

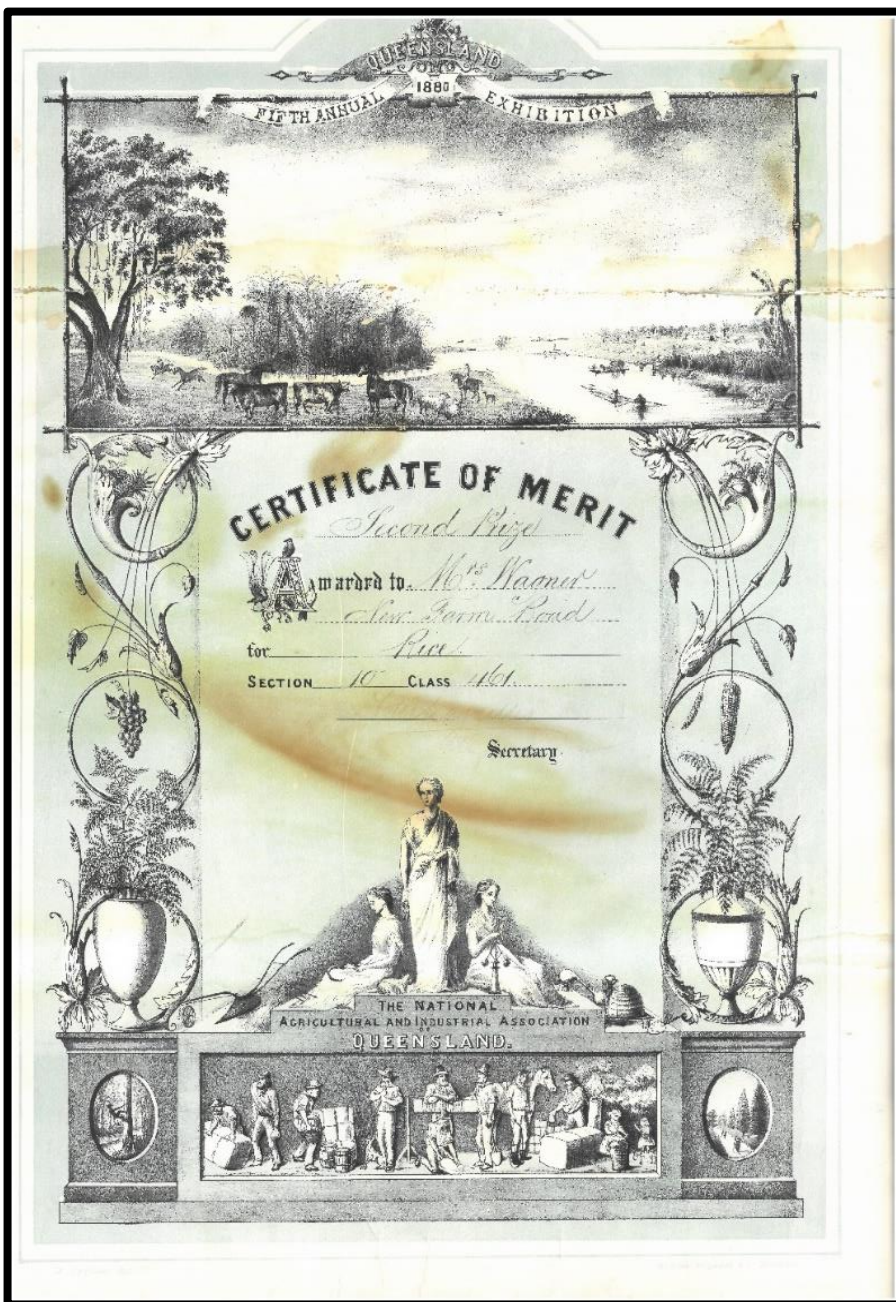


THE RHSQ

# Bulletin

81 years of continuous publication  
DECEMBER 2023 No. 891

The newsletter of The Royal Historical Society of Queensland  
Patron: Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM  
Governor of Queensland  
President: Mr. Matthew Rowe  
Website: [www.queenslandhistory.org](http://www.queenslandhistory.org)



