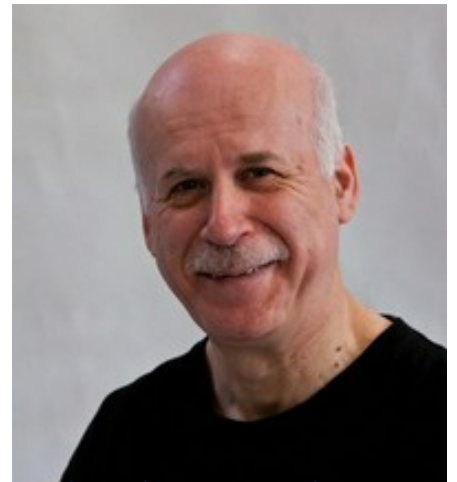# NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2023 - ISSUE 4

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting will be held:

15 November 2023
Lord Newry Hotel
Doors open at 6pm for a start at 6.30pm.

Light snacks will be provided and, if you would like to stay for dinner, please ensure that you book directly with the Lord Newry.

Our guest speaker this year is Christopher Bennett, author of 'Roy Boy' which was released in May this year.

Christopher Bennett, Author, Roy Boy

Roy Boy is the compelling story of Christopher Bennett who was born and raised in the working-class suburb of Fitzroy in the 1950s and 1960s. A cheeky and boisterous kid of migrant parents, he roamed the streets and nearby haunts for fun and adventure and found much more than he bargained for – including trouble with authorities and exile from his home and family.

Rob Deutscher Photo from Flickr 2018

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.

J GRAYSON AND SONS ENGINEERS OF FIZTROY

WRITTEN BY PETER S EVANS

John Grayson was born in Wentworth, Yorkshire, England, in 1828, the son of William Grayson (contractor) and Ruth Grayson (maiden name unknown). On Christmas day in 1849, he married Sarah Clarke at Sheffield. By 1851, the family, now enlarged by a daughter Ann, lived in Ecclesfield with John working in the skilled trade of 'spring (pocket) knife cutler', still very much a cottage industry available to those with the required skills but small capital. The couple would go on to have a large family, few of whom survived to have long lives. It included two sons, William and Arthur, who would eventually go into partnership with their father. The family arrived in Melbourne aboard the SS Great Britain in September 1865.

John Grayson immediately set up in business with a steam-powered cutlery works in Smith Street, Collingwood, (winning a medal in the inter-colonial exhibition of 1867) and, three years afterwards, moved to 225-227 Brunswick Street in Fitzroy. Perhaps freed from the old Sheffield guild rule of 'one man, one trade',

John Grayson diversified; production at Fitzroy included velocipedes and butcher's knives. By 1876, the word 'engineers' had been added to the firm's advertising.

In November 1880, Grayson & Sons exhibited a horizontal steam engine of their own make fitted with link motion and reversing gear. Despite being well finished and having a disc crank, it was much-criticised for its otherwise old fashioned design. The engine was built up from multiple parts, had the valve chest on top of the 12-inch cylinder (making the valve gear complex and prone to wear at the pins), and the cylinder was devoid of any form of lagging.

⬆ Grayson & Son's engineering works Fitzroy, with the staff standing outside the entrance. The Fitzroy Library caption says 'Johnston Street', but the numbers on front of the building indicate it to be 225-227 Brunswick Street. **Photograph by Andrew Muir, image 21126, courtesy of Fitzroy Local History Photograph Collection.**

