

Carlton Community History Group

Carlton Chronicles

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Squizzy Taylor shot in Carlton

In the 1920s and 1930s Carlton was one of Melbourne's poorest suburbs and noted as an area rife with crime. One of the more notorious incidents that happened in Carlton at that time was a shoot-out in which two major crime figures, 'Snowy' Cutmore and 'Squizzy' Taylor, ended up dead.

Cutmore was a violent man with a string of convictions for assault, stealing and resisting arrest. He was originally from Melbourne, but in the early 1920s had moved to Sydney, where he enhanced his criminal reputation as a member of a notorious 'razor gang'. In October 1927 he decided to return to Melbourne with his wife, and holed up at his mother's house at 50 Barkly Street, Carlton. A few days after he arrived, he found himself confined to bed with a bad case of influenza.

Joseph Theodore Leslie Taylor, known as 'Squizzy' was a notorious and colourful underworld figure in Melbourne in the 1920s. A dapper little man, he earned his income from armed robbery, prostitution, the sale of illegal liquor and drugs, and from race-fixing and protection rackets.

Snowy and Squizzy were old foes. Snowy had been linked to the murder of one of Squizzy's allies who had been gunned down in an alleyway in Sydney, and the police believed that Squizzy had vowed revenge against the men who killed him. When he heard that Snowy was back in Melbourne, he set out to find him. On 27 October 1927, Squizzy and two associates met at the Bookmakers Club in Lonsdale Street. They hired a car and had the driver take them

to a succession of pubs in Carlton in search of Cutmore. Unable to find him, they then went to his mother's boarding house in Barkly Street. Letting themselves into the house, they found Snowy in his bedroom. But he had a gun. A series of shots were fired by both sides in quick succession.



Police mug shot of Squizzy Taylor.
(Photo: Public Record Office Victoria)



The scene of the shoot-out in Barkly Street, Carlton, in October 1927 in which resulted in the death of both Snowy Cutmore and Squizzy Taylor. (Photo: Public Record Office Victoria)

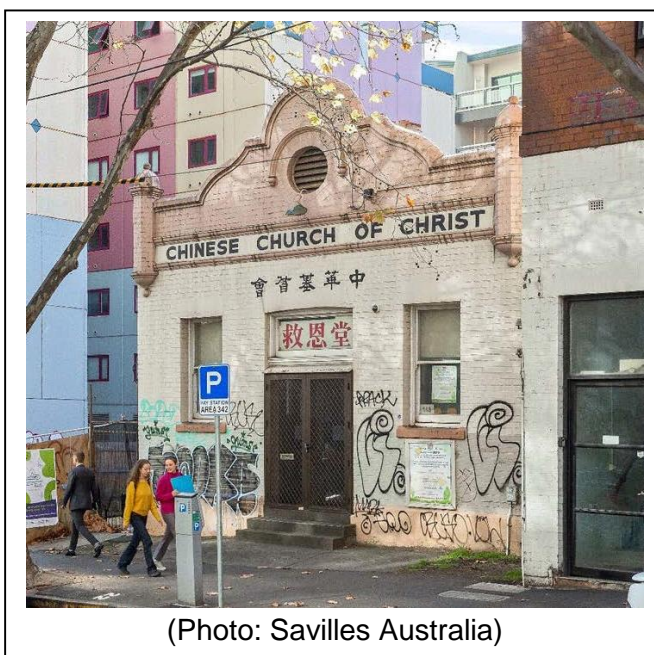
Snowy, still lying in bed, was shot dead. His mother, hearing the shots, ran into the room and was wounded in the shoulder. Squizzy was shot in his right side and was badly wounded. Staggering outside he was helped into the waiting hire car, which sped off towards St Vincent's Hospital. On the way his associates jumped out and fled. By the time the car arrived at the hospital, Squizzy was unconscious. Within half an hour he had succumbed to his wounds.

His death and funeral attracted a lot of public attention. He was buried a few days later in the Brighton cemetery. On the morning of the funeral, the police had to be called to control a large crowd that had gathered at his house and swarmed around the hearse. A newspaper described it as 'a disgraceful exhibition of morbid curiosity, coupled with a callous disregard for the feelings of the bereaved'.

The house in Barkly Street where the shooting took place was in a row of rather sombre bluestone houses known as Barkly Terrace, originally built in 1862. It survived for just over 100 years until 1965 when it was demolished under a Housing Commission order and replaced by a block of flats.

