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NEWSLETTER

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## Ian Rye

### Ave atque Vale

On the afternoon of Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2007 we joined with Mavis in the packed Chermshire Uniting Church to bid farewell to Ian who was one of our earliest members.

The main eulogy was given by his nephew, Ron Goward, who knew Ian from his, Ron's, childhood days. He told the story of Ian's life in which self sacrifice and service to others figured prominently.

Ian was always quiet at the meetings of the Society but had a ready smile and was always willing to help. We are indebted to his skill at sketching which produced the only known likeness of the old School of Arts.

Ian and Mavis were helping Beverley to reconstruct the map of Gympie Rd of the pre WWII era which is now largely forgotten as the irreversible movement of change continues. RIP.

tend to drive straight through when we are travelling.

At Rathdowney, our coach driver managed to find a parking space in the crowded coach parking area – we were not the first to arrive. It was a very pleasant day with a slight breeze and plenty of activity on and around a large oval. There were stalls selling all kinds of craft and some produce. Every business in and around Rathdowney must have had a stall.

There was plenty of activity on the oval. The pioneers' parade was followed by parades of old cars, machinery and a re-enactment of the Australian Light Horse. We eventually tracked down the source of the coffee smell (from the other side of the oval) and while we drank it, we watched the ring events – flat racing, sheep dog trials, and very entertaining wood chop events.

There was no shortage of food and many local groups catered to our every need. One in particular had very appealing food (sight and smell) and sold it from an old railway carriage. It was such good chicken kebab that I had to ask for the recipe!

The return journey always seems so much quicker and we arrived back at Kedron Wavell Services Club in time to see the results of the vandals' visit to our building the previous evening – *but that is another story*.

The bus trip was a financial success as the net profit was \$465 from the day.

**The Other Story** is soon told – the vandals graffitied the usual places and then proceeded to kick

## RATHDOWNEY BUS TRIP

Bev Isdale

On 1<sup>st</sup> April, 23 members of the CDHS joined members of Kedron Wavell RSL to visit Rathdowney by bus. It was the occasion of the Rathdowney Heritage Festival.

We left the western freeway and travelled to Peak Crossing where we had morning tea. It was another one of those small places that we

out three panels of the balustrading on the veranda. It made a 'pretty sight' scattered on the garden amongst the bushes.

The damage was discovered when I arrived there on the Sunday morning on my usual bicycle ride.

The police came and did all they could by photographing and collecting material that might yield fingerprints, including a small sharps' bin which contained some used syringes.

The Northside Chronicle featured a couple of photos and a goodly article about the damage sustained.

Three of the members, all old tradesmen, quickly got together and not only restored the scattered bits to their proper places but reinforced the lot so that it will be a lot harder to break down in future. One front door was also damaged with one of the stiles being fractured. This was reinforced on the inside with a stout piece of hardwood bolted on like a splint.

Now we have to look at getting a security door to go over the front doors or further reinforcing the existing doors.

**Progress Report on Graffiti and Vandal Control** – After the damage a Safety Audit was carried out by the BCC, Police and the Precinct and it was decided to establish clear lines of sight around the buildings and institute some Graffiti control measures.

The Precinct engaged a gardener to trim the hedges to a height of 700mm and lift the trim the lower branches of the trees to a height of 2000mm; this has been done and paid for by the Precinct.

To control the graffiti pests it was recommended that hedges be planted close to the walls of the buildings in order to obstruct the 'artists' from easy access to their 'canvas'. Faith Hopkins contacted the Parks North section of the BCC which has planted a series of plants around the accessible walls. Unfortunately some of the walls already have concrete paths or other constructions running beside them which prevent the growth of the hedges.

**Another Story** tells of our latest grant to buy a TV Monitor and Video/DVD Player to use in the meeting room. This will enable us to show up to date material relating to history and other aspects of our local area. It will enable us to view material from the Archives and other Societies.

We have also been offered a flight for two, in a real airplane, to raffle in our Father's Day raffle.

**Did you know** that a couple of our members give talks to various groups around the town? We do! So if you belong to a community group which invites visiting speakers, then maybe you might invite us.

We take our own gear along and tell people about the Society and the history of the local area. It is good publicity for us and we do get feedback which we can use in our research.

**May Speaker** – was our Archivist, Beverley Isdale, who with the aid of some well chosen photos displayed by our Data projector, the modern Magic Lantern, explained the origins and the foundations of Alan and Stark. This was the firm which changed the face of Chermside and set the course for its development over the following 50 years; now it continues to be the engine driving the current upward development.

Beverley examined the two founders of the firm who began their career in a shop on the south side but were flooded so they moved to the north side. After WWII the then managing director T J Weedman went to the USA to see what was happening in the retail shopping world. What he saw inspired him to hurry home and start planning for the motor car in Brisbane.

