



THE RHSQ

# Bulletin

*73 years of continuous publication*

APRIL 2015 No. 795

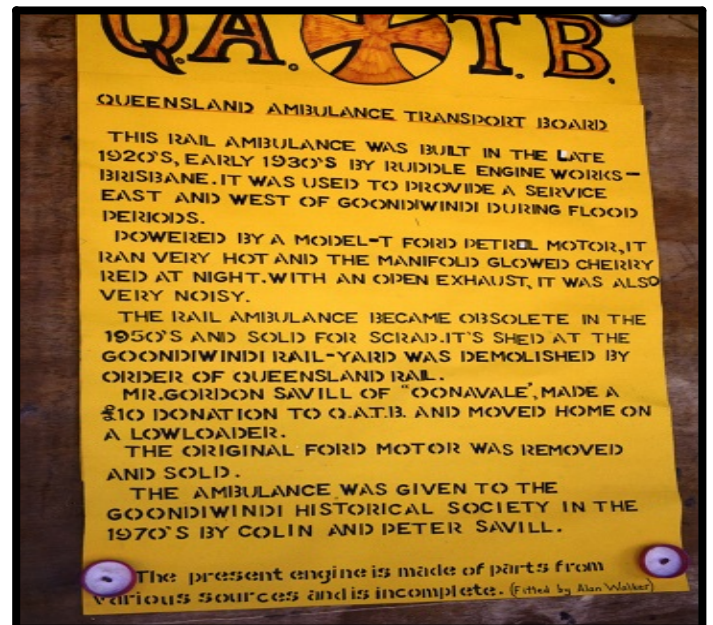
The newsletter of The Royal Historical Society of Queensland

Patron: His Excellency the Honourable Paul de Jersey AC,  
Governor of Queensland

President: Dean Prangley

Website: [www.queenslandhistory.org.au](http://www.queenslandhistory.org.au)

## A RARE FORM OF TRANSPORT QUEENSLAND RAIL AMBULANCES



The above photographs were supplied by Elaine Appleton (pictured), a descendant of RS Ruddle whose workshop made the rail ambulance featured

Early in the 20th century roads in western Queensland were difficult to traverse, especially after heavy rain. To overcome this problem, the first rail ambulance was introduced in 1918 to enable injured people from the mining centre at Blair Athol to be quickly conveyed to the closest hospital at Clermont.

The rail ambulance at Goondiwindi was introduced in 1923 and was retired in the 1950s. Other towns known to have had rail ambulances include: Dalby, Mount Mulligan, Roma, Charleville, Baralba, Cloncurry, Blackall, Charters Towers, Pentland, Atherton, Ravenshoe and Millaa Millaa. The last rail ambulances were withdrawn in 1990.

Graeme Nicholson

## President's Report

Dear Members,

First of all I must apologise to our member David Feez from Buderim who was the donor of the antique revolver, the Polo photograph and the book on early Queensland athletes. Due to a misunderstanding he was not acknowledged as the donor in the last *Bulletin*. David's grandfather Adolph carried the little five chamber nickel plated revolver with him on the first survey of Poeppel's corner in 1879. He eventually turned to law and some of you may remember the well known firm of Feez Ruthning, Solicitors in Brisbane. Coincidentally my great uncle Adalbert was the Ruthning in that firm.

This *Bulletin* contains a flyer promoting our membership month in April. Please try to introduce a new member in April and your Society will be very grateful. We are holding a Welcome to New Members evening at the Commissariat Store for new members and their proposers on Thursday 21 May at 6.00 pm. Our guest speaker will be RHSQ member Peter O'Reilly, of the famous O'Reilly's guest house whose forebears farmed there years before the Lamington National Park was proclaimed 100 years ago.

The museum team is busy preparing our World War One display, which will be constantly updated every year to reflect the course of the war. I visited the offices of Births Deaths and Marriages on Monday to see their carefully kept volumes on all Queenslanders who served in WW1. We are the only State who recorded this information totally and it is worth a visit to see them. One page had a letter dated 1916 attached from a mother thanking BDM for telling her that her son had died in action. Sadly the Army had failed to do so.

We are organising a special trip to the 'Dig Tree' in June.



