

## Fremantle, Perth and Cyclones

When we arrive in Fremantle the weather is dull, drizzly and cool - very unusual for this, the hottest, driest part of Australia.

We have a tour booked for the morning and we are taken through the historic and commercial areas of the port of Fremantle, on towards the city of Perth. We pass many large impressive residences overlooking the Swan River. They are mostly two storey white or cream buildings, with a surfeit of balconies, verandas and pillars. They are set in large gardens, with semicircular drives and manicured lawns, and our guide tells us about the famous people who have homes here.

Our first stop is in King's Park, a 406 hectare area of natural bushland and wild flowers, with noisy pink and grey parrots flying through the trees, and feeding on the grass. The views of Perth are impressive from this vantage point. The city is very modern, with lots of glass, stainless steel and modern sculptures, although there are still some old renovated buildings such as a Town Hall, Court House and Cloisters.



Historic Fremantle



View of Perth from King's Park

After the trip we have some free time in Fremantle, so we have a meal in an Irish Bar (only to escape a sudden downpour of course!), and then decide to visit a motor museum. The exhibits are the personal collection of Peter Briggs, and we see an unusual and interesting collection of motorbikes, racing cars, British vintage automobiles and American classic cars. We are disappointed that there are very few Australian cars.

We leave Fremantle in the evening of the same day, having sampled the local Chinese restaurant, and immediately hit rough weather. The port Pilot, who is responsible for taking our ship out of the harbour, has great

difficulty in jumping off the Van Gogh and onto his own Pilot boat alongside.

We now have 9 days at sea before we see land again, our next port of call being Mauritius. The sea is very rough and we see waves breaking against the windows of the bar on deck 6. In fact the ship is listing to one side so much, that when we sit in the restaurant we can only see sky on the port side and water on the starboard side!



Hang on tight!

The Captain tells us that the winds are Gale Force 8, and we are sailing into Cyclone "Humber" which has devastated the island of Reunion, which we are due to visit after Mauritius.

Travelscope staff members are not sure whether we will be able to go there at all now, apparently the north side of the island has been hit badly, and there are fallen trees, rock falls and flooding - we shall see!