



NEW FARM AND DISTRICTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

ESTABLISHED 1994

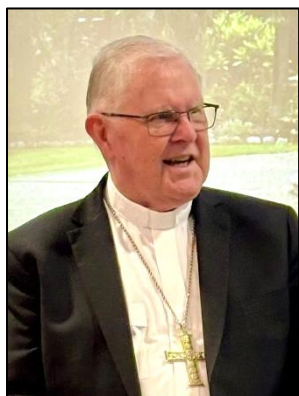
June 2025

NEWSLETTER

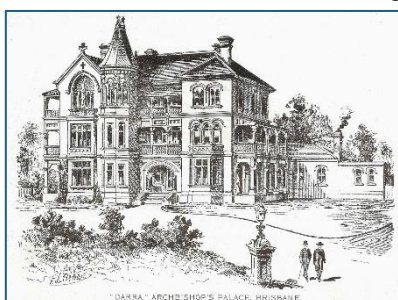
Vol XXXI, No 5

REPORT ON MAY MEETING

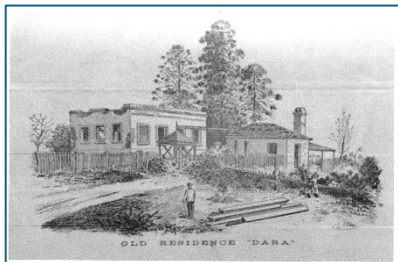
Archbishop proves a gracious and entertaining speaker



An unseasonably warm late Autumn afternoon and the prospect of hearing a prominent speaker drew a larger than usual crowd to our May meeting (around 130 attendees). Our guest was the Most Reverend Mark Coleridge (pictured), Brisbane's Catholic Archbishop, and his thoughtful address about living in the historic Wynberg property enthralled the gathered throng.



New Dara above and Old Dara below



The Archbishop was born in Melbourne, ordained as a priest in 1974 and was subsequently posted to Melbourne, Adelaide, Canberra and Rome before his appointment by Pope Benedict XVI as Brisbane's seventh Archbishop in 2012.

A keen student of history, he began by discussing the Church's two previous official Archbishop's residences, both of which were called *Dara* and stood on a hill in Fortitude Valley. The Church bought Wynberg

in 1925 as the residence for Archbishop James Duhig. The builder and previous owner, George Willcocks, had named the house after an area near Cape Town, South Africa. Wynberg is a Dutch or Afrikaans word which means "vineyard".

Wynberg is a working residence, home to the Archbishop and several Cathedral clergy and the venue for regular meetings and formal gatherings. His Grace was keen to point out that it is not "his" house but was bought and is maintained by the Catholic people of Brisbane. He emphasised that Wynberg really belongs to all of them.

He then took us on a fascinating descriptive journey of Wynberg's architectural features and grounds, noting the delights and drawbacks that living in a heritage-listed property entails.

The grand formal reception rooms contrast with the much more modest living quarters and His Grace outlined the various extensions and renovations – some sympathetic, others not so sympathetic. He has his office in the city but uses the house to entertain guests, to carry out research, and to write much of his correspondence.

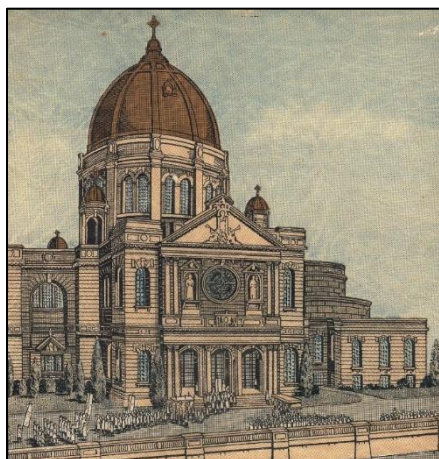
Wynberg's prominent location and central role in New Farm's history led several Society members to share their own interactions with the home and previous incumbents over the years.

Archbishop Coleridge will retire shortly – he is currently awaiting news about his successor from the new Pope – so we were fortunate that he agreed to speak to us before, in his own words, he "rides off into the sunset".

Continued next page.



