



FREMANTLE HISTORY SOCIETY

Established 1994

The Secretary, PO Box 1305
FREMANTLE WA 6959

**Winter Edition
2006**

Editors: Ron Davidson, Dianne Davidson, Anne Brake



Dianne Davidson and Anne Brake representing the editorial team, collect the Fremantle Heritage Festival Award from Fremantle Mayor, Peter Tagliaferri and his East Fremantle counterpart, Jim O'Neil. Photo courtesy Fremantle Herald

FREMANTLE STUDIES WINS HERITAGE AWARD!

Awards night at the Maritime Museum, during the Fremantle/East Fremantle Heritage Week, proved a triumph for the Fremantle History Society. The Society's *Fremantle Studies* Volume 4 was the judges' choice for the best local history published work. Judges noted the academic quality of both the research and writing contained in our journal.

Volume 4 opened with a masterly article by Professor Geoffrey Bolton on Fremantle's larrikin sports official and (briefly) member for West Province in the Legislative Council, Thomas Henry 'Harry' Marshall. Bolton closed his paper with:

He deserves our attention because he represents so many of the elements which came together in Western Australian working class culture: convictism, sport, pubs, the trade union movement, and not least the staunch sense of local patriotism appropriate in a Fremantle lad.

There are other interesting papers. Geoffrey Higham writes of a relative who was different in the world of importers, exporters and merchants – because she was a woman, Mary Higham. Professor David Dolan writes of the importance of heritage in Fremantle and the dishonesty which surrounded the demolition of John Tonkin's house; Bob Reece tells of the contribution of the Rev. George King to indigenous education and Anglicanism in Fremantle; and David Worth on Fremantle's response to visiting nuclear ships in the 1980s. There are other papers by Anne Brake, Government architect Geoffrey London, Rhonda Jamieson and finally Allen Graham who debunks the idea that only one duel was ever fought in Fremantle. Congratulations to all contributors.

Fremantle History Society stalwart and former committee member David Hutchison took second prize in the published section with his *Fremantle Walks*, published by Fremantle Arts Centre Press.

Allen Graham, another Society member, who took out the unpublished local history section last year, repeated the win with his evocative account of the life of Patrick Moloney, publican at the Emerald Isle hotel when the *Catalpa* conspirators stayed there. Another of our members, Graham Nowland, was second in this section with his study of how Fremantle was presented to readers in fiction.

The Fremantle History Society also plays another role in the local history awards – we are sponsors for the best secondary schools project. This was won by Sam Newman and Luka Zivkovic from South Fremantle Senior High School with their enthusiastic study of the Long Jetty. This involved a snorkelling tour over the old piles and underwater photographs of the Old Jetty's remnants.

The general impression of the Heritage Week was that it had been a great success. The number of events was up as were the attendance figures at particular events.



COMMITTEE MEMBERS

As the newsletter has been distributed before the annual general meeting, the new committee has not been ratified. Details will be published in the next edition.

In the meantime if you have any issues you wish to raise or questions to ask, please contact President, Dianne Davidson by phone on 9430 6096 (email ronaldi@cygnus.uwa.edu.au) or write to PO Box 1305, Fremantle 6160

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

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. Be sure to check details as meeting dates may differ from this.



COMING EVENTS

FEAST AT THE FLYING ANGEL

Have you ever wondered what lies behind the closed doors of the Flying Angel Club? Did you know that it had its beginnings in the Sailors' Rest originally started by the Woman's Christian Temperance Union in 1892 in the Freemasons' Hall? Fremantle History Society members Wendy Markmann and Wendy Antonovsky have been researching the history of the Flying Angel and the Sailors' Rest and will present their fascinating story, together with a photographic display, at our annual **Pub Lunch**.

Come and find out all about this seamen's club on **Saturday 5 August** while gazing out over the magnificent harbour view and feasting on a sumptuous assortment of curries, condiments and raitas, about which we've had rave reviews. There will also be a bar open for drinks.

Meet at the Flying Angel, 76 Queen Victoria Street, Fremantle (parking in Officeworks car park next door) at **12 noon for 12.30pm** all-you-can-eat buffet lunch. Cost \$16.50. **RSVP Dianne 9430 6096 mob 0403 026 096** or email ronaldi@cygnus.uwa.edu.au by **Monday 31 July**.

NOTE: This year's Pub Lunch is early Saturday 5 August.

