



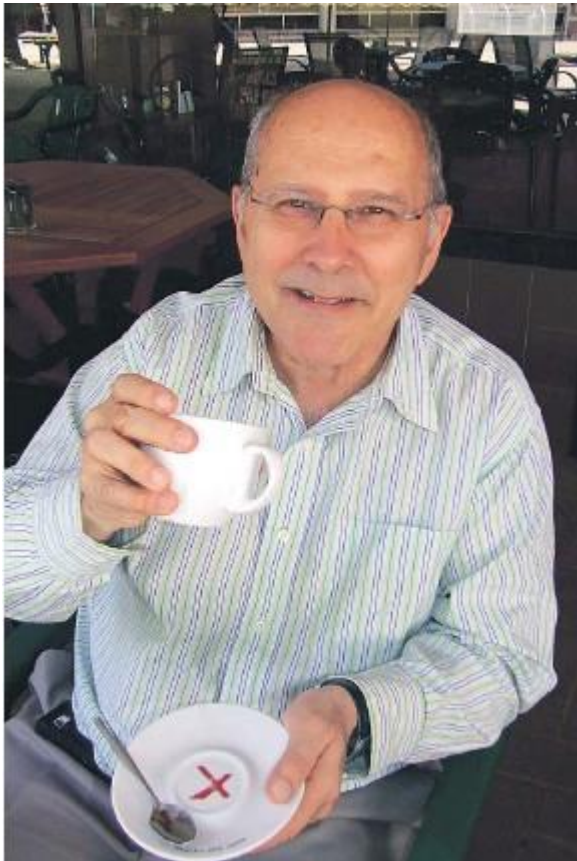
FREMANTLE HISTORY SOCIETY

Established 1994

The Secretary, PO Box 1305
FREMANTLE WA 6959

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<https://fhs.org.au>



KEN POSNEY

Born: Tarentum, Pennsylvania, 1939

Died: Perth, aged 79

While most of Fremantle and squadrons of weekend sailors scurried about on high beam, talking up the chances of Australia retaining the America's Cup in early 1987, Ken Posney was more concerned about the welfare of people who were nowhere near the winners' tape of life.

A senior City of Fremantle staff member with a passion for community relations, he was supportive of the cup defence by local yacht racers but took a broader view of social effects.

Freo did want to look smart for its weeks of global attention but at what cost?

Patric de Villiers, then a Fremantle planning officer and eventually city manager, says Ken "was actively concerned with the potential impacts of the cup on the most vulnerable members of our community.

Groups of older men were being ejected from

boarding houses and Ken spent a great deal of time and energy ensuring they had somewhere to go.

"He was an atypical council employee in that he disregarded much of the bureaucratic rigmarole, preferring to ensure that services including meals on wheels, aged accommodation, legal aid, the women's refuge and migrant resource centre, reached the right people."

However unsavoury people looked, it was needs, not neatness, that mattered to Ken.

His wife, Francesca, recalls that one day a homeless man went to the council office and told him his bank had declined to serve him. "Ken marched the man back to the bank and asked the staff to meet his request immediately."

"A champion of social justice" is how local newspapers described Ken after his death last month. Energy and expertise in breaking down barriers marked his three decades of work for the City of Fremantle. Former councillor Bob Hewitt says Ken was a "visionary in how he saw

the council dealing with disadvantaged people . . . he was largely responsible for Fremantle's particularly empathetic approach. But it was not just social issues that preoccupied him. His role as director of community services included an 'art' component.

"The city's cultural activities and organisations flourished during his time in office. Ken helped me a lot in establishing the FotoFreo festival of photography."

As a movie buff, Ken was rumoured to have kept the local video store in business.

Friends might wonder about the source of this power and creative egalitarianism. There was evidently great fire in the belly and brain.

American accents like his were heard rarely in WA half a century ago, but the word "Detroit", the city in Michigan where Ken had grown up, did resonate with many.

