

MELBOURNE WALKS

Newsletter August 2010

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Introduction

When my partner Amanda and I started Melbourne Walks in 1992, we had the dream of creating unique adventures exploring forgotten and secret parts of our city.

Since then, several thousand individuals have participated in these specially designed journeys, not just adults but also large numbers of primary and secondary students.

We currently run over forty tours of every description and the number is growing. If you have a group of 5-10 people, any of these walks can be booked at short notice.

Since 1995 Melbourne Walks has also produced 14 books on Melbourne's indigenous, historical and natural heritage. Our latest book is the history of Ripponlea Village.

New Book

Did you know that the famous Firebrand **Sourdough Bakery** at 69 Glen Eira Road commenced in the 1987 after a Melbourne-wide search for an old bakery with surviving wood-fired oven. They are usually located in buildings near railway stations, beside lanes with a telltale chimney. Finally a disused 1930s bakery was found in a former brothel in Glen Eira Road.

In May Melbourne Walks launched '*Ripponlea - The Village*', the first history of Ripponlea at the request of the Ripponlea traders. What a delight to record the heritage of such well known places such as Quat Quatta, Ripponlea Mansion, Ripponlea Railway station and the large Jewish Community. It also features a self guided walk of the village. Get it online for free at:

www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/default/HISTORY_OF_RIPPONLEA.pdf

Explore the Western Suburbs

Walk south along the Maribyrnong River from the Footscray Arts Centre beside the historic wharves and you arrive at a mosaic marking the site of the Stanley Arms. An excavation in 1989 revealed the absence of pig bones, suggesting it was the 1840 site of the pub and punt of Benjamin Levien, a Jewish settler and Footscray's first resident.

We are now starting twelve different walks in nine western suburbs for the City of Maribyrnong. The first, on 29 August, is '**The Buddhists of Braybrook**' visiting the Vietnamese Golden Stupa of Quang Ming Temple on the Festival of Hungry Ghosts. To register to receive information about all future walks simply email:

walking@maribyrnong.vic.gov.au or visit our website www.melbournwalks.com

The Body in the Sugar Bag

In 1937 a sugar sack was found floating in the Yarra River containing four severed limbs. The coroner adjourned the case to determine if this was proof of a death. To do this, he examined the famous '*Arm in a Shark*' case of 1935. These are two of 24 murder mysteries and other crimes in our '**Solving Melbourne's Cold Cases Tour**'. Tour members form a forensic squad to solve cases of unexplained murder, riot, bombings, theft, assassination, cannibalism, fraud, massacre, and occult happenings between 1835 and 1977. Hundreds of thousands of dollars of outstanding reward money could be yours if you crack the crime!

They include the Gun Alley Murder, the Picasso Theft, Great Bookie Robbery, the Bourke and Wills conspiracy theory. We even examine copies of the Batman Treaty in 1835. Are the signatures genuine? Did Batman actually meet with the 'chiefs'? On a recent tour we had a retired forensic scientist who worked on the Azaria jump suit: '*We determined a dingo could have torn them but the Northern Territory police had already made up their minds*'.

Our next tour runs at **7.00 – 9.30pm Friday 27th August**. Cost \$30. Meet St Paul's Cathedral. **Bookings 90907964 or meyereidelson@yahoo.com**

Death in Early Melbourne

Did you know there are 9000 burials of Melbourne's earliest pioneers under the Queen Victoria Market? Recently St Leonard's College students visited the former pioneer graves with us - 9000 bodies are buried under the car park bitumen - and read out many moving burial records from the 19th century. They created memorials in chalk on the pavement as curious pedestrians watched.

One student wrote:
*'I feel your loss, I feel your shame
On your grave are laughing and games*

*No respect, none at all
On your grave they built a stall'*

Melbourne Walks runs a **Death in Early Melbourne Tour** at night in Melbourne's two earliest cemeteries at Burial Hill (Flagstaff) and Victoria Market. If you have a group of five or more - people are dying to get in!