Future of Chinese church uncertain

In the 19th and early 20th century, Carlton had a sizeable Chinese population. It was close to the Queen Victoria Market where many Chinese had stalls and was therefore a convenient place for them to reside. Evidencing this early Chinese presence is a small church tucked away in Queensberry Street, Carlton. Located between the RMIT University and the University of Melbourne, it is surrounded by warehouses and student accommodation that houses more recently arrived young Chinese. Built in 1905, the church was part of the Church of Christ's 'outreach' missionary activities aimed at converting members of Melbourne's Chinese community to Christianity. The building ceased being used as a church several years ago, and in August 2021 it was sold to a developer. Later that same year the City of Melbourne initiated steps to give the building greater heritage protection. We hope that Carlton does not lose this building that has such an interesting history.



(Photo: Savilles Australia)

History walks around Carlton

Saturday 20 April, 10.00am – Princes Hill

Walk around this interesting part of Carlton, and hear of its history and the history of iconic places such as Princes Park, the Carlton Football Ground, and the Melbourne General Cemetery.

Saturday 27 April, 10.00am – Victorian Grandeur

Experience what are probably the best examples in Australia of the eloquent 'boom era' architecture of the 19th century in the generously designed streets of south Carlton, laid out in the 1850s by Robert Hoddle, who also designed the grid of Melbourne's central business district.

These walks are run by the Carlton Community History Group in conjunction with the Princes Hill Community Centre. To register, contact Princes Hill Community Centre. Phone: 9387 7740. Email: enquiries@princeshill.org.au

A Greek childhood in Carlton

In this his second article about the Greek community in Carlton, Andrew Athanasopolous recalls his school days in the 1970s.

My initial schooling was at South Brunswick Primary School, which I attended from Prep to Grade 5 inclusive. It was in Park Street, and to get there I had to cross over the railway lines of the old Inner Circle line. In Prep I had a bit of separation anxiety, but my Dad said 'men don't cry' so I sucked it up and went to school. I did not know much English when I started school because we mostly spoke Greek at home. But other kids were in the same boat as me. It was a multicultural school, mostly Greeks, Italians, Yugoslavians, and Aussies. I had many friends there.

In summer we played cricket, and in winter football or soccer. If you had a ball, bat, or footy, you were the boss. We played kick-to-kick with big pack marking games, on concrete. Soccer was played on a gravel pitch with the goals marked with our jumpers. Cricket stumps were a bin or a tree with the wickets painted on them. In the shelter sheds at school, we played games such as King Ball, Brandy, Down Ball and British Bulldog. These were massive full-on games, most of which would be banned today. I am surprised no-one was killed. At the 1976 Olympics, Australia won a silver medal in field hockey, so we all made hockey sticks and started playing hockey - with no safety equipment.

At the same time as starting regular school, I also started at Greek School. This was initially for a couple of hours on a Tuesday and Thursday evening, at the first Greek church on Drummond Street. Later it moved to 885 Drummond Street, and classes were held on a Saturday between 9am and 2pm. At the secondary level this was extended to 3pm. There were lots of girls there, which was an added incentive for me to go, as at that stage I was going to Melbourne Grammar, an all-boys school, and it was nice to have girls in the class with whom I could flirt and who flirted with me. Me and my friends got up to lots of mischievous behaviour – giving teaches grief by playing pranks on them. My favourite was the classic whoopee cushion. We often 'wagged' the last hour of the day to go to the football at Princes Park.

At the time, learning Greek was for me a chore. But my parents persisted and I am forever grateful to them for that. My dad reinforced all my learnings at home in a very hands-on way, resulting in me having an excellent grasp of the Greek language, especially reading and writing. When I sat for the HSC, Greek was my best subject. Religious Education at the Greek school was taught by Rev. Kourtesis Sr. whom the kids respected and feared. Punishment for misbehaviour was a brutal ruler across the hands.

The school participated in the annual parade to the Shrine of Remembrance on 25 March, to celebrate Greek Independence Day. In preparation, we practiced by marching up and down Drummond Street, causing havoc to the local traffic.

Carlton was a great place to grow up in. It has changed a lot, but it was a multicultural microcosm of fun and learning. When I walk around the streets, a flood of memories engulfs me, mostly sad ones since many people have passed away. But I am grateful that I lived my life in this area, and look forward to making more memories.



Students from a Greek school participating in Greek Independence Day celebrations at the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne. (Photo: Greek Reporter).

Carlton Personality – Charlotte Disney of the Clyde Hotel

Holding the licence of a Carlton hotel for 32 years must be something of a record and this honour goes to Charlotte Disney, licensee of the Clyde Hotel from 1922 to 1954.

