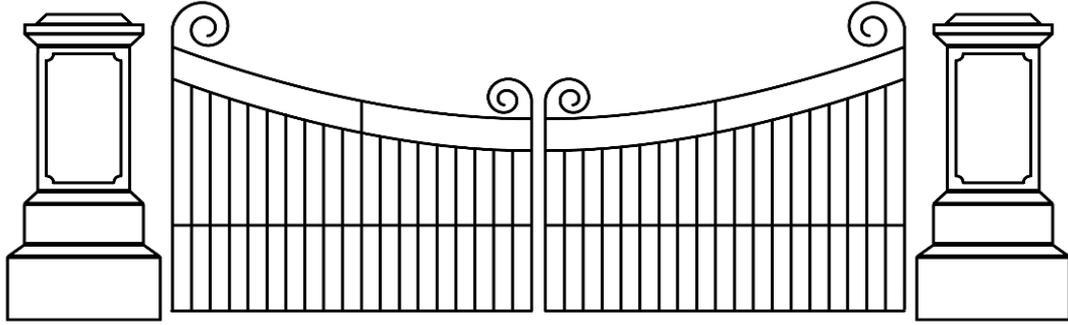


*Preserving our past is our future*



# Chermside & Districts Historical Society Inc.

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NEWSLETTER

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## Hail and Farewell

On Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2010, May Hibberd died peacefully in The Prince Charles Hospital after a short stay.

May is survived by her husband Keith, son, Greg daughter, Caroline Bowser and Grandchildren.

May was a foundation member of the Society and contributed a great deal of information on the formative years of The Prince Charles Hospital; her photos are especially informative.

She trained at Brisbane General Hospital from 1943 to 1946 and started working at Chermside in 1960 with the handicapped children and in about 1964 took charge of the new Outpatients Department. May continued working at Prince Charles till she retired in 1984.



1946 Graduation Photo of May Edith Reedman whom we knew as May Hibberd.

Our April speaker was Dr. James Lergessner who spoke on the topic of “Snippets from a Baby Boomer’s Diary”. The snippets were taken from his book of the same name which he had intended to publish when Hugh Lunn published his “Over the top with Jim”. So he put it off as he felt that two books about Brisbane in the 1940s – 1960s would be too much at once; he finally published in 2009.

Jim describes the book as a social history of growing up in Brisbane, based on Annerley, during the mid 1940s to the mid 1960s. Childhood was in a two parent family in a three bedroom home. Going to school, warm school milk and Globite school cases. Bread cost 1shilling & 4 pence per loaf and was sliced with a knife, newspaper 3pence, matinee at the pictures 11pence, the nightsoil truck called, they had Bakelite records and fast food was fish and chips.

When pot meant a saucepan, a big Mac was a large raincoat, a chip was a piece of wood, grass was mown not smoked, a crumpet was eaten and the F word was confined to male company. A workaday world, no rock-music, no computers, no Medicare, long service leave was rare, no baby bonus, children supervised by parents and teachers; an age of innocence.

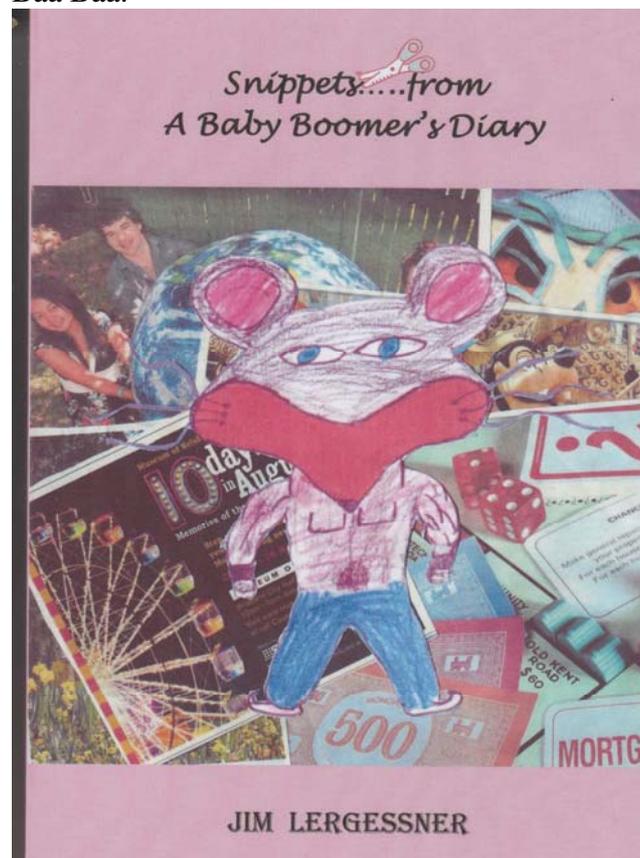
He read five snippets from the book. The first one was his first girlfriend, in primary school. He had been eying her for some time trying to work up courage, but courage to do what? What did you have to do? Finally he simply asked her “Would you be my girlfriend?” and she said “Yes”. He was stunned, is that all there is to it?

