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MEN OF  
GOODWILL

The Boards  
of Trustees



In November 1863 everything seemed to be going well for the Philosophical Society, for the government apparently had accepted its museum as the Queensland Museum. Not only had the government provided the Windmill accommodation and given £100 to further the society's aims, but also the minister for Lands and Works had just indicated that it was prepared to provide a site outside the gates of Government House for a museum building. The society delegated three of its members to discuss this last proposal with the minister and to raise with him the appointment of trustees for the museum<sup>1</sup>.

Those discussions of November 1863 were not fruitful. A museum building was not seriously discussed again until 1871 and it was to be even longer before the matter of trustees was raised a second time. The honorary curator, Charles Coxen, seeking relief from the minutiae of the museum's management, wrote to the secretary of Lands on 18 February 1874, suggesting that he should be appointed, together with W.H. Miskin and A.C. Gregory, to a board of four members in which would be vested 'all matters connected with the management of the Queensland Museum'<sup>2</sup>. However, it was not until 26 January 1876 that Under Secretary for Mines G.L. Lukin recommended the appointment of trustees:

the work that would devolve upon Trustees is performed entirely by Chas. Coxen Esq. By appointing several trustees Mr Coxen would be relieved from some of the duties and responsibilities which are now becoming very onerous. The following gentlemen—C. Coxen Esq., F.O. Darvall Esq., J. Fenwick Esq., W.H. Miskin Esq. and A.C. Gregory Esq.—who would consent to accept the Trust would as Trustees give material aid in advancing the objects of the Institution.

Secretary for Mines H.E. King MLA, accepted the recommendation in principle but deleted Darvall from the list and added George Raff, Gresley Lukin and John Douglas MLA<sup>3</sup>. The trustees that Secretary King recommended to cabinet on 17 February 1876 were Coxen, Douglas, Gregory, Raff, Lukin, Fenwick and Miskin. The governor—W.W. Cairns CMG—approved the appointments on 25 February 1876<sup>4</sup>. Karl Staiger, the custodian of the museum and government chemical analyst, was the secretary to the board. The next day, the under secretary (Lukin) writing to the appointees, referred to the notification of their appointments in that day's issue of the *Government Gazette* and went on to say—

The Honourable the Secretary for Works and Mines desires me to request that among the first matters that call the attention of the Trustees you will be so good as to take into consideration the eligibility of either of the following sites at present available for the erections of a New Museum, viz.

1 At the corner of Queen and William Streets, at present occupied by the Audit and Harbours and Rivers Offices.

2 In the Botanical Gardens.

Subsequently the Trustees will be called upon to consider what description of building will be most suitable for the purpose.

A sketch plan of a Museum building proposed to be erected on the first named site is now in this office for inspection by the Trustees<sup>5</sup>.

Now and for some years to come the museum was referred to interchangeably as either the Queensland Museum or the Brisbane Museum in official circles. The trustees, at a meeting on 7 March 1876, decided that it should be called the Queensland Museum and by 1880 this was the name invariably used officially.

*Previous page:* Mrs Charles Coxen donated this portrait of her husband—'Charles Coxen Esq'<sup>re</sup> CMZS. First honorary Curator, one of the earliest Trustees and Contributors to the Museum' (board of trustees minutes, 6 August 1887).

Sir

Brisbane 18 July 1874

In accordance with your request I do myself the honor to submit for your consideration the following suggestions having reference to the management and conduct of the Queensland Museum

I think a Board be appointed to consist of four members in whom shall be vested the general management and supervision of all matters connected with the Museum and I submit that the Hon<sup>ble</sup> the Minister for Works Mr Gregory (Survey General) Mr McKinn (Curator of Intestate Estate) and myself be nominated as the members forming the Board. In naming ..... to the present date more than equal to the delay occasioned by Mr Staiger and from the increasing demand for his services there can be but little doubt that with increased application this branch would be kept supporting

I have the honor to be  
Yours Most Obedient  
Servant  
Henry Curator  
Charles Coxen

Charles Coxen to the Hon. the Secretary of Lands, 18 July 1874 (QSA G149/3) recommends 'that a Board be appointed' and draws the minister's attention to the revenue earned through Staiger's assay work.

### A Beginning, 1876-1882

At their first meeting, on 29 February 1876, the trustees decided on the Queen and William Streets site for the new museum. They asked the government to inform them what operating funds would be available and the government's views regarding their use. By 7 March 1876 there is an indication of some hedging by the government when it informed the trustees that they were not confined to the two sites previously advised, but could put forward others for consideration. The trustees resolved to adhere to their previous decision.

At the same meeting they considered some further instructions they had received. They had been asked to examine and report on the present state of the museum and accordingly a sub-committee consisting of Gregory, Coxen and Miskin was delegated to prepare an inventory of the collections. The trustees were also asked to advise on the proposed plans of the new museum building and to make suggestions as to its regulation and management. The trustees invited colonial architect Stanley, then



Augustus Charles Gregory KCMG, scientist, explorer and surveyor general of Queensland and the first chairman of the museum board of trustees (photograph by courtesy Oxley Library).

absent, to meet them on his return and they decided to obtain copies of management regulations in force in Sydney and Melbourne. Stanley submitted his plans on 21 March and they were broadly approved. He agreed to complete and resubmit them to the board. Gregory and Miskin were deputed to draw up a set of by-laws for consideration by the board.

The board was launched. Coxen, the only person associated with the museum who had any practical experience of museology, died on 17 May 1876. However, both Gregory and Miskin understood the role of a museum and appreciated the importance of the collections. Gregory was a scientist and explorer of some renown who was establishing a noteworthy career as the colony's surveyor-general, and Miskin was a public servant whose hobby was entomology. With the exception of Lukin who was a public servant turned newspaper editor, the other trustees had pastoral affiliations—Douglas, although now a parliamentarian, had been a squatter, as had Coxen in his earlier days; Fenwick was a stock and station agent and well-known woolbroker; and Raff was a merchant, woolbroker and sugar grower<sup>6</sup>. Actually, many of the affluent and influential men in the community were associated with the pastoral industry at this time and, further, many were members of the Acclimatisation Society and had some knowledge of natural history. On 4 July 1876 the governor-in-council approved the appointment of Joseph Bancroft MD<sup>7</sup>, a medical practitioner of considerable repute who was also interested in natural history, to take Coxen's vacant place on the board<sup>8</sup>. Attached to the file is a memorandum stating 'These are trustees of management only'. Thus no property was vested in them.

In the meantime, realising the wait they would have before a new building became a reality, the trustees had sought increased storage space in the existing Queen Street premises—the old Post Office building. In June 1876 Gregory, Miskin and Raff were delegated by the board to see the premier (George Thorn MLA—who was vice-president of the executive council, minister for Public Works, Mines and postmaster-general) to seek the rooms then occupied by the detective force in the same building. At the next meeting Dr Bancroft agreed to discuss with the hospital board the removal of the hospital dispensary, but it was not until July 1877 that the museum acquired that extra space (see Chapter 2).

In September 1876 the trustees heard that the government was intending to select an alternative site for the new museum. The minister hastened to reassure them promising, on 20 October 1876, that the museum would be erected on the site of their choice, namely the Queen and William Streets corner. He further promised that £3000 to fund the building would be put on the supplementary estimates.

Although it seemed that the building plans were now secure, this was not the case. It was almost a year before the trustees could confidently anticipate the move to the new building. On 19 December 1876 they learned from their colleague Douglas—then secretary of Public Lands—that the Treasury claimed a prior right to the Queen and William Streets corner. Further, noxious gases said to emanate from the museum would preclude choice of a main thoroughfare site<sup>9</sup>. The trustees objected strenuously, as the site was a 'twice chosen one', and decided to wait for further advice from the government. Then, on 3 January 1877, they accepted a site extending from the Colonial Stores to Queen Street, between William Street and the road to the old ferry (now called Queens Wharf Road) and on 24 January they were informed that the government had called tenders. The board of trustees approved the amended plans on



W.H. Miskin, amateur lepidopterist, public servant and lawyer (photograph by courtesy Oxley Library).



