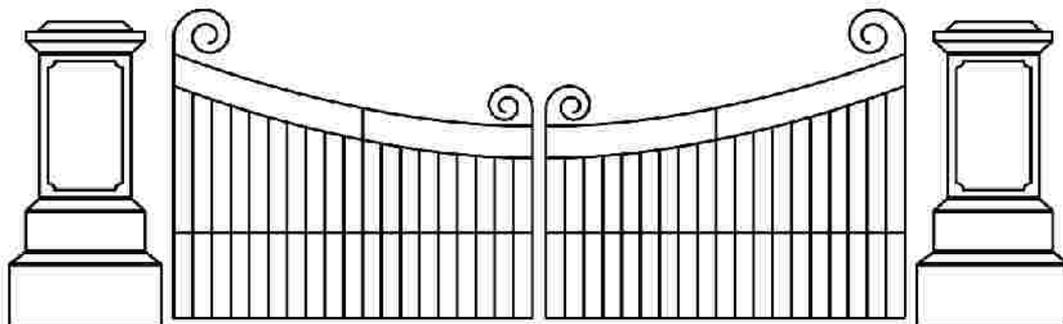


Preserving our past is our future



Chermside & Districts Historical Society Inc.

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NEWSLETTER

Feb-Mar 2013

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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.



Hail and Farewell

Our oldest foundation member, Adrian Turner, died on 27th February 2013 at the age of 96. He

served as Vice President, Newsletter Editor and Executive member for most of his time with the Society



Adrian and Elsie sold their home in West Chermside and went to live in Bridgeman Downs Retirement Village some years ago and after Elsie died Adrian stayed there. He continued to attend meetings for some time, being driven by members but due to advancing age he was unable to attend in recent times. He recently transferred to Ashworth House at Zillmere where he died.

He contributed many articles to our archives and using his skills as a sign writer he did beautiful jobs of restoring Honour Rolls including that of the Chermiside State School World War I Honour Roll shown in the photo. He literally rescued it from oblivion. 'Lest We Forget' was more than a pious slogan to Adrian who served in the RAAF in WWII.

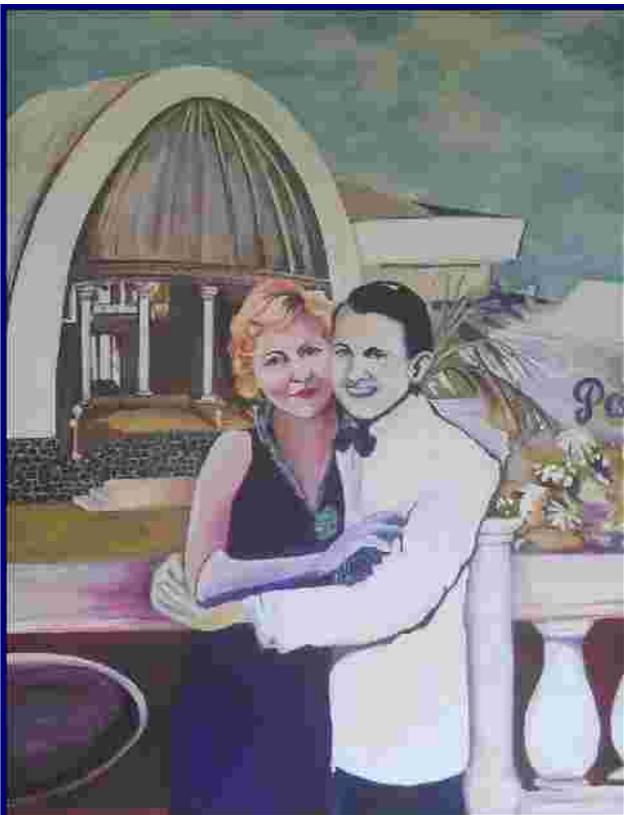
The family held a private funeral with a graveside ceremony, and a very well attended Memorial Service was held at the River City Family Church, 59 Settlement Rd., The Gap on Wednesday 6-2-2013 at 2pm.

Each of Adrian's four children gave a eulogy describing him from their own point of view which added up to an excellent summary of a long life well lived to the full. Adrian will not easily be forgotten by a wide range of people.

Rest in Peace Adrian.

