



# NEW FARM & Districts HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

[www.newfarmhistorical.org.au](http://www.newfarmhistorical.org.au)  

NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2021

Vol. XXVII, No. 7

## JULY MEETING

### Anyone for a swim?

**I**T may have been winter, but around 50 Historical Society members were transported to golden summers past when Steve Capelin presented 'A World of Water: A Brief History of Swimming in Brisbane' to the July meeting.

Steve — an arts worker, teacher, local historian and novelist — provided an engaging summary of Brisbane's relationship with swimming. His own aquatic interest was sparked after researching a 50-year history of the Musgrave Park Pool in 2017.

Some of today's older residents learnt to swim in the Brisbane River. Steve, however, pointed out that much earlier inhabitants camped, fished and swam at



many of the creeks which flow into the river, including at York's Hollow near Fortitude Valley and at Breakfast Creek.

Indeed, a colonial map of Aboriginal campsites in South Brisbane shows its original inhabitants swam in the creek now occupied by the Southbank Lagoon.

The river was vital for colonial settlers as it provided the water for cooking, cleaning, industry and, of course, swimming. Frequent creek drownings and a morbid fear of sharks helped lead to safer options, such as swimming enclosures and floating baths. Bathers were strictly segregated by allotting different times for men and women.

Later came council municipal baths, of which the Spring Hill Baths (1886) is our earliest remaining example. Of particular interest was Steve's description of the construction of the Booroodabin Baths (1901), its successor the Valley Baths (1926), and the flurry of pools built during the 1950s, including the famous Centenary Pool (1957).

A new addition to the story of swimming may one day come to fruition in Teneriffe. In 2016, the developer Riverside Marine presented to the BCC an idea for a floating pool as part of a "marina and an activated river bank".

Thanks Steve, for a broad and entertaining account of Brisbane's changing but enduring aquatic love affair.



BY  
Robert Allen



**Staying cool:** The swimming arrangement at Ithaca in 1910 proved a mecca for locals. (A227-BCC-B54). Meanwhile, Society member Gertrude Zaklikowski (above right) enjoyed time off at the Valley Pool in 1950. She was soon to start waitressing at Cafe Europe, becoming a familiar face for so many during 37 years.



## AUGUST MEETING

### "May I help you?"

**G**ROWING up in a small family shop is similar to being raised on a farm: every member has chores from an early age—and while there is very little break from the business, there are life lessons to be learned galore.

The Garnett Family Grocery Store was at 152 James St for around 84 years—and this is to be the topic of the talk by both Ross and Desley Garnett at our August meeting, following the AGM formalities.



"A new house on the block adjoining where the old shop stood at James St has been called 'Garnett on James', which ensures that the name lives on," said Desley.

After leaving school, Ross worked with his parents in the shop—and he will share yarns not only about life behind the counter, but also on the delivery bike all over the suburb.

The meeting (to be recorded) is to take place at the Uniting Church Centre, 52 Merthyr Rd, at 2.30pm on Saturday, 28 August. Afternoon tea is included. All are welcome. Entry: \$5 (members \$4).

*I'm more comfortable sinking while clutching a good theory, than swimming with an ugly fact... — Mamet*

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Ross Garnett



## Thank you for the last 17 years...

**T**HIS will be my last message as President of the New Farm & Districts Historical Society. Thank you for your trust in me as president for the past 17 years and for the privilege of leading the growth of the society.

Over those years we have had such an interesting variety of speakers who have willingly given of their time to share historical information with us. Which ones stand out in your mind?

I am very grateful for the support and interest of many people, including committee members and other volunteers. I will not try to name names here for fear of leaving someone out. Indeed it would be a very long list to mention the wonderful volunteers over the past 17 years!

A society such as ours continues only by virtue of the dedication and strength of the many who contribute their time and skill. You will agree that the smooth running of our monthly meetings for around 100 people is a testament to how committed they are to their tasks.

We also exist only because of the interest and support of our members, so thank you to those who pay their membership each year. The fee of \$10 is affordable for all and gives the society strength.

