



# MT VICTORIA

## Historical Society News

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### No. 93, June 2020

Here's a key date to put in your diary. Visitors are welcome.

## Annual General Meeting

**Sunday September 20 at 2.30 pm**  
Tararua Tramping Club, Hall, Moncrieff St

Followed by talk and afternoon tea.

**A 'home where every woman, however degraded, and however many lapses might be charged against her, would meet with competent and humane treatment in her urgent necessity.'**

*Early in the morning on 19 November 1905, 19-year old Isabella Goodman, an unmarried live-in maid and laundress, quietly gave birth. She woke no-one in her Newtown house as she left her baby daughter and went to a nearby pond to drown herself. Her room-mate told the inquest that she had not known Isabella was pregnant as she was 'in the habit of lacing very tightly'. Isabella's death focused public attention on the provision of emergency maternity services and the care available, or lack thereof, to 'friendless' and unmarried girls and women.*

*In the wake of the publicity following Isabella Goodman's death, Dr Edith Huntley and her friends got together to consider what could be done about the plight of unsupported women giving birth outside wedlock. By early 1906, they were working on a plan to take over a valuable but dilapidated property in Majoribanks Street. The property was held by a moribund trust that had been set up in 1885 to help 'fallen' women, but by 1906 was used as a boarding house.*

Historian, Sally McLean, will talk about the contentious history of the Majoribanks Street refuge, operated as the Wellington Christian Society's Home for Fallen Women and then as a Salvation Army rescue home from 1885 to 1894, and about Edith and her ladies' committee's attempt to revive the refuge as a maternity home, a children's hospital and care centre to improve the survival rate of the babies farmed out to foster care in the city.

## Spatial Plan consultation

WCC has advised that it will start consulting on its draft Spatial Plan on August 10. This is an extremely important issue for Mt Victoria because it could threaten the character the suburb. The Council describes the plan as "essentially a 'blueprint' for our city that sets out a plan of action for where and how we should grow and develop". Potentially, all of the Council's current scenarios could see removal of at least some protection for our historic housing stock. The pre-1930s demolition rule has played a significant part in ensuring that Mt Victoria retains the unique character it does:

- **Scenario 1 (Inner City Focus)** – would require removing the pre-1930s character protection across most of the inner suburbs, particularly in Newtown, Berhampore, Mt Cook and parts of Mt Victoria.
- **Scenario 2 (Suburban Centre Focus)** – would require reducing the extent of the character areas, particularly around Newtown and Berhampore where high density housing is considered
- **Scenarios 3 and 4 (New greenfield suburb and extensions)** – low or no changes to the pre-1930s character controls would be required as new growth is focussed in suburban centres and greenfield areas.

You will be hearing more from us on this soon but, in the meantime, if you would like to learn more or become involved in raising awareness of the issue around Mt Vic, please email [joneyman@xtra.co.nz](mailto:joneyman@xtra.co.nz).

## Stables in Mount Victoria

Our last newsletter prompted an enquiry from a reader on what we knew about whether houses in Mt Victoria had stables in the past. The answer was “not a lot”. But unable to resist finding out more, I started some digging – and soon realised that, as with all such historical research, it’s a BIG topic. So this newsletter just gives a taster.

Larger private houses did have their own stables. For instance, we know that George Winder in Pirie Street had a stable behind his large house (<http://mtvictoria.history.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Newsletter-39-September-2006.-George-Winder.pdf>). Winder was a successful businessman and, as there were a number of them living in Mt Victoria, there are no doubt others who kept their own horse or horses.

Many Mt Victoria residents, however – then as now – would have walked to their places of work, shopping or socialising. If they wanted to travel further afield, they may have hired a vehicle from one of the livery stables nearby on Courtenay Place.

James Johnstone, for instance, was a Carriage Proprietor and Livery and Bait Stable Keeper at 9 Cambridge Terrace. Mr Johnstone was “at all times in a position to supply wedding or picnic parties with suitable conveyances, and the public may rest satisfied that sober and capable drivers will be in charge – the equipment being in every respect satisfactory.” There was also H Inniss and Sons, Cab and Express Proprietors, on the corner Courtenay Place and Cambridge Terrace. This firm had eight horses and four traps “which include two comfortable cabs, a fine dog cart, and an express. . . . The firm are well known as careful and steady drivers. They can be depended upon at all times, and in any weather, to keep their appointments. They have had the telephone laid on to the office and stables for the convenience of their customers and a message to No. 381 will ensure prompt attention.”



