Night Musicians Club for over 20 years. It was also was the location for the first badminton match in WA – the ghostly outlines of the courts still visible in some parts of the main hall.

The rich history of the place has been captured in a series of interpretive installations throughout the building reflecting the various groups that used the place and images of a number of fascinating objects found as part of the underfloor archaeology done during the redevelopment works. Many Fremantle people have connections to the place and Kyra Lomas, architect with the National Trust, will take members and their friends on a journey through the place to tell its many stories and view the fascinating panels which illustrate them.

Following the tour and talk we will celebrate the festive season and mark another fabulous year with some nibbles and drinks.

Tuesday 26 November. Meet at 6pm in the main hall of Freo.Social (enter from Parry St). \$5 fee to cover the nibbles. Drinks available from the bar.

Please let us know if you are coming so we can ensure we order the right amount of nibbles – email secretary.fhs@gmail.com with numbers by Friday 22 November.



THE MEETING PLACE:

Stewart Alger

The Meeting Place is a heart-warming part of the Fremantle's history – one that could be said to typify the Fremantle spirit.

The Meeting Place came about in the mid-seventies due to a recognition of a disconnect occurring in the community. A significant number of Fremantle's migrant population were not accessing community resources that would be advantageous to their situation. A South Terrace house in South Fremantle was purchased by the council to become just as its name suggests: a meeting place for migrant community members to get advice, information and access services.

While first being staffed by volunteers, its success led swiftly to it having full time community and social workers employed there. The resources offered were very considered and thoughtful, as reflected by the community at the time, for example both a phone with a direct link to interpreting services and English language classes proved very popular. Aside from this migrant focus, there were a variety of community activities such as art and crafts and play groups and an occasional day care.

Funding cuts left it without a full time social worker in the late seventies, which was undoubtedly a shame as the community was clearly benefitting from its services.

However it did allow the Meeting Place to morph into a space that could be used by any community group and it continues to

remain this way today. The variety of different groups that operate again truly reflect the Fremantle community from European languages to Nyoongar language lessons, karate classes, game nights, a handy women's class, a veggie chat session for swapping vegetarian recipes to a variety of interest classes for the over 55s and quite a few different book clubs. The Meeting Place remains a much-loved Fremantle institution.



Opening of the Little Kids Place Occasional Care Centre at the Meeting Place, 1987, Brent Sumner (Fremantle Library, E000316)



TREASURES FROM TROVE

Heather Campbell

Settle in and enjoy some holiday reading with some 'Treasures from Trove' covering the 80th anniversary of Australia's declaration of war on Germany and some light hearted Christmas offerings.

80th ANNIVERSARY OF AUSTRALIA DECLARATION OF WAR ON GERMANY, WORLD WAR II

Announcing Australia's commitment to the war on 3 September 1939, Prime Minister Robert Gordon Menzies broadcast on every national and commercial radio station in the country: However the declaration could not have been a surprise...

AUSTRALIA'S PART. EXCITEMENT AT CANBERRA. CANBERRA, August 26

From our special representative.

This has been a week of extreme tension at Canberra. The threat of war has been hanging like a dark cloud over the meetings

of the Federal Cabinet. As day succeeded day, the news from overseas seemed to grow more and more ominous, and the government's consideration of defence matters resolved itself chiefly into the formulation of plans to meet a state of war, which appeared likely to be announced at any moment. But the week's meetings passed off without the dread announcement. Ministers have now left Canberra, but they have been asked to hold themselves in readiness for immediate recall, if such be found necessary. In the meantime, the Prime Minister (Mr Menzies) has, by press and radio, appealed to the people to remain calm if war comes.

The Southern Eastern Times,
1 Sept 1939, p 1.



Prime Minister Robert Menzies announcing
declaration of war on the radio,
3 September 1939

[\(https://menziesvirtualmuseum.org.au/\)](https://menziesvirtualmuseum.org.au/)

“AUSTRALIA IS AT WAR” – Commonwealth's Declaration

The Prime Minister Speaks

'Fellow Australians, it is my melancholy duty to inform you officially that in consequence of the persistence by Germany in her invasion of Poland, Great Britain has declared war upon her and that as a result, Australia is also at war,' said the Prime

Minister, Mr. Menzies, in a national broadcast at 7.15 p.m. yesterday.

'No harder task can fall to the lot of a democratic leader than to make such an announcement, Great Britain and France, with the co-operation of the British Dominions, have struggled to avoid this tragedy.

'Britain and France have, as I firmly believe, been patient, said Mr. Menzies. They have kept the door of negotiation open. They have given no cause for provocation, but in the result their efforts have failed and we are, therefore, as a great family of nations, involved in a struggle which we must at all times win and which we believe in our hearts we will win....

Kalgoorlie Miner,
4 Sept 1939, p 4.

Preparations and consequences...