## QUALITY RICE WAS GROWN IN BRISBANE

After her second prize, Mrs Wagner went on to be awarded a bronze medal for rice the following year at the Melbourne Agricultural Association show. Mrs Wagner and her husband, labourer Carl Wagner, lived on New Farm Road, also known as Old Racecourse Road (Post Office Directory 1881). This road was later renamed Merthyr Road, a major through road of the Brisbane suburb of New Farm. It is unusual for rice-growing to be linked to an urban, south Queensland location. It has usually been associated with North Queensland and the history of Chinese immigrants going to the Goldfields. They brought with them superior-quality seeds and developed a rice-growing industry which flourished for many years.

The area where the Wagners lived has been identified as the probable site of the New Farm racecourse. Race meetings were held there from 1846 until 1861. It eventually became part of the now-heritage-listed New Farm Park. This area, subdivided into allotments in the early 1880s, was swampy with a small creek nearby. Small plots supporting the growing of a variety of agricultural products were reported as evident in these years and it seems likely that Mrs Wagner was one of the growers. After 1881, no further information has been found about Mrs Wagner and her rice-growing.

RHSQ Digital Photo P13054

NAIA (Qld) Certificate of Merit, Second Prize for Rice awarded to Mrs Wagner,  
New Farm Road, Brisbane, 1880.

## President's Report

It is a privilege to be writing this first *Bulletin* report as President of The Royal Historical Society of Queensland.

### Upcoming events

We are delighted that our Patron, Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM, Governor of Queensland and Professor Nimmo will be special guests at the 2023 Separation Day Celebrations at 5.00 pm on Sunday, 10 December and I encourage you all to register. Details are at <https://www.queenslandhistory.org/events>. This will be a great celebration of the day Queensland separated from New South Wales, with tickets including nibbles, refreshments and a great social opportunity in the presence of the Vice Regal couple.

The final Wednesday lecture for the year will be held on Wednesday, 13 December at 12.30 pm. Dr Natalie Fong will be presenting on 'Charity and Culture: Chinese Youth Clubs in Queensland during the 1930s and 1940s'. See <https://www.queenslandhistory.org/events>

### Annual General Meeting and Clem Lack Oration

The Society recently held its Annual General Meeting and I thank all members and guests who attended for your hard work in enabling the meeting to go ahead and for your generous contribution to the important work of the Society. Our Society would be nothing without you, our volunteers, who make everything happen, willingly and enthusiastically, and have done so in the 110 years since our founding. Thankyou.

At the AGM we welcomed Dr Dan Morgan into the role of Vice President, Dr Ruth Kerr and Barrie Rollason will continue as Honorary Secretary and Treasurer respectively. We were joined by new Councillors Bill Metcalf and Chris Skelton and Stephen Sheaffe returned as a Councillor. Joy Bain, Tracie Dornbusch, Dr Rebecca Ling, Dr Judith McKay, Professor John Pearn, Dean Prangley and Sophie West continue as Councillors. Thanks to you all for your willingness to continue to support our Society. Warranting special mention is Dr Denver Beanland AM welcomed into the role of Immediate Past President. On your behalf I also take this opportunity to thank Denver for an outstanding second term of great achievement in the role of President which he has done with such aplomb these past three years.

Also, at the AGM members of the Society approved the award of a MacGregor Medal to Professor John Pearn AO RFD GCStJ, a most worthy recipient of this award for his outstanding service to the Society. Centenary Medals were presented to Ms Jessica Harrington and Mr Paul Brown of the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles and Papua New Guinea Volunteer Rifles Museum. Following the meeting we were delighted to hear, on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the Society's Clem Lack Oration, from Dr Henry Reese, on 'Electrifying Queensland: Towards a Cultural History of Electricity in the Sunshine State', a most engaging presentation.

I look forward to seeing you at upcoming events and wish each of you all the very best for the festive season. May 2024 be your best year yet.

