



**NEW FARM & Districts  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC**

*Gathering information from the past ....  
Preserving it for the future.*

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT AUGUST 2021**

Presented by Ross Garnett

**I present to you the annual report of the New Farm and Districts Historical Society for the 2020-2021 year. This is my seventeenth (and my last) report as President of the Society.**

This past year the Society, along with many groups, has been affected by Government restrictions put on large gatherings due to the Corona virus pandemic. The seating capacity of the hall fluctuated according to the current status of infection in the Brisbane area. Meetings were held each month at the Warner Hall of the Merthyr Road Uniting Church from August 2020 to July 2021 (except December and January). The 2020 meetings in August, September, October and November were restricted to 50 people, so the committee made the decision to video record the presentations. Some of these were live-streamed and recorded and some just recorded for viewing at a later time via the website. A professional company was engaged to video these meetings. Because of the cost, it was decided to investigate how these recordings could be done "in-house". Austin Adams researched formats and he has filmed the meetings from February to August in Vimeo format and these have been made available by link from the website. We are grateful to Austin for enabling this innovation in communication with members and friends. The recorded presentations are a valuable addition to resources available on the website.

**Committee:** The dedicated committee has met monthly and I wish to thank each person for their support. Thanks to Ben Wieland, who is not standing for re-election this year, for his support on the committee and at meetings for several years. The members of the committee this year have been:

*President:* Ross Garnett

*Vice President:* Malcolm Godfrey

*Secretary:* Bernadette Driessen (until January) and Santina Musumeci (From February)

*Treasurer:* Denise Buckby

*Committee Members:* Ben Wieland, Austin Adams, Terry Beer (resigned in April), Desley Garnett (from May) and Virginia Balmain (from May).

**Public meetings:** Public meetings were held each month except for December and January. From August to December 2020, people were required to book in to be sure we were within the restricted capacity of 50. By February we were allowed 100 people in the room. However, we have been aware this could change at short notice and we have to be flexible in our planning. Fortunately no meetings have had to be cancelled in the past year. The topics of the meetings have been:

<b>August 2020:</b> The Japanese House in New Farm	<b>September 2020:</b> Sweet History of Lollies	<b>October 2020:</b> The McWhirters Story: What will be worn?
<b>November 2020:</b> The River with a City Problem	<b>February 2021:</b> Glamour in the Skies. The Golden Age of Airline Stewardesses.	<b>March 2021:</b> The Origins of Anzac Day
<b>April 2021:</b> New Farm ANZACS: The Stories behind the Names on the Honour Board at St Andrew's Uniting Church, City	<b>June 2021:</b> He Made His Mark - Joshua Jeays: Early Brisbane Master Builder, Stonemason and Statesman	<b>July 2021:</b> The LONG Story of Sewering Brisbane

**Society office:** Volunteers have staffed the Society office each Thursday afternoon. Sometimes members of the public come in to share information or to seek information. Stuart Wallace has been steadily working on getting all of the filing of resources in order. The small Society Office housing our archives and the use of the Ron Muir Room on Thursday afternoons are provided free of charge by the Brisbane City Council. The Committee believes this is an under-used resource, so from July, it was decided to have a "Cuppa and Chat" afternoon every Thursday afternoon to provide members with the opportunity to get to know each other and to look at material in the archives. It is hoped that this will become a focus for the Society in the next year.

### **Communication and Marketing:**

- **Newsletters:**
  - Our interesting and well presented newsletter remains the most common way of communicating to our members. Currently the newsletter is emailed to about 1500 subscribers and posted to about 90 people. Thanks to Gerard Benjamin for his work in producing the newsletter each month.
- **Facebook:**
  - The FaceBook page of the Historical Society generates quite a bit of interest in photos and stories about the history of the area. It is hoped to concentrate on increasing this interest during the coming year.