**The 'Dig Tree'**

(Photo: The Burke and Wills Collection-National Museum of Australia)

Please check the notice on page 4 in this *Bulletin*. Spaces are limited so please advise your interest now as we have to deal on a first come –first served basis.

The new Eagle Farm interpretive centre is nearing completion and your Society has been invited to the official opening later this year. The building has been specially constructed to enable visitors to view the location of the convict women's prison, the original Hangar 7 built in WW2 to enable Japanese warplanes to be re-built from wrecks salvaged from New Guinea and the Pacific Islands and then flown to find out their capabilities and finally the historic aircraft engine testing facility which tested V12 Allison's before they were installed into P38 Lightning, P40D Kittyhawks and P39 Airacobra fighting aircraft.



Wikipedia photo

**P38 Lightning**  
(Similar to those flown by No 75 Squadron RAAF)



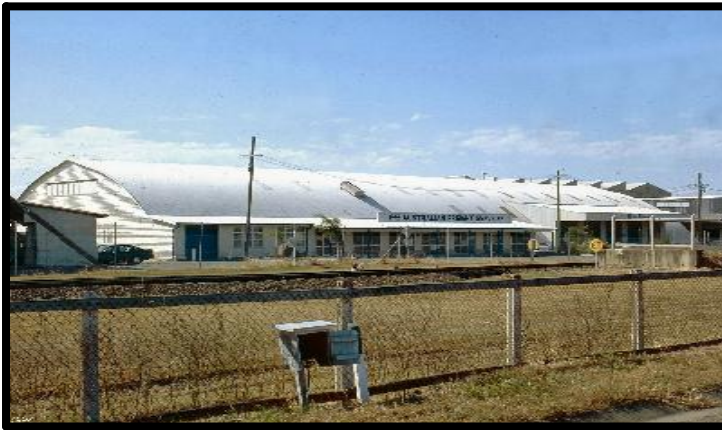
Wikipedia photo

**P40N Kittyhawk**  
(This aircraft 'Black Magic' was flown in PNG by No 78 Squadron RAAF)



Wikipedia photo

**P39 Bell Airacobra**  
 (Similar to those flown by No 23 [City of  
 Brisbane] Squadron RAAF from their base at  
 Lowood)



Queensland Government photo

**Second World War Hangar No7 (1994)**

Signage and footpaths are being installed for walking tours of this historic precinct and a café will be situated in the ground floor of the building along with museum exhibits. I will advise the date and time when we know.

Thank you for your continued interest.

Dean Prangley  
 President

## Expansion of the Society's Photographic Collection

Would any RHSQ members have photographs of the following subjects? The research team has recently had requests for them, but the RHSQ photographic collection does not contain any examples:

- Mutton Bird Man Patterson, on Surfers Paradise Beach

- Tallebudgera Youth Camp, showing huts and other facilities
- Surfers Paradise Ski Gardens
- Tankstand associated with a family home
- 'Head of the River' Schools' Rowing Competition held on Toowong Reach

We would be delighted if you could donate any such photos to the RHSQ. In any case, they would be scanned and the originals returned to you. Contact: [research@queenslandhistory.org.au](mailto:research@queenslandhistory.org.au) with details

## Queensland News for March

(Collected by Ruth Kerr from personal Queensland contacts, Affiliated Societies and Newspapers)

**Brooweena** – Woocoo Shire Office constructed in 1915 is now in the Woocoo Historical Society grounds at Brooweena. In December 2014 at the Christmas Party several descendents of previous Woocoo Shire Councillors and the last Mayor, Gloria Banting, attended to commemorate the history of the shire and the building. The shire council chambers were constructed in 1915 by AT Miller and Son of Maryborough for £135. When the shire was formed in 1914 the shire population was 600. (Woocoo Historical Society *Newsletter* Vol.29 No.1, March 2015, pp 1-3 including photograph)

**Cardwell** – The Historical Buffs in the Cardwell Historical Society appeared in historical costume on Cardwell railway station to welcome the Q150 steam train in February. It was their second outing having obtained Regional Arts Development Funding funding in 2014 for the purpose. (*Herbert River Express* 21 February 2015 p.6 including photograph)

