



NEW FARM & Districts HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

www.newfarmhistorical.org.au



NEWSLETTER

MAY 2022

Vol. XXVIII, No. 4

APRIL MEETING

Lennons, a focus during WWII

GUEST speaker and novelist, Melanie Myer (pictured), transported more than 80 of us back to 1941 when Brisbane hosted a goodwill visit by *USS Chicago*. A ticker-tape parade from Queen St to the Valley welcomed the 6,000 US Marines.

The goodwill tour of 1941 introduced young 'college educated' US Marines, whose American-style courtesy, gifts, cigarettes, and generous tipping, endeared them to families and hotel staff, and particularly impressed the young girls of Brisbane whose universal reaction was, "We had the best time of our lives".

After the fall of Singapore in 1942, General MacArthur relocated to Brisbane, and the recently opened, glamorous Art Deco Lennons Hotel in George St remained a focal point until 1945. The impact on Brisbane (population 300,000) of the 'American invasion' provided a dramatic backdrop for Melanie's fictional account, *Meet Me at Lennons*.

By 1942, around tens of thousands US troops were based in Brisbane. 12,000 Australian women married US servicemen, and 7,000 were Brisbane girls.



Church-run hostels for single women included Archibald House and GFS House, both in Moray St, New Farm. The mobilisation of women, working in factories and other roles, was life-changing for them.

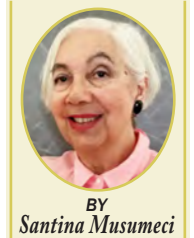


Recreational spots for the troops included The US Navy Officers Mess in Oxlade Dr, and hotels and brothels in South Brisbane, Margaret and Mary Sts and the inner city. There were also the Trocadero in South Brisbane, the US Military Post Exchange (PX), the American Red Cross (Primary's Building, Adelaide and Creek Sts), and the Doctor Carver Service Club (opp Melbourne St train station) which catered to African-American soldiers and introduced 'jazz and cool music'.

The return of thousands of Australian troops of the 7th and 9th Divs redeployed from the Middle East heading for the New Guinea campaign, created tensions which erupted in the infamous 'Battle of Brisbane' near Adelaide and Creek Sts in late 1942.

* * *

MELANIE'S INTEREST as a PhD student in this period of Brisbane's history (including New Farm's role) inspired her debut novel *Meet Me at Lennons* which won the 2018 Glendower Award for an Emerging Author at the Qld Literary Awards. No wonder attendees were keen to obtain a copy! Many thanks, Melanie. This era was perfect for many of our audience.



BY
Santina Musumeci

MAY MEETING

Brown and Broad

ON Breakfast Creek Rd near the gasometer once stood the venerable business of Brown and Broad, Newstead Homes (est. 1898).

To tell us more about the famous enterprise, as well as about George Brown, the entrepreneur and self-made businessman who went on to become a captain of industry, we will welcome his great-grandson, Boyd Brown, at our meeting in May.



"George was a trailblazer and pioneer of the Queensland timber industry," says Boyd. "He was also a co-founder and the driving force behind the establishment of the Royal Qld Golf Club."

Come and enjoy Boyd's address at the meeting to be held at the Uniting Church Centre, 52 Merthyr Rd, New Farm, at 2.30pm on Saturday, 28 May. A sumptuous afternoon tea will follow. \$10 (members \$5). All are welcome.

DEVELOPMENT**Monaise, once part of Hawstead**

The block of six flats at 299 Bowen Tce (pictured) was built ca 1923, making it one of the earliest flat developments in New Farm.

The property had been a small part of the large Hawstead estate, which had been purchased in 1912 by Josephine, widow of District Court Judge George Washington Power. The original Hawstead homestead is reputed to have had many marble baths.



Mrs Power further divided the property. This unit block, known as "Monaise", was on the site of Hawstead's croquet lawn, while on the adjoining portion, once Hawstead's tennis court, Hampton Court flats were built ca 1927, the architects being Hall and Prentice.

The late John O'Keeffe (grandson of Mrs Power) knew Monaise as a boy and recalled that the Brisbane manager of Dalgety's, an Englishman, lived in the top floor flat where he could see Moreton Island.

Monaise was retained by the family until 1972 when Hawstead was also demolished.

The Monaise site has been the subject of a recent Development Application (A005900020) for the erection of a seven-storey building.

MESSAGE TO THE EDITOR**Visiting Shafston's Anzac Hostel**

Christa Gerard's article featuring Shafston House in last month's newsletter prompted this reminiscence from Jim MacDonald.

