



POMOMA QLD



Name: **Pomona Memorial School of Arts**

Address: **8 Reserve Street Pomona**

THE TOWN:

Pomona is located at the base of Mount Cooroora at the north end of the Sunshine Coast, in south eastern Queensland. It is 166 kilometres north of the State capital, Brisbane, and 30 kilometres west of the popular coastal tourist centre of Noosa Heads. It was first established in 1890. It now has a population of 2,587 (2011 census).

The town was originally called Coorora Railway Siding then later named Pinbarren Siding before it was renamed Pomona in 1906, after the Roman goddess of fruit and orchards. The region's heritage includes many thousands of years of Aboriginal history, with the Gubbi Gubbi people recognised as Traditional Owners.

The Protestant Unity Group moved to the region during the late 1880s.

European settlers cleared the land for logging and farming. The arrival of the railway in 1891 allowed for expansion of agricultural industries and provided vital transport for people, dairy products, timber, fruit, vegetables and cattle.

The town became the administrative centre for the Noosa Shire Council in 1909 until 1st December 1985 when the council moved to nearby Tewantin.

The original headquarters for the Shire were constructed in Pomona in 1911 on a site now used by the Cooroora Historical Society and Noosa Museum. The main street of the town was devastated by fires in 1939 and 1942. Many buildings after that were reconstructed in brick. However, luckily, the School of Arts was undamaged by these events.



Opening of the Memorial Hall September 5th 1926 by The Lieutenant Governor Mr William Lennon

ESTABLISHMENT:

A committee was formed in 1919 to raise funds for a School of Arts.

At the annual general meeting of the subscribers of the Pomona School of Arts, held in January 1926 a resolution was carried that it be a recommendation to the incoming committee to spend 400 pounds on the building and that 50 pounds at least be put aside to erect a memorial in the Soldier's Park. The committee was to report their decision at a "future public meeting". The public meeting was held in April 1926 with Mr J.H. Southernden, president, in the chair. Mr W. Hodge, the secretary, read the former resolution and explained the action the committee had taken in the matter. The committee could not set aside 50 pounds as requested as the money had been collected for the erection of a Memorial School of Arts and the Government subsidy had been received thereon. Hence it was the committee's plain duty to spend it on the erection of a Memorial School of Arts.

The Ladies Auxiliary had raised the funds and the building was free of debt when it opened, the cost being 564 pounds and 10 shillings.

THE BUILDING:

Is located on the western side of the railway line The timber was donated by the Richmond River Milling Company, a local sawmill, and is built mostly of hardwood and weatherboard externally, with some chamferboard. The design was the work of Rev. R. St George.

The contractor was Mr R.A.S. Wardrop.



The timber for the new Memorial School of Arts was placed on the site in May 1926 and Mr Kipping, foreman for the contractor (Mr Wardrop) made the preliminary arrangements for the building.

The building's principal feature is a bell-casted type of gable roof. The entrance has a corrugated iron roof.

The original hall is lined with tongue and groove and is floored and lined with good timber, seasoned crow's ash, thus ensuring durability and at the same time something that is best for dancing purposes. It measured forty two feet (12.8m) long by thirty four feet (10.3m) deep. The hall space was thirty four feet (10.3m) by twenty two feet (6.7m).

The original structure was liberally lighted by windows of casement style with coloured 'artic' glass in red, white and blue.

An extension including a kitchenette was added in December 1931. The local branch of the CWA opened a rest room, a library and reading room at that time.

In 1946 another extension was added to the northern end of the hall. This hall was from a surplus ex WW2 recreation building at Enoggera (Gaythorne) internment camp in Brisbane. The work was done by Arthur Brady, a local builder. This extension is lined with panelling and the ceiling is fibro-cement plaster.

Underneath the building is enclosed. A toilet block has been added more recently on the southern end. There is a restricted disability access with improvements planned. The building has retained its original structure, with the added on features mentioned above. It is well maintained, painted and repaired. Its prominent location in the centre of the town makes it a landmark building.



Courtesy of Noosa Museum Pomona Qld.

Pomona School of Arts Memorial Hall circa 1930



HISTORY:

The Nambour Chronicle recorded on 14th November 1919 an official welcome home honouring returned soldiers to Pomona by the Noosa Shire Council. It took the form of a Peace Ball, for which elaborate arrangements were made. A huge marquee was obtained from Brisbane and erected on the show ground, with a special dancing floor. The marquee was decorated with bunting and evergreens and special lights. The attendance was estimated at between 600 and 700 including about 80 returned soldiers and their lady friends, who were present by invitation. The music was supplied by Miss William's orchestra of six from Gympie. The light refreshments and catering was supplied by Websters, Brisbane. The Ball was attended by the State Commandant, Brigadier- General Irving and his ADC Major Glover.

