



NEWSLETTER

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FIRST NATIONS VOICE TO PARLIAMENT

While much of the history we explore and share at The Fitzroy History Society traces the ancestors and stories of our colonial past we also have strong interest, deep respect, and are committed to also sharing the stories of our First Nations people. The FHS acknowledges and supports the vision outlined in the Uluru Statement from the Heart and the invitation it makes to Australians to build a better future for First Nations people. If Australians vote yes, then an advisory body of Indigenous Australians, known as a Voice to parliament, would be established. This body will provide advice to the federal government and parliament on policies and decisions affecting First Nations people. We welcome this step in Australia's history.

In this edition, we share our intention to produce a second book in our series on Fitzroy People. We know that there are many First Nations stories to be told. If you identify as First Nations and would like to share a story, please get in touch.



Adnate painting on the rear of 423 Napier Street, Fitzroy

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Fitzroy History Society acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and true sovereigns of the land now known as Yarra. We also acknowledge the significant contributions made by other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to life in Yarra. We pay our respects to Elders from all nations - and to their Elders past, present and emerging.

ANNIE O'NEILL'S FAMILY 106 NAPIER STREET, FITZROY

WRITTEN BY ALAN MCGUINNESS AND RACHEL AXTON

Annie was the daughter of James Rooney, a bootmaker in Galway, Ireland. She was born in 1862 and when she was 12 her family emigrated to New Zealand (1874). Here Annie met and fell in love with Bernard O'Neill (known as Barney) and they married in Hokitika, NZ when she was just 17 years old.

Barney had been born in 1844 in Cambelltown, NSW. His family had travelled to Beechworth during the 1850s to look for gold. After gold had petered out in this district, Barney and his brother, Patrick had travelled to the New Zealand mining fields of Hokitika and Kanieri in 1875.



Annie and Bernard O'Neill in 1909 - Photo courtesy of Alan McGuinness

Together Barney and Annie had a family of 10 children. Five were born in New Zealand and 5 in Australia. Ellen Josephine (Doll) 1880-1946, William Joseph 1882-1954, Margaret Ann (Madge) 1883-1950, Harriett Frances 1885-1968, James Lyttleton 1887-1966, John Henry (Jack) 1889-1967, Myra Agnes 1891-1919, Gladys Mary 1893-1975, George 1894-1975 and Beatrice Lyttleton Maude 1896-1988.

The family moved back to Australia in 1889 and resided in Stanley (near Beechworth). Barney's main occupation when back in Australia was as a stage coach driver, teamster and roadsman.

In 1912, the family decided to move to Fitzroy and the town of Stanley gathered to toast them off. "All testified to the sterling worth of Mr. O'Neill as a man and a citizen, one who was ever ready to do all he could to assist any charitable work, whether for the individual or the community. The concensus of opinion was that Stanley could ill afford to lose such kind, obliging people as Mr. and Mrs. O'Neill" (Ovens and Murray Advertiser (Beechworth), Saturday 27 April 1912.

SUBSCRIPTIONS NOW DUE

Subscriptions are due on 1 August 2023 for the new financial year.

Ongoing membership enables the Committee to continue to viably represent Fitzroy's history. We really appreciate all fees and donations. Individual adults \$20 each and family memberships are available. Fees can be conveniently paid in a variety of ways. Visit our Memberships page - <https://fitzroyhistorysociety.org.au/join-us/membership/>



106 Napier Street, Fitzroy, State Library c. 1970-1974

The family first settled into 32 Palmer Street and then later moved to Hanover Street. In 1919 while at Hanover Street, Barney contracted pneumonic influenza during the world-wide epidemic and died within 2 weeks. At this time Annie was engaged in home duties. Four of their children, George, Beatrice, Lyttleton and Ellen were still living at home.

By 1924 the family had moved again to 146 Brunswick Street and then finally around 1934 settled into 106 Napier Street (shown above).

Annie lived here until she passed away aged 78 in 1940. For some time Beatrice and her husband Bruno Ciancio also lived here. Bruno was Italian and became Australian in 1937. Unfortunately Bruno was tragically killed in 1956 in a tram accident on Victoria Parade.

Doll took over the house until she passed away in 1946. George and Beatrice remained living here until 1975. The house was sold in 1977.



Annie (seated) and three of her daughters: Madge, Gladys, and Doll standing. Photo courtesy of Alan McGuinness

FITZROY PEOPLE #2 - GET INVOLVED!

