



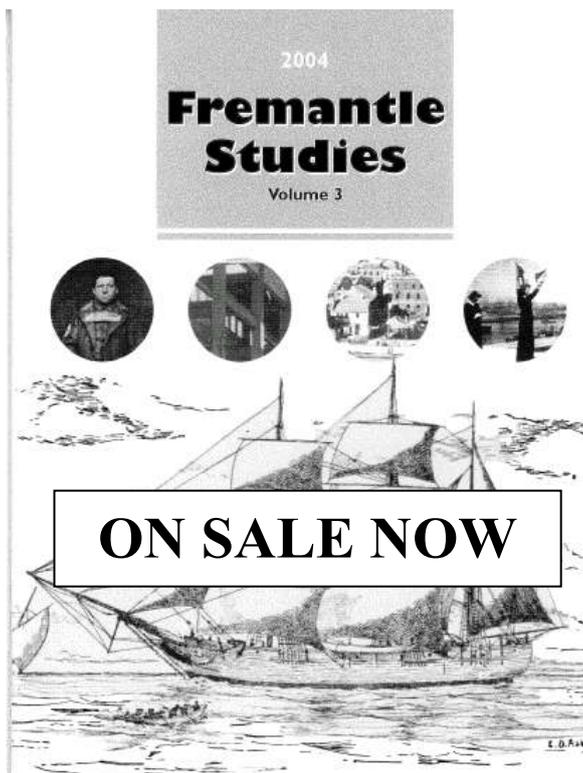
FREMANTLE HISTORY SOCIETY

Established 1994

The Secretary, PO Box 1305
FREMANTLE WA 6959

**Summer Edition
2004**

Editors: Ron Davidson, Anne Brake



FREMANTLE STUDIES – VOLUME 3

Like its predecessors, volume 3 of *Fremantle Studies* focuses on the history and heritage of the City of Fremantle. The papers are drawn from the Fremantle Studies Days held in 2001 and 2002. Heritage features prominently in this volume. David Hutchison examines the importance of the Fremantle Railway Workshop, Ron Bodycoat assesses the heritage significance of the South Fremantle Power Station, Nonja Peters identifies the value of the Immigration Buildings on Victoria Quay as being strongly embedded in the connection to the many migrants who passed through the building and Kristy Bizzaca explores the reasons for the controversial destruction of the CBH wheat silos in North Fremantle.

Although two papers focus on the Fremantle Prison, their themes are very different highlighting the complexity of a site such as this. Norman Megahey examines the response of prisoners to their circumstances and treatment, while Sir William Heseltine looks at the escape of the Fenians on board the *Catalpa* from the position of the warders who were involved.

Sir William's interest in this theme arose from a family connection. Similarly, Coralie Solomon's research into her family and in particular the diaries of Elias Solomon, businessman, first federal member for Fremantle and former Mayor, led to her paper.

The journal was supported by the City of Fremantle and the Professional Historians and Researchers Association, for which we are very grateful. Many individuals have also assisted in the production of this volume – we offer them our heartfelt thanks.

The volume is available from local museum bookshops as well as the WA Museum and State Library bookshops. You can also pick up a copy at the City of Fremantle Information Desk or by

Membership fees now due

phoning Ken Hopkins on 9339 7399. The perfect Christmas gift for anyone who has a love of Fremantle.



COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Executive:

Bob Woollett (President)	9335 7451
Lisa Williams (Vice President)	9430 7966
Beres Coley (Treasurer)	9335 9473
Suzan Miles (Secretary)	0429 300 122

Committee:

Elaine Berry	9336 1906
Anne Brake	9336 5206
Jean Cecil	9335 2352
David Hutchison	9335 1594
Ron Davidson	9430 6096
Ken Hopkins	9339 7399
Loretta O'Reilly (wk)	9432 9739

Fremantle History Society's committee meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month.

If you have something you would like discussed at a meeting, please contact one of the members at the numbers shown above.

General meetings of the Society are generally held on the 4th Tuesday of the month. Details of these meetings can be found in your newsletter and reminders are placed in the local press. As we have started to have Sunday afternoon meetings occasionally, please be sure to check details.



