

Charitable and Cultural Organizations

Friendly Societies, lodges, charitable, cultural and service organizations were formed as early as 1878 and have served the Brisbane Valley for over a century, founded and guided by prominent citizens. Last century's organizations, the Oddfellows, Rachebites, Masonic Lodges, Good Templars, contrasted in form to today's Lions, Apex, and women's groups. The histories of the groups illustrate their intermittent support over the years.

A friendly society was formed at E. McDonald's Royal Hotel in Esk on 8 June 1878. Eighteen men joined the new Manchester Unity Lodge of Oddfellows. On Saturday 21 September 1878 the eighteen members initiated by Brother E.H. Blunt of Ipswich included Brother Jones, P. and D. Denholm, Robert Henderson, H. Winwood and G. Peters. Brother Winwood was in the chair for the luncheon provided by G.D. Peters in his Esk Hotel. They met in a cottage rented from G. Peters; in 1882 Brother Langton was chairman.

The Esk Masonic Lodge opened on 9 March 1888. Temperance societies began in 1892 with a Temperance Society and two Band of Hope societies. The St Mel's branch of the Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society operated actively from the turn of the century. The Good Templars *allowed women members* and Sister Seymour was secretary in 1913; at the 1915 installation of the Good Templars Ada Porter gave a demonstration of club swinging and there were recitations and songs. The Loyal Glenrock Lodge Manchester Unity Independent Order of Odd Fellows went into recess during the war but revived with a large ball at the Lyceum Hall on 23 May 1919. Brother W.M. Gorrie was instrumental in the formation of a juvenile lodge in 1931 but was opposed to a mixed group. Their newly built hall in Highland Street was opened at a cost of £416 in August 1932.¹

The Rose of Fernvale Society of Oddfellows was formed early in the 1880s. Office Bearers were Brothers Heers, Denning, Balow, and Boyes in 1883. They bought Fernvale Hall from Edwin Hine in 1891. In 1896 the office bearers were J. Poole, J. and E. Michel, J.H. Wade, W. Suchting, F.C.A. Heers and H. Jensen but the organization faded as population drifted.²

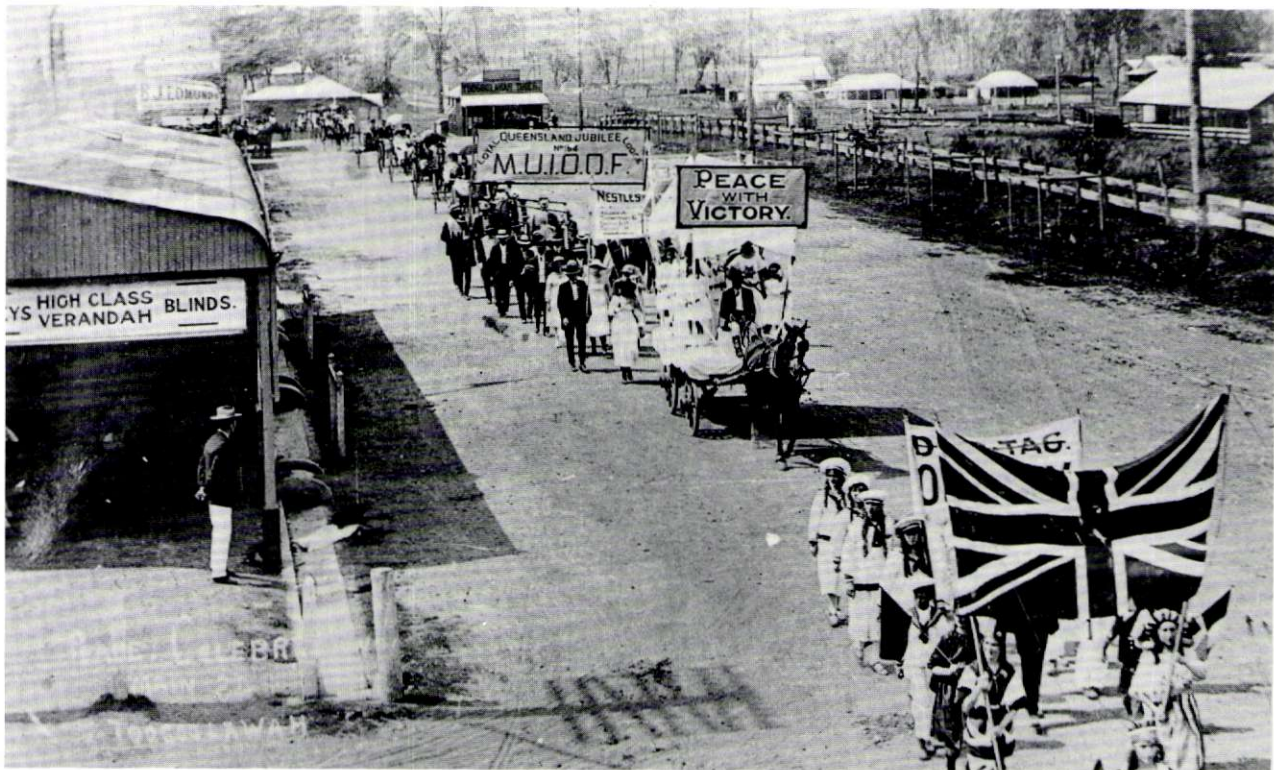
A branch of the Independent Order of Rachebites, Salford Unity Queensland District No 87 Tent 2, was formed in 1887 in Lowood. Ernest C. Nunn and several farmers and businessmen became members. A Masonic Lodge was formed in October 1898, followed by a Loyal Centenary Lodge MUIOOF, formed around the turn of the century; they built a substantial hall in 1925.³

