

VCCA(Q) CLUBROOMS HISTORY

Our clubrooms at Carindale opened on 5 March 1994. At the time of writing, 2018, only around 30% of current members were members on opening day. Few of the Building Committee are still active and even fewer know of our pre-Carindale meeting places, the fund raising events and contributions of other Clubs and individuals that led to us building our own premises.

The purpose of this article is to gather and record this part of our Club's history.

Information has come from the Minutes of meetings and the recollections of many. Unfortunately, the minutes of the Building Committee cannot be found.

EARLY MEETING PLACES

- Early meetings were held in the auditorium of H.C.Sleigh (Golden Fleece Petroleum Products) who were major sponsors of the Club from its inception in 1956, through to 1966.
- During 1966, some meetings were held in the old RSL Hall in Nicholas St Ipswich, to make it easier for Darling Downs and Kingaroy members to attend.
- Member Frank Hack operated an automotive electrical business at 312 Main Street Kangaroo Point. The premises comprised an old high set Queenslander style house with the workshop underneath and at the rear of the house. Frank allowed the Club to modify a room in the front upstairs part of the house for meetings. Frank's premises were resumed in 1967 by the Main Roads Department for widening Main St and Shafston Avenue.
- In 1968, member Alan Sypher secured the lease of a Queensland Rail building in Railway Terrace Milton beside Milton Station. The lease would only be available "for a few years" as the land was to be used to install a transformer for the future electrification of the railway system. For the next 22 years, the hall was the venue for our meetings as well as a host of social activities and the starting point for rallies.
- Don Roberts was lifelong friends with the Morris Woollen Mill family. In the early 1970s, some of this processing moved offshore leaving vacant, some interesting historical buildings at Redbank. Don's proposal to occupy one as a display/workshop/meeting area was discussed but did not proceed.
- Following termination of our lease over the Queensland Rail property at Milton, we met at East Brisbane State School from August 1989.
- In May 1991, we moved into the Church Hall next to our Carindale property, while our clubrooms were under construction.

- In September 1992, we moved to the Queensland Rifle Association Hall, Old Cleveland Road Belmont for a few months, while the Church Hall underwent renovations and our clubrooms were under construction.

LOCATIONS CONSIDERED FOR OUR CLUBROOMS

Minutes of the February 1987 General Meeting said,

"When it is all summed up, the Club can either purchase freehold land and build and be broke, or lease land and build and still have some money in kitty to be invested and the interest to help out with outgoing costs each year. Take up freehold and every Club Member will be heavily committed for years to come. Take up leasehold would be much easier but would be faced with the prospect of never owning the building etc."

The following locations were considered.

- In June 1988, 96 perches of freehold land at Sunnybank.
- October 1988, a house and two blocks of land at Fairfield.
- A worked-out quarry site at Ashgrove adjacent to Ashgrove State School. Among other problems, the site was leasehold and would not guarantee the security of our investment, if lease terms changed over time.
- In November 1988, Brisbane City Council offered the disused Girl Guides and Brownies Den at Baron St Greenslopes. Neighbours were canvassed and supported VCCA(Q) occupancy. In February 1989, we held a rally to the site and gained further support of neighbours. Our members were enthusiastic about the site. Sketch plans showing possible extensions were submitted to Council. In June 1989, the local Ward Alderman vetoed our lease of the property in favour of a local sporting body he supported.
- In April 1989, we received advice from Queensland Rail, that the lease on our Milton premises was to be terminated in July.
- We considered the Downey Park, Windsor headquarters of the Queensland Softball Association, then in liquidation. Again, we would not have owned the land, it being Brisbane City Council parkland and our investment in buildings would be jeopardised if Council had a change of heart about our lease.
- Vacant land diagonally opposite the Shafston Hotel at the corner of Wellington Rd and Shafston Avenue, East Brisbane. This Main Roads Department owned land was the site of the open air Mowbray Park Picture Palace from 1912. From 1960 to 1967, it was Queensland's first Ice Skating Rink. (See photograph on our clubrooms wall, of Veteran Delage and Sunbeam outside the Picture Palace.)

Our intentions were to construct clubrooms with a period style Motor Garage façade. (We had suitable roof trusses in storage from a demolished central city building.) Negotiations with the then MRD Minister Russ Hinze failed to achieve a price we could afford.

