



January 2005

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## FHS Activities: Dates for Your Diary

**Celebrate Yarra! 2005 Festival in the Edinburgh Gardens: Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> February, 12 noon to 7 pm**

Many local community organisations are participating in this annual City of Yarra event. Visit our stall, purchase a publication, share some of Fitzroy's history, and enjoy the gardens. Renew your membership, and give us your ideas for future activities of the Fitzroy History Society.

Any inquiries, or offers of help to staff our stall, please contact Heather on 9486 9643

**Twilight Autumn Evening Walk along Alfred Crescent. (starting 6pm at corner of Rowe St) Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> March 2005**

Hear some of the interesting history of

- No 75, built for John McMahon in 1886, becoming later the Salvo's 'The Haven' (1890s-1970s)
- No 43, with its elaborate three storey tower
- North Fitzroy primary school, and its 125 years of local education
- former North Fitzroy police station, and its 1980's controversy of the Special Branch files

Then optionally join with us for dinner at Haskins, in the Fitzroy Arms Hotel, corner of Reid & Rae St. Bookings are essential if joining us for dinner to Sue Bradshaw (9416 0616 [bradshaw@rabbit.com.au](mailto:bradshaw@rabbit.com.au)) or Mike Moore (9416 1446 or [m.moore@bigpond.com](mailto:m.moore@bigpond.com))



## Visit to Christian Israelite Church

On 5<sup>th</sup> November 2004 an enthusiastic group of about two dozen FHS members visited the Christian Israelite Church in Fitzroy Street.

We were given an extensive tour hosted by Mervyn Eastes. The present church was built in 1861 (with further buildings in 1870) and it replaced an earlier building (perhaps dating to as early as 1853) on the same site. Indeed, the new was built over an old chapel which was then demolished.

The church was founded by John Wroe, an Englishman from Bradford, Yorkshire.

By the time of the American Civil War John Wroe had traveled numerous times to Australia and America establishing Christian Israelite Societies in these countries. A picture taken in the Fitzroy church around 1895 shows that an instrumental music tradition was firmly established in the Christian Israelite Church. Over twenty instruments were used in this Christian Israelite sanctuary including a pipe organ, several brass horns, woodwinds and numerous stringed instruments including a concert sized harp.

John Wroe built a mansion in Wrenthorpe, England patterned on the old Melbourne Town Hall and called it Melbourne House. It is still there.

Wroe actually died on one of his visits to Australia at the Fitzroy chapel on 5<sup>th</sup> February 1863 and his body was interred in Melbourne Cemetery.

You can find more details about the church at <http://www.cichurch.asn.au/>

## Book Review: *Forever Fitzroy, A History of the Brunswick Street Oval*

Authored by Marc Fiddian and published during 2004, this new book has 60 pages on the history of what was once one of Melbourne's main sports venues. The book covers the early days of the recreation site, the grandstands and other buildings, and the many sportsmen who have played at the oval. There is much detail on cricket and football scores over the decades, together with descriptions of great wins and losses by the home teams.

Did you know the following about the Brunswick St Oval:

- in 1884 when the team scoring the most goals won, Fitzroy beat Carlton, 2.5 to 1.12 (page 6);

- Bill Ponsford, born at 82 Newry St, played baseball (but not cricket) for Fitzroy (pages 17-18);
- a record crowd of 36 000 saw Fitzroy & Collingwood play a draw there on May 6, 1935 (page 25);
- Neil Harvey's first game with Fitzroy first XI was as a fourteen year old in 1943 (page 29);
- Fitzroy's last football match there was a loss to St Kilda in round 17, 1966 (page 47);
- Doug Nicholls was the Bowling Club greenkeeper during the 1940s (page 58).

There are plenty of statistics and scores included throughout the book, and Marc probably witnessed many of the games described in vivid detail. It is well worth a read, copies are held at both the Fitzroy and North Fitzroy libraries, or buy your own copy for under \$15.

