

## PRESIDENT'S PIECE

At our last meeting there was a misunderstanding about our guest speaker.

The woman who was going to speak from The Commisariat Store had declined the invitation to speak. Unfortunately this message did not reach me until less than a week before the event. I apologise again to those people who came to hear her speak. We sent out emails to all our members to advise them of the variation.

At very short notice our Society's photographer Ian Harding agreed to be our guest speaker. Ian entertained us all with a trip down memory lane of the photographs he had taken at our Society meetings and events over the last decade or two. It brought back many happy memories for me as I am sure it did for many of our members there that day. Ian was supported when needed by Margaret who supplied the names of the people in the photos when Ian was not sure of their names. Well done Ian on a very enjoyable presentation at such short notice.

After the meeting it was my pleasure along with our founding President James Houghton to cut our fifty th birthday cake. James started the Society in February 1967. It is pleasing to note that as well as founding the Society he still takes an interest in the Society and regularly attends our meetings.

After the cutting the cake was quickly devoured.

We are planning an official function to celebrate our fifty years. At this stage it is likely to be held about Thursday 15 June at one of the function rooms upstairs at the Redcliffe Leagues Club. We are trying to arrange an interesting speaker for the evening with our founding President James Houghton also relating some of his memories of the Society.

Some of you may remember that the High Tea that we had during Redcliffe Remembers last year was very enjoyable for those attendees. We are now going to hold another High Tea on Thursday 19 April between 11:30 to 2:00 pm. It will be held at Teddies N Sweets in the Comino Arcade. Ladies get your thinking caps on to decide what outfit you will wear that day. There were some outstanding dresses at last years function.

Our departure from the room we are occupying at the Museum is getting closer. Work will soon start on the extensions to the Museum which is occurring on the eastern side of the Museum where our current office is located. MBRC have agreed that we can occupy the eastern office of the Frank Ferron building that is located behind the Museum. Car parking is available from the current Museum car park.

Our medallions are selling well. Anyone who needs more information on the medallions please see our Secretary Rae Frawley. To date our medallions have included The Amity, Redcliffe Jetty, Red Cliffs and The Koopa. The old Redcliffe City Council coat of arms and the Anzac Memorial Avenue are being worked on at present.

Our guest speaker this month is probably no stranger to a lot of you. He is Peter Parkes from the Police Citizen Youth Club who has spent many years in Redcliffe. Peter is originally from Victoria and he will explain how a man from Victoria became a Redcliffe resident in charge of the PCYC.

Our April speaker will be Ray Kekhove who will speak on aborigine camp sites concentrating on ones near our area.

Do not forget that our normal April meeting falls on Good Friday so we are holding our April meeting the week before on Friday 7 April.

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*The RHS aims to*

*Research -*

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## Autobiography of Bill Devonshire "Early Days" — Part Three

After a couple of years on the goldfields, my wife and I went to Theebine. There I was a traveler for Rawleigh Products, ranging far and wide over the rough mountain roads and sand of the area towards Tin Can Bay. Each night when I checked my docket I found I was short of money, according to them, but after my wife made me a money bag the money stopped disappearing. Later, repairing the seat of the car, I realized what had been happening. The roughness of the roads had shaken the money out of my pockets, to slip under the seat-I found £28 in silver in the tray there!

When the drought came, the farmers could not afford to buy anything, so moved to Tin Can Bay (near Gympie) to take up net fishing. There were a few memorable happenings at Tin Can Bay. For example, during the holiday breaks, there was always someone who wanted to go net fishing. This was usually done between late evening and midnight. If, however, the tide was really late in rising, say in the early morning, little or no fishing was done. Once I took with me a fellow who was a real "bundle of nerves" and, worse, not used to sea animals. As I was moving the dinghy towards a gutter to intercept a school of mullet, a large turtle came up for air a few feet off the boat. Well, this fellow I had with me nearly fell overboard with fright, and just after I'd succeeded in calming him down by assuring him that the turtle wouldn't hurt him, a large dugong surfaced. It lunged and smacked under the boat with its tail, rocking us in all directions. I got a start, too, and my passenger had the shakes, so we went home without any fish, an unusual event because fish were so plentiful. Once at Inskip Point we put a net around a school of whiting that was so big that the net ropes parted.

