

# Deaf Children Australia's

# Bluestone Restoration and Redevelopment Project



## (article provided by DCA)

**D**eaf Children Australia's [DCA] beautiful heritage listed property with its gothic bluestone building at 597 St Kilda Road is of outstanding Australian significance to the State of Victoria and the Deaf community.

It is an iconic, much revered symbol of deaf people's civic rights, as its construction in 1866 by Crouch and Wilson as a residential school heralded a new era of education and emancipation for deaf people.

We need to keep such an icon accessible and multifunctional for the Deaf community and the wider community. We hope that in the future, we can facilitate increased public use of the grounds. But we need your support!

### The problem

The bluestone building is in dire need of restoration. When the last major works were completed in 1998, an architectural report stated that the building would need significant attention to remain structurally sound. The

goal is to restore the exterior of the building by 2016 – being the 150th anniversary of the historic property. We have just undertaken an extensive building audit of the external condition of the building and we have received preliminary advice that we may not be able to use the main front door due to the condition of the stonework immediately above. If something is not done now we will lose the space, potential and heritage of this site.

### The requirement

Deaf Children Australia is seeking funding and support in the vicinity of \$12 million. The redevelopment will create a culturally and commercially significant space for the Deaf and greater Melbourne community, encouraging diversity and inclusion.

### The benefits

- The continuing commitment to the support of both primary and secondary Deaf education
- The creation of a fully accessible Arts and Cultural precinct with a focus on promoting community, arts,

and cultural development for the wider community to enjoy

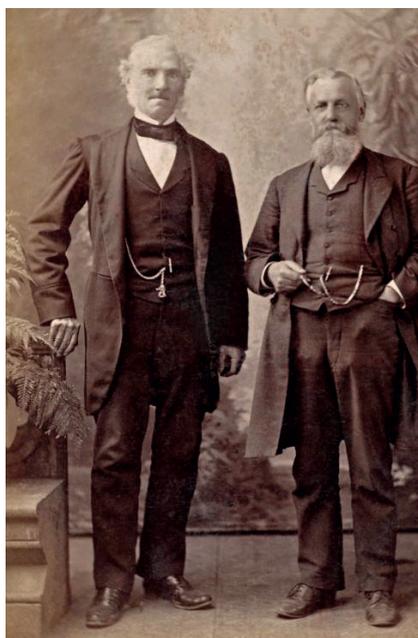
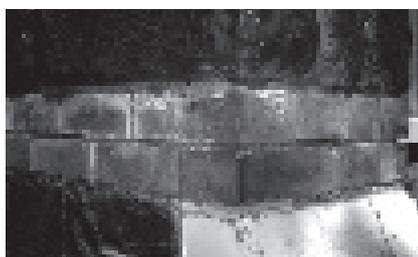
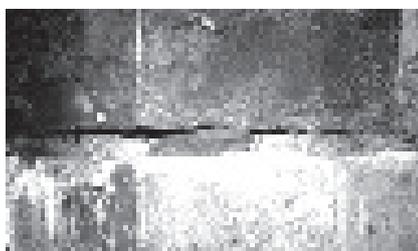
- The provision of professional facilities for shared holistic services, collaborative offices and amenities for the Deaf sector
- The development of a Tertiary Education and Research hub of national significance
- Commercial sustainability of the site
- The retention and accessibility of the history of the Deaf community on this site in Victoria
- The creation of a resource base for Deaf community interest groups.

To learn more about the Bluestone Restoration and Redevelopment Project, contact Fundraising Appeals Manager Noel Henderson at [noel.henderson@deafchildren.org.au](mailto:noel.henderson@deafchildren.org.au) or go to [www.deafchildreinaustralia.org.au](http://www.deafchildreinaustralia.org.au) to read the concept document. Please sign up to show your support.

SOURCE: above article and image provided by DCA. Refer also page 2 *St Kilda Times*

## FRETTING BLUESTONE

When DFA's [Deaf Children Australia] Noel Henderson showed SKHS Committee members around the historic DCA site, your editor photographed examples of deteriorated tuckpointing between the bluestone blocks



Ferguson & Urie, c.1877

## UTMOST FOR THE HIGHEST

FREDERICK JOHN ROSE (right) 1831-1920, who was born in England, founded what is now known as the centre for Deaf Children Australia (DCA) in the 1860s, is buried in St Kilda Cemetery.



Frederick caught scarlet fever (scarletina) as a child and became deaf but, fortunately for him, his parents were able to have him educated in the Asylum for Deaf & Dumb at Old Kent Rd, London.

