Don’t forget that Heritage Week is about to commence, and there’s a huge range of events lined up across the Territory. The full program can be found on our website, at www.nationaltrustnt.com.au, or in last month’s eNews. There will be regular updates on our Facebook page as well.
As always, the moment the Christmas decorations and boxes of shortbread have been reduced for quick sale, the supermarkets are suddenly full of Hot Cross Buns. Do they really keep for four months?

While appropriated by the Christian tradition, hot cross buns are said to be pagan in origin, with the cross representing the four quarters of the moon. However, other sources claim that putting a cross onto baked goods was a common baking tradition in olden times, as a means of warding off evil spirits.

In the 1600s, under the influence of the Protestant Puritan movement, the common practice of marking bread and buns with crosses was condemned as ‘Popery’ and it was largely terminated.

In the times of Elizabeth I of England (1592), the London Clerk of Markets passed a decree forbidding the sale of Hot Cross Buns and other spiced breads on any day other than a burial day, Good Friday and Christmas Day. Punishment was the forfeiture of all forbidden goods to the poor. As a result, home production of the buns became popular.

There are many superstitions around Hot Cross Buns. If they are baked and served on Good Friday they are said to last the year without spoiling or going mouldy. (Bit like the modern commercial ones, but with superstition rather than chemicals.)

To share a bun with someone means establishing a friendship that will remain strong over the coming year. And taking some on a sea journey will protect against shipwreck.

The earliest written instance of the name ‘Hot Cross Buns’ was recorded in a popular rhyme from 1733AD, which also includes the old superstition for making the sign of the cross on baked goods:

‘Good Friday comes this month – the old woman runs
With one or two a-penny hot cross buns
Whose virtue is, if you believe what’s said,
They’ll not grow mouldy like the common bread.’

Acknowledgements to Wikipedia and the Recipewise websites.

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MEMBERSHIP 2014

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The National Trust of Australia (Northern Territory) is a community organisation which seeks to conserve the Territory’s heritage.

Membership is open to everyone.
Community Milestones – Celebrating Stories
A Katherine DVD Initiative

The Katherine branch of the National Trust, utilising a small Heritage Festival grant of $1500, has produced three invaluable DVD resources, documenting the stories of the properties under National Trust protection in Katherine, and also the fascinating experiences of people who contributed in many varying ways to the region’s establishment and history.

Two Katherine Properties

In the DVD ‘Two Katherine Properties’, Katherine National Trust chairperson Gillian Banks takes us on a warm and informative tour of the beautiful National Trust properties in Katherine – O’Keeffe House and the 1926 Railway Station.

O’Keeffe House was named after its final residents – Sister Olive O’Keeffe and her husband ‘Johnno’. They initially named the house ‘Stray Leaves’ as a reflection of the tumbling nature of their previous lifestyle, which involved many years of extensive travelling.

Originally built in 1942 as an officers’ mess, the house was very basic, and encompassed only the bare necessities of life. The kitchen had only a single, cold water tap and a wood-burning stove, and an outhouse contained the septic toilet and shower facilities.

It’s likely that Olive was able to enjoy electricity for only the last 16 years of her life in Stray Leaves. When she finally left the house, she was aged 86.

Olive was a dedicated and inspiring nurse, who founded the Aboriginal Babies’ Home in Alice Springs. She was awarded the British Empire Medal in the 60s, and was further recognised for her work with a Territorian Woman of the Year Award in 1965.

In the 1870s, Katherine was simply a river crossing called Knotts Crossing, where the Overland Telegraph linesmen camped as they built the pylons. There was a tiny police station, and Mrs Knotts ran the Gallon License Store. The discovery of gold in nearby Pine Creek precipitated the need for a railway line, to access the port at Darwin, and once the bridge across the Katherine River was finished, the town of Katherine was established.

The 1926 Railway Station is a cement slab construction, using river sand. It consists of three rooms: the Station Master’s Office, a general waiting room, and a ladies’ waiting room. The rooms still contain original features, such as the ticket window and the cupboards, and also showcase a china cabinet of memorabilia that belonged to the last station master’s wife. The Ladies Waiting room has been transformed into a well-stocked and successful book exchange.

Decorative features on the verandah, using the metal hoops from beer barrels

The wonderful Book Exchange in the Ladies’ Waiting Room
Katherine Community Contributions

The second DVD, ‘Katherine Community Contributions’ contains oral histories from two families who have contributed greatly to Katherine’s history.