At Tin Can Bay I joined in partnership with George Hestead on a forty-four foot launch "Kauri," engaging in deep sea fishing from Tin Can Bay to Brisbane. We caught fish of all kinds but made very little money after expenses. We also fished sharks around the headlands of Double Island Point, Cape Moreton and Stradbroke Island and Flinders Reef. Once during a cyclone we had to shelter at Mooloolaba, being tossed from side to side within the cabin, eventually stranding the boat high and dry. My last run in the "Kauri" was from Tin Can Bay to Brisbane. On the way down trolling for mackerel I caught a twenty pound snapper but now, 30 years later, fishermen around Sydney have 'discovered' that artificial lures work on reef fish, including snapper.

After two years at Tin Can Bay war broke out and I joined the army signals. I was given a send-off by the residents and my wife and daughter went to Redcliffe and rented a cottage. My unit was established at Lytton Hill (little did I think that I would learn morse code and finish there in 1972 in charge of signals for shipping) and after three months of signal lessons a sergeant and I were sent to Holland Park Secret Radio Station to operate the wireless station. The Japanese were moving closer.

The day Darwin was bombed I just managed to see a very high-flying plane; a detachable fuel tank was later found inland towards the West Australian coast, so I suspect it was a Japanese reconnaissance plane. We moved to Chermside and I was posted to another secret radio station in the bush out from Holland Park.

Whilst stationed at Holland Park I was involved in an incident with spies. I will deal with that more fully later, but it is sufficient to say here that after it I spent six weeks in Greenslopes Military Hospital and after that a further ten months off duty, in bed convalescing. I was finally discharged from the army being unfit for service. When I joined I weighed twelve stone seven pounds; when I was discharged I weighed eight stone four pounds. It was the loving care of a devoted wife that restored me to good health. I was very glad to have a private nurse then.

The Coral Sea battle was being fought whilst I was recovering but for me the war was very far away. I fished for squire around Redcliffe whilst I was getting back into shape. When I was again fit I was called into the Civil Construction Corps (CCC) and for the next twelve months I was stationed at Amberley, working for the work force construction gangs. I was then transferred to Rockhampton in charge of an allied works kitchen preparing meals for 160 men.

About 2pm one day all the utensils from the mid-day meal had been cleared away, the kitchen washed and the wood boxes filled for our two large Range stoves. I was working on a rice custard for that evening when there was a knock on the door which led to the kitchen. I answered it and was introduced by the Personnel Officer of the CCC to the then Premier of Queensland, Mr EG Theodore and General Eisenhower (as well as his body guard.) Army kitchens were, at the time, the responsibility of the Queensland Government, and the Premier and the General were inspecting the kitchens throughout the State. I invited them in and they looked at the utensils, cutlery, staff and even tasted my baked custard (which was then put in the oven.) Even today I make a very nice custard. In fact it's one of my favourites which is probably why it is good. The Premier and the General liked it too so compliments were flying.

They inspected everything-the kitchen itself, the store rooms, the dining hall. Occasionally I chanced to hear a comment pass between them. After the inspection, they accepted my offer of afternoon tea. I called the second cook and the dining hall attendant and we set before them sandwiches (ham, meat, tomato), puff pastry, scones and biscuits. They looked amazed when they entered the dining hall and saw it, and Mr Theodore said that they did not want to cut the men short of their food. I explained that by careful catering there were never any shortages, even when there were unexpected visitors, and no waste.

Any workmen who went past were asked if they had any complaints about their food and all said they ate well. Some even said that it was better than they got at home! Our visitors ate heartily and enjoyed their break – and a month later the Personnel Officer informed me that I had received the highest points for the best organized kitchen in Queensland.

I was transferred from Rockhampton to Darwin, and I travelled to Mt Isa by train and remained in the staging camp there, prior to journeying to Darwin. We left Mt Isa about 7.30am and arrived at Camooweal at 5.30pm. We put our palliasses amongst a lot of loose water-worn stones and I became violently ill. I was taken to the MO and he grumbled something about “another one.” He said that eight men in two ambulances had been rushed back to the Isa to be hospitalized. To hospital I went too. We all had dysentery and remained in hospital for a week. When we were well enough, we were sent out to collect timber for the hospital. Two large Army trucks were filled and brought in. Having been a prospector before joining the Army, old habits die hard, so I knocked the top off the out-cropping reefs looking for gold. One reef contained a vivid green ore and I did not know what it was so I put five specimens in my kit bag. There they stayed until my return home and then I put them in a chest of drawers in my bedroom and more or less forgot about them.

