



NEW FARM & Districts HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

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

PRESIDENT'S REPORT AUGUST 2024

Presented by Desley Garnett

I present to you the Annual Report of the New Farm and Districts Historical Society for the 2023-2024 year.

This year we have recognised that it is 30 years since the inaugural meeting of the New Farm & Districts Historical Society and we celebrated the achievements of the society since 1994. The society was built on firm foundations with a clear purpose of gathering and recording the history of the area. We are indebted to those who have shaped the society over the past 30 years. Whilst we have largely concentrated on New Farm and Teneriffe over many years, we have now picked up more interest in the fast-developing suburb of Newstead as well as Bowen Hills and Fortitude Valley.

COMMITTEE

The dedicated voluntary committee has met monthly and often have extensive discussions outside of that meeting to further progress the current projects. We have had a very full year. I wish to thank each committee member for their support, interest and commitment. The members of the committee the 2023-2024 year were:

President: Desley Garnett

Vice President: Malcolm Godfrey

Secretary: Tracey Hurren

Treasurer: Denise Buckby

Committee Members: Robert Allen, Rosalinda Pike, Ben Pritchard, Bruna Burello-Day (membership secretary and newsletter editor)

Past President: Ross Garnett

We want to thank Malcolm for his several years as a member of the committee. Malcolm is retiring from the committee this year.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership fees were increased to \$20 per person as from January 2024. This was the first increase in the cost of membership in 30 years! This allows us to fund the ever-increasing costs associated with societies in today's world, especially subscriptions to necessary software to be able to efficiently run the society and undertake a number of projects. All members receive the monthly newsletter and discounted entry to the monthly public meetings.

There has been a steady stream of applications for membership throughout the year. As of the end of July this year, there are 4 life members and 225 financial members, of which 48 are new members in the past 12 months. We are currently trialling a new computer program that may assist in smoothing out the membership process both for our members and the membership secretary.

SOCIETY OFFICE AND NEW FARM LIBRARY

The Society Office is located in the Ron Muir Room next to the New Farm Library 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 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.

We have developed a closer connection with the New Farm Library staff over the past 12 months. We

were invited to mount a display of historical items for two months mid-May to mid-July. The library made three glass display cabinets available and we were able to borrow items from members and friends to feature various topics - fires in New Farm and Teneriffe (including a fireman's helmet), old drink bottles, early Delahunty chemist items, the New Farm Collett family photos and our book publications along with some of Gladys Blundell's paintings hung on the walls.

Library staff have given us instruction on the use of podcasting equipment that is available for our use free of charge at the Brisbane Square library.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

The monthly public meetings are a special feature of this society. Each month we have an interesting speaker on a variety of topics that are relevant to New Farm or greater Brisbane. The ambience in the meeting room has been enhanced by Stewart Free's musical entertainment prior to the meeting. The AV team at the back of the room work to ensure the sound is clear and easy to hear and the nostalgic *Cinesound* clips always give us a chuckle and stir up memories. Our speakers' presentations are recorded and made available at <https://vimeo.com/showcase/8485721>. Thanks to the 'AV Guys' for helping the meetings to run smoothly and for filming and editing the recordings. Thank you to all the speakers for interesting presentations and for their permission to video record their presentation.

August 2023 Crimes in New Farm – Lisa Jones	September 2023: Hauritz Drinks – Lionel Hauritz	October 2023 Cross River Rail archaeology – Dr Kevin Rains
November 2023 Whimsical Memories of the Earth Closet – Denis Stirling	February 2024 Century of Centenary Place – Robert Allen	March 2024 Secret US/Australian Intelligence Operations in Eagle Farm and Ascot 1942 to 1945 – Bob Tucker
April 2024 'Unpropitious Beginnings': The Brisbane Centenary Celebrations of 1923-1924 – Tamsin O'Connor	May 2024 Bridges of Brisbane from a new perspective – history and images from <i>Brizzypix</i> – Mark Coleman	June 2024 30 th Birthday celebrations featuring memories of long-time NF residents – facilitated by Robert Allen
July 2024 Brisbane Greeters Showcase Brisbane to visitors and locals – Dr Joanna Phillips		

COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING

- **Newsletters**

Our monthly newsletters are our main tool for keeping people up to date with what's happening. They have interesting historical articles relating to the area and beyond. Currently the newsletter is emailed to over 1200 subscribers and posted to about 40 people. Because of the increase in Australia Post postage costs recently, members with an email address were encouraged to receive the newsletter electronically to reduce the cost of postage each month. We welcome letters to the editor, questions and items of historical interest from our members and friends. Thank you to Bruna Burello-Day for editing such a newsy, interesting and colourful newsletter each month.

- **Enquiries**

Enquiries come to the Society mostly through the Society email address info@newfarmhistorical.org.au. There are fewer enquiries since the availability of so much information on-line. We endeavour to respond to these enquiries promptly and this is most often done by historians Gerard Benjamin and Robert Allen on behalf of the society. As well as sharing information that we hold, our policy is to

give the enquirers the resources to research further for themselves.

