



# MT VICTORIA

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## Historical Society News

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## **An opportunity to learn about the history of St Joseph's Church**

Hear Mark Richards, chairman of the St Joseph's building committee,  
and Jack Duggan, parish historian  
at the new St Joseph's hall, Brougham St  
**on Sunday, November 21, at 2 p.m.**

A Catholic church was first built in Mt Victoria in 1885, next to St Patrick's College in Buckle Street. When St Mary's Cathedral Church in Hill Street burnt down in 1898, land was chosen near the Basin Reserve as the site for a new cathedral. The Parish of St Joseph's Mt Victoria was formally founded in September 1913, and it was planned that the cathedral would also be the parish church. In 1945 the church next to St Patrick's College was demolished, and the parish shifted into a renovated hall in Patterson Street to await the construction of their new church.

Continuing uncertainty from the 1970s about plans for a motorway or expanded Mt Victoria tunnel meant that no firm plans could be developed for the site, and in 1983 the Sacred Heart Basilica in Hill Street was dedicated as the Catholic Cathedral of Wellington. In June 2002 agreement was finally reached with Transit New Zealand, including a land transfer, which required part of the existing buildings to be demolished by 31 March 2003.

(More is available about St Joseph's from its web site: <http://www.thecarpenterproject.co.nz>)

**Come and hear about the historical saga which lies behind completion of this new Mt Victoria landmark.**

*We have received notices about this writing course – nothing is known about the organiser, but if you're interested, here are the details to find out more:*

## **Write AWAY! Writing Workshop**

### **Writing Life Stories**

**Saturday November 6, Wellington**

Would you like to write someone's life story?  
Always wanted to write about your experiences?  
Want to gift something to your grandchildren?

Discover simple techniques for writing life stories, including how to get started, how to find information and access the past, how to convey realistic character and tell interesting stories, how to present material and reach readers.

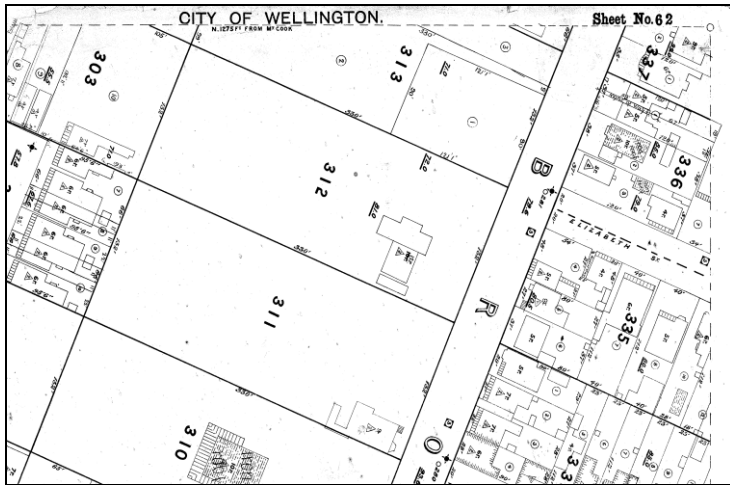
Whether you are researching your family history, would like to write about a historical character, or wish to share your own life story, you'll develop new skills and learn in a friendly, supportive environment.

Investment: \$49 (\$39 PTL, concession for unwaged)  
Morning and afternoon tea provided

Please phone Keith on 972 2181 or email [workshop@keithlyons.org](mailto:workshop@keithlyons.org) for more information or to book your place.

## HISTORICAL NOTE

The land on which Crossways sits was originally part of Town Acre 312, one of two Town Acres (also 311) bought by William Nicol from the New Zealand Company in 1857. William Nicol was an early settler in Wellington, being listed on the burgess roll for the first municipal elections in 1843, with an address of Pipitea Pah, but little more is known of him.



A section from Thomas Ward's Survey Map, 1891 [Wellington City Archives]

In 1873 Town Acre 312 was bought by Thomas Whyte Young, along with 311 and 313, and he had his residence there. Young was a Wine and Spirit Merchant with his business on Jervois Quay. He had arrived in New Zealand from Scotland in 1859, with his brother. They established their business in about 1865, and were direct importers with connections throughout the North Island and most of the South Island. Their premises on Jervois Quay were significant – three storeys high with about 8000 feet of storage.

We know Young's house, which now forms the basis of Crossways, was built by 1891 because it appears on Thomas Ward's Survey Map in virtually the same form it is today. The map tells us it was a 12 room residence.

In 1902 part of Town Acres 312 and 313 was taken by Wellington City Council to form the lower part of Elizabeth Street. Three years later another slice was taken off Young's land on Town Acre 312 to widen Brougham and Elizabeth Streets for the Kilbirnie tramway extension<sup>1</sup>. Trams required much gentler, wider curves in their tracks than the old roads allowed.

The late TW Young's estate was subdivided into 18 residential sections in 1928 and auctioned off. At the time, it was described as "the last of the original Town Acres". At one stage it had been proposed as the site of the Clyde Quay School and Young gave an option over the land to be exercised on his death. This fell through, however, and only part of his land on Town Acre 313, on the northern side of Elizabeth St, was acquired by the Education Board.<sup>2</sup> Young's residence straddled lots 9 and the subdivision required that these lots be sold as one, unless the house was removed first, which did not happen. Lots 9, 10 and 12 were passed in at auction in April 1928 but, in January 1929, they were bought by the New Zealand Women's Christian Temperance Union Incorporated.

The NZ Women's Christian Temperance Union was founded in 1885 with the visit from the United States of Mrs Mary Leavitt, who brought with her a petition to be signed by women in all parts of the world urging their governments to introduce the prohibition of alcohol. Its motto is "For God, Home and Humanity" and its original platform was "Peace, Purity and Prohibition". The union's first campaign was to stop the employment of barmaids, whose presence in pubs was seen as demoralising to women and as enticing men to drink. It has been associated with a number of other reforms, including women's franchise, teaching of religion in schools and welfare work among seamen, in prisons and with juveniles. The organisation reached its peak in the late 1920's – about the time the Brougham Street property was purchased – with 7700 members.

In 1952 the land was sold to William Aitken & Co Ltd. This company was established about 1937 in Wellington as an importer of olive oil. From the start, its biggest customer base was the Island Bay Italian community. Based in Taupo since 1997, but still a family firm, it is now New Zealand's leading importer of olive oils and Italian foodstuffs.

The property was next sold to the Presbyterian Church in 1978. This was when it became known as Crossways. The Mt Victoria Presbyterian Church is a reconciling Christian congregation, focusing on social justice issues. Crossways grew out of a decision by the church in 1975 to shift from a traditional setting, with all the trappings, to a community house where they could be in partnership with the secular world.<sup>3</sup>

Crossways is now a community centre owned by Wellington City Council.

<sup>1</sup> City Engineer's file, 00009:585:36/322, Wellington City Archives

<sup>2</sup> Press clipping 21.4.1928

<sup>3</sup> Graham Howell, Elder/Parish Councillor, Jan 2002 [http://www.arcc.org.nz]