Motor car production led to the nickname Motown.

Ken Robert Posney was born in Tarentum, Pennsylvania, on June 24, 1939, the younger of two sons of Ida (nee Conocchia) and Frank Posney. After studying history at Wayne State University in Michigan, where Ken discovered America's past, he learnt more about the country's present challenges while running a street-market stall in Detroit. The wheels were falling off Motown as the city became a battleground.

Race riots connected with the civil rights campaign in the 60s flared in many US cities, but those in Detroit were the most damaging. The death toll of 43, and destruction of at least 2000 buildings, told some of the story.

Ken's business was among those ruined. He moved to WA in 1969 and worked as a parole officer within the prison system, building up, along the way, plenty of

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The port has seen many colourful international arrivals over the decades but few stayed on to contribute as much as the man from Motown.

A degree in social work at the University of Western Australia added to his formal credentials.

In 1990, he met Francesca Garnett, who after a marital breakdown in Italy, had brought her four children to make a fresh start in Perth.

After her marriage to Ken in 1997, he could add, she says "patient and welcoming son-in-law and father figure" to his CV. Never one to waste a moment, he often listened to audiobooks while walking, so engrossed as to alarm those who worried that he might step off the pavement into the path of a truck.

A brain disorder, progressive supranuclear palsy, was diagnosed in 2003 and began to affect his speech and mobility.

He listened to music in "Ken's Den" at home and began writing an autobiography that would be foiled only by failing dexterity.

He died on November 28, survived by a son, Robbie, from a previous relationship, and Francesca and her children.

Among the colleagues keen to pay tribute was Betty McGeever, a former City of Fremantle librarian, who praised the Posney capacity to treat every colleague, from the most junior staff member to the mayor, with the same respect.

June Moorhouse, former manager of Fremantle Arts Centre, described him as a person of “beautiful contradictions . . . calm and going with the flow, yet passionate, determined and fierce for the things that matter”.

Patrick Cornish, author, editor and journalist, is hoping to write a book on Ken Posney and what his achievements say about Fremantle.

"Though delighted to write his obituary," he says, "it was a challenge to squeeze his major life events, his qualities, his positive impact into the allotted space of 850 words. Fremantle became a better place for his years of contribution.

Patrick is looking for people he can speak to about Ken's life and his contributions to the port city. You can contact Patrick at patrickcornish@aol.com



There are a few spaces still available on the executive and the committee. Anyone interested in joining please contact one of the current committee members noted below.

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
Cathy Hall	0407 086 300
Prof Bob Reece	9335 7892
Michelle Morrison	0419 043 217
Heather Campbell	0408 175 246
Judith Robison	0434 571 666

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

Christmas meeting at Fremantle Army Museum

Our thanks got to Col (retired) Robert Mitchell for his informative tour of the Fremantle Army Museum's fascinating World War 1 galleries. The museum's extensive collection of items range from the general to the specific, from awards and medals to letters and diaries, from a jumper knitted in a prisoner of war camp to the uniforms and equipment used by nurses and doctors who tended the sick and dying. It's a very moving and sobering space with dioramas leaving little to the imagination when it came to the horrors of capture.

To catch our breath we moved over to the Officers Mess to partake of some Christmas cheer and to wish all well for the festive season.



COMING EVENTS

MONUMENT HILL UNVEILED

On Remembrance Day 2018, Fremantle publisher Carmelo Amalfi produced a moving commemorative booklet to coincide with the 90th anniversary of the unveiling of Monument Hill and 100th anniversary of the end of WW1.

Drawing on historical records, surveyor maps and images of the war memorial, Carmelo with Hilton designer Beau G' Froerer completed the booklet on time, its printing paid for by the City of Fremantle and all donations raised on November 11 donated to WA Legacy. The release of 'Monument Hill - 1928-2018' also coincides with a City review of the masterplan governing the future of Fremantle's much-loved reserve.

