

Pratique

Friends of Woodman Point Recreation Camp

The Isolation Hospital, 74 O’Kane Court, Coogee WA 6166

Email: friends@woodmanpointquarantinstation.com



<http://www.woodmanpointquarantinstation.com>

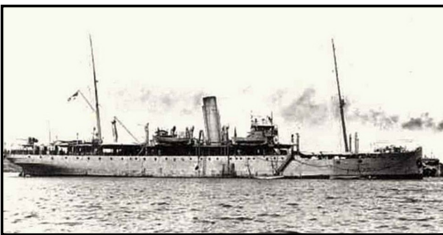


<https://www.facebook.com/friendsofwoodmanpointrc/>

SPRING 2021

A TRIBUTE TO A FIJIAN FAMILY’S SEARCHING

Late March 1943 saw the arrival off Fremantle of the British tramp steamer *Suva*, a Pacific trading ship from Europe and the commencement of an extended quarantine lockdown at Woodman Point Quarantine Station.



Smallpox had already taken its toll on the vessel with one seaman succumbing to the disease as it crossed the Indian Ocean. A further 17 officers and seamen were also severely infected and from this group, five more were to die from smallpox whilst being cared for at the Isolation Hospital. They were cremated at the Quarantine Station Crematorium and their ashes laid to rest in the small cemetery there. Among the deceased was a 20 year old Fijian national, Osea Tuvoqa, who

became the last person to die at the Woodman Point Quarantine Station.

In June, Friends received an email query from Mr Andrew Boyle enquiring about Osea on behalf of his family and in particular, Osea’s nephew, Penioni Cokanalagi (pictured below with other family members) a retired policeman who lives in Tawake, a coastal village in rural Fiji. In early 1943, Osea’s parents had received a



letter from him, posted from a Red Sea port, but that was the last they heard of their son before being notified of his death on 11 April 1943. They knew that he had died from smallpox at Woodman Point and was buried in the cemetery there, but they knew little else.

From our records and those held by the National Archives of Australia, President Gary Marsh was honoured to provide Andrew and Penioni with details and documents of Osea’s service and passing,

including clarifying the vessel on which he was sailing.

Andrew advised that most Fijians have elaborate funerals and that Penioni was greatly comforted to know that his uncle was treated with respect in his final days and after his death. He was also grateful to receive a photograph of the grave in which Osea and his fellow seamen are buried, still carefully tended and cared for by the Friends of Woodman Point.

In tribute to Osea and his fellow ship mates, former president Jenni Carder placed a wreath of flowers on the grave on behalf of Penioni, Andrew and Osea's family in Fiji. This was particularly poignant as Jenni is the grand daughter of quarantine nurse Bertie Poore, who nursed Osea in his final days.



Friends are honoured to have been able to provide these details to Penioni and Osea's family, and send to them all our kindest regards and very best wishes, and the commitment that this grave will continue to be tended as an important part of the human stories of the Woodman Point Quarantine Station.

HERITAGE TOUR BOOKINGS ARRIVE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

There has been considerable discussion at meetings over the past six months trying to work a way forward for Friends to implement electronic payments for heritage tours. Various options have been considered and with each, there were

sound reasons why that particular option was not quite "for us".

A suggestion to consider the online booking site [trybooking](#) was made and followed up. We found it such an easy site to navigate, both for Friends as the operator, and for the public when booking, and [trybooking](#)'s customer support when setting things up was second to none.

So we are delighted to announce that, as of our [trybooking](#) regular August public tour held last month, has become the means by which members of the public book places on our Sunday tours.

People participating in these tours now pay for their tour in advance by credit card. Tickets featuring the Isolation Hospital are automatically emailed to patrons upon booking and paying and we have instigated a full-refund policy for cancellations made up to 48 hours prior to a tour's commencement.

Patrons pay a [trybooking](#) small non-refundable booking fee to when making payment and Friends have opted to absorb the small credit card fee rather than pass this onto our patrons.

The public can now make bookings up until several hours before a tour commences and we are able to print out participation lists in readiness to welcome people at the WPRC gates. And a single electronic transaction at the conclusion of the tour transfers money from that tour to the Friends' bank account.

A single link on both Friends' website and on our Facebook page provides patrons with easy access to our tour booking page on the [trybooking](#) website.

We list tours six months in advance and already, bookings have been made several months out for future tours.

The Committee are delighted with this step forward and ✨trybooking look forward to further investigating how might meet our future booking and payment needs.

If you would like to check out our new cyber presence, go to <https://www.trybooking.com/search-events?keyword=woodman&location=&date=>

FROM THE PAGES OF HISTORY

The next in a series of articles of sites at Woodman Point that may no longer exist or may have faded from our memory.

The Morgue

In the bushland, a little to the south of the Woodman Point Quarantine Station Crematorium lies a cement slab, all that now remains of the Quarantine Station’s morgue. Previously overgrown and inaccessible, recent renovation works have seen a small limestone pathway laid so that visitors can now walk to the site and contemplate the building that used to exist there.



