



NEW FARM & Districts HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

www.newfarmhistorical.org.au

NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2018

Vol. XXIV, No. 3

MARCH MEETING

Shops: from hawkers to emporia

A RECORD crowd gathered at the Society's March meeting to take a trip down memory lane with Dr Ellen McArthur's address, "Talking shop... a history of retailing in Australia".

With the help of old photographs, we learned that before the arrival of department stores in the 1880s, goods were supplied through tiny shops (such as Finney Isles' 1864 two-window shop, corner of Ann & Warner Streets), along with drapers and ironmongers' shops, and fresh food markets.

Peddlers sold goods door-to-door with their carts and drays, and were relied on to carry news from the nearest town. Milk and bread were delivered by horse and cart.

As stores began to add more departments, competition increased to make larger and larger stores until we had the five-story "Cathedrals of Consumption".

At first these stores had no fixed prices and goods were kept behind counters. I well remember sitting on stool at the counter in Bayards with my Grandmother while the shop assistant rolled out

a length of felt on which to display gloves. Gradually goods were brought forward where the public could examine them as a means of encouraging a purchase.

Dockets were written at the counter, and the docket and money were sent by Pneumatic Tube or trigger system to an upstairs office and the change returned the same way.

At one stage Brisbane had seven department stores in the City and three in Fortitude Valley. The owners of these emporia became the princes

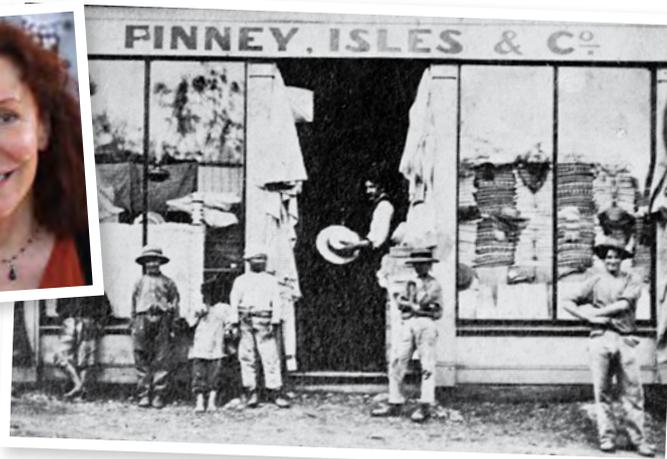
of society. With one-stop shopping, they became the largest employers in Australia. From what had started as male-dominated employment, women soon became the essential element of the shop assistant workforce.

In 1957, Allan and Stark opened the first Drive-in Shopping

Centre on 28 acres at Chermside, and this changed forever the way we shop. With internet shopping, who knows the fate of the Department Store? Sincere thanks to Dr Ellen for a most thought-provoking address.



BY
Stewart Free



Factory floor: George Symons's father supervising garment-making at this thriving family business.

Historical Society.

"Our family business was begun in the 1920s in Melbourne after my grandfather had arrived from Greece," said George.

Come and be thoroughly entertained by George on Saturday

28 April, 2-4pm, at Merthyr Road Uniting Church Centre. All are welcome. Bring your friends. Afternoon tea will be provided. For more details, please phone 0409 498 402.

APRIL MEETING

Talk to be well-tailored to you...

BRISBANE Rugby League fans among you will remember that the weekly man of the match was the happy recipient of a newly-fitted George Symons suit.

The gentleman behind this famous menswear business, George Symons, is to be guest speaker at the April meeting of the New Farm and Districts

MAY MEETING

Salves, balms and homespun remedies

QUEENSLAND'S record of invention and innovation extends to the design and manufacture of familiar potions and extraordinary strategies to popularise them. Queenslanders were also ready adopters of similar remedies devised overseas and marketed through personal contact.



"This talk examines the history of three Queensland remedies—two of which were marketed well beyond our shores—and looks at the ways in which an American company achieved deep market penetration in Queensland for its wide range of 'cure-alls'," says well-known

historian Helen Gregory, who will be the speaker at our May meeting.

