



# NEW FARM & Districts HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.



www.newfarmhistorical.org.au  

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2019

Vol. XXV, No. 8

## AUGUST MEETING

### 1919 flu epidemic

OVER 100 members of the society gathered on a warm winter afternoon to hear Matthew Wengert's account of the 1919 Spanish Flu Epidemic.

Matthew, a Brisbane historian and author (pictured), was introduced to the meeting by Malcolm Godfrey (in the mask).

Matthew received an award from Brisbane City Council to write the history of the epidemic, especially how it impacted Brisbane. The book, *A City in Masks*, details the deadliest event in the world, in Australia and in Brisbane. It killed more people than the two Wars combined.

Research reveals that the strain probably began in China in birds, spreading rapidly to humans. The H1N1 virus has since been isolated as the cause, having been found in frozen corpses in Northern Europe. The flu actually began in the last six months of WWI, peaking in Europe in early 1919. It arrived first in Melbourne in January 1919, brought back by returning soldiers from Europe. Next it spread to NSW and then to Queensland, peaking in May to July.

Seven hundred Anzacs had already died in Europe the previous year. In Brisbane, 190,000 were ill and



320 died; in Australia, 15,000 died.

The government introduced strict health measures to prevent the spread, which meant closing schools, cinemas, sporting events and shortened church

services. Masks were mandatory where more than five people gathered. Interstate trains were policed for flu cases and quarantine depots set up at borders.

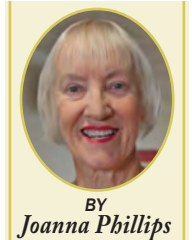
St Laurence's College, Yungaba migrant centre, Rosemount, and even the Ekka were set up as hospitals as the RBH overflowed with sick people. There was no cure, so the therapy was rest, fluids, mushy food and isolation.

There was an added social fallout as police, nurses, doctors, retailers and delivery

people also succumbed; food shortages developed as stores closed.

Matthew showed us a graphic photo (above) featuring the Ithaca community kitchen, women cooking food for invalids, and a line of adolescent boys, no longer at school, but patrolling the streets on bicycles looking for either of two signs on homes: 'SOS' (help needed) or 'Food' (needed for the hungry).

What an enjoyable way to spend the afternoon, feeling almost smug that we no longer have such huge fatalities from the flu, and that in many cases, we can prevent it by vaccination. Thank you, Matthew!



BY Joanna Phillips

## SEPTEMBER MEETING

### Has urban renewal been a success?

The Urban Renewal Task Force was set up in Brisbane in 1991, having been inspired by a federal government initiative called "Building Better Cities".

"The city fathers wanted to find the buzz of the next Expo-type experience—and once and for all to throw off the shackles of being a big country town," says Ben

Pritchard (pictured), who is to speak at the September meeting of the New Farm & Districts Historical Society.

Has urban renewal been a success? Come to compare your verdict with that of Ben's on Saturday, 28 September, 2-4pm, at Merthyr Road Uniting Church Centre. Afternoon tea will be provided. Bring along your friends. All are welcome.



**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Ross Garnett

**Dedicated to another year...**

**F**OLLOWING on from the AGM in August, I want to thank you for your trust in me to lead the Society for another 12 months. Thanks also to the committee members who have chosen to serve you for the next year and to the non-committee volunteers who are continuing in their roles. We still have a vacancy on the committee and I would be very happy to hear from anyone who might consider joining us one Monday night each month.

Those who are new to living in New Farm, Teneriffe and Newstead may not know of the major changes that came as a result of the Urban Renewal Task Force in the 1990s. Part of the process was community consultation, in which I took part.

Gradually, gone were the run-down Teneriffe Wharves, the CSR Refinery, the powerhouse's power generation, the woolstores (as dirty, empty storage spaces, etc.), the Coca Cola factory, the train along Vernon Terrace and Macquarie Street, the large trucks travelling down James Street, and much more.

Who better to tell us more about those changes and how they unfolded than society member Ben Pritchard who was working with the BCC Urban Renewal Taskforce?


Changes like this make it obvious why we need to have archives to record information about our district for future generations. Are you able to assist the community to access these archives on Thursdays from 2pm to 4pm? Perhaps you'd like to add your name to those on a roster, so as to assist like this periodically? This task is a 'gap' in our team of volunteers which we really need to fill as soon as possible.

