



Inner West Branch of the National Trust Newsletter – Autumn 2011

Heritage Festival 2011 Two Inner West Events

All Trust members will have received the 2011 Heritage Festival Program, *Steam to Surf* listing a huge number of events happening all over the state from mid-April to Mothers' Day weekend. Your branch is presenting a conducted tour of two heritage public gardens on Sunday May 1st; Williamstown Botanic Gardens in the morning, Footscray Park in the afternoon.

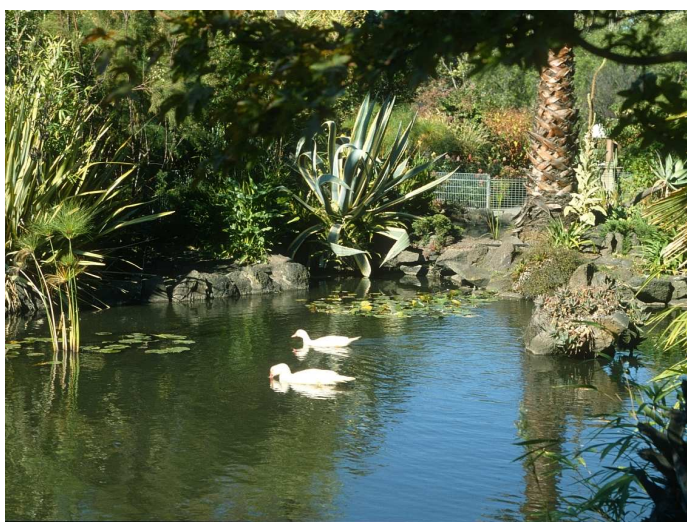
Starting at 10.30 a.m, the morning part of the event will be a tour of the 150 year old Victorian era Williamstown Botanic Gardens conducted by its Curator Shelley Wood. In the afternoon there will be a tour of the 100 year old Edwardian Footscray Park led by heritage guide, Meyer Edelson. The Williamstown tour will finish at 12.30 p.m., allowing time for lunch before the beginning of the tour of the Footscray Park at 2.00 p.m. This tour will finish at 4.00 p.m.

The Williamstown Gardens have benefited from a \$1 M restoration program, including revival of its pond (pictured below in as it was in 1984).

Footscray Park has been the subject of an extensive conservation study. It is notable for its vistas across the Maribyrnong River and its shady walks, such as the Drew Walk, (pictured below)

Meet at Williamstown Botanic Gardens, cnr Osborne and Giffard Streets Williamstown in the morning. Footscray Park, cnr Mills Close and Ballarat Road Footscray in the afternoon .

The event is free, but we would like some idea of the numbers so book with Cyril Curtain 9397 2421.



The Pubs of Old Williamstown

In its 160+ years of existence, Williamstown has had many hotels. More than 500 hotel licenses have been held in the municipality (Williamstown, Newport and Spottswood), and at any one time there were as many as 40 hotels operating. The present total in Williamstown is about 10 with two in Newport and one in Spottswood, all operating in old buildings.

A guided walk to view 14 of the south end Williamstown pubs will be led by our Vice-President Ian Rae on Saturday June 25th. Meet at Williamstown Station at 2.30 p.m. (to book contact Hugh Basset, 9689 7393)

The walk will take about 90 minutes, beginning and ending at the Station. Parking is available in Hanmer Street, opposite the station and close to the 471 bus stop.

The Terminus Hotel (below left) at 40 Hanmer Street is the first stop on the walk.

It started as the Union Hotel but the name changed to Terminus when the railway came through. Built in 1858 and later modified, it was reconstructed in 1911 when the Carlton Brewery Ltd took over. The pub was popular with workers, particularly with seasonal workers who helped shift the wheat crop each year. Tait (*Pubs of Williamstown. Historical guide, 2010*) places the

blame for its closure in 1971 on changes on the local wharves, a drop in peak hour rail traffic due to greater use of motor cars, and changing attitudes. The Stag's Head Hotel, SW (below right) corner of Ann and Cecil Streets will be the second stop. It could also be a suitable stop for refreshment on the way back to the station at the end of the tour.

The original timber building, dating from 1867, was replaced by the present building in 1887, the business also incorporating the Shamrock, a smaller hotel just to the south. After two years of operation, the original licensee, Stephen Hannaway, transferred the license to Michael Brew (1845-1902) who ran the hotel until his death, whereafter his wife, Mary, continued as proprietor until 1919. The stag's head, to be seen above the corner entrance to the bar, may not be original but is old enough to have lost an antler. The building is listed by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria).