Charlotte Louisa Disney (née Kennett) was born in Brunswick on 20 October 1878 and grew up in that suburb. In 1899 she married musician Walter Disney who ran a music shop in Brunswick and had a group of musicians who played at parties and dances. In the early 1900s, Charlotte and Walter ran the West Brunswick Hotel, and Walter was Mayor of Brunswick from 1920 to 1921. Charlotte and Walter made the move to Carlton in 1922 and took over the licence of the Clyde Hotel, on the corner of Cardigan and Elgin streets.

The hotel by that stage had been operating for nearly sixty years, having been first licensed in August 1865 when James Stephens made an application for the hotel. This was promptly withdrawn and a week later the licence was granted to Jeremiah Ryan for the Aherlow Hotel. Mr Ryan held the licence for a few months only, when it was transferred to John Graham in November 1865. The hotel name 'Clyde' appears in the Sands & McDougall Directory for 1866. In 1878, meetings of the Carlton football and cricket clubs were held there. This was the start of a long association of sport with the Clyde Hotel, which has continued to this very day. Charlotte Disney was a keen supporter of the Carlton Football Club, while still retaining her interest in the Brunswick Football Club.

In 1923, one year after Charlotte and Walter took over, the Clyde Hotel had a major building upgrade. The original hotel, described as 'three sitting-rooms and four bedrooms' in the 1865 licence application, was transformed into a fourteen-room hotel, designed by Joy & McIntyre. The project was valued at £3,000, a considerable amount in the 1920s. Charlotte presided over later renovations in 1929 and 1940.

Charlotte ran a respectable establishment and recorded only a couple of minor convictions - for having persons on the premises after trading hours in 1923, and selling alcohol on Anzac Day in 1929. At the age of 75 years, Charlotte served her last beer and was ready for retirement. She advertised an application in January 1954 to transfer the licence of the Clyde Hotel to Leonard Stanley Lott.

In later life Charlotte lived with her family in Northcote. Her husband Walter was licensee of several other hotels in Melbourne and country Victoria. He died in 1958, aged 80 years. Charlotte outlived her husband by seven years and died in Northcote on 31 August 1965, aged 86 years. In an apt coincidence, Charlotte died one hundred years to the month after the hotel was first licensed in August 1865.



Portrait of Charlotte Disney as a young woman.
(Photo courtesy of Aldyth McClelland).

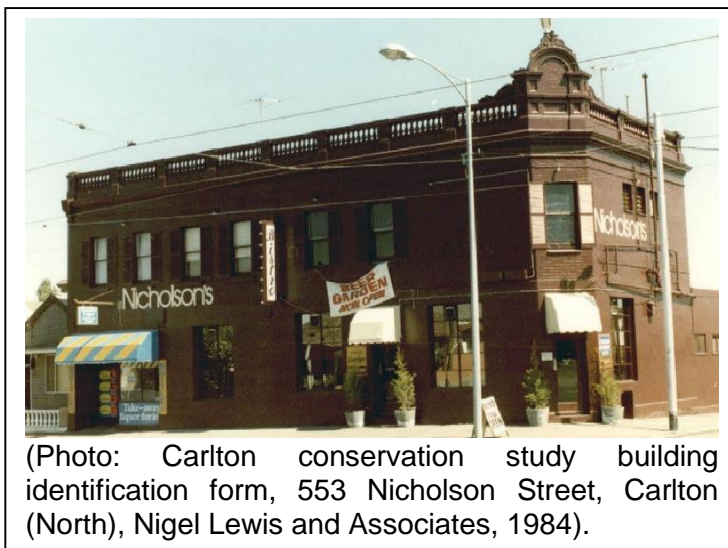
We shall not be moved

In April 1974, a group of women's rights activists staged a protest at the Polaris Inn Hotel, North Carlton, after they were refused service. The women linked arms and blocked access to the bar, so that male patrons could not get their drinks, and sang the popular protest song 'We shall not be moved'. The hotel licensee, Raymond Riordan, was losing business and also losing his patience. The protesters refused to leave when asked and he called the police, who forcibly removed the women from the hotel. Twelve young women – mostly locals from Carlton, North Carlton and Fitzroy – were arrested and charged with offensive behaviour, being disorderly on licensed premises and refusing to leave. The case was heard a few weeks later in the Melbourne Magistrates Court. As reported by *The Age* of 14 May 1974, licensee Raymond Riordan was quoted as saying: 'Women are not encouraged to drink in the public bar' and 'Wherever there are snooker tables, it is my considered opinion that women can cause trouble'. The magistrate Mr Stott, SM, dismissed the offensive behaviour charges and the women were later fined on the other charges. A video clip of the arrest can be viewed on the Getty Images website at:

