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NEWSLETTER

June-July 2007

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Naming of Parks – The policy of the BCC is to name parks after prominent citizens who were connected with the land which has been dedicated as a park. The Society follows this procedure and supplies suggestions and information.

A problem arises when a park had more than one owner, and people only remember the most recent owner.

The first owners of the land were the Aboriginal people but as far as I know there is no park using the tribal or clan names.

When we consider the European owners there is usually several involved since the first survey in 1864 by Edward Huxtable.

Consider the present nomenclature of the original 509 acres bought by William Murphy in 1868 for £186.

- 1881 Murphy died and his sister, Mary, inherited the land.
- 1885 sold it to Michael Ballinger.
- 1891 he sold the 400 ac south of Murphy Rd but kept the remaining 100 ac
- The south section may possibly have been owned by John King and later, a Mr Cowlingshaw.
- 1909 it was bought by Alonzo Sparkes
- 1941 Comm Gov resumed the area
- 1963 BCC acquired the land left after the post WWII housing development
- 1996 named 7th Brigade Park
- 1889 George Marchant bought the smaller part of Murphy's Paddock.
- 1921 Marchant gave the land free to the

Kedron Shire Council and they named it after him.

Then there is the story of August Vellnagel's four acres which is a tale for another time.

Speaker for June – John Wrench, Environmentalist, displayed his passionate love of nature when he took us on a tour of the local area. Not just any old tour but one in time as well as place; he went back 240 million years when the local area was being formed in the super continent of Gondwanaland.

These early rocks formed the base for the local area and the soils that developed from them. Ancient species of trees such as the Bunya Pine covered the land; earthquakes and volcanoes accompanied the building of the mountain ranges. Then for millions of years the climate wore down the great mountains into the plateaus of the present Great Divide.

Australia drifted north to its present position, the climate changed again and again; the rain leached the soils till today we have the poorest soils of all the continents. But the vegetation adapted to this by seeking out what minerals were there and living on them; much later, in the last few million years, the distinctive flora and fauna of the ancient land developed; it became the home of the eucalypt and wattle, the kangaroo and the platypus; unique and wonderful.

About 80,000 years ago African people walked and paddled their way into the North West corner of the continent and then walked clear across the land to the island we call Tasmania. On the way they learned to live with the land, the vegetation

and the animals. They became one of, if not the most, successful society that has ever existed on the planet; they lived sustainably.

They made a lot of errors but in the end they got it right and they recorded the progress in their stories of the Dreamtime. They were literate without books and pens; their lore was read in the environment, the rocks, soils, animals, trees, grasses and tracks.

They had their own time without clocks, by the flowering of plants, the shedding of leaves, the nesting of birds, the running of fish, the coming of rain, the cold and the heat.

They drew their tribal and clan boundaries from the area needed to support their numbers; they sought permission to go into another tribe's area and sometimes they fought, but did not massacre each other. Live and let live was not just a saying, it was a principle of life.

Then the great canoes with white clouds above came and it all changed, for the worse. They lost their land and with it, their reason for living, they died inside as the European invaders carved up the land.

The new arrivals got just about everything wrong and almost starved in a land of plenty. They didn't know the land and they considered the Aboriginal people incapable of telling them anything worthwhile.

The Europeans then set about changing the land to suit themselves. It didn't work and today we are finding out just how badly they got things wrong. In the long run nature doesn't change; we have to change and work with nature or else we suffer.

Today we tear up the bush to build houses - we need houses, that is obvious, but we also need the bush, which is not so obvious. But with climate change we are learning; a trial and error approach in the scientific age?

The bushland has no status in law so it can be treated in any way the owner wants, unless the local people fight for it. We need to give bushland a similar status as National Parks to protect what remains. Wild life corridors such as the local Mountains to Mangroves need to be established so that the native flora and fauna can stand a chance of surviving.

John is a challenging speaker with a challenging message to all of us and, judging from the way people are reducing their use of water, the message is getting through. Live simply in order to live at all.

Affordable Housing for Chermiside – On Sunday 1st July, before our ordinary monthly meeting, we went into the Drill Hall to hear Trevor Peach explain this concept. It is an important endeavour and we need to understand the concept.