You may visit Adrian's online memorial and leave a tribute, photo or send a flower at:

www.heavenaddress.com



Our speaker for February was James Lergessner who had visited us a couple of years ago. This

time he spoke about the magic world of Cloudland, Queen of the Dance Halls 1939-1982.

The iconic building had a very shaky beginning in that the builder, T. S. Eslic, went bankrupt in the process and then tried to float another company. In spite of his troubles he managed to build the dance hall, a funicular railway up to, and down from the site, a big dipper and several other buildings. It opened in July 1939 and in September World War II started and the place was taken over by the Americans for their troops in 1942.

The photo is taken from the front cover of James Lergessner's book. It features the iconic parabolic arch way at the entrance to the Dancehall which towered some 18metres (60 feet) into the air.

The US service men taught the Brisbane girls how to jive and jitterbug which really rocked the sprung floor of the hall. In 1947 it was sold, refurbished, reopened and resumed its role as one of Brisbane's major entertainment centres.

In the 1950s as well as Ballroom dancing it featured movies such as Blackboard Jungle, Rocked around the Clock to Bill Haley's Comets, the BGs started there and had to be told to wear shoes, the Bodgies and Widgies came, to the horror of the older generation, the FX Holden made its presence felt along with roaring portable wireless sets; the word radio had not surfaced then.

Lee Gordon's World Tour came along with Jerry Lee Louis, Johnny O'Keeffe, Buddy Holly and Don McLean who sang American Pie telling when the music died; thought to be a reference to the death of Buddy Holly. And the funicular railway closed down.

The 1960s saw the decline of Ballroom dancing and the formal Debutant Balls being replaced with the livelier and fashionable Rock and Roll music and dancing helped along by Normie Row and his screaming fans. New dances such as the Funky, the Locomotion, the Spunky Chicken and the Mashed Potato appeared, and in due course, disappeared. Alcohol made its appearance late in the decade.



Tripping the light fantastic C1947-1948
Back: Ian Rye, Bernie Slater, Teddy Love
Front: Mavis Smith, Inez Watson, Dorothy Lowe.

At the end of each year Cloudland was used as an examination centre with hundreds of students sitting at individual desks. The overflow of students had to sit in the wool stores down near the river.

The 1970s saw the gradual decline of Cloudland with competition from the RSL Social Clubs, the Pubs with the pokies, the buildings deteriorated so much that when the Queen visited in 1977 the ceiling of the dance hall had to be covered with curtains to hide the crumbling plaster.

It was used for concerts, weddings, conferences, conventions, displays, markets and anything that would bring people in. But to no avail; times had changed and the venue was being eclipsed by newer venues as well as new technologies such as Television, DVDs, parking problems, and in 1979 the Bell View was demolished by the invincible Dean Brothers; was nothing sacred?

The 1980s saw a continuation of the 1970s and the old lady was nearing her end when on the night of the 7th December 1982 she disintegrated under the

blows of the demolisher's hammers or whatever they used. The site was cleared and as the Deans commented "we leave only the memories".

Our speaker for the March meeting was John Bowden who outlined the development of the Boondall Wetlands. John was a science teacher at Sandgate High and often took students on visits to the wetlands as part of their course.

The area was occupied by the Yuggera (or Jagara) People which may have overlapped with the Turrbul People. Senator Neville Bonner was a tribal elder of the Yuggera Tribe

Bishop Quinn, the first Catholic Bishop of Brisbane bought some 3,000 acres (C1,200ha) in about 1863-7 and established a dairy farm partly to supply milk to Nudgee Orphanage.

