



November Meeting

Contributor: Maureene Ann Fries

The "rinking" craze at the Rivoli and a riveting book launch

An absolute buzz vibrated from the forecourt of the Uniting Church in Merthyr Road ahead of the NF&DHS' final meeting of 2025. Members eagerly clamoured at the table to buy a copy of our resident author Gerard Benjamin's latest book - New Farm: Another 50 Stories. This book is a must-have collectable for members and a fabulous gift for anyone with an interest in New Farm or social history. During the meeting Gerard and Councillor Vicki Howard presented the book for the first official launch, and Gerard explained the nostalgic front cover was an extract of 'Tapestry of Shadows, Newstead Park' painted by David Hinchliffe. If you missed out, they are now on sale at local bookstores or at our meetings.

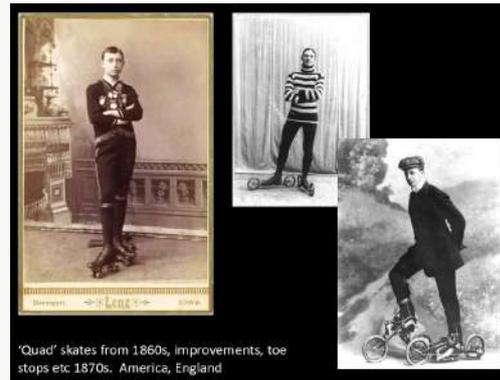
Christmas songs and carols by Stewart Free on keyboard welcomed a capacity number of members and visitors. As is now a tradition, we celebrated the annual Empty Christmas Tree appeal, in aid of Holy Trinity Church. Beneath the tree was an abundance of generous hamper bags and many cash donations decorated the branches. It was wonderful to see that by the end of the meeting, the tree looked anything but empty!

President Robert Allen sent his apologies for the day as he was busy conducting walking tours in the Valley. He particularly wanted to thank all the hard working and dedicated volunteers who keep our society not only functioning, but the best in Brisbane. The meeting was very ably chaired by committee member Linda Whatman.

The audio-visual team trialled a new system to great effect. The Trams newsreel was exceptionally good and showed footage of the trams that were the pre-runners of the 199 and 196 bus routes. There were gasps of recognition, and memories jogged at the vision of almost empty streets and the landmarks of yesteryear. Well done to Stuart, Marcus and helpers who brought this segment to us.

Members were asked by show of hands to vote for their favourite three or four monthly presentations throughout the year. Former Catholic Archbishop of Brisbane, the charismatic Most Reverend Mark Coleridge, was the overwhelming favourite for his entertaining address about living in the historic Wynberg property last June. It was also the most watched on Vimeo, apart from Austin Adams' Walking Tour of Kangaroo Point.

(Though Austin's tour was never presented at a meeting, this excellent history sits on Vimeo under the NF&DHS banner.)



'Quad' skates from 1860s, improvements, toe stops etc 1870s. America, England

Our guest speaker at the November meeting was Andrew Darbyshire, who gave an enlightening and entertaining presentation on "rinking"! This was Brisbane and New Farm's periodic obsession with roller skating from 1880 - 1930s.

Andrew, a self-confessed non-skater, explained it was an abandoned building, the Inala Sports Centre, that first piqued his interest in purpose built recreational rinks. This particular building was a gift to the community from the Boss Brothers who had won the contract to build 1,000 homes in the area.

In the 1880s, roller skating fast became an acceptable recreation, even deemed safe and respectable for young women of the time. Can you imagine skating in full length skirts and the latest in fashionable hats and bonnets? Giggles at the attire shown in footage of a 1910 film all but turned to outright laughter, as these genteel young women battled it out in a game of musical chairs. I am sure their antics would have been applauded by exponents of modern-day roller derby. (Continued over page.)



Thomas White brought back bicycles for his grand-daughters from USA

The 'Ladies of Toowong' stopped calling

November Meeting Cont.

