

⊗ Fremantle History Society Inc ⊗

Established 1994

The Secretary

Fremantle Prison, The Terrace, Fremantle 6160, Ph: 335 9473

Summer Edition, 1996



Jessie Whittaker (nee Thompson) with her mother walking across the old Alma St cemetery site, now the South Terrace Primary School, c 1930. The Fremantle Hospital nurses' quarters are on the right in the background (now demolished).
Photo courtesy Local History Collection, Fremantle City Library.

Alma Street Cemetery

The Swan River colony was founded in 1829. Soon after the early settlers arrived the townsite of Fremantle was laid out. In 1830 the Colonial Secretary's office ruled

'...that to prevent indiscriminate burials and unpleasant consequences arising therefrom in a warm climate, a Burial Ground will be set apart in Every Township and or parish... All Burials by the Chaplain must take place as soon after sunrise as possible or an hour precisely before sunset and at no other time...'

Signed F Brown, Colonial Secretary

Although burials took place from 1830, the Alma St Cemetery wasn't officially allotted until 1847 when it was vested in the Church of England. The original site was approximately 4 acres. It was situated away from the town on the south side of Church Hill (also known as Scotchman's Hill). Access to the site was via a footpath from King St (now Henderson St).

The area remained allotted as a cemetery until closed by proclamation on 18 December 1895. Burials however continued in vaults and in other cases with permission from the Governor until at least 1905.

DEAD CENTRE OF TOWN

On 20 March 1833, a map showing some additional allotments was submitted to the Lieutenant Governor for his approval. It showed Lots 433 and 448 to be 'the reserves of the Crown being the site of the original Burial Ground'. These two lots stretched along Market St from the corner of Bannister St where AE Davies Funeral Parlour now stands, to the corner of Collie St.

Around 830 people were buried in the Alma St Cemetery. When the Fremantle and Karrakatta cemeteries were gazetted in 1897, the wealthier people exhumed the bodies of their relatives for reburial in the new cemeteries. By 1911 all that remained were the bodies of the poor and the 'unknown'.

EARLY RECYCLING

Tombstones from the Alma St Cemetery may have been used to improve the footpaths of High St. In 1892 a letter appeared in the *Inquirer* wherein the writer reported that a flagstone turned up for repair in High St was in fact a tombstone from the Alma St Cemetery.

Another was discovered as a hearth stone in an old house owned by the Gourleys on the south side of the Swan River. It was the tombstone of Frances Scott, eldest daughter of Daniel & Frances Scott. She died on 9 March 1833 aged 21 months & 9 days and was buried in the Alma St Cemetery.

The earliest recorded burial is Sarah Ann Lockyer, aged 9 months, who died of dysentery and was buried 25 March 1830. Dysentery and scurvy were common causes of death in the early days of the

colony, particularly of children. The Edgcombe family lost two-year old twins, Richard & Lydia, in April 1830 from scurvy. Other recorded causes of death were old age, water on the chest, fever, change of life, confinement, suicide and cause unknown.

The victim of Fremantle's one and only duel, George French Johnson, was buried on 19 August 1832. He was shot by William Nairne Clark. The precise motive for the duel was never established.

The Alma St Cemetery was finally transferred to the Fremantle Municipal Council in June 1915, 'subject to the Council exhuming and removing the bodies interred there in for reburial in the Public Cemetery (Fremantle Cemetery) the said Council to re-erect the gravestones there and to undertake to lay out and use the land conveyed to them as a public garden'.

BIZARRE EXITS

- † Daniel Scott, Harbour Master of Fremantle died 20 February 1865 of **fatty degeneration of the heart & liver** while his poor wife Frances died on 2 November 1865 at 57 of **change of life**.
- † Amelia Pringle, wife of Captain Pringle of the *Sea Ripple*, died as a result of **confinement on board** and 'was put in a zinc case with rum, slung from the cabin roof and so brought to harbour'.
- † Richard Cove, aged 64, buried 16 September 1864, died of **decay - convict - no mourners**.
- † William Carpenter, aged 50, 31 October 1831 - **labourer - visitation of God**.

