



## WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE?



## The Changing Face of Brunswick Street see p 5

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## NEW FARM & Districts HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC NEWSLETTER JULY 2023 Vol XXIX, No 6

### REPORT ON JUNE MEETING

By Karen Costello



Thank you for the opportunity to offer some notes on the wonderfully informative talk given by well-known historian and author, Gerard Benjamin, which complemented the walk around Bowen Hills that I attended on Saturday 17 June along with my husband, Dan, and a group of friends (including two from Trim, Ireland, who have lived in Australia for over twenty years). It was great to see the photos Gerard presented at the talk which enhanced the stories he told on the walk.

The walking group met under the tall iron structure on Skyring Terrace, Newstead, a remnant of the Gasworks, which was established in 1887. On the walk we visited the Cloudland Memorial Arch in Cowlshaw Street and were entertained with stories of Cloudland's history and its surprise night-time demolition.

We walked Cintra Road where the Twelfth Night Theatre remains an important part of the performing arts scene in Brisbane. We saw the beautiful stained glass of the Roman Catholic Our Lady of Victories Parish Church in Roche Avenue overlooking the Brisbane River and heard the story of the memorial to the Polish Prisoners of War.

There were many historic homes on the way, and we shared in the stories of the residents and visitors of these beautiful homes, including *Cintra House* in Boyd Street used by the US Army during WW2, where a young boy by the name of Arthur MacArthur was photographed enjoying a visit during his time in Brisbane with his famous father.

*Montana*, the residence of aviatrix, Lores Bonney, evoked stories of this remarkable woman's pioneering aviation exploits, while examples of different architectural styles were displayed in *Taishan* and *Miegunyah* on Jordan Terrace, now the headquarters of the Women's Historical Society.

We came away with a much greater appreciation of the history relating to Bowen Hills.



See some snaps from the actual walk on page 7.  
The Vimeo of this presentation is available here:

[2023-06-24; Gerard Benjamin, A Walking Tour of Bowen Hills on Vimeo](#)

*A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.*  
Marcus Garvey



*A nod to June - Italian Month  
With thanks to the caterers - Ann  
Sargeant, Carol Douglas and Jan Wyles*



## ABOUT THE SOCIETY

### Monthly public meetings

are held at 2.30pm on the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of each month, February to November, at the Uniting Church Centre, 52 Merthyr Road, New Farm. Entry Fee (cash preferred):  
\$5.00 members  
\$10.00 non-members  
includes afternoon tea.

**All welcome!**

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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### Website:

[www.newfarmhistorical.org.au](http://www.newfarmhistorical.org.au)

### Office:

Ron Muir Room, next to  
New Farm Library  
135 Sydney Street  
New Farm

### Office Opening Hours:

Every Thursday 2-4pm  
February to November

## OFFICE BEARERS

**President:** Desley Garnett  
0409 498 403

[president@newfarmhistorical.org.au](mailto:president@newfarmhistorical.org.au)

**Vice-President:** Malcolm Godfrey

**Minutes Secretary:** Virginia Balmain

**Treasurer:** Denise Buckby

### Committee Members:

*Immediate Past President* Ross Garnett,  
Robert Allen, Ben Pritchard and  
*Membership Secretary*  
Bruna Burello-Day

[membership@newfarmhistorical.org.au](mailto:membership@newfarmhistorical.org.au)

### 2023 Membership Fee:

\$10 per year or part thereof.

Apply for or renew membership

<https://newfarmhistorical.org.au/membership/>

### Acting Newsletter Editor:

Bruna Burello-Day

[editor@newfarmhistorical.org.au](mailto:editor@newfarmhistorical.org.au)

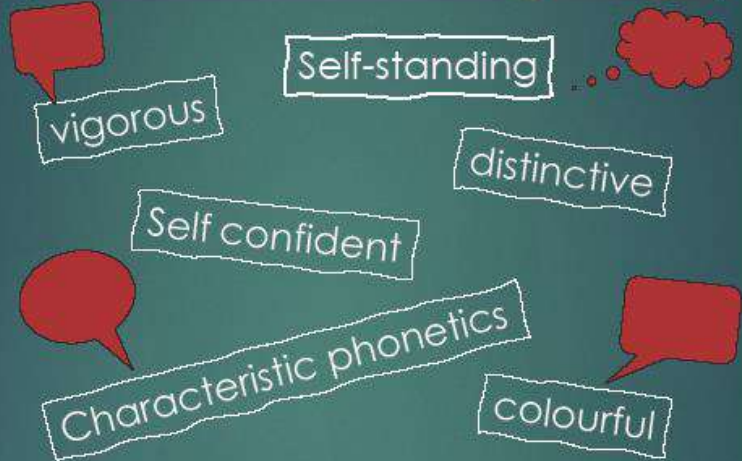


Answer to P 7 question:  
Jim MacDonald and  
Arthur MacArthur

## JULY MEETING PRESENTATION

### New Farm and Districts Historical Society presents:

## English: What it is and where it is going



Speaker:

