

Pratique

Friends of Woodman Point Recreation Camp

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

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<http://www.woodmanpointquarantinationstation.com>



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

WINTER 2025

FRIENDS CELEBRATES 25 YEARS

On 29 November 2000, a small group of 18 interested community members, chaired by Hugh MacLean from the then Ministry of Sport and Recreation, met at the Woodman Point Recreation Camp with the intention of formalising an incorporated association to manage the Camp's Isolation Hospital for the greater benefit of the community in areas such as sport and recreation, youth activities, community development and heritage restoration and interpretation.

The Isolation Hospital had been seen by the Government as surplus to the immediate needs of the recreation camp and could be sub-let if restored appropriately. Four years previous, there



had been an attempt to seek a lessee for the building, but there had been no community interest in the proposal at that time.



Despite the poor state of the buildings, the local South Coogee Scout group and the Fremantle District team were subsequently offered use of the Isolation Hospital while their headquarters were undergoing renovation, a move instigated by local State politician, Norm Marlborough. Norm was aware of the vandalism and degradation of the buildings by squatters and resident pigeons and saw this as an opportunity to begin a program of renewal for the site.

The use of the Isolation Hospital by the Scouts as their base and meeting rooms helped stem this vandalism, but the building was still in a severe state of disrepair. It was only after considerable work over a long period of time by this small group of scout volunteers that the Isolation Hospital slowly began to return to "life". A huge injection of funds from the State Government, Lotterywest and Friends and their supporters eventually resulted in the restored facility that we know today.

From these humble beginnings, and through the huge contributions of many locals – far too many to name here, Friends has slowly evolved over 25 years. Its initial focus of managing a community space for hire has changed to a greater emphasis on interpreting the former quarantine station's history, and partnering with site managers towards that shared goal, as well as garnering funds to assist with further conservation works. Friends of Woodman Point Recreation Camp Inc has raised the profile of this once hidden community to one of significant tourism and educational potential in the Cockburn region. Although a small group in terms of membership size, never before in the long history of the Woodman Point Quarantine Station have so many people learnt of its actual existence, and had the opportunity to visit the site and see its still remarkably intact infrastructure.

Friends is organising a celebration to mark 25 years of achievement. Taking into account weather, the scale of arranging such an event, and the opportunity to perhaps launch a special project to commemorate the occasion, the celebration will be held next year, on **Sunday 9 August 2026**. Significantly,

this date marks the 25th anniversary of the very first AGM of the then newly formed Friends group.

Please save the date

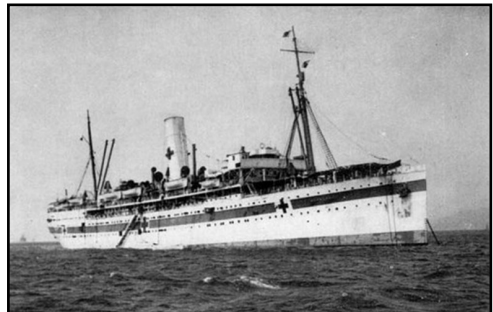
As the time draws nearer, you will be sent an invitation with further details of our plans for the day. Given favourable weather, it will, of course, be held at the Isolation Hospital – where else?

The current management and committee of Friends of Woodman Point Recreation Camp want this to be a day when we proudly remember and acknowledge all who have contributed to the success of this group and commit ourselves to ensuring that the former Woodman Point Quarantine Station remains an important chapter in the social and medical history of our State.

FROM THE PAGES OF HISTORY

Continuing a series of articles recalling some of the events that shaped the history of the Woodman Point Quarantine Station.

Lockdown at Woodman Point: HMNZHS Maunganui, 1943



In early 1943, against the backdrop of the Second World War's Pacific theatre of war, the New Zealand hospital ship HMNZHS *Maunganui* became the focus of a health emergency that led to its quarantining at Woodman Point Quarantine Station, near Fremantle, Western Australia. The incident highlighted the continuing risks of infectious disease, even amidst the technological and logistical advances of wartime medicine.

The *Maunganui* was originally a passenger liner, repurposed as a hospital ship by the New Zealand government in 1941. Crewed by the Royal New Zealand



Navy and staffed with medical personnel, the ship served a critical role in transporting wounded soldiers from battle zones in the Middle East and the Pacific back to New Zealand. On a voyage in February 1943, the ship became the centre of a serious public health concern when cases of smallpox were suspected on board.

