

HSNT Newsletter

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Historical Society of the Northern Territory

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

A happy and productive New Year to you all. It appears we are coming out the other end of the financial depression which is good news, but now the squeeze is on to pay for the 'stimulus' which, for history, is bad news. The decisions to close the North Australian Archives in Darwin and to merge the administrations of the Northern Territory Archives and the Northern Territory Library are tragic ones for historical research in North Australia. Even more tragic for N.A.A. is that, once done, there will be no going back.

Despite the general gloom about the place of history in the general scheme of things at present it is looking like another busy year for the Society. We are planning on a return visit to Raffles Bay and to Bradshaw Station and this years' field trip will probably be down to the Tennant area, being able to meet our members in Katherine, Mataranka and, hopefully, Alice Springs. [Barry Leithhead and Robin ..., members from NSW, are hopefully going to be able to join us too]

Brian Reid

DATES TO REMEMBER

- 10 FEBRUARY:** HSNT Council meeting, 55 Ross Smith Avenue, Parap, 7.30pm.
- 14 FEBRUARY, Sunday, 3pm:** HSNT Quiz afternoon: at Shennegans Hotel, Cnr Mitchell St. and Peel St., \$10per person, come a join us—tables are not booked in advance—questions are very general.
- 16 FEBRUARY, Tuesday;** Darwin City Theatre, 10.30am: Ray Chin to talk about the 19 February 1942. Bookings a must 88930 0230
- 17 FEBRUARY:** HSNT lecture, MAGNT, 7.30pm: Grahame Hockey *The NT Pastoral industry*. Gold coin donation [please note new date]
- 18 FEBRUARY, NT Library, 5.15pm:** Book launch '*Baby S.O.S.*' b y Theresa Goode. Bookings preferred 1800 019 155
- 25 FEBRUARY, NT Library, 5.15pm:** Talk by author Jill Jolliffe on '*Cover-up: The Inside Story of the Bailibo Five.*
- 24 MARCH, Wednesday:** Annual General Meeting of the HSNT, Rooftop restaurant (same as the Patron's Dinner), 7pm for 7.30pm. \$45
- 10-19 APRIL, Alice Springs:** 150th Anniversary of John McDouall Stuart's first expedition through Central Australia, April 1860 [contact the National Trust]
- 22 MAY, Saturday, 10am:** Meet David Carment at the Cool Spot, Fannie Bay.

EDITORIAL

Having got all my 'bits and pieces' out of the way, we can now become more serious!

Sadly Wendy Carter (member from Kununurra) has left for a sojourn in England—her parents are not well and she wishes to be with them and her family. Wendy will be away for six months or more—we wish her well and hope that she is not 'snow bound' as all else in England seems to be at the moment.

Those members who have not rejoined this year will find a membership form in their newsletter. Please do rejoin, currently memberships, sale of books, the annual Quiz Afternoon and various raffles are the only way we raise money and you will read from the Treasurer just how precarious our funds are. We do not receive any money from the Northern Territory or Federal Governments therefore it is up to us to cover our annual costs.

I think that, in the last newsletter, I forgot to say that the decision to close the National Archives was not from the Federal Government, it was a decision of the National Archives Board. Strangely enough they will have to build another building to house these extra archives!!!! Perhaps the Board members have not read Section 63 of the Archives Act!!!

More on the National Archives—the Federal Cabinet asked the NAA to reduce costs, they did not tell them the way to do it. Ann Picot who organized the petition said they got 6789 signatures from over 220 returns and the ABC's 7.30 Report will be in Darwin filming at the NAA Office—no staff but people using the search room and they will be interviewed outside the building.

The NT Writers Centre has announced the short list for the 2010 Territory read NT Book of the Year:

JONSBURG, Barry: *Cassie*

MUNKARA, Marie: *Every Secret*

WALLACE, Kathleen Kemarre and Judy Lovell:

Listen Deeply, the these stories in.

THAMM, Shane: *My Private Pectus*

NORRINGTON, Leonie: *The Devil You Know*

ROTHWELL, Nicolas: *The Red Highway*

The winner will be announced on February 12th.

