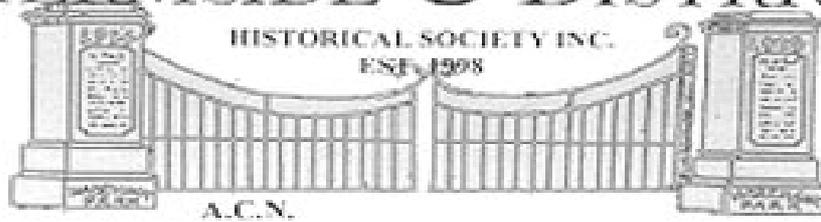


CHERMSIDE & DISTRICTS



Volume 11 No. 4

NEWSLETTER

Aug - Sept 2008

(Issued Oct. Meeting)

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Located in the Chermshire Historical Precinct at 61 Kittyhawk Drive, Chermshire but DO NOT send post to this address.

Hail and Farewell

Alf Vellnagel died aged 94 and was buried from Nundah Lutheran Church on Tuesday 5th August and on the 20th August the death of Harold was announced. Although they were not members of the Society both men would have been known to many of our members. They were predeceased by Charles who died some years ago; the three brothers, sons of August, took over the family blacksmith business in the early 1930s when August died.

The business had passed into the management of Peter son of Harold and the old property was sold in 2004 after 107 years of blacksmithing for Chermshire. The business was transferred to Brendale while the old forge is still preserved in its original location on Gympie Rd.

Annual Report 2008 – was delivered at the August meeting and summarised the activities of the Society for the previous 12 months.

- Membership of 74.
- Vandalism continues to be a problem
- Underside of the school closed in to keep out intruders.
- The work of recording the changing face of Chermshire continues; it is changing greatly and rapidly.
- Celebrated our 10th Anniversary and conducted 10 displays and speakers addressed other organizations.
- The work of recording, indexing and analysing our archives continues

- Researching the history of Wallace St continues and is a major undertaking in which many members are engaged.

The following is an excerpt from the History of Chermshire, Ch. 2 – European Take Over - 1824-1864

Introduction

The industrial revolution began on the coalfields of England in the late 18th Century and started a period of industrial expansion that is still going on around the world today. Being first in the process gave Britain a head start in the everlasting race to be the dominant power in an expansionist Europe. These countries were busy colonising, aka invading, the lesser powers of Africa and Asia to establish new, or expand, existing empires; British industry supplied the muscle to keep her ahead of the pack.

With the victory of the British fleet under Nelson at Trafalgar in 1805, Britain became the unchallenged mistress of the world's oceans and remained such till World War I in 1914-18. The red-coloured countries on the map marked the British Empire stretching around the world, joined to the Mother Country by the shipping lanes which were patrolled by the British Navy. 'Britannia Rules the Waves' was not just a patriotic song, it was a reality and the Pax Britannica was enforced globally.

When Wellington defeated the 'invincible' Bonaparte at Waterloo, the British government was able to continue its long standing pol-

icy of controlling the balance of power in Europe. This meant that Britain remained secure, separated by the Channel from Europe, but always ready to support the smaller European powers against any larger power attempting to dominate Europe.

Thus Britain was the superpower of the 19th Century and the British people were proud of their status; they were the Lords of the earth; for the time. Much later, Germany would challenge and fail, but the USA would succeed in the 20th Century.

The colonials in Australia were proud to be British citizens and flew the Union Jack long after Federation. When they arrived in Moreton Bay they came bringing their traditions and customs but the land slowly, very slowly changed them; for a long while they thought the history of the land began with their arrival.

Arrival of the Newcomers in the Moreton Bay Area

John Oxley discovered the Brisbane River, but only for the Europeans; the Aborigines discovered it thousands of years earlier. However, he did explore and map the river in 1823 and the first shipload of convicts arrived on 11th September 1824¹² intending to settle at Redcliffe but soon moved to the present Brisbane area, then called Moreton Bay, to establish a dump for the worst of the convicts who were being evicted from the larger dumping ground at Sydney Town; hardly an auspicious start to the proto colony.

In 1827 Alan Cunningham, travelling north from the Hunter River, by the overland route, 'discovered' the Darling Downs. The next year, by following the Bremer River, he 'discovered' the gap in the ranges that bears his name and so, opened the route from the sea to the inland for the Europeans.

