



FoPI Flyer

December 2008

In this edition

Historic lazaret in WA	1
President's Annual Report	2
FoPI Christmas party	2
New executive line-up	2
Ranger's update	5
Treasurer's Annual Report	6
2009 Events diary	6
Hot off the press	7

Editor & layout: Gabi van Willigen
 Editorial assistance: Rhonda Bryce
 Contributions are welcome:
gabvanw@optusnet.com.au

Any opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the author and not necessarily those of the organisation.

Historic lazaret in WA

Past FoPI president Harry Beiers and his wife Karilyn have been travelling the back roads and highways of Australia for the past several months. They took time during their trip to stop into the historic Bungarun lazaret, near Derby in W.A.

Knowing the interest FoPIA members would have in the site and its history, they kindly put together some details (reproduced below) they gathered from the museum at Bungarun, as well as from Jenny Kloss from the Derby Visitors Centre.

Leprosy was first detected in WA in 1889 at Northam, about 100 Km from Perth. Two more cases were diagnosed near Perth by 1902. All were Chinese. In 1898, a Chinese cook who worked on various pastoral stations near Roebourne in the Pilbara died and was diagnosed with having leprosy. Many Aborigines in the area contracted the disease.

The first cases of leprosy in the Kimberley were diagnosed in 1908. The popular theory was that Chinese who worked in the Northern Territory mines contributed to the spread of the disease in the Aboriginal population of northern areas of Western Australia. It is significant that leprosy was spread among the local people of the north-west coastal region possibly via the pearling lugger crews of Malays, Japanese, Chinese and South Sea Islanders. Leprosy was endemic in the countries of the pearling lugger crews.

From 1921 onward, the number of cases of leprosy among Kimberly Aborigines increased around the coastal areas of Derby, Broome and Beagle Bay, as well as the pastoral stations in the Fitzroy River basin.

From 1908 to 1914 a number of lazarets were established, The first isolation hospital for leprosy in the West Kimberley was at the old Residency (doctor's house) in Derby however, the non-Aboriginal population complained long and loud. There were also lazarets at Bezout Island, Port Hedland, Onslow and Beagle Bay.

(cont'd page 3)



President's *Annual Report*

After taking on the roll as President at the last AGM, I like others in the group thought we would have a much less hectic year than 2007 but this did not always prove to be the outcome.

This past year has seen items discussed in detail such as the investigation into the ATO Deductible Gift Recipient scheme, Business Plan discussions within the group along with those of Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service (QPWS) for Peel Island, regular Peel Island working groups, the Wood Carving Replicas progress, the QPWS family day for the lazaret Centenary and our success with the Q150 Community Funding grant.

FoPIA's major fund raising event for the year was the June boat trip on Morton Bay including lunch at Southport with the day proving to be most successful along with the weather being perfect. The comments on the day were very satisfying.

For future boat trips we need to consider a little larger vessel along with one that is more up to date to suit today's requirements.

The book that Fopia is having produced on the 2007 Exhibition "going to the gums" is fast approaching completion and all those members that have been involved in this project are to be congratulated on their efforts. We also thank the Q150 Community Funding

Grant for their contribution to the major cost of this book.

Our membership drive instigated in the early part of the year must be an on going effort and the activities of the year have improved the awareness of Fopia in the community.

I would like to express my thanks to all members and in particular the Fopia committee for their great contribution through out the year with a special thank you to Rhonda Bryce our Secretary, Gabrielle van Willigen the *FoPI Flyer* editor and Rosaleen Carroll our Treasurer.

Our thanks also go to QPWS for their assistance and willingness to have Fopia's involvement in the future of Peel Island along with Roland Dowling's regular updates for our meetings.

In conclusion, I feel sure that the work of Fopia and it's efforts of assistance in the wellbeing of Peel Island will continue well into the future.

Peter Hubbert
November 2008



FoPI Christmas party

Many thanks to gracious hosts Peter and Phyllis Ludlow for inviting members to their place at Raby Bay for the FoPIA end of year celebrations.

A very pleasant evening was had by all on Saturday 6 December. Even a little rain didn't dampen the festivities.

Congratulations

New executive line-up

At the recent AGM a new Executive Committee was voted in for 2009.

President:	Peter Hubbert
Vice-presidents:	Scott Fowle Simon Baltais
Treasurer:	Rosaleen Carroll
Secretary:	Rhonda Bryce
Executive members:	Brad Cahoon Diane Hausler Brian Isaacs

(Cont'd from page 1)

Eventually, in 1925 a custom-built lazaret was opened at Cossack, near Roebourne, in the Pilbara. All leprosy patients from the Kimberley were to be held there.

This did not solve the problem as more cases became evident. In the early 1930s it was agreed that all leprosy patients from WA be accommodated at the Northern Territory leprosarium on Channel Island in Darwin Harbour.