BEYOND THE BRIDGE

Its been some time since the history society has ventured beyond the bridge to the northern most extremes of our town. The September meeting will do just that, when Ann Forma, long time resident, landscape architect, community activist and former Fremantle City Councillor, will give us a potted history of North Fremantle since European settlement and then discuss changes in the area since 1942, illustrated with aerial photographs taken regularly since that time. It promises to be a stimulating and instructive evening!

Venture across the bridge to the **North Fremantle Bowls Club**, Thompson Rd, North Fremantle. Meeting begins at **7.00 pm** with the usual refreshments served after the formalities.

2006 FREMANTLE STUDIES DAY

This year the Fremantle History Society is organising its annual Studies Day in conjunction with the Voices of the West End Project run by Curtin University, and the day will include the launch of the project's multi-media archive search engine.

As usual, there will be papers dealing with hitherto unexplored areas of Fremantle history, people and places. Details will be circulated closer to the time, but put the date in your diary now!

Saturday 28 October 12.30 registration for 1pm start.



MEETING REPORTS

GATE KEEPERS: CONSERVATION WORKS TO FREMANTLE PRISON GATEHOUSE

Members and their friends gathered at the Fremantle Prison Gatehouse on 29 May to learn more about the conservation of this important element in one of Western Australia's most significant heritage sites. Graeme Gammie, the Prison's Executive Manager, welcomed the History Society to the site, glad of the chance to show off some of the work that has been going on at the site over the last couple of years. He also introduced Phil Griffiths, of Phillip Griffiths Architects, who directed the conservation project.

Phil explained how the project has developed over several years and described the various tools that conservation architects and builders use to determine the most appropriate solution for the job at hand. With conservation jobs it is almost impossible to know the extent of work needed until the job begins. New and unexpected issues surface once fabric is removed and it is possible to see the extent of the problem. This is the time to determine the cause of the trouble and measures can be put into place to prevent future damage.

Several possible solutions to the conservation of the limestone façade of the Gatehouse had been determined several years ago. Trial panels were implemented and later assessed to determine the most appropriate treatment. Information from the building itself, including the levels and type of deterioration to adjoining areas, assisted this process. A number of questions remained unanswered however, including what was the function of the small object that resembles a miniature loudspeaker embedded in the limestone.

The Fremantle Prison meeting was held as part of the Fremantle Heritage Festival.



'FREMANTLE IS...'

At our June meeting which also formed part of Heritage Week, veteran performer and former Society President Bob Woollett presented a wide-ranging and entertaining talk on various aspects of Fremantle's colourful past. He covered not only the better known and more dramatic incidents like the William Nairn Clark / George French Johnson duel, the hanging of John Gavin at the Round House, the *Catalpa* incident and the famous escapes of John Boyle O'Reilly and Moondyne Joe (Joseph Bolitho Johns), but also more complex aspects of Fremantle's history like the achievements of CY O'Connor and the 'Bloody Sunday' riots of 1919.

Snippets of new information also emerged from the audience. Fay Campbell pointed out that Cantonment Road once continued on as far as Bicton, while David Hutchison mentioned some of his recent research which had raised new questions about the nature of Tom Edwards' death and the identity of his assailant.

This event proved so popular, with over fifty people attending, that the Society is considering making a talk of this nature a regular Fremantle Heritage Week feature. Much thanks to Bob for providing such a worthwhile History Society contribution!

LANCE HOLT SCHOOL AND AGM

As the newsletter will be distributed before the AGM in order to give notice of our extra early "Pub Lunch" at the Flying Angel, this meeting report will appear in the next edition.



AUSTRALIA ICOMOS NATIONAL CONFERENCE - FREMANTLE WA

9-11 November 2006

Australia ICOMOS 2006 national conference will explore a range of issues facing historic port cities and towns across Australia and around the world. Over the two main days of

the conference, three keynote and over forty other speakers will investigate the tensions and opportunities that arise due to changes in use patterns and technology, particularly in relation to the built fabric. Papers will include a range of case studies covering diverse global ports - from Gdansk to Geelong and Fremantle to Fiji. The changing demographics of the towns and the planning and heritage pressure this creates on housing, services and facilities will also be explored. Heritage professionals as well as port managers will be presenting papers, promising informed debate about both operational and conservation issues. Sustainability, interpretation, planning and adaptive re-use topics will consider the dynamics of heritage in working industrial environments.

As well as the more formal elements of the conference, a range of social events has been organised which will give delegates the opportunity to mix with other delegates. A number of pre and post conference tours will be offered providing insights into key issues facing some of the state's most important heritage projects and sites including Rottnest Island, the West End of the City of Fremantle, the Fremantle Prison and sites associated with iconic engineer, CY O'Connor.

