

HSNT Newsletter

No.36/April 2010

Historical Society of the Northern Territory

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Patron: The Hon Austin Asche AC, QC

DATES TO REMEMBER

24 MARCH, Wednesday: Annual General Meeting of the HSNT, Rooftop restaurant (same as the Patron's Dinner), 7pm for 7.30pm. \$45

27 MARCH, WA Historical Society book sale, 9am-5pm, 49 Broadway, Nedlands.

28 MARCH, *Maps, myths and Monsters*, 2pm-3.30pm at the Australian National Maritime Museum, Sydney

10-19 APRIL, Alice Springs: 150th Anniversary of John McDouall Stuart's first expedition through Central Australia, April 1860 [*contact the National Trust*]

14 APRIL, Wednesday, HSNT committee meeting, Ross Smith Avenue, 7.30pm

28 APRIL, HSNT evening lecture: MAGNT, 7.30pm, Jim Sullivan, pastoralist. *Gold coin donation.*

7-19 MAY, Wordstorm 2010, Alice Springs

12-16 MAY, Wordstorm 2010, Darwin

22 MAY, Saturday, 10am: Meet David Carment at the Cool Spot, Fannie Bay.

12-14 JUNE: Trip to Fort Wellington, Raffles Bay. Contact Brian Reid telegraph station.

JULY: Trip to Tennant Creek and environs.

20-22 AUGUST: Return trip to Bradshaw Station. Contact Brian Reid

Your committee for 2010:

PRESIDENT: Matthew Stephen

VICE PRESIDENT: Yvonne Forrest

HON. SECRETARY: Janie Mason

HON TREASURER: Ros Henry

COMMITTEE: Maisie Austin; Judy Boland; Margaret Clinch; Earl James; Bev Phelts; Alan Powell; Brian Reid

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EDITORIAL

We have been successful in keeping the Office of the Society at the Girl Guides building on Ross Smith Avenue, Parap. So life is good again!

We have also been most successful in selling our lottery tickets—we have banked over \$500 and all the tickets are out.

Also we have been successful in keeping our national archives in Darwin—but we must not be complaiscent, you never know what might happen next! An interesting little bit of information from the Professional Historians newsletter (WA) - it was calculated that it would take more than 560 years for the existing collection of records to be digitized!! (p.16)

Did you know that two Australian place names have been ascribed to features on the planet Mars? Canberra and Woomera. [Placenames Australia (2010), March, p.5]. Also 'Australia' has been known not only a *Terra Australis* and *Nova Hollandia*, but also as *Notasia* and *Ulimaroa*. [read more about this in Placenames Australia (2010) March]

Volunteers at the State Library of New South Wales have been counting, rehousing and entering data from the Australian Consolidated Press Magazines Ltd. Archive which has recently been donated— 185,000 photographic negative is a treasure house of mid 20th Century Australian visual history.

Heron Airlines is re-creating the Grand Days of Travel—Darwin—London—Darwin by pirate air-liner. Darwin/London in 25 days leaves on 25th September next, travelling via Lombok, Yogyakarta, Singapore, Bangkok, Rangoon, Mandalay, Calcutta, Varanasi, Khajuraho, Agra, Muscat, Sharjah, Luxor, Cairo, Alexandria, Crete, Malta, Cannes, Jersey, arriving in London on 30 September. The return journey, London/Darwin, leaves on 4th October 2010, arriving in Darwin on 30th October. Included are tours, accommodation, guided sightseeing tours and the flight follows basically the original London/Darwin QANTAS route. Travel is on a twin alliedSignal TPE331 turboprop, Swearingen Metroliner aircraft and every passenger has a window seat. There is an all Australian crew of

two pilots and a tour escort. Sounds wonderful!!: the contact is: Heron Airlines, email: sales@heronairlines.com.au, telephone 1800 025 261

I leave shortly for a trip to Broome so Bev Phelts will have the HSNT mobile phone (0432 558 226) and tickets for the lottery.

Steven Noble from Darwin Walking and Bicycle Tours is looking for assistance for guides for a local guided heritage walk, operating Monday to Saturday at 9am for 2 hours, April to October around the CBD. Currently he is looking for two part-time guides, working approximately 8 to 16 hours each week, training is provided. He can be contacted on info@darwinwalkingtours.com or on 8981 0227

Tony Pickering has produced a small booklet on the '*Doors and Windows of Darwin*' available from me at \$10. It is a delightful small gift for friends.

A very pleasant dinner was held at the Frontier Hotel for our Annual General Meeting. Reports were presented by the President and audited accounts presented by the Treasurer - we really do need more members so what about asking someone you know to join.

A member of the Cairns Historical Society has been in touch to remind us that their office (staffed by volunteers) is open between 10am and 3pm. Their website is www.cairnsmuseum.org.au

I have just finished reading a most interesting book—if you like novels and Jane Austen - I would recommend Fay Weldon (1984) *Letters to Alice, on first reading Jane Austen* - a most interesting discussion of Miss Austen's work and how to write a novel.

I think that this will be my last newsletter as editor—there will be a committee doing it—and anyway 36 issues is quite enough for a girl. So 'thank you' to everybody for your kind remarks over the months and for 'feeding' me with information.

Yvonne Forrest

Ron Winch, FAHS President 1986-1991 and on the Committee from 1983 to 1996 died recently in Canberra. He was also President of the Canberra and District Historical Society in 1975-77, 1983-85 and in 1990. He was aged 89 years.

