

**RHSQ**

The Royal Historical Society of Queensland

**THE RHSQ**

# *Bulletin*

*79 years of continuous publication*

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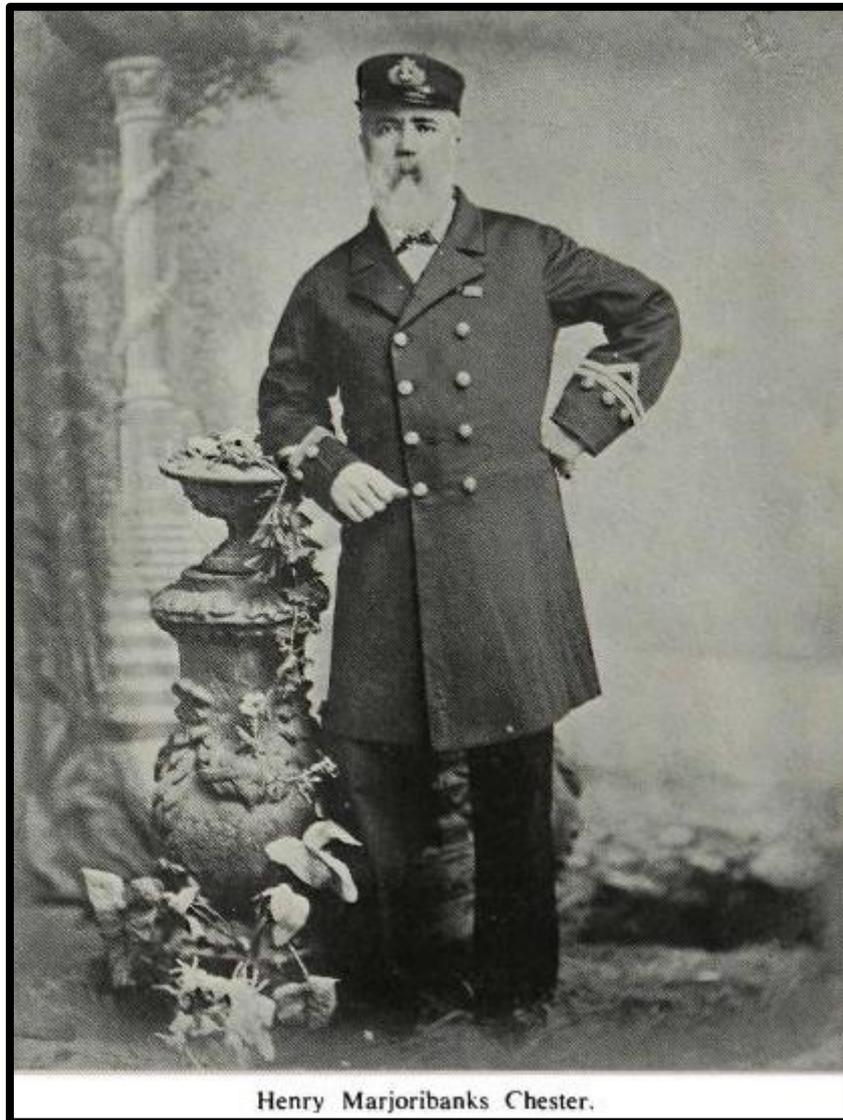
The newsletter of The Royal Historical Society of Queensland

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)

## **HENRY MARJORIBANKS CHESTER QUEENSLAND PIONEER**



Henry Marjoribanks Chester.

RHSQ Photo Collection PD – 25

Henry Marjoribanks Chester was born in London in 1832. He saw service in the Indian navy, including actions against pirates in the Persian Gulf, followed by a period as political agent to the court of Oman. In

1862, he migrated to Queensland. He held various positions in the then Department of Public Lands, and acted briefly as police magistrate for the Cape York town of Somerset. Between 1875 and 1903 he was appointed police magistrate at a number of remote and often ‘troublesome’ settlements. He returned to Somerset in this role in 1875, moving his headquarters to Thursday Island in 1877.

He became a notable figure when the Queensland Premier, perceiving a threat from German expansionist intentions, asked him to take possession of unoccupied eastern New Guinea, in Queensland’s name. This annexation was not recognised by the British government until 1884. Chester retired in 1903 and died in Brisbane in 1914. (Ref: G. Bolton, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 3, (MUP), 1969).

The RHSQ Library Archives holds the H M Chester collection which includes letters, diaries and certificates.