I hope to see you at the meeting on 28th September to hear more about how our suburbs were changed by the ambitious URTF project.

**PLAQUE TOUR**

**#7 — Arbour Walk**

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE that steam locomotives once thundered through what is now the tranquil glade between Gray Street and Refinery Parade—adjacent to Cutter's Landing Apartments. Trains served both the sugar refinery and the powerhouse. The railway closed in 1990, just short of its centenary.



**ART AWARD**

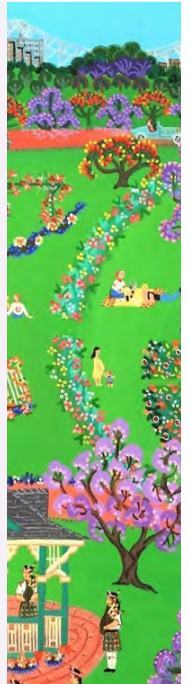
**Winning view of park...**

**N**EW Farm Park is in the international spotlight, thanks to Philippa Webb's winning a competition connected with a recent film which depicts Van Gogh's fascination with Japanese print-making.

According to those behind the Van Gogh & Japan Challenge, Philippa's entry (portion shown at right) brought a smile to the faces of the team members in Brighton, England.

"We love the energy and playfulness she has brought to her painting, inspired as she clearly was by the lively characters in her local park," they said.

*Well done, Philippa!*



**1919 FLU FOOTNOTE**

**Chilly quarantine in Wallangarra**

**A**tending the Society's August meeting was Eloise Harris who vividly remembers being told this century-old reminiscence about the Spanish flu from her mother, Constance Moran:

In July 1919, Cairns publicans Arthur and Esther (Stellie) Moran along and their two daughters, Constance (11) and Joyce (7), took the coastal ship to Sydney to visit relatives.

When the dreaded flu broke out in Sydney, the family quickly decided to return home. Since they were unable to book a passage on a ship going north, the alternative was to take the train to Brisbane then complete the journey by ship.

The plan went awry on arriving in Wallangarra near the Queensland/NSW border. Here, for fear of the spread of flu to Queensland, along with many other rail travellers, the Morans were kept in isolation for 10 days.

Being a bitterly cold July, Mrs Moran decided that something had to be done with the bare dirt floor inside their allocated tent. Her husband was 'sent on a mission' and he returned with hessian bags which were duly cut open and laid on the dirt... carpet of the highest quality under the circumstances!



**SURPRISE INVITATION**

## Facts and fun on historical walk around New Farm

ON Saturday 31 August, around 20 walkers led by Gerard Benjamin took to the streets of New Farm in a quest for history and heritage houses.

Embarking from New Farm Park's Cafe at the End of the Road, the band headed up Elystan Road and turned several corners before arriving for half-time coffee at the Moray Cafe.

"At almost every corner our attention was drawn to a residence with history, not only of the building but of its various owners. Anecdotes flowed freely," said participant Austin Adams.

Walker Katrina Astill remarked on the characters who merited mention by the tour guide.

"Our fascinating suburban predecessors included musicians, theatre producers, actors, pilots, premiers and a passionate doctor experimenting with the healing powers of papaw," she said.

"We also heard about Loes Bonney, cousin-in-law to Bert Hinkler, whose joy-flight with the famous aviator sparked her own flying ambitions."



An unexpected invitation to inspect 'Winterburn', a beautiful Queenslander in Moreton Street, came from its owner, architect Ross Brand. This generous offer permitted the walkers a free rein to take in the eclectic and artistic decoration in this stylishly-presented home.

"Many of us did not want the tour to end—so we visited the Holy Spirit Church in Villiers Street where there was lots to admire. Even the Latin on the foundation stone was translated for us," said Katrina.

### TENERIFFE WALK – 5 October 2019

Gerard will conduct an Historical Walk around Teneriffe on Saturday, 5 October, 9-11.30am. Meet from 8.30 onwards at Dot210 Cafe at 53 Vernon Terrace. It will include a look inside a wool store, a leisurely climb to the heights of Teneriffe Hill, a mini bush walk, and a survey of the Submariners Heritage Walk, plus many points of interest along the way. \$22 each (\$20 members). Book at the Society's coming meeting on 28 September or email: drgarn@bigpond.net.au. This will be the last walk for 2019.

