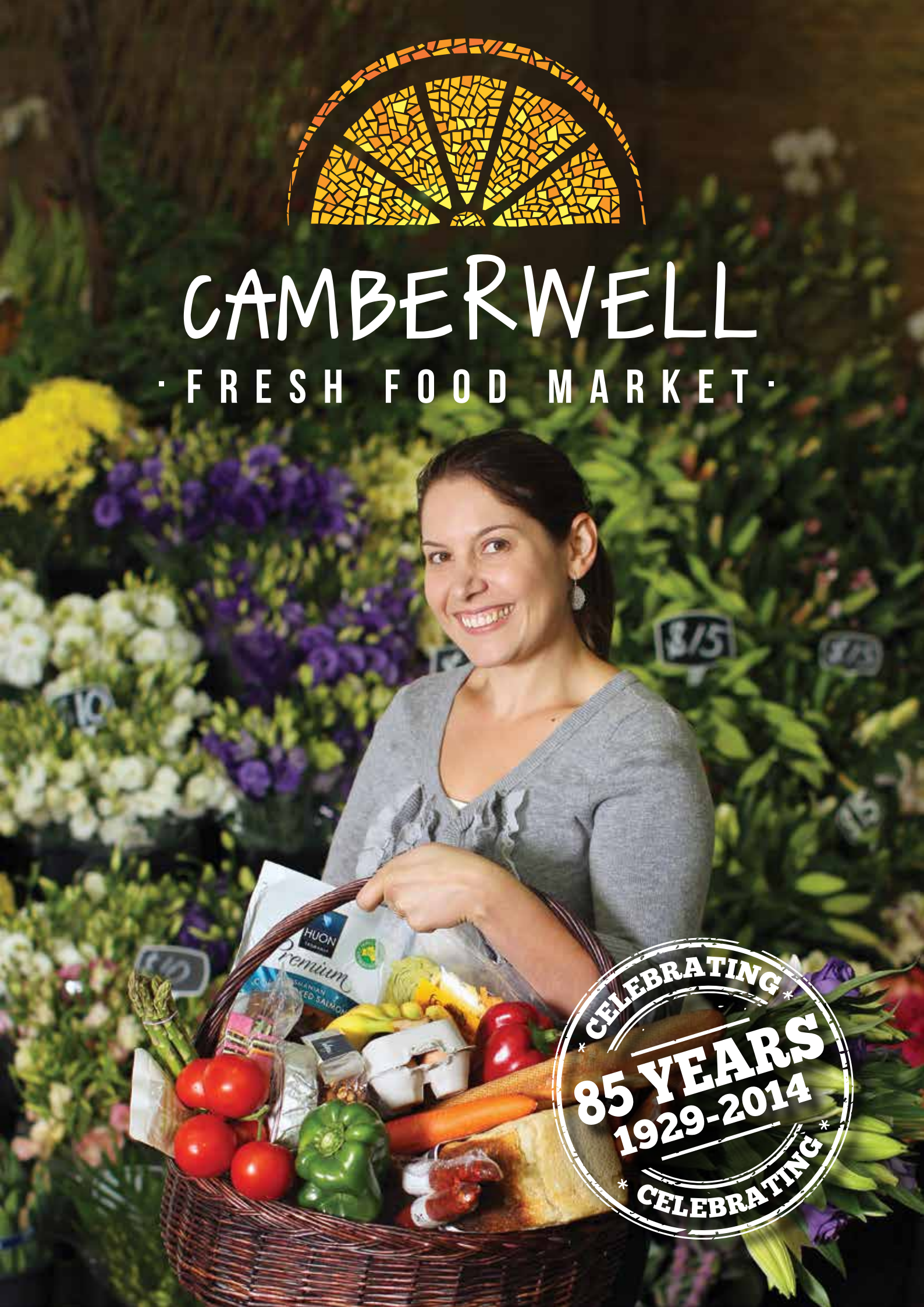
CAMBERWELL
· FRESH FOOD MARKET ·
HUON
Premium
CELEBRATING
85 YEARS
1929-2014
CELEBRATING

Arthur's Shoe Repairs

Caffe Lo Bello

Camberwell Deli

Camberwell
Market Florist

Camberwell Market
Fruit and Veg

Camberwell
Market Poultry

Camberwell
Market Seafoods

Commercial
Quality Butchers

Flower Charm

Forno

Golden Gardenia
Fruit and Veg

Golden Rooster

Junction Deli

Kingfisher Seafoods

Market Meats

Nick and Sue's
Gourmet Deli

Peter's Continental
Deli and Nuts

Sushi by Yoyo Sushi

Sweetie's

Mayor's foreword

I have always loved the Camberwell Fresh Food Market.