Our February meeting takes advantage of the location to beat the summer heat. Join Carmelo at Monument Hill on **Tuesday 26 February at 6pm** to learn more about this fascinating memorial and its future.

Enjoy refreshments after Carmelo's talk while taking in one of Fremantle's most spectacular views.

LINDA J BETTENAY: TELLING AUSTRALIAN STORIES

Linda was born in Roleystone into a pioneering orcharding family who have farmed the land since 1901 and have lived in the area since 1895.

Linda's stimulus to write her first novel has come from the discovery of an amazing, true story of an event in her husband's family. This story was kept secret from the family over the years and was only recently uncovered. Linda's books are based in our state's history – steeped in our pioneering past and cover the two world wars. In her talks Linda explains how she uses historical fact to weave historical fiction.

'Secrets Mothers Keep', 'Wishes for Starlight' and 'The Apple Core Wars' make up the 'Secrets Series'. Linda's books will be available for sale on the night for \$25

Join us Tuesday 26 March at 6pm at the City of Fremantle Library to hear Linda talk about her journey. Meeting to be followed by our regular convivial supper.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE; REMEMBERING THE PAST

Freo 2029 is a bold visionary plan designed to 'unlock the potential of Fremantle as a vibrant and sustainable centre'.

Arising from a community consultation process it aims to link and reinvigorate the various precincts of the port city. But what are the implications for the city's sometimes vulnerable heritage places? Is there recognition of and support for intangible

heritage vital to an ongoing sense of place and sustaining connections to a time before European settlement? In this presentation, Mayor Brad Pettitt will outline his vision for the City of Fremantle and the place of heritage within it.

Join us at the **City of Fremantle Library** on **Tuesday 23 April at 6pm** followed by a light supper.

This meeting is part of the National Trust's Australian Heritage Festival.



TREASURES FROM TROVE

Heather Campbell

'EVERYBODY MAKING HOLIDAY' a hundred years ago - January 1919

At Fremantle everybody making holiday.

Nineteen nineteen was ushered in at the Port amid the usual clangour and clamour of whistles, tin-can bands, 'Auld Lang Syne,' and the hundred and one other sounds, which might be construed as a revival of the old custom of making a noise to keep, the evil spirits away during the- birth of the New Year. Till the rays of the rising sun began to show over in the east, bands of singers with more lung power than harmony, serenaded the policemen on their beats, as well as those residents who were endeavouring to woo elusive sleep.

From 8 am knots of people equipped with hampers, rugs, etc., and full picnic impedimenta, hurried through the doors of the Fremantle Railway Station out to the waiting trams, to make holiday. On the tram routes Point Walter was the favourite spot, and thousands of people were dotted over the large area at this favourite pleasure resort, enjoying the glorious day to the full. Down the reaches of the Swan, hundreds of white wings sped towards the same rendezvous, every make and shape of craft being called into service. Point Walter this year, came fully into its own. Hundreds of

Fremantle residents elected to spend the holiday week under canvas there, and daily crowds flocked per tram and river to enjoy the ideal conditions that prevailed.

South Beach also had a goodly number along its sands, the younger ones enjoying themselves to the top of their bent in the shallow waters lapping the sands, whilst their elders were content to take life more easily in the shaded spots on shore. Many left for Rottnest, combining a short sea voyage with a most enjoyable day's outing.



South Beach c.1920s
Fremantle Library 1713

A large contingent of the sporting fraternity, including many ladies, left to watch the struggle for the Railway Stakes and minor events at Ascot, travelling both by rail and road. Others not so fortunate gathered in ever increasing crowds in High-street waiting for the results to come through. Quite a feature was the little band of immigrants who came ashore from the S.S. Zealandia last evening, and who were having a first view of sunny Australia by day. They could easily be distinguished from the average Australian, both by their general appearance and also by the inflection of their voices.

