



NEW FARM & Districts HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2021

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MARCH MEETING

The origins of Anzac Day

THE rain had cleared, and the Covid lockdown had not quite started, as more than 70 devotees gathered to be entertained, educated and entranced by Dr Mark Cryle's erudite lecture entitled, "Lest We Forget: the Origins of Anzac Day."

Dr Cryle is well credited to deliver such an address, being an historian at UQ, a musician, songwriter and once the manager of the Fryer Library.

His delivery became very interactive,

as he questioned the audience on the origins of what Anzac Day represented. Was it a military victory or a defeat? He assured us that there were lots of myths about Anzac Day. He explored the reasons Australia was even at Gallipoli with the British, and why anyone was at Gallipoli fighting the Turks.

Dr Cryle reminded us of the mythmakers: Mr Ellis-Bartlett, a war correspondent who didn't even step ashore at Gallipoli; Charles Bean, another who glorified Gallipoli; Ernest Bailey who wrote two books of glorious deeds; and another shyster, Tom Skeyhill, a poet and circuit speaker.

Much later, in 1926, honest reports began to surface, from Cecil Aspinall, and even from Bartlett



who retracted his earlier falsehoods. A film was made in 1915, *A Hero of the Dardanelles*, which reassured the public that all was well.

Dr Cryle's research uncovered meetings in Brisbane in 1916 involving politicians, church leaders and schools to promote Anzac Day. Enlistments

had been falling and it was felt that a public march

would bolster community spirit and enlistments. In fact, the opposite occurred as the parade became very unruly, with many badly wounded soldiers

on display and recruitments actually failed.

Mark reminded us that 15,000 Australians were killed in 1916-17, and 19,000 in 1917-18. Death touched every second family in Australia.

Anzac Day, of course, continues to be celebrated. It was once nationalistic, militaristic and masculinist, but now the messages are of peace, and of the futility of war. Needless to say, delving beyond the traditional perspectives on Anzac Day is not something that is always wholeheartedly embraced.

Dr Cryle completed his thought-provoking address by playing guitar and singing Eric Boyle's "And the Band played Waltzing Matilda". Thank you, Mark.



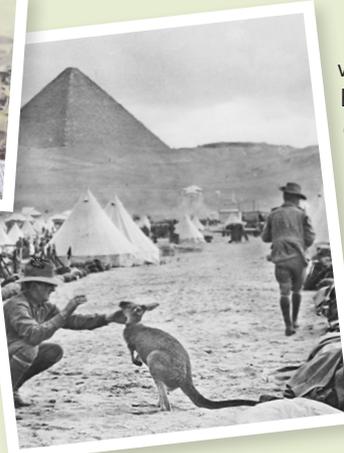
BY
Joanna Phillips

APRIL MEETING

New Farm Anzacs

Our April meeting will feature Noel Adsett OAM (pictured) who has researched the lives of most of the soldiers, doctors and nurses whose names are listed on the honour boards at St Andrew's Uniting Church in the city.

"Since some lived in New Farm," said Noel, "I will outline salient facts about their schooling, military service and later life at home."



Noel will also offer an insight into their wartime experiences, their lives back in Brisbane and the impact of the Great War on their homes and families. The talk will include a selection of historic photographs.

The meeting is to take place on Saturday, 24 April, **2.30pm**. There will be room for 100 attendees, and afternoon tea will be available. All are welcome. Entry: \$5 (members \$4).

Please note: This meeting begins at the later time of 2.30pm, since access to the area is not permitted until 1.30pm.



TUDOR WRAP

The enshrouded building near Maxwell St has kept Riverwalk amblers and Kangaroo Point residents guessing over recent weeks. The mock-Tudor heritage home *Gwandoben* (1933) has been well wrapped while awaiting its new life as an exclusive apartment which will complement 12 others in a new riverfront tower. There is more about *Gwandoben* in *Homes with History*.

DESPATCHES FROM WWI

Letter to Bowen Tce from France, 1918

THE Frankel family lived at Strathmore, Bowen Tce, across the road from Lonbuie, William Fraser's large home of which only the brick fence remains at 341 Bowen Tce (now Bowen Place). The sons of both families served in WWI and their names appear consecutively on the Honour Board at New Farm Bowls Club. Mr Frankel (who owned an automotive parts business in the Valley) contributed extracts from his son's letter from France in late 1917.



