



NEW FARM & Districts HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.



www.newfarmhistorical.org.au  

NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2019

Vol. XXV, No. 10

OCTOBER MEETING

The bricks that have made Brisbane

AROUND 110 attendees enjoyed another brilliant event when the two authors of *Brisbane Bricks* (published this year) took it in turns to address the October meeting.

Joanne Heath, retired nurse and daughter of a bricklayer, and Virginia Russell, a retired Sydney architect, met through their shared interest in photography and decided to collaborate on a beautiful pictorial compilation.

We were given a potted history of brick and clay, including remnants of bricks in aboriginal dwellings at Lake Mungo, and the amazing fact that 5000 bricks were brought to Australia in the First Fleet.

We learned about the brickworks in Kent Street which were begun in 1856, and about how the great fire of Brisbane in 1864 was the catalyst for brick construction.

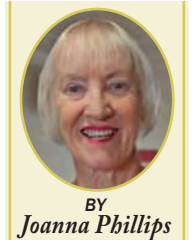
Then of course, there was John Petrie, our first mayor, who owned the Albion brickworks. Roma Street was the first railway station to be built in brick in Brisbane.



Bricks of course: Speakers Virginia (left) and Joanne signed books after the meeting. Listeners were inspired to look afresh at architectural 'gems in brick' such as St Andrew's Uniting Church (right).



We were treated to brilliant photos of buildings which included the Breakfast Creek Hotel of 1889, and of course, the wool stores of Teneriffe and New Farm, the CSR refinery on the river, as well as the Powerhouse dating from 1928.



BY
Joanna Phillips

Virginia showed us how the brick medium helped the Art Deco movement to come alive in Brisbane with Coronet Court, the Waterloo Hotel, McWhirters, the Old Museum and the Valley Baths.

Of course, schools also featured: Brisbane State High in 1925, Stuartholme Convent 1920 and Somerville House in 1890.

We were shown photos of interesting brick features such as the arches at New Farm State School and the sombre ramparts of Boggo Road.

The brick trend also included churches and attention was drawn to St Ignatius, Toowong; St Bridget's, Red Hill; and St Paul's, East Brisbane.

We were reminded that there is still brick construction going on to this day—for example, the Spire in the CBD not far from St John's Cathedral, the Calile Hotel in James Street, West

Village at West End, and the Bellbowrie Pool.

As Queenslanders we love our timber and tin heritage but this talk and book are wonderful reminders of our handsome brick heritage as well. Thanks, Virginia and Joanne!

NOVEMBER MEETING

Suburb's foremost citizen...

The grand house Merthyr, home of New Farm's most famous resident, Sir Samuel Griffith (1845-1920), once stood at 193 Moray Street. Local street names (Merthyr Road, Griffith, Llewellyn and Samuel Streets) honour him and his family.

According to one Griffith biography, "His intellectual brilliance and achievements especially in law are unchallengeable."

Doug Drummond will address four facets of this distinguished citizen (Premier, Chief Justice, Radical and New Farm resident) at what will be the Society's final meeting for the year.

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

Come to hear more about SG on Saturday, 23 November, 2-4pm, at Merthyr Road Uniting Church Centre. Afternoon tea will be provided. Bring along your friends. All are welcome.



There is a budding morrow in midnight... — John Keats

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Ross Garnett

Christmas only weeks away...

WHAT a year! We have celebrated our 25 years with attendances of over 100 for most of the 10 meetings, four of them over 140! We know that this area has a long and interesting history (by Queensland standards) and these attendances are proof of the interest in learning more about our past. Our email distribution list has grown to almost 1000. We have a number of folk who attend every meeting and others who come because of their interest in the particular topic of the day.

For our last meeting for 2019, we will remember a great man from the past, maybe New Farm's most famous resident. What a pity his grand home was demolished before people were taking a keen interest

in preserving these old and significant homes! We look forward to hearing about Sir Samuel Griffith from local resident Doug Drummond.

Our November meeting gives us all an opportunity to contribute to the lives of others who need support through our Empty Christmas Tree. This year we will support the local organisation 3RD SPACE (previously called 139 Club). The article below explains what donations would be most useful.

