



NEWSLETTER

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 18 SEPTEMBER 2024 6PM - 8PM UNION CLUB HOTEL (DINING ROOM)

The Fitzroy History Society Annual General Meeting will be held on **Wednesday 18 September 2024** and will feature the Fitzroy and Gertrude Street icon, Rose Chong.

Rose Chong purchased the former Macedonian social club at the corner of Gore and Gertrude Streets in 1979.

Going strong after 45 years, Rose will share her stories of Fitzroy over the years.

Details will be issued shortly on how you can register to attend.

The Union Club Hotel is located at 164 Gore Street Fitzroy.



Rose Chong with one of her costumes, Photo by Doosie Morris (the Age, 2021)

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 BARRY PULLEN

Barry was founding member of the Fitzroy Residents Association and Fitzroy city councillor 1972–1976. He was very active in campaigning against the high rise Housing Commission of Victoria flats being built in the 1950s and 1960s.

Barry and his wife Margaret contributed to the Fitzroy History Society Oral History Project, and you can read their interview on the website. <https://fitzroyhistorysociety.org.au/oral-history-barry-and-margaret-pullen/>



Pullen joined the Labor Party in 1968 and was Minister for Housing and Construction from 1988 to 1990. Additionally, he was appointed as Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs and Minister for the Arts in 1989. In 1990, he became Minister for Education, then Minister for Education and Training in 1991, as well as Minister for Conservation and Environment in 1992. He retired from Parliament in 1999, but remained active in the local community and the Australian Labor Party.

LAURIE O'BRIEN

When the Fitzroy History Society was formed the first meeting of the newly formed committee was held at 35 Hanover Street, Fitzroy, the home of Laurie O'Brien. Laurie was to be an indefatigable champion of the Society and its charter to promote the history of the suburb over the next decades.

In particular, the 1980s proved an important decade in the development of the Society's historical program. In the mid-1980s, the City of Fitzroy employed Shirley Metcalfe to work out of the Social Planning Office to support community groups. The History Society was one of the beneficiaries and a committee consisting of Laurie, Mary Lewis, Suzanne Dance, Rosemary Kiss, Shirley Metcalfe and myself commenced to organise a photographic exhibition of Fitzroy. This exhibition – "Fitzroy: Lost and Found" – was held in April 1986 at the Fitzroy Town Hall and caused much excitement for old residents returned as well as current residents of the suburb.



Such was the interest in Fitzroy generated by the exhibition that the committee, now without Shirley, decided to expand the brief and produce a history of the suburb. This was to be Fitzroy: Melbourne's First Suburb published in 1989.

In both these undertakings, Laurie's role was immense. Her commitment to meticulous research, her attention to all the details of publishing a manuscript and, throughout, her immense goodwill to all involved in the project. She was, indeed, a true friend to Fitzroy. *(Written by: June Senyard)*

FAMILY CONNECTIONS TO FITZROY

BY ALAN BOX

My great, great grandfather Samuel Box was born at Mawnan Cornwall in 1793 and in 1824 married a widow, Alice Nicholls. Samuel's nephew, William, in 1842 married Catherine Glasson.

One of Alice's children from her first marriage, William Obediah George Nicholls, migrated to New Zealand where he married, under Māori custom, Hera Te Whakaana, a Māori Chieftainess. Alice and Samuel's daughter Charlotte married William Secomb in Cornwall and they arrived in Melbourne on the "Persian" in



Samuel Box



Edward Box



Elizabeth Box, nee James

1852. Their son William Edward Secomb was born in Collingwood in 1857, became a Methodist minister and married Sarah Harriet Sands.

In 1854 Samuel, Alice and the rest of the family followed Charlotte to Melbourne. After the usual stint in the goldfields Samuel went into business as a carrier. A newspaper advertisement for six horses, lost or stolen, was inserted by "Samuel Box of 226 George Street Fitzroy (reward 3 pounds, if strayed, or 6 pounds if stolen.)"

