



NEW FARM & Districts HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

www.newfarmhistorical.org.au  

NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2020

Vol. XXVI, No. 1

NOVEMBER MEETING

The inimitable Griffith of Merthyr

SIR Samuel Griffith is decidedly our most famous local identity. For most denizens of the peninsula, the tidbits of information about this celebrity need to be gleaned from Historical Society plaques dotted around our locality.

Doug Drummond's address to our very well attended November meeting (around 160, as per below) brought this stellar political and legal figure to life. In humanising this local legend, Doug was able to bridge the gap between the facts about Griffith's remarkable achievements, and the complex and colourful creative genius that toiled assiduously into the wee hours at *Merthyr* in Moray Street.

More than ever, we glimpsed that Griffith was truly one of a kind. Attendees heard of his



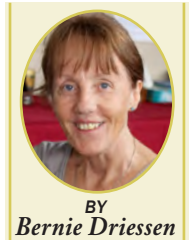
Griffith descendant: Speaker Doug Drummond (left) meets Society member Julia Bigge who is a great-granddaughter of Sir Samuel Griffith.

supreme self-confidence (he applied for the headmastership of Ipswich Grammar School at the age of 18 — unsuccessfully), he read Karl Marx and endeavoured to introduce into Queensland legislation the concept

of the redistribution of wealth, and he codified the criminal law of Queensland. The 'Griffith Code' (with some changes) is still in use in a variety of jurisdictions in Australia and overseas.

As Mr Drummond pointed out, Citizen Griffith thrived on 'spirit'—in his case, whiskey—both in the carriage to and from town each day, and he reputedly worked on at night until the bottle was empty.

The end result of Doug Drummond's fascinating pen sketch of Griffith is that many of us could say that we love our local legend all the more.



BY
Bernie Driessen



FEBRUARY MEETING

From Bowen Hills to the world...

MRS LORES BONNEY, wife of Harry Bonney, a wealthy leather goods manufacturer, appears to have led a fairly conventional life in their comfortable home in Jordan Terrace, Bowen Hills—until she met her husband's cousin, Bert Hinkler.

The year was 1928 and Bert had just landed at Eagle Farm after the sensation of having completed the first solo flight from Britain to Australia.

There was a reception at Bowen Hills for Bert, and it's then that Lores appears to have been badly bitten by the flying bug. To explain just where that took her is to be left to Janet Marshall (pictured), our speaker at the



first meeting of the New Farm and Districts Historical Society for 2020.

"The talk is entitled 'Flying High: The remarkable life of Aviatrix Lores Bonney,'" says Janet who is a member of the National Trust.

"I have always been interested in aviation probably because of my father's flying exploits during World War II, then later with his little Auster J5."

It promises to be a busy meeting so please arrive early on Saturday, 22 February, 2-4pm, at Merthyr Road Uniting Church Centre. Afternoon tea will be provided. Bring along your friends. All are most welcome.

Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could do only a little. — Burke

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Ross Garnett

Welcome to the next quarter century...

WELCOME everyone to the new year and betrust it is set to be a great one for you. We're just a century ahead of the Roaring Twenties when the kinds of inventions that began shaping America included the car, aeroplane, washing machine, radio, assembly line, refrigerator, garbage disposal, electric razor, instant camera, jukebox and television.

After so much change in the past 100 years, it's exciting to think that now we are part of shaping the the 2020s. The NFDHS will certainly ensure that it has a strong history component...

We are starting the year Flying High! Maybe you have seen the new Lores Bonney Riverwalk alongside Kingsford Smith Drive and wondered who Lores Bonney was. She lived in Bowen Hills—which is, of course, one of the 'districts' referred to in the Society's full name.

You can hear more about this remarkable woman at our first meeting for the year. Its date will please lovers of numbers: 22-02-2020.

This newsletter offers the chance to pay tribute to three of our members who passed away since the last meeting. Vale Noel, Bryan and Fairlie.

We have an exciting line-up of speakers for the coming year so I hope you have marked the fourth Saturday of each month as 'busy'—so that you can be sure not to miss any of them.

New Farm and Districts Historical Society presents:

Bowen Hills resident, Lores Bonney

Speaker:
Janet Marshall

Lores Bonney Riverwalk

Flying High - The remarkable life of Aviatrix Lores Bonney

Saturday 22nd Feb 2020 2 pm

Uniting Church Centre, 52 Merthyr Rd, New Farm

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

FAREWELL TO MEMBERS

BRYAN EDWARD OXLADE, whose family roots run deep in New Farm, died in December aged 94. A delightful personality with a huge sense of humour and fun, Bryan began work at 13 years of age sweeping floors at Oxlade Brothers, the paint and art emporium founded by his grandfather in 1894. By age 36 Bryan was at the helm of the family business, steering its success as one of Brisbane's leading school art suppliers. After 72 years on the job, Bryan 'semi-retired' in 2010 handing the reins to his son Paul—however, he still turned up at work until his late 80s!

