

IT'S NOVEMBER....

And just like that, we have come to the end of another NFDHS year!

What an eventful year it has been with highlights including our 30th anniversary celebrations in June; the always interesting and very well attended monthly meeting presentations followed by lively discussion and cheerful mingling over afternoon tea; the convivial President's welcome afternoon teas; the many engaging historical walks and tours – just to name a few.



But it's not over yet!

Our final meeting will feature Robert Allen who will lead us down memory lane as he showcases Fortitude Valley and New Farm Christmas celebrations. Those of us who were children in the '50s and '60s and beyond might well remember how fascinating those Valley Christmas windows were. Be prepared for a few surprises during the afternoon as well, including a lucky door prize or two!

The Office will still be open every Thursday afternoon from 2.00 to 4.00pm with the last session being 28 November. It will re-open on Thursday 6 February 2025.

There will be one last chance this year to attend the President's Welcome Afternoon Tea (see p 4 for details). Come on down!

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NEW FARM & Districts HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2024 Vol XXX, No 10

REPORT ON THE NOVEMBER MEETING

MYSTERY WOMAN REVEALED

There were blank looks from members of the St Andrew's Uniting Church Heritage Committee when they considered **Miss Martha Burns'** name on one of their chapel's Honour Boards.



**PRESENTER:
Miriam King**

Miriam King's research has since revealed a woman of wit, grit, achievement and life-long dedication. New Farm born and bred Martha was quite a gal! Queensland's first qualified female dentist (Licentiate Dentistry Qld), she famously responded to her fulminating father's "No daughter of mine..." speech that, after all, "we'd both be building bridges". Unlike her sisters, she had "no intention of becoming a lady, driving out in the buggy, visiting, taking tea". Imagine!

Nursing qualification at the Brisbane General Hospital came first, followed by three years' dentistry study. Registration denied first by UQ, then Sydney University, Martha moved on to Melbourne. A year's further study gained her registration and she began practice in the AMP Chambers*, Queen Street. (This was but the beginning of a lifetime of "firsts". The National Pioneer Women's "First in their Field" Hall of Fame acknowledges her long list of achievements and community service alongside her friend, fellow dentist Dorothy Gray.)

In London for an International Dental Congress in 1914, she volunteered to nurse in France - the Battle of Mons and its retreat followed by the First Battle of Ypres. Within the sound of the guns and in appalling conditions, doctors, nurses and orderlies ("big strapping University graduates" who dropped from exhaustion) worked 30-hour stretches. Miriam traced Martha's return home - via the Harvard Dental College, no less!

Faced with a long list of post-war achievements and spirited dedication, there was now an elephant in the room! How on earth could one once so honoured and central to this community become unknown, even here? We were collectively impressed, it's fair to say, by both Martha herself and Miriam's painstaking research. It was a wonderful address, and we look forward to reading Miriam's book on Miss Martha Burns LDQ (1873-1959) before long.

*Now Macarthur Chambers

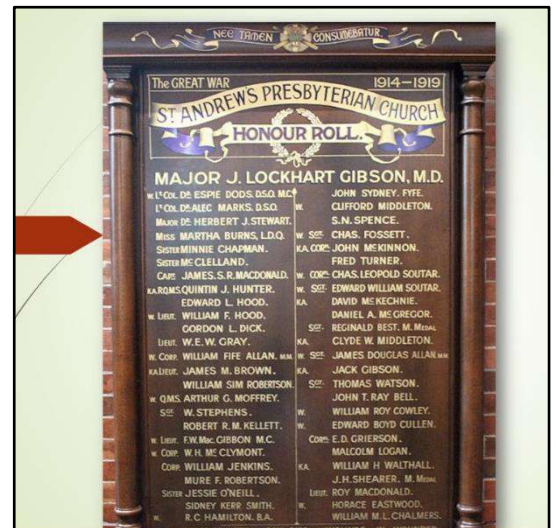
(Continued on Page 2)



The above photo is courtesy of Lester Harding. Used with permission.