REPORTER:
Robert Allen



At left, the Cathedral that was not to be – the proposed Holy Name Cathedral – and above, what stands on the site today.
At right, Wynberg in earlier times.



The Archbishop's address, including some excellent background slides added by Austin Adams, can be viewed online [here](#).



May 2025 meeting

Photos from the presentation, with additional images kindly supplied by Brisbane Archdiocesan Archives



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

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Office Opening Hours:

Every Thursday 2-4pm, February to November

Office Bearers

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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, with supplementary images by Robert Allen and others

Video recordings of all our meeting presentations can be accessed [here](#) or by clicking 'v' icon below.

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:

19 June: Monthly Afternoon Tea

26 June: Getting to Know You Soiree

28 June: Monthly Public Meeting

12 July: New Date – Historical Walking Tour

Mainly Moray, led by Gerard Benjamin

17 July: Monthly Afternoon Tea

19 July: New Date – Historical Walking Tour of the Woolstores, led by Ben Pritchard

26 July: Monthly Public Meeting

14 Aug: Monthly Afternoon Tea

23 Aug: Monthly Public Meeting and AGM


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




JUNE MEETING PRESENTATION

New Farm and Districts Historical Society Inc


**RUSSELL TRANSPORT:
CELEBRATING 100 YEARS**



The R.B.RUSSELL fleet in 1948




Speaker:
Phil Russell



Saturday 28th June 2:30 pm

Uniting Church Centre, 52 Merthyr Rd, New Farm



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

Philip Russell is the second generation of Russell Transport. The company was founded by his father, Roy Bayley Russell, in 1925 and operated out of New Farm until 1971. Roy won the contract to cart motor spirit for agents, Dalgety and Co, on behalf of Commonwealth Oil Refineries. Roy started with one truck and quickly grew the fleet over the formative years, expanding into wool carrying out of the Woolstores. The company served the local Brisbane area and travelled as far as Beenleigh each day. Over the years, the business moved locations within the New Farm wharf area as they expanded in size until, ultimately, the company moved out in 1971 to Eagle Farm where it is still based today. Phil will be talking about the company's history and evolution in the New Farm community and beyond.

LOOKING AHEAD TO JULY – SATURDAY, 26 JULY A RICH RESOURCE: QUT DIGITAL COLLECTIONS

Discover the **Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Digital Collections**, a rich resource of historical photographs, documents, and manuscripts. In July, speakers Jill Rogers and Dr Lyndal O'Gorman will provide an overview of this valuable archive.

Jill Rogers will highlight items specifically related to the early history of **New Farm** and its surrounding areas. **Dr Lyndal O'Gorman** will share personal insights as a contributor, showcasing digitised 35mm slides from her family's collection that vividly capture scenes of New Farm and the district.

Their presentation will demonstrate the crucial role digital collections play in preserving history and fostering global access to knowledge.

PRESIDENT'S JUNE MESSAGE



It's June — a delightful time of the year in Brisbane! Last week we celebrated Queensland Day – a day that commemorates the remarkable moment on 6 June 1859 when our great state started to chart its own course away from New South Wales. One hundred and sixty-six years ago, Queen Victoria gave her approval and signed the Letters

Patent, approving a separate colony named Queensland – a name she preferred over other possibilities presented to her!

It's a celebration of who we are and where we've come from – a day to honour everything that makes our state great. We are all part of the continuing story today – history is made each day by each person in small or large ways. You can read more about a few interesting points in the history of Queensland [here](#).

At our meeting on 28 June, we will hear the story of a family business that has contributed to the history of this state for 100 years as told by our member, Phil Russell. Perhaps few people know their story, but the effect has been felt in the transport industry as part of the development of Queensland.

THANK YOU, BRUNA!

This month, we want to express a huge thank you to Bruna Burello-Day who has been our newsletter editor for the past 20 editions. You may be aware our historical society newsletter is recognised as one of the best in Brisbane, if not

Queensland! Two years ago, we were faced with finding a new editor and Bruna agreed to do it in the interim – the 'interim' went on and on, and by default, Bruna became editor, a role which she has executed most admirably. However, this was a task on top of her role as membership secretary and being responsible for co-ordinating "front of house" at our meetings, both of which are large volunteer tasks. The time has come to hand over the editorship role to someone else.