Several rinks were opened in the coming years in and around Brisbane. However, due to lack of promotion and business acumen, many closed operations not long after opening their doors.



Instructors, demonstrations, live music, light shows, carnival nights

It was then that tea rooms, cinema evenings, big band orchestras and theme nights were introduced to expand the appeal. This made skating rinks more of a multi-layered entertainment mecca.

New Farm had two roller skating rinks operating during the early 1900s, and Andrew presented slides of one of these rinks and tea rooms in Brunswick Street.

This rink started life in 1911 as Earls Court. In 1920, it

became the Rivoli Rink with a mix of open air and covered entertainment space. It was exciting to learn these buildings, still visible today, were once used as a venue that gave much pleasure to so many. Have a look on the corner of Brunswick and Kent Streets.

Although our current members are too young to have ever skated at the venues, many recalled the names and the buildings. One member even spotted his mother in one of the slides taken at a function inside the Rivoli.

Since the time early man invented the wheel, its uses have been an ever-evolving story, and on that day, we learned a little about one of them.

Watch Andrew Darbyshire's presentation online [HERE](#).



A recent and historical photo of the Rivoli Rink on Brunswick Street

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 each month from February to November.

Entry fee: \$5 for members; \$10 for non-members.

Other events include:

- 21 Feb:** The Wild, Wild World of Charley Bowers (silent films, 1926 – 1930) at GOMA. Free admission, information [HERE](#).
- 21 Feb – 14 Mar:** Nash Theatre's A Night of Sherlock Holmes at Merthyr Rd Uniting Church. Book [HERE](#).
- 24 Feb:** Twilight at the Queensland Maritime Museum, launching Brisbane Living Heritage's 2026 Program. Book [HERE](#).
- 28 Feb:** Monthly Society Meeting
- 6-7 Mar:** Research Reveals 2026: Queensland history symposium at the State Library of Queensland. Book [HERE](#).
- 8 Mar:** Women's work: Art in Queensland 1913-1945 at the State Library of Queensland. Book [HERE](#).
- 14 Mar:** Walking Tour: New Farm Stories. Join us for a fun walk around a dozen locations in New Farm. Book [HERE](#).
- 19 Mar:** Members' Afternoon Tea
- 12-14 Mar:** Side by Side with Sondheim at Brisbane Powerhouse. Book [HERE](#).

Community News

OAM recipient – Virginia Balmain

Former President and Secretary of the New Farm & Districts Historical Society Virginia Balmain OAM has been recognised with a Medal of the Order of Australia for her outstanding service to the community across Australia and internationally.

Close to home, Ms Balmain served in several roles for the New Farm and Districts Historical Society, worked in public relations for Volunteering Queensland, and was consultant and co-ordinator to Brisbane City Council for the Kidspace Build Playground and Northey Street City Farm. As state manager of AUSTCARE Queensland for six years, she created programs with the University of Southern Queensland and other initiatives to support refugees.

In New South Wales, Ms Balmain set up the Duke of Edinburgh's Award as National Executive and later became head of leadership training programs and chaired international review teams. She was also heavily involved in the arts in South Australia, worked for the SA Red Cross and was a member of the South Australian Young Women's Christian Association Board.

Ms Balmain served as president of the United Nations Association of Australia (UNAA) Queensland and vice president of the national UNAA, and contributed to UN programs for many years.

Meeting Photos

The presentation can be viewed online **HERE!**



Acknowledgements

As always, thanks go to our wonderful meeting volunteers as well as:



Grace Grace MP
Member for McConnell
(07) 3145 9100
Newsletter
printing



Brisbane City Council
Use of the Ron Muir
Meeting Room,
New Farm Library



"Wrinkles only go where the smiles have been." — Jimmy Buffett

About the Society

Contact Details:

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secretary@newfarmhistorical.org.au

Treasurer: Denise Buckby

Membership Secretary: Bruna Burello-Day

membership@newfarmhistorical.org.au

Committee Members:

Immediate Past President Desley Garnett,
Ben Pritchard, George Cowin, Judi Jabour and
Linda Whatman.