**REPORTER
Maria Shaw**



COMMUNITY NEWS

The hassle-free proceedings at the recent Qld State Election's polling booth at the Merthyr Uniting Church Centre were in stark contrast to those of the local government election earlier in the year, which were characterised by long, snaking queues and a general air of frustration. This was good for the Society as our display provided a welcome relief for the passers-by. This time, the crowd was minimal with voting taking no time at all.

Despite this, the Society's display did attract attention and two books were sold! Thanks should go to Desley Garnett and George Cowin who arrived early to erect the displays and stayed on duty to engage with interested voters. Gerard Benjamin called in early for a little while as well.



Society Member Kay Thorpe examines the Election Display stands

They then went on to attend the Society's October meeting which was held in the Brunswick Room (Church, pictured below) at the Centre while voting continued in the Hall. Attendance numbered a healthy 85 and all were able to be accommodated in the shared Courtyard for afternoon tea.



See more photos on page 8.

A generous donation

Six audience members who correctly answered an impromptu quiz on Miss Martha Burns' life were presented with a copy of *Birds in the Nest*, thanks to the generosity of its author, Wendy Hart.



Ahead in December: An address by well-known former Queensland Politician, Pat Comben

Society member, **John Godfrey** (pictured) announced that at the December meeting of the **Coorparoo & Districts Heritage Group** (of which he has been a long-time member and former committee member), the guest speaker will be **Pat Comben**, formerly State Minister for Environment & Heritage 1989 to 1993. His address will be a light-hearted overview combining his knowledge of some of Queensland's political identities over the last 40 years with his experience of conservation of native wildlife. It is based on his latest book whose launch John recently attended along with Gerard Benjamin.



Topic: **Politicians and Other Animals I Have Known**

When: Saturday, December 7, at 2.00pm

Where: Kingsbury Room

Queen Alexandra Community Centre –
next to Coorparoo Primary School
Old Cleveland Rd, Coorparoo Junction

(Continued from Page 1)

Martha was an early adopter of the motor car. "Dr Lillian Cooper and I were the first (Brisbane) women drivers". Martha Burns loved to drive up and down at a roaring 16 mph! Could this car, outside the Kodak Building in Queen St (where her second dental practice was situated), be Martha's?

To learn more about the remarkable Miss Martha Burns who grew up on the corner of Brunswick St and Villiers St, New Farm, go to the [Lives, Links & Legacy website](#).



Photo is from [this page](#) in Museums Victoria Collections

DATE CLAIMERS

Public meetings are normally held at 2.30pm at the Merthyr Uniting Church Centre, 52 Merthyr Road, New Farm, on the fourth Saturday of each month from February to November. Entry fee is \$5 for members and \$10 for non-members.

Date	Event
November/ December/ January	Membership Renewals will be accepted for 2025 at the November meeting and via Bank Transfer thereafter or at any time. Please see Page 4 for further details. Applications for renewal and new memberships should be received by January 31 to be eligible for discounts starting from the February meeting onwards.
November 9	Mainly Moray Walking Tour
November 16	A Walk around the Woolstores
November 23	Final Public Meeting for 2024 Empty Christmas Tree

Please save these dates in your diaries. Further events and information will be supplied in subsequent newsletters and email notifications.

ABOUT THE SOCIETY

Postal Address:

PO Box 1141, New Farm Qld 4005

Email: info@newfarmhistorical.org.au

Website: www.newfarmhistorical.org.au

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

Office Opening Hours:

Every Thursday 2-4pm, February to November

Honorary Office Bearers

President: Desley Garnett
0409 498 403

president@newfarmhistorical.org.au

Vice-President: Robert Allen

Secretary: Tracey Hurren

Treasurer: Denise Buckby

Committee Members:

Immediate Past President Ross Garnett,
George Cowin, Rosalinda Pike, Ben Pritchard, and
Membership Secretary Bruna Burello-Day

membership@newfarmhistorical.org.au

2024 Membership Fee:

\$20 per year or part thereof.

Apply for or renew membership:

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

Newsletter Editor:

Bruna Burello-Day

editor@newfarmhistorical.org.au

Photos taken at meetings by our photographer, Maria Shaw (unless otherwise credited), can also be viewed on Instagram, or [here](#).



