

Fitzroy History Society Inc. Newsletter

April 1999

Family tales

It was rewarding to meet so many people at the Town Hall in February when the Yarra City Council opened the building for public tours. Many of the visitors did not live in Fitzroy but had family connections going back to the days of early settlement. They had plenty of stories to tell.

These snippets of family history provide the important social memory of a place that is all too often lost. In fact one lady lamented: 'My uncle would know the history of that house but he's dead now and I never asked him'.

- Tom Carter reminisced about growing up in the hallkeeper's residence (since demolished) in Moor Street next to the Town Hall when his father was the hall keeper from 1947 to 1960. He remembers his father pulling hundreds of chairs by a rope up through a trapdoor from the ground floor to the ballroom when a large function was held.
- A Freer grandson talked about the Byrne & Freer Phoenix Chemical Factory in Napier Street which operated in the 1890s selling spices and flavourings etc. The two-storey red brick building with its wide side driveway is still there, now converted to accommodation.
- When the Duke of York visited Melbourne to open Australia's first parliament in 1901 (at the Exhibition Building) the Mayor, Councillors and Citizens of the City of Fitzroy offered a hearty welcome to His Royal Highness and 'the assurance of our most devoted loyalty and affection to the throne and person of his Majesty the King'—this welcome inscribed on an elaborate illumination complete with Australian wildflowers, coats of arms and the Fitzroy Town Hall, a document which the mayor's granddaughter treasures today.

Who knows?

Andrew Cuthbertson's home must surely have a story to tell. If anyone knows anything about the former Cricketers' Arms Hotel on the corner of Rae and Percy streets, North Fitzroy, please call Andrew on 9585 1877.

Fitzroy's Cyclorama

Mimi Colligan unearthed this story of the Fitzroy Cyclorama while researching popular entertainment in Australia. Read more in *Fitzroy: Melbourne's First Suburb*.

The circular red-brick building that housed the Fitzroy Cyclorama was built in 1889 on the corner of Victoria Parade and Fitzroy Street. For the next five years it provided Melbourne people with a fascinating entertainment in the form of large oil paintings depicting famous historical events.

Fitzroy from the 1930s

A fascinating collection of photographs of Fitzroy is held by the Brotherhood of St Laurence in Brunswick Street. The photographic archive, under the care of librarian Patricia Newell, is open to the public from 9.00 am until 4.30 pm Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. You might like to ring Patricia on 9483 1388 before you come. The collection comprises photos of housing, families, Brotherhood of St Laurence activities, etc. There are also some videos of slums in the 1950s.

St Joseph's Parish School

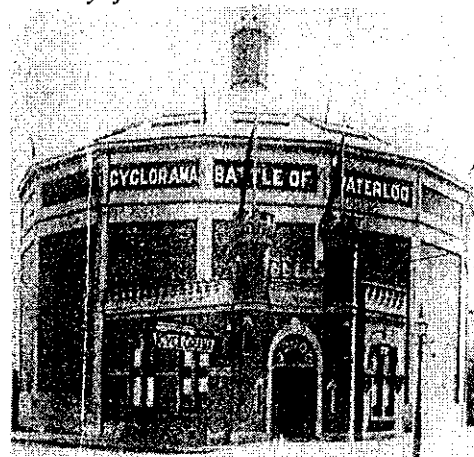
Val Noone is writing the history of St Joseph's Parish School, North Fitzroy. Please contact him on 9419 8631 if you have any recollections, memorabilia or tales to tell. He's especially interested in knowing how the children travelled to the school—the spur on the inner circle railway perhaps? Photographs would be particularly welcome too.

Welcome to new members

Thanks to all those people who have become subscribers this year. We look forward to seeing you at our activities. If you have any suggestions for the newsletter or for events you'd like to see offered, please let us know.

The public stood on a central platform to view the 360° picture. Lighting and some real-life objects (such as trees) placed judiciously, gave the illusion of actually being there! The Battle of Waterloo was the opening attraction, others being the Battle of Gettysburg, the Eureka Stockade and Jerusalem.

The cyclorama closed when moving pictures offered more excitement. The building then became the Palace of Pictures and showed movies. In 1906 it was the venue for Wild West shows then boxing matches. Its last use before being demolished in 1927 was a storeroom for theatrical scenery. The site was used for extensions to St Vincent's Hospital. *Below: Fitzroy Cyclorama, La Trobe Collection, State Library of Victoria*



War memorials

Known as the Peace Memorial, the rotunda in Edinburgh Gardens was erected by the Fitzroy City Council and the Peace Year Citizens Committee in honour of the citizens of Fitzroy who served in the Great War. It records the following statistics: Enlisted 1453, Wounded 521, Killed 216.

A forgotten memorial is the Greek-style loggia next to the Fitzroy Bowling Club, facing the Fitzroy Oval. Inscribed on marble are the words: *This memorial has been erected by the Fitzroy Cricket, Football, Bowling, Baseball and Tennis Clubs to perpetuate the memory of members who fell in the Great War 1914-1919. Seek it out.*

Executive Committee — 1998-1999
Convenor: John Senyard
Treasurer: Harold Mackrell
Secretary: Annabel Barbara
Publicity: Margaret Lee
Editor: Jill Robertson (9419 8868)



**The Fitzroy History Society and the Fitzroy Legal Service
present**

**A social justice walk
around Fitzroy**

Led by Brian Stagoll and Pauline Spencer

Fitzroy has quite a unique history as a place where many campaigns, innovations and reforms for social justice arose for the first time in Australia. The list includes anti-poverty programs, aged care, housing reforms, family planning, family day care and community child care, local government involvement in social planning, community legal services, international groups and many significant Aboriginal organisations.

Why Fitzroy has been such a social laboratory is a question we hope to open up on this walk.

Join Brian, Pauline and a host of key local figures who have been actively involved in struggles for social change, to revisit the places where it all happened. Participants will be invited to contribute their own memories and ideas.

This walk will start at places around the Brotherhood of St Laurence, move to the Alherton Gardens estate, then the Fitzroy Town Hall (with stories of its famous public meetings), back onto Brunswick Street and the Social Planning Office and end up at the Fitzroy Legal Service for refreshments and debate.

Sunday 18 April 1999

10.30 am —12.15 pm

Meet at the Rob Roy Hotel, corner of Brunswick and
Gertrude streets, Fitzroy

\$2 members \$3 non-members