Matthew Rowe  
President

## Queensland Report

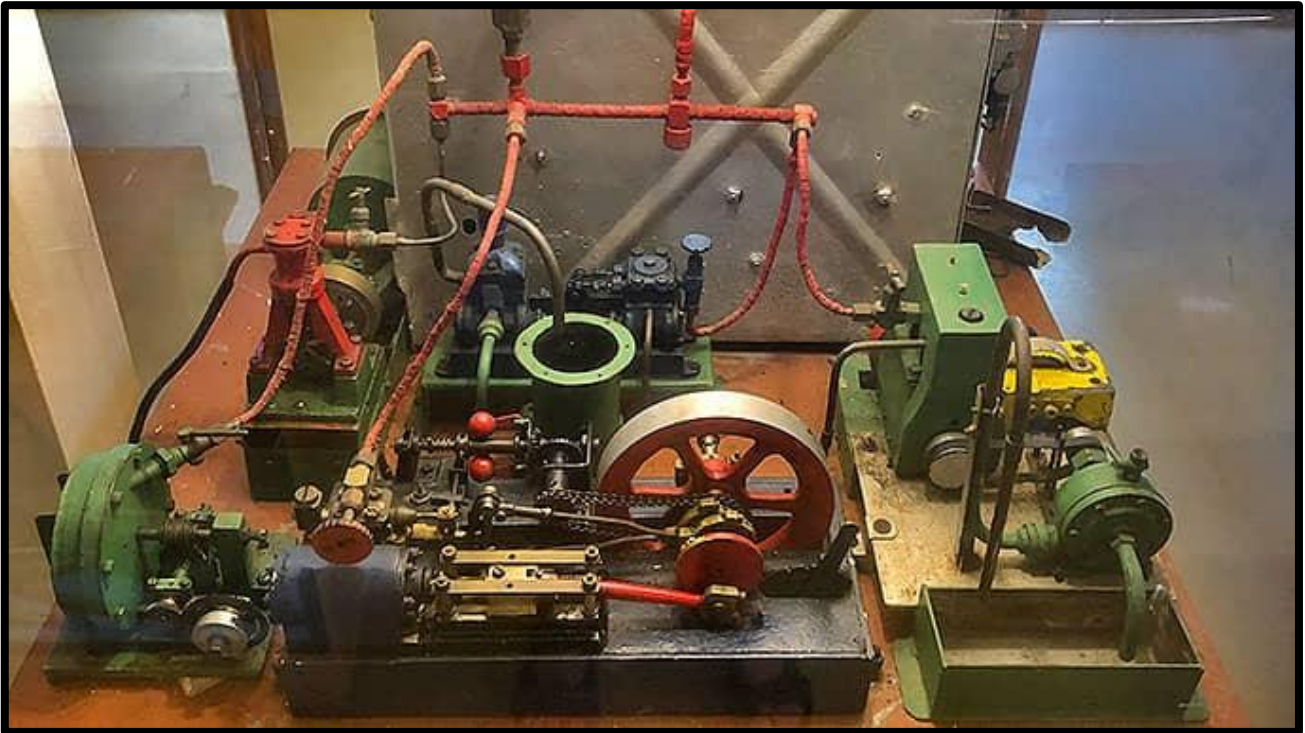
(Collected by Ruth Kerr from personal Queensland contacts, Affiliated Societies, Newspapers and Department of Environment and Heritage Protection official notifications)

**Cooktown** - A lunch time celebration of Cooktown's 150 years was organised by Cook Shire Council on 25<sup>th</sup> October in William Daku Park. A sausage sizzle was supplied by the staff. Speeches were given by Bev Shay, president of the Cooktown Historical Society, Councillor Marilyn Morris, Alberta Hornsby from Waalmbal Birri Heritage Centre and Lai Chu Chan from Cairns and District Chinese Association, who also cut the large sponge cake created by the Cooktown Bakery. (*Cape York Weekly*, 28 October 2023)

**Herberton** - There are two mining history and heritage centres in Herberton – The Herberton Historic Village (run by private enterprise) and the Herberton Mining Museum at 1 Jack's Road, Herberton, operated by the Herberton Mining Museum History Association (HMMHA). The Herberton Mining Museum was the vision of Ivan Searston, then a Herberton Shire Councillor. He and his wife Mary have provided the leadership for the HMMHA which includes local history volunteers enthusiastic about promoting the history of the tin mining history of Herberton and surrounds. The museum is situated on the Great Northern mine freehold which was taken over by the Shire Council and is now supported by the Tablelands Regional Council. At its



