



THE RHSQ

Bulletin

76 years of continuous publication

JULY 2018 No. 831

The newsletter of The Royal Historical Society of Queensland

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

President: Stephen Sheaffe

Website: www.queenslandhistory.org.au



The Royal Historical Society of Queensland and the Professional Historians Association (Qld) Inc are pleased to award the 2018 John Douglas Kerr Medal of Distinction to Dr William Metcalf.

Dr Metcalf has produced a prodigious body of work across a research career spanning over four decades. He has advanced the study of Queensland and Australian history most notably through his investigation of utopian communalism in Australia, a project which he commenced in 1990. His publishing in this field includes two books, *The Gayndah Communes*, published in 1998, and *Herrnhut: Australia's First Utopian Commune*, co-authored with Elizabeth Huf and published in 2002. In addition to these volumes, Metcalf has authored an extensive bibliography of journal articles and essays on this topic, and continues to explore this subject in his ongoing project, *The Encyclopedia of Australian Utopian Communalism*.

In addition to his work in this field, Bill has contributed significantly to the study of local history in Brisbane. Bill's work in this field include the chapters 'The Toohey Family:

Irish Catholicism and Land Speculation in Early Brisbane’, published in *People, Places and Pageantry* in 1987; ‘Henry George’s Utopia: Wintergarden Centre, Queen Street Mall’, published in *Radical Brisbane* in 2004; and ‘Dr Thomas Pennington Lucas and Plague Denial – “More terrible than war!”’, published in *Brisbane Diseased: Contagions, Cures and Controversy* in 2016. Bill’s most recent volume, *Brisbane: Tertiary Education 1825-2018 – Training, Teaching and Turmoil*, co-edited with Barry Shaw and released earlier this year, brings together several viewpoints on the development of Brisbane’s academic landscape from the earliest period of the Moreton Bay penal settlement to the present day.

Throughout his career, Bill has supported and enhanced academic rigour in professional historical work. He has served as President of the International Communal Studies Association and locally on the management committee of the Brisbane History Group; he has acted as a peer reviewer for *The Queensland History Journal*; and has performed as Assessor and Advisor for the Brisbane City Council History and Heritage Grants program. Most impressive, however, is Bill’s commitment to ensuring historians of the future are capable of producing work of the highest scholarly standard. Bill has been invited three times, in 1991, 1995, and 1998, to Queen’s University, Belfast, to deliver public lectures and liaise with staff and postgraduate students as a Distinguished-Scholar-in-Residence; and in his service as a research methodologist at Griffith University, taught and encouraged tertiary students to engage with history laterally to develop relevant research questions for the discipline.

In all his research, Bill has demonstrated extraordinary energy in identifying sources and people relevant to his research; this enthusiasm is testified in the impressive quantity and consistent standard of his published work. A commensurate historian, Bill has very much ensured that the events and personalities of the past remain remembered and considered in the present. In conclusion, Dr William Metcalf is a most deserving recipient of the 2018 John Douglas Kerr Medal of Distinction.

Press release issued by the Professional Historians Association Brisbane, 6 June 2018

Queensland historian Dr William Metcalf was awarded the prestigious John Douglas Kerr medal of Distinction in historiography, historical research and writing. This annual award is the highest accolade awarded in Queensland to a living historian.

Dr Metcalf has worked as a historian for over four decades. He is most known for his research into utopian communalism in Australia and the local history of Brisbane. Metcalf was formerly an adjunct academic at the School of Environment and Science at Griffith University, and has been a Distinguished-Scholar-in-Residence at Queen’s University, Belfast on three occasions.

The medal was presented to Metcalf by the Governor of Queensland, the Honourable Paul de Jersey AC at the Queensland Day Dinner. Hosted by the Royal Historical Society of Queensland at the Brisbane Club, this year the event’s guest speaker was Dr David Fricker, Director-General of the National Archives of Australia, President of the International Council on Archives, and Vice-Chair, UNESCO Memory of the World International Advisory Committee.

The John Douglas Kerr medal of Distinction is awarded by the Royal Historical Society of Queensland and the Professional Historians Association (Qld) to a historian with demonstrated excellence in historical research in Queensland or Australian history. Former recipients include Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Blainey (2017) and Professor Ann McGrath (2016).

Timothy Roberts, President, Professional Historians Association (Qld) said of Metcalf ‘He is a commensurate historian. He thinks laterally and has encouraged countless tertiary students to pursue history enthusiastically.’

President’s Report

It is never a surprise to observe the vast amount of time members of the Council and volunteers spend on the activities of the Society. It is truly humbling to see the time and energy that is being expended and the Society is indebted to everyone for their contribution. Similarly, a contribution is being made by volunteers at the Historical Societies in the small towns and suburbs across the State, all working to promote the study and recording of our history. From a personal point of view, I live in Annerley and am a member of the local Annerley Stephens History Group (ASHG), a very active group.

