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President: Stephen Sheaffe

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BRISBANE'S ALBERT HALL – RECLAIMING A LOST HISTORY



John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Neg. 46126

Albert Hall Brisbane, 1967

The loss of culturally significant buildings is a recurring theme in Queensland's history. The 50th anniversary of the demise of Brisbane's Albert Hall occurs in 2019, so it is timely for its legacy to be documented. With the support of the State Library of Queensland's Letty Katts Award, Peter Roennfeldt is currently working towards this goal.

From 1901 until its demolition in 1969 made way for Brisbane's first skyscraper (SGIO / Suncorp Building), Albert Hall was a much-loved venue. Its central location and size ensured it was constantly in demand for events that did not warrant using the city's largest venues. Its usefulness only increased following its 1941 refurbishment that added a proscenium stage, balcony and expansion to 700 seats.

Countless concerts, plays, film evenings, eisteddfods, lectures, meetings, wartime events, conferences and rallies took place at Albert Hall. By the 1950s it was in use for 150 days annually – a very busy venue by any standard!

What remains of Albert Hall's legacy? The few surviving photographs, numerous performance programs and many newspaper reports are a good starting point. Audio-visual recordings are unlikely, but may yet appear. To complement the physical evidence, Peter is currently looking for people with memories or memorabilia. As a starting point, go to the SLQ website (www.slq.qld.gov.au) and click on the 'Blogs' tab and locate the 'All the world's a stage' story posted on 6 November. Messages and comments are most welcome.

President's Report

It has been another extremely successful year for the Society. I am continually inspired by the energy and dedication of the many people who work so hard to make this volunteer organisation what it is. The effort by everyone is simply amazing. There are so many projects that are being undertaken at any one time that I am not able to mention them all. However, I note two significant research projects, one is on Hoddle's and/or John Oxley's notes and the research on the monuments the Society has erected. Both worthy projects.

There are many issues that were dealt with during the year. To me, the most significant is our occupancy of the Commissariat Store moving forward. Over 18 years ago, the Society entered into a 30-year lease with the Department of Public Works at a designated peppercorn rental of one dollar per year but the Society was required to pay all the building outgoings (cleaning, electricity, rates, insurance etc) subject to a discretionary provision that the Department could waive these costs. Over the years, the Department has waived these outgoing charges so our occupancy has been without charge. We should always be grateful to the Department for this generosity.

However, change was in the wind with the Casino Development. The contracts between the Government and Destination Brisbane Consortium (DBC) were kept confidential even though they had a serious impact on the Society. We were informed that the Commissariat Store vested in DBC for a 99-year term and DBC was now our landlord - we were not shown any documentation to support this - we were simply told. This raised important issues: Would DBC, a for profit entity continue to exercise the discretion and pay the outgoings and would the lease be renewed when the term of our lease expires. Rumours abounded. In fact, DBC ground staff informed members of the Society that the plan was to convert the Commissariat Store into an eating facility or night club. We had meetings with DBC representatives and raised these issues without success. They always said it was being referred to a higher management level and they would get back to us. They never did.

The former president (Deane Prangley) and I made a personal visit to the Works Department to meet with David Edwards. Even though he refused to provide us with a copy of the relevant contracts between the parties, he did assure us it was a term of these agreements that DBC was to continue to treat the Society as had occurred over the years and they had to offer a lease on identical terms to the current lease when our current term expires. This term is for the duration of their 99-year lease. We requested that the issue be placed in writing and a letter duly arrived. In summary, but always subject to government power, the Society has a right to occupy the Commissariat Store for 99 years. This is the best outcome we could have achieved.

Despite the development next door, the visitation levels have remained fairly constant over the year. We expect the visitation to boom when the development is completed in 2022.

The Dig Tree is another issue that has been time consuming. A grant was received and the money expended on the creation of information signs, including the making of moulds of the blazes that were originally engraved on the trees by the first visitors. These signs have been delivered to the Bulloo Shire Council. An application for funding to the Building Our Regions Grant Program has been made to fund the construction of a boardwalk and for the restoration of the eroded bank. This process is continuing and Denver Beanland has spent an extraordinary amount of time moving this issue forward. Our Dig Tree Reserve Account has in excess of \$80,000 in it. The committee has met regularly and we have also met with the Department of Environment and Sciences to seek their support. As the Dig Tree Reserve is on the heritage list, every step requires Departmental approval. We hope it will be completed next year. The planning to introduce Wi-Fi to the Reserve is continuing.

