



## **Historical Society of the Northern Territory**

**Patron:** The Hon Austin Asche AC

**NEWSLETTER December-February 2012 NO: 53**

PO Box 40544, Casuarina NT 0811

Office: Room 3, Girl Guides Headquarters, 55 Ross Smith Avenue, Parap

Mobile: 0487 413 709      [www.historicalsocietynt.org.au](http://www.historicalsocietynt.org.au)

Email: [historicalsocietynt@yahoo.com.au](mailto:historicalsocietynt@yahoo.com.au)      Newsletter Editor: Bev Phelts

### **President's Report by Dr Brian Reid**

Welcome to 2012 and another year of interesting lectures, field trips and activities.

This year our activities will differ slightly from the usual as we have two main anniversaries that the Society will be focusing its activities on:

- the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the bombing of Darwin and;
- the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of John McDouall Stuart and his party crossing the continent from south to north (Pt Stuart).

Our lectures for the year will be on Territory events surrounding the Second World War and our first speaker for the year will be our Patron, Austin Asche. To acknowledge the impact that War had on Darwin and its citizens, Janet Dickinson's book, *Refugees in our own Country: The Story of Darwin's Wartime Evacuees* has been republished and will be launched on 19<sup>th</sup> February.

July 24<sup>th</sup> marks the day that Stuart and his party arrived at what is now Point Stuart, and the Society has organised a range of activities during that week. The Federation of Australian Historical Societies, which represents the interests of 1000 historical societies throughout Australia, will also be holding its AGM in Darwin on 23 July to coincide with the events. Our usual field trip will instead, be a day trip to Pt Stuart to honour the achievements of Stuart and his party.

### **Coming Events**

#### **Annual Memorial Service for Inspector Paul Foelsche – Tuesday 31 January**

Inspector Foelsche was the first police inspector in the Northern Territory and an avid photographer who died on 31 January 1914. The service will take place in the Pioneer Cemetery, Goyder Road at 5pm at Foelsche's graveside. Light refreshments will follow in the Masonic Hall which is adjacent to the cemetery. Parking is available at the rear of the Hall and entry is from Stokes Street. The annual service is organised by Lodge Foelsche and all members are invited to attend.

## ***Minh's Story: A Conversation* - Book Launch – Saturday 11 February 2012**

*Minh's Story: A Conversation* by Lam Thi Minh Nhuong and Ian Walters is a story about Minh's experience growing up Vietnam and her early years in Darwin.

Minh's book launch will be held at Ruby Vietnamese Restaurant (ex Louis), Paspaley Centrepoint 10:00am to noon. The book will be launched by Emeritus Professor Alan Powell.

If you are interested in attending please RSVP by Monday 6 February. Ring Bev Phelts on 89818236 (leave message), mobile: 0487 413 709 or via email: [historicalsocietynt@yahoo.com.au](mailto:historicalsocietynt@yahoo.com.au)

## ***Refugees in our own Country: The Story of Darwin's Wartime Evacuees* – Book Launch – Sunday 19 February 2012**

Due to popular demand and to coincide with the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the bombing of Darwin, Janet Dickinson's book has been republished and will be launched on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> February at 1.00pm in the NT Library.

The following was Janet's inspiration to write the book –

I always knew that the evacuation from Darwin in December 1941 on board the troop ship *Zealandia* with three children was a horrific time for my mother, Gladys Litchfield. While thinking of a subject for my tutorial in Northern Territory History at the NT University, I decided to take on the evacuation of women and children from Darwin during WWII. My mother's memories of the event were still very raw and my interview with her was teary. To verify some of the data, I also interviewed another *Zealandia* evacuee whose story corroborated my mother's.

During the planning of Battle of Australia year in 1991, I asked the organising committee if something could be held for the women and children who had been evacuated. The answer was yes, but I was told that I had to do it and that I should also apply for a grant. I did apply and was given one. I advertised the event in newspapers throughout Australia and the response was overwhelming. With this huge interest, I received many letters telling stories of personal experiences. The result was the Evacuee Reunion that was held at the old Darwin Hotel on 12 December 1992.

Several years later, I received a NT History Grant to interview evacuees. The interviews were heart wrenching and there were many tears during the interviews. In many cases, the women and their children were collected at very little notice and no care was taken to where they were sent. The conditions on many of the ships were overcrowded and carelessly catered for. It was a long and arduous journey with a lot of port stops along the way. Those who didn't have family to go to were billeted with strangers or had to support themselves.

Armed with all this information, and needing to publish these harrowing stories the Historical Society of the NT first published *Refugees in our Own Country* in 1995. This title was chosen because those women and children were forgotten once they left Darwin. Administrator Abbott sent word to the receiving city that those people were self sufficient and their husbands were all working for the cause. This of course was true in most cases, but for women whose husbands were killed in the first or subsequent bombings, there was no follow up to see how they were coping.