Some other troops had moved in and I joined the others in a convoy and proceeded without incident to Larrakia, a rail link with Darwin from the South. We left two days later on the train which the men had nick-named ‘leaping Lena’. The train appeared to weave in and out of the melon-hole country and jerked and jolted her way on to Darwin. On arrival at Darwin we were scattered to various places and went to a camp in Darwin near Vestey’s (a match company) and meat exporters.

Here I was 100 yards from an “OUT OF BOUNDS” sign. Actually it was just across the road. One very hot night I decided to walk across in the open to get some of the breeze. I stopped not far from the sign. Just as I sat down there was an air raid siren sounding and a search light to my right lighting up the area. It was followed by another one and it in turn by another three or four. The second light started to wiggle and then it spotted with the other beams crossing it. In the spot I could see an object not unlike a feather. The feather turned out to be a high flying aircraft. There were motors revving and roaring and I was showered with twigs and stones. Then zip and zip again and a fire streak passed within fifteen yards of me. Five streaks of fire passed me and I realized they were fighters taking off and that I was sitting alongside the runway.

Another search light flicked on and the first light disappeared. This was repeated three or four times. Well, I can tell you this, I did not stay around to see what happened. I upped and went as fast as I could. I could only draw my own conclusions after the spitfires had taken off.

Next morning I went and had a look at where I was the night before. I walked within six feet of tin helmets just below the ground and which were covered with camouflage nets. I could have fallen into the trenches as the troops were very hard to distinguish from a six foot distance. I would not have been the only one surprised and I doubt if I could have thought of a good ‘excuse.’

It remained calm for the next few days I was there. I was to move out to K40 camp. Here was a runway and a number of planes standing by ready for take-off (or so I thought.) The surrounding area was a little flat valley between low lying ridges and the planes, I saw then, were wooden and immobile. The air strip proper was 200 yards away in the next little valley-well hidden from view.

Darwin when I was there was a shambles-the Post Office did not exist-result of a direct bomb hit; the Bank of New South Wales had only the sign over the front door, no other part of the building remained; and the hotel with a brick frontage was pock-marked the shape of a saucer from the machine guns of attacking Japanese planes. The Chinese Club had two ends and no centre portion of the building from a direct bomb hit. Shrapnel scars were evident everywhere and trees were cut off. Large Liberators were taking off daily on their bombing missions far and wide. I have not been there recently but cyclone Tracy which struck there recently created damage which has been compared to the war-time bombings.

While I was in Darwin, I had a visit from a nephew. He had been in Darwin Hospital and got a lift out to where I was stationed. He came off a sub-chaser and left the next day. He told me before he left that he started along the road for Darwin 20 miles away and an American Colonel picked him up in his jeep and gave him a very bumpy ride into town. He said, and still says, that the driver said to him, "Hang on, guy!"

After K40, I was sent to Batchelor and this camp was not as good as the others. The main element was all of the rough type. As I was responsible for meals for 1200 men I knew how they behaved. One night three sacks of potatoes were pulled for the next day and during that night some "who dunnits" poured metho into the containers of potatoes. A few nights later the bullock that was brought in and placed in the large refrigerator was carried outside and allowed to go bad overnight in the very hot humid air of Darwin. Then it was bully beef and tinned fruit, if you had the fruit. Onions were hard to get and dehydrated foods were coming in. Lack of other commodities made the cooks' job a difficult one to perform. But the ones who spoil good food just for so-called fun made it even more difficult.

I reported to the Personnel Officer. I was returning to HQ Adelaide River and here I was posted to cook for the Executive Staff (12 only.) I had very nice lodgings. My hand, however, was heavy after feeding 1200 men and I cooked sufficient in two days to last them a month; so the goodies were given to the First Aid Centre and daily the sisters would call for the leftovers. I got to know them and I made sure I had some extra leftovers for them to take away.

