



FREMANTLE HISTORY SOCIETY

Established 1994

The Secretary, PO Box 1305
FREMANTLE WA 6959

Spring Edition, 2015

Editors: Ron Davidson, Anne Brake, Dianne Davidson



Nurses, soldiers, and visitors at the No 8 Australian General Hospital, 1915
Fremantle History Centre #3529

CHRISTMAS IN FREMANTLE, 1915

Sabrina L Bednarski

The 25th of December, 1915 – 515 days since the outbreak of World War I; 420 days since the first troop ships left Fremantle; 244 days since the landing at Gallipoli; 1,052 days yet to go before the armistice. The Great War colours much of our understanding of life between the years 1914 and 1918; such is the nature of total war. While the Anzacs fought half a world away, for the people of Fremantle life went on. Hundreds of families celebrated Christmas in 1915 longing for the safe return of a loved one fighting abroad.

Christmas Day in Fremantle 1915 was, by all accounts, a typical hot summer day. Even with the pressures of life, and war, many aimed to mark the day with happiness and Christmas joy. At the No 8 Australian General Hospital on South Terrace, preparations were made in advance to make the occasion a cheerful and happy one for the soldiers. The wards were decorated and

food and drink were in abundance. Relatives and friends spent the day there. The Mayor of Fremantle, William Ernest Wray, visited the wards and spoke with the soldiers; no doubt offering his thanks for their service. Colonel Hadley, the medical officer in charge, presided over the dinner. One can only hope that the recuperating soldiers felt some sense of normalcy and enjoyment on that Christmas Day.

On the home front, many in Fremantle were struggling with poverty and destitution. The Women's Home, now the Fremantle Arts Centre, managed to celebrate Christmas Day joyously. Decorations of Chinese lanterns were hung around the courtyard and the women were provided with a splendid feast. A gramophone was set up and the music, including the wartime classic *Little Grey Home in the West*, brought pleasure to all. Even the matron, Mrs Fraser, was in good cheer. It was a day of welcome respite for those women, a moment of happiness in a life of melancholy. They ended the day with a rendition of God Save the King, prayers for the Anzac soldiers, and hope in their hearts for peace for all humanity.

This Christmas will mark one hundred years since that day. Many things are different from that time; many things have remained the same. Christmas Day in Fremantle, 1915, was celebrated with feasting, community, and jubilation. The stresses of war and life at home gave way to festivity, even if it was just for one day. On Christmas Day in 2015, let us continue that tradition.

(Sabrina Bednarski is currently working at the Fremantle City Library History Centre as Assistant Librarian Local History.)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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General meetings are held on the 4th Tuesday (or Sunday) 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.

We are always looking for ideas for meetings and encourage you to contact committee members with suggestions for places to visit or learn about.



COMING EVENTS

Hope you were able to make it to the Christmas lunch. If not we look forward to seeing you at an event in the new year.

The summer edition of the newsletter, out at the start of February, will have details of the first 3 meetings of the year.

Stay tuned.

The committee is always looking for ideas for meetings, so if you have an idea, please give one of us a call or drop us an email at secretary.fhs@gmail.com



MEETING REPORTS

PUB LUNCH: BALL and CHAIN

The end bar at the Esplanade Hotel was the location for this year's Pub Lunch. New and old members and friends had a happy time in the historic venue.

The building's history dates back to 1850 when Captain Daniel Scott decided to build a warehouse and to dig a well on the site.

With a well and warehouse he could act as a ship's victualler but the waterfront warehouse was invaluable when the first 75 convicts arrived in Fremantle on 1 June 1850. The convicts that had arrived on the Scindian used Scott's warehouse as their only home until Captain Henderson and the convicts had constructed their own convict establishment by 1857 – hence its new name, The Ball and Chain.

(<http://theballandchain.com.au/our-cred/>)

GARDEN ISLAND

The sojourn to Garden Island was a couple of years in the making but definitely worth the wait. Our thanks go to our guides for the day Archaeologist Dr Shane Burke and Able Seaman Ian Strike. For those who missed the day and others who want to relive it see Jennifer Dudley's comprehensive account, *Historians on Holiday*, starting on page 6.

FREMANTLE STUDIES DAY

The Fremantle History Society moved to the suburbs for the twentieth Studies Day. More than 50 attended at the Hilton Hall in Paget Street.

