



Inside this issue:

Presidents Piece Cont..	2
Presidents Report	3
Research Report	4
Museum Update	5
AGM 2020	6
The Keam Residence	7
My Redcliffe in WWII	8-9
The History of Christmas Trees	10-11
The Michael Family	12
A Salute to Lindsay Sim	13
Harry Waples	14
In the Papers	15
Dig Tree Reserve	16
Sponsors/Social Media	17
The Great Northern Garden of Remembrance	18
Committee Member Contact	19
For Your Diary	20

**PRESIDENT'S PIECE**

At times like these where we cannot meet as a group and share with fellow members our activities for our Society, it is most important to be able to produce a good newsletter to share with our members. Yet I find, because of our lack of activity caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, we are presently enduring, I have very little to fill this page. Fortunately others have contributed articles to our Newsletter so hopefully you will find enjoyment with the articles contained within.

Last year our Treasurer Pat Spillman emailed me an article she had downloaded from Google on the story of The Christmas Tree. I am sure some of you would not know some of the matters mentioned in this story so I am adding part of it to this Newsletter and the balance of the story will be in the December Newsletter. Pat had the story as she was investigating the making of a Christmas Tree for the Christmas Tree competition which, unlike last year, we are not doing this year.

I would like to thank Dr. James Page who applied to the National Library of Australia for a ISSN for our Newsletter, as it was granted. Our Newsletter will now be available all over Australia. You will note that this number is on our front page.

History Redcliffe was very fortunate in being able to conduct our AGM albeit in the garage of my office. COVID-19 restrictions allowed it at the time but about a week later that changed which also caused the cancellation of our General meeting in September. Our General Meetings in the future are in doubt but hopefully we will be able to hold a meeting or two before the end of the year. Our Secretary Rae Frawley has sent out two Newsflashes to keep members up to date with these matters and will do the same concerning future meetings and events.

One of our committee members has arranged for the Division 6 Moreton Bay Regional Councillor Karl Winchester to attend our next Committee Meeting which hopefully will be on Tuesday 29 September. The committee is going to discuss with Karl a number of matters including a commemoration of the establishment of the Moreton Bay settlement in 1824 as well as an update with what Council is proposing for the development of Corscadden Park, that has been ongoing now for a number of years. Another matter is the establishment of a plaque or some other appropriate display explaining the timber that has a fence around it at the northern portal of the Hornibrook Bridge. This timber was retained as part of the old bridge but there is nothing in the area stating that. Unless you are a local in the know, you would not be aware of the significance of the timber section, so I feel some sort of recognition about the fenced area should be displayed. HR will keep our members informed of the outcomes from this meeting.

*History Redcliffe aims to*  
*Research -*  
*Collect -*  
*Evaluate -*  
*Preserve -*  
*Inform -*  
*Promote -*

## PRESIDENT'S PIECE CONTINUED

In trying times like we are now enduring it is not uncommon to compare the pandemic we are having, with uncertainties of yester year. It is difficult to compare present day events with past years as society is so different with the passing of each decade. It appears we are now suffering one of the worst economic times in history and that has been clearly felt with the huge down turn in my own surveying business. The government is making a large contribution to support business and I am extremely grateful for that, even though it may take a decade or more to financially recover. Yet I am fortunate that at present my way of life is able to continue thanks to the community working together which is demonstrated by how well Queensland has managed the pandemic and again I hope that continues. That is enough about our pandemic. Now I would like to discuss a subject near and dear to my heart which besides my wife and family is surveying.

Some of you will know and have read many of his books as I have done. I also have most of the books he has written. I am talking about Len Beadell the well known surveyor who established the Woomera Rocket Range. **Len had a phobia about wearing socks and he seldom did. I was at a friend's place recently and he produced a CD containing four hours of narration about Len called Still In the Bush. I was unaware that this was available, so I made some enquiries via the net and found I could purchase this CD. This I have done as well as a DVD narrated by Len about his experiences called Still In the Bush. I have watched most of the DVD that I received yesterday and clearly saw the harsh conditions that Len endured constructing The Gun Barrel Highway and many other roads in Central Australia. These days took its toll on Len and he died on 12 May 1995 at 72 years of age but his legacy lives on. For anyone who wants some light entertaining reading and at the same time learn about the history of Central Australia I can recommend his books and the CD of The Shepparton Talk, all of which is still available on line. A photo of the DVD and CD is below.**

Since primary school I have been a Burke and Wills tragic so I am adding the Burke and Wills flyer from RHSQ to our Newsletter.

Until our December Newsletter please take care, practice social distancing, wash hand continually, try not to touch your face and look on the brighter side of life.



# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

FOR AGM 14TH AUGUST 2020

Our year started on 9 August 2019 when our AGM was held at the meeting rooms of the Redcliffe Library. All positions were filled as well as two non-voting members that comprised a committee of ten. The meeting for the first time had a Welcome to Country with the election of offices being conducted by our founding President James Houghton. James is a regular attendee at our meetings and functions, and I hope that will continue now that he has retired as Division 5 councillor for MBRC.

James is away today and he and Paul Woodcock, our Patron, both suggested it would be good to continue the trend and have a Division Councillor hold our election of officers. Karl Winchester kindly agreed to do that so thank you Karl for keeping the tradition going and we hope you enjoy a good afternoon with us.

We have been fortunate to be able to source some interesting speakers for our meetings and Barbara Mapp was our first guest speaker relating to us all about the History of the Redcliffe Show. Barbara was our September guest speaker.

Two days later we took part in the Walk With Me Moreton Bay commencing at Crockatt Park which was held by the Moreton Bay Dementia Alliance. There were about two hundred people who took part in the walk and it was a most enjoyable morning. There were plenty of young student volunteers from the ACU to help us erect our tent where we displayed our photos of the Redcliffe area and sold our books and brochures.