Joseph Bancroft MD, (photograph by courtesy Oxley Library).



John Fenwick, stock and station agent and woolbroker (photograph from *Jubilee Review of English Masonry in Queensland*, Fowler and Whitby, Brisbane, 1909).

6 February, but indicated that the laboratory and chemical department should be in a separate building. One further setback occurred on 1 March—they were informed that the government wanted part of the site returned. The trustees, now thoroughly fed-up, declined this request. Nothing further was heard of it and they now anticipated that the new building would be ready for occupation by September 1878. Eventually, it was not to be ready until the end of 1879, and even then there was some difficulty about the government handing it over. On 12 November 1879 Miskin threatened to resign:

he had heard the government had offered the new museum building to the National Association for their January show. As he thought this showed that the wishes of the Trustees, who desired to move the collections.....as soon as possible, were to receive no consideration from the government he intended to resign.

Fenwick explained that approval of the trustees was a condition of the government's arrangement with the National Association and Miskin 'allowed his resignation to remain in abeyance for the present'. On 21 November the Queensland Insurance Company objected to the collections being left in the old building—a low premium having been offered on the understanding that they would be in the new building. Then, although the government was prepared to hand the building over on 1 December, the trustees decided to wait until Haswell, the new director, arrived. He was handed the keys and told to engage labour to convey the collections from the old to the new building on 7 January 1880. Extra labour for the move cost £116.5. and a drayman £45.0. By 15 March 1880 the museum was installed and open to the public.

Insurance of the collections, arranged early in 1877 in preparation for the move, was for £4,000, a big sum for those days, showing that they were by no means insignificant even then.

During its first six years, despite an almost overwhelming preoccupation with the acquisition of a building, the board had concerned itself with many other aspects of the museum's operation. The colonial government was sympathetic to the concept of a museum as a repository for the flora, fauna and geology collections of Queensland. Indeed, it had set up the board and provided the museum with a building for just that purpose. Thus, the definition of the primary function of the institution was not a problem. The trustees proceeded to develop the collections. Between 1876 and 1879 the minutes reveal that a great part of the board's business was concerned with additions to the collections—by purchase, donation and exchange—and the museum's responsibilities for those collections. In fact the trustees did much of the work that, today, would be done by a curator, actually inspecting specimen lots offered for purchase and refusing material with which they were dissatisfied. They established the conditions under which specimens could be loaned—and these were usually stringent—they agreed to loans for scientific research, but loans for other purposes were not so readily agreed to; nor would they lend unique specimens. On 20 October 1876 the secretary was directed to inform the curator of the Australian Museum—

That however willing the Trustees were in forwarding the curator's scientific work, they could not allow that the Museum part with its unique specimens even for a short time.

Of course, not all the trustees were intransigent about loans—but Miskin was. His convictions are reflected in the minutes of the board meeting of 16 April 1877, where he referred to a special meeting of the

board, called by Fenwick, that he—Miskin—had not attended. It had been convened to reconsider and to rescind, a previous decision not to send specimens to the Sydney agricultural exhibition. Although there was not a quorum at the special meeting, many of the trustees had signed a minute authorising the despatch of mineral specimens.

Mr Miskin protested against, in the first place, the singular manner in which the meeting had been convened, the notices only having been issued upon the same day as that for which the meeting was called at noon.....; next a re-opening of a matter which he contended had already been decided by resolution at a previous and properly convened meeting (20th March) that nothing should be exhibited at the Sydney exhibition except the colour photographs; further against the adoption of the practice of the Board coming to a decision upon matters affecting the management of the institution by written memorandums signed singly by the members instead of discussing them in open meeting—and again most strongly against the principle of allowing any of the specimens forming part of the Museum collections to leave the Museum premises and custody of the Trustees.

Later in the meeting Miskin 'objected to the accounts for expenses incurred in sending specimens to the Sydney Exhibition being paid from Museum funds'. Following this incident the board unanimously resolved, on 18 July 1877, presumably in regard to type or unique specimens for exhibition—

that it was now time to absolutely set the matter at rest.....  
and.....decided that for the future it is inexpedient to make any exception to the rule of strict refusal to allow any portion of the museum collections to leave the museum premises for any purpose whatsoever.

There was general agreement that 'spare duplicate' specimens could be loaned provided there was no expense to the board. At this same meeting another important decision was made—the 'sale of museum materials to any person was beyond the scope of the board'.

A few years later the trustees received a request from the National Association to send a collection for an international exhibition, again in Sydney. At the meeting of 7 August 1879, Miskin was persuaded that it was desirable for the museum to be represented and undertook to select the items to be sent. He selected so few that the colonial secretary protested that surely the Queensland Museum could do better in view of the importance of national representation. The board appointed two others of their number on 18 August to help Miskin make a further selection of material. Miskin may have been right in his reluctance to lend material. Following the international exhibition in Sydney the items were sent on to the Melbourne international exhibition. By June 1881 they had arrived back in Brisbane severely damaged 'the contents of all the larger packages being a perfect wreck' owing to 'gross negligence displayed in their packing'<sup>10</sup>. The museum had received a medal for their display (see Chapter 4).

Meanwhile, as the new building was nearing completion, the trustees had decided that a curator should be appointed. As early as 21 March 1876 Coxen had pointed out that Staiger was doing the work of a curator. No doubt this continued after Coxen died, even though his dual role as museum custodian and analytical chemist probably made it difficult. Nevertheless, Staiger never became curator—he appears to have lost the trustee's confidence and they looked elsewhere (see Chapter 3). The board minutes 6 March 1879 record that it was thought that—



John Douglas MLA, squatter and politician, later magistrate at Thursday Island (photograph by courtesy of Oxley Library).

a good man might be procured at £400 a year and that when the collections were removed to the new building a man of suitable attainments and the requisite business capacity for carrying on unremitting correspondence with scientific bodies in all parts of the world was, at present, the most urgent need of the institution.

In the annual report of 1878–9, recommending the urgent appointment of a suitable officer to superintend the detailed management and supervision of the museum, the trustees nominated a higher salary:

The Board (members) are strongly of the opinion that a first class man should be secured from the old country and they think that £600 per annum is the least that could be offered (particularly as there are no quarters provided for residence) likely to attract the attention of a man of such attainments as would raise the institution to the position it is hoped it will command.

The salary, eventually offered was a mere £200 per annum. So William Haswell BSc, MA (Edinburgh) came, and went within the year (see Chapter 3).

One of the applicants for the position of curator was Gerard Krefft, formerly the curator of the Australian Museum in Sydney. Krefft had been relieved of his position in that museum on what appear now to have been contrived charges made by the Sydney trustees. He never had been reinstated nor had he been able to find another position. Friction between Krefft and his board had developed over some of its members's unilateral manipulation and use of both museum staff and collections. Naturally Krefft had objected. Ultimately, in September 1874, without power to dismiss him and being unsuccessful in obtaining his resignation, the trustees had had him evicted from the curator's quarters in the museum<sup>11</sup>. Two of the most reliable trustees had resigned over the incident, one of them observing that—

it would be difficult to find a Curator to work like Krefft; he has made our Museum the admiration of the scientific visitors<sup>12</sup>.

Krefft is now regarded as the best Australian vertebrate zoologist of his day. He had been the first to recognise the significance of the Queensland lungfish, *Neoceratodus forsteri* Krefft. He published monographic works on snakes and mammals of Australia and his authority in the field of vertebrate palaeontology at that time was challenging Sir Richard Owen's in the British Museum:

Krefft was one of the first to raise the banner of colonial independent expertise.....backed by the rising importance and stature of the colonial museum<sup>13</sup>.

