
Carlton Community History Group



NEWSLETTER

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Hotels in Carlton

In October last year Melbourne was shocked by the illegal demolition of Carlton's earliest extant hotel - the Corkman Irish Pub (originally the Carlton Inn). In 1853, according to the Licensing Register, there were three licensed public houses in Carlton - the Builders' Arms in Cardigan Street, Noah's Ark in Victoria Street and Seven Stars in Madeline Street (now Swanston Street). Three years later in 1856, when the Carlton Inn was first licensed, the number of licences had tripled and continued to grow as the suburb of Carlton extended further north. Wherever there were people, there were hotels. Hotels were not just places to have a meal or a drink after work. Local hotels provided short and longer term accommodation and stabling for horses; they were places for community engagement, public, sporting, and political activities. The Loughrea Hotel in Elgin Street, for example, hosted the first inter-colonial handball match in 1874, and the Clyde Hotel, also in Elgin Street, was used as changing room facilities for the fledgling Carlton Football Club. Carlton hotels also had their dark side, as haunts for criminal activities, SP bookmakers, larrikin gang warfare and illegal trading, with the odd murder or suicide thrown in. Even inquests into deaths were held in hotels, with the deceased person sometimes present.



Madeline Street (now Swanston Street) Carlton in the early 1870s, with the Harp of Erin Hotel on the right. (Photo: State Library of NSW)

Historic Carlton Walk and Talk

Saturday 7 October 2017, 10am to 12 noon.

Discover remnants of early Carlton before the era of the cast-iron terraces.
Learn of its more notorious crimes, notable migrants and more recent controversies.
Starts at Church of All Nations, 180 Palmerston Street, Carlton.

North Carlton Walk and Talk

Saturday 21 October 2017, 10am to 12 noon.

Explore North Carlton's nineteenth century streetscapes and learn about its history, its forgotten prison, plus stories of the British, Jewish and Italian migrants who settled there.
Starts at Carlton Neighbourhood Learning Centre, corner of Station and Princes Streets.

These walks are run by the Carlton Community History Group in conjunction with the Princes Hill Community Centre.

Bookings: phone: 9387 7740, or email: enquiries@princeshill.org.au Cost \$10.

New exhibition at RHSV – ‘Standing on the Corner’

The latest exhibition to be mounted by the Royal Historical Society of Victoria at its premises at 239 a'Beckett Street in the city is entitled 'Standing on the Corner'. It is an exhibition of images illustrating how Melbourne's street corners have been used across 110 years. To provide context for the images, there are also maps of Melbourne in the period 1850 to 1860.

Launch of Fitzroy oral history project

In 2015 the Fitzroy History Society approached a number of long-term Fitzroy residents with the aim of recording their stories of life in the suburb. A total of 23 residents have now been interviewed and the recordings and transcripts of the interviews stored in the Fitzroy Library. A launch of the results of this project entitled 'The Life and Times of Fitzroy from the 1960s' will take place at the Fitzroy Town Hall on Thursday 17 August from 6 to 8 pm. RSVP by 14 August to Lina.Favrin@yarracity.vic.gov.au

Mining history conference in Traralgon in September

The Australian Mining History Association holds a conference somewhere in Australia every year, and this year it is in Victoria – in Traralgon in the Latrobe Valley from 25 to 29 September. As well as keynote speakers, the conference will include sessions focused on local Gippsland mining history as well as broader topics, and site visits to nearby areas of mining interest. For more information visit the AMHA website at www.mininghistory.asn.au

Brunswick Community History Group talks

The Brunswick Community History Group has two interesting talks coming up. On 2 September, Kelvin Thomson, former State and Federal Member of Parliament, will talk on 'My Life In Politics'. On 4 November Sharron Pfueller will talk on 'The Life of Paul Pfueller and his Contribution to Holeproof'. The venue in both cases is Sherwood House, Site Works, 33 Saxon Street, Brunswick, and the time is 1.30 to 3.30. For information contact Francesca on 9387 1194.

History Week, 15 to 22 October

This is an annual event organized by the Royal Historical Society of Victoria. A calendar of events taking place during History Week will be published later in the year, and any group that is planning a history-related event during that week is invited to have it included in the calendar. Events can be registered on-line at www.historyweek.org.au. One of the history walks advertised in the box above will be a History Week event.

The lost hotels of Carlton

In 1885 a Licensing Act was introduced in Victoria that made provision for the reduction of hotel licences in a district if it was deemed there were too many licensed premises per head of population. This meant that new licences could be refused and existing licences could be deprived (not renewed). Factors such as the location, suitability and condition of the licensed premises and its history of licensing breaches were taken into account. Licences could also be voluntarily surrendered or lapsed through non-renewal. What became of these former hotels? Some became private residences, while others were used for a variety of business purposes. Many, like the Commercial Hotel in Bouverie Street, suffered the same fate as the Corkman Irish Pub, but there are still examples of Victorian-era former hotel buildings remaining in Carlton. Here are a few examples:

Lough Rea (Loughrea) Hotel (1860-1919), 77 Elgin Street, was licensed in December 1860. A handball court at the rear of the hotel, built in 1869, was the venue for the first inter-colonial handball match played between New South Wales and Victoria in January 1874. The licence was deprived in June 1919 and the hotel ceased trading in December 1919. The building is now a private residence.

