

# Burnside Historical Society Inc.

**NEWSLETTER - December 2010**

**Volume 30, No 4**



**Port Germein Hotel**

## From the Editor's Desk

This is our last issue of the quarterly *Newsletter* for 2010 and thanks must go to all those who have helped in so many different ways with the articles, production and distribution. We have the editorial committee who oversee the choice of articles and help with proof reading and we have the members who have contributed as reporters, summarizing the meetings and events and contributing articles.

Then there is the distribution of the *Newsletter* where Shirley Sumerling and her husband Mike have very capably sorted newsletters and then coordinated the members to deliver in the different suburbs. Thanks Shirley. Special thanks go to one of our delivers, Margaret Rohde, who found it necessary to retire during the year. Colin Harris has taken over her round.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the incoming Mayor, David Parkin, and hope he enjoys reading our *Newsletter* as much as Wendy Greiner did. We thank the Council for the annual Community Grant that it has been allocating to us each year. This has gone towards producing the *Newsletter*.

If you can help with articles or photos with the Newsletter, please contact me on my new email address [esmyth@adam.com.au](mailto:esmyth@adam.com.au) or on 8332 8019.

Please note that the new starting time for meetings in 2011 is **7.30 pm**.

**Elaine Smyth, Editor**

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## President's Message

I have commented previously to the effect that this has been a very busy year for the Society. As it now draws to a close we can take some satisfaction from the fact that in addition to our normal monthly meeting programme we have organised and run the 9<sup>th</sup> biennial Eastern Regional Seminar for historical societies, celebrated our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary and run our biennial regional tour, on this occasion to Upper Spencer Gulf.

A report on the regional tour is to be found elsewhere in this Newsletter, suffice to say at this point that it was enjoyed by all – the splendid weather complemented the wonderful appearance of the countryside, the features and points of interest were many and varied and we were treated to some very good meals, especially at the Arid Lands Botanic Garden at Pt Augusta.

One of my recurring themes throughout the past two years has been the importance of the relationship and partnership we have with the City of Burnside. I have stressed at every opportunity that it is a mutually advantageous one: the City of Burnside provides us with very valuable support and we, in turn, assist the Council in helping to raise community awareness of Burnside's rich and varied history. At the same time, it is no secret that the dysfunctional character of the elected Council in recent times has made it harder for us to get full value from the partnership. Inevitably, the attention of Councillors has focussed on internal divisions and tensions and this, in turn, has impacted adversely on the Council administration, making it hard at times for us to progress a number of important initiatives.

Hopefully, the recent elections will have cleared the air and I will be writing shortly to the newly elected Mayor, David Parkin, to congratulate him on his win and to draw to his attention the importance of the relationship we have with the City of Burnside. However, it is also incumbent on me to acknowledge with real gratitude the interest and support that outgoing Mayor Wendy Greiner has provided throughout her period of office. She has taken a keen interest in our activities and it was always reassuring to know that we had this sympathetic interest at the highest level of Council. I know that I will have the support of all members in thanking Wendy and wishing her well in her future activities.

In closing for the year I do need to emphasise the need for us to build our membership in 2011 and beyond. Through the inexorable march of time we are losing long-standing members and recruitment of new members is not keeping pace with this loss. All of us have a role to play in attracting new members and if the Society is to persist into the future we need to take it seriously.

My thanks to all members who have helped in many and varied ways with the

running of the Society this year, and my very best wishes to all for a safe and happy festive season.

Colin Harris, PSM

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## Program 2011

### MEETINGS

MEETINGS of the Burnside Historical Society are held in the Burnside Community Centre, corner of Portrush Road and Fisher Street, Tusmore (car park and entrance off Fisher Street) at **7.30 pm** on the third Monday of the month, unless an alternative time or venue is notified. Admission is free and supper provided. Visitors are most welcome.

**Monday 17 January, 6 pm** — Rob Marshall & Chris Hughes.  
*Brock Reserve: walking trails and the Brock family history*

Brock Reserve on Dashwood Road, Beaumont is one of the City of Burnside's many parks and reserves, but for those interested in our history it hold a special place through its association with the Brock family, the last private owners of nearby *Beaumont House*.