He soon found out that there was more when she told him “You have to take me to the pictures on Saturday.” That was no real problem as long as it didn’t cost too much. But then she said “You have to give me a ring”. Where did he get a ring, Jim thought and wondered if he was getting out of his depth. Then somebody pointed him in the direction of the school tuckshop where he could buy a ring in a packet of bubble gum. Problem solved.

He regularly gave her presents such as a tailless Guppy in a jam jar, presumably with water. Another was a box of silkworms; with Mulberry

leaves? Very precious to Jim, but what did the ‘lady fair’ think? We were not told but one wonders what she told her girlfriends.

The second snippet was his about his acting career; short but sensational under the direction of Miss Myer at the Sunday School Christmas Concert. Because Jim had rather curly hair he was selected to be a sheep and to crawl about on all fours, as sheep do, wearing a mask and crying Baa Baa.



At the performance he was so excited that he forgot to put on the mask and Miss Myer could not attract his attention to alert him to the fact; she was getting rather excited too. But the play must go on and the members of the audience got excited when they realised that Jim was supposed to have a mask like all the other sheep. They roared with laughter and responded with great applause when the play ended: Miss Myer was not amused and roundly ticked Jim off. Such is fame.

Snippet the third, relived the visit to Brisbane of Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Phillip. Jim was one of hundreds of primary school children dressed in their best and lining the road waiting for the Royal Progress in an open car.

His main memory of the day was the heat; it must have been 40 degrees or more in the sun

that day. Children were dropping all around but he stood his ground like a man. Even the flags they made at school were drooping, the crayon was running and someone was handing out flags coloured with chalk.

When the Queen and the Prince swept by in their car it was an anti-climax as she looked like somebody off Neighbours, a dotty aunt maybe. They were gone in a few seconds, it was all over and the children had waited for a couple of hours.



*Dr James Lergessner entertained the Society with excerpts from his book tracing the social changes that took place in the adolescence of the Baby Boomers of Brisbane. His listeners could identify with many of the things he described.*

Snippet number four centred on the family wireless or Radiogram, it was a combination of radio and gramophone, state of the art in communications of the time. It was in the lounge room and could pick up London, New York and other far away places as well as the local stations.

The family would gather around and listen to the serials such as “Yes-What” portraying a school room; the children waited till Greenbottle yelled in pain while getting caned. “Dad and Dave” were forever trying to solve the problems of the village of Snake Gully. Superman and Tarzan figured prominently while the Adventures of Davy Crocket led to an explosion of coonskin caps among the juveniles.

Little Richard and Buddy Hollis, along with the Disk Jockeys, provided a steady diet of music and singing. While everybody could sing along with the Aeroplane Jelly Jingle, as well as a myriad of other advertising jingles.

For more ‘intellectual’ amusement there were the two quizmasters, Jack Davey and Bob Dyer. The big prize was the 64 Dollar question - seems rather small beside the million dollar question on one present quiz show. Then at 7pm the News, followed by a commentary by some prominent academic, and this was slowly replacing the daily papers. You got the news faster by radio.

The final snippet was Friday night at Cloudland. Jim prepared carefully for this weekly event by washing his hair and rubbing in Brylcreem to keep it the way he wanted. Next he donned a snow white, freshly laundered and ironed shirt, light black trousers held by a slim belt. In cold weather he would drape a lumber jacket over one shoulder as Elvis did in the movies.

His transport was a second hand Fiat, he could not afford a Mini which was all the rage among the younger set. Before he got in the car Mum would give him a lecture to be careful which applied to both behaviour and driving.