I am a bit of a Market tragic, and often shop there three times a week.

I love buying produce fresh; not in packets and I love being able to choose individual items. I enjoy the community atmosphere and getting to know the traders. It is like another family.

My English background meant that I was brought up shopping in markets and from market stalls. So in lots of ways the Camberwell Market reminds me of those markets, or even the English Market in Cork.

However, it is much better. You get to pick the apples you want – not the apples in the box under the counter! It is under cover and there is a great variety of shops. When I have overseas visitors it is one of the places I always take them.

The Camberwell Market is a wonderful place to ask advice and you get personal service. I will often ask the butcher what meat they recommend this week, or the fish shop what is the best buy. We often forget that produce is not the same each week, so it is great to be able to ask the traders what is the pick that week.

I enjoy being able to try products – we discovered our now favourite cheese by sampling. The trader can then tell you, well if you like "x", you will probably like "y".

The delis are full of home-made products – which I buy for weekend lunches. And ravenous teenagers adore the marinated chicken ribs!

The Market is a community. It is full of life and characters and is a great place to bump into people. When my children were little there was only one fruit shop with wide enough aisles for a pram. I still shop there, but others now have the wide aisles. My children loved going to the market – and not just for the lollies or bananas they were given by the traders!

The Market has changed with the times, but is also still the same. The community atmosphere is the same; the personal service is the same. But the wares have changed. And the Market needs to respond to the community expectations to ensure it is sustainable – it certainly is not the same as it was 85 years ago.

Congratulations to everyone on reaching this milestone and I look forward to seeing what exciting things are in store over the coming decades.

Coral Ross

Coral Ross
Mayor of Boroondara

March 2014

Introduction

Did you have any idea? Camberwell Fresh Food Market is up for a serious birthday!

For 85 years it has been a place where stories, confidences and banter are traded with the same zeal as fish, flowers and fruit, chicken, chives and chorizo. A place where butchers, fishmongers, florists, fruiterers and deli owners not only fill baskets, but happily carry them to cars if they get too heavy.

A place defined as much by the things it doesn't have as the things it does: name tags – because everyone knows everyone, clunky trolleys and muzak, although, if you listen closely, mixed chatter becomes its own unique soundtrack.

As for the things it does have, let's just say there are few recipe ingredients, however obscure, that traders either don't stock or won't move mountains to source. So long as you let them know how the finished dish tasted.

Ultimately, it's about the food, among the freshest you'll find. As no lesser gourmet than Luciano Pavarotti once observed: "One of the very nicest things about life is the way we must regularly stop whatever we're doing and devote our attention to eating." Such devotion deserves the finest quality produce.

That's the market difference.

So, in the spirit of celebration, welcome to this anniversary booklet, featuring tales from the past, snapshots of the present and a glimpse into a bright new future.

Most importantly, to those of you who don't know them, we introduce and celebrate the market's lifeblood – its traders.

Pavarotti would have sung to that.

Thank you...

Photography and words: Stephen McKenzie
Cover model: Renee Toone

... and especially the traders and our valued customers.