We have a couple of possibilities in mind, but what we also need are regular contributors to the newsletter each month. That is where you come in! Gathering the content is a time-consuming task that requires some knowledge of the history of the area. If we all contribute, then the editor has simply the final task of deciding what goes into the newsletter and putting it together for publishing.

How might you contribute to the content of the newsletter? Do you have family history that would be of interest? Old photos with a story? Information about a house, business or street in the locality? A memory of a particular event? Changes you've noticed? Something you're curious about? What could you research? Where can you go to find information?

We have 240 members, with 100 attending most monthly meetings, and 1300 on our email distribution list. I am sure there is a wealth of knowledge, experience and curiosity within those numbers! Please email me at president@newfarmhistorical.org.au with your response to this call out for your support.

Desley Garnett

GETTING TO KNOW YOU – *take your pick!*

There are two opportunities to meet your Committee and other members this month. We especially welcome new members to come along to one – or even both – events!

**Getting to Know You
Afternoon Tea**

Thursday 19 June 2025
2:30 to 3:30 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




**Getting to Know You
Soirée**

Thursday 26 June 2025
5:00 – 6:00 pm
Ron Muir Room
New Farm Library
135 Sydney St, New Farm

An opportunity to meet other members


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



An evening event especially for those who cannot attend our afternoon meet-ups

I hope to meet you there!

Desley Garnett



MEMBERSHIPS

What an amazing turnout we had for our May meeting! It was a huge success, not only for the quality of the presentation, but also for the interest in the Society that it garnered. There were several visitors from whom ten new membership applications were accepted on the day, making 20 altogether for May. Thank you to all our new members. **Welcome!** We hope you will continue to participate in our activities. In all, there are now **243 current financial members**. No wonder we are considered the "best local historical society in Queensland!"

Although it is the middle of the year, we will still happily accept new applications and renewals. Please note that

memberships expire at the end of the calendar year, regardless of date of application. We understand that this might seem unfair, but I am managing these memberships using a self-produced rudimentary database (total 500 records). We are trying to automate the process, but it is more complex than anticipated. We hope to use a proprietary product to manage all aspects, including payments, and enable memberships to be current for a full year from date of application. This will incur extra costs which may necessitate an increase in membership fees. We believe that \$20 is still a very reasonable fee considering the many benefits on offer.

Bruna Burello-Day – Membership Secretary

MEMBERS' STORIES

MEET OUR MEMBERS

We are blessed in our Society to have a sizeable membership so it's perhaps not surprising that it includes some very talented published authors. Here, **Rita Cleveland** introduces someone she discovered recently.

Congratulations to our longtime member, **Lesley O'Dowd** (pictured), on publishing her debut novel, *Frenchman's Waratah*. The "Frenchman" is Lucien Henry (1850-1896) who is a noted Australian fine artist. Lesley was captivated by his work and his story after visiting an exhibition at the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney.

Lesley was born in Brisbane before leaving with her family at the age of two to live in many countries across the world. She returned to Brisbane in her forties. She felt at the time that her life had come full circle.

While researching her novel, she discovered that her paternal great grandparents were married in 1894 in New Farm. Today, Lesley practises with her choir in the Merthyr Road Uniting Church Centre and, of course, attends our monthly Society meetings there. Lesley has an apartment in Oxlade Drive and has been a member of the Society for many years.

When asked what attracted her to the Society, she said it was the conviviality and attention to so many aspects of the history of New Farm and its neighbouring districts. Lesley said that she loves the cinematic clips at the beginning of the meetings and the way they often link to the topic for that day.

Her book is an imaginative and engaging story that follows Lucien Henry's contribution to artistic development in Sydney during the 1880's. Lesley's own background of French/Australian citizenship is evident in her exploration of many aspects of "cultural dislocation". Lucien Henry, buoyed by Sydney society and the booming 1880s, was able to overcome this dissonance. As Lesley writes, "...In the colonial era the bush was perceived as harsh or challenging. This Parisian artist saw its beauty and made it into a source of national style."

When we next visit the Art Gallery of New South Wales we can search for the paintings of Lucien Henry. Thank you, Lesley, and congratulations from all of us!

