



## FREMANTLE HISTORY SOCIETY

Established 1994

The Secretary, PO Box 1305  
FREMANTLE WA 6959

**Spring Edition, 2020**

<https://fhs.org.au>



Ron and Pam Harris at Fremantle Studies Day,  
2019 (Kristi McNulty)

### **VALE RON DAVIDSON**

Anne Brake

Ron was a founding member of the Fremantle History Society and an active committee member since the Society formed in 1994.

Many of you will know Ron from his Fremantle years. He and Di moved to Fremantle in 1976 when they bought the house in Fothergill St against the wishes of his parents – Fremantle was seen as pretty rough in those days. But they bought the rundown home with magnificent views above the prison and built a home with their two daughters and, over the years, several dogs. Ron slowly did the place up working alongside tradies or doing much of the work himself – learning on the job! He collected various architectural elements from anywhere and everywhere and took great delight in various second-hand shop finds and filling the place with eclectic furniture and books. The house was full of books.

The garden was one of his favourite spots. He loved to potter there. Tomatoes were his speciality but he grew many different vegies and several lemon trees – ‘Every home should have a lemon tree,’ he would often say.

Both he and Di loved this house and it was very difficult for both of them to leave it when they had to go into aged care.

They both got very involved with the Fremantle Society and they were at the heart of much of the community action which has resulted in the Fremantle we have today.

I met them both just after I arrived in 1994. Di and Jenny Archibald came to see me about setting up a history society and Ron was there from the beginning. He made enormous contributions to the Society by instigating and guiding many discussions and debates about issues of importance, through his enormous contribution of articles to the newsletter, his tireless promotion of our programs and the work of the Society through articles in the Herald, suggesting ideas for some of our best meetings and his unswerving support, hardly ever missing a committee or general meeting.

Although history and heritage were loves, his real passions were words and stories. He came from a newspaper family and started life as a journalist working alongside his father at the *Sunday Times* and then the *Mirror*. But his Mum was a strong woman and she didn't think being

a journalist was a good thing for a family many so Ron studied and finally taught Psychology at UWA.

He was a successful author ghost writing two books – *Divided Kingdom* (with Connie Element) and *Anything but Ordinary* (with Cecile Dooward).

*Hijinks at the Hotpool* and *Fremantle Impressions* were both published by Fremantle Arts Centre Press as was *Fighting for Fremantle*, which he co-authored with Diane.

He was a regular at the Fremantle Library's Local History Collection providing endless amusement as well as edification for Pam and Kristi. I know both miss those times greatly. He was also a regular visitor to the offices of the *Fremantle Herald* with stories, letters, ideas for stories, leads, or he'd just stop by or a visit. He formed a strong and enduring friendship with Andrew Smith, the *Herald's* editor.

His memory was incredible and his connections and networks extensive. He seemed to be able to draw the most obscure fact or connection from somewhere in the recesses of his amazing mind no matter what the occasion or the issue.

He had a healthy disregard for authority and regulations in general, always ready to challenge and question. He also had a wonderful sense of humour – a key element of his ability to tell a good story. Bob Reece captured it so well in the piece in the *Herald* a week or so ago.

As an unusually wicked story bubbled to the surface of his mind, his eyes and then, slowly, his whole face would light up in a beatific smile that drew his listener into a conspiracy against all things pretentious and self-serving.

Pam always referred to him as having a 'cheeky glint in his eye'.

They were a formidable pair but at the same time incredibly warm and generous. They welcomed me into their home and their lives. As well as spending much time with them planning, writing and distributing the newsletter for the history society I became a bit of an extension to their family. With my

family all in the east I was included in Christmas, Easter, Mother's and Father's Day, birthdays etc. Over the years a very close and caring friendship developed.

I, along with many others, will miss him dearly. We recognise today the great legacy he leaves behind and celebrate our friendship with him and our great joy at knowing him.



## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

### Executive:

|                          |              |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| Allen Graham (President) | 0412 933 360 |
| Pam Harris (Secretary)   | 0408 092 100 |
| Anne Brake (Treasurer)   | 0438 445 141 |

### Committee Members:

|                  |              |
|------------------|--------------|
| Fay Campbell     | 0419 969 678 |
| Jon Strachan     | 0417 901 809 |
| Heather Campbell | 0408 175 246 |
| Judith Robison   | 0434 571 666 |
| Tania Heyne      | 0419 197 116 |

Ordinary meetings are generally held on the 4th Tuesday (or Sunday) of the month.

