



Fitzroy History Society Oral History Project 2015-2017

Transcript of interview with Michael Gawenda

(Interviewed by Alison Hart and Marion Glanville Hearst from Fitzroy History society on 15 November 2016 in Fitzroy)

Michael Gawenda, a journalist and former editor of *The Age*, spent his early childhood in Gore Street, where his parents owned a corner store. He particularly remembered the freedom allowed the children, with all parents keeping an eye out for them. Games were played in the street; they were introduced to new foods when they ate at their friend's homes. Fitzroy was the only place where he has lived where there was such a sense of community. Everybody knew each other, and there were many nationalities and different groups of people. "They were the greatest years of my childhood."



START OF TRANSCRIPT

Facilitator 1: It is Tuesday 15 November and we're speaking to Michael Gawenda.

Michael Gawenda: Okay, so I lived in Fitzroy for most of my primary school years. Basically that was the period that I attended the George Street State School. I lived in a milk bar on the corner of Gore Street and Webb Street. My parents ran it- and I see I see it's still got the upstairs residence....

Michael Gawenda: There was me, my mum and dad, my older sister. I had a sister who was six years older than me, we lived here basically from the time they bought that shop.

Michael Gawenda: I was in Grade 1 at George Street State School. We lived here for some years and I was actually enrolled to go to Fitzroy High but my mother died during that period before school started. So we left Fitzroy, basically. My dad couldn't cope with the shop- my mum basically ran the shop and my dad was not a great person.

It must've been three or four months after she died that we left Fitzroy. So that's the period that we're talking about. So I never worked here, I was still a child.

Facilitator 1: Yeah, so we're talking 1950s?

Michael Gawenda: I was born in 1947, so I must've started school in 1952 or 1953 so it was that period until 1958 or 1959, 1960 when my mother died. Sorry that I'm so vague on the times. But that was the period and it was a milk bar, mixed business. I see the pubs still across the road. The houses look more or less the same. So that's the period we're talking about.

Facilitator 1: So what was it like starting school here? Because you came - how old were you when you came here?

Michael Gawenda: Six [to Fitzroy].

Michael Gawenda: When I came to Australia? I was three years old. Two and a half years when we came to Australia. For the first couple of years I didn't speak English, my parents spoke to me in Jewish. I didn't go to kindergarten, I remember, - but I must've learnt some English in a place like the synagogue when we were living in Elwood because by the time I started school I had some English. A lot of the Jews that came after the War were holocaust survivors and they went to either Carlton or St Kilda; there were places in St Kilda where they were looked after.



We lived in a communal house in Elwood. So the big thing was coming to Fitzroy. I remember us moving, because we had been living with my elder sister and her children. She was 20 years old, 19 years older than me, but she was married and had children. We had come out together and we were living together. My mother decided she wanted to go into business.

So I remember the move very well because I did not want to go to school to start with. I didn't know anybody and therefore I didn't want to go to the school. Really quickly, my memory is that I made friends with the kids that lived around the shop. There was a mixture of people - you would know this, I mean others would've told you.

Michael Gawenda: There were old Australian working class people, the Italians had started to move in, Greeks and Yugoslavs too. They worked in the shoe factories and the textile factories. I think that was a shoe factory, or some sort of factory across the road because we played cricket up against the wall.

Facilitator 1: Right where the apartments are there?

Michael Gawenda: Yeah, it was a factory, it wasn't a warehouse. It was actually a factory of some sort and there were certainly factories around these streets. I mean people went to work locally.

Facilitator 2: Some neighbours said all the women worked in the factories in the neighbourhood.

Michael Gawenda: They were either shoe factories or textile factories. I think there might've been clothing, when I say textiles, I think they were clothing, or there was even a carpet factory in one of these streets. I know that because my father was a weaver, he didn't work in that factory but he knew about it. In fact, there was somewhere nearby, it may have been on Gore Street where the Labor Party branch meetings were held. I think it was just a few doors down and, of course, the workers from this area made up the Labor Party branch.