August is the month when memberships are due. Could I suggest you make it easy for the volunteers at the membership table by completing the form attached to the newsletter and placing it with your \$10 in a marked envelope. We are in the process of updating the membership database, so please take the time to complete all of the details so that we can be sure the data is current.

If you are receiving this newsletter and have not ever decided to become a member, please make this the year when you support the society that is supporting your interest in history.

Payments can be made simply by bank transfer and emailing a completed form to us, so inability to attend a meeting need not be a barrier. All the required details are on the membership form.

As I finish my presidency, I wish the society well in continuing to work towards our motto, "Gathering information from the past... Preserving it for the future".

**MAGIC CONNECTION**

## Cintra House, and a certain nanny...

**H**ELEN Lyndon Goff, even before the age of ten, had lost her father and been shunted between relatives, as well as between places such as Maryborough, Brisbane, Allora, Bowral and Sydney. It's no wonder that the child sought refuge in the magic of fantasy as a way of surviving.

Perhaps little Lyndon (as she was known) had once been shown the big white mansion named Cintra House, atop Bowen Hills, resplendent with its views of the river and the bay beyond.

"That's where your mother's famous uncle used to live," she might have recalled being told. "He was Premier of Queensland."

The little girl grew up to become a writer, calling herself Pamela Lyndon Travers or 'P.L. Travers'.

Her mother, Margaret Goff (née Morehead), was a niece of the pastoralist, businessman and politician, Boyd Dunlop Morehead (1843-1905) who lived at Cintra House for more than 30 years with his large family.

B.D. Morehead was premier during 1888-1890 and was succeeded by Sir Samuel Griffiths.

P.L. Travers likely relished hearing about the literary connections of the Premier's father (her great-grandfather), a Scottish clergyman who served as Dean of Edinburgh. He was also a poet, a reviewer of Jane Austen's novels, and a correspondent with Byron and Sir Walter Scott.

Years later, Helen Lyndon Goff (1899-1996), as P.L. Travers, also applied her pen, her most famous creation being a sagely nanny named Mary, whose family name was Poppins.

**POSTSCRIPT:** Thanks to Suzanne Guastini for pointing out the link between P.L. Travers and the Moreheads—as well as for recommending the film: *Saving Mr. Banks*.



**A fairy tale come true:** Top: Boyd Dunlop Morehead and Cintra House. Above: Julie Andrews, Walt Disney and Helen Goff (aka P.L. Travers).



**COMING MEETING****Notice: AGM — 28 August 2021**

**T**HE Annual General Meeting of the New Farm and Districts Historical Society will be held at the monthly public meeting of the Society on 28 August at 2:30 pm.

David Hinchliffe, life member of the Society, will preside at the AGM. At the meeting, all positions on the committee will be declared vacant and a new committee elected. Nominations are invited for all positions and nomination forms can be obtained by sending an email to [info@newfarmhistorical.org.au](mailto:info@newfarmhistorical.org.au) ATTN: Secretary.

Ross Garnett, who has been President for the past 17 years, is retiring at this AGM and we will take time to pay tribute to him for so many years of service and leadership. Following the meeting there will be a special celebratory afternoon tea—covid-safe, of course!

The Annual Report and a list of nominations will be sent out to all members prior to the meeting. Any apologies can be sent to the secretary. All members are encouraged to attend this special meeting.

**Mainly Moray Historical Walk:** This walk with Gerard Benjamin was due to take place on Saturday 7 August. When the recent lockdown was announced, it was decided to postpone it until **Saturday 11 September**. For enquiries, please email: [info@newfarmhistorical.org](mailto:info@newfarmhistorical.org).



**Wall art:** 'New Farm Park comes to Florence Street, Teneriffe' might well be the title of this art work signed: "The Zookeeper". It decorates a wall adjacent to No 9.