The result was the "island of shops in a lake of cars"; parking was a problem in the inner city so he came to the suburbs where there was room to build and expand and expand and expand; and so it happened.

Beverley paced her photos carefully so that there was time for people to remember, comment, listen, agree and disagree. She even had to resort to the broomstick at one time, not to discipline the class, but to use it as a pointer on the screen.

Why did A & S come to Chermside when they could have gone to a couple of other sites? All of them had good public transport, lots of people living near, new housing going up and more consumers coming to live nearby. According to T J Weedman, who called the 'shops', "In October 1955 the block of land upon which the Centre now stands became available – 28 acres". That was the trigger that set the whole show in motion and, in spite of heavy criticism from other firms as to the lunacy of going suburban, he went suburban and led the way; the critics soon followed setting up their own shops and car parks, in the suburbs. 'When you're on a good thing.....'

Using the photos that the Society bought from the State Library of Victoria, which holds

the Myer Archives, we saw some aerial shots which clearly showed the 1957 buildings. These photos are all professionally done and are very clear. They also show much of the surrounding area and the viewers, who mostly, have all lived here all their lives and their memories span over a hundred years, were eagerly spotting the familiar landmarks of streets and buildings. Many of the buildings have since gone and been replaced in the continuing development of Chermide.

A tour on the inside of the centre showed a glimpse of the Candy Shop with a candy striped roof; an American touch. Then into the office where about 15 girls were sitting at desks with typewriters, NOT COMPUTERS, in front of them. Imagine, there was only one computer in Australia at the time, at Sydney University and it would have filled the room.

The Premier, Vince Gair, surrounded by the directors and invited guests, ceremonially opened the big front door; he gave the camera a big smile while he turned the key. His presence emphasised the importance of the occasion, but few, if anybody, could have foreseen that just how momentous was the occasion.

Then the camera moved into the main section of Alan & Stark huge shopping hall with hundreds, if not thousands of shoppers all busy like bees in a hive; heads down looking for bargains. The crowd is so large that it is almost impossible to see the merchandise but signs indicated the position of the different departments.

Women predominated with a sprinkling of men, some looking bored, standing around in the sea of femininity; this was the domain of the woman; many of the older women were wearing hats, shopping was still rather formal for some.

In 1957 some 15,000 very excited shoppers came for the opening and parked their cars in 700 spaces.

In 2007 some 70,000 very calm shoppers came for the opening of the latest extension and parked their cars in 6,500 spaces.

Some of the 1957 shoppers came to the 2007 opening but I bet they didn't drive the same cars.

**Mother's Day Raffle** – First prize of a hand painted tile, done by Ray Brackley, was won by Jenny Gilmore who was celebrating her 50<sup>th</sup> birthday; happy birthday Jenny.

Second prize of a cuddly toy dog and pillow was carried off by Gary Brunkhorst; sleep tight Gary. Third prize of a dinner set was won by our retired secretary, Carolyn Bowser, who was doing

duty while Heather Bingham was away. The raffle raised \$382.

**Affordable Housing** – Faith Hopkins addressed the meeting regarding the proposed building of five towers of units beside the Precinct. Westfield sold off 1.5 ha of their land to the Australian Affordable Housing Association and the new owners have already had test drillings done on the site.

The towers will be two of 13 levels which is the height of the Australian Tax Office on Banfield St, two of 10 levels and one of 8 levels.

The aim is to provide affordable units not low cost which often become slum dwellings. At present the average family needs an income of \$1150 weekly to afford suitable accommodation. The Association rents the units for a number of years and then offers to sell to the tenant and crediting him/her with a percentage of the rents paid towards the cost of the unit.

They aim to accommodate some of the people who work locally in the Shoppingtown and the Gympie Rd Shopping area so that they do not have to travel long distances to work. If it works it will take vehicles off the road.

The units are between luxury and low cost accommodation so the cost is, affordable.

Cars on the roads, more sewage, more water, more electricity, more garbage, more recyclable material – all these have to be examined.

### **Affordable Housing Meeting**

- Drill Hall at 1pm before the July monthly meeting.
- To discuss the proposed development of Affordable Housing beside the Precinct.
- Trevor Peach from the Affordable Housing Association will outline the proposal and answer questions.
- Faith Hopkins has organised the meeting to give the members a voice in the future of Chermide.

**Annual Bus Trip & Tour** – This year Terry Hampson will be leading the Society to Caboonbah Homestead and visiting Brisbane Forest Park, Esk, Wivenhoe Dam, Lake Somerset, Kilcoy, Mt Mee and Dayboro. All this, plus morn-

ing tea, lunch, entries and Guide, or should we say, Scout Terry.

