

The Fitzroy History Society Inc. Newsletter

February 2002

Welcome

Welcome to the first newsletter for 2002. We have a packed calendar of events organised and these are outlined in the enclosed brochure. Put the dates in your diary now! Further details will be available in our newsletters throughout the year.

Membership

Membership is from 1 January to 31 December so it's time to renew your membership. For only \$5 a year you will receive regular newsletters and reduced admission to our activities.

This year we have asked for your email address so we can send you the newsletter if you would prefer to receive it electronically.

World War 1 memorial

The City of Yarra has recently completed a study of the memorial to those who died in World War 1.

Hidden near the bowling club in Edinburgh Gardens, the memorial has sadly seen better days. There is a wonderful photograph of the memorial in 1932 in the book *Fitzroy: Melbourne's First Suburb*, available at the Fitzroy Library.

Burial Information

From time to time we have people enquiring about early burials in Fitzroy. The original Melbourne Cemetery was where the Queen Victoria Markets now stands. It operated from 1837 until 1917. In 1920 all identified graves (900) were transferred to the Pioneers Section at the Fawkner Cemetery. Some information can be found at www.fcmp.cvom.au/puioneers.htm

The Melbourne General Cemetery was proclaimed in 1852. Most early Fitzroy residents would be buried there. General information is at www.necropolis.com.au/history

If you are looking for a particular person, call (03) 9349 3014.

Help for researchers

The Fitzroy Library has very generously offered to hold a session to help people conduct historical research on the Internet.

The date has been set for Thursday 14 March at 6.30 pm. Due to the number of computers and space available, the session is limited to 20 people.

If you would like to attend, please call Annabel on 9419 6186 who will take your booking and inform the library staff.

Wartime Social Survey

Taken from *Fitzroy: Melbourne's First Suburb*, Chapter 15 by Jenny Carew.

During World War II a survey of Melbourne households was undertaken by the Economics Department of the University of Melbourne. Fitzroy was investigated in the summer of 1941/42.

A two-storey brick house in Bell Street with 10 bedrooms: in reasonable repair and clean. Unfurnished rent £2.2s Bathroom used by nine lodgers and landlady. Six male and three female lodgers paid 6s. To 10s. a week rent. The landlady said she did not drink or gamble and was therefore regarded as a wowser by the rest of the street. Most of the lodgers ate out. They had small spirit heaters, as they didn't like the slot-meter gas stove.

A two-storey stone house of eight rooms in George Street had eight lodgers on the old-age pension who paid from 5s.6d. to 7s. A week (the pension was then 23s. A week). Some had been there for years. As caretaker kept the passageways and kitchen very clean. He said he had a number of books, mostly Dickens, which he let the men borrow. He said that the owner gave the men a dinner on Christmas day. There was a large yard in which the caretaker grew tomatoes and a small but bright front garden.

A very old terrace in Young Street was rented by four sisters who worked as domestic servants. The paper and plaster were falling down in the dining room. Rats came when the skirting board fell away. The women were afraid to sleep at night. They burnt phenyle and spray with disinfectant. A tiny cobbled lane, more like a gully, ran behind the yard—stagnant water. smells badly.

Congratulations ...

To founding member and current treasurer Harold Mackrell for being awarded the City of Yarra's Citizen of the Year. We are all very proud of this well-deserved recognition Harold!

Community Day

Edinburgh Gardens is the scene for this year's Community Day. Our Society will be having a stand in the heritage tent, so come along, meet other members and see our publications. If you are interested in 'manning' the stall at any time, please call Annabel on 9419 6186.

Take one of the scheduled walks around the garden (one at 11 am and another at 2 pm) with our guides who will discuss the history of the site.

Advance notice

As mentioned in our brochure, this year's heritage festival theme is 'beyond the big smoke'. Local history societies have decided to focus on sites that remind us of how rural we once were. In our case, we will be mounting a display on the Edinburgh Gardens and historian John Patrick will give a half-hour talk on its history and significance.

If you have old photographs of the gardens, contact Jill on 9419 8868.

We're 20 this year!

A public meeting was convened on Thursday 17 June 1982 by the Mayor Harold Mackrell in the Mayor's Room at the Fitzroy Town Hall for those interested in forming a history society. An advertisement appeared in *The Age* on 12 June advising people to attend. The inaugural meeting took place on Tuesday 9 November. A talk was given by Rosemary Kiss.

Throughout this birthday year we will be including snippets of our recorded history. Keep tuned!

Executive Committee —2001-2002

Convenor: Annabel Barbara (9419 6186)
Treasurer: Harold Mackrell
Editor: Jill Robertson (9419 8868)



Nicholson Street Walk

Nicholson Street was the western boundary of the first suburban land sold outside the bounds of Melbourne in 1839. Many of Melbourne's social elite—from the 1850s until the 1890s—had a mansion or town house in this very fashionable residential area.

Join us as we stroll along Nicholson Street from Victoria Parade to Johnston Street where you will discover a rich mix of building styles and a wealth of architectural detail. Many of the original mansions survive. The street is also significant as it mirrors the rise and fall of Fitzroy's social development.

The walk incorporates a visit to the Convent of Mercy school and chapel.

Did you know that:

- Nicholson Street was first called West Government Road.
- Two of the three oldest surviving buildings in Fitzroy are contained within the Convent of Mercy complex.
- The building at 116 now known as 'The Nunnery' was, in 1944, St Vincent's Hall, a hostel opened by the Daughters of Charity for country girls working in the city.

When: Sunday 24 February, 2002

Time: 10.30 am

Meet: At the corner of Nicholson Street and Princes Street, Fitzroy
(near St Vincent's Hospital)

Cost: Members \$2 Non-members \$3