**Gillian and Ian Banks** arrived in Katherine in 1968, after crossing the sandy stretch of track that was the Nullarbor in those days. Initially they lived in a tent, before moving to reside with the other Katherine itinerants in the half-built meatworks.

In 1968, Katherine consisted of less than 800 people, and Ian and Gillian became vibrant members of the community, establishing many businesses, including the BNW Sports and Toys Store, where they sold the three year-old Cadel Evans his first pushbike. They were particularly drawn to the region’s landscape, and Gillian expressed her love of the colours and forms around her through a successful career as an artist and art teacher. Her first commissioned artwork was the huge Brahman Bull sign in place at the town’s CSIRO, which was initially commissioned by the Cattleman’s Association, and said simply: ‘Eat More Beef’.

Apart from raising a family and devoting many years to a demanding teaching career, Gillian was an active member of many local societies, and was integral in agitating for and setting up the original Katherine Museum. Her history is a delightful example of a full and busy life, and she celebrates the decades they have spent in a small, supportive community, which she happily describes as living in paradise.

**Rob Phillips**, the current alderman of Katherine, narrates the story of his parents, Ingrid and Lindsay ‘Flip’ Phillips, and their dedication to the establishment of the small town. Flip and Ingrid were married in Wyndham, after a friendship of many years. As an example of just how wild these remote areas still were not so long ago, he tells the story of his parents’ wedding, which came to a halt halfway through, as the wedding guests filed out to view the arrival of the local policeman leading a chaingang of ‘escaped’ prisoners – a train of Aborigines shackled together at the neck, wrists and ankles. The captives were secured to a large Boab nearby while the policeman carried on his other duties.

Flip was working on crops at an experimental agricultural centre in Kununurra, but after the continuing destruction of his work by the local cockatoos, jabiru and brolgas, he came to Katherine to establish a research station for the CSIRO. The couple moved into an ‘upmarket’ house – as an old officers’ mess it had a concrete floor.

Family holidays to Queensland were eye-opening experiences for Rob as a bush kid, and he describes topping up his cordial bottle in the ocean, and discovering salt water for the first time.

His father was a well-respected agriculturalist, who dedicated his life to researching crops that would have a chance of success in the challenging region. Failing eyesight eventually forced his retirement, but he continued to devote his time to tending his vibrant garden at their Katherine home.

Katherine Community Milestones

The Katherine Community Milestones DVD was filmed at last year’s Heritage Festival, and is a wonderful collection of life’s stories as told by long term Katherine residents. The stories represent the pioneering experiences and the spirit with which the region was settled in the early twentieth century. The DVD celebrates ‘tough times, comical times, tragic times; tales of hope and survival in an often hostile and isolated environment. Stories that mark the milestones of a developing community centre to the thriving township it is today’.

The stories on the DVD are fascinating, covering so many aspects of the personal, economic and social development of a remote town.

**Gillian Haggar** starts with an entertaining account of the establishment of a much-needed aged care facility in Katherine, and the various upheavals the home faced along the way, including furniture that was too big to fit into the...
rooms, and its original condemnation by the same government officials who’d approved its design in the first place. The home, after several failed suggestions (‘It’s not going to be called Snoddy’s Nursing Home,’ objected Win Snodgrass), was eventually named ‘Rocky Ridge’ in acknowledgement both of its position and the process of its instigation.

Ted and Bessie Hart give an understated and impressive account of arriving to begin life at Hodgson River Station, at 10 past 1 in the afternoon, on April 6th 1973. The family arrived to find their residence was a corrugated tin shed, 12ft x 24ft, and the toilet was a selection of surrounding trees. Bessie’s account of their daily life is amazing, especially in the face of what they managed to achieve, including establishing a medical clinic, and the first schoolhouse, in the back of a cattle truck.

Ted’s reminiscences about the cattle industry in the 40s and 50s detail the work of mustering stock over incredible distances, in a region of around 2000 square miles, with not a single fence. An average muster would take 6 weeks, and selecting tins for your supply kit was severely frowned upon.

Brian Hill and Rob Phillips supply fascinating histories of the research and hard work that went into establishing the region’s agricultural and cattle industries, and the sorts of issues that caused many ventures to struggle or fail, such as the havoc caused by magpie geese to the attempts at establishing a rice growing industry, or the destructively inconsistent nature of the wet seasons. The success of agriculture was vital to the region’s survival, particularly in the early days of settlement in the 1800s, when they were too far from anywhere to be able to import food.