Membership Fee:

\$22 per calendar year or part thereof.

Add \$17 for posted newsletter.

Apply for or renew membership:

www.newfarmhistorical.org.au/membership/

Newsletter Editor:

Kate Lockyer

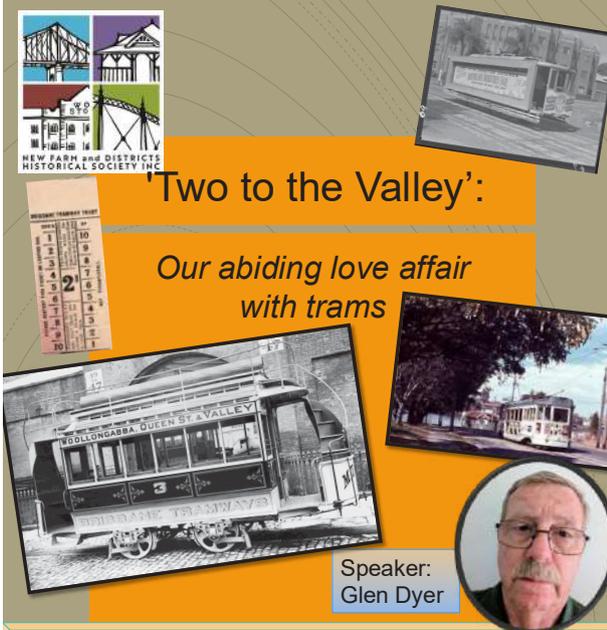
editor@newfarmhistorical.org.au

Meeting Photography:

Maria Shaw, with supplementary images by
respective contributors and others.

February Presentation

Who remembers the Brisbane trams?



'Two to the Valley':
*Our abiding love affair
with trams*

Speaker:
Glen Dyer

Saturday 28th Feb 2:30 pm

Uniting Church Centre, 52 Merthyr Rd, New Farm

www.newfarmhistorical.org.au
Enquiries: 0437 280 104

Glen Dyer from the Brisbane Tramway Museum will be our guest speaker at our first meeting of the year on February 28.

Through words and pictures Glen will take us back to the era before cars were kings of the road.

The museum in Ferny Grove has archives which hold lots of interesting material about the Brisbane Tramway as well as other tramway systems in Australia and overseas.

March Presentation

Coming up... Jan Power, her markets, and her legacy

Jan Power was a much-loved Brisbane identity on our radios and TV screens for many years. Jan's daughter Astrid will join us at our March meeting to talk about her mum, her legacy, and Jan Power's Farmers Markets, which have been a Saturday morning fixture at the New Farm Powerhouse for more than 25 years.



YOU'RE INVITED TO A

MEMBERS' AFTERNOON TEA

Thursday 19 March 2026

2:30pm

Ron Muir Room
New Farm Library
135 Sydney Street, New Farm

This is an opportunity to meet other members
over a cuppa. I hope to meet you there!

Robert Allen
President

RSVP to membership@newfarmhistorical.org.au
Text or leave message: 0417 190 675

President's Message



Welcome to our first newsletter of 2026. My thanks, as always, to our editor Kate and her contributors. The committee have a busy year of activities planned and we'd love you to share in them. Behind the scenes, we are ploughing ahead with our digitisation project and plans to make 2026 one of our best years ever.

It's over a year since we lost long time member and friend Jim MacDonald, but I'm pleased to report that the New Farm State School (Jim's old alma mater) have taken up an excellent proposal from Connie Hamer to present an annual student award in his memory. More information is included in the newsletter. We look forward to more interaction with the school this year as they celebrate their 125th birthday.

Who doesn't love trams?! The history of trams through the Valley and New Farm will be the subject of our February meeting. Our guest presenter is Glen Dyer from the Brisbane Tramway Museum at Ferny Grove. I'm sure he'll spark a lot of memories.

