



MT VICTORIA

Historical Society News

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Victorian Society meets the Motorcar Age

Sunday, March 9 at 2.30 pm

Meet at the Wakefield Memorial in the Basin Reserve

Join us for a guided tour of some of the most important heritage of this inner city suburb, threatened by a second Mt Vic tunnel.

Finish with tea and scones on the front lawn of William Waring Taylor's 1870's mansion.



"The verandahs have been given a juicy assortment of decoration including brackets, lattice work, pierced balustrading and bold expanses of glazing"
(Terence Hodgson, *Proud Possessions*)

Numbers will be limited so that participants can enjoy the walk and for catering purposes, so please get in touch early to book your places – phone Joanna Newman, 385 2254

Some members will note that this looks like a similar walk to one we conducted last year at this time. You are not wrong.

What you might have also noticed, however, is that since the last Council elections there is increasingly-determined talk of putting a second tunnel traffic tunnel through Mt Victoria. This could put at serious risk this significant Mt Victoria (and Wellington) heritage. We feel it is essential for us to highlight its value, to start to spread the word and to prepare to defend it. We want as many people as possible to know about it. Furthermore, we have done new research into the history of the area since our last walk and have more stories to share with you. If you aren't able to join us for this walk, do tell your friends and neighbours about it. And if you can't come this time, we will be sharing our research with you and keeping you up to date with our plans for publicity around the area.

As has become tradition in recent years, this walk is part of Wellington City Council's **Stepping Out** March walking promotion, which we hope will help promote a wider knowledge of this area.

Mt Victoria: great cricket moments ...

With summer here, and with it the annual Basin Reserve cricket test, it seemed a good time to include two little snippets, a reminiscence and a photograph, that might interest the sports buffs amongst us.

This little anecdote was written by Arthur Ashenden for the Crossways Reminiscence Group in 1994. Arthur was born in 1915 and was a lifelong Mt Victoria resident. His widow, Edna, was one of the stars of our recent oral history exhibition.

“In the ‘20s and early 30’s, Queen St in Mt Victoria was not sealed. We kids used it for cricket pitches. We used to practice there and on the playing fields above where the Bowling Club is now. From that tiny street of only 100 yards long so many talented cricketers emerged. In 1927 we had our first New Zealand rep, Herbie Lambert. In 1937 my brother Jack played for New Zealand, bowling Joe Hardstaff at the Basin Reserve. In the early ‘50’s Eric Dempster played for New Zealand in South Africa. My sister and I both played for Wellington and Eric Boniface was a New Zealand champion table-tennis player – ping pong in those days.

It was quite a sporting street and we used to compete against neighbouring Elizabeth Street. Although we were only 10, 11 or 12, we had made a shield to compete for but it never shifted from Queen Street because we were so much better than Elizabeth Street.

The photograph was taken at the Basin Reserve in January 1930. It was a great day for New Zealand cricket. Batting first the New Zealand openers put on 276 for the first wicket, for many years a New Zealand record, and the scoreboard shows the moment when both openers reached their centuries. One can imagine that young Arthur and his Queen Street team mates were enthusiastic spectators. (Photo: G-2-¼-EP, Alexander Turnbull Library)



In the background above the Basin work is just beginning on the car tunnel, while to the right the north wing of the Wellington Girls' College building hall is nearly complete. Outside the ground a tram advertising soap rumbles along Dufferin Street, between the Wakefield Memorial and the long-demolished houses on the other side. The scoreboard and the little scorers' shed in the northeast corner had been erected a few years before. Nowadays the scoreboard is on the southern side.