While focusing on ports, their infrastructure and surrounding urban environments, the conference promises to be of great relevance to anyone involved or interested in heritage management.

For more information on the conference go to www.promaco.com.au/2006/icomos



NOTES FROM THE LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTION

Alison Bauer

The April-June quarter has been a challenging one in Local History with two staff members and one of our volunteers away on leave. Lorraine Stevens is in Africa for six months and Alison Bauer spent a

month in Ireland. Shirley Watts, the volunteer who cuts local newspapers, has also gone on holiday, so Kristi McNulty and Loretta O'Reilly have been busy.

We had a number of successful and well attended workshops held in the Local History Collection during the Heritage Festival. Well known historian Kris Bizzaca conducted two sessions of Researching the History of Your House which attracted a total attendance of about 30 people. Robyn Hukin of the West Australian Genealogical Society presented Family History for Beginners attended by 23 people who were keen to discover the many different avenues available to obtain more information about their ancestors. David Ashman and Jonathon Schmidt from the State Library Preservation Services described the proper care and preservation of family papers to an interested audience of 23. Preservation Services have already offered to do another similar workshop next year as they had such a good reception.

Recent acquisitions have included microfilm of the first 30 years of Minute Books for the Town of East Fremantle, covering the period 1897 to 1927, which were produced by the State Records Office. Unfortunately it does not appear likely that they will microfilm the remainder and LHC staff have submitted an application for a grant to the National Library of Australia for funds to enable the microfilming of Minute Books up to 1975. We have also received a brief pamphlet outlining the history of the Fremantle Ladies Hockey Club 1946-2006 and a history (in Croatian) of the establishment of the Croatian Club in North Fremantle. All the entries in the Heritage Festival Local History Awards have also been received in the collection. Our latest Oral History project is a study of Fremantle Boatlifters in Mews Road, with interviews being conducted by Heather Campbell.

In April a production team from SBS were in Fremantle to produce a part of a series on Australian Iconic Towns. They filmed in Fremantle and also at Rottnest and the Leighton battery site. Preliminary research

was done at the LHC and some early photos and maps from the Collection were photographed to be incorporated into the final product, so it will be interesting to see the end result.



ANOTHER INDUSTRIAL SITE: TINNY THOMAS' GINGER BEER FACTORY

Ron Davidson

This newsletter's favourite industrial / commercial place is different from the last one which was the old Furphy Brothers foundry at 8 Grey Street, now a sail makers loft. This winter edition's special place is Jack 'Tinny' Thomas' ginger beer factory and residence at 92-94 Marine Parade. Tinny was given council approval to sell ginger beer from a green drop-side caravan in front of the station. A pot of icy ginger beer from Tinny's secret recipe cost threepence.

In the early twenties the vacant block at the corner of Fitzgerald (later called Marine) Terrace and Russell Street became a ginger beer factory and wood yard. A few years later a residence and shop and outdoor servery were added. Later in the twenties and thirties Tinny opened a 'modern' ginger beer shop in Market Street.

The final question is why Tinny was called Tinny. There are several theories, most of them revolving around the fact that he was lucky: tin in an earlier version of slang meant luck. Perhaps you can give us a better reason, and also nominate a favourite industrial place!



PROPOSED ING COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT ON VICTORIA QUAY

Dianne Davidson

The Fremantle Town Hall was packed to the rafters for the special electors' meeting called by the Fremantle City Council at the request of residents to discuss the proposed

commercial development on Victoria Quay by Fremantle Ports and ING Real Estate.

A number of speakers rose to condemn the existing proposal as dull, unimaginative and grossly out of scale with the surrounding landscape, calling for a return to the drawing board. Strong resolutions were passed demanding that existing options be scrapped and proper community consultation take place to canvass all possibilities for the site, which was seen as a crucially important one for the future of Fremantle.

All speakers felt that the location demanded something more interesting than yet another suburban shopping mall. The resolutions also demanded that Council contact the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure to convey to her the views of the meeting and to ask that the portion of Victoria Quay which has become superfluous to Fremantle Ports requirements should be returned to the City and to come under the City's planning policies.

Interestingly though several of the proponents of the current proposal were present at the meeting, none of them voted against any of the resolutions put which were carried unanimously.

Subsequently a full meeting of the Fremantle City Council unanimously endorsed and strengthened the resolutions passed at the electors' meeting and councillors and Council officers have been meeting with both the Fremantle Ports and the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure.

