

Pratique

Friends of Woodman Point Recreation Camp
The Isolation Hospital, 74 O'Kane Court, Coogee WA 6166
Email: friends@woodmanpointquarantinationstation.com



<http://www.woodmanpointquarantinationstation.com>



<https://www.facebook.com/friendsofwoodmanpointrec/>

SUMMER 2024

HERITAGE TOURS ON THE RISE

After a relatively slow start to 2024, heritage tours at Woodman Point seem to be absolutely on the rise with no end in sight.

The year began with some wonderful publicity via *The West Australian*. Travel reporter Mogens Johansen visited the Station, spending time chatting and touring with President Gary Marsh and tour coordinator Jenni Carder. The result was a glorious two-page spread, published on 28 January 2024, complete with some new original photos (Mogens is a highly regarded travel photographer), a wonderful written commentary and the recommendation "*As I bid goodbye to my two guides, I reflect on the confronting and thought-provoking tour. It has been a real eye-opener for me and if you have an interest in WA history, this tour is not to be missed.*" From a traveller and journalist who has seen so much of the world, there could not be a greater recommendation than that.

The publicity continued throughout the year with several other notable reviews,

specifically the Jaguar Club of WA and the University of the Third Age (Melville), who again urged their readers to visit and spread the word about this not-so-well known historical site. And so they have come.



From March to November, our tour guides have been busy conducting 18 community tours during the week. This provided historical exposure to almost 400 people. In addition to this, over a further nine tours, 118 more participants turned up early on a Sunday morning to attend our regular monthly public heritage tour. In total, 27 tours have taken almost 600 people across the site and already six community groups have booked weekday

tours for 2025.

Our tour guides have done a sterling job conducting these tours, many of which received hugely complimentary comments on our Facebook page. We welcomed Keith to our tour guide group this year and so to Jenni, Keith, Chris, Bernadette, Gary and Neil, Friends acknowledge your passion and expertise in providing a highly professional activity that complements our group's public face. And not forgetting in the kitchen our thanks go to Ana who assists with our morning teas on many occasions and is the perfect host.



Whilst many enjoy the opportunity to walk the Woodman Point site, our tours have taken on a different perspective this year to cater for larger groups, and people with limited mobility. To meet this new demand, Friends have reached out, providing audio-visual presentations to a range of community groups from smaller church groups to larger professional



groups such as Melville View Club and the Karrakatta Club. Neil has undertaken these presentations and in total, he has presented to a

further seven community groups, reaching out to a further 200 people.

And it is not only the older generations who are finding a renewed interest in the historic workings of Woodman Point. History tours are offered on the activities program of the Woodman Point Recreation Camp and many schools are taking advantage of including some history amongst the physical activities offered by Camp instructors. These tours, mostly conducted by Neil, and have

proven to be increasingly popular with students and teachers alike. 2024 has seen 32 student tours conducted, reaching out to over 500 students and their teachers.

Two issues consistently face our tour guides:

- Providing a tour which meets the needs of those with limited mobility; and
- time, or rather, the lack of it.

In an effort to be proactive, Friends have worked to provide a solution to both of these issues.

Shortened tours for those with limited mobility have been introduced in 2024.

For a reduced price, participants tour the



Isolation Hospital, and, if able, walk to the Crematorium before enjoying our usual morning tea. This 1½ hour tour has already proven to be very popular, meeting people's needs yet not

making their visit onerous or too taxing.

As a result of regular comments that participants wish they had more time to read display commentary and look carefully at photos, it is planned that in 2025, Friends will introduce several Sunday open days where, for a reduced fee, people can visit the Isolation Hospital and tour its wonderful history and displays at their leisure. During these open days, there will be no access to other historic buildings on the site, but unlimited time can be spent in the Isolation Hospital. It is hoped that both these initiatives will be well-received by the community and will become a regular feature of our tour offerings.

Whilst Friends have enjoyed the increased public exposure we have seen this year, of

greater importance has been the number of people on tour descended from a Woodman Point quarantined patient. There has been great joy as people find the name of their ancestor recorded in our records or visit the site knowing their ancestor would have been cared for in a particular building. This disclosure has reaped rewards for Friends too as we receive a growing number of photos of these ex-patients to add to our archives.

Heritage tours at Woodman Point are going from strength to strength and we look forward to see how our new initiatives will look when they are fully introduced in 2025.

FROM THE PAGES OF HISTORY

Continuing a series of articles recalling some of the patients who were nursed and cared for at the Woodman Point Quarantine Station.

Janet Welch 1941 -

The arrival in Fremantle of the P&O vessel RMS *Mooltan* in May 1949 heralded a significant smallpox lockdown at the Woodman Point Quarantine Station. The vessel, carrying 1062 passengers, mostly new immigrants to Australia from Britain, reported the possible outbreak of smallpox on its voyage from Colombo to Fremantle. It was not determined how the infection boarded the vessel, though it was possibly via a crew member, but the face of this lockdown came from a small 8-year-old girl, Janet Welch from Yorkshire, England, travelling with her parents and sister to make a new life in New South Wales.

