



## FREMANTLE HISTORY SOCIETY

Established 1994

The Secretary, PO Box 1305  
FREMANTLE WA 6959

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<https://fhs.org.au>



Papa Luigi's Café,  
1986  
Brent Sumner (City of  
Fremantle Library  
LH005417

When going through papers recently Ron Davidson found the following written by Gerard McCann back in the early 1980s.

### **PROPOSED DISCO AND COFFEE SHOP WITHIN PAPA LUIGI'S, FREMANTLE**

Gerard McCann

Weekend church socials apart, there is no facility in Fremantle (or Perth) for young people to congregate and dance, drink coffee and socialise on premises that are free from the complications of a liquor licence, and that is a regular, readily accessible venue.

The concept of a disco within the environs of the Coffee Shop is unique, somewhat reminiscent of the folk music era in coffee lounges during the early 60s. Unique because only hotels and taverns at present provide a music/dancing venue for younger folk, and whilst the choice remains weighted towards these venues, the after effects of alcohol will concern to authorities.

The proposed disco within 'Papa Luigi's' coffee lounge is intended to be a small venue that will attract people off the street in providing a much-needed alternative entertainment, especially after other venues close at 10 or 11pm. This time in Fremantle is usually accompanied by 'terror tactics' by car enthusiasts.

With coffee, soft drinks and music available, younger people's energy can be positively expressed, thus aiding an enjoyment of life and offsetting the otherwise negative effects of

'pubs'. The popularity of the nearby 'Skates' ice rink testifies to the dire need within our city to provide entertainment free from licensed premises.

Fears may be expressed as to the effect of youths in the vicinity after the disco closes. It must be remembered that the concept of the disco within the coffee lounge is one that provides entertainment and therefore a positive outlet for the restless energy of some of these youths, and, unlike hotels, is more likely to 'release happy folk into the street again'.

The coffee shop itself, and especially the basement, are remnants of an era that provided no entertainment for young folk, with consequential problems. The current proprietor is moving slowly towards a broader patronage for the premises, evidenced by the wide age and ethnic groups using the lounge; from older fishermen to business men, young Australian 'renovators' and the unemployed. This wide range usage tones down the impact of any one group, and provides a mature, lively spirit. The amusement parlour sees business men, architects and doctors, as well as youth as its users.

The immediate intentions for the building are to provide legal stairs, exits and ventilation to the basement; new toilet facilities and a new pergola covered outdoor coffee lounge at the rear of the building. The appeal and quality of this venue in summer could be felt perhaps comparing with the rear part of the 'Carolina' Restaurant, with its tile paving and pergola, planting and walling.

The long-term intention is to tidy up the aesthetic nature of the premises (without losing its appeal) and provide a kitchen and restaurant where light meals (spaghetti, etc) are served all day and night.

There is no place at present that provides this service, and a need certainly exists. This function will complement the existence of the disco in the basement.

How times have changed!



## 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

### CHRISTMAS at Freo.Social November

Almost 40 people gathered at the Artillery Drill Hall in Parry St, to celebrate Christmas, the end of another great year for the Society and to hear about its transformation into the latest music venue in town.

Kyra Lomas, architect with the National Trust, provided an overview of the history of the site as well as an insight into the various aspects of conservation and redevelopment of this fascinating site.

Underfloor archaeology, undertaken as part of the works revealed the many uses the building has supported over the years. 25,000 items were found under the floor boards from rope and clay pipes from the old convict gardens, a badminton shuttlecock from its time as a drill hall and home of the first badminton played in

Australia, through to smoking paraphernalia, hairpins and buttons from its days as the Fly By Night Club.



A shuttlecock found under the floor of the Artillery Drill Hall (G Pickering, NTWA)

Kyra led a tour of the interpretation of the building, an important part of National Trust's commitment to helping people understand the history of their heritage sites.

This was all followed by a delightful array of platters and conviviality – a very pleasant way to round out the year.

Thank you to Kyra and to the folk at Freo.Social who opened just for us that night.



## COMING EVENTS

### Addressing historic injustices

25 February

Ezra Jacobs Smith, a Whadjuk Noongar man who has worked on Rottnest Island, will provide a snapshot of Western Australian history of Aboriginal incarceration on Wadjemup/Rottnest Island, used as a prison for Aboriginal men and boys between 1838 and 1931.