Reports indicate that *Maunganui* had departed from the Middle East, stopping at Bombay, now Mumbai, a region where smallpox was still endemic. Although rigorous hygiene protocols were in place aboard the vessel, the risk of exposure

remained. By the time the ship approached Fremantle in Western Australia, several individuals aboard were displaying symptoms of the highly contagious and deadly disease. Australian health authorities, already stretched thin by wartime demands, responded swiftly. The decision was made to quarantine the vessel at the Woodman Point Quarantine Station.

The arrival of the *Maunganui* couldn't have come at a worse time. The Station had only just re-opened on 2 May 1943 following a 38-day period of active quarantine that had involved the quarantining of 26 crew members from the Pacific trading vessel SS *Suva*, all suffering from smallpox. The crisis had been the greatest experienced at Woodman Point and had resulted in the deaths and subsequent on-site cremations of five of the *Suva*'s crew. Staff at Woodman Point were suffering considerable physical and mental fatigue as a result of this already protracted quarantine lockdown.

The *Maunganui* reached Fremantle on 3 May 1943 and remained offshore while medical officers assessed the situation. Eight contacts were landed: five

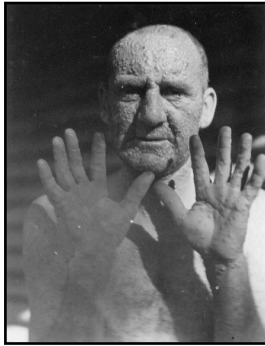
confirmed cases were transferred to isolation wards at Woodman Point, while the remaining three were held under observation aboard the ship or within the station's dormitories. The quarantine period for most of these contacts lasted for several



weeks, all being released 13 days later on 16 May 1943. During this time, no one was allowed to disembark freely, and contact with the public was strictly prohibited.

Amongst those placed in isolation was

James (Jim) Fox (1915 - 1986), aged 28 years, who had served as driver in the New Zealand Army. Jim was placed in a separate ward to other contacts as he battled diagnosed



smallpox, nursed by Bertie Poore for the entire duration of his 29 days quarantine. During this time, Jim also developed keratitis, an inflammation of the cornea, which is a common complication of smallpox. On his release on 1 June 1943, he was transferred to Hollywood Hospital for further ongoing treatment before making his return to New Zealand.

Ultimately, only a small number of confirmed smallpox cases were identified, and the *Maunganui* outbreak was contained without spreading to the general population. The prompt action by both the ship's medical crew and Australian health authorities was credited with averting what could have become a serious public health disaster.

When the Woodman Point Quarantine Station opened again on 3 June 1943, there was considerable relief amongst the staff and health authorities in Western Australia. It had been the longest and most trying period of active quarantine in the Station's history.

The quarantining of the HMNZHS *Maunganui* in 1943 remains a little-known, but significant episode in wartime medical history. It serves as a reminder of the dual battles faced during war: one against the enemy, and another against the ever-present threat of disease. Woodman Point's role in the combined *Suva/Maunganui* lockdown marked its final major use as a quarantine station before it was officially closed in 1979.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

For another year, I am reporting from sunny Exmouth, except it's raining today and more is expected in the coming week. Thank you to Neil for filling in while I am away.

As we embraced the month of May, it is fitting that we celebrated National Volunteers Week and expressed our gratitude to the incredible volunteers of Friends of Woodman Point Recreation Camp. Your dedication keeps the history of this unique site alive, ensuring that the stories of resilience, care, and service continue to be shared with future

Save the Date

Sunday 9 August 2026

Join us next year at the Isolation Hospital for celebrations to mark the 25th anniversary of the formation of Friends of Woodman Point Recreation Camp Inc.

More details to come as plans for the celebration are finalised.

generations. Thank you for all that you do: your commitment is truly invaluable.

Reflecting on April, we once again acknowledged the heartfelt efforts of our members who look after the graves of the Army nurses, who are at rest in Woodman Point Cemetery. Your care in memorialising the WWI service personnel who tragically succumbed to the Spanish flu is a profound gesture of remembrance, and ensures their sacrifices are never forgotten.

A special note of thanks also goes to Graeme Jeisman for his continuous work renewing the skirting boards of the Isolation Hospital. His efforts contribute to preserving this important building, and we greatly appreciate his commitment to maintaining its heritage.

