



40 KINGSHOLME ST, TENERIFFE



NEW FARM & DISTRICTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

October 2022

Vol XXVII No 9

SEPTEMBER MEETING

Warm spring weather for the September meeting provided a perfect backdrop for a nostalgic boat trip. David Jones from the Maritime Museum took us on a series of delightful journeys on board three grand old ladies of the bay—the Mirimar, Mirana and Mirabel.



The early twentieth century heralded a new culture of leisure time but, as David explained, most Brisbane families had to rely on a busy fleet of ferry services and leisure cruises to access the simple entertainments on offer. Chief among these were the day cruises provided by the entrepreneurial Hayles family.

Regular visitors to Straddie were enchanted to learn that trips to Amity had once included dancing on the jetty as well as swimming and fishing. The jetty and its dance floor were inevitably claimed by the erosive impacts of the notorious Rainbow Channel. Dancing was one of the most popular entertainments of the era and the Mirabel took parties up river to the Mandalay Tea Gardens for picnics and dancing. A less wholesome entertainment by modern standards was an excursion to the Tangalooma whaling station to watch a whale carcass being flensed. I think we all prefer the 21 st Century version of whale watching. In the 1940s all three vessels were requisitioned for war service.

While some Brisbane commercial vessels disappeared into the war zones of the Coral Sea, the Hayles fleet remained safely in the bay, servicing military installations on Stradbroke and Moreton Islands. So the conflict drew to a close the Hayles fleet was well placed to resume cruises for a war weary populace. The 1950s were great years for the Hayles cruises but by the 1970s the rise of the family motor car had completely changed the way we worked and played. The city turned its back to the river and the mass weekend exodus to beaches of the Gold and Sunshine Coasts began a new era. In 2009 I enjoyed the Mirimar's 'Valedictory Voyage' to Lone Pine but until now I was oblivious to the rich history of her 75 years of service.

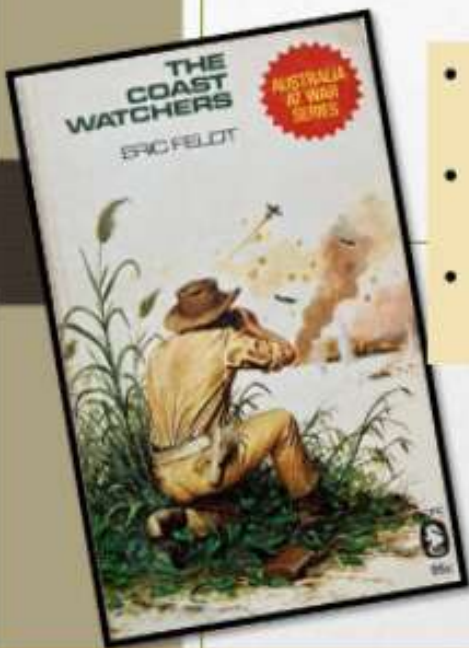
Tamsin O'Connor

September Spring Meeting



New Farm and Districts Historical Society presents:

The Coast Watchers: Eric Feldt - *Right Man, Right Place, Worst Time*



- An unsung hero of WW II
- Former resident of New Farm
- Commander of brave team of spies

Speaker:
Dr Betty Lee



Saturday 22nd Oct 2:30 pm

Uniting Church Centre, 52 Merthyr Rd, New Farm

www.newfarmhistorical.org.au

Enquiries: 0409 498 403

It is 80 years since Eric Feldt's influence had its most significant impact on events in World War 2 in the lands and seas immediately to the North of Australia. Despite his achievements, he and his team are very much unsung heroes in Australia. Without him the Coastwatchers would not have existed in the way that they did. Throughout 1942, and into 1943, his strength, intelligence and support contributed greatly to the success of his brave team of spies. Dr Betty Lee is the great niece of Eric Feldt. She is a retired general practitioner living in Brisbane.