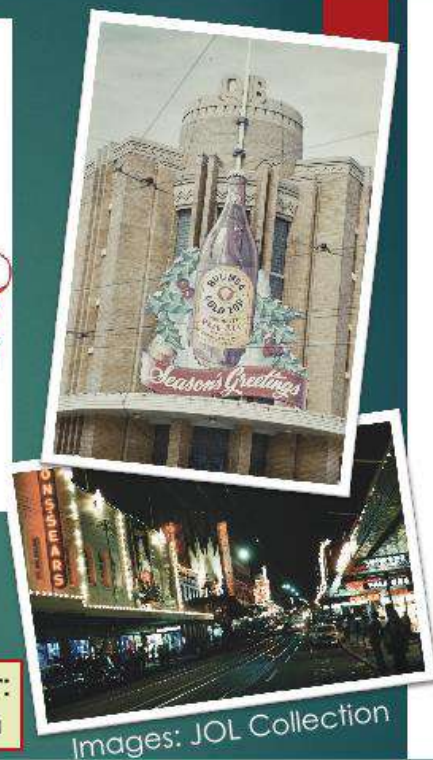
NOVEMBER MEETING PRESENTATION

New Farm and Districts Historical Society presents:

Local
images of
Christmas
past



Speaker:
Robert Allen



Saturday 23rd November 2:30 pm

Uniting Church Centre, 52 Merthyr Rd, New Farm

www.newfarmhistorical.org.au

Enquiries: 0409 498 403

CHRISTMAS PAST

Who remembers the Christmas window displays at McWhirters, Waltons and TC Beirne – or the end-of-year workplace and children's parties in New Farm Park?

At our November meeting, Robert Allen will guide us through some holiday images from Brisbane Christmases past, with a particular emphasis on Fortitude Valley and New Farm.

WHAT WILL 2025 BRING?

Your committee is busy organising next year's lineup of guest speakers and interesting topics. Be sure to save the dates and mark your diaries for our meetings on the fourth Saturday of each month, with the first one being on February 22. We will also be embarking on some exciting new projects that we have been developing. Watch this space!



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Desley Garnett

NOVEMBER!
OUR FINAL NEWSLETTER FOR
2024 AND OUR FINAL MEETING!



Thank you to those who brought their membership renewal forms completed and in a named envelope to the October meeting – that made it simpler on the day, giving the volunteers time to follow up everything at a less pressured time after the meeting.

Eighty-five people had an interesting time learning about the life of Miss Martha Burns from Miriam King at the October meeting. At our November meeting, we will walk down memory lane a little as Robert Allen leads us back to Christmas in Fortitude Valley and New Farm. Some aspects we will remember, but there will be much to learn about the extensive celebration of Christmas in earlier years.

I know we can rely on our community to be generous in donations of non-perishable foods and hygiene products at the November meeting. Will we fill the boot of Denise's car for her to take to the Trinity Pantry? Cash donations are also useful for the Pantry as they support people in our community who are struggling with everyday life. Thank you in advance for your support of this Christmas sharing opportunity.

The new logo project has not been forgotten – it will be revealed in February 2025! The project to digitise our historical records has had a slow but steady start but is soon to get chugging again. Do you have experience in digitisation or know someone who does? – please talk to Stuart, Tracey or Desley if you can assist.

So now it is time for me to say thank you for your support of the society during 2024. The committee always

has the desire to meet the expectations of our 280+ members and we hope that you have discovered more about our wonderful peninsula through walks, talks and newsletters. We look forward to 2025 with the expectation that we will have another successful year, and we encourage you to find your little niche for contributing to that success. How do we measure that success? By people's continuing interest in learning about and sharing the interesting history of the area.

Best wishes for a Christmas that is full of great warmth and happiness. We already possess all the gifts we need; we've already received our presents: ears to hear music, eyes to behold beauty, hands to build true peace on earth and to hold each other tight in love.

Here's your last chance this year to join in the camaraderie of our President's Afternoon Tea. Everyone is welcome.

