

Peach Trees Gazette

Peachester History Committee Inc. Newsletter
Number 194 ~ May / June 2024

NEWS AND COMING EVENTS

SUNDAY 26TH MAY: Regular open day at Peachester Heritage Centre, 10.00 to 2.00pm.

SUNDAY 2ND JUNE: PHC lunch meeting at Peachester Hall, from 11.00am. Please bring lunch to share as usual.

Theme: Visit by Les and Lorraine Clarke, who will show the film "Along the Passage: A history of the Clarke family in Caloundra." This film was produced by SC Council. Les will also talk about his experiences in the fishing industry.

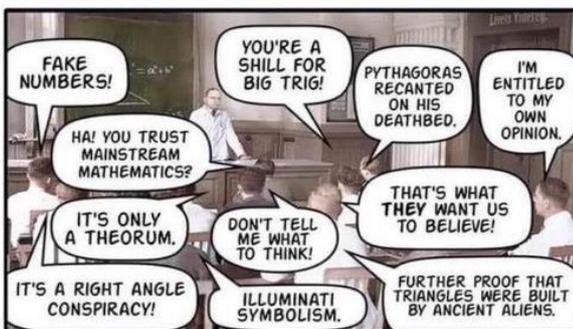
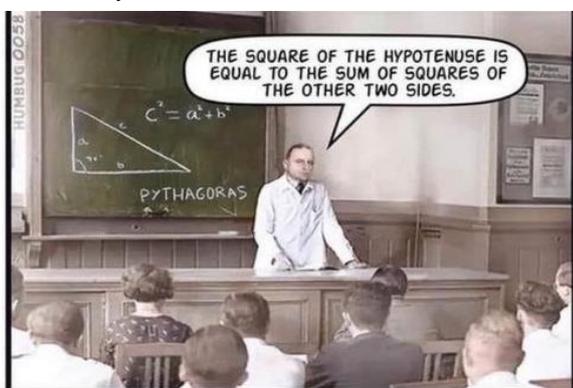
SATURDAY 8TH JUNE: Peachester Village Markets 8.00am - 12 noon at the hall, hosted by Peachester QCWA. PHC volunteers are running the canteen - helpers welcome.

SUNDAY 23RD JUNE: Regular open day at Peachester Heritage Centre, 10.00 to 2.00pm.

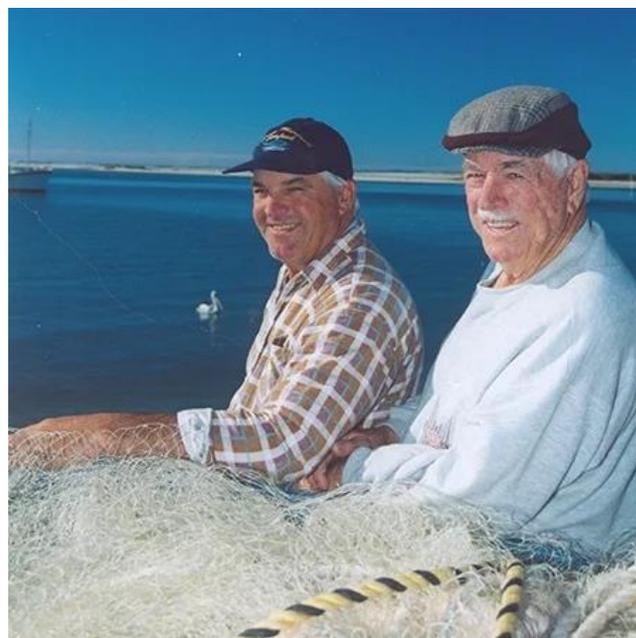
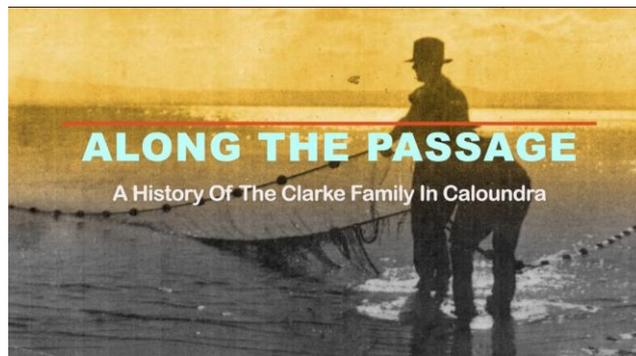
Any questions, please contact:
Helen (54949557), Trudy (0421760810)

CAN YOU RELATE?

