

Fitzroy History Society Newsletter

www.fitzroyhistorysociety.org.au

May 2012

National Trust Heritage Festival
The National Trust and Fitzroy History Society present
Brunswick Street: Lost and Found.
A Guided Walk and Presentation
Sunday 20 May 2012

The Secret History of Brunswick Street.

A guided walk in south Fitzroy with
Professor Miles Lewis
Emeritus Professor AM, FAHA. The University of Melbourne

Learn about one of the first significant streets to develop beyond the CBD of the 1839 Port Phillip District.

Sunday 20 May 2.00-4.00 pm

Cost: Gold coin donation.

Book online at fitzroyhistorysociety@yahoo.com.au

Meet at St Vincents Plaza tram stop, corner of Victoria Parade and Brunswick St Fitzroy.



And at the old Melbourne Veterinary College a Presentation of recent research by Society committee members

Findings about the earliest land sales, personalities and the development of the south end of Brunswick St Fitzroy.

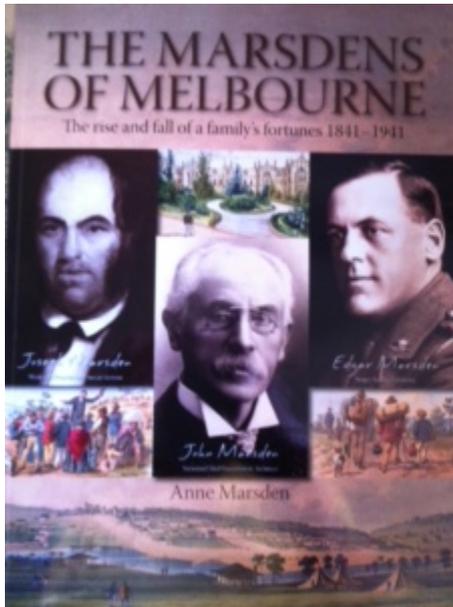
Sunday 20 May, 5.00-7.00 pm

Cost: Gold coin donation

Book online at fitzroyhistorysociety@yahoo.com.au

Meet in the Brunswick Room, upstairs at the former Melbourne Veterinary College, adjacent to the *Metropole Hotel* 44 Brunswick St.

Copies of a new publication, ***Brunswick Street: Lost and Found***, will be available for purchase at \$15 per copy



The Marsdens of Melbourne
The rise and fall of a family's fortunes 1841- 1941

Wednesday 25 July 6.30pm
(Please note the earlier starting time)

Fitzroy Library

Join Anne Marsden, author, who will talk about her findings published in the book. Her donated copy is located in Local History Collection at the Fitzroy Library.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Thursday 23 August, 7.00 PM

Reading Room, Fitzroy Town Hall
201 Napier St, Fitzroy
Guest speaker: Major General Mike O'Brien on
"Fitzroy and the First World War".
With an opportunity to view the
Honour Roll in the Town Hall.

Revisiting Past Events...Alfred Deakin

Carole Woods, guest speaker at 2010 August FHS AGM gave a very informative talk on Alfred Deakin's boyhood in Fitzroy. This has now been published as a 17 page article in the Victorian Historical Journal (VHJ), Volume 82, No 2, dated November 2011.

We are hopeful that a copy will be available in the local history collection and on our website in the near future.



Danila Vassilieff

At Heide Museum of Modern Art - now until 7 Oct 2012

Many of Danila Vassilieff's 1930s works feature Fitzroy. Heide guest curator Felicity Moore gave talk to the FHS in Sept '07 about this influential Russian émigré artist. Read the full report in our October 2007 newsletter published on our website www.fitzroyhistorysociety.org.au

Vale

HAROLD MACKRELL, OAM

Harold was a foundation member and
Treasurer of the Society until 2009 -a period of 25 years.

Harold passed away on April 1, aged 88.

His reliable dedication and ongoing support to the Society was valued by
all those who knew him.