<https://www.gettyimages.com.au/detail/video/ext-polaris-inn-hotel-carlton-club-bar-sign-int-public-news-footage/641071508>

Nine years earlier, in March 1965, Rosalie Bognor and Merle Thornton had scored a major victory for the women's liberation movement. They were refused service in the public bar at Brisbane's Regatta Hotel and, in the tradition of the suffragettes, had chained themselves to the railings. Their action led to progressive changes in liquor licensing legislation that allowed women to drink alcohol in public bars. However some hotels, like the Polaris Inn, were slow to admit women into the hitherto male domain of the public bar.

The Polaris Inn Hotel, on the corner of Nicholson and Macpherson streets, was first licensed to Joseph Pashley in February 1872 as the Chesnut [sic] Tree Hotel. It soon became known as the North Star Hotel and kept this name for nearly 100 years, when it was changed to the Polaris Inn Hotel. The hotel was a popular live music venue, catering for eclectic tastes in music from bush bands through to rock, jazz and blues. The vibe changed in the late 1970s when the nightclub 'Hearts' was opened. Community attitudes towards late night music venues in residential areas were also changing and this led to the demise of 'Hearts'. The hotel returned a more traditional pub as Nicholson's Hotel and was at one stage operated by former Carlton footballers Peter 'Percy' Jones and Adrian 'Gags' Gallagher. They gave it the improbable name of 'Blush & Stutter'. The building was sold in the late 1990s and later converted to residential apartments.



(Photo: Carlton conservation study building identification form, 553 Nicholson Street, Carlton (North), Nigel Lewis and Associates, 1984).

Membership fees for 2024 are now due

Help finance the preservation of Carlton's history by becoming a financial member of the Carlton Community History Group. The membership fee is \$20 for a calendar year,

and can be paid by cheque, or bank transfer:

BSB: 06 3014 Account number: 10198637

Name of account: Carlton Community History Group

Vale Judith Biddington (1933-2023)

Dr Judith Biddington, founding President of the Carlton Community History Group (CCHG), passed away on 13 December 2023. She will be sadly missed by CCHG and the broader community. Judith and her husband Ralph, who died in 2019, had lived in Drummond Street, North Carlton, since the 1970s. She was a teacher and education academic by profession, and had a passionate interest in history. In this capacity, she identified the need for a local community history group covering Carlton, North Carlton and Princes Hill. In 2006, Judith placed a notice at the Carlton Library in Rathdowne Street and, together with several like-minded people, held a series of meetings with presentations from people on living, growing up or working in Carlton. Within a year the Carlton Community History Group (CCHG) became incorporated and had achieved affiliation with the Royal Historical Society of Victoria. From the start Judith's approach was to engage with local people directly, gathering history on the ground and, most importantly, involving and engaging people. Along with several other hard working and dedicated members, Judith began recording a series of interviews with present and former Carlton residents. These oral histories have now been digitised and made more accessible. She also began a series of special events and regular publications produced by the CCHG. As the work load increased, Judith stepped aside as President of the CCHG in 2012, but she maintained a lifelong interest in the group.



Judith Biddington being presented with an Award of Merit in May 2019 by the President of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, Emeritus Professor Richard Broome, for 'meritorious service to a historical society'. (Photo: CCHG)

La Porchetta closes after nearly fifty years

After almost 50 years of operation, Rathdowne Village's popular pizza restaurant, La Porchetta, has closed its doors. A pizza shop was first opened at that location in the 1970s, but in 1985 the original La Porchetta was taken over by Rocco "Rocky" Pantaleo who had arrived in Australia only eight years before. He was immediately successful selling pizza, pasta and gelato and was soon able to expand into four adjoining shops in Rathdowne Village. He also franchised dozens of other La Porchetta outlets in other parts of Australia as well as in New Zealand and Indonesia. But the Rathdowne Village shop was the birthplace of the La Porchetta brand, one of Melbourne's most recognisable restaurant chains. Rocky Pantaleo died in 2010 in a road accident, but the business continued. While the Rathdowne Village outlet has now closed, the many other franchised La Porchetta outlets will continue operating.

**This publication, Carlton Chronicles, is produced and distributed four times a year.
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at cchg@y7mail.com or visit our website www.cchg.asn.au**