Sectarian difference left its imprint on inner suburbs such as Fitzroy and Richmond. Discuss.

Despite today being gentrified, inner-city suburbs with hipster vibes and eye-watering house prices, Fitzroy and Richmond were very different places in colonial times. Both were initially settled by the upper-middle class, such as the Anglo-Irish; immigrating to places like Australia allowed the wealthy middle-class to reinvent themselves as colonial gentry. However, wealthy immigrants were not the only ones searching for new opportunities: working class from all over the British Empire (especially Great Britain and Ireland) were also travelling to Australia and these immigrants also began to make their way into the developing suburbs of Fitzroy and Richmond, taking on the unskilled, manual jobs required to keep the suburbs running. This class difference left an indelible mark on these suburbs, which can still be seen today. It is reflected in the buildings, streets and churches that make up Richmond and Fitzroy.

Both Fitzroy and Richmond were settled, initially, by the relatively wealthy. In Fitzroy it was the upper-middle class from Britain, such as doctors, lawyers, merchants and entrepreneurs, while in Richmond, the Anglo-Irish were the predominant early settlers. Despite their wealth, in Britain's highly striated class-society, they were beneath the aristocrats (some of who were poor, compared to the upper-middle class) and were sometimes seen as social upstarts, putting on airs and graces. Coming to Australia allowed them to ensure that it was *wealth*, not titles, which would confer class and they used their money to buy land on which they built gracious houses to demonstrate their means and created a new kind of aristocracy: the colonial gentry.

By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the leafy suburbs of the colonial gentry were being invaded by a new kind of settler: the working-class English and Irish were beginning to arrive in Australia. This was thanks to advances in sea travel, meaning the trip took weeks, not months, the end of transportation, and major campaigns in Britain encouraging immigration to the colonies, which included fully-funded or subsidised fares for those willing to leave Britain and settle in Australia. These people had neither wealth nor class, but had the same motivations for coming to Richmond and Fitzroy as the new colonial gentry had had in the mid-nineteenth entry: to build a better life for themselves and their families, outside the strict social classes of British society.

These two, very disparate groups of people, settled in different areas of the suburbs and very rarely (if ever) mixed. As factories began to spring up in the late nineteenth century, the working class moved into cheap, close-packed housing in the industrial quarters springing up, well removed from the gracious, mid- and late-Victorian style houses built by the colonial gentry. In Fitzroy, the working class tended to be skilled labourers, specialising in metal work or particularly manufacturing industries and so had particular skill sets and were experts in their trade. Those in Richmond were unskilled,

manual labourers, working in factories which did not require specialised training or skills. However, both groups were poor and lived in similar conditions, although the skilled labourers in Fitzroy saw themselves as a class above the unskilled working in Richmond.

As the working class moved in, the colonial gentry moved out, getting away from the noise and the smell as their areas became increasingly industrialised. Elite areas such as Erin Street, once the domain of the wealthy Anglo-Irish, were snapped up by factory owners and sometimes subdivided into boarding houses for workers. Others were brought by the new, emerging middle-class who had saved enough from their manual labour jobs to purchase the kind of home they could have only dreamed of owning when they arrived in Australia. However, as these people moved up in social class, new working class came in and the divisions began to deepen along not just class lines but religious and political lines too.

Most of the early Irish working class immigrants in Richmond were Catholics and St. Ignatius Church served their spiritual needs. It also became something of a working class hub in Richmond, and was the scene of trade union movements, anti-conscription demonstrations and anti-war protests over the decades. These ideas tended to be discussed at the pub, but the demonstrations took place at the church. However, the Anglo-Irish who had preceded the working class were Protestant and a large Anglican Church had been built to accommodate their needs. Ironically, this church had been finished with wood, on the assumption that it would need to be expanded as more Anglo-Irish moved in, but it remains wood to this day. There were never enough Anglicans to warrant the planned expansion.

In Fitzroy, the working class tended to be poor English (sometimes referred to as Cockney) and so there was little religious divide between them and the wealthy Anglicans, but small, shack-like churches were built in their neighbourhoods, to prevent them trespassing into the elite quarters of Fitzroy. This suited them well, but not even the teachings of the church could contain one group rising to prominence in Fitzroy: the larrikin. Despite becoming a primarily working class suburb, Fitzroy did not have an endless supply of jobs and young people, usually Australian born, but with immigrant parents, began to push back against the system and refuse to follow the rules. Larrkin gangs drank, smoked and womanised in the street, they openly flouted the class divide, taking any opportunity to heckle and harass the few wealthy colonial-era elite still clinging on in the suburb. Larrikins were not usually trade unionists either, although were always happy to be involved in a demonstration if it gave them the opportunity to punch someone! By the 1920s, these larrikins had become hardened criminals, including in infamous Squizzy Taylor, and it would be several years before the streets of Fitzroy got some peace.

Today, both Fitzroy and Richmond are well-off, gentrified, inner-city suburbs, but the evidence of their divided pasts: economic, social and political, can still be seen. The Mid- and Late-Victorian houses of the 1860s - the early 1900s dominate the central areas of the suburbs, while on the outskirts, the factories - many now converted into apartments or office blocks - are surrounded by simple workers cottages (now very much in vogue and which sell for the kind of money the people they were built for couldn't even dream of!). St. Igantius's Church in Richmond remains a central meeting place for all kinds of demonstrations, while the never-expanded Anglican Church was abandoned by its builders and now serves the small, Methodist community, showing the eventual dominance of the working class over the social elite, despite the fact that the latter have now reclaimed this area. Fitzroy has recovered from its larrikin days and changed dramatically in a short space of time due to slum clearances in the 1930s. Towers were built to accommodate Fitzroy's poor, putting them out of sight and out of mind, and so the wealthy gentrifiers began to move back in. The rich history of back and forth settlement and exodus in both suburbs has left its mark indelibly in both places. It's just a matter of knowing where to go and what to look for.