He had written, on 11 March 1879, to let the Queensland trustees know that he was an applicant for the 'position of curator at the Queensland Museum', enclosing testimonials, offering his library and collection to the museum at nominal cost if he should be appointed, and offering—

to begin work without payment for a month or two just to become acquainted with the.....rich stores which your museum undoubtedly possesses<sup>14</sup>.

Krefft died, destitute, in 1881, at the age of 51.

Haswell's application for the Queensland position, received by the board on 19 February 1879 was supported by a recommendation from Krefft's successor in the Australian Museum, E.P. Ramsay. Haswell's academic record was good—but that on its own does not explain why the museum board choose the untried and inexperienced man from



Gresley Lukin, public servant and newspaper editor (photograph by courtesy Oxley Library).

Edinburgh in preference to Krefft, except that perhaps the choice reflects the influence of the Sydney trustees. Certainly Krefft had had the support of at least one eminent naturalist in Queensland—Silvester Diggles—who wrote to the *Brisbane Courier* suggesting Krefft as a suitable curator for the new museum<sup>15</sup>.

In any case, Haswell's scientific stature, as the board had hoped, did confer a new prestige on the museum that was probably enhanced by its new building. The collections continued to expand. On 20 August 1880 the minutes record that during June and July the museum had received:

214 bird skins, many of them rare, besides mammals fishes etc. from collector Broadbent (then on contract to the board) at Cardwell; also a good many from other sources; a collection of corals from a dealer at Bowen; 2 cases of fossil bones from Clifton, Darling Downs; specimens of Fiji products from the Fijian government; 2 dugongs purchased.....

A taxidermist had been appointed and the *Queenslander* of 13 March 1880 concludes a glowing account of the displays in the new building with the remark that—

one of the many advantages of a competent scientific gentlemen as curator is that opportunities of judicious purchase are not likely to be lost.

The trustees proudly refer to the museum—the only scientific institution in the colony at that time—as the scientific centre of the 'great and varied territory of the colony' in their report of 1879-80. In the same report they express their embarrassment about Haswell's low salary:

provision made for the remuneration of this officer— viz., £200 per annum—being, as is obvious, of but a mere temporary character to meet the occasion, requires now to be placed on a more satisfactory footing, and it is hoped that the Government will recognise the necessity of remedying this palpable incongruity by providing a salary consistent with the importance of the office and adequate to the acquirements of the holder thereof.

The government was not convinced. Haswell's resignation came after a disappointing parliamentary debate from which it was apparent that his salary would not be increased. At least the move to the William Street building was achieved during his tenure.

It was March 1882 before Haswell's replacement, Charles Walter de Vis BA (Cantab.), was appointed. All through 1881, F.M. Bailey, the keeper of the herbarium then in the museum, was temporary curator and the business of the museum proceeded as usual. At their regular meetings the trustees discussed the collections—more exchanges, loans, purchases; the educational role of the museum; and the library—then the only collection of scientific literature in the colony freely open to students. They wanted the library to be as complete as possible. It was an ambitious project but one that they did have some success with. Today the library is one of the most important repositories of early zoological and geological works in the state and this is due to the efforts of the first board of trustees in the 1880s (see Chapter 13).

They also recommended that the museum be open on Sunday afternoons and, despite opposition from the churches, the minister for Mines decided, on 13 October 1881, that this would be done. It was a decision that the public welcomed and one that has continued to this day.

Despite its successes during its first six years, board meetings were not well attended. Miskin relates one of the inconveniences resulting from this in a letter tabled at meeting on 25 September 1877. Apparently Under



George Raff, merchant, woolbroker and sugar grower (photograph by courtesy Oxley Library).



Louis A. Bernays FLS, clerk of the Legislative Assembly (photograph from *Queensland 1900*, Alcazar Press, Brisbane).



John M. Macrossan MLA, miner and politician—secretary for Mines (photograph by courtesy Oxley Library).



K.I. O'Doherty MD, pardoned political deportee (photograph by courtesy Oxley Library)

Secretary Lukin detected what he regarded as an irregularity in the way the board dealt with the vouchers presented for payment. Miskin and Custodian Staiger had pointed out to Lukin that there was no permanent chairman—the chairman was elected at each meeting—and no number was set down for a quorum. Miskin continued:

it has been the practice not to entertain other business than the passing of vouchers with a less number than three; and the members present if less than three.....sign the vouchers (even if only one) there having been a difficulty in obtaining a regular attendance of three members of the board at ordinary meetings. Mr Lukin still persisting in refusing to receive the vouchers.....I have, to satisfy his scruples, signed the vouchers as Chairman, notwithstanding the seeming incongruity of making myself Chairman of a meeting at which I was the only member present. It is necessary that the vouchers should be passed in order that the claimants may receive their money, otherwise I would have declined to commit so absurd an inconsistency.

The board's existence was also marred by constant change in its membership. It seemed that no sooner was a vacancy filled than another arose. Before the move into the new building, the minister for Mines nominated extra members—Kevin Izod O'Doherty, Irish nationalist and medical practitioner who had originally been transported to Australia and subsequently was unconditionally pardoned; and Lewis Adolphus Bernays FLS, the clerk of the Legislative Assembly<sup>16</sup>. They were appointed on 7 February 1878<sup>17</sup>. Bernays became honorary secretary to the board from 30 August 1878 to relieve Staiger, but relinquished the position three months later when he visited New Zealand. He took specimens to New Zealand with him 'with a view to the initiation of friendly intercourse between the museum and kindred institutions..... which might prove mutually advantageous'<sup>18</sup>. Indeed it was—the board entered into correspondence with his contacts in that country and donations and exchange of material resulted. Bernays also was particularly anxious to develop the herbarium. He resigned from the board on 9 May 1879<sup>19</sup>, apparently frustrated by governmental interference, the board's impotence, and perhaps some dissatisfaction with Staiger:

I have felt that it would be impossible to secure for the museum a high character among kindred Institutions in other parts of the world, or its proper sphere of usefulness within the colony unless the policy of management could be entrusted for carrying out to an officer in whose capacity for the work of the curatorship the managing body had implicit trust, and over whom they had entire control.

This indispensable condition of successful management of the Institution being absent, and the credit of the Trustees being thereby seriously compromised, I did not see any other course open to me than to resign<sup>20</sup>.