COMING EVENTS

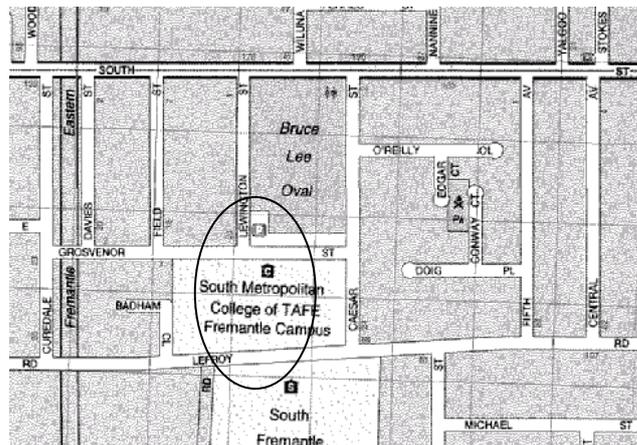
CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS – BOOK NOW

Wednesday 1 December is the date and the Grosvenor Restaurant at the Fremantle TAFE, Grosvenor St, Fremantle (see map), is the venue for this year's festive fun. You will be welcomed at 6.30 with a refreshing glass of bubbly followed by a 3 course buffet

of Christmas favourites which will be served at 7.00 pm. There will be a raffle and Jennifer Nevard from TAFE will give us a brief history of technical education in Fremantle. Entertainment will be provided by our own Rusty Christensen who will spin us a Christmas yarn with a Fremantle flavour.

RSVPs are essential but payment can be made on the night (please contact us if by chance you can't keep your booking to ensure no-one who wants to come misses out. Ring Bob Woollett on 9335 7451 by **24 November** with your booking.

The dinner will cost \$20.00. Drinks will be available from the bar.



MEETING REPORTS

WINTER PUB LUNCH AT THE SWAN HOTEL

Bibik Chan's restaurant at the Swan Hotel in North Fremantle was packed with History Society members on Saturday 28 August for what has become one of the Society's most popular regular events, the annual pub lunch.

Richard Rennie from the Sound and Light Discovery Centre at the Fremantle History Museum entertained members with stories about his great-grandfather, also named Richard Rennie (1870-1936), who became

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one of Fremantle's most prominent building contractors.

Richard described how his great-grandfather came west from Victoria in 1896 to escape the depression that had set in there. Fremantle was in the middle of a building boom, and he easily obtained work as a bricklayer as soon as he stepped ashore. From that moment he prospered, and Fremantle owes a number of important buildings to him, including the Fremantle Municipal Tramways Building, Manning's Chambers, and the National Hotel. Rennie was also a Fremantle Town Councillor for more than ten years, and served on the board of the Fremantle Municipal Tramways. According to his great-grandson he was something of a 'rough diamond', though Richard's presentation showed images of a very dapper and proper-looking businessman!

STORY OF PRISON TRAMWAY

Rail and tramway enthusiast Jeff Austin spoke of the early Fremantle tramway and railways at the History Society's September meeting. Below is an edited extract on the tramway from Jeff's paper:

When the transport of convicts to WA began in 1850 a program of public works was begun to build accommodation for them and their guards. The site chosen for the Convict Establishment was a hill overlooking the town. This required considerable earthworks to remove rock and soil and level the ground in preparation for building. To remove this material a wooden railed horse-drawn tramway was prepared from the site towards the ocean at South Bay. It proceeded down the large embankment which was Fairbairn Street, along William Street, Henderson Street and across South Terrace to Essex Street. It continued to Marine Terrace and ended at a small jetty on the tidal flats of South Bay which was yet to be reclaimed.

The *Perth Gazette* in 1851 reported the rails were made from white gum and were 'defended from friction by iron on the top'.

After the completion of the prison the tramway was retained for the transport of goods and materials from South Bay. A project was also begun to reclaim much of the tidal flats at South Bay and to construct a sea wall. Probably much of the material for this work came from the prison site.