All are invited to attend on Saturday 26 May, 2-4pm, at Merthyr Road Uniting Church Centre. All are welcome. Afternoon tea will be provided. For more details, please phone 0409 498 402.



PAST PRESIDENT

At the helm of the Society in the early days...

VIRGINIA Balmain was elected President during the beginnings of the New Farm & Districts Historical Society. She had moved from Adelaide to Brisbane in 1994 and by good fortune purchased a house in Annie Street, New Farm.



Having been born in Cooma NSW, then a small country town at the foothills of the Snowy Mountains—which became multicultural during the building of the Snowy Mountains Scheme—Virginia finished secondary school in Canberra before moving to Sydney to complete a diploma in physical education. This was followed by a teaching career in Sydney, Prince George, British Columbia, and the UK. On returning to Australia, Virginia became the first executive officer of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award in Australia.

It was then that she started collecting background information on her father's side of the family. Virginia's 3g-grandfather, John Balmain, a teacher from Greenock in Scotland, arrived in Sydney with his family in 1837. After teaching in several towns in NSW and a short unsuccessful journey to the California goldfields, John Balmain moved to Goondiwindi, opening and teaching at the first school in 1863. John's son David and daughter taught at Goondiwindi over 20 years (1864-1884). An earlier cousin was Dr William Balmain (1762-1803), Assistant Surgeon on the First Fleet which reached Port Jackson in January 1788. The Harbourside suburb of Balmain was named after him.

On Virginia's mother's side, William Macleod (1850-1929) was an artist who, as a young boy, migrated to Australia with his parents in 1854 or 1855. Over 40 years later, he became the Managing Director of *The Bulletin* in Sydney.

It's no wonder that Virginia became interested in local history—and joined the New Farm Historical Society, subsequently being elected President.

In the years since then, Virginia has been connected with the United Nations Association, and has held the positions of National Vice President, and Queensland President.

Saturday 28th April, 2 pm

THE RAG TRADE

SPEAKER:

George Symons

"It was a little, narrow staircase, and once you get up to the top George and his father fused over you. It was quite a big deal, they made you feel like you were on top of the world."

UNITING CHURCH CENTRE, 52 MERTHYR RD, NEW FARM

New Farm and Districts Historical Society
www.newfarmhistorical.org.au
 Enquiries: 0409 498 402

HONOUR BOARD**The Imber brothers from Dalgety's**

ALLEXANDER Swan and George William Imber were born in Redfern in Sydney in 1896 and 1899 respectively, to George Edmund Snr and Catherine Elizabeth Imber. The family, with three other children, moved to Brisbane in October 1906 and lived on Dalgety's Wharf.

George Jnr, the younger of the brothers, was the first to enlist in July 1915, overstating his age by two years making it 18 years and 4 months. George had been a labourer for Winchcombe Carson Ltd Wool Brokers. That October 1915, a Mr Solomon and employees presented George with a wrist watch, wishing him well and a safe return.

This coincided with when the boys' father was the foreman stevedore for Dalgety's Queensland Foremen Stevedores' Association.

George became a Gunner with the 3rd Field Artillery Brigade (FAB) Enoggera Camp. On 9 November, he embarked from Melbourne on *HMAT A62 Wandilla* and arrived in Heliopolis, Cairo, Egypt just before Christmas 1915.

In February 1916, George was transferred to Tel El Kebir, Egypt, with 4th Division Artillery until the 12 March when he was reassigned with the 11th FAB 42nd Battery. By June 1916, his unit was at last on the move. He left Alexandria and arrived in Marseilles in June 1916.

In August 1916, George went AWOL from morning stables at 6:30am and was given extra guard duty.

He was on leave during 19-29 May 1917, but weeks later, he received the sad news that his father had died and that he was to be buried on 28 June 1917 at Toowong Cemetery.