Details of these meetings can be found in your newsletter.

**Be sure to check details as meeting days and times may vary.**



## MEETING REPORTS

### Pub Lunch – August

It was wonderful to welcome members back to Society meetings and what better way than with a Pub Lunch. This years was a bit different – more a watering hole than a pub. Members and their friends gathered in the basement of the old Oceanic Trading Exchange which operated out of premises in Arundel St from 1928.

We now know it as The Freo Doctor Liquor Store, the oldest bottle shop in Fremantle! As well as alcoholic beverages, the Sgro family were providores of Italian foods

serving local families, as well as ships and their passengers and works.

As well as enjoying our lunch we were treated to a wonderful talk by Tim Wright who lives close by and has been in Arundel Street on and off for many years. He took great delight in researching and telling us about the history of the street and its colourful characters much to the delight of everyone there. A great way to start our meetings again.

### **The Naval Store and AGM - September**

This year we enjoyed the hospitality of Enkel Collective who are currently leasing the Naval Store for this year's AGM. It was a great opportunity to get into this hidden gem which we all pass so regularly but very few have been inside.

The formalities of the AGM saw us heartily thank and farewell Cathy Hall from our committee and warmly welcome Jon Strachan and Tania Heyne to our ranks. This was followed by a presentation from Adam Jorien from the Enkel Collective who gave us an insight into the aspirations of this innovative group who are exploring new ways to address the problems of today and tomorrow. By working together, they believe people will be empowered to create better futures.

As well as the presentation from Adam, Tom Muller told us about plans for the Fremantle Biennale project to be based from the Naval Store in 2021. Thank you to both.

### **Studies Day – October**

We were delighted to welcome round 50 people to Studies Day this year – a great turn out given the lateness of preparations due to the uncertainty brought on by COVID. Not only were we unsure if we could have meetings, we usually start organising Studies Day early in the year to give our speakers time to do their research and prepare their papers. Our fabulous group of speakers however provided us with terrific papers at very short notice – and we thank them for it.

The day started with Steve Errington, previously on our committee and currently

the President of the Royal Western Australian Historical Society (RWAHS) who has been researching the early years of the Roundhouse. He was particularly interested in what appeared to be an anomaly in the information about the structure which he discovered had been added on to to create additional space for the warden. He also has begun detailing the various offenders who spent time there, exploring the nature and length of sentences creating a useful database for future reference.

The second paper was a fascinating insight into Thomas Maywood a Fremantle photographer from the 1890s. He was unusual in that he was not a professional photographer but a very keen amateur – very common these days but not so at that time. Four comprehensive albums, including one almost exclusively on Fremantle, where he lived, were given by his family to the Royal Western Australian Historical Society. We thank Lenore Layman, Lorraine Clarke and Judith Robison for revealing this hitherto little-known resource.

Our final paper was presented by Allen Graham, our President, who shone a light on some of the less pleasant aspects of our history – something often avoided but an important part of us better understanding our history. Allen's paper showed that a number of the men folk of Fremantle in its early years were pretty unpleasant chaps who had little regard for women, particularly their wives.

As usual a delicious afternoon tea was enjoyed by all and we thank our 'catering corps' for keeping the troops well fed and watered.

All papers will be printed in an upcoming edition of Fremantle Studies journal.



## **COMING EVENTS**

### **CHRISTMAS AT VICTORIA HALL**

It's been some time since we have visited this beautiful building (see Jon Strachan's piece for a potted history of the place, p7) now occupied by SpaceMarket - *pairing disused spaces with useful people*. As well

as the usual Christmas drinks and fare, members will have the chance to learn a little about the history of the building and hear about the way it's been revitalised by this active group.

**Sunday 22 November 4 - 6pm.** Because of their licence, we are not allowed to do BYO so it will be drinks from the bar after a complimentary glass of festive bubbles.  
**Victoria Hall, 179 High St, Fremantle.**



## FREMANTLE LEISURE CENTRE

Stewart Alger

With the upcoming fiftieth anniversary for the Fremantle Leisure Centre next year, the History Centre thought it timely to have a glimpse back over its half-century history of this beloved Fremantle community hub.

The Centre first opened in 1971 boasting an Olympic size pool, a learner pool, a wading pool, trampolines, barbeques and a playground. For a good 5 years, it was the coolest hangout in summer (being the only aquatic centre in a 20km radius) drawing in over 180,000 people annually. However, the second half of the seventies saw a drastic decline in attendance with other councils cottoning on to the public demand and opening their own centres, and of course the increase of the backyard suburban pool.