This book has been a release for me from transferred memories and understandings of what my mother experienced. I know that the people I interviewed appreciated the fact that someone was interested enough to listen and record their memories of that traumatic time - and then write about it. This was very special to them.

Janet's book will be launched very fittingly by Wendy James (nee Secrett), who at the age of six was evacuated to Perth on the MV *Koolinda* with her mother, brother and baby sister.

## **2012 Speakers Program**

As 2012 marks the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the bombing of Darwin, our theme will be on Territory events surrounding the Second World War.

Our first speaker for the year will be our Patron, Austin Asche who will talk about his personal experiences during the War in Darwin.

**PLEASE NOTE:** that the date of Austin's talk has been changed to Wednesday 29 February, 7.20pm for a 7.30 start at the Museum and Art Gallery theatre. Stay for refreshments afterwards.

## **70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Bombing of Darwin**

Some of the forthcoming Darwin events are :

- A commemorative service at the Darwin Cenotaph including a re-enactment of the first bombing raid by the Australian Defence Forces on Sunday 19 February from 9.30am;
- The Frontline Australia Ball at the Darwin Convention Centre on Saturday 18 February;
- A one-off commemorative football match at TIO Stadium on Saturday 11 February at 5.00pm;
- An exhibition named 'The Community Lens' featuring historic photographs of members of the Darwin community at the Community Art Space at the Civic Centre;
- Australian premiere of documentary 'The Bombing of Darwin - An Awkward Truth' with talks from the producers and the author of the book, Peter Grose;
- Talks, workshops and displays at the Darwin City Council Libraries and the NT Library
- A special event with the National Trust and Sing Australia at the Myilly Point Heritage Precinct;
- A Film Festival including screenings of documentaries, original newsreels and related cult movies;
- NT Schools Exhibition at the Chan Contemporary Art space;
- Historical photographic display of the original Post Office and Telegraph Station at the Main Hall at Parliament House;
- A fashion show named 'A Minute's Warning' at the Parap Hanger, Parap in the evening of the 19 February;
- Heritage tourism packages; and
- Government and community arts events.

For further information see [www.frontlineaustralia.com.au/events](http://www.frontlineaustralia.com.au/events)

## **HSNT AGM – Wednesday 28 March – 7pm for 7.30pm start**

Our AGM dinner will be held at Hot Rock Restaurant function room (ex NT News site) in Mitchell Street. The restaurant is at Bennett Street end, opposite Kitty's O'Shea's (old Hot & Cold Bar). If you wish to come along to the AGM dinner the cost will be \$40 p/p which includes an entrée of baguette filled with garlic and herb butter, a main course choice of barramundi, rump steak or chicken breast and a desert choice of either cheesecake or liquored mud cake Drinks are extra.

Also at the AGM, Jimmy Cadogan's book *The book of Harry, Eric and Bronte* will be launched

If you are attending, please send your cheque/money order for the AGM, with your details to PO Box 40544, Casuarina NT 0811 by Friday 18 March. For inquiries, contact Bev Phelts on 89818236ah or mobile: 0487 413 709 or email: [historicalsocietynt@yahoo.com.au](mailto:historicalsocietynt@yahoo.com.au)

The agenda, previous AGM minutes etc. will be sent out in the next newsletter

## **The Chief Minister's Northern Territory History Book Award**

is now open for applications.

Entries Close 30 March 2012 and the winner receives \$1000.

The Award is given to the best historical book on the Northern Territory published between 1 January and 31 December 2011.

For information and an application form, go to the NT Library web site – [www.ntl.nt.gov.au](http://www.ntl.nt.gov.au)

## **HSNT Day Trip – July 24**

This year, our annual field trip will be a day trip to Pt Stuart to mark the day that Stuart and his party arrived at Chambers/Finke Bay. The reenactment will be led by Jim Stuart, descendent of Stuart's sister and Ian Wilson descendent of Stephen King. The reenactment will include the speeches, toast and the raising of the Union Jack made by Stuart and his men. The trip will form part of the John McDouall Stuart 150<sup>th</sup> celebrations which will be held from July 12 to 26. A bus will be available to transport members to the site. More details about the trip will be advertised later in the year.

## **New Publications**

The Society has four new publications which are available to purchase –

An Occasional Paper by Janie Mason – *The Gentle Touch: The Social Life and Impact of Pioneering Women*. Janie discusses the role of the white women who came to the Territory to nurse, teach and work along side men in primary industry.

