

Peach Trees Gazette

Peachester History Committee Inc. Newsletter
Number 199 ~ March, April, May 2025

NEWS AND COMING EVENTS

SUNDAY 2ND MARCH: Breakfast at Glasshouse Mts Tavern, 8.00am. If you would like to add your name to the list, please ring Jan ASAP (54942301).

SATURDAY 8TH MARCH: CWA Markets at the Peachester Hall, PHC running the canteen as usual: sausage sizzle and drinks. Helpers always welcome!

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

SUNDAY 6TH APRIL: Lunch meeting at Peachester Hall, from 11.00am. This will be our AGM, and Cr Jenny Broderick will be in attendance. Guest Speaker – Peter Long (Trudy's cousin) who will speak about his book "Identity", on the life of bushranger Larry Cummins (their ancestor). Please bring lunch to share as usual.

SUNDAY 27TH APRIL: Regular open day at the Peachester Heritage Centre, 10.00am to 2.00pm.

SUNDAY 4TH MAY: Lunch meeting at the hall, from 11.00am. Video to watch: "Kenilworth Township Centenary 1924-2024" produced by SC Council.

WEDNESDAY 14TH MAY: Outing to Brisbane, visiting the RHSQ Commissariat Store and Police Museum, lunch at the Garden Room Café in the Roma St Parklands. More details later – but keep this date free. (Contact Jan for more info).

SUNDAY 25TH MAY: Regular open day at the Peachester Heritage Centre, 10.00am to 2.00pm.

Hope to catch up with you at one of these coming events.
Helen Page (0408 542961), Trudy Long (0421 760810)

CAN YOU RELATE?

What a marvellous invention!



WILLIAM JOSEPH BROWN QX47993



William Brown was a teacher at Crohamhurst State School when WW2 started. On 29th June 1940 he married Barbara Jones (daughter of Inigo Jones). He enlisted on 11th February 1942, and this story by his grand-daughter Pam (written as a school history assignment) tells of his experiences in the Army. The story has been edited for the *Gazette*.

LIFE OF WILLIAM JOSEPH BROWN AS A WARRANT OFFICER DURING WW2

By Pam Brown, 14 October 1996.

William Joseph Brown was a twenty-three-year-old local school teacher in the country. He had been teaching there since 1935. He remembers the announcement of war: "I remember it was, I think, a Sunday evening when the news came over the radio that we were at war."

The threat to the nation became real when the Japanese forces came down through Malaya and Netherlands East Indies, reaching New Guinea in 1942. When Darwin was bombed, Mr Brown's attitude at this time was: "I wasn't a bit surprised because we had been expecting it for quite a long time. I realised it was going to make a big difference to the way we were living because I was of an age to be called up to war service."

Mr Brown was called up with men from the coast north of Brisbane to train at the mouth of the Brisbane River at the old Fort Lytton. The purpose of these army camps was to prepare the soldiers for war. At these camps the soldiers did basic training. This was marching drills, learning how to fire and put together a gun. Once the soldiers had done their basic training they could then volunteer to join specific units. They could join such units as search-lighting, being a gunner, a rifle man, or the air force or the navy. Mr Brown, however, was called up specifically to start the searchlight battalions that were needed for anti-aircraft defence, especially in Brisbane. Mr Brown recalls the men's attitudes at the camps where they were preparing for war: "A bit like boy scouts, we were all rookies. We learnt a lot of things – how to handle a gun, all the parts of the gun, over and over and over. We thought the whole lot was bally hoo."

Equipment at the camp Mr Brown was at was almost non-existent. Leftover equipment from World War I was used. His unit was being trained to use searchlights but there were no searchlights for them to practise with. "Because we didn't have any searchlights and we had to train to steer a searchlight, the men had to hold their hats and steer them forwards and backwards. It was great fun." Mr Brown spent six weeks at the army camp until it was time to REALLY go to war.

Soldiers were mostly sent by ship to their destination. Because the Japanese had already been established on the islands for some time it was necessary to bomb the beachfront to enable the soldiers to get ashore. Once ashore they would drive the Japanese back up into the mountains where some stayed, not even knowing war had ended. The Japanese were taught to fight to the death and the allied soldiers never had an easy battle. In the later stages of World War 2 the Japanese used the kamakazi attack by divebombing their planes onto the decks of ships.

Often to travel between islands the soldiers were sent on landing barges. They were very large and could carry men as well as machinery and vehicles. They would drive up onto the beach and drop their stern, then the men would run out and then drive the vehicles out onto the beach. Mr. Brown was a sergeant when he was sent to Borneo and he recollects his experience on a landing barge: "You would get out of the back and into the water up to your neck."