A commentary on modern life.



THE CLARKE FAMILY IN CALOUNDRA



Professional fisherman Lloyd Clarke with his son Les at Golden Beach, ca 2000. (Picture SC)

CALOUNDRA'S PIONEER FISHING FAMILY

The film celebrates the history and connection of the Clarke family to the local fishing industry.

Les Clarke and his family have been professional fishers in Caloundra since the 1920s, and he and his wife Lorraine live on their fishing boat in Pumicestone Passage.

"Along the Passage: A History of the Clarke Family in Caloundra" celebrates the history and connection of the Clarke family to the local fishing industry and community life.

Film produced by James Muller, Earth Base Productions. Funded by the Arts and Heritage Levy.

The Clarkes were an important fishing family in Caloundra, arriving by boat from Coochin Creek, near Beerwah, in 1924. Evan Clarke set up an ice factory in Maloja Ave, near the Passage, mainly to supply the family's fishing business.

This enabled them to store the big winter hauls of mullet from the ocean side of Bribie Island until trucks were available to take the catch to Landsborough Station for transport to Brisbane.

The Clarkes helped the military during the Second World War, advising of weather and tidal changes as well as allowing them to use their ice works for free to store cold goods and meats for troops camped nearby.

(From SC Council and *Courier Mail*)

FAREWELL TO JOHN AND ELVA

It has been very sad this year to say farewell to two of our good friends and PHC members, John Innes and Elva Dimsey. We send our best wishes and condolences to John's wife Pam, and to our treasurer Elaine, and to their families.

It was John who secured the Memorial Window for us in 2001, indirectly influencing the layout of the Heritage Centre, as we set the window up first . . . and the rest fell into place around it!

Following are their stories, provided by both families.



JOHN INNES, 1929 - 2024



John Innes lived a rich and interesting long life, becoming a well-known member of the Glasshouse Country community.

His wife Pam tells John's story (adapted from the family eulogy for John's funeral service):

John was born on 18th June 1929 at Caboolture Hospital, which has since been relocated to Caboolture Historical Village. His father Wallace came from a big Scottish Presbyterian family with his siblings being doctors, teachers, an author and theologians. His mother Edris came from a family of farmers and teachers. John loved staying on the farms at Armstrong Creek and Dayboro.

John had two older sisters, Marion and Edris, and two younger brothers, David and Lesley. His family later moved to the Nundah area and John attended Virginia State School and later State High School.

One story John tells of his childhood was when his father was called up for army service and John had to take over the milking at short notice. It was a crash course in learning for him but it stood him in good stead when later we had our own house cow.

After leaving school John was apprenticed as an electrician at Synchronome Electrical Company. One of his jobs was maintaining the clock mechanism of the Brisbane Town Hall.

John and I met through church activities in the Nundah Anglican Parish. We started to see each other regularly, and were married on the 3rd May 1952 at St. Francis Church at Nundah.



We built a home at Zillmere next door to John's parents who had given us some land as a wedding present, and with help from members of both our families. We spent many evenings working on finishing one section of the L-shaped house, making do with beach towels as doors. When Susan was born a bedroom was ready for her and by time Wendy came along the other section had floorboards. Many improvements were in place before the births of Garry and Donald. By the time they were teenagers we had added a room for our pool table.

