

NEWSLETTER



Volume 5 No. 2
President 3350 2874

P.O. Box 416, Chermside Qld 4032

April/May 2002
Secretary 3359 3022

Message from the President

Our first guest speaker for the year, David Burgess, brought back memories for many of our members. David's grandfather bought land in the Aspley area in about 1914 and with his brothers, helped to build houses, some of which are still standing. David went to Chermside and Aspley schools and there were many "Do you remember" during his talk.

The school rooms are starting to look like a historical resource centre and we have had a couple of working bees, inside and outside the building. Several members spent some time in preparing and painting the floor and now we can move various items into the rooms. I would like to thank Ian at Wattyl Paints at Chermside for donating 8 litres of paint - we gave the archive room two coats of paint and there was enough to paint the office. The floors must be about 100 years old so you can imagine they really soaked up the paint. As the weather gets cooler, we'll attack the gardens again.

Thanks also to Rona Arndt for donating two marvellous paintings for our Mothers' Day raffle. I would be delighted to win either one. Tickets will be available soon.

Don't forget our bus trip to Crows Nest to see Early's car. It was the first car in the Chermside district and we are hoping to drive it around the paddock. It looks spectacular.

We are gradually acquiring furniture and the latest chairs have their own history. Adrian Turner rescued many of them from the recent household collection in the district and has restored them to useful items. Thank you very much, Adrian.

Beverley Isdale

The Creek about 1933

By Joan Hamilton

Who would believe a creek ever run through the centre of Chermside. Kuran Street (earlier Duff Street) was a bush track, only one house in the street in 1927, with plenty of bush where we built our cubby houses. The creek ran from near Byrne Ford in Hamilton Road, through the hollow at Hall Street, the parking lot of the National Bank in Kuran Street, crossing under Gympie Road between the Motel and Parking lot.

The creek was our main playground, lots of happy times together, seeing who could jump the widest part until one of us fell in, sailing our boats made of flat rushes grown in the creek. We knew them as bull rushes. We would fold them, put a stick through the middle to hold it together and a stick up the centre for a mast and set them on the stream to see whose boat would win the race. We would catch tadpoles and put them in bottles of creek water, but I do not remember any turning into frogs. I think Mother threw them out before reaching that stage.

A piece of meat on the end of a string dangled near a rock would encourage the little lobsters to come out. We would catch these and take them home for Mother to cook and enjoyed eating our catch. The best fun was catching the small fish. We would dig worms from the garden, put them in an old jam tin and carry the tin and our fishing rods along to the creek. Our rods were made from a stick cut from a small tree, tie a length of cotton on to the end and the

other end was a bent pin for a hook. When the fish took the worm we had to be quick to land it. The fish were taken home for my cat "Possum" to enjoy.

It was not long before Possum got into the picture, she seemed to know when we were digging worms what was going to happen. She would follow us to the creek and sit there waiting for the catch and soon devour the tasty little fish. Once we found a nice square of chicken wire, tied a length of string on each corner. One each side, we would throw it in and quickly pull it out. The little fish would hop around and the cat pouncing on them was quite a sight. Eels were also in the creek. I would take the eel home, nail it to a post, skin it, then feed it to Possum. Mother did cook one but it was too muddy to eat. One day we kept losing our line, even our string line so we knew it must be something big. That night our neighbour, too embarrassed to be seen in daylight, took his rod down and caught a big eel about two feet long. Possum thought it was Christmas that day.

After storm rain the creek would flood, making Hall Street and Kuran Street impossible for cars to cross. A bridge was built for pedestrians but one had to paddle to reach the bridge. Some holes of the creek were never known to be dry even in the longest drought, the water was very good and clear in a dry time. On my grandparents property, they made everybody welcome who required the water. The creek was piped when the Drive In Shopping Centre came and further piped when Bruce Pie built his factory.

Remember the old fancy dress balls.

A yearly event held by schools and churches at the local hall, Cloudland or the Brisbane City Hall.

The fancy dress ball, decades ago, was breathlessly important in the community. It was so necessary to get a big group of kids together, deck them out in all manner of gear, and have a ball. It became a heavy family problem deciding on what each kid would wear. Mums, Dads, brothers and sisters would sit around in a regular think tank to throw around a few ideas until each child had a basic idea of their all important costume. Then preparation became a family affair.

