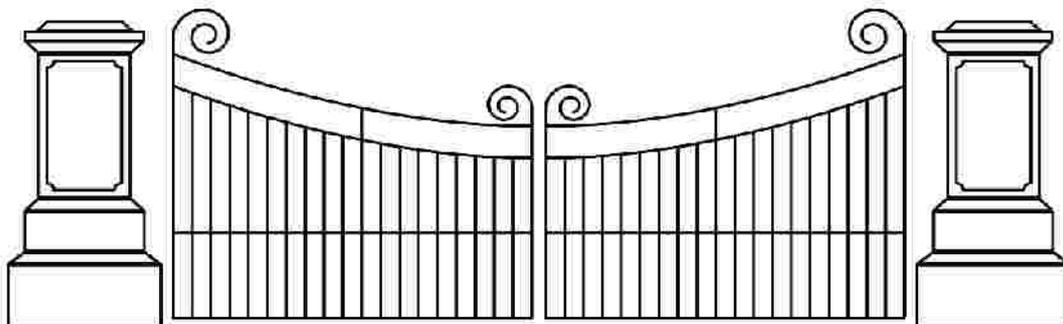


*Preserving our past is our future*



## Chermside & Districts Historical Society Inc.

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

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NEWSLETTER

Apr -May 2012

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Gay Sparkes

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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.

**Our speaker for March was Beverley Isdale** who gave a photo presentation showing buildings that had been demolished and replaced in Chermside and District. The area is no stranger to the phenomenon as it is a fast growing place with high density residences being built to cope with the increasing population.

Chermside is a very good place in which to live as it has so many facilities for different people of all ages. It began as a small semi-isolated hamlet in the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> Century and had to develop the facilities that were needed in such a settlement.

Transport was slow and expensive so it was often a matter of 'provide it locally or do without'. A blacksmith set up a forge and soon there were five of them; and some were making horse drawn vehicles. A general store was opened that sold everything the local consumer needed; more shops such as butcher, green grocer, boot maker, saddler appeared.

Entertainment was provided on the local paddocks *for cricket and football, while the School of Arts and the Methodist Church provided worship and*

social centres. Wells and creeks provided water, and for some, bathrooms. A builder or two, a sawmiller, slaughter yards, tanneries, wool scour, fellmonger set up around the village.

The small farms surrounding the village provided much of the custom for the shops and raw materials for the industries

The nucleus of a mini city was slowly developing around the great north road which was dramatically extended after gold was discovered at Gympie.

The settlement grew slowly but after World War II it exploded as in a couple of decades houses were built by the hundreds. At the same time there was plenty of room for new facilities such as 70 acres for a Chest Hospital which continued to *develop into two general hospitals*. Another 28 acres was available to develop the Drive-in Shopping Centre. When the wartime army camp was closed more space became available. And so the story continues and today the only space left for development is in the air above; enter the high rise apartments and the second building boom.

