YOUR VIRTUAL DISCOVERY VISIT – 28
TO THE DEFENCE HERITAGE STORIES OF ROTTNEST ISLAND

The *Virtual Visit series was initiated during the COVID-19 pandemic when Rottnest Island was closed to the public due to social distancing restrictions and periods of use for quarantine from March to June 2020.*
The intent was to maintain a connection to the Island by exploring stories of interest and offering links for self discovery.
Now that the Island is once again open to visitors and guiding services are being gradually re-established, these Virtual Visits have been retained as part of an archival record for future reference and enjoyment.

THE CHANGING FACE OF THE CHAPEL (2)

As noted in a previous Virtual Visit, services in the Chapel ceased in 1903 when the Native Prison closed. For the next 60 years, services were variously held in the Hostel Lounge by visiting clergy from the Parish of Fremantle. After 50 years use as a storage area, the Chapel was reinstated in its original location following a decision by the Rottnest Island Board. The Anglican Church undertook to provide to provide public worship on an ecumenical basis for Island visitors and residents. Thus, on Saturday 11 December 1965, the Most Reverend George Appleton, Archbishop of Perth, assisted by Reverend Ralph Thomas, conducted a service of rededication On a note of historical continuity, Ms Edith Pearce, daughter of last Superintendent of the Native Prison, was present for the last service in 1903 and the re-dedication in 1965.

The interior of the chapel was restored as close as possible to the original layout. Three of the original convict-made pews were found and CW Rhoades, Board Foreman, used them as templates to make copies. for the remainder. Timbers from the Old Government House (now the Hotel) were salvaged to construct the lectern, credence table, hymn number board and kneelers.

On 1 July 2000, shortly after the Feast of the Visitation, the Rottnest Island Chapel was formally named the *Chapel of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary* by Bishop Michael Challen. In celebration of the event, a stained-glass window depicting the visitation between Mary and Elizabeth was unveiled and blessed. The window was made and donated by John and Jan Burrowes and their son Rowan. The painting of detail was done by Veronica Overton and Kim Fitzpatrick.

The Chapel's formal name and the window expresses the hope that visitors to this tiny place of peace and quiet may find that they are *visited* with a sense of life giving experience and renewal whatever the purpose of their stay on the Island. Some people come to Rottnest in order to be revived or refreshed and stimulated for the next phase of their life. Some come to get away from it all and to be alone with their inner self or nature. Often we come to celebrate with friends or family to have fun or make new friends. The window and its theme can thus symbolise the many experiences of Rottnest.

THE VISITATION:

The window inserted into the western wall of the Chapel is based on The Visitation story from the New Testament of the Bible. Mary visits her older cousin Elizabeth to inform her that they are both pregnant; she with Jesus and Elizabeth with John the Baptist. The gift of life and joy is the theme of this image and the window imagery is based on the painting of the same name by Fra Angelico, 1434.

http://www.wikiart.org/en/fra-angelico/visitation-1434
accessed 14 September 2020

The Rottnest Chapel featured in the movie *Under the Lighthouse Dancing* but interior shots only. Most of the exterior shots used a radar installation "dressed "as the Chapel. The evidence is still visible on the exterior of the building. Gone however (actually transported off the Island) is the beach house set overlooking Salmon Bay which also featured in the film. Both locations could be future quiz questions or you can discover the answers when the Archives go on-line in the next few weeks.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Under_the_Lighthouse_Dancing

https://www.urbancinefile.com.au/home/view.asp?a=479&s=Features