



# NEWSLETTER

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[www.fitzroyhistorysociety.org.au](http://www.fitzroyhistorysociety.org.au)

AUGUST 2021, ISSUE 2



*Photo: Dale Budd*

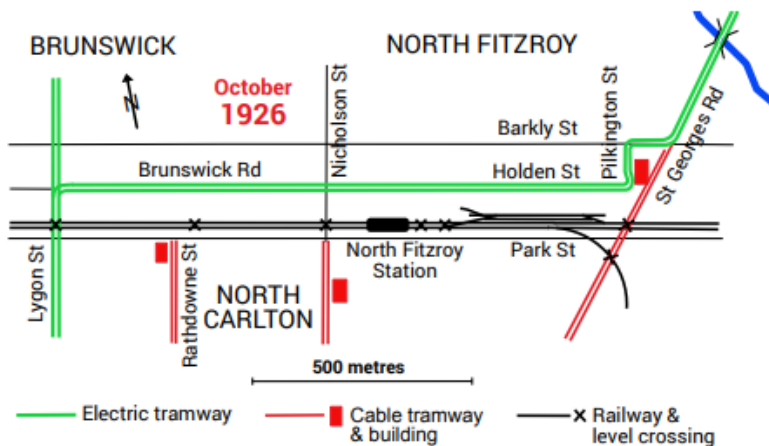
## HOLDEN STREET'S LOST TRAMWAY

Our cover story is a summary of the fantastic article in the **Bellcord Newsletter #50** produced by the **Melbourne Tram Museum**. This photo is of a W2 class 535 as it rounds the curve into Pilkington Street from Holden Street, North Fitzroy on a tram enthusiast charter trip (20 July 1969). The incorrect destination and route number were a request of participants. Note the distinctive track curve to negotiate the narrow street. Between 1926 and 1939, a second track lay between this and the brick wall of the tramway substation. The disused overhead trolley wire can still be seen. Note also the sign on the pole at the right of the photograph which reads 'Warning: Beware of buses crossing'. This dates from 1939.

Until 1976 a seldom-used single tram track ran along parts of Holden Street, North Fitzroy and Brunswick Road, Brunswick. It did not appear on most transport maps and there were no tram stops where passengers could board. More puzzling than this, the line ran along one side of the roadway which meant that trams in one direction travelled toward the oncoming motor vehicle traffic.

The story of the Holden Street/Brunswick Road line begins in the first years of Melbourne's electric trams with the formation of the Fitzroy, Northcote and Preston Tramways Trust (FNPTT) in August 1915. Councillors and residents proposed an electric tramway that would link their municipalities. But no direct access to the city would be possible as the cable tram network monopolised most of the thoroughfares.

Unfortunately the FNPTT's financial viability was at best marginal. Low population densities and construction challenges were major factors and just a month after FNPTT's formation the neighbouring Melbourne, Brunswick and Coburg Tramways Trust suggested that the two adjacent systems be built and operated under one central management. A schedule of potential cost savings was prepared and the proposed connecting track was to be built using Barkly Street. Discussions continued into 1916 when the proposal was shelved.



*The completed tram line with full duplication of lines. For the previous 19 months Pilkington Street and sections of Holden Street were single track.*



*W5 class 800 in Holden Street being transferred to Preston Workshops for repair, following collision damage to its dash panel (15 Jan 1976). This may have been the last tram to traverse the Holden Street line.*

Construction of the stand-alone FNPTT lines eventually began in 1918, but history overtook the Trust before it commenced operations when in 1920 the newly established Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board assumed control.

The next 3-4 years saw further consolidation of the tramways and debate on the route. In September 1922 the Holden Street/Brunswick Road line was approved at a projected cost of £19,500 and construction began in 1923 and was completed in March 1925. Full duplication of the track was completed in October 1926.

By 1930, the use of the tram diminished and the trams were replaced with buses in 1939.

Trams returned to the lines in the 40's, but the line was never really supported and was eventually removed in 1976.