- ✦ Maria Wauhop, aged 49, **disarrangement of intestines - immigrant, just arrived**
- ✦ William Sutton, 50 years, **went silly, wandered in the bush and found dead with head in waterhole.**
- ✦ Cecil John, about 40, 6 September 1870, **hard living.**

South Terrace Primary School

The original South Terrace Primary School was to be established where part of the Fremantle Hospital now stands. This land was part of the convict grant. This site was opposed by the hospital authorities, amongst others, who were anxious 'to retain the splendid sea view'. However the Minister for Education was determined to build a school because they had calculated there were 439 children of compulsory school age north of South Terrace and another 498 under six years old. The Minister got his way and South Terrace Intermediate Government School opened in 1904 using some of the buildings on the hospital site including the town morgue and Coroner's Court.

In 1962 Fremantle Hospital arranged with the Education Department to move the school to the Alma St Reserve. One of the buildings erected in 1912 for the school was used by the hospital for a time as a nurse's training area and what had been South Terrace Primary School was transformed into a day centre. Today there are 195 pupils and 14 staff at the school.



Committee Members

The following are members of the committee of the FHS

Dianne Davidson	430 6096
Elaine Berry	336 1906
Margaret McPherson	337 2668
Anne Brake	(wk) 335 9473
Suzan Miles	339 3145
Deborah Tout-Smith	(wk) 427 2725
Michael Seats	335 2890
Bob Reece	335 7892
Sally Rodgers	339 7922
Lorraine Stevens	(wk) 430 2266
Ron Davidson	430 6096
Milton Jones	337 2331

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 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.



New members

Celia Chesney
 George & Robyn Goodwin
 Monique Pasqua
 Daniel & Barbara Krusenklau
 (USA)



Coming Events:

The Army Museum of Western Australia

Our first general meeting this year will be held in conjunction with the members of the Army Museum of WA. Their most interesting meeting, planned for the same night as our first meeting of the year, was too good an opportunity to miss. It also gives both groups the opportunity to meet people with similar interests.

Following a heritage survey of Artillery Barracks recently commissioned by the Department of Defence, the contracted architect, Phil Griffiths, has been invited to speak to the Army Museum's members. Phil will outline the heritage aspects of the Artillery Barracks in Fremantle that now houses the Army Museum's collection and exhibitions. Lieutenant Colonel Jack McRoberts, president of the Museum, has generously extended an invitation to Fremantle History Society members to attend.

The presentation will be held in the Museum's Education Room on **Tuesday 27 February** at 7.30 pm. The talk will be followed by some refreshments on the veranda for which a \$5.00 donation is requested.

To assist in the preparations for the night, members intending to attend are asked to leave a message on the answering machine on telephone 335 2077.

Have your say!

Have you enjoyed the Society's general meetings? Are there things

you would like to do? Are there changes you would like to make? The Society's March general meeting will give you the opportunity to have your say on the way the Society is run. It will focus on reviewing our first year and developing projects for the coming 12 months or so. The meeting will be held in the video room at the Fremantle Prison on **Tuesday 26 March**. A viewing of the newly refurbished Interpretation Centre will also be included in the evening's activities.

Heritage Walk - Conducted tour - Fremantle Defence Sites - WWII

On **Sunday March 10** two tours - 10.00 am and 2.00 pm - have been arranged for members and friends to visit various defence sites around Fremantle. The tours will be conducted by Michael Seats and Bob Woollett, members of the Society, who will explain the history of the sites. It will be necessary to walk around some of the areas in order to appreciate the history.

The tour will commence at the Round House, incorporating a look at Arthur Head Battery and Cliff St precinct. A bus will drive to Scotsman Hill, Drill Hall and Fremantle Prison before looking at Monument Hill. Next point of call will be a walk around the Fremantle Arts Centre and History Museum where Marg McPherson will discuss its use by the American Navy.

On to Burt St Barracks where Milton Jones will meet you. Here time is allowed for you to look at the Artillery Museum. At the conclusion of the tour the bus will take you back to the Round House and your car.

Pit stops and refreshments will be available at the Fremantle Arts Centre and the Artillery Barracks.

Cost per person will be \$7.00. A brochure of the tour will be available prior to same. Seats must be booked and paid for by March 3. Contact Margaret McPherson - 337 2668 or Anne Brake 335 9473.

This will be the inaugural tour by the Society of historical sites and if successful others may follow. So come along and enjoy a couple of informed hours about the protection of Fremantle during WWII and pave the way for future tours.

