



Historical Society of the Northern Territory

Patron: The Hon Austin Asche AC

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President's Report by Dr Brian Reid

For many years the Society has managed an archive. It comprises an archive of Society business, collections of images, letters, books etc gifted to the Society and a wide range of books, periodicals and newspapers. Over the years we have had much appreciated help from archivists to manage the growing collection; more recently from Margaret Clinch and Yvonne Forrest.

But archives require space, suitable storage conditions, updated catalogues, a capacity to be searched and facilities that can be accessed by researchers and others. In human and physical terms, this has become an increasing problem. We have sought expert advice on the matter and generally that has been to appreciate that there are other organizations and institutions around Darwin who manage collections in a more ongoing and professional way. As a consequence we have reluctantly decided we can no longer manage an archive.

However that decision generates a range of further questions; we need to know more precisely what is in our archive, we need to decide what to dispose of and what to pass on to other collections. We need to decide how to manage our own Society archive and we need to work out how to manage gifts and bequests. It is with these questions we now wrestle.

Field trip to Victoria River Downs Station, Darwin Show weekend, 22-24 July.

VRD Managers, Russell and Julie Richter will allow us to camp near the homestead and run a guided tour of the Station's buildings. As well as being one of the earliest and largest Top End stations, VRD was also where one of the early Australian Inland Mission Hospitals was established.

The proposed itinerary is –

Friday, 22 July (show day) - Muster at Buchanan Highway turnoff at 12 Noon. The turnoff is 30kms east side of Timber Creek. (People could spend Thursday night at Timber Creek/Victoria River Roadhouses).

Travel in convoy to VRD (approx 110km to VRD homestead from the turnoff). Lunch at Jasper Gorge along the way. Set up camp at Jacky's Camp on the Wickham River adjacent to VRD Homestead.

Saturday, 23 July – The managers will provide a tour of the surrounds, VRD's homestead, the Old Store and Post Office, the WW2 bomb shelter, cemetery and the National Trust Old Nursing Home/Hospital.

Sunday, 24 July - Travel back to Darwin at own leisure.

Expeditioners must be fully self sufficient. Julie Richter has kindly allowed us use of the social club's BBQ facilities and the bar will be open on Saturday night. There are two toilets we are able to use but NO showers. If you can brave the cold, there is the option of swimming in the river. Earl and Wendy James are taking a reconnaissance to the VRD prior to the trip. They will be reporting on the condition of the roads and heritage sites. Depending upon their findings, the itinerary could be modified.

The Managers are also concerned about OH&S issues and have requested that the following be inserted in our newsletter. "VRD is a working cattle station and due to OHS reasons we are unable to allow any visitors to be involved in the day to day running of the station in anyway. Although we make every effort to provide a safe environment for you to stay in, we do not take any responsibility for any damage caused to visitors or property while you are staying at VRD Station."

Let me know if there are singles/doubles looking for a ride and willing to share costs. We will try and pair you up with others wanting passengers.

Brian Reid is busy preparing field and history notes about the trip and he will hand these out at our muster point.

If members are interested in coming along, complete the form at the end of the newsletter or email Bev Phelts with your details. We need vehicle and passenger information in order to finalise arrangements with the VRD managers. RSVP by 15 July at the very latest.

Congratulations to Emeritus Professor David Carment

David was recently elected President of the Royal Australian Historical Society.

The Society was founded in Sydney in 1901 and promotes all Australian history. It has a membership throughout Australia and organises lectures, workshops, functions, walks and talks and promotes a wide range of topics in Australian history.

HSNT talk this Wednesday 22 June

At the Museum and Art Gallery NT Theatrette, Concher Street, Fannie Bay – 7.20pm for 7.30pm start

The theme for 2011 is to mark the centenary of the transfer of the Northern Territory from South Australia to the Commonwealth Government. Ken Parish, past member for Milner, will be speaking about legal aspects from self government to statehood.

Stay for refreshments after the talk

The Inaugural Parap Arts Festival this Sunday 26 June at Parap Place 12 noon to 10pm

The Festival is sponsored by the NT Government and Parap Village. Various organisations will be providing arts, craft, theatre, music, food and general entertainment and stalls.

The Launch of Bev Phelts' book, *Felix Ernest Holmes: Darwin 1890-1930: Racehorse owner, Pearler, Agriculturalist, Pastoralist, Butcher, Baker, Icemaker; and the first to switch on Darwin* in the Darwin Plaza Building on 31 May 2011.