As each of the WA lazarets was vacated, they were destroyed by fire in the vain hope that this would prevent the spread of the disease.

The poor conditions experienced by patients en- routed to Channel Island contributed to the 1934 Mosley Royal Commission into the welfare of Aboriginal people in WA. The Commission recommended the establishment of a leprosarium in the Kimberley district.



Two different accommodation buildings



The lazaret church as it is today



Aerial view of Bungarun, taken by Karilyn when she and Harry were on their way to the Horizontal Falls

This decision was precipitated by the fact that the lazaret at Beagle Bay was destroyed by a cyclone.

The creation of Bungarun

Bungarun was opened in 1936 to cater for the increasing numbers of leprosy cases being diagnosed in the northern area of the State. Bungarun was the main leprosarium in the region for 50 years.

The new 'Derby Leprosarium' had been constructed and was fully operational by December 1936. The following year, the Sisters of St John of God accepted the invitation to provide nursing care for the patients.

At the peak of the leprosy epidemic in the 1940s and 1950s there were as many as 350 patients being held in the leprosarium at any one time.

In its later years as a leprosarium, Bungarun was almost entirely rebuilt with modern accommodation, a hospital, a school and therapy areas. It was still operating as a leprosarium as recently as 1986. It was the last leprosarium operating in Australia when it closed.

Bungarun today

Bungarun is 25 Km from Derby via the Gibb River Road at the Southern entrance to the Kimberley. The complex covers approximately 20 hectares in a total reserve area of 2,020 hectares.

(cont'd over)

(Cont'd from page 3)

There are a number of buildings remaining on the site. Some are not accessible due to deterioration and safety concerns while others are currently being used as a minimum security 'work camp' by the Ministry of Justice.

A museum of the leprosarium's working life is currently housed in one of the remaining buildings and contains historical information, photos and artefacts.

In recent times the entrance to the cemetery has been landscaped. This includes interpretive panels of historical facts (*photo at right*) on large stone plinths, a shelter and panels with the names of the patients buried in the cemetery. Harry & Karilyn wish to thank Jenny Kloss (*pictured below, with Harry*) of the Derby Visitors Information Centre. Jenny escorted Harry and Karilyn on a tour of Bungarun and provided access to much of the above information.



To commemorate all who were buried, unnamed crosses were placed in the cemetery



A list of those buried in the cemetery has been laser cut in steel panels, visible behind Harry Beiers and Jenny Kloss of the Derby Visitors Centre



The Committee members of the Friends of Peel Island Association Inc wish every one of you a *Merry Christmas and the very best for the New Year.*

Our first meeting for the New Year will be on **Monday, 09 February 2009** at: Indigiscapes, 17 Runnymede Rd, Capalaba

(Heading east from Brisbane - Runnymede Rd is located just before the junction lights at Redland Bay Rd and Vienna Rds Capalaba.)



Ranger's update

Teerk Roo Ra (Peel Island) National Park



The Family Day on the 21st of September was in itself a historic moment for Peel Island. Despite our logistical challenges and several previous postponements due to bad weather, the day was seen by all to both a major success and a very good thing to do.

The EPA was greatly appreciative of the considerable efforts and support of FOPIA members in pulling the day off. Rhonda Bryce's work, including the research and contacting the families was simply invaluable. I would also like to specially acknowledge Mette Juel for her great efforts in managing the logistics for the day.

In other news, our general management of the island is continuing as usual. We received funding this year for completing the male bathhouse and works to Nurses Quarters No.1. The works include replacing the flooring, which had been eaten out by borers, and replacing the kitchen to make it useable for ongoing accommodation. Works are well underway

at present and should be completed early in the New Year.

The Queensland College of Art program has also been running very successfully. The program is winding up but the individual artists and the college organizers have been speaking very highly of both the island and the opportunity. The program will culminate in an exhibition opening at this stage at South Bank on the 20th March 2009. The details will be confirmed in the New Year.

We have really appreciated our ongoing relationship with FOPIA this year. There is no shortage of challenges ahead but we are looking forward to working together again in 2009.

Thanks and seasons greetings

Roland

Roland Dowling
Ranger-in-Charge
Heritage Parks Unit

Memberships renewals and New members

To renew your membership, or join Friends of Peel Island, you can now pay with direct debit via internet banking, or by more traditional methods of cheque or money order. Membership is from 1 July to 31 June each year, and if you join in December your membership will be valid until June 2010.

Annual Membership Renewal

Full Membership—	\$16.00
Pensioner, Student & Junior Membership	\$12.00
Organisation Membership—	\$40.00

New Members

\$26.00 (\$16+ \$10 once-off joining fee)
\$17.00 (\$12 + \$5 once-off joining fee)
\$50.00 (\$40 + \$10 once-off joining fee)

Payment options

Direct deposit to:

Commonwealth Bank of Australia,
BSB 064-000; Account 10649391

Include your surname in the comments invoice number section, and advise the FoPI Treasurer of your payment - rosaleencarroll@bigpond.com

Send cheques or money orders to:

The Treasurer
Friends of Peel Island
PO Box 1015
Slacks Creek Qld 4127

Treasurer's Annual Report

I am pleased to table a copy of the Financial Accounts of the Association for the year ended 30 June 2008. The Statement has been audited by Stewart Scott, a Chartered Accountant and Director of *Accounting Solutions & Strategies Pty Ltd*.