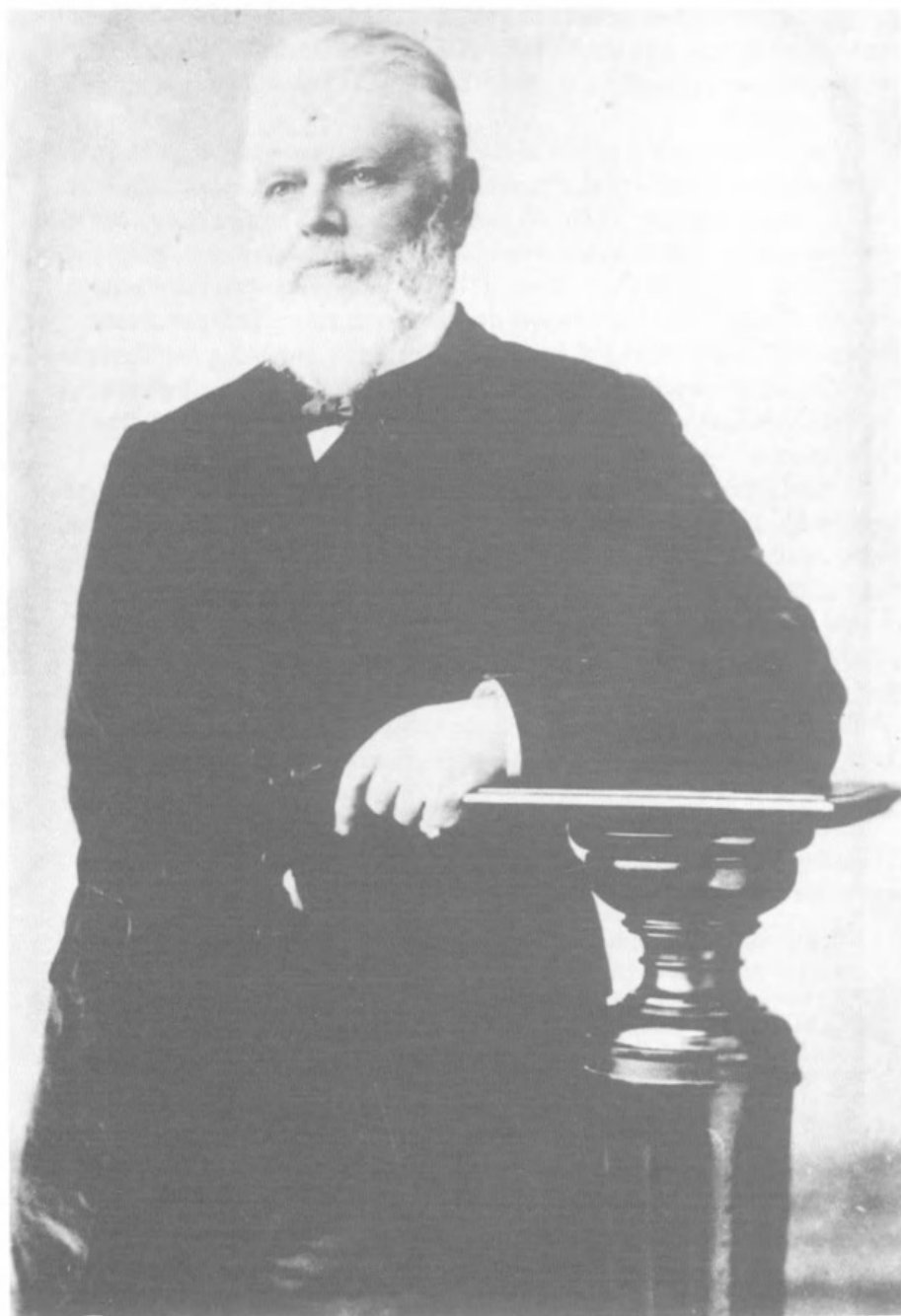
The appointment of Bernays' replacement, John Murtagh Macrossan MLA, former miner<sup>21</sup>, was gazetted on 18 October. He formally accepted the position only on 3 March 1880, possibly because of a slip-up in paperwork. As Macrossan was the minister the oversight hardly mattered. Gresley Lukin also resigned in March 1880. Charles Hardie Buzacott MLC<sup>22</sup>, newspaper proprietor and editor of many years standing, was appointed on 28 July 1880<sup>23</sup> and resigned after only 15 months—on 28 October 1881. Reading his letter of resignation one wonders why he had accepted nomination:

My time is already over-taxed and I am opposed to the management of public institutions by nominee, honorary and irresponsible boards. I suggest the cost of the Museum be defrayed by rates or contributions and the Board could then be elected by the ratepayers or contributors. Where the entire cost is met by the State, administration would be much more advantageously conducted by a responsible Minister of the Crown<sup>24</sup>.

It was almost a year later—23 October 1882—that the premier wrote to the minister for Public Works and Mines advising that he wished Sir Arthur Palmer KCMG to be appointed a trustee of the museum. This was gazetted on 5 November<sup>25</sup>. Palmer was a pastoralist of substance. He had been a member of the Legislative Assembly and premier and, at the end of 1881, had been appointed to the Legislative Council as president<sup>26</sup>. He eventually became chairman of the museum board of trustees and some stability in the membership ensued.



Charles H. Buzacott MLC, newspaper proprietor, editor and politician (photograph by courtesy Oxley Library).



Arthur H. Palmer KCMG MLA, pastoralist and politician—premier and president of Legislative Council (photograph by courtesy Oxley Library).



Richard Gailey, architect (photograph by courtesy Oxley Library).



The Hon. Berkley B. Moreton MLA,  
secretary for Public Instruction  
(photograph by courtesy Oxley Library).

## A Period of Growth, 1883–1892

In 1880, after the move to the new building, rumours were spread about the disappearance of specimens during the move (see Chapter 8). The trustees rejected these rumours but the government did not. A select committee was set up to enquire into and report on the working of the museum<sup>27</sup>. This enquiry is not referred to in the board minutes. Nevertheless it may have been the recommendations from that enquiry that resulted in the more liberal treatment the museum received from the government after Haswell resigned.

de Vis' appointment, on a salary of £400 per annum, heralded a decade of respite from the ever present museum staff problems that otherwise plagued this board for the whole of its existence. In its annual report for 1882 the board thanked the government for the liberal manner in which its needs had been met. At this time, as well as the curator and the taxidermist there were two collectors, and another scientist, Henry Tryon, was appointed as clerical assistant the following year. The museum was able to get on with its jobs of collecting specimens of the state's fauna and geology and providing an interpretive and educational centre for the community.

The trustees were proud of the collections and were anxious to improve them. Fearful that a refusal would prejudice further gifts from donors they tended to accept all material offered. The two collectors were also busy in the field amassing specimens for a museum that, before very long, was to overflow. Every month the curator's report to the board contained long lists of specimens donated, exchanged and purchased. Between 1879 and 1893, the board's proceedings, including the director's report complete with its list of donors and specimens, were published in the *Brisbane Courier*—no doubt encouraging others to donate material to the museum.

In its 1883 annual report the board warned the government that the new building was too small. In 1885 the board expressed its regret that there were no preparations for a new building despite the government having invited its recommendation on this topic. In 1887, again in its annual report, the board expressed its regret that although the sum of £40,000 had been voted nearly five years previously for the erection of a new museum and library no steps had yet been taken—'The present (William Street) building (as has frequently been brought to your notice) though capable of conversion to a public library is totally unfit for a museum'.

The board must have been feeling frustrated for at its meeting of 3 October 1890 it raised, again, a matter that was referred to many times during its history:

The derogatory position of the Board as Trustees in name only without any legal faculties became a subject of animated expression of opinion and the Curator was instructed to draft a letter to the Chief Secretary conveying to him the pronounced feeling entertained on the matter and requesting him to create them or others a Trust by legislative enactment.

Then, in 1890 plans of a proposed new museum building in Albert Park—on the northwest side of the central city area—were examined by the trustees and approved. The government called tenders, but in 1891 the trustees lamented that no tender had been accepted. There must have been indications even then of the dark clouds of the depression looming on the financial horizon.

However, before the storm broke, an event of significance in the history of the museum occurred. Miskin was an amateur entomologist, his hobby being Lepidoptera (butterflies). He had published numerous taxonomic papers on this subject between 1874 and 1892 and had been awarded fellowship of both the Linnean and Entomological Societies. In 1890 he wrote *A Synonymical Catalogue of the Lepidoptera Rhopalocera (Butterflies) of Australia*. The work represented over twenty years study of the subject in Queensland and he offered it to the board. It was accepted and published in 1891 as the first issue of the *Annals of the Queensland Museum*. The creation of the *Annals* certainly pleased the curator, de Vis, whose research output was prolific and who sometimes had to resort to publication in the daily press (see Chapter 7). Thus began the publication of the museum's own journal—now the *Memoirs of the Queensland Museum*—reporting the results of its researches to scientists around the world.