John's father had been an amateur beekeeper and when he died in 1962 John took over his hives. He joined the Brisbane Amateur Beekeepers Association and just two years later won his first prize as a novice at the Royal Brisbane Agricultural Show. As his interest in bees grew, he decided he needed to learn more and enrolled in a short course on beekeeping at Gatton Agricultural College. As a family we went on numerous beekeeping field trips.

When he was eventually semi-retired as an electrician, and our four children had left home, his hobby interest in bees was starting to expand so we thought we should move from suburban Brisbane to a rural area. We were already well acquainted with Beerwah because of visits to my cousin Coral and her husband Trevor. We were fortunate to find a property suitable for a bee keeper. So, the big move began.

We finally moved in at Easter 1982. But very soon after our move an offer came of other work in Brisbane. John went back to fulltime work as an electrician, travelling daily to work at Virginia and I'd become a mature age student at TAFE at Carseldine campus so the move meant a lot of travelling for us.

Finally, it was time to give more attention to the bees. John eventually had 300 hives and sold the honey to the Honey Corporation. The hives were mainly located in state forests around South-east Queensland. So this also entailed much travelling, often at night when bees were being moved on to the next honey flow.

Over his lifetime John won many ribbons for his entries in the Caboolture Agricultural Show and took out the Grand Prize a number of times. He was invited to be judge of the Beekeeping Section of Caboolture and Woodford Shows and once at Redcliffe Show. After some 50 years, eventually age and the heavy weights, meant John had to sell many of his hives. Disease further depleted the number until he only had a few left, enough just to keep us in honey.

My father had been an orchid fancier in retirement, and I had received many orchids as gifts. However, the orchids were neglected a lot of the time and I was relieved when John took them over. This interest soon grew and in time John had hundreds of orchids in his care and had many prize ribbons to show for his efforts. He joined the Orchid Club and in later years went on to become President. He also trained to become an orchid judge. John's love of orchids and mine of gardening took us around the world as we attended flower shows in a number of countries.

John's most loved tale of life at Beerwah was the time when we were looking after our daughter's dog. I had come across a carpet snake downstairs and we were worried for the dog's safety. We called the Australian Reptile Park, and Steve Irwin arrived with a bag that proved to be too small for the size of the snake. Steve just picked the snake up by hand and threw it on the front seat and drove off.

Moving to Glasshouse Country brought another life twist. Through my placing an item in the small community paper at Maleny for the Society of Women's Writers I was first asked to help with writing local items for Glasshouse Country News, then to be a paid helper. When the editor and co-publisher Sue Parnell wanted out, she finally persuaded me to take over. It was a big decision for each of us, as I became editor and John became circulation manager of a fortnightly 2000 copy paper. Eventually the paper grew both in size and number to over 6000 copies weekly. We had several approaches from people who wanted to buy the paper. Lee was more persistent and once again we were in semi-retirement.

We had enjoyed living at Beerwah very much but as John had some of his bees on the property and our neighbours had two little boys, he was afraid they might get stung. We started looking for acreage more suitable. In 1986 we were lucky to find it halfway to Peachester, on the cusp as we said.

Another new venture was to plant macadamia trees. So it began. With the help of a local grower, 500 trees were planted and another 100 were added later. John's father came from an academic family but he chose to be a farmer instead. In the end John's heart was also in farming.

When the trees finally started producing we, and especially John, were kept busy supplying nuts to Sunshine Gold Macadamias at Gympie. In recent years it became too big a job and Susan and her husband Trevor were a great help with this. I know John would want to me give our thanks to Susan and Trevor for the many additional years we were able to stay in our own home because of their constant help with all our needs.

John became a behind-the-scenes supporter after I had been asked to join the Chaplaincy Committee at the new Beerwah High School. He had also been appointed Warden for Caloundra/Glasshouse Country Anglican Parish, and a member of the Peachester History Committee as well as a member of the Peachester Garden Club also going on to becoming President.