A reminder that our tech wizard Austin records, edits and uploads all of our guest talks for you to watch at your leisure. You can find more than 60 of them online [HERE](#). Austin is also adding talks to our new Youtube channel, which you can find here: [New Farm and Districts](#)

Historical Society Inc. – YouTube.

New and existing members alike are invited to drop into our Thursday afternoon sessions for a cuppa and a chat. The venue is the Ron Muir Room next to the New Farm Library between 2 and 4 pm. More information from Bruna at membership@newfarmhistorical.org.au.

The approaching end of summer signals the resumption of our guided history walks. Gerard has already slotted in several walks over the next few months. The first, on March 14, will focus on a dozen places Gerard included in his recent book, *New Farm: Another 50 Stories*. You can book your ticket (\$20 plus \$2.49 booking fee for society members; \$30 plus \$3.08 booking fee for others) here: [Walking Tour: New Farm Stories Tickets, Sat, 14 Mar 2026 at 8:30 am | Eventbrite](#).

Speaking of walks, ticket sales for our society – sponsored walks were up by 17% last year. Aside from the pleasure these walks give people, they also provide a handy revenue stream for the society, as 15% of all revenue goes straight into our coffers.

You can follow our eventbrite site here: [New Farm & Districts Historical Society Events - 1 Upcoming Activities and Tickets | Eventbrite](#) and never miss a tour notification.

Until next month,

Robert Allen
President NF&DHS

Community News

Award commemorates Jim MacDonald



Just a year after his passing, the legacy of New Farm local and history enthusiast James "Jim" MacDonald has been immortalised in an annual history encouragement award at New Farm State School.

The inaugural award was presented to Ally Hold on December 9 at the Grade 6 graduation ceremony, alongside a copy of *Reflections on New Farm* by Gerard Benjamin.

The school introduced the Jim MacDonald History Encouragement Award (JMHEA) with the intention of encouraging "a genuine interest in history and a deep curiosity for 'things of the past'" that extended past the school curriculum, much like Mr MacDonald possessed during his life before he passed in 2024.

Connie Hamer, a member of the New Farm and Districts Historical Society, explained: "It was Mr Jim MacDonald's

sincere desire to leave a legacy celebrating and recognising his love for the New Farm area and its community and his passion for history".

The society described him as "a witty, knowledgeable and quintessential gentleman" who will be remembered for his invaluable memories of New Farm, remarkable collection of memorabilia, and his warm friendship with fellow society members.

Mr MacDonald attended New Farm State School between 1940 and 1948 and reportedly "had very fond memories".

He took great pleasure in sharing and documenting these memories – and many others – for the enjoyment of people of all ages.



Mr MacDonald's daughter Gillian Eisenkolb, Grade 6 student and JMHEA recipient Ally Hold, and NF&DHS Life Member Gerard Benjamin

Membership Matters

2026 is off to a great start!

Happy New NF&DHS year to all our members and friends! Our final meeting for 2025 was a wonderful way to close the year, with around 120 people attending.

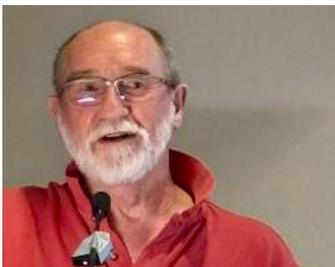
We also finished 2025 with a record membership of 270 – our highest ever!

November was by far our busiest month with 80 membership transactions completed, 60 of which were processed at our November meeting alone. Many thanks to Rosalinda, Kris and Tracey for managing payments and data entry so smoothly and to members for their patience while waiting in the queue.

Over the break, volunteers have continued working behind the scenes on the transition to TidyHQ, our new membership management platform with renewal invoices emailed in late December.

We're especially grateful to members who used the online payment process via the email link, which greatly reduces our volunteer workload and gives us the opportunity to further test our management platform.

