



FREMANTLE HISTORY SOCIETY

Established 1994

The Secretary, 24 Fothergill St,
FREMANTLE WA 6160

**Autumn Edition
1999**



History Society members listen to Ann Forma during the North Fremantle Ramble, enroute to Passmore Ave.

Passmore Avenue

How many members have noticed this tiny picturesque street to the left of John Street in North Fremantle? Lined with wooden cottages set in leafy gardens, it is a place like no other.

Passmore Avenue was created by Henry Passmore, who arrived in Fremantle on board the *Racehorse* in 1865, together with his wife Mary and their eight children, George, Henry (Harry), Annie, Minnie, Rosalind, John Phillip (Jack), Charles Christian, Mary Ellen (Nellie), and Jessey, who died at the age of eight months.

Henry had been with the Royal Navy, serving in the Baltic and in the Crimea 1854-1862. After his arrival in Western Australia he was put in charge of convict public service works, roads, and river dredging. He is also recorded as farming in the Swan District in 1868. He opened the York-Greenmount quarries and controlled the first steam power there, and he was one of the first officials with the Public Works Department.

Henry purchased lots 35, 36, 47 and 48 North Fremantle on 6 October 1891. He built his family home in a street which he named Raleigh Avenue after his birth place in Raleigh, Barnstaple, England. He also built other houses for his children and friends. Seven wooden cottages were constructed between 1892 and 1910, with flowering gardens at the front. A number of decorative

arches spanned the street, and there were orchards, stables, vegetable gardens, fowl yards and wells at the rear of Raleigh Avenue. The atmosphere was reminiscent of a small English village.

Henry was a kindly, humorous man, with a talent for woodcarving and furniture making, and an interest in horticulture and botany. He kept his family together with the help of his eldest daughter Annie after his wife died, leaving him with seven young children. He was for many years a member of the North Fremantle Council, and Justice of the Peace for North Fremantle. He was also credited by C Y O'Connor with the idea of taking the bar away to construct Fremantle Harbour. Raleigh Avenue was renamed Passmore Avenue in his honour in 1934.

The Passmore family continued to own the street until 1938 when it was sold. In 1948 lots 35 and 36 (the orchard area at the back of the street) were sold, which meant that the original estate of Henry Passmore was split into two parts. In 1956 lots 47 and 48 were divided into eight shares in the form of a Purple Title which still remains today. Two of the houses have been lost; No. 2 in a fire, and No. 10 when lots 35 and 36 were redeveloped into town houses.

Passmore Avenue has been home to many people. In recent times it was the birthplace of Deckchair Theatre, and the headquarters of both the Socialist Labor League and the Socialist Workers' Party, as well as being used as a film set. People who have lived there have fond memories of the street, and comment on its uniqueness. It remains today as a testimony to one of Western Australia's great pioneering individuals.

(Material largely taken from David Kaesehagen: 'Passmore Avenue, North

Fremantle, 1891-1991'. For anyone interested in finding out more about this fascinating little street, the Local History Collection has a large amount of information as well as photographs of the area.)



COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The following were elected as members of the committee of the FHS at the last annual general meeting.

Elaine Berry	9336 1906
Bob Woollett	9335 7451
Dianne Davidson	9430 6096
Anne Brake (wk)	9335 9473
Phyl Brown (wk)	9430 7449
Ron Davidson	9430 6096
Alan Kelsall	9336 4573
Kath Jordan	9335 8974
Alison Gregg (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 on the numbers indicated.

General meetings of the Society are generally held on the 4th Tuesday of the month. Details of these meetings are 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

The Navy at Fremantle

Captain Len Vickridge RAN (Ret.) AM OBE VRD will be the guest speaker at

the Society's meeting on Tuesday 25 May. He will discuss the role of the Royal Australian Navy Reserves (Fremantle Division) and the RAN's long connection with Fremantle.

Len is eminently qualified to tell this story. He has lived all his life in Fremantle, served on HMAS *Fremantle*, and served a grand total of thirty-nine years with the Naval Reserves both as a sailor and as an officer. He is currently researching the history of maritime buildings now occupied by Notre Dame University.

This meeting will take place in the Local History Collection at the Fremantle City Library on Tuesday 25 May starting at 7.00pm. The Local History Collection includes over 5000 prints related to Fremantle and its history. Many of them are of boats of all kinds, from tugs to skiffs, ferries, passenger liners, corvettes, bulk carriers and submarines. There is even a photo from Edwardian times of model yacht racing at South Beach.

