

**Volume
37
No 3**

**August
2025**

Featuring

**Society News
Roblane Street**

**The Ekka
A shipwreck
Wilston State
School
& more.**

Journal

The first "EKKA" 1876



The first show, held between 22 and 26 August 1876, attracted 17,000 visitors. The centrepiece of the grounds was the timber exhibition building which housed 1,700 individual exhibits in total. All visitors to the show were given a free bag of coal; this is considered the first example of what would become the showbag.

Journal

Volume 37 Number 3

August 2025

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Secretary WDHS

*Much of the historical material was sourced from
the Society's record collection, Trove and other
online data bases.*

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Gem Cowlishaw

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We are dedicated to preserving the history of the
old Windsor Shire / Town areas of :

Albion +
Alderley +
Eagle Junction +
Grange
Kalinga
Lutwyche
Newmarket +
Wilston
Windsor
Woobowin



And now extended to cover
Gordon Park and Herston.

+ part of this suburb

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Our home

We open to the public
each Sunday and Monday

1—4 PM

Closed public holidays and
the Christmas/New year period

Society News

July was a busy month for the society with the participation in three events.

- Taste of Wilston
- Brisbane Open House
- Holy Cross School celebrating 135 years



John
Alison
Rob



John with one of the society's items on sale at the stall.



The Windsor Council Chambers participated in the Brisbane Open House event on Sat & Sun. July 19-20

Volunteers from the society, Jenny, Gem, Alison, John, David and Rob were in attendance at various times, to provide tours and information.

The society was delighted that there were **186** visitors over this weekend.



John and Rob ready to welcome visitors



Gem at the Society's stall



The school's history on display

The naming of Roblane Street



Roblane Street was named after a Windsor area pioneer settler **Robert Lane.**

He grew up in Glastonbury England and when he was of 21 years old age, migrated to the Moreton Bay Settlement on the ship "*General Hewitt*", out of Southampton, landing in Brisbane in December, 1854. The voyage lasting 111 days.

Robert was introduced to Captain John Wickham who was the chief Government officer of the Moreton Bay Settlement. Wickham offered Robert a job, first as a groom, and later as his gardener for his home "**Newstead House**". Robert worked for Captain Wickham for 4 years and 8 months.

Around 1855 He was able to buy approx. 10 acres (from John Harvey's portion 10), at 3 pounds 10 shillings per acre and resolved to start his own market garden. Later, his next task was to build himself a *humpy*, the aboriginal word for hut, on the hill where the

Holy Rosary Church stands today.

The house was made of slabs with a bark roof. Most early settlers' homes were like this.

Houses had to be built of whatever was available on their land – mostly timber, some cottages were of stone or mudbrick.

In 1860 he married a young Englishwoman **Ann Marks** who was born in Radstock England. Ann arrived with other Baptist immigrants on the ship "*Alfred*" in September 1858.



Ann and Robert Lane c1910s



Typical Humpy



Robert's Sulky

In 1865 the Bowen Bridge Road National School opened on the land adjacent to the Lane property and Robert became a member of the first school committee. The two eldest Lane children, William Henry and Elizabeth, were enrolled on the first day, and subsequently six more young Lanes were educated there.