Also, in late September Cheryl Salisbury and I attended the Open Day for the Great Northern Garden of Remembrance where once again we displayed our Redcliffe photos, books and our calendar for 2020. GNGOR is also one of our Society's sponsors. Attendances were down this year, but an enjoyable day was had by those who did attend.

In September our members and friends took a bus trip to the Abbey Museum. Those who went were impressed with the small church and the interesting and well set out displays.

In October we listened to our guest speaker Doug Morris burst into poetry during his talk. Doug spoke on Reflections on Redcliffe whilst remembering his early days. Unfortunately, Doug ran out of time and was unable to complete all his reflections, so we are going to have him attend another meeting to complete his talk. The poetry Doug recited was written by him and he did it without the aid of the written word.

Our November meeting saw librarian and historian Jane Smith talk on her recently written book Ship of Death. The Tragedy of the Emigrant. Jane gave a very interesting talk and sold quite a few of her books.

For our December meeting we had no guest speaker but had Christmas activities, trivia and afternoon tea. History Redcliffe then went into recess until our committee meeting on 28 January in our Den.

Discussions with History Queensland during the last few months of 2019 led to HR agreeing to holding the State Conference in Redcliffe. The theme of the Conference will be Sands of Time and it is proposed to be held over the weekend of 22 October 2022. It will be held at the Redcliffe Leagues Club commencing on Friday and finishing on Sunday. Several meetings have been held and a committee to organise the event has been formed.

During December there was the start of a corona virus in China. I read about it but did not realise what an impact this outbreak would have on our way of life. Now eight months later, here we are conducting our AGM in the garage of my office, as alternative meeting rooms to hold a function of over twenty people, was not available. We held our general meetings in February and March this year but none since then due to Covid-19. Hopefully we will be able to continue holding our monthly meetings but only time will tell on that as the virus has not yet run its course in Australia.

We can only exercise caution with our daily living and be extra careful with our hygiene and continue to practice social distancing.

The virus did not stop our Senior Vice President Pat Gee from continuing her Margate Memories Booklet which is nearly finalised and due to be released at a function in the Redcliffe Museum soon.

We certainly are living through unusual and at times trying times. Thanks to the efforts of our committee we are still operating and attending to enquiries when they arrive. We have settled well into our Den and hopefully brighter times lie ahead. Thanks to all the committee for all their work during the past twelve months to ensure we are financially stable and attending to the many matters that are needed to keep our Society successfully operating.

We look optimistically to our year ahead.

# RESEARCH REPORT - JUNE TO AUGUST 2020

BY MARGARET HARDING

## Research Report .....JUNE TO AUGUST 2020

An enquirer about prawning trawlers has been asked for details.

Information was sought by a lady in Margate regarding the "Goatman's" residential address..... In 2008 the Society printed a short piece about the Goat Man of Margate and Suttons Beach in reply to a copy of a photo that Society member Rita Sikes sent in. It was taken c1943 and shows Ann Sikes (Mrs Hichens, Warwick) in the cart, born 1939, Ashby b1931 and John b1935. Also on the picnic rug was Mrs Nell Sikes.



It is believed that Herbert George Curtis was born in Hartley, New South Wales in 1872. His parents were Charles Henry Curtis and Sarah Stokes. He lived on the corner of Dover Road and Chatham Street, Margate and offered rides to children by leading one or two goats harnessed to a light cart, retiring in 1953. George Henry Curtis died at Eventide in March 1954, aged 81. Checking electoral rolls and more research is required to determine his address in Margate.

It was pleasing to have feedback from two Society members regarding the story of **pharmacist Bernie Shaw** in the previous newsletter. Both recalled happy family dealings.

**Quote from Frank Hunt,..."I knew him fairly well as we lived in Rock Street at the time. He was always very helpful to my parents, a gentleman. He was a timekeeper at Lakeside Racing circuit in the 1960s and loved his cars. Ken Peters, another Redcliffe Pharmacist, was President of the Queensland Motor Sporting Club at the time and a competitor as well. Dr George Douglas from Scarborough was the track doctor at times, if my memory is correct."**

David Walker enquired if there was anything written about Harry Waples.....see story in this edition. Thanks to the Redcliffe Herald for such a generous account of Harry's relatively short life and his passing.

# MUSEUM UPDATE

BY SELINA CLARK

Redcliffe Museum Update August/September 2020

## Exhibitions

'On the menu' exhibition opens 11 September and explores what, how and how much we eat has changed over the centuries. Many Moreton Bay collections objects will be on display.

A Curators tour, 'art of table setting' workshop and vintage cocktail party will be held alongside this exhibition.



## School holiday programmes

Bribie Island Butterfly House will hold a talk and release of butterflies to the sky. A treat for all ages.

The little ones can have fun making of butterfly wings, glow bugs and circuit board creatures and try to spot the live insects in the Imaginarium

## National disability week

We are hosting a series of wheelchair pilates classes for people with MS.

## Calling all Koopa memories!

If you know anyone who has a memory of the Koopa, please ask them to pop into the museum to record their memory in our purpose-built memory booth. Or they might prefer a call over the phone where we can interview them about their experiences with the Koopa. These will go into the museum archive to complement our objects and Koopa artefacts.

# AGM 2020 - COVID STYLE

BY PAT SPILLMAN

At our recent History Redcliffe Committee Meeting on Tuesday 26th August, Vice President Pat Gee moved a vote of thanks to President Errol Deller for allowing us the use of his large work garage in which to hold our Annual General Meeting on Friday 14th August. Pat also congratulated Errol on his excellent Annual Report! This was unanimously seconded by all committee members present! It was **only through Errol's generosity, organization and setting up the venue that this was at all possible** in these restricting times!