There were prizes to be won on the big night and the wags could try for the novelty section. Costumes were clever rather than expensive. Old curtains, lampshades, cardboard, absolutely anything could be recycled to become a costume.

There was the basic Robin Hood, Fairy, Red Indian, Ballet Dancer, Cowboy and others.

One year when I was 10 years old (during the 50's) and preparing to attend the Toowong State School Fancy Dress Ball I burnt my leg by spilling a full saucepan of boiling water while carrying it to the bath tub. Our house had no hot water system and preparation for a hot bath was a weighty chore. Big pots of water boiled on the stove ready to be carted into the bathroom every night. On this particular afternoon I was too impatient to wait for my mother or older siblings to do it for me. My mother was talking over the fence, an everyday scene back then.

My screams brought family and neighbours rushing to my assistance. All I could think of was that I would not be allowed to attend the Ball. I insisted that I felt little pain and a bandage would do the trick. I was going as Prince Charming.

During my years at school, classes were very large and predominantly girls, therefore the question came up each year about which girls would march in the boys line in the Grand Parade. This year was my turn to march in the boy's line and this suited my girlfriend very well. She was an 'only child' which meant to me that she was 'rich' and her mother had hired *real* costumes – she became Cinderella and I was Prince Charming. I was a tomboy anyway, so Prince Charming was right down my alley.

The day after the magical Ball, I was taken to the family doctor to be treated for 3rd degree burns. Strangely, the pain had begun after midnight when the whole family arrived home tired and exhausted. But the Fancy Dress Ball was that important that I could ignore the discomfort for the whole night. It was a magical night, as were all the Fancy Dress Balls I attended.

Carol Cunningham

What anecdotes do you have about your Fancy Dress Ball experiences?

Sandy

The sweets shop at the corner of Victor Drive and Gympie Road was run by Mr and Mrs Jackson. Their family, among the most respected in the district owned this medium sized white terrier, which had big sandy coloured patches across its back. Hence the dog's name was Sandy. They loved this dog as much as any owner can love their pet. Alternatively Sandy was most disliked by the residents of Chermside. There was no fence that Sandy could not and dare not jump. Sandy did not belong to Chermside; *Chermside belonged to Sandy.*

The Smeetons had a dog, named Bluey, which would accompany the children every afternoon on their way home from school. Sandy would wait, and attack Bluey on every possible occasion. Sandy never let a chance go by to get involved in a dogfight.

Sandy also claimed the very centre of Gympie Road. He loved to lie on the warm bitumen, in front of the Jackson's store. Daily he would lie there, as if to challenge any motorist to make him move.

Then World War II began, and the army moved in to Sparke's Paddock and Marchant Park. There were several transport divisions based there. The army convoys drove up and down Gympie Road. Hundreds of trucks daily drove past the corner store and each truck in turn, like follow the leader, would diverge slightly to the right allowing a defiant Sandy to claim the centre of the road.

The residents of Chermside predicted that one day Sandy would surely meet his fate by a passing motor vehicle. It never happened. I think Sandy enjoyed a normal old age.

I now have to wonder, did Sandy have a charmed life, or was it because his owners were such good people, no one would have risked breaking their hearts? I'd like to think so.

Val Ross (nee Fullwood)

ZILLMERE

General Store

380 Zillmere Road (corner of Jennings Street)

Charlie Millis was a widower living at Bulimba when he heard about the Zillmere General Store. He had worked for the Texaco Caltex Oil Company until his job became redundant with a change of ownership.

Charlie had built a 35 foot boat with his son Ted and named it after his young daughter, Rita. Ted worked for local boat builder, Roy Bliss, until he left to establish his own business on the banks of the Brisbane River at Bulimba. The business flourished and the name Millkraft became synonymous with fine boat building for years to come.

Ted's father Charlie had been diagnosed with Pagets Disease and as he had young Rita to care for since his wife's death, he was very interested when his doctor told him about a business for sale at Zillmere that would have provided a job for Rita and himself and also included accommodation for both. After inspecting the shop on Zillmere Road, the move from Bulimba soon followed.

Rita later recalled how much she missed her wonderful life on the river where many weekends were spent on Moreton Bay and camping on the islands. However as she grew older and made friends at Zillmere, she and her girlfriends looked forward to the weekly dances at Geebung Memorial Hall after which a group of them would walk together across the railway line and through the bush to their respective homes.