When Janet, who had shown "a mild positive reaction" to smallpox tests, was

immediately isolated along with other contacts – her parents and sister, other passengers and several crew members: 19 people in total - and the vessel's master advised authorities in Fremantle of the possibility of disease onboard the ship. As the voyage between Colombo and Fremantle was a lengthy one, the quarantine period of 14 days isolation was largely served whilst at sea. However, on arrival in Fremantle, those at the centre of the drama were taken by quarantine launch to Woodman Point and placed in the Isolation Hospital for further observation. Janet and her contacts spent a further 14 days in quarantine, spending their time swimming, reading and fishing.

Janet's departure from Woodman Point on 21 June 1949 was well documented.

Looking happy and well and clutching her mascot, a toy kangaroo with a joey in its pouch, she walked through the gates holding the hand of Station nurse Bertie Poore who had been her chief carer during her internment. With her parents and sister



Anne, they transferred to the Point Walter Migrant Hostel where the family stayed for a week before heading to Sydney to begin their new life.

In early 2016, 67 years after her time in quarantine, Janet contacted Friends as she was intending to visit WA later that year. At the invitation of then president Earle Seubert, Janet revisited Woodman Point. She said she had many fond memories of her experience there and explained to

Earle that, even though so young at the time, she felt a great affinity with Woodman Point and the Poore family, who had kept in contact with Janet and her family.

Janet remembered helping Bertie make hospital beds and credited her contact with him to her eventually becoming a nurse, completing her training at Sydney's



Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. For Janet, it was a nostalgic visit and the photos taken by Earle on that day are a powerful reminder to us all that there have been many happy endings to personal tales, even in a quarantine setting.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

2024 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 2024 Annual General Meeting was held in the Isolation Hospital on Wednesday 20 November 2024. Fifteen members were in attendance.

President Gary Marsh presented his annual report, reproduced below.

President's 2024 Report

Another busy year for Friends is about to conclude. Although it started slowly, it soon became very busy. Thank you to our committee and active volunteers for their tremendous work and assistance over the past year.

This year to date, Friends have conducted 30 group and general public tours and several private tours. Thank you to all our tour guides for time in conducting these tours. Also welcome to our newest tour guide, Keith Dodd.

Our membership numbers grew over the past year and Friends welcomed seven new members: Ross Marsh, Kylie Selek, Joanne Sterkenberg, Peter Black, Stephen and Carolyn Olton and Robert Wilson.

On 3 January, a heritage plaque provided by the WA Heritage Council was mounted on the Woodman Point Recreation Camp Office building, formerly the Station laundry block. Thanks to Neil for co-ordinating the application for this plaque with the WA Heritage Council.

On 23 January, Friends had the pleasure of showing David Scaife MLA, Member for Cockburn, around the Quarantine Station. David was extremely impressed with the work of Friends in maintaining the Station's history and making it more visible and open to the community.

During January, volunteers Sara and Frankie upgraded the display boards in the meeting room of the Isolation Hospital. They are now looking crisp and fresh and we thank Sara and Frankie for their work on this project.

On 27 January, in the West Australian Newspaper Travel Section, a wonderful article on Friends of Woodman Point Recreation Camp was published. This followed a visit to the Isolation Hospital by journalist Mogens Johansen from *The West Australian*. Our thanks to Mogens for this article as it helped bring the former quarantine station to the public eye again and several tour bookings resulted from the exposure from his report.

Friends held their first busy bee for the year on 10 March. Thank you to our wonderful volunteers who attended, for a very productive day.

On 14 March, Friends welcomed a visit

from members of the Fijian Community and the Commander of *RFNS Puamau*, a Guardian-class patrol boat donated to Fiji (for the Fijian Navy) by Australia as part of the Pacific Patrol Boat Replacement Project. Our guests had come to pay their respects to the four Fijian seamen buried at Woodman Point Cemetery. Following a short service of commemoration, Friends enjoyed an afternoon tea with our guests at the Isolation Hospital. Unfortunately, *RFNS Puamau*, ran aground on a reef in Fiji, on her maiden voyage in June. Sadly, after several salvage attempts coordinated by Australia, it was deemed that the vessel has been damaged beyond repair and will be decommissioned.

The Recreation Camp hosted a meeting of the Department of Local Government, Sport, and Cultural Industries Corporate Executive at Woodman Point on 8 May, providing executive directors from all agencies within the department the opportunity to see firsthand the work being undertaken at Woodman Point. The meeting was followed by a historical tour by Friends. Thank you to Neil for conducting this tour.

In May, Friends received a grant from Volunteering WA to conduct a luncheon to recognise the fabulous work of our volunteers and supporters, past and present. This was held during National Volunteer Week at the end of May and by all accounts, it was a great gathering of those that have helped, and are helping, Friends to be great. More than 30 people attended and I was disappointed not to be able to join in this recognition of all our work. Thank you to Volunteering WA and Lotterywest for the grant that enabled this function to occur.

