

# Peach Trees Gazette

Peachester History Committee Inc. Newsletter  
Number 178 ~ January / February 2022

## NEWS AND COMING EVENTS

Concern about the current Covid wave, with numbers escalating throughout the Sunshine Coast, together with our duty of care to members and visitors, led us to review the Peachester History Committee and Heritage Centre program for the next few weeks.

Bearing in mind advice from the Premier and Qld Health that vulnerable groups should avoid crowds and stay at home when possible, PHC Management Committee has made the following decisions:

### CHANGES TO NORMAL PHC DATES

- Heritage Centre 23 January public open day cancelled
- Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> February general meeting cancelled
- Monday work days at the Heritage Centre to go ahead with volunteers attending at own discretion
- No Heritage Centre group bookings at present
- Review these arrangements mid-February
- Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> March general meeting to go ahead if the situation has improved at that time
- AGM to be held in April rather than the normal March meeting. **Hence please note the 2022 AGM date for PHC is now Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> April.**

We hope everyone is safe and well, and look forward to catching up soon. This is just a short Gazette to keep everyone in the loop, plus a few items you may find of interest. More next edition, when hopefully there will be better news about meetings, and even – dare we hope – some plans for outings and activities! (We have started a very tentative wish list for the 2022 program).

Please let us know if you have any concerns, and also send your ideas for the wish list.

Helen (54949557), Jocelyn (54390895)



## COMBINED SMALL SCHOOLS REUNION

Woodford Historical Society has invited PHC to help with a combined reunion for all the schools that have existed over the years in the Woodford – Peachester – Kilcoy – Mt Mee area. Numerous small schools were established, especially in the early 1900s, many of which have long since closed.

The date proposed is Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2022, with the gathering to be held at Woodford Community Hall.

We can all help by spreading the word, and contacting as many past students, teachers and descendants as possible. The organisers are also calling for photos and memorabilia to display on the day.

PHC has run two smaller-scale reunions in the past – one for Commissioner's Flat in 2008, and a combined Commissioner's Flat & Crohamhurst reunion in 2013. We have also helped with several Peachester State School gatherings. So we have quite an extensive collection of photos and other items which can be displayed on 22<sup>nd</sup> October. However, it is always possible to find more, so let us know if you have anything of interest to contribute.

Some sample photos below: Commissioner's Flat School 1928, Crohamhurst School 1950 (can you spot any familiar faces?), and (bottom) former students of Commissioner's Flat School visiting the old school site in October 2008: Barry Ferris, Bruce Page, Gordon Page and Ivan Wild.



## BRIBIE ISLAND AND THE CALOUNDRA BAR

Have you been following the story about the breakthrough on the northern end of Bribie Island? Many of our readers will remember visiting the Happy Valley area and enjoying the rides and entertainment there during the holidays. Then the tides chewed away at the spit – and it was gone! How fascinating to observe history and geography taking place before our eyes – what's next for this iconic piece of our coastal landscape?

### Why Bribie Island split in two and what happens now

ABC Sunshine Coast / By Jessica Lamb and Meg Bolton, 27 January 2022



Sunshine Coast water users are urged to avoid the treacherous new passage through northern Bribie Island. (Doug Bazley, Blueys Photography)

Ex-Tropical Cyclone Seth has changed south-east Queensland's coastline, with massive swells buffeting Bribie Island's northern tip and splitting the island in two.

High tides and huge seas driven by Seth carved a passage through the northern end of Bribie Island at the end of last year. Experts say the new bar could take up to 20 years to close and will eventually become the preferred entry to Caloundra.

The island's northern tip has gradually been thinning on the ocean and Pumicestone Passage sides, with the surf briefly running over the dunes into the passage during the middle of last year. The evolving passage is now 300 metres wide with a depth of 1.5 metres at high tide and 1 metre at low tide.

It is so treacherous that two 24-hour cameras were donated and installed to monitor the area after calls for help to the coast guard increased.

Caloundra's Coast Guard Commander, Roger Pearce, said the new bar was not officially classified as a trafficable coastal bar on maps by the harbour master yet, and was currently only used for emergencies.

"According to the coastal scientists who have been out with us, the north end of Bribie Island will eventually break up and become sandbars again," Mr Pearce said.

### Existing Caloundra bar could close

University of the Sunshine Coast geologist and coastal erosion expert Javier Leon said the original Caloundra channel north of the Bribie Island bar could change and close.

He explained what was once part of Bribie Island could become officially part of Caloundra and form a Caloundra spit. Mr Leon said it was exciting to be an eyewitness to such dynamic changes to the landscape. More high tides and storm surges are predicted for the end of the month starting on January 31. We're going through a La Niña period, which means, usually for

this part of the coast, more energy coming so more easterly waves, and that's going to be super interesting to monitor," he said.