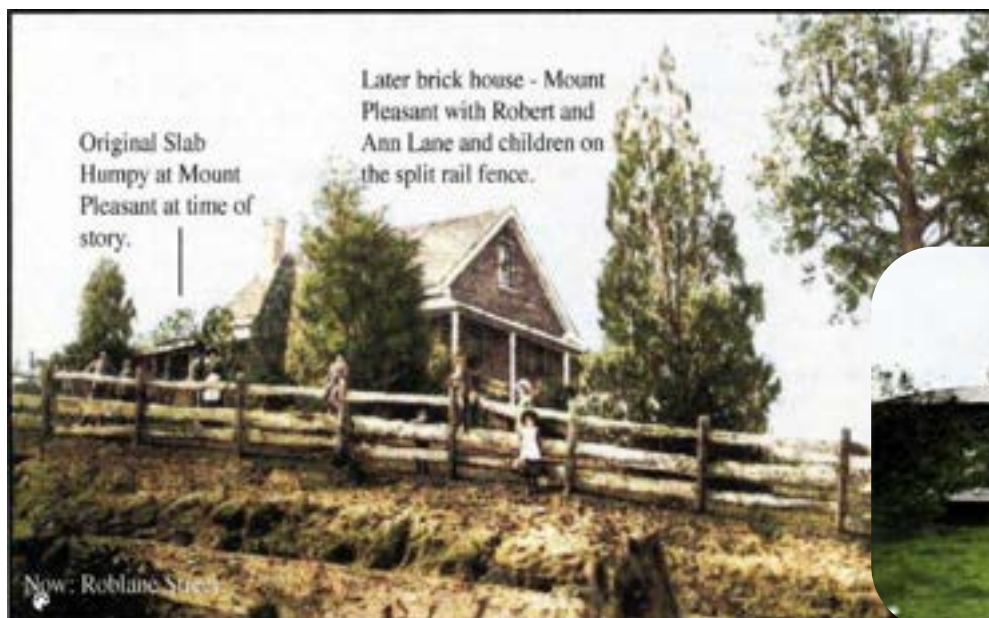


The School

After the Colony of Queensland's first Governor, Sir George Bowen left to return to England, Sir Maurice O'Connell became Administrator and Acting Governor of Queensland. On 4 January 1868 he appointed Robert Lane, gardener at Government House. He served in that capacity under Governors Sir Samuel Blackall and Lord Normanby, until the arrival of William Wellington Cairns.

In 1875 he was appointed a messenger of the Legislative Council. He later became Chief Messenger, serving until his retirement in 1913 at the age of almost eighty years.

In the 1880's Robert built a brick house with attic bedrooms which housed the family much more comfortably. They named it **Mt Pleasant**.

