



NEW FARM AND DISTRICTS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

OCTOBER NEWSLETTER

www.newfarmhistorical.org.au



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September Meeting

Contributor: Maureen Ann Fries

Articulate artist – Who said men can't multi-task?

A large September meeting of 124 members and guests were treated to an entertaining afternoon with David Hinchliffe in Conversation. David stood before his easel, paintbrush in hand, as he answered probing questions from the society's current president, Robert Allen.

Relaxed, and very generous with his answers, David often had the audience chuckling with his witty anecdotes. As the painting developed – a subject synonymous with David's work, a sunlit Jacaranda tree with dappled shadows below – we learned of David's early life in Toowoomba before moving to Brisbane, and his time at New Farm State school.



As his mentor, David's father had much influence in his decision to forego art as a fulltime career, instead spending 24 years in local government. Art became a hobby. David described his electorate as "a generic ring, like a donut". All the development and growth pushed outwards. An interesting statistic David related was that in postwar Brisbane, 120,000 people lived within a three-mile city radius. By 1990 only 55,000 lived in that same area. (Approximately 130,000 to 140,000 people live here today according to Google.)

David's achievements and ambitions were touched on briefly, as well as his tremendous appreciation for what he does now. A successful artist, his work is displayed in galleries in New York, London, and Paris. David is holding workshops in Venice, Cinque Terre and Arles, among many other idyllic venues in Europe.

When asked if he was actually going to write a book with

the title *The Art of Politics and the Politics of Art*, the answer was emphatic. "No! That was only ever meant as a joke. If I ever write a book, it might be a child's guide to art."



Members were soon gazing at sky through blooms of purple, the artwork becoming richer with each stroke. David describes himself as a Contemporary Impressionist, and believes this style leaves space for the viewer to engage their imagination.

When Robert called for questions from the floor, a member asked, "What is your favourite view to paint?" David's immediate answer: "New Farm Park. However, an aerial view of the sun setting behind Mount Coot-tha, with the light reflecting on the Brisbane River, is also something I enjoy."

With the easel moved to the courtyard, David's generosity continued. He painted during afternoon tea, a sandwich in one hand, and brush in the other, while chatting and posing for photographs.

The completed 'In Conversation' artwork will be placed with the Wentworth Gallery, a lasting image of the beautiful trees recently felled in Victoria Park.

Thank you to David and Robert for a truly memorable afternoon.

Find a summary of David's presentation online [HERE](#).



Meeting Photos



Acknowledgements

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

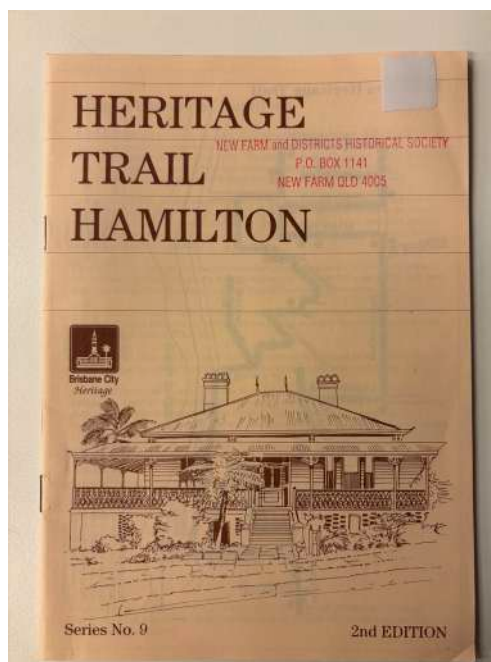


Grace Grace MP
Member for McConnell
(07) 3145 9100
Newsletter
printing

**VILLAGE
VOICE**
Your Trusted Voice



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



About the Society

Contact Details:

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

Office Bearers:

President: Robert Allen

0437 280 104

president@newfarmhistorical.org.au

Secretary: Tracey Hurren

secretary@newfarmhistorical.org.au

Treasurer: Denise Buckby

Committee Members:

Desley Garnett, Ben Pritchard, Judi Jabour,
Linda Whatman and Bruna Burello-Day
(Membership Secretary).