Despite its importance to medical examinations that followed deaths from communicable diseases in the Isolation Hospital between about 1900 and 1943, little is known today of the morgue, its construction and its eventual demise. It was certainly built around 1900, the same time as the Crematorium and by the same contractors. Constructed of corrugated iron, it comprised a single room with a

cement floor, devoid of electricity or any form of refrigeration. In the centre of the room was a stone-topped grooved mortuary table, similar to the one that still exists at the former Albany Quarantine Station, pictured right. Autopsies were performed on this table, the grooves draining blood away from the body during the autopsy process and into a drain pit outside, the remains of which are still seen today.



From Station records, it appears that, following a death in the Isolation Hospital, the deceased’s body was taken directly to the morgue. If the deceased was a member of the military, a soldier stood guard at the morgue entrance in tribute to their deceased comrade.

Records also indicate that a small supply of coffins were housed in the morgue, implying that it was in this building the deceased’s body was prepared for cremation.



The photograph above, taken in the 1950s, is the only one known to exist of the Woodman Point morgue building.

The morgue building was removed in the late 1950s, leaving only the mortuary table on the cement foundation slab. The table was later removed to another

medical facility, leaving the foundation slab with its central drain, the only reminder of this building's existence.

MORE HERITAGE BUILDING REPAIRS

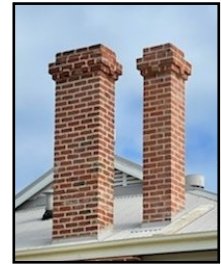
All buildings, over time, need a little love and care and the heritage-listed buildings of the Quarantine Station are no exception. But the care required by the Dining Hall chimneys caught us all a little by surprise. Glancing skywards during a Sunday tour in May, Vice President Neil Wilson noticed that the chimneys of this beautiful building, dating back over 100 years to 1912, were showing considerable signs of fretting at their base.



The problem was raised at the next Friends' meeting the following week and what seems like a well-oiled machine sprung immediately into action. In consultation with Graham Sharpe and WPRC staff, Friends member **Graeme Churcher** made contact with those who had assisted with the restoration of the fretting brickwork at the Crematorium last December. Purpose-built scaffolding, supplied by **Barry and Dylan Lloyd** from **Perth Scaffolding**, quickly rose around the chimneys making them safe and preparing them for their make-over. This enabled **Peter Carman** from **RMS Refractory Management Services** to access and inspect the chimneys and prepare a report outlining the extent of the problem and the repair methodology required. **Steve Strydom** and **Stephen Soon** from **Veolia Refractories** again provided assistance in the form of three tradespeople skilled in refractory bricklaying who spent a day and a half repairing the mortar on the chimneys to

better than their former glory. And overseeing the whole operation was **Cockburn Cement**, who through their operations manager, **Colin Powers**, provided project-management and materials to complete the project which again was completed with incredible speed and efficiency.

To these local companies and their personnel, Friends once again offers our wholehearted appreciation and sincere thanks for their contribution in once again helping repair and preserve our special part of WA's history. Without the incredible support, commitment and huge generosity of these local companies, integral work such as this would be a monumental problem to our group. Please ensure you, as Members of Friends, voice your support of these companies and their commitment to the community whenever you have the opportunity.




FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

With Gary almost at the end of this annual Exmouth stay, he has asked me to outline Friends' activities over the past 3 months in his absence. Winter, as usual, has been a quieter time for Friends, but with the return to warmer weather and all hands on deck once again, we are looking forward to winding up the year and its many projects on a high note. It will culminate on 18 December with a combined Christmas luncheon in the Woodman Point Dining Hall with our volunteer friends from the Azelia Ley Homestead Museum. Please consider, if you are able at what I know is a busy time of the year

for families, to come along, acknowledge our tremendous efforts over the year and celebrate all the things that make Friends such a strong and positive group.

As COVID restrictions lessen in WA, so have our heritage tours begun to make a return to their normal levels. Jenni, Chris and I have been conducting mid-week tours, with all singing praise for our work and the unexpected experience they enjoy as they discover our part of WA history. Our mid-week tour schedule remains busy through to November.

There has also been growing interest in our Sunday public heritage tours, now being conducted regularly on the third Sunday of each month. Each month since March, has seen capacity tours to a wide range of WA folk, usually a different demographic to our mid-week tours. And with our recent move to the  trybooking online booking system, we have streamlined our operations and receipt of payments. This seems to have hit a chord with the public who are now making firm bookings several months in advance.

Friends have recently negotiated with the National Archives of Australia to digitise some of the records they hold from Woodman Point Quarantine Station from 1900 until its closure in 1979. Whilst the records have always been publicly accessible from within their collection, they have not been available online and required a visit to the Archive's Reading Room to actually view them.