## President’s Report

Your Society will be undertaking a major Book Fair, between the hours of 10.00 am and 3.00 pm, at the Commissariat Store, 115 William Street, City, on Saturday 14 August for Society members. Entry will be free for Members. Then on Sunday 15 August between the hours of 10.00 am and 3.00 pm for the general public. Entry fee for the general public will be adults \$5, children under 15 years of age \$2.50, and \$10 for a family. On sale in lots of eight for \$5 will be surplus *Queensland History Journals* and its predecessors *Journals* from various years, including the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s and earlier, together with single *Journals*. There will also be hundreds of books dealing with Queensland and Australian history together with periodicals, magazines, and novels for sale, together with a range of second-hand books that the Society has gathered over the years. In addition, at reduced prices will be many of the publications the Society has produced on Queensland’s history. Rare convict made bricks will also be for sale. This will be a great occasion for members to nab a publication on Saturday 14 August and the general public on Sunday 15 August to obtain presents for various occasions as well as history books. Members – Saturday 14 August is your day. After the sale we do not expect the Society to have surplus second hand books or publications.

On Saturday 9 October the Society is having its next conference entitled ‘Queensland’s Earliest Surveyors – who, what and where?’ The conference will commence at the Commissariat Store, 115 William Street at 9.30 am and conclude at 1.00 pm with registration commencing at 9.00 am. There will be a number of guest speakers, so it will be an action-packed conference, covering a broad range of surveyors and issues. As usual the details will be on the RHSQ website and a separate flyer will be distributed to members in due course with more information.

Members are reminded that the next one-hour Wednesday lecture commencing at 12.30 pm at the Commissariat Store on 14 July is entitled ‘A Look at Adelaide Street’. The guest speaker will be Terry Tolhurst who will take you through the rich history of Adelaide Street. Although entry is free for members, you are reminded that because of COVID-19 you are required to book, which can be done online. Members are reminded that as usual there will be no lecture in August because of the Exhibition holiday.

What a very busy and successful period your Society has enjoyed since my last *Bulletin* report.

Congratulations to those recipients for which the Council has approved Centenary Medals this year. These do not require AGM approval so in some cases will be awarded over the coming weeks. In cases where possible, they will be awarded at the Society’s AGM on 18 November 2021. Those awarded this prestigious medal are: Cooktown Historical Society; Charleville Historical Society; Vince Little for ambulance history; Bronwyn McBurnie for special collections, development and promotion at James Cook University; Anne Monsour for Lebanese history; and Ian Bonacorso for Stanthorpe and related history.

The Queensland Day Dinner which the Society holds each year in June to celebrate the occasion when Queen Victoria signed the Letters Patent separating Queensland from New South Wales was again a happy occasion. His Excellency, The Governor delivered the address which will be published in the *Queensland History Journal* in the first half of next year. On the evening, the Society presented to Mrs Kaye de Jersey a bunch of flowers to thank her for her continuing interest and support over the years that His Excellency has been Governor.

The John and Ruth Kerr medal for Distinction in historiography, historical research and writing is usually awarded by The Royal Historical Society of Queensland and the Professional Historians Association of Queensland at the Queensland Day Dinner. A Committee, comprised of three members from each organisation, decides upon the successful nominee. The name of the successful nominee is always kept a closely guarded secret until announced at this dinner as was the situation this year. Last year because of COVID-19 the Medal was not awarded until we held our dinner on 10 December, Separation Day. Because

of the late awarding of the Medal, nominations for this year were not called until the new year but still closed on 31 March. This meant the nominations were only open for a short period.

This year I have to report that no nominations were submitted, so the Committee has not awarded the Medal. This year the records will show the Medal was ‘not awarded for 2021’. Under the RHSQ Constitution the John and Ruth Kerr Medal is not required to be awarded each year.

Further, the Committee decided that nominations for next year will be called on 1 September this year and close as usual on 31 March 2022. It is most disappointing that this year we are not giving an award, however, we look forward to 2022.

The Burke and Wills conference held on 29 May was another successful event as has been the recent Wednesday lectures. It is pleasing to see members of the Society attending and enjoying such events. If there are topics on which you wish to have a guest speaker, please advise the Society. Moreover, the Colonial Domestic Exhibition launch on 27 May curated by Fred Carter was attended by more than 50 members who enjoyed the evening over a wine and cheese while socialising and getting to know other members of the Society. Thanks to all those volunteers who contribute to make these occasions successful.

