



# NEW FARM & Districts HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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NEWSLETTER

MAY 2020

Vol. XXVI, No. 4

## ON THE MOVE

### From Japan to New Farm, then Ingham

A QUEENSLAND judge recuperating in Japan so appreciated the coolness and utility of the house in which he stayed, that he decided to buy one — and ship it back to Brisbane.

Within the year, three carpenters and two plasterers from Japan arrived to assemble the flatpack. This was brave of them since in those times, the Japanese Foreign Ministry warned its citizens that “Australia was so unknown and uncivilised that Japanese nationals travelling there risked being deceived and exploited.”

When the house’s assembly was accomplished, the judge surveyed with appreciation a single-storied dwelling of about 18m x 14.5m, which was raised off the ground, with an exterior of unpainted timber and white plaster, surmounted by a distinctive dark-tiled roof with elaborately carved end-tiles, and a step-down over the surrounding veranda.

This innovative architectural arrival, which was named Yeddo, was positioned on a sloping block overlooking the Brisbane River towards Kangaroo Point, bordered by Bowen Terrace, Langshaw



**Oriental classic:** In later years, the Japanese house became the State Office of the Queensland Country Women’s Association.

In 1961 a developer sought to demolish the house to make way for a block of brick flats. At the last moment, Dr Pamela Markwell secured the house and was given three weeks to remove it. After careful dismantling, it was re-assembled in Ingham where its heritage value continues to be cherished.

Street and Gilbey Lane. It became known locally as ‘the Japanese house’.

Naturally, there is so much more to this remarkable story—and as a society we were to hear all about it in June, but then along came a pandemic.

Nevertheless, the proposed speaker, Brisbane writer/researcher Jill Barker (pictured), looks forward to speaking to the society when the viral dust has settled. In the meantime, why not read her informative article about the house which appeared in the *Griffith Review*.

“I would still like to give the talk,” says Jill. “There are other details and angles and images to the story that are not covered in the article.”

## BACK TO KP

### Recognise Miss Burke’s house?

AMONG the many who appreciated last month’s article about the new Kangaroo Point Heritage Walk booklet was local resident Keith Harrison who sent the attached photograph showing a Queenslander with the bridge close by in the background.

“Around 1939-40, my father was a fitter and turner at Evans Deakin,” he wrote. “He boarded in this house



(near Holman Street) under the Story Bridge whilst waiting to enter the RAAF.”

On the reverse of the photograph was the label ‘Miss Burke’s Boarding House’, so the writer assumes that she was related to Captain Burke after whom the park on the point underneath the bridge was named.

Nearby is a large notice which tells the story of the John Burke & Sons shipping line which traded along the Queensland coast.

With luck there will be more about this house in a future issue. If you can offer any details, please email: [info@newfarmhistorical.org.au](mailto:info@newfarmhistorical.org.au).

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Ross Garnett

**Don't ever forget this strange period**

**W**ELCOME to our second 'isolation' newsletter. I am wondering what effect this period of enforced change of pace is having on your life and your emotions. This is an extraordinary phase in our history and maybe we should be recording its effect on life in New Farm for our archives. Why not send/email a message about your reflections on this chapter in our history!

One change in recent weeks has been the unusually high number of requests for historical information put to the society.

Maybe the lockdown offers more time to think about family history. Maybe some have spoken more to their grandparents, and inevitably curiosity about the past arises. Maybe there's never been a better chance for online research about the history of the family or the house. Maybe cleaning out a cupboard has brought to light all sorts of wonderful old family records and photos...

What have you found out about your family or your house?

A reminder about the value of our books came this month from Pattie Hobbs who wrote that her mother, Beverley (nee Bowen), aged 82, on receiving her copy of *Reflections on New Farm*, was overjoyed to read the chapter on Terrace Street and to see the old family home on p. 169 (pictured).



"The names and memories came back to her and she loved the fact that she could just flip through and read about what she well remembered: Coolden and its wedding receptions, Wynberg, pictures of local shops, including the butchers, and even the baker's horse," said Pattie.

"You have made some ex-New Farm locals very happy..."

"Thanks so much, Ross. You have made some ex-New Farm locals very happy."

Yes, we are looking forward to resuming our monthly meetings, but realise that it might be a while before large groups can gather so as

to observe social distancing. Committee members keep in touch online via Zoom — and we even had a birthday cake for Austin at our recent meeting. Unfortunately, he could not blow out the candles and eat the cake, so Desley and I did that for him!

