



NEW FARM & *Districts* HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

NEWSLETTER

August 2009

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Our July Meeting - The Electric Light reaches Brisbane suburbs.

Report by Chris Derrick

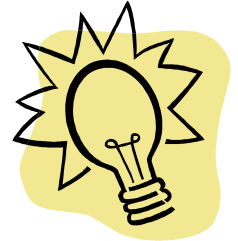
The Society held yet another successful Saturday afternoon Meeting in July with a large and enthusiastic crowd seeking information and reminders on the provision of electricity to New Farm in particular, and Brisbane suburbs in general.

Jim Simmers was the Society's co-host of the presentation at the Merthyr Road Uniting Church Centre. A retired Engineer, Jim gave a most informative and quite detailed presentation, followed by a robust Q & A from fellow power buffs in the audience.

Some of the gadgetry associated with the early days of power development and generation was of special interest. It was intriguing to hear that the provision of light, and not power, was the apparent priority of the population and community thinkers at the time.

A quality and reliable gas supply was available to consumers at the time, from the Brisbane Gas Co., founded in 1854, but no one needed reminding of the difficulties and frustrations reading under the glare of a gas lantern. The first electric lighting installation was inside the Queensland Parliament Building and for some time, the system ran in tandem with the very ornate and reliable gas system.

Jim had most of the background details of the rise of the entrepreneurs in the provision of electricity, with all of the moves being made from within the private sector. We were reminded that it was only a matter of time before government instrumentalities



took over, not only the generation of power in Brisbane, but its distribution.

The Meeting was told about the process of suburban power station construction as the demands for a quality supply of electricity grew. We all remember the CBD station located ironically in Edison Lane, just behind the Queen Street GPO. Others were built in Countess Street, Balmoral, Light Street in the Valley and Ithaca.

Jim advised us that the City of Brisbane Act was passed in 1924, which effectively provided the Council to "possess express powers in relation to light and power "

In 1928, the New Farm Powerhouse went into service, the works being put in place in only 19 months and by 1935 New Farm Powerhouse was supplying power to all of Brisbane's suburbs. Tennyson Powerhouse followed much later, as demand for services increased. In 1970 the New Farm Powerhouse ceased operating, with great relief for those nearby, who suffered the spoils of regular soot showers coming out of the 4 stacks of the Powerhouse.



A guided tour of some of the archival items that Jim had brought with him, followed by the compulsory quality afternoon snacks, ended up the delightful and most informative Meeting.

NEOGALLERY invites you to view an exhibition of new works by award winning artist David Hinchliffe.

David's 34th solo exhibition focuses on his love of the iconic suburb of New Farm and its rapidly changing face. His artworks are personal vignettes of local streetscapes and river vistas, rendered in his signature style.

David's paintings are in private collections in Australia, the USA and Europe and his works have been exhibited in both New York and London.

Exhibition opens Friday 14 August, 6-8pm Meet the artist on Saturday 15 August, 2-4pm. The gallery is located in the arts precinct of Fortitude Valley at 758 Ann St.



The Exhibition is current until 9 September, 2009 and can be viewed online at www.neogallery.net

News from the Committee August 2009

The Committee had its last meeting before the AGM on the 23 August and it was a busy one. Dr Rod Fisher presented an exciting proposal to join with the Brisbane History Group to develop a New Farm Heritage Trail. Anyone who went on either (or both) of the *Sites of Separation* Brisbane Heritage Trails that Rod and the Brisbane History Group organized earlier this year will know how successful the trails were. They were backed up by a remarkable collection of information about heritage sites, some that have lasted, some that have disappeared and some that have been so changed they are unrecognisable. Sounds just like New Farm! The Committee has agreed in principle to go ahead with the project in 2010, and will continue to keep members informed. We will be looking for help from anyone interested in being part of the project.

The new website for the Society www.newfarmhistorical.org.au was launched on 8 July, so do have a look and post any comments or contact us with ideas and suggestions. Exciting news was that Mary Ryan's New Farm bookstore has sold 1000 copies of *Reflections on New Farm* – that is half of the stock initially ordered. The Committee

agreed to present the bookstore with a plaque recognising that unique achievement. Since there are less than 100 books now in stock, the Committee decided to order a reprint of 1000 copies.