This article was produced courtesy of the Melbourne Tram Museum. For the full article (Edition 50) and many other about our trams, visit:

[trammuseum.org.au](http://trammuseum.org.au)



## WALKING TOURS - PODCAST SERIES

SPONSORED BY EWING TRUST

The latest walk in our podcast series has been recorded and will be released online soon. This time we will take in the sights and stories of the buildings associated with MacRobertson's Chocolate Factory. While you wait, you can download the latest walks from:

<https://library.yarracity.vic.gov.au/browse-and-borrow/yarra-libraries-podcast>

### FHS COMMITTEE 2021

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## FITZROY HISTORY SOCIETY EVENT RESCHEDULED LA TROBE AND EARLY FITZROY

Charles Joseph La Trobe arrived in Melbourne as Superintendent of the Port Phillip District in 1839 and left as Governor of Victoria in 1854. In this time Melbourne flourished and Fitzroy grew into Melbourne's first suburb.

Tim Gatehouse, Peter Yewers and Mike Moore will speak on La Trobe the person and his relations with the Melbourne City Council of which Fitzroy became a ward in 1851.

La Trobe laid the foundation stone for our venue St Peters Eastern Hill in 1846 and with his wife were regular worshippers at the Church. The present vicar, Dr Hugh Kempster, will offer a tour of the church focussing on the links with the couple.



**Date:** *Sunday 19 September 2021 at 2pm (COVID Restrictions Permitting)*

**Venue:** *St Peters Eastern Hill Church Hall, 15 Gisborne Street East Melbourne (Near the corner of Albert Street). Booking now by donating \$10.00 per head through:*

[www.eventbrite.com.au/e/charles-joseph-latrobe-and-early-fitzroy-tickets-166004069641](http://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/charles-joseph-latrobe-and-early-fitzroy-tickets-166004069641)

## VALE

MARGARET PULLEN

Death Notice in The Age July 23, 2021

Margaret was a committed community member and a great contributor to the Fitzroy History Society's Oral History Project. Her interview with her husband Barry can be viewed on our website.

## MRS PORTLOCK 248 BRUNSWICK ST & 44-48 GREEVES ST, FITZROY



The Beswicke Building of eight 3 storey shops was built in Brunswick St by 1889. One of the early occupants, over 10 years from 1898, was Mrs Susan Mary Portlock who employed 19 females making mantles, now known as overcoats and capes.

She and her family had come from London in the 1880s. Following the death of her husband Edward, she had a business at Geelong over 1889-96 making capes, cloaks and mantles.

In 1908, she registered her mantle-making factory at 44 Greeves St, employing 60 females. She lived next door at 48 Greeves St.

Her daughter Edith Mabel married Percy Albert Cooper in Jan 1909, followed by an 'at home' reception at "Brixton" in Greeves St, the house probably named after Mrs Portlock's early London suburban life. Mrs Portlock lived in Greeves Street until 1917, before moving. Mrs Portlock died in 1936, aged 93.

Percy and Edith Cooper lived in Greeves St until 1924 with their 3 daughters.

WRITTEN BY MIKE MOORE



*Mrs Portlock lived in number 48, the two story building on the left. The building on the right was where her mantle-making factory was. This is an artist impression of the recently completed apartments now on the site.*

# ROBERT SAUNDERS WEBB (1811-1855)

## ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIAL

Robert Webb was born in England on 25 November 1811 and journeyed to Sydney, NSW in 1827 as a 16 year old. He obtained a post as a Controller Clerk in the Customs Department, Sydney in 1829. He married Ann Fisher in 1834 and purchased land west of Sydney.

In September 1836 he was appointed Principal Customs Officer and the Sub Treasurer for the Port Phillip District. He came by ship to the Port Phillip district with wife Ann, one child and two female servants and initially lived in a 'shabby, comfortless, weather-boarded cabin' belonging to John Fawcner behind where Customs House now stands and on the alignment of Flinders Lane. The population of the town at that time was about 1,500.

In early 1837 he agreed to act as the district's first Postmaster, a task carried out from his residence. In 1838 he purchased three blocks of land north and west of the Flinders St/ Queen St intersection.

## THE FITZROY CONNECTION

Webb purchased Crown Portion 70 of about 28 acres (11 hectares) from Thomas Walker of Sydney in 1839. This Lot extends from south of Hanover Street to north of Moor Street and from Nicholson Street to Young Street. He sub-divided it into 160 blocks which were sold over a period of years. A large area at the western side of Lot 70 was not sub-divided and was known at the time as "Webb's Paddock". He retained a large block at the south-west corner on Nicholson Street on the south side of Hanover Street where he built a house for his family. At a later date his house was replaced by 'Uxbridge' by the Architect William Bates. This house was later demolished and units built and given the name 'Cairo'.

