

# RHSQ

The Royal Historical Society of Queensland

THE RHSQ

# Bulletin

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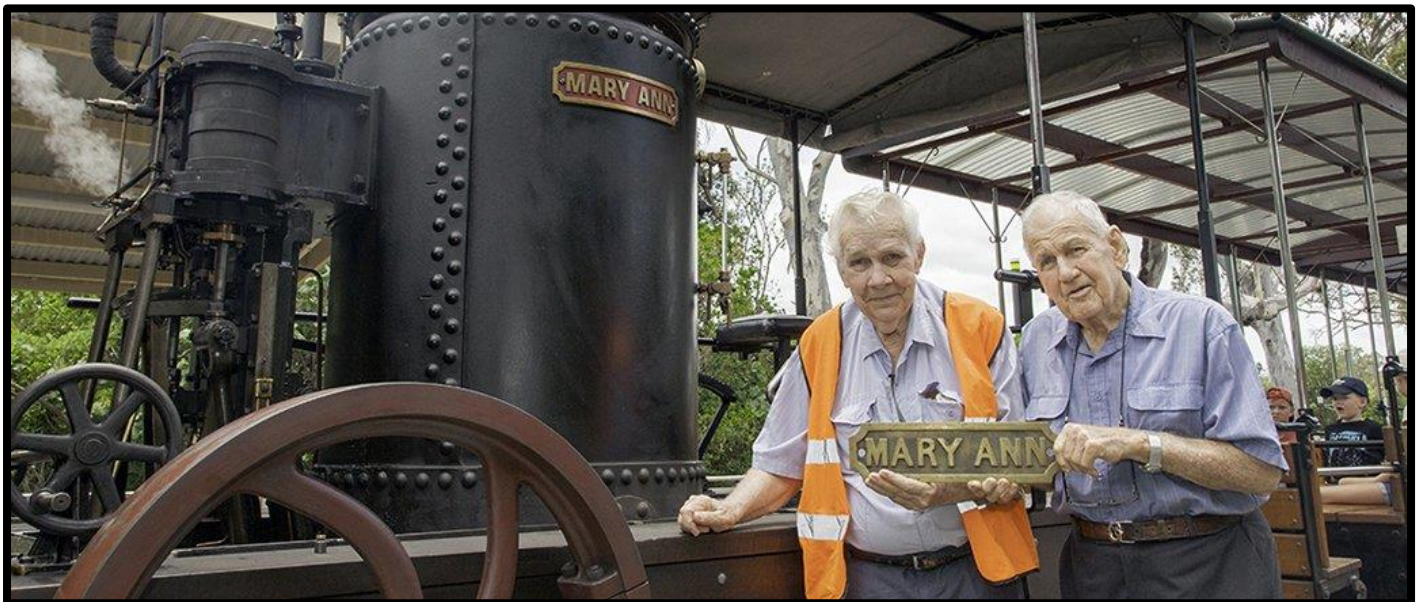
The newsletter of The Royal Historical Society of Queensland

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

President: Dr Denver Beanland AM

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

## The original name plate of the *Mary Ann* locomotive has been returned to Maryborough



Jocelyn Watts Photo

**Railway enthusiast Merv Volker (left) donates the name plate from the original *Mary Ann* to Peter Olds on behalf of the Maryborough City Whistlestop Committee**

### Queensland News

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

**Maryborough** – The original name plate of the *Mary Ann* locomotive has been returned to Maryborough. It was handed over by Mr Merv Volker of Ipswich to Mr Peter Olds of Olds Engineering on 17 December 2020. Olds Engineering built a one to one model of the Mary Anne locomotive, the first locomotive built in Queensland and it runs in Queens Park, Maryborough.

The Maryborough *Chronicle* on 20 December 2020 reported in detail on the return of the name plate. Mr Peter Olds OAM of Olds Engineering and the Whistlestop Museum are calling it a Christmas miracle. The original name plate of the legendary *Mary Ann* locomotive built in 1873 has mysteriously reappeared after 127 years. The little locomotive, the first built in Queensland, disappeared without a trace in 1893 after a Mary River flood and a disastrous fire at the Dundathu sawmill where it was stored. Maryborough engineer Peter Olds, long intrigued by the loco with the upright boiler, was the driving force behind the building of a replica, launched in

1999 after being rebuilt from three historic photographs and the *Queensland Heritage* article by John Kerr in 1970. The *Mary Ann* has since been an iconic attraction in Maryborough, hauling carriages of visitors and residents through Queen's Park on her regular outings before returning to her home at the Whistlestop museum.

