



**NEW FARM & Districts
HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC**

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

PRESIDENT'S REPORT AUGUST 2022

Presented by Desley Garnett

I present to you the Annual Report of the New Farm and Districts Historical Society for the 2021- 2022 year.

As I write this report, Brisbane (and indeed Australia) is just coming out of another wave of Omicron COVID virus infections affecting a large number of people. For more than 2 years now, the Society has, like many groups, lived with the uncertainty of the effects of the pandemic on the ability of the society to meet in its normal pattern. Fortunately, only the February public meeting in 2022 had to be cancelled due to the inadvisability of meeting in large groups. Members have made their own decisions about protecting themselves from the possibility of contracting the virus when mixing in a large group. This has possibly affected numbers attending the public meetings on the fourth Saturday of each month at 2:30 pm at the Merthyr Road Uniting Church Warner Hall.

Last August we recognised the huge contribution that Ross Garnett made over the past 17 years as President of the New Farm and Districts Historical Society. He oversaw its incorporation and its growth from a small group of about 30 who met in the Ron Muir Room to a society with 150 members.

Public meetings now have 70 – 140 attendees each month. During this past year we have built on that momentum to increase the current financial membership to over 200.

Committee: The dedicated committee has met monthly and I wish to thank each person for their support. The members of the committee this year were:

President: Desley Garnett

Vice President: Malcolm Godfrey

Minute Secretary: Virginia Balmain

Treasurer: Denise Buckby

Committee Members: Austin Adams, Ben Pritchard, Janetta Douglas (to February 2022)

Particular thanks to Austin Adams who is retiring from the committee this year. Austin has researched and refined the video recording of the monthly meetings that are appreciated by many people who can't attend the meetings. Most videos have been viewed by over 80 people after the meeting. The videos of the meetings plus some meetings in 2010 are all available at <https://vimeo.com/showcase/8485721>

Public meetings:

August 2021: The Garnett's Family Grocery Store: Desley Garnett	September 2021: Motorising Qld – The Canada Cycle and Motor Agency: Dr Hilary Davies	October 2021: The bells of St Stephen's – the History of St Stephen's Catholic Cathedral: Sr Ann Hetherington
November 2021: Powering Brisbane: Stuart Wallace	February 2022: Cancelled due to COVID	March 2022: The People of Newstead House: Helen Gregory
April 2022: Meet Me at Lennon's: Melanie Myers	May 2022: Brown and Broad Timber Merchants in Newstead: Boyd Brown	June 2022: <i>Dovercourt</i> in Toowong and its connections to Merthyr House: Harold Peacock
July 2022 Lost Brisbane in images: From Newstead House to Teneriffe: John McDonnell		

The contributions of all of our speakers who freely give of their time to prepare and present their presentations at the monthly meetings is always appreciated. The meetings each begin with a musical prelude by Stewart Free and this sets a welcoming ambience to the meetings. Also appreciated are the excerpts of Movietone News that Stuart Wallace prepares for our nostalgia.

Society office: Volunteers have staffed the Society office each Thursday afternoon. Stuart Wallace has commenced working on digitising the resources in the archives. This is a big project and will need more volunteers to assist with the process.

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 and we are grateful to BCC for this provision. These past few months, we have introduced "*Cuppa and Chat*" on Thursday afternoons as a way of getting to know each other, meet new members and give society members and the general public an opportunity to look into the archives. We will keep this new initiative going and welcome new volunteers to be on the roster to host these meet-ups.

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 over

1200 subscribers and posted to about 90 people. Gerard Benjamin has compiled and edited the 10 monthly editions each year since August 2011. We have been treated to many interesting and informative articles, professionally designed and appreciated by so many. The August 2022 edition of the newsletter is the last one to be edited by Gerard. **THANK YOU, GERARD!** The good news is that Emma Golder has accepted the role of newsletter editor, commencing in September. **THANK YOU, EMMA!** We look forward to the submission of short articles by society members and friends for publication in the newsletter.

- **Facebook:**

In today's world, Facebook is one of the most common ways of communicating with the community and the Society is slowly embracing this. Ron Altman administers the FB page and we are looking to our members and friends to increase the activity on the site. Like the page, become a friend and post some images!

- **Website:**

Last year, the annual report said "There are plans to enhance the website in the near future". This project has not yet commenced, but it is certainly on the agenda for the upcoming committee.

- **Enquiries**

Enquiries come to the Society mostly through the Society email address info@newfarmhistorical.org.au. We endeavour to respond these enquiries and this is most often done by Gerard Benjamin on behalf of the society. The monthly newsletter brings responses to both articles and enquiries and the help given by the society is always appreciated by the enquirers.