NEWS in BRIEF

During the past week – that is, from the time that war in Europe appeared almost a certainty – heavy consignments of petrol and oil in drums and bulk supplies have been removed to country districts from Fremantle to Geraldton.

Southern Herald,
6 Sept 1939, p 1.

Within a week even the footie was affected!...

NEW ANGLE ON FOOTBALL SITUATION:

War Weakens League Sides. VITAL GAMES ON A SATURDAY

Declaration of war has put an entirely different angle on the football situation, but instead of simplifying matters it has only made them more complex. Teams that will most likely suffer most are East Fremantle and Claremont, two of the highly fancied teams for the pennant.

New Call and Bailey's Weekly,
7 Sept 1939, p 3.

Commencement of hostilities - the first shot claimed for Fremantle - pleasure boats requisitioned:

NEWS IN BRIEF

Melbourne claims the credit of the first Australian shot fired in the war - a fort at Port Phillip firing a warning shot across the bows of a vessel that did not stop for examination. Really, that doubtful distinction belongs to a guard on the Fremantle railway bridge, who was attacked by a drunken man and discharged his rifle to call the attention of other guards. This happened on Sunday, whilst the Melbourne shot was fired early on Monday morning

...

In order to carry out the system of examining all vessels arriving at the port of Fremantle the pilot boat Lady Forrest and the pleasure steamers Zephyr and Emerald have been requisitioned by the Defence Department, extensive alterations having been effected to the last two mentioned to fit them for the work.

Great Southern Herald,
9 Sept 1939, p 1.



The ferry Zephyr with a staff excursion from Foy & Gibson department store, 10 November 1934
SLWA ref: 015393PD

Prompt naval action in Fremantle!

NAVY'S ACTIONS EXPLAINED TO PRESS. INSPECTION AT FREMANTLE

Perth, Oct 2 – On Saturday,

Newspaper men were allowed aboard H.M.A.S. "Sydney" to learn something of the Navy's readiness for action. Since shortly after the declaration of the war, the "Sydney" and two destroyers, "Voyager" and "Vampire" have been based at Fremantle for the protection of shipping.

Mount Barker and Denmark Record,
2 Oct 1939, p 1.

Meanwhile in the rest of the world.....

LECTURER TELLS OF SEA BLACKOUTS

A passenger on the last British ship to make the passage of the Mediterranean before the declaration of war, Dr. Halliday Sutherland, famous British author and lecturer, arrived in Perth today to begin a lecture tour.



Dr Halliday Sutherland,
1882-1960, a British
physician and author.
Photo at
<https://hallidaysutherland.com/>

'At Suez I realised that war was inevitable,' Dr. Sutherland said in an interview today. 'We knew that there were two enemy submarines in the Red Sea, but we also knew that 13 British destroyers were sweeping the sea ahead of us. 'The ship was darkened at night – at last the passengers thought so – but a destroyer signalled us that we were a 'blaze of light.' Two portholes were open with lights showing. One culprit was the inevitable old lady, who insisted that she was entitled to fresh air. When the purser attempted to close her port, she threatened him with her umbrella.'

Daily News,
2 Oct 1939, p 9.

Oh no! On top of everything else - shortages of tea!

TEA IN DEMAND - FEVERISH BUYING.

Rush to Avoid Increased Price.

Stimulated by the announcement that the price of tea would be increased by 3d. a lb. as from today, the public made feverish demands on retailers for supplies on Saturday morning. Although they rationed orders to 1lb. and ½lb. packets, some store principals in Perth reported that in the four hours of trading on Saturday they sold as much tea as in a fortnight or three weeks of normal trading.

Surprising demands were made. Some housewives who normally bought a pound of tea to meet their needs for a week asked for 25lb., 50lb. and 100lb. tins. The heavy demand was not limited to city stores; it was general throughout the metropolitan area and last night people were still seeking tea.

Heavy stocks of tea are not normally carried by wholesalers or retailers because tea deteriorates in quality rapidly. Five weeks ago when it was thought that a sales tax on tea was imminent the public bought heavily. Merchants' stocks have always been sufficient only to meet normal demands and the abnormal buying, followed by the declaration of war, with uncertainty about shipping, forced wholesalers to alter their normal buying methods. Fremantle is handily situated to the tea producers in Ceylon and Java and in peacetime wholesalers have been able to carry on satisfactorily with weekly shipments. Now when one shipment is missed it is necessary to double the tea order for the next shipment. For weeks wholesalers have rationed orders to keep buying as near normal as possible. ...

West Australian,
9 Oct 1939, p 8.