Meanwhile there had been further board changes. In 1885 responsibility for the museum and its board was transferred from the Department of Works and Mines to the Department of Public Instruction. On 1 May 1885 Dr O'Doherty, writing from Sydney, resigned from both the



F.A. Blackman, grazier (photograph from Clarke, C.G.Drury, 1985, in *J.R. Hist. Soc. Qd* 12 no. 2).



Albert Norton MLC, formerly speaker of the Legislative Assembly (photograph from *Queensland 1900*, Alcazar Press, Brisbane).



James Chataway MLA, newspaper proprietor and politician—secretary for Public Lands and Agriculture (photograph from *Queensland* 1900, Alcazar Press, Brisbane).

Central Board of Health and the Queensland Museum board<sup>28</sup>. The museum board could not have been informed for on 8 August 1885, de Vis by direction of the trustees, wrote to the minister pointing out the poor attendances at board meetings of certain trustees (namely O'Doherty and Douglas) 'whose absence from Brisbane on official duties precludes their attendance at meetings'. O'Doherty was often absent on intercolonial visits, while Douglas by this time was resident magistrate at Thursday Island. The letter concluded by nominating Albert Norton, speaker of the Legislative Assembly, for appointment to the board. The secretary for Public Instruction, Berkely Basil Moreton MLA, whilst approving the letter on 14 August never had it acted upon. Instead, on 28 August, Moreton himself was appointed a trustee<sup>29</sup>. Moreton, a younger son of the Earl of Ducie and both pastoralist and politician<sup>30</sup> was another example of a minister of the crown being appointed to the board — others being Macrossan and Douglas. In late October 1888 Norton was again nominated to the board and on this occasion was appointed<sup>31</sup>. Raff died in 1889, to be followed by Macrossan in 1891. Then, on 30 September 1891, Miskin resigned from the board<sup>32</sup>. To replace Miskin, Raff and Macrossan the board nominated the under secretary of the Department of Public Instruction — on an *ex officio* basis, Richard Gailey — a well-known architect, and Frederick Archibald Blackman — a semi-retired grazier resident in Brisbane<sup>33</sup>. On 12 March the under secretary advised the board he considered it desirable from the official viewpoint that he should not be a trustee so, on 22 March, the board asked the minister, W.O. Hodgkinson MLA — formerly explorer, journalist, civil servant<sup>34</sup>, to accept nomination, which he did. Thus on 21 April 1892 all three — Gailey, Blackman and Hodgkinson — were appointed<sup>35</sup>.

Shortly after his appointment Blackman developed a hearing disability. He became so deaf that he tendered his resignation a little over a year later<sup>36</sup>, a real loss to the board. He was a friend of Norton's and was interested in natural history and museums, being the donor not only of reptile species subsequently described by de Vis<sup>36</sup>, but also of the model stockyard (see Chapter 11). Hodgkinson lost not only office but his seat in the Legislative Assembly on 13 May 1893. He went at once to Western Australia where he won wide respect as an expert on mining. He resigned his seat on the museum board towards the end of 1893<sup>37</sup>. In June 1894 Bancroft died. It was to be the end of the century before steps would be taken to fill these vacancies.

### A Period of Regression, 1893-1907

The economic collapse of 1893 was disastrous for the museum. Not only were the plans to have a new building abandoned but also there was little joy for the trustees at all as can be seen from the general history of the museum from this year. They saw themselves as conducting a holding operation and the various regressive moves upset them deeply. Many of the staff were retrenched, leaving the director — de Vis, two attendants and a young clerical assistant to run the museum. It was not possible to take any initiatives to make the museum more useful and attractive to the community. They had to stop supplying educational collections to state schools and schools of arts; the library vote was cut off with consequential loss of serials and it was not then always possible to answer inquiries about new scientific discoveries; and after only two issues (1891 and 1892), publication of the *Annals* ceased until 1897.

In 1896 the gloom began to lessen. The government opened discussion with the trustees about the adaptation, for the museum, of the

financially troubled National Association's Exhibition building on Gregory Terrace. The trustees found the proposal acceptable. The building was to become available in June 1899, but without the section known as the concert hall. Alterations to the exhibition hall and basement to adapt it for the museum's use took some months to complete. The museum in its William Street building closed its doors to the public on 2 November 1899, on 2 October it had begun to pack, and all materials and collections had been moved from William Street to Gregory Terrace by 18 December 1899. The museum was in a suitable state to reopen to the public in its new domicile on 1 January 1901. There had been only two hitches. In his diary de Vis records that the only injury during the move was to a large dugong which had slipped from its sling and was much damaged in its fall. And on 31 December 1899 troops of the second Queensland contingent, on their way to the Boer War, had been quartered in the building — rank and file in the concert hall, NCOs and the doctor in the exhibition hall and officers in seven of the ten rooms in the basement. They had been installed by order of the premier, having been flooded out of camp at Pinkenba. de Vis, in reporting it to the board on 6 January 1900, complained that it was making it very difficult to unpack. It was 29 January before the troops were reported to have vacated the building.

Right through the bad years from 1893 until the board's dissolution in 1907, Norton and Gailey were zealous in their attendance at board meetings. The minutes reveal that these two, usually on their own, continued with the usual business of the board — negotiating specimen and library acquisitions, approving vouchers and generally supporting the hard-pressed curator who, without this support, might well have despaired utterly. Their efforts certainly kept the board going and very likely the museum too. Other board members showed their lack of interest by not attending. Perhaps they felt there was nothing much to do with the fortunes of the institution at a nadir. Perhaps they had troubles of their own. Palmer had died, whilst still a trustee, on 19 March 1898. Ill health had dogged him in the last years of his life and a reasonably good attendance record at board meetings had fallen to virtually nothing. Gregory, scientist, foundation member of the board and effectively its spokesman and its leader in its formative years, was another of those who no longer attended meetings.

The government decided to do something about this board of absentee members. At the end of July 1899 the minutes note a letter from the minister of Public Instruction thanking Norton and Gailey for their attention to the affairs of the board and asking if they thought it ought to be strengthened in the event that resignation of some of its present members should occur. In August Norton and Gailey, the only trustees now attending meetings, nominated Cameron, Marks and Sutton, and reminded the minister of the board's 'desire to be constituted a corporate body'. On 30 September it was noted that, although the names submitted were acceptable to the minister, the board had no power to procure resignations from the inactive trustees as the minister had suggested it should.

Eventually, on 17 November 1899, the government did dissolve the old board. On the same day Norton and Gailey were reappointed, while new appointments were John Cameron, pastoralist, company director and politician; James Vincent Chataway MLA, newspaper proprietor and politician (secretary for Public Lands and Agriculture); Charles Ferdinand Marks MD MLC and J.W. Sutton, iron master with an interest in physical



Charles F. Marks MD MLC (photograph from *Queensland Men and Industries*, Brisbane 1888).

science<sup>38</sup>. The members not reappointed were Gregory, Douglas, Fenwick and Moreton. Early in 1901 Chataway's health failed and he died in April 1901, but was not replaced immediately.

The annual report for 1899, signed by Norton, concluded with yet another appeal to the minister to establish the board's—

administration of the Museum on a more satisfactory basis by giving us statutory powers as we have before suggested.

On 26 April 1902 there were further retrenchments—the staff was reduced to four again and the budget was halved. The trustees observed that the museum could carry on if its activities were reduced to the cleaning and the preserving of specimens—and indeed that was what happened. In the same year the control of the institution passed from the secretary for Public Instruction to the secretary for Agriculture and Stock. The board's annual reports became short sectional articles in the reports of the Department of Agriculture and Stock. On 14 November 1905 Alfred Jefferis Turner, paediatrician and entomologist, and Ernest George Edward Scriven, under secretary, Department of Agriculture and Stock were appointed trustees<sup>39</sup>. On 10 November 1905, shortly before Scriven was appointed to the board, Gailey sought to resign on the ground that the reduced appropriation left little for trustees to do. By direction of Minister Digby F. Denham MLA, Scriven wrote to Gailey on 15 November requesting him to withdraw his resignation. Gailey replied the next day stating that as it was the desire of the minister he would do so. He set forth the whole of the reasons for his resignation:

- 1st There is very little to do for so many trustees.
- 2nd I am coming up to 70 years of age, which is beyond the Limit prescribed for the Civil Service, and thought that, that limit might be applicable to Trustees also,
- 3rd That your appointment to the Trust indicates a desire on the part of the Minister to manage the Institution directly through his Department and was really Tantamount to a want of Confidence in the existing Trustees.
- 4th I had no desire to stand in the way of any Contemplated reform by the Minister and hence left him free to make fresh appointments if he so desired.