Ezra is exploring the topic as part of a state-wide reconciliation project to acknowledge the island's history and memorialise associated sites including the Aboriginal Burial Ground and the adjacent former prison building known as the Quod.

**Glyde-In Community Centre**, 42 Glyde St, East Fremantle. **Tuesday 25 February** at **6.30pm**. Convivial refreshments to follow.

### History of the Smelters Camp @ Fremantle Library

20 March

Local researcher and author, Julie Raffaele, will be presenting her fascinating research project on the history of Smelters Camp, which was located on the Coogee coastline. A display of her research will also be available in the library during the month of March.

The meeting will be held at the **City of Fremantle Library**, Fremantle Oval on **Friday 20 March, 10am – 11am**.

**Please note the change in meeting day and time.**

### Fremantle and the Boer War

26 April

The Boer War is not as well-known or understood as other skirmishes Australians have been involved in under the British flag. The war began in 1899 and was over by 1902. As with other wars, the port of Fremantle was used to ship Australian, including Western Australian, soldiers to the conflict zone.

The 3rd West Australian Bushmen's Contingent left Fremantle on 13th March, 1900, on the ship 'Maplemore' with 7 officers, 109 soldiers and 397 horses under the command of Major H.G. Vialls, arriving in Beira, Mozambique on 18th April.

At our April meeting, Col (Retired) Robert Mitchell will provide an overview of the causes and casualties of the Boer War and its connections to Fremantle.

**Sunday 26 April, 2.00pm, Fremantle Army Museum Theatre, Burt St, Fremantle.**



## FREMANTLE COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE

Stewart Alger, Local History Librarian

The Fremantle Community Legal Centre has been working tirelessly as a non-profit organisation that offers free legal advice, financial counselling and information and

assistance on tenancy and welfare rights to the community for almost forty years.

In 1983, it humbly began as a simple welfare agency, however a grant eight years later enabled it to hire a solicitor to address the ever-growing need for free legal advice. Soon after, due to the demand, additional legal staff were employed. From this point onward its mission has been to provide an accurate and timely legal and para-legal service combined with community education to those disadvantaged people living within the Fremantle community.

It has always been housed within the Fremantle CBD: its first location was on Parry Street when it was named the Birmingham Centre, in 2006 it moved to the Queensgate Building and finally from 2017 to its present home has been the Fremantle Malls. It remains the only Centre within the region that services and assists people who are disadvantaged and therefore unable to access legal advice, minor assistance, referral and short representation.



Queensgate Complex, c1990s  
FCC Collection



## TREASURES FROM TROVE

Heather Campbell

Some gems from the second (or is that third) iteration of the *Fremantle Herald* which opened its presses in 1919 but closed them again by 1921 when the paper merged to form the *Fremantle Advertiser*. Some sources also refer to a paper in Fremantle from 1913-1915 also referred to as the *Fremantle Herald*.

The first version of the *Herald* started in 1867 and ran until 1886. Its editors were ex-convicts – interesting in light of the scathing first article Heather has selected for your reading pleasure.

The current *Fremantle Herald* has been operating since 1989. The tone and style of journalism has changed over time but the focus on Fremantle remains the same.

### DOWN WITH THE STONE WALLS!

Editorial, *Fremantle Herald*, 2 January 1920, p 2

Fremantle is more disfigured with grim stone walls than any other town of which we know—in Australia, at any rate.

The masonry on Arthur Head justifies itself on the grounds of picturesqueness and historic association; but none can urge such a plea in favour of the Gaol or the old Lunatic Asylum.

The former institution, like all gaols, seems specially designed to obtrude its ugliness, both of physical form and psychic association, upon the beholder. Whoso looks upon its walls, or hears the ghoulis tones of its gong, needs no very quick imagination to feel the clammy breath of the gallows on his cheeks. From its gaunt greyness exudes the horror of the tomb without its softening, wistful sadness; the ugliness of sin stripped of its fascination. Yet this thing broods in the midst of our city, a toad in its very heart.

Then the old Lunatic Asylum — now better known as the Old Women's Home — sprawls its forbidding boundaries over many acres of ground. Its ugly walls culminate in the most ghastly architectural abortion imaginable—a sort of bastion-like turret resembling nothing else on Earth save the

terraced pyramids of Ancient Mexico, whereon stood the bloody altars of the War God whose priests were wont to tear from the still living breasts of human victims their palpitating hearts. These walls fling back to the Prison the echo of its own brazen gong, as though Belzebul and Belphegor bandied laughter over lost souls condemned to their mercies.