Missing from that meeting was Malcolm, who was celebrating his birthday with family on the same day. 'Many happy returns' to both Austin and Malcolm, with the hope that there are better circumstances for celebrating next year.

**NICELY NOSTALGIC**

Jim MacDonald

**Who remembers 'the telegram'?**

**I**N its day, before e-mail and the like, the telegram was the fastest way to send a written message between two points in Australia.

If you needed to communicate, you presented yourself to a Post Office or a Telegraph Office, and wrote your message on an official P.O. form. Since you were charged by the number of words, keeping it brief and omitting all but the most essential words kept the cost down.

The official at the Post Office calculated your charges for payment in cash (this was the pre-credit card era). Next, the message was transmitted by 'Morse code' to the receival point — which happened to be the nearest Post Office to the location of your recipient.

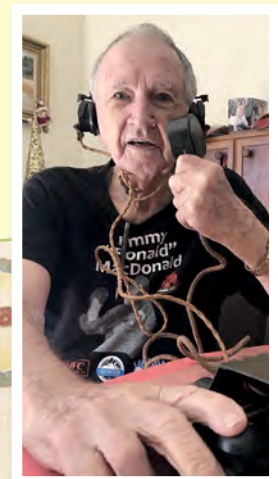
At that office, someone monitored a 'receiving box' then interpreted your message from the dots and dashes of the Morse code. He/she typed on a P.O. telegram form — which was given to a 'telegram boy' (just out of school) who, with your message in his leather belt pouch, would cycle to the addressee.

His pushbike was bright red and prominently displayed 'PMG' in metal letters so as to deter unauthorised borrowings.

During the war years, the telegram boy was the conduit for informing a family that their loved one was 'Missing in Action, Believed Killed'. No wonder people were immediately worried when they saw a telegram boy in the street. How sad and how final.

On the other hand, the service could be used for happier matters. Weddings often generated congratulatory wishes. Remember being at a wedding reception when part of the best man's duties was to 'read out the telegrams'?

**Finger on the key:** The article's author Jim MacD tries out an NZ military Morse key for transmitting messages over a network rather than through wires.



## MEMORIAL TREASURES

Noel Adsett

## New Farm optician enlists for WWI

**A**RTHUR Cyril Carvosso was born in Brisbane on 30 December 1893, the second son of William Henry Carvosso and Eliza Ann (née Adams).

His parents were prominent Brisbane residents: his father served as Supreme Court Sheriff of Queensland, was a renowned cricketer and cricket umpire for interstate matches and a deacon at the Wharf Street Congregational Church, while Mrs Carvosso, a tireless voluntary worker in a number of organisations, was president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) for over 30 years.

Mrs Carvosso held office in the National Council of Women and the Lady Lamington Hospital over long periods.

Their home was 18 Arthur Street, New Farm. Cyril attended Brisbane Grammar School from 1909 to 1911 and joined the company of Chas Sankey Fraser in 1912. In 1916 he completed examinations with honours to become an optometrist.

Cyril Carvosso enlisted in Brisbane (2279) for AIF service abroad on 22 February 1916.

As Acting Sergeant, 52nd Battalion reinforcements, he embarked on *HMAT Boorara* from Brisbane in August 1916 and visited the home of Cecil Rhodes in Cape Town on his voyage to The Front.

He was engaged on battlefields on the Western Front at Bapaume, Amiens, Villers-Bretonneux and Etinehem until fighting ceased in November 1918.

He spent periods in hospital during these months, suffering wounding of his hand, and 'trench feet', a condition caused by prolonged exposure of the feet to the damp, unsanitary, and cold conditions in the muddy war trenches of France.

After the war, having been appointed to the rank of corporal, Cyril studied at the British Optical Institute, London, gaining the Fellowship of the British Optical Association and the Freemanship of the Spectacle Makers Guild—and also became a Freeman of the City of London.

**N**OEL ADSETT was to be our speaker on Anzac Day, but the talk has been postponed until a more opportune time. Instead, he has kindly provided the New Farm story of Corporal Arthur Cyril Carvosso (1893-1983).

Arthur's name was listed with 266 others on the honour boards at St Andrew's Uniting Church. He was one of the 20 who lived at New Farm before enlisting. Several paid the supreme sacrifice, while others returned sick or wounded and bore these scars for the rest of their lives.

Arthur Cyril Carvosso of Arthur Street, New Farm, was more fortunate. He was able to follow a highly successful career after his courageous war service.

