

CARLTON RECALLED



CO·AS·IT

SPECIAL DOUBLE ISSUE OF THE

NEWSLETTER

of the

ITALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

CO·AS·IT. - VICTORIA

APRIL TO SEPTEMBER, 1992

Volume 3, Numbers 2 and 3

CONTENTS

Opening of Bridging Two Worlds	3	Growing Up in Carlton	11
Address by Dr Ray Marginson	5	Picnics at the Beach	14
Address by Mr John Gandel	5	Pescia's Place	16
Address by Sir James Gobbo	8	Matt and Mimi Vita	18
Address by Sir Zelman Cowen	10	The Leone Index	21

ISSN 1034-4195

THE ITALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ADVISORY PANEL:

Dott. Carlo Coen, Professor Graeme Davison, Professor Greg Denning, Professor Alan Frost, Dr. John Lack, Dr. Andrew Marcus, Professor John Salmond and Ms Jacqueline Templeton.

COMMITTEE OF THE ITALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY, CO.AS.IT.:

CHAIRMAN: Sir James Gobbo

DIRECTOR: Dr. Ilma Martinuzzi O'Brien

MEMBERS:

Mr. Doug Campbell, Dr. Joan Campbell, Ms. Sarina Cassino, Ms. Gina Di Rita, Mr. Mark Donato, Mrs. Bette Maiuto, Mrs Laura Mecca, Mr. Tony Pagliaro, Ms. Bruna Pasqua, Mrs. Maria Mantello Sandbach, Mr. Loris Sartori, Mrs. Delfina Sartori, Mrs. Anna Scariot, Dr. Celestina Sagazio, Mr. Gaspare Sirianni, Mrs. Maria Tence, Mrs. Susi Wardrop.

REGIONAL CORRESPONDENTS:

Mr. Damian Tripodi, La Trobe Valley.
Mr. Tom Florio, Mildura.

About the newsletter

The newsletter aims to provide, to those who are interested in the history of the Australian-Italian communities, an outlet for the circulation of news, the exchange of information and the notification of future activities.

We welcome your suggestions for items to include in this newsletter, and invite readers to contribute newsworthy articles and short notes.

The Newsletter will be published four times each year. Subscriptions are available at \$10 per year, (postage included).

Please address correspondence to:

Dr Ilma Martinuzzi O'Brien,
Editor,
Italian Historical Society, Co.As.It.,
304 Drummond Street,
Carlton, Vic, 3053.

Telephone: (03) 347 3555

Telefax: (03) 347 8269

BRIDGING TWO WORLDS: JEWS, ITALIANS AND CARLTON
EXHIBITION AT THE MUSEUM OF VICTORIA



Mr Joe Gagliardi, Mrs Agnes Rush, Mrs Rita Arceri (far right) and her daughter Carol Proietto in front of Felice Gagliardi's violin hospital at the exhibition.

A major exhibition on Carlton, the heartland of Melbourne's Italian community, was prepared by the Society, and launched on 31 August, 1992. Italians, and the Jews who lived here before them, had many similar experiences in Carlton while they were becoming settled, and for this reason the Italian Historical Society and the Jewish Museum of Australia decided to work together to document the process of migration and settlement for both communities. For both, Carlton was a bridge between old Europe and the new country.

The exhibition will be on display for at least one year, until August, 1993, in the first gallery of the Museum of Victoria in Swanston Street.

To present the exhibition, we developed a partnership with the Jewish Museum and the

Museum of Victoria which breaks new ground in museum practice in Australia. We believe the project demonstrates the positive benefits of multiculturalism, both in the content and subject matter of the exhibition, and in its methodology and working arrangements.

During the preparation of the exhibition a group of researchers worked tirelessly for the Society to collect material about Carlton. The Italian community responded warmly and enthusiastically, and many beautiful photographs were loaned to the Society, together with objects and other memorabilia, many of them items lovingly treasured for many years. During the research process, approximately 1300 photos were added to the Society's collection along with documents, letters and papers.

Among those who helped the curator tell the Italian story were: Angela Bonacci, Sarina Cassino, Olga Cavedon, Marcello D'Amico, Maria Irwin, Carmel Italiano, Fiona McFarlane, Bette Maiuto, Laura Mecca, Adele Murdolo, Anna Scariot, Delfina Sartori, Nadia Stefani, Maria Tence, Maria Triaca Harris, Di Veitch, and especially Gabrielle Belgiovane, Adriana Bella, and Teresa Pagliaro. The curator, Ilma Martinuzzi O'Brien wishes to thank all for their valuable contributions. Most importantly, without the on-going support of Co.As.It. for the work of the Historical Society, the exhibition would not have taken place.

Also warm thanks are due to all the members of the Italian community who provided photos, correspondence, documents and objects, or who otherwise shared their Carlton experiences and memories with us.

The exhibition would not have been possible without the generous support of our sponsors. The Victorian Health Promotion Foundation and its associated body the International Diabetes Foundation made a grant to the project of \$42,000, and the Department of Ethnic Affairs presented \$25,000. In addition, we received generous financial support from both communities, for which we are most grateful. Sponsors from the Jewish community were the Gandel, Lew, Pratt and Smorgon Charitable Trusts/Foundations.

The Italo-Australian Foundation, the Barro Group, the Valmorbida Family and the Grollo Family very kindly sponsored the exhibition from the Italian community, and we wish to thank them most sincerely.

Countdown to Opening Night...



On Saturday, two days before the opening, construction work was still underway. Painting, carpentry, the installation of sound and lighting, the placement of objects and the positioning of perspex all came together finally, and by the time the first guests arrived no-one would have guessed the previous rush.