Gateways Project

The Fremantle City Council is planning to commemorate next year's centenary of the port with the commissioning of art works to celebrate various aspects of its history. As part of this exciting project, research on the rich history of the port is being undertaken. For its April meeting, the History Society hopes to prevail upon the consultants involved to share some of the colourful stories that have come to light. Watch the local press for further details.

Fremantle Studies Day

The inaugural Fremantle Studies Day - or should we say 1/2 day - is planned for **Saturday 4 May** at the Fremantle History Museum. The program will run from 1.00 - 5.00 pm and will include a session to discuss the future viability of making the day an annual event.

Papers will include:-
Bill Latter, *Xavier Herbert's Fremantle*

Tony Fletcher, *The Myriad Faces of War: The Fremantle Waterfront 1939-45*

Ann Delroy & Phyl Brown, *Sugar and Spice: women and Work at the Arnott, Mills & Ware Biscuit Factory*
Patricia Brown, *'She Eateth not the Bread of Idleness' Women and work in the changing world between 1900 and 1940*

For further details and to reserve a seat for the day contact Deb Tout-Smith on 427 2725.



A New Exhibition At The Fremantle History Museum

La Semilla

The Fremantle History Museum is currently hosting a delightful exhibition of art and craft by a recent migrant from El Salvador, Ana Teresa Montoya Calderton.

La Semilla, Spanish for 'the seeds', represents the growth and progress of Ana's life since her arrival in Western Australia only five years ago, speaking no English. In that time Ana has been able to fulfil her lifelong desire to practice art. She now uses a range of media including acrylic, water colour, pastel, papier mache' and ceramics to vividly express her experiences and feelings. She draws on both her own traditions and those of contemporary Australia.

The exhibition will include colourful pinata, the traditional Latin papier mache' form filled with sweets, which will be broken open by children at the end of the exhibition. The pinata represents the lies and vanities of the world, and the stick used to break it represents virtue.

The sweets are the reward for faith and hope.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a children's program during the Easter holiday break which will include a four day workshop to make pinata and look at the traditions that surround their use.

La Semilla can be seen in the Hearthealth Community gallery at the Fremantle History Museum from 10 February to 28 April. The Museum is open from 11.00 am to 4.00 pm on weekdays and 1.00 pm to 5.00 pm weekends. There is no charge for entry. For further information contact Deborah Tout-Smith on 427 2725.



The Professional Historians and Researchers Association WA (Inc)

Perth Goes Modern: Art, Architecture and Historiography, by Robyn Taylor

Robyn Taylor will be presenting an illustrated talk based on her doctoral research which investigated the concepts of modernism and modernity in the context of Perth's 1930s architecture and related art and design forms.

The meeting will be held on Wednesday 14 February, 1996 in Room 2.9, 2nd floor, Alexander Library Building. Refreshments at 5.30 pm, meeting to start at 6.00 pm. Cost \$2.00 (PHR members \$1.00).



Fremantle History Society Christmas Party

The Fremantle History Society took a considerable step into the port city's industrial and social past at its Christmas party held in the cellars of the Lionel Samson building in Cliff St.

Members celebrated with drinks from the Lionel Samson cellars and snacks they had brought along. The company's sales manager, Miles Bennett, then showed members how a variety of devices, now distributed around the cellar, had once been used to break down 100 proof spirit from barrels into something more drinkable, and to bottle and cap the resulting whisky, brandy and rum.

Members were then taken next door into Fanny's cottage where Lionel Samson and his wife Fanny had lived in the early days of the colony.

The cottage now houses a family and company museum. Only the front section of the cottage remains, the back being destroyed when the adjoining company headquarters went up in flames. The present Lionel Samson building was erected in 1898.

An enjoyable and educational time was had by all attending.



For Your Diary

Tuesday, 27 February - The Army Museum of WA. Conservation Architect, Phil Griffiths, will present a talk on the heritage aspects of the Artillery Barracks, Burt St, Fremantle. 7.30 pm. \$5.00 charge for supper.

Sunday 10 March - Conducted

Tours - Fremantle Defence sites of WWII. Society members will be leading a bus tour of these interesting sites and sharing their knowledge and experiences with you. Bookings must be made by March 3 (M McPherson 337 2668, A Brake 335 9473), 2 tours are offered - 10.00 am and 2.00 pm

Tuesday 26 March - Have your own say! Members are invited to have their say on the activities of the Society. Fremantle Prison - video room, 7.00 pm

Tuesday 23 April - Gateways Project. The colourful history of the port of Fremantle will be the focus of this meeting. Watch the local press for details.