On 6 June our annual Queensland Day dinner was held at the Brisbane Club in the presence of the Governor of Queensland and Mrs de Jersey. The function was a booming success and a special thank you is extended to Mary Ann and Ilona, amongst many others for organising this wonderful event. Congratulations is extended to Bill Metcalf for being awarded the John Kerr medal of distinction. It was a great night.

Four days later many members of the Society volunteered at the two-day History Alive event at Fort Lytton. Again, Jeffrey, Ilona and others were present for long periods of time flying the flag. Unfortunately, the attendance was down due to parking restrictions.

On Monday 11 June both Glenda and I had the privilege to represent the Society at a one-hour cocktail function held at Government House to celebrate the Queen’s birthday. We also attended the National Trust Heritage Awards on 31 May at the Old Museum in the Valley. This was also a memorable event.

In March, the Society received an invitation to hold a joint conference with the Stanthorpe Historical Society in Stanthorpe. The Council have agreed to accept the invitation and the date and venue is currently being organised. It will probably be held in the first half of next year. We will probably book a bus for many of us to attend.

The issues surrounding the Dig Tree Grant are slowly moving forward. A special thank you is extended to the Library and the Honorary Research Team for their work in drafting the contents of the panels for the proposed boardwalk. A letter was recently sent to the relevant Department seeking their approval, an essential requisite on any work on this heritage site. I recently had a meeting with Fiona Gardiner to discuss this and many other heritage issues and it was arranged that she would send a letter regarding the Dig Tree and organise a pre-lodgement meeting to consider the proposal.

The years slowly tick by. It was almost twenty-five years ago that the Society organised a conference in Annerley, titled *Annals of Annerley*. As the convenor of this conference in my suburb, I remember vividly organising the speakers, collecting the papers and sending them to the editor John Kerr for publication. The articles were published in a volume titled *Annals of Annerley* and the printed volumes have now been sold. The Council has (for a small fee) given approval to the ASHG to reprint this publication. It is hoped it will be reprinted by the end of the year and be available for sale at the next ASHG conference held on 23 February next year.

There are many unknown Aboriginal relics across Brisbane that are just not known to exist by members of the public. One such example is a large stone slab in the ground of the backyard of a house in Fairfield (about 5 x 5 metres square) that contains many ancient aboriginal grinding grooves. This stone is on the heritage list.

The Society is a beneficiary in a deceased estate of an assortment of household objects. The president and Jeffrey O’Mara have been appointed to examine these objects to assess whether they should be retained by the Society or sold.

The Society has received offers to hold two separate music events in the Commissariat Store later in the year. One is for an opera performance and the other a classical chamber music event. Tim Roberts has spent an ordinate amount of time drafting a hire agreement for this and other prospective events. We thank you Tim for all your work on this issue and the many other issues you are involved in. The Council is still considering whether the Commissariat Store should be hired out for public functions.

Finally, a re-enactment of the first car journey from Brisbane to Toowoomba is being held in early July. The very same car is leaving the Commissariat Store after breakfast and the media will be in attendance

to make it a significant public event. The Society will provide breakfast for those in attendance. Our Immediate Past President, Dean Prangley is organising the event. Thank you Dean!

Stephen Sheaffe
President

Queensland News

(Collected by Ruth Kerr from personal Queensland contacts, Affiliated Societies, Newspapers and Department of Environment and Heritage Protection official notifications)

Babinda – Michael Fomenko (Tarzan) has returned from Gympie to Babinda where he had lived for many years. He was born in Georgia in Europe to former Princess Elizabeth Matchabelli and university lecturer, Daniel Fomenko in 1930. They migrated to Australia in 1941. Michael Fomenko was a decathlon athlete but left Sydney and went to Cape York and built a canoe and paddled it from Cooktown to Merauke in New Guinea. He was arrested in 1964 and committed to psychiatric hospital until 1969. He returned to Cape York and lived with Aboriginals. He moved to Babinda in 1990 and made many friends and was well known for walking on the Bruce Highway in the area. He set off to walk to Sydney in 2012 to see his family, but only reached Gympie before becoming ill and was taken to live at *Cooinda* Retirement Home. He expressed a desire to return to Babinda and was driven to the Babinda Multi Purpose Health Centre where he now explores the parks and gardens. (*Cairns Post*, 19 May 2018, pp. 1 and 7 including photographs)

Longreach – A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed by the Central Queensland University and the Qantas Founders Museum in Longreach. It includes restoration work on the set of stairs for boarding the Boeing 707s. They were invented by George Roberts in 1959 and built by Hastings Deering in Lidcombe, Sydney. The renovation work will be done by apprentices. A mini education hub is being set up in Longreach which the University is contributing to. (*North Queensland register* 17 May 2018 p. 8 including photograph)

Thallon silos have been memorialized in a series of stamps released by Australia Post. The four silos have been painted by street artists. The 30 metre high silos were painted as part of a project between the artists (Drapl and The Zookeeper), The Thallon Progress Association and Grain Corp. (*Western Times* 24 May 2018 p. 7)



