



NEWSLETTER

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AUGUST 2022 -ISSUE 3

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 6.30PM - 27 SEPTEMBER 2022

GUEST SPEAKER: JO BUCKLE



Jo studied Dr Sue Kee who lived at 2 Marion Street, Fitzroy and will talk about her research. This photo of terrace houses on Marion Street is from the State Library taken in 1935 before the houses were demolished (it may not be number 2).

Date:

Tuesday, 27 September 2022 at 6.30pm.

(Duration approx.1hr)

Dinner post AGM is optional - Registration options will be issued by email

Venue:

The Rose Hotel (Upstairs)

406 Napier Street, Fitzroy

Details:

All committee positions will be available for nomination.

About Jo:

Jo has been living in Fitzroy for over 20 years and has an interest in its inhabitants, past and present. This is her first attempt at this kind of research, and she is keen to share with anyone how accessible and interesting an activity it is.



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.

VALE - GRAEME PRITCHARD



FHS member Graeme Pritchard died on 18 July 2022. He and his wife Rena have lived in Kneen Street since 1978, and they have been FHS members for over 20 years.

He was an agricultural scientist with a career that ranged from Papua New Guinea to weed control here in Victoria. He had a great love of cricket, a passion that he shared with John Senyard our convenor of the pre-2000 era.

In about 2008 Graeme joined the FHS committee. He was our treasurer from 2009 to 2013 in succession to Harold Mackrell. He then developed and maintained our FHS website over 2014-21. The FHS newsletter was edited by him, and he arranged its early production and distribution.

His funeral service was held locally at St Mark's Anglican Church on 29 July and was attended by several of his FHS colleagues.

We thank Graeme for his great contributions to FHS over many years, and we extend our condolences to Rena and his family

WRITTEN BY PETER HEADING & MIKE MOORE

PERSONALITIES OF FITZROY PROJECT AN EVENT IN OCTOBER

Over the previous three months up to 10 members of FHS have been researching past personalities of Fitzroy. We now have at least 20 fascinating stories illuminating Fitzroy's past and the various occupations and lifestyles of the times. They include a feisty female publican, an

entrepreneurial aboriginal publican, several manufacturers who have left their mark in Victoria, the Chinese presence in Fitzroy and many more. An event is planned for October where the story compendium will be published and launched. Further details later to make sure you don't miss it.

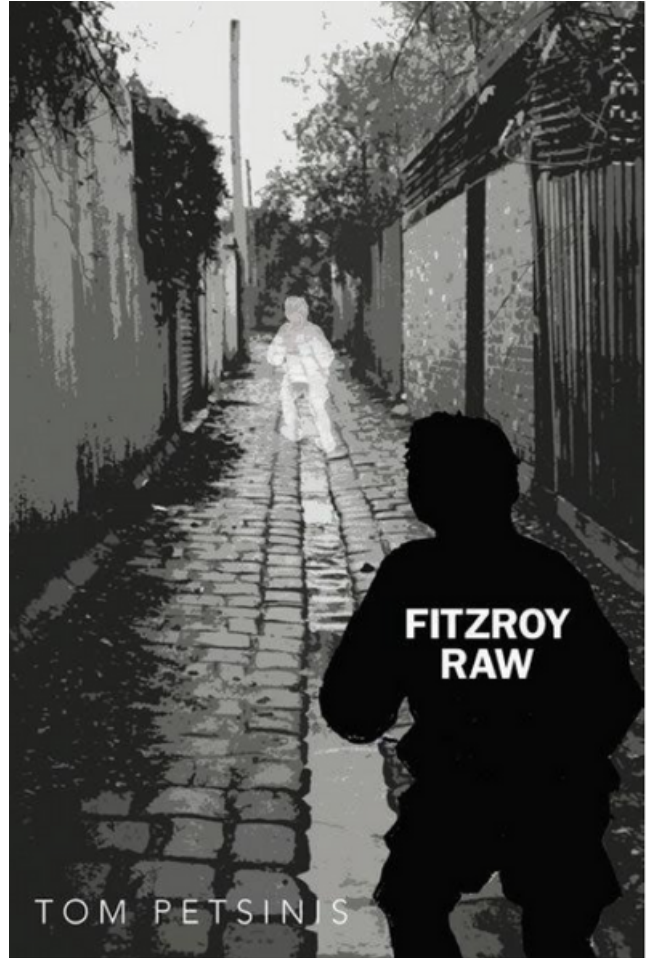
FITZROY RAW - TOM PETSINIS

Tom Petsinis, Poet, playwright, and novelist was awarded a fellowship to research a novel framed in present-day Fitzroy focusing on a childhood in the 1960s. The resultant novel is a memoir of a Macedonian child growing up in Fitzroy. There are many memorable sites, events, and locations for reflection of Fitzroy in those times. As a child of an immigrant family there are many cultural and emotional circumstances explored within the text.