For our traditional outdoor January meeting we will gather at the Brock Reserve, at the top of Glynburn Road, to hear Chris Hughes from the National Trust of South Australia talk about the Brock family and life at *Beaumont House* when that part of Burnside was still rural in its character. We will also have present Rob Marshall OAM, to talk about the network of walking trails he and his wife Dr Sue Barker have established over the nearby foothills of Glen Osmond.

*Please gather at the reserve at 5.45 pm for a 6.00 pm start (see accompanying map on insert for reserve location). Bring a folding chair to sit in the shade: there will be a portable sound system for the speakers and we will have an alternative plan if the weather is inclement.*

The gathering will conclude around 7.15 pm and be followed by an optional two course dinner at the *Feathers Hotel*. The cost of the dinner

will be \$39 and those intending to participate in the dinner need to fill in the flyer accompanying this Newsletter.

**Monday 21 February, 7.30 pm** – Iris Iwanicki  
*A tale of two towns: Cold War tensions in outback Australia*

Iris Iwanicki is a highly respected heritage historian and town planner. At various times she has worked in these fields in the private sector and at both state and local government levels in South Australia.

She is currently completing PhD research on planned townships that were built in remote parts of Australia at the height of Cold War tensions in the immediate post World War 2 years.

Specifically, Iris will look at two south Australian examples, Radium Hill and Woomera. Radium Hill was established to service a uranium mine in the north east of the State and Woomera was established to service the joint UK/Australia long range weapons project. Iris will outline their respective origins, their character as modernist, planned towns in outback settings and their fortunes in post Cold War times.

**Monday 21 March, 7.30 pm** — Rick Moore  
*The golden age of Australian exploration*

In the nineteenth century the western world was fascinated by tales of adventure in far-flung countries. Geography and exploration were national obsessions, with books and newspapers catering for what seemed to be an insatiable public curiosity.

The greatest stories were, of course, coming out of Africa, but exploration of the interior of Australia – the last great continent to be colonised by Europeans – was not far behind, especially in the United Kingdom. What was it that motivated European exploration of Australia's vast interior and who were the champions of exploration? What were the consequences of their discoveries and why is John McDouall Stuart referred to as the greatest of Australia's inland explorers?

Rick Moore is President of the John McDouall Stuart Society and has an abiding interest in the exploration and pastoral settlement of South Australia and the Northern Territory. He has a rural background and has lived in the bush for much of his life, although he admits to enjoying living in Adelaide in recent years. He spends around sixty nights a year in his swag, mostly in the arid lands, and will find any excuse to light a fire and use the camp ov-

en. He has recently has been working as a guide with well-known outback tour operators such as Rex Ellis and Diamantina Tours.

**Monday 16 April, 7.30 pm** - Glen Woodward

*What grows out of wars?*

**Monday 16 May** - Ray Buttery

*The defence of Darwin*

**Monday 20 June** - Valerie Sitters

*John Rymill – our forgotten explorer*

**Monday 18 July** - Ron Potts

*The Magic Lantern – images from Innamincka*

**Monday 15 August** - Tony Rogers

*A very different climate: how Europeans settlers coped*

**Monday 19 September** - Ken Preiss & Geoffrey Bishop

*Ferguson Park: its history & natural History*

**Monday 17 October** - Sharan Northcott, Mary Wilson & Colin Harris

*The history behind the plaques: Greengate Inn, Prescott Farm & Wandeen*

**Monday 21 November**

*Members' night: show & tell*

### **Half day tours/excursions**

**Sunday 7 August, 1.30-4.30 pm,**

Mitcham Heritage Resource Centre

**Sunday 2 October, 10.30 am -12.00 midday**

Ferguson Conservation Park

**Welcome to new members Myrith Barr and Chas Grimes.**

## **Burnside Parks and Reserves**

19 July 2010

Eleanor Trott, (Ellie), a member of the BHS executive, has been researching the Burnside City Council Minutes to glean information about the 113 parks, gardens and reserves within the City of Burnside. She continued the early research of the late Dean Dinning, not realizing what a mammoth task it would be, especially as the large Minute Books were accessible only within Council precincts. However, it has become her passion, as she has not only spent hours foraging through the information but also hours photographing each one of these 113 areas. These stunning photos were on the screen behind her as she spoke.