BRIDGING TWO WORLDS: JEWS, ITALIANS AND CARLTON

THE EXHIBITION IS ON DISPLAY DAILY

from 10.00am to 5.00pm

at the

**MUSEUM OF VICTORIA
328 SWANSTON STREET
MELBOURNE**

**LAUNCHING OF THE EXHIBITION
BRIDGING TWO WORLDS: JEWS, ITALIANS AND CARLTON
at the
MUSEUM OF VICTORIA
on MONDAY, 31 AUGUST, 1992**



*Dott Carlo Coen, Dr Franco Schiavoni, Mr Giorgio Mangiamele, Mrs Danielle Kemp, and Mrs Mangiamele
Below are the speeches delivered on the occasion.*

**DR RAY MARGINSON,
PRESIDENT,
MUSEUM COUNCIL OF VICTORIA**

Prominent among the Museum of Victoria's objectives is the commitment to providing communities access to cultural resources. It was therefore, with great enthusiasm, that the Museum welcomed the opportunity of working with the Jewish Museum of Australia and the Italian Historical Society in the development of the exhibition **Bridging Two Worlds**. We hope that this innovative partnership will provide others with a model for shared cultural planning and activities, as well as providing a most effective means for exploring and understanding our country's culturally diverse past and present. It also provides the Museum with a benchmark for future joint community programmes. We look forward to the possibilities and challenges ahead.

**MR. JOHN GANDEL
CHAIRMAN,
JEWISH MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA**

Mr Chairman, Madam Premier, Joan Kirner, Sir Zelman Cowen, Ministers, Mr Phil Honeywood MP (representing the Leader of the Opposition), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen

As chairman of the Jewish Museum of Australia, I have taken great pride in being associated with my co-hosts, Sir James Gobbo, Chairman of the Italian Historical Society, and Dr Ray Marginson, Chairman of the Museum of Victoria, in the creation of this Historic Exhibition. The three host organisations have combined magnificently to bring this exhibition to fruition.

It has been made possible by generous sponsorships from both public and private



Mr John Gandel and Sir James Gobbo.

sources, some of which have been mentioned already. In acknowledging all of these sponsorships, I would like, on behalf of the Jewish Museum and the Jewish community as a whole, to single out those enthusiastic supporters of our Jewish Museum who have been extremely generous in their assistance. The Smorgon family, Solomon and Rosie Lew, and Richard and Jeanne Pratt. Also, those many people in our community who have loaned their personal artefacts and contributed in many other practical ways. They, with the many volunteers, the three curators - Helen Light, Anna Malgorzewicz and Ilma O'Brien, and other sponsors and professionals are deserving of our special thanks.

Having been born in Carlton myself from migrant parents escaping to a new free country from the Europe of the 1900s with all of its persecutions and problems, this exhibition has become for me, as I am sure it will become for many of you, a major journey in nostalgia and sweet memories of times gone by, and of people who are perhaps no longer with us.

Australia today is the product of the merging of millions of people from more than 100 different

countries. The Italians and the Jews are just two groups who make up this culturally rich society which is one of the demographic phenomena of the modern world.

Carlton has long been an exciting, vibrant and changing area, demonstrating the culturally diverse expression of Australia's changing society over the years. Today, with the exception of Israel, Australia has the highest percentage of overseas born people of any country in the world. The Jews and Italians, with their historically different backgrounds, have both had major, but similar impacts on this diverse society.

For example, the generosity of Italian and Jewish-Italians towards local philanthropic causes and for the well-being of their Kith and Kin overseas is well documented. Jewish donors to local charitable causes are estimated at some four to five times community averages and the Italian community's record of support for regular appeals such as Victorian Charity Queen and for special projects like the Vaccari Village is legendary.

It is appropriate that both the Italian and Jewish communities should be associated with the Museum of Victoria in presenting this Exhibition. The Italian and Jewish influence in the development of Australia has been noteworthy from the earliest days of European settlement. The depiction of their role in the early days of Carlton is simply a magnified reflection of their impact on Australian life generally.

Apart from the Aborigines, the Jews were the first ethnic group of non-Anglo/Celtic non-Christians in Australia, with not less than 8 Jews arriving at Botany Bay with the First Fleet in 1788. Similarly, several Italians, mainly ex-Sicilian sailors, captured by the British and transported to the penal colonies, came to Australia with the early convicts and free settlers. At least one Italian was a First Fleeter in 1788.

Who, in those days, could ever have comprehended the waves of migrants to follow those early pioneers. Australia's culturally diverse community is not a hotch potch of different attitudes, customs and ideas. It is, in reality, one total Australian community with common aspirations and a unity of purpose. Our



Mrs Magnavacca, Mrs Dina Grollo and Mr Bruno Grollo viewing part of the display.

differences are the ingredients of our strength bound together with a social cohesion that is demonstrated by the manner in which this Exhibition has been conceived and implemented.

The Italian and Jewish contribution to the professions and to commerce has been quite remarkable and this Exhibition records that many of these successful and prominent Jewish and Italian families had their beginnings in the homes and shops in Carlton. Perhaps, the most notable would be the Smorgon family interests, whose three pioneering brother founders opened their first Kosher Butcher shop in Lygon Street in the 1920s.

Toto's Pizza House in Lygon Street was probably the first of the thousands of Pizza Parlours that exist in Australia today. While it is not generally known that an Italian Jeweller unwittingly played a major role in starting the 1851 Gold Rush when he purchased one of the first two nuggets found by a shepherd near Ballarat.

As this Exhibition depicts the strength and vitality of early culturally diverse life in Carlton, it is appropriate to mention in the presence of the Premier and many Parliamentarians that Victoria was the first Government in Australia to give statutory recognition to the concept of a multicultural society through the provisions of the then Ministry of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs Act 1977, introduced by Walter Jona and supported by the whole Parliament.

That first Ministry of Ethnic Affairs also had its Italian-Jewish foundation. The first Minister (Walter Jona) was Jewish and the first Assistant Director of the Ministry (Sauro Antonelli) was Italian born. Mr Antonelli, now head of the office of Ethnic Affairs, and Mr Jona are both here today.

Those of us closely linked with this Exhibition's three sponsoring organisations are all mindful of history and destiny. We are deeply conscious of the heritage of modern Australia and of the spirit and heartbeats that have changed its face over

the years. We are all gratified by this opportunity to assist in the presentation of an Exhibition that will contribute greatly to an important area of community education and cohesion at this challenging period in Australian history.

I would like to thank all of you for being present and for your support, and to wish you a wonderful experience in viewing our Exhibition.

Now it is my pleasure to call on one of my Co-Host, Sir James Gobbo, to speak in his capacity as Chairman of the Italian Historical Society Co.As.It.

Sir James, a leading Jurist, has played a leading role in many diverse areas, particularly in the promotion of harmony and goodwill between various ethnic groups which make up our society. His achievements have been recognised far and wide, for he not only holds prestigious Imperial and Australian Honours, but he has also been decorated with the Knighthood from the Government of Malta and by the very special commendation of The Order of Merit of The Republic of Italy.