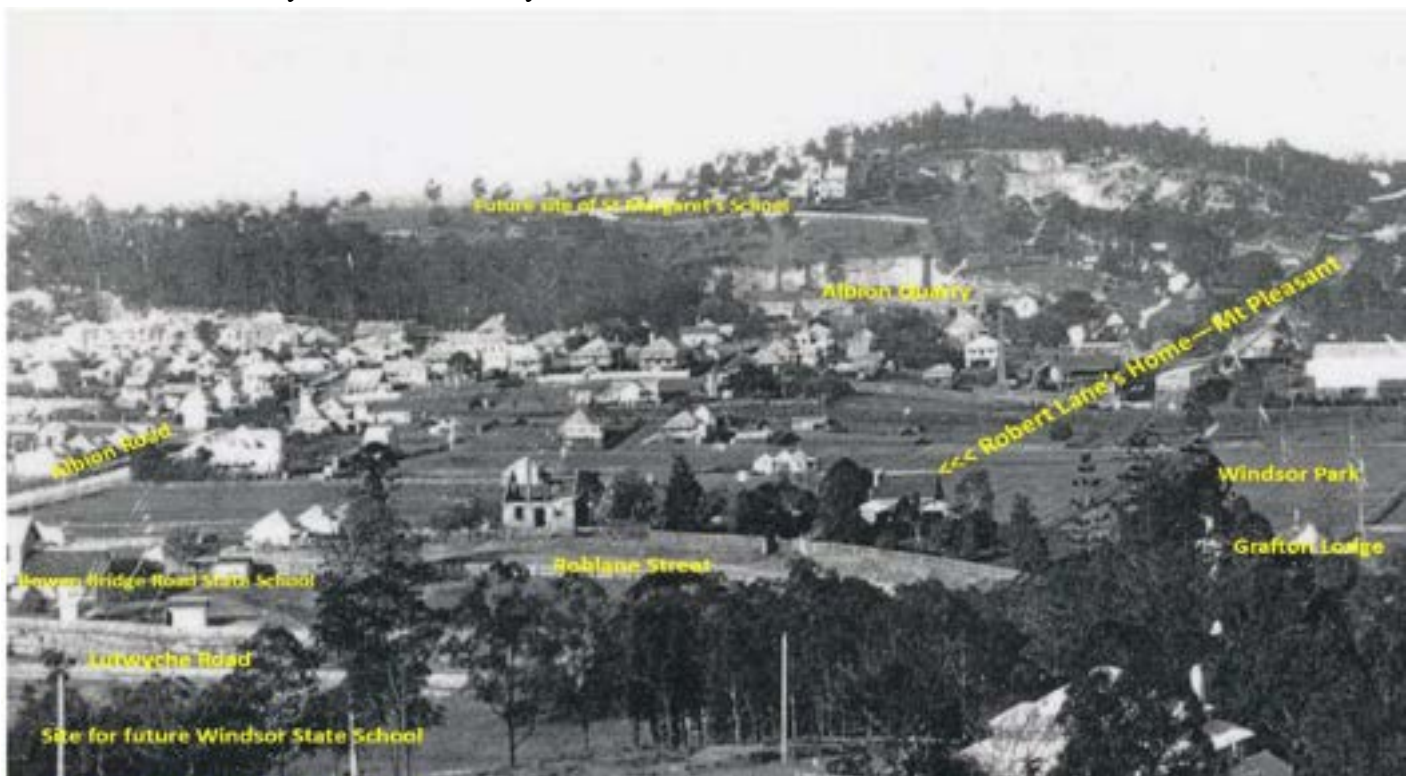


The back yard

The Lane family's contribution to the settlement and development of the suburb of Windsor has been recorded and recited with pride on many occasions. This young man from Long Sutton in Somersetshire walked with, and worked beside, many notable men in the history of the establishment of the Colony/ State of Queensland, and more particularly of Windsor — his contribution was invaluable.



Robert's sons William Henry Lane and Robert Blackall Lane were dedicated members of the Windsor Shire and Town Councils. William Henry was a Shire councillor 1887-1903 and Shire President in 1893. Robert Blackall was Shire Clerk 1897—1903 and then Town Clerk 1904—1906 After that her served as an alderman for six years, and was Mayor in 1916 and 1920



View from Eildon Hill late 1890s looking east

Wilston State School

125th anniversary this year

The Brisbane Courier: 16 August 1920

THE OPENING CEREMONY.

There was a large gathering of the residents of Wilston on Saturday to witness the ceremonies in connection with the opening of the new State school.



The Minister for Public Instruction **Mr J. Huxham** who played the most prominent part in the proceedings, was accompanied by Mrs Huxham. **Alderman Inglis** (chairman of the school building committee), in opening the proceedings, said the people of the locality were delighted at the realisation of what they had been fighting for a long time (Applause).

Credit for the achievement was due to Messrs Macrossan and McPhail, former members for the district and also to Mr Taylor, the sitting member, who had spared neither time nor trouble to secure the establishment of the school. He announced that **Miss Thorpe**, clerk of the Windsor Town Council had generously offered to give a gold medal, to be awarded each year to the pupil getting the highest marks in the scholarship exam.



John Saunders HUXHAM

Minister for Public Instruction

1919—1924

Alexander Inglis

Alderman, Windsor Town Council 1912-1920.

Mayor in 1917



Sarah Alcyone May THORPE

*Windsor Town Council Clerk
1916—1925*

The Minister for Public Instruction (Mr Huxham) said the people deserved every credit for the plucky way they had maintained their agitation for a school. The school would start with an attendance of 320, but he fully expected this would be increased to 500 in the near future.

Mr H. F. Hardacre also expressed his pleasure at the opening of the school. Mr C. Taylor, M.L.A., paid a tribute to Alderman Inglis, who had been most insistent in advocating the claims of the district for a school.

Mr Mackay, secretary to the building committee, presented Mr W. Collings (head teacher) with a photograph of the building committee. Mr Collings, in acknowledging the presentation said reference had been made to an offer by Miss Thorpe to give a gold medal for the pupil gaining the highest marks in the scholarship test examination.