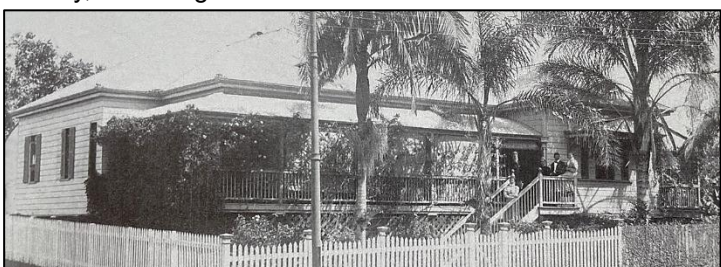
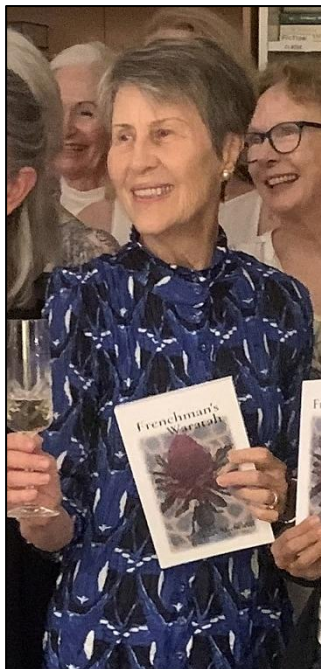


Photo: Lester Harding

Next, another of our longtime members and Art Deco aficionado who leads many AD tours in the district, **Santina Musumeci**, reports on an item close to home.

A Victorian Fireplace and its Place in New Farm's History

Dr Thomas Pennington Lucas, renowned for developing the *Papaw Ointment*, established a medical practice at his private residence named *Vera* on the corner of Moray and Sydney Streets, New Farm. During the late 19th Century, Dr Lucas transformed his residence into a hospital and named it the *Vera Papaw Hospital*. Following Dr Lucas' death in 1917, the hospital was taken over by the Salvation Army.

Dr Lucas' widow, Susan, relocated to the Victorian home named *Ranza* on the corner of Merthyr Road and Abbott Street, New Farm (pictured lower left of page). She renamed the house *Vera* in memory of her husband and the hospital. *Ranza* had been built circa 1899 for the Presbyterian Minister Rev Walter Roberts and his family.

Susan Lucas (nee Draper), born in Basingstoke England, had arrived with her family in Brisbane in 1862. Acknowledged for her good works, Susan was appointed first matron of the *Lady Musgrave Lodge* established by Lady Lucinda Musgrave, wife to Queensland's Governor. *The Lodge*, located on Astor Terrace, Spring Hill, opened in 1891. In early colonial Brisbane the Lodge provided safe accommodation for women. Susan Lucas continued to reside at *Vera* until she passed away on 30 October, 1933.

As with so many of New Farm's colonial homes, *Vera* was demolished in 1975. It was replaced by an apartment block named *Merthyr Castle*.

All that remains of the history of two of Brisbane's early residents, the Roberts and the Lucas families, is a Victorian fireplace, rescued during the demolition.

This fireplace is seeking a new home.



If anyone is interested in finding out more, please contact Santina at santina1@bigpond.com.

The image of *Ranza* and the Roberts family (at left) can also be found in Chapter 2 of Gerard Benjamin's 2023 book, *New Farm: 50 Stories*, as part of another story. This book, along with other NFDHS publications, is available for purchase at local bookshops, the Society's Office and at Society meetings.

Did You Know?

- The land on which *Wynberg* stands was acquired by Mr George Raff in 1853.
- In the early 1860s, a brick dwelling was built on this site. This brick building was built for Mr John Abraham and likely faced towards the present-day New Farm Park.
- In 1863, Mr Henry Bates Fitz, a Darling Downs squatter, bought the house and named his new home *Ashton*.
- Mr George Charles Willcocks, a stone mason from Devon in England, purchased *Ashton* in 1890. He later named this property *Wynberg* after an area in Cape Town, South Africa.

Source: The residence, *Wynberg*, and the historical plaque titled *Wynberg*, located at 790 Brunswick Street, New Farm.



