



NEW FARM & Districts HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.



www.newfarmhistorical.org.au  

NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2019

Vol. XXV, No. 9

SEPTEMBER MEETING

Safeguarding our heritage by making old buildings new again...

GOOOO Brisbane! ...and well done Ben for seamlessly presenting our urban renewal timeline from our bogan beginnings as a convict country cousin—to Brisbane, a bright beacon on the international stage.

From our first Exhibition Centre at Gregory Terrace, to hosting the Commonwealth Games and then Expo 88, urban renewal has experienced some heady days.

As we listened to Ben's presentation, some of us detected a feeling of pride surge through our veins which had us sitting a little straighter on our chairs.

It's the same awe you experience when you flick through a favourite family photo album and realise that your offspring—having transitioned through the 'terrible twos', then the 'horrible threes', before becoming a recalcitrant teenager—had somehow been transformed

into a successfully functioning and positively contributing member of society. Wow! When did that happen? How time flies!

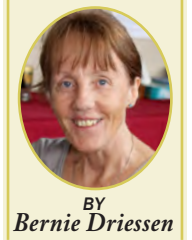


I'm sure that somewhere in Murphy's Law it states that the path to success in life—as well as in urban planning—is not always smooth. It's the spice, the hiccups and the inevitable indigestion that make it so interesting, and inspire the best stories.

Those of our generation still mourn the clandestine death by demolition of significant buildings of our colonial past—but even Murphy agrees that every cloud has a silver lining, and from this criminal destruction befitting the State's criminal conception, were born the powerful heritage

protection agencies we now have which safeguard the culturally important buildings of today.

It has taken some strong and courageous characters to pioneer our way to the international acclaim of the vibrant city we enjoy to call home today. Ben is one of that team. A huge vote of thanks to all of them!



BY Bernie Driessen



THE Teneriffe woolstores project as it was proposed last August. The approved version is similar except that two-storey townhouses near the riverbank have been set further back and reduced from more than 30 to 24.

Council plans to approve shops, homes project at old woolstores

THE Brisbane City Council will approve a \$100 million shops and homes redevelopment of Teneriffe's old woolstores. The riverside project, by Eastpac Corporation, involves two 12-storey towers, an eight-storey tower, a nine-storey tower and a nine-storey tower. The council's development and planning committee chairman, Alderman Bob Ward, confirmed yesterday that 33 objectors had been given a chance to views."

By City Hall reporter MATTHEW FRANKLIN



OCTOBER MEETING

Inspirational Brisbane bricks...

A RECENT book entitled *Brisbane Bricks* by local authors Virginia Russell and Joanne Heath (pictured) has inspired lots of Brisbanites to look afresh at local landmarks that tended to be taken for granted.

Joanne and Virginia will be the guest speakers at the October meeting of the New Farm and Districts Historical Society. Coincidentally, both discovered that they were photographing the wonderful facets

of Brisbane's brick-built heritage. Why not collaborate on a book, was the natural conclusion. The result is an eclectic arrangement of images which are inspirational and not just nostalgic.

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



A bird is safe in its nest — but that is not what its wings are made for... — Amit Ray

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Ross Garnett

Our meetings are becoming busier!

THE September meeting was jam-packed with information. We heard about the proposed historical walk around Teneriffe, the invitation to visit historical homes in Albion, a new publication about an early battle between European settlers and our first peoples, an appreciative account from past president Virginia Balmain, as well as the New Farm Red Cross Committee's activities. All of this was before we were able to welcome our main speaker of the day.

Our member Ben Pritchard delivered a very informative and interesting talk to 109 people about Urban Renewal. I thought Urban Renewal was a new concept when it transformed the New Farm peninsula, but Ben took us way back in history showing that Urban Renewal is constantly happening all around the world. Ben had some great photos to remind us what our locality looked like before all the changes began. Who would have believed that some people thought the Teneriffe Boardwalk would not be used much by the community?

We will not have any more historical walks over

Summer, but look for them to be advertised as the weather gets a little cooler after March 2020. Walkers around Teneriffe were kindly invited by the owner of *Roseville* on Chester Street to have a peek inside at the home's 1880s charm. Many of us remember going there when it was a gracious restaurant in the 1980s.

Though the year is quickly rolling to a close, we have two very interesting meetings still to come.