He was sure that offer had been made with the best possible intentions, but it was against this policy in school life to offer any rewards whatever. It had been one of his lifelong desires to carry on a school without any rewards to the pupils and without any punishments. He hoped however, that Miss Thorpe would allow the value of the medal she had proposed to give, to be used for obtaining some useful appliance to the school which would be to benefit of the children generally. Alderman Inglis then handed the key of the school to the Minister (Mr Huxham) who formally declared the school open amid cheers. Subsequently the Mayor of Windsor **Alderman Lane** opened a cricket pitch for use of the boys of the school,



Early school badge



Robert Blackall LANE

Windsor Town Mayor 1920

Mrs Lane performed a similar ceremony in connection with a tennis court. A number of races were contested among the children during the afternoon, and prizes given these having been purchased from a fund raised locally.



In the background of the photo, Eildon Hill can be seen before the reservoir was added. It was just a bare hill.



Memories of the “EKKA”



The society has collected many personal stories over many years.

This story was written by Florine Alback in 2020

- her memories of the “Ekka” days from the 1950s Photos added by the editor

The **Exhibition**, (as it was known in my childhood years - 1950s,) is an annual big event and it features as one of the highlights in my growing up, particularly since the timing coincided with my birthday in August. We were on school holidays during the week of the show, and it was also the occasion of a midweek public holiday. So, in our primary school years, a visit to the Exhibition was a family event, but during high school, when we were teenagers, we generally went with friends.

Early on, the big attraction for me and many kids was Sideshow Alley, the fun fair component. From the Ferris wheels swinging us high up over the crowds, to the more daring rides like the octopus or dodgem cars and scary ghost train. We raced from one to the other, grabbing fairy floss or dagwood dogs to fuel our energy.

It was mainly the chance to let our hair down and shriek our heads off that was the big attraction as youngsters. But there were so many ways to spend our pocket money in the hope of extra thrills or winning prizes. The **laughing clowns** often resulted in being able to choose a kewpie doll on a stick or a stuffed toy.

The tents with exotic dancers or boxing troops that drew the men like bees to honey, added another layer of colour to the goodness and hype. **Jimmy Sharman's** tent always had a long queue of blokes waiting to try their luck against the tough-looking boxers in their lairy satin dressing gowns.



Never wanted to see the bearded lady or Siamese twins, but one year there was a group of **Pygmies** from the Congo that took my fancy.



Back at school and writing an essay about interesting things at the show, I admitted how fascinating I found the group. Their stunted size, their colourful get-up and singing talk. That earned a scathing rebuke from my teacher. I was supposed to have described all the worthwhile elements like the ring events and livestock pavilions, but they were staple fare, and the pygmies were different and strange.

And it wasn't that I didn't enjoy the grand parade or seeing the baby calves and lambs and amazing varieties of poultry, but had the topic, been what my favourite part of the show experience, it would have been hands down the **regional district displays** in the main pavilion. The stunning exhibits of primary products showcased the specialties from all over the state, from the Granite Belt Darling Downs, the Burnet and Capricornia, to the Atherton Tableland and the Tropical North, a feast for the eyes.



Magnificent mountains of fruit and vegetables arranged in imaginative passions with different themes every year. Cornucopias of luscious foodstuffs, apples of every colour, oranges, bunches of bananas from green to yellow, spiky pineapples, plump tomatoes, polished pumpkins from large to huge, row and row of bottle fruits gleaming like jewels, sheaves of wheat and other grains, woolly fleeces, what a testament to the hard-working men and women of the land. The other display features a range of industrial and manufacturing activities and was a source of many product samples and processing information that could be used for school projects.

And did I mention the **show bags**? For a few shillings you could load up on the favourites like Cadbury's or Alan's sweets containing samples of chocolate bars and their confectionery ranges, while Sanitarian always did a good trade along with comics and popular magazines. Other show bags catered to more adult tastes including perfumes and household items.



Still more drawcards were cookery, arts and crafts sections always hotly contested and rousing debates about whether the first, second and third prizes with their blue, red and yellow ribbons went to the exhibits that we would have chosen.



Some of the other staples of the Exhibition were the reliable Country Women's Association catering providing the essential homemade scones, jam and cream with a cuppa and a chance for weary mums to give their feet a rest from traipsing around the extensive showgrounds with excited kids in tow.