**Cooktown** – Charles Christopher Harris's collecting of botanical species is featured in the *Cooktown Local News* of 22 January 2015. He sent the Cooktown area ferns from Endeavour River to Queensland Museum. The *Brisbane Courier* reported in November 1883 he also sent fish and reptiles. These species arrived at the same time that a collection of minerals (over 500 pieces) arrived from David C McConnel of *Cressbrook*, Toogoolawah and fish and reptiles from Ling Roth. (*Cooktown Local News* of 22 January 2015, *Brisbane Courier* November 1883)

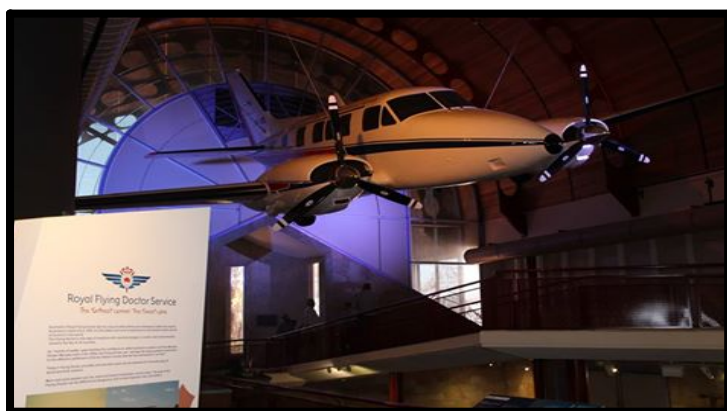
**Longreach** – The Stockman's Hall of Fame received a \$5 million grant in September 2014 from the Commonwealth government and has installed a number of attractions and maintenance. Half of the funds are being used for refurbishment of the building and a new cafe. \$500,000 is being utilised for an indigenous stockman's exhibition by the end of April. The final \$2 million will be expended on an

undercover equestrian and multi purpose centre in 2016. A restored Royal Flying Doctor Service Queen Air aircraft is hung from the ceiling as part of the upgrade of that exhibition. It was obtained from a museum in Mareeba. It was refurbished and repainted at Caboolture and was delivered to Longreach for a total cost of \$250,000. (*Longreach Leader* 27 February 2015 p.1 including photograph)



Stockman's Hall of Fame photo

### The Stockman's Hall of Fame Longreach



Stockman's Hall of Fame photo

### The Restored Royal Flying Doctor Service Queen Air

**Mount Molloy** – The Mount Molloy RSL has decided to move the cenotaph and flag pole from the main street because of increased traffic through the town. A new cenotaph will be constructed behind the shire hall but in view from the street. The Mareeba Shire Council donated \$770 for concrete for the base. (*Tablelands Advertiser* 16 January 2015 p.3)

**Tewantin** – The collection of photographs taken by Sam Griffiths, who established *Noosa News* in 1968, has been donated to Noosa Shire Council Library. Sam Griffiths, a photographer, and his son, Bill, took the photographs between the 1960s and 1990s. The first stage of the public launch of public access to the collection was held at the library on 25

February 2015. The photographs will be placed on Noosa Picture Online. (*Noosa News* 17 February 2015 p.3 including photograph of the toad race)

### New Members

Gerard Sullivan	Ashmore
Ray Pini	Fortitude Valley
Keith and Nancy Dawson	Toowoomba
John Tidey	Middle Park Vic
Caroline Acton	Red Hill

### Speakers Needed

The RHSQ and the Annerley Stephens History Group are convening a history conference on the history of the Annerley Stephens area to be held in February 2016.

If you are undertaking research on a topic that is relevant to this area and are prepared to deliver a paper please call Stephen Sheaffe on 0417 770 176.