On 17 December 2020 Mr Merv Volker of Ipswich walked into the museum with a solid brass curved plate bearing the name *Mary Ann*. Peter Olds is jubilant and is certain that the name plate is the original. Mr Volker, a former Granville resident and now volunteer at the Ipswich railway museum said he bought the solid brass curved plate bearing the name *Mary Ann* from a long-time friend in Gympie. He bought it from him 23 years ago, Mr Volker said he didn't know how he came to have it. No other part survives of the original *Mary Ann*, built to cut and haul timber in the Cooloola forest in the late 19th Century.

The nameplate cast for the replica closely resembles the original, appearing a centimetre longer because it has been flattened slightly. A commercial font closely resembling the script shown in blown-up photographs of the original was used for the replica name plates. Several copies were cast as well as the one fixed to the boiler of the replica. Slight variations are shown in the letters carved in 1873; the replica casting has a uniform font. Mr Olds said the shape of lettering on the plate is identical to the lettering shown in the old photographs and the name plate would have been attached to *Mary Ann's* original boiler with two screws. "There'd be steam pressure on those screws and they wouldn't come out too easily. Whoever took it off would have had to do so with great care." "It's amazing the plate is still in such good condition, apart from being slightly bent." Mr Olds said the Maryborough City Whistlestop committee was planning to fix the original name plate to the *Mary Ann* replica on the rear end of the locomotive.

Peter Olds and Whistlestop executives, Warren McPherson and John Sims, have speculated that the name plate might have been removed from the *Mary Ann* in 1893 by owner William Pettigrew after the fire in the mill. Pettigrew and his partner, William Sim, "both had daughters named Mary Ann so the nameplate would have been of great sentimental value to William Pettigrew," Mr Olds said speculatively. Pettigrew's diary (held by The Royal Historical Society of Queensland) showed he visited Dundathu after the Christmas Day fire in 1893, noting "two locomotives" in an inventory of stock remaining at the riverside site. "He may well have taken the name plate because it would have meant a lot to him but who knows where it has been for 127 years?" mused Mr Olds.



Jocelyn Watts Photo

**Merv Volker and Peter Olds show where the historic name plate will be placed on the rear of the replica's engine.**

Mr Olds said the Maryborough City Whistlestop committee was keen to accept more donations of other local railway relics and photos, including the second locomotive made by John Walker & Co. Ltd, *Mary Ann's* sister *Dundathu*. To contact the committee phone (07) 4121 0444 or email mborowhistlestop@bigpond.com For more on *Mary Ann's* history, visit <https://maryboroughwhistlestop.org.au> and [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cooloola\\_Tramway](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cooloola_Tramway)

Photo in Maryborough *Sun* newspaper: Merv Volker and Peter Olds with the Mary Ann (Jocelyn Watts/SUN) and *Welcome Back Mary Ann* by Nancy Bates, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, Fraser Coast Chronicle, 2017; John Kerr, 'The Calooli Creek and Thanna Railway, Tin Can Bay: Queensland's First Private railway and First Queensland-built Locomotive', *Queensland Heritage*, November 1970, vol.2 no.3, pp. 14-19; Elaine Brown, '[William Pettigrew 1825 - 1906: Sawmiller, surveyor, shipowner and citizen: an immigrant's life in colonial Queensland](#)', PhD thesis, University of Queensland, [The University of Queensland, 2005](#); Maryborough *Chronicle Digital*, 20 December 2020.