Following the successful research and publication of 'Fitzroy People' a number of others have approached The Society with other stories. If you are interested in being involved in researching a story or you have a story about people of Fitzroy you are most welcome to join in. We work as a team collaboratively in a supportive way to make the most of every story. Please contact FHS via email if you have a story or an idea to research a story. We would be delighted to hear from you.

Also we have just **three copies** of Fitzroy People left - please email if you are interested in purchasing a copy.

WRITTEN BY MEG LEE

TOM PETSINIS TALK

37 people attended the Tom Petsinis talk at Bargoonga Nganjin, North Fitzroy library in June. Tom started his talk outlining the background of his formative years in Fitzroy. His book "Fitzroy Raw" could be loosely described as autobiographical. In both this book and his other book "Fog" there are many references to Fitzroy and North Fitzroy. Tom started by reading a few passages from "Fog" and "Fitzroy Raw" and on his memories as an adolescent. He had a rich history as both a migrant and young male. Tom then recited a few poems from his poetry collection "Four Quarters". Tom like many young males was obsessed by AFL. After Tom had entertained us for one hour he was happy to answer a number of questions for the next half hour.



Tom's two books

Tom was very generous in sharing his experiences and memories.

WRITTEN BY SIMON ARMSTRONG



Lina Faurin, Tom Petsinis, and Simon Armstrong



Tom presenting at Bargoonga Nganjin, Fitzroy Library.
Photos courtesy of Simon Armstrong

APPERLEY STREET, NORTH FITZROY

RESEARCHED BY ALLAN WILLINGHAM
AND WRITTEN BY RACHEL AXTON

Some may jump in to correct me, it should be Apperley Street, not Apperly, but thanks to the fantastic research of Allan Willingham, I can confirm the spelling should be Apperly.

Allan has conducted much research on North Fitzroy and when a request came through from a member asking about the street, he recalled a very detailed history that he had previously conducted. This article is a summary of his notes and the history of the name Apperly.

John Apperly was born on 7 February 1823 in Rodborough, Gloucestershire. He married Mary Ann Dorcas Berman on 3 June 1848 in Widcombe, Somerset. John worked as a solicitor's managing clerk prior to emigrating to Victoria around 1854. Here he held several positions with the Kyneton Shire Council in the 1850s and 1860s, such as Town Clerk and Secretary.

In 1871 he retired from Council and sold up in Kyneton and moved with Mary to Albert Park (aka Emerald Hill). At this time he also purchased land in North Fitzroy as shown in the map below.

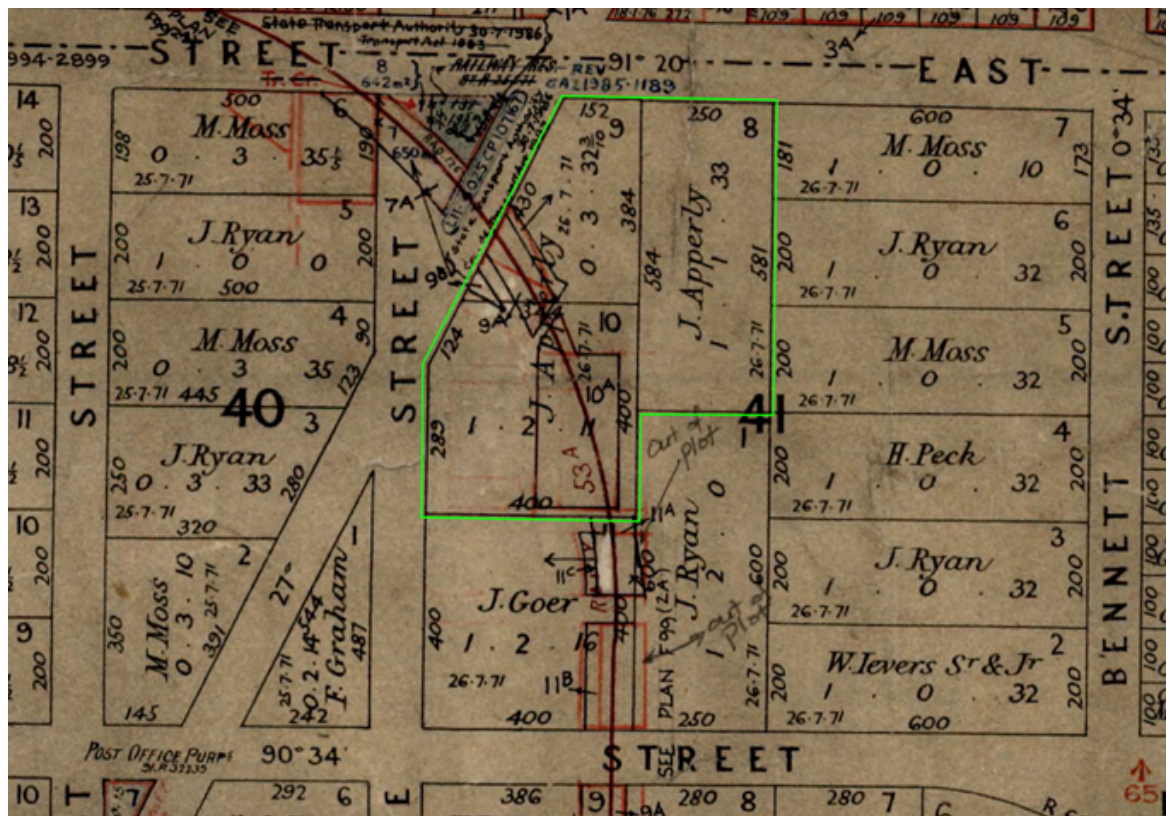
In 1886 the Council agreed to formally construct the private streets: Apperly Street, Tait Street, Eastham Street and Ivan Street with the costs to be paid by the several owners with property abutting thereon (Fitzroy City Press, 12 Jun 1886, p.3).