- Five acres of freehold land at Morningside available for \$64,000. This would have only left \$15,000 in our coffers to build clubrooms. Clearly not enough.
- An industrial shed at Sumner Park was deemed to be not central enough for members travelling from north, south or east.
- A closed BP Service Station site at Wavell Heights at \$60-65,000. It was thought we could not afford Council rates of \$55 a week. At this stage, we were not contemplating other Clubs paying to use of our premises.
- A building on the Mt Gravatt Showgrounds.
- A site on the property of the Brisbane Tramways Trust at Ferny Grove.
- We looked at using part of the Old Museum in Gregory Terrace.
- The Nudgee School of Arts built 1914, on 2 acres of leasehold land.
- In February 1991 we inspected Redland Shire Council land at Pinklands Oval, Thornlands. Council was encouraging community groups to establish premises at the complex. We inspected and thought it not central enough for our purposes.
- Then came the property at 1376 Old Cleveland Road Carindale. Eureka! We had found our home.

FUND RAISING VENTURES

- In the early 1970's, club members including Neil Johnston, Don Roberts, Greg and Roy Hill, Lindsay Barram, John Hoerlein and at times Graham Wilkinson and John Jones dismantled "the Old Bakery", an 1870 timber slab building that Don had been renting in Ipswich. It was on Government land with a 99 year lease which had expired. A local businessman purchased the building, and these club members moved it piece by numbered piece to Purga, just outside Ipswich. This was done over a three month period and resulted in around \$5000 that was arguably the start of the club's Building Fund.

As an interesting aside in 2018, the chap who had "the Old Bakery" moved to his property at Purga was re-locating to NSW and taking the building with him.

- In June 1969, the club published a booklet “Veteran Cars of Queensland.” Don Roberts took it upon himself to sell these to the public from his Model T at every opportunity. Funds raised went to the building Fund
- In 1982, Greg Hill and John Hoerlein were the executors of the Estate of Foundation and Life Member J.E.(Don) Roberts. While no specific bequest to VCCA(Q) was made in Don’s will, his intent in terms of bequests to “charities and clubs” allowed Greg and John to make a \$20,000 contribution to the Building Fund in remembrance and recognition of Don’s significant part in the history of the Veteran Club.

Note: The February 1986 Minutes passed a motion that “A suitably inscribed plaque be formulated to the memory of our late Life Member, J.E. (Don) Roberts and made to the satisfaction of the Donors of this very generous donation of \$20,000 towards new clubrooms and then installed in the VCCA(Q) clubrooms while ever that Club or clubrooms is in existence. This can be seen in the Clubrooms foyer.

- The Kern Corporation was a major property developer in the 1970s/80s. Our member, Phil Fletcher negotiated a deal with Kern to run “Kern Classic Rallies” for Veteran, Vintage and Classic vehicles annually from 1984 to 1987. This injected \$40,000 into Club coffers. The Kern Classics cemented the concept that our clubrooms was to also offer a home to the historic car movement as a whole. This funding was the single biggest impetus to our dream of a place of our own.
- The February 1987 Minutes showed we had investments with the Bank of Queensland earning 15% interest.
- 09/11/1991, Member Val Coles arranged a Wine and Cheese night at Palma Rosa, the then headquarters of the English Speaking Union in Queensland. This event injected \$1048 into the fund.
- In May 1992. a Jazz night raised \$770. An auction of donated parts raised \$247.
- The April 1992 General Meeting decided that we were well short of enough funds to commence construction. It was decided to fund the difference between cost and available funds, by:
 - Preselling rent to other clubs
 - Buy a Brick donation scheme
 - Interest free loan from members (if available)
 - Loan from members at the then current pension deeming rate of 6%.
- Trevor Farnell and John Day attended general meetings of over 20 historic car clubs at their various meeting venues, to canvas the concept of these clubs becoming tenants of the proposed Veteran Club premises. At the time, we had the land and a sketch plan of the proposal, drawn for us by Tim Braby from the Austin 7 Register. These meetings yielded \$40,000 in pledged funds as rental

payments for up to 10 years in advance. This also included rights to library rooms for VCCQ and QVVA/Vintage Chev Club.

- In November 1992, Canadian visitors Bob and Joan Lawrence conducted a slide night at the Greenslopes Bowls Club, to showcase their world motoring travels.
- Many members and supporters “bought a brick”, (Gold/\$100, Silver/\$50 and Bronze/\$20) as a badly needed cash donation to the building fund. These donations are recorded on a plaque in the foyer of the clubrooms.
- Despite all our fund raising ventures, we were still \$25,000 short. Member (later Life Member) Bill Ferris stepped up and offered to loan the club \$25,000, with interest calculated at the pension deeming rate. This generosity was accepted. The loan and interest was repaid in just a few years.
- Once the clubrooms were occupied, Val Wojtasik, Janette Farnell and Alison Day made craft items for sale in the clubrooms
- Alison Day made and sold jars of jam by the dozen at meetings, with a willing clientele waiting for the next batch.