SETTLING DOWN BESIDE THE SEA.....Quite unexpectedly I received a telegram reporting that my wife was seriously ill and I was to return by the fastest route. I was sent to a Dutch camp somewhere in the bush. It was late afternoon and I was given a room and two Malay boys waited on me. They were wonderful and if I wanted a dish they had it quickly. If I went to carry anything, they carried it. That night I was briefed by the Dutch Officer to be ready to leave at a given signal. This came two days later at 3am and I was placed on board a plane at 4am and it took off for Brisbane. It took 12 hours from where I was to Brisbane and the only stops were at Cloncurry, Charleville and finally Brisbane. It was dark at take-off and we experienced low cloud and fog, a dust storm, a hail storm and then we landed in Brisbane during a storm. At Cloncurry, the plane landed and stopped alongside a steel plate in the ground. A man who unlocked the grid asked the pilot how many. The pilot replied "500." When we left we had 21 passengers and kit bags plus the 500 gallons of fuel or whatever it was in the tanks. The next stop was Charleville. I was looking down and could see a rabbit warren and the pencil-like lines of tracks which proved to be a tank and cattle pads going to water (not a rabbit warren.) Then disaster-almost! We hit an air pocket and fell, according to the pilot, the worst he had experienced at 1100 feet. I was in the tail part of the plane and I suddenly found myself on top of all the others at the pilot's door, looking out at a mountain and the tops of trees. Here the mulga (or whatever) trees were near the wing tips and the pilot said he had to bank to avoid hitting trees and this gave me an angle view as the country was quite flat. No one was badly hurt but those underneath were well pressed by human bodies on top. I was lucky to be right on top of them all. It was an experience.

We arrived in Brisbane only to fly around until a break in the clouds permitted us to land. I found my way to the Railway Station and in two hours I was home with my wife and mother-in-law who was caring for her. My wife was so ill that it was necessary for me to remain at home. I was posted to Amberley Air Base and worked away until the kitchen staff was introduced to a roster system. We knew by this alone that the war would soon be over. The end came quickly and I went home and started crabbing for a living until such time as the Fish Board took over the sale of crabs.

I was given a job by the Commonwealth Navigation Department at the New Farm depot, cleaning and painting gas cylinders for the various automatic lights on the coast (sun dial operation.) As the sun set or became overcast and cloudy, the light came on. When the sun shone the light ceased to operate. I was then sent, together with another man, 'Ted' Myers, to Pine Islet, about 90 miles south-east of Mackay. We were put on the supply ship Cape Leeuwin at Gladstone to replenish lighthouses and stations which were unmanned. I spent a couple of days on board and replaced used cylinders on some high and rocky out-posts. High Peak was one; it was to me like climbing up a wall that had a bulge outward half way up. It had to be negotiated with some care and skill. To the new hand it was frightening and that it was to me! It was about 300 feet or more on a rock face that had a few grips and holds at an angle of approximately 60 degrees. After the replacement of cylinders hauled up by winch we returned to the ship and had tea and then did a spot of fishing. Everybody turned out to do some fishing, even the cook. Well of course we had fish for breakfast. Then it was off to Pine Islet and here I remained from September until April. This was when I noticed my first cyclone cloud formation.

I returned to Brisbane Head Office and was sent to Cape Moreton, Cape Capricorn, Lady Elliott Island, Double Island Point and Bustard Head. By this time my wife's health was very poor. The skipper of the pilot vessels "Matthew Flinders" and "John Oxley" ran a shuttle service for pilots off Caloundra Heads. I was returning from Cape Moreton on the "John Oxley" and the skipper, Captain George Kerr suggested I see the employment officer at the Harbours and Marine Department as they were always needing signal men. This I did and not only did I get the job but I was paid in advance to help my finances along for the doctor and medicines. I was posted to Bishop Island at the mouth of the Brisbane River and we completed three weeks work on the station. Then we had a week on the mainland. Mr J Meares was in charge of the signals when I started at Bishop Island in November 1950. Vida and I were very happy to be settled again. I was deep in thought one day about the future when this verse came to me:

**I Wonder 1952 – 2052**

I wonder who will signal  
To the ships out in the Bay  
I wonder will they skim the waves  
Or float like those today.

I wonder will atomic power  
Be used by all or few  
Will a robot work the Pile Light  
In 2052?

This verse was tacked on the wall of the Signal Station and Mr Meares wrote underneath: "Change here for Goodna!.....J Meares"

## Muse News by Joan Kelly

### Hi Everyone

We have just installed our latest exhibition, *Shackleton: Escape from Antarctica*.

#### ***Shackleton: Escape from Antarctica***

This is a bit of a thriller and tells the story of how Shackleton led his crew to safety when his ship, the *Endurance*, became stuck in the ice.