... AND UPCOMING EVENT

Stay tuned... we will have an event later in 2022 or early 2023 with Tom Petsinis who will talk about his book and his memories of Fitzroy.

More details coming soon...



VALE - ARCHIE ROACH



With strong associations to Fitzroy during his childhood they are exemplified in his conversation with Sara Kanowski, Presenter. Here, as a child of the Stolen Generation he tells of the first reuniting connections with his siblings as it happened in Gertrude Street Fitzroy. You might like to hear it from his heart. Archie also tells of writing *Took the Children Away* and playing it in public for the first time, of his belated reunion with his siblings, and his love story with Ruby Hunter (R) CW: For our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander listeners, this program features the voice of someone who has died. Please take care when listening.

Listen to ABC RN Conversations

<https://www.abc.net.au/radio/programs/conversations/archie-roach-spirit-song/13991706>

CHARLES LATROBE EVENT

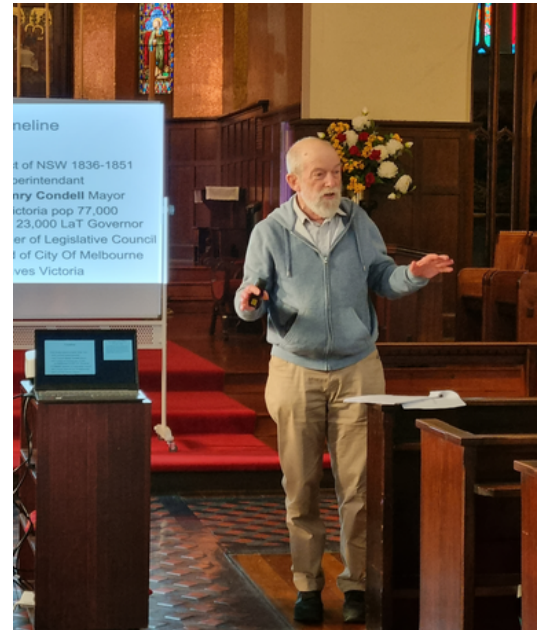
ST PETER'S CHURCH, EAST MELBOURNE

Our LaTrobe talk was the third time the FHS had tried to organise the get together in the past 18 months. A tribute to ours and others persistence over the Covid period. We were fortunate to be able to hold the event in St. Peter's church in East Melbourne which held particular significance for Governor Charles LaTrobe as he was a regular attender.

We had 52 people attend the talk. A welcome was given by the Bishop of the church, David Farrer. He gave some history of the construction of the church which was started in 1846 and added to several times over the ensuing 20 years. The workmanship varied due to the exodus of skilled tradespeople to the goldfields. A foundation stone laid by Governor LaTrobe is reported to be located on the church premises, but has never been found. Governor LaTrobe did leave a casket to the church, and there is a memorial plaque to his wife Sophia.

The talk was separated into 3 parts. Tim Gatehouse from the La Trobe society talked about LaTrobe the person. Peter Yewers talks about LaTrobe's relationship with the City council and Mike Moore talked about the relationship of LaTrobe to Fitzroy. Some significant dates and events are shown in the dot points below.

- 1836-1851 Port Phillip District of NSW
- 1839 LaTrobe superintendent
- 1851 Colony of Victoria pop 77,000
- 1851 LaTrobe Governor



*Photos of presenters at LaTrobe talk.
Photos taken by Simon Armstrong.*

- 1851 Fitzroy ward of City Of Melbourne
- 1853 LaTrobe leaves Victoria
- 1855 Self Governance
- 1858 Municipality of Fitzroy
- 1861 Victorian population 540,000
- Henry Moor member of House of Commons for Brighton 1864-1865
- 1865 bill for Colonial Governors' pensions
- Bill amended to define the District of Port Phillip as a colony
- Death of LaTrobe 4 December 1875

CITIZEN HISTORIAN PROJECT

79 GERTRUDE STREET, FITZROY

For a decade I could brag that I owned a bar. And in Gertrude Street at that! Radio was a delightful, cosy little bar where you can grab a bite, a coffee, or sip a cold beer, wine, or mixer. Inside, you will be greeted by good vibes, fat tunes and a future Melbourne cityscape on the wall to die for.

