



FoPI Flyer

November, 2007

Generous grant for carvings

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Friends of Peel Island Assoc are delighted to announce that we have been successful in obtaining a Community Development Grant from Consolidated Rutile Ltd (CRL) to the tune of \$11,900. This will go to commissioning Troy Robbins, professional sculptor and environmentalist, from Cleveland to make replicas of the wood carvings from the Lazaret.

Each year CRL (a sand mining company and the largest employer on Stradbroke Island) contributes to the cultural, social, health, environmental and economic wellbeing of the local community through their Community Development Program. They saw FoPI's project to have the carvings reproduced as worthwhile and to the benefit to the local community.

On a very wet, wet morning of Thursday 6th September 2007, CRL hosted a morning tea in Dunwich to distribute sponsorship cheques to the successful community groups. Six different projects were supported in this round of the Community Development Program and representatives from each group were invited to speak about their projects.

Other successful applicants were:

- Minjerribah-Moorgumpin Elders in Council – Terra Bulla Leumeah and new equipment.
- University of Queensland – Dugong Research
- Amity Point Playgroup – Positive Parenting Program
- Island Time Festival – Island Youth Program

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



The cheque handover from CRL to FoPI - from left, Chris Cobb (CEO of CRL), FoPI member Harry Beiers, Redland Councillor Debra Henry, Karilyn Beiers and Paul Smith (CRL Environmental Manager)

Sculpture benefits from CRL grant

Thanks to the generous grant from CRL, sculptor Troy Robbins will be making clay based replicas of the fish, wallaby, pineapple and penis that were on the posts around the former church. These will be placed in the grounds of the Lazaret, and the originals will be kept elsewhere for conservation.

He will also be making a replica of the timber grave plaque. Members will be familiar with the forlorn and weathered timber in the Lazaret cemetery "RIP In memory of Frances (sic)

departed this life on October 15 1951 Jesus Mercy".

Jim Welsh from Taree, NSW visited the Lazaret's centenary exhibition this year, and contacted FoPIA about his greatuncle Francis. Francis was 67 when he died and, according to "occupation" on the birth certificate was a "Gardner" on Peel Island. It is likely that Francis' name was changed to the female spelling "Frances" to protect his identity. Such was the stigma to Hansens' Disease in those days.

Editors note

Who was the original sculptor?

According to the reverse side of the photo of the children beside the wood carvings around the Church of the Good Samaritan, Peel Island (shown here, and held by the John Oxley Library), the carvings are said to have been made by "Aboriginal patient Bob Pela from Palm Island".

Also stated on the reverse side of the photo is that the photograph came from the "Teleradio Wireless Journal" dated June 15th 1936. This was a weekly magazine published in Brisbane by Telegraph Press from 1933 until the 1940s or possibly later. Presumably there was an article in this June edition about Peel island.



Trying to track down a copy of the June 15th edition has been unsuccessful. The Qld State Library has copies Jan to April 1936. The UQ Fryer Library has 1935 and 1941 editions only. The NLA, Canberra, has the first copy in 1933. None of the other State Libraries has any editions. The Mitchell Library in Sydney is where the Wireless Institute of

Australia donated all their material but alas the journal I am seeking is not there and neither do any of the Australian archive bookshops have a copy.

FoPI contacted the Palm Island Elders but to date they have not been able to locate any family members. It is possible that Bob Pela was a South Sea Islander.

Welcome to new members:

The success the exhibition *going to the gums* and the publicity for the Lazaret's Centenary Year has brought a rise in membership, particularly from ex-patient s and their families.

With a few more members we should be able to apply to the ATO for 'Deductible Gift Recipient' status next year. This will enable any donations or gifts to FOPIA to be tax deductible. Your support for FOPIA is appreciated.

More stories surface

Thanks in part to visits to the lazaret's centenary exhibition *going to the gums*, as well as the FoPI website (www.fopia.org.au) we are hearing more stories of ex-patients and their families.