Later on, Frederick and his brother relocate to Victoria, in the early 1850s on the SS *Gloriana*, and will work in Sth Melb and the Bendigo goldfields before Frederick answers a letter written by Mrs Lewis, the mother of a deaf child (Lucy), published in *The Argus*, 1859.

After opening a series of four temporary schools in Windsor and Prahran from 1860 onwards, and continuous enrolment growth, funds were raised for a permanent home.

The imposing "Gothic Revival" bluestone building was designed by Crouch & Wilson and built by William Ireland on land granted by the Vic Government on behalf of the Victorian people, and opened in 1866.

## ARCHITECTS

The architects for the bluestone building, 597 St Kilda Rd, were Tasmanian-born Thomas Crouch and Londoner Ralph Wilson, partners in an architectural practice based in Melbourne (commenced 1857).

The firm would design a number of prominent Melbourne buildings including: The Homeopathic Hospital (later Prince Henry's Hospital); Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind; Prahran T/Hall; Methodist Ladies College; as well as various churches.

In St Kilda they designed Wilgah Terrace in Burnett St, Hewison Hse (Elmwood) in Chapel St; Charnwood Grove Synagogue, and the Wesleyan Methodist Church, Cnr Fitzroy & Princes Sts.

Both Crouch & Wilson resided in St Kilda. Crouch was elected a councillor 1867-74? and in 1870-71 was selected mayor of St Kilda. When he passed away on 4 December 1889 (buried in St Kilda cemetery) he left his widow, Mary Emma Bloor Crouch with nine children.

## LEADLIGHTERS

Sources: Text-Online Encyclopaedia of Melbourne; Text & Image <http://fergusonandurie.wordpress.com>

The leadlight window depicting Faith (left), Charity (centre) and Hope (right), draws your eyes up the stairwell as you enter Deaf Children Australia's bluestone building at 597 St Kilda Road.

The 31/2 metre (approx) central panel shows an angel on a sphere holding a biblical scroll declaring "the deaf shall hear" alongside scriptural quotes on the other two panels topped by the botanical symbols of England, Ireland and Scotland. Traditionally, the Angel of Charity is one of the three Masonic Angels. Faith. Hope. And, of course Charity is the Greatest of them all. For Charity is Love.

The DCA window was designed and created in 1866 by the firm of Ferguson, Urie (& Lyons), the first known and most successful of

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stained-glass window-makers in Australia and examples of their work are found throughout the older suburbs of Melbourne.

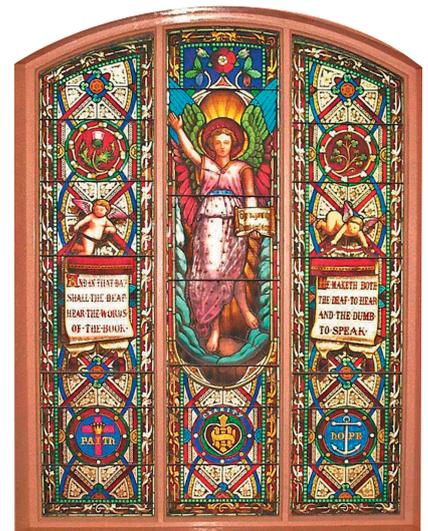
## **FERGUSON, URIE & LYONS**

According to the website of Ray Brown, a descendant of James Ferguson, (<http://fergusonandurie.wordpress.com>) one of their earliest business advertisements appear in *The Argus*, August 1853\* promoting lead lattice windows for churches and cottages, as well as zinc spouting, piping, revolving cowls for chimneys and galvanised roofing products.

Although Ferguson and Urie initially set up as plumbers, glaziers and decorators in North Melbourne, it was when fellow Scot, John Lamb Lyon joined the firm around 1862, that they began producing stained and painted glass windows.

Prior to the early 1860s, window glass in Melbourne was clear or plain coloured, with nearly all being imported. And, as new church and institution buildings create a demand for pictorial windows, the majority of imported stained (colored) glass is brought in from the U.K, Germany, France, Belgium and the USA.

\*The firm ceased operation in 1899. (Encyclopedia Melb)



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### **TOUR DCA**

If enough SKHS members indicate interest, DHA offers a guided tour through the historic DCA site. Do let an SKHS committee know if you would like them to arrange a tour: - email [stkildahistory.org.au](mailto:stkildahistory.org.au); mobile/text 0405510799; message 9209 6866.

### **DCA VOLUNTEERS**

DCA also needs volunteers to help them research and record their history and heritage in preparation for their 150th in 2016. If you are able to commit some time to this project, please contact [noel.henderson@deafchildren.org.au](mailto:noel.henderson@deafchildren.org.au).