Exciting developments are also underway! Our 25th Anniversary Celebration sub-committee is making great strides in planning what promises to be a memorable event, to be held **next year on Sunday 9 August 2026**. This milestone will provide an opportunity to reflect on our achievements, recognise our volunteers, and celebrate our ongoing preservation efforts at Woodman Point.

The recent purchase of a new TV for visual displays marks another step forward in our ability to share historical narratives with visitors in a more engaging and dynamic way. This enhancement will allow us to present information, stories, and visuals that highlight the rich history of the former quarantine station.

As always, the spirit of Friends of Woodman Point is driven by passion,

respect for history, and community dedication. Thank you to each and every one of you for your contributions - we truly could not do this without you.

Gary Marsh
President

LATEST NEWS FROM FRIENDS

- ❖ It is with sadness that Friends acknowledge the passing of our member Kay Turner on 20 April 2025 following a short illness. Kay joined Friends in 2022 following her participation in one of our public tours. Kay had a passion for history and loved the history she heard at Woodman Point, so much so that she acted as an assistant tour guide over the course of a year or more.



We extend our sincere condolences to Kay's family.

- ❖ Our second IH Open Day for 2025 will be held on Sunday 17 August 2025. Our Open Days aim to give people to opportunity to browse the IH collection at their leisure, something that regular tours cannot provide due to time constraints. They were introduced for the first time in February this year following requests by many tour participants to have more time to read and take in all of

our displays, photos and stories. The Open Day visit is confined to the interior of the IH and does not provide the opportunity to visit any other points of interest within the Quarantine Station grounds. Our tour guides are, however, on call in various rooms throughout the IH to answer any questions that visitors may have regarding our historic collections.

Tickets for the coming IH Open Day should be pre-booked on our [trybooking](#) platform at a cost of \$10. Morning tea is included in the price.

- ❖ Many thanks to the University of the Third Age (U3A) Western Suburbs Branch for their recent donation to enable Friends to continue our heritage work at Woodman Point. This donation was the result of a very enjoyable tour by the group in May 2024.

Professor Nick Beeching, their excursions coordinator, was very interested at the time in the WWI doctor's medical case on display in the IH and, through an overseas contact, was able to provide us with a translation and explanation of the medicines contained within the case.

Nick's UK contact, Dr Ulrich Pfeiffer, also identified that the case was most likely Swiss and came from the city of St. Gallen, as most of the medicines were from Drogerie/Apotheke Haussmann and would have been dispensed in their pharmacy there. Based on the patent of one of the medicines within the case, Dr Pfeiffer suggested that the case was assembled post 1909.

- ❖ To enhance the delivery of our public heritage tours, Friends have recently acquired two portable voice amplifiers. These amplifiers attach to the belt or by a cross-shoulder band and will enable tour leaders to be heard clearly and audibly by tour participants as they walk through the Isolation Hospital or around the Station site.



Many thanks to Rob Tagliaferri for his research into the most appropriate amplifier to suit our needs. Thanks to Rob's guidance, our purchase is absolutely "fit for purpose".

- ❖ Tune in to Curtin Radio 100.1 on Friday 13 June at about 12.20pm. Jenny Seaton will be interviewing Vice President Neil Wilson about the history of the Woodman Point Quarantine Station.
- ❖ The next meeting of Friends will be held at the Isolation Hospital on Wednesday 16 July 2025 commencing at 6.30pm. All members are welcome to attend.

NEW MEMBERS

No new members have been 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 on week days for community groups. Morning tea is included in all tours.

Regular Sunday heritage tours, conducted on the third Sunday of each month, provide tours for members of the public to visit the former Quarantine Station and to learn about this important Western Australian heritage site.

The Isolation Hospital Museum is also open twice a year, on the third Sunday in February and in August, for members of the public to browse the Isolation Hospital's historical collection at their leisure.

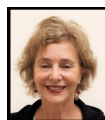
We acknowledge the contribution of our valued volunteer tour guides who lead heritage tours of the former Quarantine Station.



Jenni



Bernadette



Chris



Jo



Gary



Keith



Neil

UPCOMING HERITAGE TOURS

June 2025

July/August 2025

15 June Monthly public tour
19 June Retired Engineers
26 June Kalamunda Probus

20 July Monthly public tour
27 July Cobra Car Club
17 Aug IH Open Day

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