Brigadier-General Irving pinned a number of decorations on the men who had won them. The ADC read out the deeds of the men who won the honours.

The above event was the precursor of a committee forming later that year to raise funds for the Memorial School of Arts.

The Ladies Auxiliary was responsible for raising the funds needed for the building.

A Queen competition was held in 1922 and it resulted in 300 pounds being raised . The additional monies were raised with other local events.

As reported in the Brisbane Courier of 20th May 1926 , a dance and skating, with a large attendance, was held in Mr. H. Page's motor garage that month in aid of the funds for the School of Arts.



The Hall was officially opened on Saturday 5th September 1926 by the Lieutenant Governor Mr William Lennon.



The official party arrived by train from Brisbane at midday and were met by officials from The Noosa Shire Council, Rev. B. St George the designer, Mr J Aird Chairman of the School of Arts committee, and The Kin Kin band playing the National Anthem.

Mr H.V. Woods, The Shire Clerk, presented a gold key to the Lieutenant Governor as a souvenir of the occasion. Once inside the new building a flag was unfurled from the honour board on which are inscribed the names of 28 soldiers who lost their lives in the War. Mr Walker, a councillor, asked for donations towards more library books and succeeded in securing 23 pounds. Subsequently luncheon was provided by the ladies and then Mr Lennon and his ADC Captain Plant returned to Brisbane by the afternoon train.

The original building comprised a hall area, two small rooms, one a library and reading room and the other as a haven of rest for the returned diggers.

The Memorial Hall was rented for 7/6d a week from 1928 until 1934 and used as a Court House until Pomona Court House was built. Court cases were conducted by Justices of the Peace in the hall for that time and anyone in the library or rest rooms could hear the court proceedings!

It was also the base for the 6 ft tall local policeman Constable Harry E Brown. The building additions in December 1931 were commemorated by a Carnival Dance after the official opening by Mr B. McKenna, State Director of Education.

The rest room was also opened by Mrs Moore who accompanied Mr McKenna to Pomona. The additions were beautifully decorated for the occasion. The Main Hall had a canopy of lattice work with painted panels, a chandelier as a centre piece and in each corner, baskets were suspended with wisteria and trailing foliage. Streamers of many hues were formed for an arch effect with chenille curtains and then further adorned with gold vases containing wisteria and foliage. The new kitchenette had tables decorated with vases of gerberas and Dorothy Perkins roses. The music for the dance was supplied by the "Joy Boys" Orchestra from Cootharaba. Miss Dulcie Uhlmann from Skyring Creek played a violin solo. Mr S Parr, a well known North Coast tenor sang "Come into the Garden Maude" and "Sally in our Alley" and others were enthusiastically received.

Approaching midnight a "dainty supper" was served by the ladies of the combined committee.

The door takings for this event amounted to 18 pounds and 8 shillings.

In October 1941 electric energy was switched on in Pomona.

In May 1945 more extensions were proposed to the Memorial Hall by the Pomona sub-branch R.S.S.A.I.L.A. It was hoped to enlarge the hall by 40ft and to provide for facilities in rooms underneath the building for the benefit of returned soldiers. The fund raising began with a boxing tournament in June 1945. It was hoped at the time that the new planning would make the hall equal to any similar building in the Shire.

The extensions were completed in 1946 with an existing hall from the internment camp at Gaythorne, Brisbane, being relocated and assembled by Arthur Brady the local builder.

The hall could now accommodate up to 600 persons.

Annual events such as The Show Ball and Church Ball could now attract visitors from Gympie, Mary Valley and other North Coast districts.

A Miss Toomey held her annual music concert in the hall and shows, revues and dances also took place.



In August 1949 the final competition of the Miss Noosa Ball that year was held in the Memorial Hall.

This attracted the largest crowd ever seen in the hall to witness the final of the series of dances at which a young lady was selected to represent a section of the Noosa district. There were six sections and the six contestants were judged by Mr and Mrs Fritz, Mrs Miller and Mr Hull (from Eumundi).

Miss Dorothy Spinaze, who represented the Kin Kin area and was known as "Miss Kin Kin" was declared the winner. The other contestants represented Pomona, Cooran, Skyring Creek, Cootharaba and Kareewa. The winner was presented with a cheque for 5 guineas (a guinea was one pound and one shilling) and the other contestants received one guinea each, plus a ladies and members ticket for the forthcoming show and floral posies and bouquets. The winner was the recipient of a basket of flowers.



On the official table in pride of place was a cake ornamented by six dancing dolls which was cut by the successful contestant.

The Ball had various dances including the "chocolate waltz". The best couple to dance this event received a box of chocolates.

The event was highly successful and door takings were over 100 pounds. The Show Society used the proceeds for ground improvements.