Our friend Helen Page, reflecting on her association with John, pointed out how his forethought in securing the beautiful memorial window to WW1 digger WHH Hume, when the Landsborough Anglican Church building (formerly Coochin Ck Methodist Church) was sold, had such an important influence on the design of the Peachester Heritage Centre.

We were both grateful for almost 72 years of happy married life. I have a wealth of happy memories of John, and last week he left me with a special one. It was my birthday and it turned out to be a special day for him too. We had family visitors and as our daughter-in-law Jill was going to take over the care of one of our remaining bee hives he was giving her all the instructions and bringing in anecdotes on the way. He thoroughly enjoyed himself. He passed away peacefully on 19th February at Erowal.

John loved and was proud of all his children, grandchildren and great grand-children and was grateful for the friendship of many. You will appreciate his quirky humour when you hear his choice of song for when the casket leaves. We were children of the war years and heard this song frequently, "Wish me luck as you wave me goodbye."

He would also have been pleased that he was piped on his way by the bagpipes as he left the Mary MacKillop Centre.



BUTTERFIELD STREET (From Pam)

When I read of Ron Gillinder's experience of living at Butterfield Street, my thoughts went to my experiences of the area.

As a child I visited a relative at what must be Lower Butterfield Street, as I seem to recall water at her back fence.

On the night of 1st October 1953, John was driving me to the Royal Women's Hospital, Herston, for the birth of our first child. It was a wild, wet night, and when we got to Bowen Bridge it was closed and we made an anxious detour through suburbia. Arriving at the hospital dripping wet, we pressed the bell; a nurse opened the door, took my case and told John he could go. Our next three children's arrivals were without drama.

John was again involved in the area in the aftermath of the 1974 floods. His employer gave him permission to volunteer to check the electrical wiring of the houses that went under water. He arrived home each night reeking of the smelly mud with many tales to tell.

ELVA DIMSEY, 1925-2024

Elaine adapted the following from the eulogy written by her brother David Dimsey.



Elva and Elaine at Bankfoot House, 2015

Elva Florence Dimsey died on Easter Sunday, March 31, 2024, one week before her 99th birthday.

She is survived by four children, ten grandchildren, and fifteen great-grandchildren. She had outlived all her siblings. There is no-one left who remembers her as a child: none of her school friends, no-one who worked with her, no-one who was with her in the Army. No-one who can bear witness to her early life.

Elva was born on April 7, 1925. She was therefore a year older than the late Queen Elizabeth, just over a year older than Marilyn Monroe, and four years older than Anne Frank. Canberra would not be Australia's capital for another two years. Orville Wright was still alive, as was Annie Oakley.

Elva was the third of five children born to Ada and Joe Gooding, in Bendigo, Victoria. WW1 had been over for six and a half years but its effects were still being felt, even though they would not have had much impact on a child of six and a half. We still remember her exhortation to 'remember the starving Belgians' whenever we refused to eat – something she must have heard from her parents, referring to the famine in Belgium in 1914 after the Germans invaded and requisitioned most of that country's food.

Elva's childhood spent during the difficulties and privations of the Great Depression gave her an acute appreciation of the value of a shilling and of the need to 'use it up or wear it out'. She was recycling before it became a thing – washing out plastic bags and glass containers to use again, knitting, sewing, darning, mending, etc. She preserved huge quantities of fruits and vegetables using an old Fowlers Vacola bottling kit, made jams, jellies and pickles galore, and brewed ginger beer. There was always a vegetable patch and fruit trees.

She started at Quarry Hill State School in Bendigo at a young age and did six years of primary school and four years of secondary schooling at Bendigo High School, leaving at fourteen and a half to go to work. Her early departure from school didn't mean that she stopped learning – there were always books in the house and her children all became avid readers.

Elva had been taught shorthand and typing at school and first worked with the Secretary of the Bendigo Show. She then

worked for a stockbroker in Bendigo and finally at the Bendigo offices of the State Electricity Commission. The family moved to Melbourne at the end of 1941 and she was transferred to the Flinders Street offices of the SEC where she met her future husband, Lyle Dimsey.