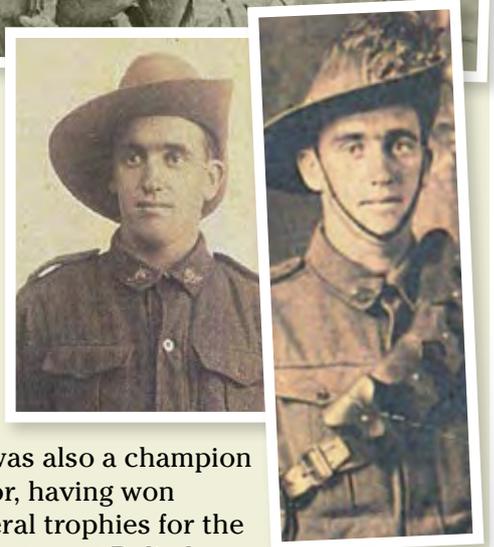
George enjoyed another stint of leave in March 1918, this time in England. He returned to duty in France and died on 9 April 1918. He was buried in the Frechencourt Communal Cemetery in France by Rev. G. E. Shaw on 10 April 1918.

* * *

Alexander's occupation was a diver's assistant. He was a fine sportsman, having been part of the Commercial Football Club premier's team in 1914.

**Brothers**

in arms: (Above) George Imber with his artillery unit, probably in Egypt. (Right) Two views of Alex Imber. Both died in France in 1918, four months apart.



Thanks to Society members Paul Sneddon and his daughter Tammy for this WWI story of the Imber brothers—who were Paul's uncles and Tammy's great uncles.

He was also a champion sailor, having won several trophies for the 18-footers at Bulimba Point. Furthermore, as an amateur boxer, he fought at the old Cremorne Theatre in South Brisbane and other halls under the guidance of his father who was both a boxing judge and referee. It was quite an achievement to participate in all of these sports which depended on whistles, starting guns and bells—since Alex was profoundly deaf.

He enlisted in November 1915 and was assigned to the 3rd Field Artillery Brigade (FAB) as a Gunner. On the 22 May 1916, he embarked from Sydney on the *HMAT A69 Warilda*, arriving at Devonport in England in July 1916.

Alex served with a number of batteries, namely the 3rd, 9th, 11th, 17th, 18th, 24th and 33rd. On 23 August 1916, he was sent to Etaples in France to join the 4th Division Artillery.

On 29 July 1918, he reported ill, suffering from pyrexia (fever), and was sent from the 15th field ambulance to the 12th casualty clearing station. He was then transferred by casualty train to hospital at Le Treport where he died on 14 August 1918 of cephalitis and an abscess on the brain. Alex was buried at the Mont Huon Military Cemetery at Le Treport—about 100km from where his brother had been buried four months earlier.

NFDHS FAN CLUB

EVERY TIME I receive the NFDHS newsletter I am delighted, and every time I am delighted I mean to let you know. We have been gone from New Farm for over four years now but I will always retain an interest in such a special little pocket and its history. We were so fortunate to happen upon NF as a community in which to live. The newsletter is always very enticing for "the next meeting", and I would always love to be there. — *Shona Fretwell, New Zealand.*

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Ross Garnett

Retailing proves very popular...

THE story of the progression of retailing from the very early days of Brisbane was very interesting at the March meeting and many people remarked that they wished Dr Ellen McArthur had been able to finish that story up to the present day and project it into the future. Many members in the audience of around 120 (what a bumper crowd!) had stories to share and we just did not have time to hear as many as we would have liked.



After all, that delicious afternoon tea was nearly ready and we did not want to burn the sausage rolls and party pies!

So... we have invited Ellen to come back some time later this year for "Talking Shop, Part 2". Keep thinking about the stories you might want to share, and maybe even write them down and forward them to me for inclusion in the newsletter.

We also apologise to the speaker and to the audience for the technical difficulties experienced again. We did have the computer checked last year and thought it was fixed, but it will be checked again before the next meeting. This intermittent problem is difficult to track down. If someone reading this has expertise in this area and could assist with looking into the problem we would be very happy to hear from you.