By recent English mails Mr Philip Frankel received letters from his son Alan (pictured) from "Somewhere in France," in which he states that his battalion had just finished a nice little route march lasting eight days, and they were at the time of writing enjoying a well-earned spell, and, with a bit of luck, hoped to remain at their quarters over Christmas.

The billets, he states, were very comfortable, and he was doing his best to pick up a little more French. It takes time, but he was beginning to "feel his feet," and hoped to be able to "parley" pretty well soon.

He thanked the members of the New Farm Bowling Club for the postcard containing the photograph of the honour board, and said, "It is nice to know that one is not altogether forgotten by one's friends."

He added, "I suppose by this time that the pennant matches are over. I am wondering how you got on, and would be very pleased to hear that New Farm had won." (Note: New Farm won.)

"Football is very much encouraged in our battalion. I

have been playing a lot lately, and it is keeping me rather fit and well. We generally devote our afternoons to it instead of drill."

After acknowledging several parcels from friends and the Comforts Funds, he continued, "The cold is not a patch on what we experienced this time last year, and up to the present we have not had a decent fall of snow. We have had sheepskin vests issued to us, and I have just received a pair of new boots, as the old ones were well worn out." He desired to be remembered to all inquiring friends.

– *The Brisbane Courier*, 28 February 1918, p. 8.

VISITORS



From Melbourne and Bribie: Calling at the Ron Muir Room on Thursday 18 March were Brian Ashen (second from right) and his wife Judith-Ann from Melbourne, along with his brother John and wife Norelle from Bribie. Their quest was to view spots connected with the Clark family once of Elsytan Rd. John and Brian are descendants of Stephen, the elder brother of James Clark (1857-1933) who became one of Queensland's most prominent citizens. Robert Lehane's book about James Clark entitled *The Pearl King* was featured at a NFDHS meeting in 2014. The Clark family home Wybenia overlooked Oxlade Dr. It was later acquired by the Cerebral Palsy League of Qld and demolished in 1968.

VIRTUAL SEMINAR

Enjoy a field-day with DNA

HAVE you ever been tempted to have a genealogical DNA test, with the aim of connecting up with cousins whose DNA matches are close to yours? If so, you may be interested in attending the **DNA Discovery Day** being convened by the DNA Group within the Genealogical Society of Queensland (GSQ). This will take place – *virtually* – on Saturday, 19 June 2021, 9am-4:30pm, the cost being \$50-65.



Six expert presenters will be featured, and they will conduct Q&A sessions. According to one presenter, "Adding DNA research to my genealogy tool kit has increased the range of my methods, and has helped reveal skeletons and break down many brick walls."

An Early Bird discounted offer ends on 31 May 2021. Please make your bookings at: <https://www.gsq.org.au/event/2021-dna-discovery-day/>.

For more information, you are welcome to contact Maureen Cavanagh (dna@gsq.org.au).

JUST KIDDING

Senior Investigator Jim MacD

Scramble about metric oversight...

IN 1966, this nation committed itself to a conversion to the metric style of accounting. Out went the pennies and in came the cents.

My quality carpenter's boxwood folding, four-piece, three-foot rule became obsolete. I needed to buy a Lufkin steel tape in metric measurement.

My family had to convert from ounces to grams, and my journey to work changed from five miles to something more in kilometres. My pay doubled in numbers but it didn't seem to buy anything more than previously.

But! Eggs (or cackleberries as they are known in the trade) continued to be marketed in the original moulded recycled carton of 12 eggs. Why not 10? Who was responsible for this oversight? As a citizen of Australia, I demand a Royal Commission be set up to investigate, nay crack the shell of this imbroglio.

Meanwhile who remembers buying eggs back in the thirties, forties and fifties? They were bought



from the grocer who, after receiving your order for a dozen, picked up a fresh brown paper bag and selected the eggs from his loose bulk stock and carefully wrapped each egg loosely in a pre-cut/torn off six-inch square piece of the Telegraph newspaper. After such careful packing, it was now the customer's responsibility to get the bag home without any breakages.

During WWII and thereafter, eggs were not rationed, but supply was strained. To overcome this, the government legislated that all eggs be sold through the Egg Marketing Board. Egg producers were required to consign their total production to this Board which would wholesale them to grocers.

Grocers could not always obtain the quality they wanted for their customers. However, some rogue vendors would, of a weekend, roam locations such as the Redlands in an endeavour to negotiate illegal purchases from poultry farmers.

When you next enjoy 'tweeggs' (two eggs) that are soft-boiled after three minutes, accompanied by that tasty, hot buttered toast, offer a paean of praise for the ultimate fine-feathered producer, the hen....