Aquatic Centre and Aqua Thrillway, c1981  
(Fremantle Library Local History Collection 2179)

Fighting to keep its doors open, a dramatic make over was in order for the eighties and **AQUA THRILLWAY** was its name. A 400 foot slide and a bumper boat pool was what it took for it to soar back up to the height of its popularity... albeit only for two seasons.

The thrill was certainly short-lived with the structures being dismantled and sold five years after its opening. Soon after the Centre made a return to its roots with some simple upgrades: re-rendering of all the original pools, shade shelter over reticulated grass areas and heated showers in the change rooms was now where it was at in 1986 and has ultimately remained this way to its present day.



## NEW MEMBERS

The Society welcomes **Lois Pinnell** and **Fran Lee** as new members.



## FLYING ANGELS

**Allen Graham**

This is part two of the history of the Sailors' Rest and the Mission to Seamen/Seafarers aka The Flying Angel Club. To read up on part one, go to our Summer Newsletter of 2019 which can be accessed on our website [www.fhs.org.au](http://www.fhs.org.au)

**1896/October** - Since its inception the Sailors Rest had made a number of representations to the Government for a grant of a parcel of land on which they could establish their own facility without having to hire rooms in the Masonic Hall. However, it was not until 1896 when a block of land was granted to the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) for the purpose of erecting a Sailors Rest. *The West Australian* giving more details of this grant when it wrote,

Sailors' Home, Fremantle. - It is proposed to erect a new building to be called the Sailors' Home, at Fremantle. The site upon which the building is to stand is that granted by the Government for the purpose in Marine-terrace, adjoining the Masonic Hall. The building is designed by Mr. F. W. Burwell. F.E.I.B.A., London, in the Renaissance style, and shows a handsome facade to the ocean. It will contain an entrance hall and staircase, dining room, refreshment-room, captains'-

room, reading-room, kitchen, and a number of bedrooms. A drawing of the building is now on view in the window of Messrs. J. McHenry Clark and Co., High-st., Fremantle' (*The West Australian*, 21/11/1896)

**1897** – Since its foundation in October 1892 the committee of the Sailors' Rest had worked tirelessly to raise the £2,000 which was considered necessary for the construction of a decent facility and now that a parcel of the land had been allocated to them, fundraising took on an even greater importance. However, by June 1897 they were still a long way short of their goal. As it was the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria's reign, the Mayor of Fremantle convened a public meeting to discuss ways of pushing forward with the building with a general understanding that the new building should be called The Victoria Sailors' Home. This resulted in a fundraising committee being formed, but within days of that meeting being held it was shown that that there were conflicting views within that committee, for as much as the WCTU had appealed to the public for financial support, it had never contemplated handing over the running of the Sailors Rest to a community assembled committee. The matter was further compounded by the fact that the land allocated for the building had been vested to the WCTU and not the Town of Fremantle (see *Inquirer and Commercial News*, 11/6/1897 for more detail on this matter).

Thus, to resolve the confusion over who would have the ultimate responsibility for the new home, a sub committee was formed where it was resolved that the public would continue to support the fundraising efforts of the WCTU and that the ownership and management of the Sailors' Rest, when built, would remain under control of the WCTU. (*The West Australian*, 19/8/1897)

**1898/March** – Draft plans of new building completed and the architect instructed to prepare plans and specifications for the construction of the building forthwith. (*The West Australian*, 9/3/1898)

**1898/April** – It was now necessary that the WCTU proceed with the construction of their own building ASAP as the Masonic Lodge now required the rooms for lodge purposes.

(*The Western Mail*, 8/4/1898). Alternative accommodation had to be found for the Sailors' Rest and so they relocated to Beach House, the old Manning house which stood on the corner of Essex Street and Marine Terrace. (*The West Australian*, 3/5/1898)

**1899/August** – Tenders were called and

'the one from Mr T Game was accepted, the amount being £1,678. Building operations will be immediately commenced, and it is expected that the building will have so far advanced by the first or second week in October that it will be possible for the foundation stone to be laid by Sir John Forrest.' (*The West Australian*, 1/9/1899). As anticipated, the Foundation Stone was laid on the 9 October, 1899.