Meantime, George Symons is a name you are sure to have heard and we look forward to hearing about the Rag Trade in Brisbane. Maybe you have a George Symons suit or school blazer in your wardrobe!

Message master: George Frith's Curiosity Shop in Fortitude Valley, ca. 1907 (corner of Brunswick and Hall Streets, near the Empire Hotel) employed wall space to make the pithy marketing message an art form.

GETTING THE WORD OUT**Where is everyone coming from?**

YOU may have noticed that the numbers at monthly meetings are rising. Two years ago, 60-80 people coming each fourth Saturday might have been the norm. So far this year, monthly attendance has been over 100.

Undoubtedly, the valuable coverage by Village News plays a part—as may social media, in particular the Facebook sites for "New Farm History" and "Fortitude Valley Revisited", and latterly "New Farm and Districts Historical Society".

Around three years ago when the "New Farm History" site was launched, the originator Ron Altmann (who grew up on Brunswick Street and attended NFSS), wondered if the group would attract 20 members. Months later when it clocked up 200, Ron harboured the thought of convening a 'meeting of members', perhaps at New Farm Park.

Nowadays, such a notion would be fanciful. There would not be a venue large enough, since the group numbers over 2,300.

The Facebook site "Fortitude Valley Revisited" has also sustained meteoric growth. Its membership stands at 1,900, thanks to the diligence of Ray Thurlow (author of *Back to the Valley [State School]*,



celebrating 150 years of FVSS).

In summary, Facebook has certainly provided a platform for the lively exchange of historical information about New Farm and Fortitude Valley — which in turn seems to have had a very positive effect on meeting attendances.

If you ask me what I came into this life to do, I will tell you: I came to live out loud... Zola



Chris Derrick, who often supplies photos for the newsletter, sent this one of himself (left) with the concierge at his New York hotel. Chris promises a USA postcard for the next issue.

Poster: Desley Garnett

Design & Layout: Gerard Benjamin

Photography: Gerard Benjamin, Gayle Martin



VILLAGE NEWS

MANY THANKS TO
Claire Moore
Senator for Queensland 1300 301 879
for photocopying the newsletter

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 Open Hours:* Every Thursday 2-4pm
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Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see... Twain

V | history

Yachting's lost plaque found at last



VILLAGE
history
GERARD
BENJAMIN

In 1952, the Royal Queensland Yacht Club moved into their new headquarters at Kemp Place.

The premises was a grand sprawling residence named Caldew, on a large site with a magnificent view of the river.

To celebrate the occasion, which was honoured by the Governor's attendance, a fine granite plaque was installed at the club's entrance.

More than 20 years later, the Club - by then renamed the Squadron - was again on the move, this time to its current HQ at Manly.

As with any such major transition, some things got put into storage.

In 2016, the Squadron was contacted by someone asking if they wished to purchase the 1952 plaque

which had been found at the Birkdale dump in 1989!

The ensuing consternation centred around how such a precious item could have ended up at the tip, and could it be authentic?

Subsequent enquiries verified that someone remembered that other items bearing the Squadron crest had been thrown out in the late 1980s and yes, some deft detective work confirmed that the plaque and its wording were genuine.

It seems that the granite piece had been made into a coffee table, and that the gentleman possessing it rejected the RQYS's initial offer for its purchase.

Come August 2017, a further offer was accepted and the plaque was quickly transported to Manly.

* * *

The large home that became the Kemp Place clubhouse appears to have been built about 1882 for the merchant George Wilkie Gray (1844-1924) who later formed Castlemaine Brewery.

The house was named Villa Marie.

Gray was a leading Catholic, and the house was once offered as a temporary residence for Bishop Dunne, and to accommodate a visit by Melbourne's Cardinal Moran.

A bequest from Mr Gray's will was used to build the Mater Children's Hospital.



LOST BUT NOT FORGOTTEN: Caldew is in the foreground viewed from the Story Bridge while under construction, with All Hallows in the left background.

