



Sunday, 27 May 2007 at 12.15 "In Search of (Fitzroy) Kings" : with Tony De Bolfo

Tony will present an illustrated talk on his book at the Old Colonial Inn, 127 Brunswick Street, at 12.15 pm on Sunday 27 May, focussing on the Italian immigrant passengers who settled in Fitzroy from 1927.



Re d'Italia King of Italy

Melbourne journalist Tony De Bolfo's interest in his family's migration from Italy has led him on an incredible and moving journey through the lives of hundreds of migrant families. In 1994, Tony developed a burning need to discover what prompted his grandfather and his two brothers to leave their homeland in northern Italy for a new life in Australia. He turned to his great uncle, Igino De Bolfo - the only surviving member of the original trio who undertook that arduous forty-six day voyage aboard the steamship "Re d'Italia" (King of Italy) in 1927. Working from the original passenger list, he set out to uncover the life stories of the 107 men, women and children who accompanied his forebears down the gangway, into the unknown, discovering extraordinary tales of love and friendship, suicide and murder, tragedy and success.

Enquiries to Mike Moore on 9416 1446

Tuesday, 19 June 2007 at 6.30pm - Clifton Hill Presbyterian Church and Environs

Why is the Clifton Hill Presbyterian Church situated in North Fitzroy, at the corner of Michael Street & McKean Street? At the church, Tim Gatehouse will provide the answer to this and hopefully any other questions you may have, on 19 June.

The Church building dates from the 1890s, but the streets surrounding it have a fascinating history extending well before that time, and involving some of the colourful characters from Melbourne's land boom.



A gold coin donation will be asked as a donation to the church funds. We hope you will join us for dinner afterwards at Chianti Bistro, 376 Queens Parade. If you wish to attend please telephone Tim Gatehouse at 9489 2357.

Sunday, 1 July 2007 at 10.30am - Inner Circle Railway Walk, with Terry Nott



The Inner Circle Railway was opened in 1888. It carried passengers only until 1892, and goods until more recent times.

Now, for our recreation and enjoyment, it forms a linear park across North Fitzroy and into the Edinburgh Gardens.

Join our walk, to be led by Terry Nott, commencing at the Carlton North Railway Station Neighbourhood House, 20 Solly Ave, North Carlton (Melways 29 H11)

(contact Chris Friday on 9489 2834).

Fitzroy Town Hall re-opens

It was an event we have all been waiting for, and we were not disappointed. The celebrations for the grand re-opening of the Fitzroy Town Hall were eclectic, lively and well-attended. The major festivities were on Sunday 18 March while events continued for the remainder of the week.

Highlights on Sunday included:

- Our intrepid duo John Senyard and Michael Moore were interviewed on ABC 774 for the Sunday Show with Helen Razer, giving publicity in equal measure to the Fitzroy Town Hall and to the Fitzroy History Society. Well done!
- Michael again promoted the Society in his speech which was part of the opening ceremony (along with the mayor and other dignitaries)
- The book *Fitzroy Town Hall: The Heart and Soul of Fitzroy* compiled by Society member Michael O'Brien was launched by the mayor. A fabulous addition to our growing range of publications.
- Robyn Riddett led eager crowds on tours of the Town Hall.
- Members on the Society's stall sold 33 books and signed up new members. We met several people who have connections with former civic leaders.
- Sue Hodges recorded several oral histories.
- A heritage talk in the beautiful Mayor's Room was well attended.
- People enjoyed Jill Robertson's talk on the MacRobertson chocolate empire.

Later during the following week:

- The City of Yarra Council met at the Town Hall on the Tuesday evening.
- More tours of the building were held on Wednesday & Friday.
- Fitzroy's Aboriginal heritage was acknowledged with events on Sir Doug Nicholls and the 1967 Referendum.

Jill R

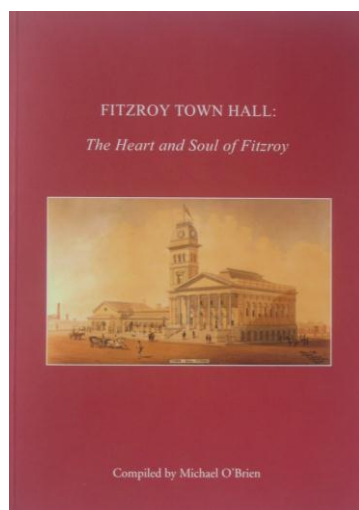


Fitzroy Town Hall : The Heart and Soul of Fitzroy

Published jointly by the City of Yarra and the Fitzroy History Society to coincide with the re-opening of the Town Hall, this 40 page booklet was compiled by FHS member Michael O'Brien. It is based on the 1996 Conservation Management Plan prepared by FHS member Robyn Riddett.

It well describes Fitzroy's early municipal history, the original 1873 Town Hall, the extensions of 1887 and the later changes to the building. It is a companion volume to the earlier publication *The Fitzroy Public Library 1887-1997*, authored by Carole Woods seven years ago.