In 1911 a branch of the International Order of Good Templars was formed in Toogoolawah. Brother H. Hoskins was Chief Templar. They had 250 in attendance for entertainment and refreshments in Alexandra Hall for their first anniversary in 1912. About 200 people attended the meeting of the prohibition campaign at Toogoolawah arranged by the local Good Templars Lodge. Dr E. Fox was chairman of the meeting in June 1920.⁴

The 'Loyal Coominya Lodge' was formed on 13 October 1922 with twenty-eight members with Brothers Floyd, Watson, and Sister Hughes as office bearers. Colinton also had a Masonic Lodge from the 1920s. In 1932 the office bearers were Brothers R.W. Williams, B. Larsen, J. Williamson, N., M. and J. Gorrie, A.W. Gray, William Wells, C.G. Veitch, W. Hunt, H.C. Harvey, G. Brown, W.W. Fox, W. Broneham, C. Welch, and H. Soden. The 1950s and 1960s were difficult for lodges as other service clubs took over and they have progressively declined in membership.⁵

Women have organized fund raising for social welfare through the Red Cross since the First World War and the Country Women's Association (CWA) since the 1920s. The Toogoolawah and Esk CWAs were formed in 1923 and the Lowood CWA in 1927.

The Fairfay, Nott, Peters, Graham (president), Pryde, Eastwick, T. Peters, Findlay, Seymour, Armstrong, Deane, Hogg, and Findlay women were foundation members of the Esk CWA. Their first restroom was a tent for women and children at the Esk show. Their second was one near Leggett's shop for women coming into town for shopping. They raised money for the QATB, the Esk hospital, State School, School of Arts, Tennis Club, Golf Club, and the Comforts Fund in the Second World War. On 2 September 1955 they bought land for a hall and it was opened on 24 October 1959. The



Peace Procession in Toogoolawah in 1918.