**SIR JAMES GOBBO
CHAIRMAN**

ITALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY, CO.AS.IT.

It is an honour to speak on such an historic occasion. My links with Carlton are both institutional and personal.

The institution which I represent is part of CO.AS.IT., the Italian community organization which this year celebrates the 25th year of its existence. All those years it has been based in Carlton. We began as tenants of a kindly Jewish landlord Mr. Steinberg, in MacArthur Place. Then we moved to our present headquarters at the corner of Drummond and Faraday Streets, where we were next door neighbours to the site of a famous Jewish restaurant, Cohens, now Donnini's.

My links are also personal as I was born in Carlton and lived in Newry Street and later, after a childhood in Italy, returned and eventually settled in Carlton. Our first home was in University Street, near Tibaldi's salami factory.

Later we moved to 501 Drummond Street, a house with a great deal of character and a long garden covered with grape vines. At the rear was a sleep-out, where for years we had as a friend and lodger Chenno Baggio - who still bakes some of the best bread in Melbourne as San Remo Bakery.

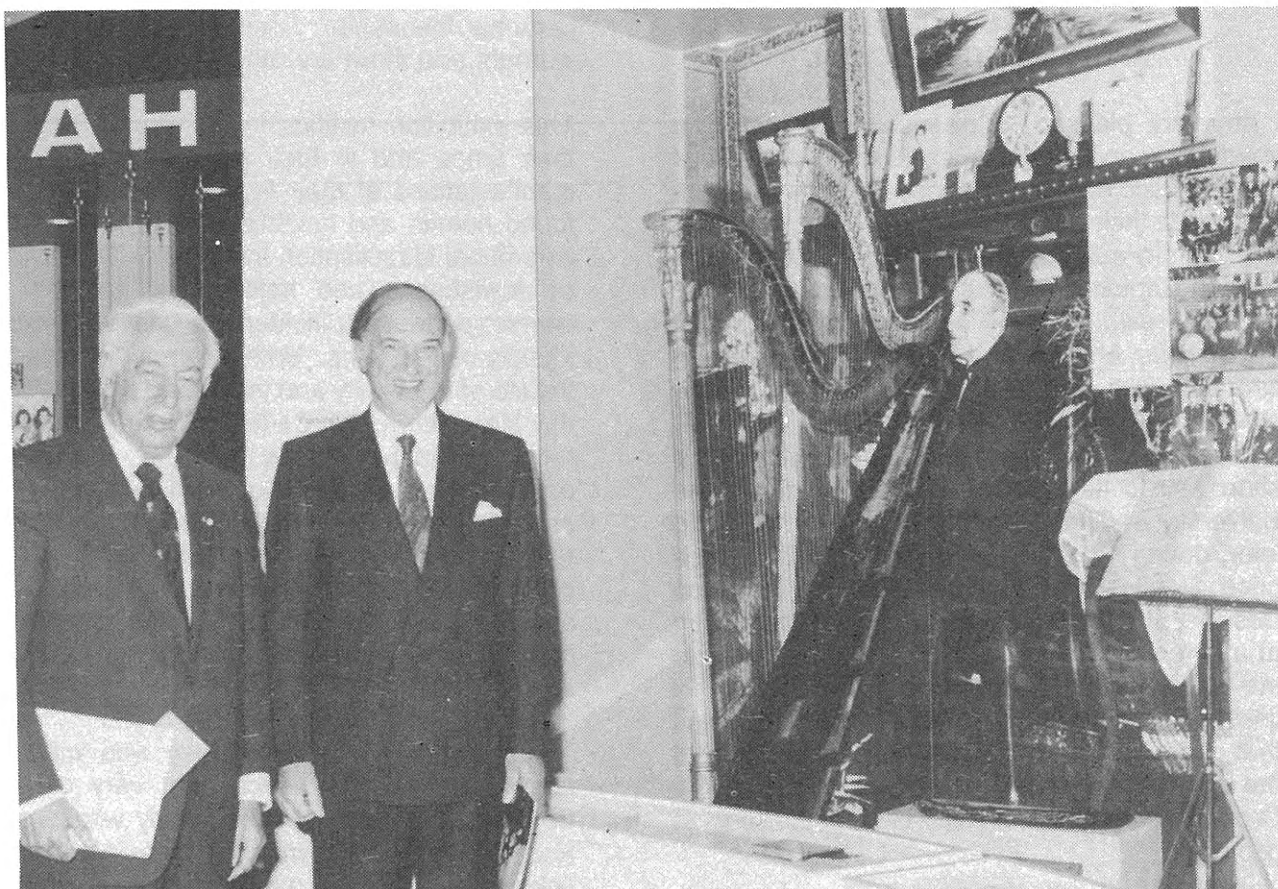
After I returned from Oxford, my new wife and I also settled in North Carlton, yet again in Drummond Street at the very end where those beautiful elm trees adorn the road. There we had Jewish neighbours across the lane and a few paces up the street was a small but very busy Jewish school. Again we had grape vines and we bottled our own wine - in beer bottles. Three bottles of the 1957 vintage are in the Exhibition. I am not sure what was the name of the vintage. I think it was North Carlton Barolo.

The two communities that did so much to enrich and transform Carlton were of course significant as migrant communities far beyond Carlton. In the history of migration, two Ministers stand out as having a decisive role in the development of Australia's migration programs. I refer to Arthur Calwell and Harold Holt. Both enjoyed a close and friendly association with the Jewish and Italian communities.

Arthur Calwell had part of Carlton in his electorate and came to many Italian functions. I believe that his quite remarkable and courageous support for an expansionary migration program sprang from his personal links with our two communities.

I have a personal debt to express to him for he was always encouraging my parents to make sure they kept their children at school. In that context I also have to acknowledge my debt to my mentor and teacher, Sir Zelman Cowen who helped me reach Oxford. Whilst still a Carlton resident I had the good fortune to have Arthur Calwell and Sir Zelman Cowen as guests of honour at my 21st Birthday party. You will therefore understand my pleasure that Mary Elizabeth Calwell is present tonight and that Sir Zelman is about to open this Exhibition.

