



NEW FARM & *Districts* HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

NEWSLETTER

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Even though the April meeting was on a Public Holiday, 60 people came to hear Estelle Pinney speak on the topic *To the Ladies of WW II*. After taking the opportunity for one minute silence to remember the effect of war on the lives of ordinary people in many nations, we were treated to an entertaining talk reflecting the “other side” of war, the view from the home front, where essential services to support the war effort, and to “keep the home fires burning” were carried out by the men, women, and sometimes children “back home”.



During the war, author Estelle Pinney travelled from North Queensland to Brisbane, and at the age of 15 was enlisted in the Land Army. Her stay at the pig farm was short, and she moved back to Brisbane to work in a hand grenade factory in Montague St West End, and from there trained to be an Army driver. She told us of the hard work and of the great times, partying and dancing. There was no lack of dancing partners when both Australian and American troops made Brisbane their base. These were only some of the many extraordinary events of her wartime, and many more are outlined in her book, *Time Out for Living*. Two of our members shared their stories of the war, and no doubt there are still many stories to be told.

Brisbane Heritage Expo

The Society was invited to take part in the Brisbane Heritage Expo 2009 at the Brisbane City Hall on Saturday May 16. Many thanks to those members who gave up their time to look after the stall and spread the word about what the New Farm & District Historical Society does to capture and preserve the history of our suburb.

Another event coming up as part of the celebration of Queensland’s 150th birthday is the Q150 Heritage Festival organized by the Friends of Toowong Cemetery Association to be held at Toowong Cemetery grounds on Sunday 7 June 2009. There will be guided walks, Heritage displays, book sales, entertainment, food and drinks.

New Treasurer

We have recently received the resignation of treasurer Kim Ferguson. We are very grateful to Kim for taking up that role earlier this year, and getting our financial records up to date. This was quite a task because of the number of financial transactions for the sale of the book since November last year. Many thanks, Kim!

The good news is that Brooke Node has now accepted that role. Brooke is the Senior Teller at Westpac, New Farm, and wants to be involved in the community. Please welcome her with open arms at the next meeting

Next meeting 23rd May, 2 pm at Merthyr Road Uniting Church Centre

The Italian Story



New Farm has been known as “Little Italy” especially from the mid-50s to the mid-60s. What was it that attracted such a large number of Italians to New Farm? And what made them stay here?

Reflections on New Farm just touched on the influence of Italian migration to New Farm with snippets from oral

histories collected some time ago. At our meeting on 23rd May there will be the opportunity to hear from current residents some of whom have lived in New Farm since the early 1950s. Come and listen as members of the local community share their memories of various aspects of their lives in New Farm.

Committee Member, Bruna Burello-Day arrived in Australia with her family as a child in 1959. The family settled in New Farm almost immediately, and Bruna remembers growing up in the suburb, attending local schools and even doing the family’s shopping at Garnett’s store. She will introduce other speakers including:

Italian born Mrs Concetta (Connie) Mazzocato has lived in New Farm since 1951. Connie has been very active in the community and, in February, celebrated 25 years as President of the New Farm Branch of the Red Cross. The group has raised significant amounts of money for the Red Cross and combines fundraising with social activities for ladies from New Farm and beyond, such as bingo mornings and bus trips.

Mr Carmelo Caruso has lived in Teneriffe since 1968, after arriving in Queensland in 1950. His story is told in the recently launched biography *Carmelo Caruso – the two hearts of an immigrant* and was featured last month in *The Village News*. Starting out as a tailor, Mr Caruso had many successful business pursuits including the iconic Caruso’s Italian Emporium in the Valley. He was also very active in charity work, as well as assisting migrants, founding the National Association of Emigrant Families (ANFE) in 1962.

Walter Morellato was born in Brisbane of Italian parents and has lived in New Farm all his life. He had a long career with Coca Cola in marketing, accounting and IT. He has also had a long musical career which started when he was in high school playing in various bands and this continues to this day. He has great memories of performing at dances, weddings and other functions at various venues and will share his observations about the social life of young Italian-Australians in the 70s and beyond.

Recently re-elected as state member for Brisbane Central, Grace Grace grew up in New Farm, and was educated in New Farm and The Valley. She will share her early memories and her comment, as quoted from *Reflections*, perhaps sums up the shared experience of our speakers – “...I have seen tremendous changes in New Farm over the years, with industry and its blue-collar workforce moving on, and the new generation of Italian Australians moving up the income and social scale. One thing never changes, however, and that is the strong sense of community that still captivates those who make New Farm home.”



We hope you will join us for a lively afternoon’s discussion during which there will be an opportunity for audience members to share their memories too, whether you are Italian or not. Then, enjoy an *al fresco* afternoon tea with an Italian flavour while mingling in the relaxed courtyard area. Bring your friends!



New Farm & Districts Historical Society Inc

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Committee Members: Bruna Burello-Day, Phil Evans (2 vacancies) Acting Newsletter Editor: Desley Garnett