EARLY GERTRUDE

James Gall was the architect who designed 79 Gertrude Street, which was built in 1871. Gall was the architect of over forty houses and public buildings in Victoria built over 1868-90, including 16 & 88 Collins Street, a house in Lennox Street, Richmond in 1869, and the Italianate mansions: Mintaro at Monageeta (1881-82), Noorilim at Murchison (1879), Frognall (1888-89), 54 Mont Albert Road Canterbury, Illoura in St Kilda Road (1889, demolished c1965), and Parlington, and Frognall in Camberwell in c1889, both very splendid.

79 is one of the five shops at nos 75-83 Gertrude Street, and five similar shops that are at nos 55-63 Brunswick Street. The shops and other extensions to the former Rob Roy Hotel (now the Workers Club) were all built in 1871 on the generous stabling yard of the hotel. The Rob Roy was licensed in

WRITTEN BY RICHARD PETERSON,
ARCHITECT

1857, and was owned by the Castlemaine Brewery, who also owned the 10 shops, until the 1920s. The hotel had been designed by the architect Patrick Scanlan and built in 1859-60. Of the 14 hotels in Gertrude Street, 9 were built during 1853-57. By the 1950s, only six hotels remained, and now only three operate.

In 1837, the Colonial Surveyor Robert Hoddle subdivided this area, including all of Newtown (which consisted of Richmond, Collingwood and FitzRoy, sic), into square mile (1.6 x 1.6 km) allotments, then these were each further subdivided into strip allotments, some extending down to the Yarra River. Victoria and Alexander Parades, Nicholson and Smith Streets, and later Johnson Street were all reserved as government roads. Smith Street led on to Heidelberg Road (1840), the earliest road in Victoria. But before the first land sale in 1839, the land was subdivided again into 25-acre (10 hectare) and 5-acre (2 hectare) lots. Lot 49 (Napier Street to Fitzroy Street, from Victoria Parade) was the second lot sold, to Captain Benjamin Baxter and Captain George Brunswick Smythe.

SUBSCRIPTIONS NOW DUE

Subscriptions became due on 1 August 2022. If you have not already paid your membership, Please submit your fee to keep the Society alive and viable. Individual adults \$20 each, family memberships available.

Fees can be conveniently paid in a variety of ways. Visit our Memberships page - <https://fitzroyhistorysociety.org.au/join-us/membership/>



*79 Gertrude Street (left) 1970-1974 (State Library)
<http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/4211659>*

Immediately after the sales, this land was then split in two by Gertrude Street, which with Brunswick Street which was formed at the same time, was a private road and hence narrower, and so because they were privately developed, Gertrude and Brunswick Streets became the most commercial streets. They formed the two earliest retail strips outside the CBD. The villas of the wealthy were on the highest land along Victoria Parade and at the very south end of Brunswick Street.

EARLY DAYS - 79 GERTRUDE

Since 1871, 79 Gertrude Street has been a stationery shop, a newsagent, by the 1940s a fish shop, and from 8 November 1967, its proprietor was Evangelos Vosnakis, a greengrocer. By the 1970s it was listed as being 'old and poor,' and it closed in 1977, then remaining vacant. On 16 April 1985 Vosnakis sold the building to the Victorian Government's Director of Housing, and the interesting young firm Robinson & Chen Architects & Builders (the drawings are dated December 1985), altered it into stylish offices for the Aboriginal Housing Board. This had been

established in April 1981 by the Victorian Aboriginal Co-operative at 108 Smith Street, Collingwood. Following a National Aboriginal Conference meeting in Swan Hill in June 1978 a meeting had been convened in Collingwood to deal with housing issues. Two years of meetings ensued before the Aboriginal Housing Board was established in April 1981 at 79 Gertrude Street. This history is acknowledged in a plaque fixed to the building by the City of Yarra.

Robinson & Chen designed its shopfront window generally in the form of the aboriginal flag, which some remember being painted in aboriginal colours, although paint-scrapes which we made did not reveal this. Eight years later, Ian Robinson later used a similar motif in his firm's design of the first floor window of Tansy's Restaurant at 161 Spring Street in 1993, which became The Melbourne Supper Club. Most of Robinson Chen's work at 79 is now lost, but both of these windows survive.