Emeritus Professor Roly Sussex



Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2:30 pm

Uniting Church Centre, 52 Merthyr Rd, New Farm

[www.newfarmhistorical.org.au](http://www.newfarmhistorical.org.au)

Enquiries: 0409 498 403

From Roly: Australian English has become a vigorous, self-confident and distinctive variety of English, with characteristic phonetics, grammar and vocabulary which mark us as colourful and different. The influences behind this development include a remarkably creative and playful capacity. But our path to a self-standing language has not always been easy. This talk addresses some of the key landmarks during the 20th and early 21st centuries.

## Looking ahead to our August meeting

**Lisa Jones, Curator of the Qld Police Museum, will present *Policing in New Farm and Fortitude Valley*.**

Policing in New Farm and Fortitude Valley since 1864 has been interesting to say the least. There has been a police presence in New Farm since 1889, firstly in Heal Street and then on the corner of Balfour and Brunswick Streets since 1912. The colonial police administration first established a police presence in Fortitude Valley in September 1863 when a former lockup in Church Street was proclaimed a prison. According to the 1878 Blue Book its status was listed as a gaol but was referred to as a police gaol in the 1890 Prison Act. Police gaols were used for prisoners serving sentences of less than a month, and for those awaiting trial or transfer to another prison. As early as 1864, this facility also included barracks as part of the Fortitude Valley's first police office.

There are a million stories to tell about police and crime in these two inner city suburbs, but Lisa will try to keep them to a manageable number.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE JULY 2023

I hope you are staying warm and cosy and enjoying these cooler days and nights! We have officially passed the shortest day of the year, but we do expect our delightful Brisbane weather to continue for a while.

It is a good time of the year to participate in one of our Historical Walks. A dozen or so people enjoyed the walk over Bowen Hills recently and then almost 90 of us enjoyed a virtual walk over the same territory at the June public meeting. The Vimeo of that meeting is now available at <https://vimeo.com/showcase/8485721>. There are two more walks planned for July and you can see the information about them elsewhere in this newsletter.

I want to give advance notice of the **Annual General Meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> August** at which we will receive reports of the 2022-2023 year of the Society and also elect the committee and office bearers for the next 12 months. It is very healthy for all committees/boards to have a turnover of members, so I am asking each member to consider accepting a position on the committee as your way of contributing to the society.

Thanks to Bruna, our membership secretary, for preparing name tags for the members that were distributed at the June meeting – I find it makes it so much easier when I am engaging in conversation to be reminded of the person's name! (Maybe you find that also!) Please try to remember to wear your badge to each meeting. If you do not have yours yet, you can pick it up at the next meeting.



*Desley Garnett  
President*

## New members' afternoon tea

If you are a newish member, please join us in the Society Office for afternoon tea on **13 July at 2.30**. It's just a friendly time to chat and meet other members and see where what we call "The Office". That's where our archives are kept.

We are at "the office" every Thursday afternoon from 2 pm to 4 pm – in the Ron Muir Room of the New Farm Library in Sydney Street – the building on the left of the library. Everyone is welcome on any Thursday.

## Acknowledgements

Many thanks to:

Grace Grace MP  
Member for McConnell  
(07) 3145 9100  
for printing the  
newsletter



Brisbane City Council  
for the use of the Ron  
Muir Meeting Room,  
New Farm Library

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



## DATE CLAIMERS

### Weekend of 15 and 16 July 2023

**Brisbane Open House** is an annual event which allows you to explore heritage, religious and cultural buildings, places and spaces you may not otherwise see.

It is free event run by a not-for-profit organisation with assistance from government and corporate sponsorship.

Around 80 spaces and places will be open for tours. In our area these will include Coronet Court, the Powerhouse, the Howard Smith Wharves, the Wickham and Jubilee hotels, the Valley Baths, Brisbane Grammar, the Old Museum, the 4ZZZ radio studios, the Old Windmill and St Paul's Presbyterian Church at Spring Hill.

Perennial favourites City Hall, Anzac Square, the Masonic Centre, St John's and St Stephen's Cathedrals, Old Government House, the current Government House, State Parliament, the MacArthur Museum and the Commissariat Store will also be open.