November 2023 Council meeting the RHSQ decided to award a Centenary Medal to Ivan and Mary Searston and the Herberton Mining Museum History Association. It is proposed that it will be presented by Dr Ruth Kerr at Herberton on 4 December 2023. (<https://herbertonminingmuseum.com/>)



HMMHA Photo

### The Mining Room at HMMHA

**Murgon** - In 2014 Murgon Men's Shed founding President, Paul Pfeifer, purchased two rail carriages in Rockhampton. Eventually, the carriages arrived in Murgon and a grant from Stanwell Power enabled restoration work to commence. A D17 locomotive had been given to Murgon Council in 1974 and was positioned near the tennis courts. It was sent later to the ARHS Rail Museum at Rosewood. Department of Transport objected to the Men's Shed building a shed to house carriages near the front of the rail station because they desired to retain the rail corridor clear. Tracks were then laid to the side of the station building, the carriages were moved and a rail shed was completed by Christmas 2022. The C17 No. 763 loco was offered to Murgon Men's Shed. Transport arrangements were made and the loco arrived in Murgon on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2023. Unloading was done by a 100-ton crane from Kingaroy. One of the members donated \$25000 for the transport and crane hire. No. 763, was built in 1927 by Walkers Ltd, Maryborough. Twenty-five of the 202 built have been preserved. All had been removed from service in 1969. No 763 is 16.29 metres long, weighs 56 ton dry, 82 ton full (with coal and water). Boiler pressure is 7.206KPA, has two cylinders, 17inch x 22inch

stroke. Murgon Men's Shed undertake to restore the locomotive which will form a static display under cover near the two restored railway carriages. The Murgon Men's Shed Railway Museum was opened on 2<sup>nd</sup> October by Llew O'Brien MP, Member for Wide Bay. (*Murgon Moments*, September 2023, issue 204, pp. 25-26)

**Murgon Men's Shed vice-president Rudy Broers says the locomotive will become a permanent, static display** (*Murgon Moments Photo*)





Dave Mollenhauer Photo

**The locomotive is unloaded and lifted into position**

## **The First Powered flight by an Australian designed and built aircraft**



National Library Photo

### **The Duigan Pusher Biplane**

The Duigan pusher biplane (often simply called the Duigan biplane) was an early aircraft which made the first powered flight by an Australian-designed and built machine when it flew in Victoria in 1910. The aircraft was constructed by John Duigan with help from his brother, Reginald, on their family farm at Mia Mia. The effort was especially significant in that the brothers built the aircraft almost entirely by themselves and without input from the pioneering aviation community; a photo-postcard of the Wright Flyer inspired the design and Sir Hiram Maxim's book *Artificial and Natural Flight* provided the theoretical basis.

#### **General characteristics**

- **Crew:** One pilot
- **Length:** 10.67 m (35 ft 0 in)
- **Wingspan:** 7.47 m (24 ft 6 in)
- **Wing area:** 19.5 m<sup>2</sup> (210 sq ft)
- **Gross weight:** 285 kg (630 lb)
- **Powerplant:** 1 × custom-built water-cooled straight-4 , 19 kW (25 hp)

#### **Performance**

- **Maximum speed:** 64 km/h (40 mph, 35 kt)



## Library and Research Report



RHSQ Archives Box 506, Folder 2.

### Menu for Banquet in honour of Sir Thomas McIlwraith K.C.M.G. Southport Hotel, ca 1880s, printed on silk.

The menu is one of a number of ephemera printed on silk held in the RHSQ Library. Specialist Dr Ian Hadwen is currently assessing them for a conservation project for which we will be applying for grant funding.