OUR CARINDALE COMPLEX

The Main Roads Department acquired the property in the 1970s. Part of it was required as road reserve for the new Gateway Arterial Road. The balance, including the house was used as a site office by the Contractor building the road. They cleared a section behind the house, laid concrete slabs and constructed machinery servicing and workshop facilities. At the conclusion of roadworks, the Contractor was required to hand the property back to Main Roads in substantially the same condition as when first occupied. The workshops were removed but the slabs were hidden under 300mm of fill.

The property was then excess to Main Roads’ requirements and was sold at public auction. The purchaser appeared to do little to the property before again putting it to auction. Our Secretary, Graham Porter saw the “For Auction” sign and the rest is now history. Its attraction to VCCA(Q) was :

- Being beside the Gateway Arterial and Old Cleveland Roads gave easy access from north, south, east and the city. Good location as a starting/finishing point for rallies.
- Enough land to build clubrooms and still have a sizeable area for field events.
- The property is encumbered by 3 SEQEB Power transmission easements, running parallel to the Gateway. No structures can be built under the easements, which occupy roughly half the land. We felt this would limit commercial interest in the block, and the amount they would pay. But it would not stop us having car parking/activities under the overhead cables. (The transmission lines have now been relocated west of our property, but the easements are still on title.)

- Income from renting the house would ease the burden of freehold ownership.
- Apart from tenants in the house, nobody would be disturbed by club members leaving late night meetings.
- The local Councillor was enthusiastic about our potential use. A previous approach to Council had been for a demolition yard, an eyesore beside such a major road into Brisbane, compared to our proposal.

Graham Porter was to bid at auction on our behalf. Agents expected it to sell for around \$105,000. We decided not to show our hand at the auction by having many enthusiastic VCCA(Q) members milling around. Graham with a couple of supporters withstood the pressure and was successful bidder at \$92,500. We had bought well. The unimproved value for rating purposes was \$108,000. We paid cash and became the owner of 1.1 hectares. The 1930/40s house showed advanced depreciation, particularly after rough use as a site office. The grass and weeds were waist high and the old chook sheds had seen better times. Investigations with a crowbar later unearthed the workshop slabs. These are those now behind the clubrooms, near the B-B-Q

A Building Committee was formed, comprising Phil Fletcher, Alan Telfer, Trevor and Janette Farnell and John and Alison Day. Howard Kenward came on board during construction. Veteran Car clubrooms in Sydney, Adelaide, Auckland, Christchurch, Perth and Launceston were visited and good/bad ideas noted.

Early in 1992, we hosted other clubs for morning tea, on site, to generate interest.

In October 1992, we invited many clubs to a very well attended lunch at our property, again to generate interest in the project. Profit of \$1700 for the day covered the cost of engineering drawings for the clubrooms.

An Acoustics Engineer was engaged to advise on design features that would aid good acoustics for the clubrooms. (The perforated ceiling is actually acoustic panel. Future painting of this will need to take the acoustic properties into account.) Alan Telfer drew plans for construction. These were modified regularly, as funding constraints dictated.

In October 1992, we received approval from South East Queensland Electricity Board, for our eastern veranda to encroach 1 metre into their easement area.

BCC Building Approval came in February 1993 and we went to tender immediately. Tenders were opened at our March Meeting and ranged from \$146,335 to \$239,640.

In April 1993, we signed a contract with Col Bartlett of Burbank for \$92,700, for a modified project. The planned brick façade, 2 of 4 toilets and all showers had been deleted. Members and supporters were to handle plumbing, drainage, electrical, painting, site works and car park.

Construction started on 08/06/1993, with 12 weeks allowed for completion. In the retention period after completion, only two issues arose, and these were readily fixed by the contractor. We were very satisfied with his cooperation and the quality of his work.

Our first meeting in the still to be completed clubrooms, was November 1993.

A committee planned the official opening of the clubrooms on 05/03/1994, by Her Excellency Mrs Leneen Forde, Governor of Queensland and Patron of VCCA(Q). Federal, State and Local politicians attended as did delegates from Veteran Clubs in NSW, Victoria and Canberra.

It had rained heavily all week, but cleared for the opening. 161 Veteran, Vintage and Classic cars attended the opening celebration. That night, we held a spit roast dinner with a jazz band to entertain us. The heavens opened again.

As an aside, on the morning of the opening, ex Sergeant of Police and VCCA(Q) member Hugh Kimlin, noticed a marijuana plant growing in the house garden, beside the fence that the Governor would drive by that afternoon.

Back then, we had the land, some plans, not enough money and a dream. Without the \$40,000 pledged by prospective tenant Clubs before a sod was turned, and the donated material, equipment and time of Clubs and members, it is arguable that the premises we enjoy today would have happened when it did in 1994.