Bev's book was launched in the Darwin Plaza Building by Robert Knight MLA, Minister for Essential Services. The Building was the site of the first public "power station". The Minister and Bev also unveiled two plaques - one plaque commemorating Holmes while the other, the site of the first public "power station".

The Power Water Corporation organised the plaques and provided a wonderful display of Holmes' engine parts and photographs dating back to Holmes's era. Thanks to Trevor Horman and Debra Wightman.

Felix Holmes is of Holmes Jungle fame and "Holmes Corner" flanked Smith, Knuckey and Mitchell Streets. From this site, he sold ice, cordials, frozen foods, meat and bread and produced electricity. Holmes also owned a fleet of pearling luggers, a share of the Don Picture Theatre, an awesome number of landholdings (32 lots in the Darwin CBD alone), and lastly, a stable of 24 racehorses that raced in both Darwin and Sydney.



Minister Robert Knight & Bev Phelts



The unveiled plaques



The Minister with some of the guests



Ash Dally, Leo Izod, Anne Wait & Bev Phelts



Michael Spadaccini, one of the owners of the building, Trevor Horman, Minister Rob Knight & Brian Reid



Judy Boland & Yvonne Forrest



Holmes' Tangye engine made in Birmingham was the centerpiece of the launch

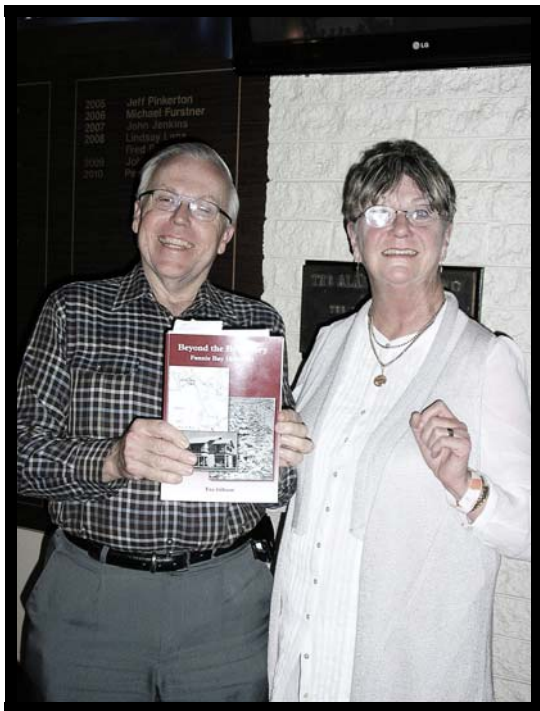


Peter Gloster, Greg Lambert & Carl Cossill

The Launch of Eve Gibson's book *Beyond the Boundary Fannie Bay 1869-2001* was held at the Darwin Sailing Club on 14 June.

Against the background of a spectacular sunset, Emeritus Professor David Carment launched Eve's book. The book launch attracted a large crowd of local Fannie Bay/Parap people and offered the chance to catch up with Eve and Ian. It has been nine years since they retired to Hobart.

The book focuses on events, buildings and town plans that contributed to the history of Fannie Bay. It covers the first buildings in the area which includes the railway, Vesty's meatworks, and housing. The book records the landing of the first flight from England to Australia in 1919, and the enormous impact that World War Two and Cyclone Tracy had on the suburb. A copy of the book can be obtained from the Historical Society for \$25.00 plus postage \$3.00.



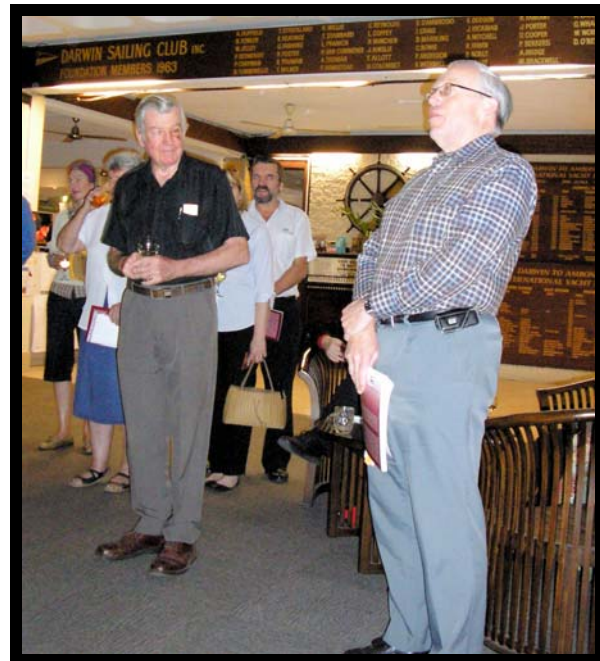
David Carment & Eve Gibson



Eve book signing



Some of the audience



David launching the book

Interstate Events

Advanced Professional Development Short Course at Port Arthur, 'Best Practice in Managing Heritage Places'

The Institute for Professional Practice in Heritage & the Arts (IPPHA) is pleased to offer once again the Advanced Professional Development Short Course at Port Arthur, 'Best Practice in Managing Heritage Places', from 15-19 August 2011.