Price \$10.00 (\$8.90 & \$1.10 GST) plus postage & handling \$2.50

Janet Dickinson (nee Litchfield) book *Refugees in their own Country*

Janet's book had been out of print for some years but there has been a renewed interest in the book sparked by the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Janet tells of the one of the most horrendous sea journeys that top end women and children had to undertake in December 1941, two months before Darwin was bombed. Price \$20.00 (\$18.20 & \$1.80 GST) plus postage & handling \$3.00

Jimmy Cadogan, *The Book of Harry, Eric and Bronte*

This is a tragic story of three brothers, Jimmy's uncles, who lived in the Territory undertaking various occupations between the two world wars. They came from Paraguay and were descendants of the New Australia settlement. While one brother died in the Territory, the other two passed as a consequence of World War Two problems. Unfortunately the three of them met untimely and sad deaths

Price \$20.00 (\$18.20 & \$1.80 GST) plus postage & handling \$3.00

Lam Thi Minh Nhuong and Ian Walters, *Minh's Story: A Conversation*

This is a story about Minh's experience growing up in Vietnam and her early years in Darwin.

Price \$20.00 (\$18.20 & \$1.80 GST) plus postage & handling \$3.00

## **92nd Anniversary of the Great Air Race from England to Australia (Darwin) held on 10 December 2011**

This year the commemoration was held on Friday 9 December at the Great Race Monument situated on Ross Smith and East Point Roads. The event was organised by the Fannie Bay History and Heritage Society, Darwin High School, the Defence Force and the Darwin City Council.

To mark the occasion, the NT Library followed proceedings with a function and display of memorabilia.

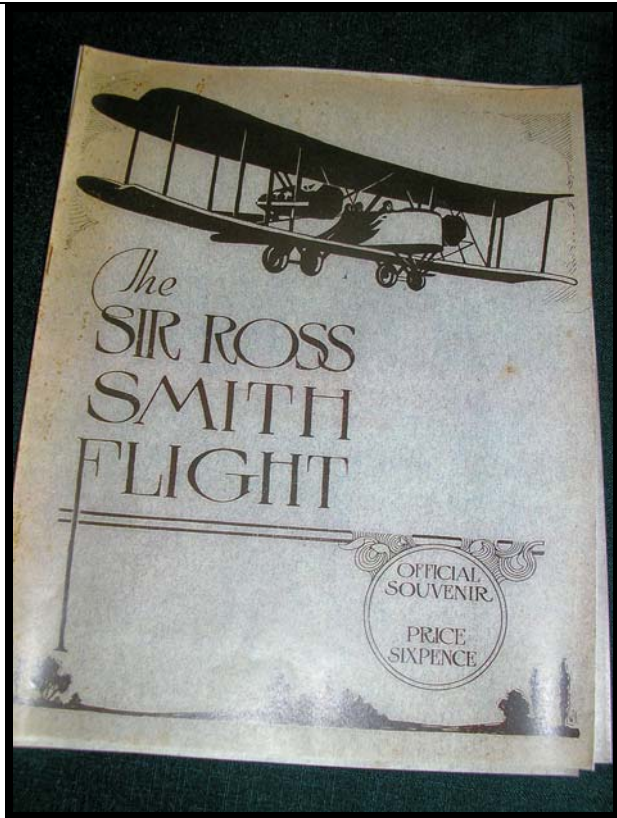
Our patron, The Hon Austin Asche AC spoke about the great journey that the men undertook and the harrowing experiences on their flight to Darwin.



Justice Austin Asche and Darwin City Council Alderman Alan Mitchell



Barbara Hickey, Bob and Kay Schultz



Memorabilia from the day



Darwin City Council Aldermen Helen Galton & Heather Sjoberg



Margaret Clinch and Dr Val Asche



Peter Radke and John Richards



Barbara Hickey and Leo Izod



Brian and Mary Woodrow



Ash Dally, Dr Brian Reid and Margaret Clinch



Judy Boland who organised the event

## Sunday Christmas Brunch – 27 November

Twenty- seven people turned up for brunch. It was a very enjoyable morning and a welcome opportunity to catch up with some of our members that we don't see very often.

Wendy and Earl James had exceeded our expectations with their homemade delights. We were treated to a variety of quiches, egg, mushroom and meat dishes. Lyn Reid, as promised, brought along her champion mince pies topped with deadly brandy butter.

Champagne and orange topped brunch off nicely.