Apperly street commences off Park Street and runs roughly down the subdivision line (centre of the green box below).

Unfortunately, Apperly didn't see his street named as he had returned to Stroud in 1878 where he remained until his death in June 1891. However his family has, but where the extra 'e' came from is a mystery!



Street sign with incorrect spelling



Crown Grant Plan showing Crown allotments 8, 9 and 10 being owned by John Apperly

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH

CELEBRATES ITS ARCHITECTURE AND CONSECRATION MILESTONE

On Tuesday 3 October and Sunday 8 October 2023 the church of St. John the Baptist, Clifton Hill celebrates its consecration centenary. It was the second Catholic church in the Archdiocese of Melbourne to be consecrated.

The Consecration took place on 3 October 1923 with Archbishop Daniel Mannix, Melbourne's feisty and sometimes politically controversial archbishop officiating at the elaborate overnight and daytime ceremonies. On Sunday 7 October the parish came together for a celebratory Mass with Mannix and former parish priest, John McCarthy and then Bishop of Sandhurst (Bendigo) officiating. It was followed by a parish celebration and a students' picnic on the Monday.

The church is an architectural and artistic gem. It took 31 years (1876-1907) to complete, and was heavily influenced through its architect John Bunn Denny by the ideas of Augustus Pugin, the leader of the Catholic Revival Movement in England and architect of the now named Elizabeth Tower, home of Big Ben. It is equally remarkable that such a grand church should be built in the then poor Irish Catholic suburb of Clifton Hill, aided by parishioner and Catholic printer and stationer, Thomas Edmund Verga who contributed about half of the cost of the building and its interiors. This included its front and rear stained-glass windows, manufactured by John Hardman and Company of Birmingham. Other stained-glass windows on the side walls followed from parishioners in 1928-29. The church also contains the second largest interwar Fincham organ in Victoria.

On 3 October the consecration will be commemorated by students from St. John's



Google Image - St John the Baptist Church

Primary School and parishioners with a Mass and special activities planned for the day. The results of student research projects will be displayed in the school and later in the church (24 September-22 October) together with a photographic exhibition of the church's and parish's history.

Sunday 8 October will be witness to the celebratory concelebrated Mass by the archbishops of Melbourne and Perth, together with the Salesian Provincial and current parish priest. Civic, historic and religious representatives have been invited to this Mass. It will be followed by the launch of *St. John the Baptist: a church and its community*, written by award-winning author and historian, Dr. John Andrews and published by Coventry Press. Proceeds will be given to an art restoration fund for paintings in the church. A parish celebration will be held afterwards.

For further information, contact the chair of the Consecration Centenary Committee, John Andrews on 0439 614 461 or the parish priest, Father Anthony Nguyen on 0424 376 193.