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NEWSLETTER

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February Meeting

At this first meeting of 2007 we did not have a scheduled speaker but rather the members spoke. They usually do a lot of that, but this time it was about what happened over the holidays.

Jean, Keith and Mellissa Tune went to their holiday cottage at Noosaville which Jean's father, Sam Harris a builder, erected just before Keith was born 53 year ago and the family has been going there each year ever since. The neighbours look after the house in between visits.

They even have a small boat called Mums Too with a motor to paddle around the area. It is called Mums Too because many years ago Jean let Colin, her other son, use the house for about a year. Since she didn't charge him rent he gave her a small boat which he called Mums. So when the new boat arrived they were discussing what name to give it Keith remarked that it was Mums Too, so that was that.

This year Keith took Mums Too out for a run on the river but when he launched the boat there was a strong wind and it was blown past the ramp. Keith tried to correct the boat but the steering cable broke. Then he hooked up the winch cable and began winching it out of the water when the cable broke. Fortunately there were several people who lent a hand or two and got Mums Too on the trailer so Keith could get it to the boat hospital for surgery.

What to do without Mums Too? They went on a series of land trips – The Big Pineapple, up to Pomona to see the very old Hotel and the refurbished Majestic Theatre, the last silent

screen theatre in Australia; Rudolph Valentino was screening. Then they went for a Sunset Cruise on the Noosa River, which has the best sunsets in Australia.

Paul & Lorraine Kirby flew over to Perth in WA for three weeks via Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide. They were very impressed with the dry brown of the desert as they crossed the Nullarbor Plain.

In Perth there are no storm water drains as we have here in our creeks, but they dig large pits on vacant land and drain the water into them so that the water soaks into the ground.

There has been a lot of work done on extending the train lines in Perth. They combine rail with road so that the roads run on either side of the train line. I wonder if the cars are faster than the trains.

They attended a reunion in Fremantle and visited the two maritime museums located there. One covers the early Dutch shipping that was wrecked on the way to the former Dutch East Indies, now Indonesia. The other houses the modern shipping collection including submarines.

They visited the convict jail which was still in use up to 10 years ago and went on the free bus tour of the city.

The fruit and vegetables for Perth come from the Ord River irrigation farms at the top end of WA, a couple of thousand kilometres away. And lobsters are commonly available, delicious and cheap.

The flight over to WA took 5 hours and 20 minutes, but the homeward voyage took only

3 hours and 55 minutes – see what the right wind does; you just have to catch it!

Herb Carr told of a visit he made to Scandinavia some time ago. He was not only impressed by the ‘land of the midnight sun’ but also puzzled as to how the sun behaved. It seemed that the sun does not appear to go around the earth like it does here, but just bounces up and down, goes around again without going to sleep.

The editor got lost somewhere between sun up and sun down, and finally assured Herb that it was all done with mirrors; and for Herb to sit down before the editor’s brain got fried.

Carolyn Bowser then told us about her holiday that wasn’t. Carolyn runs the casualty section at the Prince Charles Hospital just over the way on Lindsay Staib’s old family farm.

Just like all modern hospitals they are continually changing and upgrading the place. It started off as a TB hospital back in the 1950s but changed into a heart and lung specialist hospital when the scourge of TB was beaten.

Now as the city has grown it is in the process of changing into a General Hospital to serve the north side. This means a wholesale re-organisation and expansion for the Casualty Department. So to keep the process on target the staff didn’t have holidays over Christmas-New Year but kept their heads down, tails up and soldiered on.

The change will continue after the new buildings are completed because the hospitals in Brisbane do not operate as separate entities but work together as one large health system.

Carolyn’s family connections with the hospital go back to 1960 when her mother, May, went there as a nurse and, in 1967 took charge of the Outpatients Department.

Good luck Carolyn, hang in there.

Painting of the Kedron Shire Offices – at the February meeting Herbert Carr one of our members, and an accomplished artist, presented the Society with the painting.