Whatever happens on this crucial heritage site could make or break Fremantle – we will await developments with great interest!



SIGNIFICANT PUBLICATION

The long-awaited *Building a Colony: the Convict Legacy*, edited by Jacqui Sherriff and Anne Brake, is going to see the light of day at last in early October. It is being

published by the Centre for WA History, and will be launched at the Centre's 21st birthday party.

It will be an important publication with papers exploring the impact of convicts on the social and economic life of Western Australia, as well as studies of the lives of the convicts themselves and their keepers.

This collection of papers should be of great significance to anyone interested in the history of the Fremantle Prison, one of Western Australia's most important and iconic heritage sites. Keep an eye out!



RWAHS AFFILIATED SOCIETIES CONFERENCE – CELEBRATING THE CENTENARY OF CUNDERDIN

The 2006 Affiliated Societies Conference will be hosted by the Cunderdin Historical Society, and will be held on Friday 29 September to Sunday 1 October.

Events include a civic reception, conference dinner, a visit to Cunderdin Museum and a coach tour to local sites of historical interest. A series of talks will also be given on the Saturday, covering the history of Cunderdin and the aerodrome, the life of RJ Anketell, water prior to the CWS, and a hundred years of education in the area.

We would be pleased to hear from any member who would like to attend and represent the Fremantle History Society as a delegate during the business section of the conference on the Saturday morning. Members are also welcome to attend all or part of the programme as observers.

Cunderdin is two and a half hours' drive from Perth on the Great Eastern Highway, and local accommodation can be arranged if desired. For further information contact Bob Woollett on 9335 7451.



GLEANINGS FROM THE *HERALD* 2

David Hutchison

By 1967, the end of convict transportation was near. The people of Fremantle, living in the shadow of the Convict Establishment, must have felt its presence more than colonists in other districts and towns. In the early years of its existence, the *Herald* often reported escapes by convicts, as in the issue of 9 February of that year:

On the 5th inst., at 5 am three prisoners made their escape from the North Fremantle jetty party, two of whom were captured within three hours after their escape by Constable Fee, a most active officer, the third man was arrested on the evening of the same day.

On the 7th inst., Sergeant Regan and Constable Fee proceeded to Woodman's Point, where they captured William Burnside, who had escaped for the second time on the 2nd ult., having previously, two years ago, been one of the ten who made their escape from the chain gang.

Another matter that would be raised frequently throughout the twenty years of the paper's existence was the need for a safe harbour and reports of various proposals for one. There was such an item in the issue of 4 May 1867:

The new passage across the Bar is making rapid progress under the active supervision of Warder Griffin; on Wednesday morning, the Clerk of Works and Mr Trigg attended to witness the explosion of a number of blasts, which were most effectually carried out, rending the work in all directions.

The cut through the bar at the mouth of the Swan was known as 'Trigg's Cut.'

In an earlier issue (9 February 1867) the impact of the development of steamships, railways and the Suez Canal on the

transport of mail, cargo and passengers from England to Australia is foreseen:

It is probable that at no distant time the Italian railways will be made available for the transmission of our overland mails to India. And of [sic] the Suez Canal also completes the passage of the mails to India and the East will be shortened in point of time very considerably. The port of Brindisi which would probably be selected for the shipment of these mails, is almost as far distant from Alexandria as is the Island of Malta. The sea voyage from Malta to Marseilles, which is the most stormy portion of the whole, would thus be avoided, and the land journey through Italy would be more rapid as well as more agreeable.

About thirty-three years later, Sir John Forrest would declare that he believed that Fremantle would become 'the Brindisi of Australia'. That is he envisaged that it would become the terminus for steamer services from Europe and that passengers, mail and goods could be carried to other states by rail. This concept has been proposed again in recent times.

The next issue of the paper, 16 Feb. 1867, had another account of a convict escape, which hints at a family tragedy.

On the 9th inst., Mary Laura Liggins, wife of Warder Liggins, was charged by Mr. sub-Inspector Snook, with, in November and December last, harbouring a prisoner named Riley, who she stated, was her brother, and at the time a convict illegally at large. Sentenced to pay a fine of £5.