Ferguson Park, one of only two conservation parks in our Council area, and *Attunga*, a heritage garden, were her special focus as she outlined their interesting history. Ferguson Park preserves an important remnant of the original vegetation of the eastern Adelaide Plains. It was donated to the SA Government in 1949 and named after the owner, Effie Ferguson. Effie, with her mother, Jessie, had lived in nearby *Chiverton* (now St Peters Girls College) since 1896. The Park is managed by the SA Department of Environment & Natural Resources plus a Friends Group, formed in 1982, to assist in the maintenance of its natural state and ongoing re-vegetation projects.

*Attunga* was purchased by Otto von Rieben and his wife in 1907, but having no children, he gave *Attunga* to the Burnside Council in 1944 with the proviso that the house and garden be permanently preserved in the form of a hospital and nursing home. The garden had been laid out under his guidance in the Edwardian style. The hospital was completed in 1956, and the Burnside Trust, in the 1990s, established a scented garden for the visually impaired. A grant of \$20,000 was used to develop the garden as a place of tranquillity and recreation.

Ellie has reached 1947 in the Minutes, with more years yet to research. Thank you for this special insight into two of our treasured areas of Burnside and also for your beautiful photos, which are available for viewing in the Local History Room in the Library.

Our second speaker, Simon Bradley from the City of Burnside, is head of what could be deemed Burnside's open space development, past, present and future and his obvious enthusiasm and concern for these open spaces was very evident throughout his address. Tree management, reserves and parks which have sporting facilities, playgrounds for children between the ages of 0-12, walking trails and indigenous vegetation come under the umbrella of open space. Master planning is developed in conjunction with the local community, social and recreational clubs to ensure that the needs of all can be satisfied and with 190

hectares of open space to maintain, this is no easy task.

Simon mentioned the anxiety of residents living in and around Alexandra Avenue and Prescott Terrace in relation to the 153 State Heritage listed trees which were planted in 1918 in memory of the fallen servicemen of WW1. Many trees are declining from a combination of old age and the prolonged drought and coming to grips with this is proving to be difficult for many residents. Hazelwood Park Play Space provides diversity for physical, explorative, interactive and imaginative play opportunities – a beautiful State Heritage listed park. Add to this, the steep, but now re-aligned, Women’s Pioneers Trail to Mt Osmond which is now suitable for all ages to enjoy.

Simon outlined some exciting projects under consideration such as community gardens where people can grow vegetables and a demonstration garden featuring new and different plants suitable for the area. Also, water sensitive urban gardens designed to integrate management of all water resources and the total water cycle in the urban development process.

Simon appreciated the fact that City of Burnside and Burnside Historical Society work together on various projects such as the Wheal Watkins Mines renovation, the naming of roads and reserves, the erection of historical plaques and the restoration of the Magill Cemetery. Burnside is a beautiful City with extensive open space which enables us to enjoy a wholesome lifestyle and we thank our speakers Ellie and Simon for the excellent and informative addresses.

**Isabel Williams OAM, JP**

Kensington Gardens Reserve, photo Ellie Trott



## 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner

14 August 2010

The Burnside Historical Society held its first official meeting on 14 August 1980, so it was fitting that our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations should be held on the same date this year. The Feathers Hotel, Glynburn Road, Burnside, proved an appropriate venue for the anniversary dinner. The Feathers itself is a Burnside institution. In addition, it stands on the site of an old wine saloon, a dispenser of spirits and liquors to Burnside’s workers for many decades.