Another favourite food through the 1950s and early 60s was obtained by joining a queue outside the Tasmanian potato stand, their chips were worth waiting for.



My lingering memories include the smells and sounds ranging from the pungent livestock pavilions to the bustle and raucousness of the barkers inside Show Alley and the sheer visual spectacle of the **Grand Parade** and regional exhibits.



And being August, the westerlies could be counted on to raise the dust and blow us along with the discarded rubbish that accumulated during the course of the full day that was needed to try and see everything of interest. It was only during teenage years that we paced ourselves and were more selective, staying the distance to watch the evening **fireworks** and the demonstration races.



It wasn't until 2013 in my first year back in Queensland that I was able to revisit the show (now called the **Ekka**), and what a lot had changed in the 50 intervening years.

At the same location near Bowen Bridge Park and Hospital, but no tram stopping outside Sideshow Alley. I took the train into the thick of the main action, immediately noticing the improvements in my many facilities and paved walkways but my target was the main pavilion. What a disappointment to find a mere handful of district displays alongside garden exhibits and food demonstrations but the larger space filled with dogs!!

This was indicative of the significant shift from country bounty to city lifestyle orientated displays, particularly evident in the range and prices of show bags and the focus in the newer modern complex was its fashion shows, wine bars and technological displays. At least the model of parading clothes that made the most of fine wool cotton. The good ladies from the CWA were still providing their homemade scones and tea but they had competition from an array of German, French, Spanish, Italian fast foods.

No sign of tassie chips but lots of stalls with nuts and cheese specialties. I was introduced to the contemporary Ekka iconic food, the strawberry sundae and I could appreciate why it's become so popular but my hankering for the good old days found an outlet in the great lineup of quilts and cookery section, and I was impressed with the more varied entries in the art and craft sections. I didn't miss seeing Sideshow Alley one bit and was glad to find a place in one of the grand stages to watch the grand parade and Daredevil Riders showing off their skills before the fireworks came on.

An 1850 Shipwreck.

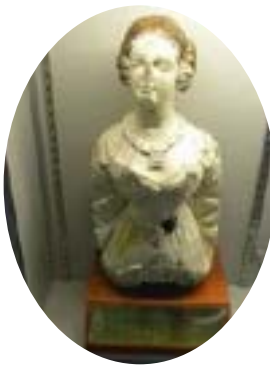
An early family of the Windsor district.

Is there a connection?

THE SHIPWRECK: The “*Jenny Lind* “ was a wooden Barque vessel of around 484 tons and was named after a Swedish Opera Singer. She was wrecked 21 September 1850 when she struck Kenn Reef (280 miles east of Mackay in Queensland), and then laid broadside. With seas pounding over her, the 28 passengers and crew scrambled to a small elevated coral outcrop covered with sand. It was here that they survived for 37 days due to their accessibility to the wreck for provisions.



A decision was made to construct a large boat that could take them to Moreton Bay. Timber from the *Jenny Lind* was used for the construction. This was completed after 34 days and on October 30, this boat with 22 on board and a second small lifeboat (from the *Jenny Lind*) with 6 on board, set out for their journey to Moreton Bay and Brisbane. This journey was successful and all 28 passengers and crew from the doomed *Jenny Lind* arrived safely in Brisbane November 5.



The Figurehead from the Jenny Lind was eventually found and is now exhibited in the Gladstone Maritime Museum



Part of Kenn Reef

Currently, for those who take the “Larc” tour from the Town of 1770 to visit the Bustard Head Lighthouse will cross a creek before ascending to the lighthouse. This creek is named “**Jenny Lind Creek**” in remembrance of the shipwreck..



THE FAMILY: The passenger list of the *Jenny Lind* included the Northern Ireland Family of

Daniel Rowntree SOMERSET—his wife Dora and three children aged 5, 3 and 1



The following is an extract from a 1970 talk at a QWhA meeting by Robert H Mearns (1891-1979), a descendant of Daniel and Dora

It is thought that Daniel's occupation was within the mercantile community in Belfast. Conditions in Ireland became bad and Daniel and Dora must have decided to seek wider horizons and they did not lack the spirit of adventure, or the ability to endure it (as told in the story of the wreck). They sailed to Australia on the ship "Duke of Bronte" which left London and Plymouth in 1849, (date unknown). They arrived in Adelaide 12 September 1849, where they disembarked.