The newcomers could have saved themselves a lot of trouble if they had simply treated the Aborigines as fully human and asked them the way; they had found these places and tracks thousands of years ago – but the newcomers treated the Aboriginal people as backward, a typical action of empire builders of the past, and the present.

Free settlers were not encouraged but some were beginning to move north and squat in the Darling Downs area to pasture their herds of cattle and sheep. These squatters now looked to the new settlement of Moreton Bay as a centre for supplies and exports but they were banned from coming any closer than 50 miles (80.5km).³ The first wheeled transport passed through Cunningham's Gap in 1840⁴ which was after the convict settlement closed.

Little was known about the Australian environment and climate but the new settlers set about trying to establish European style pastoral and, later, farming methods in the newly acquired coastal lands; they had no idea of the droughts and little of the rainfall pattern. They cleared the forests to let grass grow or to plant crops, in both cases they were trying to grow grass crops in an area which was really subtropical forest and not very suited to the farming methods of Europe. This was one of the early, understandable, mistakes they made and it was to cost dearly in the future, as was their importation of new animals and plants, including an amazing variety of pests.

The early growth of Brisbane Town and Limestone Hill (Ipswich) was artificial, in that the occupants were convicts and soldiers who, with their supplies, came by sea and depended on ship transport for their maintenance. The clearing of land for cultivation was secondary while the main aim of the settlement was punishment; an open air jail. Any produce was looked on as a reduction of the costs of running the jail rather than as a means towards the end of establishing a permanent, self supporting, settlement. On the other hand, the squatters were seeking their fortune in the new lands and intended to stay permanently while the Aboriginal people were being forcibly moved off their land by one means or another.

The 1830s saw the growth and decline of the convict establishment, the gradual clearing of land around the Brisbane River and the growing idea of free European settlement in the surrounding area. In 1834 Governor Burke issued Squatters Licences for grazing rights on Crown Land at £10 PA⁵ and the arrival of Andrew Petrie in 1837 as a Superintendent of Works⁶ meant that the government was preparing to build some-

¹

² Fitzgerald, R: From the Dreaming to 1915 – U Q Press St Lucia – 1982 ISBN 0 7022 1634 8

³ Fitzgerald: p. 89-90

⁴ Brisbane 1859-1959 p.29

⁵ Fitzgerald: p.86

⁶ Fitzgerald: p.87

thing more substantial than a jail. Possibly about that time, the first bridge over Breakfast Creek, on the site of the present Bowen Bridge, was built by the convicts using logs from the local forest⁷. Military engineers would have supervised the construction, and it would probably have been built before about 1839 when the convict settlement was closed but could have been as late as 1842 when the last convicts were withdrawn and the area was opened to free settlement.

Parks and Bridges

On Saturday 5th July 2008 the Society named the Gerns Park on Downfall Creek off Newman Road, Wavell Heights. Heinrich Gerns, a butcher from Germany, after working at Huttons of Zillmere, opened a small goods business on the Geebung side of the creek in 1895. The business is still operating today and still in the same family being managed by grandson Edwin Gerns.

This was the culmination of about four years of organisation by the Society in getting the family and the Council and the history all in place and all pulling together. Few people know anything about the process because only a few ever have to go through it all. Endless phone calls and letters written, but in the long run that's what the Society is all about, trying to preserve the history of the area.

About 50 people came to the naming, the Brisbane City Council supplied a large self supporting tent, which was needed when the rain started, the Aspley Rover Scouts provided morning tea, Cr Kim Flesser (Northgate Ward) paid for it while the Council made and erected the very high profile new style name sign.

The Society President addressed the gathering, outlined the Society's role and introduced Edwin Gerns who gave a very interesting address which pleased the gathering and led to questions. Edwin was able to recount various family memories much to the delight of the family members. Cr Flesser spoke on behalf of the Council, outlined its policy on parks and their care and congratulated the Gerns family on 113 years of continuous service to the community.

All this happened while the rain fell steadily and the cold wind blew, in fact it blew the plastic covering off the sign and we had to put it back on to formally name the park. This

was followed by a delicious morning tea and chatter. We had to pull the tent down to get the people to go home, wet but happy.

This was the 12th park or place the Society, in conjunction with the Brisbane City Council, has named in the local area and we are looking at another park that needs a name on Cabbage Tree Creek off Beams Road. This is a prime method of teaching the history of the local area.