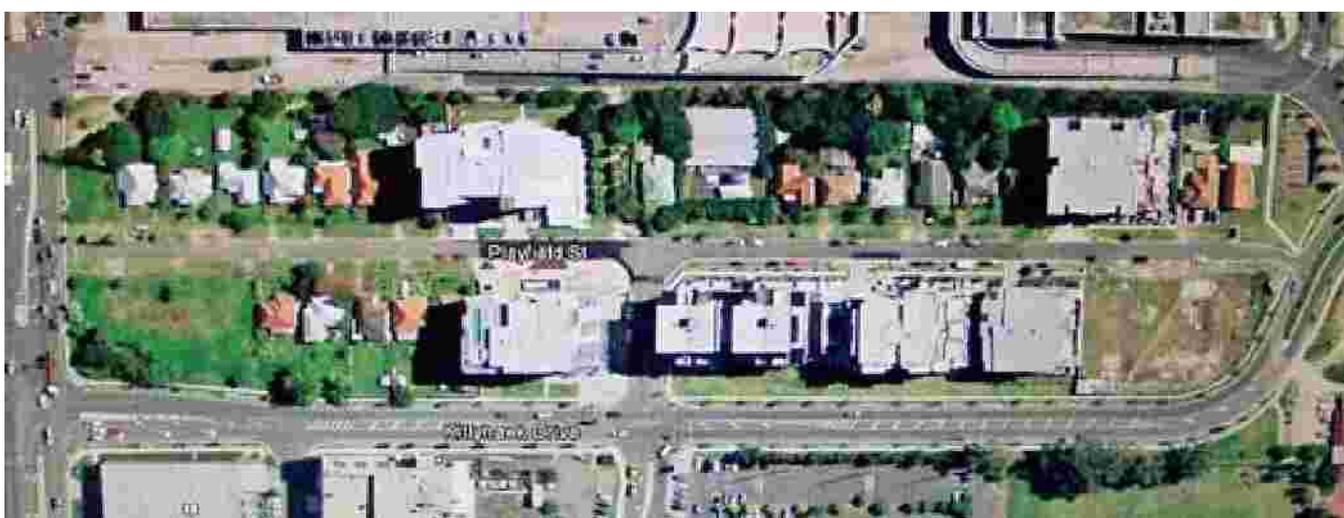
The three aerial photos below illustrate the radical changes that are taking place today in Chermside's vertical expansion. Extra space is created by putting more floors on top of each other.



The above photo shows the original northern end of Playfield St from Banfield St on the left to Way St on the right. The green roofed cottage facing Way St was removed to make a walkway into the Drive-In Shopping Centre. The Sea Scouts building is shown at the truncated end of Banfield St which 'jumped' Somerset Creek as there was no bridge. There are 27 houses in the photo.



This photo shows the original southern end of Playfield St from Way St on the left to Hamilton Rd on the right where it was open to traffic. There are 25 houses shown in this section because the green roofed house opposite Way St is not counted as it is in both photos. The houses in both photos were built in the early 1950s and were, with one exception, all tile or tin and timber, typical of the time. The exception was a brick and tile house No. 18 which is now beside the Equinox Apartments block.



The above Google aerial photo of Playfield St and Kittyhawk Drive was taken in about 2010 before *'The End'* building was erected on the large brown block at the northern or right hand end. Of the original 52 houses only 17 remain; we are witnessing the current change which is a move from the horizontal expansion of accommodation of the post-World War II period to the vertical expansion of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. My estimate of the population in 1955 would have been about 260 while in 2012 it could be in the vicinity of about 700 and only about half the area has been used so far. Then there is the other five large apartment blocks nearby!