At the dance the action was fast and continuous while time between dances was to consume orange juice and maybe a smoke. It was considered the height of elegance to light up a tailor made cigarette by first striking a Wax Vesta on the brick wall. Sometimes it was possible to drive a girl home via Mr Cootha and view the stunning sight of electric lights of Brisbane. You might even get another date with her if she felt you did not belong to the “wandering hands society”.

On the week end a car load of adolescents could drive around with radio blasting and visit a coffee club or go to Brekkie Creek for supper.

What happened to those days? The gang grew up and moved on.

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Enoggera & Districts Historical Society  
We received an email from the above society informing us that the founder of the society, Kate Perry died on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> April.

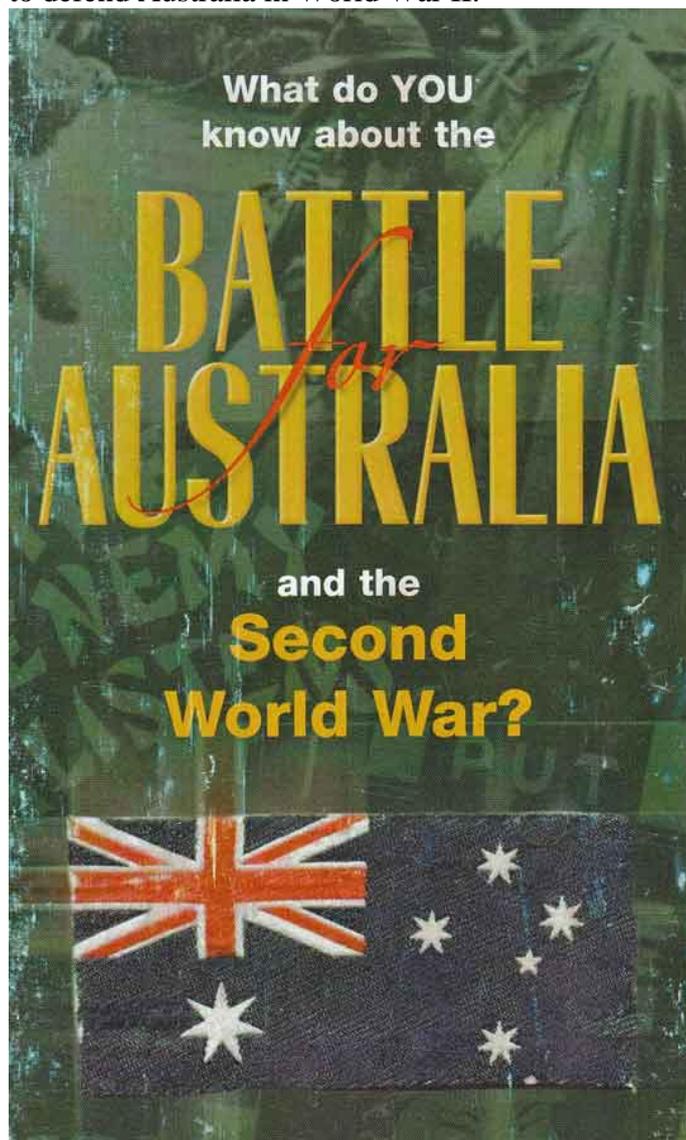
Kate came to Australia from England in about 1950 with her husband and elder children. She founded the E&DH Society and the Enoggera Memorial Hall Society in 1996.

The CDHS extends our condolences to the family and the E&DH Society.

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The speaker for May was Patrick O’Keeffe who is a military historian and the Curator of the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalions Museum (Drill Hall) at the Chermside Historical Precinct.

Pat’s topic was The Battle for Australia which is remembered on the first Wednesday in September each year by holding ceremonies around Australia to commemorate the years of fighting to defend Australia in World War II.



*The answer to this question for most Australians is “Nothing”. The commemoration of the battle is to rectify this lack of knowledge.*

The Battle for Australia began on 15<sup>th</sup> February, 1942 when the ‘impregnable’ fortress of Singapore fell to the Japanese army. Prime Minister, John Curtin, called it Australia’s Dunkerque but there was no evacuation for the 8<sup>th</sup> Division.

The Japanese Imperial Army continued its advance into the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia) and landed in New Guinea, Australians were worried; they had seen what war was like on the newsreels at the pictures (Movies).