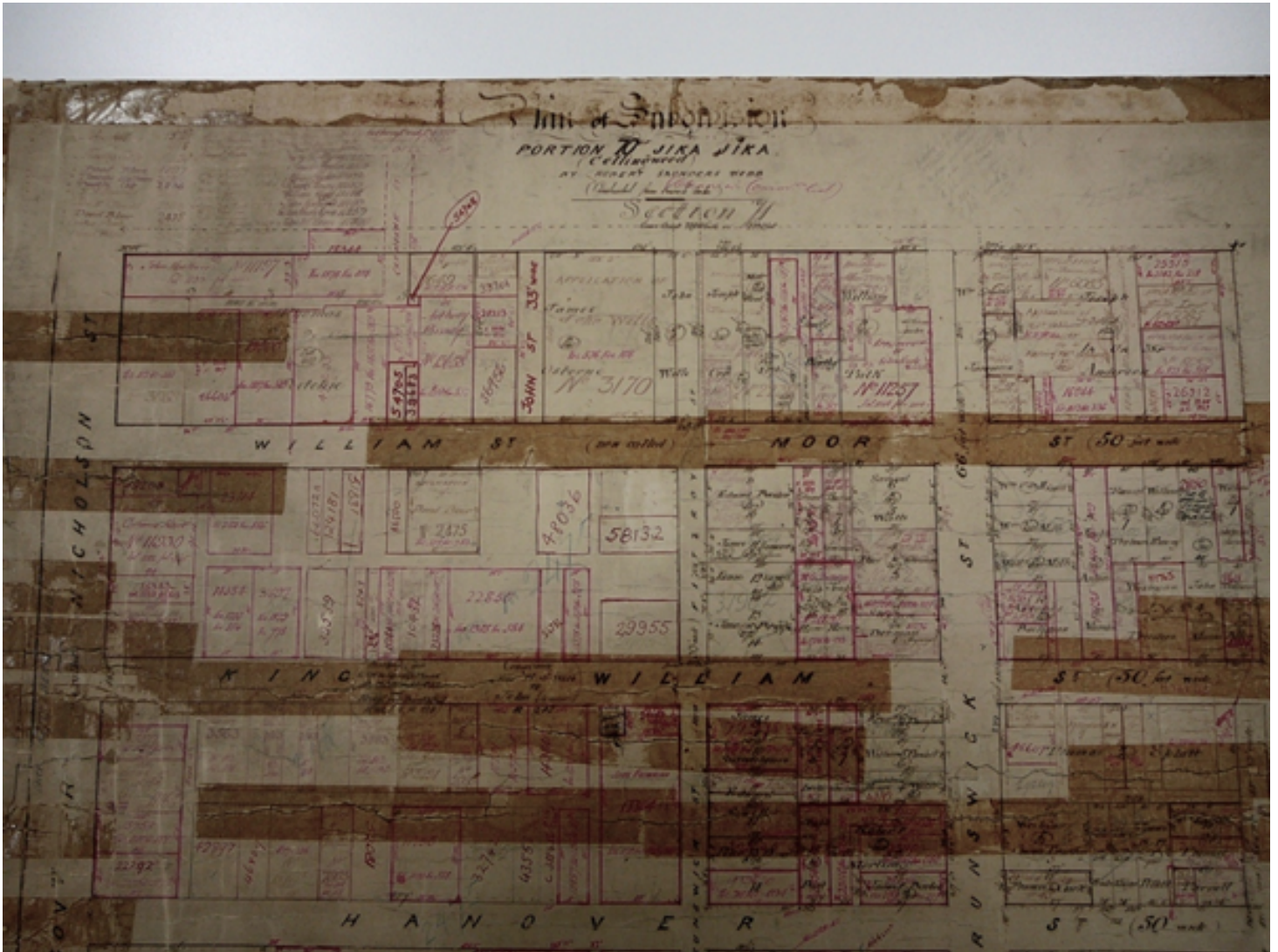


*Robert Saunders Webb - potentially this is one of the sketches produced by Ann Webb*

Webb quickly became a central figure in early Melbourne society and served on several committees. Webb's Sub Treasurers responsibilities included the payment of all salaries to public officers for Port Phillip, the granting of pasture licenses, granting of auctioneers and publicans licenses and receiving and accounting for all revenue derivable from any source. An extended period of correspondence in 1839 between himself and the Treasurer in Sydney resulted in his refusal to sign a bond or security for the handling of the Sub Treasurers responsibilities, and his Sub Treasurer role was taken out of his hands in December 1839.