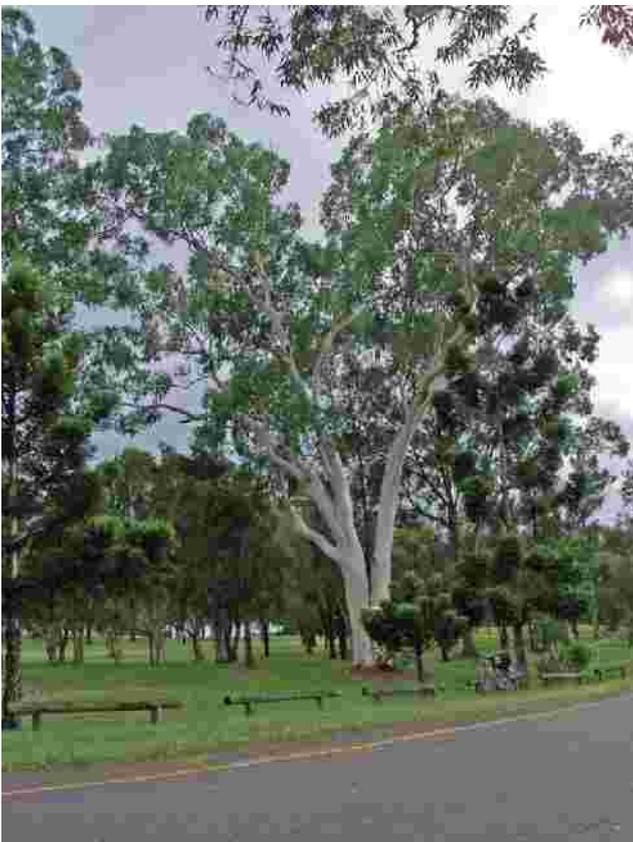
## Street Numbering Puzzle

While trying to find street numbers for the houses in Playfield Street to identify the houses on the aerial photos I noticed that one house was number 11 and next door was 15. Thinking that someone had got their number plates mixed up I went to the survey maps and found that there is no 13, and never was, a 13 in the street. I checked with Google maps and found a number 13 in seven other streets/roads around the local area. So what happened in Playfield Street?

Then there is the little riddle of Way Street which is located on block 29. Does this mean that Way Street was put in only when the first section of Kittyhawk Drive was built? Was a house resumed? Then there was the house that was removed to make the walkway from Playfield St., to Westfield.

Then there were the four blocks which fronted on to Hamilton Road but were really part of Playfield Street. They account for the fact that the numbering in Playfield Street starts at number 5.

## Demolition of a Giant



*The Eucalyptus signata (Scribbly Gum), that towered about 35m over the entrance road into Marchant Park, is no more.*

The stately gum was cut down and chipped just before Anzac Day 2012. It towered over the bike track in Marchant Park just near the WWI Memorial Gates. It would have been there when the diggers went to the Boer War, World War I and World War II but it had become dangerous and had to be demolished.

It took about six men using two large “cherry pickers”, a chipper and a stump grinder three days to do the job; it was massive tree, or rather couple of trees. Until the stump was exposed it seemed to be one tree but as the photo below shows it was really two trees.



*The two black dots are the heartwood of each tree. The larger tree on the right had grown around the smaller one on the left. The smaller one was beginning to lean dangerously and would have eventually collapsed.*

There is only one scribbly gum left in the two parks now but two more will be planted soon;

## Hinze Dam Bus Trip:

Date: Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> July

Time: Depart 8am – Return 5.30pm – 6pm

Place: Chermshire Historical Precinct

Cost: \$60

Guide: Terry Hampson 2361 1601

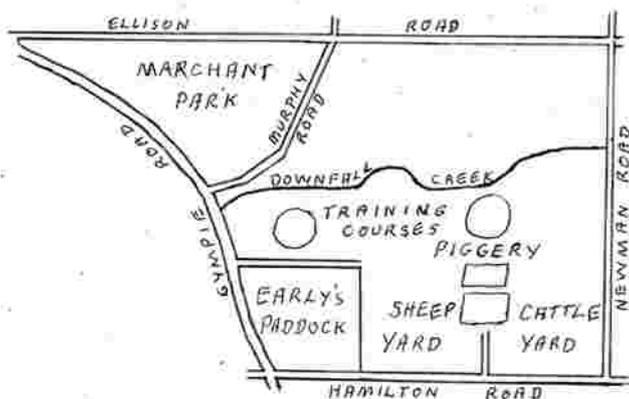
Visit and Tour Hinze Dam followed by Lunch at the Tamborine Botanical Gardens. (Cost included in the \$60 fee)

Then a visit to one or some of the following nearby places at Mt. Tamborine – Craft Galleries, Cheese Factory, Water Falls. NB – there are no entry fees for these places.

Vale: Joan (nee Potter) Blackman 89 – Joan joined the Society in April 2010 and was an enthusiastic attendee of meetings although she was incapacitated and had to depend on others for transport. Born in Sheffield, England, she came to Australia as a child and was educated in Brisbane finishing at Girls' Grammar. She went to university graduating as the first female industrial chemist in Australia; this became her lifelong occupation, managing the laboratory for Gillespie Flour Mills. Married to Jim in 1958 she became his carer, after his stroke which put him in a wheelchair; she even took him on a trip to England and cared for her mother as well. After Jim's death in 1993 she went on a trip to Europe. She was a very cheerful person and always appreciated the smallest courtesy. Buried with her husband, Jim, at a graveside ceremony at Pinnaroo 11am Monday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2012. RIP

**The speaker at our May meeting was Barry Brewer** who talked about his family's, the Dawsons, connection with Alonzo Sparkes and his slaughter yard at Chermside.