79 Gertrude Street in 1987 after works. Photo by Terence Nott, Architect

The Aboriginal Housing Board moved into 79 Gertrude Street in 1987, following community protest about evictions from premises, there were a series of community meetings in each of the Board's seven regional centres: Mooroopna, Morwell, Dandenong, Mildura, Ballarat, Warrnambool and Gertrude Street. Aboriginal Housing Victoria⁵ is still a state-wide community organization managing the Victorian Aboriginal Rental Housing Program from Narrandjeri House at 125-127 Scotchmer Street in North Fitzroy. In August 1993, the proposed new historicist cast-iron street lights for Gertrude Street were opposed by many people as bogus history. They were funded by a \$1 million federal heritage grant. By then, some had already been installed.

In February 1995, the Aboriginal Housing Board moved to Scotchmer Street, and 79 Gertrude Street was sold to Graham Carberry as a residence and for proposed accommodation for the collection of the Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives (now the Australian Queer Archives, AQuA), for which I prepared a design, working



Google Image of 79 Gertrude Street in July 2019



Melbourne Supper Club, Photo by Richard Peterson

drawings, and called tenders for the work. Graham decided not to proceed, and so and I purchased the property on 16 May 1996 and leased it as offices to the heavy metal CD label, Roadrunner Records.

Roadrunner had been launched in 1980 in the Netherlands. Its initial business was importing North American metal-band recordings into Europe. In 1986, Roadrunner opened its US headquarters in South Bend, Indiana and later opened offices in the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Japan, Australia, Denmark and then in Canada. It handled the early Metallica releases from Scandinavia. In c1989, Roadrunner had already released of two albums that are now considered classics of their respective genres: Obituary's *Slowly We Rot* and Sepultura's *Beneath the Remains*. In 2006, the Warner Music Group purchased a majority in shares of the international Roadrunner Music Group BV. In 2008, Roadrunner was voted the Best Metal Label by Metal Hammer at their Golden Gods Awards, which won the past four years in a row. By then, Roadrunner expanded and had to relocate.

The building was then occupied by the secretive government agency, the ANEX needle exchange programme.

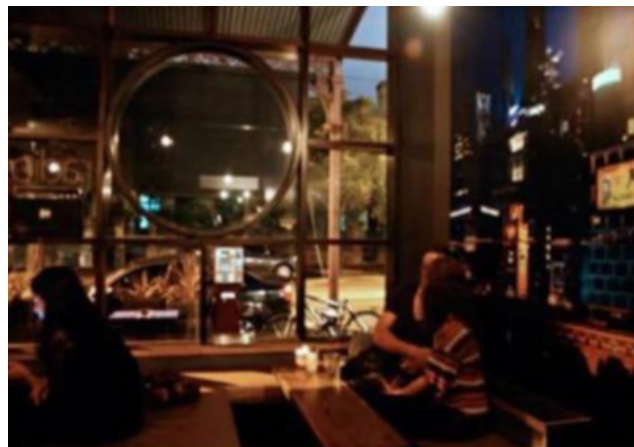
RADIO BAR - HISTORY

A former student of mine, Joseph Reyes, M Arch, designed the building's conversion from offices into a cool bar, which opened on 21 July 2006. It featured a marvellous visually enhanced skyline view of Melbourne extending along a wall. The business was operated by three former bar people from Rue Bébelons, 267 Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne's second ever laneway bar (1996-2013), now demolished.

Later alterations to Radio which extended the bar, and installed banquettes in the window were by another architect.

The very popular Network 10 comedy/drama lifestyle series *Offspring* was filmed each year at Radio from 2010-17. *Offspring* mixes conventional narrative drama with flashbacks, graphic animation and fantasy sequences, showcasing the vibrant world of Fitzroy, where Nina (Asher Keddie) and the extended Proudman family go about their unpredictable daily lives. It also starred Eddie Perfect and Deborah Mailman. Some fans would go from one *Offspring* site to the next in a road trip.

On 3 June 2016, very sadly, I sold the building, and in early June 2017, the Radio Bar relocated to larger premises at 357 Brunswick St with live bands and meals, where it still operates today. Late in 2017, 79 Gertrude Street, was entirely redecorated, its Melbourne skyline mural removed, and re-opened as Ends & Means, a cocktail bar.



Radio Bar, Photos by Richard Peterson

WRITTEN BY RICHARD PETERSON

FOLLOW US

Fitzroy History Society is on Facebook and Instagram, so for more great information about the history of Fitzroy, follow us!

Facebook: **Fitzroy History Society**

Instagram: **@fitzroyhistorysociety**

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

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