FREMANTLE STUDIES DAY DRAWS THE EXPERTS

David Hutchison once again organised a very successful Fremantle Studies Day. Around fifty members, their guests and others interested in Fremantle's history and heritage met to listen and share ideas concerning issues relating to the conservation and interpretation of our city. This studies day had an interesting mix of theoretical as well as practical themes which reflect the debate that continues to occur around Fremantle which was encouraged throughout this the Year of the Built Environment. Mayor Peter Tagliaferri was there to launch *Fremantle Studies* Vol 3.

The most outspoken comments came from Jeremy Dawkins, the city's director of planning in the 80s and now chair of the State Planning Commission. He said that the city would have to devote itself to the big questions rather than getting bogged down on smaller issues. One of his big questions was the increasing impact of the University of Notre Dame on the West End. Another was Fremantle Ports' planned retail and commercial development on Victoria Quay.

Addressing the Mayor directly, he also said that the current council lacked the councillors and planners to achieve what was done in what he called 'Fremantle's Golden Age'. He listed a number of former councillors, including Don Whittington, Les Lauder, June Hutchison, Gerry McGill, June Boddy and others, as people who worked for the good of the city as a whole rather than playing only to their own small constituencies. He had a particular word of praise for earlier city manager Stan Parks, who piloted many of the city's most important projects of the 70s and 80s. The implication was that we could do with such

guidance again.

He also praised the work of Agnieszka Kiera, particularly with regard to the restoration of the Moores Building. He attributed the saving of that building largely to luck at a time when the Coastal Highway was planned to run through Henry Street, and buildings on its eastern side were marked for demolition.

David Dolan, Professor of Cultural Studies from Curtin University and chair of the National Trust, spoke on why the saving of Fremantle's heritage was important, and asked whether it was secure. He said the heritage of Fremantle was important but pointed to the recent demolition of former Premier John Tonkin's house in East Fremantle as an example of how easily important heritage items can be lost. He also raised the issue of the Fly By Night club and criticised the council for continuing to demand rates for the building, which is owned by the National Trust.

Geoffrey London, Government Architect and Professor of Architecture at UWA, spoke of the need for good design in Fremantle's new developments, pointing to how these could be incorporated into the heritage areas so that they would enhance rather than destroy them. He provided some examples from English and European architects where this had happened. He said that Fremantle had an impressive collection of good architects but that some of the new developments did not even use an architect.

Our own Anne Brake, Manager of the National Trust's Golden Pipeline project, was the final speaker. She spoke on the need for good interpretation to tell Fremantle's stories and raised the issue, as former curator of the Fremantle Prison Precinct, of the tensions between interpretation and sustainability making reference to attempts to soften the prison story by removing razor wire. She also showed a photograph of the prison's death row, where large pot plants had been placed in an attempt to welcome visitors to the business enterprise centre.



SNIPPETS FROM THE LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTION IN FREMANTLE

Loretta O'Reilly
Local History Librarian

The Local History Collection has been a hive of activity as usual with many visits from genealogists, students, Council employees, aspiring authors, etc., etc., Also we are continually chipping away at the ever present backlog.

Currently we are reviewing several oral history tapes and plan to prepare them for borrowing, a first for us. This will mean that the underused collection will be made so much more accessible to the public who may not be aware of our hidden treasures. A reader will be able to borrow tapes and keep them for the same time as they would a book. This should be an interesting experiment and, if successful, we will continue to add tapes for borrowing. Homebound readers would, I am sure, love to listen to their contemporaries reminiscing about the events and times which they also lived through and experienced. This reminds me of a thought expressed by an old historian as he mused on the objectivity or subjectivity of history writing. He wrote 'What a historian writes (sic, or says) may be objective, but will unavoidably occur within a framework determined by which room he or she has chosen to enter, and depending on which window he or she chooses to look out'. No two people will report the same sensations about specific events and that is what makes the oral history borrowing program interesting with, perhaps, readers getting a new perspective on old events!

