

Fremantle Reunion 2008

The weather was perfect, the venue superb and the 93 Vindi lads and their partners most of whom arrived on our chartered Red London Double Decker Bus, had a wonderful time. Friday was the "Meet and Greet" night where the mood was casual and the entertainment light. After a Gourmet Buffet Dinner which included Beef and Turkey roast dinner or a fine selection of cold meats and salad plus whole baked Pink Snapper, we were entertained by the ever popular Tommy Cooper alias David Partridge and as usual he had us splitting our sides with laughter. There was also plenty of memorabilia for us to ponder over. We had twenty two raffle prizes which were all drawn out of our barrel one after the other. We also had Vindi wines, port mugs, hats and caps for purchase, these were gobbled up in no time.

Saturday was the semi formal evening, after dinner which was again absolutely delicious, we were entertained by Adams & Rix two professional comedians who kept us laughing for a little over 30 minutes, their act included hilarious impersonations of Sammy Davis Jnr., Mick Jagger and Frank Spencer. I think the following was the highlight for me. Some time ago I read the poem "HEROES" written by Vindi lad David Partridge, I was so moved by this that I put it to the members we should try to obtain a grant to cast an updated version which includes the Allied Merchant Seamen who lost their lives at sea during the wars, it was agreed that we start the ball rolling so with the help of the committee we managed to get a grant of \$2500 from the Lotteries West Commission and the plaque was manufactured in Sydney and shipped to us just in time for the reunion. I asked David to come up to the stage where he unveiled the Bronze Plaque which measures 600mm x 350mm. I think all who saw this very emotional unveiling agreed that the plaque is indeed a piece of art and will be mounted at the Fremantle Cenotaph on Monument Hill.

We were then all entertained by the lovely "ESMERALDA" (alias Moira Butler) from Port Said with an absolutely wonderful Belly Dance. How did she manage to balance a sharp sword on her head while dancing? The main raffle of a ship in a bottle "ARRANMORE" made by the master Dave Smith in the UK, was drawn by Chalkie White and guess what? I won it and am absolutely "chuffed".

The evening came to an end at 11.00pm but not before I thanked my committee, their wives who had to put up with our ranting and ravings, my wonderful wife who is a pillar of strength and to all who attended.

Sunday morning our lads turned up with their partners on the Double Decker when we held our memorial service in the undercroft of the boat club. Fred Reid our Chaplain did a magnificent job even without a microphone, David Partridge read the poem "HEROES" he did a fantastic job and was a little emotional as expected.

The Service finished at 11.30AM and we all enjoyed a superb BBQ which was cooked for us by three members of the RAOB. The final raffle of a painting by our very own David Bell was won by Joe and Hope Mann who I know will cherish it for years to come, thank you Dave for your kind donation.

After a rousing Auld Lang Syne we all said our goodbyes and went back to our respective accommodation, it was only a couple of hours before some of us wanted to carry on with the social and sat around the pool at the caravan park sipping on a few sherbets.

A big thank you to all who attended this our first reunion, I know we all had a great time, as I have always said "it is the Vindi Lads and their ladies who make these reunions a success, all the planning cannot make up for the great comradeship we all enjoy when we get together.

Tony Harben, President

(Report by Bill Davis) The weather was kind and fickle with cool strong breezes one day and the next rather warm and that is the vagaries of WA weather, as if you don't get a breeze then it gets hot. The breeze is known as the Fremantle Doctor as any cricket fan would know about, being that it can turn the game around very quickly at the WACA grounds.

Fish and chips were very popular down at the Fremantle Marina with many visitor spouting which was the better from the myriad to choose from, but this fad soon wore off in favour of the Street Café society - a much more dignified style of eating and less hurried.

Others have written about the reunion function so I won't dwell on that other than say Tony Harben and his loyal branch members put on a great show and the presentation was first class, showing the time and effort put in to make it a great success. Well done Vindi WA.

The accommodation was in 2 camps, the Fremantle Holiday Park and closer to the venue 5 km down the road the Woodman Point caravan park so a tad spread out though a bus passed by on the hour, the latter alas far from shops. The reunion did carry on long after the official closing with many couples and groups taking tours around the area and BBQ's in the evening with a long drink and swinging the lamp into the wee hours.