The first paper was *Houses of Hilton* by Mary Ann Goodligh, a teacher with a strong interest in urban design and a resident in one of those houses. She looked at post WW2 houses in Hilton and how they collectively contributed to the aesthetic of the Hilton Garden Suburb. Changes to planning policy and increasing density have reduced this impact.

This was followed by *Bright, Breezy, Bracing South Beach: the History of a Seaside Playground*. The presenter was Jillian Barteaux, a historical archaeologist and holder of the first Fremantle History Society scholarship. Jillian's recent studies and interest in social history led to a curiosity in one of Australia's most celebrated landscapes – the beach. She told how South Beach built up massive popularity as a leisure destination. More than 35,000 attended the opening ceremony in 1909 and

South Beach had attractions such as a skating rink, tearooms, merry-go-rounds. Jillian then looked at the decline and eventual fall of this iconic entertainment site.

Then came afternoon tea – sumptuous indeed, as always.

Next Robin McKellar (Rob) Campbell took up a theme he had spoken to some years earlier, the *Prehistory of Conservation in Fremantle, Revisited*. His aim then had been to set out a chronology of conservation events. Here he spoke of the people who 'populated those events'. It is obvious there is still controversy about who contributed what to Fremantle's heritage retention.

The afternoon closed with Kris Bizzaca speaking to *Exit Stage Right: Looking at the Deckchair Theatre Collection*. Deckchair was a unique Fremantle theatre company which specialised in new and new locally based dramas. They brought down the curtain for the last time in 2013 after thirty exciting years. Deckchair is sadly missed. Kris who specialises in archives and collections will look at items used by Deckchair as an exemplar of what such collections can tell us. Her work is part of a study of the significance of the collection with the aim of discovering a long term home for the extensive collection of archival material relating to Deckchair. Her work is supported by a Lotterywest grant.

Studies Day continues to find new topics and new talents. Keep those ideas flowing.



VALE GEOFFREY BOLTON

The Fremantle History Society lost an inspiration and good friend when Professor Geoffrey Bolton died on September 4th. We will remember him for many things but probably most for the paper he gave - Harry Marshall A Fremantle larrikin in politics - at the Studies Day of 2003 and published in Fremantle Studies, volume 4.. Geoffrey had

warm words for our society when he launched volume 4.

We include this tribute from Lenore Layman first published in *History West*, October 2015.

Prof Geoffrey Bolton AO

(5 November 1931 - 4 September 2015)

Remembering with affection a fine scholar, teacher and friend ... they will maintain the fabric of the world; And in the handiwork of their craft is their prayer.

Ecclesiasticus 38

Geoff had an illustrious academic career. After first class honours and an MA degree at the University of WA, he won a Hackett Studentship to Balliol College, Oxford, where he completed his doctorate. He returned to Australia to take up a research fellowship at the Australian National University, followed by a senior lecturership at the newly established Monash University before being appointed to his first Chair of History at the University of Western Australia in 1966. He took up the Foundation Chair of History at Murdoch University in 1973, later becoming head of the Australian Studies Centre at the University of London, Professor of Australian History at the University of Queensland and then Professor of History at Edith Cowan University. In retirement he served as Chancellor of Murdoch University and in 2006 was named WA Australian of the Year.

Geoff devoted his life to history. It was of unceasing interest to him and, in turn, many histories flowed from him in books, articles, interviews and talks - at least fifteen books as well as a great many other publications of all sizes in which he assisted. His output was abundant and continued until his death, with his authoritative biography of Paul Hasluck (2014) his last major work. Few scholars could claim such a prolific and varied output, one that testified to his intellectual ability, energy and dedication.