Many attempts at establishing agricultural industries were caught in a Catch-22 situation: to secure finance the project had to be on a scale so large it was difficult to properly manage, and any adverse years of production were often fatal.

Peanut growing was a successful agricultural industry in Katherine. Neala Boyle grew up on a peanut farm 12km from town, and a trip to Katherine would take 3 hours each way, the raods were so bad and the river crossings so dicey.

Ann Shepherd, the former mayor of Katherine, moved to the town in 1967, to work as a nurse at the Katherine Hospital. Initially, the hospital held 40 beds, but demand was such that there were usually extra cots added to the rooms and lining the halls.

There was no pharmacy or blood bank at the hospital, and the nurses would have to dispense pharmaceuticals and often give blood to meet demand, especially after a car accident. As there was no vet in the town, they also treated horses, dogs and cats in their line of work, including one woman’s bull terrier, which had eaten her medication.

The nurses also had to run the ambulance, as there was no St John service in those days. The orderly would drive the ambulance, with a nurse accompanying him. As there was no radio, they often had no idea what they were heading into, and could be facing a lengthy time away. They would have to take food supplies and a large box of drugs with them, into isolated and serious situations.

For all the hardships they faced, Ann notes with concern the security now evident in modern hospitals, such as glass panels to protect the nursing staff, a disturbing development that wasn’t necessary in earlier times.

Stories like these are enriching historical records, adding layers to the often dry official accounts of pioneering life. The personal details bring the reality of life in a remote and isolated region into focus, adding a human dimension that makes the stories of the development of Katherine much more accessible and rewarding.

What is remarkable in the stories told on these DVDs, is the understated humour with which people look upon their remarkable achievements, the laconic attitude of just getting on with what needed to be done, without fanfare or fuss. As a resource, they are invaluable, and the Katherine branch of the National Trust have done a wonderful job of funding and producing them.

The next DVD project will be part of the 2014 Heritage Festival events, and will involve Indigenous Katherine locals, sharing their experiences on the theme of ‘Journeys’. We look forward to it.
Christine Nathanael & Jean Vickery

The National Trust would like to pay tribute to two treasured contributors, who for many years volunteered their time and expertise at Government House open days. Co-ordinator Kay Goon shares her fond memories of these two staunch supporters.

JEAN VICKERY

Jean was a long term Territorian who worked tirelessly to preserve the history of the Northern Territory. Her life post World War II was spent in Darwin, so she had certainly seen many changes. She was active in so many areas around the town, as evidenced by the many tributes to her when she passed away late last year. She had an infectious, bubbly personality and anyone who knew her became caught up in her enthusiasm; no matter what it was about. Jean was a tiny lady physically, but her inner strength knew no bounds.

I first met Jean through the National Trust. When I took over the role of co-ordinating the house attendants for Government House Open Day, like Christine Nathanael, Jean was always on my “hit list.” She enjoyed being part of Open Days and like most of us, took ownership of the House and happily sang its praises to every smiling visitor who passed through the doors. Jean didn’t miss many Open Days and I always made sure I contacted her when planning the roster. I always remember those “quick” calls to Jean became an opportunity for her to share any frustrations she had regarding the loss of much of our history.

I remember a National Trust field trip quite some years ago “down the track” to visit the war sites along the way to Adelaide River. My Mother was with me on that trip, as was Jean. I can remember my Mum being so impressed with this little lady who had so much energy and just got in and organised everyone on our overnight stay with such efficiency.

Jean was 90 years old when she passed away and she gave a huge part of those 90 years to enjoying, preserving and fighting to save the heritage of her home.

CHRISTINE NATHANAELO

In the Dining Room at Government House Open Day for many, many years, you would always find Christine Nathanael, proudly sharing her knowledge and love of Government House with everyone who passed through.

When I took over the role of co-ordinating the house attendants on Open Day for the National Trust, I was told that Christine and Judy Boland shared a wealth of knowledge about the Dining Room in particular. My job was made easier by knowing these two ladies were always reliable and would always show the Dining Room off as the magnificent room it always has been.

Christine was very keen every year to see what, if anything, had been changed. When the sparkling chandelier was taken down from the Dining Room, we all complained, especially Christine.
She became the proud guardian of the stunning quilts that hang around the Dining Room. Her proficiency as a quilter was displayed and still is, amongst the beautiful pieces.