While researching Cyril's life story, Noel spoke with his surviving daughter, Mrs Helen Wagner, who kindly provided anecdotes and Cyril's photographs.

Helen passed away in 2015.

Corporal Carvosso returned to Australia on the troopship *Friedrichsruh* in 1919. Also on board were the then Prime Minister of Australia, Mr W M Hughes, and the Minister for the Navy, Sir Joseph Cook. Cyril was discharged from military duties on 5th May 1920.

Cyril resumed his career as an optometrist, being manager of branches of Chas Sankey Fraser in Brisbane and Toowoomba for the next nine years.

He married Florence Edna Mundell of Taroom at the Dalby Presbyterian Church on St David's Day, 1926.

From 1929 to 1932, he had charge of the optical department of F.A. Newman Pty Ltd., Collins Street, Melbourne. He next moved to the Queensland town of Gympie where he owned his own business in Mary Street.

Daughters Helen (1930-2015) and Janette (1937-2004) were born in Melbourne and Gympie respectively. One of Cyril's interests was astronomy. He lived at The Gap in retirement and died, aged 89 years, in 1983.



**The eyes have it:** (Above) Private A.C. Carvosso; Cyril dressed in hospital garb. (Below) The Carvosso home at 18 Arthur Street, New Farm has long been replaced by a new building, but the laneway remains; Visiting Cecil Rhodes' House, Cape Town, 1916.





**FLYING VISIT**

**Snapshot from 1937**

**T**HE query in last month’s newsletter about the possible presence of Catalina flying boats in the New Farm area elicited this wonderful photo — not of a Catalina, but instead a Short S-23C Empire Class Flying Boat.

The image came courtesy of society member and New Farm

resident Bill de Ruyter. It offers the additional bonus of a view of Dyne & Co’s wire works which was on River Rd (later Oxlade Dr) near the intersection with Sargent St from the 1920s (More about Dyne’s [here](#).)

The photo dates from 1937 and marked the return of Qantas pilots who had been training on these aircraft in England. These flying boats were destined for the England-Australia run,

and offered “an entirely new conception of air travel”. For one thing, they were roomy. “In the spacious hull there are four large cabins, the ceilings of which are about two feet out of reach, when standing,” said one report.

The aircraft pictured (G-ADUT) was later allocated to the RAAF for war service. It was destroyed in Broome Harbour when attacked by Japanese aircraft in March 1942.

**STRANGE TIMES**

**How have you been managing in a lockdown world?**

*SOME people put it pithily about how they are coping. Do they sound familiar? Email us yours.*

- The diurnal ups and downs of isolation: “I’m sure it will be fine, you bad, you sleep, you wake up, you good again!” – FR (songwriter)
- Writing my memoirs and I’m up to describing my (Greek-born) mother’s tangles with English, as in: “Mum, what do you mean your friend had a blood translation?” – SG
- Harbour-bound skipper’s weekly lament: “Another fourteen tides have come and gone but perhaps we will soon sight one we can use.” – RE
- Thought it was a good time to get a puppy for the kids. Doggy instruction has gone really well. Now, after a couple of weeks, she has us completely trained up. – HR

- Long bike rides, house repairs, mowing and more biking, and since there’s no chance of canoeing over to Bribie, my wife throws out a line on the beach and catches enough fish for dinner. – RA
- I’ve put cooking on my menu for getting through this isolation. – GJ
- Iso-gardening, iso-walking, iso-zooming, iso-cleaning, I-so-love this change of pace... – NG
- I’m doing my distancing by devouring novels. I have them stacked up like planes waiting to land... – BC
- Since we own a heritage house and I have an eye to detail, I’ve been scrubbing the skirting boards with a toothbrush and husband has been cleaning the chandeliers. I now realise why modern architects got rid of ornate skirting boards and chandeliers! – GE
- I’ve had more neighbours and passers-by greet me with a “Hello” in my front yard in the last six weeks, than ever before in my whole life! – MJ
- I’ve been on the phone more than ever, and I combine calls using an

- earpiece with my walking exercise. When I reach my destination, I say, “It’s been lovely talking to you. I’ve finished my walk, so I’ll say goodbye until next time.” – GD
- There’s been more time to go into the history of nearby houses. Makes me pleased that I’ve already recorded the history of our place. – WP
- It’s strangely fitting, isn’t it, to think that my favourite new podcast (with 2256 episodes on hand) is BBC’s “Desert Island Discs”... – BG





The Christmas gathering in December 2019 at the New Farm Bowls Club for the stalwart volunteers of the society seems an eternity ago... and definitely from 'BC' (before Covid-19)! Instead, we've grown used to the ubiquitous markings on the ground for social distancing, the "Closed" signs, the warnings about "no handshakes", the "Stop" signs at aged care facilities, and of course, the busy river walkways. One day, we'll look back and wonder...