The kids all played in the street, that's where we played. I mean there weren't backyards, just tiny backyards but we wouldn't play in those, we played in the streets. Everything, we played kicking the football, playing cricket. Marbles were big when I was a kid so you played marbles on the footpath. I don't know how you stopped the marbles rolling but we did.



... and my memory is that within a very short period of time I was close I had friends, I remember in the house on Gore Street next door to the shop there was an Italian family. I remember the two little girls were called Dominica and Miguch. I think their English was poor, they spoke Italian at home. They may have spoken English, they certainly spoke English with me. So I was friends with them. There was a little Yugoslav boy that lived a bit further down.

Now some of these people I have met over the years in the most unusual circumstances. When I was editor of *The Age* one of the cleaners was a boy that I'd grown up with down the street, I can't remember what - he was a Yugoslav boy, he wasn't the one that I was first talking about, but we were really good friends. Suddenly I - I hadn't seen him, I'd worked at *The Age* before he'd been there - I saw him one day in the cafeteria at *The Age*. It was an amazing experience and coincidence. So we sat down and talked about it.

Michael Gawenda: Yeah, and then we saw each other a bit. But he was embarrassed or something. I eventually got him to come with his wife to my place and we talked about the past. He had retired, but that's my memory. The kids played in the street, we played in our block. We never went past Johnston Street except to go to the football ground even though I was an Essendon supporter, which I never could admit.

Facilitator 2: How did you become an Essendon Supporter?

Michael Gawenda: Because of my mother: we went to the Victorian Markets when I was little, we were living here already, and she bought me an Essendon jumper. She bought the jumper because she thought its black, if it gets dirty you can't see the dirt.

Of course, from then on I was an Essendon supporter. I never wore the jumper to George Street. I never, never told. And of course we went to the football I never went to Essendon We were allowed to cross Johnston Street to go to the football ground. But that was really the boundary. There was the picture theatre on Johnston Street that we could go to, but it's on this side of Johnston Street, you don't have to cross over Johnston Street.

Facilitator 1: Was that kind of an unwritten law or was it a parental thing you don't cross Johnston Street?

Michael Gawenda: We just never did.



I think it must've been a parental, it must've been something we were told, that's your area. I can't remember going much down to Gertrude Street. We went to Smith Street and there was a Police Boys' Club.

Facilitator 2: Whereabouts was that?

Michael Gawenda: You cross over Webb Street and there was sort of a little park type area. There were toilets and the Police Boys' Club was on the corner, just inside there. That's what it was called. The local police must've run it you know.

Facilitator 1: What sort of things did you do there?

Michael Gawenda: You did exercises, there was a boxing ring so we all had a go at boxing, we punched the bags. So that's how we spent our time, we went there. Of course, when television came we used to all go down at night down Smith Street to Foy's and you could watch TV in the window. I don't know whether you could actually hear anything, but there were crowds of people, crowds of kids who would stand there watching.

No one had a TV. So you'd stand there and watch TV. Parents weren't scared to let their kids stay out; we were on the street at night. We were okay, we didn't cross Johnston Street, but we went all over the place.

Facilitator 2: It reminds me a little bit, of just how resourceful children were about playing in the street as my experience was in Manhattan.

Michael Gawenda: ...because that's where they've got to play. ...Yeah, but we never thought we were deprived. I mean we could play all over the place... and everybody knew us.

Facilitator 1: Well and a lot of freedom too, I guess. ...Yeah, as long as you're back by dinner time?

Michael Gawenda: Yes. Often we would go and play after dinner. There was no sort of fear of letting kids out on the street. Look, everyone knew us. That was a rough old pub across the road there, I don't know if other people have told you that, but there were fights there all the time and our shop had a kind of verandah, you could sit on the roof. You've still got something there, I don't know whether it's the original, but you could go out the windows and sit on the roof. So three or four of us would sit on the roof, you could see the fights, watch the fights across the road.



Absolutely, and it was regular. It was kind of, you know there was the six o'clock swill... and they'd pour out of there and there'd be fights. I mean I don't know whether they were arguing about whether you drank my last beer or what but there were fights. I'm not saying they were vicious, I can't remember them being shockingly awful fights, there was probably a lot of pushing and shoving and you know, but it was that sort of neighbourhood. Look, I don't think I'm making this up [laughs], but I think that was a brothel across the road. ... here on the corner of Gore and Webb Street, right, opposite the pub.