John Dowson's book *Old Fremantle* was featured at the University Press Club panel discussion in September. David Hutchison chaired the panel and Patrick Baker had a power point presentation describing the exacting work required in the preparation of the photographs for the eventual publication of John's book. John gave a talk on the process of writing a book and the intricacies

of getting it published and I gave a talk on the research process and the facilities we could offer John as he wrote his book. It was a well attended gathering and was followed by a lively question time. The Local History Collection received wide acclamation for its role in the preservation and conservation of the history of Fremantle. There are currently about four or five authors (or soon to be authors) researching Fremantle at Local History at the present time.

Remember our hours are 9.30am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday so come and see us for any research you may be undertaking!



LEGACY OF A SEA VOYAGE

Lisa Williams
Curator, History
Western Australian Museum

When Maria Elizabeth Webster left England for Fremantle, little did she realise that the paper doll she made at sea would survive for over 140 years.

In 1861 Maria sailed with her five children to start a new life in Western Australia. While on board the *Oryx*, she cut a tiny doll and set of clothing from paper to amuse the children. Among the intricately painted costumes are day and evening garments, including a cape and bonnet in the style of the early Victorian Period.

Over the years the items were handed down through generations of Maria's family, and have survived in near perfect condition. Together with a copy of a letter written by Maria's son, they form a link to the early days of the colony and some of the tragedies that befell the Webster family. Sadly, less than two years after arriving in Australia, Maria and two of her children had died.

In a letter to his Aunt in England, Francis aged thirteen, wrote:

"I have sad, sad news to write. Dearest Mother is no more. She was ill for seven weeks of a fever. Sister Minnie and I were ill at the same time...Poor dear Minnie the best of us sank weaker and weaker until she died one week after Mamma...I have not yet told all our trials. Brother Fred was bound to serve four years at sea. He had made one voyage and had left again for Singapore. Standing on the bulwarks he was swept off into the sea in a storm and lost!"

The words are a poignant reminder of unfulfilled dreams.

In 2004, Barbara Grosvenor – a descendant of Maria Webster, donated the items to the Western Australian Museum. The doll and accompanying clothes are rare examples of childhood ephemera. They provide us with representations of Victorian fashion and, with the letter, allow us to share insights into the experiences of an early settler family. They are a significant acquisition to the collection.

Originally made for temporary amusement, the items now form a permanent part of Maria Webster's legacy in Western Australia.



New acquisition – paper cut out doll and some of the clothes made by Maria Webster on a voyage from England to Fremantle in 1861



A bit of holiday entertainment for you – the answers can all be found in the last five editions of the Fremantle History Society's newsletter (or on the back page of this newsletter).

Membership fees now due

1. In which year was the present 3-storey section of the Hotel Fremantle built on to the corner of High St and Cliff St?
2. What is the name of the cottage at Arthur Head, now the home of the Fremantle Pilot Service and where you can find a display of their work?
3. To whom does the oldest known gravestone in Fremantle Cemetery belong? (The grave features in the booklet which the Society helped the Cemetery Board prepare).
4. Where will you find the names of Fremantle's sporting heroes set in the pavement?
5. Why did the Fremantle Traffic Bridge, constructed in the 1860s, become known as the Bridge of Styx?
6. Who was Fremantle's first Anglican priest, the builder of the original St John's Church and founder of a school for Aboriginal children in 1841?
7. What was the name of the Fremantle larrikin, a one time MLC, who was the subject of Prof Bolton's paper which he presented at the Society's 2003 Studies Day?
8. What is the name of the research project about the history of Fremantle currently being undertaken by Murdoch University?
9. What was the Manning Arcade in High St Mall when it was originally built in 1916?
10. What was the name of the 15 year old boy who was hanged near the Round House in 1844, the first European to be executed in Western Australia?
11. Where will you find the granite spire which marks the grave of Sister Rosa O'Shane who died from influenza in 1919?
12. Three artillery sites formed the crossed triangular system which defended Fremantle Harbour in the early years of World War II. Where were they?
13. What was the name of the book written by Judy M Price which described a visit to Fremantle Harbour during its construction in 1895?
14. In which year was the present Fremantle Railway Station opened?
15. What was the name of the fairground which was set up in 1922 on the current site of Pioneer Park?
16. What is the name of the Fremantle Cemetery Board booklet which details an historical trail of notable graves to be found in the cemetery?