Mystery Pub Lunch

For those of you who missed out on the very enjoyable Phillimore's lunch last year, you have been given a second chance! The Society has decided to repeat this very successful winter warmer at a different, local, historic watering hole in June. As with the format last year members and their friends are welcome and a tour of the premises will be made before the feasting begins.

Final details are still to be confirmed and a flyer will be sent in the near future with all the necessary information - keep your diaries free on Sundays towards the end of June!

AGM - Army Barracks

The Annual General Meeting for 1999 will be held at the Army Museum in Burt Street, Fremantle on Tuesday 27 July at 7.00pm. After the (as usual!) speedy conclusion of official business, members will be taken on a tour of the current exhibition, followed by light refreshments. Please note: there will be a small charge (\$4) for the tour and refreshments.

At this time members could give some thought to joining the ever-hardworking committee! You only need an hour or so to spare on the second Tuesday of the month at 5.30pm. If you are interested, please phone Dianne on 9430 6096 SOON to arrange nomination!



MEETING REPORTS

Aboard the *Duyfken*

Dusk was approaching when more than 50 members and friends assembled at the Round House for the March meeting. Society President, Elaine Berry, pointed to landmarks of historical significance as the group moved from there to the Fishing Boat Harbour. Here boat builder Nick Burningham took us on board the *Duyfken* where he pointed out some of the special features of building an early seventeenth century ship in the late nineteen nineties. Nick described how design of the hull depended in large part on the shape the timbers for the hull took when bent. This reversed the process later used for boat building. After inspecting the ship many members stayed for fish and chips at the water's edge.

North Fremantle Ramble

David Kaesehagen and Ann Forma provided about 30 members of the Society with an informative and interesting view at the old and new of North Fremantle. The suburb has gone through many changes over the years. The last several years have seen a "gentrification" of several areas with house prices reaching heights that would have had the old timers reeling. Local residents are cautiously optimistic of what these new developments might hold for their neighbourhood.

Many of the participants had either grown up in one of the suburb's streets or had worked in one of its many offices or factories and this added much depth to the discussions. Some of the old streets have disappeared, as have the industries - to the west of the railway line over 300 homes were destroyed

Our rambling took us through the heart of North Fremantle, up to Rocky Bay and down to Passmore Ave (see lead story). Our great thanks go to Ann but particularly David who opened his home in Passmore Ave for very welcome refreshments at the end of the walk.

Memories of an East Fremantle Childhood: Rusty Christensen

The battle for the title of Fremantle's best storyteller edged a little Rusty Christensen's way at the April meeting. Rusty described vividly his boyhood, much of it spent camping under a large peppermint tree on the East Fremantle foreshore. He also told us of the picaresque collection of people who lived, often illegally, around the hillside there. It was an account with a real Mark Twain touch. Rusty, whose father was a lumper, noted the special place lumpers had in Fremantle when he was growing up.



Fremantle History Society: Oral History Submission

The Library and Information Service of WA is currently conducting a review of the Oral History Unit at Battye Library - unfortunately, no information is available about who is actually conducting the review.

The Fremantle History Society has put forward a submission to the 'review committee', stressing very strongly that the Oral History Unit needs to function as a central source of information and guidance to oral historians, amateur and professional, since there is no other body with the capacity to do so. We have also urged that whoever is placed in charge of the Unit should be a qualified historian and able to exercise quality control over the content of the current collection and over future acquisitions.

There is no indication as to how long the review is likely to take. We will be keeping an eye on the process, and following up with requests for further information if necessary.



More About Your Committee

Whoops! We didn't include Phyl Brown last issue - sorry Phyl.

Phyl Brown – Committee Member

Knowing no better because they had been raised there themselves, Phyl's parents brought her up in Sydney, not Fremantle (a distinct liability in life).

With husband and five children she came to WA in 1976, matriculated, then

majoring in history at UWA. It was during the time Phyl spent researching and writing a history of the Fremantle Hospital that she caught the 'Fremantle History bug'.

Now, as curator of the Fremantle History Museum and a curator in the History Department of the Western Australian Museum, she has been known to become inordinately excited about some of the objects having Fremantle provenance which are donated to the State's collection. Once it was a cart, another time a Lumper's mug fashioned from a jam tin and even a straightjacket from the Lunatic Asylum! Phyl's other passions include reading, music, beaching and walking.



