President’s Message from Earl James

What has happened to the Dry Season? Where is the cool weather? I went to the Roper River during the Society’s annual field trip well prepared for freezing overnight and early morning conditions but I could have left my track suit and warm blankets at home. We had beautifully mild weather conditions which enabled us to do practically everything that Past President Brian had planned for us. There were a few hitches – e.g. we were beaten by the long grass when we attempted to drive to the Overland Telegraph Depot on the bank of the river but with the kind assistance of the Roper Bar Store we finally got there by boat. Eighteen members enjoyed the trip with all taking five days over the journey. We have to thank Brian for the reconnaissance trip he and Lyn did and for his liaison with the management of the store that provided much assistance during the trip.

The annual field trip is generally too long for many members but your Council has been attempting to organise a series of day trips to places of historic interest so that more members may participate. Currently we are considering looking at the aboriginal shoreline middens around the Darwin harbour and another prospect is a trip to view the remains of the Daly River copper mine and the associated graves. We need ideas from members and to find trip leaders who are well versed in the subject sites.

The proposal to seek the renaming of the George Brown Botanical Gardens in Darwin was discussed at the last council meeting and in the light of Robyn Smith’s excellent report and we came to the conclusion that it would be inappropriate to proceed with the proposal. In its stead, we resolved to find another way to emphasise recognition of the Holtze family within the gardens. Vice President, Bev Phelts has already investigated existing memorials there and has made a recommendation that we attempt to have a small garden close by the site of the original Holtze Cottage declared a memorial garden complete with appropriate historic signage.

The Patron’s dinner is coming up in September and so far we have only eleven acceptances. Please give this event your earnest consideration. Patron Austin Asche will be providing us with a humorous dialogue on his twenty five years as patron of the society. This is a speech not to be missed so please make a booking.

You should all be aware that the Society has an extensive publishing programme. Books and occasional papers by local and interstate authors on matters of historic interest to Territorians are the means by which our financial balance sheet is kept well in the black but I am not sure that many know much about the programme. I intend to talk to the editors in an effort to provide members with periodic information on the subject. In the meantime please log onto the Society’s web-site www.historicalsocietynt.org.au where the names of available publications are advertised. There is much good reading there.
Forthcoming Events

Thursday 14 August – Book Launch – 5.30pm, NT Writers’ Centre Lawn, Frog’s Hollow

Sophie Cunningham’s book Warning: The Story of Cyclone Tracy will be launched by the Mayor of Darwin, Katrina Fong Lim.

RSVP to Jane Novak by Friday 8 August.
Email: jane.novak@textpublishng.com.au

Lunchtime Talk - Cyclone Tracy: Whose Story is it? with Sophie Cunningham at 12:10pm NT Library

Over the last three years, Melbourne author Sophie Cunningham has been researching and writing about Cyclone Tracy. The result if her book Warning. Given that the cyclone created such painful memories for those who endured it, how appropriate is it for an outside to write about it? And why is it so important we remember the events of that traumatic day almost 40 years ago?

Free event, open to the public. Bookings preferred phone (08) 8999 7177 or email ntl.info@nt.gov.au

19 August – 1 September, Launch and Exhibition – Photographs from the Heritage Branch Competition at NT Library

At 1pm, the winners of the Heritage Photographic Competition, run by the NT Government and the National Trust of Australia (Northern Territory) will be announced. Minister Chandler will award the overall winner and provide a special prize for the best photograph taken by someone under 18 years of age.

View the winning photographs and shortlisted entries winners of the Heritage Photographic Competition, run by the NT Government and the National Trust of Australia (Northern Territory).

The competition encouraged people of all ages to photograph heritage-listed places in the Northern Territory; or places which people value, and think should be retained for the benefit of future generation. Entries included old historic buildings, shipwrecks, Aboriginal archaeological sites and places of natural significance.
Wednesday 20 August 5:00pm at the NT Library

Join for us for a special In conversation with award-winning director Rolf de Heer, who will be the special guest on Wednesday 20 August from 5pm to 7pm, where he will talk about his acclaimed Cannes-winning feature Charlie’s Country as well as the unique way in which he works in developing, producing and directing films. Hosted by Screen Territory, Penelope McDonald, Screen Territory’s Director, will be in conversation with Rolf.