They stayed there for a short time but Daniel was not impressed, and they moved to Melbourne, where again Daniel was not impressed. As a result, Daniel decided to move the family out of the colonies. He booked a passage for the family on the "JENNY LIND", and left Melbourne on 3 September 1850 for its voyage to London via Singapore. It is conjecture whether Daniel had some thoughts about residing in Singapore—what did it offer him?

.....

Daniel kept a diary which detailed the events of the shipwreck and the days that followed. The Society has a transcript of those entries.

The wrecking of the *Jenny Lind* changed the future for the Somerset family. Instead of arriving in Singapore or London, they now were in the Town of Brisbane, which at that time was part of the colony of New South Wales. They decided to stay there and it was documented that Daniel entered into a partnership with a John Richardson in a wharfage and warehouse business on a site near the corner of Wharf, Queen and Eagle Sts. The family lived in Eagle St until about 1855. During the 1850s, crown land, (still part of the NSW colony), was available for sale and Daniel purchased many portions. Those relative to the future shire of Windsor were portions 145, 146, 147, 11, 12 (and 13 from C Windmell).



Portion 13 that Daniel purchased (130 pounds) from C Windmell 3 August 1855 was just over 26 acres and it was here that Daniel built his house and called it "ROSEMOUNT"



Rosemount c1865 with second owner
Sir Maurice O'Connell

Daniel purchased portions 145,146 and 147, (33 acres, 3 roods, 24.75 perches) on 31 May 1858.

Then, Daniel listed his ROSEMOUNT house for sale in November 1858 as he decided to build a house on his new land.

FOR SALE,

THE FOLLOWING VALUABLE PROPERTIES:—

No.1.— ROSEMOUNT HOUSE and Grounds, situate on Breakfast Creek, about two miles from Brisbane, and commanding an agreeable view of the new bridge.

The House is built of stone, and is lofty, contains Drawing Room, Dining Room, four Bed Rooms, and Hall. The principal rooms have marble chimney pieces, and enriched cornices and centres.

The Kitchen is built of stone, and contains Pantry, Store Room and two servants' rooms.

The Coach House and Stable are built of hardwood slabs. There are about 73 Acres of Land, chiefly rich alluvial soil, well enclosed by a four rail fence, and having an extensive frontage to the Creek which, being salt water, affords all the advantages of sea bathing. The garden contains about 1 acre, and is well stocked with Flowers, Shrubs, and Fruit Trees.

No.2. — About 3 Acres of Land in Wharf-street, North Brisbane, very valuable as building ground.

No.3 — A Waterside Allotment at Kangaroo Point, containing about half an Acre—deep water frontage suitable for a wharf.

No. 4 — An Allotment of Land at Sandgate, adjoining Mr. Louden's — a splendid site for a Villa.

For further particulars, apply to the proprietor
D. R. SOMERSET
Brisbane 13th November, 1858

Note the other land titles that Daniel had purchased !

It did not sell at this time, but in 1861 Sir Maurice O'Connell rented Rosemount, and in 1864 he purchased the property. Years later Alfred Jones became the owner and in 1894 he demolished the house and built a new Rosemount.

Today, Rosemount House is occupied by the

"Karuna" Hospice Service

27 Cartwright St Windsor



With regard to Daniel's second land, it is recorded by family members that a house was built around 1860 and Daniel and his family lived there for a few years until the property was sold to Sir James Cockle, the chief justice of the Colony of Queensland. In 1864, Sir James then engaged James Cowlshaw to design a large stone house to be built next, (or addition), to the existing house.

This house would become OAKWAL

Current address 50 Bush St Windsor



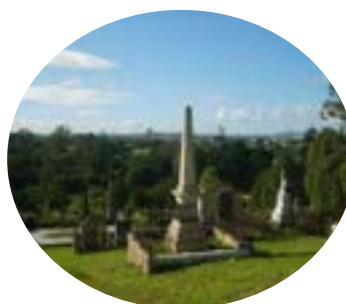
Daniel's next home (built on his purchase of 52 acres), was in the current suburb of Ashgrove, and was named ST JOHN'S WOOD, (also known as the "Granite House").