Rita recalled years later (2002) in her 80th year that all the girls agreed that local lad, Gordon Bowden, was the best dancing partner in the district! Edna Kennedy was Rita's special friend and she lived with the family on Zillmere Road along from Millis General Store. Bat Kennerley who worked at Huttons owned a large block at the bottom of Church Road.

Other neighbours included Bob Scott and his family who lived opposite the shop in a fine house with large grounds and a tennis court. He was a manager at Huttons Factory which provided work for many of the locals. The Housing Department eventually built 21 low rent flats on Bob Scott's large block of land.

Between Scotts and the Church of Christ was one of the early colonial houses which, at that time, was occupied by Mrs Rosner. This house was removed to make way for 6 units named Silvia Court.

On the other side of the Church of Christ was another old colonial which was also removed back up Rowell Street to make way for the 1944 cottage built by Harry Sketcher Baker who still lived there in 2002. This area was developed by Blockridge & Ferguson and was known as the Showground Estate.

On the eastern corner of Zillmere Road and Jennings Street opposite the Millis Store was the old School of Arts building which was one of Zillmere's most significant venues for many years to come. It was later replaced by the Council Library.

Other neighbours were the Price family at 295 Zillmere Road. The beautiful Federation house that was built on acreage in 1916 is still much admired by passers-by. Brother and sister Bill and May Price still lived there in 2002 and the house is still in its original condition, as is the furniture.

Gradually the old families have moved on but the following are some of the names living near the old shop in those days:

Dowdell; Mison; Want; Krause; Eyles; Zimitat; Fischle; Berg; Finger; McGladrigans; Wilson.

One of the customers of Charlie Millis in those days was a young man named Alan Kubler, a descendant of the pioneering family of Carl Stabe in Church Road. In the year 2002 both the Stabe farm houses are still standing, but the surrounding land has long since been developed into housing blocks. The old houses were at 84 and 96 Church Road.

Alan Kubler, whose mother was a Stabe and his cousins Ray and Syd Stabe joined up at the outbreak of World War II. A romance blossomed between Rita Millis and Alan Kubler and they were married in 1945, the year the war ended.

Rita still remember nearly 60 years later, the day old Granny Stabe made a special trip to the Millis store to check out the prospective "in law". After a few cursory questions the old lady went on her way obviously satisfied with young Rita.

Bert Kubler, Alan's father owned 5 acres on Church Road (ex Robinson's farm). Like many of the local land owners in the district, their farms were being turned over to the Government and developers for post war housing and the Kubler farm was sold to the Government for \$1000.

Bert and his wife Lilly moved to Handford Road where Lilly continued as a local dressmaker with one of her

customers being Dr Wood whose house and surgery were across the road at 58 Handford Road. The doctor used to get his clothes from America and they often had to be adjusted to fit him. Dr Wood was Zillmere's first residential doctor and in 2002 Mrs Wood still occupies the house which covers three blocks of land.

After Rita and Alan Kubler were married, they bought a general store of their own at Northgate not far from the Golden Circle Cannery, which turned out to be "a little gold mine" for the enterprising couple. They later lived at Geebung before retiring to Zillmere.

Charlie Millis sold the store to Ernie Lewry and with the help of brother Tom the shop was quite viable for some time. Other owners were Rod & Mary Brewer who purchased it in October 1981 and sold in 1989.

Early photos show an awning on the front of the shop giving plenty of shade on the footpath. According to neighbours who lived there at the time, this awning was torn off by a fire engine racing to a fire. Apparently another vehicle travelling along Zillmere Road in the opposite direction did not leave enough room for the truck to clear the shop awning.

The shop eventually closed down for business and the premises became a private residence for some years. In September 2001 the property was vacated and put on the market and sold along with the older worker's cottage next door. Both buildings had been painted up prior to the sale.

Marion Eaton interviewed in February 2001

*Rita Millis Kubler
Harry Sketcher Baker
Bill and May Price
Stabe family members*

Ooooooooooooo000ooooooooooooO

**QUEENSLAND FAMILY & LOCAL
HISTORY FAIR**

SUNDAY 26TH MAY 2002

9.00 AM TO 4.00 PM

**MT GRAVATT SHOWGROUNDS
1644 LOGAN ROAD, MT GRAVATT**

**Film Screenings – "Deluge"
Workshops, displays, talks, book bargains, maps
Refreshment available**

Ooooooooooooo000ooooooooooooO