Fremantle Street Names

In this and future editions of the newsletter, we will present instalments of an article which appeared many years ago in the (then) *WA Historical Society Journal and Proceedings* on Fremantle street names and their origins. The information was gathered from early maps in the Titles Office, the blue books of WA, and old records from the Chief Secretary's Department. It was presented as a paper before the Society by K Caldwell on 29 May 1931.

Miss Caldwell begins with some interesting observations:

'Unless corroborated, too much reliance cannot be placed on oral testimony, for life in the early days of the Colony was extremely casual, just as it is in the outback today. A family who arrived in 1829 had been living in the town for over 40 years, and were under the impression their address was Beach street; in fact, their letters were

addressed so. It was not until the Titles Act under the Torrens system came into force in 1874 and their property was registered, that they realised they had been living in Phillimore street. In this connection it might be stated that Phillimore street was not a continuation of Beach street, Bay street coming between. Before the Titles Act became law, many lots that had been abandoned were 'jumped', and in many cases when real owners of property came to register they found caveats had been lodged by creditors, in many cases hotelkeepers, for accounts long overdue.'

Here, then, is the alphabetical list of streets, together with the origins of the names and other relevant pieces of information.

ADELAIDE: Queen Adelaide, consort of William IV, after whom the city of Adelaide was later named. This is one of the earliest streets, appearing in the survey of 1833.

ALMA: This street does not appear on the survey of the town in 1844, and did not come into existence until after the convict period, when the Convict Establishment (1855) and the Comptroller's Residence, the Knowle, were built. Many of the pensioners who came out as guards on the convict ships would no doubt have seen military service in the Crimea, and from the Battle of Alma in that campaign (1854) the street would derive its name. The Knowle, which took up the greater portion of the northern side of the street, was later converted into an Old Men's Depot, and when it was afterwards taken over as the Fremantle Public Hospital, the old men were removed to the Barracks (now the Immigrants' Home) in South Terrace. Before October 25, 1897, when the first board was appointed, all that was in existence

in Fremantle was a casualty hospital, the staff comprising a sister-in-charge, two servants and an orderly. In the report for the year 1895 the total of patients was 155, with a daily average of 18, and 17 deaths in the period under review. The hospital was under the supervision of Dr A R Waylen, who is shown in the blue book as having paid it two surprise visits in 1894. He joined the service in March, 1859, and was appointed Colonial Surgeon for the Colony in August, 1872.

AMHERST: The Hon J G H Amherst was private secretary to the Governor, Sir Federick Napier Broome, 1885-1889.

ARUNDEL: Edward George Fitzalan Howard, first Baron Howard of Glossop (1818-1883), second son of the 13th Duke of Norfolk, was MP for Arundel in England from 1853 to 1868, losing his seat in the general election that year. Howard street adjoins Arundel street, thus making the connection. Between this street and Howard street was situated the old water jetty. The Fremantle sea baths which were demolished in the early part of this century were built over the spot. Eastward of the jetty was a well and a pump house. The water was carried by a pipe to the jetty where it was put into casks and shipped on lighters to be transferred to overseas vessels anchored in the roads.

ASHBURTON TERRACE: The original owner of the land on which this street was made was Mr H J Higham, and Ashburton was the name of his station in the North-West.

ATTFIELD: Dr G Attfield was Imperial Surgeon between 1854 and 1879. He married a daughter of Surveyor-General Roe and died in England at an advanced age.

BANNISTER: Captain T Bannister was the buyer of the first allotment in Fremantle. He was an early explorer and at one time Government Resident in the town. On December 14, 1830, he set out with Mr Smythe of the Surveyor-General's department, and two servants to tramp to Albany via Kelmscott. They duly arrived on February 4, 1831. Bannister, near the Williams, bears his name.

BARNETT: Dr H C Barnett, whose first Government appointment was in 1868, was appointed Superintendent of the Asylum in April 1872, at a salary of 500 pounds. He was also Colonial Surgeon till 1895, when the office was abolished. At the same time he acted as District Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages. His private residence was on the cliff overlooking this street. Mr J K Hitchcock in the *History of Fremantle* mentions the belief that was never contradicted in Fremantle, that the doctor amputated his own leg when at sea. (He had come to the colony as a ship's surgeon). What he himself did tell one of his patients was that he had had an accident when kangarooing, and the limb had had to be amputated. Some time later it appeared as if the limb were becoming gangrenous. He was then at York and the only medical man in the district, and, as the case was desperate, and he knew he would not be able to take the long rough journey by road to Perth, with the help of his man, and no doubt a local anaesthetic, he was able to cut off a further portion of the leg and thus arrest the mortification.