While naturally proud of her great uncle, Betty knew little more about him than having read his 1946 book *The Coastwatchers*. In retirement she was able to research Eric Feldt's life, which culminated in her writing his biography *Right Man, Right Place, Worst Time*, published in 2019.

President's Message — October 2022



News of a moment in world history has been flooding into our homes as we now recognise the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the accession of King Charles III. It prompted my daughter to look again at her 'inheritance' from my father of several significant newspapers. I am keen to look through the newspapers for the news of the coronation of King George VI in 1937, his passing in 1952,



the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II and then her visit to Australia in 1954. Other news of the times and the advertisements in these papers will also be of interest!

Such papers make me realise that what seems just of interest at the time becomes an important part of history if we keep it long enough! This is why we have archives. You are welcome to come to the Society office any Thursday afternoon to look at what we hold in the Historical Society archives. Maybe you have some images or information that could add to the information in the archives. It would be great to have some volunteers to look after the archives.

If you no longer wish to receive the newsletter, please "unsubscribe" on the email or let us know to discontinue posting the newsletter.

Happy reading! Letters to the editor are always welcome to info@newfarmhistorical.org.au or editor@newfarmhistorical.org.au.

Desley Garnett

WHAT IS IT?



Q: This tool was found in the kitchen and cleverly accomplished a dual purpose.

A: Meat Grill/ Candle Maker. While the user cooked meat over an open fire, furrows in the grill face collected lard or tallow which ran back into the collection point in the handle. This was then poured into a candle mould.

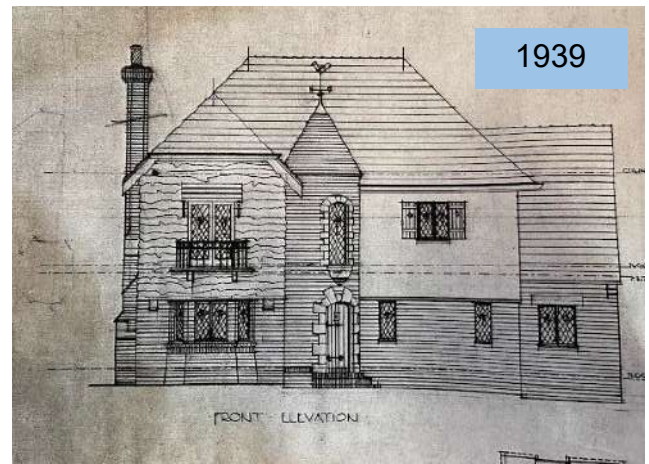
Living In History

For this series, Living in History, I visit old houses in the area and meet the owners for some insight into what it's like to live in a period home. My husband and I have been walking the dogs around the streets for a few years now and I have a list of some of the houses I think are special. One that has always been a particular favourite is Moray Street's fairy tale castle. It has a turret, so it deserves the title.

When I tried to find out more about the house, I came across a reasonably detailed account of its origins from the heritage listing on the BCC website. Off to a good start I thought, but that was all that it was. I couldn't find any information recorded about it anywhere. It didn't appear in any of the heritage architecture books when a house so unique would usually appear in several.

One day my husband was out walking when he saw the owners in the front garden. He approached them and they were willing to share their remarkable story.

George Augustus Sapsford and his family lived in a beautiful old Queenslander style home named Awa-peri from the 1910s, with wife Annie, their daughter Marjorie Jessie Joy and son Robert Wayne. Annie passed away in 1931 and George remarried and lived next door at 114 Moray Street.



When Marjorie Sapsford married Tom Danaher, her parents offered her a choice of either renovating the existing home on the Moray Street site, or she could choose to build the new house for which they already had the plans by architect Eric Marshall Ford of the partnership Chambers and Ford. The couple chose to build new. Awa-peri was demolished in 1938 and in 1939 a house was constructed in the Old English revival aesthetic. The style had been very popular in America for some years where whole suburbs dubbed "stockbroker manors" sprouted in new affluent neighbourhoods. The houses were well-built and lent an illusion of English aristocracy to the middle and upper middle classes.