### Research Report

The inquiries/requests continue to arrive steadily, often as a result of the publication *Lost Brisbane (LB)*. They include: an offer of a donation of postcards from descendants of a person who worked at the Windmill; possibility of identifying, from an attached photograph, a convict 'punishment ball' which is on loan to the Redcliffe Museum, without success; then and now pictures of Brisbane for WWI Anzac coverage by *Courier Mail*; identification of the type of transport used for immigrants arriving in Mackay and travelling to Springsure in 1882; pinball machine arcades in Brisbane during the last 50 to 70 years, eg Timezone Albert Street; photographs for WW1 display at Federation House; location of a diary of Colin William Mackay, donated to Newstead House – not located; survey for history of the koala fur trade; people of North Stradbroke Island in relation to WW1 War Memorial; site information on Red Hill Roller Skating Arena, 2 & 14 Enoggera Terrace; a publication from *The Queenslander* 1879 – 1880, 'Lost in the Winning'; history of *Boaga*, a property situated at the mouth of Baffle Creek, north of Bundaberg; information/photos on *Kinkabool*, Surfers Paradise; appointment to view historical images of the City and South Brisbane; information re the plumbing firm of Peter Fleming (*LB*, p. 81); request for images of Narcisse Pelletier from Swiss editor; images of the former Queensland Book Depot store in Brisbane; clarification of photograph of the Butler family farm at Brookfield (*LB*, p. 161); info re Army infrastructure at Tingalpa; image of Ellen Wickham,

second wife of Captain JC Wickham; and history for family associated with Old Burnett Inn, Nanango and Kilcoy Station.

The Exhibitions Coordinator of the Supreme Court Library and her colleague visited to view the Society's Museum collection and to discuss the management of same. A client who had requested information on the naming of her property visited to do further research on the topic, and she joined the RHSQ. Some success for visitors researching James Hexton, and convict Hannah Rigby; a visit from three members of the Bulimba Historical Society relating to *Lost Brisbane*; researcher of Pettigrew diaries, and of John Kerr's railway database, and a visit from a researcher from Stradbroke Island Museum.

Val Donovan  
Honorary Research Officer

## Book Review

**Michael Brumby. *Black Gold: From Gateway to Golden Lands – the True Story of the Founding of Townsville to the Finding of Gold at Charters Towers*. (Charters towers, Charters Towers Archives, 2014) (180p, illus, index, biblio, glossary, maps, ISBN 9780957900974)**

Michael Brumby, Officer of the Charters Towers and Dalrymple Archives Group in the Charters Towers Regional Council Library, has researched and written a very good reference book with fresh eyes on the establishment of Townsville and the discovery and early development of Charters Towers. The result is book with a sense of unity in its creation because of the author's analysis of how Townsville and Charters Towers depended on each other. The book is very easy to read with a clear approach to a subject on which extensive writing has already been done in various forms and forums over the years. Charters Towers was known as 'The World' and Queensland's largest inland town at its peak and its discovery story is assessed carefully (pp.110-113). In contrast Townsville prospered as a port and commercial centre servicing hinterland pastoral stations and towns.

Access to primary sources has always been a challenge for north Queensland historians. Michael Brumby acknowledges and has used extensively the pioneering research by Jim Manion, manager of Townsville *Daily Bulletin*; John Mathew, a town planner with the Townsville City Council; Anne Allingham, at James Cook University; and Joe Janecek, a geologist of Charters Towers. The author has done very well researching at James Cook University Library John Ewen Davidson's Diary from

the summary transcript, as well as the manuscript of the late Jim Manion's unpublished biography of Robert Towns (after whom Townsville is named) and the transcript of Towns' and John Melton Black's correspondence 1864-1865. These resources together with TROVE and *Queensland Government Gazettes* are the foundation for this book. Another Charters Towers researcher, Don Johnson's material has not been utilized, probably because of the difficulties surrounding its availability.

*Black to Gold* also illustrates the necessarily different research approach by a northerner compared to a southerner with reference to the early pastoral lease history. Michael Brumby has utilized the *Queensland Government Gazettes* for most of that information, whereas a southerner would have accessed the Commissioner for Crown Lands Office Registers, Treasury Run Rent Registers, and Lands Department Run Registers at Queensland State Archives.

There is a tantalising unanswered question in the early section of the book. Why did John Melton Black choose to go to north Queensland to establish a pastoral empire? He had already amassed a fortune by 1855 from the carrying business between Melbourne and Bendigo goldfield. He then established the Theatre Royal in Melbourne in 1855, renamed the Princess Theatre in 1857. Perhaps it was related to his brother's suicide in the theatre in 1861 or a connection to Sydney merchant, Robert Towns, or announcements after Separation of land and business opportunities in north Queensland. The North was settled by many successful southerners and Michael Brumby draws out their achievements in the book.

