



MARCH 2024 NEWSLETTER

The Annual General Meeting was held prior to the February meeting. All existing committee members were re-elected un-opposed.

Elected members for 2023 are President: Ron Baker, Vice-President: Richard Jeffreys, Treasurer: Angela Hawes: Secretary: Ron Baker, Committee: Barbara Carloss, Helen Hastie: Lesley Brandis, Pat Skytte and Ruth Blair. Paul Barry was also elected to the committee. Congratulations to all the committee members on their election. The President's Report for 2023 accompanies this newsletter.

At the February meeting Con Drozdonskii spoke about the St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Cathedral and the centenary of the St. Nicholas Parish. Father Gabriel, who was to speak, was ill and unable to attend. This meeting was not held at the Queen Alexandra Home Community Centre but at the St. Nicholas Cathedral hall on Vulture Street, Kangaroo Point. Unfortunately, members had to swelter in the hall as the air-conditioning was not working. Con presented the group with two books for the Eris Jolly Library: Siberian Cossacks and Cadets St. Nicholas' Day Brisbane Australia and First in Australia history of St. Nicholas Cathedral in Brisbane (1923-2023).

Following the meeting members were invited to an inspection of the wonderful cathedral

Our President Ron Baker OAM will be the guest speaker at the meeting on 6 April 2024, back at the Queen Alexandra Home Community Centre. His topic will be Coorparoo Junction Then and Now. Ron will illustrate the numerous changes that have occurred at the junction over the years. Ron agreed to step in as speaker when the speaker we had hoped to speak to us was unable to speak in April owing to other commitments. That speaker has agreed to speak at another meeting during the year.

Your committee is always on the lookout for speakers for our meetings. If you have heard someone speak or know of someone, please let your committee know. Topics that the committee is considering for future meetings are Brisbane Metro, Female Suffrage, the boy scouting and girl guide movement in Coorparoo and James Stone and his ginger beer.

Planning for the October bus tour has commenced. This year it is planned to travel to the New Farm area to view some magnificent homes located there. So as not to clash with the King's Birthday holiday long weekend the tour has been moved to the following Saturday 12 October 2024. It is hoped that this tour does not have to be cancelled due to lack of patronage. Expressions of interest will be called at a later meeting.

Continuing our articles on prominent Coorparoo identities in this Newsletter we feature a Coorparoo girl who went on to become Miss Australia 1972, Gay Walker.

Gay Walker (Clarke)

Miss Australia 1972

Gay Walker was born in 1951, the youngest of four children and the only daughter. The family home was in Rutland Street Coorparoo.

She was educated at St. Margaret's Anglican College for 5 years where in her final year was made a Prefect and House Captain and won a Commonwealth Scholarship to go to university. Entering the University of Queensland in 1969 she enrolled in a Bachelor of Arts degree and graduated in 1972. This was an important year for her as she entered and won the Miss Queensland Quest. She then became an entrant in the Miss Australia Quest and was later crowned Miss Australia 1972. This was a life changer for Gay as she had originally planned to be a school teacher. The winning of Miss Australia helped her overcome her shyness and she became an expert public speaker. This was good training for her future career path. The Miss Australia Quest was the longest-running, most popular, glamorous and successful charitable event in Australian history. The quest was run by the Spastic Welfare League (now called Cerebral Palsy League) and ran from 1954 until 2000.

Later she married Brisbane Lawyer Varro Clarke and she had a daughter Samantha. Sadly, the marriage did not last and the couple divorced. Following the divorce, Gay, as a single parent moved back to her parent's home and enrolled in the Bachelor of Laws Degree at the Queensland Institute of Technology (QIT), now the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) in 1977. She graduated in 1982 with 1st Class Honours and the Law Medal. After graduation she was offered a position at QIT as a law tutor and was admitted as a Barrister of the Supreme Court of Queensland at the end of 1982. As her career developed, she was promoted to Lecturer in Law and then to Senior Lecturer. Not satisfied with her Law Degree she enrolled part time at the University of Queensland in a Master of Laws Degree, graduating in 1990.

In 1992 she was awarded a QUT Distinguished Academic Service Award for 'outstanding teaching performance and leadership in the Faculty of Law' and promoted to Associate Profess and Director of Teaching and Learning in the Law Faculty. Gay was one of the first women to be promoted into the Professorial levels in Law.

In 1995 she was appointed by the Commonwealth Attorney General for a three-year term as a member of the National Alternative Dispute Resolution Advisory Council (NADRAC). After twenty years of full-time career and having to look after her elderly parents for a number of years, she decided to ease into part time work. She remarried in 2002 she married Barry Page.

