



September 2009

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GREEKS IN FITZROY

After a brief Annual Report and election of Committee Members at the 2009 Annual General Meeting of the Fitzroy History Society in the Reading Room of the Fitzroy Town Hall on 6th August those present were privileged to hear Joy Damousi speak about her early life in Fitzroy.

Joy is a Professor of History and Head of the School of Historical Studies at the University of Melbourne. Her parents, newly arrived from Greece moved into a house in Napier Street near the corner of Gertrude Street in 1960 with their daughter Mary.



Joy was born in 1961 and her talk gave us many insights into life in a Greek family in Fitzroy from a child's perspective. She remembers drunks from the nearby hotel sleeping in the gutter and on verandahs of the terrace houses; newly arrived migrants from Greece moving into the house as tenants; and, playing games on the footpaths and back lanes with other Southern European and Australian children.

Greek was spoken in the home and her parents wanted her to go to Greek School. **Joy refused!** She attended Fitzroy Primary School in George Street and was inspired by the teachers. She credits them with instilling in her a love of learning.

Her father worked in a boot factory and her mother was a machinist in a clothing factory – both situated in Collingwood. **Is this how she became a lifelong supporter of the Magpies?** Her mother had little time for recreation given her domestic workload in addition to her shift work. Her father however spent much of his recreational time in the male only Greek cafes in Gertrude Street drinking coffee and playing cards. There were many Greek owned and operated businesses in Fitzroy supported by the Damousis as well as attendance at the Greek Orthodox Church in Victoria Parade. Easter was always a highlight. In 1972 her parents were able to afford to move to the eastern suburbs to a bigger house and garden but found that they did not have such a supportive network as they had enjoyed in Fitzroy.

Joy showed us some family photographs to illustrate her talk and also introduced us to her sisters, Mary and Kathy, who also shared reminiscences of life in Fitzroy in the 1960's.

It was a convivial and very enjoyable evening with many of the audience members sharing their memories of Fitzroy.

We thank Jenny Krasopoulaki, general secretary of the Greek Orthodox Community of Melbourne and Victoria for the delicious Greek biscuits and cakes we had for supper.

Launching the Fitzroy History Website; www.fitzroyhistorysociety.org.au

Access the resources of the history society, the Fitzroy Library and keep up to date through the new Fitzroy History website. The website was made possible through a City of Yarra grant and the work of our subcommittee. We look forward to your feedback and welcome your contributions and ideas. So please log on, have a look and send us an email!

Welcome to the new Committee

At the first Committee meeting following the AGM new office bearers were decided.

Of note two very long serving and valuable members of the Committee will step aside. After 6 years in the position Mike Moore will be replaced as Convenor by Margaret (Meg) Lee. Meg has previously been Convenor. His record has been a long and very dedicated one to the group. Harold has resigned as Treasurer but will continue to be a Committee member. Graeme Pritchard has agreed to be Treasurer. Catherine Pugsley will continue as Secretary (both Membership and General) and Kym Ortenburg will publish the Newsletter.

Other members of the Committee nominated at the AGM are Trudie Fraser, Sue Bradshaw, Chris Friday, Tim Gatehouse and we welcome Kate Indigo.

Our FHS 2008-09 financial statement has been finalised, and indicates that after a total income of \$6,336.63 and a total expenditure of \$5,721.69 our bank balance on 30 June 2009 was \$5,508.51, an increase of \$615 from a year earlier. Additionally we have a \$615 credit with the City of Yarra as a refundable security deposit for our occasional use of the Fitzroy Town Hall Reading room.

**Researching Your House
Who built it? Who lived there?
Using the library resources and the internet
Wednesday, 16 September 2009
Fitzroy Library Meeting Room
7pm sharp**

The Fitzroy Library has an excellent collection of resources to assist in researching your house - directories, rate books, maps, heritage studies, indexes, etc. On the internet, we can access land records, probate documents, other databases, on-line newspapers, etc. This will be a 'hands on' event to get you started.



‘The Rise and Fall and Rise again of North Fitzroy’

**Allan Willingham will share his personal insights
and knowledge as we
walk through North Fitzroy.
October 11 at 10 a.m.**

This walk will be an ‘appetizer’ event leading up to 150th celebrations, next year, of North Fitzroy being part of the Fitzroy Municipality .

Please meet on the corner of Freeman Street and Brunswick Street
at 10.00am

**Celebrate History Week in Fitzroy:
Walking Tour & Local History Collection Open
Sunday 25 October**

Eastern Walk, 11.00am , 25 October

Meet at the Town Hall Steps (Duration 1 hr)

Join Trudie Fraser and explore the area east and south-east of the Town Hall and learn about many of the buildings important in the early history of Fitzroy. They include St. Marks, one of Melbourne's earliest bluestone churches; the family home and business premises of Nuttall, the artist of 'The Opening of the First Federal Parliament; Cobden Terrace, a fine example of Fitzroy terrace houses; Pastor Doug Nicholl's Aboriginal Church of Christ; the mystery of the Captain's House; the meeting place of the election of Fitzroy's first council; George street school, where many of Fitzroy's famous citizens were educated and finishing at the Napier Hotel, a significant example of Art Deco architecture.



Local History Collection Open at the Fitzroy Library

Fitzroy local history room will be open Sunday 25 October 2.00pm — 4.00pm

**Thank you to Harold Mackrell
Retiring Treasurer**

At our recent 2009 AGM, Harold Mackrell retired as treasurer - a position that he has held since the formation of the Fitzroy History Society 27 years ago.

Harold was a founding member of FHS, Mayor of Fitzroy in the early 1980s, and was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia OAM, 2002 in recognition of his community service of many decades.

We all thank Harold for his great contribution over the life of Fitzroy History Society.



**Fitzroy History Society Annual Dinner
Dante's Restaurant**

Friday November 20th 7pm for 7.30pm start

RSVP Please ring Sue Bradshaw 94160616 or email randshaw@bigpond.com

By November 14

BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL

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Name (s)

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Telephone

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Address

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E-mail

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Subscription Cash Cheque
\$10 per person, per year

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Please forward your Comments, Feedback, Suggestions for future activities

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If undeliverable, return to

Fitzroy History Society Inc.,
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FITZROY HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
Registered Organisation No A0029933H

Print Post Publication
PP 318780 / 00217

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