Complementing his business acumen were his many artistic talents. He was a gifted sign writer with a keen sense of colour and style. In the 1960s he launched an art gallery in his Fortitude Valley shop where he showed many well-known Queensland artists.

Bryan was born and raised in his family home in Moray Street. He attended New Farm State School and lived most of his life with his wife Doreen in their home in Mountford Road, not far from his family namesake Oxlade Drive. Bryan leaves behind his three children, 10 grandchildren and one great-grandchild. One of New Farm's finest sons will be sorely missed. (*Thanks to Fay Rayner*)

FAIRLIE SCHMELZER (nee KENT), late of Newstead and formerly of Obergurgl, Jimbour Plain, died in December surrounded by her family. Growing up on the land, Fairlie sometimes accompanied her father to the woolstores at Teneriffe around sale time. She was a regular attendee at the Society meetings.



NOEL FIELD passed away in November and will be remembered for the address he gave to the Society in August 2016 about the site now known as the Howard Smith Wharf precinct.

Noel was raised in Clayfield and attended Brisbane Boys Grammar. He began work with IBC (Intercolonial Boring Company) before enlisting as an 18-year-old for war service in WWII. As a RAAF pilot, he served in the South Pacific and was based in the Philippines. At the end of the war, he married Gem Collin and they had two sons.

Noel's work career included positions at the Atlantic Union Oil Co. in Kyabra Street, Newstead, various activities with the Collin (Shipping) Group, and the Emoleum Group at Newstead [a co-worker was Jim MacDonald] which specialised in laying bitumen.

Later Noel was self-employed restoring houses, and he also captained a pleasure boat on the Brisbane River, before retiring to Woody Point. With Annabelle Stewart, he co-authored *William Collin: Building from the Brisbane River 1862-1972*. (*Thanks to Jim MacDonald*)



Discovering RBWH History: Part 10
Tuesday, 25 February 2020, 5.00-7.00pm
RBWH Education Centre

Topic: *International Year of the Nurse and Midwife*
 MC: Gillian Nasato
 Guest Speakers: Alanna Geary, Cluny Seager,
 Tami Photinos and Emma Babao

2020 is the Year of the Nurse and Midwife in honour of the 200th birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale.
 Tickets are \$10 and include hot & cold buffet with beverages including wine, beer and soft drinks.
Phone 3646 7588 or go to: <https://bit.ly/3ayrxCj>



SURPRISE FIND

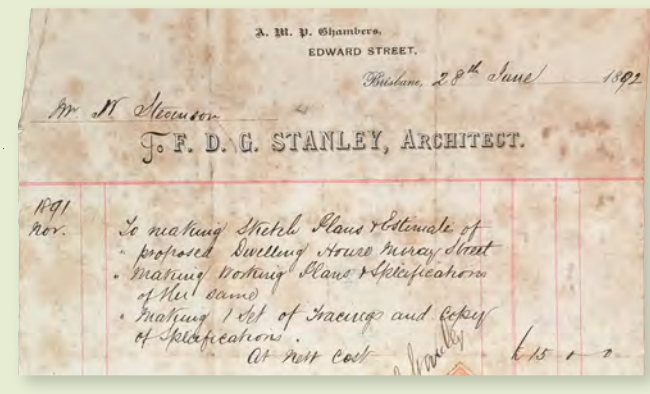
The Moray Street masterpiece which never went ahead...

Society member Stuart Wallace always knew that his great-great-grandfather William Stevenson had planned to build a two-storey stone residence on Moray Street, but he was only recently reminded just who the architect was likely to be.

"Among the family papers was a receipt dated 28 June 1892 for preparing the sketches and plans. The architect was a fellow Scot, F.D.G. Stanley, who charged £15 for his efforts," said Stuart.

The most prominent example of this architect's work is the General Post Office in Queen Street, Brisbane.

William Stevenson's daughter Jeanette conducted the New Farm Private School (ca 1901-1965), with the help of her sister Eleanor and her niece Biddy Wallace.



COME TO THE CINEMA

Saturday afternoon film in March

Here's something very different for the meeting of the New Farm & Districts Historical Society on Saturday 28 March.

Come to enjoy an historic film in an historic theatre. The main event is the 1940 classic comedy 'Dad Rudd M.P.' which includes familiar themes:

- dams and water rights
- a by-election • dirty tricks in politics • romance complications
- a fierce storm, and
- unlikely political liaisons!