More Meeting Photos



What to expect going forward

We have a fabulous lineup of presentations organised for our monthly meetings this year. **To take advantage of the discounted members' entry fee of \$5, it pays to have a current membership before our first meeting on 28 February.** As well, you will be entitled to generous discounts for historical walking tours and other events already scheduled.

We appreciate your continued interest in our Society and look forward to your attendance at our monthly meetings and other events. Our members' afternoon teas will resume next month. The first one is scheduled for 19 March with further details to be published in the March newsletter. Make sure you save the date!

P.S. If you haven't had a chance to pay your 2026 membership and can't locate any invoice from us, please check your email spam folder for your invoice.

The sender will be the following address: hello@members.newfarmhistorical.org.au.

If you are still unable to locate it please send us an email to new email address and we can reissue an invoice to you before the February meeting.

Volunteer Appreciation Event Photos



Community News

Vale Dr Edgar Moo



Edgar Moo – born April 7, 1932 – died January 17, 2026

Dr Edgar Moo lived a long, generous and deeply meaningful life and has been remembered with affection and gratitude by family, friends, colleagues and the many people whose lives he enriched through his care and kindness.

Born in Darwin, Edgar was the eldest son of Willie Kim Pow Moo and Ken Hong Moo and brother to Florence, David, William and Sidney. His early childhood was shaped by family closeness and resilience, including evacuation from Darwin in World War II – experiences that shaped the steady, thoughtful man he became.

Edgar received his schooling at All Souls' College in Charters Towers before pursuing medicine at the University of Queensland. In 1956, he graduated with a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery.

From the beginning, Edgar's calling was clear – to care for people. Choosing general practice over specialisation, he built a remarkable career defined not by status, but by trust, compassion and unwavering commitment.

Opening his first practice in New Farm in 1960, Dr Moo served the community for nearly 60 years. He treated generations of families, often becoming a constant presence through life's milestones.

Patients valued his calm judgement, warmth and genuine interest in their wellbeing. His role in establishing the Merthyr Medical Centre further cemented his place as a trusted figure in the community.

Though he never married, Edgar was a devoted uncle and great uncle to his six nieces and nephews and in his later years his three grand nieces.

Dr Edgar Moo leaves a legacy of kindness, dedication and humanity in a life well lived and warmly remembered.

Useful Links

Brisbane Living Heritage:

www.brisbanelivingheritage.org

State Library of Queensland:

www.slq.qld.gov.au

Royal Historical Society of Queensland:

www.queenslandhistory.org

Genealogical Society of Queensland Inc:

www.gsq.org.au

Vale Carmelo Caruso



Carmelo Caruso – born October 27, 1929 – died October 31, 2025

Born in Licodia Eubea, Catania, Carmelo Caruso emigrated to Australia in 1950 and went on to make an extraordinary contribution to Brisbane and its Italian community in particular.

A long-term resident of Chester Street, Teneriffe, Carmelo was a tailor, a storyteller, ran a travel agency and migration consultancy, and a lover of Italian music and culture. His small tailor's shop in Newstead grew into the iconic Caruso's Italian Emporium in Ann Street, Fortitude Valley.

On April 25, 1964, he married Rina Muriglia. Together they raised three children: Maria, Adrian, and Fabio, and he later became grandfather to four grandchildren: Alessia, Danilo, Dario, and Lucas.

His life was defined by decades of dedication to the Italian-Australian community. He was Justice of the Peace for 60 years and hosted a bilingual radio program on 4KQ and 4EB from 1957 to 1988. For over 30 years, he contributed as a correspondent for *La Fiamma* and *Il Globo*.

Carmelo was Patron of the Giuseppe Verdi Choral Society, organised Brisbane's first Italian Fashion Parade in 1959, and was president of The Azzurri, now Brisbane City Soccer Club.

He founded the Italian School Committee, was a founding member of the Italian Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Brisbane and the Comitato di Assistenza Italiana, now Co.As.It., and established ANFE – Associazione Nazionale Famiglie Emigrati in 1962.