Shafston House served as a hospice for diggers who had been injured whilst serving at the front in WWI and had been left seriously injured. Since 1920, it had been known as the Anzac Hostel. My father James Donald MacDonald had himself survived injuries in that conflict and understood the plight of these men.

Through the 1920-30s, he provided some support by way of regularly visiting to simply talk and offer companionship with these often lonely and forgotten souls. He often took along my elder brother as added company for these patients.

The injured included men who had been burned by exposure to mustard gas. The men's skin never healed and remained a continuing painful legacy. To achieve relief from these burning sensations, the man was often required to lay in baths of oil for extended periods.

In July 1935, the Hostel was visited by Billy Hughes, the Minister for Health and Repatriation (and former Prime Minister). At the time, there were nine patients in residence.



Crowded Waterfront: This view of HMCS Ontario departing from Newstead No.1 Wharf in March 1951 offers a perspective on the thriving commercial and industrial activity in the area, with woolstores, storage for Plume petroleum, an industrial chimney, and wharves, wharves, wharves, all overlooked by the homes on Teneriffe Hill. (Photo courtesy of John Gates, Hamilton)

HISTORICAL WALKS

In coming months, the Society is offering a series of HISTORICAL WALKS in the local area led by a variety of guides. You are invited to book and pay for the walks via the online site Eventbrite. Should you prefer not to use this method, please either email the society on info@newfarmhistorical.org.au, or enquire at the next meeting, or phone for further information.

MAY

TENERIFFE WOOLSTORES: 8am, Saturday 14 May 2022

BEN PRITCHARD will lead a leisurely walk around Teneriffe to discover the story and the secrets of the woolstores that have dominated the suburb for over 100 years. It's not just about wool. There are also tales of disease, geology, industry and warfare.

This will all be packed into two hours and a couple of kilometres' walk. Meet at the Teneriffe Ferry Stop. 8am sharp. Saturday 14 May. Tickets: \$30 (members \$20). Booking via NFDHS or online at [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com).

JUNE

DISCOVER NEW FARM'S ART DECO GEMS:

8am, Saturday 11 June 2022

SANTINA MUSUMECI has a passion for the Art Deco style, and she will conduct you past a selection of the suburb's 'in vogue' homes and flat complexes, many designed by leading architects of the day. Starts at 8am. Tickets: \$30 (members \$20). Book via NFDHS or online at [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com).

JULY

NEW FARM – HALF-CIRCLING THE PENINSULA:

8am, Saturday 9 July 2022

GERARD BENJAMIN will be your guide as you half-circle the New Farm peninsular (via Oxlade Dr, Maxwell & Moreton Sts, and Merthyr Rd) in order to view locations of note for their architecture and social history. Tickets: \$30 (members \$20). *Booking details in the June newsletter.*

PRESIDENT'S REPORT Desley Garnett

Juggling a festival and a meeting

IT is good news that many of the previous Covid restrictions have been lifted, plus there is no limit on numbers other than the capacity of the hall which can comfortably accommodate 110, and at a real squeeze, 140.

As you know, the Teneriffe Festival is being held on 28 May, which happens to be the same day as our May meeting. Showcasing the history of Teneriffe is integral to the Festival, so we will mount our usual display of historical photos, as well as show the ever-popular video of the tram ride from South Brisbane to New Farm Park in 1965.

NFDHS is also responsible for organising the Teneriffe Bus Tours (in a restored Council bus supplied by the Omnibus Society) and for rostering tour leaders to point out places of historical interest along the route.

All of this means that we are looking for extra volunteers to make sure both events are successful. Can you spare a couple of hours at the Teneriffe Festival (10am–12pm, 12pm–2pm or 2pm–4pm)? Can you be part of the volunteer team at our public meeting at Merthyr Road from 1:30pm? Please email or phone me to volunteer your participation: — president@newfarmhistorical.org.au :: 0409 498 403.

Many thanks to our catering team (Natalie Blair



Remembering: Sprigs of rosemary were prepared by the kitchen crew as Anzac Day mementoes at the Society's April meeting. Meanwhile on Saturday 7 May, Newstead Park was the backdrop for commemorating the 80th anniversary of that decisive engagement, the Battle of the Coral Sea.



and Emma Golder) for preparing and serving afternoon tea each month. You will all agree that it is truly impressive!