**Getting to know you
Afternoon Tea**

Thursday 14th November
2:30 pm
Ron Muir Room
New Farm Library
135 Sydney St, New Farm

An opportunity to meet other members over a cuppa

Please rsvp to
president@newfarmhistorical.org.au
0409 498 403

I hope to meet you there
Desley Garnett

FROM THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Bruna Burello-Day

At present there are **283** current financial members (including four Life Members). This includes **90 members current to December 2025**. At the end of 2024, the current membership will reduce significantly unless the remaining 180+ renew as soon as possible. The November meeting will be the last opportunity to apply for or renew memberships in person. To help streamline **the procedure for applying or renewing memberships at meetings**, the following may help:

Check in with Phil at the entry gate. Then, if you are on Phil's 2025 or higher members list, congratulations – you just need to pay your \$5.00 entry fee (cash preferred) at the Members' Welcome Table and proceed to the Hall.

If you are on Phil's 2024 list, pay your \$5 entry fee (cash preferred*) and proceed to the Hall. **HOWEVER**, if you wish to **renew your membership for 2025**, go to the Membership Table to obtain a form (very easy to complete if your details haven't changed) and pay \$20.

***OR**, if you don't have cash, go straight to the Membership Table, get a form and pay \$25 to cover application fee and entry. EFTPOS is available.

Non-members/visitors go to the Non-Members Welcome Table, register your name and pay \$10. **OR IF YOU WISH TO JOIN THE SOCIETY**, after registering go to the adjacent Membership Table where a friendly volunteer will assist you. \$25 will cover entry and application fees. Cash or cards will be accepted.

As the procedure worked so well at the October meeting, the easiest option is to put your completed form along with your payment in cash, or details of your bank transfer, in an envelope and hand it in at the Membership Table for later processing. Please write your name and payment method on the front of the envelope. Relevant forms can be found [here](#).

Please note that if perchance you have an automatic debit arrangement in place, you will need to update the amount to \$20.



Empty Christmas Tree

An NFDHS tradition, we will once again bring gifts of non-perishable foods, toiletries and cash to our next and last meeting of the year. Fr Rodney Wolff of the Holy Trinity Church, Fortitude Valley, spoke earlier this year of the invaluable role these gifts play in the lives of those who access the Trinity Pantry.

RECENT EVENTS

Merthyr Bowls Club celebrates 75 years



On a cool and stormy night in October, several members of the society attended a celebration at the [Merthyr Bowls Club](#) to recognise its 75 years.

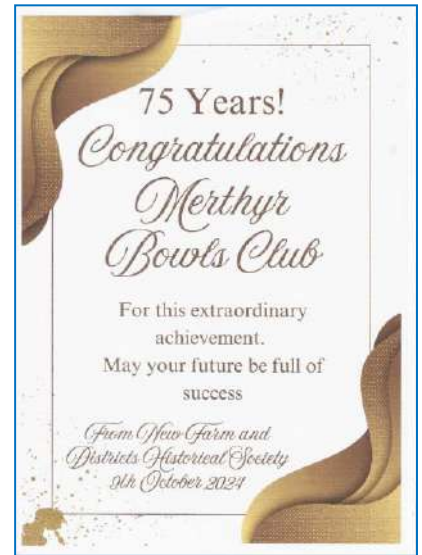
Built next to the Limbless Soldiers' Club in Oxlade Drive, the Limbless Soldiers Bowling Club was officially opened in 1949 by the Queensland branch of the Returned Limbless Sailors and Soldiers Association (RLSSA) to provide recreational facilities for returned disabled servicemen. The first day of play was in December 1948.

In the early 1950s the clubhouse building, comprising two ex-army huts, was relocated from Camp Columbia, the United States 6th Army headquarters at Wacol during the Second World War.

The Limbless Soldiers Bowling Club was later renamed the Merthyr Bowls Club. The RSL, which continues to lease the land from Council, subleases the facilities to the Merthyr Bowls Club. In a prime location adjacent to the Brisbane River, it was recently voted as the #1 Barefoot Bowls location in Australia.

Pictured above is a certificate (created by President Desley) presented to the Bowling Club on the occasion.

CONGRATULATIONS, MERTHYR BOWLS CLUB!



Gerard Benjamin's historical walks cover a lot of territory!

Sights/sites all the way to Teneriffe Hill

"What does a woolstore look like inside?" That question was more than answered for participants on the "Gasworks to Teneriffe Hill" Walk on Saturday 21 September, led by Gerard.