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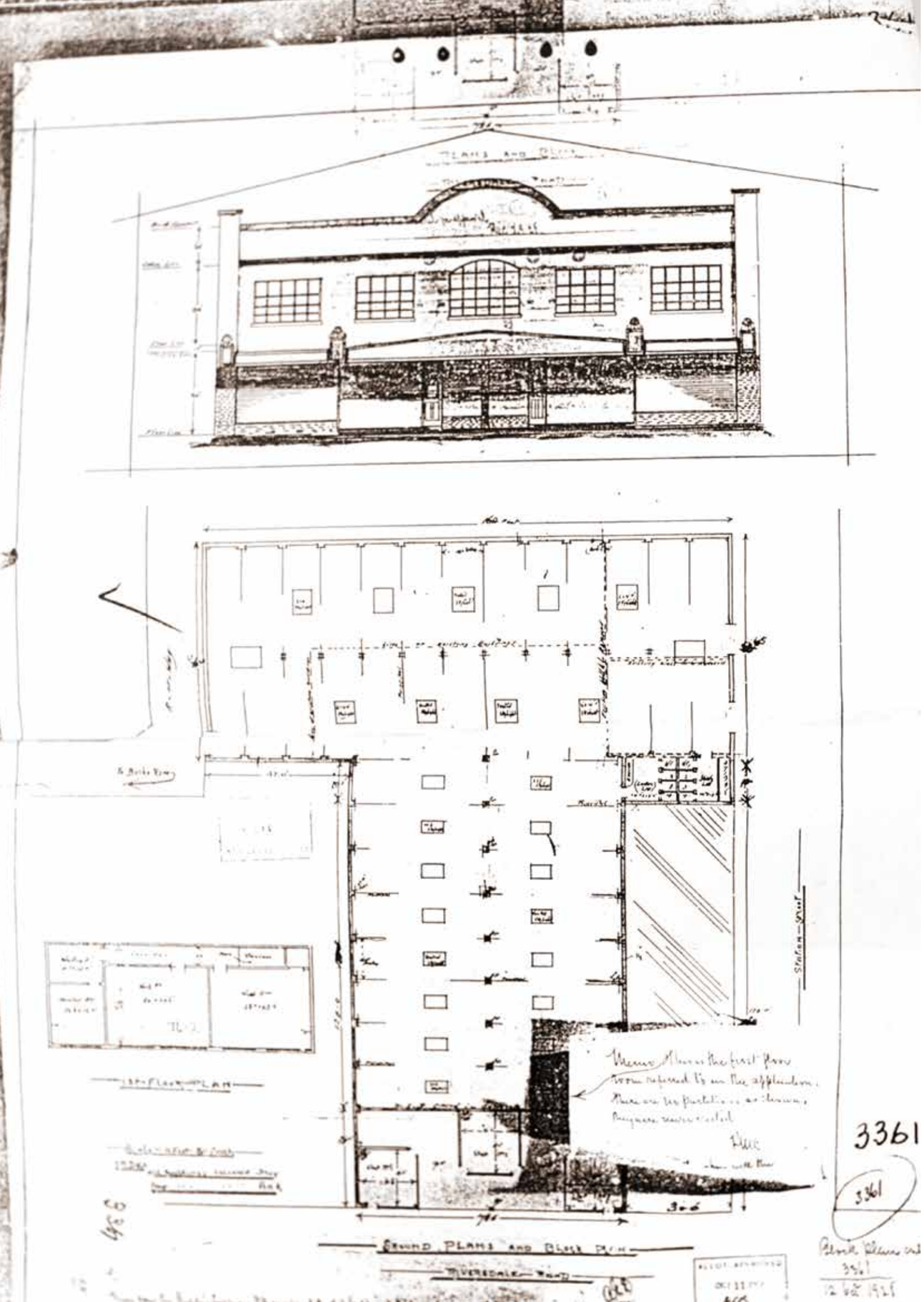
Launched 29 March 2014 on the occasion of the 85th Anniversary of the Camberwell Fresh Food Market.



History

There's no mistaking the glint in Camberwell Fresh Food Market's (CFFM) eye, but like most 85-year-olds she feels the weather and aches in spots. But then, if you'd battled The Depression in infancy, a devastating fire in your 50s and a host of rivals much of your life; you'd be a bit weary too. With grit and determination she has always picked herself up, dusted herself off and got on with things; after all, with traders to safeguard and families to feed, there's no question of retirement.

Last year, Council developed an exciting blueprint of a five-year-plan, designed in careful consultation with traders, leaseholder Fitzroys, urban planners, architects, heritage bodies and the local community.

Works have started on the revamped front entrance with bold, colourful banners set against a crisp façade that will welcome shoppers beneath a new canopy to LED-lit walkways. A new first floor will host a community meeting room and the much-loved Camcare Christmas card shop.

And that's just the southern side.

Incrementally, the plan is to further open CFFM to its surrounds, with seating replacing cars and trucks to the north and south, increased greenery and bustling food vendors enlivening currently rendered walls. Picture artful lighting, performance spaces, kids play areas, festivals even, and if anyone is still unaware of what's inside, an art installation beside the northern entrance will spell it out: M A R K E T.