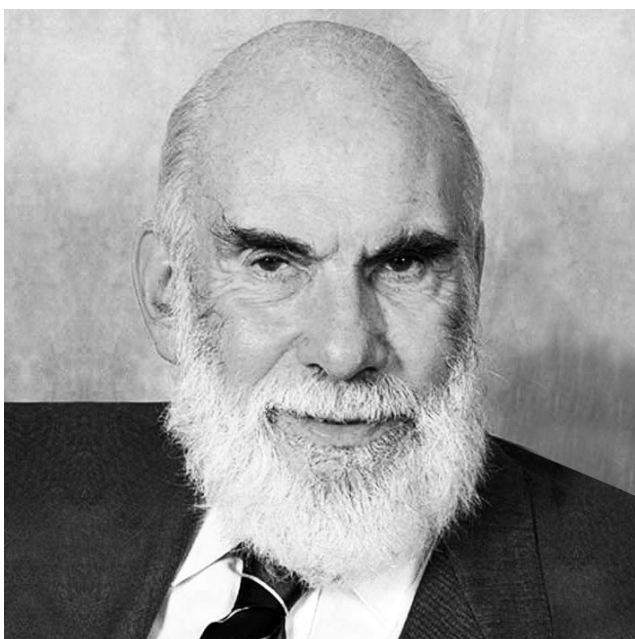
Like other leading historians of his generation he spanned imperial and Australian history, a man of wide knowledge which he always wore lightly and with wit. He has been Western Australia's leading historian of his time and will be sorely missed.

Open-minded and ever alert to new approaches to history, Geoff pioneered many new areas in Western Australian historical writing. His 1953 MA thesis, 'A survey of the Kimberley pastoral industry from 1885 to the present', and his first book, *Alexander Forrest. His Life and Times* (1958), were path-breaking regional and biographical studies. *A Fine Country To Starve In* (1972) tackled the devastating impact of the 1930s depression on a primarily agricultural state, drawing on oral interviews to capture the personal experience of the catastrophe. He became an early practitioner and leader of the oral history movement. *Spoils and Spoilers • Australians Make Their Environment, 1788 to 1981* (1981) introduced environmental history. *Daphne Street* (1997), his close-grained biography of the street where he grew up, was another departure into new (and personal) territory.

He wrote on Aboriginal- settler relations with sensitivity. His biographical studies, both lengthy and brief, captured the characters and influence of a multitude of past West Australians. He was central to the life of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, writing 86 entries over the years. He made major contributions to the State's political history, notably in the form of collaborative biographical dictionaries. Following in the footsteps of Kimberly, Battye and Crowley, his brilliantly-titled *Land of Vision and Mirage • Western Australia since 1826* (2008) was his endeavour 'to summarise and interpret the history of Western Australia since British occupation and settlement' for his generation. In all these ways he shaped the understanding of WA history.

Geoff was a brilliant lecturer with such an encyclopaedic knowledge and prodigious memory that he could step into any breach at the last minute and deliver an erudite and entertaining talk. Some amazing talks were delivered from the back of an envelope! He rarely said no to the continuous flood of requests for lectures, book launch speeches, interviews on diverse topics, after-dinner speeches, committee memberships or chairing, and so forth. He seemed to enjoy making himself available and giving his time and considerable authority to worthwhile enterprises. If his support could help, he provided it. His intellect and the speed of his mind enabled him to undertake far more than others could. He collaborated on so many projects at the same time that it would have been difficult for anyone else to keep track!

He mostly had admirers, but listened carefully to those who occasionally disagreed and was always a kind and supportive senior historian. Geoff was not only respected but also held in great affection. He was warm and friendly, a favourite with students. His histories are widely read because he could engage his readers with knowledge, charm and a splendid turn of phrase.



Geoffrey Bolton, Courtesy RWAHS

Although Geoff was already in his 80s, he had numerous histories in the planning stage in his head and intended to keep writing. We will never learn about these topics, alas, or read the fascinating memoirs he planned. And there will be no more interesting talks or endless flow of anecdotes and aphorisms; no more nuggets of information instantly recalled and appropriate to the occasion. It is very hard to believe that such a wealth of knowledge and such a lively mind have gone. We will miss him so much!



FREMANTLE HISTORY CENTRE

Pam Harris

The History Centre is currently working with the State Library of WA Foundation to assist with some funding to initiate the digitisation of several series of Fremantle's historical newspapers. When completed the newspapers will be available on the National Library's Trove database. This project will certainly enhance research opportunities for the period through 1920-1935.

Recent donations include the records associated with Druid organisations in Fremantle. The materials had been stored in the North Fremantle Community Hall and it was considered that they would be safer in the History Centre. The materials haven't been assessed as yet but they include records such as minutes of meetings and ephemera relating to the organisation.

Other materials donated include a series of photographs relating to the Lee family of Fremantle. The photographs are of contemporaries and descendants of Bruce Lee who was a Fremantle City Councillor from 1940 to 1967. The donation includes images of functions and people associated with St John's Church. Bruce Lee had a long association with the church.