Mills Hotel (1868-1915), 259 Queensberry Street on the corner of Leicester Street was licensed to Patrick Langan in October 1868. The hotel was in the heart of larrikin 'push' territory and in 1898 both it and the neighbouring Commercial Hotel on the corner of Bouverie Street, were targeted by drunken rowdies who made violent attempts to force their way inside. The licence was deprived in April 1915 and the hotel ceased trading in December 1915. The building is now a café, with a yoga centre upstairs.



The former Bristol Hotel (1871-1908) on the corner of Rathdowne and University Streets. Formerly known as the Australia or Australian Hotel, the Bristol Hotel was licensed to Ellen O'Brien in 1871. From 1887 to 1924, the hotel building was owned by Charles Goldspink who, as a Justice of the Peace, presided over the "Drunk's Court" and was known to take a lenient approach to drunken miscreants. The licence was deprived in 1908, and the building is now a doctor's surgery.

(Photo: John T Collins and State Library of Victoria)

United States Hotel (1869-1925), 213 Canning Street, on the corner of Neill Street was licensed to William Williams in 1869. It was the scene of a fatal shooting in May 1925 when the publican, Jack O'Shea, shot an intruder, John Dodd, in the early hours of the morning on Sunday 17 May 1925. The murder charge was withdrawn in June 1925. The hotel licence was deprived the following month, and the hotel ceased trading in December 1925. The building was later occupied by the Princes Hill Gallery and is now used as office space.

Sources: Hotel licensing information has been sourced from the Liquor Licensing Register (VPRS7601), Index to Defunct Hotel Licences (VPRS 8159) and the R. K. Cole collection of hotel records.

Did You Know?

Hotels used for public meetings

In the nineteenth century, hotels were used as the venue for important public meetings. For example on 19 May 1858 *The Argus* newspaper reported that a new Masonic Lodge to be called the Carlton Lodge was inaugurated at a meeting held in the Lincoln Inn. Melbourne City Councillor Patrick Costello (the great-great-grandfather of the former Federal Treasurer Peter Costello) was appointed as Master. The newspaper noted that: "After the business of the Lodge was concluded, a collation was served and partaken of by about 80 persons" It seems that the meeting was good business for the hotel. On 6 December 1859 a letter to the editor of *The Argus* referred to a meeting at the University Hotel at which Carlton ratepayers were urged to support of a petition calling for the suburb of Carlton to be separated from the City of Melbourne.

Hotels with no beer

As the number of licensed hotels grew in nineteenth century Melbourne, so did the influence of the temperance movement. Temperance hotels and coffee palaces became popular as non-alcoholic hospitality venues in the 1880s, in direct competition with licensed premises. Some hotel proprietors took steps to protect their businesses. William Burlinson of the Football Club Hotel in Pitt Street, Carlton, covered both bases by buying £100 of shares in the Queen's Coffee Palace Company Limited, a temperance hotel on the corner of Victoria and Rathdowne Streets. This proved to be a bad investment because the company went into receivership in 1890 and the grand building in Rathdowne Street remained vacant and unfinished for years.

100 years in the hands of the same family

The Queensberry Hotel, on the corner of Swanston and Queensberry Streets, bears the date of 1890, but its history goes back several decades to the early days of Carlton. The hotel was first licensed to William Hawkins in 1854 and owned by members of the Fagan family for nearly one hundred years, from 1866 to 1963. The current hotel building was constructed by Michael Hoarey in 1890. The wording "Fagan's Hotel 1890" can be seen on the parapet.

Interested in local history? Then come and join us, bring your stories and help preserve our past for the future. Dates and topics of forthcoming meetings are posted on our website.

Carlton Community History Group

In September – The History of Trades Hall

Trades Hall in Lygon Street Carlton has been the scene of many historic and dramatic events including the growth of unionism in Victoria, a police shoot-out in 1915, and the anti-conscription campaigns of 1916 and 1917

7.30pm, Monday 4 September 2017,

Kathleen Syme Library and Community Centre, Faraday Street, Carlton.

Carlton Community History Group, P.O. Box 148, Carlton North, 3054.

