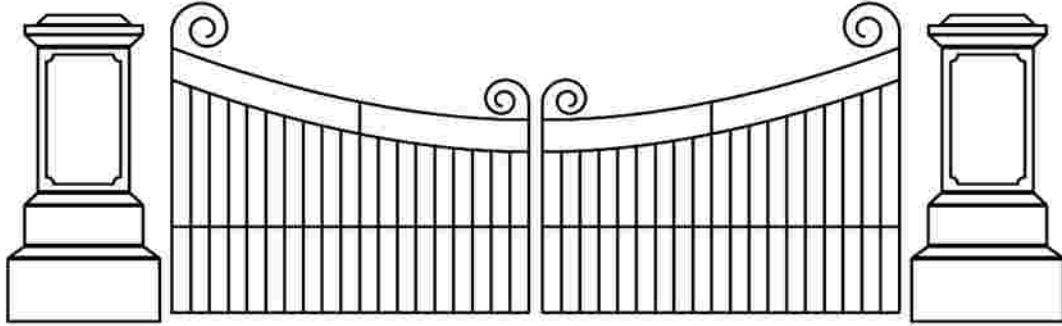


*Preserving our past is our future*



# Chermside & Districts Historical Society Inc.

Website: <http://www.chermsidedistrict.org.au>

Volume 14.No.3

NEWSLETTER

June-July 2011

(Issued Aug. Meeting)

President 3261 1601  
Terry Hampson

P.O. Box 416, Chermside Qld 4032  
Editor: Pat O'Shea 3260 7384

Secretary 3857 3195  
G Sparkes

ABN 15 432 826 265

INC. No. IA28320

Located in the Chermside Historical Precinct at 61 Kittyhawk Drive, Chermside but DO NOT send post to this address. Printing courtesy of Cr Fiona King.



### **Brian Maurice Tilly 1945-2011**

Brian was an energetic and well informed Executive member of the CDHS. Being a lifelong resident he had a very long and intimate family connection with the history of Chermside. He put this to good use by researching much valuable material for the Society's archives.

Brian was a very pleasant and cheerful 'young' man who is sadly missed by all who knew him.

Rest in Peace

**Speaker for June:** Lt Colonel Miles Farmer (Ret'd) - from the Boer War Memorial Committee spoke on the Anglo-Boer War



*Lt. Col. Farmer used a power point presentation to outline the first major involvement of Colonial troops abroad.*

The Cape of Good Hope was invaded by Dutch farmers (Boers) in the 1600s to build a supply station for Dutch ships on their way to and from their colony in Indonesia. The British invaded in the 1806 because they wanted it for a similar reason i.e., to supply British ships.

The Boers moved out to the north and formed the Boer Republics (Transvaal and Orange Free State). Then, when in these areas diamonds were discovered at Kimberley in 1870 and gold on the Witwatersrand in 1886 Britain tried to move in. The Boers resisted and beat the British in the 1880-1881 conflict.

However the British won the 1899-1902 (Boer) War but only at the cost of 22,000 British

and 25,000 Boer (mostly civilians) lives. The mighty British Empire was stretched to its limit to defeat a motley band of Dutch farmers.

The Boers were defending their homes and families so they fought like tigers using guerilla tactics. The British were invading and fought like a European army on parade as they had been trained to do.

The first Australians to be involved was a contingent of NSW Lancers who were returning home from England. The colony of Queensland was next to send mounted infantry and the other colonies followed. The value of these soldiers was that they could ride, shoot and live off the land. They began to operate as commandos like the Boers.

The British resorted to burning and destroying Boer farms, driving off the cattle and imprisoning the occupants in concentration camps. When the British public found out how bad these camps were they were appalled and demanded better facilities.

About 1,000 Australian men and a few women died in the conflict. This is more than in all the wars since the Second World War. There was local recognition of the exploits by our men but nothing on a national scale. Partly because the Commonwealth was not formed until the war was nearing its end and so had little to do with it.

The Boer War Memorial Committee aims to build a monument on land already set aside

in Anzac Avenue, Canberra at the Australian War Museum.

**Footnote:** George Reid, the father of Rona Arndt, fought in the war and came home a committed pacifist. He was stunned when he saw the Boers; they were just like the farmers back home in Qld. The first time he met one in battle they looked at each other, discharged their rifles in the air and parted.

George served for two years and was awarded the Queen's Medal. The clasps record his service in South Africa 1901-1902, Transvaal and the Orange Free State.



*The map, courtesy of Google Boer Republics, shows how the British possessions almost surrounded the Boer Republics of Transvaal and Orange Free State.*

**Sergeant Major Robert Lee:** He served in the British Medical Corps in the Crimea (1853-5) and in the Abyssinian Campaign of 1869; he is buried in an unmarked grave at Lutwyche. Recently we have been in contact with some of his descendants and new information has come to light.

One of his sons, Harry Lee, became a Lt Colonel, commanded the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion in WWI and was the Head Teacher at Chermside State School 1919-1923. He lived at Farrington House in Alderley where SM Lee died in 1919.

