



MT VICTORIA

Historical Society News

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Visit a Victorian Perfumery

Sunday, July 7 at 2.30 pm

Near the top of the cable car, Kelburn (beside the carpark)

For a reviving mid-winter experience, join us on a visit to *Fragrifert Parfumeur* to learn from Francesco how perfumes were made in Victorian times and enjoy the products he creates by these methods today. (Not just for the women – men's perfumes created by a man!)

Please let us know (jnewman@xtra.co.nz) if you would like to come – it's helpful to know how big our group will be.

Wellington's early colonists were not so consumed by the practicalities of establishing life in a new town that they weren't interested in perfume. No doubt it could be purchased here from earliest days, but in 1846 Messrs James Smith & Co advertised for sale by public auction "perfumery", which had recently arrived in port. While the language may have changed, the qualities and powers of perfume have ever been promoted. In 1880, Wellington Agents, W & G Turnbull and Co., were advertising: *Burnett's Aqua de Florimel, as its name implies, is the honey of flowers, highly concentrated, and imparts a peculiar and most agreeable fragrance. It combines the virtues of cologne, the pungency of a handkerchief perfume, with an adaption to daily use in the bath, which commends it to general use. In the sick room this delightful perfume will prove invaluable. Its invigorating qualities will disinfect the atmosphere, relieve the tired brain, soothe and refresh the restless patient, and revise his drooping energies.*

Publication of Rocks, Radio and Radar

Mary Harris's book on the life of Elizabeth Alexander is now available. [See Newsletter No. 69 for Elizabeth's story.] Two chapters are about Elizabeth's life in NZ and her radar work, not least her research at Experimental Station 1 on top of Mt Victoria, which was the beginning of the post-war Canterbury Project. There is a substantial online discount if you apply the discount code WSRRR19 (valid until the end of July) in this link:
<https://www.worldscientific.com/worldscibooks/10.1142/q0198>

Wellington Region Heritage Promotion Council Newsletter

MVHS is a member of Wellington Region Heritage Promotion Council. Their newsletters are not distributed as a digital or physical item but if you would like to read their bi-monthly newsletters, full of local heritage information, you can find them via this link:
<http://www.wrhpc.org.nz/library/index.htm>.

Mt Victoria properties owned by NZTA

We have recently received a document showing the properties in southern Mt Victoria which are owned by NZTA (most of them for many years) and thought you might be interested to see this graphic representation. As you know, some of these are historically important.



Historical Note

No. 38 Austin Street

The house at 38 Austin Street dates back to 1875 or 1876. Its age is evident in the house's form – twin hipped gables side by side, parallel to the street. This arrangement was common in early workers' houses and was often used as a relatively straightforward way of expanding a house.

The house was almost certainly built for Thomas Martin, an engine fitter, who bought the property it occupies in 1875. Apart from being a relatively early surviving house in Mt Victoria the house is notable for its association with a social sensation a decade after its construction.

Thomas Martin sold the house to Friedrich (Albert) Fiebig, a gardener, in 1886. Fiebig and his first wife Rosalie arrived in Wellington in 1873. Rosalie died in 1875 and Albert married Margaret McClelland the following year. In 1886, the same year the Fiebig family took ownership of Martin's house, Margaret Fiebig ran off to Hawkes Bay with a local widower, John Oake, who had been a tenant in Fiebig's Elizabeth Street property. Soon after, Oake was arrested for stealing some of Albert Fiebig's possessions. The trial featured prominently in local newspapers, with such juicy details as the "Witness' wife used to skylark with the accused" and Fiebig describing his wife as having a temper and "more like a devil than a woman". Although the case was dismissed, Fiebig subsequently divorced his wife on the grounds of adultery.



The original corrugated iron roof of no.38 is a contrast with the shingle roofs on the houses either side in this detail from an image taken in 1884. The other two houses no longer exist. (BB-2235-1-1-G, Alexander Turnbull Library)

Fiebig, who remarried and moved to Normanby Street (Earls Terrace), remained the owner of the property until his death in 1915.

TO LET, in Austin-street, a five-roomed Cottage, scullery, washhouse, copper, bath, large garden, splendid view; rent low. Apply to A. Fiebig, at Mr. C. E. Capper's, Brongham-street, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., or on the premises after 6 p.m.

The house passed to his executors – his widow Emily and Charles Carter, a coachbuilder. Emily Fiebig died in 1919 and Carter split the property, selling the house to Richard Cheer, a packer, that same year, while the remainder of the section was sold to the owners of 104 Elizabeth Street to provide a back yard for that property.

The house was later owned by the Wellington City Council for staff housing. It has been privately owned since 1966 and much altered internally since then. Nevertheless the roof arrangement remains as original.