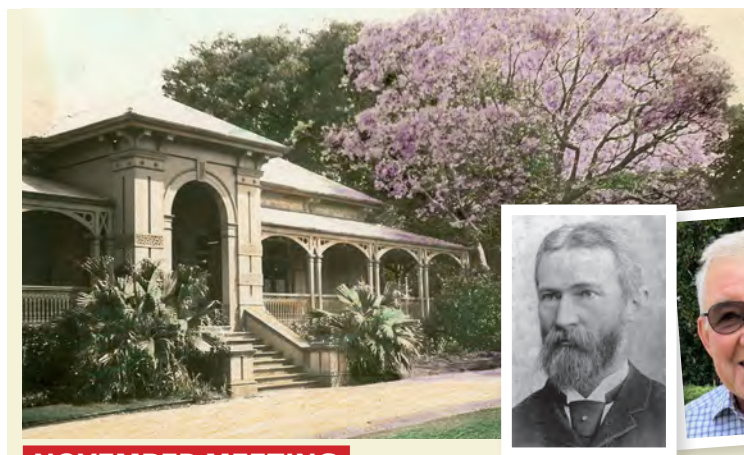


Kingaroy visit: Margaret Gilmour (second from left), who is now living in Kingaroy to be close to her Bjelke-Petersen nieces and nephew, recently had visitors from New Farm, including (from left) Desley Garnett, Bernie Driessen and Anita Garnett. Margaret grew up in Mark Street, New Farm and had lived in the family home there until recently. Now aged 95½, Margaret is among the Society's most venerable members. Her long public service career included being confidential secretary at Government House for 24 years during the terms of four governors.

I am sure we will all start to look at brick buildings in a fresh way after our coming meeting about Brisbane Bricks—so plan to arrive at the October meeting early as the seats fill up quickly! Copies of *Brisbane Bricks* will be on sale in the courtyard at the meeting. The book is a photographic celebration of brick-built structures in Brisbane and would make an ideal Christmas present.

As usual, we will have an empty Christmas tree

at the November meeting, giving us the opportunity to contribute to the lives of others through a chosen charity with gifts of food and money. More details will be in the next newsletter.



1850s. He was responsible for important social and legal reforms.

To speak about "Samuel Walker Griffith: Premier, Chief Justice, Radical and New Farm resident" at the final meeting of 2019 for the New Farm & Districts Historical Society will be local resident Doug Drummond (pictured).

"He tackled issues such as the political dominance of the squatters and the importation of Pacific Islander labour," said Doug. "Political critics said that he had a 'moral twist' so they kept alive his schoolboy nickname, 'Oily Sam'."

Griffith was a key figure in the movement towards Federation and became the first Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia. He even led a strike by the High Court judges.

"This great Queenslander deserves to be better known," said Mr Drummond.

Take advantage of this wonderful opportunity by coming to the meeting on Saturday, 23 November, 2-4pm, at Merthyr Road Uniting Church Centre. Afternoon tea will be provided. All are welcome. Bring your friends.

NOVEMBER MEETING

Moray Street's premier citizen...

Jacarandas are pictured in bloom at Sir Samuel Griffith's grand residence, Merthyr, which had frontages to Moray Street (between Merthyr and Sydney Sts) and the river.

The man who was to be twice Premier, then Chief Justice of Queensland, arrived in Queensland in the

NICELY NOSTALGIC

Jim MacDonald

New Farm's trophy coin gang

According to a recent newsletter from the Nundah & Districts Historical Society, Nundah had its 'Flat Pin Gang'—thrill-seeking youngsters who would brazenly place two pins arranged as a cross on the railway line then wait for a passing train to meld them into a thin cruciform medallion. Later, the trophy would be worn—but secretly! It was for the eyes of the gang only...

Not to be outdone, I can verify from personal experience that New Farm youths depended on trams for their forays into metallic compaction.

After a tram turned from Merthyr Road into Brunswick Street and gathered speed for the run down to the ferry terminus, wicked boys would place a coin on the tram rail. This

was near the billboard on Welsby Street which advertised the coming attractions at the Astor Theatre. The billboard conveniently offered cover.

As the wheels of the tram passed over the coins there was a slight but noticeable jolt, and the conductor or driver would sometimes hurl a blast at the youthful perpetrators.

Once the tram had passed, the coin was recovered and exhibited at school the next day as prized booty.

Silver coins were more compactible than copper, but a silver coin meant a bigger outlay...

Oh, what fun were these harmless high jinks of yesteryear!



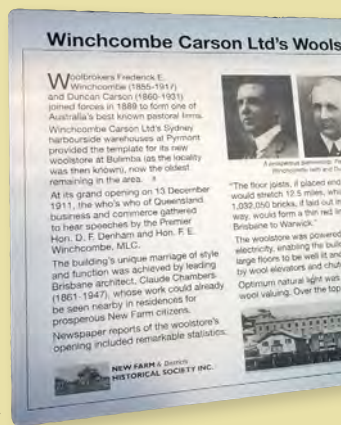
Updated Plaque: Gloria, the sheep sculpture on the panoramic Teneriffe Riverwalk, has already shepherded a following among walkers, running groups and cycling tours, and even appears on some phone apps. Now that 'Mrs Sheep' (as children describe her) has been joined by 'Mr Sheep', the plaque explaining the sculpture's raison d'être has been updated. Enjoy reading it the next time you visit the spot, and be among the million or more destined to have a photo (a 'sheepie') taken with the duo.

PLAQUE TOUR

#8 — Winchcombe Carson Woolstore

MR WINCHCOMBE and MR CARSON joined forces in 1889 to form one of Australia's best known pastoral firms. This woolstore—the oldest remaining in the area—makes a stunning statement about how important wool was to Queensland's economy.

