



NEW FARM and DISTRICTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

*Gathering information from the past
Preserving it for the future.*

PRESIDENT'S REPORT AUGUST 2025

Presented by Desley Garnett

It's my pleasure to present to you the Annual Report of the New Farm and Districts Historical Society Inc for the 2024 - 2025 year.

COMMITTEE

The following committee members were elected at the August 2024 AGM for the 2024 - 2025 term:

President: Desley Garnett

Vice President: Robert Allen

Secretary: Tracey Hurren

Treasurer: Denise Buckby

Committee Members: Ben Pritchard, Bruna Burello-Day (membership secretary and newsletter editor), Rosalinda Pike, George Cowin.

Ex-Officio Past President: Ross Garnett

I want to extend my sincere gratitude to all committee members for their dedicated commitment. Their efforts ensure the efficient, effective, and progressive governance of our society, reflecting our shared understanding of the importance of preserving history.

MEMBERSHIP

As at the end of July, financial membership of the society stands at 246 – a fantastic increase of 21 members over the past year. A big thank you to everyone who “gossips” about the benefits of belonging to this welcoming community leading to these new memberships. We also have 4 life members.

The committee has been actively investigating the best computer program to efficiently maintain our membership database. While a final decision is still pending, this initiative highlights our continuous pursuit of progressive administrative efficiency.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Public meetings have been held on the fourth Saturday of each month (except for December and January) and there has been an attendance of 80 – 127 members and friends at each meeting. We are incredibly grateful to the knowledgeable speakers who generously volunteer their time to prepare and present on such a diverse range of interesting topics.

Our volunteer members are the backbone of these meetings, diligently fulfilling a variety of crucial roles:

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| • Welcoming attendees | • Managing A/V and filming |
| • Checking in and taking membership fees | • Hosting guest speakers |
| • Signing up new members | • Chairing meetings |
| • Selling books and merchandise | • Preparing, serving, and cleaning up |
| • Setting up chairs | afternoon tea |
| • Providing pre-meeting musical entertainment | • Stacking chairs at the end of the day |

We truly appreciate everyone who faithfully performs these special tasks, ensuring our meetings run smoothly for everyone's enjoyment.

With permission of the speakers, all of the presentations are video recorded and made available at <https://vimeo.com/showcase/8485721>. Here is a list of the presentations for the past year:

August 2024: New Farm Croquet Club celebrates 100 years – Zach Kominar	September 2024: Brisbane has “our house” back - Newstead House – Claire Moore	October 2024: Hidden in plain sight – the emergence of Miss Martha Burns – first female dentistry student – Miriam King
November 2024: Christmas in Fortitude Valley – Robert Allen	February 2025: Iconic images in the new logo – Michael Moy, Vicki Howard, Ben Pritchard, Gerard Benjamin	March 2025: My Journey and St James College – Ann Rebgetz
April 2025: Miegunyah and Qld Women’s Historical Society – Joanne Wallace	May 2025: Living in Historical Wynberg – Archbishop Mark Coleridge	June 2025: Russell Transport celebrates 100 years – Phil Russell
July 2025: QUT Digital Collections – a rich resource – Jill Rogers and Dr Lyndal O’Gorman		

NEW LOGO FOR THE SOCIETY

In February, we proudly introduced a new logo for the society that clearly demonstrates the extent of the main area that we serve – New Farm, Teneriffe, Newstead, Bowen Hills and Fortitude Valley. It is available in both landscape and portrait styles offering flexibility for various documents.

SOCIETY OFFICE and LIBRARY

We are grateful to the Brisbane City Council for providing an office for us attached to the Ron Muir Room at no charge. While the room is small for all our records, we appreciate its availability and the ability to book the meeting room for our Thursday afternoon opening hours, committee meetings, and other necessary times. Many new members have enjoyed our monthly "Cuppa and Chat" afternoons, finding them a welcoming way to connect with other members and foster a sense of belonging.

COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING

• Newsletters

A special thank you goes to Bruna Burello-Day for her two years as newsletter editor, initially stepping into the role on an "acting" basis. We frequently receive compliments on the newsletter's quality – it's welcoming, easy to read, newsy, and informative. We also extend a warm welcome to Kate Lockyer, who has accepted this task as of

July 2025. Our newsletter reaches far and wide, emailed to almost 1400 recipients and mailed to approximately 40 people.

We encourage members and friends to submit letters to the editor, enquiries, and items of historical interest.

• Enquiries

Enquiries come to the Society through various channels: through the Society email address (info@newfarmhistorical.org.au), participation in historical walks, follow-ups after talks given to groups and personal contacts. We strive to respond promptly, a task most often handled by historians Gerard Benjamin and Robert Allen on behalf of the society. We are grateful to Gerard who has assisted 28 enquirers in the past 12 months. Our policy is to share information we hold while also providing enquirers with resources to conduct further research independently.

• Social Media

The society maintains a Facebook page and an Instagram account. We recognize that increasing our social media presence would greatly benefit the society, and we would welcome a volunteer able to manage active postings on these sites.