Of all the colourful characters who've roamed Camberwell Fresh Food Market, none was better known – or more loved – than Eric. He gravitated to all, particularly children, who saw past his dotage, his shabby appearance and gutter mouth. When he died in the fire that engulfed the building in 1992, children sobbed hardest for a friend who'd spent 50 of his 89 years at the market. For many, Eric *was* the market, and he remains the most famous cockatoo in Camberwell's history.

If he were alive today and could do more than cuss and ape spruikers, Eric could fill a host of gaps in the market's history: the travails and triumphs, and the shoppers and shop owners who little has been written about for example. It's as if the market was so commonplace, such a regular part of people's lives, no-one thought to record its goings on.

One thing is for certain though, a quill-dipped entry on page 187 of the Camberwell Building Register 1926-1928 lists Camberwell Markets Pty Ltd, with the builder Jennings and Sons Pty Ltd, the address N (North) Riversdale Road, the materials brick and iron and the cost 9,100 pounds.

(Opposite page) The first known sketches of the market exterior and layout; (above) Page from the Camberwell Building Register – it's official – 'The Camberwell Markets Pty Ltd' is inked into the Register – a simple entry for what would become an iconic place.

The area itself dates back to the 1850s, when sizeable lots were subdivided and snapped up by investors like George Eastaway, whose Camberwell Inn at the Junction's north-east corner was the first known use of the suburb's eventual name. (Traders would wet their whistles at a time when the only thing 'dry' about Boroondara was residents' wit.)

Unfortunately, records from the period are scant, with an unknown saddler and a blacksmith, John Blanksby, the only businesses traceable to the strip west of Station Street.

In May 1888, however, the *Boroondara Standard* wished "every success" to two enterprising tradesmen, Harry Rooks and Harry Scott, who paid the then Camberwell Inn licensee Harry Withers 50 pounds to start a carriage manufacturers at the site where the market now stands.

It was just the right time for such an enterprise, with a *Guide to Melbourne* announcing that Camberwell not only catered "for the magnates", it benefited from "the close vicinity of Melbourne, presenting an unlimited field for the disposal of fruit and vegetables and making their production (and delivery) highly profitable … The centre of trade is Camberwell Junction where 5 (!) roads meet and near this is a large and prosperous carriage manufactory".

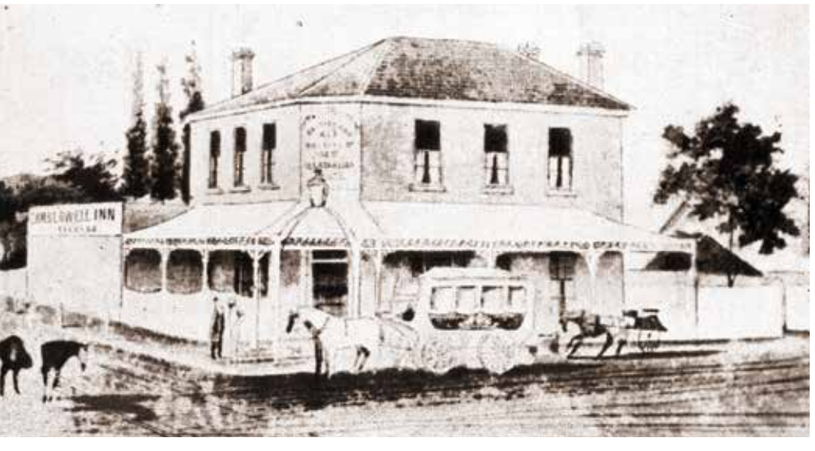
Rooks and Scott flourished until 1914, when the pair went their separate ways. Allen Motor Engineers took over, extending the building in 1924.

Not until June 1928 were the Camberwell Fresh Fruit Market's first seeds planted, with B Bentley moving a motion at council "in regards to converting a building in Riversdale Road (near the Junction) into a market shopping centre". He was asked to refer this to Public Works, along with his intended plans.

Bentley's suggestion gathered momentum, at least with Cr Latham whose move the following month for council to consider the "establishment of a municipal market within the city of Camberwell" was seconded by Cr Vine. Two more voted aye, but with one councillor absent and four against (then Mayor Howie among them), the motion was dismissed.

