



## **NEW FARM & Districts HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC**

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

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT AUGUST 2023**

Presented by Desley Garnett

**I present to you the Annual Report of the New Farm and Districts Historical Society for the 2022- 2023 year.**

From July this year, the Society has entered its 30<sup>th</sup> year – something we should celebrate in June 2024. I was reflecting how different the New Farm Peninsula suburbs are from the time of the beginning of the Society. In 1995, the Urban Renewal Task Force was active re-purposing and transforming many industrial sites into vibrant new retail / arts / residential

precincts. New residents and visitors to the area have little concept of what the Woolstores precinct, Gasworks, Powerhouse, James St shopping area, CSR Apartments, and many others looked like at the time of the birth of the New Farm and Districts Historical Society. So that is our mission: to gather information from the past and preserve it for the future.

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#### **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:* Ben Pritchard, Bruna Burello-Day  
*Past President:* Ross Garnett

Particular thanks to Virginia Balmain who is retiring from the committee this year. Virginia was a member, committee member and President in the very early years of the Society and knows much of the history of the Society.

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#### **MEMBERSHIP:**

As from January 2023, the membership year changed to a calendar year in order to make it simpler to remember when fees are due. There has been an increase in the number of members during the past year and we thank Bruna Burello-Day for keeping these accurate records. Membership now stands at 230. We welcome the new members to the society and hope that you find that we are a welcoming group where you will learn more about the past that will enrich your lives.

Since the Society has been operating at a deficit for several years, the committee has decided to increase the membership fee as from 2024. The membership fee has been \$10 per person since the very early days of the Society and it will increase to \$20 per person from next year.

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#### **PUBLIC MEETINGS:**

Probably the most prominent activity of the Society has been the monthly public meetings. They have again been on an interesting variety of topics as listed below. Attendances have climbed up again now that 'COVID' has become less of a concern – 70 – 80 - 90 – 120 – that one was over capacity for the venue, but we managed to fit in. We are grateful to Stewart Free for the pre-meeting musical entertainment and to Stuart Wallace for preparing the Cinesound clips for our nostalgia. Our speakers' presentations are recorded and made available at <https://vimeo.com/showcase/8485721>. Thanks to Austin Adams for recording and editing these. Thank you to all of these speakers for interesting presentations.

<b>August 2022:</b> A Prince's Tale - Prince Consort Hotel: Robert Allen	<b>September 2022:</b> Three Ladies of Moreton Bay – Miramar, Mirabel and Mirana: David Jones	<b>October 2022:</b> The Coastwatchers: Eric Feldt – Right Man, Right Place, Worst Time: Dr Betty Lee
<b>November 2022:</b> Brisbane Utopian Dreams and Dystopian Nightmares: Dr Bill Metcalf	<b>February 2023:</b> New Farm – the Precise Measure of Home: Kristina Olsson	<b>March 2023:</b> George Cowin I – Isle of Man to New Farm: George Cowin IV
<b>April 2023:</b> 1941 – The Pensacola Convoy: Brian Martin	<b>May 2023:</b> Rayner's Meats and the Family Behind the Business: Fay Rayner and Janne Hamilton	<b>June 2023:</b> Highlights of a Walk over Bowen Hills: Gerard Benjamin
<b>July 2023</b> English: What it is and where it is going: Prof Roly Sussex		

**SOCIETY OFFICE:** The Society Office is located in the Ron Muir Room and volunteers have been there every Thursday afternoon (Feb – Nov) to meet members and others and for access to the archives. Thanks to the Brisbane City Council for the providing a small office for us at no charge. New members have been invited to “Cuppa and Chat” afternoons as a way of getting to know each other.

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#### COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING:

- **Newsletters:**

Our interesting monthly newsletters are a way of keeping people up to date with what's happening and they have interesting historical articles relating to the area and beyond. Currently the newsletter is emailed to over 1200 subscribers and posted to about 80 people. Emma Golder edited the newsletter for several months - THANK YOU, EMMA – and the current acting editor is Bruna Burello-Day – THANK YOU BRUNA. We welcome letters to the editor, questions and items of historical interest from our members and friends.