We were afforded the opportunity to meet new Councillor Karl Winchester who very ably and impressively carried out the duties of chairing the election of officers. Pat Gee provided and **introduced a very entertaining video on "Rooftrees", a beautifully designed home and meeting place** which had been a long standing feature of Redcliffe. This was most enjoyable and educational for those of us not familiar with this notable building and well received by everyone present. This video would be well worth a second viewing when those who could not attend are once again able to do so.

It was great to meet up with some fellow members and guest and enjoy the generous Afternoon Tea which topped off this happy event. I am sure everyone present would have been pleased with the afternoon! As future meetings are in doubt for the remainder of the year, we are indeed fortunate to have been able to hold our AGM!



# THE KEAM RESIDENCE: MODERNIST ARCHITECTURE IN SUBURBAN MARGATE

BY DR. JAMES PAGE

Quite often there are dwellings of historical significance in our midst which we might not ordinarily notice. The Keam Residence, a modernist style house, built in the 1960s on the corner of Sorrento and Adrian Streets in Margate, is one such dwelling.

The dwelling was constructed by noted Redcliffe architect Michael William Kearney (xxx=xxx), who subsequently co-founded, with xxxxx, Peninsula Architects and who also served as a Councillor on the Redcliffe City Council. The dwelling is referenced in the Digital Archive of Queensland Architecture, and in 1963 the Brisbane Courier-Mail published a special feature article on the dwelling. Michael Kearney, now living in retirement in Buderim, indicated to the author that he believed this was one of his best designs.

The dwelling was designed for local residents Eric and Veronica Keam. Eric Keam was a local bookmaker and owner of greyhounds and racehorses, but in terms of local history he is perhaps most notable as one of the pioneers of the modern Dolphins Rugby League Club.

Modernism is a recognized trend in Australian and Queensland architecture, although some historians prefer to refer to the international style. The Keam Residence exhibits many of the characteristics of Queensland modernist architecture, such as simplicity of design, flat roof, long rectangular shape, an industrial aesthetic, open plan internal design, use of industrial-type materials, and above, a functional focus on nature and enjoyment of the environment.

The focus on nature and enjoyment of the environment can be especially seen in what might appear to be the strange alignment of the house, slanted diagonally over three allotments, in order to increase the northerly aspect and capture as much of the winter sun. The diagonal alignment also assisted in capturing breezes, whilst still providing good views over Moreton Bay, views which at that time was less encumbered by high-rise development closer to the coast.

Is the Keam Residence an attractive building? Some would say no, and indeed one local described it as being like a tissue box. Yet simplicity and lack adornment is the point of modernism. The 1960s was a time of break from convention, and the Keam Residence represents such a break from convention, slanting a house diagonally over three allotments to make the dwelling more enjoyable for the residents. The dwelling is simple and functional, and this is what makes it a good exemplar of modernist architecture.

Is modernist architecture important for Redcliffe history? Architectural historian Chris Osborne thinks so, suggesting that the Redcliffe Peninsula came into its own as a popular seaside destination in the 50s and 60s and that modernist homes were characteristic of this period. He suggests that we often recognize value of 100 year old houses, but fail to recognize the value of 50 year old houses. The Keam Residence may well be one such treasure.



# MY REDCLIFFE IN WORLD WAR II

BY MORETON HOWES

Redcliffe was a wonderfully exciting place for a six-year old boy in 1943. US corvettes were anchored off the end of the Redcliffe jetty, often up to six of them side by side. We watched low flying aircraft cross Moreton bay with shark's jaws painted on their noses - wow! Heavy guns mounted at Cape Moreton and Caloundra conducted regular firing practice, producing a deep rumble across the bay which bothered nobody except those returned soldiers who had been on the receiving end of the real thing. We never considered the possibility that it might not be a practice. American servicemen in uniform paraded along the shops opposite Redcliffe jetty with their Australian girlfriends and the U. S. Marines practised beach landings at Queens Beach with "Ducks" (amphibious vehicles) accompanied by aircraft and other landing craft, and hundreds of troops with full equipment, facing a hazard they had not previously encountered - small kids on the beach getting tangled up in their telephone wires!

Dad served in the Middle East in 1940 with the 2nd AIF and was back home by mid-1942. He transferred to the RAAF, was posted to Sandgate (now Eventide). He worked at Margate at what was called a Battle Inoculation School, located past the water tower at the end of Duffield Road where they fired live ammunition over the heads of soldiers in training.

We lived next to an unformed road facing Queens beach at 13 Flinders Parade, Scarborough, close to Osbourne Point. Wartime rents were fixed by the Government and Dad paid 15 shillings per week for six people living in a two-bedroom high set timber holiday house with a closed in veranda. It had a wood stove, a dunny down the back yard, no bathroom and a million-dollar view across the bay! The front gate opened directly onto Queens Beach, and the back gate gave access to Prince Edward Parade along a 25metre right-of-way just wide enough for a cricket pitch. Dad was home most weekends after riding a bicycle across the Hornibrook Highway. Next-door was the Leslie Wilson Home operated by the Queensland Bush Children's Health Scheme and providing holidays for kids from remote country areas. Some of the kids had never seen the ocean and their fathers were mostly absent at the war. Many of the kids were our age and we made friends. The next property on the corner was owned by the Trittons, furniture retailers in Brisbane.

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour in December, 1941 Brisbane's population doubled to over 500,000 in 12 months. Redcliffe Peninsula changed from being a sleepy holiday venue to a massive troop concentration area following an influx of American military in transit to North Queensland and the Pacific islands. Add to that the return of 25,000 Aussie troops from the Middle East, before leaving for Papua New Guinea. Relations between Diggers and Yanks were initially not friendly. Battle hardened Aussies, after two years fighting in the African Desert were not impressed by slick GI's in brand new uniforms, with twice as much money and access to luxuries unobtainable to outsiders from their PX (Canteens), as well as bragging to the girls how they had come to save us from the Japs. They had (at that time) not fired a single shot in anger. There were frequent stoushes culminating in the "Battle of Brisbane", where an Aussie soldier was shot dead by a Yank military policeman. Relations improved somewhat after Diggers were granted access to American canteens.