Gone



Still going strong

Images Cyril Curtain

Branch meetings. Branch meetings are open to all members and are held at various venues in the Inner West. For latest details contact Hugh Basset on 9689 7393

Your Branch

Branch Office Bearers
President Hugh Basset
Vice-Presidents Ian Rae
 and Sue Murray
Joint Secretaries
 Rod Armstrong
 Cyril Curtain
Treasurer
 Ian Yarde

The branch meets on the last Wednesday of the month at various venues in the Cities of Maribymong and Hobson's Bay. For more information the branch contact numbers are
 Hugh Basset
 9689 7973
 Cyril Curtain
 9397 2421

Our Region



The Inner West region includes the post codes

3011, 3012, 3013, 3015, 3016, 3018, 3019 3025 and 3032 (part).

However, we may collaborate with other branches in matters of strategic importance in adjacent areas where there is no Trust coverage.

The Changes in the Footscray Railway Precinct

The Inner West Branch recently had a walk through the railway precinct of central Footscray. The Footscray Railway Station Complex is on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR H1563). Considerable change to the complex and its context is underway or proposed. Our walk was to get an understanding of the imminent changes.

The starting point for the walk was the pedestrian overpass at Footscray Station. This new structure was completed late 2010 and already needs to be modified to accommodate the additional tracks and platforms for the Regional Rail Link (RRL), and to include escalator access! The pedestrian rail bridge is now the dominant structure in the complex. The stated intent to respect the scale and visibility of the Railway Station has certainly not been achieved.

The RRL appears to require the demolition of the Nicholson Street railway bridge. This bridge is unusual having shops to both sides of Nicholson Street, above the railway. South Yarra and Box Hill are the only other suburban road-over-rail bridge and shops. Nicholson Street bridge was built in 1928 in a major upgrade of the railway line including suburban, country and freight lines, a little like the RRL. Shops were added following a push from Council concerned that the Footscray shopping centre had been "terribly cut up" by the railway. The bridge now has local cultural (historic, aesthetic, technical, social) significance. Through the Maribyrnong Heritage Advisory Committee, the Branch has encouraged retention and perhaps adaption of the existing bridge to be considered the preferred option. All that is really needed is an extension of the bridge to the south, with loss of a few properties, so the cutting can be expanded to accommodate the RRL.

The former Footscray Station Gardens are to be transformed into McNab Reserve, adjoining a substantial development of the land to the east of McNab Avenue.

A Masterplan for the Reserve has been developed by Maribyrnong City Council, including restoration of the rotunda, retention of the Canary Island palms to the north of McNab Avenue, new paths and planting, and an "urban space" next to the Telstra Building. The Reserve is to be used during the construction of the "MCNAB AVENUE" project which takes in the former bowling green site. The Reserve is to be developed before the first tenant moves in (or: first building is constructed).

MCNAB AVENUE is "a landmark \$350 million development" across the road from the McNab Reserve (see www.dpced.vic.gov.au/planning/footscraycad). The development is to be of three stages, the first being at the southern end where the roundabout to Buckley Street has been removed to release the site for development. This first stage will be for commercial use, and of some 12 storeys. In the process of road realignment, the former Nicholson Street underground toilet block was uncovered. The block was recorded and then refilled. It is quite intact. Re-use was not on the agenda however.

In the meantime, the proposed C90 amendment to the Maribyrnong Planning Scheme, to establish a comprehensive development zone for the Footscray Central Activity centre (CAD), was withheld by the previous government ostensibly to review the amendment for impacts from the RRL. Perhaps the response to the handling of compulsory acquisitions for the RRL blunted the political resolve pre-election. The new government will presumably want to place its particular stamp on the amendment. But it seems some amendment will occur, and the expectation would be that densification and development will be encouraged. In the interim, a gap study is being prepared which is looking at gaps in the existing heritage overlays, and reviewing the C90 with an emphasis on the management of heritage matters.

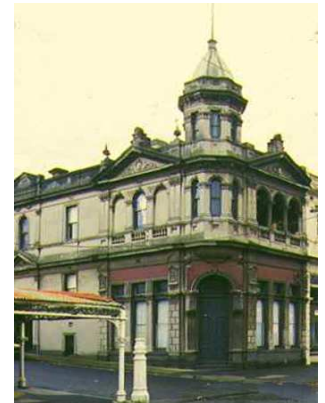
Model of McNab Avenue development from "fact sheet" supplied by Department of Planning and Community Development. Covering a 1.3 ha plot it will have residential and student housing and government and commercial office space. It is expected to be finished by 2014. Anchor tenants will be primarily government agencies, such as Department of Justice, Department of Planning and Community Development and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.



