



October 2015

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

President: Peter Woods

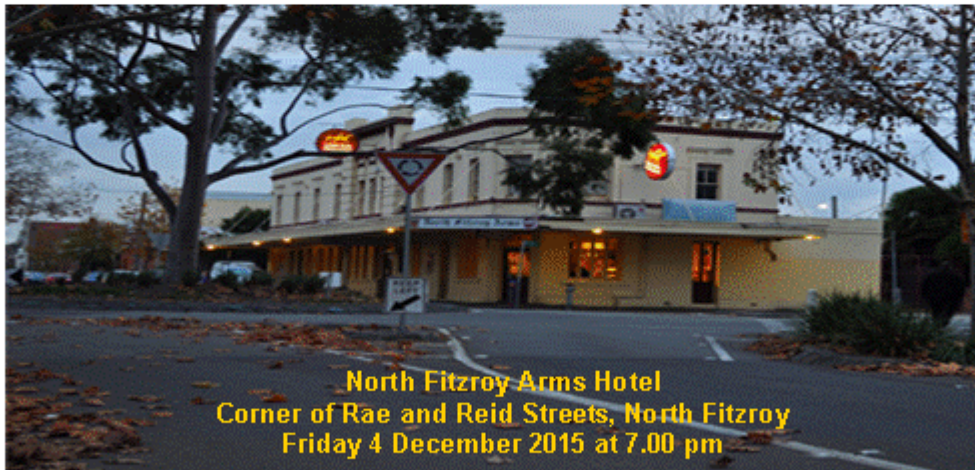
## NEWSLETTER

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Secretary: Meg Lee

### ANNUAL DINNER



**A la Carte Menu**

**All members welcome**

**RSVP by 21 November to [fitzroyhistorysociety@yahoo.com.au](mailto:fitzroyhistorysociety@yahoo.com.au)**

Come along and enjoy the company of like-minded members who are interested in knowing and exploring their local history

### THE GARDEN OF THE BEALE FAMILY IN FITZROY

The speaker at the annual general meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> August was FHS member Tim Gatehouse, who gave an account of the garden in Fitzroy created by Anthony Beale and his family at their home, St. Helena Cottage. The history of the creation of the garden was drawn from Anthony Beale's diary, now preserved in the State Library of Victoria.

Work on the garden commenced in 1839, and although other gardens were planted earlier by settlers such as John Batman and Rev. William Waterfield, none have so far been discovered which were recorded in the detail of the Beale garden. Anthony Beale's daily diary entries refer to the laying out of the beds and paths, the construction of fences and garden buildings, the lists of plants and seeds planted, attempts to enrich the poor soil with burnt shells and manure, the names of the family members who carried out particular tasks and frequently those of their guests who were also put to work. The growth of plants was carefully noted, comparisons being drawn between those at Melbourne and on St. Helena. The weather was also recorded. But more importantly, the diary is illustrated with sketches, plans and diagrams of the layout of the house, outbuildings and garden, including a birds eye view of the whole property overlaid with Beale's plan of subdivision, the streets being on the same lines as those existing today. The detail with which the garden was recorded makes it probably the earliest documented garden in Victoria, and one of the earliest in Australia.

Anthony Beale had been the paymaster to the East India Company on the island of St. Helena, where his family had lived for generations. When he was retrenched from the company, having a large family to support, he chose to emigrate to Port Phillip. After a short sojourn in England and later Launceston, the family finally settled in Melbourne late in 1839, moving into the prefabricated wooden house brought with them from England. The house was erected on three acres of land purchased by Anthony Beale at auction, without him having first seen it. The land was bounded by the approximate lines of Condell Street on the south, Napier Street on the west and George Street on the east, extending back almost to St. David Street to the north.

The Beales' capital was almost exhausted by the time they arrived in Fitzroy, and their only income was from sales of water from the water cart brought over from Launceston. Carts such as these were the only source of water for Melbourne's residents, apart from the Yarra. Consequently the land had to be fenced, cleared and brought into cultivation as soon as possible in order to provide food for the family. A small farm was developed on the property, with a stable, cowshed and pens for goats and fowls behind the house, and garden beds for growing vegetables and flowers in front. A large circular turning circle and curved paths leading to the front gate on the south (later Condell Street) side of the land provided a degree of formality for a family conscious of its social position, which it was now struggling to maintain.

A considerable variety of vegetables was produced, including potatoes, turnips, peas, beans and carrots, as well as many varieties of berry. An orchard was planted, but had not begun to bear fruit during the short period of the family's residence.

Very few of the flowers planted are actually named in the diary, perhaps because they seemed of little importance compared with the necessity to produce food.

It gradually became apparent that the Fitzroy property was not sufficient to support the family, so in 1841 they moved to a farm near Greensborough. The Fitzroy property was subdivided, but very few blocks were sold and ultimately Anthony Beale, who like so many other early settlers was ruined by the 1840s depression, gained very little from it.