Webb served as the Collector of Customs with a small staff meeting all ships as they arrived at both the Yarra River and at Williamstown until January 1845 when he was investigated over the possible use of public monies in making land purchases, and after some months of a serious serious illness and taking leave including a recuperative journey by sea to Sydney, "he was





*This plan of Lot 70 Jika Jika is held in the Land Titles Office. It is not dated as it was continuously modified as properties were sold. Examination of some ownerships suggests that the latest revision occurred in about 1852.*

removed from office as a consequence of some mismanagement of accounts which reflected more on his mode of book-keeping than his integrity.” (Edmund Finn ‘Chronicles of early Melbourne’).

Webb’s daughter Annie is thought to be the first white girl born in Melbourne in December 1836. The 1841 Census for the District of Port Phillip list 10 persons living in the Webb stone and brick house; 4 children under 14, 1 under 21, and 5 adults. Domestic servants numbered 4. Melbourne City Council Land Valuation records show that in 1847 he was living in a 6-room house with kitchen, stables, outhouses and garden with a land value of £70.

By 1947 while Webb retained ownership of the

house, it was rented to a Mr Stewart, and had a value of £60. R S Webb is recorded on the Electoral List in Gipps Ward from 9 September 1845 until 13 April 1847.

Robert Webb died at his London address on 19 July 1855. One son, Thomas Prout Webb studied Law in England and returned to Melbourne becoming an eminent Victorian lawyer. Robert Webb’s wife and son were sketchers and water colourists. Ann Webb (wife) returned to Australia some years after Roberts death but died at sea on board ‘True Briton’ en route London to Melbourne in September 1862 age 47. A descendant retains one of her sketch books.

WRITTEN BY PETER WOODS

# CITIZEN HISTORIANS PROJECT

## 149 GEORGE ST, FITZROY

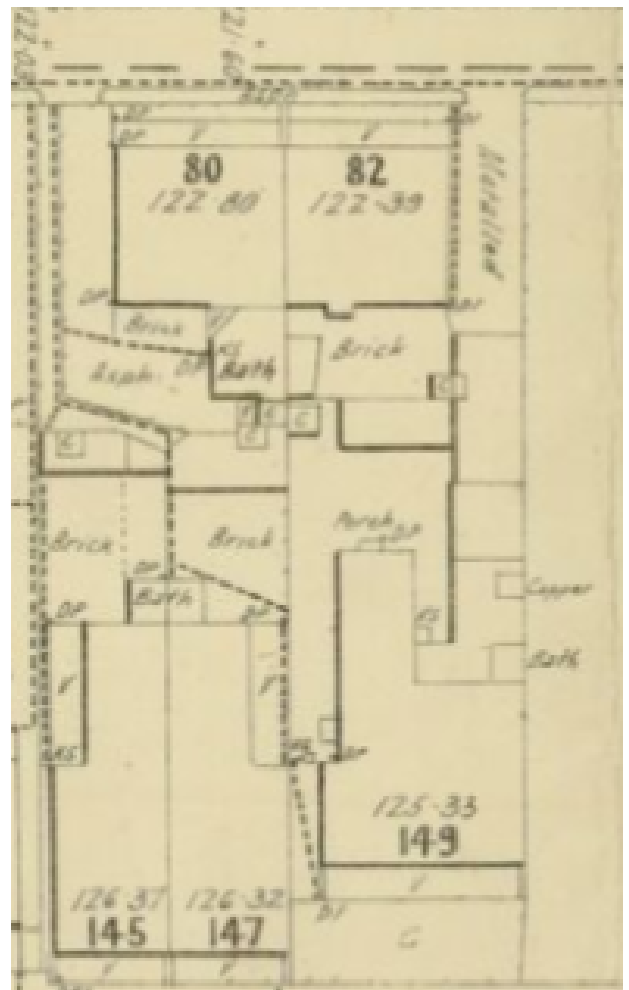


"To Cab Proprietors, Dairymen, and Others" proclaimed the papers on 27 November 1862 as the land at 149 George Street, Fitzroy (then 93 George Street), was advertised to go under the hammer a week following.

The land was described as "An allotment of land, having 33ft. frontage to George-street, by depth through to Little George-

Street. The buildings consist of a four-room weather board cottage, large sheds and stabling.. This property is well adapted for a car proprietor or dairyman."

