



NEW FARM AND DISTRICTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

ESTABLISHED 1994

April 2025

NEWSLETTER

Vol XXXI, No 3

REPORT ON MARCH MEETING PRESENTATION

"Inspiring minds, touching hearts, shaping futures"



PRESENTER:
Ann Rebgetz



REPORTER:
Margaret Yeates

This anonymous quote came to mind whilst listening to the impassioned talk by Ann Rebgetz who recently retired as Principal of St James College in Spring Hill. Her intense love of teaching was obvious to all.

Ann has had a long and varied career since she started teaching at Innisfail over 40 years ago. Upon marriage to a medical practitioner, she found herself in the Northern Territory for 14 years where she had many roles including school principal at three schools, advisor to the Parliament on mathematics and, as Councillor for Women, travelled all over the state.

Ann had many experiences during this time including fending off brown snakes in her derelict new abode on Bathurst Island where the family was stationed for some time. She particularly enjoyed her time at Kakadu. Different schools had different contexts, Ann said. During all these experiences, Ann explained it was important to trust her "gut feeling". Her commitment to her roles was palpable.

Ann said that some of the many challenges were climate, isolation, accidents, riots, poverty, staffing, bureaucracy, and substance abuse. She often felt her role was "default parent".

Upon arriving back in Queensland at St Columban's School, Ann said she cried when she saw the marvellous facilities there compared to those disadvantaged schools in the Northern Territory.

Ann eventually became Principal at St James which has changed almost immeasurably since it was founded in 1868 and particularly in recent years. I wish my education in a single sex, academically driven Catholic boarding school had been more like St James as it is now because of the numerous opportunities it offers. St James is now multicultural, co-ed, is closing the equity gap, and has a

wellbeing hub. The students even built sports cars at St James and raced them. Wow!

Ann talked about the tensions and paradoxes for the future of schooling: have an appetite for risk but balance the scales;

red tape versus teaching time; non-binary approach to skills which are transferable between academic and manual skills.

An inspiring and very apt analogy was the use of the London underground map to illustrate the many pathways a student can take to reach their goal instead of following a linear approach. And, if a child baulked, she simply said "you can do it" or "over the jump"!



A quote from Henry Brooks Adams fits Ann like a glove: "A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops."

Ann has undertaken many roles and has been at times President of the Catholic Schools Principals of Queensland, 2017 to 2021, and President of Catholic Schools Principals Australia, 2022 to 2024. She was also President of the Catholic Schools Netball from 2015 to 2024. Ann, having retired from St James, is now Executive Officer of Catholic Schools for Queensland. (Continued on Page 2.)

View the Vimeo of Ann's Presentation [here](#).

ST JAMES COLLEGE – Spring Hill Brisbane - Recent History



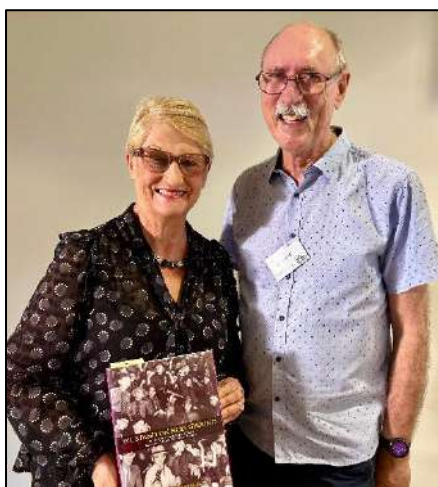
One of the slides from the presentation

- Turrbal and Jaggerah People - Boundary St History
- Catholic co-educational college (1993) for Years 5 – 12, 157 Years old – Christian Brothers since 1893 and after school started 1868, Strategic location, Edmund Rice Education Australia entity 2007
- Strong focus on global learning, wellbeing, vocational, academic and career employment outcomes for all students
- Multi-cultural, Multi-lingual, Multi-faith campus, Multi-skills, Multi-success
- Student-centred pastoral care, intervention culture
- Separate alternate pathways program – Pirlirra
- International students – registered school
- “Make friends with the world” Innovative Global Culture
- Winner as school of Australian Training Awards Nov 2023, student state finalists 2019-24



As a token of our appreciation, MC Robert Allen presented Ann with a copy of *Reflections on New Farm* as well as one of our new library tote bags to put it in!