This brilliant Exhibition is a testament to many good things. It reflects the generous and far-sighted hospitality of the Museum of Victoria and the skill and goodwill of its staff and consultants.



Sir Zelman Cowen with Sir James Gobbo photographed on opening night, standing beside the Kadimah and the harp of Matt Vita.

It tells how Carlton bridged the cultures of the Old World and the New. It tells how two communities came together to contribute to a new society. It tells of the shared values of Jews and Italians especially their religious fervour, their concern for family and their love of music. It reflects the special talents and dedication of its three curators, Dr. Ilma Martinuzzi O'Brien, Anna Malgorzewicz and Dr. Helen Light. The Italian Community would want me to pay tribute to Ilma for her sympathetic insight in helping to tell their story so well.

The Exhibition also reflects the generosity of our sponsors. On behalf of both communities and the museum, I thank the International Diabetes Institute and the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation. Can I assure those two splendid organizations who are represented here tonight by Professor Zimmet and Rhonda Galbally, that I

cannot imagine any two communities that place such importance on the value of good fresh food on the family table as the fountain of so many other riches.

I thank also the Ministry for Ethnic Municipal and Community Affairs which through its Minister, the Honourable Caroline Hogg provided valuable funding assistance.

The Italian community has been generous in its support. I refer not only to the many valuable treasured objects that have been lent by the donors, all or nearly all of whom are here tonight but also the four Italian sponsors, the Grollo Group and the Valmorbida family. All are more or less Carlton born and bred. They will, I know, share with so many, great satisfaction at the artistic success of this splendid Exhibition.

**THE RT HON
SIR ZELMAN COWEN
AK GCMG GCVO QC DCL**

I am very pleased to be asked to open this imaginative and evocative exhibition which tells of the multifaceted lives of these two communities who made their Australian landfall in the setting of Carlton. In a larger context - I mean extending beyond Carlton - my links with both communities are very real. With the Jewish community they are obvious, and over the years they have grown stronger with the Italian community. As Governor-General I participated in a variety of Italian community events; during those years on a short visit to Italy, I was made a Doctor of the University of Turin in a colourful ceremony and later, during my years at Oxford, I established a good friendship with President Francesco Cossiga, and that had a special significance when at a ceremony in the Quirinale Palace, he made me an Italian Cavallieri. Not least because of my links with the Italian community in this country, that gave me special pleasure. Maybe it breaks the rules, but I wear the badges of the Italian Order and the Order of Australia together on this occasion.

I am not a Carlton Jew; I was born and lived throughout my boyhood in St Kilda. But there are many links with and remembrances of Carlton. As a barmitzvah boy, sixty years ago this year, part of the celebration was a family lunch at Mr Cohen's Continental Cafe, and that was not my only visit to that well remembered place. I remember the good smells and excitement of Passover shopping at King and Godfreys. Throughout the latter years of the 1930s I was a student at Melbourne University set in a Carlton environment. I remember, then and later, visits to the Kadimah, and I deeply regretted my imperfect knowledge of Yiddish, though it was readily possible to sense the intense vitality of that distinctive Carlton Yiddish culture.

Then when later I came as Professor to Melbourne University in the early fifties - and that stretched into the middle sixties - I took much pleasure, in the sights and tastes of Italy, as the Italian community grew and spread; it was a lively and warm environment. My hair was

attended to by Mr. Angerame: with gusto and personal friendship. I remember that link with warmth, and there are other good memories.

This exhibition testifies to the way in which in their times and in their places, in the varied manifestations of their lives, Italians and Jews found homes and established life patterns and communal identification in Carlton. The notions of Jewishness and Italian-ness, are not, of course, perfectly coincident, but one can readily identify connections. Both cultures lay stress on the life of the family and that found expression in the life patterns of Carlton. Both had strong religious identifications. The community organisations of both communities flourished, and that contributed much to the vitality of life in Italian and in Jewish Carlton. The two communities in their shops and businesses, their activities, their living side by side contributed much to a colourful, vigorous changing Australian society.

There will be many here today who will have memories and experiences not very different from my own; there will be many whose past, and it may be present, life experiences have links with Carlton as part of their Australian life experiences. I believe that all who view the exhibition with its well chosen evidences and record of Jewish and Italian life and lives in Carlton will see how these two cultures have enriched and diversified the life of this Australian community.

The exhibition has been planned and produced as a shared endeavour of the Italian Historical Society, the Jewish Museum and the Museum of Victoria. It is justly claimed that this partnership is unique in Australian museum experience, and it certainly provides us with an excellent opportunity to enrich our knowledge and experience of multicultural Australia. I thank all of those who have planned the venture and who brought it to fruition. It is a moving and a warming story.

I have great pleasure in declaring this exhibition "The Jews and Italian of Carlton" open.

GROWING UP IN CARLTON

by

Teresa Pagliaro



The under-fourteen football team at St George's in the mid 1930s.

The lives of children growing up in Carlton were divided between school and home.

During the 1930s, Italian children in Carlton, in the main, attended St George's School, the parish school of the Sacred Heart church in Rathdowne Street. Their numbers steadily increased with wave after wave of immigration. The grotto between the school grounds and the church is remembered by all for this was the focal point for the major events in their lives.

After school, on weekends and holidays they spent their time in a variety of ways. In comparison with the 1990s, theirs was an essentially simple life and their toys and pastimes unsophisticated. One of the particular advantages of living in Carlton in comparison with other inner suburbs, was the large amount of open public

space. The parks, gardens and squares provided easily accessible areas where the children could play. The squares off Lygon Street (Argyle and Pelham), Rathdowne Street (Murchison, McArthur and Curtain) and Grattan Street are examples of these.

The squares could be seen dotted with children. In winter, the boys spent the cold and drizzly Melbourne afternoons playing football. Some have said that it was rare to see a real football and that they made their own. There were several ways of doing this. An empty cigarette packet, preferably the larger Capstan sort, was rounded out and the centre was filled with other packets which had been flattened out and folded over and over. String or rubber bands around the outside held it together. Even although it was not the size of a football, its particular shape allowed

the boys to kick a torpedo punt. An alternative method was to fill an old sock with rags and paper and tie it in a knot. This formed a central core which was wrapped around with paper and tied with string. Football, of course, was played also at school. Sometimes matches between St George's and St Michael's were organised at Princess Park, which was also a favourite venue of many children on Saturday afternoons where children frequently queued up to "tag a ride". An adult with a season's ticket was entitled to take in his family free, so that if someone came alone to attend the match, a child waiting would be allowed a free entry.