Melbourne After Dark

Recently Melbourne Walks conducted our regular '**Melbourne By Night Tour**' for Year Nine students. Between 9pm and 2am we visited the Corroboree Tree, the underground Dights Falls Mill, a possum colony, the roof of the St Kilda Baths, The Shrine, a ridge overlooking the illuminated city, a graveyard on the Merri Creek and an adventure playground. The adults had to synchronize their biorhythms but the kids at night are in their element. A great class for understanding Melbourne.

A New History Video

The Soul of St Kilda (on You Tube)

Recently the Mayor of the City of Port Phillip launched our story-telling DVD '*The Soul of St Kilda*' in the St Kilda Town hall council chamber. The DVD celebrates the 120th anniversary of St Kilda Town Hall. Joe Eidelson (15) a co-

Vaults and Clocktower

Did you now that hidden under the St Kilda Esplanade are interconnected underground vaults which are entered from Jacka Parade. They are the sealed spaces of ten shops built in the 1880s but closed in the 1970s when the road was widened (*note the shop verandahs far right below*).



Melbourne Walks runs over 20 different walks in St Kilda. See our website. We also coordinate the **City of Port Phillip Walks program** each year. Find the program on: www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/walks.



Recently we also visited the Catani Clock tower through a tiny steel door at the base to view the workings. It was built in 1930 to honour engineer Carlo Catani, from Florence who reclaimed land from the sea and designed the St Kilda Foreshore in 1906. This passionate Italian immigrant laid out the romantic Mediterranean pleasure resort that continues today from Catani gardens to Acland Street.

2010 Seniors Festival

A statewide event with more than 1,000 discount events from October 3-10, including free travel for Seniors Card holders. We are running eight different discount walks for the event. See the Senior's Festival program to be released from supermarkets in September or ring Melbourne Walks on 90907964 for details of walks.

author of the DVD was present with a large crowd who undertook guided tours of the town hall. Also being launched was a self guided tour using posters and images which we helped design with staff Penny Morison and Ruth McLean. Part one of the DVD can be found on:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=YSAIaoG79P8

St Kilda Audio Walk

A new free walk by Heritage Victoria demonstrating the wide range of historic architectural styles in Victoria has been developed for downloading on MP3 devices. It visits many famous places in Acland Street, St Kilda. Map and recordings can be found on

www.heritage.vic.gov.au/multimedia.aspx. Melbourne Walks also runs this tour with in person if you have a group. We are also preparing another free on-line tour of **Bay Street, Port Melbourne**.

Harry Potter eat your heart out!

Did you know this year is the 100th anniversary of **Harry Houdini's** visit to Melbourne in 1910? As well as performing at the Tivoli Theatre in Bourke Street, he made the first sustained plane flight in Australia. Melbourne Walks runs a city tour visiting the 19th century theatres where Houdini and other magicians performed. It includes performing magical illusions.

We have spent many enjoyable days at holiday programs and schools recently cutting people in two, mind-reading, levitating and escaping from straightjackets. Our magic class teaches the history of magic and **20** different illusions for aspiring young magicians.

Magic builds confidence, motor skills and science awareness. If you think your local school or holiday program could benefit from such a class, contact us.



Fishing on the Merri Creek by Troedel, 1864

Hunting and Gathering at Merri Creek

Did you know there are over 50 kinds of bush tucker, medicine and tools you can harvest from native plants near our local rivers and seashores? In April we took 100 students from Fitzroy High School hunting and gathering down the **Merri Creek**, harvesting bush tucker and using traditional indigenous tools of the Kulin Nation. These included edible wattle gum, mat rush for rope and fish traps, ochre for paint, pigface for water and bites, bark for housing, lilly pilly berries, shell for sharpening, flint for knives, spider web for wounds and much more. The young people heard dreamtime stories and looked at copies of the original **Dutigalla (Batman) Treaty**.

Students love this hands-on activity where they appreciate indigenous lifestyles and the value of our native fauna and flora. If you have a school or group of adults that are interested let us know! We also run this activity **on location** at many primary and secondary schools. Inquiries: 90907964.

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