But now that your letter assures me on all these matters, I will gladly continue the Trust as heretofore<sup>40</sup>.

These seem quite reasonable grounds for resignation. Gailey, who had conscientiously attended board meetings for six years, probably understood how badly the museum needed a change and even may have hoped for one. Politically Denham may not have wanted Gailey's resignation, possibly thinking it would draw unwelcome attention to the museum.

Then in April 1906, while Denham was still secretary for Agriculture, the *Brisbane Observer* published an article entitled 'The Queensland Museum—Its Success and Failure—A Critical Sketch'. In brief the article praised the quality of the collections, but criticized strongly the taxidermy of natural history specimens and their arrangement—or rather lack of it. The presence of many pictures was criticised and there was a suggestion that they should be in an art gallery rather than a museum. Some genera and artefacts were said to be poorly represented while others were over-emphasised. The article conceded that the trustees were handicapped by the building itself 'and possibly by shortage of funds' but the author considered they had 'evidently a good deal to learn'. The article was



Alderman J.W. Sutton, iron-master (photograph from Greenwood, G. and Laverty, J., 1959, *Brisbane 1859-1959*, Wald Ziegler Publications, Brisbane).

directed by Scriven to be placed with the department's museum papers on 17 April 1906<sup>41</sup>. This article may have caught the attention of William Kidston, premier, chief secretary and treasurer. In any case, his attention was certainly drawn to the museum later in the year when W.E. Roth, formerly chief protector of Aborigines, sold, to the Australian Museum, the valuable collection of artefacts that belonged to the Queensland government and should have been lodged in the museum (see Chapter 10). On 20 September 1907 Kidston took over control of the museum from the minister of Agriculture and Stock and the next day the chairman of the board was advised of the change. Four days later Scriven, under secretary in the Department of Agriculture and Stock, tendered his resignation as a trustee of the museum, but stated that if it should be desired that he continue to act in that capacity he would be pleased to do so. His resignation was accepted<sup>42</sup>. The last recorded meeting of the board was on 28 September 1907—apparently it was a meeting convened to wind up its affairs, and it is a sketchy set of minutes that records it. Confirmation of the disbanding of the board of trustees is to be found in the *Annals of the Queensland Museum*—number 7 of June 1907 was published by the authority of the board, number 8 of March 1908 was published by the authority of the premier, W. Kidston MLA.

However, disbanding the board was not the whole solution. Three years later Kidston, who was still in office, decided that he needed advice. He wrote to the premier of New South Wales:

It being my intention to endeavour to place the Queensland Museum on a more satisfactory footing than at present it has occurred to me that as a preliminary step it would be advisable to secure a full report on the present condition of the Institution from a competent authority, and I am anxious to know whether you would allow Mr Robert Etheridge, Curator of the Sydney Museum, to undertake the duty<sup>43</sup>.

Kidston wanted Etheridge to come urgently, within the next two weeks. The New South Wales premier was agreeable and so was Etheridge. Thus, on the 14 June, having obtained his own board's approval he left for Brisbane on 'Wednesday evening's train'<sup>44</sup>.

To the beleaguered and forgotten staff Kidston's interest and Etheridge's arrival must both have been momentous events. There was C.J. Wild, formerly entomological collector, and now acting director since de Vis' retirement in 1905. Kendall Broadbent, once the museum's most able collector but, since 1893, one of only two attendants, was 73. The other attendant was 70. The attendants also did the cleaning. Two young men—J. Lamb in the industrial department and W.E. Weatherill assistant to the taxidermist—were both doing a wide variety of jobs. Then there was the taxidermist, A. Alder aged 61, and a librarian-clerk.

Kidston asked Etheridge to report on the purpose and functions of museums in general and whether the Queensland Museum fulfilled them; on the condition and appropriateness of the items in the museum; on the competence of the staff; and on any other items worth noting. He also asked him to produce a general report on the best means of making the institution what it should be.

Etheridge's handwritten, preliminary report was handed to Kidston before he left Brisbane about 27 June 1910 and the general report was posted on 1 July 1910—less than one month after Kidston had written his initial request to the premier of New South Wales.

Etheridge's report was not complimentary to either the staff or the museum<sup>45</sup>. The quality of some of the material in the collections



John Cameron JP, pastoralist, company director and politician (photograph from *Queensland 1900*, Alcazar Press, Brisbane).



W.O. Hodgkinson MLA, explorer, journalist, public servant and politician (photograph by courtesy Oxley Library).

impressed him — especially the fossils and the New Guinea collections. Weatherill and Lamb he thought were bright and promising young men. He found little else to praise, and, concluding his preliminary report, he said that 'the Queensland Museum leaves on my mind a feeling of gloom, absence of taste and disjointed elements'<sup>45</sup>. He emphasised the need for a professionally qualified director.

On 19 July 1910 Kidston sent his thanks —

for the care and trouble you have taken in connection with our museum. To quote Mr Wild's words, which he used on the morning of our visit to the institution but which you may have either not noticed or forgotten "I am sure good will come of your visit", for your very illuminative and exhaustive report makes the path of reform one very easy to travel<sup>46</sup>.



Robert Etheridge jnr, director of the Australian Museum, Sydney.

Kidston did not table Etheridge's report in parliament—in reply to a question in the house asking if he would, he gave the unequivocal reply 'No'<sup>47</sup>. His solutions to the museum problem were simple, direct and his own. He did not replace the board and he did appoint a well qualified director, R. Hamlyn-Harris. The museum was revitalised.

During the period from February 1876 to September 1907, 24 people had served as trustees of the museum. Of these 11 were politicians at the time of their appointment, five were public servants, one was an ex-politician, one an ex-public servant, and only six came from what would now be called the private sector. They all were influential members of the community, five even held ministerial office at the time they were museum trustees. Although, with the exception of Bancroft, Douglas and O'Doherty, they lacked evidence of formal education in the twentieth century sense—that is degrees and professional qualifications—they were products of the heyday of the 19th century liberal education.

However, the board was handicapped by lack of foresight and political neglect, of its own inexperience and of the economic depression. The lack of foresight lay in creating an *ad hoc* body with no legislative backing nor even a corporate entity. Although the trustees tried to persuade their political masters that the board needed these statutory powers, these efforts were to no avail. Politically the museum, including its board, was an orphan, tossed from department to department—first Works and Mines, then Public Instruction and finally Agriculture and Stock—and had not prospered with any one. While in the Department of Agriculture and Stock it had even had the under secretary—Scriven—as a trustee but no benefit to the museum had accrued. Primarily as a result of the depression, the institution the board was to manage had virtually no staff infra-structure. The trustees' own inexperience resulted in their approval of the plans for a building that was inadequate from the day it was occupied. It was Premier Kidston's interest in the institution, as a result of the mauling the museum had received in the press, and his view that all was not well that finally determined the fate of the board.

Nevertheless, the board had achieved a new building for the museum and, having watched and abetted the institution as it overflowed that building, had found it another home that sheltered it for the next 86 years. Most importantly, however, the board had preserved the scientific status of the institution by the appointment of qualified curators; by the publication of the *Annals of the Queensland Museum* and the establishment of a library; and, recognising the fundamental role of a museum, it had worked tirelessly to build up the collections and protect them from alienation and thus had formed the basis for a museum of stature. The museum benefits from its efforts to this day.