In the summertime, the children played cricket in the Carlton squares. "Tip and run" was a favourite variety designed to allow everyone to have a chance to bat and make runs. Another summer pastime which passed the hours was swimming. Children flocked to the nearby Carlton baths but frequently too they travelled together down Swanston Street to the South Melbourne beach.

Sometimes they went with their families. Ilda Benini remembers:

We used to go to South Melbourne. We used to get the tram... there were two benches where you could sit and there was a roof on top for the sun. We used to go very early so we could get one for ourselves, because otherwise people came and took them first. We would go with our friends, early ... six o'clock in the morning on Saturday or Sunday with our basket of things. South Melbourne was the nearest because we could go with the tram. No one had cars in those days. Not Italians, anyway. So you had to go where you could go with the trams... There was a cable tram that went right down to South Melbourne on the beach.

Picnics in the 1930s tended to be reserved for special occasions. Mrs Cattapan recalled that on Christmas day the family went to Studley Park, taking roast chicken and salad. if someone owned a car or utility truck, a large group went - Werribee



Luciano Anceschi's seventh birthday party in Carlton in 1951.

gorge, Warrandyte, Eltham and Seaford were popular destinations.

At home, children spent time playing with bilycarts. These were made from fruit boxes, with a board down the centre as an axle, and pram wheels with a piece of rope or thick string to steer with. Frank Gasparini remembers that races down the Barkly Street slope to Nicholson Street were very popular. On Saturday they put the bilycarts to a different use. They waited outside Victoria Market, with other boys, aged about eight or nine, offering to take home for about threepence large loads of shopping for the women who lived in Carlton, West Melbourne or North Melbourne.

For some of the girls, the afternoons and evenings were spent doing mending, knitting and sewing. This included crochet work and embroidery. As they grew older they started making items for their glory boxes - bed covers, mats, tray cloths and bed linen.

For most children there were a variety of chores. Those, for example, whose mothers were working, had to prepare and cut up the vegetables after school for the evening meal. In the weekends on Saturday morning they generally did the cleaning, scrubbing and polishing the linoleum floors, before they were allowed out to play.

Sometimes on Saturday afternoon they went to the pictures. Frank Gasparini recalled that it was possible to get into the fleahouse for half price if you arrived late or at half-time. On Sundays some went to church and afterwards to coffee. Another common way of spending Sunday afternoons, particularly in the 1930s, was walking in the Exhibition Gardens. Time was spent with the family and visiting family friends. Often they visited paesani. Mrs Donato recalled the meetings of her family with other Viggianesi, the regional group well known for their large number of musicians:

...We would get together and I can remember even until my late teens during the War even my mother and her two brothers would come over to our place and I'd be on the piano, Uncle Frank on the cello... and we would have singing... Well, as I said, a typical Sunday would be a family day, we would have lunch; but after Sunday night's dinner, the family would come and we would have little soirees or they would sit and talk and the men would be outside playing cards and the women talking, if not, it was Saturday which was the women's day to get together. We would go mostly to my grandmother's sister's... it was a get together, and as we all grew

up they would be teaching us how to sew, knit, crochet and cook...

Describing her childhood years of the 1950s, Inez Binotto contrasts her life with those of her children. With far fewer toys she and her cousin, Fabiola, made their own fun. They spent a lot of time in the playgrounds of Newry Street playing un-supervised. In this they had more freedom than their own children. They frequently played in the streets, climbing trees. Given that toys were few, neighbourhood children shared those they had. These included marbles, jacks and pick-up-sticks. As children they always became involved in their parents' social activities.



Inez Donazzan with cousin Fabian Tasca and uncle Luigino Tasca gardening in the backyard in Canning Street in 1963.

PICNICS AT THE BEACH

by

Anna Donchi Scariot



Anna Donchi Scariot and her mother's picnic basket.

The Donchis were more fortunate than many of the other Italian families in Carlton in that they had a car - a red Fiat - which enabled them to pack up their food etc in the basket, and bring along everything required for a picnic at the beach. The guitar which Genoveffa played was an important part of the festivities, and people would be disappointed if it were left behind.

Mostly the picnics were pre-planned and arrangements made to meet other families who relied on public transport, eg tram or train -to Brighton Beach, or Sandringham where there were plenty of trees under which blankets were spread, out of the sun.

Food was planned beforehand but prepared the same morning, so that it would be still warm, and was eaten soon after arrival. Plates, cotton serviettes, (checked - made at home - table cloth -thermos, (which invariably arrived broken) and a spirit lamp to make the coffee in the "Napoletana" were all taken in the basket.

It was quite common to have freshly cooked ravioli or gnocchi or spaghetti. Roast chicken,

roast veal, fritto misto eg veal cutlets, veal chops, rabbit cutlets. Vegetables could be fried - including zucchini and cauliflower. Home preserves of wild "carciofi" and mushrooms sottolio...

In jars were brought fresh bean salad, potato salad or cauliflower salad. Fresh salad of Italian lettuce - endivia and radicchio - home grown. Lemons were an important item to use with fresh shell fish. Lemonade and wine was brought also.

From time to time Genoveffa would organise picnics for everyone, and engage drivers with large furniture vans. At other times the driver from San Remo pasta company would get a loan of the truck he used for deliveries, and everyone would climb into the back of the van for the trip.



Genoveffa Donchi outside the Dalla Toscana grocery shop at 139-141 Cardigan Street.



Genoveffa Donchi with guitar during a picnic at the beach.

Genoveffa was from l'Isole D'Elba and at that time there were several families from the same island in Carlton. This explained the venue.

An important part of the beach picnics was the collection of shell fish under and on the rocks and the pier. Mussels, sea snails, vongole, limpets were plentiful in those years. Some were eaten fresh with lemon and bread - the rest were taken home.

Lidia Bearzato (was Chellini) tells the story of the family's trips to the beach on the tram where they used hessian bags to carry 1) for the beach towels, 2) to bring home the mussels. The food was carried in boxes. One day on the return journey home the tram pulled up suddenly and the bag with the mussels fell over, which caused all the mussels to spread all over the tram floor. This was in the days when Australians had no appreciation of shell fish.