**Great photo – two stories:** On 6 November 1965, two submarines were moored at Dalgety's Wharf: *USS Barbel* (a pioneer of a new hull design) and the WWII-era *HMS Taciturn* serving with the Australian Navy. Behind them are Dalgety's Woolstore (1906-7) and the 1950s woolstore (later Paddy's Market, now Teneriffe Village apartments). The houses are mainly on Walker Avenue.

In 1984, the Dalgety woolstore went up in flames. As one report put it: "For 17 gruelling hours fire-fighters tackled the immense riverfront structure, before it finally collapsed in a firestorm of tumbling bricks, timber and rubble."

In 1965, society member Jim MacDonald lived across the river from Dalgety's Wharf. In his capacity as President of the local Lions Club, a welcome was often extended to crew of visiting naval ships. As coincidence would have it, on 20

November (two weeks after the above photograph), the sub *USS Sabalo* was in port, and received an invitation from the Bulimba Lions Club. As a result, a senior officer from *USS Sabalo* joined the MacDonald household for a meal which certainly thrilled the young sons of the house. *USS Sabalo* was en route to Pearl Harbour.

As local naval historian David Jones explained, "Brisbane was seeing many US Navy visitors at this time since it was a desirable port for R & R for crews serving off Vietnam."

By way of thanks for the MacDonalds' hospitality, the officer presented the family with a shield displaying the insignia of *USS Sabalo* (pictured).

– Photo kindly supplied by David Jones





## EMAIL TO THE EDITOR

## Swimming, footy and more...

Appreciative feedback for Steve Capelin's talk, "A brief history of swimming in Brisbane" (24 July 2021), came from Hazel Watson of Darling Point in Sydney:

"Thank you. What a fascinating story and history. I particularly liked the posed images on the river bank of the Aboriginal men. I also wonder if, when my father was a young swimmer in the early 1900s (he apparently represented Queensland in that sport), where would he have trained?"

By way of reply, Steve suggested that there would have been several pools at the time suitable for Hazel's father in which to train.

"The Spring Hill Baths is the most obvious. It was built in 1886 and is still going strong. There were also two land-based pools at South Brisbane, one where GOMA now stands, and another at the end of Ernest St where Kodak Beach at Southbank is now located. All were 25-30 metres in length.

"The first (modern) Olympic Games in 1896 set the standard competitive distance at 50 yards. Brisbane did not have a pool of that length until the 1920s. As a result the Dry Dock at South Brisbane was used for competition.

"Your father probably was a member of a swimming club. Some of these still exist and retain records of members and competition results," wrote Steve.

\* \* \*

IN 2019, Hazel visited Brisbane to enjoy a sentimental tour of Wynberg in Brunswick Street, since her father, Robert James (Bob) Willcocks, had grown up there in the era before it became the residence of the Catholic archbishops of Brisbane.

R.J. Willcocks, in his late 40s, had married in Sydney in June 1937, and Hazel recalled that among her father's good friends was Thomas Welsby of Amity at



**Wynberg cousins:** Hazel Watson (right), with her cousin Jane Robb of Brisbane and daughter Arabella. Jane is the granddaughter of Hazel (sister of R.J. Willcocks) whose marriage in 1919 to Stan Schooley took place at Wynberg, the Willcocks family home.

101 Welsby Street—and football followers may appreciate Hazel's recollection of this snippet of 'code history'.

"My father, a rugby union player of note before WWI, was later president of Queensland Rugby Union. Following that war, there was an issue between the two codes, Union and League.

"Mr Welsby recorded the tussle by compiling a book of newspaper cuttings relating to the crisis. This book was inherited by my father and then following his death, by my brother Robert.