Article and above photos provided by Connie Hamer

CELEBRATING ITALIAN MONTH



Photo by Nino LoGiudice on Facebook

On 2 June, our local icon, the Story Bridge, along with many sites in the district, donned the colours of the Italian flag, commemorating Italian National Day, *la Festa della Repubblica*. This annual celebration acknowledges the

significant contributions Italian migrants, particularly those in the post-war era, have made to our way of life, with Italian-themed events held throughout the month. New Farm, once known as *Little Italy*, still thrives on this rich legacy. In what has become a tradition, our June meeting will feature an Italian-themed afternoon tea with special treats. Additional delights await at our two upcoming events – the **Getting to Know You Afternoon Tea** and the **Soirée**. This month also marks the Society's **31st anniversary** – even more reason to celebrate!

True or False?

1. Known as *Wynberg* since the 1890s, *Wynberg* may be New Farm's oldest existing residence.
2. The imposing front fence was constructed in 1894 by the Willcocks family, with the gate posts bearing the property name *Wynberg*.
3. From 1925, *Wynberg* became the home to Catholic Archbishops and various staff members.
4. Over the years, *Wynberg*'s guests have included Governors, Cardinals, Premiers, Prime Ministers, General Douglas Macarthur, Dame Nellie Melba, artists and schoolchildren.

Answers: True! True! True! True!

Source: Benjamin, Gerard, *Homes with History on the New Farm Peninsula*, New Farm and Districts Historical Society Inc., Brisbane, 2015. (Chapter 1 – *Wynberg*, 790 Brunswick Street)



Photo by Austin Adams of the recently restored sandstone fence

UPCOMING EVENT

Historical Walking Tour – Mainly Moray

Saturday, 12 July, 8.30am to 10:30am (approx)

Guide: Gerard Benjamin



Meet at the bus stop adjacent to the To Be Thai restaurant (92 Merthyr Road) for a 90-minute walk focusing on Moray Street, including Merthyr Road and Bowen Terrace. The walk highlights the social and architectural history of the area, pausing at sites of significant historical and architectural interest, before taking in the panorama of the Story Bridge. It concludes at Merthyr Village by which time morning tea will have been well-earned. For bookings and further details, see Eventbrite [here](#).

COMMUNITY NEWS

TWILIGHT AT NEWSTEAD HOUSE

A Twilight Soirée, hosted by Brisbane Living Heritage at Newstead House, was a wonderful opportunity for some NFDHS members to mingle and network with other guests. Many historical organisations are represented under the BLH umbrella (90+ in all). Do visit the [BLH website](#) to discover the range of sites and activities promoted by them.

We enjoyed a warm welcome from Claire Moore, Chair of the Newstead House Trust, and were treated to a guided tour of the house led by Sandy Hughes. Sandy has had 25 years' experience as a Newstead House guide and also leads tours at Miegunyah House Museum. What a magical place is Newstead House inside and out! It is well worth a visit on a Friday or Sunday when it is open to the public. The soirée was especially enchanting as the sun went down and the twinkling lights of the city emerged.



Photos by Rita Cleveland

A WRITING COMPETITION

Attention all writers! From Pamela Tonkin of the **Royal Geographical Society of Queensland** comes the news that the RGSQ is running a writing competition. They are inviting submissions of a short story or memoir piece (500 words) set in Queensland on the topic "The significance of the environment in human life", using imagination, creativity and with a wide interpretation. Entries close on 30 June.

Cash prizes are offered. Find details [here](#).

New Date for Walking Tour of the Woolstores

Please note that Ben Pritchard's walking tour will now take place on 19 July. More details will appear in next month's newsletter.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF OLD NEW FARM

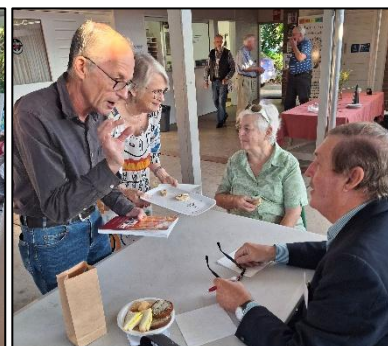
A recently digitised collection of photographs of New Farm by Peter Fischmann is available [here](#).