Saturday 4 May - Fremantle Studies Day (1/2 day) - the program runs from 1.00 - 5.00 pm and will be held at the Fremantle History Museum, Finnerty St, Fremantle. For further details and registration information contact Deb Tout-Smith on 427 2725



Tracing past lives: The writing of historical biography
Edited by Richard Broome

This book was published by the History Institute of Victoria in October 1995. The publication comprises a collection of essays that flowed from a conference on History and Biography held by the Institute in 1994.

Eight prominent historians discuss the problems and methods of historical biography in the context of

their own biographical research.

Chapters include:

- ♦ Walter Phillips, 'Historian, Biography and History'
- ♦ John Rickard, 'Writing the biography of a family: the case of Catherine and Pattie Deakin'
- ♦ Judy Brett, 'Robert Menzies: Psychobiography and the Public Man'
- ♦ Joy Damousi, 'Feminist Biography'
- ♦ Brenda Niall, 'Georgiana McCrae: A Private Life'
- ♦ Jim Davidson, 'Defining ambience: first Louise Hanson-Dyer, then the biographer'
- ♦ Geoffrey Searle, 'Writing about a contemporary: Robin Boyd'
- ♦ David Chandler, 'Writing a Biography of Pol Pot: uncovering a clandestine life'

The book also features an introduction by Robert Broome.

The price is \$8.00, plus \$3.00 for interstate postage. Multiple copies can be posted at the same rate as single copies. If you are interested in obtaining a copy, post your order, including a cheque or money order to Book Orders, The History Institute Victoria Inc, 254 Faraday St, Carlton, Vic 3053 and allow at least 10 days for your order to be processed and returned.

(from the PHR Newsletter No 43, Feb '96)



New Plans For Samson House
Margaret Anderson
Western Australian Museum

Long-time landmark of Fremantle, Samson House, is in the midst of an exciting period of development at the moment. The house was built originally for local Fremantle residents Michael and Mary Samson in two stages - between

1888-9 and then 1899-1900. Originally named, rather optimistically, 'Park View', it was described in the press in 1905 as 'one of the prettiest villa homes in Fremantle'. Members of the Samson Family lived in the house until 1982, when it was bequeathed to the Western Australian Museum. A long period of restoration and cataloguing followed before the house opened to the public in 1987. It is now open on two afternoons per week, on Thursdays and Sundays, or by special arrangement for groups and school classes at other times.

The creation of a Division of Social and Cultural History within the Museum has led, in the past two years, to a re-evaluation of the potential of Samson House. As a result new resources are being invested in a range of programs. In addition to interpreting the house to individual visitors, several programs for schools have been developed and will be introduced this year - barring more industrial action by teachers! These programs use the house to explore with children aspects of family life in the past. They also introduce concepts of class difference, and the work which went on inside all houses to keep them running. Samson House is equipped uniquely to present such programs, since it retains major elements of a functioning kitchen, the original bathroom, (added in 1899/1900) and the original laundry, complete with several generations of equipment.

Samson House is also unique amongst historic houses in Australia, in having in its grounds a small cottage, apparently built by Michael Samson to rent out. Although now in very poor

condition, the cottage is capable of restoration and will enable the Museum to present a very interesting range of programs, contrasting life in the 'big' house, with life in the cottage. Over the years some very valuable oral history projects have been completed by Museum staff and the Samson House Volunteer Group, and these provide some most useful insights into life in the cottage. In 1994 the Heritage Branch of the Building Management Authority was kind enough to complete a conservation study of the cottage, which enabled the Museum to apply, successfully, for an Australian Heritage Commission grant to begin the restoration of the cottage. That work will begin shortly.

The same period has seen some serious planning for the garden of Samson House, really the only public historic garden in Western Australia. A conservation study of the garden by Oline Richards and Phillip Palmer is almost complete and the Museum must now seek the funds to implement its recommendations. If this cannot be undertaken all at once, we will introduce elements over time, beginning with a major overhaul of the rose garden this year.