**Design & Layout:** Gerard Benjamin

**Photography:** G. Benjamin, C. Derrick



EDITION: 1721 (15)  
**VILLAGE** NEWS

MANY THANKS TO  
**Grace Grace MP**  
Member for McConnell (07) 3145 9100  
for photocopying the newsletter

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*Self-love, my liege, is not so vile a sin, as self-neglecting... — Shakespeare*

# archives



## *New Farm's canal, the solution to flooding?*

On 1 February 1893, a tropical cyclone crossed the Queensland coast near Yeppoon and within days Brisbane felt the effects.

Living on Norris's Point (now the Powerhouse site) in a high-set home was Harry Wright, a prominent figure in the Brisbane hotel scene. Having experienced flooding three years earlier, Mr Wright moved all of the family furniture, including a piano which had recently arrived from England, three feet higher than the 1890 flood mark.

With the preparations complete, Mr and Mrs Wright and their children joined friends on the other side of the river to sit out the deluge. Late in the afternoon of Sunday 5 February, the Wrights watched in disbelief as their house was lifted off its stumps and was carried away in the current.

The following day, it was clear New Farm had been seriously affected. The elevation of the almost-complete CSR sugar refinery proved not to be high enough for this sort of flood, and nearby houses were from four to 15 feet in water.

Amidst all of their losses, Mrs Alice Wright especially lamented losing a case containing heirlooms from the day she and Henry married at Wickham Tce in 1877.

There was a brief respite until the following Sunday (11 February) when a second cyclone brought more rain but the flooding was minor in comparison with what Brisbane had seen.

Just as the district set about recovering, the unbelievable happened. Around 17 February, a third cyclone caused inundation which was almost as damaging as the first flood.

Brisbane's battering was profound. There were around 35 deaths, almost one third of residents were left homeless, and the Victoria Bridge and Indooroopilly railway bridge were washed away — hence the ascription, Black February.

In the aftermath came demands to know how such devastation could be avoided. A report was commissioned from the state's first hydraulic

engineer, John Baillie Henderson. The prevailing assumption was that the river could be tamed and engineering was the key, a misapprehension succinctly encapsulated by the title of Margaret Cook's superb recent book *A River with a City Problem*.

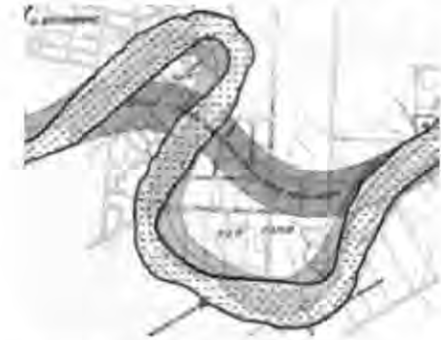
Interestingly for New Farm, Henderson's 'Scheme B' proposed a 'short cut' in order to drain water quickly from the town centre. His idea was to slice a canal through Kangaroo Point and continue it through New Farm, so as to make outfall in the river towards Newstead.

"The cuts would form two islands with the economic advantages of creating docks and 173 hectares of reclaimed land, a new government asset, which could be used for bulk stores and businesses," writes the author.

Imagine standing at the end of the truncated Brunswick Street (not far below today's New Farm Cinemas), as you surveyed the sweep of the canal (perhaps renamed Merthyr Quays) and took in the new (Oxlade?) island.

Needless to say, an international expert demolished Henderson's solution, then there were years of argument and conjecture until flood worries waned in the face of the Federation drought of 1902-1903.

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Following the devastating 1893 floods, a study proposed a canal through New Farm. (Courtesy: Margaret Cook)

Two weeks after the first 1893 flood, Mrs Alice Wright had good news. The precious case which held their marriage certificate was found on Bulwer Island near the mouth of the river by a passing schooner.

Meanwhile, as the waters receded, another marriage certificate was signed on Tuesday, 21 February 1893 in East Brisbane. Businessman and New Farm local Tom Welsby welcomed his bride to their new riverfront home Amity, having assured her that the floodwaters stopped just eight inches below the front verandah floorboards.

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