How New Farm rocks!

All 92 attendees were taken on a rocky ride through geological time by geologist Graham Muggeridge at the Society’s March meeting. Using the suburb and surrounding areas as the focus of interest on local rocks, Graham started the journey by pointing out interesting and familiar rock outcrops around the streets of New Farm.

We learned that the Australian continent is currently sitting in the middle of the Indo-Australian Plate which is drifting northwards at about 7 cm per year. Luckily for us, the Australian continent is relatively stable and generally not subject to the devastating earthquakes which frequently afflict neighbours such as Indonesia, PNG and New Zealand. This is because these countries, in part, lie along the edges of various colliding tectonic plates. These collision zones are also characterised by active and potentially destructive volcanoes, such as Mt Merapi in Java and Mt Ruapehu in NZ.

Australia’s stability has not always been the case. 500 million years ago, Australia was part of the Super Continent of Gondwanaland, which began to breakup progressively over the following 440 million years into the various presently known continents/subcontinents of Africa, South America, India, Antarctica and Australia.

Some of these geological events are reflected in the rocks of New Farm. 370 million years ago, New Farm lay within a deep oceanic trench close to a former tectonic plate margin, along Australia’s east coast. The coastline of this early continent lay to the west beyond Dalby, where a volcanic mountain range marked this coastline from antiquity. As these ancient mountains eroded, the seabed was uplifted to form the present coastline of southeast Queensland.

Local Curved Structures: Are these real Quonsets?
— (from top) Riverside Receptions, Oxlade Drive, and the rear of Stratton Street.

Local Quonset search is on!

Our July speaker, Roger Marks, requests your assistance before he speaks about Quonset huts, those lightweight prefabricated structures of corrugated galvanized steel, having a semicircular cross-section, examples of which are dotted around Brisbane.

Dating from around 1942, Quonset (Nissen) huts were a quick way for the US military to set up the extensive workshops and structures needed for the war effort against a possible Japanese invasion.

Roger is requesting that you take a photo of what you believe to be a Quonset hut and send it to him. “I would like to display your members’ photos as a basis for discussion,” he said.

A retired engineer, Roger says that there are several Quonset versions. They appear to differ mainly in the nature of the steel curved ‘arch’ member. Please send your photos to <qaww2@bigpond.com>.
rivers transported the sediment to the coast and into the sea where progressively the trench became filled with fine grained sand, silt and mud. As the continents continued to move and breakup, this trench was subjected to a continental vice where the soft sediments in the trench were deformed and crumpled into tight folds over considerable time and subsequently were thrust above the sea into a new mountain range.

The highly eroded remnants of this mountain range can be seen in the road cutting in Macquarie Street – and also form the backbone of the D’Aguilar Range and the foundation of the hilly western parts of suburban Brisbane.

226 million years ago, pressure from these rising molten granite magmas broke through to the surface somewhere north of New Farm and created the most catastrophic event in the geological history of New Farm. A vast explosion erupted from a volcano north of Brisbane creating a searing pyroclastic cloud of hot ash and poisonous gases hurtling down river valleys, sweeping all before it with intense heat and force.

This volcanic eruption event may have lasted only a day or two. The resulting rock formations of this volcanic episode are seen in the Kangaroo Point cliffs and the road cutting on James Street near New Farm State School, and form one of most significant features of the geology of Brisbane. These rocks are known as the Brisbane Tuff or Ignimbrite which, since the earliest convict days of Brisbane, have been used as a highly effective building stone. Brisbane Tuff has been used for St John’s Cathedral, Cairncross House (St Clair house) in James Street here in New Farm, and other Brisbane buildings including the Commissariat Store – and in sizable retaining walls around the city, such as at All Hallows in Ann Street.

Since the series of ice ages that have impacted on the world’s climate and sea level over the past one million years, the position of the mouth of the Brisbane River has been either well out into Moreton Bay or at a position near where it is now.

The Brisbane River is now the most important influence on the geology of New Farm as evidenced by the January 2011 flood. Historic flood records (eg 1974 and 1893) show that the Brisbane River has the potential to deliver greater flooding than that experienced in 2011.

Over the years since the end of the last Ice Age, Quaternary deposits of mud, silt and clay have been deposited in the areas subjected to this periodic flooding marginal to the Brisbane River, such as in New Farm Park.

These Quaternary sediments provided relatively fertile soils for the growing of crops in the early days of the settlement of Brisbane and now provide the setting of one of Brisbane’s most beautiful parks. – Graham D Muggeridge
**APRIL MEETING**

‘Real Great Escape’ author will transport us back to 1918

Jacqueline Cook has written the story of how 60 British and Australian prisoners of war tried to break out of the “inescapable” Holzminden camp towards the end of World War One.

