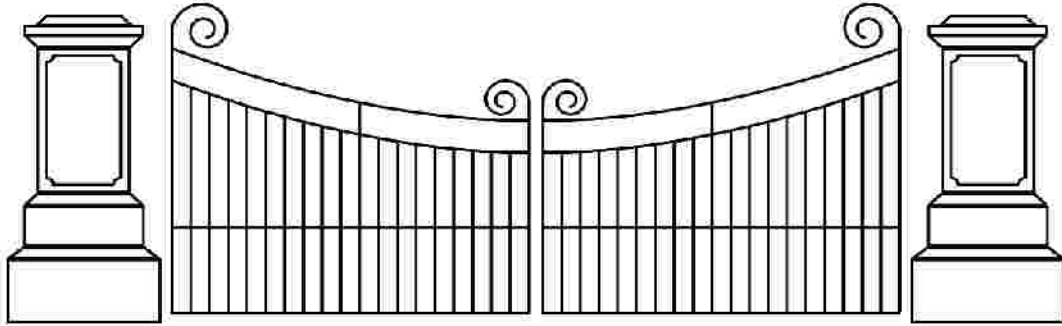


Preserving our past is our future



Chermside & Districts Historical Society Inc.

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NEWSLETTER

Feb-Mar 2012

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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.



Vivienne Heiner (nee Marquis 1918-2012)
Long-time member of the Society photographed at the dedication of the Joseph Lee Park at Zillmere in 2002. Viv was born at Zillmere and lived in the district all her life. She attended the dedication of the Marchant Park WWI Memorial Gates as a four year old child. She was present when they were rededicated in August 2003. Viv was an enthusiastic member of the Society attending meetings even when she was confined to a wheel chair. (Died 20-3-2012, laid to rest 26-3-2012)

Our speaker for February was Marilyn England from the Toowong History Society who spoke to us about how World War II affected the local area of Toowong and in particular the nascent University of Queensland. War broke out in 1939 and on 1st August 1942 the Forgan Smith and the Steele buildings at UQ became the Advanced Land Headquarters of the Allied Defence Forces until the 31st December 1944. General Blamey had his office in Room W341 and from there directed the Australian Armed Forces.

On 17th July 1942 General MacArthur arrived and set up his headquarters in the AMP building in the city. Brisbane then became the centre of the allied planning and administration for the roll back of the Imperial Japanese army and navy in the South Pacific.

More than two hundred rooms in UQ were used; there were 176 telephones with 200 extensions and secure lines to the Signal Camp at Long Pocket and the translators based at Indooroopilly, to Victoria Barracks in Melbourne, to MacArthur

in the AMP building and to army camps all over Australia.

By May 1942 General Blamey was commanding 373,000 Australian troops and his objective was to recapture New Guinea and defend North Queensland



Marilyn England, using her laptop and our data projector, outlines Toowong's central role in World War II.

Many large houses near the UQ were requisitioned to house the personnel and their families, working at the headquarters. MacArthur officially lived in Lennon's Hotel but had a house near UQ and the family lived there which allowed MacArthur's son Arthur, to attend a local kindergarten and play with local boys. Some of them even had rides with General MacArthur in his second large staff car, America 2.



1 Forgan Smith building and 3 the Steel building were the first two buildings at UQ in 1938. They formed the headquarters of General Blamey. (Photo courtesy of UQ)

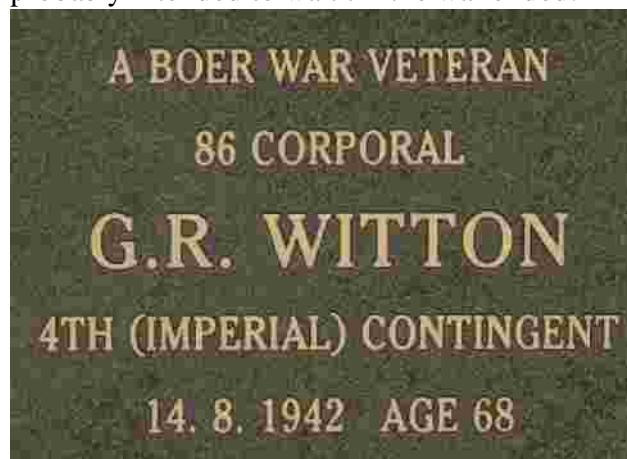
There was a rubbish tip in an old stone quarry

nearby where the Americans dumped parts of planes, large tins of biscuits which were dented and pushbikes which only had a punctured tyre. The local boys rescued the biscuits for home consumption, availed themselves of free bicycles and even cricket bats. The war was turning out to be pretty good, for them.

