

September 2010

Fitzroy History Society Newsletter

Forthcoming talk

10 October at 3.00pm, Fitzroy Library
The Reverend William and the
Professor, Keith:
The Hancocks in Fitzroy and Beyond.

This talk covers two lives: that of William Hancock, vicar of St Mark's, Fitzroy (1896-1900), and later Archdeacon of Melbourne; and his son W K (Sir Keith) Hancock (1898- 1990), who some consider to be Australia's finest historian – superior to Manning Clark.

Keith Hancock was born in Fitzroy, and after moving away went to Melbourne University. Going to Oxford on a Rhodes Scholarship, much of his life was spent in England, where he wrote a mammoth *Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs* and edited the Civil Series of the British war histories. But the tug of Australia remained strong, and on his first return he wrote *Australia* (1930), still one of the most incisive accounts of this country. Later he was a founder of the Australian National University. Some time after his final return in 1957, Hancock wrote the pioneering environmental history, *Discovering Monaro* (1972).

Jim Davidson is the author of the recently published *A Three-Cornered Life: The Historian WK Hancock* (UNSW Press). His previous biography, the prize winning *Lyrebird Rising*, also concerned an Australian expatriate. Jim is Principal Fellow at the Australian Centre in the School of Historical Studies, University of Melbourne.

Mary MacKillop

Events to celebrate her life and
canonisation



Fitzroy-born Mary MacKillop is to become
Australia's first saint

On Sunday 17 October, Blessed Mary MacKillop will be recognised as Australia's first saint at a Canonisation Ceremony conducted by Pope Benedict XVI at St Peter's Basilica in Rome.

The Melbourne-based celebration of the canonisation will take place near to Mary MacKillop's birthplace in Brunswick Street, Fitzroy.

The Sisters of St Joseph and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne have planned a series of celebratory events including the Blessing of the site of the new Mary of the Cross chapel at Central Hall (part of the Australian Catholic University) at 1.15 pm and a Street Procession departing from Mary's birthplace to the Royal Exhibition Building at 2.15 pm.

Further information is available on the
following website:

<http://www.cam.org.au/mackillop>

FHS ANNUAL DINNER

Friday 12 November at 7.00pm
 The Terminus Hotel
 492 Queens Parade North Fitzroy
 RSVP 5 November
 Chris.Friday@exemail.com.au Or 9489 2834
 Only space for 35 people so book now!
 Enjoy a 2-course meal with appetizers and a choice of 3 mains for approximately \$40.

The Terminus Hotel was originally called the Scotch Thistle and is the only hotel of the 3 that existed in the Quarries District in 1860 that is still operating as a hotel.

Beating the Bounds of the Quarries District

On Sunday 29 August the Society was joined by 3 Nicholls Ward Councillors – the Mayor, Councillor Jane Garrett, and Councillors Jackie Fristacky and Sam Gaylard – as we “Beat the Bounds” of the “Quarries District”.

This was one of a number of activities organised by the Society, and supported by the City of Yarra, to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the expansion of Fitzroy by the addition of the “Quarries District” (most of present-day North Fitzroy).

On 1 September 1860 the Argus Newspaper reported that the annexation of the “Quarries District” had been celebrated by the revival of “the old English custom of beating the bounds of a parish”, with a procession composed of the Councillors of the Municipal Council of Fitzroy, the local fire brigade and local schoolchildren, who “perambulated the boundary at its more salient points”.



City of Yarra Mayor Jane Garrett, wearing the Mayoral chain of the former city of Fitzroy, “beats the bounds” at the north-west corner of the “Quarries District”
 Photo: Mike Moore

To add to the sense of occasion of our commemorative walk, the City of Yarra generously arranged for the Mayor to wear the Mayoral chain of the former City of Fitzroy.

We viewed sites of historic interest along the way, including churches, early terrace houses, remains of the former Inner Circle railway, and Brookes Crescent, scene of community activism in the 1970s. We referred to the original parish map of the district and a number of historic photographs that assisted our understanding of how the area has developed over the decades.

At the time of the annexation of the “Quarries District”, there were 3 hotels operating in the district and one of them, the Scotch Thistle in Queen’s Parade, built in 1854, is still operating as a hotel, now named the Terminus. This historic hotel was a fitting place for us to enjoy a refreshing drink on the home stretch of our walk.

Deakin's Native Place

At the Annual General Meeting on 26 August Carole Woods delivered a talk on her research into the early years of Alfred Deakin and the influence his childhood experiences in Fitzroy had on his adult life and political career.