He emphasised that this was not low cost or public housing or social housing. It is for the medium income earner who has a job with a future but whose income is not sufficient to be able to buy a house or pay the high rents for decent housing.

These people would be eligible for public housing but the waiting list is very long. Affordable housing offers them a chance to buy into the market leaving public housing for those on low incomes.

The aim is to provide housing near transport, shopping, jobs, hospital, medical services, entertainment and the best parks in Brisbane. Individually, they could never hope to buy that sort of land, but collectively, they can afford the \$20m price of the block, alongside of the Precinct; so we will have 495 units there in a couple of years.

The buyers will have to pass a stiff test to get in by having a job paying \$300 - \$1,100 per week (\$15,000 - \$60,000 pa), have only one or no car, be prepared to assume responsibility for the good of the whole community, take out long term leases, have a good record of behaviour and other criteria.

The project is financed by superannuation funds, managed by the Australian Affordable Housing Association which is a non-profit organisation, and uses asset managers instead of developers; the managers are paid fixed salaries and no bonuses.

They have several projects on hand including a 350 unit in Albion near Crosby Park and a 450 unit in Cathedral Square, Fortitude Valley. The Chermiside towers (5) will cost \$260m and be the biggest.

It will include a physical fitness centre, a lifestyle wellness centre, swimming pool, vegetable patch, resident's club, personal training workshops to improve all aspects of life and work, child care and community rooms.

More information as it comes to hand. Remember - you read it here first. **(Aerial Photo)**

Vale – recently Jean and Ken Tilley died within a fortnight of each other. They will be remembered as pioneers in the Old Lady called Dawn.

Ken was the son of Maurice Tilley who built and named the Dawn in 1928. When Maurice was hospitalized in 1941, the Army sent Ken back from Townsville to run the Dawn. They needed it to keep going in order to maintain morale amongst the local people and the diggers then in camp at Chermiside. Ken, sister Mavis and Mrs Tilley continued to run

the theatre till they sold out to the Fardoullys and Pantges families in the early 1950s.

Ken then rebuilt the shop on the corner of Norman Drive and ran it as a general store till about 1960 when he sold it and went into the Taxi business. He followed this in the 1970s by operating as a builder till he was within a couple of years of retiring when he worked with MBF as a manager.

Research – a lot of work has been done on the firm of Bruce Pie Industries Pty in Kedron. The factory commands a prime position at the top of Araluen St overlooking Kedron along with the huge Chermside Building Centre and the equally huge National Storage facility in the gully of Somerset Creek.

When Bruce Pie established the factory in the early 1940s we were at war and the Kedron/Chermside area was still the rural urban fringe of north Brisbane. There was plenty of bush and farm land which explains why a factory could occupy such a prime building position; there was plenty of land available.

As a newcomer to the area the only pie I ever knew was the one you ate. Then I found that everybody knew of Bruce Pie, but nobody knew much about him except where the factory was located. And he was long gone having died in 1963.

Then, one day, riding my bicycle in the vicinity I noticed a large sign on the side of a brick building – BRUCE PIE INDUSTRIES PTY. I had found it, but what had I found? It looked pretty small compared to the Pie factory in the aerial photo taken in 1960.

Peddling onward and upward I came to two very long buildings and what looked like the beginning and end of another with a long stretch of concrete paving in between. So which, if any, was the Pie factory? Neither of the long ones looked like the one in the photo, the roofs were very different.

Much later I went back determined to find more information by asking somebody. It is amazing just how few people seem to be about when you want to ask questions; maybe old fellows on bicycles frighten people.

I went into what seemed to be an office. It was - there were three women working behind desks but they knew nothing. So, back out on the road, I found a gentleman who turned out to be in charge of the building maintenance. And he knew a thing or two AND was prepared to talk,

briefly; he was very busy. Yes this was Bruce Pie's factory and there had been a big fire there about 18-20 years ago. This was followed by a rebuilding from the lower brickwork up, which explained why there was no longer a saw tooth roof as shown in the 1960 photo.

The other long building beside Pie's was a much newer facility holding a variety of businesses. But, what was the function of the other nearby buildings, especially the isolated one bearing Pie's name?

