Free Speech Heritage Walk Map of Brunswick

The story of Noel Counihan and his role in the 'free speech' fights which culminated in his protest from the cage in Sydney Road Brunswick in May 1933 is an important one because it brings into sharp focus our ideas on what constitutes an egalitarian society and having a 'fair go'.

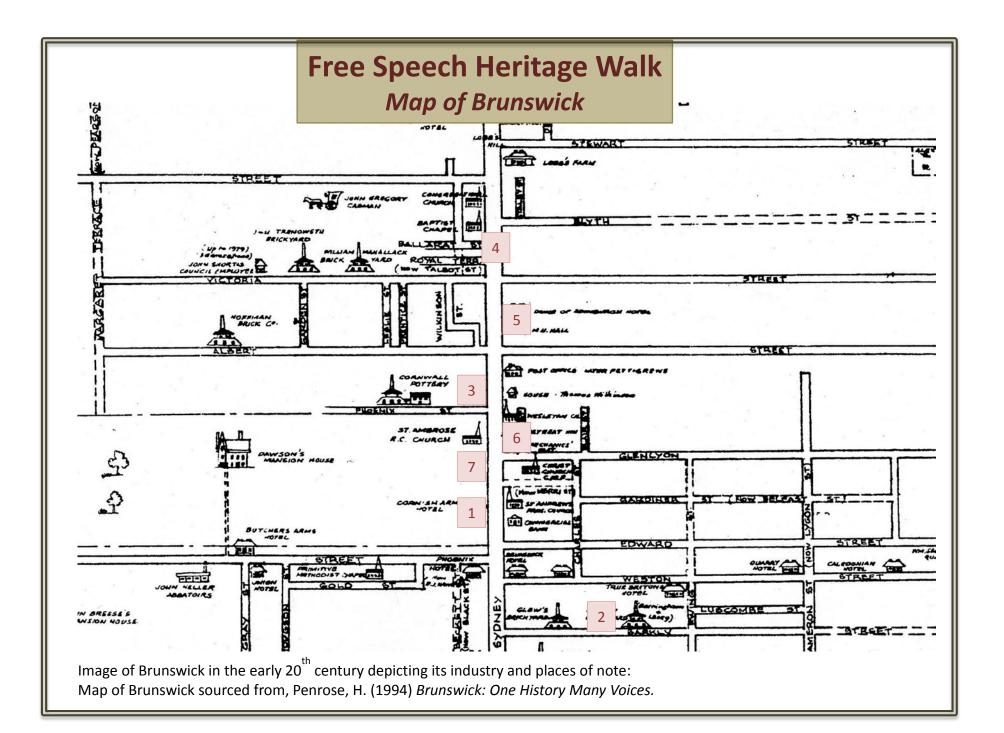
Brunswick, the setting for the 'free speech' fights is a place steeped in a rich history of story and culture. Its origins lie in the early brickworks and stone quarry industries, which established themselves in the second half of the 19th century in what was then Melbourne's outer north. Brunswick along with neighbouring industrial suburb Northcote together formed the engine room for the supply of the brick and bluestone that features so prominently in Melbourne's architecture and streetscapes. During the depression era of the early 1930s Brunswick was a close-knit working class community who supported one another when times were tough and visits from the bailiff and evictions were common place. The Brunswick and Coburg Gazette at that time featured many stories about 'arrests', 'punch-ups' and 'evictions' along side community singing events and amazing dance marathons lasting 100 hours!

Image above:

Brunswick & Coburg Gazette, 'Two Exiting Arrests stir shopping crowd in Brunswick', The Sun News-Pictorial, 20 May 1933. p. 2.

Please take the time to visit the places of significance in Brunswick that

feature in this story and experience the local diversity and culture of this area, using the map of the 'Free Speech Heritage Walk' as a guide!



Legend:

- 199-207 Sydney Road Brunswick was first occupied by the Lyric Theatre and later the Brunswick Boxing Stadium. During the 1930s it was the headquarters for the Unemployed Workers Movement (UWM) and Friends of the Soviet Union (FOSU).
- 2. Unemployed Single Mens Group (USMG) lived as a collective in tenements and terraces in Barkly Street, Brunswick. The USMG was established by the Communist Party of Australia.
- 3. Corner of Phoenix Street and Sydney Road, Brunswick, the location of the Brunswick Free Speech Defence Committee protests against the law (Police Offenses Act 1928) prohibiting 'free speech' and 'public assembly'.
- 4. Ballarat Street, Brunswick, where 'Shorty' Patullo was chased and shot by police after creating a diversion on the roof of cable tram, giving Noel Counihan a chance to give his 'free speech' address to the Sydney Road crowd.
- Duke of Edinburgh Hotel location of the cage used by Noel Counihan to conduct his 'free speech' address on 19 May 1933.
- 6. Free Speech Memorial. Sculpture by Simon Perry to acknowledge legacy of Noel Counihan in the Brunswick 'free speech' fight. The Memorial Free Speech sits in front of the Mechanics Institute, a place that continues to today to have a community focus formerly used as a for peaceful community protest.
- 7. Counihan Gallery located at the old Brunswick Town Hall site on the corner of Sydney Road and Dawson Street, Brunswick.

By Melinda Barrie, Presented at the 'In the Public Interest' program held at the Counihan Gallery 4 October 2013. I also wish to thank Laurie Cunningham, local Brunswick historian for his accounts of life in 1930s Brunswick and for a copy of the Counihan in the cage news article.