The Australian Women's Army Service staffed much of the administration of Blamey's headquarters and was located in barracks at Indooroopilly. At Long Pocket, which was very isolated, the 24th Australian Line of Communications Signals Corps was located and the area was used also for examining and testing captured Japanese equipment.

In 1943, after the capture of Sio in New Guinea, Australian Engineers discovered a Japanese code book which should have been destroyed by the retreating Japanese. It was sent to Brisbane to be assessed and found to be the Japanese Army States Codes which when examined by the Intelligence section at UQ enabled the Australians to decipher Japanese signals for the rest of the war. It was the Pacific equivalent of the German Enigma code which was broken at Bletchley Park in England. Everybody knows about the latter but few know about the former. This achievement saved thousands of Australian and US lives.

George Witton Grave Update. Jenny Witton-Sands has obtained a plaque from the War Graves Australia to place on the headstone. After 70 years George will have his name on the headstone along with that of his first wife. We still do not know why his name was not inscribed in 1942 when his ashes were interred there. Maybe the war and fear of a Japanese invasion was a much bigger worry at the time. He died in Victoria, his ashes were sent to Lutwyche for interment and the relatives probably intended to wait till the war ended.



The plaque is simple, straightforward and will fill the void on the headstone at last. This is more than his old nemesis Kitchener got on his grave.

Jenny intends to get a stonemason to fix the plaque and then to tidy up the grave with a new gravel top in place of the broken concrete.

Our speaker for March was Leon Misfeld who spoke about the wives of Queensland governors who resided in Old Government House. We know a lot about most of the men but not much about the women who supported them and did a lot of work for the women and children of Queensland off their own bat.

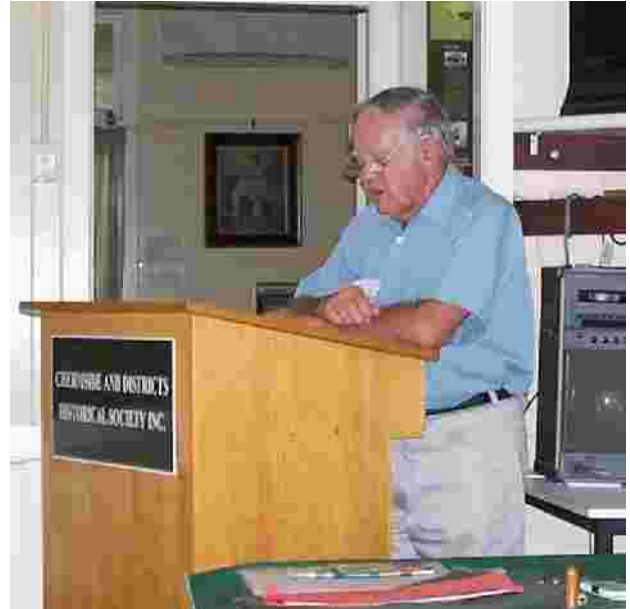
The governor's wife, to some extent, lived in the shadow of her husband by supporting him so that he could attend to matters of state. However these women were also very much individuals in their own right and proved to be very practical in what they did. They were expected to be accomplished hostesses who could entertain all and sundry while they waited to get the governor's ear for their schemes.

The governor's wife had to be a very good diplomat as well as being the social leader in the colony which was an enormous feat in itself. The 'lady wife' usually came from a European background accustomed to the refined society of the great cities. Brisbane on the other hand was a hot, humid, colonial backwater, with streets of mud in the wet season and inhabited by rough-hewn individuals. And there were no mansions to which one could retire to recuperate.