Shortly afterwards our intrepid archivist, Beverley, risking life and limb on the Gateway Arterial to get to distant Runcorn State Archives, found the solution.

She located the floor plan of the Pie complex which comprised five separate buildings including the long mill; also shown is the name and function of each one along with the size in feet. Gradually the operation and complexity of the site was becoming clearer.

In the Society's archives, the result of earlier research, there are several items that give more information about the building of the factory while others tell something of the background of Bruce Pie. There is a small collection of photos and a few people have told me about their experiences working for Pie.

Today the mill building is occupied by United Bonded Fabrics, makers of cushioning, pillows, mattress protectors, fibres, underfelt and removalist blankets. Thus, while the products are different from those of the Pie era they are still in the textile group.

The other buildings are occupied by a printer, a cabinetmaker, a floor making firm and the large Edsco firm which is a supplier of educational materials.

This is all part of the research that is currently underway into the manufacturing sector in the Chermside-Kedron area. While there are a small number of firms which actually make products they are dwarfed by the huge number of firms which sell products and services.

Previously this area was one of small farms, the produce of which was processed by small manufacturing enterprises, such as canneries, slaughter yards, tanneries and a large smallgoods factory of Huttons, is now an urban area dominated by housing and shops, including hectares of used car sales yards.

Now the process is continuing with the growth of the Shoppingtown and the upward march of high density accommodation. Exciting, isn't it?

50 years of Chermside Shopping Town

The 50th Anniversary of Allen & Stark's Drive-in, Wednesday 30th May, was celebrated in conjunction with the management of the Westfield Shoppingtown by mounting a display of photos in the Shoppingtown and in the Chermside Library. This included many photos which the Society bought from the Victorian State Library and a Time Capsule which the Society prepared and the Management interred in the centre.

A special morning tea, with a very large cake, was held by the Management with several speakers including Merv Richards, a nephew of Thomas Weedman, the driving force behind the original Drive-in, which, it is thought, was the first such enterprise in Australia and, indeed, the Southern Hemisphere.

The biennial **Mountains to Mangroves** festival was held in June and on the 23rd the Precinct held an Open Day as part of the activities. A lot of work went into the preparations but the attendance on the part of the public was very poor.

It was especially disappointing for the organisers of the seminar held by M2M in the Drill Hall where several highly qualified speakers gave talks. The audience was mainly the workers from the other exhibitions. One speaker, Dr Anna Keenan, a local woman who trained with Al Gore, presented a stunning expose of global warming and the consequences if we do not act quickly.

The War on Graffiti – the war continues: the Council has planted 37 shrubs around the Precinct buildings to form hedges to foil the pests. They have survived for about two months with only two having been pulled out. This is phenomenal; when we tried to grow bougainvillea to protect the outside air conditioning unit, the plants were ripped out in a couple of days.

Executive Dinner – we held this in the old School on Saturday 14th July. This is an annual event where we can get together and 'chew the fat' looking both forward and back. This year we farewelled our secretary, Heather Bingham, who stepped into the breach two years ago to fill the position. Heather is the secretary to a couple of other organisations and has simply run out of time. Gay Sparkes will take over the secretary's position after the Annual Meeting and a new member, Daphne Buse, will be joining the executive.

At the dinner we inaugurated the new 80 cm TV and Combo DVD & VCR Recorder by watching the DVD of the opening of the Chermside Hub which was recorded in our own school, featuring several of our own members; they all looked very spiffy.

The TV et al was bought on a grant from the Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. We applied for the grant in July 2006 and by the time it was approved, technology had marched on and we paid an extra \$400 to get the best technical deal on offer.

Bob Cunningham had to sort out how to operate the monster and then passed the knowledge on to Beverley who is the operator; she tried to show me but, like Sergeant Schultz, I know nothing.

The Building Committee finally got into gear and built a large triangular shelf in the north east corner of the meeting room; it is the head height of the shortest member of the committee, so everybody in the room will have a good view.

A second shelf was placed below the first to hold the Combo DVD-VCR box. Apart from four bolts and six screws all the material was recycled from stuff scrounged by the committee.

A very strong metal table will sit below the edifice to hold the Lap Top computer which can be connected to the box to work the TV monitor. Of course we haven't figured out how this can be done, but we will; watch this space.