Now it just remains for me to thank you for your support of the history of New Farm and Districts throughout 2019—with special thanks to the volunteers who help the afternoons to run so smoothly, thus facilitating a friendly and interesting afternoon for all. We are currently working on an interesting line-up of guest speakers for 2020.

Happy Christmas, everyone!

New Farm and Districts Historical Society presents:

Samuel Walker Griffith:

- Twice Premier of Qld
- Chief Justice of Qld
- Chief Justice of High Court of Australia
- Key figure in movement towards Federation
- Radical
- New Farm resident ("Merthyr" in Moray St)




Speaker: local resident
Doug Drummond

Saturday 23rd Nov 2 pm

Uniting Church Centre, 52 Merthyr Rd, New Farm

EMPTY CHRISTMAS TREE

For the homeless




THIRD SPACE (formerly The 139 Club) in Fortitude Valley offers sanctuary to homeless people who may have no home, no friends and no hope.

By providing practical help – a safe bed in which to sleep during the day, a laundry, a mailbox, a low-cost healthy meal – as well as social support – a place to play pool, try some art or music or watch TV – Third Space has helped people in the depths of despair to smile and laugh again. For our Empty Christmas Tree this year, we are supporting **Third Space**.

Gifts that are most useful for their clients include:

- **Undies (M & F), smaller sizes for women; S-L for men**
- **Socks (ankle socks) • Plain t-shirts (Men: larger sizes)**
- **Plastic water bottles • Caps • Razors • Backpacks**
- **Toiletries (small travel size) • Sweets**
- **Thongs – Men (sizes 10-13) – Women (sizes 7-10)**
- **Combs and Brushes • Deodorants.**

The most useful food items that Third Space use for their food parcels include:

- **Milk powder/UHT milk**
- **Muesli bars and snacks • Small cereal boxes • Pasta**
- **Pasta sauce • Rice.**

PLAQUE TOUR

#9 — Teneriffe Apartments Woolstore

FORGET the dramatic stock market crash of 1929! Wool in this state was so profitable that Queensland Primary Producers' Co-operative Association Limited ("Primaries") simply went ahead and completed its 'large and up-to-date' No. 3 woolstore in 1931.

By the early 1990s urban renewal had arrived. You could buy a woolstore apartment with beautiful polished hardwood floors in a range from \$95,000 to \$296,000. Drop down to Commercial Road for a closer look at this brick-built gem.



One must wait until the evening to see how splendid the day has been... — Sophocles

NICELY NOSTALGIC*Jim MacDonald***The working horses of New Farm**

They plodded the streets of New Farm moving the goods that we needed and consumed on a continual basis. I particularly remember them working through the World War II era. The nation was desperately short of petrol because it all came from overseas and there was a massive demand for it to keep army, navy and air operations functioning. Here was an alternative that needed only water, hay and chaff to keep working.

There were lots in harness working around the sugar refinery, the wharfs and the wool stores, amongst other businesses.

All that hard work called for a dunk of water from time to time. Near the kerb between the footpath and gutter at the corner of Merthyr Road and James Street (outside the current day office of Councillor Vicki Howard) stood a horse-drinking trough.

It was about seven feet long with a bowl-shaped bottom, the water level being controlled by a float valve housed under a steel-lidded box. Wicked boys on their way to New Farm State School would lift the lid and hold down the float valve ball allowing water to flow into and over the sides of the trough.

A young boy would get to know the particular horses and their carts. For instance, at the sugar refinery there was a single horse pulling a cart which had a tipping body. This would allow the cart to be positioned under an outlet which discharged a waste product from the refining process straight into the cart. It was brown coloured, semi-solid and quite often warm.

When the cart was loaded, it would be driven to a patch opposite Dodge Brothers (in Sydney St?) where the waste was discharged onto the ground. This process was repeated countless times a day. Also seen locally were the horse-drawn bread carts of McMahon's Bakery which



Them were the days: Taking the horse bus in the 1890s guaranteed a cosy, bumpy, odourful ride. – SLQ 6108

worked from Terrace Street. J. Jackson & Sons' red and yellow drays were always around the wharf areas.