Trio of Maskateers:

Volunteers (from left) Michael, Stuart and Jim at our meeting in March were a picture of covid consciousness. Thanks again to all attendees for observing the protocols which make it possible to continue our meetings.



(the courtyard or hall) prior to 1.30pm to allow the cleaning to be done. This is part of the Covid-safe plan for the venue that we hire, so we do ask that you respect this change.

The link for the video recording of the last meeting is available on the [Society website](#).

We continue to trial the best way to record the meeting 'in-house' so if you have technical skills that you can offer, please contact us.

Santina Musumeci is our Volunteers Coordinator, so she will be very happy to hear from you if you would like to contribute your skills so as to have your name added to the roster of volunteers.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT Ross Garnett

Safety first a necessity...

WE were fortunate that we managed to hold the last public meeting just days before the three-day lockdown. The declaration of a New Farm café as an important venue in the contact-tracing process brought Covid close to home for us. However, we still had more than 70 people at our meeting.

Covid has brought many changes to us all, and the latest change of which you should be aware is that our meetings in the future will commence at **2.30pm** instead of 2pm as it has been for many years.

This is to allow time for the venue to be cleaned after the group that meets in the morning, and then time for us to set up the hall ready for our meeting.

Please take note that no one can enter the venue

MAY MEETING

Meet Joshua Jeays

"IT would be a pleasure to share some of my research about Joshua Jeays, an important early resident and builder in Brisbane," says Beryl Roberts, who is to be our speaker on Saturday, 22 May 2021.

Jeays started work in England as a carpenter, then in Brisbane, he worked as a builder, architect and stonemason. He is remembered locally via Jeays Street, Bowen Hills.

There will be more details in the May newsletter.



ON THE MOVE*George Cowin***Cowin house relocates from Villiers St to Fig Tree Pocket**

THE Cowin family home, dating from 1906, originally stood at 40 Villiers St. It had been built by George William (Bill) Cowin and Eliza Jane Cowin. The property of 112 perches had been purchased in 1896, and was used initially to rest horses connected with the family transport business which had recently won the contract to cart sugar for the Colonial Sugar Refinery.

The family had been living at 119 Browne St in the house bought by Eliza Jane before she was married.

In the 1893 flood (there were several cyclones that year) it was surrounded by water and the family had to billet with the Hackett family higher up in Annie St until the waters receded. As a result of this experience, Bill Cowin vowed to find a flood-free property so that in future neither his family would be put at risk nor his business jeopardised.

When purchased, the Villiers St property was joined to the neighbouring property on the eastern side, and consequently divided Villiers Street into two sections.

This meant using Cross St in order to traverse Villiers from Brunswick to James Sts.

Local residents asked Bill if could they pass through the gates on either side of his property, to save them having to go home the long way round.

He agreed, providing that they shut the gates so the horses did not get out—however, people being people, someone left the gate open so he locked the gates.

The (then) Brisbane Town Council were persuaded to join up the two halves of Villiers St and the property owners were approached for a resumption of land to provide the roadway. However, they were only prepared to resume part of the width of the roadway, because of lack of funds in the coffers. Bill regarded them as fools, and he said he would build his house at the front of the property and they would never get the land that was obviously needed for a proper roadway.

This he did, and that was how it remained until 1995 when the land was sold again.



Old and new: The Cowin family residence at 40 Villiers St (showing the last horse and dray before trucks took over); and (right) the house soon after arriving in Fig Tree Pocket.



Originally, the house was built and fenced off as a family residence, and the rest of the land was used for the transport business that included stables for horses and drays. The business grew to 36 draught horses by about 1920 and employed many locals.

While the house was not one of the grandest houses of New Farm, it was typical of the era and enjoyed a commanding view out towards New Farm Park and the Refinery. It remained as a residence with a small office off the verandah until 1950 when Eliza Jane passed away. After that it was entirely used as an office.

By the late 1970s, the house was in need of repair, so the roof was re-sheeted and verandahs enclosed so as to provide a dust-free environment for the first computers. While the modifications detracted from the grandeur of the old house, the business purpose was served.

In 1993, the business was sold and the transport equipment was removed from the site. Sheds and structures were demolished and decontamination of the soil began. The land was sold, with the house to be removed before sale.

The removal process meant demolishing the brick chimney, taking off the roof and dividing the house into two. It was transported at night to a quarter-acre block at Mactier St, Fig Tree Pocket, where it was reconstructed and restumped.