Us kids knew nothing about these things, and we loved the Yanks. They lived in canvas camps scattered around Brisbane and in the bush behind Redcliffe up to Deception Bay. Main Coast Road (now Oxley Road.) was the start of the bush back then, so the GI's spent their leave in Redcliffe and they were friendly and generous, especially with children. "Got any chewing gum, mate?" became a standard greeting from the local kids which was rarely ignored. I had never heard of chewing gum, but I do remember my mother saying it was dangerous if swallowed and she tried to stop us asking for it. I think she was perhaps worried about our being molested but I never saw or heard of anything like that happening to kids in Redcliffe. Perhaps we had safety in numbers, but then again, the girls were a different matter!

Suttons Beach was by far the favourite place for the Yanks. There was a raised open-air timber dance floor, a giant ferris wheel high on the Point next to the John Oxley Memorial, and numerous sideshows faced the rocky beach below Oxley Point. I particularly remember the "Knock'ems", grinning painted faces on canvas of Hitler, Mussolini and Tojo with their mouths full of "teeth"- wooden blocks knocked out by hurling wooden balls for a prize. Several secluded nooks on the wooded grassy slopes surrounding Suttons Beach were often populated by Yanks with girlfriends under blankets, risking being disturbed in daylight hours by wandering stray kids! The nearby Ambassador Hotel was considered a posh pub, close to Oxley Point with a first-floor veranda overlooking the bay. Not far away the Redcliffe Hotel was at the top end of the shopping centre, popular at a time when bottled beer was scarce. Bottled draught beer was widely accepted and pine cartons of beer if you could get them contained a dozen tall bottles packed in sleeves of straw, which kids loved to slip over their arms and legs. There were then three pubs including the Scarborough Hotel, "Seabrae" was an unlicensed Private Hotel on the corner of Anzac Avenue.

Continued page 8



# **MY REDCLIFFE IN WORLD WAR II CONTINUED**

**BY MORETON HOWES**

We had two bus services. The red bus depot in Anzac Avenue had ancient buses, handled local traffic and served Brisbane via Petrie. The green bus depot was adjacent to the Sandgate railway station and had the newer green buses which crossed the Hornibrook Highway, co-ordinating with Brisbane train services at Sandgate. The green bus picked up only, leaving the red bus exclusively for local travel. New vehicles were unobtainable, and a few of the older red buses had canvas shutters instead of glass windows, which were closed in wet weather and made it dark inside. We always took the train to Brisbane from green buses numbered from 1 to 21 and knew them all by heart. Number 12 was my favourite, a diesel bus with the front corner missing over the motor, which emitted a satisfying roar as it bounded over the Hornibrook like a kangaroo! Shortly after the war they fitted a long bus chassis to a war surplus semi-trailer (number 24), which was exhilarating riding in the front seat when it wanted to go straight ahead as the driver executed a tight turn. I caught a red bus to and from Humpybong twice a day for five years for the princely sum of a penny each way, unless I got hungry and bought eight boiled lollies at the shop over the road from school with my bus money and walked home.

The five years I spent at Humpybong State School from 1943-48 was the happiest time in my life. Margate Parade **did not extend along the beach front to Scott's Point until much later and the school had a beach frontage, although it was** forbidden for pupils to go to the beach during school hours. The grounds were sandy and well grassed, the boys never wore shoes and we marched into school each day to the strains of Colonel Bogey. We had lunch on benches under the classrooms, and a veteran pie cart arrived punctually every day outside the front gate with a wood fired oven on a tray at the back. Once a week I was allowed to buy a thrippenny pie or pasty with sauce. Marbles was a big game played on the **school basketball court every day, as was the inevitable "Red Rover" between two large eucalypts near the beach.** The teachers were all wonderful, Headmaster Mr. Anderson was the best history teacher ever (!) and there was also Mrs Henderson, who kept a large jar of boiled lollies as a reward for good work in Grade 2. The classroom windows had strips of tarred paper glued vertically and horizontally to limit the danger of shattered glass from bombs.

**Saturday afternoons were divided between the "flicks" or roller skating. My pocket money of ninepence a week** covered the Redcliffe Pictures for sixpence leaving threepence for an ice cream. The skating rink charged ninepence all up including hire of skates, therefore requiring a major decision every Saturday. The flicks had two feature movies plus newsreels, cartoons and a 15minute serial such as Buck Rogers, so they usually won. The picture theatre burned down early in the war but was rebuilt on the same spot, with rows of canvas deck chairs. The Rainbow Café was down the road a **bit next to Cominos Arcade and had chocolate flavoured ice cream, which you couldn't get anywhere else. The Penny Arcade** at the halfway house on the Redcliffe Jetty was another attraction but we were forbidden by our parents to go there, not that it stopped us! The slot machines over the water were enormously popular with the Americans.

All cars were American, black in colour with headlights painted over except for a small spot in the centre and a 3 inch white strip was painted all the way round the lower chassis so you could see them in the blackout. Curtains were drawn at night to complete a blackout at home, although we never had anyone check us out. Searchlights crossed the night skies and air raid sirens sounded frequently, for practice only. Public air raid shelters at Redcliffe were few.

Living in Redcliffe as a child was adventurous and full of interest. All things considered, we did not feel threatened by the war – how could we with massive military ordnance and soldiers constantly visible in and about the community? I do remember the atmosphere was tense when Dad was informed his sister who was a doctor, and her Naval Officer husband **were missing in Singapore. The tension eased after he discovered they were "guests" of the Japanese, they spent the remainder of the war in Changi jail and survived.** The main complaints we kids heard was about people coping with coupons issued for rationed supplies of butter, meat, clothing and petrol. We lived well and never went hungry, and if we dared to complain or refused to finish our vegetables we were reminded about the starving children in Europe!