BATEMAN: The Bateman family arrived in 1830, John Bateman being the first postmaster at Fremantle. The firm of J and W Bateman Ltd, general merchants, founded by his sons, is still in existence. (Note: sadly, no longer)

BEACH: This name is self-explanatory, as the street runs parallel with the shore of the river.

BEARD: George Beard was Town Councillor from 1906 to 1909.

BELLEVUE: The origin of this street name is doubtful, but the short portion northward of Fothergill street was originally called Higham street, John Joseph Higham being one of the Town Councillors. His parents arrived in the Colony in 1853 and started business at the corner of High and Pakenham streets. On the father's death Mrs M Higham built on the block at the south-west corner of High and Market streets, the property being still known as Higham's Buildings. Previously it had been a vacant allotment covered with rushes and pools of water, whereto the ducks of the town used to repair for refreshment, and where also small boys used to search for eggs.

BLINCO: Henry Blinco was Chief Warder, Fremantle Prison. He was born in 1832, dying in 1907.

BRENNAN: John Charles Brennan was a Town Councillor for many years.

BROOME: Sir Frederick Napier Broome was Governor from 1885 to 1889. The town of Broome in the North-West also bears his name.

BOSTOCK: The Rev. G J Bostock, BA, Trinity Hall, Cambridge, came to Western Australia in 1858 with Bishop Hale and other clergy. His first parish was Gingin, from where he was transferred to Fremantle in 1860. There he remained till 1875 when he returned to England on account of ill-health. He became Rector of Kirby Wharfe, Yorkshire, and died there in 1888. While in Fremantle he built rooms for the Young Men's and Women's Clubs

alongside the old rectory in Cantonment street.

BURT: Sir Archibald Burt, of St Kitt's in the West Indies, succeeded Judge McFarland in February 1861, later being appointed Chief Justice. He died in November 1879. His son, Septimus Burt, a leading lawyer in Perth, became first Attorney-General under Responsible Government, the Forrest Ministry being in power. This position carried a salary of 1000 pounds per annum. The street being named in the 70s, it would no doubt be in honour of the Chief Justice.



The mail makes it to WA

Milton Jones

In 1852 The Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Company (P & O Company) won a British mail contract to cover the Australian service by means of a branch line from Singapore to begin in January 1853.

Mails from the U.K. would be shipped by P & O steamer to Alexandria, then by Mahmoudieh Canal to Cairo then by the "overland route" by camel train across the desert to Suez. Caravans numbering more than 3,000 camels were needed to transport the cargo mails of a single steamer. From Suez the P & O Company had services extending to Ceylon, Madras and Calcutta with a branch service from Ceylon to the Straits and China.

Before the actual Australian contract began P & O sailed the "Chusan" from Southampton on 16 May 1852 to inaugurate an experimental service for the purpose of learning as much as possible about the route. The ship a new iron-built square-rigged screw-

steamer of 699 tons and 80 horse-power, armed with long 32 and 18 pounder guns to repel swarming pirate junks and prahus of the China and Java seas, arrived at Melbourne on 1 August 1852 via South Africa after a passage of 74 days. Her arrival in Melbourne caused a tremendous interest throughout Australia. At long last those who had striven for a regular steam mail service had triumphed. A Civic Dinner was tendered the captain and he was similarly feted at Sydney when "Chusan" arrived on 3 August 1852.

On the return voyage to Singapore "Chusan" called at Adelaide and Albany.

The route to Singapore brought prominence and a good deal of prosperity, to the little town of Albany, because the safe harbour of King George's Sound was made the coaling depot of the company against all protests of Perth and Fremantle, where public meetings and memorials to the Secretary of State to the Colonies made vain endeavour to remove this 'slight' and 'insult' to the capital city and its port. The blunt fact was that Albany offered a safe and sheltered harbour and Fremantle no more than an open roadstead, with vessels berthing at the Long Jetty with every risk of north westerly gales dragging a ship's anchors and driving her ashore.

The first arrival of "Chusan" at Albany on 21 September 1852 where she stayed for two days, brought the usual round of a ball on shore, a reception on the steamer, when the "Chusan Waltz" music specially written for her historic voyage was played. The mails for Perth had to be taken by packhorse or cart from Albany, taking 4 to 6 days for the journey. From Albany "Chusan" sailed to Singapore from where cargo, passengers and mails were transported to Suez then by overland route to

Alexandria for oncarriage by ship to the U.K.