**Benarkin** - The Blackbutt District Tourism and Heritage Association (BDTHA) volunteers have erected six storyboards stretching from Benarkin State School to the Benarkin Store relating stories about the early days of the town. The storyboards, funded with a grant from the South Burnett Regional Council, were officially unveiled on Friday, 4 December 2020. BDTHA president Noeleen Bird said Benarkin had a vibrant history due to the timber industry, railway and farming. The BDTHA now have another signage project planned. The group has received a grant from the Yarraman / Blackbutt branch of the Bendigo Bank to sponsor signs and a brochure about Jesses Well, the Taromeo Mill, the Sandy Creek Fire Tower and local bora rings. (<https://southburnett.com.au/news2/2020/12/07/story-of-benarkin-officially-unveiled/> - 7 December 2020)

**Eidsvold** and District Historical Society unveiled new signage at their Heritage Day on Saturday, 21 November 2020. The Society received a grant from the Mundubbera Community Bank Branch of the Bendigo Bank.



Eidsvold & District Historical Society Inc. Photo

On site is the surviving detached kitchen of Knockbreak Homestead – a slab and shingle hut of the Sinclair family from the 1860s. Guthrie Sinclair worked on the Archer brothers' Eidsvold Station as a shepherd. Paid in sheep, he tendered for a run and moved his family and flocks to Knockbreak, named after his district in Scotland. Other buildings relocated to the complex include the old station buildings of Clonave, the Calrossie store and meat shop and the Riverleigh Railway Fettlers' Cottage.

Phil Robinson from Mundubbera created the signs and unveiled the entry sign at the Heritage Day event. The *North Burnett News* published a photograph of the president of the Historical Society, Roseanne Riethmuller and John Zahl, Chair of the Mundubbera Community Bank Branch. (*North Burnett News*, 26 November 2020, p. 7 and *Burnett Today*, 10 December 2020, p. 10)

**Nanango** – On 21 October 2020 South Burnett Regional Council called tenders (SBRC-20/21-08) by community groups for the lease for the operation and management of the historically significant *Ringsfield* House and associated grounds and buildings located in Cairns Street, Nanango, described as Lot 9 on SP307587 and Lot 5 SP156194. *Ringsfield* has previously been run as a destination for visitors and the local community as a showcase of historical memorabilia and items from the history of Nanango, as a function and event centre, and café. *Ringsfield* provides opportunities to prospective Tenderers, including historical display and tours, events centre, café and commercial kitchen. Council stated that it is looking for a thoughtful and considered approach to management and operation of *Ringsfield*. Tenders closed on 20 November 2020. (<https://www.southburnett.com.au/sbrc/index.php> - 7 December 2020).



Nanango Historical Society Photo

### *Ringsfield* House

This impressive house has been featured in the *Bulletin* previously on pages 4 and 5 of the September 2020 issue.

### HERITAGE

**Dunwich** – Ward 13 of the former Dunwich Benevolent Asylum at 8 Mallon Street, Dunwich on Stradbroke Island has been nominated for entry on the Queensland Heritage Register. (*Courier-Mail*, 8 January 2021, p. 72)



North Stradbroke Island Museum Photo

### Dunwich Benevolent Asylum Ward 13 ca. 1930

**The Dunwich Benevolent Asylum was established under the Benevolent Asylum Wards Act of 1861 to provide accommodation and care to poor people unable to care for themselves due to illness or infirmity. It opened on 13 May 1865 with the transfer of initial patients from the Benevolent Ward of the Brisbane General Hospital.**

**Over 21,000 people were admitted to the asylum during its operation, with around 1000 to 1600 at any one time. Those who died in the asylum were generally buried in the Dunwich Cemetery unless families made other arrangements. In the 80 years spanning 1867-1947, 8,426 former inmates of the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum were buried in the Dunwich Cemetery.**

**It operated until 30 September 1946, after which the patients were transferred to the newly opened Eventide Home at Sandgate, a northern suburb of Brisbane. Most of the buildings were subsequently destroyed. However, some buildings remain including the heritage-listed St Mark's Anglican Church and Dunwich Public Hall.**

## President's Report

Welcome to my first President's report for my current term. As members would generally be aware, I was previously president of the Society from 2007-2009. I look forward to meeting all members during the year at our history and social events. At your Society's Council meeting in December, following the AGM, Councillors were again appointed to the various committees as published in the December *Bulletin*.