Fremantle Prison Walls, 1928.  
State Library. Ref: 047798PD

In short and in fine, the Stone Walls of Fremantle are unpleasant links with an evil past — with the Convict System. Convict associations serve to keep alive convict traditions. They taint our civic life with a savor of the "bond-or-free" regime, faint and elusive, perhaps, but none the less real and potent for evil. We sense it in the ignorant Prussianism of our local police and police-court methods; in the crown-colony mentality of some of our municipal magnates. For the sake of the clean moral growth of our young Fremantleites we must exorcise this evil influence; and to do so we must stand by removing the offensive prison walls from the centre of our town.

Where they are to go concerns us but little, provided it be to some place where they need be seen by as few people as possible. We all know that there are vessels chosen to honor and vessels chosen to dishonor; the latter sort are useful, probably indispensable, yet no decent person suffers them to occupy his public apartments, where their existence would be thrust unnecessarily upon the notice both of his household and his guests. A gaol is a vessel chosen to dishonor, yet Fremantle flouts it

in the faces of its own inhabitants and of visitors to our shores.

So much for the aesthetic aspects of the question — and they are important. But there are material considerations not less weighty that should confirm us in the resolve to have the gaol removed. The institution occupies something over a quarter mile square of most valuable space. It creates a vast blank in the midst of the town — a blank which, if devoted merely to parklands would be a source of pleasure to the community, but wasted on a prison is, economically, a dead loss, and, spiritually, something worse.

But park lands are not specially scarce in Fremantle, whereas dwelling houses are. The gaol site occupies space sufficient to accommodate between one and two hundred dwellings, which would house as many families whose breadwinners are employed in Fremantle, but who are, at present, utterly unable to secure housing. Fremantle would benefit as a result of increased trade and rateable values, and lose nothing but an eyesore and the meanest buying institution in the State.

No doubt we will find objectors who enjoy a little of the custom of the prison and its employees. People there always are — and probably always will be — who cannot grasp the single fact that the progress of their town, although it may involve minor and temporary dislocations of business, must be reflected sooner or later (generally the former) in all round prosperity. We can only bear with these troglodytes, and try to drag them along despite themselves. The addition of a couple of hundred new households to our population — and a live Council could easily secure this by means of a Municipal Housing Scheme — would vastly outweigh any trivial loss of gaol orders. Producing resident workers must always be the strength of an industrial community such as ours, and they can be secured by the mere provision of roofs to cover their heads. Gaol employees are in no sense producers; indeed, we know of no occupation productive of less, save it be that of praying for rain on a high barometer.

The Old Women's Home stands on similar ground. A site in the heart of a town is not suitable for the purpose, and the space is too urgently required for purposes intimately touching the progress of Fremantle. In any case, rip down the stone walls! What are they for? Not for beauty, certainly; nor we presume, to lock the inmates in. Maybe they are purposed to keep our gay Latharios out!

## OUR BIRTHDAY

*Fremantle Herald*, 23 January 1920, p 4

This is THE HERALD'S 53rd. issue. We celebrate, therefore, our first birthday.

A strenuous year lies behind us. A year of tasks attempted and of tasks fulfilled.

We have not yet accomplished every task we set ourselves. That were more than human prowess might command. But in many things we have succeeded despite strenuous opposition.

We have shown, in the first place, that Fremantle CAN support a newspaper of its own; and, no less important, that Fremantle's paper must be one sworn to the great task of the upliftment of the Working People.

We believe that it has been the failure to recognise that last that has spelt out the failure of previous efforts to establish a Fremantle paper.

Fremantle is, first and foremost, an industrial centre. It is more; it is the greatest industrial centre —in other words, the industrial Capital — of the State. Too long have Western Australian affairs suffered the paralysis of bureaucratic domination. Bureaucracy is centred in Perth; take away bureaucracy, and nothing of Perth remains. It follows, consequently, that so long as Perth newspapers, cradled in bureaucracy, dominate the public opinion of the State, so long will red-tape, sycophancy and general muddledom remain the key notes of Western Australian effort.