Mayor Jenny Farrar launched this new book on 18 March 2007, and copies are available for loan or purchase at the Fitzroy Library.



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Brunswick Street in the Seventies

Brunswick Street is one of Melbourne's major restaurant strips.

Establishments such as "Mario's", "Babka" and "Joe's Garage" are well-known in Melbourne's café culture. Celebrated restaurateurs such as Stephanie Alexander and Mietta O'Donnell launched their careers in Brunswick Street. Each day and night of the week, the street is crowded with people heading to try a new venue.

Interestingly, the rise of the Brunswick Street restaurants is a fairly recent phenomenon, perhaps twenty or twenty five years old. It forms only a small part of Brunswick Street's one hundred and fifty year history. (The street was officially proclaimed in 1851.)

An analysis of the Sands and McDougall's, "Directory of Victoria" for 1974 – sadly the last year of the Directory's publication – gives quite a different picture of Brunswick Street, highlighting the relatively recent nature of the changes that have taken place.

Thirty years ago there were only six restaurants in Brunswick Street between Victoria Parade and Alexandra Parade: "Skopje" at number 77, "Lady Luck Bar and Restaurant" at number 121, "La Costa Azzurra" (number 131), "Continental Gala" (number 201), "Virgona" (number 229-31) and "Rumah Makan" (number 410). Of these only the "Virgona" restaurant survived until fairly recently. It is now "Madame Sousou".

In 1974 the main dining area in Fitzroy was Gertrude Street where there was a concentration of restaurants of European origin. Names such as "Blue Danube", "Yugoslavia", "Macedonia", "Balkan", and "Gorica" left the patron in no doubt about the type of food on offer.

Gertrude Street was also a place for meeting up with friends. There were two "Greek Clubs", "Harry's Café", "A&H Bosnakis' Coffee Lounge", "Yugoslavia Club", "Macedonia Social Club", "Albanian Club", "Tzavaras Coffee Lounge", "Citadella Coffee Lounge" and "Bosna Espresso Bar".

Brunswick Street, too, had a sprinkling of clubs and coffee lounges including a "Greek Club", coffee lounges run by P. Kritsidimas and J Krisohodis and the "Colosseo Espresso Bar Coffee Lounge".

The main business activity in Brunswick Street in 1974, however, was not serving food. Thirty years ago the street was a prominent site for Melbourne's clothing and foot-wear manufacturing companies. The most important of these was the "Gloweave" factory at number 234. "Gloweave" was a major national producer of shirts and a significant local employer. Other clothing firms in Brunswick Street included leather clothing manufacturers "Plannet (sic) Garments", "Glowin Knitwear", "Aviv Shoe Co.", "Elsies' Sportswear", "Athas Lingerie" "A&M Hocking" shirt manufacturers, "Palard Fashions" frock manufacturers, "B&G Shoes" and "Heart's Desire Lingerie".

It is unclear from the "Directory" if all these firms had workshops on their Brunswick Street premises or if they were merely offices, storage spaces or organising points for outwork. Nevertheless, a count of the eastern side of the street alone shows that there were thirty four clothing or footwear companies between Gertrude Street and Alexandra Parade.

Several trends since 1974 have combined to create Brunswick Street in its contemporary incarnation as an entertainment and eating area. Many commentators in the nineteen eighties and early nineties saw it as a reflection of the gentrification of Fitzroy. Others thought of it as an expression of Melbourne's late twentieth century craze for eating out.

Perhaps just as indicative of social change was the exodus of the Australian clothing and foot-ware industry from the nineteen eighties onwards from Brunswick Street, most apparent with the closure of the "Gloweave" factory and the erection on the site of a multi-storied apartment block.

By the early eighties Brunswick Street was rather run down, with many empty premises and small struggling shops. The departure of the old workshops pushed down rents. The conditions were favourable for a new type of industry – the café and restaurant trade. As the clothing manufacturers left the restaurateurs moved in.

John Senyard.

The Fitzroy History Society intends to run an activity involving some of the famous restaurants and restaurateurs of Brunswick Street later on this year.



In 1891, almost 30,000 women petitioners to the Victorian Parliament sought that 'Women should Vote on Equal terms with Men'. That petition has now been digitised

and it can be searched on-line by name and/or address at

<http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/WomensPetition/>

When searched on the 'Fitzroy' address, there are 267 petitioners from North Fitzroy and 428 from elsewhere in Fitzroy.

Several interesting signatures adorn the top of the petition, including: *Margaret McLean* (as Mrs William McLean), head of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and campaigner for women's rights and the vote.

Some of the Fitzroy petitioners were:

- Susan Rees and 80 others in Gore St
- Etty Rose and 37 others in George St
- Lavenia Heney and 19 others in Greeves St
- Susanna Cousins and 25 others in Rae St
- Lizzie Varlone and 30 others in McKean St
- Ann Loveland and 21 others in Fergie St