Lady Diamantina Roma Bowen took it all in her stride and had three children as well. She taught Sunday school, conducted the choir of All Hallows, set up a home for young women migrants until they could find appropriate accommodation, set up the Lady Bowen Lying-in home for childbirth which was badly needed, established the first part of what became the Princess Alexandra Hospital. She was a keen gardener in her spare time and a Golden Trumpet Vine she planted still grows in Old Government House grounds.

Lady Laura Phipps the mother of four sons and three daughters must have found the 'lady wife' side more than a little difficult. However she was

the first woman to attend a civic banquet in Brisbane; must have been a 'boys only' affair. From then ladies came to the civic banquets.



Leon Misfeld addresses the March meeting.

Unfortunately Lady Georgina Kennedy died before her husband was appointed. Her place was taken by her 15 year old daughter, Georgina, who seems to have been a very accomplished young woman. She was very popular, wore short skirts, was an accomplished horse rider and managed her role for over six years. Not many ladies of 21 years could equal that accomplishment.

Lady Janine Musgrave was the second wife of Sir Anthony and was from the USA. She had very wide interests, was a natural social leader and lifted the vice-regal entertainment to new heights. She founded Lady Musgrave House at Spring Hill to provide temporary accommodation for single women till they found permanent homes; it is still operating helping homeless women and children.

Lady Alice Norman was a very generous and public spirited woman. After the great 1891 Shearer's strike when tensions were still running high she worked to heal the rift between shearers and the squatters.

Lady Lamington had to deal with the social side of the change over from Colonial to State Government. She also trained as a nurse and worked to build the Lady Lamington Nurses' Home at Brisbane Hospital. She was patron of the Braille Translators and took an active part in the work. When the future King George V and Queen Mary visited as the Duke and Duchess of York she host-

ed the visit. She was a volunteer in the Ambulance Corps in World War I. She is best remembered for giving her name to the sponge cake dipped in chocolate and rolled in desiccated coconut, but there are several stories about the origin of the very popular cake. One report claims that Lord Lamington did not like them and called them "those bloody poofy woolly biscuits". (Wikipedia)

Lady Clementine Chermiside and her husband gave permission to use their name to replace that of Downfall Creek in 1903. They travelled widely and took a 15% cut in allowance as well as reducing social events during a prolonged drought.

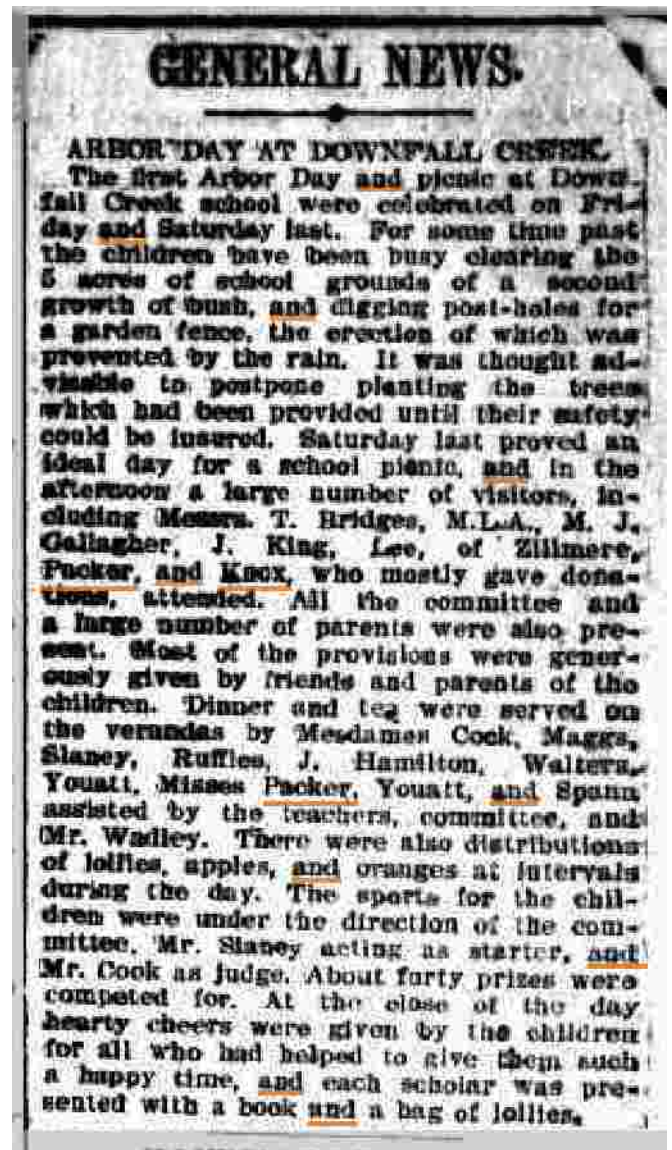
Lady Francis Napier was a distinguished pianist and her piano is still in Old Government House; her husband, Baron Chelmsford, played the cello.