The RHSQ ended 2020 holding a successful Separation Day Dinner, which is usually a cocktail celebration event, but because of the COVID-19 virus the Society had to cancel the Queensland Day Dinner, which was scheduled for 6 June 2020. Instead, your Society held the dinner on Separation Day. Congratulations to Dr Margaret Cook who was awarded the 2020 John and Ruth Kerr Medal for Distinction in historiography, historical research and writing Australian history.

At the Society's Annual General Meeting on 25 November, Dr Rod Kirkpatrick was awarded a Fellowship of The Royal Historical Society of Queensland and Dean Prangle was awarded the MacGregor Medal for his significant contribution to the functioning of the Society. Centenary Medals were awarded to Dr Mick Davis, Mrs Merle Heiner and Mr Michael Strong who have all had significant roles in community history groups and museums. Congratulations to all awardees.

Again, this year the Society will be holding the usual lunch time lectures on the second Wednesday of the month. Members should check the RHSQ website to keep up to date with speakers, etc.

As we enter 2021 your Society has a great year of both history and social events planned for the year. At 6 pm on Friday 12 February 2021 Assistant Minister Senator the Honourable Amanda Stoker will launch the Dig Tree Blazes Exhibition at the Commissariat Store. These are sculptured replicas of the blazes at the Burke and Wills Dig Tree Reserve which have largely grown over and are now unreadable. All members of

the Society are welcome for this history and social occasion. This is a wonderful opportunity for more recent members of the Society to attend and meet other members and to familiarise themselves with the Commissariat Store.

From 10 am on Saturday 20 February 2021 in the Legislative Council Chamber (Red Chamber) at Parliament House the RHSQ in conjunction with Parliament House are holding a conference ‘Sir Samuel Griffith: A political life’. All are welcome to this important historical and social event. It is an opportunity to hear about one of the giants of Queensland; Griffith was a barrister, twice premier and Chief Justice of Queensland and later the High Court of Australia.

On Saturday 19 June 2021 at Cooktown the RHSQ is holding the Cook conference that was postponed from last year. Accommodation is limited and anyone contemplating attending should quickly make arrangements.

Bookings are essential for these events to meet COVID-19 requirements and for catering purposes. Invitations are being sent or have been forwarded for these activities.

Denver Beanland  
President

## Library and Research Report

Best wishes for a productive 2021 and welcome back to our loyal volunteers and researchers. Our team has already been busy responding to a range of interesting research enquiries. They are as follows: information on the married quarters, ‘rigs’, at the Little Yabba Forestry Camp near Kenilworth around the 1950s; the Queensport Aquarium, its maintenance and the animals it featured; any societies of Afghan descendants of the cameleers who came to Australia; the identity of the ‘Women Ice Vendors 1942’ in an RHSQ photo featured in *Lost Brisbane 2*; the Bowers Private Hospital, Bowen Bridge Road, c.1915. Permission was given to make copies of photos from F.E. Lord’s *Historic Homes of Brisbane*; and to reproduce a 1950s photo of Queen St. from the RHSQ Collection. Thank you to recent donors of documents, photos and books, all of which are valuable additions to the RHSQ Library. They include documents relating to the well-known Dart Family and a significant collection of railways’ books and photos, many by renowned photographer Eric Marggraf. Full details of all donations will be included in next month’s *Bulletin*.

Kay Cohen

<b><u>IMPORTANT EVENTS AND FUNCTIONS</u></b> <b><u>FEBRUARY</u></b>	<b><u>NEW MEMBERS</u></b>
<b>Wednesday 10 February, Talk 12.30 pm</b> <b>Thursday 11 February, Council Meeting</b> <b>Friday 12 February, Dig Tree Exhibition Launch</b> <b>Monday 15 February, <i>Bulletin</i> deadline</b>	<b>Troy Reeves</b> <b>Colleen Sippo</b> <b>Janine Evans</b> <b>Rick Hunter</b> <b>James White</b> <b>Gary de Vere</b> <b>Gloria Annette Banting</b>
	<b>Hamilton</b> <b>Wilston</b> <b>Kuranda</b> <b>Hampton VIC</b> <b>Newstead</b> <b>Kangaroo Point</b> <b>Ferney</b>

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website: www.queenslandhistory.org	<b>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.</b>	Libraries: \$ 66.00
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