At the Bulimba Brewery in Brunswick Street, I remember a lone horse with its cart standing patiently under a waste material chute. I do hope he was not allowed to eat the hops!

When Fay Rayner lived in Welsby Street in the 1950s, she well remembers the fellow who came with his horse and cart collecting everyone's empty bottles.

No doubt the stalwart steeds from Cowin's stables in Villiers Street next to the Holy Spirit School would have horsey tales galore to tell if they could talk and were still there. Last but not least, though the early 1860s were a bit before my time, what about the race track which was once down near the Powerhouse?

LAST MONTH Thanks to Mike Ryan who responded: "Further to your article about boys placing coins on the tram tracks on Brunswick St, I was told a story that at the corner of Brunswick St and Merthyr Rd, boys would lay a small bundle of matches wrapped in foil onto the tram tracks and wait as the tram turned the corner to see if the wheels would ignite the bundle of matches. No doubt there was a "bang" as the wheel passed over the concoction!



Lots to see: This is just a portion of a wider photograph from the State Library of Queensland (62074) but it shows a wealth of detail. Heading to Dalgety's Wharf in August 1933 was *HMAS Canberra*, the flagship of the Australian Fleet, which was to be open for inspection. It is seen here passing the extensive Newstead Gasworks building. Also clearly visible is the old woolstore on Commercial Road, now current day Teneriffe Apartments. Almost exactly nine years later, *HMAS Canberra* was struck by the opening Japanese shots at the Battle of Savo Island (in the Solomons) and sank after being evacuated.

Love all, trust a few, do wrong to none.... — Shakespeare



Poster: Desley Garnett

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VILLAGE NEWS

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

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Our happiness depends on wisdom all the way... — Sophocles

v | history

archives



GERARD BENJAMIN

Late in May 1919 when the Spanish flu epidemic showed no sign of abating in Brisbane (11 had died on a previous weekend), volunteers formed a Women's Emergency Corps.

Chosen as leader for the New Farm branch was Miss Martha Burns who resided in 'Hope Mansel' on the highside corner of Brunswick and Villiers Streets.

It was the kind of grand family home which could host a private ball in the drawing room to the accompaniment of a string ensemble.

Her Scots-born father, Capt. C.D. Burns, had been a marine engineer who eventually became the superintending engineer for the Harbours and Rivers Dept.

Years earlier and in answer to her father's strong objection to her wanting to study for dentistry, Miss Burns reportedly replied, "This means that we would both be

building bridges."

Her father's disapproval was an early sign of things to come.

After studying for three years, the Queensland Dental Board refused to register her.

Undeterred she undertook further study at Melbourne University where women students were being accepted.

Eventually by 1907, and now in her early 30s, Martha Burns became the first woman to receive a Queensland Diploma in Dentistry.

The way was open for her to begin her Queen Street practice in what is now Macarthur Chambers.

Along with Dr Lillian Cooper, Miss Burns was one of Brisbane's earliest women motorists.

She would have been a familiar sight doing 16mph along Brunswick St in her little green and black seven-horsepower Oldsmobile.

When World War I was declared in August 1914, Martha Burns was half a world away in London attending an international dental conference.

Wasting no time to join the war effort, she proffered her nursing and dental qualifications.

Just to be sure, she also mentioned her driving ability — which apparently drew the welcome response: "You're the sort of woman



Martha Burns, pictured in 1954. (Courier Mail, 3 May 1954, p. 14. — SLO)

we want at the front."

What followed was a hectic tour of duty in various makeshift hospitals in France, including in Boulogne from where the booming guns at Ypres (20 miles away) could often be heard.

The conditions were tough.

There might be 500-600 men under care, and nurses and orderlies could be required to work as many as 30 hours without a rest.

By the end of 1914, Miss Burns' health necessitated that she come home.

Later she would talk about her experiences, having in mind what one soldier wrote from the front, "The only people who are privileged to talk of the war are those who are taking part in it."