In April, Anzac biscuits and lamingtons underlined the theme for ANZAC Day. Look for something special in May when a 'Coronation Theme' will celebrate the remarkable 70 years' reign of Queen Elizabeth II.

Perhaps you would like to join the team which cleans-up following afternoon tea? It involves collecting up cups and plates and stacking the dishwasher. *Join the team and enjoy the fun!*

GOOD NEWS: *Coles at New Farm to sponsor our afternoon teas each month.* Thanks to Natalie for negotiating this arrangement with our local supermarket in Merthyr Village, which I know is frequented by many of our members. Please offer a thank you to manager Cameron Curtis if you happen to see him when you are shopping there.

FRIENDS AT LENNONS



Partygoers at the place: Society member James Delahunty (pictured, top photo, RHS) dusted off this memento of his 19th birthday held in 1963 at Lennons, considered in those days as *The place* in Brisbane Town. "I was brought up diagonally across the road in the Grosvenor Hotel which my mother ran," says James. "She employed Warren Dennis before his National Hotel days. We saw President Lyndon Johnson, The Beatles, and many other celebrities of the day by standing on the awning of our pub." James says that his family and guests had a table at Lennons' dining room most Saturday evenings, where he was likely to spot figures such as Bob Menzies. James issued an invitation to the guests at his 1963 party, and was thrilled when some of them could join him at the April meeting of the Society.

VALE MARGARET

SINCERE CONDOLENCES ARE OFFERED to the family of Society member Margaret Baker-Genovesi who died on 23 February 2022.

Her very successful career in opera singing took her to Rome where she married Vittorio Genovesi. After her return to Australia in 2007, Margaret lived in New Farm and lectured regularly at the Queensland Conservatorium/Griffith University on most aspects of the singer's repertoire. She also adjudicated many national voice competitions.

She was a singing teacher to students across the globe. *Vale Margaret.*



YOUR TALENTS

Why not give it a go?

How many volunteers does it take to operate an Historical Society?

THE ANSWER IS “LOTS!” – and in order to give you some idea of the invaluable contribution of our unsung historical helpers, here are just a few snapshots from the April meeting.

As you can imagine, in order to make a meeting unfold like clockwork, there is so much that goes on behind the scenes.

Many have been our volunteers for years, some are newer arrivals. Each seems to love making his or her contribution, and relishes the camaraderie of working alongside kindred spirits.

Does this sound like an activity that you would enjoy?

Why not give it a go, and try yourself on something that you'd get a thrill out of doing. We would be delighted to welcome you aboard.



REPLY FROM THE WEBSITE

Happy wool days...

MY name is John Hunt and at the age of 15, I started my working career for Australian Estates from August 1968 until 1974.

I began as a junior and my first day was to sweep E floor which was in the new building (No 2 store). It was BIG and took me most of my first day.

When I became a senior at the age of 18, they made me the Head Weigher. The wool was unloaded in the rail siding with a conveyor system which was fantastic for that era. It travelled the full length of the siding then went up to B floor (second floor of the old building) where I was seated at the scales with all the controls for all

conveyors from the B floor scales all the way along B floor across the catwalk and continued across E floor with drops and elevators all along, so as to service every floor in both buildings.

I remember that on a lot of days we weighed wool the whole time and still did not finish it all. These were the most enjoyable days of my working career. My manager at the time was RW. He was my first

manager, and to be honest the best I ever had.

After leaving Australian Estates in 1974 when I also did three years' night college for Wool Classing, I moved on to the testing side of wool in Beeston St, Newstead, with the Australian Wool Testing Authority (AWTA). I continued with them until 2005, leaving the wool industry behind.





Mum & Daughter team: (left) Bruna, one of our long-time members, asked her daughter Annie to be fill-in photographer for the April meeting. Sincere thanks to Annie for these A1 snaps of the event.

Corporal William 'Rex' Wells. Rex was captain's aide in the Marines and gunner aboard the USS Chicago.
Photo: March 1941, Brisbane (courtesy of Ken Wells)

Photos: Gerard Benjamin & Annie Day

Design and Layout: G. Benjamin



MANY THANKS TO
Grace Grace MP
Member for McConnel (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
Postal Address: PO Box 1141 NEW FARM 4005 • **Email:** info@newfarmhistorical.org.au

President: Desley Garnett • 0409 498 403
• president@newfarmhistorical.org.au

Vice President: Malcolm Godfrey

Minutes Secretary: Virginia Balmain

Treasurer: Denise Buckby

Committee: Austin Adams and Ben Pritchard

Newsletter Editor: Gerard Benjamin

• ggerardb@bigpond.net.au

The rain begins with a single drop... — Manal al-Sharif



GERARD BENJAMIN

Snapshot of Brunswick St Queenslander arrives from WA

Trish, a long-time local resident, received an email from her Western Australian friends, Marie and Dennis, along with the photo of an old Queenslander.