Originally the exterior cladding was dark brown but little else has changed in 83 years.

In Australia the style was equally as impressive with every modern convenience. The home had two bathrooms, an indoor laundry and an eating nook in the kitchen which was also furnished with electrical appliances. Damask wallpaper covered the walls, leadlight appears in every window and door, both internal and external, and many also have a central coat of arms inspired motif. A living room replaced the formal parlour, carpet covered the floorboards and lino was laid in the kitchen.



L to R :
Marjorie
Danaher in
her living
room leading
onto the
sunroom.

The sun
room now.

Outside the house is whimsical in detail. The lower part is red brick, the upper trowelled stucco and the roof is terracotta tile. The most remarkable feature however (aside from the turret) is a most unusual wavy edge board cladding.

Marjorie and Tom Danaher raised their two daughters Ann and Mary there and lived in the house until the late 1980s. Tom and Marjorie then moved to the Brisbane Corso, Fairfield, next door to their daughter Ann Beatty for their last several years, but retained the Moray St. house and rented it out by the room through the 1990's. The house saw some colourful tenants. A fire twirler practiced his act indoors, scorching the ceiling and walls but thankfully not properly catching them alight. In 2002 the estate was sold by tender and bought by Ann's son David to retain it in the family.

The reason no public records exist is that the house has remained in the same family from 1939 until 2022. The house has effectively been a time capsule. David, the grandson of the original owners, has childhood memories of the house but also a large collection of documents and photos collected through 83 years of ownership. His wife Natalie is curating the collection including the original plans, title deed, a rate increase objection letter, newspaper cuttings and even the sewerage map which was recently used by plumbers because it is still accurate.

Natalie and David returned from living in New York when COVID broke out and set to cleaning and painting. As it stands the house has not been modified other than a cosmetic bathroom and kitchen update. One apple green bathroom suite is still in-situ. The family have plans to modernise some aspects of the house and possibly extend, which brings the challenge of how to achieve what they want without affecting the façade. While complying with the BCC heritage guidelines. The finished project will be named "Danaher" in honour of the original owners and Natalie will have collated the story into a book all of its own.



Tom Danaher in the breakfast nook.



Apple green bathroom still looks immaculate.

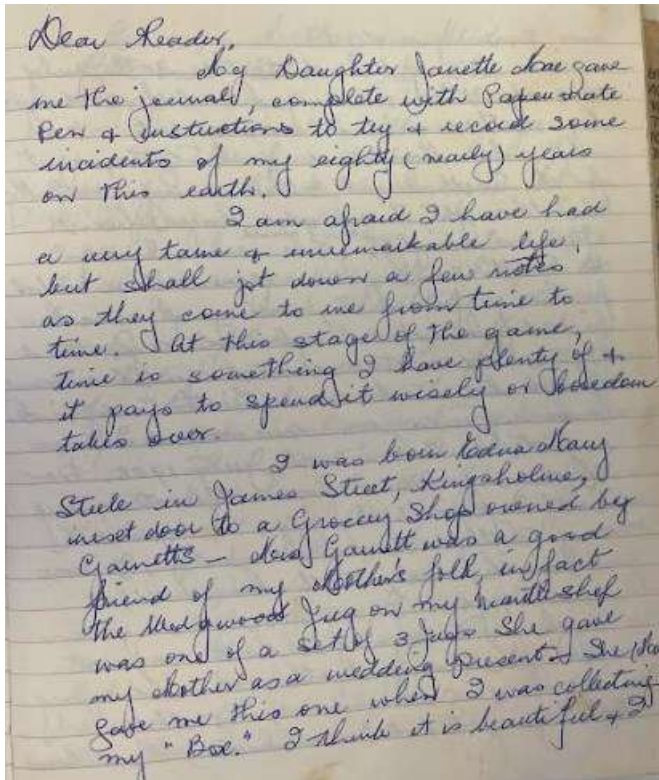


Internal leadlight doors with central motif.