Memberships:

2026 Fee: \$22 per calendar year or part
thereof. Add \$1.85 for each remaining month.
Applications for 2027 will be accepted from
December 2026.

Enquiries: As a new application and renewal
process is currently being implemented, please
contact the Membership Secretary for advice:
membership@newfarmhistorical.org.au

Newsletter Editor:

Kate Lockyer

editor@newfarmhistorical.org.au

Meeting Photography:

Chrissy Layton with supplementary images by
other contributors.



YOU'RE INVITED TO A
MEMBERS'
AFTERNOON TEA

Thursday 19 November 2026, 2:30pm
Ron Muir Room, New Farm Library
135 Sydney Street, New Farm

Refreshments will be provided.
All welcome!

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

October Presentation

T.C. Beirne and the House of the People

Thomas Charles Beirne emigrated from poverty-stricken rural Ireland in the 1880s, ended up in Brisbane and began a drapery partnership in South Brisbane. Moving to Fortitude Valley in the 1890s he built his own store and became a prominent businessman, philanthropist and one of Queensland's richest men. Robert Allen will discuss T.C. Beirne's life and times at our October meeting.

The October meeting will also
include our resumed Annual
General Meeting and a vote on the
society's proposed new constitution.

Date: Saturday, October 24, 2:30pm

Location: Uniting Church Centre,
52 Merthyr Road, New Farm

Enquiries: 0437 280 104

Entry fee (includes afternoon tea):

\$5 for members;

\$10 for non-members.



*The T.C. Beirne building in Brunswick
Street Mall. Photography: Robert Allen*

November Presentation

Coming Up: Memories of the California

Arthur Apostolos and his siblings grew up in and around the California Café, a Fortitude Valley landmark. Operated by his parents George and Eleni for almost four decades, it was famous for its legendary breakfasts, mixed grills, laminex tables and the assorted characters who frequented it.

The meeting will conclude with a special pre-Christmas afternoon tea.
All welcome.



Arthur and George outside California Cafe in 1992

President's Message



Welcome to the October NF&DHS newsletter. My thanks, as always, to our editor Kate and her merry band of contributors.

Our next society meeting on 24 October will be discussing two important issues: the receipt of the financial reports held over from our AGM in August and a

special resolution for the proposed adoption of our new constitution.

Please see the formal meeting notice regarding the constitution elsewhere in this bulletin. Further details and accompanying documents have been emailed to all current financial members and placed on our website. I urge all members to become acquainted with what is being proposed before the meeting.

I'd like to thank the management committee and our lawyer Lesleigh Mayes for their hard work in modernising what had become an outdated document.

This is a substantial reform designed to ensure our society stays relevant and responsive. My thanks also to the Brisbane City Council for their Historical Organisations Assistance grant, which has helped us to deliver this important work.

After we get through the financial and constitutional business, I'll give a brief talk about Fortitude Valley business icon Thomas Charles Beirne, whose 1902 flagship store still stands in Brunswick Street.

Looking ahead to our November meeting, Arthur Apostolos will be talking to us about his memories growing up at the California Café, which was a much-loved Valley institution for several decades.

We will also be celebrating the end of the year with a special pre-Christmas afternoon tea and asking for donations and non-perishable items for the Holy Trinity Church Pantry.

Until next month,

Robert Allen
President NF&DHS

Letter to the Editor

Margaret Herbert - records in SLWA

Ross Herbert recently emailed all the way from Perth, to share an update on a former New Farm resident.

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. Margaret worked at Wallace Bishop in Brisbane and in Perth went on to become the right hand of the Managing Director of Mazzucchelli's Jewellers.

Mr Herbert wrote:

Further to the article on page 6 of the **April 2025 NFHDS newsletter** regarding Margaret Herbert – nee Matthews – formerly of 29 Sargent St New Farm, I would like to add that the State Library of Western Australia has now included a selection of photographs and a short biography on Margaret in their catalogue.

If the society is interested the collection can be found **HERE**.

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:

Ongoing: Fragile and Forever: Ceramics exhibition at the Queensland Museum. More info **HERE**.

