

FREMANTLE STUDIES DAY

Images & evidence of early Fremantle life



WHEN: Sunday 27 October 2013

Registration from 1pm

Papers 1.30 – 5.00pm (afternoon tea included)

WHERE: Artillery Barracks in Burt Street, Fremantle

COST: \$12 members, \$15 non-members (join on the day for member's prices)

RSVP: Essential by 22 October to 9430 6096, 0403 026 096 or dianne.davidson@gmail.com

RARE AND IMPORTANT: THE EARLY PHOTOGRAPHY OF FREMANTLE

Most places are well documented with maps, drawings, and paintings from their early days. With the invention of photography, officially in 1839, photographic documentation gave an often brutally honest representation of developing cities, devoid of emotional interpretation, despite the selectivity of the photographer's viewpoint. Although it is recorded that the first photographer visited Western Australia in 1846, none of his work survives, and the earliest outdoor images of Fremantle were taken by Stephen Montague Stout and Alfred Hawes Stone in the early 1860s, the former a convict, the latter a law man.

Albany predates Fremantle and Perth photographically, the first known outdoor images there being from 1858. Albany also appears to have more surviving very early photographic representations than Fremantle. Apart from a handful of images by Stout and Stone, surprisingly very few images of Fremantle exist until the 1890s. What outdoor photographs have survived are thus of great importance for a reading and appreciation of the early landscape and townscape, let alone any artistic value the works possess. John Dowson will present a coverage of rare and important photographic survivors from the first 40 years of the camera in Fremantle.

John Dowson is a photographic historian who has written four books on Fremantle, three of them being photographic histories. "Old Fremantle" won the WA Premier's Award in 2004 and his latest book "Fremantle Port" was short listed for the same prize and won a gold medal in New York. John believes that early photography in Western Australia has not been given the respect it deserves by collectors or historians, though pioneer photographers Stout and Stone have finally been the subject of recent significant books. John uses photographs to promote the history and stories of Fremantle and is currently working on a photographic history of Perth.

STEPHEN MONTAGUE STOUT: CONVICT TEACHER, PHOTOGRAPHER AND JOURNALIST

A study of the life of Stephen Montague Stout, who arrived in WA as a convict in 1858, reveals a man with a strong belief in his own capabilities and a determination to build a new life for himself in the fledgling colony. His eventful life tells us much about the workings of the colony during this formative period. Never averse to self-promotion, Stout's varied activities led to interactions with all levels of society, sometimes with negative consequences. A competent and popular teacher, whose former students held high positions in the public sector, Stout is also recognised for his talents as a photographer, leaving behind a valuable record of the State's early history. In the field of journalism, he obviously made a deep impression on many of his contemporaries, who continued to regale their readers, many years after his death, with anecdotes about the life of this talented, yet controversial character.

Irma Walters is a former primary school teacher and has always had a keen interest in the State's history. Since retirement, she became a member of the Australind Family History Society, where she is involved with the production of its quarterly newsletter. Always on the look-out for local stories, Irma became interested in the life of Stephen Montague Stout, first teacher at the Australind settlement. His connection to her home town of Geraldton further stimulated her interest.

IMAGES OF LIFE ON THE ROCKS: RECONSTRUCTING THE MEARES CAMP 1829-1831

The Meares family briefly occupied a location just north of Peel town on the coast of Cockburn Sound Western Australia between 1829 and 1831. There are no images of the place, but the archaeology – gathered over the last two years – paints as vivid a picture of life as any traditional method of recording from the time. In addition, the material remains provide a unique opportunity to access behaviour not traditionally preserved on canvas or cellulose.

Simon Meath is currently undertaking a Master degree at the University Notre Dame Australia. He is a passionate and focused archaeologist, having worked on numerous research projects in the Fremantle area.

A PORT EMERGES: FREMANTLE 1829 – 32

When our first private settlers arrived on the *Calista* on 5 August 1829 nothing was ready for them. But three weeks later Surveyor John Roe was at the site of Fremantle laying out the first streets of the colony's future port. The first building blocks were allocated on 5 September and houses, inns, and shops began to appear, followed by a post office, a weekly newspaper, a burial ground, a jetty and a gaol. By the time Captain Fremantle returned in September 1832 he thought the town showed promise and we have a painting to show what it then looked like.

Dr Steve Errington was born in Northam, grew up in Northcliffe, collected a PhD from UWA and taught chemistry at WAIT/Curtin University for 41 years. He joined the Royal WA Historical Society in 1963 and has recently been made a vice president. His main research interest is nineteenth century WA history on which he has published several papers. His latest book, *Southerners Forever More*, describes the first sixty seasons of the South Fremantle Football Club.