FoPIA received a large grant of \$11,090 from Consolidated Rutile Limited (CRL) to produce replicas of original wood carvings on Peel Island. Following the receipt of this grant, an enjoyable tour of Stradbroke Island was arranged in September last year by the managers of CRL Ltd.

Members and friends were delighted to visit areas not usually available to the public, and to see a variety of wild flowers. Another highlight was a welcome by Aunty Margaret Iselin and a visit to areas that are significant to the local Aboriginal Elders. A small profit was made from this event, and I thank CRL, Aboriginal Elders, and those who organized it and participated.

The year's main fund-raiser was again a boat cruise to Southport on 29 June 2008. My sincere thanks to the president and members of FOPIA who organized the very enjoyable and successful event.

In the financial year 2007-2008 there was a substantial increase in membership, (twenty new members) after a successful membership drive. One reason for the drive was to gain a sufficient number of members to apply to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) for Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status. Unfortunately it proved impossible for FOPIA to obtain this status, but I thank sincerely those members who spent many hours in research and contact with ATO.

I wish to thank sincerely all the Members of FOPIA and of other organisations and the public who in various ways have supported its cause. As treasurer, I congratulate and sincerely thank all those who have worked so hard in our fundraising and public relations and social activities.

I extend special thanks to our Executive, whose commitment and teamwork, together with their organisational skills, have again made my role relatively easy.

It is a pleasure to present this report and the accompanying audited statement to the AGM.

Rosaleen Carroll
Treasurer

2009 Events diary

Mark **10am February 24 2009** in your diary. FoPI's travelling exhibition 'going to the gums' is heading to the **Redcliffe Museum**. First displayed at the Redland Museum, this exhibition will provide opportunities to more people in the region to learn of Peel Island's unique history.

Queensland's new Governor Her Excellency Ms Penelope Wensley AO has kindly accepted the invitation to open the exhibition.

FoPI will also use this occasion to launch the book on the exhibition which Rhonda, Gabrielle and Tracey have been working on for the past 6 months.

HOT OFF THE PRESS

Rhonda Bryce (at right), FoPIA's Secretary is ever enthusiastic and hard working in creating opportunities for FoPIA. While juggling and coordinating activities such as the Families' day to Peel, the boat trip, and writing grant applications for FoPIA projects she has also been busy putting together a book of her own poems "Off the Coast", with Catherine James providing the lovely line drawings.

Rhonda says about the verse excerpt from her book: "*This verse refers to the Coringa-Herald and Lihou Reefs area -Coral Sea - Pristine : is the only way I can think of it - amazing empty shells drift in the currents onto the beach; nautilus; helmets; etc. - which I visited with an Australian Scientific Charter group c 1973. When we landed on the coral beach - it was almost impossible to decide where to put a foot! (In the 1980s this whole area was declared an Australian Commonwealth Marine Park.)*"

Rhonda Bryce was born in Brisbane. Her interest in the sea, islands and the environment began at Heron Island in the late 1960s. After a time travelling in South Africa/Swaziland/and 'Rhodesia'; she joined up as crew on charter boats in Greece and the West Indies; she returned to Queensland joining the crew of the *Coralita* which operated out of Yeppoon in the early 1970s

~ A navigational pioneer, with no modern navigation aids Capt Wally Muller took private charter groups into the Swains Reefs and the Coral Sea - among the guests were: Australian scientists e.g. Vince Serventy, Eric Worrell; international tourist/diving groups; Australian divers Ron and Valerie Taylor and John Harding; and Australian artist Russell (Tassie) Drysdale and friends.

Rhonda later lived for many years on Scotland Island, Pittwater, Sydney where she and her partner Chris sailed. After leaving Pittwater with 2 young children Rhonda and Chris sailed to Townsville in the mid 1980s.

A return trip was made from Brisbane to Townsville in 2005 on their current yacht *Lady Lonsdale*. Rhonda and Chris live in the Redlands, where along with boating interests, she is active not only FoPI but also other community environmental groups.

Self published, the book is currently available from Riverbend Books, Bulimba, Redland Museum, Museum of Brisbane Gift Shop, IndiScapes, Books 'n Art Cleveland and TLC Books Manly, for RRP of \$19.95. (The Book is available for FOPIA members at \$10.00 per copy (plus \$1.10 postage) from coralita.arts@gmail.com).



in noon hazed tension
a sextant point is fixed

another noon
of heated glare

the dinghy lands
on a gentle place