#### ***Serge Testa: Sailing into History***

We are celebrating local sailor, Serge Testa's 30th anniversary for holding the current record for sailing around the world in the smallest boat. Serge has been in every Monday morning helping our fabulous Monday team build various models for the exhibition.

Join us on 21 April at 10.30 for the Opening of this exhibition.

### Education Team

Once again we are gearing up for the school program season. And once again we would love to hear from anyone who would love to take up the (moderate) challenge of assisting us roll out this program.

If you are interested please call James on 3883 1898.

#### **National Trust Heritage Festival (18 April - 19 May)**

This year we are taking up the Hear Your Voice theme and running a series of our favourite oral histories of the Peninsula. Check the website closer to April to find the program.

### Bribie Island Seaside Museum

Currently at Bribie is the very beautiful *Glass Houses* exhibition. We have drawn on local (MBRC and Sunshine Coast) collection to build a stunning representation of this 'borrowed view' of the Glass House Mountains.

There will be a panel talk on 28 April with various writers who will discuss the Glass House Mountains. See the website for details.

### Pine Rivers Heritage Museum

At PRHM you can catch the quirky Wild Wanton & Unimagined - our eco/anti-plastic exhibition for 2017. Each year I try and program in an environmental show with a message and this is that one!


This exhibition has a number of exciting workshops that you may be interested in.

As usual - check the website for details!

Until next time!

Joan

Network Coordinator - Museums



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## Humpybong Story extract from 1883

EXTRACT FROM *THE QUEENSLANDER* - REDCLIFFE, 13 JANUARY 1883

A very large number of visitors have reached this place to spend their holidays, the Orient Boarding House having as many under its roof for some nights as 42, including the proprietor and family; all other places were proportionately full. As for Boxing Day, the storm of wind and rain was so heavy that all were compelled to get "boxed" up, except two Brisbane gentlemen, desirous of having a sail, who got into a pleasure boat and succeeded in going a short distance, when the boat capsized and all got a sound drenching. The boat was recovered by two or three kanakas who were also on board. One of our ferry-men informed me that owing to the wet and stormy weather he reckoned having lost £36 each of the holidays. If such an amount could be made by an open boat between Sandgate and Woody Point, I think the shareholders of our Steam Ferry Company have good reason to expect their shares to realize high premiums.

On New Year's Day two steamers landed a large number of excursionists at Woody Point jetty, one of them, the Francis Cadell, being crowded with parents and children belonging to the Brisbane Presbyterian congregations. Preparations had been made to supply the company with refreshments. Squatting down in circles on the green sward, all got served with warm tea, cakes, and fruit. On taking a stroll around one could almost fancy he had got into a picnic on an "auld Han'sel Monday" in Scotland, hearing on every side the true Scotch dialect and the "auld countrie" jokes and remarks. After rambling about the seaside for some time the steamer whistled their return which many very reluctantly had to obey, and also all seemed loth (sic) to say good-bye to Humpybong.

We have just entered on a change in our mails, that service having been carried on by the same contractor for the past six and a half years from the North Pine. We are now having the mails conveyed from Sandgate. We now have three deliveries in the week – on Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays; but we are looking forward to a daily mail immediately on the starting of our steam ferry boat. The people cannot see why they should not have then a post and telegraph office erected on some suitable Government reserve, also a police station.

I am glad to notice we are getting an addition to our mode of communication with Brisbane, as Mr Campbell's new steamer, The Mavis, is advertised to call at Woody Point jetty. I trust he will meet with that encouragement which will induce him to continue it regularly, as the want of a regular boat for conveying stores, building materials, etc., was much felt; but as the place is just now in a transition state I trust he will have patience until things get a little shaken up to take advantage of his offer. The Mavis deserves our warm support.