Melbourne in 1941 was an exciting place for a sixteen year old girl. The city was full of soldiers from all parts of the world. She and her brothers would socialise with the American soldiers, some of whom would come back to the house for meals.

In 1941 her oldest brother, Ron, joined the RAAF and, after training in Australia as a Wireless Operator and Air Gunner, left for England to fly with the RAF. Elva would never see him again – he died on the night of April 4, 1943 on a bombing raid over Keil in Germany. He was twenty-two and Elva not quite eighteen.

As soon as she was able, Elva enlisted in the Australian Army Medical Women's Service. After training she was transferred to the Casualty Clearing Station at Geelong and then to the AAMWS Head Office in Melbourne, and then to the Heidelberg Military Hospital where she worked for Lieut-Colonel Benjamin Rank. Dr Rank was the CO of a unit set up to treat complicated injuries from the Asian fighting whilst developing new techniques in fascio-maxillary and plastic surgery.

Although only aged eighteen, she must have been an impressive young lady, quickly gaining the confidence of such senior and experienced people. She certainly found the work interesting and challenging, often having to attend operations and document procedures. She described her time in the Army as the most interesting of her life.



When the war ended the POWs returned, and many of them eventually came to the hospital in Melbourne. They were shockingly thin and suffering from vitamin deficiencies. Elva said they were each given a jar of Vegemite and were encouraged to eat it during the day whenever they wanted. She said they seemed to thrive on it. There was always Vegemite on our table when we were growing up.

After the war Dr Rank arranged for Elva's early discharge from the Army so that she could go and work with him in private practice. He became a world-renowned plastic surgeon and was knighted by Queen Elizabeth in 1972. Elva worked for him until in 1947 when she left to marry Lyle.

Elva continued to work in medical practices for many years and to maintain contact through the RSL with the men who had fought in the war.

Elva's early life was lived during some of the most significant events of the Twentieth Century and it is worth reflecting on such a life, one in which 'humans intersect with history'. There is no doubt that the experiences through her childhood, adolescence and early adulthood shaped the rest of Elva's life.



She knew hardship during the Depression and was forever after conscious of never wasting anything – money, food or time. She knew the value of doing your job responsibly, conscientiously and well. During the war she witnessed the meaning of obligation and duty and knew the price that such duty can sometimes demand of us. Elva was not famous and she perhaps was not important in the eyes of the world, but she did significant things with people who were.

Elva was married for forty years, raising four children with love, care and diligence. In her retirement after Lyle died, she became an accomplished genealogist, researching both the Dimsey and Gooding families back for many generations. She collected the results of this research into a work she named 'Eldamian' and we think it is a masterpiece of family history.

Elva was, in many ways, the last of her generation – a generation that lived through the chaos and upheaval of some of the most socially tumultuous events of the Twentieth Century in Australia. She was not only a mother, grandmother and great-grandmother – she is an ancestor and a witness to history.

'A life of modest achievement is, nevertheless, a life of achievement'.

PHC 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Presented at the AGM on 3rd March 2024

2023 was the first for several years which began without the shadow of Covid, and we felt that PHC and the Heritage Centre had a busy and productive year.

We continued with monthly meetings, featuring a variety of guest speakers and historical themes. The February meeting was a great success, with Guest Speakers Gerald Youles and Bruce Winkel outlining the history of Woodchopping as a sport in this district, and also providing a demonstration (outside the hall). We also enjoyed talks by Gary Bacon on the history of Tibrogargan Lodge and Neil Halpin on his book "Tall Tales

True." We celebrated the 25th anniversary of PHC, heard the story of Beerwah Charity Sports (community fundraiser for CCQ), and enjoyed the film "100 Years of Maleny Show".