A vital part of the picnics was the sharing of the

food, gossip, telling jokes, games on the beach and playing cards.

When Genoveffa had her guitar, she sang in her rich mellifluous voice the old Italian songs, and "stornelli" which everybody loved to hear, join in and sing along. One of the Australian friends who thoroughly enjoyed these picnics and participated was Miss Helen Byrne, Chairman of the Department at Melbourne University.

There were other picnics organised to the country. As Italians slowly started up their concreting businesses, they acquired vehicles which they used. The Veneti and Friulani said they were more practical with their food in that they brought cheese, salame and bread, and wine.

Other venues for picnics were Fern Tree Gully, Keilor and Rupertswood at Sunbury for the Eucharistic Festival.

PESCIA'S PLACE

The Italian Settlement of Carlton

by

Charles D'Aprano

The Italian immigrants who settled in Melbourne were not wealthy and, therefore, sought cheap accommodation. The areas most favoured were the north-east of the city and South Carlton, especially the area around the Exhibition Gardens and across to the Pelham Gardens. For many years, the area was known as North Melbourne and extended to Pelham Street, then to Grattan Street, and right across Parkville to present day North Melbourne. As settlement occurred and spread north, new municipal wards were created. The suburb of Carlton [to present day Fenwick Street] extended at first only to Elgin Street, then to Princess, followed by Church, McPherson and finally Park Street as its northern boundary. The railway at its northern end divided Carlton from its next neighbour, Brunswick. It is interesting to note that Church Street continues to exist by its original name across Nicholson Street in North Fitzroy in North Carlton it is known as Fenwick Street.

The area north of Princess Street was for many years a series of blue-stone quarries. It was not until the 1880s that the North Carlton area became settled. It was in this environment that the Italian-speakers came to live.

In 1854, North Melbourne, of which Carlton was part, already had nearly 7,000 people. The area must have been slow to develop because Newtown, which comprised present day Collingwood and Fitzroy, had a population of over 17,000 people for the same year.

There were many impediments to Carlton's growth. We have already mentioned the blue-stone quarries in the area but possibly the most difficult to overcome was the Reilly Street drain which ran along present day Princess Street. The quarries and the drain caused drainage problems which are still in evidence today in many streets in north Carlton as water constantly seeps through the paths and blue-stone kerbs. Because of this, it seems that there was no development north of

Fenwick Street as late as 1878. In the following year, the Member for Carlton asked the Minister for Public Works to make funds available for filling the quarry holes in North Carlton.

By 1881, residential development north of MacPherson Street was only four percent of the 1861 residential concentration so that Carlo Pescia, who built his grocer's store on the corner of MacPherson and Canning Streets in 1885 must have been one of the earliest settlers in the quarry filled area.

Pescia's name is one of the most interesting discovered in the Sands and McDougall Register of that period. It is interesting because there is a house on the corner of Canning and MacPherson Streets, North Carlton, with Pescia's Building written above the front door.

Carlo Pescia had been a digger around the Daylesford area in the 1850s and 60s. He then transferred to Melbourne and was a fruiterer-greengrocer at the Eastern Market from 1876 to 1883. In that year he transferred to 135 Rathdowne Street, Carlton as a grocer. In 1885 he opened a grocery shop in Canning Street, in the building that bears his name. In 1889 Pescia opened a restaurant at 110 Lonsdale Street, diversifying his interests and investments. However, the house in Canning Street remains. It was purchased by an Italian immigrant family in the 1950s and the family lived in it for many years, turning the shop into part of the dwelling. It was recently renovated and made into a charming residence. The young Italo-Australian owner, Joe Donnoli, has insisted on retaining the verandah over the footpath with some of the original posts still in position; the bricks have been cleaned and taken back to their original colour. The young owner's love of the house and tasteful renovations have maintained for posterity, at least for some time, a little corner of history.



Pescia's place on the corner of Canning and Macpherson Street with his name still visible.

Even after Pescia built his residence - grocer's shop, the blue-stone quarries continued to exist for many years as we find maps dated 1885 with these huge holes still very much in evidence, especially at the northern end of Drummond and Rathdowne Streets.

According to Frank Lancaster Jones, in his study "The Italian population of Carlton", the history of Carlton and North Carlton has always been working class. It is true that the villas owned by some rich families did exist and some are still visible, as for example some of the fine residences along Drummond Street, close to Victoria Street, which have become University Colleges or apartment houses. Possibly one of the finest houses in the area was Sir Edmond Barry's residence in Rathdowne Street, opposite the exhibition gardens. The old villa later became part of the Children's Hospital and is now part of a modern block of offices constructed on the site.

So that the Italians came to a working class area

where housing was cheap and close to their place of work, if they worked in the city or in one of the factories in the industrial suburbs: Fitzroy, Collingwood or Brunswick. Carlton itself had little industrial concentration, with four flour mills and some small industrial enterprises. Some of the flour mills are still to be seen along the sides of the old inner circle railway which ran along Park Street North Carlton.

Possible employers of at least some of the Italians in the area were the monumental stone masons' yards of which there were several. The closest industrial concentration was Brunswick with its numerous clay quarries and the manufacture of bricks, tiles and sewage pipes.

As the Italians continued to arrive in greater numbers in the 80s and 90s, they continued to settle in Carlton, especially south of Pelham Street, constituting nearly one percent of the entire population of the suburb. The area was a great focus because of its boarding houses which were mainly for unmarried males who gathered in the Italian-run boarding houses. Only a small percentage lived north of Pelham Street. With the unfavourable economic conditions which developed in the early 90s, the Italians departed for other areas, possibly for the rural districts where they may have had a better chance to earn a living. This theory, however, does not always hold true because in the same period we note a movement of Italian-speakers from wine growing areas such as Nagambie and Tabhilk along the Goulburn, to other rural areas.

In Melbourne itself, small groups still remained, in particular the Viggianese musicians. Jones does support the view that the musicians from Viggiano and Marsicovetere settled in Carlton and by 1893 they had achieved quite a considerable concentration of residents of Italian or Swiss- Italian origins.

