

FoPI Flyer

September 2010

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Special visitors to the lazaret

The Governor of Queensland, Her Excellency, Ms Penelope Wensley, AO, Patron of the National Parks Association of Queensland and the National Trust, Queensland visited Peel Island (Monday 26 July 2010).

The visit was hosted by Acting Regional Manager, Heritage Parks Unit, Moreton Bay Region, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) Mr John Esdaile.

On Peel Island, Her Excellency, Ms Penelope Wensley, AO, Mr Stuart McCosker and Ms Louise Ahern, Senior Adviser, Office of the Governor, and Acting Inspector Samantha Purcell, Aide-de-Camp met with Mr John Esdaile and Mr Joe Eggmlesse, Rangers Mr Roland Dowling, Ms Mette Juel, Mr Mark Callinan and Mr Trevor Mullen, and Fopia members Mr Peter Hubbert, Mr Peter Ludlow and Ms Rhonda Bryce.

Roland Dowling and Peter Ludlow led an informative tour of the Lazaret buildings and the cemetery.

Fortunately the likelihood of heavy rain did not eventuate although the wind had picked up by early afternoon. Undaunted, the able crew of the QPWS barge, *Spoonbill*, Sebastian Selwood and John Wordsworth, managed to get everyone safely into the inflatable dinghy and back on board for the homeward trip.

More on Joe Eggmlesse's story, page 2.



Back L-R: John Esdaile, Louise Ahern, Peter Hubbert, Mette Juel, Peter Ludlow, Roland Dowling
Centre: Rhonda Bryce
Front L-R: Stuart McCosker, Her Excellency Ms Penelope Wensley, AO, Selwyn Joel (Joe) Eggmlesse



Photos courtesy www.govhouse.qld.gov.au/the_governor/image_gallery.aspx

A sister island in the north

Included in the visit to Peel Island by Her Excellency, MsPenelope Wensley, AO was Selwyn Joel (Joe) Eggmolesse. Joe was cured and discharged from Fantome Island in 1956 (aged 17 1/2 yrs). Joe was always reluctant to talk about the fact that he once had leprosy (Hansen's disease). Then after ensuring his children knew about his past and had a better understanding that the Hansen's disease was not as highly contagious as people first thought, Joe 'came out of the cupboard' and now when ever necessary Joe is quite willing to tell his story.

Joe's message to other ex-patients out there is "Don't be ashamed of your past illness, and when necessary speak up and help reduce (if not remove) the stigma which has wrongly been placed on the disease. Joe said he knows of some Indigenous and non-indigenous ex-patients who find it hard to 'Come out of the Cupboard' and he accepts and understands why".

Fantome Island is one of the Great Palm Island group in north Queensland, 65 Km north-east of Townsville.

It had a number of functions since the early 1900s related to housing Indigenous and Islander people with various health concerns. The facilities there were closed down in 1974.

On 31 May this year the Indigenous Catholic Council and the Palm Island Parish, supported by Day & Day Shipping, and others arranged a reunion to Fantome Island.

The "Palm Island Voice" reported that some passengers on the emotionally-charged 45 minute journey had been former-patients or workers on the Island.

Guests were welcomed to country by Mr Allan Palm Island (Manbarra) and then walked to the memorial site.

St Michael's Aboriginal dancers were there and Catholic Bishop Michael Putney and Mr Eggmolesse unveiled a memorial plaque after prayers.

From there most walked the 1km to the old Fantome Island cemetery where graves were blessed and ashes of Paddy Tanna were scattered by an emotional Katherine Graham.

The barge arrived back on Palm Island at around 3pm where a photo exhibition was on display at the PCYC.

1. Peter Ludlow, Her Excellency, MsPenelope Wensley, AO, Joe Eggmolesse about to visit Peel Island (26 July 2010).Photo courtesy www.govhouse.qld.gov.au/the_governor/image_gallery.aspx
2. Fantome's Women's Quarters, looking south west 1950s
3. Auntie Daisy & Uncle Ellison Obah with 8 yr old Selwyn
4. Six married couples' huts top end of men's compound; nuns from the Franciscan Missionary of Mary

Photos 2, 3, 4 from Joe Eggmolesse

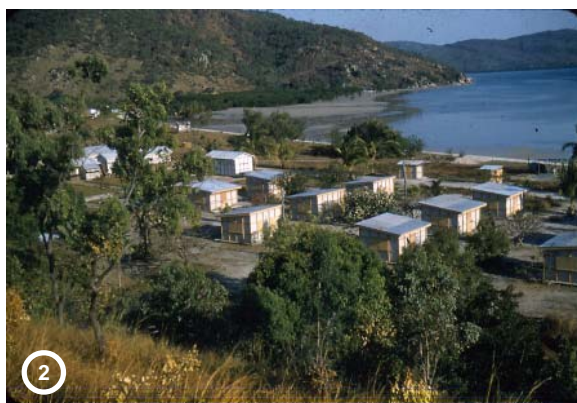


Photo gallery

More pictures of the Governor's visit to the lazaret, courtesy of the Government House official website: www.govhouse.qld.gov.au/the_governor/image_gallery.aspx



Above: Horseshoe Bay looking wilder than most visitors wish to experience. Conditions such as these present challenges for those wishing to get off the island by boat. Photo courtesy Rhonda Bryce

Ray was passionate about Peel

BOATIES who visited Peel Island in the early 1990s will be sad to hear of the passing of George 'Ray' Cowie on August 15 at Logan Hospital.