Lady Mary Macgregor was the last hostess in Old Government House and supervised the move to the temporary Government House while the new one was being renovated.

While searching for information on Packer & Knox I found the attached report in the Brisbane Courier dated Wednesday 3-7-1901. It fills out some of the detail relating to the accompanying photo of Arbor Day which would have been on Friday 28 or Saturday 29 June 1901. (Perpetual Calendar)



This photo of Arbor Day at Chermiside State School comes from the Hamilton Collection in the Society archives. It is a very early photo as can be seen from the height of the windows on the side of the building. They were lowered to their present level in C 1903.



Vandalism: Our vandals have been busy working on the newly painted handrail of the front veranda balustrading. I found several skins of paint on the front lawn when cleaning up the mess left by the previous night's party. They seem to make a cut in the paint with something sharp and then peel back the skin of paint. This is the first time I have seen this tactic, and I have seen quite a few. Innovative is the word that springs to mind; what will they think of next?

The final touch to the painting of the school will be completed soon when the present plastic stormwater downpipes are replaced with metal pipes. For the last ten or so years vandals have been slashing the plastic pipes and they have been mended several times. This time, I hope, will be the final episode in the drama.

DINGOES AT CHERMSIDE

Sheep Destroyed

ALSATIAN CROSS?

Dingoes have been destroying sheep at Rode Road, Chermside, within eight miles of the city, and it is claimed that a beast which was shot was a cross between an Alsatian and a dingo.

Mr. A. Thompson, a farmer, said last evening that for some time he and his son, Mr. Roy Thompson, had been on the watch for the dingoes, but it was only recently that one of them was killed by a lucky shot. On the farm were about a dozen sheep that had been reared on the bottle by Mr. Thompson's niece, Miss F. Campbell, and they were regarded as pets.

One day Mr. Thompson went to

town, and when he returned he found three sheep lying dead, about half a mile from the house. In each case the kidneys had been torn from the carcasses and devoured. He then strongly suspected dingoes. Previously he had noticed that a few milking cows which he kept had shown alarm, but he thought they had been chased by "town dogs."

UNSUCCESSFUL SHOT.

Shortly after he discovered the dead sheep he took a shot gun with him to the paddock, where the depleted flock was grazing. As he entered the run he saw a large male dingo snapping at a newly-born lamb following a ewe. The dingo caught the lamb by a hind leg, and threw it. When the ewe turned on the dog, the lamb ran towards Mr. Thompson. The dingo followed, and the farmer fired, but the distance was too great for the pellets to take effect, and the dingo disappeared in the scrub.

Mr. Thompson stated that the dingo was large and powerful, standing about 2ft. 6in. high. He was of the opinion that the animal was crossed with an Alsatian. On another occasion his son saw the same dingo, but he was unable to shoot it.

FIRST TIME IN SUBURBS.

The director of the Queensland Museum, Mr. H. A. Lowman, said last night that dingoes had been seen quite often near to Brisbane, but this was the first time he had heard of them actually in the suburbs. Many of the older naturalists in this city sometimes spoke of the times when the wild dogs could be seen close to the city. The dingo had teeth relatively much larger than those of the ordinary domestic dog.