Naming of the Cpl. John French VC Memorial Bridge

On Sunday 24th August 2008 the Society, in conjunction with the Milne Bay Memorial Library and Research Centre (Drill Hall) and the Brisbane City Council, named the new bridge over Downfall Creek on Kittyhawk Drive after Corporal John Alexander French 2/9th Battalion A.I.F. The gathering was attended by some 90-100 people, veterans, relatives and members of the three organisations.

The Service was directed by Major Pat O'Keefe OAM (Retd) who welcomed the people and introduced the participants.

Prayers for the Fallen were led by the Rev Keith Briggs.

The Ode was led by Greg Peake representing the K/W Sub Branch

The Last Post and Reveille, interspersed by a Moment of Silence, was conducted by Major Laurie Young (Retd)

The Corporal J.A. French, VC Testimonial was given by Mr Bryan Wells – Final President of the 2/9th Battalion Ex-members Association. He briefly outlined the circumstances for which Cpl French was awarded the Victoria Cross which was the highest award for bravery (valour) in the armed forces of the British Empire during WWII.

On the 4th Sept 1942 the Australian infantry was attacking the Japanese position at Milne Bay and came under severe rifle and machine gun fire. The section led by Cpl French was held up by fire from three Japanese machine gun posts. He ordered his men to take cover and advanced alone silencing one of the posts using hand grenades.

Returning to his section for more grenades he then went out and silenced the second machine gun post. Finally, armed with a Thompson sub-machine gun, he advanced on the third post firing from the hip. He was badly wounded but continued to advance until the Japanese gun ceased firing.

⁷ Brisbane City Archives

His men then came forward and found Cpl French dead in front of the enemy post, the occupants of which were also killed.

Cpl French saved his men from sustaining heavy casualties and was responsible for the successful conclusion of the entire infantry attack.

The Official Unveiling of the Bridge Sign was conducted by Councillor Fiona King of Marchant Ward.

The Laying of Wreaths followed with some 20 wreaths laid at the foot of the sign which was high above the participants on the embankment of the bridge.

The Rev Keith Briggs then gave the Memorial Blessing and the Australian National Anthem was sung by the assembly.

The Ceremony concluded with Major O'Keeffe thanking the participants and inviting them to morning tea at the Drill Hall.

The whole ceremony was conducted in an atmosphere of deep reverence, with the precision characteristic of the military in honouring the fallen. At the same time there was a touch of awe-nostalgia-sorrow at seeing the 'old soldiers still soldiering on' in spite of the toll of sixty six years.

The Brisbane City Council designed and made the two signs from information supplied by the participants. They then erected the signs and prepared the curtains on one of them for the ceremony. They also supplied and erected a large marquee which shaded the congregation from the strong sunshine.

Avenue of Trees: Brisbane City Council plans to plant an avenue of Brush Box trees along the cycle path in 7th Brigade Park. The Society is proposing the avenue be named after Major James C. Mahoney one of the officers at the battle of Milne Bay and who was the Inaugural Professor of French at UQ. This is in line with our consistent policy of naming local parks and places after historical figures associated with the local area.

One Book Many Brisbanes

Cr Fiona King has forwarded the following information which is aimed at encouraging local writers to tell their stories of Brisbane.

On Wednesday 17 September, the 2008 One Book Many Brisbanes story competition will open for entries. The competition aims to

showcase the literary talent of our city by publishing the best original stories about Brisbane.

In 2008/9, One Book Many Brisbanes will form part of the Brisbane 150 celebrations and is partnering with the Brisbane Writers Festival. As part of this partnership, there will be some changes to the program. Five winning stories will be chosen from the competition and five high profile authors will be invited to submit stories. These ten stories will then be published in a special edition of the One Book Many Brisbanes anthology, to be released in June 2009.

The story competition will close at 5pm Monday 8 December 2008. If you would like entry forms we have them here in the Ward Office Phone 3407 0707.

Bus Trip to Toowoomba

On Sunday 21st Sept 18 members and friends went to the Annual Carnival of Flowers which is still going in spite of the widespread water restrictions presently in force.

Originally it was hoped to hire a large bus but the response was not great enough. At one time it was felt that we would have to cancel the trip but then it was decided to hire a small bus and keep faith with those who wanted to go.

The trip was a success and next year we are thinking of running similar trips, maybe even half day ones in the Brisbane area. This is being forced on us due to the rising cost of living and the competition from other bus entrepreneurs.