The purchaser was likely Thomas Brocklebank of Sandhurst / Bendigo, later of the Sewers and Water Department, who bought the land. Mr Brocklebank was originally an auctioneer in Market-square, Bendigo. It is likely that it was he, who commissioned the building of the brick houses on both George Street and Little George street as they were described after his death (age 68) in 1873 as a house in George St, built of brick, containing 5 rooms, let for one pound a week and a house in Little George Street, brick, 3 rooms, let for eight shillings a week. They had a combined value of 600 pounds. This was only a small part of Brocklebank's wealth, as his probate (determined in June 1874) was valued at 2,000 pounds.



Thomas died on passage from Melbourne to London on the Thomas Stephens, it is reported that his health was failing and he died in June 1873 about 5 weeks into the journey. While Brocklebank was clearly successful, he was also well loved by those in Bendigo who celebrated his life following his passing in the papers. The link to Bendigo, still very strong as his daughter was married to Dugald Macdougall, the Mayor of the City of Sandhurst, Bendigo for the period 1871-1873.



There is no record that Thomas and Mary lived in the dwellings, and given his past career as an auctioneer, it may be that he purchased this land simply for the purpose of building the two dwellings to provide rental income. One of these tenants being William Phillips, a builder, who is resident in the cottage in 1868 until approximately 1875.

Mary and her son Thomas Mills Brocklebank remain the owners of the property until at least 1879 / 1880 (when Mary passed away in Koroit).

Edward Way, a journalist, and his wife Sarah were the next residents, living there from 1878. Edward was the son of Thomas Way, an Inspector of the detective police in Portsmouth.

Edward sadly passed away in 1879, and Sarah stayed living there until her death in 1885.

In 1885, the resident was Ebenezer Choate, who was born in Colchester, England in 1848. Ebenezer, a pastry cook married Elizabeth Cameron in Melbourne in 1882. Ebenezer ran a restaurant and coffee stall at 371 Elizabeth Street Melbourne.

In 1940 to 1955 the property was identified as apartments, and Nicolo Natalizio was the owner and primary occupant over 1950 to 1970. The house was known as a 'slum' property, but it survived and was purchased by the catholic church in 1971.

WRITTEN BY MEG LEE & RACHEL AXTON



**M**R and Mrs Archibald McNicol, shown in the picture, pay 10/- a week for this 10ft. x 6ft. humpy, made of packing-case timber, rusted iron and sacks, behind and in the yard of 149 George Street, Fitzroy.

Mr McNicol is 80. He says he suffers from asthma and dropsy.

Other boarders live in the house in front, which is owned and occupied by Mr N. Natalizio. The front of the house is neat, well-kept, and has a small flower garden.

Mr Natalizio said today: "I don't want those people in the humpy. I want to repair it and use it as a wood and junk shed.

"They have lived in that humpy at least six years. They were there when I came, and I've tried to turn them out but failed."

Mr McNicol said: "We don't want to stay in such a place. But we have little money, and nowhere else to go."

*The Herald, 17 July 1952, page 5*

## CITIZEN HISTORIAN PROJECT

During lockdown it is possible for you to become a Citizen Historian and research the history of your home. A comprehensive Resource list is available from the FHS website to get you started.

Let us know how you go - email [fitzroyhistorysociety@yahoo.com.au](mailto:fitzroyhistorysociety@yahoo.com.au)



## EVENTS, SOCIAL & OUR COMMUNITY

### FITZROY HISTORY SOCIETY NEWS

The AGM has been postponed. We hope to set a date in September. More details to come.

The FHS has been busy with its website refresh program. We are halfway through the project, and if you want to sneak a view of what is coming, head over to:

[www.fitzroyhistorysociety.org.au](http://www.fitzroyhistorysociety.org.au)

Comments & suggestions welcome! Please send to: [webmaster@fitzroyhistorysociety.org.au](mailto:webmaster@fitzroyhistorysociety.org.au)

### MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL IS NOW DUE

Please head to the 'membership' page on our website: [www.fitzroyhistorysociety.org.au](http://www.fitzroyhistorysociety.org.au) to update your membership - we have also added new payment options such as PayPal, credit card and Apple Pay. Of course you can still join with a direct transfer.

**THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR SUPPORT.**

## MEMBERSHIP

Membership is \$20 per person, per year. If you would like to join, please complete the form found on our website:

[www.fitzroyhistorysociety.org.au](http://www.fitzroyhistorysociety.org.au)

and follow the instructions on the site.