ADVANCE NOTICE

Brisbane Open House will again hold its very popular event in mid-July this year. New Farm was the focus last year. What places will be featured this year? For further information, click [here](#).

SOME MORE PHOTOS FROM THE MAY MEETING

And plenty of interaction among the 130-strong crowd



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



THE LAST WORD

...and it's *arrivederci* from me...

My Journey as Membership Secretary and Newsletter Editor

In the August 2022 Newsletter, I shared the story of how my family came to live in New Farm and how I found myself back in the family home, purchased by my parents in 1962. There was the promise of a sequel which never quite eventuated. Here, by way of a Part 2, I share the history of my involvement with the NFDHS. It has been enormously rewarding being a part of this Society and I hope to remain a member for a long time yet. And, yes, I will be continuing my role as Membership Secretary for as long as needed.

I first joined the Society in around 2003 and quickly found myself on the Committee (the President then was Peter Walpole) and then made a rapid ascent to the role of Secretary which, in those days, encompassed just about everything, including writing the newsletter and taking care of memberships – without the aid of the technology available today. I acquired those roles because I was a typist, and I also had the tools; my husband being involved in IT ensured we had up-to-date hardware and software. This lasted until about 2008/2009 when for various reasons I had to step away from the Society for a while. However, I still kept in touch by maintaining my membership, occasionally attending the Saturday meetings, reading the newsletters, keeping in touch with members, and so on.

Twenty years or so later, history repeated itself and I found myself back in the fold, firstly as an ex-officio membership secretary, but it soon became apparent that I needed to join the committee to perform the role more effectively. And so it was, that in June 2023 as outlined by Desley in her report, I put my hand up to produce the newsletter which, ostensibly, was for the period of six months which somehow stretched to the present.

Both roles have changed enormously over those twenty years – the membership database has increased significantly, and the newsletter is unrecognisable from the original versions, having had a number of editors who had different styles and focuses, all of which contributed to the evolution of the newsletter as we know it today. The considerable contributions of Gerard Benjamin, and before him, Chris Derrick and others, must be acknowledged. Gerard's tenure must be some sort of record, having held the role for 11 years, producing a mammoth 112 editions! His was certainly a hard act to follow!

So, here I am at the end of my second tenure as newsletter editor, lasting a modest two years. With a name like mine, it is fitting that it should occur in June – Italian

month. It has been an evolutionary journey with my versions changing from month to month. That is because I have enjoyed experimenting with layouts and formats and learning so much along way. It certainly has kept “my little grey cells” churning!

As an amateur, I am deeply grateful for the positive feedback and the assistance and encouragement I have received from many sources, especially from president, Desley – whose monthly report is always warm, positive, and uplifting – as well as committee members, members, regular contributors and, of course, readers. It is always a united effort, helped more recently by my little band of assistants – Maria Shaw, Connie Hamer and Rita Cleveland – who are all still keen to contribute.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of my predecessor, Emma Golder, whose “Living in History” articles I thought were very interesting and were no doubt inspired by the historic home she lives in. Her home was the subject of a presentation she made at one of our monthly meetings some years back. I liked Emma's idea of showcasing our own current members – new and long-standing – and their interesting lives, and I hope that the “Meet our Members” segment will be a regular feature. I find the connections to New Farm within our community truly amazing.

Last but not least, I gratefully acknowledge the help and advice, not to mention the many contributions, of Gerard Benjamin, resident historian, author and publisher, and erstwhile long-standing editor who has rescued me on at least one occasion when he produced the October 2023 newsletter from my hastily gathered notes. It was clear I would not have been able to finish it before a planned interstate trip. So, instead of being No 20, this current edition should have been my 21st consecutive issue!

With that, I would like to wish our new editor well in this role. I think it is an opportunity for them to put their own stamp on the publication, with the assurance that help is at hand should it be needed. Like Desley in her report on Page 4, I strongly encourage members to contribute to the newsletter. You never know what your contribution might spark in expanding our knowledge of the rich history of New Farm and Districts.

Bruna Burello-Day

PS: I do intend to conclude the story of my journey “back to Byram Street” one day. Look out for Part 3 in an upcoming issue – at the discretion of the new Editor, of course!