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CWA helped cater for both the opening and the golden jubilee of the Esk butter factory and for the water supply opening on 22 September 1962.⁶

The Toogoolawah CWA had a stump capping ceremony for their restroom in August 1949. Located in Fulham Street opposite the Post office it was to have a main room, three smaller rooms, and a kitchen. The contract price was £750 and the women already had £650 in hand at the stump capping.⁷

On 18 July 1927 a meeting was held in Guthrie's Hall at Lowood to form the CWA branch. Mrs F.M. Findlay was president and Miss E.J. Patrick secretary. Meetings were held in Guthrie's Hall and the Jubilee Theatre until 1953 when the CWA Hall and restrooms (situated in Main Street diagonally opposite the Royal Hotel) were opened.⁸

The first **Agricultural and Pastoral Shows** were held at Esk in 1904, at Lowood in 1907 and at Toogoolawah in 1913. The Brisbane Exhibition attracted the enthusiasm of many Brisbane Valley groups over several decades. James Barbour Jr had a wide reputation for his success in organizing the West Moreton District Exhibit for thirty-one years to 1949. Special trains took prize Illawarra and Friesian stock to the show in the 1920s. The Esk Shire always has a public holiday for the Brisbane Exhibition; being so close to Brisbane it has always been a popular social event.¹⁰

The Esk Progress Association decided in July 1903 to form an Agricultural Society. They selected J.H. McConnel as patron of the Esk Pastoral, Agricultural, and Industrial Association and decided upon 10 and 11 May 1904 for the first Esk show and races. The Toogoolawah show was established in 1913 in conjunction with Esk and was held in each town in alternate years. The war and depression interrupted this arrangement but for several years Esk held a Bushman's Carnival.

The Toogoolawah Show Society bought forty acres of good freehold land for £400. The Toogoolawah Show Society presidents over the years were J.H. and E.C. McConnel to 1926, D.C. Pryce 1927-1945, H.W. Searl 1946-1947, L. Pryce 1948, E. Vaughan 1948-1951, S.H. Laver 1951-1953, E.J. McConnel 1954-1955, R.D. Heaton 1955-1958, S.H. Allen and P.F. Lawrence to 1962. The Temperance movement was so strong in the town in 1919 that the usual publican's booth was refused. By 1949 the next generation — Duncan McConnel, W.M. Gorrie, W.J. Seymour among others, were on the committee. They had an attendance of 3000 with 1936 entries for the 1949 show opened by Dr D.A. Cameron.

They certainly had their share of financial and meteorological difficulties; 1930 was so wet that the ground was a quagmire. The grounds were improved by relief workers under the supervision



Committeemen and Judges of the Esk Agricultural and Pastoral Society. c. 1915.

Back Row (L to R): Newspaperman, J.D. Handley, A. Robinson, H.M. Scott, D.L. Dynmock, J. Beard, A.V. Ralston, J. Mahon and F. Seib.

Middle Row (L to R): T. Conroy, C.G. Handley, S.H. Harding, Miss H.M. Smith, W.J. McGhie (Hon. Treas.), T.C. Pryde (Sec.), Mrs Gurther, W.H. Kirk, J. Williams, J. McBeane.

Front Row (L to R): L. Andersen, J.G. Smith (Assist. Sec.), A. Smith, S. Graham, J.E. Moore, C. Clifford, H. Chaille.

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of the Main Roads Commission in 1931, and a new ring was erected by C.W. Crandell for £90 in 1939.

Extra lights and electric wiring were installed in 1956. The pavilion, cattle yards and pig sties and concrete areas were also improved. By 1972 they were holding two days of camp draft events and caged birds were introduced as entries because there was such a wide variety of birds bred and shown widely in the West Moreton. A new galvanized dining hall was erected at a cost of \$7,000 in 1974, replacing the old one damaged in the storm of 4 December 1973. In 1977 they lost dairy cattle exhibits because of the brucellosis problem and did not get them back until 1981.¹¹

An Agricultural Society was formed in Lowood in 1906 and land was secured for a showground reserve on part of the Rifle Range and the Tarampa Estate. The first show was held in 1907 with Charles Lumley Hill as President, H.P. Somerset MLA (patron) and Louis Shureck (treasurer). Nearly a hundred Tarampa residents helped to clear the showground land. Money was raised from C.H.D. Lindemann and the Bacchus Marsh company for more land. Lindemann's old house was used as a pavilion at first; then timber for the ring and pavilions was milled free by Denning's sawmill. The new pavilion, with a special Crow's Ash dancing floor, was opened by Mrs Lumley Hill in 1920. It cost £750. The presidents over the first fifty years were F.G. Woodward 1904-1917, E.C. Nunn Snr 1918, 1922-23, 1932-35, C. Litzow 1919 and 1924-30, 1941-42, C.A. Vorpapel 1931, L.G. Hall 1936-37, W.J. Walters 1938-10, 1950-11, F.N.