In July 1918, 60 officers began the escape attempt, but 29 succeeded in getting away through a nearby field of rye. One officer hid on board a train and reached the Dutch frontier after three days.

To tell this extraordinary story, Jacqueline – a screenwriter at heart – solicited contributions from descendants of Holzminden POWs, who opened their treasure chests to offer personal anecdotes, wartime journals, unpublished photographs and artwork.

Come and hear more about this extraordinary episode in military history from Jacqueline on Saturday 26 April at Merthyr Road Uniting Church Centre, New Farm, 2-4pm.

Jacqueline will be accompanied by Ross Thomas, whose research on Beneath Hill 60 led to its being made into an acclaimed film.

**MAY MEETING**

Hear from a man at the heart of urban renewal

Who knows how Teneriffe, Newstead and Fortitude Valley may have looked today if Jim Soorley, Brisbane’s Lord Mayor (1991-2003), hadn’t established the Urban Renewal Task Force in 1991.

At the society’s May meeting, attendees will hear all about how Soorley fought bureaucratic inertia in order to achieve this vision, when local town planner Ben Pritchard gives a talk entitled: “The Seven Ages of Teneriffe.”

Uncertainty: Would people really like to live in an antiquated woolstore such as Winchcombe Carson? The planners have been more than vindicated!

Ben will wax lyrical about City Cats, the Riverwalk, the conversion of the Powerhouse, getting heavy goods vehicles off James Street, the adaptation of the woolstores to apartments, the reuse of the CSR sugar refinery, striking the deal to get the Gasworks project started, and building the Inner City Bypass – to name but a few of the key topics and projects.

Mark your diaries for Saturday 24 May, 2-4pm.

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**PROGRESS...**

One of Teneriffe’s unobtrusive gems

Florence Street is truly one of Teneriffe’s less visible gems, hidden away behind Vernon Terrace. The recently-formed Friends of Florence Street is committed to raising the street’s profile as a thriving hub of business activity, whilst celebrating its rich history.

President of the Teneriffe Progress Association and co-founder of the Friends of Florence Street, Ben Pritchard, who lives in the street said, “Businesses in Florence Street are of such a variety that you could live quite happily in this one street. We have doctors to photographers; grocers to town planners. The street is full of history, too, as the quiz on our Facebook page shows. Lookout for more quiz questions there soon.”

Sourced Grocers, at No. 11 Florence St, has just been voted Best Neighbourhood Shop in the World, by Monocle magazine.

For more info, visit www.teneriffeprogress.org.au or the Friends of Florence Street Facebook page.

Florence Street 1995: Paddy’s Market was operating in the woolstore, and across the road, terracotta planters were on special for $30.

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Books make the difference between the wise and the otherwise...
Florence Street farewells venerable home of Sargood family

By the time you read this, 27 Florence Street will show little evidence of the fine residence which once stood there.

Apart from the house’s recent use as business premises with the word “Love” prominently displayed, significant long-time owners were the Sargood family. Mrs Maria Fulcher, having lost her husband in 1895 and re-married, lived with two daughters Elizabeth (a tailoress) and May Sargood in Florence Street from before WWI. Her son John, a carpenter, joined the AIF and was killed near Messines in France in 1917.

For extra income, Elizabeth and May used the home to run a good standard boarding house which greatly added to the street’s sense of community.

Joan Sparkes, who grew up in the house next door, recalls that the well-respected sisters were talented rifle-women. “An overly persistent Chinese fruit and vegetable man, complete with pole baskets, was difficult to get rid of. One of the ladies simply took to the rifle and put a neat hole through his coolie hat, thereby saving any further argument,” Joan explained.

“Our houses were pretty close together. My sister and I slept on our closed-in front verandah.

Demolition in Progress: Before the advent of the woolstores, the home at 27 Florence Street commanded fine views of Teneriffe’s bustling waterfront.

Sometimes, the Sargood sisters would pass us an egg on toast through the window, using a kind of hand prop…”

May Sargood made the news in 1935 for saving a neighbour from burning. Mrs Georgina Living’s dress caught on fire from the boiler as she was doing her washing. Hearing her screams for help, Miss Sargood (then aged 49) told her to lie on the ground, then climbed the intervening fence and tore off the burning clothes. Mrs Living survived her burns and shock.

Later in life, one of the Sargoods’ male boarders returned and asked the hand of Elizabeth when she was around 60.

The good life should refer more to ‘values’ than ‘valuables’…
The ink of a scholar is more sacred than the blood of a martyr…

Team effort: Many thanks to Stewart Free for his keyboard melodies before the meeting, as well as to the behind-the-scenes kitchen team who always ensure that attendees are well-fared.
Saturday 26th April, 2 pm
Uniting Church Centre,
52 Merthyr Rd, New Farm

New Farm and Districts Historical Society
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