# THE HISTORY OF CHRISTMAS TREES

## PART 1 OF 2

The evergreen fir tree has traditionally been used to celebrate winter festivals (pagan and Christian) for thousands of years. Pagans used branches of it to decorate their homes during the winter solstice, as it made them think of the spring to come. The Romans used Fir Trees to decorate their temples at the festival of Saturnalia. Christians use it as a sign of everlasting life with God.

Nobody is really sure when Fir trees were first used as Christmas trees. It probably began about 1000 years ago in Northern Europe. Many early Christmas Trees seem to have been hung upside down from the ceiling using chains (hung from chandeliers/lighting hooks).

Other early Christmas Trees, across many parts of northern Europe, were cherry or hawthorn plants (or a branch of the plant) that were put into pots and brought inside so they would hopefully Lower at Christmas time. If you couldn't afford a real plant, people made pyramids of woods and they were decorated to look like a tree with paper, apples and candles. Sometimes they were carried around from house to house, rather than being displayed in a home.

It's possible that the wooden pyramid trees were meant to be like Paradise Trees. These were used in medieval German Mystery or Miracle Plays that were acted out in front of Churches on Christmas Eve. In early church calendars of saints, 24th December was Adam and Eve's day. The Paradise Tree represented the Garden of Eden. It was often paraded around the town before the play started, as a way of advertising the play. The plays told Bible stories to people who could not read.

The first documented use of a tree at Christmas and New Year celebrations is argued between the cities of Tallinn in Estonia and Riga in Latvia! Both claim that they had the first trees; Tallinn in 1441 and Riga in 1510. Both trees were put up by the 'Brotherhood of Blackheads' which was an association of local unmarried merchants, ship owners, and foreigners in Livonia (what is now Estonia and Latvia).

Little is known about either tree apart from that they were put in the town square, were danced around by the Brotherhood of Blackheads and were then set on fire. This is like the custom of the Yule Log. The word used for the 'tree' could also mean a mast or pole, tree might have been like a 'Paradise Tree' or a tree-shaped wooden candelabra rather than a 'real' tree.

In the town square of Riga, the capital of Latvia, there is a plaque which is engraved with "The First New Year's Tree in Riga in 1510", in eight languages. You can find out more about the Riga Tree from this website: [www.firstchristmastree.com](http://www.firstchristmastree.com)

A picture from Germany in 1521 which shows a tree being paraded through the streets with a man riding a horse behind it. The man is dressed a bishop, possibly representing St. Nicholas.

In 1584, the historian Balthasar Russow wrote about a tradition, in Riga, of a decorated fir tree in the **market square where the young men "went with a Lock of maidens and women, first sang and danced there and then set the tree aflame"**. **There's a record of a small tree in Breman, Germany from 1570.** It is described as a tree decorated with "apples, nuts, dates, pretzels and paper flowers". It was displayed in a 'guild-house' (the meeting place for a society of business men in the city).

The first person to bring a Christmas Tree into a house, in the way we know it today, may have been the 16th century German preacher Martin Luther. A story is told that, one night before Christmas, he was walking through the forest and looked up to see the stars shining through the tree branches. It was so beautiful, that he went home and told his children that it reminded him of Jesus, who left the stars of heaven to come to earth at Christmas. Some people say this is the same tree as the 'Riga' tree, but it isn't! The Riga tree originally took place a few decades earlier.

# THE HISTORY OF CHRISTMAS TREES

## PART 1 OF 2 continued

The custom of having Christmas trees could well have travelled along the Baltic sea, from Latvia to Germany. In the 1400s and 1500s, the countries which are now Germany and Latvia were then part of two larger empires which were neighbors.

Another story says that St. Boniface of Crediton (a village in Devon, UK) left England and traveled to Germany to preach to the pagan German tribes and convert them to Christianity. He is said to have come across a group of pagans about to sacrifice a young boy while worshipping an oak tree. In anger, and to stop the sacrifice, St. Boniface is said to have cut down the oak tree and, to his amazement, a young fir tree sprang up from the roots of the oak tree. St. Boniface took this as a sign of the Christian faith and his followers decorated the tree with candles so that St. Boniface could preach to the pagans at night.

There is another legend, from Germany, about how the Christmas Tree came into being, it goes:

Once on a cold Christmas Eve night, a forester and his family were in their cottage gathered round the fire to keep warm. Suddenly there was a knock on the door. When the forester opened the door, he found a poor little boy standing on the door step, lost and alone. The forester welcomed him into his house and the family fed and washed him and put him to bed in the youngest son's own bed (he had to share with his brother that night!). The next morning, Christmas Morning, the family were woken up by a choir of angels, and the poor little boy had turned into Jesus, the Christ Child. The Christ Child went into the front garden of the cottage and broke a branch off a Fir tree and gave it to the family as a present to say thank you for looking after him. So ever since then, people have remembered that night by bringing a Christmas Tree into their homes!

In Germany, the first Christmas Trees were decorated with edible things, such as gingerbread and gold covered apples. Then glass makers made special small ornaments similar to some of the decorations used today. In 1605 an unknown German wrote: "At Christmas they set up Fir trees in the parlours of Strasbourg and hang thereon roses cut out of many-colored paper, apples, wafers, gold foil, sweets, etc."

At first, a figure of the Baby Jesus was put on the top of the tree. Over time it changed to an angel/fairy that told the shepherds about Jesus, or a star like the Wise Men saw. The first Christmas Trees came to Britain sometime in the 1830s. They became very popular in 1841, when Prince Albert (Queen Victoria's German husband) had a Christmas Tree set up in Windsor Castle. In 1848, drawing of "The Queen's Christmas tree at Windsor Castle" was published in the Illustrated London News. The drawing was republished in Godey's Lady's Book, Philadelphia in December 1850 (but they removed the Queen's crown and Prince Albert's moustache to make it look 'American!').