Incredibly unusual wavy edge cladding.

Source material is always an interesting find. Further to our story about a little known dairy in Bowen Terrace, Janette Whiteway shares her mother's recollections of earlier days in New Farm...



Dear Reader,

My daughter Janette Mae gave me the journal, complete with Papermate Pen and instructions to try and record some incidents of my eighty (nearly) years on this earth.

I am afraid I have had a very tame and unremarkable life but shall jot down a few notes as they come to me from time to time. At this stage of the game, time is something I have plenty of and it pays to spend it wisely or boredom takes over.

I was born Edna Mary Steele in James Street, Kingsholme, next door to a Grocery Shop owned by Garnett's. Mrs Garnett was a good friend of my

mother's folk, in fact the Wedgwood Jug

on my mantel shelf was one of a set of 3 jugs she gave my mother as a wedding present. She (Mum) gave me this one when I was collecting my "Box". I think it is beautiful and I am sure you do too.

To get back to the 30th July 1908 about the witching hour of midnight. My mother said it was about 11pm when her husband, Jack Steele, went for Dr. Scott about 1/4 mile away – naturally she thought it would have been after midnight when I arrived. She remembered Dr. Scott saying she deserved a medal for her performance seeing it was her first-born. Her husband registered the child, and it was not until many years later, when a Birth Certificate was required, we discovered I was registered born 30th July 1908. For thirteen years I had celebrated my birthday on 31st July. You see, my father had died when I was 3-1/2 months old, 24th November 1908 aged 29 years, I understand from Typhoid Fever. His last request was that my mother should marry again and give me a father. So, Jane Steele (nee Shiels) had been a bride, a mother, and a widow in a little over twelve (12) months; no wonder she went into what was called a "decline" in those days. Apparently, her parents took her and the baby for a holiday to Buderim Mountain in the hope of a recovery. There a Sea Captain and his wife offered to adopt the child – apparently this helped to bring Jane back to reality and time heals everything and eventually she and the baby returned to her parents' home where Edna became the family "Pet" and Jane took in Dressmaking for a living.

There were two Aunts and two Uncles at home with G'ma and G'dad Shiels – Kit and Julia, Tom, and Hugh. Two older girls Nell and Mary were married.

G'dad Shiels had a Dairy Farm at New Farm (522/4 Bowen Terrace). The two boys (men of course at that time) worked for him, Kit stayed home and helped G'ma etc and Julia who had had Commercial Training, worked in the office at McDonnell and East in George St., City. Needless to say, Edna was a live doll to the family. Although I believe there were times when Kit was jealous and rebellious and fought with her mother "why should she be the navey (navvy) round the place while Jane sat and "rocked her foot all day" * She often cleared out and went bush as a cook on a station or in a country pub, but it never lasted long, she always came back. The Prodigal Daughter you see. She and G'ma were so much alike they saw each other's faults when together and worried about each other when apart.

*As a dressmaker she used a treadle sewing machine.

Tom Shiels eventually started keeping company with Elizabeth (Ciss) Johnson who lived with her father (when home) and her Uncle Joe (I don't know if his (Uncle Joe's) mother was alive, possibly couldn't be) but Ciss's mother had died when she was born and she was reared by her paternal G'ma at 18 Bowen Street, New Farm.