17. What was the name of the building contractor who was involved in the construction of the Swan Hotel in North Fremantle in 1822?
18. What was the Victoria Hall in High St formerly known as?
19. Who was the founder and inaugural President of the Fremantle History Society?
20. What was the main reason for adding a front porch to the Church of Christ in High St in 1939?



**ROYAL WESTERN AUSTRALIAN
AFFILIATED SOCIETIES' CONFERENCE**
16-18 September 2005
Fremantle

The working group has had further meetings and has continued to make good progress with some of the basic planning for the conference. As already indicated, towards the end of the year the group will turn its attention to forming a Conference Management Committee to assume responsibility for making the final arrangements and for supervising the running of the conference.

Areas of responsibility include:

- ❖ Merchandise
- ❖ Publicity
- ❖ Sponsorship
- ❖ Registration
- ❖ Secretarial
- ❖ Accommodation liaison
- ❖ Catering
- ❖ Conference business program
- ❖ Talks program (Saturday)
- ❖ Visits program (Sunday)
- ❖ Finance

Anyone interested in serving on the committee as a co-ordinator of one of the areas or acting as an assistant in some way is asked to contact one of the working group: Kristy Bizzaca (9361 9915), Jacqui Sherriff (9472 1436), David Hutchison (9335 1594), Geoff Higham (9310 1186) or Bob Woollett (9335 7451).



Membership fees now due

SOCIETY AT SPRING ON WRAY

David Hutchison

A table was set up in Little Howard Street for the community event, Spring on Wray. During the time (noon to 4 pm) Margaret McPherson, June Hutchison and Suzan Miles gave me sterling assistance.

Although a last minute arrangement, it was a useful participation for the Society. We sold 19 copies of *Fremantle Studies* and several people either paid or made enquiries about joining. Altogether, we had about 50 interested inquirers and distributed copies of our newsletter, flyers for Studies Day and all the available membership forms. After we ran out of membership application forms, we noted the addresses of interested people to send forms to.



GEORGE FLETCHER MOORE WRITES...

'Nothing remarkable has occurred within the last two days except the appearance of seven spermaceti-whales from Fremantle and that the people have been smitten with the mania for whale fishing; but, unfortunately, there is no suitable fishing tackle for an attack on these monsters of the deep, which would otherwise (and will at a future time) have a successful result.'

An extract from George Fletcher Moore's *Diary of Ten Years of an Early Settler in Western Australia*. Here Moore shows a particular ability for accurate prediction but also to keep control of a long sentence. Moore's diary has become a classic among historians and book collectors. However, a more complete version of the diary is now being prepared by Hesperian Press and is eagerly awaited.



SHOW ME A SIGN

This is the final of our articles focusing on the sign program around Fremantle which

has been brought to you as part of the society's recognition of the Year of the Built Environment. (Note text only from signs)

Location: South Terrace / Henderson Street



Fremantle Markets from South Terrace, c 1900
LHC 532

Fremantle Markets c1900

The Fremantle Markets were opened by Premier Sir John Forrest in 1898.

The markets provided fruit, vegetables and dairy products to local shopkeepers and providoring companies. Growers would arrive at 3 am and unload their produce from horse drawn carts. The auctions would be over by 10 or 11 am and if the selling had gone well the growers would cross to the Freemasons Hotel (now the Sail and Anchor) to enjoy a drink or two and discuss the day's market.

Trading had declined by the 1960s and the markets were closed in 1970. The building was restored and re-opened as art and craft markets in 1975 and the verandahs were restored in 1981. The original wrought iron gates on the three frontages are still in place, as is the Council's motto "Nec prece nec pretio" (Neither by entreaty nor bribery) and its first coat of arms.

Fremantle Technical School c1924

The single storey building was opened in 1878 as a government infants and girls school. When Princess May Girls School (in Adelaide Street) was opened in 1903, the

pupils were gradually moved to the new school and the building was taken over by the technical college.

The two storey technical college was built in 1912 on the site of the playground of the former infants and girls school. The building was designed by Public Works Department architect Hillson Beasley

Freemasons Hotel c1922

Built in 1903, it replaced an earlier (1854-56) hotel on the site. It was renamed the Sail and Anchor Hotel and underwent extensive restoration work in 1984-85 guided by architect Michael Patroni. The work received a Royal Australian Institute of Architects award.