At the end of May, our long-awaited tourism and heritage signs were installed

at the corner of O’Kane Court and Cockburn Road. This signage directs interested passers-by to our new signage on the front perimeter of the Recreation Camp, acknowledging the heritage site and promoting Friends’ heritage tours. Thank you to Neil for his work bringing this project to fruition.

Friends have been successful with several grant applications this year. In June, we received a further grant from the City of Cockburn to complete our project replacing the tek screws on the walls of the Isolation Hospital. Ainslie and Suzy attended a presentation night on 26 June at the City of Cockburn where this money was formally presented to us. This grant was put to effective use when in July, the project was completed by the IFM group with the replacement of all tek screws on the higher parts of these walls. A big thank you to Graeme and Greg, and to Ross and Ryan from IFM Group for their work in completing this essential project.

Later in July, the IFM group also undertook work to help preserve the morgue slab and have also installed a safety fence around the morgue drainage pit. Thank you once again to Ryan, Steve, and the crew from IFM Group for their work on this project.

In late October we had a visit from Adrian Pitsikas, owner of Greenacres Turf Group, to assess the condition of the lawns at the Woodman Point Camp. He found the lawns to be in poor condition and has recommended a program to restore the lawn back to a good condition. Adrian’s recommendations included firstly adding a wetting agent to assist the water to penetrate the soil. This process has already been undertaken to some 4000 m² of lawn around the Isolation Hospital. The next stage will be to core

the lawn, followed by fertilising. Volunteers to help do this will be contacted as required.

I would like to acknowledge the passing of two of our members during the course of the past year: our former treasurer Howard Shepherd on 28 March 2024 and member Barry Ireland on 29 July 2024. They will both be missed for their contribution to our group.

Once again thank you to all who have assisted Friends during the year.

Gary Marsh
President

UPDATE FROM THE CAMP

As 2024 draws to a close, Woodman Point Recreation Camp reflects on a highly successful year, having hosted over 409 camp events since January and achieved several key milestones, notably the draft of the *Woodman Point 2024 Conservation Plan* and a progress report for the *Woodman Point Bushfire Management Plan (BMP)*. While some minor works are still required to ensure the site complies with a BAL-29 rating, the updating of the *Woodman Point Bushfire Management Plan* is an important resource in managing the risks associated with bushfire threats at this heritage site.

Throughout the year, we’ve made substantial improvements, including minor restorations of heritage buildings, upgrades to utilities, and enhanced client experiences. During the recent Friends AGM, we witnessed firsthand the tremendous efforts of the committee and volunteers. Their dedication continues to make a huge impact, and we sincerely thank you all for your continued support.

We are also pleased to announce the

permanent appointment of a seventh staff member, focused on maintaining the physical environment and enhancing client relations. Lachlan Thomson joined our team in November as our new Operations Officer. Our permanent FTE team is now complete, positioning Woodman Point Recreation Camp for another strong year ahead.

Looking forward to 2025, our priorities will include restoring the CUBE facility, improving the history tour program (including new interpretation signage across the site), and the approval and associated works outlined in the Conservation Management Plan.

From all of us at Woodman Point, we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Ben Walton
Camp Manager

LATEST NEWS FROM FRIENDS

- ❖ Adrian Pitsikis from Greenacres Turf Group in Serpentine recently visited Woodman Point to assess the state of the Camp’s lawns which are looking a little the worse for wear. Adrian will provide us with directions to improve the lawns around the Isolation Hospital and has donated 50kgs of lawn fertiliser to begin the improvement process. Sincere thanks to Adrian and Greenacres Turf Group for this generous donation.
- ❖ The next meeting of Friends will be held at the Isolation Hospital on Wednesday 18 January 2025 commencing at 6.30pm. All members are welcome to attend.

NEW MEMBERS

No new members welcomed this quarter.

HERITAGE TOURS

Friends of Woodman Point Recreational Camp operate regular heritage tours of the former Quarantine Station and the Isolation Hospital Museum for community groups.

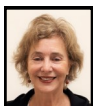
Morning tea is included in all tours, and if required, lunch can be provided at an additional cost.

Periodic open weekends provide tours for members of the public to visit the site and to learn about this important Western Australian heritage site.

We acknowledge the contribution of our valued volunteer tour guides who lead heritage tours of the former Quarantine Station.



Jenni



Chris



Bernadette



Suzie



Gary



Keith



Neil

UPCOMING HERITAGE TOURS

December 2025

January/February 2025

Nil

17 Feb IH Open Dayr

COMMITTEE 2024 – 2025

PRESIDENT
Gary Marsh



TREASURER
Greg Ireland



PAST PRESIDENT
Jenni Carder



**SECRETARY/
MEMBERSHIP**
Ainslie Poore



VICE PRESIDENT
Neil Wilson



EX-OFFICIO COMMITTEE MEMBER
Ben Walton



MEMBER SERVICES

HERITAGE TOUR BOOKINGS
Jenni Carder



PRATIQUE
Neil Wilson



WEBSITE MAINTENANCE AND DESIGN

