

The Fitzroy History Society Inc. Newsletter

April 2001

Federation Builders of North Fitzroy

On Sunday 1st April in perfect weather, about 35 of Society members, National Trust members and visitors, were once again treated to another memorable walk hosted by the inimitable Alan Willingham. Alan has lived in North Fitzroy for 27 years and knows the street architecture second to none. Alan started by referring to the book *Towards the Dawn* by Howells & Nicholson which is all about Federation architecture i.e. the architecture of 1890-1914. In the book George Tibbetts describes the period as the 'eminence of lunacy' in architectural form. You will need to read the book to know the reasons why!

The walk went from the Edinburgh Gardens, Brunswick St, Freeman St, Alfred Cresc, Rowe St, Michael St, McKean St, Rushall Crescent and finally Queens Pde. We learnt of the features to watch out for: Marseille tiling, ridge capping, porthole windows, timber fretwork, strapped chimneys, pressed metal and black tuckpointing. Some highlights were:

- The elaborate 1906 additions at 43 Alfred Crescent and its zinc Wunderlich tiles on the tower. Alan referred to Marshall Browne's book *The Burnt City* that describes this house etc and contains some wonderful intrigues of this era in Melbourne.
- The house on the N-E corner of Alfred Cresc. and Rowe St which would do justice to anything of the style in Camberwell, but as is the case with most Fitzroy properties is limited by the size of the block.
- 46 Rowe St. Note the high mounted gable sleepout now walled in by glazing. The vogue in those days of fresh air was to sleep in the open during the warmer months (hence the term sleepout). Also contains rising sun motifs as does #56.
- 60, 70 & 72 Michael St. A lovely group, obviously builders spec. houses because of similarities.
- 238 McKean St. built in 1906; this is a rare example of a full 2-storied Federation house. Contains black tuck-pointing, which came in in the early 20th century.
- 422 Queens Parade which has interesting terracotta finials (probably French).

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- The old ANZ Bank in Queens Parade (formerly the London Chartered Bank). An early example (c1890) of this style of architecture. The style of red bricks and cream rendering was disparagingly referred to as 'blood and bandages'. You actually have to be in the middle of the street to appreciate the grandeur of this superb building.

Richard Honess

Federation Celebrations

From The Argus, Monday May 13, 1901

On Tuesday morning, the scholars attending the different state schools will assemble at their respective schools at the customary hour and be presented with medals by the member so the Fitzroy Board of Advice. At 10 minutes to 1 pm the grand old flag will be displayed at the masthead over each state school. The scholars will then sing God Save the King and the proceedings will conclude with cheers for King Edward VII and the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York.

As a protest against the action displayed by the local council in refusing to contribute any money towards giving the children a treat, a number of prominent citizens decided that the children should be entertained. A committee was appointed and an appeal for funds was made, which met with a ready response and a substantial sum was raised. The children will assemble in Victoria Parade at 6 o'clock and form a torchlight procession headed by Bennett's Military Band. After marching through some of the principal streets they will proceed to the vacant land between Smith and George streets where there will be a monster bonfire and pyrotechnic display.

On Wednesday evening there will be a biograph entertainment at the Exhibition Hall, Brunswick Street, and a cinematograph entertainment at the Fitzroy Town Hall. The tickets will be distributed by the teachers at the schools.

Thanks to member Michael Moore for discovering this Federation gem. If anyone else has come across an article or photograph about Federation in Fitzroy please let us know.

Dodgshun House

One hundred years ago, Samuel Gillott, M.L.A. owned and lived at 9 Brunswick Street. He was a city solicitor and Mayor of Melbourne. As such he had a lead role in the original Federation celebrations. The Argus newspapers of May 1901 record that he hosted the Mayor's reception for the visiting dignitaries on 10 May, and that he received a knighthood from the Duke of Cornwall and York on 11 May. Also at that time his office was upgraded to that of Lord Mayor.

By 1903 Sir Samuel was Attorney General, and he is listed as living at Brunswick Street through to 1912. In 1927 the house was bought by the Eye and Ear Hospital to be used as nurses' accommodation. It was then named Dodgshun House in honour of John Dodgshun who had been a member of the hospital's Committee of Management from 1893 to 1918, and president from 1918 to 1922.

In the grounds of that large property behind the high brick fence, researchers have found the original foundations of the 1840s McKillop house where Mary was born in 1842. A plaque recording her birth there is set into the footpath outside on Brunswick Street.

[A detailed history of Dodgshun House was featured in our February 1999 newsletter.]

Welcome

- Welcome to all our new members who have joined since the last newsletter. If there are any activities you would like the Society to organise please let us know and we can add it to our list for next year.
- If any member is undertaking any research, please let us know so we can spread the word for you. Also, we would love to provide you the opportunity to present your findings at one of our meetings.

SUBSCRIPTIONS NOW DUE!!!

Thanks to all those who have renewed.

Subscriptions for the Fitzroy History Society are from January to December. Please send your subscription to PO Box 180 Fitzroy 3065. Pay \$5 yearly or \$10 for 2 years.

Executive Committee —2000-2001

Convenor: John Senyard
Treasurer: Harold Mackrell
Secretary: Shared role
Publicity: Margaret Lee
Editor: Jill Robertson (9419 8868)



An Evening Visit to Saint Patrick's Cathedral

Wednesday, 9 May 2001, at 7.30pm sharp

Saint Patrick's Cathedral was first consecrated in 1897, and its centenary was celebrated in 1997. In preparation for that centenary, extensive restoration and conservation works were completed.

As well as the cathedral's towering presence in the streetscape of Brunswick Street, Fitzroy's links with the cathedral include:

- the southern part of Fitzroy was part of the cathedral parish until All Saints church parish was created in 1938
- Blessed Mary McKillop was born at Brunswick Street and there are memorials to her at the site of her birth and in the Cathedral.

Members and friends of the Fitzroy History Society are able to join a special after-hours visit and guided tour of the cathedral.

Please meet at 7.30 pm sharp on the main steps at the corner of
Gisborne Street and Cathedral Place.

Our host and guide Max Potter will meet us and let us in
before the doors are locked.

Make sure that you get there on time.

\$2 members

\$3 non-members