Yeah. But I'm pretty sure because I can remember the girls used to come into the shop to buy stuff, used to talk to them. When I was nine or 10 years old, I watched the men going in and out. I'm sure I'm not making this up.

I can't ask, my dad and mum are long dead, and the sister that lived with us was dead. But I'm sure that that was true.

Facilitator 1: Yeah, and presumably it wasn't really spoken about to the kids?

Michael Gawenda: No, no I would never mention it to my parents, but we knew. We didn't know exactly, but we knew men were going in and out of there, we knew the girls came out of there to buy things.

... it would be late into the night. So yeah, and we knew it was something we shouldn't ask about. So I don't think I'm - I think that's - in some ways, maybe because it's my childhood years, you know, but they were the greatest years of my childhood, really.

I mean I was very sad to leave Fitzroy, I left friends, and we moved to Caulfield which was a kind of totally different life. Kids didn't live on the streets, there was no kind of street life at all, people lived behind walls - I hated it. My memory as a child is that it's the only place I lived where there was a neighbourhood where everybody knew everybody.

There wasn't anyone in the street that we didn't know, there wasn't anyone that we couldn't...

Facilitator 1: I guess that meant all the adults were watching out for the kids, so if you were a couple of blocks away and you fell over or something?

Michael Gawenda: Absolutely and they, certainly up and down Gore Street, up and down Webb Street, George Street because we went to school there and walked home from



there. We knew the people who ran the picture theatre. I don't think we went there all the time but we used to go. I can remember that I saw my first Elvis Presley movie, *Love Me Tender* in the Fitzroy - there's lots of things like that I remember.

My first long pair of pants I got from a little tailor, my dad got this tailor, - it was across the road actually, in a house on the corner of Gore Street and Webb Street, - to make me my first pair of long pants. I remember taking the tram the first time in my pants so I'm wondering and worrying that the conductor is going to think I am older- because you had to pay full fare over 13 or something. I would think I was 10 years old about a that time.

So, but in my memory it was the only place that I lived in where there was that sense of neighbourhood, everybody knew each other, and they were different groups of people. Italians, Yugoslavs, Greeks, old Australian working class people. I don't remember there ever being any, certainly no tension between, amongst the kids I mean we ate at different peoples' places quite often, so that depending where we were those parents fed four or five of us. Those Italians next door, my first Italian food with that family, and I remember it really clearly.

Facilitator 1: So you got to just like to eat different types of food?

Michael Gawenda: Because we ate whatever we were invited , and so by the time I was 10 or so, I had eaten a heap of different food. For me that Italian food was good ,but do you know what I remember was the best in some ways? I went to a boy's place, they were an old Australian family, and they served eggs with tomato sauce on them, I thought I was in heaven. We never had tomato sauce at home, I can't remember, but we did after that. So we were really, exposed to a lot of different people without knowing we were, from a lot of different backgrounds.

Facilitator 1: So completely multicultural without realising it?...

Michael Gawenda: Well the word didn't exist; we didn't even know what it meant. I think that maybe Carlton was a bit like that too, I don't know, but Fitzroy was certainly working class area. I mean I don't know what happened in other inner suburbs in the whole decade of the 1950s and into the 1960s, where you had a working class suburb made up of people from all sorts of different places that lived well together.

School was multicultural, I mean we were never told to be kind to each other because we were all from different parts - I mean it was kind of like we were all



the same I think looking back, that that must've been pretty unique –but maybe it existed in other places.

The arrival of the Italians and the Greeks and the Yugoslavs was post-War. Fitzroy before the War would've been a very old working class Australian suburb and you could see the changes they made when they came. The Greeks painted their houses light blue, –and even the architecture changed in that sort of way.

The Italians grew vines, I mean even next door they grew vines on the walls of their houses and it was out on the street. But I think that came after the War. But the old Australian working class families stayed there, some of them would have got better off and moved to the quarter acre block somewhere or other. I mean most of the Italians here, our neighbours and others, ended up moving out to the newer suburbs because they could get more land.