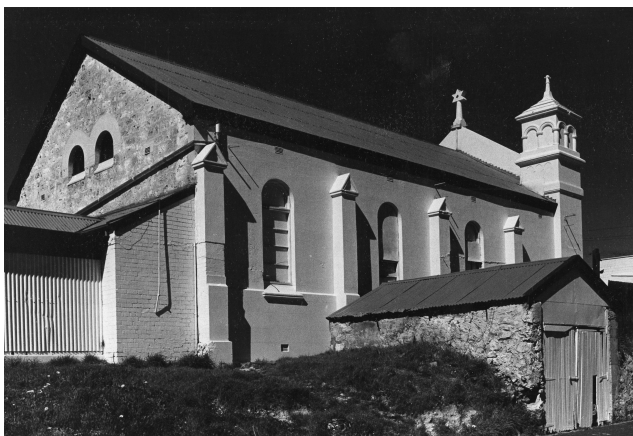
We have been busy processing a large collection of photographs collected by Les Lauder when he was involved with the Fremantle Society in the early 1970s. Over



Canon Collick officiating at a function at St. John's Church Fremantle, c1940
 Fremantle City Library History Centre:
 Image No. E000874-01

300 photographs of significant heritage buildings in Fremantle have been indexed .

Images available on the online photograph database are increasing and there is a now a total of 5692 images which includes the historical postcard collection. Staff has received many positive comments about the database and uploading data is a priority.



Fremantle synagogue showing some of the original elements of the building now removed, c1975
 Fremantle City Library History Centre: Image No.
 EFS000134-01



HISTORIANS ON HOLIDAYS

Jennifer Dudley

After much careful planning and the

requisite Naval Base clearance, 22 intrepid Fremantle History Society members boarded a BusWest Coaster at Fremantle Town Hall for a day at Garden Island and Point Peron. Splendid weather rewarded our early morning start while luck provided us with a jovial bus driver, Bryan O Hara, whose wife Lyn works in the Royal Historical Society office at Nedlands.

We made a short detour through the industrial outskirts of Rockingham, before arriving at the Mangels Bay boat ramp car park to collect Able Seaman Ian Strike and Archeologist Shane Burke, our specialist guides for the day. We then proceeded through the gate to the base, crossing the causeway to Garden Island and then on through the spread out complex of heliports, unique facilities and buildings such as the enormous water-filled Submarine Escape Training tower, one of only 6 in the world. We were en route to Cliff Head, the first imperially commissioned British settlement in Western Australia and the vanguard of its Swan River Settlement plans.

As we drove, Ian Strike described the unusual native fauna and flora of the Island; ospreys, small Tammar wallabies and abundant tiger snakes. Unfortunately, white arum lilies, the questionable floral legacy of early colonial gardeners, are now endemic on the Island. Despite Base eradication

programs, the lilies have triumphed over low-growing native bushes, ground covers and flowers, but dense tree cover remains a distinctive feature. Although highly flammable tall and bushy Rottneest Island Pines, smaller Rottneest Tea Trees and Honey Myrtles comprise an attractive forest-like bushland across most of the Island, but form dense stands near the coast. Eucalypts were absent in the indigenous landscape. We passed the Base perimeter heading for the northern end of the Island until we arrived at a small track on the eastern side leading to the remains of Stirling's 1829 camp. Within three months, a collection of tents became the Settlement known as Cliff Head. Dismounting, we proceeded on foot, listening attentively as Shane Burke commenced his presentation.



Dr Shane Burke with FHS members
Jenny Patterson

The first site of archeological interest occurs in a semi-cleared area. What appears to be an old sinkhole is in fact a well dug into the limestone, which was rapidly quarried in the surrounding area for use as a building material. The well provided Cliff Head's only reliable water source. We stopped here for some time while Shane described the general layout of a community which was essentially an interim arrangement. Tent barracks and rough timber constructions cut from the bush for stores and ammunition were near the well, and later, gardens

cultivated for food, but Captain Stirling's own house was atop a ridge climbing up, away from the Settlement. From here, Stirling could send and receive messages from the next highest hilltop and so on across to Point Peron and back. The tip of Point Peron faces the open ocean at the entrance to Cockburn Sound, a feature read by the imperial mind as satisfactorily defensive.

