

My Car Club NSW
CARPACCINO'S
(cars and coffee)
Fairfield City Museum & Gallery
Wednesday the 10th of July 2024

Once again, Mark managed to uncover another interesting part of Greater Sydney's history. Today, we had a great turnout of MCCNSW members (together with some interesting cars!) at the Fairfield City Museum and Gallery.

The Gallery was a mix of old buildings including the original Council Chambers, a school room, a slab hut, a slightly more "upscale" part of a cottage, an old service station featuring "Plume" branded petrol fed by gravity feed pumps, an old general store featuring some old products long gone or banned. Including Vincents APC and Bex Powders, a printing press from probably around early to mid-last century and examples of old laundry apparatus/appliances. Overall, an eclectic and interesting mix of exhibits.



We were lucky to have the help of 2 guides to explain the history of some of the buildings and exhibits.



The old Council building also featured a history of the Villawood Migrant Hostel which, incidentally, hosted a group of 5 young guys from Britain and Holland who eventually became the Easybeats, and who found world fame for about 15 minutes (or maybe a bit longer!).



A less cheerful display showed the later time when the hostel became a detention centre, for people who arrived here by boat, some of whom were refugees and others about whom one can only speculate.

Following our walk around the museum exhibits, we all enjoyed a pleasant morning tea.

According to "Dr Google", this LGA, now called the City of Fairfield, was originally established as the Municipality of Smithfield and Fairfield in 1889, and over time, incorporated the neighbouring municipalities of Cabramatta and Canley Vale, eventually becoming a City Council in 1979.

My personal recollection of Fairfield relates to frequent visits to a Dutch family we made from our home in Russell Lea when I was a child in the '50's and early '60's. At that time, the ethnic mix of Fairfield was Anglo, Italian, Yugoslav and some other Euro groupings. It was already an established suburb.

These days it features Assyrians, Vietnamese, Sudanese and some assorted Middle Eastern groupings, whilst the previous ethnic mix moved on to other parts of Greater Sydney.

One piece of trivia is that the original Bing Lee store was established in Fairfield in 1957! (this is not a commercial!).

My other personal experience of the suburb was as an Articled Clerk in a law firm in the Fairfield CBD, where I was immersed into the rough and tumble of domestic dramas, public drunkenness (not me, I might add!), lewd acts (not me again!), as well as the less exciting activities of property law and deceased estates.

It was, for me, a learning experience as a future lawyer, and to that extent, I have a fondness for that part of Sydney.

MCC members love their cars, and on that note, and I spotted some great metal, including a beautiful Mercedes 2 door (which I assume was an S class-based vehicle), a gorgeous Citroen Pallas, a Triumph TR6, a Ford Falcon with a lovely V8 (transplanted) heart, a '50's Morris Minor and a '60's original Mini. All great automotive eye candy!



Once again, many thanks to Mark Hertz for once again organising a great day out. It was also great to catch up with MCC members, some of whom I hadn't previously met and some others whom I have known since the inception of the MCC.

Alex Zuur