Oline Richards has conducted a great deal of research, both into the roses grown at Samson House and into popular species from the period c. 1930 - 50. This period saw the development of the rose garden at the House. Unfortunately many of these roses, although relatively recent, are now quite difficult to obtain. The current interest in 'heritage' roses often by-passes the roses of this era. It will be necessary to obtain stock from

growers around Australia, graft it onto the appropriate root stock for Western Australian conditions and transplant them into Samson House. This process is underway at present and hopefully next rose planting season will see the beginning of the transformation. We intend to interpret the garden in some detail at the same time, and have asked Oline Richards to consider writing a booklet about the history of gardening in Western Australia in general and the garden at Samson House in particular. We hope that the green thumb brigade will find the re-creation of the garden at Samson House of special interest.

We are also considering a range of programs which might bring music into Samson House, both as public performance (on an intimate scale of course!) and as programs for schools or other groups. The piano at the House has just been overhauled and pronounced fit and we are searching for suitably talented teacher/musicians with an interest in domestic music of the past. Since so much of the music of the nineteenth century was written for the domestic, or semi-domestic setting, we are hopeful that some interesting programs can be devised over the next year or two.

Our intention in all of these programs is to develop the potential of Samson House and to expand the range of experiences we offer our visitors. The Museum has committed substantial new resources to the House and we hope, in this way, to ensure its place in Fremantle's heritage and cultural life for the foreseeable future.



Fremantle in WWII Exhibition at the Fremantle City Library

In conjunction with the History Society, the Local History Section of the Fremantle City Library, will be mounting a display of photographs and memorabilia relating to Fremantle's involvement in the second world war. The exhibition will be held in the display area to the right of the Library's entry during March. Lorraine Stevens is interested in speaking to anyone who has objects from the second world war that may be used in the display - ration cards, gas masks, air raid warden helmets - **IN SHORT ANYTHING!** Lorraine can be contacted on 430 2239 or drop in at the Local History desk.



Fremantle Prison Trust

As of the January meeting, Marli Wallace has taken over the position as the Chair of the Fremantle Prison Trust from Mayor Jenny Archibald.

The Trust reports to the Minister for Works, Kevin Minson, through the CEO of the WA Building Management Authority. The care of the Prison, one of the state's premier heritage sites, was vested in the Works Department following its closure as a maximum security prison in November 1991. Jenny Archibald has been involved in the project firstly as a member of the Community Consultative Group and then as the then Mayor, John Cattalini's, representative on the formed Trust. She was the inaugural Chairperson.

The Trust oversees the management of the Prison and advises the Minister on matters

regarding its conservation, interpretation and tourist potential. Marli Wallace brings considerable experience as a senior public servant in both WA and Victoria.



**Garden Island Excursion -
18 March**

The Melville History Society (note their name change!) is planning a trip to Garden Island. The day starts at 1.30 pm at the Miller Bakehouse Museum and will include information on the history of the island. The day will cost \$11.00.

This interested in attending should contact Alice Smith on 339 4486.



Jigsaw Column

For those of you who are recipe hunters I have some advice on how to make rice pudding and cups of tea for a crowd.

These were taken from a **Diet List for Patients at the Fremantle Asylum - 1 January 1902.**

To make a Gallon of Tea you need

- 1 ounce of tea
- 4 ounces of sugar
- 1 pint of milk, and (of course)
- a gallon of hot water

If you want to make rice pudding for 280 people you would require

- 35 pounds rice
- 84 quarts milk
- 8-3/4 pounds sugar
- 14 ounces butter, and

A VERY LARGE PUDDING DISH!

HAPPY CATERING



**Fremantle Heritage Week - 14 -21
April**

Elaine Berry is the Fremantle History Society representative on the Council's Heritage Week Committee. Fremantle's week of activities will be part of the new look national Heritage Festival which will stretch over a two week period rather than the one week of the past. *Our Shared Heritage* is the theme nationally and the committee is currently deciding on appropriate themes for Fremantle's celebrations. Details will be published in the local press.

This is the second year that the History Society has been represented on the Committee. Several History Society members also volunteered their services on the day. Elaine will be looking for volunteers again this year and will canvas members at forthcoming general meetings. Enthusiastic members can register their interest with Elaine on 336 1906.



We are always looking for interesting articles and tit bits of information to include in the newsletter. Have you just discovered something interesting about Fremantle you would like to share? Have you been delving into the history of your house or your street? Do you wish to write a letter to the editor?

Send your contributions to the address on the front, marked Secretary, Fremantle History Society by Monday 22 April 1996.