### A Rebirth

During its first years without a board the museum went through a period of development promoted by Kidston. Later, government interest flagged once more and, without a board of trustees and without legislation or political influence, the efforts of successive directors were not successful in advancing the museum's cause. In 1929 there was a Public Service Commissioner's enquiry into the museum conducted by Inspectors Irwin and Page Hanify. Their report was faintly critical, and its recommendations, while largely devoted to administrative procedures, did include one that an advisory committee of interested scientists be set up<sup>48</sup>. Longman's response was defensive, drawing attention to the very real improvements that had been effected in the 18 years since Etheridge



Ernest George Edward Scriven, public servant—under secretary for Agriculture and Stock (photograph by courtesy Oxley Library).



A. Jefferis Turner MD paediatrician and entomologist (photograph by courtesy Oxley Library).

had reported. He was cautious about the appointment of an advisory committee, but he did ask that 'serious consideration be given to the appointment of a board of trustees—as in most National Museums'<sup>49</sup>. The government set up another enquiry into the museum in 1933, asking Professor Richards of the University of Queensland, and G.W. Watson, under secretary, Chief Secretary's Department, to report. Their recommendations, delayed by Richard's involvement with Markham's investigation for the Carnegie Corporation (see Chapter 2), also included one that trustees be appointed<sup>50</sup>. Nevertheless the institution remained a sub-department of the Chief Secretary's Department for 45 years—through Hamlyn-Harris' and Longman's tenures—until 1947, when it was transferred back to the Department of Public Instruction—later to become the Department of Education.

In 1969, when Bartholomai had been director less than a year, the Queensland Hall of Science, Industry and Health Development Committee, which had been working for the development of a technology section in the museum, discovered that Queensland was the only state in Australia without appropriate legislation for its museum (see Chapter 11). The committee's representations received sympathetic consideration from the minister for Education, A.R. Fletcher MLA, the minister responsible for the museum. Fletcher realised that the first board, despite its success in re-siting the museum, had been hampered by lack of legislation to cover its powers and administrative functions. The council of the Hall of Science, Industry and Health Development Committee drafted museum legislation and this was subsequently introduced. It had the approbation of all political parties and passed through parliament smoothly. It was assented to on 13 April 1970. In its promulgation on 20 August 1970 the governor-in-council declared that the *Queensland Museum Act 1970* should come into force on 1 September 1970<sup>51</sup>.

Perhaps the most important aspects of the legislation were the provisions for a board of trustees to control and manage the museum; and the powers, given to the board, to open branches either alone or in conjunction with another body. In the latter case an agreement had to be entered into and approved by the governor-in-council<sup>52</sup>. Eight persons were to constitute the board, including the director-general of Education



The Queensland Museum Board of Trustees, 1978-84.  
*Back Row:* D.J. Nicklin; chairman, J.C.H. Gill; R.I. Harrison; vice-chairman, I.G. Morris, J.M. Thomson.  
*Front Row:* A. Bartholomai; D.M. Traves; J.T. Maher.

or his nominee and the director of the museum (*ex officio* and non-voting). The remaining six would be members of the public. Provision was made for the board to administer two separate funds: a general fund for moneys appropriated by parliament for the running of the museum and a trust fund for moneys received from donations and bequests or generated by activities promoted by use of funds from the trust fund source. The board would be accountable to the minister in money matters.

The members of the 1970 board were J.C.H. Gill (lawyer and historian, chairman), I.G. Morris (company director, vice-chairman), and S.A. Prentice (professor of electrical engineering), each for a period of four years; and J.M. Thomson (professor of biology), R.I. Harrison (chartered accountant) and D.M. Traves (petroleum geologist and company director) each for a period of two years. The nominee of the director-general of Education was William Wood. The order-in-council was made on 17 September 1970 and gazetted two days later<sup>53</sup>. Subsequent changes in the membership of the board are recorded in the annual reports of the museum from 1971. There have been few changes—mostly they have resulted from changes in the department under which the museum



The table in the director's office where, from 1970, the Queensland Museum Board of Trustees met at 11.00am on the first Tuesday in each month.

operates. In 1978 the museum yet again was transferred to another department—from the Education Department to the Department of Culture, National Parks and Recreation—known since 1981 as the Department of The Arts, National Parks and Sport.

Administratively the Queensland Museum of 1970 presented, of course, a quite different operation from that which had confronted the first board of trustees which took office in February 1876. For one thing the staff establishment hardly bore comparison with that of 1876. Apart from the director and senior curator there were ten curators, four preparators, three art staff, one librarian, one artificer, ten assistants and cadets, four office staff and nine attendants—a total of 44. The total vote for 1970–1971 was \$175,000. The director, Alan Bartholomai, the non-voting *ex officio* member of the board, was a fit young man of 31 years of age.

The director of the museum and the chairman of the new board jointly drew up the agenda for its first meeting on 24 September 1970. After this meeting, the chairman was asked by media representatives what the board's first objective would be. 'A new building' was the immediate

response. It was a case of history repeating itself—the preoccupation of the 1876 board had been a new building; in fact the government of the day had directed that board to make it so. The chairman went on to say that the board would be deeply disappointed if within 10 years a new building, if not by then accomplished, was not on the way. Actually it was only four years before a new building was approved.

By November 1970 the board had approved a submission by the chairman for a new museum on a block of land at South Brisbane between Stanley, Glenelg, Grey, and Russell Streets. It was surrounded by parkland and had adequate off-street parking on the Grey Street side. This was envisaged as part of an overall development which would see a new state library in a similar setting and matching the proposed new art gallery in the same general area. The minister, Fletcher, supported the concept but Treasurer Gordon Chalk was of the opinion that the land acquisitions would be too costly and a decision was deferred.

It was clear from the outset that a new building would occupy a deal of the board's attention. Thus, in order to deal efficiently with other aspects of the museum's operation specialist committees were set up, each chaired by a board member, to deal with finance, site and buildings, staff planning and appointments and publications and services.

#### **A Museum Building for the Next Half Century**

The board's site and building committee co-opted Deputy Co-ordinator General S.S. Schubert, and State Librarian S.L. Ryan in 1971 and examined other possible sites for a new museum. The vice-chairman, I.G. Morris, convened a meeting with Premier J. Bjelke-Peterson and Treasurer Gordon Chalk which the chairman of the board and the director also attended. The premier agreed to fund a feasibility study to the extent of \$6,000 to determine the type of building that could be accommodated on the best of the sites examined and which would serve the museum for at least the next half century. Architect Stephen Trotter, of the firm Fulton, Collin, Boys, Gilmour, Trotter and Partners, was engaged as consultant and he prepared a comprehensive planning brief for a building either in Albert Park, or on an area in South Brisbane, or at the foot of Mt Coot-tha. A submission was made to the government in 1973, but there was no immediate response. The reason for this became obvious when, in October 1974, the treasurer produced a cabinet-approved scheme for a cultural centre at South Brisbane to accommodate the art gallery, a performing arts complex, the museum and the state library. The floor area of the new museum was to be 11,152 square metres. The board considered this was inadequate and representations by the chairman to the Cultural Centre Planning and Establishment Committee, of which he had been made a member, succeeded in having the area increased to a nominal 13,940 square metres.