Some of the 82+ attendees at the March meeting



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

2025 Membership Fee:

\$20 per year or part thereof

Add \$15 for posted newsletter.

Apply for or renew membership:

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

Newsletter Editor:

Bruna Burello-Day

editor@newfarmhistorical.org.au

Newsletter Editorial Assistants:

Connie Hamer and Rita Cleveland

Photography: Maria Shaw

DATE CLAIMERS

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

Other events in coming months include:

17 April: Monthly Afternoon Tea

26 April: Monthly Public Meeting

15 May: Monthly Afternoon Tea

17 May: Historical Walking Tour
by Gerard Benjamin –
Heart of New Farm.

24 May: Monthly Public Meeting

Details of events will be published in the relevant month's newsletter. Please note these events may be changed without notice. We will endeavour to keep you informed.



APRIL MEETING PRESENTATION

New Farm and Districts Historical Society Inc presents:

Saving Queensland's History for Future Generations



Miegunyah House Museum
and Qld Women's Historical
Association

Speaker:
Robyn Wallace



Saturday 26th April 2:30 pm

Uniting Church Centre, 52 Merthyr Rd, New Farm



www.newfarmhistorical.org.au
Enquiries: 0409 498 403

Seventy-five years ago, on 18 April 1950, thirty-one women attended a meeting to establish a Women's Newstead House group. From this inauspicious beginning, the organisation, now known as the Queensland Women's Historical Association, set a goal of educating the public about the lives and achievements of pioneer women and their families. At the time of its formation, few museums or organisations were interested in social history. QWHA undertook to collect material such as published and unpublished records of settlement and historic events, together with personal and household items that assist in the interpretation of our continually developing lifestyle. The collection of 15,000 items is housed at Miegunyah House Museum.

Secretary, Robyn Wallace, together with other members of QWHA, will look at some of the highlights from its establishment to its current state, including some of the remarkable leaders who have guided changes needed to keep the museum and its mission relevant.

Robyn became a guide at Miegunyah in 2014, returning to her first love of history. She is currently secretary of QWHA and continues to be a guide at Miegunyah.

LOOKING AHEAD TO MAY – Wynberg – Saturday 24 May

His Grace, Archbishop Mark Coleridge, has lived in the historic home *Wynberg* in Brunswick Street for more than 13 years. What passers-by does he see? How has New Farm changed in that time? What is it like living in a heritage listed home? Find out at our May meeting.

At right, His Grace addressed the lucky participants of Gerard Benjamin's *Heart of New Farm* walking tour last year when he happened to be in residence. Coincidentally, Gerard is guiding this walk again on 17 May, a week before our May meeting.



PRESIDENT'S APRIL MESSAGE



Desley Garnett

The "April showers" have come early as much of Queensland is again experiencing much more than showers as I write. This is following on soon after the almost-cyclone just a few weeks ago. So much water ... so much devastation ... so much loss for so many. These are certainly historic weather events. April is a busy month with an election campaign, Easter, ANZAC Day and just into May an Election Day. We will again have a display at the Merthyr Polling Booth at the Uniting Church and we hope you will be able to give an hour or two to represent your society to the community. Please let me know if you can come some time between 8 am and 2 pm.

president@newfarmhistorical.org.au.

Having a very colourful and modern looking logo led us to venture into merchandise. Our tote bags are now available for purchase so that you can proudly show the world that NFDHS is very much alive! You can spread the word that history is important and there is a vibrant historical society right here in our community.