**OCTOBER MEETING**

## Reflecting on Brisbane bricks...

A NEW book entitled *Brisbane Bricks* by local authors Joanne Heath and Virginia Russell has had people looking afresh at an astonishing variety of the city's landmarks.



Joanne and Virginia will be the guest speakers at the October meeting of the New Farm and Districts Historical Society. Virginia, a former Sydney architect, thought that most of Brisbane's heritage buildings had been bulldozed.

"When I moved here 12 years ago, I was surprised by the number of interesting brick buildings to be found in Brisbane," she said.

Come to hear from the authors on Saturday, 26 October, 2-4pm, at Merthyr Road Uniting Church Centre. Afternoon tea will be provided. Tell your friends that all are welcome.

New Farm and Districts Historical Society presents:

## URBAN RENEWAL TASK FORCE

Controversial and divisive  
OR

The renaissance we had to have (to misquote Paul Keating!)

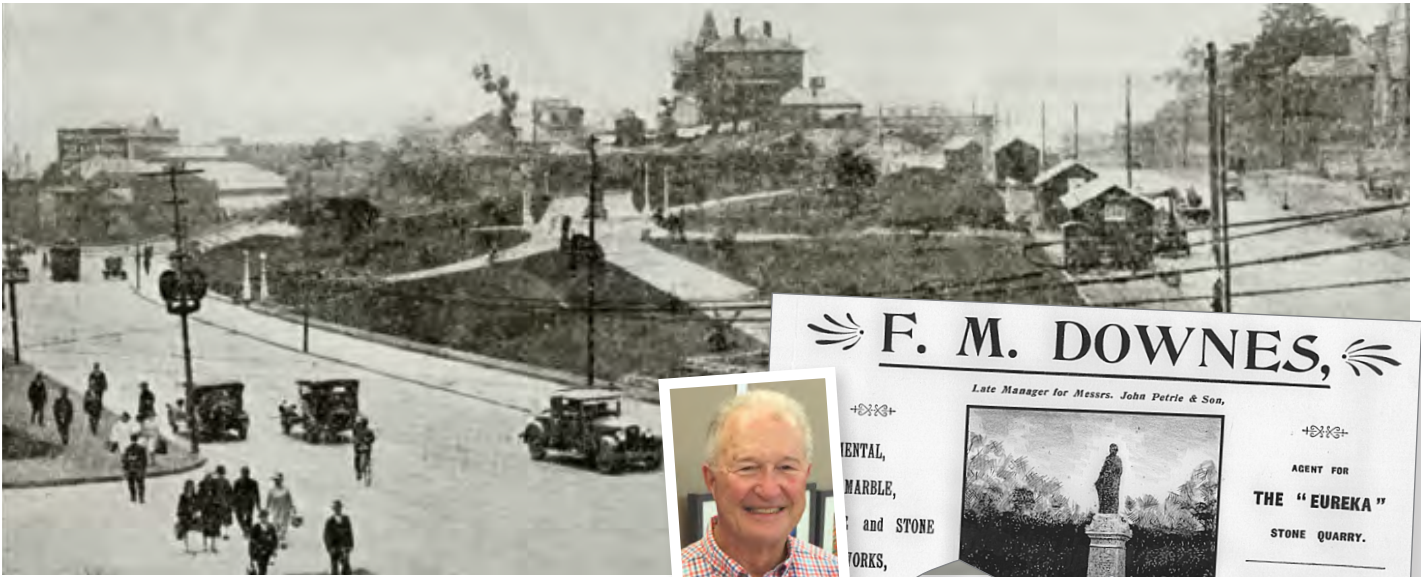
Saturday  
28<sup>th</sup> Sept  
2 pm

Speaker:  
Ben Pritchard



Uniting Church Centre, 52 Merthyr Rd, New Farm

www.newfarmhistorical.org.au  
Enquiries: 0409 498 402



**HARKING BACK**

**Downes in the Valley**

This view from the 1920s shows Centenary Place Park between Wickham Street (left) and Ann Street, with All Hallows School off to the right-hand edge of the photo.

Standing prominently at the centre top is the Catholic Archbishop’s residence, Dara, which was demolished in 1928 to make way for the proposed Holy Name Cathedral.