15 Sept - Aug 2027: Lessons in Looking at QUT's William Robinson Gallery. More info **HERE**.

19 Sept - 8 Nov: Brisbane Portrait Prize 2026 at the State Library of Queensland. More info **HERE**.

24 Oct: Monthly Society Meeting

25 Oct: Workshop: Sketch the collection at Redcliffe Museum. Book **HERE**.

5-7 Nov: Show Me Love by Circa. Book **HERE**.

19 Nov: Members' Afternoon Tea

19 Nov: Historian Ben Macintyre - Redwood: The Spy Who Saved The World. Book **HERE**.

26-30 Nov: ΝΟΣΤΟΙ | Homecomings: Stories of the Ionian Island Diaspora in Queensland at UQ RD Milns Antiquities Museum. More info **HERE**.

AGM Notice

New Farm and Districts Historical Society Inc. Notice of Special General Meeting

1. Notice is hereby given that a special general meeting of New Farm and Districts Historical Society Inc. (the Society) will be held on:

Date: Saturday 24 October 2026

Time: 2:30 pm

Place: Merthyr Road Uniting Church Hall, 52 Merthyr Road New Farm

to consider and, if thought fit, pass the following as a special resolution:

"That, under rule 43 of the Society's constitution registered on 15 April 2005, the Society's existing constitution be repealed and replaced in full with the constitution attached to this notice, with effect from the date the new constitution is registered by the Office of Fair Trading."

A copy of the new proposed constitution and the other supporting documents have been placed on our website at: **New Farm and Districts Historical Society**.

Click the link above then scroll down until you locate the AGM section and click the AGM link. Copies of these documents will also be available on the day.

2. Deferred business from the 22 August 2026 Annual General Meeting will be resumed at the same meeting in order to:

- Receive the audited 2025/26 Financial Statements and the 2025/26 Treasurer's Report; and
- Appoint an auditor for the 2026/27 financial year.

A copy of the combined audited 2025/26 Financial Statements and Treasurer's Report has also been placed on our website at: **Newsletters & Reports**.

Copies of these documents will also be available on the day.

A special resolution is passed if at least 75% of the members present and entitled to vote at the meeting vote in favour of the resolution.

All current financial members of the society are eligible to vote at the 24 October special general meeting. Please contact the membership secretary at **membership@newfarmhistorical.org.au** if you are unsure of your status.

Any financial member unable to attend is permitted to appoint a proxy in writing before the meeting if they choose. Proxy forms must be given to the secretary before the meeting. Please email me at **secretary@newfarmhistorical.org.au** if you would like a proxy form.

If you have any other queries or concerns, please:

- Email the president at **president@newfarmhistorical.org.au**; or
- Speak with a committee member; or
- Visit our office in the Ron Muir Room next to the New Farm Library on Thursdays, 2-4pm.

Tracey Hurren

Secretary NF&DHS

Community News

25 years of Brisbane Living Heritage

This November, Brisbane Living Heritage is celebrating a very special milestone — 25 years! What began as a Brisbane City Council initiative has grown, with the council's continued support, into the independent, community-led organisation they are proud to be today.

To mark the occasion, they're gathering on Sunday, 29 November, 5pm–7pm, at Newstead House — one of their inaugural member organisations, and a fitting place to celebrate 25 years of connection across Brisbane's heritage community. Refreshments will be provided by Cuisine on Cue, so come along, relax and reconnect with fellow members and friends. Join them as they look back on a proud history, and look ahead to what's next.

Tickets can be purchased **HERE**.

Did You Know?

As part of the construction of the Story Bridge between 1935 and 1940 the state government resolved to improve the Brisbane River at Petrie Bight, by widening it to a uniform width of 800 feet (240m) and deepening the draught to about 26 feet (8m).

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

Queensland Women's Historical Association:

www.miegunyah.org

Community News

September Walk: Tour leader earns a 'W.W.'

For the 'Gasworks to Tenerife Hill' walk on Saturday 19 September, the farthest-flung participant was a Senior Flight Attendant on a stopover from Canada. She joined 15 others including an architect from NZ, and a gentleman whose mantra could have been "the changes I've seen" since he had grown up here in the 1950s.