Current address 31 Piddington St Ashgrove

Dora Somerset passed away at St John's Wood 14 February 1867 at age 55

Daniel Somerset passed away at Bowen in Queensland 15 April 1880 at age 68



Toowong Cemetery

Additional information relating to the May Journal's story of the Enoggera Railway line.

*Provided by historian Diana Hacker,
from the Enoggera and Districts
Historical Society*

At the centre of the development of the Enoggera Parish was the railway line, officially opened to Enoggera on 5th February 1899 [but which ran at a loss for some years] and was, in time [1916], extended to Rifle Range. At first, Troops had to march to Newmarket to board trains.

In May 1912 an extension of the line from Enoggera into the rifle range was considered too expensive. Eventually a new survey brought a siding from between Enoggera and Rifle Range stations into the camp area to the north of Sandy Creek. In 1915 the Government gave the Railway £4,000 for the extension.

The name of the station Rifle Range was changed by the Railways Dept on 14 July 1923 to **Gaythorne** after the near by family property of Mrs Harold Bliss, 'nee Vidgen.

The first rifle range in Brisbane was within the confines of Victoria Park where Nine-teen acres was used as a Municipal Rifle Range from c 1865 to 1885. For the sake of public safety it was decided to move the range to an area of 120 acres, part of the Toowong Cemetery Reserve [without further confirmation thought to be the area now occupied by the Botanic Garden].

*Increasing population and incidences of residences being peppered by wayward shots brought about the removal of the Toowong range to the Enoggera area in 1908. The establishment of the Military camp, Gallipoli Barracks [particularly after WW I] began with an initial purchase of 1,000 acres for a 12,000 yard range. Further purchases were made over the next few years. The rifle range remained until the 1960s when it was moved to **Belmont** – a location first mooted in the 1880s.*



Departure of 5th Australia Light Regiment at Rifle Camp (now Gaythorne), 1915. Ref. A. N. M. P04604-004 Barry Redford.

The death of Common Sense



Today we mourn the passing of a beloved old friend, “Common Sense”, who has been with us for many years. No one knows for sure how old he was, since his birth records were long ago lost in bureaucratic red tape. He will be remembered as having cultivated such valuable lessons as: Knowing when to come in out of the rain; Why the early bird gets the worm; Life isn’t always fair; and Maybe it was my fault. “Common Sense” lived by simple, sound financial policies (don’t spend more than you can earn) and reliable strategies (adults, not children, are in charge). His health began to deteriorate rapidly when well-intentioned but overbearing regulations were set in place. Reports of a 6 -year-old boy charged with sexual harassment for kissing a classmate; teens suspended from school for using mouthwash after lunch; and a teacher fired for reprimanding an unruly student, only worsened his condition. “Common Sense” lost ground when parents attacked teachers for doing the job that they themselves had failed to do in disciplining their unruly children. It declined even further when schools were required to get parental consent to administer Panadol, sun lotion or a band-aid to a student; but could not inform parents when a student became pregnant and wanted to have an abortion. “Common Sense” lost the will to live as the Ten Commandments became contraband; churches became businesses; and criminals received better treatment than their victims.

“Common Sense” took a beating when you couldn’t defend yourself from a burglar in your own home and the burglar could sue you for assault. “Common Sense” finally gave up the will to live, after a woman failed to realize that a steaming cup of coffee was hot. She spilled a little in her lap, and was promptly awarded a huge settlement. “Common Sense” was preceded in death by his parents, “Truth” and “Trust”; his wife, “Discretion”; his daughter, “Responsibility”; and his son, “Reason”. He is survived by his 3 step-brothers; “I Know My Rights”, “Someone Else Is To Blame”, and “I’m A Victim”. Not many attended his funeral because so few realized he was gone. If you still remember him, pass this on.

Written by Lori Borgman – <http://www.loriborgman.com/>