- **Facebook:**

Thanks to Ron Altman for administering the FB page. 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:**

We have engaged our webmaster to keep the website active and informative. Check it out at [www.newfarmhistorical.org.au](http://www.newfarmhistorical.org.au)

- **Enquiries**

Enquiries come to the Society mostly through the Society email address [info@newfarmhistorical.org.au](mailto: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 often brings responses to both articles and enquiries and the help given by the society is always appreciated by the enquirers.

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#### TENERIFFE FESTIVAL

The Society participated at the Teneriffe Festival in May - thanks to all the volunteers who gave time to greet the festival patrons and talk with them about the displays of historical photos. It is an important opportunity for the Society to promote its activities and encourage people to discover more about the rich history of the area.

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 volunteers to host the tours and explain points of interest along the route. Thanks to tour guides Stuart and Gerard.

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## **VOLUNTEER ROLES:**

We are grateful to some 30 people who volunteer their time to assist in the functioning of the Society. I have not mentioned all names here because they are too numerous, but please take this as your personal thanks.

- 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
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## **OTHER PROJECTS:**

- **Book Sales** of the society's three publications (*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, Museum of Brisbane shop and at the monthly meetings. Thanks to Jan Wyles for managing book sales.

- **Historical Plaques:** A new plaque was commissioned by the owners of *Miss Midgley's* in James Street. This property has a history dating back to the 1860's. NFDHS managed the project and Gerard Benjamin was engaged to research, edit and design the plaque that is now erected at the front of the property.

- **Oral History Project**

Three oral histories have been collected during the past year and we thank these people for sharing their memories to be retained in our archives and on the website.

- Jim MacDonald with his memories of growing up in Oxlade Drive
- Jocelyn Biles who grew up in Browne St
- Bev Bergstrom who grew up in Villiers St

- **French connection**

Early in the year, the Society was contacted by Kloro Films Productions (France) requesting our assistance with their project to make a documentary about Australia. Franck Decluzet was particularly interested in the typical Queensland homes and requested our assistance. Gerard Benjamin generously gave of his time to undertake research for suitable homes to feature and arrange for filming of the properties. After a few weeks of liaising with Franck, Gerard assisted on the filming day when real estate agent in New Farm, Ivo Kornel, was interviewed about a house that was for sale in Waverly Street. The documentary will be broadcast in France later this year and we will be able to see the section of the filming done here in New Farm / Teneriffe. They were very appreciative of the assistance that Gerard was able to give on behalf of the Society.

- **Administrative Review**

Late in 2022, the committee engaged MyCloudland to undertake a review of our administrative procedures and come up with suggestions for beneficial changes to processes. The review was very

thorough and allowed the committee to have a clear understanding of our procedures. MyCloudland personnel concluded that what they might suggest for changes to the software used were not necessary for a volunteer organisation such as ours. They have offered to assist in a voluntary capacity as necessary.

- **Historical Walking Tours:** Twelve historical walking tours have been led by members of the Society in the past year.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Tour</b>	<b>Tour Leader</b>
10/09/22	Newstead and Bowen Hills – Cloudland, homes, a theatre and a church	Gerard Benjamin
25/09/23	Woolstores and Warships	Ben Pritchard
17/09/22	Twilight walking tour – Discover New Farm's Art Deco gems	Santina Musumeci
4/03/23	Heart of New Farm	Gerard Benjamin
18/03/22	Art Deco and Arts and Crafts	Santina Musumeci
15/04/23	Oxlade Drive and beyond	Gerard Benjamin
30/04/23	New Farm Riverwalk discovery tour	Santina Musumeci
17/06/23	Newstead and Bowen Hills – Cloudland, homes, a theatre and a church	Gerard Benjamin
8/07/23	History of Newstead Gasworks	Ben Pritchard
29/07/23	Heart of New Farm	Gerard Benjamin
12/08/23	Historical walking tour of Fortitude Valley hotels	Robert Allen
21/08/23	Tour of the Princess Theatre, Woolloongabba	Robert Allen

**CHRISTMAS DONATIONS:** At the November 2022 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 Amelia.

We are also grateful 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 then prepare the sandwiches and sweet treats for our enjoyment. Thank you, Coles. Also thank you to Natalie for heading up the catering team.

I thank you for the opportunity to be the President of this respected historical society for the past year. This is an active and vibrant society and we look to all members to discover their little niche in which to make their mark as a volunteer.



**Desley Garnett**  
August 2023

**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)