This photograph shows the office of a “Carriage Proprietor” on the corner of Courtenay Place and Cambridge Terrace in 1911-12.

It’s not possible to read the name of the proprietor (probably no longer Inniss and Sons, however), but it is very likely their premises.

[ATL 1/1-019576-G]

Our reader mentioned that, as a student, he stayed in what they joked about as the stable – a building behind the dairy on the corner of Elizabeth and Brougham St, which is still there. The limited research done so far indicates that it was indeed a stable and in 1911 belonged to a Mr Brooks. What is not known yet is whether this was attached to a business or private residence.

There were a number of stables attached to businesses. For instance, Hart Langdon, who lived at 21 Queen Street, bought 59 Brougham Street in 1895 and it became a store, bakehouse and dwelling. He had stables at the back of 21 Queen Street and his horses were used for bread deliveries, general cartage and coal deliveries (to the Wellington Gas works in Tory Street). One of the former grocery stores on Austin Street had stables attached (No.111, still there). Horace Hawker, whose father owned the store and who lived there from 1921 to 1936 told MVHS:

“Groceries were delivered, upon request, to customers by horse and trap. A stable was attached to the shop and such matters as compatibility of functions and hygiene were given scant attention, either in practice or by law. . . . Some days, at the finish of business, the horse would be put out to graze on the vast expanse of Mt Victoria. Early next morning, before school, it was my much older brother Sam’s unenviable task to set out with a handful of bread crusts to track down the horse. Mission achieved, he would mount and ride it down to the stable, bareback.”

Many businesses, along with the City Council, grazed their horses on the Mt Victoria Town Belt and this may also be why a number of contractors chose to have stables in the suburb.

At 17 Hawker Street, there was a property which seems to have included stables for working horses over a reasonably long period. In 1902, Mr Kannaugh gave up his carrier's business on the premises and was selling three draught horses and a "splendid" draught mare, and accoutrements, two lorries, a van and one spring dray. Another carrier or contractor, J.I. Collie, probably bought the premises from him and operated from there until at least 1917. Pat Lawlor in his memoir "Old Wellington Days", shares a vivid childhood memory from 1903:

"Another great outing for the horses in the weekend was to give them an airing on the town belt. This privilege endured until the twenties. I remember Coley's horses being let loose from their stable in Hawker Street to thunder down the hill and take a sharp turn to upper Majoribanks Street. In a few minutes they would be kicking up their heels on the grassy slopes of Mount Victoria."

"When Sundays came, the stable owners around the city gave their charges a special treat, a swim in the harbour at Oriental Bay. . . .In 1907 the Harbour Board decided horses had to be out of the water by 8.30 am on Sundays because there were so many."

There is evidence of at least one other contractor, P Scalley, who had a six-stall stable in Austin Street in the 1880s.



A local contractor on the job?

1920s to 1930s,  
Wellington, by  
Roland Searle.

[Purchased 1999 with  
New Zealand Lottery  
Grants Board funds.  
Te Papa A.019623]

This article has unfortunately done little to tell the story of private stables in Mt Victoria. That will have to wait for another day. It does illustrate, however, that there was a lot of equine activity at least up until the 1930s.

By Joanna Newman

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#### **Dairy Note: Guided Walk on Sunday 18 October at 2.30 pm - The Hutchinson Ladies of Brougham Drive**

Enjoy a short walk around a patch of Mt Victoria, and hear how the vision and acumen of four women determined much about what you will see. The matriarch, Barbara Hutchinson, began her association with Mt Victoria in 1857 when she and her husband Walter shifted into a small cottage located at what is now 31 Brougham St. This is where our walk will begin. (More in the next newsletter.)

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Don't forget to check out Alan Olliver's *Monday Morning Memories* on our Facebook page for fascinating snippets of Mt Vic history: <https://www.facebook.com/MVHS.Inc/>

Our new financial year started at the beginning of July, so we will soon be emailing out subscription renewal notices.