Some 42 members and visitors took part in a most enjoyable evening, commencing with a complimentary drink. Our President, Colin Harris, welcomed all and gave background information about the Society and Burnside itself. The food was the usual high standard for which the Feathers is well known. In between the main course and dessert, we participated in an entertaining quiz based on the leaflet ‘150 facts about Burnside’, recently distributed to members. Vigorous discussion and much hilarity ensured we learnt history that evening in a fun atmosphere. May that environment continue as the Society grows and prospers. Our sincere thanks go to all who worked so hard to make the 30<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations such a delightful occasion.

**Elizabeth Rogers, OAM**

### **Do you need transport to Burnside Historical Society meetings and activities?**

#### **Can you provide transport for others who live near you?**

We value our members and enjoy seeing them at our monthly meetings. If you require transport to meetings we want to hear from you!

So more members can attend our meetings and activities, your Committee is asking for support from members who are able to provide transport to meetings on a regular basis.

Once a “transport match” has been made, we will rely on the person wanting transport to contact the person providing transport, to say that they will need a lift to the next meeting or activity.

We hope our members will benefit from this initiative, which we realise has been going on informally for years.

**Please notify the Secretary in writing PO Box 152, Glenside SA 5065 or telephone Meredith Ide on 8365 3049.**

## Swimming in the River Torrens

16 August 2010

Michael Talbot, former librarian, historian and author, gave us a most interesting talk illustrated with pictures from the State Library collection.

As background, he described the change of the river from “a pretty little stream”, as illustrated by Andrew Garran’s picture of Aborigines fishing in the Torrens, to an ugly channel polluted by agricultural, industrial and human waste. In 1839 there was an outbreak of dysentery and in 1844 penalties were imposed for bathing in certain areas.

A wooden weir, built in 1876 at the site of the present weir, was swept away by floods. It was later replaced by the current stone weir. This enabled the formation of the Torrens Lake, opened in July 1881. The Elder park rotunda was built the following year.

Upstream of the weir there were a number of water holes. Several swimming clubs were established, the best known being North Adelaide, 1910, and Gilberton, 1915. There were difficulties maintaining a river swimming club due to pollution and periodic flooding. North Adelaide closed in 1934 and Gilberton, which had a peak membership of 2,500, ceased activity in 1967. The swing bridge crosses the river near the Gilberton site.

The first annual swim through Adelaide in 1913 was a distance of 1 mile and 200 yards. This went from the Torrens weir to the Albert Bridge and was won by L S Weir, with Harry Moon recording the fastest time. Only affiliated members of South Australian Amateur Swimming Clubs could enter this popular activity. It continued on the Torrens until 1980 and then moved to West Lakes where the final “swim through” was held in 1982.

Early bathing costumes for men and women were neck to knee until 1930 but then men were permitted to have detachable tops.

The River Torrens Linear Park Act was passed in 1981 and the Linear Park established in 2006. It goes from the hills to the sea.

Water quality of the Torrens remains an issue with blue-green algae often causing problems in the summer. The lake also collects a lot of rubbish washed down in storm water or dumped.

**Margaret Beare**

## Tom Kruse and Reg Sprigg - Legends of the Outback

20 September 2010

Kristin Weidenbach began her talk with a brief account of how her father’s involvement in the restoration of Tom Kruse’s Leyland Badger truck and a re-enactment in 1989 of a mail run from Birdsville to Marree aroused her interest in Kruse. Many interviews with him resulted in a book *Mailman of the Birdsville Track*, a general biography, not limited to his mail contract and carting business. The truck is now in the Birdwood Motor Museum.

Most of Kristin’s talk was about Reginald Sprigg. As an eighteen year old student of geology in 1937, Reg began life-long friendships with Sir Douglas Mawson and C.T. Madigan. In 1939, Mawson chose him as his only assistant on a visit to Arkaroola, where Bentley Greenwood had been prospecting for uranium. In 1944 Reg, now in the Department of Mines, was sent to investigate the uranium deposit at Radium Hill. (He did not know that this was part of the British search for material for atom bombs.) A common interest in uranium led to friendship with Sir Mark Oliphant, whose name Reg gave to a hill at Arkaroola. The search for oil prompted a gravity survey across the Simpson Desert, with his wife and children accompanying him. He was one of the founders of SANTOS.