SUBSCRIPTIONS NOW DUE

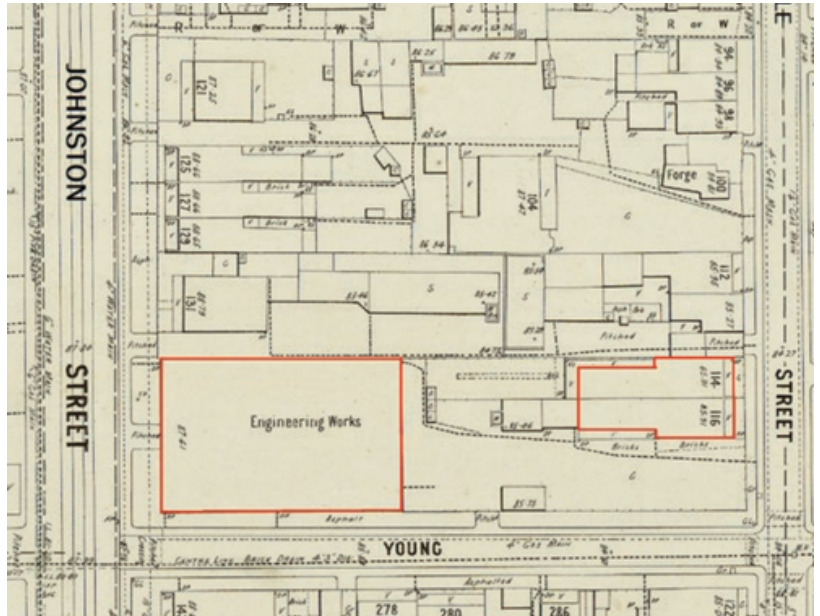*Subscriptions are due on 1 August 2023 for the new financial year.*

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/**

Grayson & Sons claimed their engines to be the 'only really automatic engines' available, there being no throttle valve, ensuring full boiler pressure was available to act on the piston, but there was a governing mechanism adjusting cut-off to ensure that the engine could not 'run-away', even if the belt to the governor came off. It would seem this mode of working was never patented. Many of the firm's engines were said to be working successfully around Melbourne. The firm also dealt in second hand steam machinery. In September 1881, John Grayson and James Clough applied for a Victorian patent for 'improvements in steam boilers for the consumption of smoke'.

In 1887, the premises were enlarged to 65ft by 100ft and rebuilt in brick, the firm employing nine hands. As the business expanded it was subsequently moved again to 137-141 Johnston Street (corner of Young Street), where the firm began to construct and install machinery for butter and other factories.

John and William Grayson built adjoining residences behind the factory. In August 1891, John Grayson, already active in a number of local sporting clubs, was elected councillor for the central ward of the city of Fitzroy and, one year later, was elevated to the position of mayor. In April 1895, he decided to visit Europe with his wife, returning in November of the same year aboard the Himalaya.

In 1896, the Grayson works built the single-cylinder 2½hp horizontal kerosene-powered engine for The Pioneer, a 'motorised double-seat dogcart' exhibited by the Australasian Horseless Carriage Syndicate at the

Map showing Grayson & Sons' final engineering works at 141 Johnston Street Fitzroy, with the works and the Grayson residences outlined in red. M&MBW map 1193, State Library of Victoria.

Melbourne Cycle Show in February 1897. The engine drove the rear wheels by chain, with two forward speeds and one reverse.

John Grayson died of cancer of the lower jaw on 15 February 1903. The business was continued by his sons William and Arthur.

Houses on Argyle Streets

This is an extract of an article produced by Peter Evans, as produced for 'The Old Machinery Magazine' published in February 2023.

REMINISING ABOUT FITZROY

Do you have stories of 'Old Fitzroy' - we have created a section for just such tales! This one is from Antoinette.

I was reading about the shops in Gertrude Street. We lived in Napier Street and my dad owned a fruit shop in Gertrude Street opposite the park from the flats. One shop in from the corner shop of little young street.

I am pretty sure that there was a hard ware store a couple of doors down from my dads.

A round the corner from Napier Street, I also remember a boot maker and Mr and Mrs Smith owned a chemist Dispensary at the end of the beautiful 3 story terraces on the corner of Napier and Gertrude street. Also an Italian family owned a milk bar deli opposite the 3 story terraces near the pedestrian lights.