Captain James Stirling first set foot on Garden Island in 1827. When he returned in May 1829 as Lieutenant Governor with his commission to create the Swan River Settlement as a colony, he brought with him two ships, the 443 ton *Barque Parmelia*, loaded with settlers and their families, poultry, stock, supplies, equipment, everything required for life in a new land, and the squat bomb shaped *Sulphur*, packed with soldiers, armaments and ammunition. One account describes the *Parmelia* as running onto a shoal in Cockburn Sound where she remained stuck for 18 hours until pulled free by Captain Fremantle's frigate, *Challenger*, which was already anchored in the Sound. All three ships then sought shelter from a fierce storm, anchoring in a bay tucked between the northern tip of the island and a beautiful white sand beach near the Island's midpoint on the eastern side.

This anchorage point determined the location of Cliff Head, yet ironically, this outpost of Empire became known colloquially as Sulphur Town after the ammunition ship. The name stuck, and according to historian Steve Errington, Sulphur Town, rather than Cliff Head, was written into colonial history via a newspaper article in 1912. Strangely, the recent history of Garden Island as a Naval Base echoes some aspects of this colonial pattern. Just a little further north of the Cliff Head area, the Navy maintains a large, heavily secured ammunition store while the Base has undergone at least two name changes since it was proposed in 1969. Presently, it is the HMAS Stirling Naval Base.

A short distance past the ammunition store is a beautiful area where, in pre-Base days, when Garden Island was famous as a no frills holiday spot, Fremantle History Society stalwart Joan Donaldson remembers a favourite camping area accessible only by boat. Here visitors could pitch their tents near a fresh water pool where they washed themselves and their clothes. Perhaps this pool was another old limestone quarry from colonial times, as most of the island is notoriously sandy and porous.

We then continued up a slight rise towards the coast, where Stirling and his men could look out over a stunningly beautiful prospect towards the mouth of the Swan River, to where Fremantle now sits and then, slightly closer, Peel Town. From this vantage point, marked by a concrete map set in the ground at the cliff's edge, we could also look back down an avenue of large cypress like Rottneest Island Pines, pruned to resemble a Mediterranean landscape, toward the bay where the ships remained while the Settlement took shape. Even in winter, Cliff Head, on the eastern side of Garden Island, was usually sheltered from wind unless storms were severe. Perhaps it was a fortunate coincidence of geography, climate and landscape elements, later selectively adapted, that engendered some sense that an oddly idyllic world was possible so far from home, a vision still palpable today.

Unlike Fremantle and Peel Town, there was little disorder on Garden Island. Stirling's solution to the boredom of isolation and confined quarters was to keep his men busy working. Parades, patrols, building, provisioning and maintenance were the order of the day. However, because the local Aboriginal tribes did not use canoes, there were no Indigenous occupants on the Island at that time. There was no need to parlay or fight for conquest and the settlers of Cliff Head could proceed with their dream of creating a free colony. Interestingly, stone tool artefacts found during Shane's archeological work have arrived since

European settlement. While Shane opted for some recent consciously crafted trickery, Steve joked that a holidaying child from Joan's era was responsible for the casual salting of the archeological and historical evidence.

We stayed here for a while asking questions, taking photos, discussing whether or not we should make a furious climb up the cliff to the ruins of Captain Stirling's house while others ambled down the path towards the bay. But we were already running short of time as lunch awaited us in the Mess back at the Base. Our visit to the Captain's house became a trip for another day. Instead, on our return journey back to the bus, Shane led us into the overgrowth opposite the well where he pointed out two other areas of "archeological gold", where his Master's student Trent Hamersley is also now hard at work. We were shown some low mounds of half buried, trimmed limestone rock, long shards of wood, and soil discolouration indicating collapsed chimneys and lintels. Early in the colonial period, a bushfire destroyed much of Cliff Head, and in the 1950's, a devastating recurrence burnt almost all the vegetation on the Island. All the conifers we see now are approximately the same height because they are the same age. Their seed only germinates after fire, so there is no overlap in the burnt area. In answer to a question from the group, Shane also presented some fascinating information regarding the different bricks found on colonial settlement sites. Certain colours, stamps and shapes were associated with bricks from London for instance, which were shipped to the colony as ballast. By contrast, bricks made from the clay near Perth were differently shaped, locally stamped and fired using local timbers which gave them a distinctive colour.