History of Chermside – grinds on with people ringing up to answer some of the questions in the last set of minutes.

The map of Gympie Rd showing all the present occupants of shops etc, which was completed a couple of months ago, is gradually being supplemented with the earlier occupants as people remember and tell me. For example:

- The Commonwealth Bank is on the site of Andrew Hamilton's forge and bodyworks.
- The Chermside Day & Night Chemist was Wally Miller's plumbing shop which became the Chermside Paint and Hardware shop.
- Next was Thomas Hamilton's family home on the site of the present Seafood Café.

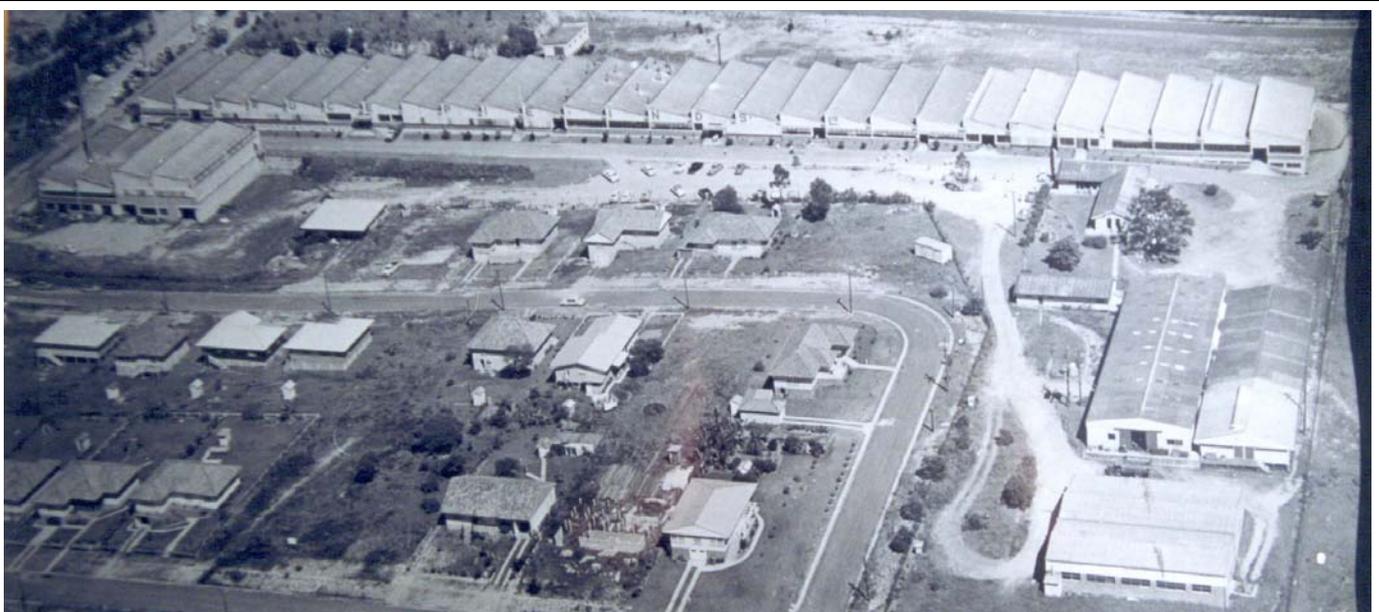
All this is new to the author who knows nothing of anything that is over 20 years old and not much of that as he lives in Virginia. Sad; so help him with anything you know about who was where in Gympie Rd.



The original Allan & Stark Drive-in, built 1957, close to the intersection of Hamilton and Gympie Roads with spaces for 700 cars.



Westfield Chermshire Shoppingtown in 2007 with spaces for 6,500 vehicles under and over the shopping floor. The original 1957 building would fit into the grey buildings in the top right hand corner of the present structure; about a twentieth of the present size. Gympie Rd is on the right and the new Kit-tyhawk Drive, joining Murphy Rd with Hamilton Rd, is on the left. The long narrow space in the top left corner is the site for a proposed development of five tower blocks providing 493 apartments by the Australian Affordable Housing Assn.



Bruce Pie Industries 1960 – All of the buildings are still there but used for different purposes and there are a lot more houses.