Denver Beanland  
President

## Queensland Report

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

**Jacob’s Well** – Residents are commencing planning for celebrations of 150 years since the survey of land in the Jacob’s Well area on 4 November 1871. Martin Lavelle was the surveyor. There had already been enterprising development on Pimpama Island by Lancashire Co-operative Cotton Company, Victoria Cotton Company and the Pimpama Sugar Company. (*Sweet Sea News*, Issue 310, May 2021, p. 8)

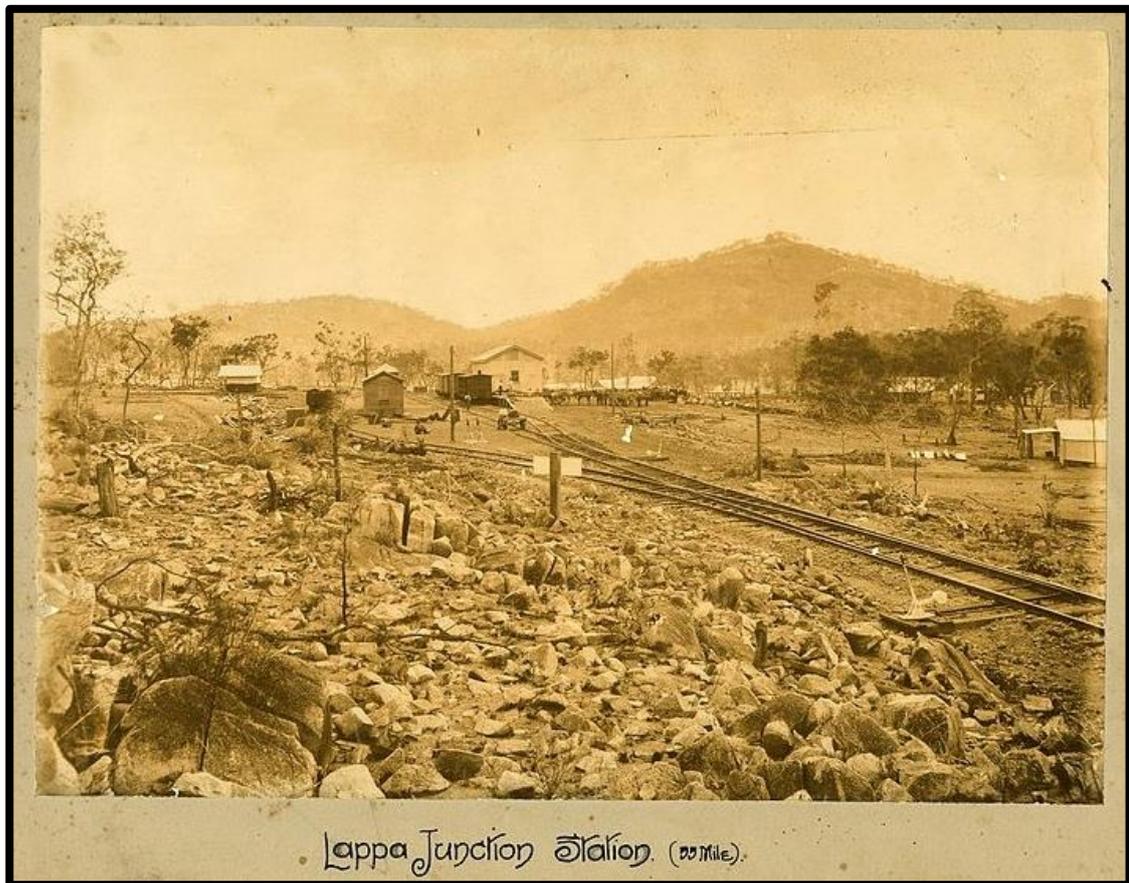
**Lappa, 130 kms west of Cairns** – The Lappa Hotel, the *Espanol*, and the house owned by Tim Prater are for sale for \$340,000. He promotes Lappa as the *Lion’s Den* of the western Tablelands (compared to the *Lion’s Den* Hotel at Rossville south of Cooktown). The *Espanol* Hotel lost its license in 1961 when the Queensland Government closed unprofitable and unmaintained hotels. Tim Prater currently runs a museum in the building.



Phil Brandel Photos

**Lappa Hotel *The Espanol***  
(Insert - the old hotel sign)

The railway was opened to Lappa on 1 October 1900 as part of the Mareeba – Chillagoe Railway and mining investment. The railway station building is owned by Queensland Rail and the *Savannahlander* train operates a tourist service through to Forsyth and return to Cairns. Lappa was a junction for the Mount Garnet railway opened in April 1902. Tim Prater's house was formerly an Almaden church moved to Lappa in the 1940s. (*Courier-Mail*, 20 May 2021, p. 14 including five colour photographs)