Our thoughts are with Diane Clarke whose husband, Chris, died suddenly recently. Diane and Chris had offered to work in the Office and we look forward to welcoming Diane when she feels ready.

Our congratulations to Brian Angel, husband of our member Anita Angel, on his retirement. We have been sent the transcript of the Farewell Ceremonial Sitting for him on 18 January 2010. I believe that they are to stay in Darwin.

On the sick list has been Reg Wilson who was assaulted just before Christmas but is on the mend now.

The latest copy of Memento from the National Archives has an article on Stanley Melbourne Bruce, a little known Prime Minister of Australia (1923-1929) before he became High Commissioner in London (1933-1945) and settled there. Interesting to me as my father was his Private Secretary for some years.

Nomination forms for the Council for the next year will be in the next newsletter. I would encourage all members to consider standing for election as your Society is only as good as the people who guide it.

Yvonne Forrest

(from page 3)

Receipts for membership were down by fifty per cent last year. Does this reflect a loss of interest from members or is it simply forgetfulness. What can be done about this? Fundraising activities in past years have resulted in an increasing revenue stream thanks to a few dedicated stalwarts but no one can predict the level of donations that can be expected.

Whatever the level of anticipated expenditure, it seems to me that we need to know what it will be so that we know what income has to be raised. We can then make reliable decisions on ways to effect an increase in membership subscriptions and on the number of sausage sizzles, quiz nights and other activities needed to raise enough funds to balance the budget. Both will require a more intensive effort by members than has been apparent recently.

Earl James.

The Federation of Australian Historical Societies, the umbrella body for Australia's more than 1000 community history and heritage societies with nearly 100,000 members, wishes to endorse the main thrust of the Minister's proposal for a National Cultural Policy. It appropriately expresses and affirms the importance of culture and its role in our society.

However we note that, in the Minister's speech to the National Press Club in which he announced this initiative, the emphasis was almost solely on the creative arts as manifesting culture. Only in items 5 and 7 of the Framework is there a general reference to the importance of the past.

The FAHS urges that cultural heritage be included in the definition of culture and that cultural heritage issues are covered by the policy as it is developed.

To this end we emphasise that, while 'culture' has many meanings, the following definition is indicative of the central role of both history and moveable cultural heritage objects that are implicit within understandings of the term:

'Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action and, on the other as conditioning elements of further action.' [Kroeber, A.L. & C. Kluckhohn (1952) *Culture: A critical review of concepts and definitions*. Harvard University Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology, papers 47]

The community heritage movement plays a major role in the collecting, conservation and the retelling of Australia's cultural heritage. There are, for example, about 500 cultural heritage museums across the nation.

All too often, cultural heritage 'falls between the stools' when government recognition and assistance is given to built heritage and to the arts. With the likely demise of the Collections Council of Australia, this cultural sector will be even less recognized and assisted.

We therefore urge the need to incorporate cultural heritage into the National Cultural Policy.

Don Garden
President, FAHS.

The financial year for the HSNT is from January to December. For the benefit of members I would advise that the Society's books are now in the hands of the auditor and an audited statement is expected in time for the AGM on 24 March. I have been Treasurer of the Society for the past year, having taken over the good work formerly carried out by Kay Goon. However I am not in a position to continue in this office so will not be available for re-election. Before I relinquish my hold on the Society's bank balances I would like to tell members a little bit about the finances in past years and the need, as I see it, for budgeting for the future.

I have seen little evidence of budgeting during the past years. It seems that the Society has gone from one activity to the next in an ad hoc manner, making decisions to spend and hoping that the necessary funds will be realized somehow. This does not seem to have had a particularly deleterious effect on the Society's bank accounts as we currently have funds totaling some \$35000. But, for the last year the books will show a deficit of \$13500—and this after receiving donations of \$5500. of course this is not as bad as it looks as the NT Government still owes us \$7500 grant money for the Beagle Boat trip. Still a deficit of \$6000 is not good, especially when in the previous two years we had surpluses of \$6000 and \$8000. The prime reason for the deficit was an expenditure of nearly \$13000 on printing and stationary which was 3 times what it was in 2007 and 2008. The difference must come from reserves and there is nothing wrong with spending reserves if it is done in a programmed way.