From the desert to the sea: Reg built a boat to study sub-marine life and geology. In addition to scuba diving, he improvised a diving chamber, suspended from a frame over the stern of the boat. One of his discoveries was a deep chasm offshore from the mouth of the Murray River, formed while the sea level was lower than it is now.

Perhaps his most distinctive discovery was the existence of fossil jellyfish and worms that lived in an era that scientists had previously believed to be devoid of anything but unicellular life. One of these was named *Spriggina*. Similar fossils have since been found in other parts of the world.

Sprigg’s name has also been given to a submarine chasm, an inlet on Kangaroo Island, an oil field in the Cooper Basin, an asteroid, a radio-active mineral, a student prize at the University of Adelaide and a medal awarded by the Australian Petroleum Exploration Association.

*Rock Star*, Kristin Weidenbach’s biography of Sprigg, and her book on Kruse, can be bought from most book shops.

**John Love**

## Upper Spencer Gulf Regional Tour

10-12 September 2010

The wealth of South Australia reaches far beyond the vaunted social income of mining. The enormous panorama of the patch-work green and gold paddocks of grain about to grow up to head and canola in flower, is a reminder of the enormous contribution farming makes to South Australia. The state is expecting a bumper crop this season which could exceed last year's total of 7.8 million tonnes. The record was in 2001-02 which produced 9.4 million tonnes. It was all there to see by the travellers on the Society's three day excursion to the Upper Spencer Gulf.

The tour visited the provincial cities of Port Pirie, Port Augusta and Whyalla, the large populations of each being reliant on heavy industry. Time constraints limited the attention that could be given to this aspect of the north's economic life, but much was still seen and in travelling to the region we passed through prosperous farming districts, crossed Goyder's Line (which is moving south!) and ventured into the southern fringes of the State's arid lands.

The group was fortunate in having our President Colin Harris as tour leader, a man who has considerable academic and practical knowledge of this state's fauna, flora and rural development. Every one had faith in the accuracy of the information he provided orally, and amplified by the excellent notes which had been distributed. On the road to Port Pirie he spoke about the settlement by farmers of the 1870s. The land of this northern area was previously occupied by graziers who had taken up vast tracts of land under pastoral tenure. A visit to the station centre of the Bowman property (formally Younghusband and Ferguson's) at Crystal Brook provided some sense of the vastness and prosperity of these pastoral runs.

There was insufficient time in Port Pirie to take a tour of the smelter although from the coach Colin pointed out the site with its high stack, which was built to disperse lead pollution to a higher altitude. Lead contamination remains a problem for the town, especially in relation to the health of babies and young children. Smelting at Port Pirie had been mooted since 1885. There was production from the British Blocks smelting works in 1889, and BHP was doing some refining there. During a difficult time at the British Blocks mine at Broken Hill, BHP bought the Port Pirie smelters and held it until 1925. It is currently owned by Dutch company Nystar. In a nice drive around the CBD Meredith Ide drew our attention to interesting buildings in her trademark 'get to the point' style.

On the way to Port Augusta some time was spent at Napperby and Nelshaby, where farms were established in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Later, in the

1930's, market gardens were established by mostly Italian and Greek growers, making the district renowned for tomatoes and peas during and after WW2. Being within commuting distance of Port Pirie, Napperby has now become popular as a distant foothills suburb. Barbara Parker had several school holidays at Nelshaby, her maternal family having settled on land there in 1899. The coach parked opposite the site of the old farm-house and an early photograph of it was passed around. She spoke about life in the district, including the fact that her mother's and later generations had to walk or ride a horse three miles to and from school at Napperby.

Our tour coach then moved on to the back blocks of Baroota, where Colin detailed the life and times of John McConnell Black, one of South Australia's most notable botanists, who took up farming land in the vicinity in 1878. Marjorie Andrew, Shirley Clissold and Andrew Barham Black, all related to J.M. Black, added a fine personal touch to the story by talking about Black and the Black family connections with Burnside.