History Society member Robert Allen will be running tours at the Princess Theatre on the Saturday morning.

This year's 'Iconic Precinct' is the Herston Hospital and Medical Research quarter. Several old and new buildings will be open, including the Lady Lamington Nurses' Home, the Nurse Cavell Building, the Mayne Medical School and the QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Centre.

Some buildings will be open all weekend, others only on Saturday or Sunday. Most buildings do not require advance booking although a few do, so it's worth checking ahead of time. More information is available online - just google Brisbane Open House 2023 or visit <https://brisbaneopenhouse.com.au/>

### Historical Walking Tours

**Saturday, 8 July 9.00am – 10.00am**

Led by Ben Pritchard

[History of Newstead Gasworks Tickets, Sat 08/07/2023 at 9:00 am | Eventbrite](#)

**Saturday, 29 July, 8.30am – 10.00am**

Led by Gerard Benjamin

[Historical Walk: Heart of New Farm Tickets, Sat 29/07/2023 at 8:30 am | Eventbrite](#)

**Advance Notice:** final details TBC and added to Eventbrite: **Saturday afternoon, 12 August**

**Fortitude Valley Pubs Tour** - Led by Robert Allen, this will be an entertaining and educational walking tour of some of The Valley's oldest hotels.

### Other Events

**Saturday, 26 August, 2.30pm**

The Society's **Annual General Meeting** will be held at the August public meeting. It's time to think about nominating for positions as Office Bearers or Committee Members.

**Saturday, 2 September, 1.30pm – 4.30pm**

Coorparoo and Districts Heritage Group Seminar  
"Women of Coorparoo and Districts"

\$25 includes afternoon tea. RSVP 18 August. Enquiries:  
[ahhawes@gmail.com](mailto:ahhawes@gmail.com) and [ruthblair43@gmail.com](mailto:ruthblair43@gmail.com)

## Continued from page 1: What's Happening Here? The Changing Face of Brunswick Street

Radna Hall, 844 Brunswick Street, is obviously undergoing a major transformation. Just a few doors up the street from Rayners Meats, it was a very recognisable New Farm structure in its previous form.



Does anyone have any information about this property? In real estate advertisements it has been described as an "art deco gem", but I can find no information about its origins or when it was built. Has anyone lived there? If its walls had ears, how many interesting stories would it be able to tell? Comments are welcome at [editor@newfarmhistorical.org.au](mailto:editor@newfarmhistorical.org.au)



Its near neighbour, Rayners Meats, was the subject of our May meeting presentation and is still operating. Flight Centre next door has closed down, no doubt a victim of recent world events.

## MEET OUR MEMBERS

Our featured member this month, **Emeritus Professor Trevor Cole**, tells us how he came to reside in Tenerife.



*After almost two years now in Tenerife since moving here from Sydney in the midst of border closures after my wife had died and I had cleared and sold the large house, I am, at long last, beginning to relax and appreciate what I have found.*

*A career in physics and engineering had taken us overseas, both travelling and living, across Europe and the UK. Combining this with the interest in Art Deco design, and a lot of Cunard travel, it meant I had high expectations of where I would settle.*

*I had lived in late Victorian and Edwardian terraces in Sydney's Stanmore and Paddington, saved from 'modernisation' by the Paddington Society and their vocal residents, so my requirements were high. There had to be a sense of scale, high ceilings, traditional design elements, close to the city centre, and, of course, near the river.*

*I needed cafes and restaurants, shops, services and excellent transport services, because I was interested neither in cooking, nor buying a car. Add in being closer to one part of my spread out family, then Brisbane and Tenerife have all I will need for the years ahead.*

Members are invited to submit their stories for inclusion in this segment. They make for interesting conversation starters! [editor@newfarmhistorical.org.au](mailto:editor@newfarmhistorical.org.au)

Trevor has kindly provided the following article about the structural details of his residence, Dakota Woolstore.

## INSIDE DAKOTA WOOLSTORE

Trevor Cole



The external impression of the Dakota wool store in Macquarie Street is of a large brick structure. It is less well appreciated that the internal structure is entirely of timber. Built at a time of a booming Queensland wool industry, it was officially opened in 1934 but by 2001 reborn as residential containing 91 apartments and 4 commercial spaces. Within the approximately 110 by 38 metre space, apartments were designed to retain the structure and heritage features, and over the years, individual apartment owners have undertaken their own renovations with foyers and corridors refurbished to the current contemporary design.