The University of Queensland, Fryer Library Photo

### Lappa Junction Railway Station c. 1900

**Murgon** – The centenary of Christ Church Anglican Church in Murgon was celebrated on 11 April 2021.

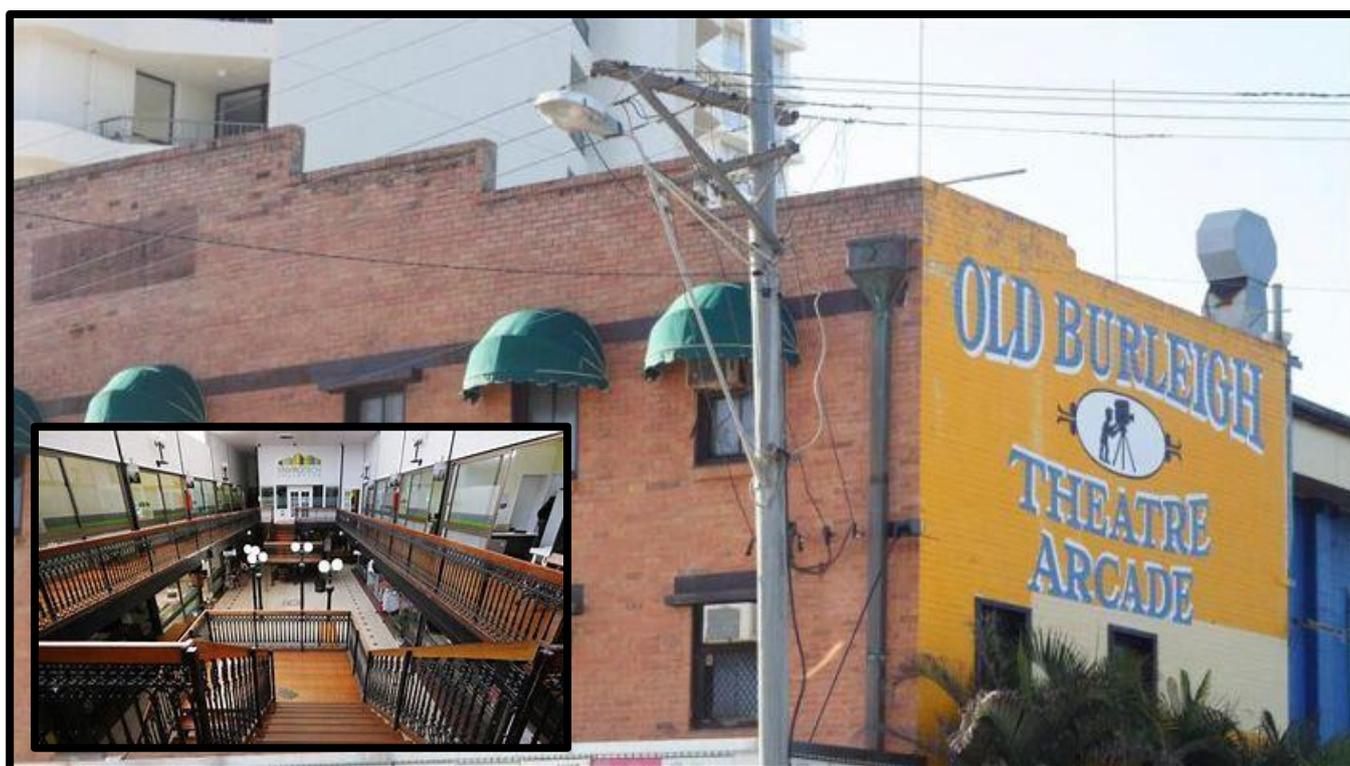


John Huth Photo

### Christ Church Anglican Church, Murgon

The Church was dedicated and opened in April 1920. Archbishop Phillip Aspinall attended the service and lunch. A history of the parish was compiled by long-term parishioner, Marcia McIntosh, and was launched by the Archbishop. (*Murgon Moments*, Issue 175, May 2021, p. 39 including four photographs)

**Southport** – There is a plaster plaque bearing the date 1927 high up on the eastern face of the Australia Fair shopping centre at Southport. The same feature once sat above the doorway of the Pacific Hotel celebrating its construction year. The hotel was demolished in 1988 to make way for the north-eastern section of the shopping centre. The plaque was preserved and included in the new building. Its position does not stimulate memories of the past hotel. The digital editor of the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, Keith Woods, took the opportunity in the paper of 19 May 2021 (page 8) in an article, ‘Heritage Tokenism Has Had Its Day’, to advocate for more meaningful preservation of heritage. He lists similar tokenism to the 1927 plaque in the preservation of other signs on the Gold Coast while the actual building referred to has been demolished eg. The Pink Poodle, the Miami Ice logo, Cav’s Steakhouse fibre glass cows. The preservation of the Old Burleigh Theatre Arcade is seen as a form of progress in preserving heritage. (*Gold Coast Bulletin*, 19 May 2021, p. 9 including two photographs)