**1900/March** – The Sailors Rest was officially opened by the Premier, Sir John Forrest on the 24 March 1890 at which time Rosa Smith told the assembled gathering that as Lady Somerset was the worldwide president of the WCTU, that it was only fitting to call the headquarters of the Fremantle Branch, the Somerset Club. (*The Daily News*, 26/3/1900) *To be continued*



## **SOMETHING OLD BUT SOMETHING NEW**

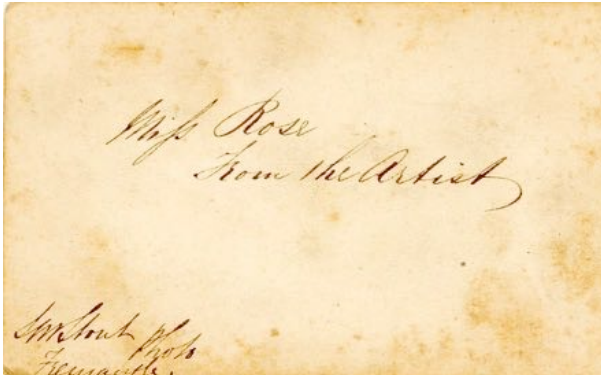
### **Acquisitions – Fremantle History Centre**

Stewart Alger and Heather Campbell

A carte de visite by photographer Stephen Montague Stout, showing the first St John's Church dated between 1863-1868, was donated to the History Centre in July 2020 by Michael Oliver, via Julie Martin (ex Battye Library).

This carte de visite was one of fifty given to Michael Oliver in the 1990s by members of the Oliver family. The remaining 49 items and one ferrotype were donated to the State Library of WA; all are of members of the Oliver, Mead, Twine and Scrivener families of Northam and the Avon Valley

Carte de visite were originally calling cards, especially ones with a mounted photograph. They were very popular in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.



Carte de visite c 1863-1868 inscribed 'Miss Rose, from the Artist, S M Stout, Photos, Fremantle', note the long archaic form of 's' used in double 's' of 'Miss'

Stephen Stout, born 1831 was transported to WA, aged 27 for three charges of stealing. He worked as a Government teacher at Australind, the Perth Barracks School and at Geraldton and as a photographer taking some of the earliest views of Fremantle and Perth. He then



became a journalist, starting up newspapers in Geraldton before working briefly as editor of the *Daily News*. He died suddenly in Perth in 1886, leaving six orphaned children.

Stephen Montague Stout, opaltype, 1880s  
<https://frelibrary.wordpress.com/2016/05/30/early-photographs-of-fremantle-fremantle-heritage-festival-2016/>

The photograph on the carte de visite became a very well-used image. It was later used in the *Western Mail* of 27 March 1914, p 34, in an article titled 'St John's Church, An Interesting postcard'.

With a view to helping the re-roofing fund of St. John's Church, Fremantle, and stirring up interest in the effort, the Rev. Canon Moore secured some time ago an interesting photograph of the original Fremantle church, and with the assistance of Mr P H Anderson, stationer, of Fremantle, has had this picture reproduced on a postcard in conjunction with the picture of the present church, and giving the dates on which they were built, etc. The old church was completed and opened for service on August 4, 1843. It stood for nearly 40 years in the middle of King's Square, at the top of High-street, the west door facing right down the street, at the other end of which stood and still stands the "Round House." which served as a "lock-up." The fence in the picture was of much later date, and enclosed all that area now bounded by William, Newman, Queen, and Adelaide streets. In the left hand corner of the picture may be seen the present rectory, which stands in Cantonment-street....

The carte de visite will be accessioned soon and join many other images of St John's in the Fremantle Library Collection. Another also by Stephen Stout, shows a slightly different perspective.



Original St John's Church, c. 1863, also taken by Stephen Stout, but from a slightly different perspective. History Centre Reference 32



## VICTORIA HALL

Jon Strachan

**Victoria Hall** is no stranger to members of Fremantle History Society (The Society) as it's been many things to many people. I'd like to share with you some of my memories of the place, there are several interconnecting stories.

Designed by Talbot Hobbs and built in 1897 as *St John's* Parish Hall, **Victoria Hall** took on its new name to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. In 1974 the Hall was saved from demolition by Union Green Bans. Ron Davidson RIP told a colourful story of this in *Fighting for Fremantle*. That action means we have one *Gold Rush* building left on the eastern section of High Street as a reminder of what once was.

My memories of 1980's **Victoria Hall** were of a rundown elegant well-proportioned building housing the Salvation Army charity shop. And elegant it was, boasting all the extravagance of neo-classical *Gold Rush* architecture and a well-proportioned façade. We continued to patronise the 'Sally Army' for furniture and homewares for our new home in South Terrace until they moved out in 1996.