Our thanks to Stirling Hinchliffe who paid for the travellers' morning tea.

Wavell State High School 50th Birthday.

Golden Anniversary – Back to Wavell Day is on Saturday April 4th 2009. For details see school's website (Just print Wavell State High School on you search engine) or check with Brian Tilley 3353 2203

At present there are 1,350 students at the school and it would be interesting to know how many have attended over the years. Anybody know?

Father's Day Raffle

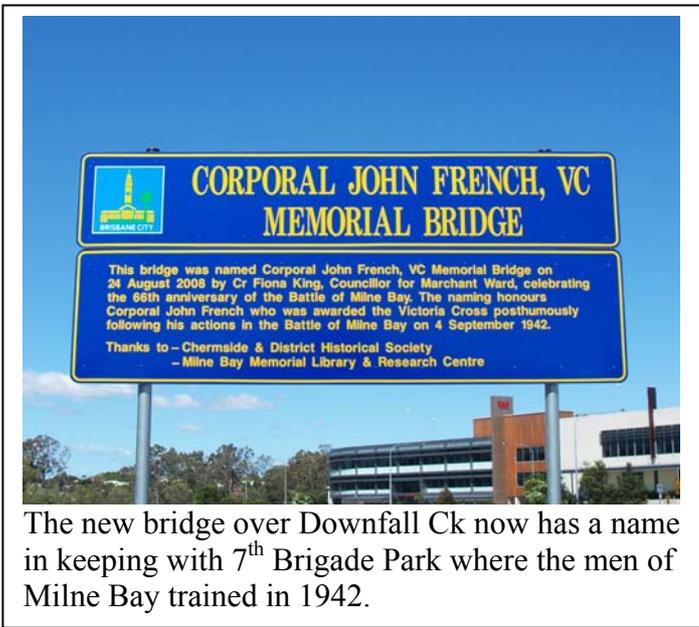
First Prize: A sleeping bag – Zoe Smith

Second Prize: A beach tent – Jan McIntyre

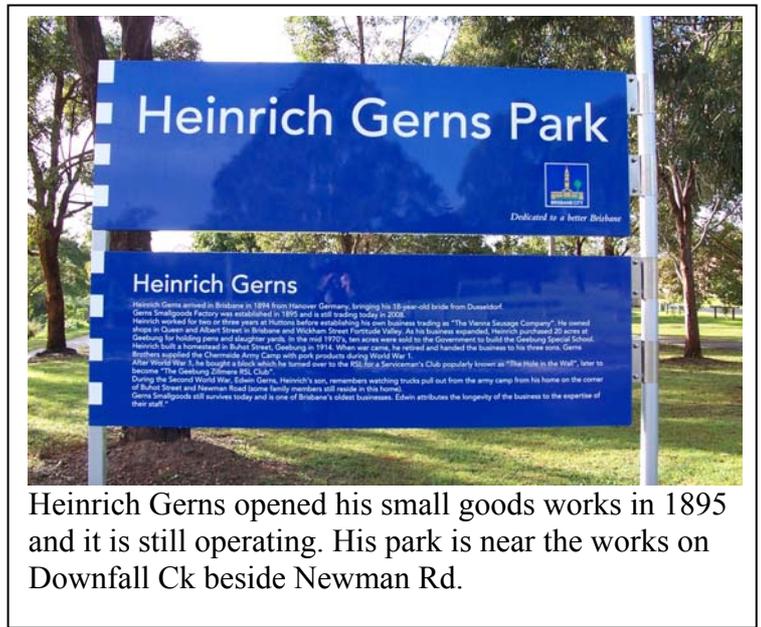
Third Prize: A clock radio – Paul Kirby

Tickets now on sale for the Christmas Hamper raffle. Don't miss out!!