These developments would have delighted Director Longman, who, in 1934, had greeted a government proposal for a new art gallery and state library building with the hope that—

The museum eventually would be included in a comprehensive cultural scheme for the housing of its contents<sup>54</sup>

The board experienced some disappointment as the completion date for the building gradually receded from 1982 to 1985. However, construction finally had started in November 1982 and the building contract was completed in November 1985. The museum, in its old Exhibition building on Gregory Terrace, closed to the public on

3 November 1985 to enable the staff to prepare for the move—to pack and start the physical transfer of the more than two million collection items to South Brisbane as well as the prepared displays that had been stored at Montague Road, West End. The Department of Works, after some hesitation, decided to oversee the move with guidance from the museum—at an estimated cost of \$0.5M to the board. In 1899 four drays, costing 13 shillings each per day, had made 210 trips in 15 working days to move the museum from William Street to Gregory Terrace after the William Street building had closed to the public on 2 November. Packing had begun on 2 October and was completed by 18 December. Eighty-six years later, the quantity surveyor's estimate for the move from Gregory Terrace to South Brisbane was for 700 truck loads—three to eight tonne trucks and pantechinons and 40 tonne low loaders, cranes and fork lifts—to shift 3000 cubic metres of material and furniture in bubble wrap plastic sheeting, polystyrene, wood and cotton wool, tissue paper and timber crates, cardboard cartons, pallets and other containers, over a period of eight months<sup>55</sup>.

The public's initial perception of the museum redevelopment in the Queensland Cultural Centre will depend on the new displays and exhibitions. Dame Margaret Weston, director of the Science Museum, London, was appointed consultant on planning aspects of the building and display programme. The board made representations to the government in support of the necessary new staff appointments and equipment (see Chapter 4). Despite staff freezes in many areas at this time these representations were successful and government funding was forthcoming.

### **Museum Services for Queensland**

The building, new displays and the move were priority items for the board's attention from 1970. Nevertheless, recognition of the fact that the museum needed to be the *Queensland* Museum in fact as well as in name had led it, at an early stage, to consider ways of taking advantage of the powers given it in the legislation in regard to the establishment of branch museums. A decision was made that if opportunities arose to establish branches there would be no hesitation in seizing them.

The first such opportunity arose when the National Trust of Queensland decided it was unable to accept an offer of the Cobb and Co. collection of horse drawn vehicles of W.R.F. Bolton. The museum expressed its interest in the collection and subsequently the Bolton family and the Queensland government agreed to the proposal that the collection should form the basis of a specialised transport museum at Toowoomba on the eastern Darling Downs—an appropriate site for a collection with rural associations. After negotiations the Bolton collection was donated to the museum in July 1982. The government provided storage for the collection, which had become an urgent necessity following a fire at the Cobb & Co. museum in Toowoomba, and it is anticipated that the Floriculture building on the former Toowoomba showground will be converted into a suitable building to exhibit the collection.

Another opportunity for a branch museum arose as a result of the government's 1982 decision that all proposals for departmental museums should be considered by the museum with a view to the development of branches. The first proposal was one from the Forestry Department. Following discussions, an agreement was entered into whereby the department would provide a building at its complex just north of Gympie. Thus, the museum, in conjunction with the Forestry Department, opened its first branch, *WoodWorks*, in March 1984.

Meanwhile, there was pressure mounting for a branch of the museum in north Queensland and the government agreed to fund a feasibility study on its siting. The report, prepared by consultants Gutteridge, Haskins and Davey, became available in 1983, and it recommended Townsville as the preferred location. That city had also been selected as the site for the Great Barrier Reef Wonderland Project—a joint project of the state and federal governments to celebrate the bicentennial year 1988. The board indicated interest in participating in this project and in Townsville the Great Barrier Reef Wonderland Association Incorporated also favoured the idea of a branch of the museum in the Wonderland. The state government approved the museum's application to participate. The Wonderland association agreed that the first stage could be funded to the extent of \$1M from the joint federal/state grant of \$6M while the government indicated that funding for staff and operation would be provided. The branch museum, built on crown land, is an integral part of the Wonderland project. The second stage of the branch will be undertaken in the 1990s.

An opportunity for another branch, at Coomera in south-eastern Queensland, arose in September 1985, when the *Queensland Transport and Technology Centre Act 1984* was repealed and responsibility for this project was vested in the museum board (see Chapter 11).

In addition to branch museums other initiatives to provide support for Queensland-wide museum services were formulated in a plan prepared in 1978. These include the provision of advice and assistance to small local and regional museums, a museum education extension service for schools outside Brisbane, and a travelling exhibition programme. The last awaits development following the move to South Brisbane. The museum's education extension service became a fact in September 1978 when the Education Department seconded a teacher to the museum to carry it out (see Chapter 5).

The societies that operate local and regional museums always have sought advice from the museum on the care and display of articles in their collections—the state museum regarding this service as an extension of its statutory responsibility for historically significant items. In May 1978, responding to a suggestion made by its ornithologist, D.P. Vernon, the museum extended its advisory role by holding its first formal workshop for small museums. It was attended by 70 representatives of museum societies in south-east Queensland who participated in the two-day programme of lectures and demonstrations on every aspect of museum operation from registration and conservation of collections to display planning and production<sup>56</sup>. Lecture room and common room facilities in the museum were stretched to the limit. Nevertheless, at the time it was



Participants in the seminar for small museums held in May 1978.

intended to repeat the programme for museum societies from more distant parts of the state. However, although the board could allocate trust fund monies for the operation of the workshops, the museum was not successful in raising funds for delegates' fares to Brisbane. As a temporary alternative several members of the staff travelled to Cairns and held a small workshop there. Plans for regular workshops were deferred until the museum had moved into its new building.

The museum's capacity to help small museum's throughout the state was given a boost by the government's decision to introduce a grants scheme. Funds are available, not only for collection maintenance and display projects, but also for attendance at workshops. The museum administers the scheme. The sum disbursed was \$50,000 in 1982-83 rising to \$100,000 in 1984-85. Seventy-one local historical and museum societies throughout the state have so far benefited from the scheme.

### **A Measure of Success**

When it was first set up in 1970 the board's capacity to contribute to museum activities was restricted by the lack of funds in the trust account. An initial contribution of \$1,000 from the board, the proceeds of a musical event held at the home of the chairman, was a beginning. Through careful management the account has grown and has conferred flexibility and expanded the range of activities available to the institution. The fund has particularly benefited the museum's publication programme, book shop and field programme.

As regards government funding, the down-turn of the economy in recent years has inevitably been felt by the museum. However, the board has successfully sought sponsorship funding from the private sector, receiving generous support from Queensland and other enterprises such as Castlemaine Tooheys and Kelloggs (Australia) Pty Ltd. The public in general has also maintained a steady flow of donations in cash and in kind and the government has granted a subsidy of dollar-for-dollar on donations received from non-government sources to a limit of \$100,000 in any one year. An increasingly well qualified staff, measured by individual successes in applications for grants for field work and equipment from both government and non-government sources, has also taken some of the pressures off the board's funds. Further appreciable income has resulted from the museum's registration as a consultant for the provision of environmental impact studies and has produced reports on major projects including the Brisbane Airport redevelopment<sup>57-9</sup>, and the National Estate in south-eastern Queensland<sup>60</sup>.

The board has achieved much of what it set out to do in 1970 and subsequent years. Unlike its predecessor of the period 1876-1907 it has had the advantage of a statutory base for its operations, a more affluent economy, a well qualified and experienced museum staff, and a growing measure of community support. Guided by an institutional corporate plan covering all aspects of the museum's operation, the board's major policy objectives are now defined. The most important of these are the policies that will be developed to enhance the authority of the museum, provide support for a range of services appropriate to the institution's resources and role, and ensure the most effective and efficient use of public funds. The various ministers of government charged with the responsibility for the museum have been receptive to representations from the board. The result has been a resurgence in the growth of the museum and the improvement of its services to the general public both in Brisbane and throughout the state.



Gill, James Connal Howard. 1986. "14 Men of goodwill: The Boards of Trustees." *Memoirs of the Queensland Museum* 24, 275–299.

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