Christine was also very aware of Government House protocol and I remember on the first Open Day for the new Administrator, Ted Egan, she was horrified when he appeared in an open neck shirt. She promptly told him what was expected of an Administrator and he appeared a little later wearing a tie!!

Over the last few years when I knew Christine was in ill health, I still made contact with her to see if she would like to volunteer at the Open Day. Sadly she was too ill to attend last year but the year before I remember the delight in her voice when I rang and asked if she was available. She told me how much it meant to her to be part of Open Day and she certainly glowed that day.

The Larrakeyah Branch of the National Trust is humbled and proud to have experienced the energy, spirit and charm of such a priceless volunteer as Christine.

Kay Goon  
Government House open day Co-ordinator

Christine has been a stalwart of the National Trust volunteers at Government House for well over 20 years.

Always to be found in the Dining Room, Christine was a wealth of knowledge about most things connected with the House, but in particular the Dining Room and the Queen’s Bedroom.

Visitors appreciated the quiet and knowledgeable manner in which Christine addressed their questions, and were spell-bound as Christine outlined for them the intricacies of quilting and the finer points of the display on the walls of the Dining Room.

Even as her health was failing, Christine would do her ‘Dining Room duty’, although it meant rests on a chair as a relief from the long hours of standing. Sadly Christine’s health did not enable her to participate in the 2013 Open Days, but her interest was there as evidenced by phone calls to other Volunteers to see how the day went.

Having shared the Dining Room with Christine for more than 20 years, I will miss her tremendously. Seeing her face light up when asked a question, her sense of humour and the twinkle in the eye are things that will long remain with me.

Judy Boland,  
Larrakeyah Branch Chairperson
Branch News

Katherine

The refurbishments being carried out to the ablutions block at O’Keeffe House are coming along well and it is hoped that they will be in use by next weekend – although perhaps without a roof if the materials do not arrive in time. The workmen have done a fantastic job in endeavouring to restore the building and create a pleasant, usable facility.

This will also be a busy week, with activities leading up to Heritage Week. O’Keeffe House, pavilion and garden will be spruced up in readiness for the weekend activities.

On Saturday morning (12th April), a group of Indigenous speakers will be videoed as a continuation of last year’s speakers’ program. This will be followed by a sausage sizzle for the speakers and helpers.

From 1pm to 4pm the house and garden will be open to visitors and pot plants will be on sale. Devonshire Teas, High Teas and raffles will be available.

On Sunday 13th April, O’Keeffe House and garden will be open from 1pm to 4pm, and at 1.15pm a bus tour leaves on a Homestead Tour, followed by High Tea back at O’Keeffe Garden.

World Heritage Day will be celebrated on Thursday 17th April, and both the 1926 Railway Station and O’Keeffe House will be open from 10am to 3pm. Entry to both properties is free for the day and refreshments will be available.

Merriel Lawrie
**McDouall Stuart**

Heritage Week begins in Alice Springs on Friday 11th April, with Heritage night at the Telegraph Station. Two McDouall Stuart Branch members have worked hard on the committee to help organise this event. This year there will be printed programs of events available at the door, and the McDouall Stuart Branch will have a stall at the event, with giveaways including Heritage Week balloons. People are encouraged to dress up for the event in 'Heritage' costumes, which will be judged in different categories, from children to adults.

There is great excitement and interest in the historic Bonds Springs Station Saturday morning bus tour, which is now full, with 100 people booked for this event.

There will be two houses open on the Saturday afternoon: the fabulous National Trust House at 86 Hartley Street has been cleaned and is looking wonderful. It is a fine example of Beni Burnett’s architecture. The very interesting house at 3 Warburton, which was once the receiving home, opened in 1959, and was renamed Bradshaw House in 1966. Children taken into the care of the Director of Child Welfare were placed at Bradshaw House, and most were transferred to other institutions or into foster care. Single mothers, children needing medical care, and some children in trouble with the law also stayed in the house.

The Heritage Walking Tour on Sunday morning will finish with morning tea at the Residency.

The speaker for the Doreen Braitling Lecture is Mr Des Nelson, who promises a very interesting and enjoyable talk about his many journeys around the NT, which often included travelling in areas where there were no roads.

The following week has new events every day and of course all the historical venues will be open during the week. Any questions about Heritage Week in Alice Springs, please ring 0408 793 868.
The National Trust McDouall Stuart Branch Alice Springs

Invites you to attend

The Doreen Braitling Memorial Lecture
& Afternoon Tea

*Where:* Alice Springs Town Council’s main function room next to the Council Chambers

*When:* Sunday 13 April at 2pm.