Australia Post Photo

Enlarged photograph of the \$1 Stamp Issued by Australia Post

Windorah – Historic farm machinery collected by John Geiger in the Windorah area was auctioned on 26 May in Toowoomba. It included tractors, traction engines, camp equipment and army jeeps. John Geiger owned the Windorah Hotel and travelled around the district collecting in the 1970s when stations were having clearing sales. (*Rural Weekly* 25 May 2018 p. 10 including three photographs)

The Wednesday talk for July

The topic is: *The Sydney Mail Train*

The Sydney Mail train was the premier Queensland Railways' service of the later nineteenth century and into the 1920s. Wallan-garra (to give it its post 1908 QGR spelling) marked the point where two

differing track gauges of 4 ft 8½ inches (1435mm) for New South Wales, and 3ft 6 inches (1067mm) for Queensland met. Passengers would change trains here to complete their journey in either direction. The Sydney Mail was the main inter colonial/interstate link until the advent of the ‘Brisbane Limited’. A new more direct route via northern New South Wales and the Richmond Gap into Queensland did not involve a change of trains at a border station – and post 1930 the Sydney Mail lost much of the ‘glamour’ associated with the ‘Mail train’ service. In later years the train became known as the Wallan-garra mail, indicating the decline of the importance of the train. The steam haulage of the Wallan-garra Mail (26 Up) ceased on 5 February 1967, with B18¼ 906 hauling the train from Warwick-Wallan-garra. The last Sydney Mail (26 Up) ran on 29 January 1972, and the Brisbane-Wallan-garra service was withdrawn as of 1 February 1972.

The speaker is Greg Hallam

Greg Hallam is member of the Professional Historians Association of Queensland and a member of the RHSQ. Greg has been active in the cultural heritage field in Queensland for nearly 25 years and is employed as a Historian by Queensland Rail daily documenting, interpreting and assisting with reports, research, displays, exhibitions and many inquiries regarding the story of the railways in Queensland – something he has enjoyed doing for nearly 20 years.

Research Report

It has been a relatively quiet month for research enquiries. The research team has dealt with the following: information re a past Life Member, Dignan and Abraham Pegg, French settlers around Bundaberg, history re Richmond (Q), location of *Queen of the Colonies* pandanus tree trunk, history of Petrie Tce., and the RHSQ Richard Daintree glass plate negative collection.

We continue to advance towards the digitisation of the Society’s archives. Researcher Jacqui Stockdale’s review of the 133 compact discs containing photographic and textual records confirmed concerns that CDs are not suitable for long-term archival storage as both the CDs and the hardware to access them will become obsolete. She is now looking at ways of transferring the material to a more sustainable storage medium.

Following reports from researcher Richard Hunt and the Society’s IT consultant, Shannon Summers of ZeroLimit, our long out-of-date InMagic cataloguing program needs to be replaced. This will be expensive and time-consuming, and will delay the Catalogue going online. Options are being evaluated. In good news, the Society has received a very welcome Gambling Benefit Fund grant, enabling the Library and Research service to add a scanner, a high-level PC and 2 external hard drives to its research and digitisation equipment.

Finally, in addition to responding to research queries, from time to time the research team undertakes projects for commercial clients for a fee well below industry rates. For one such client, we researched and supplied a range of relevant material, including a rare transcript of the location’s history, links to community groups and personalities, and a significant collection of paintings. Despite several requests, the client refused to pay the fee, saying we had not supplied any material relevant to the project. Very disappointing!

Kay Cohen

Queensland Police Museum

[2018 Sunday Lecture Series](#)

[by Old Police Museum https://mypolice.qld.gov.au/museum/2018/01/16/2018-sunday-lecture-series/](https://mypolice.qld.gov.au/museum/2018/01/16/2018-sunday-lecture-series/)

The Queensland Police Museum welcomes you to the 2018 Sunday Lecture Series. Unless otherwise advised, lectures are held on the last Sunday of the month (between February and November) from 11.00 am until 12.30 pm, within the Police Headquarters ground level conference room.

What’s on at the Beenleigh Historical Village and Museum

Beenleigh Historical Village & Museum (BHV&M), located at 205 Main Street Beenleigh QLD 4207, takes you on a journey of years gone by. This collection of our Early Australian heritage is organised as a village and dedicated to preserving the cultural legacy of the old Beenleigh region for current and future generations. Normally, the Village is open seven days from 9.00 am to 3.00 pm except on Christmas Day, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, and ANZAC Day.

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The RHSQ Bulletin

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<u>IMPORTANT EVENTS AND FUNCTIONS</u> <u>JULY 2018</u>	<u>NEW MEMBERS</u>	
<p>Wednesday 11 July - 12.30 pm Talk <i>The Sydney Mail Train</i> Speaker: Greg Hallam Thursday 12 July - Council Meeting Sunday 15 July - <i>Bulletin</i> deadline</p>	<p>Melinda Hammond Zackary George Wilfred Harding Karen Beath Liz Martin</p>	<p>Petrie Terrace New Farm Railway Estate MacGregor Annerley</p>

Contact Details

Bulletin Articles Only

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Address: 115 William Street, Brisbane		Corporate/Institutions: \$ 275.00
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