- **Website:**
  - The website of the Society is the face of the Society to the general public. It has many oral history stories and news about meetings as well as the links to the recordings of the presentations at monthly meetings. There are plans to enhance the website in the near future.
- **Enquiries**
  - Enquiries come to the Society mostly through the Society email address [info@newfarmhistorical.org.au](mailto:info@newfarmhistorical.org.au). Gerard Benjamin responds to most of these enquiries on behalf of the society. Many enquiries / comments come in response to articles in the monthly newsletter.

### **Volunteer roles:**

Societies such as ours continue to operate only because of the tasks undertaken by a team of volunteers. We are grateful to some 30 people who volunteer their time to assist:

- As Committee members
- at our monthly meetings (setting out chairs and tables, welcoming, AV, filming, music, memberships and book sales, photography, preparing announcement slides)
- at the office on Thursdays (being available to the public who drop into the office, accessing archives, assisting enquirers)
- with the newsletter (writing meeting reports and other articles, editing, folding and delivering newsletters)
- in maintaining a social media presence.

As this is my final report as President, I would like to thank all our dedicated volunteers. I hesitate to single out people, but I would like make particular mention of just a few who have supported the society for many years. Margaret King is one faithful volunteer who has been an important part of the Society for all of the time I have been President, and prior to that also. Margaret has been involved with maintaining our archives, opening the office on Thursday afternoons, leading walks, responding to enquiries and welcoming members to the monthly meetings. She is a quiet worker in the background, but I would like to recognise her very significant contribution publicly in this report.

It would also like to acknowledge the contribution of Denise Buckby as Treasurer for almost all of my presidency. This is a constant and responsible role and I want to thank Denise for her contribution over all of these years.

Gerard Benjamin has been a great support to the Society and to myself for most of my years as President. His historical knowledge and his skills in producing an interesting newsletter every month are valuable. Gerard continues to be a valuable member of our Society and a support to the Committee.

### **Other projects:**

- The **Teneriffe Festival**, normally held in July, has again been postponed / cancelled in 2021 due to the pandemic. However, The Historical Society will certainly be involved in this when it is held again.
- **Book Sales** of *Reflections on New Farm*, *Tides of Teneriffe* and *Homes with History* continue through Mary Ryan Bookshop (New Farm), New Farm Editions, Ollie and Lloyd at Gasworks, the State Library Bookshop and at the monthly meetings. We still have quite a bit of stock that has been moved to a storage locker (previously at the Garnett residence). The Committee is currently discussing publishing a book about Newstead, including a little about Teneriffe and Bowen Hills.
- The **Historical Plaques**: A plaque is currently being manufactured to note the history of Teneriffe Park. It should be in place by the time of the 2021 AGM.
- **Museum / Gallery Project**: In August 2020, Virginia Balmain put forward a proposal for the Historical Society to establish a Museum / Gallery. This proposal was considered by the committee, but it was decided that this was not a project that could be taken on at the present time. However, some ideas contained within the proposal may be taken up in a modified and more manageable way in the future.

**Christmas Donations:** At the November 2020 meeting, members donated money and non-perishable foods to the organisation Valley Hearts – a local organisation that supports homeless and vulnerable people in the community.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all members for their interest in the tasks of gathering and preserving history – what a wealth of knowledge amongst our members! Thank you for your support over the past 17 years. This is your Society and I have had the pleasure of leading it, but the true value of the society is its members and volunteers. New Farm has such a rich history and it is our task to ensure that it is recorded for future generations. We need to be active in recording the wonderful memories of our older members, so please continue to support the Society and offer your skills and talents and interests to the committee and other members.



**Ross Garnett**  
**August 2021**

**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 Opening Hours:* Every Thursday 2-4pm  
**Postal Address:** PO Box 1141 NEW FARM 4005  
**Website:** [www.newfarmhistorical.org.au](http://www.newfarmhistorical.org.au)  
**Email:** [info@newfarmhistorical.org.au](mailto:info@newfarmhistorical.org.au)