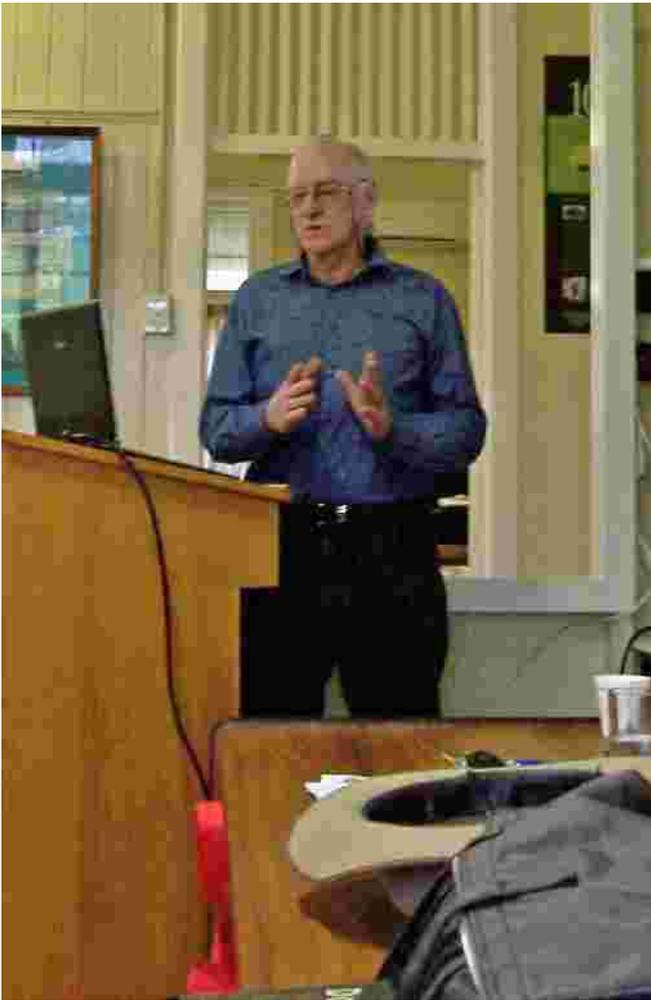
In 1976 the Church sold the Wetlands to the Brisbane City Council which wanted the site to hold the 1984 Olympic Games. A lot of clearing took place but the bid failed and the games were held in Los Angeles.

The BCC then rented the land **to cattle grazing for some years which damaged the soil by leaving** innumerable pot holes made by the hooves. These holes held water which enabled the area to become a breeding ground for mosquitoes. Meanwhile the Aboriginal People objected to any further development of the land as so much of their land, including sacred sites, had already been lost.

Several private firms wanted to develop some industries on the site but nothing was concluded so in 1991 the BCC declared it a Regional Park. A management committee was formed and a Vegetation Map drawn and published. The aim was to try and save what native trees and plants had survived and to plant species which had been cleared. The native plants would in turn provide food for the native bird species and bring them back to the area. Some rainforest has survived and is being steadily developed and expanded by planting native species using seeds taken from the existing trees and plants.

It would also safeguard the native ground species such as the 12 to 15 species of frogs which inhabit

the area. Hopefully it will bring back some of the natives which have disappeared.



John Bowden giving an illustrated talk.

A house from Toowong was transported to the site and renovated to act as the Visitors Centre; board walks and tracks have been built. The tracks have to be carefully sited so that they do not interfere with the expansion and contraction of grassland and forest. This movement takes place in response to climate change which is going on continually.

Experiments are constantly taking place to develop the right environment for the native species, eg the use of the Aboriginal fire stick management to prevent the severe fire storm bush fires that destroy all in their path.

International visitors to the wetlands have been very favourable impressed with the layout and the work being done. In particular they comment on the large size of the site compared to those in their homeland sites.

New Webpages: The Jesser Family is up and running. I first heard of Mrs. Jesser from Jean Tune who remembered her as a champion cook. True, for at least 20 years she won endless competitions in Queensland and was featured on the packets of a brand of the then new self-raising flour. She was also prominent in the cricket scene in Brisbane as she was the supervisor of Marchant Park and ran the canteen for many years; her cakes were legendary.

The other side of the Jesser family was railway engineering, not driving locomotives but building railways in Queensland, South Australia and Victoria.

Herb Carr delivered milk to the family when he was a lad, long time ago. Herb put me in touch with three of Mrs. Jesser's grandchildren who provided me with much information.

The Julie Hammer story is up and running. Julie gave the 2012 Marchant Lecture on her 'search for a real job' which involved her rise to the rank of Air Vice-Marshal in the RAAF. She joined the air force so that she would have something to do while she 'waited for a real job'. Now she is retired and still looking for her 'real job' but in the meantime pursues an active volunteer lifestyle in many different spheres.

