

# Fitzroy History Society Inc. Newsletter

## June 1999

### Marvellous Fitzroy: The social justice leader

Fitzroy is well known for its working class origins and responsiveness to social issues. The Society's April walk reinforced the significance of the suburb as a social policy and planning incubator and leader.

Many of Fitzroy's prominent activists and advocates during the 1930s and the 1970s (the two most influential periods) joined us on the walk, stopping at sites of significance which provided speakers with a great venue for relaying events and stories of the past.

At Fitzroy Street David Scott spoke about the Brotherhood of St Laurence's first contribution to fighting unemployment in the 1930s. We saw the place where its founder, Father Tucker lived, and the rented terraces for the homeless. It was at this time that the Brotherhood started the first opportunity shop in Australia.

Anne Horrigan Dickson, one of the first Presidents of the Fitzroy Community Health Centre spoke about the Centre's development and its policy of assisting public housing tenants. The Centre was deliberately kept structurally small so staff would not remain inside but have to get involved in the community.

Val Noone described the King William Street open house for homeless people. He also described the Vietnam Moratorium Committee in the 1970s which often met at the open house and organised events such as the Radical Film Festival.

At the site of the public high rise buildings at the corner of Gertrude and Brunswick streets, Barry Pullen spoke about the local community's struggles against their development; he told of the residents' desire to remain within the community.

The steps of the Fitzroy Town Hall provided the perfect venue for Paul Coughlan, Mayor of Fitzroy in the 1970s to speak about former Council meetings where tense discussion about the high rise development were held. He also spoke about the beginnings of the Fitzroy Council of Social Services.

At the side of the Town Hall, John Finlayson, a 1970s youth worker, discussed the formation of the Fitzroy Legal Service on 18 December 1972. The service operated for many years from the basement of the Town Hall. The Service is still going strong today in Johnson Street.

On Brunswick Street, Anna Fratta talked about the Fitzroy Advisory Service and the way in which it was initiated to help people access resources and services to improve their standard of living.

The walk ended at the Fitzroy Legal Service headquarters where we enjoyed much hospitality. Fine weather and the enthusiasm of speakers and participants made it a valuable and fun event. It is important that the struggles of Fitzroy, the lessons learnt and the initiatives that developed out of them are not forgotten to assist future residents. The efforts of Brian Stagoll and Pauline Spencer in organising the walk for us are greatly appreciated.

Annabel Barbara

### Who knows?

Peter McMahon is researching a former Fitzroy mayor. He wants information about the mayor's home at 115 Brunswick Street. Call him on 9534 3424 if you can help.

### Brunswick Street Terraces

#### Barcelona Terrace

One of Fitzroy's finest examples of a high Victorian terrace is *Barcelona Terrace* at 25-37 Brunswick Street. The seven grand houses were built in 1881 by Spanish migrants, the Parer family. The cast iron decoration and front garden layouts still remain largely intact today.

#### Royal Terrace

Adjoining Barcelona Terrace at 39-49 Brunswick Street is *Royal Terrace*, designed by Charles Laing, built in 1856-8, and modernised with cast iron verandahs and balconies in c1881.

### Memories

Old-timers watching the development of the Max Apartments in Brunswick Street might recall that it was the site of the Liberty Picture Theatre in the 1920s. Mrs Gaylard, writing to the Society in 1990, recalled going as a child to the Saturday matinees where it cost 3 pence to get in. She often had a penny to spend at the lolly stall. 'I always spent mine on a Violet Crumble bar—I believe they are still making them!' The building later became the Stadium where boxing matches were held.

### What's in a name?

The Yarra City Council is calling for submissions for a name for the triangular piece of greenery on the corner of St Georges Road and Scotchmer Street, North Fitzroy (opposite Piedmontes Supermarket). One suggestion is *Mayors' Corner*, to honour former mayors and local traders in the area (Otteray, O'Halloran and Parlon). Any more suggestions? Please call the Editor.

### Calling all backyard farmers

Andrea Gaynor is currently writing a PhD thesis on the history of suburban food production in Perth and Melbourne and would like to hear from readers who could talk to her about their experiences producing fruit, veges, eggs, milk, meat or honey in backyards, front yards or community gardens. If you can help and could participate in a short interview in mid-July, please get in touch with Andrea at the Dept of History, University of WA Nedlands WA 6907; (08) 9380 2137 or [agaynorcyllene.uwa.edu.au](mailto:agaynorcyllene.uwa.edu.au)

### Join the committee

Nominations are called for members for the 1999-2000 committee, to be elected at the AGM in August. Please call John Senyard on 9417 2839 for a form. It's lots of fun and rewarding, too. More in the next newsletter.

### Executive Committee —1998-1999

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

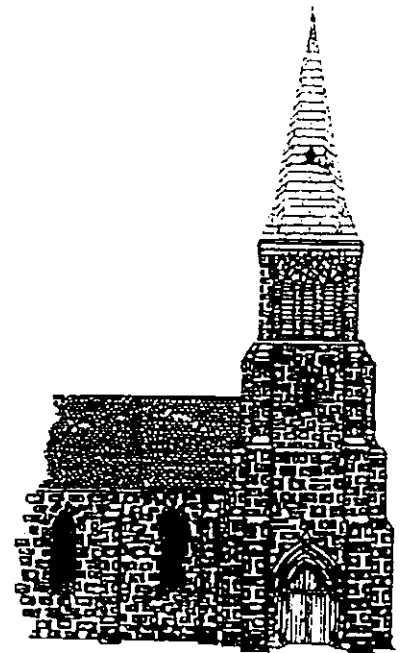


## **Inspect the restored St Mark's Church**

Boasting one of Fitzroy's famous spires, St Marks is a well-known landmark with a long history of active participation in the community.

Built in 1853, the bluestone church has undergone a major restoration.

Join Father Tony Noble as he describes the nine years of painstaking restoration and takes us on a tour of the completed works.



**Sunday 20 June 1999**

**2.30 pm — 4.00 pm**

**Meet inside St Mark's Church  
George Street, Fitzroy**

**\$2 members \$3 non-members**