



Mt VICTORIA

Historical Society News

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These are, indeed, interesting times we live in. As a consequence, of course, we have no events to announce. We do have a line-up for later in the year, though; for example a talk about the experience of getting an archaeological report done for your property and a guided walk in the Brougham Street area, focusing on the extended Hutchinson family. Hopefully they'll all be able to take place, because the first is scheduled tentatively for June/July.

In the meantime, here are a few historical options for your entertainment in lockdown.

Alan Olliver has started a regular posting to our Facebook page called *Monday Morning Memories*. You'll find there new historic photographs related to Mt Victoria that Alan has been discovering from various sources, along with information about them: <https://www.facebook.com/MVHS.Inc/>

Te Papa has The Little Page of Calm <https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/discover-collections/read-watch-play/little-page-calm>

Online jigsaw puzzles using our collections Take a moment or two to relax	Watch: Sunrise from Mahitahi Bruce Bay A series of atmospheric shots	Quiz: How well do you know Aotearoa New Zealand?	Quiz: How well do you know your New Zealand birds?	Free downloadable activity books Our activity books are designed

On Wellington City Libraries' website, you can find a number of local history booklets which have been digitised – lots of school jubilee publications, Social Reviews and other publications with great old photos of Wellington
<https://wellington.recollect.co.nz/nodes/index/page:1/q:CWGG>

Wellington City Recollect

101 results found

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A Hundred Years of Healing : Wellington Hospital 1847 - 1947 Format: Publication	The Royal Visit to Wellington Format: Publication	Wellington in Verse and Picture Format: Publication	The National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum Format: Publication	The 75th Year Jubilee of the Kilbirnie School, 1884 - 1959 Format: Publication

Our Historical Note this time is about a building we've covered before (Newsletter 26) but lots of time has passed, so newer members might not know about it, and Michael Kelly has brought together new information in his article.

Historical Note

The Cyclopedia and Beethoven – 89 Brougham Street

The two-storey residence at 89 Brougham Street, built in 1890, can rightly be regarded as one of the most historically interesting houses in Mt Victoria.

It was built for John Cole Edwards (1854-1931), printer, editor and politician. The architect was Francis Penty, who had a successful practice in the late 19th and early 20th century. With Edward Blake he designed the Hunter Building at Victoria University. An existing dwelling on the property was removed to make way for the new house.

Edwards, who arrived as a child from Yorkshire in 1862, was a printer who founded his own printing firm, Edwards, Russell and Co. Although successful in business, his most enduring contribution was as a partner in the ambitious six-volume Cyclopedia of New Zealand.



John Cole Edwards
(Cyclopedia of New Zealand, Vol 1, 1897)



89 Brougham Street
(Cyclopedia of New Zealand, Vol 1, 1897)



Cover of the Cyclopedia.
(New Zealand Electronic Text Centre)

Edwards' partners in the Cyclopedia were engraver and publisher Arthur McKee (of McKee and Gamble) and John Randerson (1846-1913), who was chairman and managing director. It grew out of Randerson's work on an almanac that was published by his company, the New Zealand Mutual Creditors' Association. Randerson conceived a national directory of the country's businesses, industries and government agencies, and the individuals who managed them, with listings on a subscriber-basis only i.e. individuals and companies had to pay to have their entries included. The Cyclopedia Company Ltd. was formed in 1894 to plan the project, engage staff and undertake the work of compiling the written and pictorial content and the printing and binding. What was originally intended to be one large volume grew into six. The company's head office was in Wellington but it had branches in other centres. The last volume was published in 1908. The Cyclopedia remains a landmark work and a major resource for historians.

Edwards lived at the property for only a short period. In 1895, he sold the house to Randerson, who lived there after he moved to Wellington from Christchurch. Edwards moved to Sydney about 1897 and lived there for the rest of his life. Oddly, in 1905, for an unknown reason, he and Randerson ended up in court in a dispute over money.

Randerson, a prominent lay-Wesleyan and temperance advocate, was born and educated in Lancashire and arrived in New Zealand in 1870. He had an entrepreneurial and adventurous spirit. He farmed for a period and was then an accountant, mining agent, sharebroker, land and estate agent and auctioneer. After the Cyclopedia was published, Randerson went on to found an advertising agency. He died in 1913.

By then Randerson had sold the house, which was soon rented out and converted into flats. It was alternately used as a single dwelling or flats. By the 1960s it had been converted into 'apartments' and housed a number of tenants.

The house seems to have been converted into a hostel during the mid-1970s. Then, in 1979, it was sold to musician Allen Goh. Goh kept the hostel (then the Mt Victoria Youth Hostel) but renamed it Beethoven House, and it became one of New Zealand's most famous, if eccentric, accommodation houses for travellers. There were 10 bedrooms and three bathrooms and a communal music room full of instruments. Music was a constant theme, with loud classical music waking guests each morning. Although Beethoven House mainly provided backpackers' accommodation, many of the occupants were long-stay guests encouraged to stay by Goh and his staff.



There is still a Facebook page for Beethoven House (presumably for its community of past residents). From Facebook, here's an advertisement for the backpackers and a picture of Allen Goh posted in December 2019. A comment from last year talks of the "incredible bond that was formed under the roof at Beethoven house".

The hostel closed in 2012 and the property was converted back into a single, family dwelling by Graham and Jacqui Nelson. Allen Goh and his predecessors had made many changes to the house and it required a major restoration to return the house to its earlier appearance. The work included new concrete foundations, the removal of a verandah, reinstatement of decorative mouldings and window frames on the front gables, the replacement of aluminium windows with double hung sash timber framed windows, new roofing iron and nearly complete refurbishment of the interior.



Brougham St in 1889, by Christopher Aubrey [ATL C-030-005]
(No. 89 would have been built about a year later, roughly where the bare patch on the hill to the left is shown.)