Bookings essential – Email: screen.territory@nt.gov.au

Wednesday 20 August 5.15 for 5.30pm start at NT Archives
Silent Pearls: The story of the Japanese in the Northern Territory 1891-1941 by John Lamb

This talk will focus on the old Japanese graves of Palmerston (Goyder Road) Cemetery and the lives and historical circumstances of the persons buried.

Bookings required by Tuesday 19 August: Phone 8999 6890 or email ntac@nt.gov.au

Northern Territory Archives Centre, Kelsey Crescent, Millner
(Car parking behind NTAC off Skelton Street. Front Entrance on Kelsey Crescent)

Thursday 21 August 5-7pm – Vincent Lingiari Lecture at the CDU
Sir Tipene O'Regan, who is an elder of New Zealand’s South Island Ngai Tahu people, will speak on the “The Economics of Indigenous Survival”. Sir Tipene will focus on the challenges faced by indigenous minorities in developing economic and governance models capable of sustaining the heritage and cultural identity of indigenous people on an inter-generational basis.

This free event will be held in the Mal Nairn Auditorium, Building 7, Red Precinct, Casuarina Campus. RSVP email: rsvp@cdu.edu.au or phone 89466554

Friday 22 August 12:30pm at the NT Library
Brown's Mart Theatre's Sean Pardy is joined by Tom E. Lewis from The Shadow King (Beswick) and Artistic Director of ATYP Fraser Corfield (Sydney) to look at developments in Australian theatre that reflect an evolving sense of our complex relationship to this land.

Free event, open to the public.
Bookings preferred phone (08) 8999 7177 or Email: ntl.info@nt.gov.au
Friday 29 August – National Trust & Historical Society Talk at Burnett House –
5.30 for a 6pm start
Our speaker will be Tony Priori on ‘Growing up in pre-Tracy Darwin’. Join us to hear Tony tell of Darwin life pre Cyclone Tracy – growing up in a small town of water tanks and few green lawns – a childhood in a town still re-constructing post WW2. There was one school with a big boab in the playground and the North Australia Railway was still running to nowhere.

$2 finger food – $4 drinks Nibbles after the lecture at 7pm. Bar will be open at 5.30pm. Entry $2 for members and $5 for non members. Inquiries Julie: 8946 6835 bh or 8927 9458 ah

Wednesday 24 September - Patron’s Dinner 6.15pm for a 6.45pm start
Our Patron, Austin Asche will be our guest speaker who talk about the highlights of being the Society’s patron for the past twenty five years. The dinner will be held at the Mantra Pandanas on the corner of Knuckey and Litchfield Streets in the Kali Function Room. The three course dinner will be a drop dinner of entrée – bruschetta or squid; main - Territory barramundi or chicken and two choices of desert. Vegetarians and others with special dietary needs can be catered for. Drinks including tea and coffee can be purchased at the function room bar. Cost is $45 per person.

If you wish to attend, please send cheque/money order to the HSNT PO Box 40544 Casuarina. Alternatively, you can pay via bank transfer. Email our acting Treasurer, Earl James for the bank details – ebmjames@bigpond.com For inquiries and RSVP email historicalsocietynt@yahoo.com.au or ring the Society on 0487 413 709.
RSVP is needed by Friday 19 September.

The Historical Society’s Journal

Each year the HSNT journal (Northern Territory Historical Studies, previously Journal of NT History) publishes between 4 and 8 articles, depending on article length. Although I have received enough articles to fill the 2015 issue, none relate specifically to heritage or archaeology. I aim to have at least one article in each issue devoted to a heritage and/or archaeology theme. I also have yet to receive an article relating to Alice Springs or elsewhere in the Centre. The journal is not a journal of northern Australia, it is a journal of the Northern Territory. So if anyone is considering submitting an article on heritage, archaeology or Central Australia (or any combination of these), please email me your contribution before the end of September.

