Old Photos of Brisbane

Queen Street, 1953: Until the late 1960s, trams ran along the entire length of Queen Street and cars could be parked in the main street of Brisbane. Buildings on the left included Christies Café, Tattersall's Club, Bayards, His Majesty's Theatre, Wintergarden Theatre (WGT), and T&G Mutual Life Society Building.

The idea came to light when QBD The Bookstore director Steve Robinson was inspired during his travels in the UK when he stumbled across the ‘Lost London’ book at the London Book Fair.

The book illustrates a journey through time, from Spring Hill's Wickham Terrace, featuring the city's stunning landmarks, which prompted Robinson to pitch the idea to The Royal Historical Society of Queensland for a Brisbane version.

'I grew up in southeast Queensland and am passionate about the region,' Robinson told the Courier Mail. ‘Because QBD is a family-owned business it is possible to do this kind of project.’
Tennis in the Botanic Gardens, 1894: Tennis has always been a popular recreational activity. This photograph shows a foursome alongside the courts in the shadow of the Queensland Club on the corner of George and Alice Streets. The ladies wore long gowns while the men had their usual attire, no doubt giving them great freedom of movement.
Clan MacGillivray troopship A46 at Pinkenba Wharf, c.1916: Family members are farewelling troops leaving Pinkenba on board A46 in about 1916. On the voyage a member of the 3rd reinforcements of the 41st battalion produced a magazine ‘MacGillivray Magister’. The ship had been launched in June 1911 and completed by Sir WG Armstrong, Whitworth & Co. Ltd, at Newcastle-on-Tyne for Clan Line Steamers.
Arch built to welcome the Duke and Duchess of York, May 1901: This is one side of the massive four-faced triumphal arch erected at the intersection of George and Queen Streets. The arch was ornamented with portraits of the royal visitors and other imperial figures, electric light at night and decorated with Queensland products. Lower arch inscribed the words - ‘Made glorious summer by this sun of York’.

Despite Brisbane’s hilly terrain, which made it difficult for transport systems to develop, residents still enjoyed picturesque views of their town.

Governors, politicians, pastoralists and businessmen built large homes on the slopes above the beach to enjoy the sea breezes and views to the bay islands, followed by hotels and boarding houses.

Family members were pictured farewelling troops as they boarded the ship to fight in Gallipoli, while another photograph captures the 1890 flood at the intersection of Melbourne and Grey Streets.
Pineapple Plantation showing irrigation layout, Moggill, 1949: In the 1940-50s pineapple growing was well established in the Moggill area. William Westaway was one of the first in the district to grow the smooth leaf pineapple in commercial quantities. In 1919, he sold his pineapple farm to HB Alpin. The pineapple farms continued to flourish until they were eventually overtaken by suburban development.
King Sandy: Young man, King Sandy (‘Ker-Walli’) is wearing a breast plate inscribed with his name. A photograph of him as an elderly man gave his location as Toorbal Point and Ningi Ningi north of Brisbane as his tribal group. King Sandy was among 25 Aboriginals, who accompanied Tom Petrie in 1862 to the Mooloolah and Maroochy Rivers’ area to mark out cedar trees for the timber industry.
Greenmount Beach, Coolangatta, January 1956: Large crowds enjoy the Christmas holidays.

One major feature that is now lost in central Brisbane was the extent of factories and industry adjacent to and in the midst of retail and residential buildings.

Not only does the book illustrate the buildings and places that no longer exist, the photographs record the everyday life of the city and how the landscapes of the development and changes during the black and white era.

According to the Courier Mail, Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast were included to the book, because Robinson believed the destinations were strongly tied to Brisbane.

'I really wanted it to be about south east Queensland and not just Brisbane, because growing up in Brisbane, we all experienced south east Queensland as a whole – the places Brisbane people found iconic,' Robinson told the Courier Mail.

Collaborated by The Royal Historical Society of Queensland and QBD The Bookshop, more than 500 photographs from the Society's Photographic Collection are printed in the book.

