



## Follow Fitzroy's Founding Footsteps

**Sunday 8 February 2009 – 11.00 am: "Southern Walk"**

**Tuesday 3 March 2009 – 7.00 pm: "Eastern Walk"**

The four "Fitzroy's Founding Footsteps" walks developed by FHS were so popular when they were run during the Fitzroy 150<sup>th</sup> celebrations that we are offering them again.

On 9 November last year, we conducted the Town Hall Precinct walk, learning of the history of that whole block from the 1850s to the present. The group then elected to do the "Western Walk", which takes in the historic "Wills House" in Hanover Street with its graffiti engraved in the side stone wall, the Christian Israelite Church in Fitzroy Street, and one of Fitzroy's earliest hotels – the Labour in Vain.

On Sunday morning, 15 February, we will walk south along Gore Street to Victoria Parade and back along George Street. Some of the historic places on this walk include the building in which the first meeting of the Fitzroy Council was held in 1859; the site of Alfred Deakin's birthplace; the home of the Mis-

sionaries of Charity (once visited by Mother Teresa) and one of Melbourne's most architecturally significant blocks of 19<sup>th</sup> century terraces, which were once home to several prominent figures from the early history of Melbourne.

Highlights of the Eastern Walk, which will be a "twilight walk" on Tuesday 3 March, include St Mark's Anglican Church, George Street, one of Fitzroy's oldest buildings, and the rich architectural history of Gore Street from 'Cobden Terrace', a fine example of a Victorian terrace streetscape, passing the Bible Christian School, later Pastor Doug Nicholls' Aboriginal Church of Christ, to the corner of Greeves Street with the mysterious 'Captain's House' and the Collingwood and Fitzroy United Friendly Societies Dispensary, a Renaissance and Classical boom style building, with



**The UFS Dispensary at corner of Gore and Greeves Street**

poignant links to Gallipoli. The Eastern walk concludes with the George Street School with important links to Fitzroy's past and her famous pupils, and the Napier Hotel, which still boasts many Art Nouveau decorative elements.

The starting point for both walks is the steps of the Town Hall. The walks can also be undertaken independently at any time, by following the brochure that sets out the route and highlights for each. Brochures are available from the Fitzroy Library.

Catherime Pugsley

### Some up-coming events for your

- **Thursday 30 April: Reflections of Fitzroy**
- **Wednesday 3 June: "Research your House in Fitzroy"/Fitzroy 101**
- **Wednesday 15 July: Fitzroy Trivia Quiz**
- **October: twilight walk and/or beating the bounds of North Fitzroy**
- **Friday 20 November: Annual Dinner**

### "Reflections of Fitzroy"

**Thursday 30 April 2009, 7.00 pm**

Edinburgh Gardens Community Room

- In 2008, 10 fourth year Honours and Masters students in the School of Historical Studies at the University of Melbourne published a book entitled "Reflections of Fitzroy".
- Each student conducted original research exploring an aspect of the social and cultural history of Fitzroy, and the publication was part of the commemoration of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of Fitzroy as a separate municipality. Join some of the authors as they give us insight into their research into areas as diverse as prostitution in 19<sup>th</sup> century Fitzroy, the early history of the Edinburgh Gardens, and the Fitzroy larrikin "Melbourne Mick".
- Catherine Pugsley

## Alfred Deakin and the Foundation Stone of the Fitzroy Courthouse

On Tuesday 18 December 1888, a sunny day, the proud City of Fitzroy held foundation stone ceremonies for two proposed major extensions to the noble town hall building. The community was to benefit from a library at the forefront of the town hall and a courthouse on the Condell Street side. Lines of flags fluttered from the town hall tower to houses on the opposite sides of Napier and Condell Streets as residents gathered to watch the Mayor, Robert Best, level the cement for the memorial stone of the library and the Chief Secretary of Victoria, Alfred Deakin, lay the foundation stone of the courthouse.