A lot of time was spent early in the year preparing for our contribution to the Woodford Small Schools Reunion event in May – researching history and photos for Peachester, Crohamhurst and Commissioners Flat schools. In July we participated in a Caboolture FH event at the Historical Village. Members enjoyed group outings to Landsborough Museum and Warrior Restaurant, and a trip to Brisbane to visit the Grand Lodge (with Gary Bacon as our host) and Meigunyah House Museum, the home of Qld WHS.

We always aim to hold a couple of film evenings during the year, borrowing films under the NFSA program. These evenings are good for fellowship and fundraising, and have become a tradition in our program each year. "The Quiet Man" and an Irish theme went well in March; but we realised just in time that our film planned for October, "40,000 Horsemen" set in Gaza, was highly inappropriate after the horrific attack of 7th October, so it was cancelled.

It was also a busy year for the Heritage Centre, with volunteers on the job every Monday, regular open days on the fourth Sunday each month, and a variety of other group bookings throughout the year. We added the display "Making" to the Women's Work exhibition, celebrating the ever-busy hands of the woman of the house. SCC Cultural Heritage funded a Preservation Needs Assessment for us which helped guide further plans and grants.

As usual we participated in the SCC Cultural Heritage network – members attended several training workshops, and the annual Heritage Sector bus trip.

Thanks to SCC for the grants which help us to keep afloat and up to date. With a Major Grant we purchased new laptops for the office, and Heritage Levy grants funded dehumidifiers and window tinting for the Heritage Centre, and a planned update for the Axemen in Competition display. The Community Partnership program continues to help us cover operational expenses such as insurance, rent and electricity.

For over 20 years PHC has worked with SCC on our Cemetery project, helping to care for Peachester Cemetery and enhancing its historical significance through the memorial walls where plaques are placed for servicemen on the Military side and local families on the pioneer side. We also host a Remembrance Day service at the cemetery each year, and in 2023 this was marred by the discovery on the morning of the service that ten plaques had been stolen. This vandalism has led to on-going investigations with the Police, and we have worked with the SCC cemetery team and the families involved to replace the stolen plaques. These are on order at present and Cr Winston Johnston has generously offered to cover the replacement costs.

We continued to work closely with the Peachester Hall Committee, helping with community events – two Bush Dances and the community Christmas Party – and it was good to see the community back at the hall after the last few rather strange years. PHC also runs the canteen at the Peachester Village Markets hosted by the local CWA three times a year, and this helps bring in some very helpful income.

Sadly, we have to report that we lost some members who passed away during 2023: Ian Bateman, Margie Mander, Robin Gillinder, and distance supporter (Inigo Jones' grandson) Malcolm Meikle, also just lately Dell Stokes and John Innes. We miss them all but are glad they have been a part of our story. Clearly, we need more younger members and volunteers, as the average age of members is 80+, so this is a challenge for the future!

PHC has functioned well again through 2023 because of excellent team work! It is not all work of course; the amount of chatter and laughter here at the Heritage Centre each Monday morning testifies to the importance of fellowship as well! Thanks to the management committee for their on-going commitment, to the committee members and other volunteers who keep the Heritage Centre going, and to all members for their unfailing support and stepping up when extra effort is needed.

Helen Page, President



2024 MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT	Helen Page	5494 9557
VICE-PRES	Jan Gresham	5494 2301
SECRETARY	Trudy Long	0421 760 810
TREASURER	Elaine Reeves	5496 9134
COMMITTEE MEMBERS		
	Jeff Bodley	5494 9846
	Ron Gillinder	0407 760 989
	Jocelyn Morgan	5439 0895
	Mike Sinnamon	5494 9149
	Eileen Strong	0416 308 558
	Les Strong	0416 308 558



MAY MEETING

For our meeting on Sunday 5th May, a celebration of the new plaques was held at the hall. The weather made it impossible to meet at the cemetery, however the families came to see the plaques, which were laid out at the hall together with photos of the servicemen involved and our other cemetery projects.



BIRTHDAYS AND OUTINGS