The Hartwell Progress Association joined the cause, but achieved little progress. "Council (has) given the matter consideration, but is of the opinion that the time is not opportune to establish a municipal market in Camberwell" was the blunt response.

By 11 October of that year, however, minds were not only changed, plans were drawn up, a lot approved and



(Above) Harry Rooks made a fabulous carriage and a decent Councillor; (left) from all accounts, nearby Camberwell Inn was so popular, it was hard getting patrons out.

Riversdale Road showing the market façade and other local shops, circa 1976.
© Collins, John.
Riversdale Road circa 1976.
Photograph.
City of Boroondara Library Service

several traders pencilled in for stalls. Fittingly, on 25 March 1929, (the now) Cr Rooks officially opened the market on the spot where he had made his name.

Unfortunately, in 1929, with the Depression starting to bite, fortunes were being lost, not made. Traders, however, trumpeted the "premier market of the eastern suburbs" where customers could "shop in comfort and obtain all (their) household requirements", from bloomers to blooms, blueberries to blade.

Back then, horse and carriage still delivered much of the produce, with trams and trains depositing a steady stream of shoppers at or near the door. It was a no frills market, with slippery, uneven floors, dark corners and questionable refrigeration that OH&S inspectors would laugh at today.

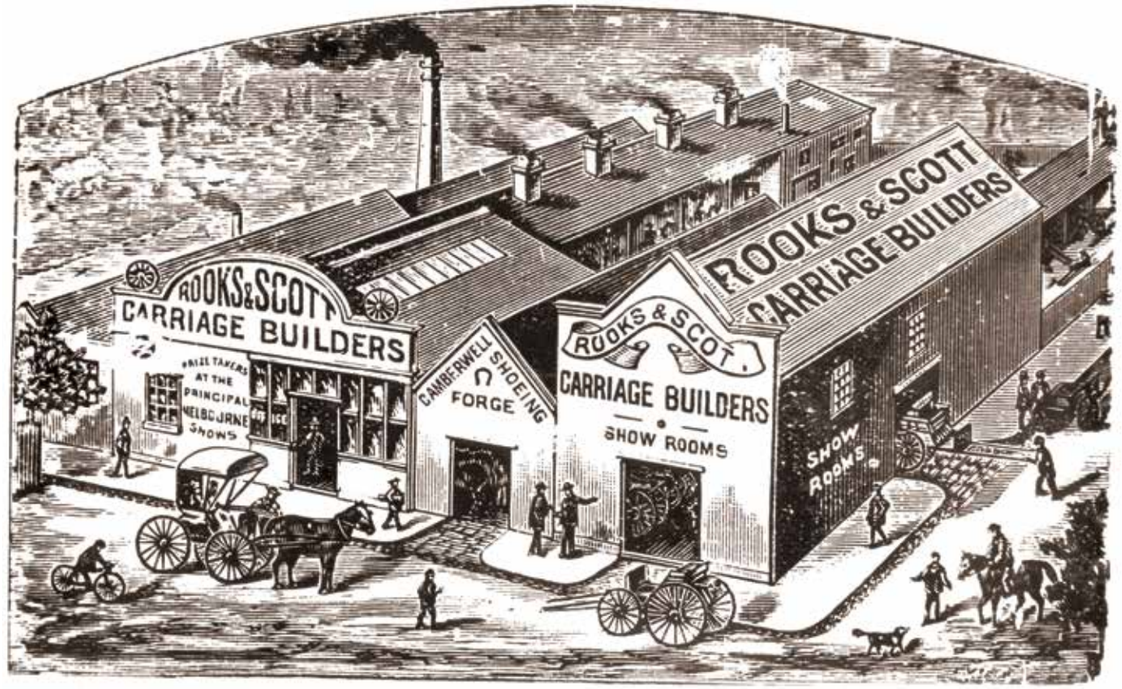
It stayed that way for decades. As architecture student Richard Lee detailed in a 1983 study on the market: "In some places boxes have been precariously stacked to ceiling height, adopting a lean of which the residents of Pisa would be wary". Paradoxically, while traders started catering to increasingly exotic tastes, living up to the motto "quality, freshness and value", the building itself was mired in the past, with unsightly shutters, dim lighting and generally poor design.