Born in George Street, Fitzroy, in 1856, Alfred Deakin later spent his early boyhood in Gore Street. His attachment to Fitzroy translated into political assistance when he attained high ministerial office in the government of Victoria. The mayor recognized this support when he presented Alfred Deakin with a silver trowel on behalf of the city council and thanked him for the substantial aid that he and his government had 'ever extended to the Fitzroy Council'. Mr Deakin commented that the courthouse part of the building 'would not cost the ratepayers a farthing', and he performed the ceremony 'amid great cheering'. Afterwards, at a dinner in the town hall, the mayor proposed a toast to 'The Ministry coupled with the name of Mr Deakin'. When responding by proposing 'Prosperity to the City of Fitzroy', Alfred Deakin mentioned that he had a special interest in Fitzroy, for 'it was his native place'.

One hundred and twenty years later to the day, a group gathered in Condell Street to commemorate the laying of the foundation stone of the courthouse and its recent re-gilding by the City of Yarra, which had absorbed the municipality of Fitzroy in 1994. On the summery afternoon of Thursday 18 December 2008, Michael Moore, president of the Fitzroy History Society and organizer of the Alfred Deakin sesquicentenary celebration in Fitzroy two years earlier, welcomed Judith Harley, a granddaughter of Alfred Deakin, historian Carole Woods, two former mayors of Fitzroy, City of Yarra staff and Councillors Jackie Fristacky and Geoff Barbour. Photographer Sophie Fetterplace captured the group at the entrance to the now disused courthouse and close to the newly gilded foundation stone. Afterwards, Jackie Fristacky presided over a convivial afternoon tea in the town hall and discussion of plans for plaques to mark the birthplace of Alfred Deakin and his later boyhood home in Fitzroy.

Carole Woods

### 2008 Annual Dinner @ Dante's

On Friday November 14<sup>th</sup> 28 members and friends of the History Society gathered at Dante's for a most enjoyable evening of good food and fine company. The Committee took this occasion to inform members that the book, 'Growing Together', Letters between Frederick John Cato and Frances Bethune, 1881 to 1884, purchased with the generous donation of Carole Woods in memory of foundation member and long serving committee member, John Senyard. The book will be held in the local history collection. It was the Annual Christmas Dinner and we have notched up 5 dinners now at Dante's. Thank-you to Maria and her staff for her warm hospitality and pleasant venue. It is now becoming an annual event! Look out for details for 2009 and book early.

Sue Bradshaw

## The Captain's House: 300 Gore Street

Hidden behind high hedges on the eastern rise of Gore Street, on the corner of Greeves Street, is a sprawling single storey house which, despite its nickname of the Captain's House, has been described as having the appearance of a farmhouse but its rural appearance surrounding were short-lived as the area south of the house to Johnson street had already been sub-divided and developed by 1862. There was, however, a large tract of land diagonally opposite the Captain's House on the west side of Gore Street which surrounded Montgomery Cottage (built by the solicitor James Montgomery). David Young bought the cottage and land in 1851 and this was not subdivided until after his death in 1877.

When Thomas O'Reilly commissioned William Hampton in 1857 to build a house on the corner of Gore and Greeves Street (Burchett Index 13 March 1857), there was a scarcity of brick in Melbourne as the brick workers had migrated to the goldfields to seek their fortunes. The result was that O'Reilly's house, like many others during that period, was built of bluestone. But, despite its country appearance the house acquired a nautical name: 'the Captain's House'.

So, who was this mysterious captain? It was not Thomas O'Reilly, nor the second resident, the Rev. John Clunie McMichael (1863-4). Further research revealed that it was the third occupant, Captain Alexander T. Woods, Master Mariner, who bought the house in 1864, and was the second of four generations bearing the same name. This captain of several coastal steamers raised his family in the seven room bluestone house on Gore Street and, sometime in 1874, he added outhouses to the stables.

By 1876, the Captain's House's association with the sea was coming to a close: for the first time it was given a house number and soon after, in 1877, Captain Woods and his family left their Gore Street home. (They moved to Tasmania where the captain managed the Launceston branch of the Tasmanian Steam Navigation Company with a fleet of 8 ships). The new owner of the house on the corner of Gore and Greeves Streets was Henry Young and one of the last external improvements was a late 19<sup>th</sup> century front



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