What an inspirational story from Ann Rebgetz, in March, when we heard about the amazing changes in education at St James College in Spring Hill – from small beginnings to almost 1000 students, catering to the needs of individual students. Ann also reminded us of the importance of remembering history and showed us that each experience we have shapes our lives and the lives of others.

NFDHS celebrated 30 years in 2024, but our next meeting will focus on another historical group that celebrates 75 years in April 2025. A few visionary women began the Queensland Women's Historical Association back in 1950 and today they operate Miegunyah Historic House Museum in Bowen Hills – just a hop, skip and jump away! It's worth a visit and we will hear more about it at our meeting on 26 April. It's worth checking out their website <https://www.miegunyah.org>. Maybe you would like to volunteer to be a house guide or to help with afternoon teas at their Open Days. You can talk with our speaker on 26 April.

You can also support the work of the QWHA by attending the event as shown on the poster below.

PERFECTLY IMPERFECT

SONGS AND STORIES OF LIFE, LOVE AND LAUGHTER

JULEE-ANNE BELL - THE VOICE
MELISSA BUCHHOLZ - PIANO

Saturday 3rd May 7:30pm
Miegunyah House
Bowen Hills
Tickets \$35
<https://www.trybooking.com/DAGVT>

CURRENTLY ON DISPLAY AT THE NEW FARM LIBRARY

The ladies of the *Threads and Yarn* group who meet at the Ron Muir Room every Thursday morning have been busy crafting several items for display in the New Farm Library



VALE MARGARET GILMOUR



Was she our oldest member? Maybe you remember Margaret Gilmour who lived in her family home up to 2018 when she moved to a care home in Kingaroy to be closer to family. Margaret passed away recently at age 101 after living a full life of achievements and service to others. She was a leader in

many aspects of the Valley Presbyterian Church and the Merthyr Road Uniting Church and was a regular attendee at our Society meetings for many years.

Margaret and her sister, Lady Florence Bjelke-Petersen, grew up in the Mark Street home featured on the back cover of *Homes with History*. (The painting is by Gladys Blundell.) She held a very responsible job as the office secretary at Government House in Brisbane for many years where she met many dignitaries and members of the Royal Family and was awarded an MBE for her services to the Crown.

Margaret is warmly remembered as a person whose life was about compassion and service to others, and I am thankful to have called her my friend.

Desley Garnett



Invitation to the monthly Afternoon Tea

All welcome! RSVP president@newfarmhistorical.org.au

**Getting to know you
Afternoon Tea**

Thursday 17th April 2025
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



MEMBERSHIPS

Excluding four Life Members, we have now exceeded the magic number of **200** with our current financial membership standing at **205** as I write! There were five new members and 28 renewals in March alone. Thank you for keeping our Society alive and thriving. Keep those applications (new and renewal) coming in.... there is room for plenty more!

The easiest way is to attend our monthly meetings where our friendly volunteers will help you with all membership matters. Bank transfers seem to be gaining in popularity. It's another easy way to pay the \$20 membership fee. Just scan your form and attach it to an email addressed to me: membership@newfarmhistorical.org.au. (See the relevant forms [here](#) for all payment methods.) Please remember to add \$15 for postage if you wish to have the newsletter mailed to you. That's a bargain for the rest of this year as postage is set to rise yet again to \$1.80 in the near future.

While you're at the Membership Table, check out our publications and "merch" for sale (more about that later in this newsletter). We accept cash and cards here.

If you are a current financial member, collect your new combined name badge/membership card sporting our new logo at the Members' Welcome Table.

If you have an earlier name badge, please bring that along and we will exchange the old one for the new one



Back and front of name badge/membership card

Bruna Burello-Day – Membership Secretary

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Bev and daughter, Louise

Just after the last newsletter mailout, we received a lovely email from **Bev Bergstrum**, which just happened to coincide with the aftermath of Cyclone Alfred. Bev is one of our most senior members (aged a sprightly 93) and often attends our meetings with her daughter, Elaine, but last month attended with another daughter, Louise Macgregor.