His family have set up a tribute website at

<http://haroldmackrell.blogspot.com.au/>

Please email fitzroyhistorysociety@yahoo.com.au with your email address to receive the newsletter electronically. **With increasing costs of printing and postage for the Newsletter we would appreciate you agreeing to receive a copy by email. By receiving it by email help to keep the membership subscription to a minimum– and help the environment.**

South Fitzroy Art Deco Walk

We usually associate the architecture of Fitzroy with the 19th century, but the suburb also contains many interesting examples of “Art Deco” and “Moderne” architecture, dating from the 1920s to 1940s. “Art Deco” is a term referring to the 1925 *Paris Exposition de Arts Decoratifs et Industrial Modernes* and the modernity expressed there in abstract decorative devices, lettering and motifs. Typical features of Art Deco and Moderne buildings are a three-dimensional quality in massing and details including vertical and horizontal fins, zigzag (chevron) motifs, stepped ‘skyscraper’ silhouettes, ‘streamlined’ effects with geometric curves and stylised decoration. There are also buildings in Fitzroy, which are built in the (other) Revival styles of the interwar era including Greek, Romanesque and Spanish Mission revival. On 25 March, we were fortunate enough to be guided around many of these buildings by Willys Keeble, a heritage architect with a particular expertise in Fitzroy’s architecture – and who is herself a resident of North Fitzroy.

Willys described the Lyddy Boot Polish Factory in Fitzroy Street, built in 1923, as the most important building on the walk. It is a distinctive, very early and accomplished Modernist design by Eric M. Nicholls, and is an intact and unusual building. Nicholls was an employee of Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony (although he undertook this project as a private commission) and the design clearly shows Griffin’s influence and in turn the legacy of Griffin’s mentor, architect Frank Lloyd Wright.



Tour guide, Willys Keeble pointing out the ribbon of windows punctuated by thick piers and a continuous decorative projecting cornice of pressed cement.



(This photograph, shows the decorative projecting cornice of pressed cement with a square crystalline pattern, repeated over the entrance (O.B.B. above the door stands for Oily, Black and Brilliant –the product manufactured in the factory)

Another highlight was the distinctive former Avon Butter Factory, built in 1932, (photograph below) whose original factory, offices and shop building remain intact. Designed by I G Anderson, this building is of cream brick with a ‘Romanesque’ tower, elaborate multicoloured and textured brick details, ‘sunburst’ edging, star patterns, corbelled eaves, Cordova roof tiles and wrought iron grilles. The pointed arch shopfront has inventive finned timber framing.



Former Avon Butter Factory

One of the final points of interest on the tour was the building at 214 Argyle Street, which was built in 1937. This was the last building of the 19th and early 20th C “White City” empire of MacRobertson Confectionary factories situated in Argyle, Kerr and Gore Sts. The building (now residential) is a distinctive, feminine Art Deco/Moderne factory within a garden frontage with curved fencing, banded parapets, steel framed windows, a clock, metal lettering and brickwork detailing (now over painted)

Further References:

The Art Deco and Modernism Society Inc. North. (See also the Society’s website and periodical magazine “*The Spirit of Progress*”)

Robin Grow, *Melbourne Art Deco*, 2009, Ripe off the Press, Collingwood

Graeme Butler, 2007 *Review of Heritage Overlay Areas, Appendix 7. Individually Significant*. (Victoria) walk leaflet for Fitzroy and Fitzroy buildings not from the primary development era (citations), Yarra City Council. The City of Yarra has also recently published an “Art Deco walk” (taking in all of the suburbs within the City). This is available at branches of Yarra Libraries.

Fitzroy History Society Membership/Renewal

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Subscription, by cash or cheque, is \$10 per person, per year, renewable annually on 1 August.

Please pay in person at the AGM or our other events, or by post to PO Box 180, Fitzroy, 3065

A receipt is required

is not required

or by email is sufficient

Information is regularly available at <http://www.fitzroyhistorysociety.org.au/>

We prefer to send the newsletter by email, please tick if you wish to be posted a printed copy ().

About Our Organisation...

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Registered Organisation No A0029933H