Today the only reminders of the Beale garden in Fitzroy are Condell Reserve and the streets laid out on the lines of the plan of subdivision drawn for Anthony Beale by the surveyor Henry Foot. From Condell Street, Wood Street runs north to Moor Street, west for a short distance, then north again along Napier Place. The Beale's house would have been sited approximately in the rear of the centre house of Francis terrace in Moor Street. Anthony Beale and his wife Katherine are buried in the cemetery surrounding the church he built in her memory at St. Helena, near Greensborough.

## REPORT ON THE WALK AROUND MACROBERTSON'S GREAT WHITE CITY



**Seb Costello speaking outside the building at 214 Argyle Street that housed MacRobertson's head office.**

**Photo: Bill Mackie**

On 20 September around 45 people participated in a walk along the streets housing the MacRobertson chocolate factory buildings. The walk, led by new FHS member Seb Costello began at the headquarters building in Argyle Street where Macpherson Robertson, or Mr Mac as he was popularly known, had his office, and followed a route which took us past 15 of the factories, warehouses and garages. As most of the brick buildings were painted white they were commonly referred to as the Great White City.

Seb acknowledged ex FHS member Jill Robertson (no relation to Mr Mac) for much of the historical information available for the walk. He divided his commentary into four principal aspects of the chocolate business;

- The Man whose drive and enthusiasm created the empire
- The buildings which housed it
- The chocolate on which the business depended including the development of the various products, and
- The marketing by which the enterprise became so successful.

We visited his first home in Melbourne, his family home at 382 Napier Street, the building which housed the American Candy Company with which he introduced fairy floss and chewing gum into Australia, the paper-making factory where wax-paper was developed, and lastly, the Old-Gold factory where the super-fine chocolate was produced. Due to shortages during and following World War 1, all his buildings and the chocolate-making machines were designed by his team of architects and engineers. Most of the original buildings survive, many converted to apartments.

Mr Mac began his chocolate career with a simple home-made boiler, (a tin can) in his mothers bathroom creating sugary confection which he sold himself around Melbourne. Following an apprenticeship to others in the confectionary business, he began his successful commercial operation.

Macpherson combined his marketing skills with a generous philanthropic nature. He financed two vehicles, 'Burke' and 'Wills', to drive around Australia (the MacRobertson Mammoth), financed Mawson's 1929 Antarctic trip for which a large part of Antarctica was named after him and the London to Melbourne air race in 1934. In celebration of Melbourne's 100 years he donated 100,000 pounds to the people of Victoria which financed MacRobertson's Girls High School, the MacRobertson Bridge over the Yarra, a large fountain near the Shrine of Remembrance, and the Herbarium in the botanic gardens.

During World War 2 in addition to chocolate-making, his factories produced war rations. In 1945 he died of pneumonia and his two sons took over the company which was finally sold to the Cadbury company in 1967.

On Sunday 18 October, Seb repeated the walk for the Royal Historical Society of Victoria as part of History Week. The event was written up in the Age on Monday 19 October. The on-line version, which includes two photos, can be viewed at:

<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/take-a-leap-into-the-past-with-freddo-frog-during-history-week-20151018-gkbwye.html>

## DARTNELL CENTENARY

In the July Newsletter there was a report of the Gallipoli Centenary Walk. One of the houses visited on the walk was the boyhood home of William Dartnell in Newry Street. It is pictured in the newsletter (and in the booklet of the Walk). Dartnell was killed in action in Kenya in September 1915 and was posthumously awarded the VC. On 3 September this year



a commemoration was held in Kenya to mark the centenary of his death. The ceremony was well attended by government representatives from Kenya, the Australian, Canadian, British and German consulates and included a military parade and procession through Voi to the graves for the commemorative speeches and remembrance services.

The photos come courtesy of Paul Thompson in Kenya.

**Dartnell's grave in Kenya.**

**The wording on the headstone reads:**

**LIEUTENANT  
W. T. DARTNELL VC  
ROYAL FUSILIERS,  
3RD SEPTEMBER 1915 AGE 30**



**James Wilson at 'Picket Hill' in Maktou, Kenya giving one of his battlefield talks. This site is near where Dartnell won his posthumous VC.**

## ORAL HISTORY PROJECT UPDATE

Ten interviews have now been completed and we are beginning transcriptions with financial assistance from the Bendigo Community Bank. The oral history project wishes to thank our interviewees for their thoughts, time and considerations that they have given to their interview. If you know of a long term resident knowledgeable about Fitzroy we would like to hear about it.

## PUBLICATIONS.

The City of Yarra has reprinted the book, *Fitzroy, Melbourne's First Suburb*. The book is available for purchase through the Fitzroy branch Library.