During the 1919 epidemic, Miss Burns' role in New Farm meant coordinating the efforts of Dr Ryton-Kelly (a returned WWI major who lived at 793 Brunswick

St) and several nurses.

She also supervised the committee, clerical workers, those who patrolled the streets (looking for signs outside houses stating either "food required" or "sick"), as well as the 'pack of wolf cubs' who ran messages.

In mid-June, the figures for attendances and distributions were: doctor, 11; nurses, 39; others, 93; food, 140; and beef tea, 137.

In her reports, Miss Burns also acknowledged eight local families who offered the use of their cars, including motor dealers A.V. Dodwell and P.A. Evers, both of Moray Street.

By the end of June, since the flu cases had declined the committee was able to close down.

The role of Miss Martha Burns (1873-1959) during this outbreak a century ago was just one of the many achievements in her life which warranted her entry into the National Pioneer Women's Hall of Fame.

For more information about Martha Burns, see Miriam King's research at tinyurl.com/y2duezm2

NEXT MEETING of the New Farm & Districts Historical Society: Saturday November 23, 2-4pm, Uniting Church Centre, 52 Merthyr Rd. Doug Drummond will discuss New Farm's premier Moray Street resident, Sir Samuel Griffith.

MONTHLY HISTORY COLUMN from
MY VILLAGE NEWS November 2019

Ideal Christmas Gifts!

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

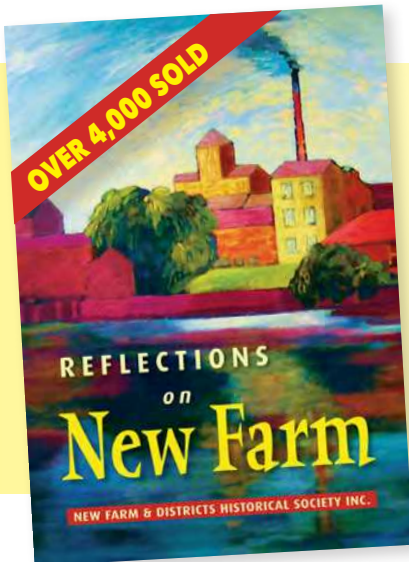
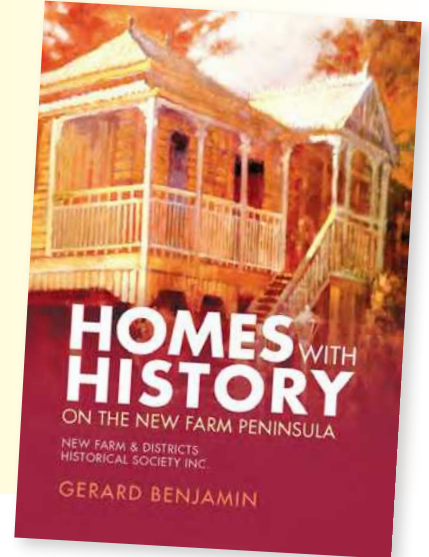
Homes with History — on the New Farm Peninsula

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

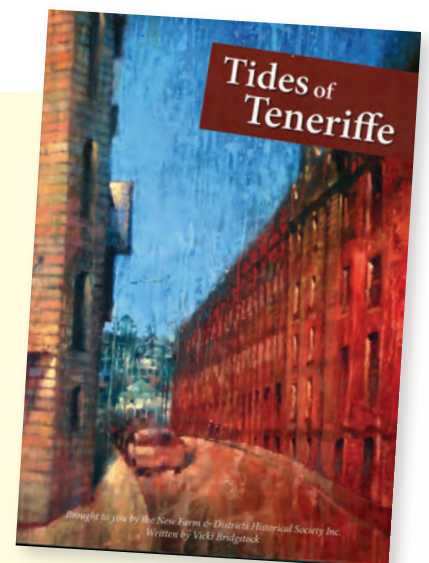
Tides of Teneriffe

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. • www.newfarmhistorical.org.au

When in doubt, go to the library...