Planning is well under way for the events to celebrate the 250 years since Lieutenant Cook sailed the Endeavour up the East Coast of Australia in 1770. A group of our members made a reconnoitring trip to 1770 in January 2018 and we booked a venue for a conference in May 2020. The organisation for a conference in Brisbane and Cooktown is continuing. We will be having a meeting with Merryn Hughes the appointed convenor of the Cooktown events in the near future. We are organising three conferences in 2020 to celebrate this milestone event.

The Society continues to take a community lead role to celebrate Queensland Day on 6 June and Separation Day on 10 December. Again, this year the Queensland Day Dinner was held at the Brisbane Club and we were blessed with the attendance of the Governor Paul de Jersey AC and Mrs de Jersey. Our good friend, Bill Metcalf was the 2018 recipient of the John Kerr Medal of Distinction. A well-attended function to celebrate Separation Day was again held at the Commissariat Store on the 10 December.

We have again held conferences throughout the year. The conference to celebrate the first sitting of parliament house in the Red Room was a great event. Similarly, the *Behind the Lines Exhibition* and the oral presentation about the glass photographic plates of Queensland WWI soldiers found in a barn in Vignacourt and the signatures scratched onto a nearby ancient cave wall was a great success. This exhibition continues.

The Library and research team, the programme and the museum committees continue their excellent work. The monthly lectures are well attended and are of a high standard and the museum displays are of a high standard. Finally, as president I was invited to write the Foreword for a new book, written by Dr Graeme Nicholson, to celebrate 50-years since the launch of the Beenleigh and District Historical Society. It was a pleasure.

Finally, it was also with pleasure that I accepted the generous gift from Pamela Gough of her painting of the Commissariat Store. It will be hung behind the reception desk.

The Annual General Meeting was held on Tuesday evening, 20 November 2018, and the Clem Lack Oration was delivered by our former president Dean Prangley on Motoring History in Queensland. I wish to congratulate those who received awards: Carolyn Nolan a Fellowship, Graeme Nicholson a McGregor Medal, Leigh Chamberlain, Marilyn England and Glenda Sheaffe were awarded Centenary Medals and finally Phil Adam and Anne Harding received certificates for giving 15 years of service as guides to the Society.

I wish to extend a special thank you to every member of the Council, to every guide, to every member of every committee and all the volunteers who have made a wonderful contribution to our society. Most days the Society is simply a buzz with activity. A special thank you is extended to Ilona our wonderful manager, who works beyond the call of duty to keep the Society operating smoothly and efficiently.

I thank you all. It has been a great year.

Stephen Sheaffe
President

Stories of Stephens

The Annerley Stephens History Group Inc. is convening a history conference for Saturday 23 February 2019 at Our Lady's College, Ipswich Road, Annerley. Speakers have been engaged on Shire, Aboriginal and many other aspects of local history. It will be a great day. You are all welcome to attend. Please contact the president: 0417 770 176

Queensland News

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

Cooktown – A local talking circle group including the Deputy Mayor, Robyn Holmes, has been formed to address local issues constructively. One of their first observations is that tourists have remarked that the entrance fee at the James Cook Museum is now too high at \$15. Also, they would like to see the entrance moved back to the original position. The Cooktown Historical Society Museum and Library who have had 2848 visitors in the past six months has an entrance fee of \$5. A film crew came to Cooktown on the 15 November, making a documentary about the Chinese in Cooktown. It included spending time at the History Centre and interviewing Bev Shay and Marge Scully. The Cook Shire Council has requested the Historical Society's help in compiling a publication to celebrate 100 years of the Cook Shire in 2019. A call will be going out for photos of council related subjects, roads, bridges etc and people of the shire. (*Cape York News* 5-11 September 2018 p. 9 and Cooktown Historical Society information.)