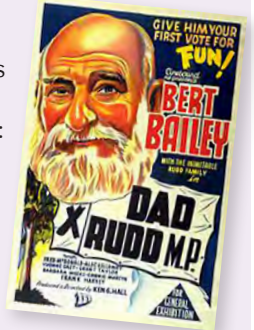
Thanks to the generosity of NEW FARM 6 CINEMAS which has been an epicentre of social activity and pop culture since 1921 [formerly Merthyr Picture Palace, Astor Theatre, Village Twin Theatre], we bring you this unique experience.

The cost is just \$12, including afternoon tea in the foyer following the movie. It will be a great opportunity to have a chat and a laugh together. This is cheaper than your usual trip to the films—without afternoon tea included.

PLEASE NOTE! – Tickets to the film will be available at the Society's coming meeting on 22 February for just \$5 each. This will be your only opportunity to purchase tickets at this greatly discounted price.

If you can't be at the February meeting, you can purchase your \$12 tickets on-line through the New Farm 6 Cinema website, or in-person at the theatre prior to the day. *P.S. If you happen to arrive at the Merthyr Road Uniting Church Centre around 2pm on 28 March, you will find a polling booth for the Council Elections – which won't be as much fun as a 1940s comedy experience!*

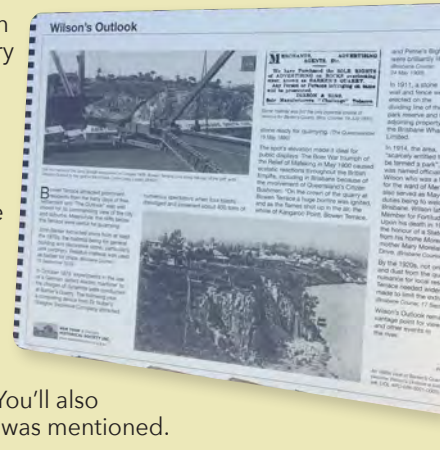
See you all on Saturday 28 March at 2pm, NEW FARM 6 CINEMAS, 701 BRUNSWICK STREET



PLAQUE TOUR

#10 — Wilson's Outlook

AFTER you've taken in the marvel of the Story Bridge, had a peek below at Howard Smith Wharves, and absorbed the splendour of the Shafston Reach of the river extending down towards Sydney Street, turn your mind to this plaque which explains why the outlook gained the name "Wilson's". You'll also realise why Dr Nobel was mentioned.





Below: These happy helpers from Third Space (formerly The 139 Club) in Fortitude Valley were very grateful for the offerings from the Society's Empty Christmas Tree at the November 2019 meeting.

Poster: Desley Garnett

Design & Layout: Gerard Benjamin

Photography: G. Benjamin & Gayle Martin



EDITION: 1721 (15)
VILLAGE NEWS

MANY THANKS TO
Grace Grace MP
Member for McConnell (07) 3145 9100
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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Newsletter Editor: Gerard Benjamin
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Mountains don't meet, but people do... — Persian saying

V | history
archives



GERARD BENJAMIN

While New Farm residents Mark and Susan were dining in Ipswich, the conversation surprisingly turned to New Farm history.

Kylie, the manager of the restaurant, told her guests that she had recently rescued a pile of old documents dating from 1917, including builder's plans for a house in Brunswick Street.

"If that house is still there, I'd love to see it," she said.

It seemed that the plans were for a high-set Queenslander of four bedrooms which had been prepared for an A.(R?) Sidney Smith.

There was no street number, so the house could have been anywhere along New Farm's main thoroughfare.

Also among the documents was a letterhead: "J.G. Smith & Co., Timber Merchants".

A search of the postal directory showed that timber merchant

John Gauld Smith (married to Clara) lived at Clarvale in Lower Brunswick Street.

It looked as if the proposed house was to be for the Smiths' eldest son, Reginald Arthur Sidney, who was soon to marry Tessie Phelan, a dressmaker of 128 Harcourt Street where she lived with her widowed mother and sister Bridie.

The late Mr Phelan had been a draper in Townsville.

As it transpired, the newly-weds continued living with his parents at Clarvale and the new house was advertised for letting.

The Smiths may have had a timber mill at Cooyar near Toowoomba, since both Reginald and his younger brother Geoffrey moved to that area where there was a property named Claredale.

The son of a Scottish upholsterer, John Gauld Smith had emigrated to Maryborough where, in 1889, he married Clara Maria, eldest daughter of drayman George Larman of Rockhampton.

Clara's father was either very



The builder's sketch of the 1917 house. Was it close to the Smiths' house which once stood at 925 Brunswick St (pictured far right)?

health conscious or highly entrepreneurial since he was quoted in a 1904 newspaper campaign to promote a flu remedy.

"I was a regular wreck till Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People made a new man of me by driving all the dregs of disease out of my blood," asserted G.F. Larman.

Enterprise was certainly in John Gauld Smith's blood.

By the late 1890s (before he moved to New Farm), he owned a third-share in the 157-ton schooner Clansman which carried lumber from the South Pacific.