The publication of the drawing helped Christmas Trees become popular in the UK and USA.

In Victorian times, the tree would have been decorated with candles to represent stars. In many parts of Europe, candles are still used to decorate Christmas trees.

To be continued..

# FOUR GENERATIONS OF FISHERMEN... THE MICHEL FAMILY

Eileen Edith Best was born on 24 September 1900, the daughter of Charles Frederick Best and his wife Emily Ann Edith (nee Ramsay). On 6 January 1923 she married John Joseph Michel in the original Catholic Church in Deagon Street, Sandgate, in a ceremony conducted by Father Power. Eileen was driven to the church in a horse-drawn cab, which her cousin Bill Davis ran for hire. The bridegroom, who was known as Jack, was the son of \*Simon and Jessie Michel. He had two sisters, Eva and Lily and a brother William David who had married Kathleen Alberta Swanson on 16 September 1922.

After the wedding ceremony, Eileen and Jack were driven to Cabbage Tree Creek and they rowed a boat across to their new home on Dinah Island. It was a one-room hut built out of motor car cases and furnishings consisted of a bed, a table, a small cupboard and a hanging safe. As there was no stove, all the cooking was done on an open fire. When it rained a sheet of iron was placed over it.

Jack's parents and his sisters and also his brother Bill and wife Kathleen were living at that time on the other end of the island. Their home was a three-roomed shed and they also did their cooking out in the open. Simon Michel had built a motor boat which he named *The Geebung* after the Brisbane suburb where they had resided before coming to the island. He and his sons were net fishermen and were away from home much of the time, fishing in Deception Bay and Pumicestone Passage. (1<sup>st</sup> boat 1920s.)



After a time the Michel family moved to a house in Palm Avenue, Shorncliffe. There Simon and his sons Jack and Bill (William David) with the help of one Alex Hickling, built a 30 foot boat in the yard beside the house. They had 20 kerosene tins soldered together to form a tub in which they heated water to soak the timber for the ribs of the boat. When each rib was sufficiently heated, two men with hessian bags as protection, would pull out the timber and slap it onto the sides of the vessel. When it was completed, *The Loafer*, as it was named, was towed down to Cabbage Tree Creek and launched. Later a 12.10 Palmer engine was installed in the vessel and it was equipped with two large icechests, as well as a tiller, a mast and sail.

The three men would leave Sandgate on a Sunday and fish Deception Bay and near Bribie Island before returning to Sandgate the following Thursday. There they would pack the fish and transport the catch to the markets at South Brisbane.

By the late 1920s Jack and Eileen had two children, John (known as Johnnie) and Jess. They took up permanent residence at Scarborough on the Redcliffe Peninsula. The Michel brothers continued as fishermen during the lean years of the 1930s, but when war broke out in 1939, Jack's son Johnnie enlisted and his brother Bill (Willie) found employment as a carpenter on public works for the Army. Jack and younger son Frank continued fishing during the war years. Jack retired after his son Johnnie had been discharged from the Army. His sons, Johnnie and Frank continued the family tradition of commercial fishing.



Soon after the end of the war, Jack's brother Bill, wife Kathleen and their four children Freddie, Ted, Peter and Peggy moved to Scarborough. Subsequently Johnnie and Frank teamed up with their cousin Peter and a friend Pat O'Brien and carried on with the fishing in *The Loafer...above (1930s onwards)*

Johnnie married Doreen (nee Gordon) and they had six children.....John, Cheryl, William, Patricia, Alan and Colleen. In the late 1950s Johnnie branched out on his own. He purchased the *Suzanne R* in the early 1960s and during that time worked mostly by himself. Currently in 2020, it is William (known as Billy) who carries on the family fishing tradition in his boat *Dreamtime*.

*Suzanne R.... at right (1960s)*

In 1986, when she was 85, Eileen Michel joined the Redcliffe Historical Society and was a frequent visitor at the Museum at Suttons Beach on Tuesday mornings. She usually took part in the Society coach trips and found no difficulty in keeping up with the rest of the party when sight-seeing involved a deal of walking. Her last trip was in May 1993 when she was 92. Michel Road is named after the Michel family and Eileen lived in the family home for about 68 years. She passed away in 1998, not quite reaching her 98th birthday.



\*Simon was actually born at sea during his parents' migration from Germany in 1872.

Cheryl's brother Billy is the 4<sup>th</sup> generation Michel fisherman. His boat is .....  
*....Dreamtime,,at left...recent photo.*

Compiled with assistance, photos and thanks to Cheryl Poor, daughter of Johnnie and Doreen Michel.

Ref. Humpybong and After October 2000....Vol. 16 No 4, page 36.



# A SALUTE TO LINDSAY SIM, A RETIRED LOCAL JOURNALIST WHO WORKED FOR THE LOCAL PAPER....1898 TO 2001

BY MARGARET HARDING

Lindsay ended 12 years at the Redcliffe Herald in December 2001. We thank him for his continued interest in the Society and in Redcliffe history. Hereunder are excerpts, with permission, from Lindsay's story which he wrote 'on the eve' of his retirement.