- **Social Media**

We are acutely aware of the need to have an active presence in social media as a communication tool. This year, we have endeavoured to have more postings of events to our Facebook page. We now have an Instagram account and would like to have a society member who is able to be more active on both of these social media platforms on behalf of the society.

- **Website**

Our webmaster keeps the website active and informative about upcoming events. We are also very aware that the website is in need of a good makeover in order to reflect our successful society, and we expect to be looking at that in the next 12 months.

- **Promoting the Society at Events**

This year we have promoted the society at two public events - the Council Elections in March 2024 and the New Farm State School Fete in November 2023. The display of historic photographs at these events always creates a lot of interest in the history of the area and the work of the society.

TENERIFFE FESTIVAL

The Society did not participate in the Teneriffe Festival in 2024 due to an unexpected change in the date of the Festival.

COLLABORATION WITH BRISBANE OPEN HOUSE (BOH)

This year, New Farm was chosen to be the focus village for the Brisbane Open House in mid-July, and the historical society collaborated with BOH to organise several events. Society members and associates participated in BOH events variously as organisers, presenters, panel members and observers. Robert Allen played a significant role in working with BOH personnel to organise successful panel events at Brisbane Powerhouse. Gerard, Robert and Santina led several walking tours of the area.

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 hand-delivering newsletters)
- in maintaining a social media presence
- in promoting the society at public events, eg at election booths
- in supplying our publications to a variety of bookshops

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, the Society's Office, and at the monthly meetings.
- **Historical Plaques:** No new plaques have been erected in this past year.
- **Oral History Project:** The society is always interested in collecting people's memories through oral histories. We are aware of the need to listen to people's stories and record them in a timely manner. The library's podcasting equipment might make this a simpler process.
- **Digitisation of Archives:** This project is progressing slowly, mostly because of lack of time of the volunteers coordinating the project. The committee is considering whether it is too big a project to expect volunteers to undertake and whether to contract a professional to do the digitisation with assistance from volunteers as necessary.
- **New Logo for NFDHS:** One of the projects undertaken in this 30th anniversary year was the design of a new clear, simple logo that clearly links to 'New Farm and Districts'. We began the year asking members to submit their ideas for the new logo. Whilst there were several interesting contributions, none was quite what the committee believed we need. It was decided that it really needs the work of a professional logo designer. This project should be completed by the end of 2024 ready for launch in 2025.
- **Interacting with Other Societies:** Representatives attended a meeting involving representatives of the historical societies on the northside of Brisbane in an effort to consider how we might help each other or work together in various ways. It was recognised that all societies now have more administrative costs, particularly for computer programs/subscriptions in order to operate the organisation more efficiently.
- **Historical Walking Tours:** Sixteen walking tours of historical interest have been led by members of the Society from August 2023 to the end of July 2024. These walks are always very popular and are a way of sharing the amazing history of this peninsula. Many participants decide to join the society following the walks. They are ticketed through Eventbrite. Thanks to Rosalinda and Bruna who often attend the walks to assist the leader in ensuring the group stays together. They also do very good PR work about the society with the walkers along the route.
 - 3 x 'Historic Fortitude Valley Hotels', including the opportunity to look inside some of these working hotels, with Robert Allen
 - 6 x 'Tour of the Princess Theatre', Annerley, with Robert Allen, historian for the theatre
 - 1 x 'New Farm and Teneriffe – streets less travelled', with Gerard Benjamin
 - 1 x 'Heart of New Farm' with Gerard Benjamin
 - 2 x 'Oxlade Drive and Beyond', with Gerard Benjamin
 - 1 x 'Wander down Wickham', with Robert Allen
 - 1 x 'Mainly Moray Street', with Gerard Benjamin
 - 1 x 'Newstead and Bowen Hills', ending at the restored Newstead House in time for the re-opening festivities, with Gerard Benjamin

The leaders of these walking tours pay 15% of the booking income to the society. The tours are of a high standard of historical accuracy.

CHRISTMAS DONATIONS

At the November 2023 meeting, members generously 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. Rev Dr Rodney Wolff

from the Anglican Holy Trinity Parish addressed one of our monthly meetings to tell us more about the assistance given to the community through the Trinity Pantry.

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.

We are also grateful to Coles New Farm Store Manager for sponsoring the afternoon tea at our monthly meetings through the donation of a \$50 gift card each month. Our catering team then prepare the sandwiches and sweet treats for our enjoyment. Thank you, Coles, and also members who sometimes donate food items. Also thank you to the catering team and all the people who have assisted with afternoon tea. That includes, of course, those who make and serve the tea and coffee for us to enjoy, and also those who stack chairs and wash up.

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 hope that all members will discover their little niche in which to make their mark as a volunteer.

Desley Garnett
August 2024



New Farm & Districts Historical Society Inc

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Find us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)