Much of the information came from biographical notes made by Deakin for an address he gave on 27 April 1910 to the Brown Society, a literary and musical society founded by his daughter Ivy and her husband Herbert Brookes.

Alfred Deakin was born in 1856 in George Street Fitzroy, The family later moved to Gore Street. Both his parents influenced Alfred with their strong sense of duty, the need for reward to be gained by merit and by their interest in politics. His father William, a partner in a coaching business was a high-spirited trusting and generous man. His mother Sarah was a stable, frugal and practical wife.

Alfred's sister Catherine, six years his senior, was a talented musician and teacher, frustrated by her inability to enter Melbourne University like her brother due to being a woman. She was devoted to Alfred and his children, who she taught.

By the time he addressed the Brown Society, Alfred's mental powers were waning, but he could still recall details of his early childhood. He remembered the first books given to him by his parents, and his father reading aloud to the family on Winter evenings from the English classics. Amongst Alfred's favourite books

were Gulliver's Travels, Robinson Crusoe and adventure stories by authors such as Captain Marryat and Wilkie Collins as well as English history.

These books fired his imagination and influenced the style of his oratory and writing. His fascination with the tales in the Arabian Nights fostered an interest in Islamic culture and religion, a belief in the religious tolerance and an interest in spiritual thought outside the Western tradition.

Another of Alfred's early passions was the theatre, which he frequently attended. Amateur theatricals remained a favourite pastime all his life and encouraged his fertile imagination. His first makeshift stages were set up in his father's stables. It was here that another of his major concerns developed, the need to protect animals. The first legislation he introduced as a politician related to the prevention of cruelty to animals.

Accompanying Carole's talk were images of many of the places referred to, and one of Alfred Deakin, appropriately with a book under his arm, together with excerpts of some of the music played at the meeting of the Brown Society one hundred years ago

Amongst the audience was the grandson of Herr Louis Haffebach, the cellist who taught Vera Deakin and played at the meeting.

We are grateful to Carole for these insights into the early life of one of Fitzroy's most famous sons.

Tim Gatehouse



At the AGM, guest speaker Carole Woods, Convenor Meg Lee, Lyndon Arnold, grandson of Louis Heffernbach, the cellist who played at the 1910 Brown Society Meeting

Vale Keith Ross

It is with sadness that we acknowledge the death of Keith Ross on 26.07.2010.

Keith was a committed member of the Fitzroy History Society Committee from its early inception. He was a stalwart of the very active Fitzroy Resident's Association at the time of housing demolition.

He was an honourable and gentle man whose intellect and compassion enriched the lives of his friends, family and the community.

Meg Lee

Special council meeting at Fitzroy Town Hall

On 17 August the Yarra Council invited members to attend the 150th anniversary commemorating the 150th anniversary of the annexation of the suburb of North Fitzroy into the then, Municipality of Fitz Roy. The Governor in Chief of the colony of Victoria signed a proclamation on 30 July 1860, confirming the area then known as "The Quarries" (North Fitzroy) being annexed from Smith Ward in the City Council (Melbourne). The meeting being held in the Fitzroy Town Hall and the presence of the Town Crier marked the occasion.



Convenor Meg Lee, The Town Crier, Tim Gatehouse at the Council meeting held especially at the Fitzroy Town Hall

Visit to the J H Porter store

When Professor Miles Lewis addressed the society at the Public Records Office on 31 July he informed us of the existence of the only remaining example of a prefabricated iron building of this type in the world. This building, the JH Porter store sits in the Council depot in Queens Pde, North Fitzroy. It was manufactured in 1853.

“The world’s last remaining prefabricated iron store exists in North Fitzroy.”

Miles considers it to be of world heritage importance and eminently worthy of preservation.

On 17 August Councillor Jackie Fristacky and several members of the society visited the prefabricated iron store in the council depot in Queens Parade.

We are grateful to Councillor Fristacky and the council officers for facilitating the visit and were heartened by the notice attached to the store advising of its historic importance and the need to protect it.

We look forward to liaising further with the council over the future of this important structure in the hope that it can be integrated into the forthcoming redevelopment of the depot site.

Tim Gatehouse.



Fitzroy History Society Membership/Renewal

Name

Address

Email

Telephone

Subscription is \$10 Cash or cheque per person per year

Annual Membership subscriptions are due in August each year

About Our Organization...

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.fitzroyhistorysociety.org.au

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