The photograph is of particular interest to society member Trevor Downes (pictured) since one of his forebears, Frank Martin Downes (1848-1918), owned a

monumental masonry business nearby. Its site would have been on the left side of the photo, on the corner of Wickham and Gotha Streets.

F.M. Downes had been employed as a master stonemason and monumental sculptor with John Petrie & Son (where his father was also employed), and later he became a manager. After 30 years, he began his own business. His family home, at 120 Warren Street, Fortitude Valley, was only minutes from where he worked.

Members of the Downes family are still in business in the area, including Downes Marine in Bowen Hills and Downes Shoes in Wickham Street, Fortitude Valley.

**COLONIAL QUEENSLAND**

**BCHS IN OCTOBER...**

THE NEXT MEETING of the Brisbane Catholic Historical Society is to be held at 5.30pm on Tuesday, 1 October 2019.

The speaker will be Dr Chris Hanlon who will address the subject of The Catholic Church in Colonial Queensland 1859-1918.

The meeting will be held at the Hanly Room at the Francis Rush Centre (located beside St Stephen’s Cathedral, Elizabeth St, Brisbane).

Non-members are welcome with gold coin donation.

**HISTORY ON RADIO...**

ALL SORTS OF FACETS of Queensland history pop up whenever historian and society member Helen Gregory speaks on the “Sunday Morning” show, on ABC Radio 612. Earlier this month, the topic was “The unique natural beauty of Moreton Bay”.

**FOREBEARS**

**Horsing around, down New Farm way**

ANOTHER tiny glimpse of local history comes via an 1849 advertisement in the *Moreton Bay Courier* in which Irishman Daniel Kelly announced that he had taken over George McAdam’s Livery Stables in George Street, North Brisbane.

Kelly had room for 11 horses, and further, “he has made arrangements with the Lessee of New Farm (where there is excellent and abundant grass) for paddock accommodation.”

Mr Kelly adds, “Horses broken in to saddle or harness at very moderate charges.” Presumably this breaking-in also took place in New Farm.

Daniel Kelly later became the lessee of The Ship Inn Hotel at North Quay (owned by Patrick Mayne), which appears to have been close to his stables.

No doubt the gentleman’s equestrian customers included those in town to test their steeds at the Moreton Bay Racing Club (adjacent to the present-day Powerhouse).

Thanks to society member Margaret Yeates (nee Kelly) for supplying this equine detail about her forebear’s New Farm connection.





**Poster:** Desley Garnett

**Design & Layout:** Gerard Benjamin

**Photography:** A. Adams, G. Benjamin, & C. Derrick



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**VILLAGE** NEWS

MANY THANKS TO  
**Grace Grace MP**  
Member for McConnell (07) 3719 7110  
for photocopying the newsletter

**New Farm & Districts Historical Society Inc** • The Office is located at the front of the Ron Muir Meeting Room, New Farm Library, right behind the green bench @ 135 Sydney Street. • *Office Open Hours:* Every Thursday 2-4pm  
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**Committee:** Austin Adams, Malcolm Godfrey and Ben Wieland

**Newsletter Editor:** Gerard Benjamin  
• [ggerardb@bigpond.net.au](mailto:ggerardb@bigpond.net.au)

*Courage is grace under pressure... — Hemingway*

V | history  
archives



**GERARD BENJAMIN**

When Ian Bates of Teneriffe captured his father's recollections about their family history on camera in 1996, he was surprised to learn details he had never heard before.

Jack Bates had been born at home in Woolloowin in 1912 but soon after, the family rented in Teneriffe, first on Florence St and then on Dath St.

The latter was a four-room cottage with no sewerage or electricity.

There was a gas ring for cooking and only the kitchen and dining room had gaslight.

"You put a shilling in the meter," Jack said.

"When the supply got low, the lights would flicker and you would have to put in another shilling."

Jack helped to keep the wood box filled for the stove.

"We'd borrow a dinghy to go under the wharves and collect pieces of wood," he said.

"We'd unload the boat then use a handcart to get the wood home."

When it came to the middle of winter, having the Newstead Gasworks only 500m away came in handy.

Here you could obtain as much coke as could be fitted into a chaff bag.

"A roaring fire with red hot coals would heat the whole house," Jack said.

"The only drawback of having such a high temperature was that the stove wouldn't last."