The soldiers established camps on the beaches. They ate a varied diet. Mr Brown remembers the reason for this: "Remember, everybody was on rations in Australia largely to make sure that there was meat, fruit and good food for the troops. We were better fed actually in the army than the people at home."

In the Pacific the soldiers did not have anywhere to spend their free time. However, a popular time while away from home was when the mail came. Many of the soldiers had wives, girlfriends and mothers who they would look forward to hearing from. When letters were sent home from the soldiers they were censored if the letter contained any evidence of, for example, name of your transport, dates of sailing and destination.

The soldiers would hear about the progress of the war on the wireless and were not left uninformed even though they were in isolated places.

Mr Brown's division's main purpose was to do the military mopping up. The Americans fought and bombed the islands occupied by Japan, forcing the Japanese back. The Australians would follow and tidy up the loose ends. Mr Brown was in Balikpapan, Borneo. This area was captured by the Japanese for the airfields, rich oilfields and vital refineries. Then in 1942 it was recaptured by the Allies.

Mr Brown manned searchlights here. He remembers the time when he spotted an enemy plane: "In Balikpapan it was the closing stages of the war. As I remember, one night a Betty plane (that is a Japanese bomber) came over. We exposed our beams and we caught him right on the middle. Further along the beach there were anti-aircraft guns, of course, and they were able to shoot him down. So we were very happy as we had at last achieved what we had been trained to do."

The war in the Pacific ended in August 1945. While still enlisted, Mr Brown was sent to Melbourne when the war finished. The job now was to resume a civilised life back in Australia for the soldiers. This was called demobilisation and this was the job Mr. Brown was sent to Melbourne to do. He took part in the rehabilitation programme. Soldiers would come to them to get assessed, then the officials would suggest to them what to do in the future.

The soldiers arrived home to find Australian life changed. The Americans had been in Australia for a couple of years. With them came new machines and their fancy way of life. The style of dress had changed. Women's attitudes had changed. They had taken on the roles of men and succeeded. Australian people had a different attitude towards life and they would never be so ready to accept things like they did before.

Mr Brown was discharged from the army as a warrant officer. Instead of returning to his job in the country to teach, he returned to Brisbane. Because of his training to be a psychologist in the army he used these skills to become one of the founding members of the Guidance and Special Education Branch of the Education Department which is now in every school in Queensland.

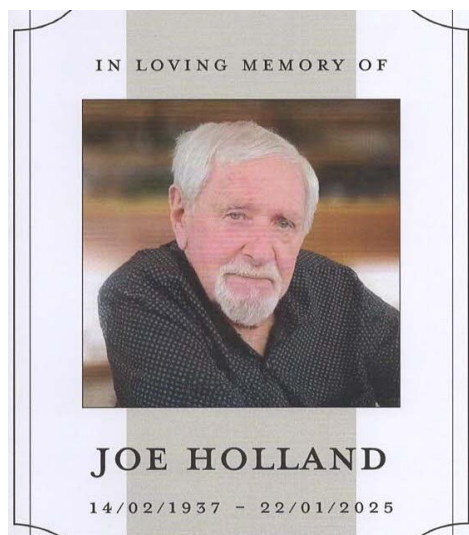
Mr Brown's attitudes at the end of the war were, "Naturally we were very glad it was over. After all, it had gone on for five years or more. People were sick of it, but we felt it was something we had to do and as soon as it was over we were all in a hurry to go home. The war's impact on individuals varied greatly. However, Australia gained a stronger sense of community than at any other time." LEST WE FORGET.



Great-grandchildren Oliver and Maisie Brown placing flowers on the grave of William and Barbara Brown at Peachester Cemetery, 2023.

TRIBUTE TO JOE HOLLAND

From Joe's daughter Toni Stieler (shortened for *Gazette*)



There are a lot of girls in our branch of the family tree. I'm not sure what Dad thought when he realised he had four girls to deal with but he must've done a fairly good job because at the last lunch at the Club with him, he expressed a debt of gratitude to our Mum, Joyce for us all and to our wonderful partners.

I've always loved Dad's style – the goatee, a cravat rather than a tie, calm, knowledgeable, witty, cultured. Urbane might be the word, though the safari suits hung around for a long time! The brief flirt with caftans gave Linda some pause to ask why he was wearing a dress.

I'm thankful our house was open and noisy and a bit free-range and do-it-yourself. The common cry was "The sun's out, you've got 3/4 of an acre to play in. Get outside!" The yard had an assortment of animals of varying degrees of wildness – turtles, birds in an aviary he built, an eel in a bath, chooks, guinea pigs, dogs, cats and whatever wildlife came for a feed. The front mango tree was perfect for climbing or falling out of.