Linville – Somerset Regional Council is supporting the Ambassadors of the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail Moore-Linville-Benarkin-Blackbutt in their bid to obtain a licence over the Linville Railway Station beside Council's existing lease. The Ambassadors plan to upgrade the station building and railway carriages on site. (*Kilcoy Sentinel* 18 October 2018 p. 13)

Mitchelton - In 1885, a survey to connect the Samford Valley with Brisbane was first made, with the line originally chosen to serve the livestock sale yards at Newmarket. Construction began in 1897 and the line opened through to Enoggera in February 1899. It wasn't until 1918 that the railway line opened to Mitchelton followed by Samford later that same year. Mitchelton station continues to be a thriving hub in the north-west of Brisbane, catering for more than 870,000 customer trips each year. The old station building was replaced in 1992. As part of recognising the 100 year milestone, a commemorative storyboard was installed at Mitchelton, to give the community a snapshot of Mitchelton station throughout the years. (Queensland Railways, *Weekly Notice* E42, 7 November 2018)

Mount Garnet – At a memorial day ceremony the Tablelands Patrol Group and Mount Garnet community remembered Constable Patrick McCabe, aged 38 years, who died on duty at Mount Garnet 105 years ago on 8 October 1913. He died in an accident when his horse bolted. He had served at Roma Street, Nanango, Rockhampton, Mount Morgan, Geraldton (Innisfail), Port Douglas, Mareeba and Mount Garnet. (*Tablelander* 30 October 2018 p. 12)

Mount Mulligan – In December 2018 Chris Morris, hotel and resort owner and founder of Computershare, is opening his 400 sq kms *Mount Mulligan* station to guests. The resort accommodating 16 tourists in the town's former hospital has been upgraded in the past three years. Morris plans to expand the number to 24. He is spending \$15 million on the property which runs 1500 of cattle. In 1921 Mount

Mulligan coal mine was the site of Queensland's worst mine disaster with the loss of 75 lives. The Mount Mulligan cemetery contains many headstones detailing the disaster. Society member, Peter Bell, has written the book, *Alas it seems cruel: the Mount Mulligan coal mine disaster of 1921* (Moorooka, Qld. : Boolarong Press, 2017). (*Australian* 4 October 2018 pp. 17, 28)

Tewantin – John's Landing, a 49 ha block with a 440 metre frontage to Noosa River was purchased in December 2017 by Noosa Shire Council and has been added to the region's public land bank. It was previously used as a very low cost housing area. It was originally a large orchard owned by the John's family. Evidence of the orchard remains on the property. (*Noosa News* 6 November 2018 p. 3)

Weipa – Seventy-five years ago 15 men from Weipa, 11 from Aurukun and four from Mapoon enlisted in the Citizen Military Forces and joined the 2nd Australian Water Transport Group, Royal Australian Engineers. The group was later renamed the 14th Australian Small Ship Company. A dinner was held in Thursday Island in March 2018, but Weipa and Napranum were unable to attend. An article by Society member, Geoff Wharton commemorating the role of the western Cape York soldiers was published in the *Cape York News* on 24 October 2018 pp. 18-19 with photographs of descendants of the soldiers and one of the Weipa veterans in approximately 1962.

National Archives of Australia

18 Corporate Drive, Cannon Hill Qld

Self Service Digitisation of Selected Records by the Public

The Queensland Office of the National Archives is testing the feasibility of allowing self-service digitisation of selected records by the public in a controlled reading room environment. It is being trialled in the Queensland Reading Room only, from 8 November 2018 to 30 April 2019.

Instructions for participating in this trial and digitising record for personal use

1. Ask the Archives Officer on duty if the file you wish to digitise is suitable for this service. The Archives Officer will allow digitisation of files that are robust enough to handle the process with minimal risk of damage.
 2. The Archives Officer on duty will ensure the scanner is ready to operate. If in doubt, ask.
 3. Do not change any scanner settings. The scanner is set to the Archives digitisation standards.
 4. Digitise each page
 - a. Start at the front file cover.
 - b. Press the green button on the scanner, or click the 'Scan' button on the screen.
 - c. Scan every page, starting from the top page and continuing to the bottom.
 - d. Place the page in the centre of the glass – the scanner will align the image automatically
 - e. Include the back of any page that has information regardless of its significance
 - f. If you make a mistake, just repeat the scan and inform the attendant.
 - g. Once you have finished, return all pages to the file pin.
 - h. It is important that the pages are returned in their original order.
 5. If you have any questions, ask the Archives Officer.
 6. If you wish to digitise more than one file, inform the Archives Officer. After each file is complete, the Archives Officer will collate the images into a file folder.
 7. Once completed, the Archives Officer will download the images to a USB for you to take with you. The images created you may be processed and loaded to the Archives' RecordSearch database where they can be viewed by the public. The images will be subject to quality assurance before they are loaded. And some files may be rejected.
- (Information provided by David Swift, Manager, National Archives of Australia, Queensland Office.)