Robert Webber has volunteered to put his technological skills to work, making sure sound, lights and images come together in our meeting presentations. (Sighs of relief from some Committee members), and the Teneriffe book is at the design stage and looking great. David Hinchliffe has a painting in his current art show that will be on the cover of the book – it is quite stunning.

Many thanks to Keith and Ailsa Bouchard from the Mt Gravatt Historical Society. They visited us in June and have sent photos of their old family house in Clay Street and New Farm SS school photos from the 50s. – great additions to our collections.

Our Committee meetings have been rather longer over the past months, with lots of business and lack of sustenance – Phil finally rebelled and brought along nibbles to keep him going and Susan came to the rescue with an elegant plate of goodies. Enough reason to think of joining the Committee!

Don't forget the AGM – see you there on 22nd August at 2 pm!

All positions will be declared vacant at the meeting, and we will elect those who will fill the positions of President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and committee members. Of the present committee, our Treasurer Brooke is unable to continue as she has been transferred in her job, and long-term member of the Committee Bruna Burello-Day, is also not standing for re-election. Bruna, who has over the past few years acted as Secretary, Newsletter Editor, Membership Secretary, email contact and most knowledgeable New Farmite, has been juggling work, family and renovations as well as committee business and has been a fantastic hard working ambassador for the Society. Bruna you will be greatly missed.

We look forward to a good attendance of members at the AGM. Memberships for the 2009 – 2010 year are now due. You can pay in the Courtyard at the meeting or post your payment along with your details to the Secretary.



Also at our August meeting

How tall will the stories be?

Artists!

Politicians!

TV personalities!

Entrepreneurs!

Even a murderer!

Councillor David Hinchliffe and other residents of Glenfalloch will share some stories of the building and its occupants over the past 50 years



Celebrates

50

Years

New Farm & Districts Historical Society Meeting

Saturday 22nd August, 2 pm (donation \$3)

Venue: Merthyr Road Uniting Church Centre,

52 Merthyr Rd, New Farm

Enquiries: 0409 498 402

Artist, Jan Jorgensen wrote to us:

Please thank members who have supported my exhibition 'Changing Places Brisbane' at Kiln Gallery, Paddington in July.

With paintings of New Farm, Spring Hill, Paddo, Red Hill and the Valley, it was very popular and was almost sold out. Just proves that love of our own city with it's eclectic heritage and vibrant possibilities is growing.

Coming up in September The Bubonic Plague in Brisbane

Our speaker, Ian Townsend, has been a newspaper and radio journalist for more than 20 years and is currently a Brisbane reporter for ABC Radio National's "Background Briefing" documentary program. Ian's first novel, *Affection*, about the outbreak of bubonic plague in Queensland in 1900, has received much acclaim. His radio documentaries have won two Australian Museum Eureka Prizes for medical and science journalism.

He will be speaking about the third great pandemic of bubonic plague that swept around the world in the late 19th century and arrived in Queensland in 1900. The book is a fictional reconstruction of what happened in Brisbane and Townsville, but it's been meticulously researched and the characters are real. Ian may reflect on the question: Are there many similarities between how the public reacts to these pandemics like the plague and swine flu?



Plague quarantine 1900

Gloria and Gerard have been out and about again

This week Gloria and Gerard spoke to a group from Holland Park Uniting Church about *Reflections on New Farm*. They are not only the Compilers of the book, but they have been out in the community promoting the book at every opportunity. Comments from those who read our book continue to reinforce our belief that New Farm has the most interesting history book of any suburb we know of. Thanks Gloria and Gerard, for your continuing PR work!



Many thanks to the Village News for its ongoing support for the Society and its ongoing interest in historical aspects of the peninsula suburbs. Be sure to get your copy of the latest edition for the story on the Refinery Wharves.

New Farm & Districts Historical Society Inc

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