Sparkes' Paddock comprised 400 acres (162Ha) of the 506 acre (205Ha) Murphy's Paddock, the remainder being Marchant Park. The paddock was bisected by Downfall Creek and Sparkes mostly used the southern part for his slaughter yard.



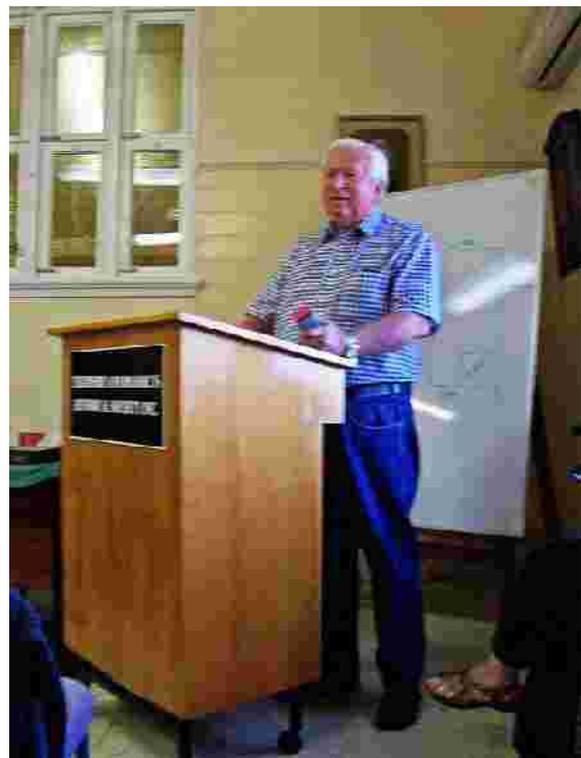
Early's Paddock was never part of Murphy's and became the site of the present Westfield Shoppingtown.

The Dawsons came from Enoggera in 1909 to live on the property and had a house on Banfield Street. Three other houses there were occupied by

the Long, Hansen and Chant families. The main entrance to the slaughter yard was via the track that became Corrie Street off Hamilton Road and the holding yards were grouped around the buildings. Barry's grandfather, Tom Dawson was the foreman of the slaughter yard and he used to go to Sparkes' station, Manumbar near Gympie' and select the cattle for killing; they were shipped by rail to Strathpine and then walked along the road to Chermside.

The sheep were bought at Newmarket sale yards and walked along the roads to Chermside. While the pigs were also bought at Newmarket they were herded on to a horse drawn lorry and carried to Chermside as it was almost impossible to drive them.

Once a month a Jewish Kosher killing was held at the slaughter yard but just how they kept the meat fresh is a mystery. Maybe they held such a killing at other slaughter yards once a month but on different weeks.



*Barry addressing the meeting and using the whiteboard on which he drew his map.*

Alonzo Sparkes used to keep race horses and Tom Dawson used to train them on the two courses on the property. When the time came to take a horse to the races, it was just hitched up behind the

sulky and trotted off. If the distance was long then the horse would need to be spelled before racing.

Barry arrived with his family in 1945 when he was about 5 years of age, just after the army camp was closed and the property was owned by the Commonwealth Government. The slaughter yard was closed in 1931 when the government abattoirs opened at Cannon Hill.

His playground was Sparkes' and Early's Paddocks and he soon learned to ride horses and help his grandfather Tom look after the cattle which were on agistment on the property. They had to be rounded up each night and counted to make sure none has strayed; if any were missing then they had to be found. Also, lactating cows in the herd had to be milked.

Barry used to work at Early's store on Saturday mornings for pocket money doing such jobs as packing potatoes in paper bags; in two lots, 5 pounds and 7 pounds. For this he received two shillings which in today's money would be about \$20.