One is Jim Welsh, talking about his great uncle Frances (page 2). Another is Joe Eggmolese, whose life was deeply affected by Hansen's disease. We thank him for sharing his story.

Joe's story

Joe Eggmolese came down from Maryborough to see the exhibition. Diagnosed in 1945 with Hansen's disease at 7 years of age, Joe was sent from his home in Nambour to Fantome Island until 1955 when he was discharged.

Joe's father's oldest sister Lizzie Tallis was admitted from Nambour to "Peel" on the 4th July 1933, and, in 1940 his Auntie Lizzie was amongst the patients transferred to Fantome Island.

Joe's mother's uncle (and possibly her father) was also admitted to and is believed buried on Peel.

"I'm spending a lot of time writing a book about Fantome and digging up a lot of very sad memories but this is helping with "closure" as will a trip to Peel Island"

Joe Eggmolese

Next newsletter we'll have more stories and family photos.

Report from the Centenary Committee

Exhibition extended – Due to popular demand, *going to the gums ~ the Lazaret on Peel Island* exhibition has been extended to 31 December 2007. It will be dismantled in the New Year, with packing, transport and storage of the material at Fort Lytton co-ordinated by Harry Beiers and Rick Thomason. Colleen and Peter Hubbert are engineering appropriate containers.

Funding for touring exhibition – Planning, which includes approaching sources for funding, is underway for this exhibition to tour regional Queensland centres in 2009. Museums and Art Gallery Services Qld will be assisting us with this project.

Book to be published – Planning is also underway for a book of the exhibition, as well as sourcing funding for its publication.

Images captured – Professional photographer Stephen Henry kindly donated his time and skill to capturing the elusive wording of Rosemary Opala's poems on the delicate fabric drops painted by artist Ruth Venner. This involved removing the drops one by one and securing them to a blank wall with magnets at the opposite end of the display area. The project was successful and we now have the works in keeping for posterity in digital images.

Artists-in-residence Program – Griffith University Professor Pat Hoffie visited Peel Island in July and expressed her delight for the site for artists-in-residence programs for a limited number of postgraduate students. Arrangements will be made directly between the Queensland College of Art and the QP&WS.

Record of Patients sent to Peel Island – The Redland Genealogical Society, with the assistance of Tracy Ryan, Local History Unit, RSC and the Director of the Qld State Archives will work on a project over the next two years to establish a register of all patients (and staff) sent to Peel Island and will include a record of those buried there. A grant will be sought from the State government's 2009 Q150 funding source for this project.

Field trip to Straddie

Wildflowers at the Ibis Lagoon

On 9 September FOPIA held an interesting bus trip to Stradbroke Island for members and friends. Participants joined the bus at Cleveland Railway Station and proceeded to the island via the vehicular ferry. We had a very pleasant morning tea at the beautiful Brown Lake prior to joining our CRL guides Jasmine Barker and Paul Smith for the excursion into the mine site to the Ibis Lagoons. The weather conditions were pleasant and wildflowers were in abundance so camera shutters were kept very busy.



Ibis Lagoon

The 'lagoons' are the sunken tops of first sandhills in the formation of the island. The complex consists of wet heath, ephemeral wetland and large open lagoons (wallam) bordered in fern with reeds to the far distance.

The highlights of the walk were the loud sounds of many wallam frogs croaking after the recent rain and the walk up to our waists into the heath area to see, in particular, the pink heath *Boronia* species and a very attractive (but unidentified) white flower



Lost in the wildflowers - can you spot more than one person?

Aunty Margaret and Uncle Pat from Minjerribah-Moorgumpin Elders in Council and Jasmine Barker and Paul Smith from CRL joined us for a Buffet Lunch at the University of Queensland Research Station.

Terra Bulla Leumeah

Following lunch we visited Terra Bulla Leumeah which is an excellent ecologically sustainable educational resource where people can learn more about indigenous culture, history of the island and the native environment. Aunty Margaret and Uncle Pat welcomed us to the site and Aunty Margaret gave a very informative address about the history of the indigenous community of the Island.



Aunty Margaret's talk