

The Fitzroy History Society Inc. Newsletter

December 1999

Visit to the Immigration Museum

Our November activity was a tour of the Immigration Museum housed in the Old Customs House.

The Museum contains an increasing amount of material for genealogical research. Located in the original Bond Store Vaults of 1840 and centred in the Sarah and Baillieu Myer Immigration Discovery Centre is the place where searches of ancestors' entry to Australia can be made through computerised access to Passenger Lists from 1852 - 1879 and indexes to Ships from 1854 - 1954. The Research section contains reference books, Government Gazettes and Government responses to matters of immigration. There are numerous family histories—some are intriguingly titled, *Head into History* and *Ashe's- This is not Cricket*.

The Immigration Museum offers the visitor many dimensions of the immigration experience through voices, memories and belongings of those who have made their home in Australia. These are housed in various formats in three different galleries. The highlight, in the Long Room, is a reconstruction of ship travel to Australia over time. We saw the bunks of a square rigger of the 1840's, 2nd class Steamer of 1900s and a cabin (with sound effects) of a post-war liner.

The building is also of great interest with valuable historical material available. There is evidence of an original building of 1830 on the site. The current building was built in two stages over twenty years. Begun in 1855, in 1858 building ceased due to lack of funds. The architect was Peter Kerr who was born in 1820 in Palermo. In 1873 the building was redesigned and completed in 1876. Government Architects involved were Arthur Ebdon Johnson and J.J. Clarke of the Old Treasury building.

The Greek Government curate the Hellenic Antiquities Museum exhibits which showcase regular exhibitions travelling to Australia. There is also exhibition space available for communities to share culture, tradition and heritage.

Thanks to Dr Michele Langfield for her liaison with the Museum and coordination of the tour and talk for the Society.
Margaret Lee

Researching Fitzroy

Over the year we have received many letters from people researching their family, their home, their local area or a local landmark. The letters have come from a wide range of people and include newcomers to the suburb, students preparing assignments, retired people with newly-acquired leisure time and people from interstate whose family roots are in Fitzroy.

The Society does not hold its own collection nor does it have a permanent base. The committee is made up of interested and enthusiastic volunteers, and while we would love to be able to offer assistance, in most cases it's impossible. The calls for help we print in the newsletter often bring forth snippets of information and put people in touch with the enquirer.

Here are some suggestions for would-be researchers:

- call the local history librarian at the Fitzroy branch on 9419 7655
- libraries use inter-library loans so don't worry if a book you want is not available at the library you visit
- use the Internet to search for out-of-print books
- the Fitzroy Library has copies of a bibliography of source books of Fitzroy
- visit the State Library's genealogical section.

'Garryowen'

Walking past 20 Leicester Street, Fitzroy last week I noticed that the cottage was for sale. This particular cottage is built on the site of a cottage that was home to Edmund Finn—better known as 'Garryowen'—who recorded his impressions of pre-gold rush Melbourne in *The Chronicles of Early Melbourne 1835-52*.

The original cottage was demolished in the early 1970s but it got me thinking about the author and his wonderfully graphic account of the housing in early Fitzroy.

'From Palmer Street, northward, a mud or wattle-and-daub hovel was thrown up here and there, and about the intersection of Moor Street, then blocked up by a queer two-storey brick-nogged rookery planted at the end of the track, was a group of seven or eight cabins in which pigs, had they the right of free selection, would hardly condescend to wallow.' *The Chronicles of Early Melbourne*, vol. 2, p. 767

Finn is remembered in the nearby Garryowen Park.

Goodbye 1999...

This is the last newsletter for 1999. The next newsletter will be sent to you towards the end of January. With that newsletter will be our brochure of activities for 2000.

...hello 2000

The program is nearing completion. We've planned a varied year of walks and talks with topics including how to research Fitzroy's history, a study of the King William Street precinct, the story of St Joseph's Parish Church and much more. The theme for Heritage Week in March/April is, not surprisingly, sport!

The Society would love to hear from anyone with ideas for interesting events or any comments on this year's activities. Just drop a line to us at PO Box 180 Fitzroy, 3065.

New historical society

Congratulations to the recently formed East Melbourne Historical Society. Anyone interested in becoming a member should write to the Society at 72 Hotham Street, East Melbourne 3002.

Historical Jigsaw

The Royal Historical Society of Victoria has sent us a flyer advertising the 'Chronologia Historical and Educational Jigsaw'. Available for \$25 from Chronologia Australia PO Box 116 Dingley (phone 9551 5255), the 250-piece jigsaw depicts early explorations and discoveries of Australia as well as an eighteenth century map of New Holland. As the advertising blurb says, 'an ideal gift for young students'.

Anyone know?

Jim Brun is trying to find out more about his grandparents. His mother May (born 1904) lived with her mother Mary McInerney at, he believes, 56 Webb Street, Fitzroy and went to school in Fitzroy. Jim thinks the family came from South Australia. Write to Jim at 60 Kendall Street, West Preston, or the Society if you have any information

Executive Committee —1998-1999

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

Annual Dinner

The Fitzroy History Society Inc. invites you to its annual dinner at
The Standard Hotel, Fitzroy Street (between Moor and Bell streets), Fitzroy on
Friday 3 December 1999 at 7.00 p.m.

Particulars

- Arrive at 7.00 p.m.
- For reservations and enquiries please call John Senyard on 9417 2839.
- To assist with catering, reservations should be made no later than Wednesday 1 December.

Come and share an enjoyable evening with fellow Society members. We've had a terrific year with interesting activities, and lots of new members. The newsletter is now a well-established feature and the Committee continues to be enthusiastic and keen!

Chat over a pre-dinner drink while deciding your meal: perhaps the bruschetta with Milawa goat's cheese followed by duck Maryland, seared kangaroo fillet, spiced lamb loin or a vegetable Korma curry. Of course there's lots more on the menu and there'll also be blackboard specials on the night.

Room left over for dessert? Check out the blackboard specials or try the perennial favourite—cheeses and fruit.

For those members who can't make the dinner, we wish you a happy Christmas and look forward to your continued support in the 21st century!