Getting serious – war and golf - at home and abroad

GOLF. *Prominent Players in Army. A number of prominent West Australian golfers have joined the army since the declaration of war. Among those in training is H. Nicholas, who has been a member of the Royal Fremantle "B" pennant team for several seasons. Dr. N. H. Robinson, who was State amateur champion for 1937 and 1938, and has been the most consistent amateur golfer in the State for some years, has joined the second A.I.F. with the rank of captain. He captained the West Australian team which visited Victoria earlier in the year for the Australian championships. Another member of that team who is at present in camp at Northam is R. Ainslie. Like Robinson, he is a member of Royal Perth, and he has figured prominently in first class golf for some years, winning the amateur championship in 1935. This year he*

eliminated K. Pixin a thrilling game in the match-play stages of the championship.

In England the war has had a considerable effect on golf. Latest golfing publications show photographs of caddies carrying gas masks as well as their usual burdens of bags of clubs, and "Golfing," one of the best-known English golf papers, has announced that "owing to the shortage of paper and other difficulties" publication will be suspended during the winter months. It is "proposed" to publish the next issue of the paper on March 1, 1940.

West Australian,
29 Nov 1939, p 12.

Although in retrospect some of these early concerns seem a bit Dad's army-ish, the war quickly became deadly serious. Australia was one of the first nations to declare war on Nazi Germany and nearly one million people – men and women - served in the forces, fighting in campaigns across the world. The Australian mainland came under direct attack, with Japanese bombing attacks on Northern Australia and on Sydney using midget submarines. At the time of the German defeat and Japanese surrender, 39,000 Australians had lost their lives and 30,000 had been taken prisoner. <http://www.awmlondon.gov.au/australians-in-wwii>

Lest we forget.

THE QUEEN'S CHRISTMAS and CHRISTMAS IN THE COLONY

Royal Dishes. — Patriotism has recently been much in evidence: quite a boom in fact. No apology, therefore, is needed for publishing the following paragraph from a London journal, which loyal housewives should read with interest: —

'The plum pudding for the Queen's dinner table on Christmas Day is made at Windsor, and boiled for seven hours. Then it is sent cold to Osborne, boiled again for three hours, and served with brandy sauces. The Queen's own entremet, however, is always a perfectly plain pudding of sago or rice, and a baked apple at luncheon.'

The Inquirer and Commercial News,
14 February 1896, p 8.

CHRISTMAS week is a period of rejoicing mostly all over the world, and is not less remarkable as a week of festivity in this small and isolated portion of Her Majesty's possessions. In spite of the paucity of public amusements afforded in a young colony, relaxation in a variety of forms has been indulged in by young and old. Roast beef and plum pudding, mince pies, custards, and whip-sillibubs, with a goodly array of foreign and colonial wines, and fruits, have fallen to the portion of the better class, and the modicum of Her Majesty's coinage in the colony, has no doubt found a quickened circulation in the form of presents, and the usual douceur of the season. If every colonist, blessed with the good things of this world, has not done all that may be expected of him to smooth the ragged path of his less fortunate fellows, we sincerely believe that there has been, in each house, at least, an endeavour to do something towards the commemoration of the birth of Him, who came to teach us to exercise love, sympathy, and good-will.

....

But during the midsummer of a warm climate, it is impossible to possess all the means, or indeed the desire, of enjoyment, peculiar to a winter day in old England. No frost, no blazing fire, no long winter's evenings, each of which seems indispensable to the sociality of a Christmas day.

...

Our warm Christmas weather is no inducement to assemble in numbers; rather the contrary. Many of the old English amusements usual at this time would be intolerable. Blind-man's-buff, snap-dragon, hunt-the-slipper, are anything but agreeable. And who would give a fig for a hot mince pie, with the rays of a nearly tropical sun resting on it? or for a smoking hot plum pudding, on one of our suffocating summer days? or, who could enter into all the imaginary horrors of a ghost story, on our warm twilight evenings? Oh! for a Christmas in England, on a Cold frosty dark evening, beside a good fire, in an old fashioned chimney, beneath, the sooty canopy of

which the listeners are snugly ensconced; and then-what?

...

These, then, are amongst the principal draw-backs in our sunny clime, which we consider adverse to the perfection of a Christmas day.

.....

Happy may our brother settlers be in the re-occurrence of this festival, and in their endeavours to alleviate the relaxing heat of the season by mutually kind offers and all the increased harmony, and good will to which they are instrumental. And with these wishes, as well as that of a "happy new year" to our friends and acquaintances, we enter upon the labours of 1848.

The Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News
1 January 1848, p 3



The committee of the Fremantle History Society wish you and your families a very happy and safe festive season. Thank you for your support across the year and we look forward to joining with you in 2020 for another wonderful year of meetings and friendship.

Say Merry Christmas to those you love in

- French: *Joyeux Noël*
- German: *Frohe Weihnachten*
- Spanish: *Feliz Navidad*
- Italian: *Buon Natale*
- Portuguese: *Feliz Natal*
- Dutch: *Vrolijk kerstfeest*
- Romanian: *Crăciun fericit*
- Polish: *Wesołych świąt*
- Swedish: *Glad helg*