Kensington revisited

Sat 28 May 2 pm

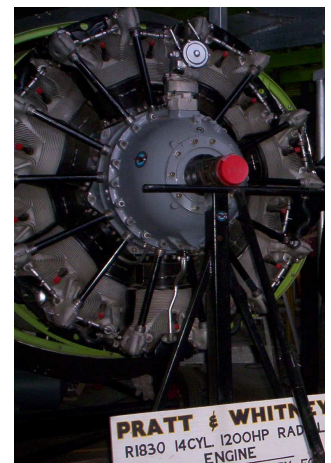
Following last year's well-attended and informative walk the Branch is holding another over a similar route. Included will be historic Belair Street. A highlight is the former Kensington Property Exchange (below), its associated residence Islington, and the adjoining shop and residence. They were designed by architect E Owen Hughes for real estate agent and local identity, James Wales and were constructed by Rowse & Son in 1891-92. Contact Hugh Basset 9689 7393



Heritage Festival at Werribee—B24 Open Day

Sunday May 1st 10.30-11.30 a.m.

A chance to meet the restorers of this historic aircraft. One of the engines will be run and morning tea will be served. Contact Judith Gilbert 9743 9734



Former Woollen Mills Hearing

Having heard from a large number of interested parties, the “Nelson Village” Advisory Committee wound up its public hearings on March 5th. Local groups and individuals made many and varied objections to the proposal made by the putative developer of the site. These mostly related to the impact on South Williamstown of the injection of 2000+ extra residents into the confines of the historic port precinct. Matters such as the presence of a residential development in close proximity to an operating ship building facility of national significance and to the bulk oil terminal at Gellibrand Pier were much in the foreground. There was a strong undercurrent of concern about the impact of any development of the site on the heritage values of the precinct and a number of expert witnesses were put forward by various groups. Their reports may be accessed at www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/planning/panelsandcommittees/current-planning-panels-and-committees/former-port-phillip-woollen-mill-advisory-committee/woollen-mills-submissions. The Inner West Branch made an oral presentation supporting the Trust’s written submission (also available at the dpcd

website). The presentation was based on the relation of the port precinct to Victoria’s Historical Themes of immigration, industrial development, transport and communications, governance and defence. Cultural continuity, as expressed by a tradition of large ship building and repair extending over nearly 150 years is an important attribute of the precinct. It follows that any residential development in this “brown field” area has to fit in with the port-associated activities.

An interesting late development was the lodging by the City of Hobson’s Bay of a proposed schedule to the design and development overlay. Along with the expected design objectives of protecting the port operations and recognising the conservation and recreational significance of the Hobson’s Bay foreshore, the schedule also allowed for the possibility of “mounding” the development up to 5 storeys in the middle. This is similar to the proposal put forward in the Trust’s original submission. The sightline diagram appeared in the article in our Spring 2010 Newsletter.

ANOTHER HIDDEN TREASURE

The Alfred Graving Dock is at the core of the historic ship-building yard in Williamstown. It is on the Victorian Heritage register (HO697) and the City of Hobson’s Bay Heritage Overlay 209. It was built during the years 1864-1873 at a cost of \$300,000. It was an ambitious engineering project for the young colony, ranking as one of its greatest public works ahead of the railway works undertaken in the same period. A comparison may be made between the Alfred Dock and the Great Western Dock (later West Wapping Dock) in Bristol. The latter was completed in 1839 as a ship building facility, primarily for the SS Great Britain. At 100 metres it is shorter than the Alfred Dock (126 metres) and the rough hewn masonry (see picture) stand in contrast to the smooth one metre cube basalt blocks of the latter. It is no longer a commercial dock but is home to the restored SS Great Britain. Both locks have floating caisson gates (see picture below left).

The Alfred Dock is one of a select number of engineering works in the Inner West designed by the distinguished 19th Century architect, William Wardell. It became part of the Victorian Government’s State Ship Building Yard in 1913 and was passed successively to the Commonwealth (1918), the Melbourne Harbor Trust (1924), the Royal Navy (1942) and privatised in 1988. The present owner is BAE Systems. As a continuing ship building site and as a major employer in Williamstown the Dockyard is a living part of the Nelson Place Historic Precinct. Although many changes have occurred around the dock and ship building technology has changed enormously over the last 150 years the dockyard complex is of major significance because it represents both tangible and intangible heritage. The latter represents the ship building tradition carried on over the years. Such intangible heritage can exist in a place, even though its material aspect has changed. In the mid-1880’s the dock appeared in isolation with the buildings in Nelson Place, visible in the distance; today it is surrounded with the buildings and equipment needed for modern ship building. If the worst were to happen and ship building ceased with the dock overlooked by residential development (Nelson Harbour?) the Nelson Place precinct would lose much of its significance. This is one of the reasons why the branch strongly supported other local organisations that argued development in Nelson Place must not be allowed to affect the long-term viability of the dockyard.



Masonry and steps in wall of Great Western Dock, Bristol England

Image Cyril Curtain



HMVS Nelson in Alfred Dock, mid-1880’s

Image Seabridge Collection



Over a century later– contemporary warship in dock

Image Heritage Victoria