[Daily News 1 Jan 1919, p 4]

Fremantle Fragments By "Militant."

The Fremantle Labor Women's Organisation gave their annual tea to the workers' children on the Saturday before Christmas, when about 1200 youngsters from 3 months to 14 years had a rattling time on the Esplanade. Tea was served from a couple

of tents, races were run under the supervision of Frank Culley, and toys were distributed to the younger children.

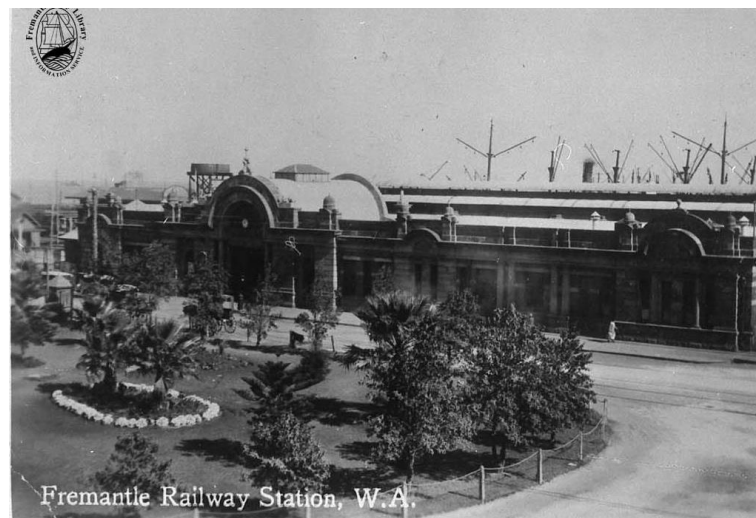
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The holidays have been very quiet at the Port—even in the Police Court. The plague scared away many visitors for which the business people rightly blame the Federal Misgovernment. Work has been very scarce on the wharf of late; so that the festive season lacked much of the means of festivity for the workers and their children....

[Westralian Worker, 3 January 1919, p 1]

Mrs. M. Harvey and her three children will leave Kalgoorlie by this evening's train for Fremantle to spend a holiday at the seaside.

[Western Argus, 7 Jan 1919, p 14]



Fremantle Railway Station c. 1920,
Fremantle Library 1477A

But lest we forget; holiday time in the summer of 1919 was not a happy time for everybody:

The friends of Mr. and Mrs. Carroll, of Thompson-road, North Fremantle will be grieved to learn that their son, Sapper H. J. Carroll (late stationmaster at Gosnells) has died of pneumonic influenza at a stationary hospital, Paris.

[Daily News 18 Jan 1919, p 5]



As promised in our last newsletter, we will present a history of the Flying Angel Club over a couple of issues.

THE HISTORY OF THE SAILORS' REST AND THE MISSION TO SEAMEN / SEAFARERS AKA THE FLYING ANGEL CLUB

Allen Graham

Part 1

1818 – The British Sailors Society was formed in March 1818 as the Port of London Society. (This was the inaugural international seafarers society, **but** it was not the Mission to Seamen.) The earliest symbol of the seamen's mission movement was the adoption of the Bethel flag, circa 1822. This was a blue flag with the word BETHEL printed across the centre of the flag with a white star showing above the word and a white dove with an olive branch below it. And so, the word Bethel began to become associated with organizations affiliated with the British Sailors Society.

1856 – The Missions to Seamen was founded by John Ashley, an Anglican Priest. The Flying Angel flag was adopted in 1858 and that flag, in similar colours to the Bethel flag, showed a flying angel carrying a bible in the centre of the flag with the words 'The Mission' above the angel and the words 'To Seamen' below and so the Flying Angel became synonymous with the Mission to Seamen/Seafarers.

1875 – From May 1875 until December 1875, James Freeman had advertised his Fremantle Boarding House as the Sailors' Home and Dining Room. This was a privately-run boarding house and had no affiliation with either of the internationally run seafarers' institutes. No more was heard of it after December 1875.