Julie is delighted with the job and even corrected my spelling – I spelt Marshall with two l's which I think is much better than a one l Marshal. It looks lopsided, anyway that's my story and I'm sticking to it. So I told her the little ditty by Ogden Nash:

A one l lama he's a priest
A two l llama he's a beast
I'll bet a silk pyjama you've never seen a three l
lama.

Lutwyche Cemetery seems to draw a lot of attention on the Society webpage, usually people looking for the grave of a relative. One such request came from a relative living in Victoria for a photo of Thomas Sprague's grave. No problem except for the fact that the grave was unmarked; there is nothing as lonely as an unmarked grave and there were several in the vicinity; although some may be unused plots!

All graves are numbered but no number is shown

on the headstone, it is not needed because the person's name is engraved there. If the grave is unmarked then one can get the number from the graves on each side; easy, unless they are unmarked.

So I began to photograph the lot and the rain started and the batteries in the camera died and the backup batteries were dead and I was getting wet so I scurried off to photograph another day. I am sure I heard some muffled chuckles as I drove off.

The final result was good; the enquirer was delighted and gave me some twelve pages of his research on the now unforgotten Thomas. Then I chuckled.

The big storm of Australia Day weekend 2013 was real "Rip your roof off" type of storm. According to the rain gauge in the O'Shea backyard some 370mm or in the old measure 14.5 inches fell and Downfall Creek came close to a real flood; biggest one this century.

The trees in the parks had a haircut with some big branches lopped as nature performed a periodical pruning exercise. With the ground having been softened by rain some sizable trees were blown down.

The very large E. Teriticornis (Blue Gum) on the opposite side below has been growing beside the bridge over Downfall Creek on Newman Road for a couple of hundred years. That is before Newman Road or the bridge appeared. It lost a branch the size of a medium sized tree but the 'old man gum' is still standing. Park walkers tell me that there was a hive of native bees exposed; I wonder where they went?



Once there were two equal sized 'old men trees' here beside the footbridge on Somerset Creek; an Ironbark and a blue gum. Now there is one and a half survivors, half a blue and one ironbark; the missing half lies below.



This email came from the Marketing Manager at Westfield.

Hi Pat,

Just to let you know we uploaded the History of the Trams onto our website on Friday:

<http://www.westfield.com.au/chermside/centre-information>

We're making some amendments to the layout slightly (aligning photos and descriptions and a left hand navigation button), but I hope you agree it looks great as a work in progress.

Since this email arrived I have written a two page history of the Shopping Centre which is also going on the Westfield website.

Talking about websites, I have been busy updating part of the Shopping Town section of our CDHS site. In particular the Fourth and Fifth Expansion sections. Being an old carpenter, building sites attract me like the proverbial flies to you know what. So I spent many hours 'supervising' and taking photos some of which I have added to the site. Some, like the erection of wall slabs on the Multiplex Theatre building are spectacular. Have a look.

The following email arrived recently; we like this sort especially the last sentence.

Hi, Thanks for posting those wonderful memories on your site. I am in the last school photo on the 1963-1964 pages - front row last kid on the right... 1964 - Grade 7B. I lived in Charlotte St for 29 years then moved to the Sunshine Coast in 1980. My name is Colin McLeary I'm not sure if anybody remembers me, I think of my old school mates from time to time & wonder what they're doing. **Thanks again, for your web site, honouring my beloved Chermside.**

Kind regards,
Colin.

Maybe some reader remembers Colin and would like to contact him? Just let me know.



Three wall slabs being lifted into place on the south side of the Multiplex at Chermside. Very specialised equipment and a highly trained team were needed to get these concrete slabs into place in one piece. To get an idea of the size of the slabs note the worker in the bottom right corner.

Trove, the National Library's search engine which has access to millions of newspaper pages and squillions of items, has come good again by unearthing two items of local interest.

Beverley Isdale was asked by Lisa Del Monte at K-W Social Club for information on a book written by Charles Caithness on the early history of the Club. There was no such book at CDHS so Beverley turned to Trove searching for the name Caithness.

She found a birth notice for a Caithness, went to the phone book and found one whom she rang and it was the son of the author Charles. His father was dead but had left a lot of notes etc. The son said he would search for the book. He did and found it and delivered it to Bev on his way home from golf.

I will tell you about the other item in the next issue. Cheers.