

Mt Victoria Historical Society Inc

ANNUAL REPORT

2019-20

With this reporting year ending June 30, we spent much of the second half in some type of Covid restriction, but as I survey the past year to summarise what we've done, I feel we haven't been too severely impacted. On the contrary.

Newsletters

We generally plan to put out four newsletters a year, including stories based on often-new information to expand and share our knowledge of the suburb's heritage, but this past year we managed five. Sometimes our internet presence connects us with people who have Mt Victoria connections and one of these sent us a great story about the Queen Victoria statue on Kent and Cambridge Terrace and the well-known Wellington Tonks family. Historian Michael Kelly contributed another two of his well-researched and illustrated stories of Mt Victoria – one about the Hutchinson-Cochrane house on Brougham Street and another about 89 Brougham Street. Another newsletter had the story of the Mt Victoria tunnel debate a hundred years ago in the 1920s and then, in response to a member's enquiry about stables in Mt Victoria, an article sharing research on those.

Events

Some planned 'live' events were affected by Covid restrictions in the past year (unfortunately our Mary Taylor Victorian picnic on the top of Mt Vic had to be cancelled in April) but we still managed a good number of events for members. In July last year, we had a visit to the Victorian perfumery at the top of the cable car in Kelburn. Alongside our last AGM, we had a presentation by Alan Olliver on Brickmakers and Potteries of Mt Cook and this was followed by a guided walk of the area he covered in this talk. In October last year, Michael Kelly led us on a fascinating tour up and down the hills around Doctor's Common and Alan took us on another tour in February, this time sharing the history of Ellice Street. Guided walks do seem to be one of our most popular activities.

Heritage advocacy

In terms of advocating for Mt Vic heritage, we wrote to Council objecting to the proposed demolition of 69 Hawker Street, and also raised again our concerns about its neighbour No. 71 (next door to the monastery). In addition, we provided information to the team working for a nearby resident opposed to the demolition. We also opposed the demolition of 4 Armour Avenue and its replacement with eight townhouses, particularly because we felt the density was out of keeping with the heritage character of the street, and this was at least reduced to six.

The committee made a formal submission to WCC on its *Planning for Growth* scenarios in April, stating that we do not support higher buildings in Mt Victoria or the removal of the protection of the character in Mt Victoria. (Our formal submissions can be found on our website.)

Other

Our Facebook presence has really had a boost this year with Alan Olliver's Monday Morning Memories. Started as a Covid lockdown project, these are regular snippets of Mt Vic history, with great images, researched and written by Alan and edited by his partner, Julie Middleton. Nineteen weeks, and 19 issues, later and with life almost back to normal in Wellington, it's still going strong.

The heritage plaques project we hoped to get off the ground run into trouble over council signage policy. We had two options, however, and will now look at option two (once we are through the Draft Spatial Plan process). This option is for a 'system' of small, simple MVHS plaques which owners can choose to purchase for their home if they wish. Examples might be: "Built 1897 by George Baker" or "Kate Edger lived here: first woman in NZ to receive a degree". (Option 1, Historic Places Aotearoa plaques for particularly significant properties, may be revived in the future.)

Conclusion

Lastly, I'd like to thank the committee for the past year: Jane O'Loughlin, Alan Olliver, Colin Carr and Rosemary Bromley for their efforts. Colin Carr, our Treasurer, is not standing again but we have very much appreciated his efforts over the past two years.

Thank you, members, for your support. Do spread the word about the value of joining Mt Victoria Historical Society – members can be as passive or involved as they wish, and we always welcome comment on what members would like from the Society.

Joanna M.A. Newman
Convenor

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