Ray was Redland Shire Council's Ranger at Peel Island from 1988 until 1993 when control of the island passed to the QPWS.

Ray and his wife Noela were passionate about Peel and did much clearing of the overgrown former quarantine and lazaret sites at a time when there was little interest in the island's history.

Ray's constant efforts to have the island's past recognised and restored did much to awaken government and public interest. - Peter Ludlow



Anyone for icecream?



Long time visitors to Peel would remember Bob Pelgrave's kiosk at Horseshoe Bay in the early 1990s. Hard to believe such a shady haven even existed; all traces are now gone and it's a case of byo everything.

This image came from Ray Cowie's photographic collection, now on a CD which Peter Ludlow has provided to FoPIA.

Anyone else have interesting photos of times on Peel over the years they'd like to share in the Flyer? Send them through to friendsofpeel@gmail.com

Russell Island, here we come

FoPIA's annual fundraiser set for Saturday 23 October 2010

Leaving from Weinam Creek Marina (Redland Bay) we will take the ferry across to Russell Island.

A short walk, approx 70-100 m up the hill, we will have morning tea and join our guide, Phobie Dupont for a bus tour of Russell Is.

Some places of interest we will see are: Mrs Fischers Grave, Jackson Historical Site and Lions Park.

Lunch @ Russell Is RSL. After lunch, tour will continue, on the bus with our guide. On completion of the tour, the ferry will return you to Weinam Creek.

Cost: \$60.00 per person

Boat: Bay Island Transit

Departs: 8.15am Weinam Creek Marina, Banana Street, Redland Bay

Returns: 4.55pm, Weinam Creek

Included: Morning Tea and lunch. Ferry, bus and tour guide.

Drinks are available for purchase during lunch.

Raffle: A Raffle will be held with an assortment of prizes.

Book Sale: "Going to the Gums" Price on the day \$20-00

Enquiries: Scott Fowle | 3821 7470 | 0407 934 147 | sfowle@tpg.com.au

End notes

You'll Have to Go Away: The Leprosarium on Peel Island was a story researched and produced by Kate Evans, and aired on Radio National's history program "Hindsight" 5 September. Highlights of the program include some of Peter Ludlow's interviews with surviving patients and medical staff from Peel Island - some of which appear in this feature.

Commissioned by Radio National in the 1980s these interviews had never been broadcast before.

For those who missed it, you can download the audio file from:

www.abc.net.au/rn/hindsight/stories/2010/2959964.htm

Guests include:

Roland Dowling

Ranger in Charge Heritage Parks Unit (which includes Peel Island and other islands in Moreton Bay), Qld Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Environment and Resource Management, Qld Govt. Based at Fort Lytton National Park.

Tracy Ryan

Historian, Local History Unit, Redland City Council (Please note, Tracy does not appear in the broadcast version of the story, but can be heard in the online extra feature, on the relationship between North Stradbroke Island and the Benevolent Asylum, and Peel Island.)

Raymond Evans

Historian and Adjunct Professor, University of Queensland. Specialist in the histories of Queensland, race relations, welfare and radicalism. Author of many books, including *A History of Queensland*; *Race Relations in Colonial Queensland*; and *Radical Brisbane: An Unruly History*.

Anne O'Brien

Historian, University of New South Wales. Specialises in the history of poverty and social welfare, and intersections between religion and colonialism. Her books include *God's Willing Workers: Women and Religion in Australia* and *Poverty's Prison, a history of poverty in NSW*. She has published an article tracing the story of an Aboriginal man who was a leprosy patient on both Friday and Peel Islands.

Daley Donnelly

Ranger (with an interest in historical interpretation), Heritage Parks Unit, Qld Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Environment and Resource Management, Qld Govt.

Margaret (Auntie Margie) Iselin

Minjerribah Moorgumpin Elders in Council, North Stradbroke Island.

Pat Iselin

Minjerribah Morgumpin Elders in Council, North Stradbroke Island.

Althea Vickers

Hon Secretary, North Stradbroke Island Historical Museum, Dunwich (museum of the Benevolent Asylum). Please note, Althea does not appear in the broadcast version of the story, but can be heard in the online extra feature, on the relationship between North Stradbroke Island and the Benevolent Asylum, and Peel Island.)

Peter Ludlow

Local historian and former hospital pharmacist. Specialist in the history of Moreton Bay and Peel Island. Member of the Friends of Peel Island Association. Author of a number of books, including *Peel Island: Paradise or Prison*.

Hugo Ree

Physician and specialist in tropical and other diseases, including HIV Aids and Hansen's Disease (Leprosy). Former Leprologist, Queensland Health. Hugo has recently submitted a PhD on the history of public health in Queensland, at Griffith University in Brisbane.