She continued her full-time career at QUT for a total of twenty years, however in 2002, after caring for her elderly parents for a number of years and marrying Barry Page, Gay decided to ease into part time lecturing work as well as running Mediation Skills courses. Gay retired in 2016

The above information was extracted from an article written by Gay Walker for the Australian Women Lawyers as Active Citizens in 2016.



Miss Australia 1972 Gay Walker



COORPAROO & DISTRICTS HERITAGE GROUP

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2023

It is my pleasure to report on last year's activities.

Our 2023 membership list stands at 59 members and the current Committee consists of 8 members. Additional Committee members are always welcome. Helen Hastie is stepping down as Secretary and I'm willing to take on the roll if no-one wishes to take this job on. It is not an onerous task. It is not too late to nominate for this year's committee. Members find participation enjoyable and informative

Sadly, we lost three members during the year, including two foundation members in Judy Rechner and my darling wife Barbara Baker, and long-time member Daphne Fortescue.

Once again, we were fortunate to experience interesting speakers.

In February, following the AGM, we listened to Constantine (Con) Drozdovskii speak about *Russian Gabba* and the Russian influence on the area. A booklet *From Russia with Love* was distributed to members and a copy is in the Eris Jolly Library.

The Brisbane City Council's Archivist, Annabelle Lloyd spoke to the group at the April meeting and informed us of the wealth of information about the city, available for research, held in the *City Archives*.

Dr. Betty Lee was our June speaker and spoke about *Commander Eric Feldt of the Coastwatchers* and the role the coastwatchers played during World War II. Copies of her book *Right Man, Right Time, Wrong Place* were available for sale and our group purchased a copy for the Eris Jolly Library.

An Anzac Day precinct in Brisbane: If not now, when? Was the topic of the August meeting when Peter Collins CGMM (Canon Garland Memorial Medal) gave a passionate talk about the foundations of the Anzac Day celebrations.

The Bus Tour of Hamilton and Ascot in October had to be cancelled owing to a lack of participants. In lieu of the bus tour Ron Baker gave a virtual tour of the area with a Power-point presentation of houses that would have been seen on the tour. Unfortunately, the meeting was poorly attended.

In December, our Christmas meeting, Ray Gilbert spoke about the republished book *Moreton Bay, Queensland in World War II*. Ray had copies of the book available and our group purchased a copy for the Eris Jolly Library. Several members of the Annerley Stephens History Group attended this meeting. Our group was fortunate to receive a grant under the Lord Mayor's Senior's Christmas Donation to assist in catering for this function.

I would like to thank the speakers who addressed our group and look forward to another year of interesting talks.

Apart from our speaker programme, last year the group undertook an ambitious seminar to feature Women of Coorparoo & Districts. The programme featured five women, Vida Lahey,

Senator Annabel Rankin, Caroline Barker, Professor Dorothy Hill and Pat Clark Ryan. This was a very successful exercise and was attended by almost fifty members and guests.

After a long wait our group was advised that our petitions to Council to name two parks were successful. In October, the small parkland in Lade St. Coorparoo was named Pat Ryan Park. Pat was a foundation member of the group and secretary for many years. In January, a section of Coorparoo Creek Park, on Old Cleveland Road, Coorparoo was named Wallace Place Park. This was the site for many years of Wallace Brothers Plumbers, until the property was resumed for park purposes. A worthy recognition of this well-known establishment.

At the June meeting Certificates of Recognition were awarded to those members with a 25-years or more membership. This included four foundation members. Sadly Judy Rechner, also a foundation member passed away before the presentation.

Our book library, The Eris Jolly Library, is continuing to expand due to generous donations by members and purchases of our speaker's books. The collection is kept in a cabinet in the room adjacent to the Kingsbury Room at Queen Alexandra Home Community Centre and is available at each of our meetings.

I would like to thank Mr. Joe Kelly MP, Member for Greenslopes and his staff for assistance with the photocopying of flyers and notices of meetings etc.

There are a number of members of our group who need to be thanked for their individual contributions.

Angela Hawes for looking after our finances and attending to numerous matters at our meetings

Helen Hastie for taking the minutes at our committee meetings and also managing the serving of afternoon teas at our general meetings.

Other Committee members for their input into various activities and contributions at committee meetings.

Also, Greg Doolan for looking after our web page and also our Facebook page

Also, our three tiers of political representatives who generously donated prizes for our Christmas raffle.

Our Honorary Patrons, Helen Hicks & Bruce Hunter are also thanked for their support.

Lastly, I would like to thank all members of our group for their continued support and attendance and contributions towards venue hire and afternoon tea. I look forward to seeing you at future meetings.

Ron Baker OAM
President
3 February 2024.