The Station's Admissions and Discharges Registers from 1900 until 1979 and they reveal a lot of information about the nearly 4500 people who passed through the quarantine gates during this period. In addition, the digitising of the Station Log,

which covers the period 1936 until 1978, provides a further insight into both the daily operations of Station and medical procedures during significant quarantine periods such as the *Suva* lockdown in 1943. This document was mostly compiled by the Commonwealth Department of Health doctors who oversaw quarantining operations and is a valuable asset to our history and great that the public now has ready access to it.

I have recently completed indexing the nearly 4500 names of people contained in the Registers onto a searchable database which means Friends can now more easily respond to the public historical queries that we receive. This index also identifies all those who died whilst in care at Woodman Point.

All three Admissions/Discharge Registers as well as the Station Log are also available for viewing and searching on the computer in the Isolation Hospital as well as from the comfort of your home. Go to the search facility on the National Archives website at www.naa.gov.au and use the following numbers to call up the document you wish to view:

Series No. PT1675/1

- Item 446652 for Admissions Book 3 (1900 to 1915)
- Item 446660 for Admissions Book 2 (1901 to 1919)
- Item 670825 for Admissions Book 1 (1919 to 1965)
- Item 334517 for the Station Log (1936 to 1978)

I hope members will find these documents both useful and interesting to look through.

Neil Wilson
Vice President

LATEST NEWS FROM FRIENDS

- ❖ The next meeting of Friends will be held on Wednesday 15 September 2021 in the Isolation Hospital, commencing at 6.30pm. All members are welcome to attend.

UPDATE FROM THE CAMP

Foremost in news for this update is the progress on the Doctors Precinct works. The advertising process for tenders for the project was briefly extended, but has now ended, and a panel will soon recommend the successful respondent to undertake the works. I'm sure you are all aware of the significance of this project. Previous work on the Doctors precinct between Owen, Spinifex and Grevillea dormitories has only ever been to "make safe", with the long-term plan to restore the buildings to then use them as additional accommodation for those dormitories. Work on the restoration is expected to start in September, and the Camp team are working to minimise the building impact during that time.

The Camp continues to be consistently busy. I can report that we have finalised the work, with Neil's assistance, to replace some of the heritage signs. This should occur during September. Many thanks to the Friends for their support in helping to bring the signs up-to-date.

On Friday 23 July, Matt Dixon from Minister Buti's Office visited the Woodman Point Recreation Camp, his tour including a walk-through of the Isolation Hospital. Matt was very impressed with the condition of the Isolation Hospital (including the deck!) and the hard work done by Friends. He was particularly impressed with the tours

offered by Friends and has suggested that it'd be great to have Minister Buti attend a tour in the future.

Thanks must also go to Graeme Churcher for his support in the recent restoration work on the Dining Hall chimneys. The work has been going for a while, but is now complete.

Kym Lawrence will again be taking some leave in late September through to late October and Ryan Austin will be stepping into Kym's shoes during that time as acting Operations Manager.

Finally, you'd probably be aware that, with the inclement weather, there was a large amount of water gathering behind Jervoise Dormitory, nicknamed by the team "Lake Jervoise". Senior Program Coordinator, Scott Price, thought it'd be a good idea to swim Lake Jervoise to celebrate the 2021 Tokyo Olympics, and we shared that footage with our friends in the Sport and Recreation Office. Imagine our surprise when that footage was shown during the 70lympics "This generation's feats in Tokyo inspiring the next" coverage. I believe Scott is giving autographs, given his recent fame.

I'd like to again recognise the work of the Friends and thank you all for your ongoing support.

Graham Sharpe
Camp Manager

NEW MEMBERS

Friends welcome the following people who have recently joined our organisation.

- Graeme Jeisman from Samson
- Susan McIntosh from Floreat

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 our heritage tours of the former Quarantine Station.



Jenni



Chris



Suzie



Gary



Jacky



Neil

We also acknowledge Daniel and the staff of Accolade Catering who provide the delicious lunches enjoyed by our tour participants.

UPCOMING HERITAGE TOURS

September 2021

3 Sept Umbrella Group
10 Sept Ascot Fillies Red Hats
19 Sept Monthly public tour

October/November 2021

13 Oct Western Suburbs View Club
17 Oct Monthly public tour
12 Nov Stirling Men's Shed
21 Nov Monthly public tour

COMMITTEE 2020 – 2021

PRESIDENT
Gary Marsh



TREASURER
Mike Poore



PAST PRESIDENT
Jenni Carder



**SECRETARY/
MEMBERSHIP**
Ainslie Poore



VICE PRESIDENT
Neil Wilson



EX-OFFICIO COMMITTEE MEMBER
Matt Hayes



MEMBER SERVICES

HERITAGE TOUR BOOKINGS
Jenni Carder



PRATIQUE
Neil Wilson



WEBSITE MAINTENANCE AND DESIGN