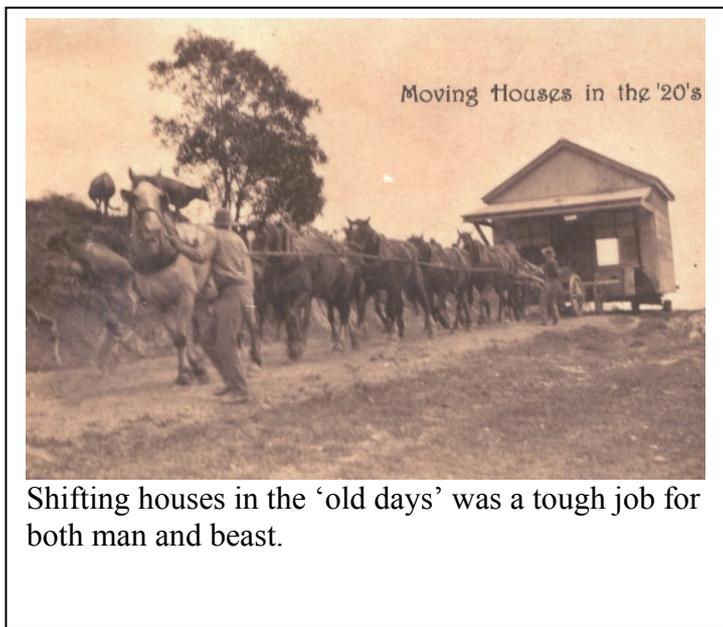
Thanks to Cr Fiona King for printing this newsletter for the Society.



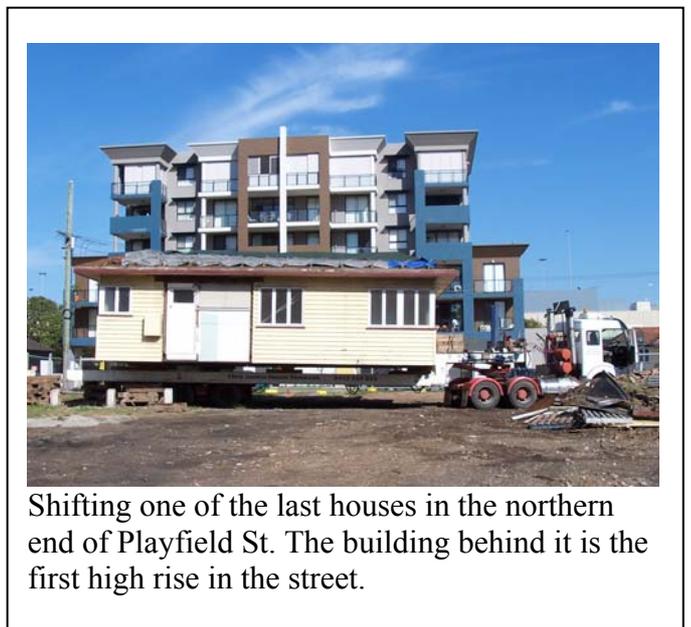
The new bridge over Downfall Ck now has a name in keeping with 7th Brigade Park where the men of Milne Bay trained in 1942.



Heinrich Gerns opened his small goods works in 1895 and it is still operating. His park is near the works on Downfall Ck beside Newman Rd.



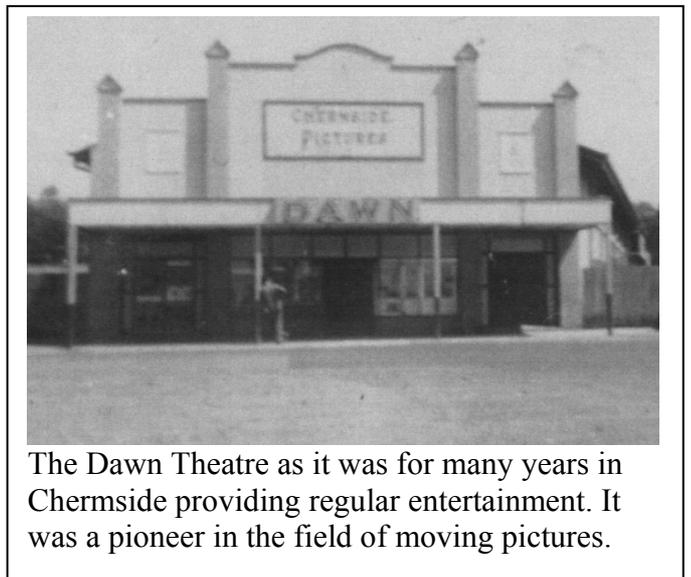
Shifting houses in the 'old days' was a tough job for both man and beast.



Shifting one of the last houses in the northern end of Playfield St. The building behind it is the first high rise in the street.



The Brisbane North Eye Centre which replaces the Dawn Theatre which stood on this site for 78 years and is contributing to Chermside's growth as a major medical centre.



The Dawn Theatre as it was for many years in Chermside providing regular entertainment. It was a pioneer in the field of moving pictures.