“Do what you will with the attached,” wrote Dennis. “It’s the house in which my mother grew up. The photo was taken by her in 1938. Sadly the house is long gone.” The address on the photo was 562 Brunswick St, nowadays the carpark of IGA Marketplace.

Trish showed the email to your columnist and hardly needed to ask, “Does this interest you?” A timeline of the house was soon assembled, courtesy of digitised newspapers at Trove.

It emerged that the house, named Levroma (“stylish, seven rooms, bath, 34 perches”), was occupied from at least 1904 by four adult children of Mr and Mrs W.T. Keenan.

These children might have spent part of their childhood at the Explosives Magazine, Eagle Farm, where their father had been the resident keeper. At his death in October 1892 (his wife had died earlier), the Post Office flag was at half-mast out of respect for his 27 years with the public service.

Levroma eventually devolved to the younger son, Joshua, who became prominent at the Auditor-General’s Department. In 1916, he married Ethel, a daughter of Richard Bryant, head of the long-established firm of mercers in Roma, Queensland. (Remarkable that the house name already had ‘roma’ in it...)

When Joshua and Ethel’s three children arrived in the early 1920s, Mrs Keenan only had to pop next door to The Laurels Private Hospital. These births were well-timed because in October 1928, the hospital went up in flames. Mr. Keenan rushed home while the fire was in progress. He found that his stalwart neighbours had removed furniture and goods in case the house should catch alight. Luckily only the paint was blistered.

Margaret, the eldest, liked submitting stories to the newspapers,

“ She describes extensive vegetable gardens in the backyard. Also two large mango trees and a persimmon tree. She mentions walking as young children to New Farm Park and listening to the band play on the rostrum. ”

such as “A Walk in the Bush” (when aged 11). By the time she was 16 and attending the State Commercial High School, she won 2/6 for “On A Cattle Station”.

When your columnist forwarded these details and more to Dennis in WA (Margaret’s son), he replied, “My mother was a prolific reader and writer all of her adult life and instilled



A view from 1938 of the Queenslander at 562 Brunswick St, a spot now occupied by the carpark of IGA Marketplace.

the importance of these skills in all her children.”

Margaret recorded recollections about growing up in New Farm. “She describes extensive vegetable gardens in the backyard. Also two large mango trees and a persimmon tree. She mentions walking as young children to New Farm Park and listening to the band play on the rostrum,” wrote Dennis.

“She recalled being evacuated to the street when firemen were called to the fire at The Laurels hospital next door. She remembered watching, from their landing above the back steps, skaters at the public skating rink next door – and that during the war, the skating rink became a picture theatre (Earl’s Court, later The Rivoli).

“The family never owned a car but once a year they would hire

one so as to holiday at Margate or Maroochydore,” wrote Dennis.

Margaret’s mother Ethel Keenan died in 1936, leaving Joshua and the three young children. Come 1946, Dennis’s mother left Levroma when she married and moved to WA. In 1949, her father Joshua died. After that the house was sold by Margaret’s two younger siblings.

Thanks to Dennis Forte for his mother’s snapshot and recollections, and thanks also to Trish for conveying the message. One never knows just how far the New Farm diaspora stretches...

MONTHLY HISTORY COLUMN
from MY VILLAGE NEWS
MAY 2022



NEW FARM & Districts HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

Membership Form

Annual Membership – 1 September 2021 to 31st August 2022

Type of Membership	New	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

Office Use Only:		
Receipt No:	Date:	Treasurer:
Date Entered on Register:		Secretary:

New Farm and Districts Historical Society presents:



Brown and Broad Timber Merchants
.....and its people



George Brown

- *Business*
- *Queensland Timber industry*
- *Royal Queensland Golf Club*
- *Boy Scouts*
- *Entrepreneur*
- *Philanthropist*

Speaker:
Boyd Brown



Saturday 28th May 2:30 pm

Uniting Church Centre, 52 Merthyr Rd, New Farm

www.newfarmhistorical.org.au

Enquiries: 0409 498 403

Thanks to Grace Grace MP for printing this poster