Back at the Base it was time to freshen up with a most welcome toilet break and refreshments, before enjoying a choice of just about everything for our sit down lunch

in the mess, complete with ship shaped folded table napkins, raspberry cordial and good company. It was a real Sunday lunch with multiculturally significant additions reminding us that today's Navy includes women as well as men, and all are recruited on merit, whether Anglo or otherwise. Stories about people's colonial forebears and how they lived, holiday reminiscences of Garden Island and Point Peron, Seaman Strike's descriptions of contemporary Navy life and points of historical contention flowed freely. The room was adorned with many photographs of WW II Western Australian Naval history which we scrutinised with great interest.

After expressing our thanks and presenting Shane with our customary bottle of wine, Bryan whisked him away to the rest of his day. Some of us decamped to the pool deck or found a cosy sofa inside except for Wendy Markham, who decided to be the "Englishman out in the noonday sun" and took off on her own brief journey along the beach.

When Bryan returned, Ian Strike's took us on a tour proper of the Base, which is a mini-city in its own right, with Police, Fire Brigade, Medical Centre, Officers, single personnel and guest accommodation, training areas, specialised communications and aeronautical facilities and an entertainment centre. We then visited the nitty gritty of the base, the wharves. Only one submarine was in dock at the purpose built double-decker submarine wharf, and none of the resident Naval fleet was present on the day or even anchored off-shore. Those resonant echoes of the colonial past experienced elsewhere on the Island, were lost in this location, although, but on another day, our luck may well have been different.

Next came the Museum, which everyone was keen to see. The displays ranged from uniforms across the years to ships' bells, lighting, anchors, communication devices and games. I was intrigued by photographs

and objects demonstrating Navy diving suits from early times until the present day, including an absolutely state of the art bright orange pressure-gauged number, designed to wear for escaping a submarine in distress. Together with Ian Strike's information rich presentation, and the museum's crowded walls of memorabilia, documents and photographs sparked debates on points of historical record and personal memories flowed. We were very impressed by Ian's commitment to and knowledge of the collection, and his enthusiasm to convey its treasures to the visiting public. Being married, Ian lives off Base. Although his day job is sufficient to keep him very busy, he works in the museum as a volunteer when he is free to do, because it is his passion. Steve suggested that one of the panel boards required updating in the light of fresh historical research, including some points raised during Shane's presentation, but again, we all know this can only happen when time and funds permit. Ian's fresh energy may well bring change and improvements in its wake.

I also overheard two of our members discussing wartime memories from their childhood when heavy artillery guns were positioned at the top of Nedlands Golf Course in case the Japanese attempted to destroy the fleet of Catalina Flying Boats anchored in the Swan River. Their conversation was prompted by early photos of the KK Artillery Battery and gun emplacements on Point Peron, as well as two of the Nedlands guns. But the Japanese didn't bomb the Swan River, destroying Flying Boats, shipping and houses as they had already done in Broome.

Reluctantly leaving the small but action-packed museum, we again boarded the bus for our foray into the wilds of Point Peron. We farewelled Able Seaman Strike at the gate after thanking him for his skillful guiding and the Base for its hospitality. It was worth all the effort of obtaining permissions, taking

bookings and arranging a tight time-table. All of us left feeling there was much more to see do and take in. We had intended to collect the Hon Phil Edman, Member for Southern Regions in the State Government, at the gate for the next section of our journey. Although Phil was unable to accompany us around the Point Peron military sites, last upgraded during WW II and now freshly restored, a project he initiated, he had sent a walking map and brochures ahead. Bryan knew the road from Mangels Bay to the Observatory Car Park and we arrived with 45 minutes to spare.

First we walked to the Lookout where we perched like birds on a deck projecting out across the cliff and sea below, and to the ocean beyond, where Captain Stirling's tiny armada had rounded the Point after traversing the globe to find shelter in a strange land. After some confused map-reading, we were faced with two choices in order to reach the hilltop Observatory opposite the Lookout, and then on to the first of the gun emplacement sites. We could select a meandering gradient or walk further and climb the steep steps built into the rock. For a few hardy souls, the lure of the gun emplacement bunker down the track proved irresistible.