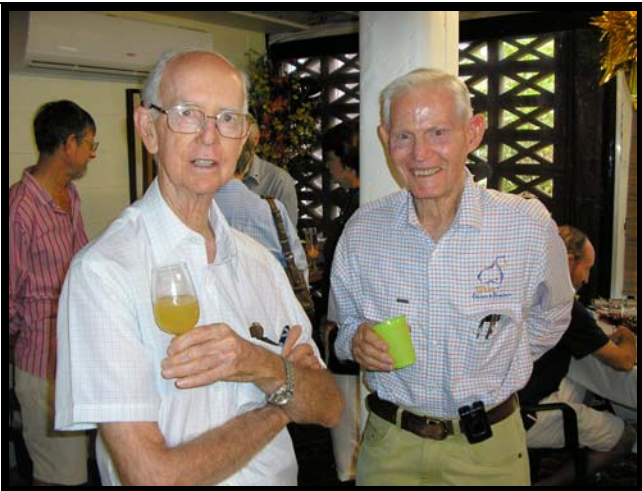
Carl Cossill & Dorothy Green



Dr Lyn Reid and Sharon Dally



Left: Penny Baird, Julie Mastin, Anne & Mario Zerafa



Dr Alby Foreman & Reg Wilson

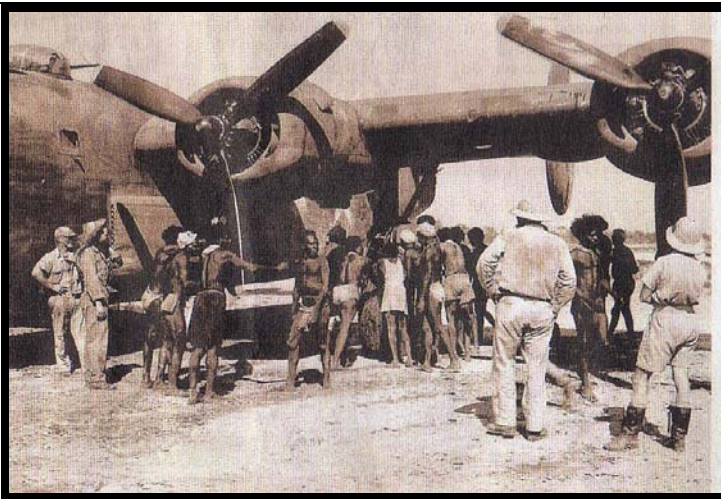


Our Vice President and President, Drs Bev Phelts & Brian Reid

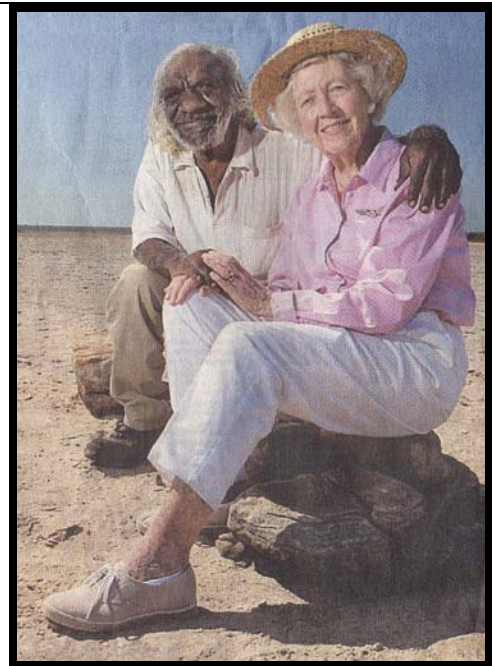
## The Daring Mission of *Shady Lady* – August 1943

On 13 August 1943, pilot, First Lieutenant Doug Craig and his crew on the *Shady Lady*, a B-24 Liberator Bomber, were to fly further than the plane's design capabilities. The 2700 nautical mile mission took off from Darwin to complete a marathon 16 hour raid into Borneo. On its return journey to Australia, it was forced to land on Anjo Peninsula which is halfway between Darwin and Broome. The successful mission had survived tropical thunderstorms, Japanese anti aircraft artillery and set a new record for a bomber. The crew were rescued by local Aborigines and Benedictine monks. Sixty-eight years later, Clement Maraltadj, the grandson of Paul Maraltadj who helped rescue the crew, and Alice Craig, widow of First Lieutenant Craig, met on the salt-flat at Anjo Peninsula to unveil a plaque and to mark the anniversary.

Information and photographs from *The Weekend Australian*, August 20-12, 2011



*Shady Lady* on the Anjo Peninsula salt flat



Clement Maraltadj, grandson of Paul Maraltadj and Alice Craig, widow of First Lieutenant Doug Craig

**If you haven't already paid -  
Memberships for 2012 (January-December) – are now due**

With your membership you will receive regular newsletters and our annual journal.

Membership fees are \$25 for pensioner/full time student, \$40 for individuals and \$50 for a family/ institution

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**I/We wish to join/renew membership with the Historical Society of the NT**

TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_ NAMES: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: HOME: \_\_\_\_\_

WORK: \_\_\_\_\_

MOBILE: \_\_\_\_\_

SUBSCRIPTION RATE:  
(Please tick)

\$25 for pensioner or full time student     \$40 for individuals

\$50 for a family or institution

Tear off and send to PO Box 40544, Casuarina NT 0811

**Donations are most welcome**