

The Fitzroy History Society Inc. Newsletter

May 2002

Heritage Festival Review

'Rural remnants—when inner Melbourne was beyond the big smoke'

Could there have been a more appropriate setting for our recent Heritage Festival presentation than the Collingwood Children's Farm? I think not. Nestled in the goats' pen (they were happily munching in an adjacent field), with straw underfoot and pigeons roosting overhead, our display attracted a steady stream of visitors throughout the day. Outside, peacocks strutted, geese squawked and ducks splashed in their pond.

Around 15 participating organisations set up displays at the barn and contributed speakers to the program. Topics included the landscaping of the Yarra, rural settlement along the river, the Abbotsford Convent, Royal Park, Merri Creek, the Burnley Gardens orchard and Melbourne's early parks. Each speaker was allotted 10-15 minutes but into those minutes they packed a wealth of fascinating information on the changing patterns of our landscape.

It was a marvellous program and a great forum for so many local organisations to get together. This was largely due to the efforts of Louise Elliot and her team who have been working on the festival tirelessly all year.

Our presentation included some wonderful photographs of the Edinburgh Gardens sourced from the local history photographic collection at the Fitzroy Library.

Thanks go to the Society members who visited the farm and those who attended our stall, and most especially to Heather McRae who worked on our behalf for many months to organise the Fitzroy History Society's contribution.

Heather says: Thanks to all those who gave time, resources and ideas to make this event possible, to the staff of the Collingwood Children's Farm for their hospitality, and to Annabel, Jill and Tom for looking after our stall on the day. The Yarra-Melbourne Local History Forum anticipates making printed versions of the talks available soon. We also look forward to similar events in the future, building on the cooperation established between local organisations in our region.

Classified Buildings

The Victorian Heritage Register now includes two buildings from the southern end of Brunswick Street. The citations for these buildings record the following:

The former **Melbourne Veterinary College**, 38-40 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy is a two storey brick building constructed in 1886 as an animal hospital and veterinary college by W.T. Kendall, who is known as the founder of veterinary science in Australia. The animal hospital operated from 1886 to 1928. The college, the first in Australia, operated from 1888 to 1909 when it was taken over by the University of Melbourne and moved to a site in Parkville.

A plaster horse's head is placed over the entrance. Signage on the façade of the building reads: "Hospital for Horses, Dogs, etc." and "Melbourne Veterinary College".

It is historically important as the first animal hospital and veterinary training institute in Victoria. It is associated with the history and practice of veterinary education in Victoria and with important advances in the control of animal diseases in Victoria, such as with the first tuberculin testing of cattle which took place on the site in 1895.

Cathedral Hall, at 20 Brunswick Street, consists of meeting rooms and offices at the front of the site and a large hall to the rear with a supper room opening off it. The building was used as a meeting place for the Catholic Church in Melbourne from 1903. The building fronting Brunswick Street was constructed in 1873 as the Exhibition Boot Factory and refurbished as clubrooms and classrooms in 1902-03 by the Church. The main hall behind the factory was erected in 1903-04 and the whole became the main venue for activities associated with St Patrick's Cathedral and the Church generally, commencing with the hosting of the Second Australasian Catholic Congress in 1904 and later the National Eucharistic Congress in 1934. The supper room, at the rear north side fronting Graham Street, was added in 1908 and the whole building was decorated in 1912-13 and refurbished for the National Eucharistic Congress in 1934 when the light fittings were designed and installed.

In the 1960s the hall became known as Central Hall.

Fitzroy Football Club to Honour the 'Bradman of Football'

The Fitzroy Football Club is planning to erect a statue to its most famous player Hayden Bunton, at the Fitzroy Football Ground, Brunswick Street, North Fitzroy.

Bunton was a triple Brownlow medallist in the Victorian Football League, a triple Sandover medallist in the Western Australian Football League and finished his career in the 1930s in South Australia. He remains the only Australian footballer to have played at the elite level in each of the major football states.

Fundraising has already begun in earnest to finance the statue. To honour the man who the club claims is the 'greatest player to have ever played the game'.

126 Fitzroy Street Saved

Last year this house was facing demolition as it appeared too derelict to be absorbed into the new development proposed by the Brotherhood of St Laurence. The terrace house was one of the few survivors of the Housing Commission's 1960s slum clearance program and was highly valued by the residents of Fitzroy Street. Luckily, the residents (with support from the National Trust) were able to work with the Brotherhood to negotiate a compromise that saw the building saved. As reported in the Trust News (June 2001) it is 'now a charming part of the streetscape, flanked by a pleasant redevelopment and a small park with a stand of gum trees'.

An early image of Melbourne by Nathaniel Whittock (completed almost 150 years ago) shows that only 12 of the buildings remain—one of them being the former Devonshire Arms Hotel in Fitzroy Street, Fitzroy. It was owned for 50 years by land speculator Francis Clarke. [Page 14, *Inherit, Heritage Victoria*, 13 April 2002.]

Family History Books

Tracing Your Family History in Australia - a National Guide to Sources and its companion *Tracing Your Family History in Australia - a Bibliography* have recently been updated. To find out more contact Nick Vine Hall at PO box 725 Mt Eliza VIC 3930 or email on nick@vinehall.com.au

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