The Muschialli family also settled in North Carlton and established a number of enterprises. Like Pescia they were urban pioneers who ventured into an area with gaping holes filled with stagnant water and rubbish, and infested with snakes and rats. One may suppose that the land was cheap, hence the attraction to build in the area. But the proximity of North Carlton to the city itself could not have been lost on the people who settled north of Princess Street.



Matt Vita playing his harp at home at 120 Cardigan Street, circa 1946.

**A GLIMPSE INTO THE LIFE OF MY GRANDPARENTS:
MATT AND MIMI VITA**

by
Elizabeth Wilson



Mimi and Matt Vita's wedding at St Patrick's Cathedral in 1925.

It was a friend who once said to me that a history containing facts and figures, dates, names, and events was not much of a history at all. In fact she'd withheld her valuable recollections of the Western District of Victoria to be published when she could find an historian sympathetic to her point of view. She believed of far more importance was the people, their personalities and their foibles and that by glimpsing these one could gain a much better picture of history. In peering back into my grandparents' life I hope to impart something more of the people than a sequence of chronological facts and figures would impart.

My journeys to Italy have taken me to the village where my grandfather, Matt Vita, was born in 1886, the surviving twin and eldest child of Gennaro Vita and Caterina Miglionico. The pleasure

I had of walking the hills and countryside surrounding Viggiano was immense and it brought to light stories my mother has told me of the festival of the madonna and a country boy's Church duty and chores before he journeyed some distance to school each day, returning home to focus on practising his music.

At around the time Matt was twelve years of age, his father and brother Charlie left Viggiano to make a new life in Australia, based in Carlton, a hub for Italians as well as other migrant groups. His sister Agnes was to join them some years later.

Matt attended Elementary School in Viggiano and studied the harp,



Matt Vita in his army uniform.

becoming an accomplished musician who was to have a distinguished career amongst the Melbourne musical fraternity. Music was his life and he participated fully in the gamut of musical experience from the formation of the musicians union, playing at the vast majority of Melbourne theatres and in concerts and dances at Town Halls, entertaining Military troops and charity groups, to teaching other professional musicians the harp.

To speak of his full musical life, though, in isolation to his home is unpardonable. When he married the twenty-four year old Filomena (Mimi) Evangelista he was already thirty-eight. Though my grandfather died when I was a child, I listened to my grandmother's stories into my young adulthood. Her single-minded devotion to my grandfather could only assist in fortifying his career. Their home was a meeting place for musicians, and non-musicians alike, for students of music, for rehearsals and social gatherings such as after theatre suppers Mimi would lovingly prepare. Mimi's tireless approach to people, her gentle devotion to her eight children, her care and support of her in-laws, relations and friends, extended outward to the community to assist new migrants in establishing themselves in their new country.

My grandparents came from different backgrounds. My grandmother came from a well heeled musical family; her father was Michele Evangelista (from Marsicovetere) and her mother was Giulia Gagliardi, the sister of Felice Gagliardi who ran the violin hospital in Lygon Street, Carlton. My grandfather came from a country background; they were villagers who understood the value of education. Together, my grandparents' union was a successful one which enabled their household harmony to extend into the community. I recall people from all nations equally welcome in my grandparents' home. It is my understanding that my grandfather believed one must participate as completely as possible in the new society one adopts in migrating to another country. His home life, work and groups of friends and colleagues substantiate that thesis.

Often it is easy to focus on people with colourful careers ignoring the social framework from which their accomplishments could flower. Mimi Vita was a woman I knew well for twenty years and loved deeply. Our impromptu chats at the kitchen table

on the days I would wander from school at the Academy of Mary Immaculate, which had been the school she had attended some sixty years beforehand, to her home at 120 Cardigan Street, Carlton, were complete and satisfying and I look back on them with fond recall. My only wish now is that I had paid better attention to the stories she told me and had not delayed the promises to teach me the secrets of her cooking. But from an adolescent's perspective, time is changeless and never ending and we assume that our grandparents will live forever to tell us and show us the mysteries of their world. She died in 1977, fifteen years after the death of her husband.

Just as I wish to know the reasons behind my grandfather's family's move to Australia, so too do I wish to know my grandmother's family's reasons. Both came from different backgrounds and it is this interest along with other details of their lives which will draw me back to Viggiano in the future. People who were a part of that picture have offered me glimpses into my grandparents' life and I look forward to the information others may share with me.



Brothers Charles and Matt Vita standing, with father Gennaro and sister Agnes seated.

THE LEONE INDEX

by

Bette Leone Maiuto

Although there were more than two thousand people of Italian birth in Victoria towards the end of the 19th century, very little has been recorded of the struggles of these pioneers. They were miners, dairy farmers, charcoal burners, labourers timber cutters, hotel keepers and various other professions, each in his own way contributing to the mosaic of life in our state, yet only a very few family histories have been published or even researched.

Italian and Swiss-Italian men came to Victoria in large numbers during the time of the gold rushes and most of them stayed in Victoria married and raised large families. So if we regard one generation as approximately twenty five years, it is possible that there are fourth or even fifth generation Australian born descendants of these pioneers who may be interested in finding out a little about their original migrant ancestor, and even recording the family history for their own descendants. Indeed, if they are descended from the daughter of an Italian pioneer and do not bear the Italian name, they may be unaware that they actually have any Italian link at all.

The first rule of family research is to start with yourself and go backwards, which means a person wishing to research his or her family must obtain a full copy of their own birth certificate as a starting point. This certificate as well as the marriage certificate of their parents and perhaps the death certificates of various other relatives may already be in the possession of a family member, so people should ask around before they go to the expense of applying to the Registry of Births, Deaths & Marriages for copies. At present the price of a copy is around thirty dollars, but an applicant may acquire these copies for half price if they provide the relevant Registration Number from the records.