Linde 1943-44, 1955-17, Arthur Wadley 1945, Lieutenant Colonel William Patrick 1946-48, F.J. Gould 1949-50, A.R. Hayes 1952-54. The first show was held on the old showground. The Lindemann's twelve acres of land near the railway station was purchased in 1918-1919 and more land was bought in 1949 from N. Weise for camping areas for side show people. There was no show in 1952 because of drought.¹²

These were the days when shows meant displays of produce, and milk production and show jumping contests. Farmers were extremely proud and loyal to certain dairy cattle breeds. When the butter price was at its highest the Jersey won most butterfat competition whilst the Australian Illawarra Shorthorn (A.I.S.), huge red-roan cows bred for Australian dairying conditions, consistently won ground milking competitions and butterfat competitions in other years. More recently the Friesian has taken precedence. Farmers knew good stock. They talked for hours about breeds, pedigrees, shapes, and colours.

Meanwhile the children swung round on merry-go-rounds all day, sucked lollies, waved fairy floss, and craved more show bags. They wore their best clothes — beautiful new ones for the occasion — pretty little girls in frilled white dresses trailing their grandparents. For weeks the town dress shops had all the best in stock. Ladies saved and competed to look their best in a new outfit with hat and gloves, handbag and shoes to match. Hairdressers also prospered before shows with perms and sets. Men bought suits, ties, and hats.

Special trains ran from Ipswich and Boonah to the shows. They carried loads of enthusiastic and contented passengers to and from the show for the day, stopping right outside the show grounds. Then in the evening after the fireworks they trundled home, rocking to the songs of passengers.

Shows brought a prosperous turnover to the district annually and a breadth of public spiritedness as well in the town. The rodeos and campdrafts have become more and more popular and much country entertainment now revolves around horse sports.

ENDNOTES

1. The Winwood and Peters families were related by intermarriage. (Information from H. Winwood, Ipswich, January 1986.); QPP 1908 Session 1 p359; QT 1 June, 26 and 27 June, and 17 September 1878, 15 March 1888, 9 and 26 July 1892, 26 November 1892, 15 May 1913 p4, 4 February 1915 p4, 29 May 1919 p3; ER 21 March 1931, 6 August 1932 and 1 October 1932.
2. QT 31 July 1883, 17 November 1891 and 4 August 1896 p3.
3. Cr. E.R. Nunn's Notes; BC 25 October 1898 p5 c5; QT April and November 1925 (Grace Nunn Collection).
4. N.G. Coleman, *Early Settlement of Toogoolawah* p16; QT 6 November 1912 p6, 15 May 1912 p7, 5 June 1920 p8.
5. QT 25 October 1922 p9; ER 25 April 1931 and 24 September 1932.
6. QT 26 October 1973 p11.
7. QT 30 August 1949 p4.
8. QT 18 June 1977 p13.
10. QT 7 August 1922 p7 and 17 August 1949.
11. N.G. Coleman, *Early Settlement of Toogoolawah* p18; *Toogoolawah State School Booklet* 1980 p7; ESKM 11 April 1904, 10 June 1931 p496; QT 28 July 1903, 19 November 1903, 5 May 1919 p3, 2 June 1930 p10, 20 June 1949 p2, 27 August 1949 p3, 15 September 1956 p6, 8 March 1972, 18 June 1973 p16, 22 March 1974 p13, 9 July 1977 p20 and 11 June 1981 p12; BVS 26 May 1962; ER 31 March 1939.
12. QT 6 December 1906, 1 June 1957 and 2 June 1972; BVS 31 May 1957.

Toogoolawah Lions Park facilities. 1987.

Terry Conway