Tom and Ciss often took young Edna out with them in the sulky at the weekends and naturally often visited the Johnson household in Bowen Street. Joe Johnson, Uncle of Ciss, apparently fell in love with the little girl and through her, courted her mother – eventually they married when I was 3 years old. They went to Sydney for their honeymoon, stayed at the People's Palace and brought back the biggest Teddy Bear they could find. The teddy bear featured in the

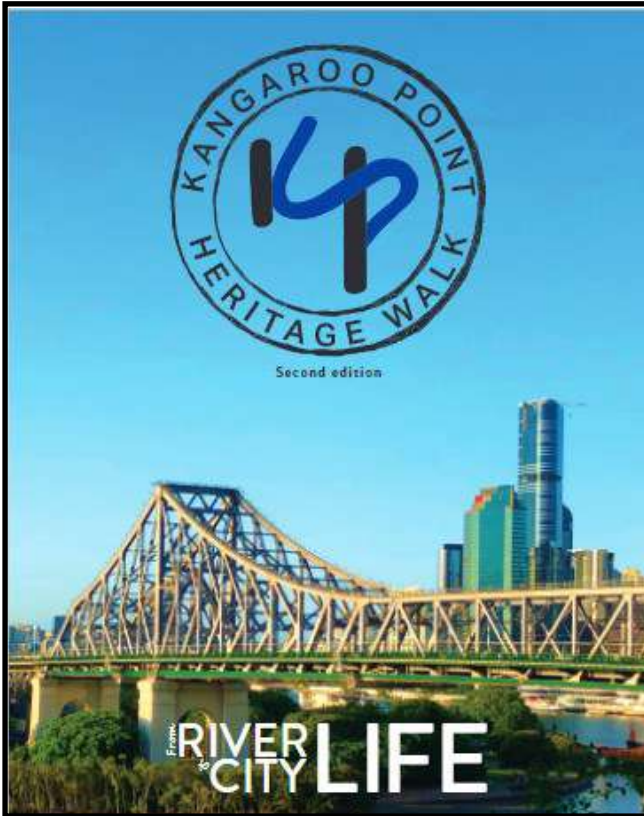
School Concert for many years, sitting on front stage with an equally big doll owned by Vera Frugenberg – probably the only time I was envied by my schoolmates.

Joe Johnson was a Cab Owner as was Larry Kelly (Mollie and Jack's father). I think his was a wagonette whilst Larry Kelly drove a Hansom Cab. This would be like Taxi drivers today, I guess. This form of transport faded out when the motor car replaced the horse drawn vehicles.

Neither Joe or Larry Kelly ever owned a car, so I guess theirs was not a very lucrative business.

I think Larry Kelly may have continued to drive a Hansom (he used to be on the Supreme Court rank and had a fair connection) until he retired. As I say I think that is so. Joe Johnson eventually worked as a Clerk for Howard Smith's until he became more or less an invalid after several operations. Recovered, he was Gate Keeper at Howard Smith's Wharf until he died, 6th January 1939. He was a good man. May he rest in peace.





"It took almost the whole of the year 2019 for NFDHS member Austin Adams with a group from the Kangaroo Point Neighbourhood Watch fraternity to produce a booklet describing a walk around Kangaroo Point, with stories from some 20 older residents giving their memories. Remaining copies were destroyed in the recent flood but the booklet can be freely downloaded from the National Library here:

<https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-2668137789>

Now, Austin has produced an illustrated talk loosely based on the booklet. It's presented like one of our monthly talks and can be seen here:

<https://vimeo.com/748430311>



Why not print out the map and try the walk yourself?



On 18 October Dr William Metcalf from Griffith university will be speaking at Avid Reader bookshop about his new book **Brisbane: Utopian Dreams and Dystopian Nightmares**. He will be 'in conversation' with ex-Lord Mayor, Tim Quinn. A direct link to this event - to attend in person or via ZOOM is

<https://avidreader.com.au/events/dr-bill-metcalf-brisbane-utopian-dreams-and-dystopian-nightmares>

MANY THANKS TO

Grace Grace MP

Member for McConnell

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For printing the newsletter



THE VILLAGE
news



Coles New Farm for the generous supply of afternoon tea at monthly meetings.



