

# The Fitzroy History Society Inc. Newsletter

## March 2000

### Refurbished library opens

The newly renovated Fitzroy Library officially opened its doors on March 15 after a magnificent makeover. It's the first time since the 1960s that the library's collection is actually under one roof. As well as the adult and children's sections, the library has an extensive Local History Collection which includes photographs, journals, books and ephemera detailing the history of Fitzroy.

A guide to some of these sources—*Fitzroy: a descriptive bibliography*—was published in 1989 and is invaluable to anyone researching Fitzroy's history. Arranged thematically, it lists the journals, newspapers, books, reports, and unpublished and archival material that are available through the library's history collection.

If you weren't among the many residents who attended the opening, plan a visit soon. The library is a wonderful blend of the old and the new, as it has retained the beautiful features of its Town Hall home while at the same time providing a high quality, state-of-the-art library service.

Our planned evening with librarian Lina Favrin and the local history collection is being rescheduled. Stay tuned!

### Membership subscriptions

Thank you to all those people who have paid their yearly subscription so promptly. And thanks to those people who jotted down some suggestions for next year's activities. We'll certainly try and include them. They included:

- history of Fitzroy's pubs
- Fitzroy's schools
- the seamy side—the haunts of Red Maloney, Squizzy et al

Keep the suggestions and the subscriptions coming...

### Reminder

Subscriptions for the Fitzroy History Society are from January to December.

The annual \$5 subscription includes the cost of the regular newsletter, and reduced admission to the Society's activities. Please send your subscription to PO Box 180 Fitzroy 3065.

### Fitzroy Public Library 1877-1997

The publication of the history of Fitzroy's local library is a welcome addition to books on Fitzroy's heritage.

Local historian Carole Woods has traced the development of the library service from its beginnings as one of the earliest free public libraries in Australia. Along the way she describes the suburb's development and its changing fortunes, and the people who have been a part of the library over the years.

The book retails for \$15 (add \$2.50 packaging and postage). Cheques payable to Fitzroy History Society c/- 2 Fairmont Ave, Camberwell 3124.

The book is also available from all Yarra-Melbourne Regional Libraries for \$12.00.

Please call 9889 2508 if you have any queries.

### The Great Search

The Department of Veteran's Affairs is making an eight-part TV documentary series, *Australians at War*, as part of the government's plans to mark the Centenary of Federation. The first screening will coincide with Anzac Day 2001. The series will cover the major conflicts in which Australia has participated and explore how these experiences have helped shape the nation.

To research the series, a nation-wide search for wartime memorabilia is being run. The search aims to unearth new material such as photos, paintings, diaries, letters, films, documents, medals, chocolate tins etc for possible use in the documentary.

No-one is being asked to give up their memorabilia, just to make its existence known and have it available to be photographed or copied.

The Society has copies of the 'Memorabilia Information Form' if you think you have anything of interest.

Phone the national inquiry line 133 254 or visit the website for more information:

[australiansatwar.gov.au](http://australiansatwar.gov.au)

### Father Leo Griffin writes...

I grew up at 48 Clausen Street, North Fitzroy and went to St Joseph's College, run by the Marist Brothers at Holden Street, North Fitzroy.

I recently read the Society's book '*Fitzroy: Melbourne's First Suburb*' and I was disappointed to find that North Fitzroy received scant attention. My secondary school seems not to have got a mention and I noticed nothing about the large quarry that extended on both sides of Nicholson Street between Barkly and Miller Streets.

I would like to know the story of that quarry. The first parish priest bought the western part of the quarry through which Nicholson Street now runs.

Editor: Father Griffin's letter has been edited. If anyone has information about the quarry you can write to the Society or contact Father Griffin at 256 Queens Parade, Clifton Hill 3068.

### A touch of the blarney...

The Australian Irish Network has told us about a new magazine just published. It's called Tain (pronounced 'toy-n') which means 'a gathering' and focuses on Australian Irish heritage and its relevance to today. If anyone would like to contribute or be a volunteer worker please call Marie Feeley on 9579 2611.

At the 1901 census there were 1622 Irish-born people living in Fitzroy. In the book '*Fitzroy: Melbourne's First Suburb*', Chris McConville tells the story of Terence Macsweeney. Macsweeney, who died on a hunger strike in Ireland, was the son of an Irishman who migrated to Fitzroy. During World War I John Wren led a pilgrimage to his grave in the Melbourne General Cemetery. To this day (1989) the Celtic cross above this Fitzroy grocer's grave bears a nationalistic inscription (in Irish) and Irish immigrants adorn the grave with green, white and orange ribbons. Ed. Does this still happen?

### Executive Committee —1998-1999

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

# The Brunswick Street Oval



Fitzroy cricketing brothers Neil and Ray Harvey. Ray, and another brother Merv, also played for Australia. Ray will be one of our guest speakers.

In 1967 the Fitzroy Football Club left the Brunswick Street Oval and with it went more than 80 years of Saturdays. Over winter, each Saturday, young men and women hurried from work to meet up with their mates in the outer, married men grabbed a bite of lunch and rounded up the kids with 'Hurry up or we'll miss the bounce', and women packed up the thermos and the sandwiches, found the rug and made for the grandstand.

Walking, catching the cable tram—which ran alongside the oval from 1886—or, as the twentieth century unfolded, going by car, thousands converged on the ground.

From 1946 to 1966, over the last two decades of Victorian Football League games at Brunswick Street Oval, well over three million people passed through the gates for the home matches. With an average Saturday home crowd of 16,600, the Brunswick Street Oval was the most heavily used few hectares in the municipality. (From *Fitzroy: Melbourne's First Suburb*, p214, June Senyard)

**Meet at the Grandstand, Brunswick Street Oval at 7.30 pm,  
Wednesday 29 March 2000.**

Dr June Senyard will bring the oval's history to life. Joining June will be Fitzroy sportspeople who will share their first-hand memories of the hallowed ground.

**\$2 members**

**\$3 non-members**