And, then, in 1966, a giant rival opened its doors 100 or so metres to the north.

As shopping experiences go, Safeway Pratt was Yin to the market's Yang, with air-conditioning, glistening surfaces and crisp, uniformed staff. What it lacked in life and energy, it made up for in range, packaged goods especially. Suddenly, for some shoppers, the market was more complimentary than compulsory. A slice of customers was lost and with them, a touch of spirit.

This infuriated market loyalists, among them Nan Rivett, who wrote an impassioned treatise in the *Herald* on 15 November 1977: "To me the market is the heart of Camberwell. That's where you meet people. There are your old friends who serve you chicken and eggs and meat and cheeses and vegetables and fruit, and your other friends who buy them … What bloody mind thought up the supermarket and packaged goods, stamped on prices and cash registers I've yet to learn, but he's on my list with the Hitlers of this world." (Nan, clearly, wasn't one to mince words).

Most shoppers, while fond of the market, weren't blind to its failings, so much so that in 1982 Camberwell Council commissioned a study into its potential redevelopment. Only one respondent, a woman from the Nan Rivett school of saying what you think, was aghast at the prospect of a market expansion. "To upgrade the market would be the last nail in the coffin for Camberwell," she said.



An artist's depiction of carriage factory Rooks & Scott, circa late 1800s.

Another woman spoke for the majority: "It would make a lot of difference if it were made to look clean," she said. "The stalls are so awkward, they're all bottlenecks and it's awkward with children and pushers."

The report identified problems and suggested changes. But few were acted upon between its tabling and that fateful Easter Monday, 1992, when a suspected refrigeration fault sparked a blaze that swept through the market. It was 5.30pm. More than 40 fire trucks fought in vain to save the building, thousands of dollars' worth of stock and several pet shop creatures, among them a barely feathered, potty-mouthed cockatoo called Eric.

By the time of the partial re-opening that September, it was clear that scores of regular customers had been lost, too.

Mayor Cooks sounded upbeat: "Now the Junction will beat with life again," he said. "The tide has turned and Camberwell will resume its place as one of the city's most distinctive retail areas" – but he looked awkward and slightly beaten on the *Progress Press* cover, waving a solitary balloon against a darkened backdrop.

But market traders are a tough lot.

Paul Panagiotopoulos is still there, 22 years after flicking on the news to see his dad's business in flames. Sue and Nick Mandas returned; changing the business from prepared gourmet food to deli items. The Bevilacquas stuck it out too, despite fire destroying everything only two weeks after they'd bought their floristry. As for fruit and vegetable dynasty, the Houlis, could you imagine them anywhere else?

Now, turn these pages and take a virtual stroll through the current market to see it as the current traders do – join in the camaraderie and community spirit.

We're so lucky to have a produce market – so few suburbs still do – c'mon down and visit.

Meet your traders...

CAMBERWELL
FRESH FOOD MARKET

Camberwell Deli

Camberwell Deli livewire Desi Stammer revels in an environment enveloped by colour: “Look, there’s some macaroons, there’s some olives, over there is fruit,” she says smiling broadly. “As for the people, they’re the most colourful of all.”

Camberwell Market Florist

Says florist Hermina Bevilacqua of the market she holds dear: “It’s a place where people meet and enjoy family-friendly service. I’m lucky enough to sell things that brighten faces and lighten rooms.” And her favourite flower? “The tuberose, for its beautiful perfume.”

Camberwell Market Seafoods

Life ain't easy if you're a salmon; a fresh, tasty one especially. Not with Peter Tripatigis after you. The veteran market man scours his suppliers for the best fish available. The day he doesn't find it, he'll bait rods himself and head out!

Anne Chapman's current addiction is Irrewarra Sourdough. She loves the trader's recommendations she regularly receives, unknown treats that become much-loved staples. "It's why I avoid the supermarkets," she says.

Said Pamela White, pictured with her boys Cameron and Matthew: “I go to the market once a week with my two boys. You can imagine if I had to move around with a double pram, two inquisitive boys and a basket to put my fruit and veges in – it would take forever. Well, the fruiterer carries my basket and helps me pick what I need. He then carries the box to my car. It’s more than personal service – he’s wonderful.”