Pausing before the beautiful homestead Roseville brought the added boon of hearing from the gardener about unique plantings made on the property by some thoughtful person long ago.

This walk was a chance to try out a portable sound system aimed to make it easier to hear above the traffic. Sincere thanks to Maud for being the 'speaker-carrier'.

The feedback was positive with Gerard's knowledge of the area earning him the ascription, 'Walking Wikipedia'! Gerard's walks will resume in March 2027.

Contributor: Gerard Benjamin



Seen at Merthyr Village at Savour Cafe where many from the group had stopped post-walk to enjoy a restorative cuppa



Tour Photography: Maria Shaw

Membership Matters

Member updates

Another outstanding attendance at our September meeting, with around 125 people present despite competition from another significant event on the day, shows the drawing power of our star attraction, the charismatic and talented, David Hinchliffe. Up to 30 of those were visitors who hopefully were so impressed that they will join the Society soon!

Current membership is steady at 271, and memberships will expire on 31 December. We plan to email membership renewal notices and invoices to current members in early December. We hope the new 'no surcharge on credit card transactions' will encourage members to use the 'Pay Now' button on the invoice – a very easy, quick and painless way to pay. It will make life so much easier for us as well. You do not need to open an account – simply follow the instructions on the invoice.

We also hope to have our new membership application process up and running in time for the new year. In the meantime, for information on any aspect of membership, contact me at membership@newfarmhistorical.org.au.

Welcome back George Cowin!

It was great to see George back looking fit and well following a long absence. Unfortunately, George had to stand down from his committee role following a nasty incident which saw him hospitalised and in rehabilitation for a very long time. We hope to see you regularly at our meetings, George!



George Cowin

And a special shout out to other former volunteers

Sadly, long-term Teneriffe resident and stalwart member, Paul Cummings is currently incapacitated and residing in an aged care home in Fortitude Valley and thus is unable to attend further meetings. A founding member of the Teneriffe Men's Shed and inveterate handyman, Paul has contributed items for use at our meetings and other events, such as book stands and collapsible display stands for posters and photographs. Thank you, Paul, for your loyal membership and support of the society.



Grant Cobbin and Paul Cummings

Contributor: Bruna Burello-Day
Membership Secretary

Another Paul who is also not able to attend our meetings, Paul Sneddon is well remembered for helping out at our monthly meetings beaver away behind the scenes in the kitchen and helping clear up afternoon tea things. He is also very knowledgeable about New Farm history and loved to share his stories. Also a handyman, Paul S has been a wonderful help in setting up displays and sharing his knowledge at events such as the Teneriffe Festival which sadly seems to have run its course.



Paul Sneddon



Chris Derrick, one-time Newsletter editor, inveterate photographer and former custodian of the New Farm Park website, amongst other things, is also no longer able to attend our events but is still very much interested in our activities.

We salute them and thank them for their contributions over many years.

No doubt there are many others who are no longer able to participate actively in Society activities, be it for health reasons, distance, family or other commitments, but maintain their support via their membership fees or by keeping in touch through our Vimeos and newsletters and contact with other members. We are grateful for their support. If you know of someone who deserves a special mention for their past contributions, please let me know.

Advance notice – Empty Christmas Tree

Every year we invite you to bring gifts of non-perishable foods, toiletries and cash to our November meeting. These gifts will be passed on to Trinity Pantry, Fortitude Valley. It's become our tradition!

Trinity Pantry started out as a small help service for those who simply didn't have enough to eat or who had met with some temporary crisis and no funds. Over thirty years later, it is now a food assistance service providing for over 1000 people each year.

Start putting aside items now and in the coming weeks so that we can surpass last year's massive effort! Your gifts will be very much appreciated by those who are doing it especially tough this year and your generosity will bring them some much needed Christmas cheer too.

We'd like to hear from you

We welcome stories and anecdotes from our members. If you'd like to be featured in our "Meet the Member" articles, email editor@newfarmhistorical.org.au.