- **Website**

With the introduction of our new logo, the website also received a vibrant and attractive update. Our dedicated webmaster keeps the website active and informative about upcoming events.

VOLUNTEER ROLES

Volunteers are an essential part of a successful society such as ours. We operate on the principle that we are a team, and **Together We Achieve More**. Each volunteer undertaking their own role contributes to the smoother running of events and the society in general.

Our volunteers contribute in many ways, including:

- Serving as Committee members
- Assisting at our monthly meetings (setting up and packing away, welcoming, A/V, filming, music, memberships and book sales, photography, preparing announcement slides, catering for afternoon tea)
- Staffing the office on Thursdays (being available to the public, accessing archives, assisting enquirers)
- Contributing to the newsletter (writing meeting reports and articles, editing, folding and hand-delivering)
- Maintaining our social media presence
- Promoting the society at public events (e.g., at election booths)
- Supplying our publications to various bookshops

PROJECTS

- **Book and Merchandise Sales**

Sales of the society's three publications (*Reflections on New Farm*, *Tides of Teneriffe* and *Homes with History*) continue through Mary Ryan Bookshop (New Farm), New Farm Editions, Ollie and Lloyd at Gasworks, the State Library Bookshop, Museum of Brisbane shop and at the monthly meetings. A dedicated member ensures these outlets are well-stocked. We've also introduced new merchandise - bags featuring our new logo – a small hessian shopping bag and a cloth library bag – available for sale at public meetings and the society office.

- **Historical Plaques**

No new plaques have been erected in this past year, though we have commenced preparation for a plaque at New Farm State School.

An overview of all of the historical plaques that the society has been involved in preparing is available on the website. It is available as a self-guided walking tour around the area.

- **Oral History Project**

This project aims to collect people's memories through conversation and written information. While no specific oral histories were commissioned last year, the committee has been in discussions with Sam Regi of 'Talking Stories'. Sam will record the stories of two individuals in multi-media format for the society at no cost, primarily focusing on connections to New Farm and various aspects of life in the area.

- **Digitisation of archives**

This project that has been on the agenda for a few years is about to begin in earnest. In February 2025, committee members completed an extensive application for a grant from the Brisbane City Council. In mid-June, we received confirmation that New Farm and Districts Historical Society Inc was a successful recipient of The Historical Organisation Assistance Grant Program which provides triennial funding to Brisbane-based not-for-profit cultural heritage and historical organisations to build their heritage economy enabling them to:

- continue to operate and grow
- build stronger, more resilient organisations to achieve long-term sustainability
- increase the skills and capacity of their teams

- preserve Brisbane's cultural heritage and history and ensure it remains accessible to the Brisbane community.

This grant provides NFD&HS with \$30,000 in funding – \$10,000 a year for three years. The main thrust of this grant is the digitization of our records and making them available to members of the public through an on-line platform called e-Hive. Further information about the scope of this project can be obtained by enquiry. We gratefully acknowledge Brisbane City Council for this grant.

• **Historical Walking Tours.**

Our members have led eleven historical walking tours from August 2024 to the end of July 2025. These walks are consistently popular and offer a fantastic way to share the amazing history of this peninsula. Many participants are inspired to join the society after attending a walk. Tickets are sold through Eventbrite.

- 1 x 'Tour of Princess Theatre' with Robert Allen
- 1 x 'Gasworks to Quonset' with Gerard Benjamin
- 1 x 'Woolstores and Warships' with Ben Pritchard
- 1 x 'Gasworks to Teneriffe Hill' with Gerard Benjamin
- 1 x 'Heart of New Farm' with Gerard Benjamin
- 2 x 'Oxlade Drive and Beyond' with Gerard Benjamin
- 2 x 'Mainly Moray Street' with Gerard Benjamin
- 2 x 'A Walk around the Woolstores' with Ben Pritchard

The leaders of these walking tours contribute 15% of the booking income to the society. Thank you to the tour leaders who prepare historically accurate information for these popular tours - they are an integral part of the society.

• **Other projects**

The committee consistently generates new project ideas for the society, but we are often limited by time and the availability of volunteers to lead them. Volunteers for various projects are always welcome!

CHRISTMAS DONATIONS

At the November 2024 meeting, members generously donated money and non-perishable food to The Trinity Pantry which supports individuals and families in need of assistance. These donations were very much appreciated and we were informed of the increasing demand on the services of The Pantry.

THANKS FOR SUPPORT

We are deeply grateful to Grace Grace MP and the McConnel Office Staff who very willingly and efficiently print our newsletters and advertising posters each month. Thanks also to Brisbane City Council for provision of an office next to the New Farm Library.

Finally, I thank you for the opportunity to serve as President of this respected historical society for the past four years. This is an active and vibrant society. We hope that all members will have a strong sense of belonging and will discover ways in which to make their mark as a volunteer.

Desley Garnett
August 2025



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