The Hall struggled along as a space for children's entertainment and occasional adult dance, harking back to when barber and dance instructor Norm Wrightson ran post war formal dance classes and *Saturday Dances* for three decades. His brother Bob and wife were championship dancers.

Our home on South Terrace was across from Price Street where the shop on the corner had a huge deckchair above its door, it was one of many temporary homes of *Deckchair Theatre Co.* From there they produced *Factory Girls*, performed at the Mills and Wares Biscuit factory in South Fremantle.

This homeless theatre company found temporary accommodation in The Old Customs House and then was to gain a permanent home in **Victoria Hall** in 1998 - where they stayed until their closure in 2012. Having purchased the Hall in 2002 Fremantle Council spent a lot of money on

renovations, these works were a double-edged sword for *Deckchair* often clashing with performances.

Some years later as a Fremantle Councillor I attended the unveiling of the renovated façade, which was grey concrete, consistent with Talbot Hobbs original design. I had many people ask why it wasn't painted a nicer colour!



(Jon Strachan)

*Deckchair* struggled around the Victorian design of the building, sometimes having audiences turn their backs on the stage and proscenium arch. Their theatrical focus was 'new works by emerging playwrights', funded by the annual *Deckchair Auction* and the very popular *Shakespeare in the Park* (Kings Park).

Unfortunately, the Australia Council threatened to remove funding if they continued with the Shakespeare events, causing great financial stress. The final blow came when a dodgy floorboard gave way and allowed a lighting rig to fall during preparation for *The Fremantle Candidate*, which became *Deckchair's* final production and had to be performed in Perth.

The Society provided important archival work for *Deckchair Theatre's* historical record, preparing the extensive artifacts for State Library acquisition. Members can be justly proud of this legacy for the people of Fremantle, which otherwise would have been lost.

*Deckchair's* closure allowed *The Fly by Night* music club to try their hand in **Victoria Hall**. They had run a popular club in the Drill Hall, I saw many Australian and international acts there and have fond memories of them. *The Fly* struggled also with the Victorian layout, I saw some excellent musicians there too, but the atmosphere was just not the same as the Drill Hall. In 2009 *The Fly* met the same fate as *Deckchair* and folded.



(Jon Strachan)

This year *SpaceMarket* were successful with their EOI and Fremantle Council granted them a lease at **Victoria Hall**.

*SpaceMarket's* by-line is "Pairing disused spaces with useful people" Manager, Kate Hulett has a long list of successes in the arts and style, and brings experience from managing *MANY* and *MANY 2.0* in Fremantle. COVID19 has limited their work so far, but the new *Fremantle Theatre Company* has a sell-out show at the Hall now and more booked for 2021. Let's hope **Victoria Hall** is set for a new renaissance it thoroughly deserves.



## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR 2019/2020** **Allen Graham**

This is my second report as the President of the Fremantle History Society and when I reviewed what I had written in last year's report I took great satisfaction with all that we had done over the preceding twelve months and I concluded that report by

saying 'I look forward to an equally successful 2019/20.'

Unfortunately, due to Covid 19 I cannot say that we have been able to match the program of 2019/20 but we were well placed to so with the activities we were able to run from August 2019 through until February 2020 when we were forced to suspend our activities. And it was very encouraging to see the high number of members who attended the recent pub lunch as that was a good sign that our members were there eager for us to get back to where we were before the lockdown.

Our reporting year usually covers the period from July through until June the following year, but for the purpose of this report I will also report on our August 2020 meeting.

The first event of our new program year was our Annual General Meeting which was held in July 2019 at the North Fremantle Community Centre and where the main items of business were the election of the new Committee and the adoption of the President's and Treasurer's reports. The Committee for 2019/2020 was:

### **Executive:**

President - Allen Graham  
Vice President – Jude Robison  
Secretary – Pam Harris  
Treasurer – Anne Brake

### **Committee members:**

Fay Campbell  
Cathy Hall  
Heather Campbell

With Stewart Alger from the Fremantle City Library being an ex officio member.

So for 2019/20 we only had seven members on the Committee and while it would be good to have more members on the Committee I cannot understate the work that is done by every one of those committee members. It is no mean feat to put together a full program of activities, speakers, venues, newsletters, publications, social media posts, grant applications, fees collection, sponsorship requests, catering, etc, but all of this seems to come together

seamlessly through the combined efforts of those Committee members.

