



May 2010

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### **Freeman Street Walk, North Fitzroy in the late 1800s**

**10am, Sunday, 30 May 2010**

Meet Cnr Brunswick and Freeman Streets.

Gil Langfield leads us on a walk of Freeman Street and its fascinating history opposite the Brunswick St oval. Commencing at the corner of Brunswick Street.

This walk continues our program of promoting the history of North Fitzroy in its 150th year.

**Gold coin donation**

### **Samuel Lazarus and his family.**

*'The most interesting man from North Fitzroy that you have never heard of,  
Samuel Lazarus'*

Tim Gatehouse will present his research with a talk

**7.30 pm, Wednesday, 23 June 2010**

Presbyterian Church, Cnr Michael & McKean Streets, North Fitzroy.

An early resident of McKean Street, Samuel Lazarus witnessed the tumultuous times of the early colony. Confectioner, business man, gold fields entrepreneur and with a role in the Ned Kelly saga.

**Entry by gold coin donation**

### **Celebrations of 150 years of North Fitzroy July 31, 2010**

**Stay Tuned for updates on this event.**

On the 31 July, 2010 a signature event will be held at the Public Record Office. A display of key documents leading up to and including 150 years to be held at the Public Record Office in North Melbourne. As well as a document display in the Reading Room we are hoping to make available early Rate Books of the area and PROV are joining our team in the final preparations.

## Re-imagining Industry activity along the North Fitzroy Railway and Goods lines. Report of Walk of 14 March

Twenty five keen members followed the footsteps of Terence Nott's Circle Line research. From his generous information we could envision the landscape as it was when railway lines was operating in North Fitzroy for both industrial purposes as a passenger service during the 1956 Olympic Games.

We began at the remnants of North Fitzroy station bluestone foundations underneath peppercorn trees near Rae Street. The walk moved eastwards towards the sub-station and railway signal box, which operated interlocking gates at Rae and Brunswick Street. Power was supplied via underground cable in 1915 and de-electrified in 1961. The substation was converted to an aged care facility for the Vacari Foundation.

Across Brunswick street at the original two level crossings with interlocking gates was the Goods Yard servicing Silos for beer producing barley storage. They were demolished in 1900. At the St Georges Road level crossing was a signal box opposite the Fire Station.

At this junction, in 1888 a North Fitzroy suburban line separate to the 'Northcote loop' was developed but never electrified. The line was carved through large residential blocks with a signal box and 'privileged' gates, as per Victorian Railways. The gate keepers house (now brick clad) still stands on the Westside of the line at Alfred Crescent. The railway line was being built through the gardens at the same time as the Grandstand, and sporting facilities eg Tennis Courts. This occurred just 4 years after the laying out of large avenues of trees in the area.

In 1956 National Can obtained a lease from the southern end of the gardens and established a metal can production factory which operated using the railway goods line until late 1990's. There was also unloading of briquettes in the good yards. A footbridge was built over the line and goods yard at the extension of Freeman Street.

The line to the goods yard closed on 1 August 1981 which began a series of community initiatives (through the Pullen Report to develop the land for housing, linear park and walkways. In response the Fitzroy Council developed an illustrative master-plan report for landscaping of the area which we now appreciate.

An expansive set of notes were generously given to participants and the local history collection in Fitzroy Library now has a copy which will be added to over time with input from previous railway employees.

### **We are interested in your research.....**

As a part of our North Fitzroy 150<sup>th</sup> celebrations, we are keen to collate as much information for the local collection as possible. Should you be researching the history of your house (see [www.fitzroyhistorysociety.org.au](http://www.fitzroyhistorysociety.org.au)) or other matters related to the area we would be very keen to know about it. Please contact us at [fitzroyhistorysociety@yahoo.com](mailto:fitzroyhistorysociety@yahoo.com) with any information.

### **[www.fitzroyhistorysociety.org.au](http://www.fitzroyhistorysociety.org.au)**

Keep up to date through the new Fitzroy History website and access many resources of the history society, the Fitzroy Library and much more.

## Did you know? W.J. Donovan Reserve.

The tiny portion of grass parkland on the corner of Charles and George Streets Fitzroy is actually the unsigned and unacknowledged W.J. Donovan reserve.

William Joseph Donovan (Bill) was born into a second generation Irish Australian family. He and his wife Mollie (both well known identities of post World War II Irish-Catholic Fitzroy) ran the dry cleaners at 140 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy (now the Atherton Gardens Estate). Bill was a tireless worker for people of Fitzroy. He served 21 years on the Fitzroy council and as mayor in 1954/5. When he retired in 1965, his business partner and fellow Councillor Les Peel said, "If Bill Donovan had looked after his business as well as he'd looked after the pensioners and people of Fitzroy, he would be a millionaire by now".

In July 1965 Councillor Black (mayor 1957/8; 1962/3) then moved that, in recognition of the splendid record of service rendered by Councillor Donovan to Fitzroy, the land made available by the Housing Commission at the corner of George and Charles Streets for use as a children's playground be named the W. J. Donovan Reserve.

The City of Yarra have been alerted to this research as it is now publicised by the City of Yarra as an off-leash dog exercise area. It has been recommended that it would be appropriate to see the tiny park acknowledged and properly signed.

Dr. Trudie Fraser



**"At the mayoral ball, Fitzroy Town Hall, 1958. Mollie and Bill join the Debutantes for the first waltz."**

**TAIN, The Australian Irish Network Magazine, March, 2007**



**Arthur Boyd** was living in the UK during the 1960's - but as was Arthur's practice he often re-visited familiar themes in his work hence "Butterfly Man in Fitzroy" painted c.1960. It may have been developed from "Butterfly Hunter" 1942 (which was exhibited as "Fitzroy Butterfly Hunter" in 1962 at the National Gallery of Victoria) and his painting "Butterfly Man" 1943.

**Arthur Boyd - Butterfly man in Fitzroy, 1960**

Arthur Boyd's work reproduced with the permission of the Bundanon Trust

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