On the way from Pirie to Port Augusta National Highway 1 travels between ranges and higher ground on both sides of the Gulf. BHS member and geologist Ross Both gave us an explanation of the differences in the early geological history of these features and has been prevailed upon to provide a summary of his most interesting information elsewhere in this *Newsletter*.

At the Port Augusta power stations, John Clark, a former senior engineer there, described how the stations consume 20 000 tonnes of Leigh Creek coal each week. The first power station, Playford A, was commissioned in 1954, Playford B in 1960 and the largest, the Northern Power station, in 1985. The coal, being low grade, is pulverised to a fine powder and blown into the German made furnaces to burn like gas. Any remaining solids are filtered from the smoke stack and used commercially elsewhere, but regrettably there is still no way of preventing CO<sub>2</sub> from being dispersed to the atmosphere.

Port Augusta was a busy port for the outback wool industry in its earlier days, as a visit to the excellent Wadlata Outback Centre illustrated. The development of the Commonwealth Railways from 1912 gave it a fillip, but it was the power station developments which stimulated the biggest population growth. Power generation continues, but with the break-up of the Commonwealth Railways much of the work once associated with rail freight and rolling stock maintenance has gone.

From Port Augusta the tour proceeded to Whyalla where we viewed from the Highway the current steel works, the original town centre around the base of

Hummock Hill, WW2 anti-aircraft gun emplacements on the summit of the Hill, and more recent western residential area of the city. As detailed in the tour notes, Whyalla has a rich mining and industrial history, including ship-building, but there was no time to explore this in detail on the day.

Throughout the tour, Colin was able to provide clear information on the state of the land. This was supplemented by two visits to the Arid Lands Botanic Gardens at Port Augusta. He talked about climate change and a likely southward contraction of farming and pointed out the ongoing decline of the tree population in our arid country, including the decline of the magnificent Western Myall trees. He did point out some regeneration of native plants, but reminded us that there remains much to be concerned about, including the continuing loss of our native fauna to introduced predators such as the fox and cat. His message was one we should all take to heart - and look for remedies.

There were only a small number of men in our coach party and this, coupled with some of the mobility limitations that go with increasing age, indicates that the general style of the tour was apt. A continuous loading and unloading of the coach was avoided, and there was no strenuous walking and climbing.

**Barbara Parker OAM**

**David Rogers**

## **The Flinders Ranges**

*During the Upper Spencer Gulf Tour, Ross Both provided the following information.*

The Flinders Ranges comprise a sequence of rocks deposited as sediments in a basin known as the Adelaide Geosyncline. Sediment deposition began about 800 million years ago and continued until about 500 million years ago in the Cambrian period, when the rocks underwent intense folding during the Delamerian Orogeny. The Flinders Ranges as we now see them were formed by uplift beginning about 50 million years ago.

An interesting feature of the geology of the Flinders Ranges is the presence of Ediacaran fossils, some of which resemble worms and jelly fish. These were discovered in 1946 in the Ediacara hills by geologist Reg Sprigg (who later established the Arkaroola Resort) and are the first evidence in the fossil record of multi-cellular life—we saw some examples in the Wadlata Outback Centre.

To the west of the Flinders Ranges is the Stuart Shelf, a sequence of sedimentary rocks the same age as those of the Ranges, but deposited on a platform

adjacent to the deep basin. The rocks are flat-lying, not having been folded during the Delamerian Orogeny. Beneath the Stuart Shelf is the Gawler Craton of Archaean and Proterozoic age.

The iron ore processed at the Whyalla steel works is mined in the Middleback Ranges. The iron occurs as the minerals hematite and magnetite in banded iron formations within a sequence of sedimentary rocks of Early Proterozoic age, approximately 1900-1850 million years, within the Gawler Craton.