The Kedron Shire Office and residence was originally located on the present site of Vellnagel’s Blacksmith forge on Gympie Rd opposite Murphy Rd. However, in 1921, when George Marchant donated his paddock to the community as a park he insisted that the 4 acres, between his land and Murphy Rd, then held by August Vellnagel should be included.

The Council agreed and offered August the site then occupied by the Council Office and

Residence on the other side of Gympie Rd. August resisted strongly as it meant going to an inferior location which was later subject to flooding, but in the end he went.

The Council Office and Residence was carted up the hill, into Marchant Park and turned around to face Gympie Rd. **Now** recently Bev Isdale found the specifications for the removal of this building. In the documents the Council specified that the chimneys should not be re-erected after the building was moved.

Since Herb, using a photo, painted chimneys on the Office and Residence then the photo must have been taken when the building was in the original position.

Also Alf Vellnagel, son of August, still refers to the original four acres as “our land”. At 94 there’s still fight in the old dog yet.

Mountains to Mangroves (M2M)

Terry Hampson, Chairperson of the M2M and Society member, gave the March meeting a power point presentation, to introduce members to the wildlife corridor in which the Society’s headquarters is located.

This corridor is structured around Downfall and Nundah Creeks and stretches 21k from Mt Mee in the D’Aguilar Ra to Nudgee Beach on Moreton Bay. It travels through some of the most beautiful country in the Brisbane Metropolitan area, right in the city only 15k from the CBD.

The M2M corridor follows the creeks through the eucalypt forests of Brisbane Forest Park around Ferny Grove and the Samford State Forest Park around Keperra; through the open woodlands around the Raven St Reserve at West Chermshire; on to the wetlands around Boondall finishing up on the sandy heath country of Nudgee Beach and the mangroves of Moreton Bay.

The corridor links our cultural heritage of settlement and city living with the wildlife of the land, much of which is in danger of extinction. It allows the fish, the eels, tortoises, frogs, the lizards, the snakes, the small mammals, to have a fighting chance of survival.

It allows the native flora from forest giants like the mighty Red Gums, Ironbarks and Tallowwoods to survive to maturity as well as the smaller woodland species such as Wattles, Casuarinas and Melaleucas to blossom and grow.

It provides room for the birds to nest, feed and rest safely, from the small Willey Wagtail, to the warbling Magpie, the song of the

Butcher Bird and the noisy Crow to the graceful White Faced Herron and the stately white Intermediate Egret with the incredibly long neck (an extraordinary engineering achievement), the busy Spoonbill sieving the mud for a meal, the little monk like Galas digging for roots, the colourful Rainbow Lorikeets feasting on the Red Gum blossoms, creating an awful din and littering the ground with blossoms and occasionally to see the beautiful Pheasant Coucal when it emerges from the dense bush around the creeks.

All this in the heart of a big 21st Century city within earshot of the roaring traffic and the perpetually hurrying populace trying, always trying, to catch up with something in the latest glossy junk advertising material.

This little bit of heaven didn't fall from the sky; it grew from the far sighted vision of a few ordinary people who dared to put their dreams into reality. With hindsight it is easy to see how right they were, but they had to toil hard and fight ignorance even harder to save what was left after 200 years of 'progress'.

It all began when some local residents began to seek ways to preserve the Raven Street Bushland Reserve which is the half way point of the corridor. They saw that one way was to link it up with what was left of the original environment on either side, and the idea of a wild life corridor was born. Then they began to link in the history and the educational value of the area to make others aware of just how precious this small remnant is to our busy way of life.

Heritage signs are dotted along the walkways and cycle tracks telling of the local history of the white settlers. Larger ceramic signs are located in each of the different habitats along the corridor showing in symbols and pictures the nature of each habitat and its development.

There is much more to tell but space is limited but you can go on the internet at Mountains to Mangroves and see for yourself what is there and what is happening. And remember that the big two week biennial festival will be on in July.