New Farm & Districts Historical Society Inc. The office is located at the front of the Ron Muir Meeting Room beside New Farm Library. 135 Sydney St

President Desley Garnett 0409 498 403

president@newfarmhistorical.org.au

Vice President Malcolm Godfrey

Minutes Secretary Virginia Balmain

Committee Ben Pritchard, Bruna Burello-Day, Robert Allen

Treasurer Denise Buckby

Newsletter Editor Emma Golder
goodasgolder@gmail.com

Edwin Urry, Photographer of Bowen Tce

archives



GERARD BENJAMIN

A century ago, it was just the thing for a young lady to have her portrait photograph printed onto postcards for circulating among friends. If the right young man just happened to like it, then he would surely reply with the sweetest message...

That was the intention—but if perchance the photo didn't quickly have the desired result, then it was simply a matter of returning to the photographer, whose stationery featured the image of a newly-hatched chicken chasing a fly, with the line underneath, "If you don't catch him in ten days, come back to Urry's Studio."

The whizz with the camera was Edwin Arthur Urry (changed from A.E.), an award-winning photographer who once lived in Bowen Tce, New Farm. Useful for his portraiture was equipment such as the 'Beaufort

reflector', its incandescent effect being that "freckles are not reproduced in the slightest degree."

Mr Urry arrived in Queensland from England in the 1880s, and soon espied his 'Miss Right' in the dress department at Finney Isles in Brisbane. When he and Miss Georgie Collins wed in 1889, the young photographer would have been delighted to find his bride "looking charming in white Indian muslin, trimmed exquisitely with real lace and orange blossoms."

The couple lived first in Maryborough where Mrs E.A. Urry offered "Dress and Mantle making in all the latest styles—Fit Guaranteed," and where Edwin purveyed "excellent photographs... both of landscape and of faces, some of them being quite works of art...". Here their two boys were born, and their home was named Medina Villa.

Next, the family moved to Townsville, and photographs which Edwin took of the town after a cyclone in 1903 are preserved in a collection at Cambridge University.

By 1914, the Urrys were settled in New Farm at 497 Bowen Tce, this being their new 'Medina Villa' (sometimes

Medinaville). Their eldest son, also Arthur Edwin, may have been intended to carry on the photographic business, but his interests lay in the direction of uniforms and theatre.

In 1916, as 'Chief Scoutmaster', Lieut Urry and Scout-mistress Evans were instructing Girl Guides in bridge-building at Turner's Estate, New Farm. Come 1918, young Edwin tried to enlist but was refused on medical grounds.

In a play at the Cremorne Theatre in 1928, Edwin, as the aspiring actor, was cast as a villain—but failed to show up on the night. Frantic efforts followed to get him to the theatre and made-up. With the help of the prompter, Edwin's "stage villainy" succeeded in bringing more laughs than drama, provoking the headline: "Mr. Urry Serves Up A Theatrical Curry".

By the 1920s, part of Medinaville was divided off for a flat—but come 1928, Mrs Georgie Urry's death signalled the end of an era. In April 1929, a big sale of household furnishings took place on the premises. In later years, the house, now divided into flats, was variously named Emoh and Trelawny. Nowadays it is "The Brambles" and consists of 8 flats.

Edwin Urry appears in a recent book entitled *Capturing Brisbane: The City's First Photographers*. Other photographers who had New Farm connections included Roland Ruddell, Thomas Mathewson, and F.W. Thiel in Oxlade Drive. Their valuable photographs offer vignettes into the life of 'way back Queensland'.

This snippet about Edwin Urry arose from a simple inquiry from a current resident at The Brambles. How many more such interesting stories are yet to come out of the woodwork in New Farm?



Edwin Urry's photograph of the O'Connell family, Maryborough. — Photo courtesy, Leisa Fallon (Facebook).

Do you recognise any of the children from New Farm Private School photo in 1936?

Next month we will meet Philip Ross (black jacket, centre back) who, after reading Stuart Wallace's account of the school his great-great aunts started, contacted the Society with a request for more information and a story to tell. If you can recall any of these children please email editor@newfarmhistorical.org.au.