However, I do have to pass on a special thanks to Heather Campbell who has acted as our back up Secretary to Pam Harris who has been truly social distancing in New South Wales and is an apology for tonight's meeting. Pam kept an eye on all the incoming and outgoing mail, but Heather took responsibility for the hand on matters like doing the agendas and minutes so a big thanks to both Heather and Pam for their work during what has been a very unique year.

So on behalf of myself as President and our members I offer a very big 'thank you' to all the Committee for making the Society tick.

I do know that Cathy Hall our long standing committee member will not be standing for the Committee this year so I will take this opportunity to thank Cathy for her contribution to the Committee. 'Thanks Cathy.'

Our July meeting is always a two part meeting where we deal with the formalities of the Annual General Meeting first and when that is concluded we make time for our guest speaker who this year was Ian Darroch.

Ian delivered a fascinating talk on the Pneumonic Influenza epidemic of 1918, also known as the Spanish Flu, and the devastating effect this had at its worst on the lives of those living, working and visiting Fremantle. Ian's thorough research provided a very detailed examination of the cause and effect of the epidemic and created a context for what happened here in Fremantle and the role of the Woodman Point Quarantine Station and those that worked there. (And I can say here that we will be starting off 2021 with a tour of the Quarantine Station.)

### **Committee Meetings**

The Committee meets once a month and the meeting day is set for a day that best meets the availability of Committee members and so for 2019/20 the regular meeting day was held on the third Tuesday of the month. All our committee meetings for

2019 were held in the Amenities Room of the Temporary Library Building, aka The Dockers Building. We did not hold too many meetings in 2020, but when we did, we held those in the homes of the Committee members. The need to find a regular meeting space is something that will need to be addressed by the incoming Committee and hopefully we will be able to access a meeting room in the Council's new administration building.

### **General Meetings**

The Committee continued to find interesting places and or/events for our general meetings as the following list shows:

#### **August – Pub lunch at The Local, formerly known as the Seaview hotel**

A happy crowd enjoyed the delicious fare at The Local, for our annual August Pub Lunch. Fay Campbell presented an overview of the history of the hotel which members Don Whittington and Jon Strachan added to with colorful stories of their personal encounters with the pub, touching on a few urban myths relating to the business across the street. (Nudge, nudge, wink, wink,)

#### **September - Protest and Unrest Exhibition at Fremantle Prison.**

Many thanks to Olimpia Cullity, Curator at Fremantle Prison, who gave us a fascinating insight on the development of the exhibition. While the riot and fire in 1988, which led to the prison's closure in 1991, probably remains in most people's memories, there were a number of skirmishes in the Prison's history. The Prison's collection, newspaper articles, diary entries and the evocative images of Karin Calvert Borshoff, taken just before the Prison's closure, all contributed to the richness of the exhibition. A compilation of video imagery, including interviews, also accompanied the exhibition. As our numbers were limited we were given the chance to view some of the Prison's prized objects including very rare convict uniforms.

#### **October - Fremantle Studies Day – MUA office North Fremantle**

This is the premier event on our calendar and this year it was held at the Maritime Union offices in North Fremantle. About 45 members, friends and interested others attended a very successful afternoon. The topic of this year's Studies Day was Labour History and the venue perfectly suited the themes explored in the four papers.

The papers and presenters were:

**The State Implement and Engineering Works, North Fremantle - Cate Pattison.**

Cate was our 2018 Research Scholarship recipient, who researched and wrote about the State Implement and Engineering Works in North Fremantle. Cate traced the history of the 'Imps' from its establishment in 1913 to its closure in 1986, interspersing her talk with photos and extracts of interviews by former workers.

Cate's lecture and research was a clear demonstration of the return that the Society and Fremantle achieves by sponsoring this Scholarship and we look forward to being able to publish her paper in a future edition of *Fremantle Studies*. Several previous employees of the Engineering works attended the talk and took the opportunity to renew old acquaintances.

**The History of Chinese Seamen in Fremantle - Charlie Fox.**

There is a long history of Chinese seamen working on ships operating from Fremantle port and this reliance on sailors from China increased during World War 2.

Unfortunately, the Chinese were not paid at the same rates as other seamen resulting in a strike in 1942. The killing of two seamen by Australian troops on the wharf and two by Dutch troops had implications for Chinese-Australian relations and the laws governing employment of both Chinese and Australian maritime workers.