Microsoft Bing photos

**External Photograph of the Old Burleigh Theatre Arcade  
(Insert - the interior)**

## Library and Research Report

This month we welcomed a new volunteer, Liz Wilkinson. As well as Archives and Records Management qualifications, she has many years’ experience in administration and human resources management and will certainly be an asset to the RHSQ. The research team has been assisting Judith McKay with background information on a number of items for her Significance Survey of the Society’s Museum collection. An unexpected discovery by the team relating to Henry Majoribanks Chester and his role in Queensland’s annexation of New Guinea in 1883, served to emphasise the often unique nature of the Museum’s holdings.

Research enquiries were again many and varied. They were: the location of the grave of Alexander Battley on Cunagh station Cunnamulla; information and photos re David Alexander Thomson and his wife Mary Jane Thomson. They ran hotels in Tenterfield and later in Brisbane at the Cosmopolitan, now the Lands Office Hotel and later the Prince Consort Hotel in Wickham Street not too long before 1900. David then went on to be the first Federal Labor Member for the Qld seat of Capricornia from 1903-1906; information on Sydney Ray and Alfred Vernon Christmas, two brothers who travelled together from the UK to Australia in 1910 and were living in Brisbane St. Ipswich in 1912; more information about a swimsuit and accompanying

certificates. It is believed to date from around 1939 to 1942, has the Speedo brand and was used at Gatton College, Qld. There is also an association with the Royal Life Saving Society; photos and information on the Logan River Bridge construction that enquirer's father was involved in; information on the Leggett family; confirmation that enquirer's grandparents who immigrated from England to Brisbane in 1911, landed at the Yungaba, Kangaroo Point, Immigration Depot; search for the Blake family in Cunnamulla; Brisbane pioneer, Captain William Collin and his links with the Howard Smith Wharf site. There was also a request to view the Library's files on the Burke and Wills expedition. As a result of a project carried out by the research team, the Queensland Heritage Register entry for the former Dept of Primary Industries building in William St. (601093) has been amended. The Heritage Branch will also look to further update the history of the building and surrounding area by incorporating the contextual information on immigration provided by the RHSQ.

Volunteer Helen West has continued her work assessing the status of the Library books housed at the Stafford storage facility. Some books have been identified as not being entered in the Library catalogue while others, such as duplicate copies and works of fiction, have been listed for de-accessioning. The Library has been offered a large box of correspondence, diaries, letters etc, from various periods from 1812 ( and perhaps earlier). Former researcher Doug Lockhead has offered copies of RHSQ journals for possible sale.

Kay Cohen  
Library and Research Co-ordinator

## Remember the Book Fair

Please remember that our Book Fair will be held in August at the Commissariat Store, 115 William Street. On Saturday 14 August, between the hours of 10.00 am and 3.00 pm, the Fair will be free entry for Society members. Then on Sunday 15 August, also between the hours of 10.00 am and 3.00 pm the Fair will be open for the general public. Entry fee for the general public will be adults \$5, children under 15 years of age \$2.50, and \$10 for a family.

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<u>IMPORTANT EVENTS AND FUNCTIONS</u> <u>JULY</u>	<u>NEW MEMBERS</u>	
<b>Thursday 8 July, Council Meeting</b> <b>Wednesday 14 July, Talk 12.30 pm, 'A Look at Adelaide Street'. Speaker: Terry Tolhurst</b> <b>Thursday 15 July, <i>Bulletin</i> deadline.</b>	<b>David Urquhart</b> <b>Oliver Martin</b> <b>Kerry-Anne Forsythe</b> <b>Sharon O'Toole and Patricia Cay</b> <b>Robert Lamberth</b>	<b>Ayr</b> <b>Brisbane</b> <b>Paddington</b> <b>Brisbane</b> <b>New Farm</b>

Contact Details	Bulletin Articles Only	Subscriptions
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Fax: 07 3221 4698	Fax: 07 3221 4698	Full-time Student (U25): \$ 33.00
email: info@queenslandhistory.org.au	email: info@queenslandhistory.org.au	Affiliated Society: \$ 55.00
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.	Libraries: \$ 66.00
Address: 115 William Street, Brisbane Postal: The Royal Historical Society of Queensland, PO Box 12057, Brisbane, George Street, 4003		Corporate/Institutions: \$ 275.00
		Life Membership - Purchased after 10 Years as a Member \$ 5,500.00