This State needs a new impulse — an impulse which, like that which is quickening the life-blood of the Eastern States to-day —

can be supplied only by progressive industrialism. To compass this end, Fremantle must thrust itself to the fore amongst the significant factors of the State's progress. As the chief industrial centre it is entitled to lead, and, for the sake of the State, lead it must.

To give direction to that leadership is THE HERALD'S self-appointed task.

## OVER THE FENCE

*Fremantle Herald* 30 January 1920, p 1

TICKLESOME TALKS: TACKLESOME TIT-BITS

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Oh! for a trip on the briny! Ben Jones, his brother, Sailor Dawkins, and Polly Polglaise, hired a yacht last Saturday, intending to spend a few quiet days on the river. All went well until Sunday at about one o'clock, when the sailing master took undue risks, with the result that the boat overturned. They were hauled to Mosman's Bay, sans clothes, sans tucker, sans money, nearly sans Polly, and, worst of all, sans beer. Polly was left at Mosman's for the purpose of enabling kind persons to resuscitate him, while Ben and his two cobbers were taken aboard by the merry — very merry — crew of the "Wanetta." The "Wanetta " was about ten minutes off the shore when she capsized. Now they reckon that Ben should lop off the two last letters of his surname and substitute "ah" in their stead.

...

Mrs. and Mr. Alf McIlwaine of Edmund-street, Beaconsfield are proud and happy parents. A member of the stork family deposited a bonny baby girl on their doorstep last week. Alf's cobbers are patiently waiting for him to wet baby's head.

...

Beryl, of De Lisle Street, and Vic, of the G.P.O., are talking seriously of marriage — so seriously that at picnics they retire into shady and secluded nooks to talk over the problem. It's good to be young. We wish

them the luck and olive branches they deserve.

A local wag went horse-racing in the country. He took along with him a first-class nedly. He struck Dowerin. The horse was entered in a race under a certain name and won easily. Another race meeting was held shortly afterwards. The horse was again entered — this time under another name—and romped home. Now the cockies are looking for the culprit. If they strike North Fremantle they will strike trouble.



## WE BELIEVE IN THE VALUE OF HISTORY!

The History Councils of New South Wales, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia have jointly adopted a statement about the **Value of History**. You will find a copy of it with this newsletter.

The four History Councils in Australia are independent membership associations. Each is the peak or coordinating body for history in its respective state. They work co-operatively to campaign for the recognition of history and to share ideas about what makes the past relevant today.

These four groups believe studying our past and telling our stories is critical to our sense of belonging, to our communities and to our shared future.

They also think history shapes our identities, engages us as citizens, creates inclusive communities, is part of our economic well-being, teaches us to think critically and creatively, inspires leaders and is the foundation of our future generations.

The Fremantle History Society committee has endorsed these sentiments and have agreed to spread the word and to encourage others to do likewise.

If you agree after you have read the attached you can endorse the statement by going to the History Council of WA website <https://www.historycouncilwa.org.au/value-of-history>.



## SAMSON HOUSE

Take a guided tour through the iconic Samson House and learn about one of Fremantle's most important families.

Arriving in the Swan River Colony on the first merchant ship, the *Calista*, on 5 August 1829 were two brothers, Lionel and William Samson. The brothers started a successful business and obtained the first licence to sell liquor.

With three generations of wealth, politics and community spirit there are many stories to uncover at this National Trust property.

### Guided Tours:

- 10.30am - 11.15am
- 11:00am – 11:45am

***Bookings are essential so register today.***

<https://samsontours2020.eventbrite.com.au>



## FOR YOUR DIARY

February – Addressing historic injustices. **The Glyde-In Community Centre**, 42 Glyde St, East Fremantle., **Tuesday 25 February at 6.30pm**. Convivial refreshments to follow.

March – History of the Smelters Camp @ Fremantle Library. **City of Fremantle Library**, Fremantle Oval on **Friday 20 March, 10am – 11am**. (Please note change in time and date)

April – Fremantle and the Boer War. **Sunday 26 April, 2.00pm, Fremantle Army Museum Theatre, Burt St, Fremantle.**



Our friends at the Rockingham Museum are looking for speakers for their monthly meetings. If anyone is interested in speaking or knows someone who may be, could you please contact Wendy Durant, 0404 918 874.

Meetings are from March to November, last Saturday of the month at 2pm, Rockingham Museum Corner Kent St and Flinders Lane, Rockingham.