Living within this big industrial area — with its wool stores, petrol depot, railway and lots of other commercial industries — presented more opportunities for a diligent youngster.

Since there were many horses pulling carts and drays, the manure needed to be collected and it was here again that the handcart proved essential.

"I'd clean out people's bins and bring home the manure in the cart for my father who was a keen gardener," Jack explained.

"We'd even collect manure on the street and sweep it with a broom."

Living on Dath Street gave the boy a close-up view of wool store activities.

"I'd watch lorries being loaded," Jack said.

"There'd be 10 bales in the first layer, eight in the next, and less as you went up to taper the load."

Jack also helped when his

grandmother won a catering contract with one of the large wool brokers to supply refreshments to visiting buyers.

"She would pay me to start at 6am," he said.

"I would help set up tables and lay the starched linen table cloths.

"Each table seated 18.

"My mother and aunty would also be there.

"After school, I'd return to finish the washing-up."

Young Jack started school only a few blocks away.

His mother decided his first year should be at the private establishment run by the Knapp sisters, daughters of Fortitude Valley blacksmith, Simon Knapp.

The sisters taught their pupils in the large family house named Marbingen, which was located at 238 Arthur Street, but is now gone.

"It cost a shilling a week," Jack said.

"The sisters' brother was a solicitor in town.

"The old home had a playground.

"It was very upmarket for those days.

"We were taught two things: to be quiet when the phone rang and to be honest and return to our teacher any macadamia nuts which fell on the ground."

The following year, when Jack continued his education at New



Jack Bates was a radio amateur VK4UR but his radio equipment was packed up and delivered to the PMG on the outbreak of WWII. This photo was taken in 1940 in the side yard of 233 Arthur St (and shows the neighbouring house at No. 237). Jack used the radio tower for transmitting.

Farm State School, one of his earliest lessons proved to be balancing economics and hunger.

"At the school shop — threepence could buy you a pie and peas for lunch," he said.

"Our family didn't believe in buying lunch so I'd take sandwiches.

"Being young and hungry, I would eat all my lunch at morning tea."

**NEXT MEETING** of the New Farm & Districts Historical Society: Saturday 28 September, 2-4pm. Uniting Church Centre, 52 Merthyr Rd. Ben Pritchard will talk about urban renewal and ask if we have benefitted from it.

MONTHLY HISTORY COLUMN from  
MY VILLAGE NEWS *September 2019*

## BOOKS *published by the New Farm & Districts Historical Society Inc.*

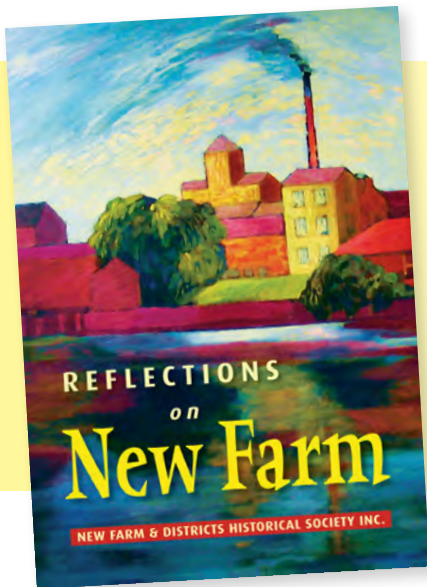
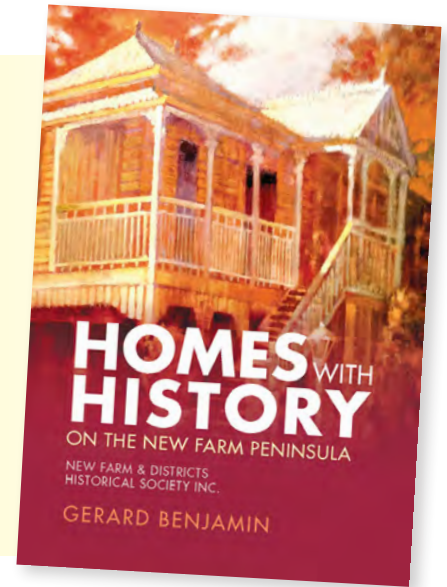
### Homes with History — on the New Farm Peninsula

by Gerard Benjamin

This enthralling snapshot of more than 20 local homes notes architectural details, but its main focus is on *people*—those who built the houses, the architects who designed them, and the successive residents and families who occupied and adapted them.