Eventually the vessel was also a 'schooner' bringing South Sea Islanders to work in Queensland.

When a change of government policy required Islanders to be returned home, an Islander died soon after being landed ashore from the Clansman on the Solomon Islands.

The resulting government hearing became known as the Clansman Inquiry.

This ended Smith's shipping activity and by 1905, the vessel was in the hands of the bank.



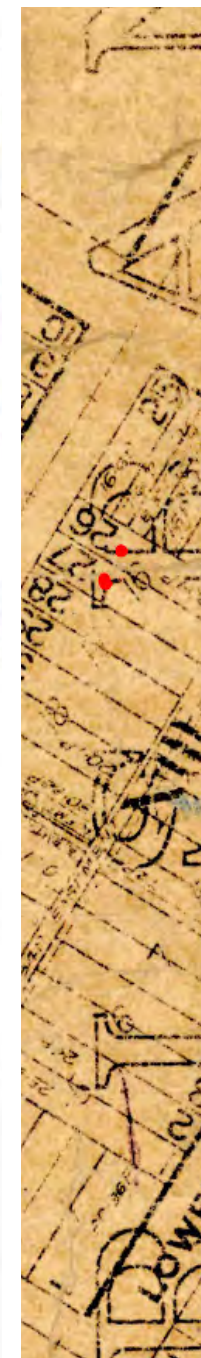
Gauld Smith build the house for his son in 1917?" was the question that manager Kylie and her New Farm diners would have liked answered, but alas, it remains a mystery.

All that can be surmised is that it was possibly close to the Smiths' house Clarvale, which once stood at 925 Brunswick Street, now the site of Heritage on the Park apartments.

What a remarkable slice of social history was served up as a result of Kylie's casual remark!

NEXT MEETING of the New Farm & Districts Historical Society:

Saturday 22 February 2020, 2-4pm. Uniting Church Centre, 52 Merthyr Road. Janet Marshall talks about a past Bowen Hills resident: "Flying



MONTHLY HISTORY COLUMN from MY VILLAGE NEWS February 2020

Perfect if you have just moved to the area!

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

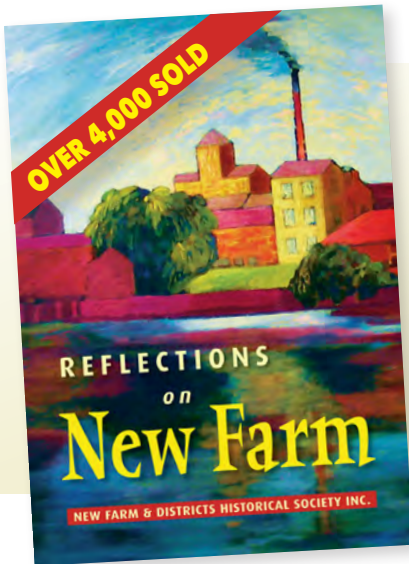
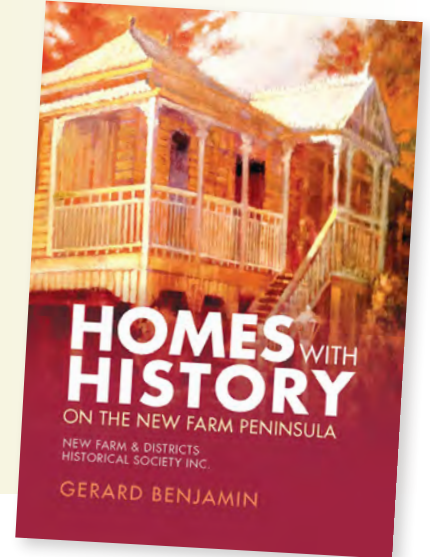
Homes with History — on the New Farm Peninsula

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 4,000 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

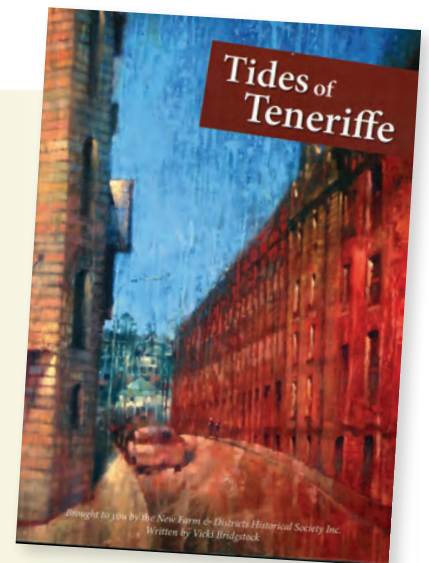
Tides of Teneriffe

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

By a sweet tongue and kindness, you can drag an elephant with a hair... — Persian saying