Richard Johnson, manager at Teneriffe Apartments on Commercial Rd, kindly offered the group a peek at the impressive atrium of the woolstore. The reaction? 'Cool' in



both senses of the word. After that, the climb to the top of Teneriffe Hill hardly seemed to require any effort, since there were so many interesting sites/sights to see.

Finally, when a cuppa at Merthyr Village beckoned, it was only a short bus ride away. Sincere thanks to Bruna who kindly volunteered to be 'Tail End Charlie' for the event.

Go to Page 6 for a chance to have an in-depth look at another Teneriffe woolstore (this time with Ben Pritchard) while taking a pleasant amble around the woolstores precinct.

Walking Oxlade Drive in October

The historical walk led by Gerard Benjamin along Oxlade Drive on Saturday, 19 October for 20+ participants proved very popular. Among the group was Society Member George Cowin who was able to point out where his Cowin relatives used to live. Special thanks go to Stuart Wallace who, as back marker, also ensured that we arrived on time for a cuppa at Savour Cafe in Merthyr Village (pictured below).



See next page for details of the last of Gerard's 2024 historical walks.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mainly Moray

Saturday, November 9

8:30-10.00am

Bus Stop Merthyr Road, opposite Merthyr Village

Tour Guide: Gerard Benjamin



Meet us at the bus stop adjacent to the To Be Thai restaurant, 92 Merthyr Rd. This is the starting point for a 90-minute walk which will focus on Moray Street, and also take in Merthyr Rd and Bowen Tce in New Farm.

You will pause before sites which are particularly rich in social and architectural history before taking in the panorama of the Story Bridge.

By the time we return to Merthyr Village, morning tea will have been very well-earned. For more information and bookings, see [Eventbrite](#).

A Walk around the Woolstores

Saturday November 16

8.30-10.00am

Teneriffe Ferry Stop, Commercial Road

Tour Guide: Ben Pritchard



We have all walked past the woolstores and admired their impressive exterior appearance, but have you been inside a woolstore? Have you had a chance to appreciate just how they were built and how they operated as part of the industry that played such an important part of the country's history? Well, now you have a chance to satisfy your curiosity.

Join us for an 8.30 start at the Teneriffe Ferry Stop for a walk around the woolstores precinct of Teneriffe. The highlight of the walk will be a rare opportunity to visit the inside of Winchcombe Carson Woolstore, the oldest surviving woolstore in Teneriffe. Learn all about how and why the woolstore was built; how its fortunes changed over the years; and how it was converted into the residential building of today as part of the regeneration of Teneriffe.

It is a fascinating story of fortune, fame, disease and dereliction. And if you don't enjoy the experience, you can get a full refund of your ticket price.

Tickets are available via [Eventbrite](#), starting at less than \$28. First come, first served!

The State Library of Queensland has a couple of noteworthy events coming up very soon.

Remembrance Day: Honouring Queensland's heroic history

12:30–1 pm, 4–10 Nov | Anzac Square Memorial Galleries | Free, booking required

To acknowledge the sacrifices and service to country Queenslanders have made, we invite you to join a tour of

Anzac Square Memorial Galleries. This November, as the nation pauses to remember, you may reflect and explore our military history, traditions, and the inspiring stories of Queensland war heroes who embody the spirit of the Anzacs. Click the black "Book now" button to register.

[Book now](#)

Our heritage and homes

10:30 am–12:45 pm, Mon 25 Nov | slq Auditorium 1 | Free, booking required

For the final Heritage talk of the year, explore Queensland's unique architectural history with presentations by industry experts and a hands-on collection experience.

[Book now](#)

Full details of SLQ events are available here:

<https://www.slq.qld.gov.au/whats-on>

A NOTE FROM YOUR EDITOR

Bruna Burello-Day

You didn't need eagle eyes to notice that the October Newsletter looked a little different. When it became obvious that I wasn't going to be able to manage the deadline due to pressing family commitments and a looming interstate trip, **Gerard Benjamin** very kindly responded without hesitation to my plea for help. I am very grateful to him for rescuing me at very short notice. As many readers would be aware, Gerard was the esteemed editor of this publication for eleven years before retiring from the role in August 2022 (producing 110 issues). So, thank you, Gerard!