NOMINATIONS FOR JOHN DOUGLAS KERR

MEDAL OF DISTINCTION FOR RESEARCH AND WRITING AUSTRALIAN HISTORY

Nominations are called for the John Douglas Kerr Medal which is awarded each year for distinction in research and writing Australian History. Details of the award are available on the Society's website at: <http://www.queenslandhistory.org/awards-and-medals/>

The criteria for the award are:

1. Demonstrated excellence in historical research in any one or more fields of Queensland or Australian history
2. Demonstrated and identified use of wide-spread appropriate source material in the context of the nominee's research field or fields
3. Demonstrated objective analysis, distillation and interpretation of historical source material leading to the formation of historical arguments arising out of the research
4. Demonstrated acceptance of the highest standards of scholarship as judged by the Queensland community of professional historians, assessing the work of written contributions of the nominee
5. Is currently practicing as a historian at a professional standard.

Nominations close with the RHSQ on 31 March 2019.

Research Report

The following are the research matters dealt with over the past four weeks: information on historic brickwork in Ipswich (researcher Chris Cormack is visiting the site and will report back on findings), paper presented to the Society on Dr Lilian Cooper; background history of Brisbane suburbs Kenmore, Fig Tree Pocket, Chapel Hill and Pullenvale; permission to use image of Narcisse Pelletier in forthcoming publication; possible donation of copies of early *Brisbane Courier* editions; Lamb House, Kangaroo Point; images and history of Story Bridge for Kangaroo Point hotel; location of Brisbane World War One military camp; names of families lodged at Immigration Depot, William St., in 1880s.

With the new scanner now in operation, copies of the RHSQ monthly *Bulletin* from the 1950s to the present are being scanned and added to the Library's digitised holdings. Chris Cormack and Beth Johnson are sourcing photos and stories for the website, the current topic being the historic mining town of Irvinebank. Sources include the extensive Wardell Collection donated to the Society in memory of William Wardell who was killed in action in World War One. Letters and other original material in the Collection have already been digitised.

Kay Cohen

The Talk for December

Wednesday 12 December

Title: Queensland's Pyrotechnic Posties: A Tale of Rivers, Wrecks, and Rockets

Speaker: Judith Nissen

As unlikely as it may seem, Queensland entered the space race somewhat earlier than is generally assumed – to be exact, on 4 December 1934. And the place – the Brisbane River at Pinkenba. This illustrated talk will trace the efforts of these early enthusiasts, and their experiments, which had mixed results indeed.

Judith Nissen is a freelance professional historian. Her work for private and corporate clients includes histories of organisations, buildings and families, heritage assessments, land tenure research, museum displays, and biographical research. She is the Queensland researcher for the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Judith particularly enjoys the serendipitous discoveries that are part and parcel of historical research – this lunchtime talk arose from one such find.

RHSQ Office Holders for 2018/2019 Elected at the AGM 20 December

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Vice President: Michael Halliday

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Hon Treasurer: Barrie Rollason

Councillors: Denver Beanland, Ian Jempson, Rebecca Ling, Jeffrey O'Mara, Janet Pender, Michelle Pickering, Janet Prowse, Timothy Roberts, Jon Stanford.

Immediate Past President: Mr Dean Prangley (not required to be elected).

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The RHSQ Bulletin

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<u>IMPORTANT EVENTS AND FUNCTIONS</u> <u>DECEMBER</u>	<u>NEW MEMBERS</u>										
<p>Monday 10 December - Separation Day Celebration at Commissariat 6.00 - 8.00 pm Thursday 13 December - Council Meeting Wednesday 12 December - 12.30 pm Talk Title: ‘Queensland’s Pyrotechnic Posties: A Tale of Rivers, Wrecks, and Rockets’ Speaker: Judith Nissen</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Pat Comben</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Tambourine Mountain</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Danielle Ellis</td> <td>New Farm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Paul Winter</td> <td>Wishart</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Megan Cottorell Manwaring</td> <td>Paddington</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Caroline Fewtrell and Geoff Thompson</td> <td>Holland Park</td> </tr> </table>	Pat Comben	Tambourine Mountain	Danielle Ellis	New Farm	Paul Winter	Wishart	Megan Cottorell Manwaring	Paddington	Caroline Fewtrell and Geoff Thompson	Holland Park
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