1876 – The Royal Sailors Rest was inaugurated by Agnes, (Aggie) Weston, (Later Dame Aggie Weston.) This was an organisation which primarily catered to sailors within the Royal Navy, but through

the work of Aggie Weston was strongly associated with the Women's Christian Temperance Union, which was later instrumental in the formation of the Sailors' Rest in Fremantle.

1883 – In August 1883, a Temperance Crusade meeting was held in Fremantle on behalf of Matthew Burnett, a prominent Temperance Advocate. In attendance at this meeting was the prominent Fremantle businessman and politician EH Higham, who advised the meeting he 'would on a future occasion bring forward some practical suggestion as to the formation of a Coffee Palace and a Sailors' Home in the town.' (*The Herald*, 25/8/1883) However, nothing was to come of this for another nine years and it was not until 1892 that the Sailors Rest was established in Fremantle.

1892/July – On 28 July 1892, Fremantle was visited by Miss Jessie Ackermann of the worldwide missionary for the Women's Christian Temperance movement. During a speech at the Wesley Church Fremantle she advocated the formation of a branch of the WCTU and as reported by *The West Australian*, 29/7/1892, 'At the conclusion of the address, a large number subscribed their names upon the roll of foundation members of the new branch of the Union, the office-bearers of which are to be finally elected at the first general meeting of members.'

1892/August – Miss Ackermann's visit to WA generated a lot of momentum for the advancement of women's interest within the colony and on the 16th August she led a deputation of 55 women to meet with the Premier, John Forrest. Amongst them was Rosa Smith who was to become the champion of sailors' interest in Fremantle and the long-term Superintendent of the Sailors' Rest. At this meeting Mrs Smith said she had come on behalf of the sailors. At the time there was no accommodation for sailors arriving in Fremantle but that given in the public house. They wanted to form a Sailors' Rest. The Masonic Hall was open to them at £2 pound a week, which however

was beyond their means. They asked the Government to give them a piece of land upon which they could erect a building and turn it into a Sailors' Rest, as well as open reading room and coffee rooms for the sailors. The Premier responded to this request by saying 'With regard to the Home they had referred to and also the Sailors' Home, if any properly organized institution applied for any assistance or land for the purpose of doing any good work for the benefit of sailors, or women, or anyone else, the Government would assist them as far as it could.' (*The West Australian*, 17/8/92)

... to be continued



FREMANTLE STRUCK BY PLAGUE

Michelle Morrison

February, 1903 found Fremantle in the grip of the town's third outbreak of bubonic plague.

On 14 February, twenty-seven year old Percy Cartwright was diagnosed with plague at the end of his working day as a 'yardman'. Cartwright worked and lived at 'His Lordships Larder' on the corner of Mouatt and Phillimore streets. He was removed to quarantine on 16 February along with fifteen contacts who had all been inoculated. Dr. Anderson noted in his report that 'two infected rats were obtained from the yard adjoining this place'.¹ Percy Cartwright died on 18 February. That same day, Norman Rovenstrunk was diagnosed with plague. Norman was a fifteen-year-old who lived in Bellevue Terrace but worked at Sandover & Co, which was situated on the corner of Mouat and High Street, the corner immediately south of Percy Cartwright's residence. Seven of Rovenstrunk's contacts were inoculated and removed to Woodman's Point. Sandover & Co, one of Fremantle's major business houses, was

closed down. Six days after his diagnosis, young Rovenstrunk died. The *West Australian* reported that 'a sad feature of his death was that he was the chief support of a widowed mother, to whom he was greatly attached'.

The Central Board of Health, based in Perth then decided it should distribute leaflets detailing the plague precautions in Fremantle and, more importantly, to issue Haffkine's prophylactic to all medical practitioners free of charge. Following this second set of cases in the new year, there was a rush among the public to take up these inoculations, with Dr. Anderson administering them to 500 people in one day.