Ester Davies (Canberra Historical Society) and Julia Ryan have prepared a brief preliminary review of the new National History Curriculum—they feel it is 'old wine in new bottles' but there is certainly opportunities for the involvement of local archaeology, genealogy and historical societies to offer vital support. [I believe that it will include information on the Bombing of Darwin]. If you would like to see the full document try <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au> Hopefully someone from the FAHS will attend the History Teachers Association conference later this year and we are looking at prioritizing the 'training manual' on this subject as our next project which should be mounted on our website.

The FAHS has written to Suncorp Group after their acquisition of AAMI and the acquisition of a very significant business and insurance archive. This is the oldest and richest collection of such material in Australia. The recent investment in gathering, cataloguing and organizing this archive has uncovered a very significant collection of material relating to this industry. Suncorp has decided to close this archive from April and we are unclear what the plans are for its continued protection and future access by researchers. We await results. LATE NEWS: I have just heard that these archives are to be given a reprieve—excellent.

The FAHS is also discussing digitization with the hope that there will be a national coordinated project that undertakes the digitization and centralized storage of the 'distributed national collection' or provides all societies with the resources and assistance to facilitate the digitization of their collections. They also need accession to the web and the capacity to download appropriate parts of collections. It would be good to also have onsite training to ensure that people managing cultural heritage possess the necessary skill levels. It is hoped that digitization will protect collections from complete loss in the case of a disaster.

2009 was a very full year for the Society. We were successfully involved in the Charles Darwin celebrations with a Darwin Harbour trip 'In the Wake of the Beagle' and the publication of a lecture series. We made a return visit to Raffles Bay and were able to identify the fort site thanks to a contemporary map located by Ruth Kerr's friends in the NSW Archives. We finally managed to get in to the old Bradshaw station and look at some of the historic sites in conjunction with the Kununurra Historical Society. We also added our voice to the many that seem to have reversed the Federal Government's position on the closure of the National Archives of Australia offices in Darwin, Hobart and Adelaide.

The Society's publications, one of our main reasons for being, continued to come out in an orderly manner thanks to many. The Journal's high standard has been maintained by Alan Powell, our Occasional Paper series continues very successfully thanks to a big effort by Yvonne Forrest, David Mearns took on the not always easy task of manuscript editor for which we are very grateful and Bev Phelts continued to work wonders with book sales.

We have made some difficult decision in the shop front area. After a two year trial we feel we cannot continue with the shop front conception despite some stirring fund raising efforts by Yvonne and Bev. However we are determined to maintain an office. We have also decided to review our collections and reform our collection policy. This is a large task that the next Council will undertake.

The Society remains solvent thanks again to many but particularly to our drafted treasurer, Earl James. Earl was volunteered for this a year ago and has kept us firmly up to the mark for which we are all very grateful. The advice of Ros Henry and Matthew Stephen have added much to the capacity of the Council over the year. Lastly a big thank you to Janie Mason for the large and often thankless job of secretary. It has been very good to have you there.

Finally, I will be standing down from the President's position this year. I would like to take the opportunity of thanking all the Council members for their support and friendship for all those years.

Continuing research....

Megg Kelham, one of our members in Alice Springs tells us that she has been asked by the National Trust to produce a conceptual plan for the development of new exhibitions for Alice's oldest town building, the Stuart Town Gaol which turned 100 last year. She has discovered that, for the first two years of the gaol's existence the gaol keeper's wife was responsible for feeding the inmates. The Keeper received an allowance for the cost of ingredients and, depending on numbers, an allowance for the time and labour costs involved in meal preparation. The wife, who did the work, received no direct payment. The Government had no direct control over how this task was performed but things went horribly wrong in 1929.. Megg would now like to find out more about the Keeper's wives—who were they, what were their relationships with their husbands like? Was the money passed on to them? So she is hunting for information—she knows a Mrs Dow, Mrs Agnes Stott (wife of the 'uncrowned king of central Australia, Robert Stott) and Mrs Noblet— can anyone help???

Megg would also like to hear from anyone who knows women who spent time in the old yellow gaol between 1938 and 1984 and who would like to participate in this project. Her contact is meggkel@yahoo.com or phone 8952 9066. More information from 8924 7677 or at Megg will be in Darwin in the week of 19th April and would like to meet members - do contact her.

NEW BOOKS, JOURNALS AND ARTICLES ON THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

- Australian Society for Sports History (2009) 50/August
- Canberra historical journal (2009) 63/December
- History SA (2010) 204/March
- The Library magazine (2010) March
- Medical History newsletter (2010), 28/February
- Placenames Australia (2010) March
- Professional Historians Association (WA) newsletter (2010) 111/February
- Queensland History journal (2010) vol.20,no.13/February
- RHSQ Bulletin (2010) 739/March
- Trust News Australia (2010) vol.2,no.1/February

FREESTONE, Robert (2010) *Urban Nation: Australia's planning heritage*. Melbourne, CSIRO Publishing
ISBN 978 064309 698 1

PEARSON, Michael (2010) *Pastoral Australia: fortunes, failures and hard yakka: a historical overview 1788-1*. Melbourne: CSIRO Publishing,
ISBN 978 064309 699 8

NORTHERN TERRITORY 2010 HISTORY GRANTS.

Grants of \$500 to \$7000 are now available for research into Northern Territory History. Applications need to be at the Northern Territory Archive office by Friday 7 May.

More information from 8924 7677 or at www.lifestylent.nt.gov.au