**Harbouring Discontent: activism in 1930s Fremantle – Paul Reilly.**

This was a time of financial and political instability with the Great Depression and the rise of European Fascism leading to World War 2. Fremantle was not immune from the turmoil of the times with high unemployment

leading to successful community and industrial action and vigorous anti-fascist activism in support of the Republic during the Spanish Civil War. Left-wing unions such as the Lumpers and the Communist Party and the Labor Party were active within the Fremantle Trades Hall. Paul used a series of photos from the period to illustrate his talk.

**It wasn't just about Webb Dock: the 1998 War on the Wharves in Fremantle – Bobbie Oliver.**

The strike was called when Patrick Stevedores sacked their 2000 strong workforce throughout Australia and attempted to replace them with non-unionised labour. At the Fremantle wharves picket lines of unionists and their supporters prevented trucks from entering the wharf and police were mobilised to intimidate the strikers. The ultimate victory for the unionists, although a compromise, ensured the MUA continued its role on the waterfront. Bobbie illustrated her talk with dramatic photos of the port confrontations and thanked the MUA for granting access to their records.

All of the above papers will be published in the next edition of *Fremantle Studies*, that being Volume 11.

The stars aligned on the day for it allowed us to celebrate two great Society achievements. One being the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Society and the second being the launch of our tenth volume of *Fremantle Studies*. No silver anniversary birthday can pass without a birthday cake being cut so how good was it that three of our foundation members namely Anne Brake, Ron Davidson and Bob Reece were there to jointly cut the cake and blow out the candles.

The afternoon was effectively broken into two parts with the major proportion of the day being devoted to hearing from our presenters. The second part of the afternoon was dedicated to the launch of our *Fremantle Studies* Journal and here thanks are passed onto the Mayor Brad Pettitt for finding the time to officially launch the journal, especially since our afternoon

clashed with the Blessing of the Fleet. So thanks Brad for joining us that afternoon and for meeting with me on other occasions when I have asked for a meeting with you to discuss Society concerns.

### **November – Christmas Social at Freo**

**Social.** Almost 40 people gathered at the old Artillery Drill Hall in Parry St, to celebrate Christmas, the end of another great year for the Society and to hear about the hall's transformation into the latest music venue in town. Kyra Lomas, architect with the National Trust, provided an overview of the history of the site as well as an insight into the various aspects of conservation and redevelopment of this fascinating site.

### **February – 2020 Addressing historic injustices. Glyde in Community Centre East Fremantle.**

Ezra Jacob Smith, a Whadjuk Noongar man gave us an insight into Whadjuk connections to this country stretching back thousands of years well before the rising of sea levels and an inundation that saw a hill on the coast become an island which Europeans now known as Rottnest but which the Noongar people know as Wadjemup. Ezra's talk also told of the history of the approximately 4,000 Aboriginal men and boys from across Western Australia who were gaoled on Rottnest and the incredible impact their incarceration had on them personally and their communities. Ezra's passionate but considered presentation was very well received.

### **August – Pub lunch two – Freo Doctor Liquor Store, formerly the Oceanic Trading Store.**

This event was a bonus event for us for we would not normally have two Pub Lunches in the one year, but due to the broken year we have had we were able to resume our program with a lunch and talk at the Freo Doctor Liquor Store. While not a hotel, the heritage basement of the building was the ideal place for Tim Wright, a long standing Arundel Street resident, to share his knowledge of the street and the building with us. His story was very well received and left us all thinking how street history can be such a rich vein of local history.

### **Newsletter**

Another key activity of the Society is the publication of our newsletter, The Society is committed to publishing four newsletters a year and the key person responsible for this task over the past twelve months has been our stalwart member Anne Brake. The newsletter is always a good read with a good mix of society news and articles on Fremantle's history so a 'big thanks' to Anne for her devotion to this course. Other members have also provided tales of interest to be included in the newsletter and so our thanks is also passed onto those contributors.

### **Deckchair Theatre Archives.**

In the 2018/2019 report I wrote how since 2016 the Society had been working in conjunction with the State Library to archive the trove of material that was retained as memorabilia when the theatre group wound up in October 2012. I also told how the project had been a labour of love for some of our members, notably Pam Harris, Cathy Hall, Kristy McNulty and Tania Heyne. Further advising, 'that the finish line is in sight'. Well, it is now with great pleasure that I can advise that the finish line has been crossed and all the archived material has been handed over to the care of the State Library of Western Australia.