THE NAPIER HOTEL

The Napier Hotel c.1904-1908

Many thanks to the owner who sent this amazing image of the Napier Hotel to the Fitzroy History Society. Miss Margaret Ryan was the the publican from 31 October 1904 to 20 July 1908. This photo showing the hotel prior to its rebuild in 1916 when Carlton and United had bought the pub from Montgomeries Brewing Company.
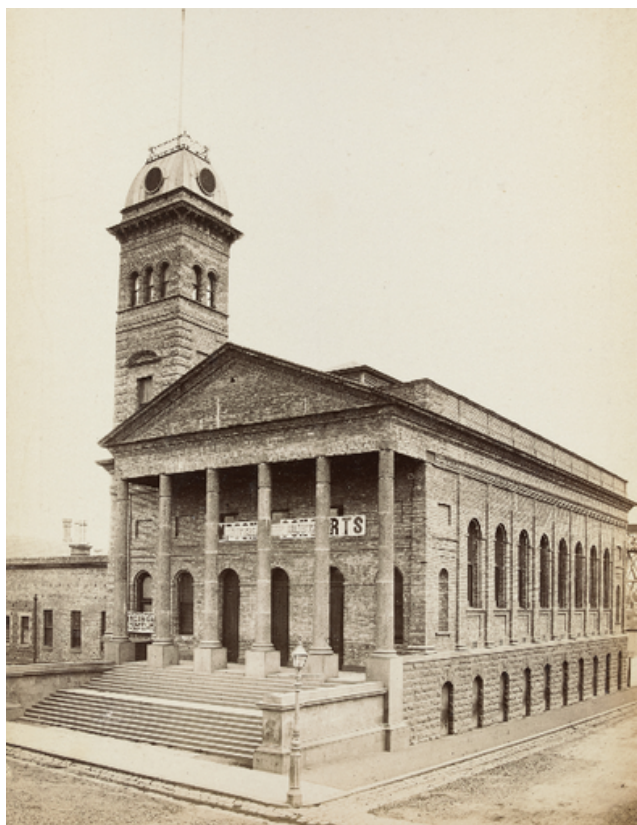
The photo appears to depicts L to R - Unidentified man and woman, Mary Ryan and her children, Mary, Bridget, Margaret, and Patrick.

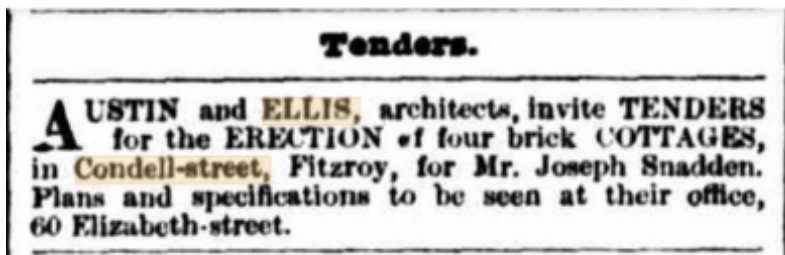# CONDELL ST & FITZROY TOWN HALL ARCHITECT - WILLIAM ELLIS

WRITTEN BY MIKE MOORE

William J Ellis, architect & surveyor, arrived at Melbourne in April 1857 and died 20 March 1883. Austin and Ellis practiced in partnership, with over 40 projects, from May 1862 until Sep 1867 when the partnership was terminated 'by effluxion of time'. In Apr 1867 they had invited tenders for the erection of four brick cottages for Joseph Snadden at what is now 32 to 38 Condell St, Fitzroy.

Advertising from The Argus, Sat 27 April 1867, p.3

Some of his significant projects were the erection of:
- (and additions to) the Carlton Brewery for Edward Latham (1868, 1870, 1873, 1877, 1878)
- a 22 room villa Lathamstowe at Queenscliff (1881)
- a Catholic presbytery at Burwood Rd, Hawthorn (1882)
- schools at Christ Church, South Yarra (1871, 1875) and
- the Fitzroy Town Hall (1874).