### Changing northern face nothing new

The changing face of the Caloundra bar is not a new phenomenon. Photographer Doug Bazley can vividly recall memories of visiting the circus and holiday fair along Caloundra's sandy spit in the 1980s. That area eventually filled with water to become the existing Caloundra bar.

Now, Mr Bazley has captured in intricate detail the next step in the area's ever-changing scenery — the Bribie Island breakthrough.

For his business, Bluey's Photography, Mr Bazley has been flying his drone over the passage and the new southern bar since the first incursion early in July last year. He said it was interesting to see the daily changes from overhead.

"I've been flying over this area since probably early 2017 and slowly watching the island get devoured by the ocean," he said.



The northern tip of Bribie Island and the Caloundra bar in 2017. (Doug Bazley, Blueys Photography)

"The feeling is that finally the north bar will close over and the southern bar will be the new bar.

Mr Bazley said the breach had created issues for some local boat hire businesses because what had always been still water now had unpredictable swells, which meant they could no longer hire vessels to inexperienced boaties.

From [www.abc.net.au](http://www.abc.net.au)



This graphic is from an earlier ABC report (January 2021), and shows two satellite photos from QImagery – revealing the very narrow stretch opposite Golden beach in 2020, compared with the 1971 image which clearly shows the former Happy Valley spit and quite a different northern point of the island.

Those interested can look this up on QImagery, Qld Govt online collection of current and historical aerial photographs since the 1930s, [www.qimagery.information.qld.gov.au](http://www.qimagery.information.qld.gov.au).

## HOW TO READ OLD HANDWRITING

Family historian Judith Batchelor explains how you can read the old handwriting in family history records. (January 27, 2022)



Reading a handwritten historical document, such as a Prerogative Court of Canterbury will or a baptism record, is one of the most rewarding parts of family history research, allowing us to uncover our ancestors' lives first-hand. However, it can also be frustrating when we can't uncover the crucial information because we can't read the old handwriting.

### Ten Top Tips

**QUICK SCAN.** Make a quick scan of the document to get a general sense of its meaning, then number the lines you are transcribing and keep to those lines in your transcription. Also add a title that describes its content.

**BE FAITHFUL.** Try not to change the punctuation and spelling, although if you wish to add letters to aid comprehension, underline them so it is clear which letters appear only in the original document.

**ABBREVIATIONS.** If a word has been abbreviated, then put any letters you add in square brackets.

**ILLEGIBLE LETTERS.** If you come across illegible text, use {...} with the number of dots equalling the number of illegible characters.

**MAKE A COMPARISON.** If you are having difficulty making out a letter, look for an example of a similar-looking letter in another word that you do recognise elsewhere in the document.

**ADJACENCY.** Adjacent letters can help you to decipher a problem word.

**USE A GUIDE.** Consult a guide to the different letterforms associated with the hand you are reading.

**KNOW THE FORMULA.** Many official documents follow a specific formula, so make sure to familiarise yourself with other examples.

**IMPROVING VISIBILITY.** With handwriting that is small or faint, try adjusting the contrast on your screen or increasing the magnification. It can also be helpful to print out the document and examine it under a bright light, or with the aid of a magnifying glass.

**CONSULT OTHERS.** If you are stuck with a word, see if someone else can help. Genealogy forums are a great place to share words that are hard to read.

### Types of handwriting

Distinct styles of writing, known as **hands**, were practised during different time periods. The hand that was used also depended on its purpose. Law courts and central government used **Legal hand**, also known as Court hand, so you will likely encounter this when viewing legal records held by The National Archives at Kew. Writing in a legible, recognisable hand that didn't diverge from established conventions was prized, and professional scribes known as scriveners were employed by the courts to write out or copy documents. As early as the 14th century, they formed their own livery company, the Worshipful Company of Scriveners. Each law court had its own distinctive version of Legal hand, but these styles were all characterised by upright letters written closely together, and featured exaggerated ascenders and descenders.

In England, a style called **Secretary hand** was commonly used for business, personal and literary purposes from the early part of the 16th century. With increasing literacy and a growing bureaucracy, there was a need to create records using a plain style of writing. Taught using copybooks, Secretary was the hand of choice for writing provincial wills, parish registers, manorial records and private correspondence. Characterised by rounded letters with many loops and flourishes, Secretary hand was also cursive, meaning that the

writer's pen did not leave the paper. This flowing style of hand enabled documents to be written at speed.