But there was a period, that post-War period, where I think the seeds of a kind of multicultural Melbourne were planted organically. It wasn't Government policy, it wouldn't have been a policy of either of the major political parties, it wouldn't have been the Council, it just happened. People, you know.

Facilitator 1: Well I guess the divisions were more about class in those days than about ethnicity, so it was about workers and elite?...

Michael Gawenda: This was a working class suburb. these were workmen's cottages, they went to work. There were, I suppose factory owners nearby.

Facilitator 2: Yeah, my understanding of workman's cottage was they were probably built by factory owners for their workmen, and then the factory owners lived, I don't know, a bit further north or a bit further east.

Michael Gawenda: I mean it was a different sort of life because the vast majority of people didn't have a car, for instance. We didn't have a car and I can't remember ever going in a car.

Facilitator 1: I guess that's why you could play on the streets, because there weren't a million cars out on the streets or parked cars?

Michael Gawenda: That's the other thing, yes. You could have a whole day's game of cricket, here on Webb Street they had a kind of wall that you could paint on or draw six or seven times in a day.



Michael Gawenda: No one had cars, or very few people had cars. It wasn't parked up like it is now. I don't think IN the years that we were here people hadn't started moving out, that must've happened in 1960s. Factories were still operating.

I've brought my kids here sometimes, they can't believe that there were factories here. They just don't know what a factory is. That's the truth.

I've written a bit about this at different times in different things, just about my childhood and people that, you know. The freedom was, looking back, astounding, what kids were allowed to do.

So we were lucky, and because we all lived in small places close to other people we spent a lot of time on the streets because you don't want to spend time in the house. They went to the pub and people used to stand outside to talk.

In the houses, there was nowhere for them to play anyway and so you had an amazing amount of freedom. Like I said before, it went late into the night. I mean when I say late into the night we were up at nine, 10, and still out. My parents, shop was open, open until 10 or 10:30pm because people still came. But I can't remember them ever worrying about where I was or what I was doing. Even when a group of us would sit out there on the roof parents and get out the windows to sit on the roof and you're nine or 10 years old, watching what's going on!

So they were great times. Adults that live here now have a totally different experience of Fitzroy than we had. It was just a fantastic period.

Facilitator 2: I do have some neighbours here who they haven't moved out yet.

Michael Gawenda: Right, well they would know. I mean God, they've seen some changes.

They've been here for that long, I wonder whether they'd know us.

I mean when we were in the shop chances are they would've gone there at some stage, we were there quite a number of years.

I reckon from 1953 to 1960, so I can't believe that they wouldn't know. 1953 is more than 67 years ago.

Michael Gawenda: Anyway, anyone who grew up in Fitzroy in the 1990s had a different experience of growing up here but I'd be amazed if people of my vintage who grew up here wouldn't say the things that I've said, it was just a wonderful place.



Facilitator 1: I do have friends who've grown up in like Coburg in that era and they've said the same thing, that their street was a gang. I don't mean a gang in a bad way, I mean a gang in a good way, like a gang of kids..

Michael Gawenda: I don't want to sugar- coat this entirely, there were instances witnessing domestic violence, because it was all done out on the street. I mean, and the next day the woman would come into the shop and she'd have a black eye. It wasn't all paradise. I suppose everywhere there were things like that.

There were fights between gangs of -bodgies and widgies, they weren't huge, but what I can't remember is ever being scared. So whatever was going on the kids were okay, the kids weren't beaten, the kids weren't abducted. Look, I wouldn't have known what being sexually assaulted as a kid was.

It wasn't part of our experience. How could it have been? We were always in gangs, we were always in groups.

So when I think about it they were unique years. I reckon it was a better form of multiculturalism than official multiculturalism. It was kind of organic; it came about because both new arrivals and old Australians had to come to terms with each other. The first time people tasted food other than their food was in someone's home. You didn't go to a restaurant to try some Italian food. It was in people's homes.

I knew some Italian words and I could understand, because their parents spoke only Italian.