Harry Lee would have taught in the CDHS rooms we use in Chermside and the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalions Museum is in the Drill Hall beside us is the Precinct. Pat O'Keeffe is researching Harry still further.



*SM Lee's grave is marked by the two pieces of white bark, one at his head and one at his feet. But I don't know which is which and probably never will. His descendants may wish to erect a monument. Why wasn't one put on the grave in the first place? Lutwyche Cemetery is full of questions.*

We have been in touch with a descendant of SM Lee who has given us a large amount of data on the family. This material will be used to update our records and website.

Terry Hampson and I met a descendant of **George Witton** at his grave and discussed what could be done to clean up the mess and maybe inscribe his

name on the headstone. It is up to the family to decide what they want to do. So we wait.



*Mary & George Witton's grave would benefit with a topping of gravel, the headstone cleaned, stabilised and inscribed. Cost?*

**The June speaker was Beres McCallum** assisted on the computer by Pat Masel. They were from the Windsor and Districts Historical Society and introduced us to the rich heritage of Windsor domestic architecture. And they have stately homes by the bucketful; they classify them by decades, 1860; 1870; 1890; etc.

Chermside has only one stately

Home, Delamore at Kedron and we have wondered why. Our visitors thought that the Windsor homes were built during prosperous times and the banks lent money freely. Also Windsor has plenty of good hill sites for grand homes and Chermside was still the rural urban fringe with farms, bush and flat land. The people who built big homes were not interested in coming way out to Downfall Creek and Kedron.

The visitors not only have a fine collection of heritage listed homes but they also have the history of many, if not all, of them. This has been the hard work of many years of researching their local area. We are just beginning to do this with our listed properties which are mainly from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century.



*Beres McClelland speaking and Pat Masel showing a sample from the Windsor Society's large collection of the stately homes of the Windsor district*

Of special interest to our society is Delamore at Kedron and our visitors had an interesting story to tell about it. It was built by Henry St John Somer-

set who was Paymaster to the Treasury of Queensland.

Henry built Delamore in 1890 and occupied it till about 1892 and, after 36 years in the Civil Service, he was charged with embezzlement of public moneys and sentenced to two years jail. It appears that up to about 1885 he was prosperous enough to go on a trip to Europe leaving his financial affairs in the hands of the secretary of the Q. N. Bank. This man speculated with Henry's money and lost between five and six thousand pounds leaving Henry almost penniless. The culprit's name was not mentioned but it was noted that the man had died before the trial.

Unfortunately Henry then began to 'dip into the till' to pay his debts, with the intention of paying the money back; it did not work and Henry 'fell from grace'.

The last reference I found for Henry was that of his funeral on the 31<sup>st</sup> July 1919. He had been living at Southport and was buried in Toowong Cemetery.

I also discovered another Henry St John Somerset, born in Brisbane who became a distinguished metallurgist. He died in 1952 in Melbourne.

**Thanks to Sponsors and Friends.**

**Mega Services** of Geebung who cleaned the school and gave us a very large discount for our services to the community.

**Kedron-Wavell Social Club** which has supported us in many ways over the years. The latest being a grant of \$2,500 to enable us to publish the History of Chermside and District.

**Peter Shepherd**, our honorary auditor, who has spent a lot of time minutely checking our books for the last several years.

-----  
**Betty van Woensel** – news has just reached us that Betty, who was a member of the CDHS, died on the 18-4-2011. Betty joined the Society in 2001 but due to a severe stroke she suffered in 1997 was never able to attend meetings. She finally discontinued her membership at the end of 2009.

We have since received Betty's eulogy from Rona Arndt. It is the story of her life and is now part of the story of the local area as it has been added to our archives.

**Bus Trip to Hinze Dam 8<sup>th</sup> October 2011.** Following the very successful Three Dams Trip in March many participants indicated their desire to go on another Dam Trip; this is it!

Cost \$60-65; leave Precinct 8.00am, return ... ..

**On a sad note:** Ken Anderson, husband of our member, Lorna, died and was farewelled at St Clements on the Hill, Stafford. We extend our sympathy to Lorna and family. RIP.



The new development in Chermshire on Kittyhawk Drive (the left photo) and Playfield St (the right photo) which was all once Alonzo Sparkes slaughter yard and before that it was Murphy's Paddock and originally it was the land of the Turrbul Tribe. Below is the northern part of Playfield St as it was in the 1950s.



History is all about change, if there was no change there would be no history.

After 20-30,000 years of Aboriginal occupation some Europeans arrived about 200 years ago and pushed them off the land. About 150 years ago the hamlet of Downfall Creek appeared and houses were built.

About 60 years ago Playfield Street appeared and 54 houses were built. The lower photo shows the northern half of them. Banfield St is on the left and Way St on the right.

It was the type of housing in which most of us grew up and

for about the next 50 years it was typical of Chermshire. In December 2004 three houses were demolished and Chermshire Central was built with eight levels and 41 apartments and parking for 60 cars below ground level.

In the past 7 years another 7 high rise apartment blocks have been built adding some 330 units. There are another three high rise apartments nearby. And another 400 units planned for Kittyhawk Drive.

So the times they are 'changing', faster and faster. Brisbane is part of the Global Village.