



MT VICTORIA

Historical Society News

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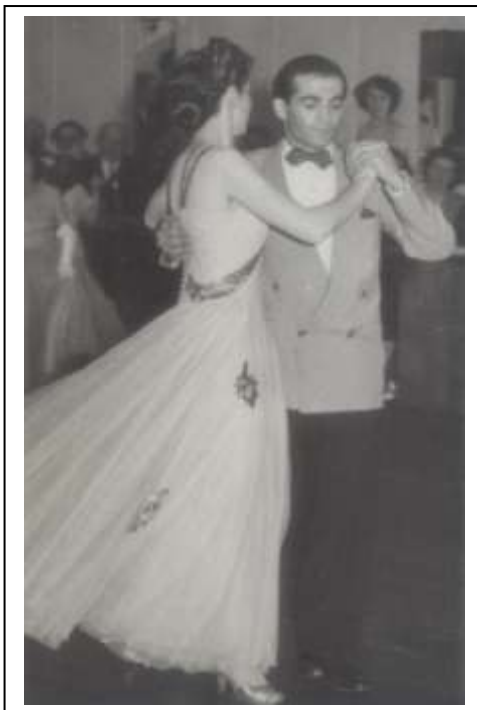
Alan Olliver on 385 1022 (hm)

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Costa Christie Presents the life of a Mt Victoria Greek resident

We are very privileged to have Costa Christie present the life of Gabriel Karantze in film.

Based on video interviews, Costa has created a carefully crafted and edited film, which gives us a first-hand account of a Greek immigrant's journey to NZ and life in Wellington and Mt Victoria.



This film is part of *the Costa Yiavasis Video Project* of interviews of the New Zealand Greek Community.

The results of the project will ultimately be held by local archives and by La Trobe University in Australia.

Sunday November 16, at 2.30 pm
At New Crossways
6 Roxburgh Street

New committee

The committee for 2008/9, elected at the AGM last month is Joanna Newman (Convenor), Sue Watt (Treasurer), Alan Olliver, Natasha Naus, David McCrone, Trevor Bleakley and Judy Southworth. If you weren't able to make the AGM and would like a copy of the Annual Report or accounts, please don't hesitate to ask us for one.

Exciting new online resource

The NZ Electronic Text Centre at Victoria University has just launched an online version of the Wellington volume of The Cyclopaedia of New Zealand. As a work which has always been a wonderful source of information for researchers of Mt Victoria's history, this is great news. The Volume, which weighs 5.1 kilograms in hard copy, was produced in 1897. (Also available now is Volume Six: Taranaki, Hawkes Bay and Wellington.) Both volumes are online at <http://www.nzetc.org/tm/scholarly/tei-corpus-cyclopaedia.html>

The Cyclopedias contain a wealth of information on New Zealand's social history and include biographical portraits, a town and country gazetteer and surveys of local trades and businesses. It was the sort of thing you had to pay to get yourself into unless you were a particularly prominent person. Despite this bias, the six volumes provide a fascinating glimpse into life in colonial New Zealand around the turn of the century. In 1896 the publishers claimed that The Cyclopaedia was "the most voluminously illustrated work ever published in the Colony."

The other four volumes, covering Auckland, Canterbury, Otago & Southland, and Nelson, Marlborough & Westland, will be made available online later this year.

The “Brougham Hill” Schools

By Alan Olliver

In preparation for the “Now & Then” photos talk and for the Southern Mount Victoria walk, I came across a series of private schools that opened in the vicinity of Brougham and Ellice Street from the late 1800s.

The first of these schools was set up by Henrietta McDonnell (Mrs Col. MacDonnell) in 1887. She and her husband lived on the corner of Ellice and Brougham Streets in what is now 57 Ellice Street. The Colonel, Thomas MacDonnell, had fallen out of favour with the Government, and lost his commission. Presumably a shortage of funds meant that Mrs McDonnell needed a job and an income. Henrietta marketed the school by various names, including **Mrs McDonnell’s Ladies Collegiate, Melmerbe(y) House School** and **Brougham House School**. The school appears in this Christopher Aubrey painting of Brougham Street in 1889. The school closed in 1896 and the McDonnells moved back to Wanganui.

Christopher Aubrey, Brougham Street 1889. ATL C-030-005
McDonnell’s house is the 2-storeyed one to the right on the hill



Miss Annie Freeman from Christchurch established a new school, **Miss Freeman’s School**, taking over the lease of 57 Ellice Street in 1897. Starting out with 29 girls, the roll expanded rapidly. Lessons soon overflowed into the upstairs teachers’ accommodation. Former students recall a deep depression in the middle of one particular bed. With a shortage of staff and teaching space, Miss Freeman shifted her school to 7 Woolcombe St (southern end of The Terrace) at the end of term two. She named the new school “**Chilton House**” after her birthplace, a village in the Buckinghamshire. The school shifted several times and finished up in Island Bay. It closed in 1931, a victim of rising costs and the Depression. Chilton Saint James School in Lower Hutt bought out the name, goodwill and memorabilia at this time.

Mrs and Miss Sheppard, formerly from Girl’s Collegiate School, Masterton, set up **Brougham Hill School** in 1898. The address is given as both Ellice Street and Ellice Avenue. If indeed it did shift, then it was to what is now 42 Porritt Avenue. According to Council Archives plans it was a purpose-built school room. My former next door neighbour, an elderly Miss Jessie Harrison, was an ex-pupil at the school. She won a book prize for Arithmetic for Class II in 1908. The book is on display in the education section at Wellington Museum of City and Sea. The Sheppards passed on the principalship to Miss Ward in 1908. The school closed in about 1909-10.

Annie Freeman (date unknown), Chilton St James Archives

Nearby on the corner of Ellice Street and Ellice Avenue, Mrs Kate (Edgar) Evans ran **Dehra Dhoon**, a private girls’ school from 1894 to 1906. Kate Evans featured in the last issue of Mt Victoria Historical Society Newsletter.

Scanning The Evening Post classified advertisements from 1894-1896 on the National Library’s Papers Past website, I came across yet another school, at 7 Victoria Terrace – a short-lived right of way where Melksham Tower apartments now exist. It was run by a Miss Kirk.

The prevalence of private girls’ schools in the area can be linked to the number of large houses able to be adapted to private training institutions. Private fee paying girls’ schools were the norm until 1903 when the Secondary Schools Act, and related acts of 1903, gave girls free state secondary education.

*Thanks/ References: Sue Blundell, Chilton Saint James Archives; Adrian Humphris, Wellington City Archives
Margot Schwass, Celebrating Wellington Girls: 125 years of Wellington Girls’ College, 2008*