Peter’s Continental Deli and Nuts

Watching television one night, Paul Panagiotopoulos saw something ablaze on the news – his store. Even then, in 1992, he had been at the market for a decade. He started afresh, of course, and would again if need be. “This place represents the world to my sister Jenny Fragias, and me,” he says, surveying a sea of nuts, legumes, confectionary, cheeses, sweets, olives and coffees. “It’s where we’ve made our lives.”

Caffe Lo Bello

Get your caffeine fix at Caffe Lo Bello. Jing and her son Michael are baristas par excellence. They make a mean foccacia too, not to mention bacon and egg sandwiches, staple Saturday morning brekkie for many Friday night revellers.

Commercial Quality Butchers

The smile on John Lentini's face is commensurate with the smile on his customers' dials; each inspires the other. Never mind that Lentini wakes most mornings at 4am; he enters Commerical Quality Butchers every trading day with the same pep. "It's about making people happy and giving them what they want," says Lentini. "My awesome staff backs me up and we work as one, especially on Saturdays when it's go, go, go!"

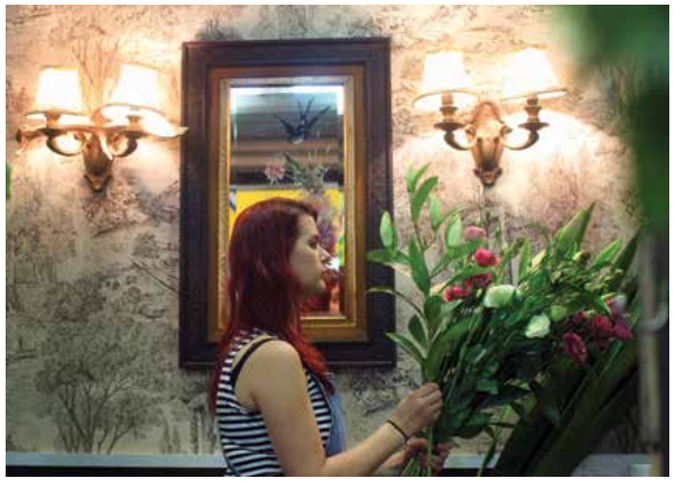
Camberwell Market Fruit and Veg

There are almost as many ranges of apples at Camberwell Market Fruit and Veg as there are ways to spell Houli, surname of Karl (seated), his brother Joe (behind arms crossed) and his boys: Makka (left) and Wally. Haoli, Houli, Haouli – they're all good. But let's get one thing straight. The Houlis are to Camberwell Market what cauliflower is to cheese: just right. Before patriarch Mohammad died recently; four generations worked the aisles. Expect a fifth, a sixth, even a seventh before the Houlis are through.

Had he not visited the market's book exchange, newcomer Avi Shoket would never have stumbled across this literary treasure, Bert and Patti, an insight into Australian entertainment royalty, The Newtons. (And he'd have been poorer for it.)

Camberwell Poultry

John (left) and Nick Kydas hold the market's tradition of fresh quality food dear. Everything in their display is prepared well before the crack of dawn each market morning – no traffic jams for them. Are they possibly tired of chicken, after 30 years serving it? "We eat it four times a day, eight days a week," says John, only half-jokingly. "We know a fair whack of our customers by name. But then, when you've been at a place for 30 years, it's like a second home."



"This is the best deli in the world," says market regular Rod Lyle, clutching Nick and Sue's Sue. "And this woman here is the second best in the world. I have to say that. Happy wife, happy life."

Arthur's Shoe Repairs

Over 27 years, Arthur Filopoulos has seen fire, a rebuild and more shoes, boots and keys than you can imagine. He loves how the market, a vestige of old Camberwell, "breaks the monotony of an area dominated by fashion shops, banks and offices." And he has a tip for people keen to get the most of their footwear. "Alternate, alternate, alternate!"

Market Meats

The boys at Market Meats ascribe to the Soumeet Lanka quote: "There is only one right way to eat a steak – with greed in your heart and a smile on your face". Actually, make that anything at Market Meats, a butcher's paradise stocked by a team of committed carnivores who cunningly fry gourmet snags near the rear entrance. It's fun watching shoppers enter, stop, turn and find themselves saying, "One, thanks, with onions".