The internal structure consists of wooden columns spaced at about every 4 metres across the entire internal area and repeated for the floors above. Beams and orthogonal rafters, surfaced with wooden flooring, lock it all together.

Of course, Queensland's abundant timber was source for much of 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century construction. In the 1930s, logging was still very labour-intensive with trees sawn down and then hewed by hand on-site or taken to a sawmill. Converting round logs to square timber with broad, flat-sided axes, hewing, is a centuries-old skill (even being used today on the 1200 oak trees renewing the fire-ravaged roof of Notre Dame in Paris).

It is simple arithmetic to go from basic information to an estimate of total lengths of timber needed to construct Dakota. The resulting numbers are quite large.

In summary, if I went to Bunnings, my order for material to make Dakota would be as follows:

- Squared (hand-hewn) timber for columns 1.8 km
- Squared (hand-hewn) timber for beams 2.8 km
- Sawn rectangular joists 24 x 6.5cm 24.5 km
- Floorboards 10cm wide 120 km
- Nails 500 thousand

**Oh, and don't forget the 700,000 bricks!**

The more detailed description and photographs of the structure along with the internal refurbishments are contained in the extended version of this article to be found on the Society's website:

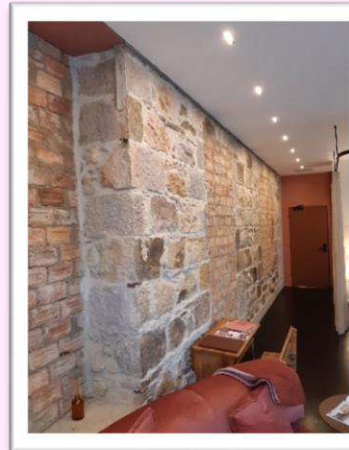
<https://newfarmhistorical.org.au>

## MISS MIDGLEY'S PLAQUE UNVEILING

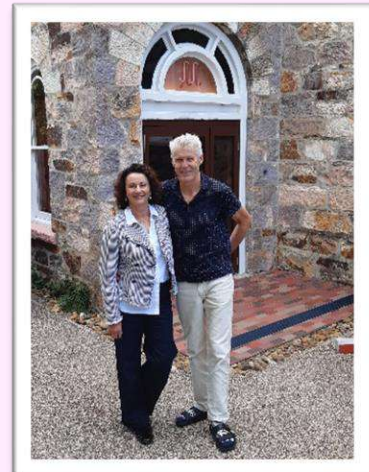
On Wednesday 7 June a few lucky members of the Committee, along with local Member Vicki Howard, attended the official "unveiling" of the new plaque at Miss Midgley's Hotel at 135 James Street. We were welcomed by the proprietors, Stephen (a retired senior surgeon) and Lisa (an architect) White, who gave us an exclusive tour of the building. Previously known as the Pink Flats, the whole structure has been very thoughtfully restored inside and out including keeping the original colour schemes. The restorations were managed by Lisa, and her designer daughter (also an architect), Isabella White. The photos show just some of the features, eg the internal exposed brickwork showing the alterations made previously over time. A more comprehensive description is given in <https://www.missmidgleys.com.au/>



The plaque had, in fact, been erected some weeks previously and had attracted quite a bit of interest from the passing parade. It was designed by Gerard Benjamin under the auspices of the Historical Society. The proprietors were so pleased with the result that Lisa commented: *There are so many people stopping and reading it. We can't believe it. Thank you all so much for organising and delivering such a lovely product.*



Thank you, Lisa and Stephen, for a most enjoyable experience.



## Some of our volunteers hard at work at the June meeting



Phil Evans was back on the job "marking the roll" and directing traffic at the Entry Gate – *members to the right, non-members to the left*. Here he is at left with long-time member, Bernie Carroll, who is showing off his new membership card!

Meanwhile, at right, Barry Martin and Michael Zalewski are ready to serve tea and coffee to go with the goodies on offer at afternoon tea.



Please remember to pin your name badge on before presenting yourself at the entry gate, to make things easier for our "Checkpoint Charlie". Wearing it will also make a great difference when in conversation with new and old friends alike!

**Previous historical walks - Led by Gerard Benjamin  
Bowen Hills**

Starting at the Gasworks and wending our way up to the summit where Cloudland once stood and then back down taking in the many historical homes and places of interest.