Genealogical Societies and most Municipal Libraries now have copies of the the Birth, Death & Marriage records for Victoria and other Australian states on Microfiche. Researchers may book the Microfiche reader for an hour at a time at no cost, and then search the files for the relevant entries and copy the down the registration number required. Application forms for certificates are available in all Victorian Post

First Name GIACOMO

Last Name # BOMBARDIERIE

M:1877 WHEELER NO 2740

D:1911 E'HAWK NO 8678

B:c1843 LOMBARDY

DIED AGED 68 YRS PARENTS: JOHAN / ANNIE POLETTI

WIFE : MARY WHEELER D:1911/8692 AGED 52 YRS

PARENTS: WILLIAM WHEELER / MARY SMITH

Notes

BIRTH: 1882/15614	JAMES JOHN	EAGLEHAWK
1885/ 2235	JIMS	"
1886/ 2473	STEFANO	"
1888/19947	ANTONIO	"
1890/12276	JOHANNA LENA	"
1892/22538	MARY	"
DEATH: 1890/ 6937	JOHANNA LENA	2 days
1892/12756	JAMES	8YRS BENDIGO H

First Name PIETRO

Last Name # BOMBARDIERIE

M: HIBBERT

D:1899 MALDON NO 14565

B:c1846

DIED AGED 53 YRS PARENTS: PIETRO / DOMENICA CABAPA

WIFE ANNIE CAROLINE HIBBERT

Notes

LARGE FAMILY:

BIRTH:	1867/22803	JAMES	MALDON
	1872/ 9989	MARY CAROLINE	"
	1874/23825	MARGUERITA	"
	1879/17546	NELLY LOUISA	"
	1877/16859	JOHN EDMUND	"
	1882/10524	EDMUND ANDREW	"
	1884/18303	SARAH FRANCES	"
	1886/11662	ALICE CORA	"
	1888/13049	PETER ALFRED	"
	1890/24792	FRANCIS JAMES	"
DEATH:	1867/10644	JAMES --	MALDON
	1894/ 2565	PETER 5 YR	"

Last Name	First Name				
# BOLLI	ANTONIO			M:	PABST
# BOMBARDIERIE	ANGELO	B:c1848	BARS		D:1876
# BOMBARDIERIE	GIACOMO	B:c1843	LOMBARDY	M:1877	WHEELER D:1911 E'HAWK
# BOMBARDIERIE	GIOVANNI	B:c1826	LOMBARDY		D:1873
# BOMBARDIERIE	JAMES			M:	KAY
# BOMBARDIERIE	JIM			M:	WILLIAM
# BOMBARDIERIE	JOSEPH		ITALY	M:1879	CROTTI
# BOMBARDIERIE	MARGRETTA		MALDON	M:1893	HILL
# BOMBARDIERIE	PIETRO	B:c1846		M:	HIBBERT D:1899 MALDON
# BOMSTRA	EMMA	B:c1856			D:1888 PRAHN
# BONA	DOMENICO		ITALY	M:1889	RIGHETT
# BONA	DOMENICO	B:c1824			D:1888 S'HURS
# BONA	ELIZA LOUISA		BENDIGO	M:1888	PERRY
# BONA	EVAN			M:	TRANTER
# BONA	MARY	B:c1799		nee	ARTHUR D:1875 WALHAL
# BONATTI	CHARLES	B:c1836			D:1877
# BONAVIA	CESARE				
# BONAZZI	AGOSTINO			M:	CARANZI
# BONAZZI	BARTOLO			M:	PANIZZA
# BONAZZI	SIMONE	B:c1851	ITALY		D:1874
# BONDINETTO	BASILIO	B:c1811	ITALY		D:1876
# BONELLA	ALEXANDER			M:1859	KEMBER

Offices and may be posted in to the Registry in Queen Street Melbourne or application maybe made in person during normal business hours.

One Australian of part Italian heritage has worked with the Victorian records for the last two and a half years extracting those names which appear to be of Italian origin. The records are not always clear, some years are very blurred and at times the incorrect spelling of some Italian names is quite confusing and even comical, if it was uncertain whether a name was Italian, Spanish or some other nationality it was decided to include it just in case. All of the information has been stored on a computer and the alphabetical index of the data base is at present being processed onto microfiche, and hopefully will be acquired by organizations as a companion to the main microfiche records.

As most Italian migrants in the 1800's were male, a man who wished to marry had to chose from the available female population which was mainly of English, Scottish and Irish origin, in the majority of marriages Italian-Irish combination was the most common. So persons of Anglo-Saxon or Irish descent may wish to consult this index if they had a great aunt or distant cousin who married an Italian last century.

INFORMATION SHOWN ON THE LEONE INDEX

The index shows varying information on individuals, the most information shown is the full name of a person, place and year of birth, year of marriage and the first seven letters of the surname of the spouse to enable identification of particular family groups, year and place of death, age given at death has been used to approximate the year of birth. However in many cases some of these facts are unknown, there may be as little as an entry of death, especially prior to 1865.

INFORMATION ON THE MAIN DATA BASE

Marriage records show names of both parties and in most years, the place of birth of each party, however in an effort save time in many cases only the place of birth of the Italian party has been recorded in this index. The full name of the spouse is recorded on the data base although only the first seven letters of the name appear in the index. It should be kept in mind that many women being married were in fact widows, and their legal name at time of remarriage was that of their former husband not their maiden name. Not all marriages appear in the records, but a search of the registers gives the year and place of

birth of the children of various couples, and most couples in those days produced a child within the first year or two of marriage, which gives a rough idea of when they married.

Birth entries show name and place of birth of child name of father and maiden name of mother. Noting the birth places of children of one family can show whether the family lived in one location or moved frequently, often following the gold strikes.

Deaths have been included along with all details shown on the microfiche: e.g. place of death, names of both parents of the deceased if known, also age at death, from which an approximate year of birth has been estimated.

As a result we have an alphabetical index of approximately 3500 family data sheets, some have only one entry, while others have full family details including year of marriage, births of children, deaths of various family members and in later years the marriage of adult children, each entry includes the Victorian Registration Number if possible, please refer to examples provided.

As this is an alphabetical listing, a researcher need check only once to find all entries pertaining to members of the particular family being researched. The microfiche records are very faint and/or blurred in many years particularly the early 1880's, and it is possible * that some names have been overlooked, also the spelling of foreign names is inaccurate in many cases. In fact some people, especially those with the christian name of Giuseppe were registered under "G" instead of the relevant surname.

If you are researching and wish to do all research yourself, this index will lead you straight to the family required, showing the year of marriage or death so that you can check the records yourself to acquire the relevant registration number in order to obtain the certificate at a reduced price. However, if you are interested in a family which appears in this index and wish to save time, you may write to the address provided including a stamped, self addressed envelope and for a small fee family data will be provided.

MRS B MAIUTO
PO BOX 275
MITCHAM VIC 3132