But you can walk or ride your bicycle through the corridor any time. In fact there are some elderly tear-a-ways hooning around in their electric wheel chairs on the tracks. It's true; I meet them walking their dogs. I wonder how they scoop the poop. That's life in the fast lane when you're 90 in the shade.

Kedron Shire and the Society

Have you ever wondered what the

District in our name represents? It means the area of the old Shire of Kedron and that means that we have to gather the history of the whole bundle of suburbs that lie within the South Pine River to the West and North, Moreton Bay to the East and Kedron Brook to the South, less Sandgate and Toombul Shires. So we need to get members in all of those areas to research their history.

There are about 18 suburbs in our bailiwick and the majority of our members come from Chermside and the surrounding suburbs. **Jack Ford's notes and maps** – Recently Dr Ford gave the Society a large expanding file of notes, recordings and documents which form the raw material from which "Marching to the Trains" was written. He also gave us a set of maps that cover the WWII camps in Geebung and Chermside as well as several other sites.

Jack is still recovering from the stroke that he suffered last year. He is vastly better than he was but still has to be careful when walking as his balance has been affected.

Early Farms - Norm Pffingst and Lindsay Staib have mapped their family farms to show something of the activities that their families undertook when they settled in the district. It is all very well to talk about farming but it is much better if you have a picture of the property.

Hedley Barker whose father had a small farm on Webster Rd opposite The Prince Charles Hospital, and later had his own pig farm at Aspley, has given me a comprehensive account of both farms. He built on the experience of his father's farm to build a modern piggery on a much larger scale. Today the industry is on a much grander scale than the Barker farm and has moved out of the district.

Wal Bassinet has described his father's dairy and the distribution of the milk to the customers, as well as the war time experience of having a large American fuel dump on the property.

This information enables me to trace the development of this sector of Primary industry in the local area. Today they are all gone and the land has been used, mainly for housing. The landscape has changed completely.

Gympie Road – Have you ever looked at an aerial view of the road as it snakes its way through Kedron-Chermside-Aspley? It looks like a river with the vehicles resembling boats continually moving in long streams both ways.

Have you ever stood near the kerb trying to talk on a mobile phone while the 'battle ships'

thunder past? And I mean thunder.

It happened to me a week or so ago when I was riding my bicycle somewhere in Kedron. I didn't even hear the phone ring but I could feel the vibrations so I answered, not that it did much good. I was yelling into the mike and Lois couldn't hear me but she knew that I was still going strong, sort of.

What was I doing on the side of the endless torrent? I was seeing the road for the first time. I have driven along it hundreds of times but never been able to see it, you have to walk or ride a bike to do that.

Gympie Road is to Chermside what the Nile is to Egypt, as far as transport goes; any water goes under the road and is not seen but that is another story I will tell sometime.

This little odyssey was to record the features including the buildings, open spaces, creeks and houses on both sides from Webster Rd to Kedron Brook.

The next step is to identify the places where earlier structures were located. In some places there has been a succession of buildings on the same spot. This is a sigh of growth when old replaced by new; buildings, like us, wear out and are replaced.

Not many buildings last like Vellnagel's forge and workshop, about 112 years old, shifted once, but still intact. Argo's bicycle shop still a working shop after about 70 years, still has the veranda posts on the footpath.

The following step is to classify the existing activities and where they cluster and what that tells us about the development of the district. Perhaps someone will do another survey in 20 years time and compare/contrast the two.

What we can do to some extent is use the Chermside shopping centre map of the early 1940s that was drawn by Norm White and added to by others with the present situation.

A person who left Downfall Creek in about 1900 and returned in 1945 would be quite at home, there had been change but the old lines would still have been recognisable. But if you left in 1945 and returned in 1995, that would be a very different picture. And if you left in about 1990 and returned in 2007 guess what? Get the picture?