Research enquiries received this month were: History of the Leichhardt Hotel in Rockhampton and four historic Queensland hotels; painting of the barque *Corinth* held in the RHSQ Museum and request for a clear photograph of the painting; information on Leopold James Kempster, architect, his career in Australia in the early 1900s and a suitcase held by his descendants; information on the life of long-time ALP stalwart

and RHSQ vice-president, Arthur Laurie; access to the diary of John Ewen Davidson 1865-68; whereabouts of two ‘phonograph records’ with recordings of traditional songs from Barambah Aboriginal settlement. They were said to have been lodged with the RHSQ in around 1925; information re provenance of dental extraction kit attributed to St Helena penal settlement; the life and times of William Pettigrew; photos of catering arrangements, such as mess halls, for construction workers living at Somerset Dam Village; family details of Evelyn Keane around the 1940s; query re remnants of stone wall in Queen St. possibly dating from convict era.

Donation offer; photos of farms near Toowoomba and of Agricultural Shows at RNA Showgrounds, Brisbane in 1987.

Research on western Queensland landholders by a recent visitor to the library brought to mind the writings of Alice Duncan-Kemp. Her four books on life on *Mooraberrie* station in far western Queensland have been in the Welsby Library for many years although long out of print. Her first book *Our Sandhill Country* published in 1933 was donated to our Library in 1938 by her sister Laura. The books are now being reprinted. This news has resulted in a quite critical assessment of her writings and the veracity of her recording of Aboriginal daily life and language in that area, although there are many defenders of her work. *Our Sandhill Country* is the best of the books. Here she writes in a quite lyrical and evocative style about life as a child on the station with her Aboriginal friends. She shared their daily routines and their stories, their knowledge of the local flora and fauna and their language. It is a unique account of those times. ( See, Pamela Lukin Watson, ‘Alice Monkton Duncan-Kemp (1901-1988)’, Australian Dictionary of Biography, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/duncan-kemp-alice-monkton-12444.

Lost Brisbane Books. A recent visitor to the Commissariat Store turned out to be the front man for a heavy metal band (name unknown). He purchased both Lost Brisbane Books, saying that the photographs and stories gave him inspiration for writing his songs!

Kay Cohen

<b><u>IMPORTANT EVENTS AND FUNCTIONS</u></b> <b><u>DECEMBER/JANUARY</u></b>	<b><u>NEW MEMBERS</u></b>
<p><b>Sunday, 10 December, 5.00 - 7.00 pm, Separation Day Celebrations</b></p> <p><b>Wednesday, 13 December, 12.30 – 1.30 pm, Dr Natalie Fong speaking on the topic on ‘Charity and Culture: Chinese Youth Clubs in Queensland during the 1930s and 1940s’.</b></p> <p><b>Thursday, 14 December, Council Meeting.</b></p> <p><b>Wednesday, 15 January, <i>Bulletin</i> Deadline.</b></p>	<p><b>Coopers Plains History Group</b></p> <p><b>David Braddock, Noosa Heads, 4567</b></p>

Contact Details	<i>Bulletin</i> Articles Only	Subscriptions
Manager: Hannah Orchard	Editor: Dr Graeme Nicholson OAM	Ordinary Member: \$ 75.00
ABN: 34 217 251 028	A/Editor: Gloria Nicholson	Partner of Member: \$ 25.00
Phone: 07 3221 4198	Phone: 07 3221 4198	Junior Member (U18): \$ 13.00
Fax: 07 3221 4698	Fax: 07 3221 4698	Full-time Student (U25): \$ 38.00
email: info@queenslandhistory.org.au	email: info@queenslandhistory.org.au	Affiliated Society: \$ 63.00
website: www.queenslandhistory.org	The Society acknowledges financial assistance from: Commonwealth Government Heritage Grants; Qld Government Gambling Community Benefit Fund; Lord Mayor Adrian Shrinner, The Lord Mayor’s Suburban Initiative Fund; Brisbane City Council; Our Honorary Auditor, Grant Thornton Audit Pty Ltd; Queensland X-Ray.	Library Member: \$ 75.00
Address: 115 William Street, Brisbane Postal: The Royal Historical Society of Queensland, PO Box 12057, Brisbane, George Street, 4003		Corporate member: \$ 315.00
		Life Membership - Purchased after 10 Years as a Member \$ 5,500.00