In 1905, Villa Marie became the home of stockbroker Frank Corrie.

Mrs Corrie renamed it Caldew after the Hobart home of her father, the 'learned, genial, and eccentric barrister', John Graves.

The commodious residence was ideal for Mrs Corrie's grand social functions.

For instance, the 1908 winner of a week-long tournament on the home's croquet lawn carried off 'the largest bottle of 4711 eau de cologne procurable'.

Prominent on the town's social calendar was the annual display of the Brisbane Needlework Guild, of which Mrs Corrie was periodically treasurer.

It was one of the outstanding philanthropic and social functions of the year when visitors could enjoy the home's spacious rooms 'showing the gleam of brass or the sheen of chrysanthemums', before stepping out onto the broad piazza overlooking the river.

At this event in 1912 for instance, it was reported that 150-200 visitors, including the patroness Lady MacGregor, inspected more than 1800 articles before they were distributed to a long list of institutions.

After she had had an up-close view of the construction of the Story Bridge, ill-health meant Mrs Corrie's having to move away.

The house was soon turned into five self-contained flats and not long after that came the acquisition by the Royal Queensland Yacht Club.

* * *

Sixty-five years after Queensland Governor Sir John Lavarack unveiled the plaque at Caldew, his current successor, His Excellency Paul de Jersey AC, re-dedicated the refurbished memorial at the entrance to RQYS's clubhouse at Manly.

The restored plaque, which had been 'lost' for so long, is now on display for new generations.

MONTHLY HISTORY COLUMN from
MY VILLAGE NEWS / April 2018

BOOKS published by the New Farm & Districts Historical Society Inc.

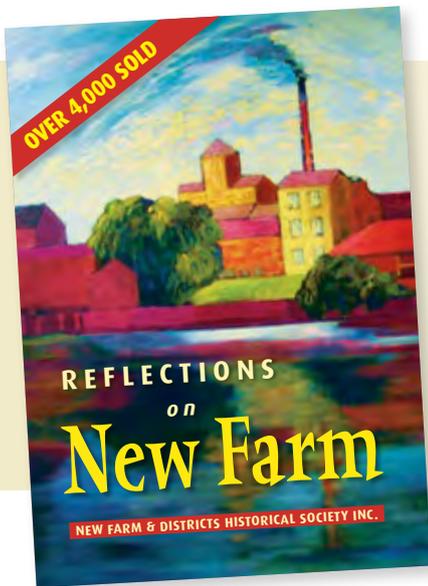
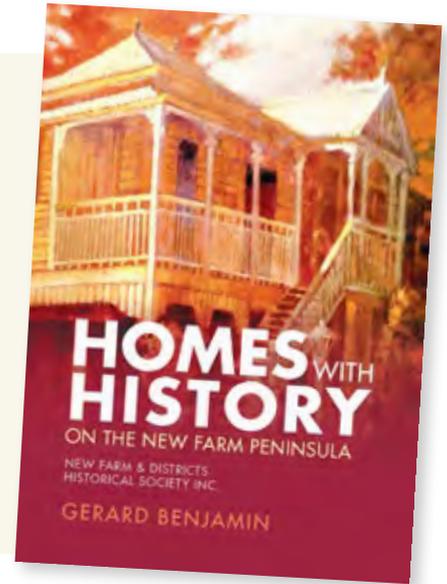
Homes with History — on the New Farm Peninsula

by Gerard Benjamin

This enthralling snapshot of more than 20 local homes notes architectural details, but its main focus is on *people*—those who built the houses, the architects who designed them, and the successive residents and families who occupied and adapted them.

When launching the book, the former Governor of Queensland Penelope Wensley said, “The individual stories are absorbing... All who take the time to read the book will enjoy the parade of personalities that passes through its pages...”

160pp, illustrated in colour; includes five letters (1848-52) of James Gibbon
PAPERBACK, \$35; HARDBACK, \$59.50.