When launching the book, the former Governor of Queensland Penelope Wensley said, “The individual stories are absorbing... All who take the time to read the book will enjoy the parade of personalities that passes through its pages...”

160pp, illustrated in colour; includes five letters (1848-52) of James Gibbon  
PAPERBACK, \$35; HARDBACK, \$59.50.



### Reflections on New Farm

compiled by Gerard Benjamin & Gloria Grant

This book has sold more than 3,000 copies, and is an indispensable reference about New Farm’s past, with enlightening insights about the suburb’s notable places, people, landmarks and events — particularly through the eyes of long-time residents who remember how it used to be... With 35 chapters and over 150 photos or graphics, you’ll relish these valuable personal recollections and wonderful stories.

PAPERBACK, 2008, 176pp. ISBN: 9780980586800 — \$25

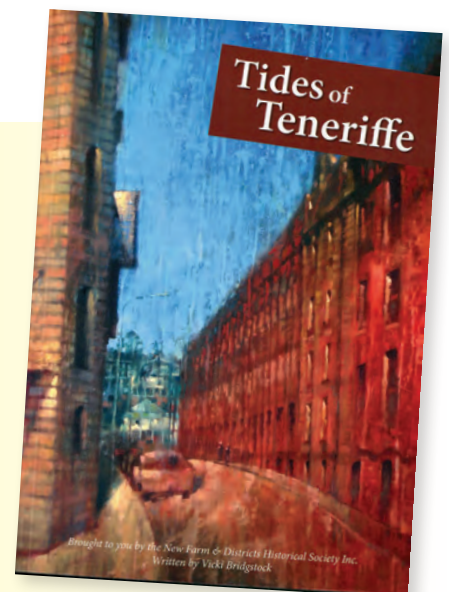
### Tides of Teneriffe

by Vicki Bridgstock

How Teneriffe has changed—from being a colonial outpost, when its wool and sugar wharves were the centre of Queensland’s economic boom, to being a bustling inner city suburb in its own right.

Vicki’s book puts you in the flow of Teneriffe’s past and local memories, and features historic images and never-before published photos of life in Teneriffe. Hear the hidden voices and stories behind this choice spot in Brisbane’s heartland.

PAPERBACK, 2009, 72pp. • ISBN: 9780980586817 — \$20



The three books are available from local bookshops in New Farm, as well as from the State Library of Queensland Library Shop. Alternatively, the books may be purchased from the New Farm & Districts Historical Society Inc. Phone (07) 3254 1449 or email: [info@newfarmhistorical.org.au](mailto:info@newfarmhistorical.org.au) • [www.newfarmhistorical.org.au](http://www.newfarmhistorical.org.au)

*I am what libraries and librarians have made me, with little assistance from a professor of Greek and poets... Heraclitus*



# NEW FARM & Districts HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

## Membership Form

Annual Membership – 1 September 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020

Type of Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> New	<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal	<input type="checkbox"/> contact info unchanged
			<input type="checkbox"/> updated info below
Name:			
Residential Address:			P/Code:
Postal Address:			P/Code:
Telephone:	Work/Mobile:	Home:	
Email:			
Photo permission	Photographs taken at public meetings may be published in newsletters and on social media		

**I can volunteer in the following ways:**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Welcoming at meetings     | <input type="checkbox"/> Collect Oral Histories                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Set up / clear up of room | <input type="checkbox"/> Assist with archives                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> IT support at meetings    | <input type="checkbox"/> Write short historical items for website |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assist with afternoon tea | <input type="checkbox"/> Other – please specify                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advise on new technology  |   |

**Membership Cost: \$10**

Signed:..... Date:.....

Payment method:

- Bank Transfer: to New Farm and Districts Historical Society Inc.  
BSB 034065 - Account Number 146217 – Reference: MEMB and your surname. Please post or email completed form
- cheque or money order payable to: **New Farm & Districts Historical Society Inc.**
- Cash at public meeting or Society Office

**Post to:** PO Box 1141  
New Farm QLD 4005

**Email to:** [info@newfarmhistorical.org.au](mailto:info@newfarmhistorical.org.au)

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