When I spent some weeks in hospital when I was about 10, there was a boy with physical and intellectual challenges on the ward. Lester's middle name was excess energy and his last name was probably Houdini, so they added a cage to the top of his cast iron cot. When Dad came to visit, he'd pick Lester up and carry him around. You could've lit the ward on midnight rounds with the sunshine coming from Lester at those times. Dad taught me with that little gesture to share whatever I could, so as soon as I could get out of bed and walk, I'd read to the poor little girl with plaster from underarm to knee for a broken pelvis.

Andie vividly remembers going to the school discos because Dad would pop all the girls in the lime green Kingswood and take them up to the school. No amount of begging to be let out at the gate could stop him taking them safely all the way down the driveway to the door so they could all be seen climbing out of the most uncool, gaudy vehicle you could imagine.

Dad knew everything. I was sure of that when I was a kid and for decades after that. He could do anything too (except use the internet). Whatever needed to be done, he'd work it out. I remember Lil' Joe going to fancy dress at school. Dad had knocked up Ned Kelly armour for him, stuck some newspapers

under his arm and given him a sign saying, "Stand & deliver". Dad won a competition run by Lincoln by welding up a figure in mask and gear, receiving a welder for his creativity.

I'm thankful Dad's style with us wasn't always to just answer the question, but to question why we asked, encourage us to look it up for ourselves "in yer Funk and Wagnells" and talk thru any further questions. It made me curious about anything and everything and I learned all sorts of ways to find out for myself, have a go at anything and see what happens.

Music was such a big part of Dad's life, especially classical, opera and ballet. Our music was incomprehensible to Dad. Even the titles were beyond him. We played Suzi Quatro's 48 Crash often enough but he always pronounced it ending with a P.

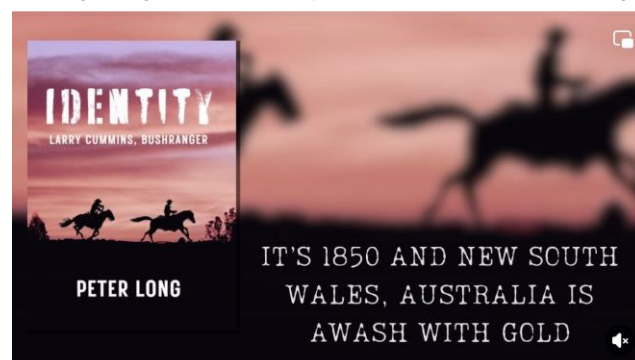
I could go on for hours but I hope you all got a taste of the joy, the fun, the humour of growing up with Big Joe. I can't thank my sisters, Noel and Sue enough for all they've done for Dad in the last few years. He never got comfortable with needing help but he appreciated every effort.



AGM SUNDAY 6TH APRIL 2025



Guest speaker Peter Long and the book based on the life of his great-grandfather Larry Cummins (later James Long).



EXCURSION TO BRISBANE WED 14TH MAY



Our proposed outing to Brisbane on 14th May is an opportunity to see the Commissariat Store (home of the Royal Historical Society of Qld). Entry fee is \$8 concession.

We will also be able to see the Queen's Wharf Development (right next door), and the Neville Bonner Bridge which connects to the South Bank parklands and Performing Arts Centre etc.

Then we will have lunch at the Garden Room Café in the Roma Street Parklands (highly recommended); and continue to the Police Museum, which is located on the ground floor of Police Headquarters at 200 Roma Street. Free entry.

Jan is organising this outing, and we need approximate numbers to work out the bus price. Could you let her know as soon as possible if you think you will be able to join us (54942301).



FAREWELLS



We were sorry to hear recently of the death of Mavis Robb, a long-term supporter and associate member of PHC (seen here with her son Ian, and Jan and Trudy on a visit to the Heritage Centre in 2023). Our sincere condolences to the Robb family. The following tribute was published in the GCMN last week.

Mavis Clair Robb

Mavis Clair Robb passed on the 19th December 2024, at Beerwah Glasshouse Views. We are grateful to the Glasshouse Views staff and her resident friends who provided tremendous support and caring. Mavis contributed a lot in her 96 years. Born 15 April 1928 in Jamestown South Australia to Bert and Violet Samuels, Mavis was one of seven children. She is survived by her sister Rosemary. Mavis trained as a teacher. She taught in South Australia, Tasmania, Queensland, Victoria and the ACT. Many students benefited from her knowledge and advice. She made a huge contribution to the community through her Legacy, Anti-cancer and community work. She believed in our democracy and was an active participant in elections. There are many people along the way who benefited from her caring, selfless approach to life. Much loved mother to Ian, grandmother to Sam and Tom, mother-in-law to Dorothy and godmother to Coralie.



Vale Mavis, we miss you dearly.
The Robb Family





Dorothy Harrison

19th April 1929 — 26th November 2024

Farewell also to Dorothy Harrison (nee Weyer), another of our associate members, who passed away in November. Dot has attended many functions at Peachester in the past, and told us just last year how much she enjoyed getting the newsletter. Our thoughts are also with Dot's family and friends.