A small booklet produced by FHS Committee members, *Travelling to Fitzroy in 1840* is available for purchase from Brunswick Street Book Shop for \$8.

## Become a Member

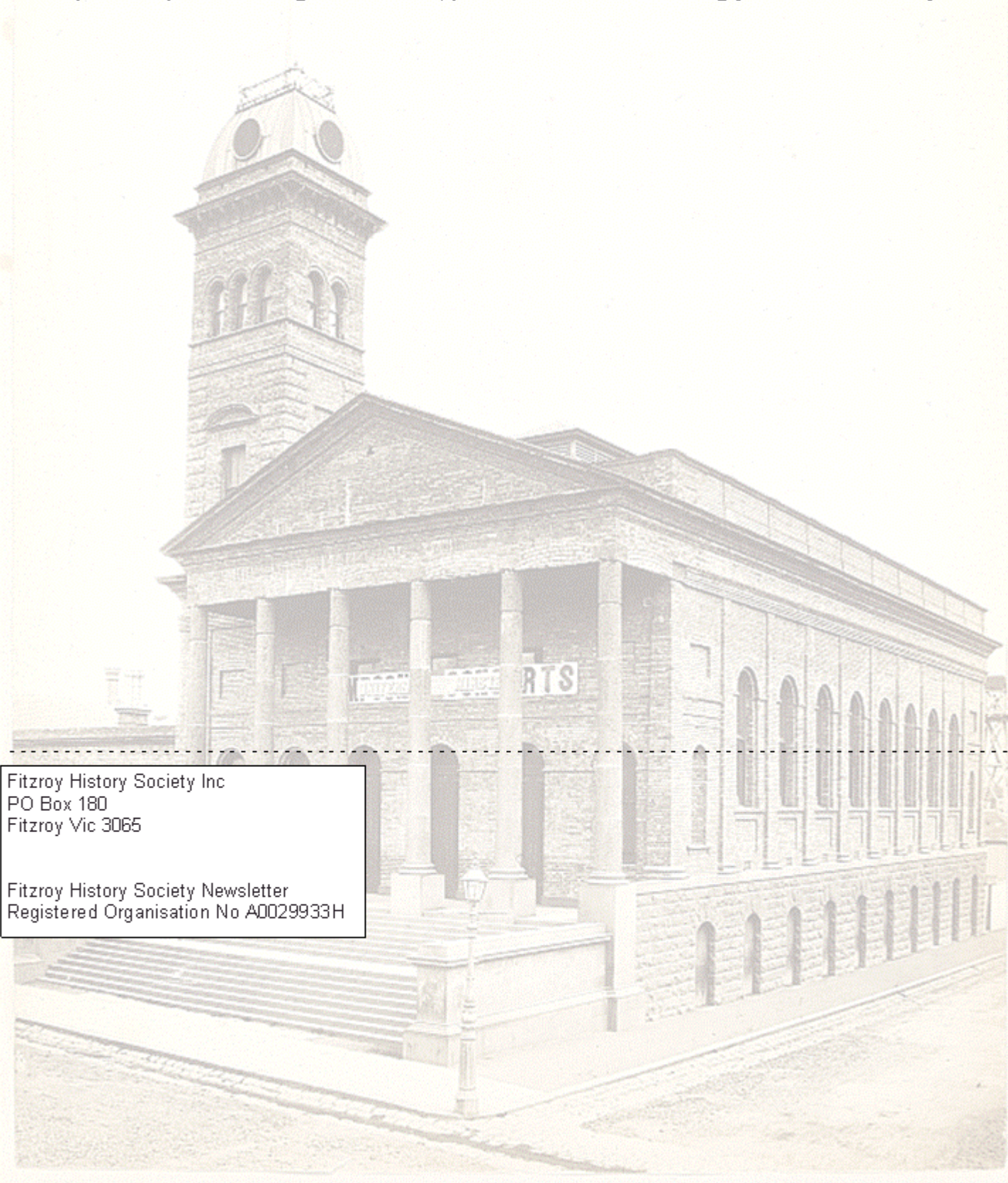
**Membership costs just \$10 per person per year.**

To make renewal easy, all memberships fall for renewal on 1 August each year (around the date of our AGM). If you would like to join or renew your membership, please complete the form found in this newsletter or on our website [www.fitzroyhistorysociety.org.au](http://www.fitzroyhistorysociety.org.au) and send it with the membership fee to PO Box 180, Fitzroy, 3065.

If you have any queries email us at [fitzroyhistorysociety@yahoo.com.au](mailto:fitzroyhistorysociety@yahoo.com.au) or write to us at PO Box 180, Fitzroy, 3065.

**We look forward to having you as a member.**

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Fitzroy History Society Newsletter  
Registered Organisation No A0029933H