*Redcliffe, you're a magic place. I felt this for the first time when we moved here from New Zealand. We arrived with a bang! Our first festive season was loudly proclaimed by the 1989 Christmas Eve tornado. For the previous 14 years I'd edited a weekly suburban paper at Porirua, a satellite city to the capital, Wellington –just as Redcliffe is to state capital Brisbane.*

*Covering the warp and weft of Peninsula community activity, I've come to know and love the place, its people and its history.*

*My wife and I took citizenship and are proud to call ourselves Australian, though we'll always have an attachment to Kiwiland. I never cease to be amazed at the many people who make news – and Redcliffe is rich with them. From diabetics to volunteers, collectors to Olympians, as a journalist I've covered them all.*

*One of the first to impress was Monsignor Bartholomew Frawley. Speaking with insight at Redcliffe's Anzac Day dawn service c1991, he showed a sound grasp of world affairs. Noting the world's largest Moslem State was just a few miles north of Australia, he said to deserve peace, this country had to do all possible to make itself strong in self defence.*

*In the mid 1990s I gained renewed respect for our veterans, whose stories in the Australia Remembers series, marking the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War 11, recalled their daring and suffering decades before.*

*In 2000 our Olympians' medal haul brought great credit to themselves and the Peninsula to national attention.*

*It is a journalist's maxim that things happen here, as elsewhere, for one of two reasons: because of, or in spite of politics.*

*Sadly, politics is also Redcliffe's Achilles heel, when those involved cannot rise above petty wrangling. If only.....*

*Redcliffe....many thanks for the memories.*

Reference Redcliffe Herald Wednesday 12 December 2001, page 22.

# HARRY WAPLES...PHARMACIST, 159 REDCLIFFE PARADE, RED-CLIFFE... C1960S/EARLY 1970S

BY MARGARET HARDING

The Redcliffe Herald's fine tribute is as follows:

The local business community, customers and friends of Harold (Harry) Desmond Waples, well known Redcliffe Parade pharmacist, were saddened to hear last Thursday of his death in Greenslopes hospital.

Mr Waples, who had a heart condition which he developed about six years ago, had led a fairly active life since but was admitted to Greenslopes on Labour Day with a recurrence of the complaint. He was placed in intensive care and when taken out appeared to be making a good recovery. However, this was not to be, for he passed away in his sleep in a ward at about 1am last Thursday.....(22 May 1975)

The service and cremation took place at Albany Creek on Saturday morning and the chapel was full with an overflow outside.

Mourners consisted of people from all walks of life, including Members of Parliament, a large number of members of the business community, fellow pharmacists, many customers of Waples Pharmacy and representatives of a considerable number of local organisations including the RSL, the Masonic movement, **Rotary Club of Redcliffe, Scarborough Ladies' Bowling Club, Order of De Mollay, Redcliffe Sovereign Rose Cross Chapter** and other organisations too numerous to mention.

**The pharmacy was closed for the day and all staff were present to offer comfort to the late Mr Waples' wife, Mrs Rita Waples and his 19 year-old son Desmond.**

It was announced at the chapel that the late Mr Waples was 53 at the time of his death.

Born in Gympie, Mr Waples was later to serve during the war years with the Australian Army in the Islands. On his discharge he set about obtaining his pharmaceutical degree and qualified in 1953, during which time he studied and worked at a Brisbane pharmacy.

Eventually he took over the Redcliffe Parade pharmacy of the late Mr Howe in a shop which was once the original Brisbane Cash and Carry on the Peninsula and from then on entered into the life of the community by joining many local organisations. At one time he was an active member of Redcliffe Peninsula Chamber of Commerce and in due course became a Rotarian.

**He suffered a minor setback when a doctor, who was a 'silent' partner in the pharmacy was lost a sea off Fiji** and it was to be more than seven years before Mr Waples was able to assume control of the business.

This was his most worrying time and soon after the affairs were straightened out and the doctor was presumed dead and lost at sea, Mr Waples began to feel the strain, eventually succumbing to a heart condition from which he did not entirely recover, although outwardly he appeared to be in good health.

He was a justice of the peace and regularly appeared on the Bench at Redcliffe when the resident magistrate was not available.

An affable friendly businessman, he will be missed by all who regularly associated with him and the assembly at his cremation service was proof of the high esteem in which he was held.

Waples Pharmacy will continue business as usual under the same trading name with a manager in charge.

Customers will still receive the same friendly service but one familiar face will be missing-that of its founder, the late and friendly pharmacist who was always willing to give helpful advice when asked, especially in the early days when neither doctors or pharmacists were as numerous as they are now.

# IN THE PAPERS—REDCLIFFE IN WARTIME

BY FIONA MURGATROYD

This year marks 75 years since the end of the Second World War. Many people who will read this will have personal memories of that time or have some connection to a friend or family member who was involved in the war in some way. For those of us who have not lived through a war on this scale it is hard to imagine what life was like.

Many of the articles I found were about the work of Redcliffe people raising funds and resources for the war effort. There was also a lovely (but very long) story about the day trip to Redcliffe of the inmates of the Mental Hospital at Goodna. Some 70 men in two buses sang songs on the journey and then enjoyed time at the beach on arrival, as well as entertainment and refreshments throughout the day. Then there was the story about the Redcliffe cleaner from the **Government Printing office who was found in possession of “stereo plates for printing the front of the 1944 issue of clothing ration cards” along with “a steel home-made printing press, a paper guillotine attached to a box. a home-made guillotine, five wooden frames, an ink roller, and a vaseline bottle containing substance which appeared to be printer's ink”.** **One can only imagine how that was all going to be put to use!**

Here are a few short snippets about Redcliffe life from the newspapers at that time.

## **REDCLIFFE** (*The Courier-Mail*, Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> December 1941)

The Redcliffe Town Council decided yesterday to co-operate with The Courier-Mail in conducting the sand garden competitions during the holidays, and appointed the Mayor Alderman A. H. Langdon, and Aldermen A. Sampson, T. G. Long, K. McPherson, and N. I. Inglis to be judges. The Mayor said that there was no danger in holding such competitions on **Redcliffe's extensive beaches in time of war. Redcliffe was safer than Brisbane: there were no important target's (sic)** in the town. Permission was received from the Treasury to spend £130— balance of a previous loan— on bitumening Duffield Road and Mabel Street. The Health Department advised that samples of water from Redcliffe beach wells had been analysed and found to be suitable for human consumption.