MILESTONE CELEBRATIONS THIS YEAR

Peachester CWA Celebrates 80 years



The local branch of QCWA was formed on 16th October 1945, and ladies have met in the Peachester Community Hall ever since.

This year they are planning to combine two celebrations – International Day (focus on Ontario, Canada) and 80th birthday – on **Tuesday 24th June**.

Mt Quilters Celebrate 40 years



The local craft group known as the Mt Quilters started on 1 May 1985, and at their Quilt Show this year they will be celebrating the major milestone of 40 years.

The dates for the show are **20th and 21st June**.

(More info on both of these events will be in the next *Gazette*.)



SNAPSHOTS FROM HOME



"Snapshots from Home" evolved out of an oral history project conducted by the Queensland Performing Arts Trust Prime of Life Arts program as part of the Australia Remembers celebrations in 1995.

This theatre piece was to be based on the wartime memories of 24 men and women from Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast. These people share their stories with oral historian Sue Pechey and the interviews were recorded. Margery was given 600 pages of the transcripts. From these she set about choosing moments which could be dramatised to tell the story of what life was like on the home-front for this particular group of Australians.

The play gives us the human face of war. It is not a picture we are familiar with from television action movies and video game adventures. We are challenged not only to observe the impact of war on the lives of real people, people who could be members of our families, but also to question our own attitudes and values to the world in which we live.

Although the world has certainly shifted the 50 years since the setting of the play, we now view war in vivid colour on television rather than clustering around the radio listening for news. For a generation which has its vision of war shaped by television coverage where soldiers and civilians are killed, families and friends mourn. It is up to future generations to remember.

This was wartime Australia seen through the eyes of the very young, children and teenagers growing up during those six years, only gradually becoming aware of the enormity of world events. While some of the experiences were common to many, others were intensely personal. They were honest stories, sad, tragic, heartbreaking and often hilariously funny.

Margery decided to write a collage of memories, a collection of snapshots linked together by visual images, radio broadcast, dance music and songs. This required intensive research finding exactly the right songs from the era was vital. They had to do more than just add atmosphere they had to flow with the text and underscore the drama.

The initial performance was held at the Cremorne Theatre, since then Snapshots from Home has been staged as part of the inaugural Brisbane Festival, has toured Queensland and has won an AWGIE award. It has now published by Playlab Press, clearly stories about us are worth the telling. The way audiences have responded to Snapshots from Home is an affirmation of the lives of the elders of the tribe, who shared their stories and importantly made it possible for them to be documented for future generations!

'Home Front' at Bankfoot House exhibition

Explore what life was like at home during the war years | 5 Feb-8 Jun | Bankfoot House

Share



Every year, Australia has two public holidays and ceremonies celebrating the bravery of the ANZAC's, but how much do you know about the battles fought at home? Though they were not waged with guns and bombs, the battles of the home front were won with ingenuity, perseverance and patience. Come and explore what life was like on the home front of Bankfoot House Heritage Precinct.

GRANDPARENTS

How children perceive their grandparents. (From the Internet)

1. My young grandson called the other day to wish me Happy Birthday. He asked me how old I was, and I told him, 68. My grandson was quiet for a moment, and then he asked, "Did you start at 1?"
2. After putting her grandchildren to bed, a grandmother changed into old slacks and a droopy blouse and proceeded to wash her hair. As she heard the children getting more and more rambunctious, her patience grew thin. Finally, she threw a towel around her head and stormed into their room, putting them back to bed with stern warnings. As she left the room, she heard the three-year-old say with a trembling voice, "Who was THAT?"
3. A grandmother was telling her little granddaughter what her own childhood was like. "We used to skate outside on a pond. I had a swing made from a tire; it hung from a tree in our front yard. We rode our pony. We picked wild raspberries in the woods." The little girl was wide-eyed, taking this all in. At last she said, "I sure wish I'd gotten to know you sooner!"
4. I didn't know if my granddaughter had learned her colors yet, so I decided to test her. I would point out something and ask what color it was. She would tell me and was always correct. It was fun for me, so I continued. At last, she headed for the door, saying, "Grandma, I really think you should try to figure out some of these colors yourself!"
5. A 6-year-old was asked where his grandma lived. "Oh," he said, "she lives at the airport, and whenever we want her, we just go get her. Then, when we're done having her visit, we take her back to the airport."
6. Grandpa is the smartest man on earth! He teaches me good things, but I don't get to see him enough to get as smart as him!

OUT AND ABOUT

Photos from Australia Day at the Heritage Centre, and a group tour from Immanuel Gardens Aged Care.