There is also an account—somewhat flippant—of one of Moondyne Joe's escapes:

The inmates of the Convict Establishment are in a very unsettled and excited state, and the booming of the signal gun is clearly heard with the usual rush of policeman [sic], turning out of Pensioners and an unhealthy looking

out for excitement by the alarmed inhabitants. The notorious Prison breaker, Moondine [sic] Joe has made his escape...Moondine has performed his promise to the Visiting Magistrate that he would soon escape again. In this instance he has shown considerable tact; for better safe keeping he had been placed inside the prison walls breaking stones; putting his hat on top of a stick, he contrived to work a hole through the wall of the yard attached to Mr. Lefroy's [H. M. Lefroy became Prison Superintendent in 1859] house, so small that if a woman had not seen him it would not have been believed that a man could have forced his way though he was obliging enough to leave his irons behind.



FOR YOUR DIARY

Sunday 5 August, Pub Lunch - Feast at the Flying Angel Club. 76 Queen Victoria Street, Fremantle (parking in Officeworks car park next door) at **12 noon for 12.30pm.** Cost \$16.50. **RSVP Dianne 9430 6096 mob 0403 026 096 or email ronaldi@cygnus.uwa.edu.au by Monday 31 July.**

Tuesday 26 September – Beyond the Bridge. Learn more about the northern reaches of the city at the **North Fremantle Bowls Club**, Thompson Rd, North Fremantle. **7.00 pm** start.

Saturday 28 October – Fremantle Studies Day. Voices of the West End Project. **12.30 registration** for 1pm start. More information to follow.



WE HAVE A HERITAGE AMBASSADOR IN FREMANTLE!

For the first time since the Heritage Council of WA instituted its heritage awards in 1993

the award for contribution by an individual to WA's heritage has gone to a Fremantle resident, veteran heritage campaigner Les Lauder, who was named Heritage Ambassador for the year by the Minister for Heritage, Michelle Roberts.

Les has an outstanding record in heritage activism, beginning when he formed the Fremantle Society in 1972 and became shortly afterwards the first pro-heritage candidate to be elected to the Fremantle City Council. This was followed by a series of hard-fought campaigns to save many significant buildings from planned demolition, including the Victoria Hall, the Fremantle Markets and the Evan Davies Library (now the Dome) and to stop the widening of High and Henry Streets which would have resulted in the wholesale destruction of the West End and which was then firmly on the Council's agenda.

In 1973 the federal government appointed Les WA representative on the inaugural National Estate Committee, which later became the Australian Heritage Commission. He was later involved in discussions with the WA state government which resulted in the passing of the Heritage of Western Australia Act 1990 and the setting up of the Heritage Council.

This heritage award could not have gone to a more deserving recipient – congratulations, Les!



WE APOLOGISE!

In our last issue we published a letter from 'Fremantle girl' Shirley Lippiatt giving information about relatives who were prominent in Fremantle. One of these was Tom Lippiatt, the name of whose stables in Onslow Street we misread as 'Threeanin'. The correct name, Shirley tells us, is 'Ghreania'. Sorry, Shirley!



**WA MARITIME MUSEUM'S BATAVIA
LECTURE SERIES
SS KOOMBANA – COLD CASE REOPENED**

The disappearance in 1912 of the luxury coastal steamer *Koombana* remains a great unsolved maritime mystery. Several well organised searches have ended in disappointment, but still new information comes to light. This shared presentation will blend fresh research with the wisdom of hindsight to reach striking conclusions about where this elusive ship may be found.

Annie Boyd, Ted Graham and Kerry Thom will outline the results of a lifetime of research and discuss the technical and funding requirements of a new *Koombana* search project.

\$10 at the door, but reservations are **ESSENTIAL**. Call 9431 8555 by 5pm, Wednesday 26 July.

This illustrated lecture will be held in the WA maritime Museum Lecture Theatre on **Friday 28 July at 6.00 pm.**

Refreshments will be served after the lecture.



YOUR DUES ARE DUE!

Fremantle History Society is an active and important addition to the Fremantle community. As well as a lively meetings program, members are involved in a range of critical historic and heritage issues and the Society supports and encourages the research of and access to Fremantle's colourful past. Our receipt of the heritage Week award for volume 4 of our journal is recognition of the important work we are doing.

Your membership fees contribute to this and assist us to ensure the Society can continue to contribute in these vital ways.

To ensure you keep up to date on the society's events and you continue to receive our informative and entertaining newsletter, fill in the attached form and return with your membership fees as soon as possible. This year we are attempting to cut back on postage by sending the newsletter by email to those who would like to and are able to receive it this way. Reminders for meetings and other news and highlights can also be sent via email. If you would like to participate, please include your email details on the relevant section of the form.



Fremantle Harbour, 1969. Photo courtesy Michal Lewi