On 24 February, two more cases of plague were reported. One was Victor Hague, an employee of the sanitary contractors, Laudehr & Gillespie, who was engaged on night-service in the infected area and diagnosed at his home in Duoro Road, South Fremantle. The *Daily News* reported that the victim was one of the company's employees who had refused to be inoculated. The second was James Gardner, a fifty-two-year old retired ships' steward who lived at 103 Phillimore Street, in the West End. In Gardner's case twenty-eight contacts were also quarantined.² In Victor Hague's case, only his wife and child were quarantined. That week, Dr. Anderson wrote to the Central Board that he had 'performed 1104 public inoculations - this includes contacts and Sandover's employees'.³ Victor Hague died on 28 February. Happily, James Gardner survived and was discharged on 24 March.

The place where James Gardner lived in Phillimore Street, with twenty-eight contacts, was typical of the delinquent tenements for which Fremantle was known. The Chief Inspector described it as 'three straggling four-roomed cottages' to which fourteen

¹ Central Board of Health files, AN 120/4, Cons: 1003, Item 1903/0418B, Outbreak of Bubonic Plague Fremantle, S.R.O. Perth.

² *Daily News*, 26 February 1903, p1.

³ Central Board of Health files, AN 120/4, Cons 1003, Item 277, Special Medical Officer's Reports, S.R.O. Perth.

other rooms had been added, some 'erected in any convenient part of the back yards of the original cottages' with walls and ceilings 'under six feet in height'. He finished by describing the tenement as 'a wretched congerie of hovels, quite unfit for human habitation'.

This February outbreak prompted the Fremantle Local Board of Health to recognize the necessity of paving the yards of the West End. Reporting on the meeting of the Board, the *West Australian* noted that Dr. Hope reminded the board that the question of tar-paving yards had been before them for the last three years but it had always been allowed to lapse, even though the 'soil of the central portion of Fremantle had been a receptacle for disease germs for the last sixty years'. 'The committee got completely on board', wrote the newspaper.



Introducing our second new committee member.

Judith Robison has had an extensive career in education both as a teacher and as a teacher educator. Her many academic qualifications have focused on the areas of education and history and even included Library Studies.

Judy taught history and social sciences for 14 years in secondary schools throughout Australia before moving to Murdoch University 1987. Here she lectured in teaching methodologies and reflective practice. Between 2003–2006 she worked as an educational consultant in the Van Vollenhoven Institute, Faculty of Law, Leiden University, The Netherlands.

She has been involved in a wide variety of projects from the National History Project to Asian Studies and Citizenship Education and across the Department of Education, the Catholic Education Office and the Independent Schools Association in Western Australia.

As well as her teaching Judith has contributed to and written both academic papers and curriculum materials for primary and secondary schools. Since retiring from full-time work, she has written a history of the School of Education at Murdoch and helped edit the essays *Murdoch Voices: The*



First 40 Years at Murdoch University 1973-2003 in conjunction with Geoffrey Bolton.

Apart from her engagement with history, Judy enjoys reading, swimming, gardening and morning coffee with friends.



FOR YOUR DIARY

Tuesday, 26 February, 6pm, Monument Hill

Carmelo Amalfi will provide a fascinating history of this site and outline the City's vision for its future. Please join us at this very beautiful spot for our February meeting.

Tuesday, 26 March, 6pm, City of Fremantle Library

Linda J Bettaney: Telling Australian Stories. Linda will give us a fascinating insight into constructing stories from the past.

Tuesday, 23 April, 6pm, City of Fremantle Library

Planning for the future: remembering the past, Mayor Brad Pettitt. Hear how our heritage is being considered in the plans for Fremantle's future.



STOP PRESS

Father Dennis Claughton of the Flying Angel Club was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia. Congratulations Father Dennis.