Facilitator 1: As a child were you kind of aware of the poverty? Or was everyone equally sort of struggling?

Michael Gawenda: No, I wasn't aware of the poverty, except people didn't have things. Yes, there were families that I can remember coming to the shop to get yesterday's bread rather than today's because it was half price or whatever it was. But it never registered to me as we weren't into things anyway. I can't remember that., I wanted a bike and all of us wanted a bike. We didn't all get a bike when we wanted it. I got a bike eventually, but we shared those. But I can't remember wanting anything else.

I can't remember hassling my parents, for instance, to buy a television because it was kind of so far beyond what we would do and we didn't have one.



Firstly, families didn't need a car, right, most people didn't need a car, and they worked locally. So I think people were poor. Looking back I think people struggled. Often only one person worked, women often didn't work. Some women did because there were factories especially the Italian and Greek women, who could work sewing machines. They sewed clothes, but they would've got paid a pittance. I mean they were doing that work because they were cheap; I mean they were really cheap.

They weren't paid a wage; they were paid piecework, right. Some of them did it at home. Some people were really quite poor. When I think of the people that came regularly to get yesterday's bread, and the people that were very careful about what they bought. A lot of it was tinned food, it was cheap. It was a shop with a grocery store attached to it. There were two rooms, one at the front was a milk bar, and then around to the side on this side was a kind of grocery store with shelves of groceries.

But we didn't have cuts of meat, for instance, because I don't reckon anyone could afford that. We wouldn't have sold much of that. We had Camp Pie, which I really liked. I don't even know if it still exists, Camp Pie.... It's in a sort of square tin. It's kind of like pressed meat. we sold a lot of that sort of stuff. Smith Street was a great street. I can't remember eating anything but chicken.

Facilitator 1: Did people keep chickens in their yards do you think?

Michael Gawenda: We didn't have chickens, but my mum might have bought chickens from people, yes people kept chickens in their yards.

Facilitator 2: When I was growing up my mother used to cook rabbit with chicken cubes and pretend it was chicken, so a chicken was a lot more expensive?

Michael Gawenda: It was. Rabbit was relatively cheap compared to all other meats.

Facilitator 1: Yeah, because by the 1960s we used to all want chicken on our birthday and we used to have chicken at Christmas, no such thing as turkey.

Michael Gawenda: We didn't have chicken every day, we had chicken twice a week and we ate soup, with meat bones in it. The meat from the bones would fall off and you'd have some in your soup. We ate a lot of potatoes. I think that I ate a lot of pasta, because pasta was often made, Italians made their own pasta and didn't have meat with it, you had tomato with it or whatever. They must've had somewhere where they grew some of their vegetables. I don't know where.



But I think people were probably poor. It was a working class area; people didn't earn huge amounts of money. The rule was that women who had small kids didn't work.

Facilitator 1: Well women lost their jobs in a lot of situations automatically if they got pregnant or got married. Airline hostesses had to be single,

Michael Gawenda: So if you had two or three kids, sometimes more, had one income, working man's wage, wouldn't have been rich, that's for sure. No one went to a private school. They might've gone to local parochial schools, Catholic schools. Italian kids and the Greek kids, we all went to George Street. I wouldn't have known what a private school was.

Facilitator 1: What was school like? Were there such things as school excursions in those days?

Michael Gawenda: I can't remember that there were. We had sports days. George Street, had asphalt playground, there was no grass. Is it the same building still? I haven't gone past. Maybe they've grassed some of the area. We played footy, must've played footy at some park. It wouldn't have been at the Fitzroy football ground they must've taken us. PE we did outside on the asphalt. There was a football team and there was a cricket team and I played football and cricket and we played other schools.

I'll tell you a very funny thing. I was the only Jewish boy, child, at George Street. They had religious instruction, and I didn't want to be singled out, as I wanted to attend. I was allowed to go to school but then my dad found out that I was going to Christian religious instruction. Now, he wasn't religious but he didn't want me to have Christian religious instruction.