M. M.

## Fitzroy Town Hall Reference Group

The City of Yarra Reference Group for the Fitzroy Town Hall has now met twice. It has been agreed that the City of Yarra will support FHS in the production of a short history of the Town Hall which it is proposed to issue when the venue is re-opened, perhaps in mid-2005.

### Have you expired?

Please look at your address label. In the top corner we have printed the date your membership expires. Please renew if you are not financial so we can continue to send you these Newsletters.

## Future FHS Functions

We would welcome any suggestions you might have for FHS functions in 2005. Why not use the feedback form on our address label page?

## Congratulations-Annabel Barbara

We congratulate Annabel on her recent election as a City of Yarra councillor. I would like to publicly thank Annabel for her untiring energy, brightness and leadership as our FHS convenor over the past several years. We all look forward to seeing Annabel, Tim and Tullio at many of our future events.

Mike Moore

## Annual Dinner

Thirty of us celebrated the FHS Annual Dinner on 3 December last, this time at Dante's in Gertrude Street. Thank you to our new committee members, Tim Gatehouse and Sue Bradshaw, for arranging this successful event.

## Shelley Young-Coyle

It was with sadness and loss that we learned of the death in November of Shelley, an active FHS committee member over recent years. Shelley was an enthusiastic and generous person. We all benefitted from her ideas, talents and practical contributions to the organisation of FHS activities. Our thoughts are with Peter and Rhys.

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## From Fitzroy's past: 1934-1937: Very Slow Recovery

**A**lthough things were not as bad as they had been in the early days of the depression there was still a lot of poverty, unemployment, lost chances, anger and lack of hope. One of the major problems was the growing number of teenage boys who had left school early and missed out on apprenticeship or training. A fifth of all male school leavers in New South Wales at the end of 1932 could not get work.

Governments were half-hearted and private organizations limited in what they could attempt or achieve. In Victoria, forestry camps were set up and these took in boys for six months before dumping them back on Melbourne's streets, where they were subject to the Vagrancy Law under which they could be gaoled for a month for the crime of being out of work during a depression. In an effort to improve their situation, the Anglican Brotherhood of St Laurence opened a hostel in Fitzroy in 1937, but this could only

scratch the surface of the problem since it could take only thirty-eight boys, most of whom had jobs anyway. It was not until the Pacific War offered jobs and retraining schemes that this problem was solved.

(From Humphrey McQueen, *Social Sketches of Australia 1888-1975*, Ringwood Vic: Penguin, 1978.)

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## Famous Australians born in Fitzroy

The *Australian Dictionary of Biography's* first 12 volumes cover Australians who flourished from 1788 to 1939. The index volume lists the persons by place of birth. Included as born in Fitzroy are:

James Lawson Balfour  
Francis Edwin Birtles  
William Arthur Mordey Blackett  
John McCarthy Blackham  
Archibald James Campbell  
Horatio Victor Patrick Conrick  
Emanuel Phillips Fox  
Constance Elizabeth Harker  
Herbert Maunsell Hewlett  
Alfred Herbert Horsfall  
Walter Reginald Hume  
James Andrew Kershaw  
Esmond Laurence Kiernan  
Fred Lewis  
Sir William George McBeath  
Daoald Alaster Macdonald  
Sir Edgar Bertram Mackennal  
Mary Helen MacKillop  
Alice Jane Muskett  
Ethel Florence Lindesay Richardson  
Robert Fitzroy Sanderson  
Ernest Herbert Shea  
Sydney Jon Tomholt  
Albert Edwin Elworthy Lee Tucker  
Thomas Prout Webb  
Sir Hartley Williams  
Francis Samuel Williamson

And if you add Newtown Victoria you get in addition:

Sir George Fairbairn  
William Noyce Kernot  
Charles Norman Morrison  
George Ernest Morison

The *ADB* is available at Fitzroy Library.

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