Readers may remember that Bev gave an oral history of her memories of growing up in Villiers Street in the 1930s. That oral history may be seen [here](#).

Thank you so much for your newsletter at this very unsettled time. My family and I have gone well. Must admit to quite a bit of praying on Saturday night. Rest of time not too bad.

Heartfelt thoughts and prayers to everyone who has experienced horrific times. I was in the 1954 cyclone at Coolangatta and saw a lot of destruction there too. Was cut off from everything. Couldn't let my parents know I was okay. Mother Nature gives us so much beauty, but she can change her mind and do what she wants that is destructive. We have no control.

So much gratitude to Premier David Crisafulli, Bureau of Meteorology - all who kept us informed. Also to Energex and all who have helped others in trouble. I believe the best has been done for us. Although they looked so tired, everyone kept going. No doubt there will be some who find fault. I say let them have a go.

Desley, the newsletter would have been the last thought on everyone's minds. Many thanks to all at New Farm Historical Society for all the work put into organising speakers, walks, and so much going on behind the scenes. None of it would happen without all of you. Every meeting is so informative and such a happy place to be. Once again many, many thanks. It is all so appreciated.

*Regards,
Bev Bergstrum*

THE WORLD WAR II TOURIST DRAWCARDS OF BRISBANE

Mr Peter Rasey has asked us to circulate a working paper to better flesh out the tourism value to Brisbane of WWII. Mr Rasey would welcome any additions that have been overlooked. See contact details at the end of the paper which can be seen [here](#). His introduction is quoted here:

"To understand the real depth and importance of the connection between WWII and Brisbane, one just needs to reflect on the following: between 1939 and 1942, the Queensland-born Ambassador to the USA, Richard Casey, lobbied for a US military response based in Brisbane if the USA was attacked by Japan; the Pensacola Convoy's arrival in Brisbane a mere matter of days after Pearl Harbour was bombed; General Douglas MacArthur's grand arrival in Brisbane to set up his command headquarters; the Battle of Brisbane between US and Aussie troops; the sad sight of an unknown US soldier being loaded on the USAT Goucher Victory; the unveiling of the first "Australian American War Memorial"; the unveiling of the only "National Australia Remembers Freedom Wall"; and the only WWII Australian Coastwatchers Memorial on Australian soil."

In breaking news, we are delighted to announce that **The National Memorial for the Australian WWII Coastwatchers was installed on 4 April 2025 at Newstead Terrace Park**. This was the outcome of a petition which the Society helped to publicise. See Page 2 of the [October 2023 Newsletter](#) for details of the petition as well as a link to a Vimeo recording revealing the motivation for it. More information about this memorial will be published in a future newsletter.

(Letters continued)

NEW FARM GIRL MAKES IT TO THE TOP IN THE RETAIL JEWELLERY TRADE

A recent email from Perth Resident, Ross Herbert, enables us to record a little more history of New Farm.

MARGARET ROSE HERBERT AND MAZZUCCHELLI'S

Margaret Rose Matthews was the youngest daughter of Fred and Helen who owned Matthews Fire Alarm Pty Ltd. The family home was at 29 Sargent St, New Farm, and Margaret was one of five children who included her older brother, Fred (Jnr), older sisters, Elizabeth and Helen (Jnr), and a younger brother Bryan.

When I met Margaret in 1966, her elder siblings were married, and she was working for Wallace Bishop Jewellers in Brisbane. She was highly regarded and helped with the opening of several new suburban branches.

After we married in April 1969, Margaret found a job in Perth with Mazzucchelli's Jewellers, a family-owned company similar to Wallace Bishop. Her talent was quickly recognised, and Margaret helped with opening several new Mazzucchelli's branches in shopping centres around Perth.

The venerable company had been run jointly by brothers Harold and Edwin Mazzucchelli. The late 1960s brought considerable change for the firm, and the task of managing its future devolved to Harold Mazzucchelli's son-in-law, Max Carter. When Margaret was promoted to the purchasing of new jewellery and gift lines for all branches, she virtually became the right hand of the MD, Max Carter.