- **Teneriffe Festival**

The Teneriffe Festival is an important connection with the community when festival goers have the opportunity to view the displays of historical photos, discover more about the society, purchase the society's books, chat with members, take out membership and view the video of a 1956 tram ride from South Brisbane to New Farm. The festival has been held twice within the past 12 months – in October 2021 and May 2022 and the Historical Society has had a display at both of these events. Future Festivals will be scheduled for the last Saturday in May each year.

The Historic Bus Tours of Teneriffe in conjunction with the Omnibus and Coach Society are always a feature at the Teneriffe Festival. Stuart Wallace liaises with the Omnibus Society that provide the historic buses and the drivers and also coordinates a team of volunteers to host the tours and explain points of interest along the route. Thanks to Stuart and the Tour Guides. This year we introduced a flag style banner advertising the bus tours to make them more visible to festival goers.

- **New Brochure**

A new DL size brochure was produced in time for the Teneriffe Festival. This brochure has a QR code to direct people to the website for more information

about the society and advertises the books for sale. The brochures feature some of the paintings of historic buildings in New Farm that were painted by Gladys Blundell and donated to the society. Thanks to Trevor Downes for designing the brochures.

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 and putting away, welcoming, AV, filming, music, memberships and book sales, photography, preparing announcement slides, catering for afternoon tea)
- 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

Other projects:

- **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. Sales are slow but steady so we still have quite a lot of stock in storage. We would be grateful for a volunteer to take on the task of regularly contacting the bookshops and delivering the required stock.
- **Historical Plaques:** No new plaques have been installed in the past 12 months, but the project continues as a possible location is identified.
- **Historical Walking Tours:** The Winter months in Queensland provide the best weather for walking tours and several have been organised during the past year. Bookings for the tours are now done through Eventbrite that simplifies the process.
 - **9th October 2021** – 3 Churches of New Farm and more in between led by Gerard Benjamin
 - **11th June 2022** – Art Deco in New Farm led by Santina Musumeci
 - **9th July 2022** – Half Circle of New Farm along Oxlade Drive and more led by Gerard Benjamin
 - **30th July 2022** – Woolstores and nearby Teneriffe led by Ben Pritchard
 - **20th August 2022** – Art Deco in New Farm led by Santina Musumeci
- **Membership:** The Committee has over the past year begun to review how memberships are handled in order to add value to the membership which

has been at \$10 per person for many years. This is an ongoing project, but changes made in the past year have been:

- o Entry fee for attending the public meetings – now \$5 for members and \$10 for non-members. This provides an inexpensive afternoon of an informative talk, afternoon tea and opportunity for fellowship in the Kingsholme Courtyard
- o Membership year will change to being a calendar year as from January 2023. Current memberships are extended to the end of 2022 and any memberships paid between now and the end of 2022 will be current to 2023.

- **Oral History Project**

The Committee has engaged Gerard Benjamin to revive our project to collect oral histories and make transcripts of these available on the website. It is a small start, but it is hoped to expand the project as new people are identified to provide some history around particular subjects and other contributors come on board. We have a rich history in New Farm and surrounding suburbs that needs to be captured for future generations.

- **Street names project**

This will be an ongoing project to gather together information about the origins of street names in New Farm, Teneriffe, and Newstead. There is some information in our archives that can be collated into this project. We are looking for a volunteer to head up this project and will be asking our members to share the information about their street that they are aware of. It has been a very slow start until a leader for the project is forthcoming.

Christmas Donations: At the November 2021 meeting, members donated money and non-perishable food to The Trinity Pantry that supports individuals and families in need of assistance. These donations were very much appreciated.

Thanks for support

We are grateful to Grace Grace MP and the McConnel Office Staff who very willingly and efficiently print our newsletters and advertising posters each month.

Thank you, Judi and Christopher.

We are also thankful to Coles New Farm Store Manager for sponsoring the afternoon tea at our monthly meetings with supplies to the value of \$120. Our catering team, Natalie and Emma then prepare the sandwiches and sweet treats for our enjoyment. **Thank you, Coles.**

I thank you for the opportunity to be the President of this vibrant society for the past year. Now with over 200 members, it does require a lot of volunteers to ensure the society runs smoothly and is progressive. We also have plans to detail these tasks and break them into small chunks. This will require more volunteers

performing smaller tasks. I have not mentioned many names in this report – there are around 30 people already volunteering, so please take this as your personal thanks.

There is great personal satisfaction in being a contributor rather than an inactive participant. We look to you to offer your help in keeping this society active and vibrant.

Desley Garnett
August 2022



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

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