When: Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> August, 2007

Where: Leave Chermside Historical Precinct at 8 am sharp, returning 5.00 pm.

Cost: \$55 per person.

Contact: Terry Hampson 3261 1601

Carol Cunningham 3350 1394

Cr Faith Hopkins 3407 0707

Already 17 seats were booked at the May General Meeting. So, hurry up and get booked in.

**Changing Face of Chermside** – About 55 years ago Playfield St Chermside was developed and house building commenced to finish within a few years with 27 houses on each side. Some of the original occupants are still there, but many have left. Two of the latest to go were the Cowles who lived in No. 51 at the northern end since the early 1950s.

They were not happy to go as they looked forward to living out their retirement there. It was such a convenient place to live; they could actually walk to the shops, movies, doctors, two hospitals just up the road, nice garden, familiar area and home; but the street was changing.

They watched the first tower block go up directly opposite them replacing three family homes which were demolished. Homes on their side were demolished or taken over by builders and a five level block was nearing completion two doors away. Beside it an eight level block was rapidly rising; they were the last household in that part of the street. Finally in December 2006 Trevor told me that they were going to a new house further out. It was a nice area but you had to drive the car if you wanted to go anywhere. Then shortly after I noticed that the house was shut, the curtains drawn, after 50 years they had gone, but the little house still stands, neat as ever. This is the downside of change.

This week, second one in May, two more houses disappeared and preparations are underway for the next eight level block of units; it will reach to Way St.

Eight houses that probably held about 40 people, mostly children, in the 1960s are being replaced with 139 units which will hold upwards of 280 people with few, if any, children amongst them. Their way of life will be very different from that of the original occupants, but that is the way of our society we can't expect our grandchildren to live the same as we lived.

Many of the people coming to live in the new units will be retired or simply moving into

smaller accommodation after the children have left home; these people will be making a new life. Others will be young professionals who want to live closer to their work rather than build in the outer suburbs. This is the upside of change.

Fifty years ago a similar change was taking place as many of the small farms in the local area were being sold to developers for housing blocks. The owners were probably getting good prices; some were even doing their own development. The old farm houses were demolished or moved and houses appeared where once cattle and crops grew. Some properties had been in the same family for generations and leaving them caused some anguish; others were probably glad to get out of the hard toil of farming.

So we go through the same cycle again, and maybe our grandchildren be facing something similar in 50 years time. What will happen to the huge Shoppingtown if the new local shopping centres with small supermarkets replace it?

Changes are already taking place with such things as 'speed shopping' becoming more prominent. Also the big supermarkets are starting to introduce self-serve checkouts; where will the 'check out chick' go? History never stands still, which makes writing about the contemporary scene so frustrating, fascinating and endless. **Draft City Shape Implementation Strategy** – the BCC has just released the latest attempt to cope with the expected changes which will be caused by some 200,000 new arrivals in Brisbane AND the 145,000 new accommodation units they will require.

This is happening now and these figures are the expected to be realised in only 20 years.

Chermside is slated to acquire 5,300 extra people to live in 3,900 accommodation units to be built in the existing area; look at what is happening in Playfield St now.

On top of all this the climate is changing and we have to save water. Already the signs are there that we are winning this battle as people respond to the reality of the situation.

**Secretary** – *we are still looking for a new one – the main job is to keep the record of meetings in the minutes and to collect the mail. Typing skills optional – somebody else can do that if necessary. Please Help!! Urgent!! We are an incorporated body and have to have a secretary.*



Even the vandals couldn't dislodge the old handrails but they did kick out the lower rail and the vertical slats. The same happened to the balustrade on the right side of the landing. The stuff on the veranda was chairs left after the party. All the parts were still there and we managed to sort out what went where, then we fastened all parts back and bound them with steel. Nihil bastadorum carborundum!



This picture shows two items: The restored veranda balustrading and the clear line of sight that now exists from the car park to the old school. The hedges have been trimmed down and the trees trimmed up. Since this photo was taken the graffiti vandals have been back and 'decorated' the walls that had been painted over; BLB is the new pest.



Playfield St from the Historic Precinct. Three apartment buildings of 5, 7 and 8 levels to house about 230 people. Another 8 level one has just begun which will hold about 130 more residents. All in the space previously occupied by about 12 houses built in the mid 1950s housing about 60 people.

**Right** – The section of the Chermshire Major Centre Plan shown here gives some idea of what the new Chermshire will look like.

- No. 1 is the Shoppingtown
- No. 2 (c) Gympie Rd – Build up to 8 levels -
- The ATO No. 2(a) has 13 levels
- No. 3(a,b) Playfield St – Apartment blocks up to 8 levels.
- No. 7 Residential up to 3 levels
- No. 9 Medium rise (3 levels) Commercial