Between 1982 and 1994, Max and Margaret travelled to Europe, strengthening old relationships and making new ones with watch and jewellery manufacturers and suppliers. Paris, Venice, London and other destinations were on the itinerary, and they were wined and dined by companies such as Rolex in the best eating establishments. A woman in this industry was something of a rarity, and Margaret stood out.

In between European tours, Max and Margaret would also visit the jewellery fairs held at Darling Harbour in Sydney as well as call in on their suppliers in Melbourne and Adelaide. Come 1995, it was a source of grave disappointment to Margaret when the MD made the decision to sell Mazzucchelli's to the jewellery firm Zamels. She would have much preferred the new buyer to have been Watches of Switzerland.

Following the handover to Zamels in September 1996, Margaret retired and the last event at Mazzucchelli's that she attended was the Staff Christmas party that year.

After some years of ill health, Margaret passed away in September 2024. She had lived a full and fruitful life and occupied a position of influence in a company she loved. She was respected far and wide for her talent, style, and for knowing the world of jewellery so well. — Ross Herbert, March 2025

POSTSCRIPT: Readers of *Reflections on New Farm* will remember that Margaret's forebear, Henry Matthews, conducted his Queensland Nursery from the late 1870s until around 1901 on a block bounded by Brunswick Street, Bowen Terrace, and the track later known as Sydney Street. Margaret's father, Fred Matthews, made an important contribution to the Society in its early days.



Margaret in front of her parents' home at 29 Sargent St, New Farm, ca1980s



Margaret in Switzerland with Max Carter, the MD of Mazzucchelli's of Perth



Margaret and her husband Ross in 2020

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

V
VILLAGE
VOICE

RECENT EVENTS

CYCLONE ALFRED



Photo Credit: Connie Hamer

For many of us, this was a once-in-a-lifetime event which didn't exactly take us by surprise as there were frequent warnings as the cyclone meandered slowly down the coast, crossing just north of Brisbane on 14 March. By the time it reached Brisbane, Alfred had weakened to a tropical low. However, his presence was very much felt. New Farm Library closed on Thursday 6 March, and the Ron Muir Room and the NFDHS Office doorways were sandbagged (photo at left), while a couple of our volunteers lifted vulnerable items above floor level. Fortunately, neither the library nor the office was flooded. Power outages caused some flooding resulting in disruptions to traffic and services. Supermarkets had erratic and reduced opening hours and shelves were stripped bare; schools and businesses closed; transport services cancelled; strong winds and incessant rain caused falling trees to block the road in streets including Macquarie, Lamington and Browne;

and our March newsletter was delayed by one week! But we were lucky compared to other regions which had devastating impacts.



Macquarie Street near Dalgety's Bar
Photo from Facebook

CELEBRATING NEW FARM PARK AND ITS BEAUTIFUL BANDSTAND

As a result of the "Did You Know" article compiled by Connie Hamer in last month's newsletter, a request was received from subscriber Fran Cox for Connie to conduct a tour and talk about the New Farm Park Bandstand. Connie was delighted to oblige. Here is her report.

On Monday, 24 March, our Society welcomed a small group of Jubilee Community Care Clients from across Brisbane to New Farm Park. A special afternoon activity, organised by home care provider Jubilee, celebrated the history of heritage-listed New Farm Park and its most elegant 1915 "Queen Anne Federation style" Bandstand (also known as the Rotunda). A short presentation provided some background to our 30 years' strong Historical Society, interesting information about the New Farm area and an appreciation of the architecture of the Bandstand structure. Acknowledgement of the Turrbal people, the Indigenous people who lived in the Brisbane city and Moreton Bay areas prior to European settlement, was made with respect to the significance of

Binkin-ba ('place of the land tortoise' – the New Farm Park area) in the early 1800s. We thank Fran, Gary and Heather from Jubilee for making this informal and educational gathering possible. *Connie Hamer, on behalf of NFDHS*



The group appreciating 'our' Bandstand

WE HAVE MERCHANDISE – TOTE BAGS!