Yvette White has shopped at the market for decades because it's a "friendly and accommodating place".

Nick and Sue's Gourmet Deli

Nick and Sue Mandas have run their gourmet deli for 32 of the 44 years they've been married. What have they learned in that time? "To be humble," says Nick. "The store has brought us close to people who know so much about cooking, but never lose the hunger to learn more. This is pure passion for me. Without it, how could my feet stand so many hours, days and years. If you have passion, if you love what you do, money loses value in the end."

Forno

There's an old saying that goes: "If God had intended people to follow recipes, he wouldn't have invented grandmothers". Tony Di Lorenzo can relate. His ready-made Italian food tastes a lot like the stuff mamma's mamma used to make. In addition to food, Tony – the self-described jokester of the market – specialises in ribbing John, the neighbouring butcher. (Mind you, John gives as good as he gets.)

Chances are little David Madrid, 8 months, doesn't share his father Juan's antipasto fetish. A few more years shopping at Camberwell Deli, though, and he'll be an olive connoisseur.

Sushi by Yoyo Sushi

If they ever run out of ingredients, the boys at Sushi by Yoyo Sushi don't have to travel far to top up. Alan and Fred Zhang spend mornings preparing for the afternoon onslaught, as locals flock to their light, healthy sushi fix. Once upon a time, the boys are informed, many Melburnians had three basic options for lunch: pies, pasties and sausage rolls. "Really?" laughs Fred. "Hah, sushi much better." Much indeed!

Junction Deli

Emily Soldatos was a practicing microbiologist when she decided to follow a long held dream and open a deli. She roped in her dad, Bill Tripatgis and opened Junction Deli in the market's belly. That was nine years ago. Posing the question: what three items would she take to a (refrigerated) desert island? "A hard one," she says. "Okay: the hand-carved ham off the bone, the King Island Discovery Ash Brie and the Parma proscuitto."

Kingfisher Seafoods

"If I shaved my beard my family wouldn't know me," says hirsute Morris Waisberg, pictured with colleague Craig Daniell. The much loved character doesn't say much, but what Kingfisher Seafoods boys don't know about fish – where to source it, how to prepare and cook it – isn't worth knowing. A large, loyal customer base speaks volumes for that.

Sushi Bar regulars know their lunch treats well enough to never mistake wasabi for avocado. They don't have to fiddle with little packets, either, one of those nice little touches.

Flower Charm

The market's multi-culturalism drives Vicki Medini and her daughter Lindije Alievski, whose Flower Charm stall blasts visitors with colour at the eastern rear entrance. "Because it's not too big, so many customers from all walks have become friends," says Vicki. "Florists are good for heart-to-hearts, because they're dealing with people marking anniversaries, deaths, marriages; all these things that carry such emotions. It's a privilege to serve them."

Kids love Camberwell Market Fruit and Veg's Ritsa Orfanidis, partly for her seemingly permanent smile, partly for the biscuits and snakes she's been dolling out for years. Grown-ups don't despair; ask nicely and she's bound to slip you a strawberry or two!

Sweetie's

It's fitting that sweethearts Maria Doumouliakis and Frank Turcino, should start a business called Sweetie's. After all, they're nuts about each other – and their customers. "You don't see many name tags here," says Maria of the market. "You know everyone by name and they know you. It's those little touches that make it special."

Golden Gardenia Fruit and Veg

What does Camberwell Market mean to Selim 'Sam' Haouli, a market character with a smile wider than his range of fruit and vegetables? He pauses for a second, strokes his beard and says: "Geez, bro, it means my life, that's what. It's like family." No kidding, with close kin staffing not only his stall, but the neighbouring fruit and veg business, too. That's plenty of reason to smile.

Golden Rooster

The difference between involvement and commitment is like a ham and eggs breakfast: the chicken was ‘involved’ – the pig was ‘committed’. They sell eggs at Golden Rooster, but there’s no questioning the free range chickens’ commitment, nor that of Nick and Theo Kavouras, who pride themselves on bringing them to discerning poultry lovers. “Freshness,” says Nick. “Here it’s all about freshness.”

Patricia McLean reckons Camberwell Market is good for “those little extras you just won’t find elsewhere.” As for freshness, she rarely buys fish or chicken from anywhere else.

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