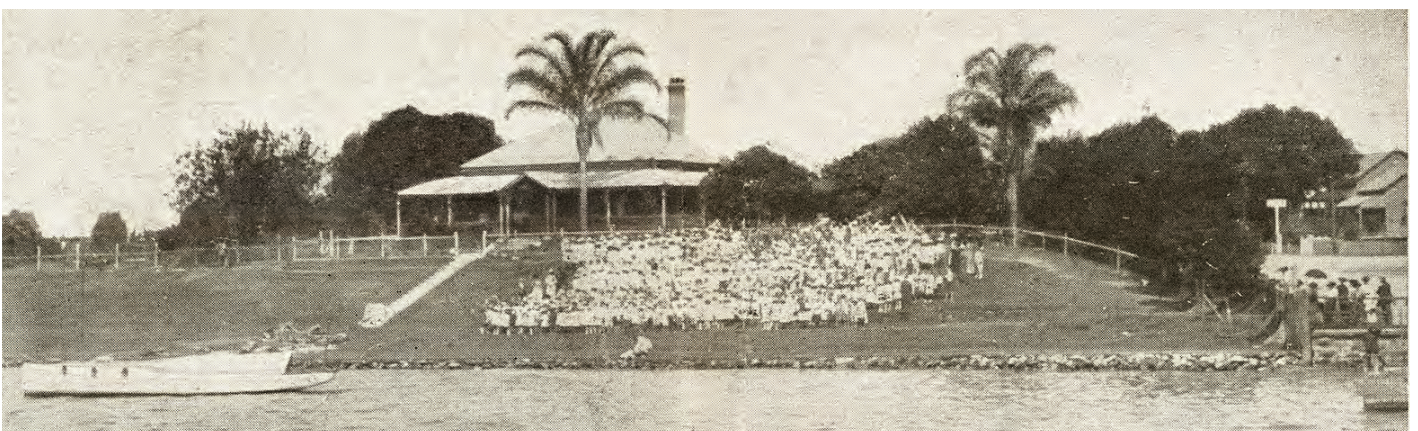
"In June 1993 a small ceremony was held before the annual NSW v Qld rugby match, when my mother, with our family, gave the book to Queensland Rugby Union for their archives."

\* \* \*

HAZEL'S FATHER was a good friend of Colin Clark who was married to Tom Welsby's daughter Marian (Winnie).

"Travelling to Brisbane when I was young, we often visited their home—and I remember, as I rested on the couch while the grown-ups chatted, wondering about the tall ornate Armoire which was inlaid with shining pearl-shell. I was probably too young to know that Colin Clark's father had been known as the 'pearl king'.

"It was following one of these visits that I was given, by Aunt Winnie, a beautiful American Encyclopedia in around 13 volumes which were leather-bound and illustrated. These I read from cover to cover, volume by volume, and no doubt was inspired by the heroic tales and history of bygone days. The only volume not of interest at the time was the one entitled 'Mothercraft!'"



**From *The Queenslander*, 20 March 1915:** The caption reads: "Children singing a song of welcome as the *Lucinda* passes." The event was the arrival of Queensland's 12th Governor, Major the Honourable Sir Hamilton Goold-Adams GCMG CB. The new governor and his wife had arrived at Pinkenba, and were being brought to town on the *Lucinda* for the swearing-in at Parliament House. Perhaps the children were from New Farm State School? The location was the riverbank adjacent to Gray Street, with Merthyr Road just visible on the right. The residence was Harnham, home of William Ruddle and family. Tom Welsby's house Amity was just out of the picture on the left.





**Quaint at the time:** It is exactly two years since Matthew Wengert (left) was a guest speaker at NFDHS. His subject was the book *City in Masks* which he had written about the 1919 Spanish Flu epidemic.

In August 2019, it seemed such an amazingly old-fashioned idea that an epidemic could ravage a modern community, requiring closures and masks to be worn.

Little did we suspect what was just around the corner in March 2020...



**Photos:** Gerard Benjamin, Lorraine Nothing

**Design and Layout:** G. Benjamin



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*Not what we have, but what we enjoy, constitutes our abundance... — Epicurus*



archives



**GERARD BENJAMIN**

Last month's *My Village News* (Nov 2019) which featured the historic riverside home Amity sparked boyhood memories for Hamilton resident Jim MacDonald.

"In 1943, one of my classmates at New Farm State School was Don Kendall whose family lived at Amity — I even visited the house," Jim said.

"From memory he and his brothers lived in bedrooms which had been built under the house.