Now his English wasn't great, but he went down to the school and said isn't there something to do rather than that. So they let me play in the playground during religious instruction which was the wrong thing to do because of course all the other kids were jealous as hell. They asked, 'Why is he allowed to go outside?' The reason is because he's a Jew, he's allowed to [laughs]...

Yes. They all wanted to be Jews. I remember that really clearly. There were other parents, later, that didn't want their kids to have any form of religious instruction, I reckon they were commies or they were radical. We all played



together during religious instruction - but at the beginning it was just me. The other parents must've found out you can opt out and they opted out.

Look, I can even remember when the Labor Party was really a Labor Party and the local branch of the Labor Party was really active. I mean, my dad went to those meetings. It was local, it thought - those people came and the kids came in and out. Often after the meetings they'd come to our shop and we had a sort of lounge room at the back, with a dining table, and some of them would come back. My mum would make them tea after Labor Party meetings, maybe there were Liberal branches.

It was active, it was alive, it was organic. Like everything else it was organic to the area.

We went into the city I just remembered that tram that goes around the corner. We must've gone to town to go to the pictures, and sometimes we went to town at night to go to the pictures. I saw *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* –

Facilitator 2: Would that be a group of you children, or with your parents?

Michael Gawenda: No, [just] children. ... So we'd take the tram in and take the tram back. Actually, I haven't spoken to my kids about some of this, but to let your children go and get home at 10:30pm!

That was a big excursion, to go - we didn't do that every week. We did that once every three months or whatever it is, because it was expensive too. You had to pay for the ticket. It cost nothing to go to the picture theatre in Johnson Street you could walk up, it cost nothing, it cost you to tram it what it was, two bob?

Must've been less because you could get a meal of fish and chips, I remember, for nine pence at the fish and chip shop. So a piece of fish, some chips and a potato cake cost you nine pence. [laughs]...

Facilitator 1: Mm, I remember getting sixpence worth of chips.

Michael Gawenda: Yeah, a sixpence worth of chips was a big deal. Or you could get for sixpence three potato cakes and chips. So the world was, it didn't feel small. For most kids, the world is what they have. . I never had a yearning to go and see other things, go somewhere else



- Facilitator 1: Oh yeah, I mean without media and television are you even kind of aware that other things exist to yearn for?
- Michael Gawenda: No that's right. I read books, I had a teacher in Grade 5 that I really liked and she encouraged me to read books. Most of the kids, in Year 6 didn't go onto Fitzroy High, they went onto Collingwood Tech. It was the closest tech school you could go to. Most of them had plans to be tradesmen.
- When my father went to see my sixth grade teacher she suggested that I should go to tech school, to become a printer because printing was then the king of the trades and that there were not many printing jobs left. Some of them were enrolled in Fitzroy High too. But it's like a lot of these things, when you move, how was I to maintain contact?
- There's no mobile phone. Most people didn't have a phone, we didn't have a phone, we didn't have a phone in the shop, as far as I can remember we didn't have a phone. We made phone calls - kids too - from phone boxes if the person that you wanted to ring had a phone. We had a phone when we moved to Caulfield, I mean [audio skip] but I was miserable for the first two years of that. I missed my friends terribly, I...
- Facilitator 1: Did you ever get to come back here in those few years?
- Michael Gawenda: Yeah, I came back by myself. Not until I was in high school, but then I did. Then over the years I came back. I took trams, came back. The shop was gone by the time - as a shop and a milk bar, can't remember [audio skip] I was still in high school. Did it become some photography place or something?
- Facilitator 2: I don't know about that but when I - I've been here 30 years and when I moved here the dental technician was there.
- Michael Gawenda: Right, it was, and it had been for some time.
- Facilitator 2: Oh, had it? Okay, yeah [Bradley Toome].
- Michael Gawenda: Right.
- Facilitator 1: But your parents sold it as a milk bar to someone else who took it on as a milk bar.
- Michael Gawenda: Yeah, and like a lot of milk bars died. I mean there were a few, every corner used to have a milk bar.



Facilitator 2: Yeah, and now they're houses.

Michael Gawenda: That's right. Yeah.

Facilitator 1: Even in the 1970s every corner in Fitzroy and North Fitzroy used to have a corner shop.