The Doreen Braitling Memorial lecture is held each year in honour of the former president of the National Trust. The theme for Heritage Week 2014 is ‘Journeys’ and the National Trust has invited long term Centralian Des Nelson to deliver this year’s lecture. Des came to the Territory in 1953, aged 18, to work on Elkedra Station. After an eight day journey he arrived in Alice Springs, where the Elkedra boss picked him up for the 500km drive north-east. In 1956 he took up the position of assistant to Animal Industry Branch (AIB) botanist George Chippendale. During his life Des has made many journeys and we look forward to hearing his stories of travelling and working in the NT.
Larrakeyah

Wendy James Talk – Life in a Beni Burnett House

Wendy James's recollections of her life in Darwin in a Burnett House immediately after the war charmed and enthralled members of the National Trust and the Historical Society at Burnett House last week.

Before the second World War, Wendy and her brother lived with their mother, father and baby sister in Darwin. Then came Pearl Harbour. After evacuation on the Koolinda, and exile in Western Australia, Poppy’s mother enterprisingly made her way back to the Territory with her youngest daughter, while Wendy and her brother went to boarding school.

As the war drew to a close Wendy's father was allocated a house where the family could finally live together again. No matter that the internal staircase had almost disappeared in a white ant attack, or that civilians were officially forbidden to return to Darwin, the two-storey Q-type Burnett-designed property in Mitchell Street (then McKay Street) offered space enough for the whole family, separated by war for four years, to reunite.

Wendy's mother furnished the house from what had survived four years of military use, after it was commandeered from abandoned properties under martial law. Mysteriously, one of the pieces – a beautiful glass-fronted cabinet – had been owned by the previous occupants of the house. The new piano came literally off the back of a lorry, rescued from a load destined to become landfill at East Point. The wait for mains sewerage – the audience enjoyed Wendy's humorous account of what needed to be done to keep their ‘flaming fury’ in working order – meant the shiny white porcelain of their new sanitary arrangements was appreciated all the more.
Her mother had her family around her. She re-established old friendships and created new; both she and her husband enjoyed the vibrant social life that sprang up in Darwin as families returned. Wendy poignantly mentioned that she had the opportunity to get to know her baby sister, from whom she had been separated for so long.

There were no schools. Wendy and her brother made the very most of their free time, exploring every nook and cranny of their surroundings. They caught mud crabs at East Point, searched abandoned army camps for treasure (finding nothing but rude pictures and empty toothpaste tubes), and swam in the green water of the Vestey's tank at Bullocky Point.

Eventually there was school, a place where all senior students sat in the same classroom. Wendy offered her commiserations to the brave soul – Mr Kennedy – who valiantly reintroduced his students to education. In her family, twin sons and then another daughter were born. The splendid De Kreisler touring car, with its canvas roof, arrived, and the family went on expeditions to Rapid Creek and Howard Springs. Through it all, the house in Mitchell Street remained the centre of the family’s joyful reunion after their separation in World War Two, and they lived there for seven years.

Heritage Week runs between Thursday 10 and Wednesday 16 April, and there will therefore be no National Trust / Historical Society lecture in April. The series returns in May and we hope to see you on Friday 30 May at 5.30 for 6 pm. The speaker will be confirmed nearer the date.

Article by Jane Farr; photographs by Judy Richardson
Heritage Festival
Alice Springs
11th - 19th April 2014

Celebrating people and their journeys
to and in Central Australia

PROGRAM OF EVENTS

Fri 11th April  Heritage Night at the Telegraph Station
Sat 12th April  Historic Bus Tour to Bond Springs
               Heritage Buildings Open House
               Old Lutheran Church & Mission Block
Sun 13th April  Guided Heritage Walk
               Old Lutheran Church & Mission Block
               Doreen Braitling Memorial Lecture & Afternoon Tea with Des Nelson
Mon 14th April  Library Lunch Time Talk with Edna Bradley
               Tour of St Mary’s Mural
Tue 15th April  Long Tamers Morning Tea
Wed 16th April  Library Evening talk with Lindsay Wright
Thu 17th April  Morning Tea at Hartley Street School
               Closing Event for Heritage Week
Sat 19th April  National Transport Hall of Fame – Public Open Day

National Trust
Mcdonall Stuart Branch Alice Springs

For more information and a detailed program Phone: 0408 793 808