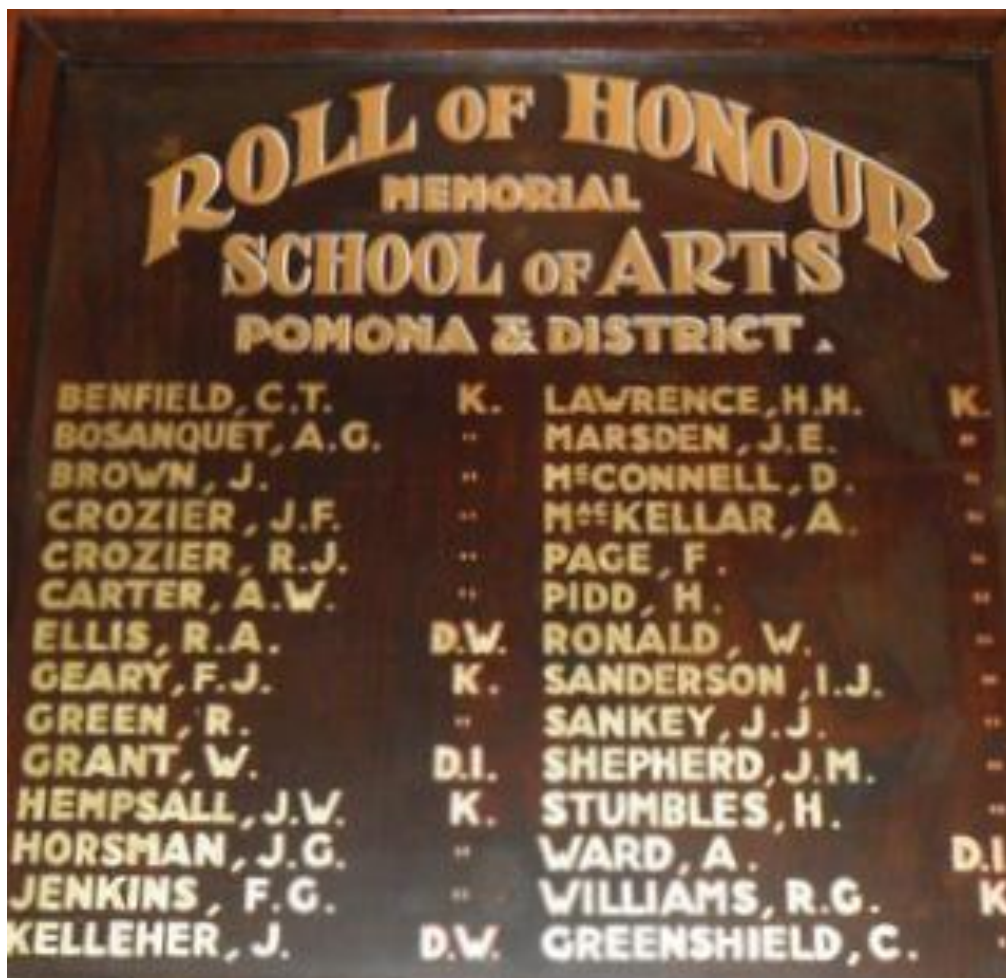
CURRENTLY (2013):

The hall today is used by community groups, such as Meals on Wheels, the Red Cross Opportunity Shop (downstairs) yoga classes, karate classes, indoor bowls, table tennis, dancing classes, by schools for concerts and rehearsals for speech nights, and at election time, by all levels of government, as a polling booth.

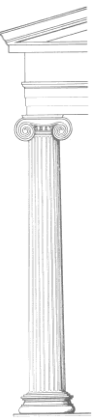
The Honour Boards:

Of special interest in the main hall are two Honour Boards which hang on the internal wall on the left of the entrance. Both honour local servicemen who lost their lives in WW 1.

The Pomona board is plain and square naming twenty eight servicemen. The other commemorates the Cootharaba district with thirty one names. This board is rectangular and more elaborate with carved leaves and decorative curlicues. It has the Australian coat of Arms at the top and is inscribed with the words Lest We Forget.



*Honour Board 1914-18 War
Pomona and District*



*Honour Board 1914-18 War
Cootharba District*

The Pomona School of Arts building has historical significance as a focus of social and organisational activities in the area since 1927.



Main Hall Stage April 2013



Acknowledgements :

Wikipedia
National Library of Australia - trove.nla.gov.au
Noosa Museum Pomona
Cooroy – Noosa Genealogical & Historical Research Group Inc.
Photographs: Courtesy of the Cooroora Historical Society Inc.
Sunshine Coast Regional Council



Photographs 2013 : Julia Gamble – ADFAS Noosa Member

Research and compilation : Julia Gamble - ADFAS Noosa Member

ADFAS Noosa

June 2013