The ground for the new hotel on St Leonards is now cleared, and the contractor, Mr Priest is now having the timber prepared and fitted in town, so that no time will be lost in its erection, but a great improvement to it will be the clearing of the esplanade and roads in connection with the other roads in the locality. We were rather amazed to read in a contemporary "that a provisional licence had been granted to St Leonards Hotel Scarborough". After all that has been spoken and written about Redcliffe, it seems strange that such a mistake should be made, as Scarborough is distant about five miles to the north of St Leonards and certainly would make a vast difference to a weary traveller seeking refreshment and rest. Ref. [http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page\\_2252047](http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page_2252047)

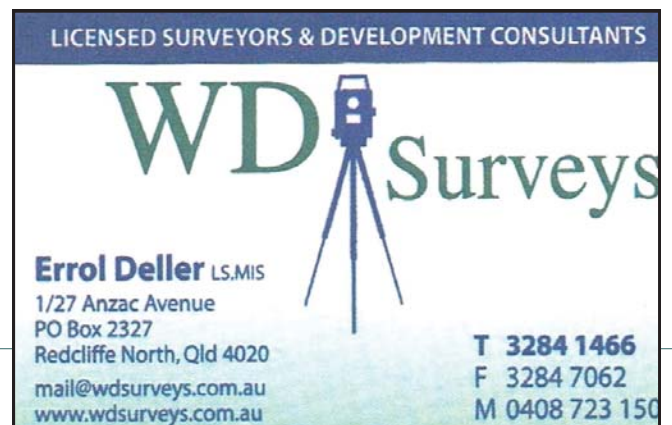
THE MAVIS is of peculiar construction, having been specially designed to the order of Messrs James Campbell and Sons of Creek Street for the purpose of carrying timber from Coochin Creek and elsewhere. She is built almost entirely of iron, even her deck being of that material, and all the machinery, including the boiler, is between the paddle boxes, so as to allow the entire hold from stem to stern to be filled with freight. Her length overall is 75ft; moulded beam, 15ft; depth of hold, 4ft 6in; and the sheer straight is carried 1ft above the deck-line. Her steam power consists of two eight-horse power engines (nominal) geared to paddle-shaft by two spare and pinion wheels. The boilers are half Cornish and multitubular, with high combustion chamber. They are fitted with Blake's steam and circulating pumps, combined with surface condensers, so as to use nothing but fresh water in the boilers. The forecabin is provided with a powerful steam winch. (The Brisbane Courier, 2 January 1883, p.4)

Reference Pat Gee's book "Boats on the Bay".....paddle steamer Mavis was built for Campbell by Sutton and Co's yards at Kangaroo Point especially for the Brisbane to Woody Point, Scarborough and Bribie run. She was the first steamer to run to Bribie.



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# Photography



Recent photos of the 50th Anniversary of History Redcliffe celebrated on 23rd February 2017.



We are going to hold another High Tea on Thursday 19th April between 11:30 to 2:00 pm.

It will be held at Teddies N Sweets in the Comino Arcade as shown to the right.



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## NEW MEMBERS

It's always a pleasure to welcome new members to our Society.

**Invite a Guest**

## MEETINGS

The Society meets on the second Friday of each month at 2.00 pm generally at the Terry Walker room of the Cultural Centre, Irene Street, Redcliffe We feature a guest speaker to cover a wide variety of topics and this is followed by the handling of general business. Afternoon tea is then served. This is a pleasant environment and Members are encouraged in invite friends as a guest. Visitors are made very welcome.

The Annual General Meeting is held in the month of August each year.

For details and the venue of our next meeting, please see "For your Diary" on the back page of this newsletter OR visit "Calendar of Events" on our website [www.redcliffehistoricalsociety.com](http://www.redcliffehistoricalsociety.com)

If undeliverable return to

History Redcliffe

PO Box 370

REDCLIFFE QLD 4020

This memorable opening day was on 3 October 2016, over 130 years after local

**2016/2017**

**For your Diary**

Month	Members Meeting/Venue	Management Meeting/Venue	Guest speaker	Function/Event/ Speaker Topic	Newsletter
<b>MARCH</b>	Friday 10th Terry Walker Room, Redcliffe Cultural Centre, 2pm	Tuesday 28th March at Museum	Sergeant Peter Parkes from PCYC		
<b>APRIL</b>	Friday 7th Terry Walker Room, Redcliffe Cultural Centre, 2pm	Thursday 27th April at Museum	Ray Kekhove	Early aboriginal campsite	
<b>MAY</b>	Friday 12th Terry Walker Room, Redcliffe Cultural Centre, 2pm	Tuesday 30th May at Museum	John Drayton from George Harnett Funerals		

## OUR SUPPORT TEAM

Society Patrons: Ray Frawley OAM & Paul Woodcock

Hon Solicitor: Hilton Misso

Auditor: John Dixon

Photographer: Ian Harding Tel: 3284 0028

History Redcliffe does not accept any responsibility for any opinions expressed in this collection of papers.