Lost Brisbane and surrounding areas 1860-1960 is on sale at QBD The Bookshop at a retail price of $30.
Government Statistician’s Office, Treasury Building, October 1949: These typists are working in the equivalent of modern-day ‘work stations’. When women first began to work in offices in America in the 1880s, it was frowned upon. One researcher wrote that ‘working among men, machines, and money was felt to diminish a woman’s innate sensitivity and moral superiority’.

Lower Esplanade, Sandgate, 1889: Located on Bramble Bay, not far north of the Brisbane River mouth. Governors, politicians, pastoralists and businessmen built large homes on the slopes above the beach to enjoy the sea breezes and views to the bay islands.
The Story Bridge, Kangaroo Point: Construction of the Story Bridge began on 24 May 1935. Queensland Premier, William Forgan Smith, is turning the first sod. JJ Bradfield, designer of the bridge, is holding the flag.
Brisbane General Strike, Albert Square, 1912: The strike began on 18 January 1912 when members of the Australian Tramway Employees Association were dismissed for disobeying a government order prohibiting the wearing of union badges to work. They marched to Brisbane Trades Hall where a meeting was held.
Queen and Edward Streets intersection towards the river and North Quay, 1860: The tall building on the right at the top of the rise was constructed in 1827-28 as the Prisoners’ Barracks. It later became the Parliament and Court buildings and was demolished in 1881.

Intersection of Stanley Street, Vulture Street and Dock Street, South Brisbane, c.1887-89: The photo shows a horse-drawn omnibus and horse-drawn tram with a tip horse which is an accompanying third horse to assist on the hill. The building on the left was South Brisbane School of Arts. It housed the Post and Telegraph Office, from 1881, South Brisbane Library, from 1897 and City Concert Hall, from 1902.
Ploughing George Street towards Roma Street, 1890s: Chamberlain and Wyllie tendered to put down wooden blocking for the length of Queen Street and George Street from Queen to Roma Streets. The contract was too big for them and George Charles Willcocks took over.

Two plough teams were used each operating 12 powerful horses.

Four drivers were required and three men to hold and guide the plough.

Looking up Queen Street towards the Victoria Bridge, 1893: On the right is the New Zealand Insurance building and further along, Muir and Morcom Printers.
Central Railway Station taken from the People’s Palace looking north along Ann Street in 1918:
The double-storey station with arched roof covering the platforms was constructed between 1899 and 1901 by Phippard Brothers at a cost of £42,163. Work commenced on 22 November 1966 on the demolition of the arched roof as part of a long-term rebuilding program for a new railway administration block.
Corner of Queen and Edward Streets, 1940: The AMP Society replaced the three-storey building on this corner with one of 10 levels constructed between 1930 and 1934. It was renamed MacArthur Chambers after US General Douglas MacArthur who established his headquarters there during World War II.

Hamilton Heights from the Brisbane River, November 1950.
The intersection of Melbourne and Grey streets during the March 1890 flood: On the right is the Terminus Hotel built in the late 1880s by Owen Hayes; it was rebuilt after a fire in the 1920s. The Fox Hotel is now on the site. Opposite the hotel is the South Brisbane Post and Telegraph Office. Mrs Maunsell’s Boarding house, Woodmere House is on the Grey Street Corner.

Coronation Drive, 1950: By the 1860s, the road was a dirt track known as Mogg-hill Road and later as Moggill Road. It ran from Brisbane town along the river to Toowong and continued to the ferry at Moggill. The track originally carried timber for Patterson’s Brookfield sawmill which later relocated to Toowong. The track between Toowong and Moggill retained the name Moggill Road.
The Story Bridge, 5 March 1941: Toll gates can be seen at the bridge’s southern approach. Although an engineering success, the bridge was regarded initially as a white elephant, the toll being unpopular and the traffic demand negligible. In 1947 the bridge was transferred to the Brisbane City Council and the toll removed. The bridge allowed direct access from the southern suburbs to Valley department stores.
Norman Creek Bridge, 1886: The creek's name is said to date from the early years of the Moreton Bay Settlement when Norman, a lime maker, lived near its banks. The bridge pictured was referred to as the first bridge and was constructed in 1885. The homes on the right were occupied successively by the Brabson, Pointon and Beattie families. Further on was the Harding's house and then Weir's dairy.