Australia went on to a ‘Total War’ footing with rationing of food, clothing, petrol, travel was only for essential journeys, censorship of news and letters was enforced, every able bodied male was subject to call up for the armed forces, black outs were standard procedure, sale of War Bonds became continuous; the Home Front was organised to support the men at the Fighting Front, everything was second to Winning the War from 1942 till victory in 1945.

Japanese submarines patrolled Australian waters, midget submarines came into Sydney Harbour, and Newcastle was shelled. But these were minor compared to the bombing of Darwin with 60 air raids. Even Broome in WA and Townsville were bombed.

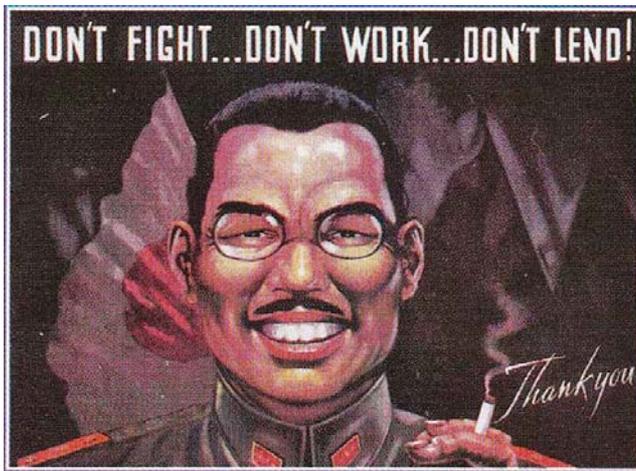
In May 1942 the US and RAN turned back the Japanese Navy in the Coral Sea Battle and blunted the attack on Port Moresby. However the Japanese landed in New Guinea at Gona on the north coast and Milne Bay on the eastern tip. The 7<sup>th</sup> Brigade, which trained at Chermside, assisted by the United States inflicted the first defeat on the Japanese Imperial Army in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. This was a big morale boost to the home front and also to the British Army preparing for to attack the Japanese in Burma.

A month later in June the Japanese navy tried to ambush the US navy at Midway Atoll and destroy its aircraft carriers but due to the US code breakers intercepting Japanese messages, the situation was reversed. The Japanese lost four carriers to the US one, making the battle one of the most decisive in the Pacific war. Australia was then probably safe from invasion but the war went on and Australian troops climbed the Kokoda Track over the Owen Stanley Range to fight, and win, the battle of Kokoda where the Japanese were finally turned back.

Why Commemorate the Battle for Australia?

- It was the first time we had to fight to defend Australia from direct attack.
- The whole population was organised to fight and work to win the war.

- Women enlisted in auxiliary forces and replaced men in industry and farming.
- Veterans are dying and need to be recognised for their sacrifices in fighting and as Prisoners of War, especially those who, because of injury and trauma, were still fighting the war long after 1945.
- Few young people are aware of the titanic struggle that engaged all Australians living at the time.
- It is a commemoration of a total war extending over several years, not just one battle.
- The consequences for Australia were far reaching in such areas as society, foreign affairs, taxation, rehabilitation of veterans, full employment, as a member of the Community of Nations, etc.
- Most Australian casualties and Prisoners of War were in the Pacific Theatre.
- What to do with the Japanese when the war ended? What to do about the independence movements in the nearby colonies?



#### How to Commemorate the Battle for Australia?

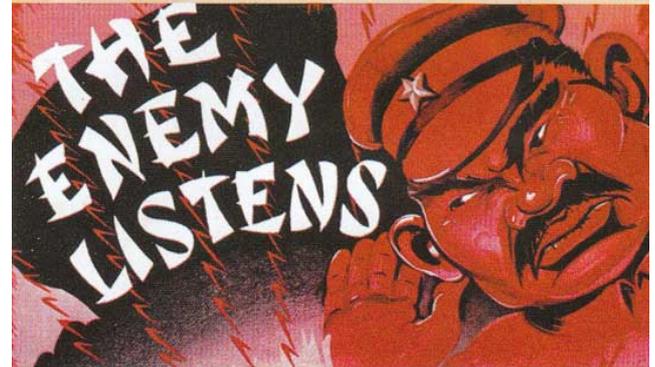
Raise public awareness by the following activities:

- Holding annual commemoration ceremonies in all States and Canberra.
- Including the story in the School History Curriculum in such a way that the Japanese people are not blamed; blame games only prolong the war.
- A National Monument in Canberra.
- A Battle for Australia Day.
- Suggest Weary Dunlop and Tommy Uren ex-POWs and champions of peace and reconciliation with the Japanese.