Over time, Secretary was overtaken in popularity by **Italic**. This hand, which features more heavily slanted letters, was developed in Italy during the Renaissance, and became the dominant hand of the 18th century. In turn, Italic became influenced by **Round hand**, also known as **Common hand**, which originated in the 1660s, and over time evolved to become closer in appearance to the common handwriting we recognise today.

### Spelling difficulties

Spelling is another troublesome area, particularly in documents written prior to the 18th century, before spelling was standardised with the development of commercial printing and the advent of dictionaries. In earlier periods, words were often written phonetically, and you'll find considerable variation in spelling, even within the same document. Also bear in mind local dialects when decoding unfamiliar words; if you have trouble recognising them, try saying them out loud. It is common to find words with an extra 'e' on the end, such as 'ordaine', or missing the final 'e' – for example, 'mak' instead of 'make'. Both vowels and consonants were frequently doubled or halved, giving rise to 'always' for 'alwavs' or 'goodnes' for 'goodness'.

Before the 16th century, the English alphabet contained only 24 letters; 'u' and 'v' were used interchangeably, and 'i' and 'j' were also regarded as the same letter (although generally the 'j' was used only as a consonant). Hence you may find the word 'ever' spelled 'euer', and 'unto' rendered as 'vnto'. Spelling tends to be more uniform in printed documents, whereas manuscript versions display more divergence.

### Punctuation problems

Punctuation was also used more sparingly in the past, and did not follow the conventions with which we are familiar today. For example, a tick was often used instead of a comma or a full stop. Marks at the end of a line may appear to be punctuation but in fact were used simply to make the line justified – in other words, to ensure that all lines in a document are the same length – so can be disregarded. A flourish served the same purpose.

Another letter that can cause confusion is 's', for which different long-form and short-form versions were used; the long 's' can be mistaken for an 'f'. A single long 's' was typically used at the beginning of a word, or in one that would otherwise contain a double 's' in the middle. The short-form version would typically be used at the end of a word, even if it ended with a double 's'. Minims such as the letters 'n', 'm' 'u' and 'i', formed by the single downstroke of the pen, can be hard to distinguish if the joins are not clear.

In general, the names of both people and places can be the most difficult to decipher, because of the lack of context and the creativity in spelling. Indeed, even that most literate of men, William Shakespeare, signed his name variously William Shaksper, Wm Shakspe, William Shakspeare, Willm Shakspeare, William Shakspeare and even Willm Shakp.



English names were also often Latinised – for example, Johannes for John. The Greek letter Chi, which looks like a capital 'X', was used as a symbol for Christ (hence Xmas). This means that the name Christopher may be recorded as Xopher. Names might also be abbreviated, so you might see Chas: for Charles, Jno: for John and Ed: for Edward.

Capital letters were frequently written in a variety of decorative styles and, because they appear more rarely, it is not always possible to find other examples in a document for comparison purposes. Capitals were used randomly, too, not just at the beginning of sentences. Note that in Secretary hand, a capital 'F' was written with a double 'f' in lower case.

To write more quickly and to save space on the paper, abbreviations were used liberally for words in common use and for those that were easy to understand given the context. Contractions – omitting letters from the middle of words – were common: you'll find 'wd' for 'would', and 'itm' for 'item'. The modern titles 'Mr' and 'Mrs' are survivors of historical contractions of 'Master' and 'Mistress'. You may also find a suspension: an abbreviation where letters are missed off from the end of the word. One common example is 'gentl' for 'gentleman'.

### Clues to abbreviations

One clue that a word has been abbreviated is a dash or an accent, known as a tilde (~), above the missing letter(s) or at the end of the word. For example, a tilde above '-con' or '-ton' indicates that the 'i' is missing in the endings '-tion' and '-cion'.

Brevigraphs are another type of abbreviation where a symbol or stroke was used in place of letters. A brevigraph that we still use today is the ampersand '&'. The Anglo-Saxon thorn 'þ', a letter that no longer exists in the English language, is behind the very common brevigraph of 'ye'. Over time, this letter started to resemble a 'y' so 'the' was written as 'ye' and 'that' was written as 'yt', although one should always record the modern-day equivalents. This is the reason why you may come across 'Ye Olde Tavern' or 'Ye Olde Tea Shoppe', names chosen for their historical resonance.

NOTE: This is a shortened version of an article in the February "Who Do You Think You Are?" magazine, and on the website [www.whodoyouthinkyouaremagazine.com](http://www.whodoyouthinkyouaremagazine.com). The full article also includes a helpful list of websites offering resources, samples and online tutorials in deciphering old hand-writing.

### CAN YOU RELATE?



### OUT AND ABOUT

Photos from Remembrance Day on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021, and the PHC December meeting and Christmas lunch.