"I occasionally saw his father, a Royal Navy captain, in full dress uniform with gold braid."

Amity could not have been more ideal for a naval man (or indeed his four sons) since it offered a front row view of the constant warship activity at the adjoining CSR wharf, as well as at the submarine base 500 metres downstream.

If the youthful Jim MacDonald could have looked up Captain Kendall's

profile online, he would have read that the naval reserve officer and master mariner had led an action-packed life, that he had survived several lucky escapes, and that he had captained his own inter-island trading vessel around New Guinea.



The front verandah of Craigroyston in 1925 when the Macgregors lived there. (The Home, 1 August 1925)

Just over a mile from Amity and on the highside corner of Bowen Terrace and Harcourt Street stood Craigroyston, a spacious residence commanding a glorious view.

It was designed in 1907 by Brisbane architect Robin Dods.

The client was barrister Peter Macgregor who was to be MLA for Merthyr and later a District Court Judge.

His actress daughter Mary Macgregor showed early promise

and even took a small part in a 1936 Hollywood film starring Jean Harlow, Clark Gable and Myrna Loy.

Following Peter Macgregor's death in 1936, the Mothercraft Association made use of the property to offer baby welfare to mothers.

In the wake of Pearl Harbour after which the war effort from Brisbane really got underway, Craigroyston was the kind of near-city property sought by the military.

Occupying the house was Security Intelligence Australia (SIA), a branch of the British Secret

Intelligence Service MI6.

This behind-the-scenes operation – aimed at "penetrating the Japanese Mandated Islands or other areas in the Pacific" – was to be independent of Australian Intelligence and the Americans, both of which became suspicious about its objective to reassert British influence in South-East Asia.

In December 1941, MI6 had chosen Captain Roy Kendall to lead SIA.

His knowledge of New Guinea and

the Orient was invaluable - he would report directly to Churchill.

It is said "Kendall's operational independence and his personal links to Downing Street, combined with his ability and charm, smoothed his unit's passage".

He apparently worked "very closely" with Chiang Kai-shek and Lord Louis Mountbatten and was described as "shrewd, capable, imaginative [and] dangerous".

As Admiralty representative in Brisbane, Kendall said that he was possibly the only Australian who could walk into General MacArthur's room at HQ without knocking.

One wonders what Kendall's wife and sons guessed about his work on the other side of New Farm and his many 'absences' overseas.

The facts of Captain Kendall's wartime job certainly came as a surprise to Jim MacDonald.

"It's amazing to think that I brushed past a man who was on such close terms with Churchill and MacArthur," he said.

Kendall was a Senator for Queensland during 1950–65, and though Craigroyston was demolished in the 1970s, Amity has survived.



Roy Kendall (1899-1972) Senator for Queensland, 1950-65 (Liberal Party of Australia) – NAA

MONTHLY HISTORY COLUMN from MY VILLAGE NEWS DECEMBER 2019



# NEW FARM & Districts HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

## Membership Form

Annual Membership – 1 September 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022

Type of Membership	New	Renewal	<input type="checkbox"/> contact info unchanged
			<input type="checkbox"/> updated info below
Name:			
Residential Address:			P/Code:
Postal Address:			P/Code:
Telephone:	Work/Mobile:	Home:	
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Photo permission	Photographs taken at public meetings may be published in newsletters and on social media		

I can volunteer in the following ways:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Welcoming at meetings     | <input type="checkbox"/> Collect Oral Histories                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Set up / clear up of room | <input type="checkbox"/> Assist with archives                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> IT support at meetings    | <input type="checkbox"/> Write short historical items for website |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assist with afternoon tea | <input type="checkbox"/> Other – please specify                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advise on new technology  |   |

### Membership Cost: \$10

Signed:..... Date:.....

Payment method:

- Bank Transfer: to New Farm and Districts Historical Society Inc.  
BSB 034065 - Account Number 146217 – Reference: MEMB and your surname. Please post or email completed form
- cheque or money order payable to: **New Farm & Districts Historical Society Inc.**
- Cash at public meeting or Society Office

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