We will be back in February with a new and improved Newsletter (featuring our new logo). I am very grateful for the positive feedback and encouragement I have received over the past 18 months, notching up 15 issues so far. But this could not have been achieved without much assistance from many sources. My thanks go to the many contributors of articles, stories, photos and advice. I encourage you to write down your reminiscences and submit them for publication. You never know what memories you will evoke and what connections you might unearth. Besides, I think it is a worthwhile exercise in itself, particularly when you go through all those actual photos that you have been collecting and meaning to cull!

Finally, may I wish everyone a safe and happy festive season and a new year filled with promise, hope, and above all, peace.

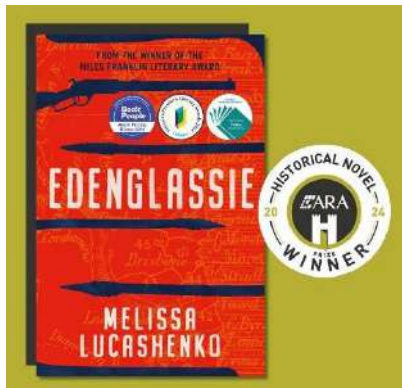
Books make perfect presents - If you are looking for that special Christmas present, you can't go past the Society's publications *Reflections on New Farm* and *Homes with History on the New Farm Peninsula* (both of which are authored by Gerard), *Tides of Teneriffe* by Vicki Bridgstock, and Gerard's latest and very popular book, *New Farm: 50 Stories*. These are all available at our monthly meetings and from local bookstores. If he is available at the meetings, Gerard is more than happy to sign his books.

On the subject of books...

A major literary prize goes to a Brisbane author

Here's a timely publication dealing with the colonial history of Moreton Bay as we approach the bicentenary of the settlement of Brisbane (originally known as Edenglassie). Following is an extract from the publisher, UQP:

Melissa Lucashenko wins the 2024 ARA Historical Novel Prize



Congratulations to Melissa Lucashenko on being awarded the 2024 ARA Historical Novel Prize in the adult category for her novel Edenglassie.

Presented by the Historical Novel Society Australasia (HNSA) at a ceremony at Parliament House in Sydney, the awards recognise 'the outstanding literary

talents of novelists who illuminate stories of the past, providing a window into our present and the future'. The prize was established in 2020 and is open to historical fiction books from Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand.

Read more, including reviews, [here](#).

A Vision in Purple

What a splendid show the jacarandas put on at New Farm Park this year. No wonder it's a favourite location for just about everybody at this time of year.



Photo Credit: Brisbane.aerial.media (IG)

Early Tram to New Farm

Tram No 1 ran between New Farm and Ipswich Road. Its body was built in Melbourne in 1896 by adding open ends to a horse tram saloon. In Brisbane it was placed on a 'truck' or chassis imported from the USA and fitted with two motors and electrical controllers (which adjusted its speed), also American-made.

On June 21st, 1897, an electric tram service was introduced to Brisbane when dignitaries and newspaper reporters rode on No 1 from South Brisbane town hall to Victoria Bridge and return. It could not cross to Queen St because the opening of the new bridge was a few days away.

The tram was driven by Joseph S Badger, an electrical engineer sent from America by the General Electric Company. He was charged with making the Brisbane tramway system a 'showcase' to sell its tramway products.

Tram No 1 was 28 feet long with seating for 32, was officially called a California combination car and unofficially a 'Matchbox'. It was scrapped in 1930.

[Interestingly, the Victoria Bridge and electric trams had an almost-identical lifespan: June 1897 to April 1969.] The detailed model is the work of Brian Martin (pictured) who is a member of the Brisbane Tramway Museum at Ferny Grove. At the Society meeting in April 2023, Brian spoke about the [Pensacola Convoy](#). The photo below was taken by Gerard Benjamin when he and John Gates paid a visit to the model maker's home.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND THANKS

As always, thanks go to our wonderful meeting volunteers as well as to the following:



Grace Grace MP
Member for McConnel
(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 a
donation towards
afternoon tea
purchases



October Meeting