When the Box family first arrived in George Street it was part of Collingwood, then known as a poor area, but shortly afterwards the boundaries were altered, and George Street became part of the more prestigious Fitzroy. Samuel and his son Edward resided in adjoining houses in George Street. Edward, my great grandfather, was a carpenter and

mid-1850s Gore Street was extended cabinetmaker. Edward married Elizabeth James in 1858 in Melbourne. Their eldest son, Edward James Box, was born in 1860 at 228 George Street Collingwood, was a schoolteacher and at times was the head teacher at Broadmeadows and Williamstown State Schools.

Their next eldest son, John Box (my grandfather), was born in 1863 at 228 George Street Fitzroy, started as a teacher and then worked his way through medicine at Melbourne University before practising medicine in Footscray and Collins Street.

Edward box died in 1920 and according to his probate owned: "Land at Fitzroy having a frontage of 68 feet to George Street by a depth of 63 feet along Kerr Street on which are erected one old weatherboard cottage of 3 rooms, one old weatherboard cottage containing 4 rooms let to tenants at fourteen shillings per week respectively and one single fronted two storey brick cottage containing six rooms formerly occupied by testator. Old Law Title Conveyance 684 book 33. Valued at 783 pounds. Land at Fitzroy having a frontage of 30 feet to Kerr Street by a depth of 68 feet on which is erected a very old weatherboard cottage of 3 rooms let for 8 shillings per week. Valued at 190 pounds." Several of my ancestors had municipal positions.

My great grandfather, John James Denton, was the mayor of Fitzroy and his home "Dentonville" in McKean Street was the subject of an article by Allan Willingham in "Fitzroy Melbourne's First Suburb." My great grandfather William Mitchell was the Mayor of Footscray and my great grandfather, Hugh Kelly was a City of Collingwood councillor.



Edward James Box



John Box



Henry Box and his youngest son Matthew Henry

TONY BIRCH AWARDED

Local author, Tony Birch, has won book of the year from The Age newspaper for his novel that tackles the impact of domestic violence, **Women & Children**.

Tony was one of the people interviewed in the Fitzroy History Society oral history project.

<https://fitzroyhistorysociety.org.au/tony-birch/>



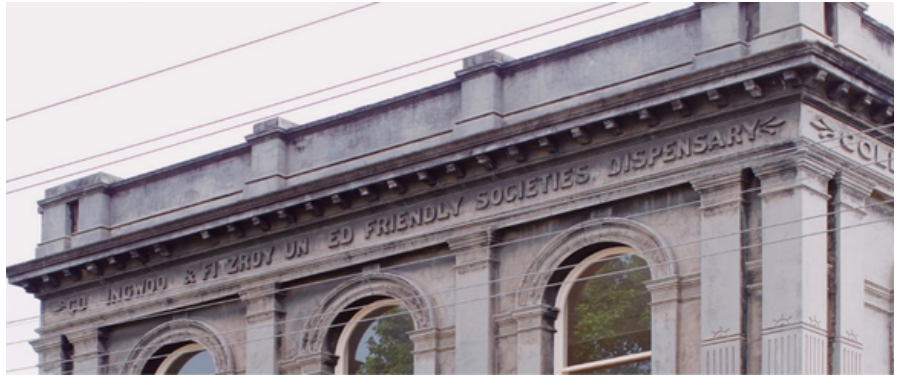
OPEN HOUSE DAY RUSSIAN HOUSE

For the first time, the Russian House is participating in the Melbourne "Open House" project.

On July 27 and 28 (Saturday and Sunday), the Russian House opens its doors to all visitors from 12:00 to 17:00.

Program:

- Historical and theatrical tours of the Russian House in English. Three such sessions will be held each day, starting at 12:00, 13:30, and 15:00. It is necessary to book a session in advance on the festival website:
<https://events.humanitix.com/russian-house>.



BIRMINGHAM HOTEL IN 1918

A group of performers standing outside of the Birmingham Hotel in 1918 prior to a show.

The Birmingham Hotel is on the corner of Johnston Street and Smith Street and still stands today operating as the Birmingham Hotel.