Life Membership – Marion Eaton, a foundation member, was given the first Life Membership of the Society for the outstanding work she has done to build up the Society's archives.

Marion has completed some 40+ family

histories of many of the early settlers in the Chermside-Zillmere area as well as several road profiles. This has involved extensive interviewing, archival research, photographing, writing up the narratives and binding the work in a series of arch folders.

The Marion Eaton Collection is an absolute treasure house of historical material which goes a long way towards recording the history of the local area. And it was all done by one person. **Vandalism** is part of the story of Chermside and like the town it grows and changes. A couple of recent incidents reminded me forcibly of this fact, nothing new, but just seeing things in new ways.

While preparing the photo page of the Newsletter I went to photo some of the M2M ceramic plaques along Downfall Creek and the first two I looked at were both graffitied. Graffiti is not new; one can still read Roman graffiti on the monuments of Ancient Egypt.

Looking at the marks on the plaques I thought that the plaques were made by a highly skilled artist with a vivid imagination while the graffiti was made by a barbarian of unused intellect who has mastered the art of pressing a button on a spray can. S/he could not even do that properly as the paint had run.

The other incident was when I saw the work of similar vandals on the Street Artists' portrait of the destroyer, Voyager, on the eastern wall of the centre of that name. It is a memorial to the seamen of the Voyager, but to the barbarians it is just a convenient wall on which to scribble. The work done by one group of young people to beautify the Precinct is mutilated by another group who are 'having fun' at the public expense.

The only difference between the ancient graffiti pests and the modern ones is that the former used ancient technology of hammer and chisel while the latter use modern technology of the spray can. Isn't progress grand?

Secretary – Heather Bingham, who volunteered to help us out as an interim secretary two years ago, has to resign as she has so many other commitments. As we are an incorporated body we must have a Secretary. The main duty is to keep the minutes and receive the mail as most of the other work is done by other members of the Executive. We will discuss this at the next meeting and try to negotiate a replacement. But we need help in order to keep the Society going.



We are all aware of the demise of the little corner grocery store over the last 30 to 40 years. Once the Drive-in was built by Alan & Stark the small shops were being seriously challenged. Often the owners would sell them to newly arrived immigrants who would work long hours to make them viable. Another way was to find a different product to sell such as this one which is a display room for aluminium cladding.

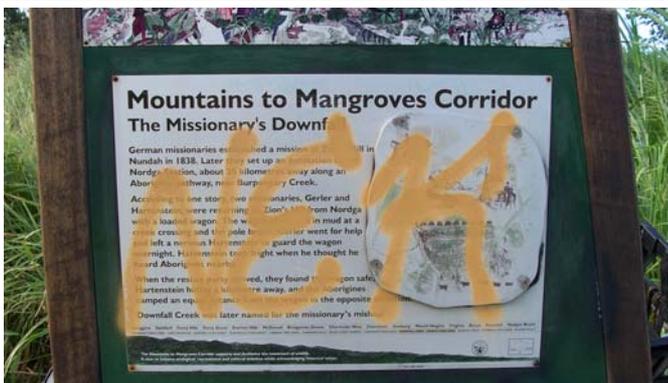


This photo is from the Carseldine collection and was taken before 1912 on a glass negative in the days when the people had to hold their pose till the exposure time was completed. The lady on the right, Miss Blair, didn't and she has two faces. L - R: Geo Carseldine, Percy Williams, Ivy Carseldine, Gwen Williams and Miss Blair.

The Mountain to Mangrove plaques have only one problem, they are constant targets for spray can vandals.



A large ceramic made up of many separate tiles each depicting some aspect of the local area, its wild life, plants and human activities



A small plaque telling something of the area in which it is placed. This one tells of the origin of the Name Downfall Creek when a wagon was bogged and broken in a crossing.



This small plaque tells of the importance of flooding in all creeks and rivers. How the flood washes out the silt, brings fresh nutrients, spreads the silt on the flood plain, etc.