In previous years the journal occasionally published Research Notes; offerings that were too short or insufficiently developed to be published as articles but nevertheless contained information or ideas worthy of wider dissemination. I would like to see this as a regular feature of the journal and for the 2015 issue will introduce a Short Reports section. Subject matter could include themes such as (these are only examples) - the history of a person, place or event; description of an historical photograph, object or artefact; or changes in legislation relating to museums, archives or historical sites. Please get in touch if you have an idea for a short report. These should be no longer than four journal pages (as a rule of thumb, around 1500 words without illustrations/photos; 1000 words with two half-page illustrations/photos).

Finally, although all contributions are reviewed by at least one member of the Editorial Board, the journal is not and has never been a journal by academics for academics. It is a vehicle for people with an interest in Northern Territory history to share their knowledge with members of the HSNT and wider public. I encourage those who may have no formal training in history, heritage or archaeology but who hold knowledge of a person, event, object or place within Northern Territory history, to consider writing something for the journal. I am always happy to discuss any proposals for articles or short reports.

Contact Clayton Fredericksen, Editor Northern Territory Historical Studies
Email: clayton.fredericksen@cdu.edu.au Phone: 0405 567 557
Launch of *A History Written in Metal: Commemorative Plaques at Charles Darwin University’s Casuarina Campus, 1972-2013*

Charles Darwin University was the venue for the recent launch of Dr Steve Farram's book, *A History Written in Metal*. Emeritus Professor Charles Webb of the University's anniversary committee introduced proceedings with an introduction to the University's various 2014 anniversary events. Professor Simon Maddocks, the Vice Chancellor, spoke about the history of the University and Daryl Manzie who launched the book, told fascinating stories of people and the politics connected to the plaques.

By means of using CDU plaques, Steve has taken an unusual approach to documenting the development and history of the CDU. The plaques and the stories behind them show that a range of significant people from federal and state politicians, royalty and university staff over the past forty years have played an enormous part in the progress of the university.

Steve is a history lecturer at the University and was supported by a grant from the University’s anniversaries committee. The book is available from the Historical Society for $25 plus $5 postage.

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Professor Simon Maddocks, Steve, Austin Asche & Daryl Manzie

*Photographs supplied by Janie Mason*
HSNT Annual Field Trip 25-27 July - Historic Sites & Landscapes in the Lower Roper River Valley

Our recent field trip was another successful event with a visit to the Overland Telegraph Depot by boat, 4WD to the Urapunga and St Vidgeon station ruins, an afternoon at Ngukurr and a side trip to Port Roper.

Group photo at Tomato Island camping ground. The Roper River & ‘Young Australian’ ruins in the background

Bev Phelts & Christine Gleeson at Roper Bar

On the Roper River Road, Brian Reid, Judy Boland, Earl James & Penny Baird

At the old Roper River Police Station lockup. Left: Ruth Kerr, Christine Gleeson, Jane Farr, Judy Boland, Julie Mastin & Penny Baird

Earl, Peter & Wendy James

Morning tea at Lomareium Lagoon, Judy Boland, Jane Farr & Michael Smith
On the boat to the Overland Telegraph Depot

Brian Reid, Barbara Vos, Ruth Kerr Earl, Peter, Matthew & Wendy James

At the OLT Depot site, Bev Phelts with the finds of a horseshoe, iron ring & various iron tools

Morning tea on the way to Roper River
Left: Christine Gleeson, Michael Smith, Judy Boland, Allan Mitchell, Jane Farr, Penny Baird & Julie Mastin

At Port Roper, Penny Baird, Julie Mastin, Allan Mitchell, Bev Phelts, Jane Farr, Judy Boland & Christine Gleeson
Urapunga Station ruins

Urapunga Station ruins – stockyards – Jane Farr

Urapunga Station squatters water tank

Urapunga Station – entrance to the homestead.

Ngukurr Art Centre

St Vidgeon Station ruins

A more comprehensive report on the trip will be available on the HSNT internet site in September