Reflections on New Farm

compiled by Gerard Benjamin & Gloria Grant

This book has sold more than 4,000 copies, and is an indispensable reference about New Farm’s past, with enlightening insights about the suburb’s notable places, people, landmarks and events — particularly through the eyes of long-time residents who remember how it used to be... With 35 chapters and over 150 photos or graphics, you’ll relish these valuable personal recollections and wonderful stories.

PAPERBACK, 2008, 176pp. ISBN: 9780980586800 — \$25

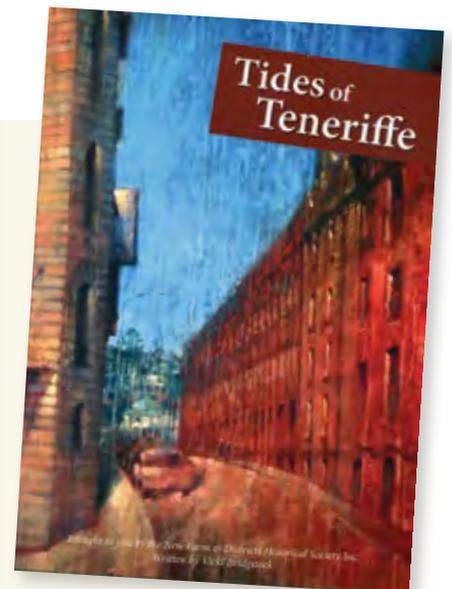
Tides of Teneriffe

by Vicki Bridgstock

How Teneriffe has changed—from being a colonial outpost, when its wool and sugar wharves were the centre of Queensland’s economic boom, to being a bustling inner city suburb in its own right.

Vicki’s book puts you in the flow of Teneriffe’s past and local memories, and features historic images and never-before published photos of life in Teneriffe. Hear the hidden voices and stories behind this choice spot in Brisbane’s heartland.

PAPERBACK, 2009, 72pp. • ISBN: 9780980586817 — \$20



The three books are available from local bookshops in New Farm, as well as from the State Library of Queensland Library Shop. Alternatively, the books may be purchased from the New Farm & Districts Historical Society Inc. Phone (07) 3254 1449 or email: info@newfarmhistorical.org.au • www.newfarmhistorical.org.au



Tertiary Education in Brisbane: Then There Were Universities

Saturday 19 May 2018

Australian Catholic University, 110 Nudgee Road, Banyo
The Mercy Building, Oculus Room



University of Queensland Students c1912 (SLQ JOL negative 124694)

- 12.45 Registration and Book Sales
- 13.15 Welcome to ACU by Jim Nyland
- 13.25 Bill Metcalf: Evolution of Universities in Brisbane
- 13.55 Jim Nyland: History of ACU
- 14.15 Launch of *Brisbane: Training, Teaching and Turmoil – Tertiary Education 1825 – 2018* *
- 14.30 Afternoon Tea and Book Sales
- 15.00 Cassandra Byrnes: Women & Tertiary Education
- 15.30 Jon Piccini: Universities as Political Melting Pots
- 16.00 Bill Metcalfe: Summary and Future of Tertiary Education
- 16.15 Q & A with panel
- 16.45 Close

Access to ACU is clearly marked on the west side of Nudgee Road. Ample free parking available

Enquiries: 3844 8922

Booking Essential

RSVP 12 May 2018

If booking by mail please complete and return this form to PO Box 2118, Brookside Centre, QLD 4053. Please make cheques payable to Brisbane History Group Inc. If you wish to book by email/EFT please use the contact form on the website or email bhg4000@brisbanehistorygroup.org.au. Include a contact phone number and the names of those attending. Please also attach a copy of your bank payment slip with your booking. Account details for direct deposits: BSB 734-000, A/C No 093887, A/C Name Brisbane History Group Inc. Alternatively you can book online through Ticketebo who will apply a small surcharge.

Number attending: _____ Amount enclosed: _____ (\$10.00 BHG members and students; \$15.00 non-members)

Name(s) attending: _____ Phone: _____

*** Purchase the book at the launch and it will be discounted by your booking fee (first copy only)**