Our new tote bags -- a hessian shopping bag and a calico library bag -- were eagerly snapped up by attendees at the March meeting. Available at meetings and during our Office open hours, they are a steal at \$10.00 each and would make excellent gifts!

ANZAC DAY SERVICES IN THE DISTRICT

(Reproduced from April '25 Village Voice)

5.30am: Tenerife Dawn Service

Hosted by Submariners Association Australia Queensland at the Submariners Walk Heritage Trail, 71 Macquarie Street.

9.00am: New Farm Service

Hosted by Sandakan POWs Family and Friends QLD Inc at the Sandakan Memorial, near New Farm Park ferry terminal. Guest Speaker will be QU Emeritus Professor John Pearn AO AM, formerly Surgeon General of the Australian Defence Force until retirement as Major General from Defence in 2000. His Uncle, Major G Armstrong, was a POW at Sandakan in North Borneo during WWII.

UPCOMING EVENTS

GETTING TO KNOW YOU AFTERNOON TEA

Another convivial afternoon tea was held last month. About a dozen people – old and new members, as well as prospective members, and friends, enjoyed hearty conversation over a cuppa and home made treats. Everyone is welcome to join President Desley and committee members at the next one on 17 April. Bring your friends! Did someone say, “hot cross buns”?



QUEENSLAND MARITIME MUSEUM

The Society recently received an email from the QMM about a visit by crew members of [Penguin](#) (one of their current projects) to Hobart for the Australian Wooden Boat Festival. (For further information about this visit, please contact Russell.Cobine@maritimemuseum.com.au.) This prompted me (your Editor) to share some information about what I discovered to be...

A Gem Hidden in Plain Sight

We in the New Farm and Districts community are very fortunate to have access to several modes of public transport, including river transport via CityCats and KittyCats. These “cats” make getting to a fellow historical organisation’s site, namely the **Queensland Maritime Museum** at Southbank, very easy and very pleasant to boot! Why is this significant? I’d like to share a little secret I discovered recently and that is the Museum’s monthly event – *Twilight Jazz at the Maritime Museum* – which is part of the Brisbane City Council’s Bands in Parks program. I have now attended three such events, the last one being in February (see photo) at which I was accompanied by several NFDHS members and friends. Don’t let the “Jazz” in the title mislead you... the evening features an eclectic range of music. February’s event featured *Brass Roots Live*, a big band, one of whose musicians includes saxophonist, Elaine Bergstrum, a NFDHS member who entertained us at our 30th anniversary celebration last June.

It’s a great way to spend a Friday evening to kickstart your weekend and support the work of the museum which is run by volunteers. Access the Museum from multiple CityCat stops to QUT Gardens Point from which a connecting KittyCat cross-river service takes you straight there. Or you could walk over the Goodwill Bridge right to the entrance.

Best of all, it’s free – see further details, and book your place for the next event on Friday, 11 April (weather permitting and again featuring *Brass Roots Live*) via [Eventbrite](#). Arrive early and bring your own camp chair or picnic rug. Seating is snapped up quickly but there are many spots where you can set something up for yourself and friends. Don’t worry if you miss this one, however, as it’s on again next month (featuring different performers).

Why not support our QMM friends by attending this event or any of the exhibits and other events organised by the Museum. Visit their website [here](#).



Frank Day: One Soldier’s Story



Frank Day was born in Newstead, grew up in Bowen Hills and attended Fortitude Valley State School before enlisting to serve in the Great War in 1915. He served with distinction in Flanders, was gassed twice, and promoted to Sergeant. He survived the war but contracted TB and died just a few years later.

Frank was the uncle-in-law of New Farm resident and Historical Society member, Keith Harrison. Keith will briefly share Frank’s story at our April meeting, which appropriately falls the day after Anzac Day.