From there it was stripped of its encasing walls, extended to the rear and increased by an additional verandah to the right-hand side. The hand railings and staircase were restored, and it was built in underneath to provide additional bedrooms, rumpus room, garage and ensuite.

Having a commanding view overlooking the Montessori School, Pony Club and Mandalay, it will never be built out nor flooded.

The river winds around the pocket from Jindalee to Indooroopilly and provides cool breezes in summer. Landscaping and further rear extensions give the house the splendid appearance it has today.

While the grand old lady of New Farm is lost to Villiers St, it lives on in picturesque Fig Tree Pocket with commanding views — so it is not lost for those who relish the pleasure of viewing old Queenslanders.



Photos: Austin Adams, Gerard Benjamin, Santina Musumeci, Lorraine Nothling

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MANY THANKS TO
Grace Grace MP
Member for McConnel (07) 3145 9100
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Accept the past, but don't get stuck in that old story...

V | news

archives



GERARD BENJAMIN

After 25 years, at last it became 'Smithy's Drive'

At 10.14am on Saturday 9 June 1928, Charles Kingsford Smith's Southern Cross touched down on the grass at Eagle Farm after the epic, pioneering 11,600km flight across the Pacific.

A crowd of 10,000 thronged to see Smithy and crewmen Ulm, Lyon and Warner, as they boarded a Dodge open tourer (from Austral Motors) and headed to the town hall.

At the corner of Riverside Tce and the Hamilton Rd (as it was then called), the entourage paused so that the aviator could point out to his crew where the house in which he had been born once stood.

The previous year, Kingsford Smith and Ulm had flown around Australia in record time. Smithy was gradually becoming a household name and people remembered their connections with the family.

My mother's great-uncle, Surveyor Monk (of Kuranda railway fame), came close to toppling R.A. Kingsford, the aviator's grandfather, from the position of mayor of Cairns in 1887.

In Rockhampton the surveyor's sister-in-law had known Mr William C. Smith who had once been among the town's bank managers. Years earlier he had married Miss Kingsford.

It was because of my father that Smithy was revered in our household. Sunday afternoon drives to the old Eagle Farm airport usually included a walk around The Southern Cross memorial.

As a kid, I assumed the plane was a replica since the fabric-covered airframe looked so flimsy. It was a shock to realise that it was the real thing.

Only years later when compiling my father's memoirs did I understand why he so esteemed the aviator.

In July 1932 when my father was a nine-year-old, Smithy, billed as 'the world's greatest flyer', arrived in Rockhampton for a civic welcome. Later, a silent film about



En route to their reception at the Brisbane City Hall, (from left) Charles Kingsford Smith, Harry Lyon [navigator] and James Warner [radio operator], with Charles Ulm seated in front. Supplied: State Library of Queensland 135100.

the cross-Pacific flight was shown with the star flyer supplying the 'talkie' part.

Also on offer were joy flights. As my father wrote, "My mate Doug and I decided it would do no harm to suggest to our parents that we take advantage of this once-in-a-lifetime experience. Contrary to expectations they agreed, and that afternoon, Mum, Dad, Doug and I piled into the trusty old Dodge and drove out to Connor Park Aerodrome.

"I found myself seated in the cabin of the famous Southern Cross only a few feet away from the great man himself, being interviewed by Miss Ann Murtagh, a reporter from the local Morning Bulletin."

My father's reaction was probably echoed by many other lucky Aussies of the era: "The joy-flight, although only 15 minutes, was one of the most thrilling experiences of my life."

Little could the youthful Keith Benjamin imagine that just over three

years later, Smithy's luck would run out for good off the coast of Burma on a flight from England.

* * *

In 1938, one idea of honouring the aviator was to rename Riverview Tce but World War II interrupted deliberations. At last in 1953, the Hamilton Rd was redesignated and the headline could read, "It's Smithy's Drive now."

The seven-km stretch of road was considered a fitting tribute to the man who took to the air from Oakland in California, via Hawaii and Suva, to Brisbane, with a flying time of 83 hours and 38 minutes.

Fast forward to the rejuvenated Kingsford Smith Drive which has been well enhanced by landscaping and tree-planting. Come 2028, with its centenary of Smithy's heroic flight, those trees are likely to look as if they have always been there.

MONTHLY ARCHIVES COLUMN from
MY VILLAGE NEWS (Inner North)
NOVEMBER 2020

As soon as we left the ground I knew I myself had to fly! — Amelia Earhart