No sooner were we framing our photos than two of the holidaying children who fill the campsites at Point Peron arrived, wanting their photos taken on, around and in the entrance to the bunker. Such is life. It was time to leave, with the rest of the sites still unseen. Back in the bus, Jenny Patterson, who had managed the trekking, ascent and descent with walking stick in hand, still wanted more. She asked Bryan if he could drive us home along the beach route out of Rockingham, which he agreed to do. We were now in holiday mode like the children at Point Peron. Unfortunately, just as we reached Coogee, our bus was engulfed by the smoke haze from controlled bush burning near Kalamunda. The blue skies were gone. While the smell reminded Bryan

of sugar cane firing in the Caribbean where he had met his wife, it promised respiratory difficulties for others. Thank you Bryan for stopping the bus beside Fremantle Gaol, allowing me to beat a hasty retreat into my car and drive home to safety! Mac and Helen also disembarked, but everyone else rode the bus to the end of the line.

It had been a terrific day and well worth Fremantle History Society's repeated attempts to pull this one off. We loved Garden Island and Point Peron, and immensely enjoyed each other's company.



A FREMANTLE STALWART

Peter Conole

Shirley Lewis, one of the Fremantle History Society's oldest and staunchest members, passed away on July 20, 2015. Shirley had Freo connections going back well over a century. Her great-grand parents Fred and Alice Smith managed a fruit shop in South Terrace from before 1903 and lived in the rooms above it. Their daughter Lilly married Noel Blundell and they became the parents of Albert Victor Blundell. He in turn married Lillian May Keevers and their daughter Shirley May Lewis (nee Blundell) was born in West Midland on January 11, 1930. Things were hard for the family during the depression, but somehow they coped and Shirley went to Midland State School to begin her education. She did well and later studied at a secretarial college, obtaining qualifications as a shorthand typist. She gained government positions and – a tribute to her skills – won a position in the civilian staff of the Royal Australian Navy in 1949. That meant moving to Melbourne for a couple of years, where she enjoyed a varied cultural and political life.

Shirley married after returning to Perth but things did not turn out as well as could have been hoped. After a second separation she was left to support five daughters and had to work hard in various forms of employment to

ensure they were well cared for and educated.

Shirley had a broad range of skills and made solid use of them. She worked for various firms and acquired additional knowledge in bookkeeping, general office work, library work and stocktaking - and was utilised at times as a TEE examination supervisor.

As a politically active person and a staunch socialist and egalitarian she took an interest in changing and advancing the position of women. She was never slow in volunteering her services to good effect for such organisations as the Citizens's Advice Bureau, Legal Aid and the Kulcha Club. From the 1960s Shirley involved herself in the campaign against Australian involvement in the Vietnam War. In addition, the broad-based movement against the testing of nuclear weapons occupied more of her time and effort.

Shirley was a cultured woman and loved the arts in general, including the theatre, music and especially ballet. Of course, it is also common knowledge that she had a sincere concern for heritage issues and assisted with the Fremantle Maritime Museum amongst other things. She was a very long-term and valued member of the Fremantle History Society.

In the course of personal contact with Shirley this writer noticed over time that her devotion to civic matters and 'Fremantle patriotism' never declined. She was always a friendly and stimulating companion, with an alert mind and a wonderfully broad range of views and intellectual interests. There was no such thing as a dull or routine conversation with Shirley Lewis. As the years rolled by, she retained her zest for life. One fond and admiring memory of her involves a train trip from Fremantle to Perth to attend a performance at the State Theatre Centre. Despite failing health, with minimal encouragement she managed the journey and enjoyed the performance.

Besides her daughters, Shirley was survived by eleven grandchildren and numerous great-grand children. Her memory will be kept green for quite some time.



Shirley Lewis, courtesy her family



APPROPRIATE OR NOT?

The recent activities at the Fremantle Prison have once again saddened the committee of the history society. While we applaud a number of recent activities and programs at the World Heritage listed Prison, the committee has had a long history of deploring the disrespect shown by granting permission for and even organising tasteless events which show little sensitivity to those whose lives were touched by this place. Criminal and social justice are complex issues riddled with discrimination and hostility amidst reform and rehabilitation reflecting the culture of the society. We should all gaze with care.