Ruth S Kerr  
The University of Queensland  
and Hon. Secretary RHSQ

## Important Announcement

### Visit to the 'Dig Tree' 21-24 June 2015

Tour from Thargomindah to and from Innamincka by coach with TravelWest.

Cost: accommodation and meals at Innamincka, \$1,000 per person (single sup \$100 – number limited), payable to RHSQ.

Tourists will meet TravelWest at Thargomindah. Travel to and from Brisbane is available per Rex Air (from approximately \$500 per person, flight booking and payment the responsibility of the individual). NB NON-smokers only. As numbers are strictly limited please do not send moneys or book flights until your tour registration has been confirmed by RHSQ: telephone 07 3221 4198.

Royal Historical Society of Queensland  
 PO Box 12057 Brisbane, George  
 Street QLD 4003  
 RHSQ Bulletin: PP100004098  
 RHSQ Journal: PP100004097

**PRINT  
 POST**

**POSTAGE  
 PAID  
 AUSTRALIA**

**IMPORTANT EVENTS AND FUNCTIONS**  
**APRIL 2015**

**Wednesday 8 April** - Talk 12.30 pm  
 ‘A story which is almost pure melodrama’: The  
 extraordinary lives of the brothers Fiuczek.  
 Claire Stewart  
**Thursday 9 April** - Council Meeting  
**Wednesday 15 April** - *Bulletin* deadline

**YOUR WEDNESDAY SPEAKER FOR**  
**APRIL**

The talk is about two Polish-Australian electrical  
 engineers, prisoners of war, one an OBE, who  
 donated millions of dollars to charity. The talk  
 reveals their lives through papers donated to the  
 Welsby Library.  
**Claire Stewart is the Information Management  
 Officer with RHSQ’s Welsby Library and works  
 with the Society’s research team. She is also  
 employed with Brisbane City Council as an  
 historian.**

**Contact details:**

<b>Location:</b>	Historical Museum and Welsby Library at the Commissariat Store, 115 William Street, Brisbane
<b>Manager:</b>	Christina Michie
<b>Phone:</b>	07 3221 4198
<b>Fax:</b>	07 3221 4698
<b>E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:info@queenslandhistory.org.au">info@queenslandhistory.org.au</a>
<b>Website:</b>	<a href="http://www.queenslandhistory.org.au">www.queenslandhistory.org.au</a>
<b>ABN:</b>	34 217 251 028
<b>Postal:</b>	The Royal Historical Society of Queensland, PO Box 12057, Brisbane George Street, 4003

**Bulletin articles only:**

<b>Editor A/editor</b>	Dr Graeme Nicholson Marjorie Shackleton
<b>E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:info@queenslandhistory.org.au">info@queenslandhistory.org.au</a>
<b>Phone:</b>	07 3221 4198
<b>Fax:</b>	07 3221 4698.
<b>Postal:</b>	RHSQ, PO Box 12057, Brisbane George Street, 4003

**Subscriptions:**

<b>Ordinary Member</b>	\$66.00
<b>Partner of Member</b>	\$22.00
<b>Junior Member (U18)</b>	\$11.00
<b>Full-time Student (U25)</b>	\$33.00
<b>Affiliated Society</b>	\$55.00
<b>Subscription fee for libraries</b>	\$66.00
<b>Corporate/Institutions</b>	\$275.00
<b>Life membership – purchased after 10 years</b>	\$5,500.00

**Open:** Tuesday to Friday 10.00 am - 4.00 pm,  
 Closed Saturday, Sunday, Monday as well  
 as Christmas Day, Boxing Day and Easter

**The Society acknowledges financial assistance from: The  
 Department of Multicultural Affairs; The National  
 Library of Australia Community Heritage Grant;  
 Queensland Government Gambling Community Benefit  
 Fund; Lord Mayor Graham Quirk, The Lord Mayor’s  
 Suburban Initiative Fund, Brisbane City Council;  
 Jupiters Casino Community Benefit Fund; Queensland  
 State Archives; Blocksidge and Ferguson Real Estate;  
 Our Honorary Auditor, Grant Thornton Audit Pty Ltd.**