### PRESERVING YOUR MEMORIES

The Yarra Libraries are running an online event on 15 September 2021 from 11.00am to 12.30pm.

Learn how to preserve your precious photos and memories for the long term. Bookings are required - for more information see

[www.eventbrite.com.au/e/preserving-your-memories-tickets-157568404339](http://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/preserving-your-memories-tickets-157568404339)

## INPUT TO REDEVELOPMENT IN FITZROY

### PROTECTION OF WORLD HERITAGE STATUS OF THE ROYAL EXHIBITION BUILDINGS AND CARLTON GARDENS

There are several large-scale development proposals in Fitzroy and North Fitzroy which put at risk the heritage and unique character of our suburb if they are allowed to go ahead without modification.

If Fitzroy History Society members are concerned with the loss of our history to inappropriate developments, input can be made on a case-by-case basis to the City of Yarra or VCAT to influence the proposal.

An example is the recent redevelopment application for 1-9 Gertrude Street, Fitzroy. The City of Yarra opposed this planning application, and it is now scheduled for VCAT on 31 August 2021. The Royal Exhibition Buildings and Carlton Gardens is a World Heritage Site, and this address is within the buffer zone determined by UNESCO and therefore should be protected.

In the case of this redevelopment, the World Heritage Precinct Protection Coalition (WHPPC) has been formed to raise funds to argue the case to limit height and maintain lines of site to the Exhibition Buildings. The group are requesting donations and support to assist. The fund raiser 'Chuffed' for fund donations is now available at: [chuffed.org/project/melbourneheritageprecinct](http://chuffed.org/project/melbourneheritageprecinct)

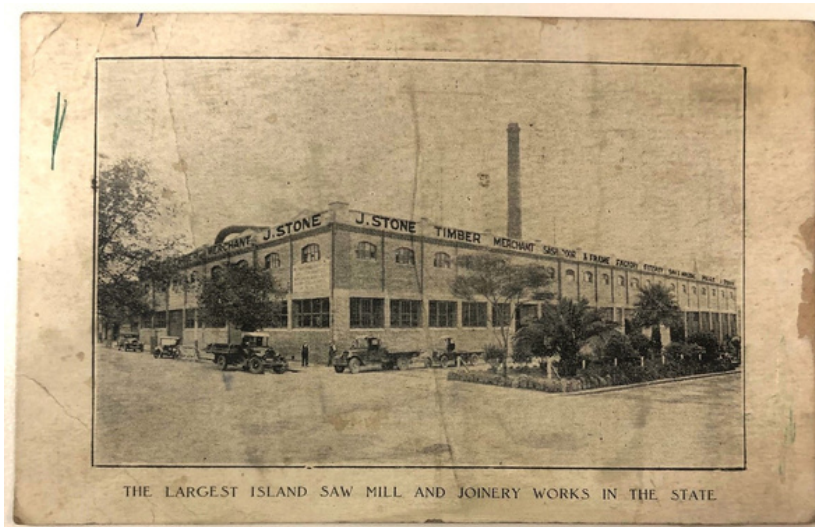
WRITTEN BY MEG LEE

## EVENTS, SOCIAL & OUR COMMUNITY

### POSTCARD FROM THE PAST

Many thanks to one of our members who sent us this fantastic postcard. The image is from the Corner of Napier St. West and Condell St in Fitzroy. A very similar image was taken by K. J. Halla in 1963 and is available at:

<http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/51782>



### THE ROTUNDA



There is a new free community newspaper for North Fitzroy!

During Covid-19, we have all depended more on our neighbourhoods. Lockdown put the emphasis back onto village life - seeking and finding everything we need in close proximity to home.

North Fitzroy has always had a great sense of community, but has never had its own newspaper to grow, record and celebrate it. Hence this initiative.

You can access the Rotunda from our Fitzroy History Society Website:

[www.fitzroyhistorysociety.org.au](http://www.fitzroyhistorysociety.org.au)



### INSTAGRAM

In addition to our website and Facebook, FHS now has an Instagram page to promote the history and cultural heritage of Fitzroy and North Fitzroy.

Download the Instagram App and follow us on **@fitzroyhistorysociety** for images of Fitzroy and North Fitzroy past and present.

You might also like to follow us on Facebook.

### COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

We are happy to share community announcements that align with the preservation of Fitzroy and its history.