In November 1981, ANFE House in Newstead was officially opened by the then Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Ald Frank Sleeman. Just last year ANFE moved from its historic premises in Wyandra Street to a new home in Stafford, where the current president, Carmelo's daughter Maria Antonietta, recently held its official opening.

In the late 1980s, Carmelo turned his attention to property development, creating the Caruso Group and building residential apartments across Brisbane.

Carmelo received the titles of Cavaliere, Ufficiale, and Commendatore from the President of the Italian Republic, the Australian Centenary Medal, and two Order of Australia medals.

In 1999, he published his autobiography, *Under Another Sky*, giving voice to the migrant experience.

Adapted from obituary in the December 2025 Dante News.

Community News

A Delightful Afternoon! Easy as A-B-C!

It was a delightful afternoon for those in attendance at Newstead House on Sunday, December 7, 2025.

Great **Art**, wonderful **Books** and good **Company** in a beautiful garden setting, at an historical location, made for a relaxing and culturally enriching occasion.

Visitors to Newstead House, members of New Farm and Districts Historical Society, and special guests associated with the publication of Gerard Benjamin's most recent book *New Farm: Another 50 Stories* gathered to informally celebrate the publication of the book and buy their own copy. Gerard appreciated people's encouragement and support in writing the book and now enjoys people's enthusiastic readership.

David Hinchliffe has expertly painted the artwork on the cover thoughtfully written the foreword to this book and was present to receive his gifted copy of the book.

He also conducted one of his unique "paint ins" with both accomplished and aspiring artists. Newstead House and the park's magnificent trees provided the artists with subject matter, inspiration and colour.

Claire Moore, current Chair of the Board of Trustees of Newstead House, also attended. Claire is a passionate advocate for the preservation of history and contributed a warm and considered foreword to Gerard's book.

Robert Allen, NF&DHS President, came along to congratulate Gerard on his book publication and to visit the 1846 house museum, Newstead House. Robert commented that for those with an interest in local history and an appreciation of art and architecture, "the afternoon made for the most perfect of Sunday afternoons".

For further information on Newstead House and opening hours, please visit the official website: newsteadhouse.com.au.

Contributor: Connie Hamer



Gerard with Debbie Baratta whose parents Frank and Glenda Hoelzl are featured in the book (see ch.44).



Gerard with Alison Algate whose grandparents John and Elizabeth Langdon are pictured in the book (see p.156).

Vale Terry Beer



After more than 12 months of declining health, Terry Allan Beer passed away peacefully in Newstead on January 2, 2026, aged 73 years.

St Patrick's in the Valley was packed for his farewell where moving addresses were offered by his longtime companion Malcolm, his brother Peter and Fr Peter Dillon.

Details of his life as a very well-respected GP, music lover, keen traveller and motoring enthusiast abounded. Terry's character was beautifully described, and one sensed he was 'there'.

The farewell also provided an unofficial reunion for many of the close-knit members of the Teneriffe Hill community of which Terry and Malcolm were beloved members.

I knew Terry from our first day of primary school at Indooroopilly through to our last day of secondary school, sporadically during uni days, then more recently via his and Malcolm's membership of NF&DHS. Why, even our walking tours over Teneriffe Hill ("where people are so friendly you knock on any door") would include a "casual" visit to an Ellis Street house, where Terry and Malcolm were ready to welcome walkers with cake and cordial on their balcony.

Farewell, Terry. Sincere condolences are offered to Malcolm, and Terry's brothers and their families.

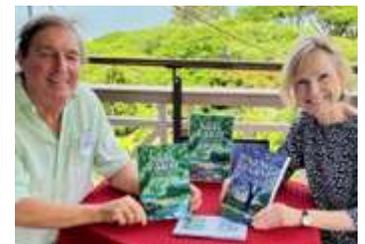
Contributor: Gerard Benjamin



David Hinchliffe (right) and Claire Moore (2nd right) with some of the "paint in" artists.



Gerard Benjamin and Bruna Burello-Day.



Gerard Benjamin and Connie Hamer showcasing the books.