Email: carlton@cchg.asn.au. Website: www.cchg.asn.au

Illegal demolition of the Corkman Hotel

One of Carlton's earliest extant hotel buildings, on the corner of Leicester and Pelham Streets, was demolished illegally over the weekend of 16 and 17 October 2016. The Corkman Irish Pub, which was subject to a heritage overlay, was reduced to rubble, despite a stop-work order being issued by the Melbourne City Council. The hotel was originally built as the Carlton Inn and first licensed to George Edmonds (Edmunds) in 1856. The developers may have calculated they could get away with paying a relatively small fine out of the profits that they expected from the development. However, a wave of bad publicity slowed them down. A series of legal cases taken by the government against them are currently working their way through the courts. In the meantime the developers have launched their own court case, against Planning Minister Richard Wynne. They want the court to overturn the planning rules that Mr Wynne placed on their site after they razed the building. It is estimated that a win in their court case would lift the value of the site, which they bought in 2015 for \$5 million, to around \$10 million.



The Carlton Inn, more recently called the Corkman, in the 1930s

The Royal Historical Society of Victoria (RHSV) believes that the loss of the historic Corkman hotel was primarily due to the weakness of heritage protection by the Melbourne City Council. In a recent article in the society's newsletter, the Chair of the RHSV's Heritage Committee, Charles Sowerwine, drew attention to the on-going loss of historic hotels in Melbourne as they are sold to developers such as those who bought the Corkman.

These hotels are the canaries in the mine as we replace the historic Victorian CBD with what the Melbourne City Council's Director of Design, Rob Adams, famously called "Hong Kong without the spectacular setting". This process began with the appalling destruction of the 1855 Stork Hotel, approved in 2009. It failed to gain heritage protection despite an intact exterior because of comparatively minor internal alterations done in 1925, at a time when the Heritage Council was being run down. Then Planning Minister Justin Madden granted a permit for a 67-storey tower.

The article draws attention to the threats currently posed to three other hotels in the CBD, including the Great Western Hotel (originally the Star of the West) at 204-208 King Street, which was built in 1864 and is virtually unaltered. (Source: RHSV *History News*, July 2017, page 8).

What shall we do with a drunken sailor?

Dealing with drunken patrons is part and parcel of the hotel trade, but staff of the University Hotel on the corner of Lygon and Grattan Streets, were in for a surprise when an inebriated sailor fell asleep on the sofa in August 1912. Constable Davies was called in and he recognised the 'sailor' as a local young woman named Vivian Campbell:

"She was dressed in a complete suit of the clothes worn by the men of the Australian squadron, including the black silk handkerchief worn around the neck, with the ends tied in the usual sailor's knot, and the blucher boots. She had tucked her hair into the cap. Constable Davies arrested her on a charge of drunkenness, and locked her up. About half an hour later a man who stated that he belonged to H.M.S. Endeavour came to the watch-house. He stated that whilst he was asleep someone had taken all his clothes, and he had to remain in bed until some clothes were borrowed from the neighbours for him. Plain-clothes Constable Sharpe sent a woman for Campbell's clothes, but Campbell declared that she would not take off the man's garments, and it was some time before she was persuaded to do so. Campbell is about 5ft. 10in high, and is built in proportion. She gave her age as 22 years."

(*The Argus*, 17 August 1912, page 21).

Never on a Sunday

Sunday hotel trading is taken for granted nowadays, but in the 19th century and well into the 20th century, Sunday trading was heavily restricted. Hotel licensees were prosecuted for breaches of Sunday trading, often based on evidence of police surveillance. Given Carlton's reputation, there would have been very few hotels that did not breach Sunday trading rules at some stage of their history.

The new Licensing Act of 1876 was put to the test in January 1877, when James Killigrew (Killegrew) licensee of the Kent Hotel in North Carlton, was prosecuted in the District Court because on a Sunday he 'sold or retailed certain liquor called ale to one Henry Peters, the said Henry Peters not being a lodger in the hotel or a *bona fide* traveller'. The key witness was John Thompson, a worker on a Murray steamboat, who was living in North Carlton at the time. Thompson stated that, on Sunday 14 January 1877, he had observed several people leaving the hotel, on the corner of Rathdowne and Freeman (later Curtain) Streets, with jugs or bottles of beer. He gave a boy named Henry Peters twopence to buy some ale and observed that Mrs Killigrew, wife of James Killigrew, served him. There was apparently no issue with serving liquor to a child, but Peters was not a lodger or *bona fide* traveller, as defined by the Act, because he was a local lad and did not live at least ten miles from the Kent Hotel.

Fortunately for James Killigrew the case was dismissed on a technicality. Killigrew remained licensee of the Kent Hotel for only a few weeks after the court case. The licence was transferred to Thomas H. Rainford on 13 February 1877 and Killigrew seemed to disappear from the hotel scene. The Kent Hotel has continued to trade into the 21st century, despite a few rough patches in its history.

For more stories of Carlton pubs, see our website at www.cchg.asn.au

This Newsletter is produced and distributed four times a year.
If you would like to be put on the mailing list, email the CCHG at carlton@cchg.asn.au or visit our website www.cchg.asn.au .