His grandfather was a very versatile man and had mastered many skills. One time a cow accidentally received a deep cut in its hide and grandfather had to stitch it together again. He took a large bag needle threaded it with fishing line and set to work stitching; the cow recovered.

A regular visitor was Lance Skuthorpe who, with his team of buckjumpers would camp on the property while putting on a show for the local populace.

Lance was a legendary figure in the horse riding world and is reputed to have done a Gordon Leap.

The leap was named after Adam Lindsay Gordon a poet of early Australia who is reputed to have performed it in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

It involves riding a horse at the gallop, jumping a fence and turning the horse to land sideways parallel to the other side of the fence. Since the fence was close to the edge of a cliff both horse and rider could be killed if the horse did not turn in time.

It was not for the faint hearted or the wise rider.



*One of Sparkes' butcher shops with four butchers and several other men who are probably employees. (Courtesy John Oxley Library)*

### **CDHS Website**

The Society's website continues to attract attention from around the world with emails coming in seeking information. Sometimes we can help but sometimes we simply have not got enough data in our archives. Consequently we are always seeking more information on families, events, stories, documents, photos, etc.

The material we receive is scanned onto our computer as the digital archives and hard copy material is stored in filing cabinets. Everything has to be indexed and stored on the search engine for quick reference.

### **Mrs Jesser's Jelly Cake**

One such item started with a mention of the legendary cook of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Chermside, Mrs. Edith (nee Rodgers) Jesser. Her Jelly Cake was fabulous according to the history of the Brisbane Women's Hockey Association.

The editor of this newsletter, not being a native of Chermside, first heard of Mrs. Jesser from a member of the CDHS, Jean Tune. Then he heard more from a member of Chermside Probus Club who listened, yes some people listen, to said editor talking about the history of Chermside. The result was a donation of a copy of the history of the BWhA which contained stories about Edith Jesser as cook and caretaker of Marchant Park.

Then Herbert Car remembered that he delivered milk to Mrs. Jesser when he was a boy; Herby has

a long memory. He contacted some relatives of Mrs. Jesser who, in turn contacted the Society.

Information in the form of emails has been coming to our website including information about Mr William Jesser. Additionally a search of the newspaper morgues via the Trove website has uncovered more information on the family including copies of Gold Crest Self Raising Flour advertising material.



*This advertisement appeared in the Rockhampton Morning Bulletin 15-12-1948 and was one of a series featuring her. This is the only clear photo we have of Mrs. Jesser.*

### **Important Announcement 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Battle of Milne Bay**

A service to officially commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the Battle of Milne Bay will be held at the Chermide Historical Precinct at 10am on 25 August 2012. .

Contact: [milnebaymlarc@gmail.com](mailto:milnebaymlarc@gmail.com) or ring 0431 440 066 for more information.

**The Battle of Milne Bay**, in New Guinea in August/September 1942, was the first defeat on land of Japan's Military Forces during World War II. Veterans and the public are invited to attend the service.

**Field Marshall Sir William Slim** – Commander of the Army of Burma in World War II – Governor General of Australia 1953-1960 wrote in his book “Defeat into Victory” – 1956:

We were helped, too, by a cheering piece of news that now reached us, and of which, as a morale raiser, I made great use. In August and September 1942, Australian troops at Milne Bay in New Guinea, inflicted on the Japanese their first undoubted defeat on land. If the Australians, in conditions very like ours, had done it, so could we. Some of us may forget that of all the Allies it was Australian soldiers who first broke the spell of the invincibility of the Japanese Army; those of us who were in Burma have cause to remember.

**Downpipes** – very good in rainy weather – our downpipes are now very good thanks to a grant from the Brisbane City Council

For years vandals have waged a relentless campaign to de-



stroy our plastic pipes. They slash them with iron or wood objects. We have repaired them ourselves for the last 10 years or so by replacing the old plastic with new plastic.

Finally, enough was enough and we have replaced all four plastic downpipes with Colourbond steel pipes. The plastic connections between downpipe and underground drain pipe have to be encased in concrete, otherwise back to square one. *(The formwork will be removed when we get time)*