The course is offered in collaboration with the Port Arthur Historic Site, and is part of a short course program that recently won an ANU award for 'Excellence in Teaching and Learning'.

Previous participants made the following comments about the course:

- "On site learning is the most effective. Applying knowledge to real life situations is how we will develop as good heritage managers."
- "Thank you for the fantastic opportunity to undertake the course along with the ANU students. It has been the best professional development training that I have undertaken."

Contact: Sandy Blair, Email Sandy.blair@anu.edu.au, Phone: 02 6125 5887

16th Engineering Heritage Australia Conference, Wrest Point Conference Centre 13-16 November 2011, Hobart, Tasmania

Hosted by Engineers Australia, this conference is the next in the series of biennial Australia and New Zealand engineering heritage conferences, the last being in Dunedin in New Zealand in November 2009, when a preview of the Hobart conference was presented.

The Conference Organising Committee is now inviting preliminary expressions of interest to participate, as registrants, as keynote speakers, as authors of papers or poster presentations, or to join the pre-conference tour.

Visit www.cdesign.com.au/ehac2011 for further information and to register.

The CDU New Medical Building opened by Prime Minister Julie Gilliard on 9 June 2011 by Janie Mason

Charles Darwin University's Nursing Museum was contracted to mount a display in the entrance to the new medical building at the University. The display tells of the stories from the Aerial Medical Services, the original Palmerston Hospital and three notable doctors.

There are a number of photographs of Aerial Medical Service visits 1968 to 1973 to Bullo River Station, Croker Island, Hooker Creek [now Lajamanu] and Rosewood Station. An open-air airstrip shelter served as a clinic. There were home visits to a brush shelter and another to a tin shed. There is a story of a man who refused to be evacuated to Darwin Hospital because he wanted to die at home – and he did two days later. Another story of a doctor who was nervous of the many dogs watching him examine a patient. Aerial Medical staff also had additional skills – such as the need to shoo away a bull from the plane [the Dove] and off the airstrip

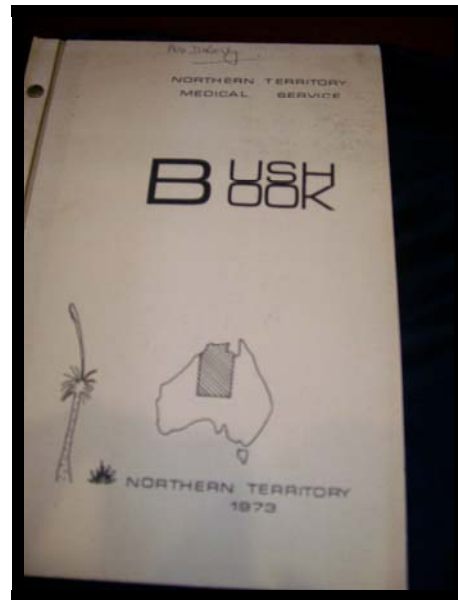
The story of Darwin's first hospital is briefly outlined – Palmerston Hospital “a little north of Peel's well”, now better known as overlooking Doctor's Gully. This hospital opened in 1874 and closed in 1941, with the establishment of the new 89 bed hospital at Lambell Terrace, Myilly Point. This second hospital for Darwin opened 2 February 1942 and was bombed 17 days later.

Three well known doctors are also featured in the display. They are WA “Spike” Langsford, Director of NT Medical Services 1950s to 1972, Charles Gurd, Medical Superintendent Darwin Hospital 1972/3 and Director of NT Health 1974 to 1981, and John Hargraves, well known for his pioneering work with leprosy. Some standard treatment manuals for staff in remote places are also on display. The Bush Book is an early example. The two badges on display are one for all medical, nursing and allied health staff prior to 1935 and the other of the NT Aerial Medical Services 1948 until its closure in 2010.

This display is open during business hours in Building Yellow 4. Visitors are welcome.



The Palmerston Hospital and three doctors



The Bush Book, 1973 Standard Treatment Manual