## **PADDY'S MARKET FOR WAR FUNDS** (*The Courier-Mail*, Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> February, 1941)

A BUILDING has been erected in Marine Parade, Redcliffe, to be used as a Paddy's Market, which will be conducted every Saturday by the Redcliffe branch of the Australian Comforts Fund. A sewing circle has been formed at Scarborough to make articles for sale. Articles sent to headquarters during the month included 36 pairs of socks, 22 scarves, and 310 handkerchiefs. In aid of the branch funds, an evening party was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. W. G. Porter.

## **REDCLIFFE'S AID TO WAR EFFORT** (*The Courier-Mail*, Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> December, 1942)

REDCLIFFE, Monday. — Redcliffe Bowling Club has donated £20 towards the provision of Christmas hampers for men of the fighting forces, and the Scarborough Social Club has given £10/10/ towards establishing a canteen for servicemen.

As the result of a bowls and card afternoon the bowling club handed over £20 to the Prisoners of War Fund.

From a Christmas fair organised by the welfare circles of the W.N.E.L. Redcliffe branch of the Red Cross Society received £69.

Redcliffe branch of the Australian Comforts Fund reports that articles forwarded to headquarters included 71 pairs of socks, nine other knitted articles, and 10 dozen handkerchiefs.



# Dig Tree Reserve Conservation Launch



The Royal Historical Society of Queensland has completed a major conservation project at the Dig Tree Reserve as trustees of the famous Burke and Wills site, and you are invited to celebrate the occasion with us.

This will be preceded by a 'Burke and Wills back under the stars' function at 6pm on Friday 26 March at the amphitheatre in Memorial Park, Thargomindah.

12 noon, Saturday  
27 March 2021

Dig Tree Reserve,  
Dig Tree Road,  
320km west of  
Thargomindah

For more information, visit the website at <http://www.thedigtree.com.au> or contact us on [info@queenslandhistory.org.au](mailto:info@queenslandhistory.org.au).



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www.wdsurveys.com.au

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**M 0408 723 150**



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## *Welcome to the Great Northern Garden of Remembrance*

Great Northern Garden of Remembrance (Caboolture & Districts Crematorium) is a public Crematorium and Memorial Garden located at 31 Tallowood Drive, Deception Bay, in South-East Queensland. Our facilities are available for use by all funeral homes and the families of the area.

We are conveniently located on Tallowood Drive, just 2 minutes from the Bruce Highway, making it easily accessible for families from the Moreton Bay Region, Caboolture, Pine Rivers, Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast.

Our facilities, set in 1.8 hectares of beautiful natural bushland, include a 90 seat chapel with a calming water window, a beautiful outdoor chapel surrounded by a running waterways, arrangement and reflection rooms, a fully-catered refreshments area and landscaped gardens with a variety of memorialisation options.

As the facility is bordered by a nature reserve there is an abundance of native animal & bird life including a family of friendly kangaroos, which add to the peacefulness of the whole environment.

Our office is staffed between 8.00am and 4.30pm Monday to Friday, and we are available on weekends by arrangement. The grounds are open to visitors every day. Services can be held in the Chapel between these times and on weekends by prior arrangement. We can be contacted by phoning 07 3888 6622.

We are committed to providing a special environment for visitors to remember their loved ones and quietly reflect on times past.

You are always welcome at Great Northern Garden of Remembrance.

Phone: 07 3888 6622



## COMMITTEE MEMBER CONTACT LIST

PRESIDENT	Errol Deller	3284 1466 – W 0408 723 150 - M	<a href="mailto:errol@wdsurveys.com.au">errol@wdsurveys.com.au</a>
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT	Pat Gee	3203 7969	<a href="mailto:patgee45@gmail.com">patgee45@gmail.com</a>
JUNIOR VICE PRESIDENT	Cheryl Salisbury	3284 3444 0408 452 265	<a href="mailto:cheryljsalisbury@gmail.com">cheryljsalisbury@gmail.com</a>
TREASURER	Patricia Spillman	3284 5795 0411 547 004	<a href="mailto:basnpat@optusnet.com.au">basnpat@optusnet.com.au</a>
SECRETARY	Rae Frawley	3284 4296 0429 437 884	<a href="mailto:rae@raeamelda.com">rae@raeamelda.com</a>
COMMITTEE	Fiona Murgatroyd	0438 741 827	<a href="mailto:fimur25@gmail.com">fimur25@gmail.com</a>
COMMITTEE	Ann Hanger	3880 0914 0422 285 056	<a href="mailto:dahangerkippa@gmail.com">dahangerkippa@gmail.com</a>
COMMITTEE	Janet Franklin	3889 4195 0490 091 127	<a href="mailto:Janet.r.franklin@gmail.com">Janet.r.franklin@gmail.com</a>
COMMITTEE	Cheryl Beutel	0419 801 853	<a href="mailto:chezza28@gmail.com">chezza28@gmail.com</a>

## 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 at the Redcliffe Library 476 Oxley Ave, Redcliffe. We feature a guest speaker to cover a wide variety of topics. Afternoon tea is served on completion of the talk by the guest speaker. The meeting commences again after the tea break.

This is a pleasant environment and Members are encouraged to 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

If undeliverable return to  
History Redcliffe  
PO Box 370  
REDCLIFFE QLD 4020



**2019**

**For your Diary**

MONTH	DATE/EVENT	GUEST SPEAKER	LOCATION
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Meeting Cancelled due to COVID-19</li></ul>		
October	Friday 9th <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>General Meeting - TBC</li></ul>	Duane Hart— Images of Redcliffe	Unknown at this stage
November	Friday 13th <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>General Meeting - TBC</li></ul>	Doug Morris- Life in Redcliffe Part 2	Redcliffe Entertainment Centre 2PM
December	Friday 11th <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>General Meeting - TBC</li></ul>	No Guest Speaker Possible video stories	Redcliffe Entertainment Centre 2PM