The obvious conclusion to be drawn from the last twenty four years, is that our premises have met the original concept of being a home for the historic car movement in the Brisbane area. Since day one, all but three Clubs are still with us in 2018.

WE SHOULD PLACE ON RECORD, THE ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO THE PROJECT BY OUR MEMBERS AND THE TENANT CLUBS AND THEIR MEMBERS.

VCCA(Q) Members provided:

- The Building Committee of Alan Telfer, Phil Fletcher, Trevor and Janette Farnell, John and Alison Day and Howard Kenward met fortnightly in the 18 months leading up to completion of works and spent countless hours on site as well.
- Many, many members, wives and families gave long hours during the construction phase. Without the savings represented by these hours, the project would not have eventuated. Particularly noteworthy were the efforts of the so called "Pensioner Brigade", Hugh Kimlin, Frank Hack, Bill Ferris and Jim Degney who seemed to spend most of their time on site for many months.
- Alan Telfer drew the plans for the clubrooms.
- Phil Fletcher attended to Town Planning and Building Approvals.
- Trevor Farnell arranged the loan of grader, drott and 10 tonne roller from Hastings Deering and supply of tonnes of roadbase at friendly prices.

- Len Williams was a professional painter and led a team of volunteers to paint the building inside and out.
- Malcolm Sypher donated a truckload of landscaping plants.
- Leon Birss donated plants and shrubs
- Kev Long supplied plumbing fixtures.
- Robbie Beeston donated the 40 foot flagpole and the sandstone block that houses the plaque commemorating the opening of the complex. The sandstone came from the old State Government Insurance Office building, demolished on cnr Queen and Albert Streets. The flagpole came from Caltex Whinstanes.
- David Straughan supplied fluorescent light fittings and fans.
- Ray Gauld, floodlight and pole.
- Jim Degney managed construction of the carpark.
- Peter Arnold provided a fridge and microwave for the kitchen and chairs for the committee room.
- Graham Crittenden reupholstered the committee room chairs.
- John and Alison Day provided the Committee and General Meeting tables.

QVVA Members provided:

- Ten years' rent in advance, plus their share of the first shed and the shopfront they share with the Vintage Chev Club.
- Gary Day designed the circuits and wired the clubrooms with Frank Hack assisting.
- Cyril Conwell built the three shopfronts and supplied and modified the original kitchen and servery benches.
- Graham Porter, also then a strong VCCA(Q) member led the plumbing and drainage team. Several QVVA members toiled in the trenches, in particular, Peter Kling who was the local Brisbane City Council Plumbing Inspector. A very helpful man to have on board to oversee plumbing and drainage design and construction! Graham also arranged the long term loan of an unregistered tip truck, used extensively during ground preparation.

- Bryson Talamini supplied the heavy duty power cable to the clubrooms, from a shopping centre in Gladstone that was being expanded. The cable was heavier than our needs, but, delivered free of cost to the site, saved us enormously.
- Roofing and guttering arranged by Mike Hubert at a very friendly price.
- Ted Wojtasik supplied materials for and constructed the BBQ, car ramp and the steps down to the sheds.
- Gary Day obtained the cold room and the umbrella over the concrete slab beside the BBQ from Fisher Paykel.
- Val Wojtasik donated the prizes and conducted raffles that went a long way towards purchase of the auditorium chairs.
- QVVA donated the white mugs we and all tenants still use for tea and coffee.

VCCQ/Members provided:

- Ten year's rent in advance plus initial contribution for their shopfront.
- Jak Guyomar arranged the carpet and its installation in the clubrooms. Total cost to VCCA(Q) was only two drums of adhesive. The carpet was near-new, from a city office refurbishment.
- The shelving in the VCCA(Q) and VCCQ libraries and in the Committee meeting room came through a VCCQ Member.

Triumph Sports Owners Club member Cliff Wells provided:

- A large screen TV and VCR and their maintenance and replacement for many years.

Austin 7 Register member, Ron Toy provided:

- Truckloads of bedding sand under the floor slab

Mini Club Member, Neil Wendt provided:

- Our initial Security system at nominal cost and its maintenance at no cost for many years.

The Model A Ford Club:

- Brian Waters provided long term loan of his backhoe that was extensively used in groundworks during clubrooms construction. Brian installed the first PA system.
- Established the gardens that separate the Church and our property.
- Provided bricks for the BBQ.

Reliability Trials Club

- Installed the telephone and paid rental for many years.

Conclusion

This is a living document. It records all I have been able to find on activities leading up to the opening of our clubrooms at Carindale. There must be more to the story and I welcome your additions and corrections to make the record as accurate and complete as possible. It will be stored electronically and able to be updated as required.

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