Fremantle Technical School, South Terrace, c 1925
LHC 143

**Location: South Terrace / Parry Street
facing south**

The Oddfellows Family Hotel 1935

The Oddfellows Hotel bears little resemblance to the Norfolk Hotel of today. Originally built in 1887 for George Alfred Davies, a merchant, town councillor (1871-87) and later Mayor of Fremantle (1895), the Oddfellows was enlarged in 1896. The front lounge and public bars were demolished in 1985-86 to reveal the original 1887 fabric, plus construction of the front courtyard, new facade and verandah.

Miss Bennett, whose family came down to Fremantle every year from the goldfields and stayed at the hotel, is photographed on the corner. The publican's daughter, Miss Bucknell, is peeking from the second doorway, while the cocky in the first doorway (on the left) was well known for walking along the bar picking up bottle tops.

Labour Day procession outside the Oddfellows Hotel 1930

Decorated floats depicted Fremantle businesses and followed trade unionists and their banners through the city streets. The annual procession demonstrated trade union solidarity and was an opportunity to take pride in Fremantle as a service and manufacturing centre.



Oddfellows Hotel, South Terrace, 1935
LHC 1851

**Location: Henderson St / William St
facing south**

Warders' cottages

Many warders' cottages, built to accommodate prison warders and their families, still remain in Henderson Street and Holdsworth Street. Numbers 7-17, 19-29 and 33-41 were constructed between 1851 and 1858 by convict labour from stone quarried from the prison site. The quarters, built close to the prison to ensure warders could respond quickly to any emergency, remained in continuous use by staff until closure of the prison in 1990.

Note the inscription "VR1851" on the central column of no's 19-29.

Demolition of warders cottages Henderson Street 1971

This group of warders' terrace houses was built in 1898 opposite the courthouse and show a more elaborate style than those still remaining. They were demolished in 1971 for the Queensgate shopping complex and car park.

Demolition of Salvation Army Citadel 1971

This building, located on the corner of Henderson and William Streets, was built in 1898 and demolished in 1971 for the Queensgate complex. The Salvation Army established in Fremantle in 1891 and met in premises in William and Essex Streets before building their own Citadel.

William Detmold building c1911

This warehouse was constructed in 1899-1901 on the corner of Henderson and William Streets (now the open car park behind you). It was one of the tallest buildings in Fremantle at the time and housed the Detmold printing business. Later known as Spicers Ltd, the firm relocated in 1968 and the building purchased by the Fremantle City Council and demolished in 1970.



Henderson St Warders Quarters, 1971
LHC 3638

(Many thanks to Ian James of the City of Fremantle for his prompt and generous assistance in bringing you this information on the sign project)



CLAREMONT AND CONVICTS – COME AND FIND THE CONNECTION

The first meeting of 2005 will be a visit to the Claremont Museum. In 1862 the first school between Perth and Fremantle was built on Freshwater Bay. This building is now part of the core of the museum site, which opened in 1975. It was established by a concerned group of local residents.

The museum is located at 66 Victoria Pde, Claremont. The visit will include a tour of the museum and members and their friends are invited to bring a picnic or barbecue dinner to enjoy in the park below the museum on the river after the tour.

Put the date in your diary now –
22 February 2005 – 6.00 pm.



ANSWERS:

1. 1898
2. Trivett's Cottage
3. Mary Anne Morrell
4. King's Square
5. It was constructed of jarrah logs.
6. Rev George King
7. Harry Marshall
8. Voices from the West End
9. Majestic Picture House
10. John Gavin
11. Woodman's Point – site of the former Quarantine Station
12. Rottnest Island, North and South Mole, Buckland Hill
13. Land of Gold
14. 1907
15. Uglieland
16. heroes and Villains
17. Richard Rennie
18. St John's Hall
19. Dianne Davidson
20. Reduce noise of trams.



MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND A
SAFE AND
HAPPY NEW YEAR

Membership fees now due