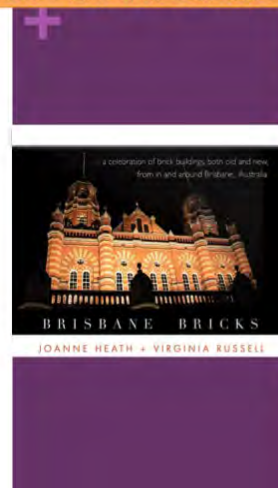
Take the time to look up and note the detail in the design. It is the work of architect Claude Chambers who lived in New Farm and designed many homes in the suburb.



New Book on Spanish Flu: If the recent talk about the Spanish Flu awakened your curiosity, you may be interested in Duncan Richardson's new book, *Captives of the Spanish Lady*, about how the Queensland border was suddenly closed, stranding many at Tenterfield. Here's your chance to meet the author at free library talks about the book: Corinda Library, (22 Oct, 10.30am); and Brisbane Square Library (24 Nov, 11am).



New Farm and Districts Historical Society presents:



BRISBANE BRICKS
A celebration of Brisbane's Brick buildings, old and new
Speakers: authors Virginia Russell and Joanne Heath
Saturday 26th October 2 pm



Uniting Church Centre, 52 Merthyr Rd, New Farm

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



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VILLAGE NEWS

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Life is really simple, but we insist on making it complicated... — Confucius

V | history

archives



GERARD BENJAMIN

Late in the afternoon of Wednesday, February 18, 1931, Alexander and Elsie Dodwell watched with mounting dismay as a spectacular blaze consumed the timber mill and wharf which adjoined their grand property 'Linden' on Moray St.

Thousands crowded the road to gape as 30 firemen battled for seven hours to control the conflagration which also destroyed around 200,000 feet of Oregon pine.

Unsurprisingly, the mill was never rebuilt.

For a decade, locals had complained about the noise, the hauling of timber with horses, and the unsightly appearance of the premises.

Instead, the cleared land provided a blank architectural canvas for the remarkable variety of heritage-listed 1930s apartment buildings to be found on Julius St today.

Taking advantage of this

opportunity were Mr E.C.H. (Chris) Dixon and his wife Ernestine.

Dixon was a wool expert who had come north when Winchcombe Carson Ltd opened in Brisbane in July 1911.

Once the mill owner, Julius Rosenfeld, subdivided the site, the Dixons purchased the allotment at 111 Moray St, next to Linden, then sought an architect whose design could do justice to the upmarket ambience of the locale.

In 1930, Horace Driver returned to Brisbane after his architectural design studies at New York University which had gained him several medals and prizes in the USA.

Driver had an eye to the traditional English approach.

For instance, in 1933, the style he suggested for two new residences on Alexandra Rd, Ascot, was described as "symbolical of the typical Cotswold cottage".

Mr Driver's proposal for the Dixons' home was not dissimilar.

The focal point was a massive chimney, which swept down in brick and stone, and included the front doorway.

Nearby, the lower terrace walls of multi-coloured porphyry stonework contrasted with the cream-coloured stucco walls.

The interior included a stair hall and



Top-notch 1933 architecture. (The Telegraph, August 4, 1936)

a panelled silky oak staircase, and the silky oak was carried through in the facings and mantelshelf of the fireplace.

Meanwhile, the dining room, serving pantry and kitchen (with a service porch) were arranged with staff in mind, and a maid's room was nearby.

The Dixons' new home was christened 'Knells', echoing its English namesake near Carlisle.

This was the elegant and commodious family mansion of Mr Dixon's great-grandfather John Dixon (1785-1857) who

had been a magistrate, high-sheriff for Cumberland, and twice mayor of Carlisle.

In January 1934, a fortnight after the Dixons held a housewarming bridge party at their new home "overlooking the prettiest reach of the river", their architect was married at St John's Cathedral in Brisbane.

In a pictorial newspaper feature in January 1936 entitled "Some of Brisbane's attractive modern homes", Knells was one of the six that appeared.

Mrs Chris Dixon was actively interested in the Girl Guide movement and did not have far to walk to the Moreton Club at 71 Moray St where she was treasurer for some years.

In 1947 after 36 years with Winchcombe Carson Ltd, Chris Dixon retired as manager of the company's wool department.

His experience was widely respected by both brokers and buyers, and he was long remembered for his conscientiousness and unflinching courtesy.

By the early 1950s, the Dixons had moved to Sydney.

If you walk past No. 111 Moray St today, you may notice that the original 1930s low stuccoed boundary wall of Knells adjoins a long cream rendered fence, which is all that remains of the substantial Dodwell residence dating from 1918.



MONTHLY HISTORY COLUMN from
MY VILLAGE NEWS October 2019



NEW FARM & *Districts* HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

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Annual Membership – 1 September 2019 to 31st August 2020

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			<input type="checkbox"/> updated info below
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Photo permission	Photographs taken at public meetings may be published in newsletters and on social media		

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| <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:.....

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