Matthew, from our walking group, offered this review:

*Informative, friendly, leisurely pace, ample time for interaction – cracking weather. Looking forward to a similar tour of The Valley (particularly the sordid highlights).*

At right, a snippet from the **Oxlade Drive and Beyond Walk**, during which mention was made of a famous NFDHS identity who lived in the house that stood on the property at No 16 Oxlade Drive before the current home. This famous person had met another famous person in wartime Brisbane.

Who is this famous NFDHS identity, and who is the other famous person? (Answer p 3)



*The House Then (circa 1992)*



*The House Now*

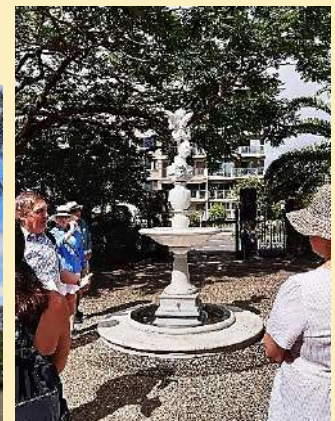
**The Heart of New Farm**

During a stroll along Brunswick Street and environs, on visiting *Wynberg*, Archbishop Mark Coleridge graced us with his presence and explained some of the history of this charming residence. As a self-confessed cricket tragic, His Grace also explained the origin of a term often heard in broadcasts from South Africa, viz [name of bowler] *is bowling from the Wynberg End* [of the Cape Town Cricket Ground].

Remarked one of the participants, "That was so cool!"



**This walk is being repeated on 29 July.**



**Gerard Benjamin**

### *Marlborough Mansions, once of Moreton St*

A grand, two-storied, brick and stone villa once stood in Moreton St, on the corner with Bowen Tce (the site of present-day Palm Lodge). Dating from 1890, the house had been built by architect (and earlier



The Chambers' residence on Moreton St (cnr Bowen Tce) was later to become Marlborough Flats, pictured ca 1904. — SLQ 141769

the city engineer), William Holloway Chambers, for his son, the solicitor Arthur Williams Chambers (later of Chambers & McNab).

When A.W. Chambers died in 1910, the tributes flowed: "He charmed the judges, his fellow practitioners, and everyone else with whom he came in contact with his courteous manners, his calm demeanour, and his wide knowledge of the world."

We can imagine that one room in the house was particularly close to the gentleman's heart, since he was described as "the possessor of one of the finest private libraries in Queensland."

The lady of this house was Mrs Elizabeth Ann Chambers (nee Gasking), and this is of particular interest to Brisbane resident Lorinda Spray (nee Gasking).

"When I moved from Townsville 12 years ago, I became interested in this spot in New Farm," she said, "because Elizabeth, the wife of A.W. Chambers, was the oldest sister of my great-grandfather."

"When her husband died in 1910, I imagine that Elizabeth eventually decided to leave the house because her sons had all grown up. It was easier for her to move to Ardencaple at Albion," said Lorinda.

Around 1918, as happened with many large New Farm residences, the home's wide verandas and balconies made for an ideal private hospital. It became known as Dunelm and was under the matronship of Miss Mary Evangeline Malone. Among the births registered here in 1920 was that of a son to Mrs and D. Espie Dods, brother of the well-known Brisbane architect Robin Dods.

Later in the 1920s, the building was converted to 11 self-contained flats and gained a new name: Marlborough Mansions Flats. There was also a tennis court and later brick garages.

Taking a flat here in 1934 were newly-weds Nancy and Lt. Eric Feldt RAN. She was well-known on the staff of the Brisbane Courier, and later during WWII, he was to distinguish himself when directing Coastwatchers in the islands north of Australia.

Just weeks after the Feldts moved in, Brisbane suffered a violent storm which put Marlborough Flats in the news: "Balls of red flame danced along the light cables in Moreton St, and a few minutes later a fireball struck and demolished a double brick chimney at Marlborough Flats."

The bricks had crashed into the flat occupied by Mr and Mrs Eric Raff who were luckily unharmed. Nevertheless, they were left with a large pile of bricks while torrential rain poured

through a gaping hole in the roof.

Come 1951, the block of 11 flats was up for auction, but failed by £3,000 to reach the reserve and was passed in. The grand house survived at least until November 1964 when it was clearly visible on an aerial photo of the area.

The property entered a new phase when Palm Lodge, an aged care facility, was built and opened in 1968. Palm Lodge continues to the present-day as part of Ozcare.

Even if the grand villa designed by W.H. Chambers for his son is no more, the name lives on. Chambers St, off Villiers St, was likely named for W.H. Chambers since in 1879 he was a landowner in this part of New Farm.



Lorinda Spray (nee Gasking) has also found links with the Dath and McMaster families of early New Farm.