Michael Gawenda: I guess, I would've liked to move back here as [audio skip] but my wife had grown up in St Kilda, wanted to live in St Kilda. I mean I love St Kilda, I love it. St Kilda still has - less and less - some of that feeling of a mixed suburb, it's not all yuppies and there are still boarding houses, there are still all sorts. There are poorer people, there are, you know. But I would've liked to have come back and live here. [Audio skip] while I think it would've been different, I don't know.

If I would've come back and I would've wanted to live in these streets, not in North Fitzroy which was like a different world. I never knew North Fitzroy anyway and I go there now, it's all like...

Facilitator 2: People still say this is the best part of Fitzroy, SOJO, South of Johnston.

Michael Gawenda: This is the real Fitzroy. ... So, there you are.

[43:06]

Facilitator 1: Yeah, which is still - like you said about St Kilda, I mean it's still, Fitzroy is still mixed, there is still - I mean I live in North Fitzroy and like the difference between North Fitzroy and Fitzroy, even now, is still quite distinct.

Michael Gawenda: Yeah, and you can see it in the houses. I mean you can see it in the streets, you can see it...

Facilitator 1: Yeah, I mean lots of yuppies and young people and that have moved in but there's still a lot of the older people. I mean around where I live I must admit there's still quite a few of the old Italian nonas there who still don't speak English. Like they walk past my place and we kind of like have a strange sort of chat over the fence because they look at my garden, but they don't speak English still.

Michael Gawenda: There would be some, yeah, no. But obviously there was that division between North Fitzroy when I was a kid, because we didn't go there and those kids didn't go to George Street. Whoever lived - I don't think they would've gone to George - maybe they did, would they have?

Facilitator 1: They would've gone to Fitzroy Primary.



Michael Gawenda: Right, so you're kind of, when we were kids, defined by the school you go to too, I mean that's what - in a sense that's where...[your friends are] ... Yes, they're there, they're there at that, you know. So but the house where the Italians lived looks the same as it looked, hasn't changed. A lot of the cottages don't look all that different. I don't know what they've done inside, I mean they're probably...

Facilitator 1: So you can still walk around the streets and recognise quite a lot of the houses.

Michael Gawenda: The houses yeah, yeah. I mean the brothel's been really done up.

[Laughter] [44:30]

Facilitator 2 ...to say when you told me that, because when I came here it was accommodation run by I think a church, a refuge for children or youths.

Michael Gawenda: How appropriate [laughs].

Facilitator 2: ...It was done up by quite a good architect and she doesn't live there anymore, she did it up.

Michael Gawenda: Right, but they haven't - maybe because they - houses haven't been pulled down along here. There hasn't been a sort of... Have they? I mean they don't look like they...

Facilitator 1: Well some have, but it's hard. It's not like the 1970s, anything that didn't get pulled down in the 1970s and early 1980s is probably, at least the façade of it might be safe. Because by the time - there is a reasonable heritage overlay.

Michael Gawenda: Right.. ...Right, so that façade of that house next door, inside might be completely...

[45:31]

Facilitator 1: Oh, inside might have two storeys and be white from wall to wall with the whole white thing.

Michael Gawenda: Okay, well - and what's happened with the shop? What's there now?

Facilitator 2: Well when Bradley moved out it was rented by a clothes designer as her work room and occasional shop. It's owned by a lawyer.

Michael Gawenda: Right, because it could be quite a nice house if you used the shopfront and...



- Facilitator 2: I've been in there just once when it was open for inspection., [renting].
- Michael Gawenda: My memory is that there are only two rooms upstairs. There's a room, a bigger room, downstairs beyond the shopfront area.
- Facilitator 1: Yeah, the one you said was the dining...
- Michael Gawenda: Yeah, and that's all there - that's, that's...
- Facilitator 2: I remember when I went through there was some really interesting molding around the windows....
- Michael Gawenda: Oh yeah, well it was kind of Victorian moulding. Okay?
- Facilitator 2: Well thank you.
- Michael Gawenda: My pleasure.
- Facilitator 1: So thank you very much.

[46:30]

END OF TRANSCRIPT