

Enrolled Pensioner Guards (EPGs) and the three Rs - Reading, Riting, Rithmetic

In 1850 the Scindian arrived at Fremantle bringing the first batch of 54 EPGs and their families, 19 EPGs settled in Freshwater Bay and Butler's Swamp Claremont.

EPG Henry Herbert, wife Ann Blake and their 4 children settled in a cottage where "The Mansions" now are on Victoria Avenue – Hard work then – Posh now - see attached photo. Commander of the EPGs John Bruce appointed Anne as school mistress - she previously taught children of soldiers in her husband's regiment of the Royal Newfoundland Veteran Companies. She was paid £10 per annum and ran the school from her home.

Bruce described her as a "a respectable woman" and that "one of the most respectable Colonists of his class in the neighbourhood is glad to send his children to her". Not only that, as the Herbert cottage was the "most commodious in the village" a Church Service was held there on Sundays.

As husband Henry farmed here and at Butler's Swamp and so was away from home often – see attached land allocation – Anne taught daily, raised her children and gave birth to their fifth child in 1856. A busy, hardworking person.

Bruce set about raising subscriptions to build a more permanent schoolroom which "may also answer as a place of worship". In 1862 'Fresh Water Bay Public Mixed School' was established - the building now functions as the Claremont Museum at Freshwater Bay - see photo attached.

The community undertook the construction work voluntarily while stone for the building was quarried by convicts. It was opened with an enrolment of sixteen children of various ages. At this time Mrs Herbert now had a salary of £30 per annum such was the regard in which she was held.

It is reported that Anne started the school day with the children singing 'God Save the Queen', taught by rote, expected neat right-handed writing, cleanliness and good posture. The school closed in 1879 because there were not enough students so Anne retired aged 69, dying seven years later. Mrs Herbert's Park, next to the Claremont Museum is a memorial to her positive influence on the children and her community of the time – see photo.

In 1936 the school building was said to be "surrounded with fig trees and vines to the beach at Freshwater Bay. This was a spot much frequented by Perth families for picnic parties. Crabs were plentiful and the river was a safe bathing place for children".

The Town of Claremont is currently refurbishing the site. When it re-opens it will be well worth a visit, on a spring day a picnic at Mrs Herbert's Park is a great way to enjoy the river, let the kids run wild and enjoy one of Perth's best kept secrets on the Swan.

Anne is an outstanding example of the contribution made by our early settlers, especially those of the EPGs and their families

The Town also has an excellent web-site for the museum and contains much more detail

<http://www.freshwaterbaymuseum.com.au/>

EPG Henry Herbert is at

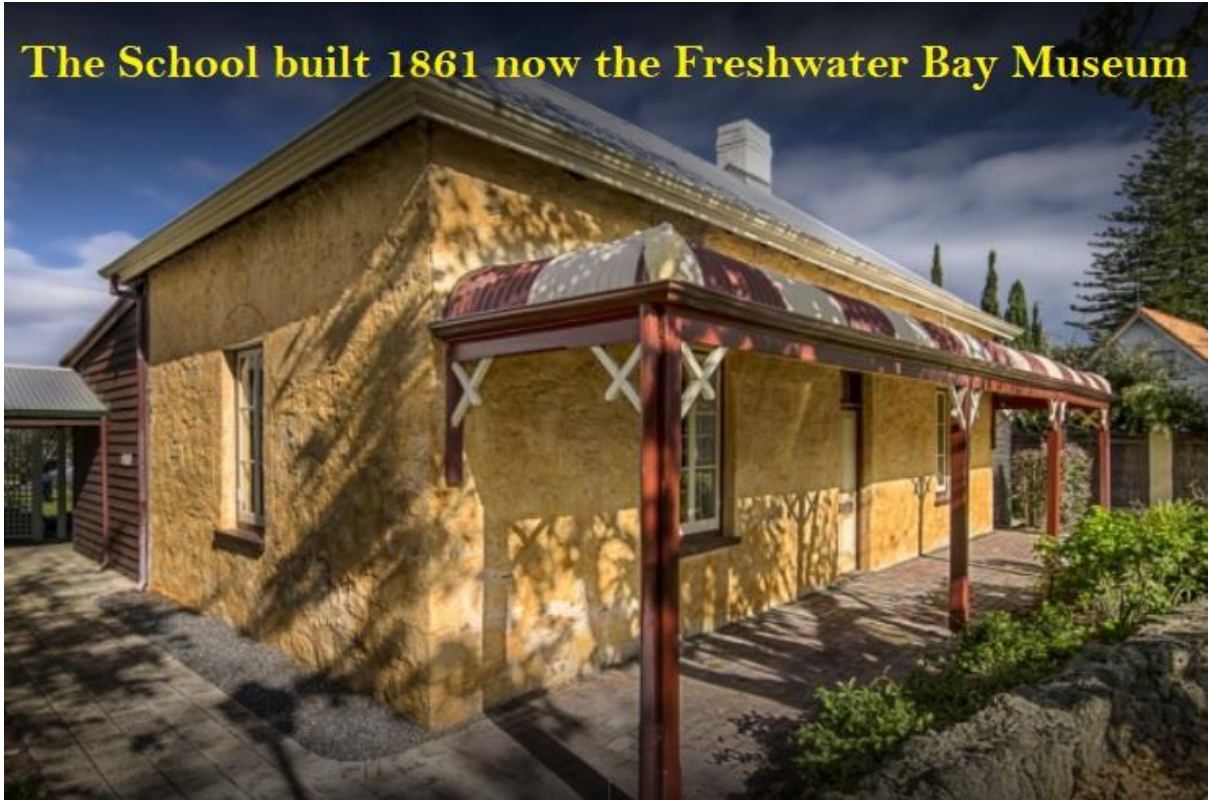
<https://enrolledpensionerforcewa.org.au/epf-profiles/h/herbert-henry-racc-and-rnvc/>



Mrs Herbert's Park



The School built 1861 now the Freshwater Bay Museum



Victoria Avenue
Site of Henry and
Anne Herbert's
Cottage