What has been done so far?

The first commemoration services were held in 1998 in NSW and the idea came north of the Tweed River in 2000 when the first commemoration in Brisbane was held at the Shrine of Remembrance in Anzac Square. Since then they have been held on the site of the old Bellview Hotel in the forecourt of the Department of Works, Queens Place.

This is also the site of the Battle for Australia Memorial near the Dutch War Memorial.



*Propaganda posters were plastered everywhere during the war warning people to beware of slacking in the war effort. They look rather comical today but we took them very seriously when the fear of invasion was real.*

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#### Coming Speakers

- June: John Donaldson – Bus Driver – Historical bus trips around Brisbane
- July: John Morris – Journalist - Speaking about his latest book on Queensland.
- August: Pat – Annual Report
- September: Father's Day – DVD Leyland Brothers.

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**New Computer** – Our five year old computer finally died and we had to replace it with an up to date model and new programs. It looks much the same as the old one but the new monitor (screen) is a wow – twice as wide as the old one. The new programs enable us to show up to a hundred small photos on the screen; very impressive and it makes the task of finding a particular photo much easier.

The whole lot cost \$2,048 but without it the task of finding data would take so long that we would never be able to write any history.

**Website** – It is growing steadily as new material is collected and old material sifted. One new page is looking at the Tanneries of Kedron in conjunction with James and Noela (nee Maggs) Gibson who have supplied a great deal of both written and photographic data.

Hardly any documents survived the sale of Maggs Bristol Tannery in 1966 and they had to rely on Noela's memory of family memories. There has been a lot emails exchanged between the Gibsons and the society as we sift the material, edit drafts, interpret photos and identify the people in the photos.

Jim Gibson drew a map showing the four tanneries along the unnamed creek that flowed from Gallagher's on the west side of Gympie Road, Slaney's, Pill's and Maggs' Bristol on the east side. As always when memory is involved, the historian is constantly probing to find documentary evidence to substantiate the memory and it paid off in searching the society archives.

In 1946 the Brisbane City Council had an aerial survey done of much of the metropolitan area including the suburbs of Chermside Kedron along Gympie Road. Looking at the negatives which we have in our archives it was just possible to see what we thought were the tanneries of Kedron.



Taking the large area photo which went from Hamilton Road in the north to Kedron Brook in the south, cropping and resizing, we were able to get the photo shown in fine detail. The result is a photo about three times the size of the one shown here. This one has been shrunk to fit in the column, to see the larger on you will have to look at the website and use your Refidex.

Even on this shrunken photo Gallagher's Tannery is clear in the top left corner, Slaney's is very small at the eastern end of Boothby Street, Pill's is between Boothby and Childers Streets while Maggs' is between Childers and Kedron Streets. This photo confirms what we already 'knew' from memory.

Then comes the 'icing on the cake'; we can now be almost certain of the location of the earlier Maggs' Edinburg tannery which was known to have been located somewhere between Leckie Road and Ramsay Street. It is probably the large blob on a small creek at the eastern end of Castle Street which crosses Gympie Road and becomes Strathmore Street. Told you to use your Refidex

The Tanneries and Slaughter yards were the hallmark of the local area when it was the frontier between the suburbs of Brisbane and the bush. The tanneries flourished here from about the 1860s till the 1960s with some like Packers at West Chermside and Maggs' Bristol lasting into the mid 1970s. The latter was bought by Johnson's and Sons after Maggs sold out.

The Slaughter yards which supplied the tanneries with hides and skins suddenly disappeared in 1931 when the State government bought out the Swift Abattoirs at Cannon Hill and centralised all slaughtering there. Then the tanneries got their hides from Cannon Hill.

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Our Archivist, Beverley Isdale is reorganising our filing system as we are running out of room in the filing cabinets. She is reducing the paper input and increasing the electronic input. This is being done with the help of several members who have been coming to Saturday afternoon working bees.  
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