The above news report appeared in the Courier Mail 30-7-1934. The Thompson property was bounded by Rode, Webster and Kitchener Roads. Alexander Thompson operated a carrying business in Brisbane and used the area to spell his horses; later the family lived on, and farmed the area.

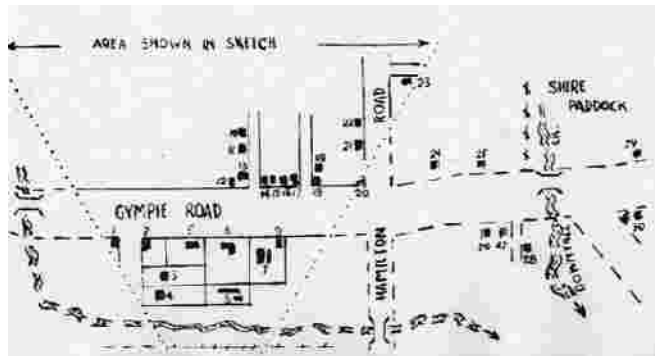
This was a time when there were still many small farms in the area as well as a lot of bushland which had not been cleared. Chermside was then still in the fringe stage of development; the frontier between town and bush. The tanneries were still working and the slaughter yards had only been closed down in 1931.

Later Bowser & Leaver operated a quarry on the corner of Rode and Webster Roads but today it is the site of Tri Care retirement village. At the other end of the property on Kitchener Road is the Somerset Hills School while housing occupies the rest of the property.

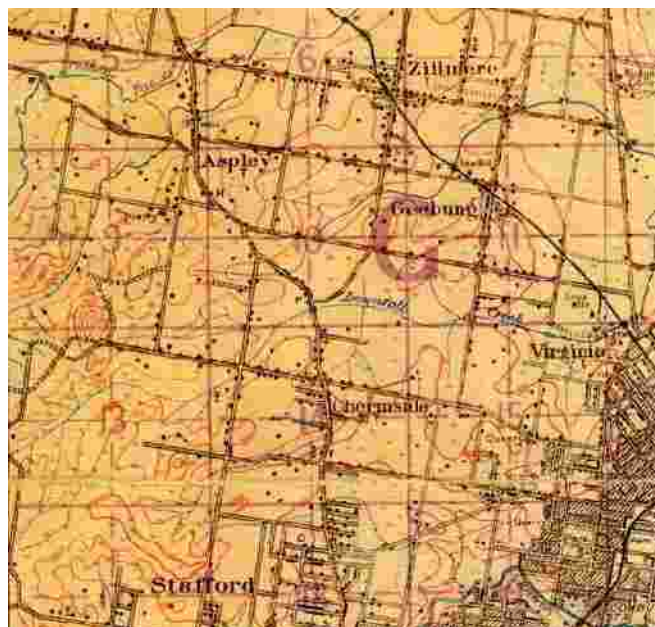


“Why Chermside?” is the interim title for a new page on the Society website. It has been under examination for some time while we figure out why Chermside has risen to such prominence as one of the four Major Business Centres of Brisbane.

The following maps help in the process.



The above map was drawn by Stan Eddowes in the 1960s-70s from the background of a photo taken in 1902. The photo was taken from Burnie Brae, the Hamilton home and captured the village of Downfall Creek in the background. This is the earliest map we have of the formation of a village on the site. The village set the pattern for the future growth of the present Chermside because a village has most of, if not all, the ingredients which would grow into a modern mini Central Business District. This is how the convict village settlement began and grew into Brisbane City.



By 1925 Chermside had not grown very much but it was still a small town with the entire infrastructure and the land for expansion which was to grow into the 2012 model, in time.



This composite photo is from two negatives of the 1946 aerial survey for the Brisbane City Council. It shows the area from Ellison Road to Lutwyche Cemetery and while Chermside has grown there is still much more land available for development.



This 1946 aerial photo shows the extensive area of small farms and bush to the west of Chermside which became West Chermside, McDowell and Bridgeman Downs.

Bus Trip to Hinze Dam – date to be announced