The Fitzroy Town Hall was erected in two stages. The first comprised the Hall wing and a tower in 1873 by Nation Co. The architect was W J Ellis. The second stage , 1887-90 resulted in the present building, including extensions to the hall and new municipal offices, library, Court House and Police Station. The original tower was demolished and a centrally located tower took its place. The contractor was J Moore, the architect G Johnson.
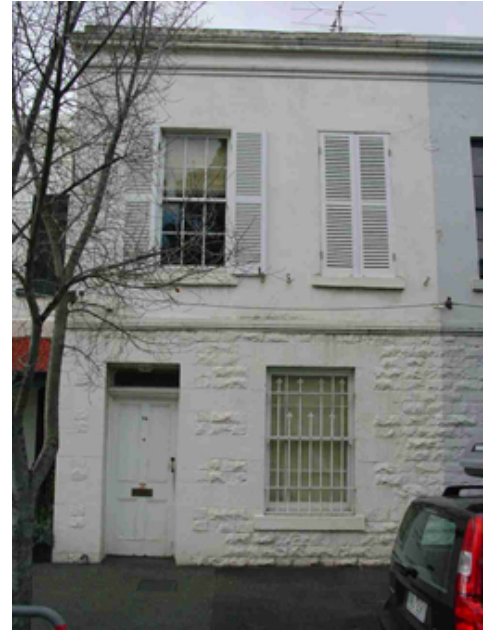

The original Fitzroy Town Hall as designed by W J Ellis - photo taken 1877 by N J Caire (held by the State Library)

From Sep 1867, until his death in 1883, Ellis practiced alone. He has hundreds of entries in the Australian Architectural Index for the erection of houses, warehouses & shops, all located in central Melbourne, in nearby suburbs and at distant locations. There are also many of his tender advertisements for alterations, additions, repairs, plastering, stabling, fencing, verandahs, office fittings, etc.

The Ellis cottages. Photo by Mike Moore

CITIZEN HISTORIANS PROJECT
54 GORE ST, FITZROY

The brick and stone houses at 52 and 54 Gore Street were first owned by Owen Kemp from about 1854 until 1865. He lived at No 54. Owen Kemp had arrived in Melbourne in Jan 1850 and was initially a spirit merchant before becoming an auctioneer in 1854. From 1865 he owned and occupied a house on the opposite side of Gore St.

MMBW plan, dated 1899

The next owner from 1865 was Felix Oliphant. He lived there until his death in 1888, and his widow lived there until her death in 1894. For 20 years (1863-82) Oliphant, who gave his occupation as 'gentleman', was on the committee of management of The Immigrants Aid Society's Home for Houseless and Destitute Persons. The committee met weekly and the Home typically housed 300 men, 150 women and 100 children. 54 Gore St would have been the boyhood home of his son Ernest Henry Clark Oliphant (1862-1936), journalist, lecturer, playwright and Shakespearean scholar.

The following owner was Henry McDonough from 1895 until beyond 1900. He was a successful grain and produce merchant in Flinders St, Melbourne, and a donor to the Catholic church. When he died in 1925, he owned properties, valued at £43,000, in Melbourne, East Melbourne and Collingwood, but he had sold the Gore Street house before then.

Later occupants there were Miss Margaret Mangan (1910), Mrs Kath Tapley (1920), Mrs Mary Ashley (1930), Mrs Alice Pascoe (1940-1967), Mrs J Mortimer (1970) and Sister Monica, Missionaries of Charity (1974).

WRITTEN BY MIKE MOORE

CAN YOU ADD TO THIS HISTORY?

If you have any further information regarding Gore Street or occupants of this house we would be pleased to hear from you with your stories or you can submit your own Citizen Historian Story - email fitzroyhistorysociety@yahoo.com.au