I believe budgeting is the process by which an organization decides upon the activities and expenses for the coming year and the manner in which funds will be raised to pay for them. Conversely some groups first determine what income they can raise and then decide what they will do. I prefer the former. The Society has now reached the stage where annual administrative costs are fairly constant but printing costs are the real variable. More effort needs to be given to finding the cheapest price consistent with quality and to decisions on what and when to print.

With income, the real variables are membership subscriptions, donations and fundraising activities.

(continued on page 2)

CONTINUING RESEARCH.....

NEW BOOKS, JOURNALS AND ARTICLES ON THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

From **Matthew Stephen**....is continuing with the research begin for his thesis *'Contact Zones, Sport & Race in the Northern Territory 1869-1953*. He is compiling secondary source material related to sport and leisure during this period, compiling evidence to support nominations for the AFLNT Hall of Fame, proposed to 'open' in late 2010. Because there are no surviving records of the various football leagues in Darwin prior to WWII, this period will not be adequately represented. Hopefully Matthew will fill this gap with a systematic survey from the newspapers of the time, he is currently up to 1934 and hopefully he will reach 1942, the cessation of Darwin football just prior to the Bombing of Darwin. Matthew's thesis is available in the CDU and NT Libraries.

Brian Reid is continuing with research into Fort Wellington for Richard Ledger with a return visit sometime in 2010. He is also continuing with the information on Bradshaw's Run, again with another visit this year.

From **Barry Leighhead**...His current research is on Dr Cook's two 1925 trips by car from central Queensland to Darwin as part of a three-year survey of leprosy and granuloma. Cook followed much the same route for both trips but with significant diversions. He dashed back to Barcaldine between the tours for the birth of his first child, James Cecil Murray Cook on 6 July. Barry's Partner, Robin, is Cook's daughter. Cook was Chief medical Officer and Chief Protector of Aborigines from 1927 to 1939. [*Hopefully Barry and Robin will join us on our long weekend trip in July. Barry has also suggested that he present his research at a meeting of Members during July/August*]

Marcel Safier (Photographic Historian) has emailed that he is researching four early NT photographers, William Barlow (1878), Johan Mathias Nielsen (1887-89, 1890), George C. Riddell (1891-94) and Ah Cheong. Any help would be greatly received (email msafier@ozemail.com.au). He has put a draft biography of Robert Cremer on his blog at <http://qldphotohistory.blogspot.com>. He also says that Kareen Magee is doing her PhD on Samuel Sweet who also worked in the NT.

Steve Farram is doing some work on the Timorese.

GARDEN, Don (2010) *Droughts, Floods and Cyclones: El Ninos that shaped our colonial past*. Melbourne; Australian Scholarly Publishing

ISBN 978 1 921509 38 4

STEPHEN, Matthew: 'Football, "Race" and Resistance: the Darwin Football League 1926-1929 IN *Australian Aboriginal Studies*, (2009), no.2, pp.61-77

Australian Assoc. for Maritime History quarterly newsletter (2009) 116/December

Australian Mining history Assoc. (2009) 59/December

History SA (2009) 202/September

The Library (2009) vol.1,no.4/December

Medical History newsletter (2009)27/November

Memento (2010) 38/January

Progenitor (2009) vol.28,no.4/December

Public History News (2009) vol.30,no.1/December

RHSQ Bulletin (2009) 735/October

FUNDRAISING

We now have our allocation of 40 books in the Australian Central Credit Union 2010 Lottery. At two dollars (\$2) for each ticket and 10 tickets to a book, it is an easy way of making some funds for the Society. I would encourage all members to ask for a book from Bev Phelts or Yvonne Forrest (although I shall be away for the rest of February) 0432 558 226. We have already sold 3 books and tickets will be available at all our functions. By now I hope that you have read the comments of our Treasurer, Earl James, and will participate in making some money for us.