President Bob Reece tendered the following letter to the Herald to voice our concern

Dear Sir
Fremantle History Society joins the chorus of protest by people appalled by the latest attempt to exploit the darker side of the heritage of Fremantle Prison. By cynically allowing this appeal to sensational voyeurism ('screaming with fear'), the Prison authorities are betraying

the trust the community has in their sound judgement and good taste in its commercial use.

Your correspondent's assertion that the Tower of London condones similar events is untrue. There is, however, a facility nearby calling itself 'London Dungeons' which offers such tawdry fare to the hardened thrill-seeker. Do we really want to emulate this in our World Heritage-listed site?

Bob Reece

President, Fremantle History Society



FREMANTLE CITY COUNCIL – INTEGRATION OF HISTORY AND HERITAGE

Pam Harris

In August 2015 a meeting was held at the City of Fremantle with Council staff and representatives of groups associated with history and heritage in Fremantle. Attendees included the FHS President, Bob Reece, and me in my role as the Librarian at the Fremantle History Centre.

The purpose of the meeting was to get stakeholders together to see if they could work together to better coordinate and promote Fremantle's history and heritage. It is envisaged that meetings will be held biannually.

Bob Reece proposed that a new history of Fremantle was desperately needed and suggested that this group help to support and fund the project. However, at this stage the group is not looking to provide funding for projects such as this. The main focus of the meeting was to see how groups could work together to provide information to tourists and visitors to Fremantle about the various historic and heritage sites. The City is working on various projects through the Fremantle Story website including the development of smart phone Apps for walking trails and way finding and signage to assist in locating sites. Increased communication amongst stakeholders in terms of these projects will ensure that all sites are included.

The City is to take on the administrative and media functions of the group. It is proposed that the 2016 Heritage Festival planning will be the first major event which the group can contribute towards in terms of ensuring all groups are involved.

It is a positive initiative from the City in terms of its history and heritage and the History Society will monitor its activities and advise members of any news from the group.



TALKING HISTORY IN GERALDTON: The RWAHS Affiliated Societies' Conference

The annual conference of the affiliated societies of the RWAHS was held this year in Geraldton where 160 history buffs – including our delegates Fay Campbell and Jenny Patterson – spent a very pleasant weekend.

Delegates gathered in the old Residency building on Friday night for a welcome catered for in splendid fashion by the CWA then re-assembled next morning at the Wintersun Hotel for a full day of talks. As usual the talks had a local flavour. They included Father Robert Cross on church builder Monsignor Cyril Hawes, Dr Howard Gray on early Geraldton and local Councillor Bob Hall on Robert Wilmott, his convict ancestor.

A business session after lunch included a talk from Don Garden, president of the Federation of Australian Historical Societies who spent the weekend with us. Conference organiser Rita Stinson then spoke about pioneer woman Catherine Chesson. An excellent dinner followed.

Sunday morning was devoted to bus tours of local sights with highlights being visits to the wonderful HMAS Sydney Memorial and Monsignor Hawes's Cathedral. The conference concluded with lunch at the RSL's Birdwood House. Before leaving, some delegates fitted in a visit to the

Geraldton branch of the WA Museum and its wonderful shipwrecks gallery.

Next year's conference (the 52nd) will be held in Armadale on, as usual, the first weekend in September.



VISITING CAPTAIN FREMANTLE

Are you one of those people who likes walking around graveyards, reading the inscriptions? Well here is an idea - if you have a trip to London planned go and visit the grave of Admiral Sir Charles Fremantle after whom our town is named.

He last visited us in September 1832. After leaving he served in the Mediterranean, the West Indies and the Crimea. He was knighted in 1856, appointed Commander-in-Chief of Plymouth in 1863 and was promoted to Admiral in 1864.

At the time of the 1861 census he was living in Mayfair with his wife Isabella, a butler, footman, cook, lady's maid, housemaid and kitchen maid. He died in May 1869 and was buried in the Brompton Cemetery.

Finding his grave is very simple. Take the tube to the West Brompton station (Earl's Court is nearly as good) and walk around to

the Brompton Road entrance. Once inside, head for the left-hand wall and walk along to the '1500' marker high on the wall. His last resting place is right next to the wall and is marked by a polished pink granite gravestone.

Our vice president Steve Errington made the pilgrimage in April and is pictured in the photo with the distinctive gravestone.