Albany continued to be the port of call for P & O mail steamers for nearly fifty years.

Fremantle built its breakwater and artificial harbour at the mouth of the Swan River and officially opened it in 1897, but it was not until August 1900 that the mail steamers changed over to it from Albany. The first P & O Liner to enter Fremantle was "India" on 20 August 1900.

With the opening of the Suez Canal in 1870 which synchronised with the adoption of the compound engine as the motive power of the mercantile marine P & O had to rethink its strategy and rebuild its fleet.

The British Post Office refused to allow mails to be transported through the canal by ship which forced P & O to continue the transit of mails by land between Alexandria and Suez. This objection was not finally overcome until 1888 when the canal had been 18 years in existence.



State Heritage Convention

The National Trust's inaugural State Heritage Convention was held at the end of April in the recently restored Midland Town Hall. After participating in the National Heritage Convention last year, the Trust saw the need to develop a set of principles and standards which it is hoped will become the genesis of the first State Heritage Strategy in Australia.

The Society's delegate David Hutchison will report on the convention at the

Society's Fremantle Studies Day in October.

As well as working on the heritage principles and standards, delegates also went on a walk around the vast Midland Railway Workshops. The workshops, which were closed by the State Government in 1994, represent the most complete example of an early twentieth century railway workshop in Australia. Delegates watched as volunteer craftsmen worked to restore the dining and lounge cars from the original Trans Train.



For Your Diary

Tuesday 25 May, 7.00pm - The Navy in Fremantle: Captain Len Vickridge at the Fremantle Local History Collection, Fremantle City Library. Light refreshments.

Sunday in late June - Mystery Pub Lunch. Enjoy an afternoon of feasting and merriment with friends and members alike. A flyer will be distributed soon with all the necessary details.

Tuesday 27 July, 7.00 pm - Army Museum, Burt Street: Annual General Meeting - Tour of museum and refreshments after official business. Charge for tour: \$4.00.



Paddy Troy Memorial Essay Competition

For all those budding writers out there - this is your big opportunity. Dust off the old typewriter or fire up the computer

and try your hand at a short story, an essay or a performance piece based on an aspect of Australian labour history and you could be \$500.00 richer. The competition is being run by the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History (ASSLH) with sponsorship from the Maritime Union of Australia.

Your masterpiece should be 2000-3000 words in length and should be forwarded to the Secretary, Australian Society for the Study of Labour History, Perth Branch, PO Box 8351, Perth Business Centre, Aberdeen St, WA 6849 by 1 July 1999.

There are no restrictions on who may enter except for the members of the ASSLH committee. All entries must be the original, previously unpublished work of the author.



Preserving Fremantle's History Alison Gregg

The contents of the Fremantle Local History Collection's invaluable clippings and pamphlet files are soon to be microfilmed to preserve them for posterity.

For the last twenty years former Local History Librarian Lorraine Stevens collected, sorted, classified and arranged every brief item of printed information that she found relating to Fremantle people, places, events or policies.

The collection now extends over five huge bays of compact shelving, but the newspaper is yellowing, and many of the pamphlets and handbills are showing signs of wear. To extend the life of the collection, the library is

Librarian Alison Cullen is checking classification numbers, re-filing where necessary, and preparing guides and headings to pinpoint individual items on the eventual microfilm or fiche. If funds permit, it may be feasible at a later stage to convert the information to electronic format so the files can be read onscreen as easily as any other database. As it stands, even preliminary work for the project will be extremely expensive, but there is little alternative if continuing access to the material is to be guaranteed.

It is hoped that the current files may be closed off at the end of this year in preparation for filming to be completed as quickly as possible. New files will be started immediately to lay the foundations for next century's record of Fremantle history as it unfolds.

If you have enjoyed being a member of the Fremantle History Society, why not share it with someone you know. We are asking all members to make the effort to sign up a new member for the next financial year.

A copy of the Society's membership form is attached to this newsletter for your use.

PS. Your membership fees are due as of the AGM. A reminder will go out with the next newsletter. You can pay at the AGM or send your remittance to our Secretary early if you wish.

If you would like to join the committee (and we would love to have you), please complete the nomination form below and post to the Secretary by 29 June.

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Signature