The Society applied for and was awarded a WA History Foundation Grant of \$8,712 to digitize the Deckchair Theatre audio visual materials and that digitisation work is currently being undertaken by a commercial contractor. The completion of that task will truly bring to an end our involvement with a project which can best be described as a cultural project, rather than an historical one, but no matter how it is described it was a project of significant state importance and is something that the Fremantle History Society can be very proud of. So I will say it once again, 'a big thanks to Cathy, Pam, Kristy and Tania and apologies to anyone who I may have missed.'

### **Research Scholarship**

The Research Scholarship that I spoke of earlier is something that the Society Awards every two years and in normal circumstances we would now be choosing a

winner to be announced at our forthcoming Studies Day. The scholarship is valued at \$2,000 and in 2018 the Society covered the full cost of the scholarship. However, our ability to fully fund the scholarship is not sustainable and we will need to rely on sponsorship to help offset its cost in the future. We did reach out to potential sponsors, but 2020 is not a good year to be asking for sponsorship dollars and so we will not be offering the scholarship this year. We do not want to give up on the Scholarship and so we hope we will have more success in attracting a sponsor, or sponsors, in 2021 when hopefully we are all enjoying more prosperous economic times.

### Thank You

Before concluding there are just a couple more 'thank yous' that I need to make and one of them is to our catering team lead by our committee member Fay Campbell who has been ably assisted by Kristy McNulty and Tania Heyne and I make this thank you with a warm memory of the catering that we put out for Studies Day

I would also like to thank all our presenters and those venues where we have held our events this year, for without them we wouldn't have the ambitious program that we always endeavour to achieve.

I have already passed on my thanks to the Mayor, but I would like to thank the City of Fremantle who for a long time have allowed us to meet in a Council provided meeting room and we look forward to being able to access meeting space in the new Council Administration building.

The History Society has always enjoyed a strong connection with the staff of the Library and so we record our usual thanks for the help they have provided us with over the year.

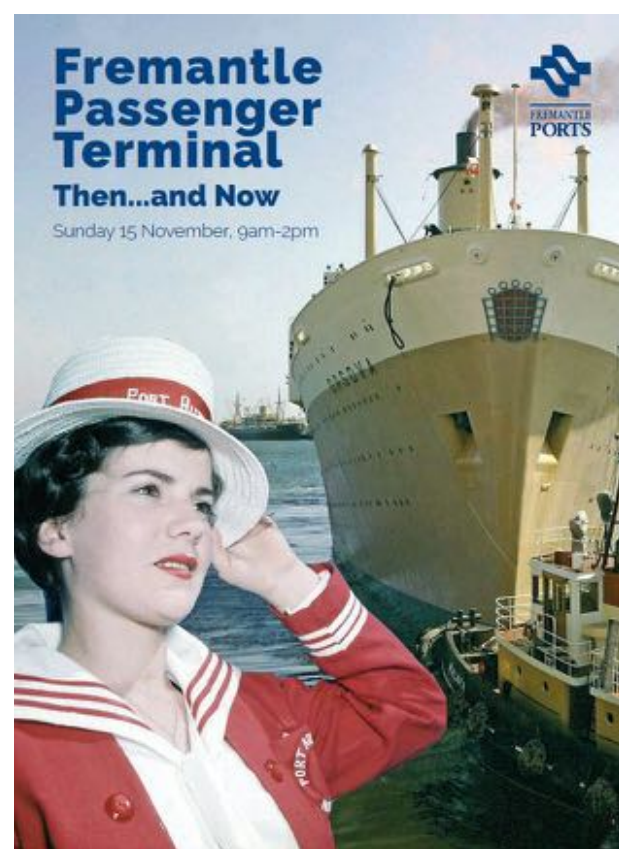
And of course, a final 'thank you' to all our members who have attended our meetings as there is nothing that gives the Committee more satisfaction than to see a good roll up of members and guests at these events.

So I think that is the right note for me to conclude this report and we look forward to

your continuing support over the next twelve months.

### FOR YOUR DIARY

**November** – join us for our Christmas meeting at **Victoria Hall**, 179 High St, Fremantle on **Sunday 22 November, 4pm – 6pm**. Drinks at the bar after a complimentary glass of bubbles.



- Relive your migrant arrival moment
- Tours of the building
- Australian Border Force detector dogs
- Meet the Harbour Master
- Photos and memorabilia
- Record your migration story for posterity
- Photography tips and tricks with Fremantle Camera Club
- Vintage-inspired fashion parade
- Music, morning tea, genealogy and more!

*Merry Christmas and a  
safe and happy New Year*