**Ross Both**

## **Caroline Emily Clark (1825 - 1911)**

### **Children's rights campaigner**

Soon after Caroline Emily Clark (known as Emily) arrived in South Australia in 1850, she took a keen interest in the plight of the destitute. Caroline campaigned for a 'Boarding Out' system where children were placed with suitable families who were subsidized to care, clothe and educate them, rather than having them herded into industrial work and reformatory schools. She drew attention to a successful Scottish trial of boarding out, and thanks to her efforts the system was eventually adopted in South Australia in 1871.

Boarding out gave many impoverished children a second chance at life, and helped protect them from injustice, neglect and cruelty. It also reduced the strain on the already overstretched resources of the Destitute Board. By 1888, nearly seven hundred of the 800 'state' wards were boarded out. So successful was the system, it was later adopted in New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania.

Caroline died in 1911 and was cremated at the West Terrace Crematorium. Her ashes were placed in the Clark family vault there. Four current members of our Historical Society are closely related to Emily. They are John Clark and his twin sister Pauline Hiscock, Jim Crompton, Rosemary Brown and her son Robert Brown.

The Caroline Clark Memorial Garden was officially opened on 2 July, 2010 by the Hon. Paul Holloway, MLC, and provides a lasting tribute to the 50,000 people buried in unmarked graves between settlement and the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century at the West Terrace Cemetery.

**Sharan Northcott**

## 19<sup>th</sup> State History Conference

### Cross-currents - history, people & the environment

Murray Bridge, South Australia 6-8 August 2010

The main theme, the histories of the River Murray and Lakes and their influence on and with the region's people, places and communities, is still *current* today with our heavy dependence on River Murray water. We were encouraged to "consider the relationship of nature and culture and the place of history and heritage in shaping sustainable communities in the future."

On **Saturday** the two keynote speakers provided valuable insight into the conference themes. **Deane Fergie**, an anthropologist, emphasised that "ideas have consequences" and how ideas about water have changed over time and man's actions. The influences of place and cultural experience over time around Australia were explored. She stated "we need to look at different ways of imagining collectively in a multidisciplinary way for radical solutions" and consider carefully how we think about water and the nature of flood.

Next **Dr Paul Sinclair** spoke about "Making connections between people and the river [Murray]" and that over time "a whole set of unintended consequences has been produced". He called for urgent, "unprecedented leadership and investment from the Australian Government" to protect and replenish Australia's ecosystems, the continent's natural life support systems. Rivers like the Murray act as the lifeblood of Australia connecting people, culture, wildlife and land. There needs to be a *balance between water that's taken out and what flows in*.

The following summaries are from the sessions I was able to attend, thanks to the support of the BHS. **Don Garden**, an author and lecturer in environmental history, the first *Climate and Society* speaker, spoke about the effect of drought in 19<sup>th</sup> century eastern Australia and the importance of the environment and climate in shaping the Australian colonial experience. Those members on the recent Upper Spencer Gulf trip would appreciate the focus of this presentation – Goyder's Line (1866), overstocking saltbush country, huge stock losses, land degradation, loss of soil, rabbits and other pests. The following speaker, **Tony Rogers**, examined how Europeans colonial settlers of the 1830s-40s coped with a very different climate. Some colonists gradually learned through contact with the local Aboriginal people how to cope with aspects of the weather.

On the Saturday afternoon I journeyed by bus on a tour of *The Story of Wellington on the Murray* via Jervis and along the River Murray. Points of interest included Mason's Rock at Edward's Crossing and Jervis which became a soldier settlement with dairying. Sir John Morphett bought land at Wood's Point and Sir William Francis Drummond Jervis, a State Governor 1877- 83,

bought land and built a residence. He engineered with Morphett to develop river irrigation. The river town of Wellington was built at the site of the first crossing. We heard about Police Commissioner Alexander Tolmer's Gold Escorts and the 1986 re-enactment of his crossings of the river. We toured Wellington's police station, gaol cells, stables and museum. On Saturday evening the tasty Conference Dinner was enjoyed at The Waterhole, Monarto Zoo. It was an eerie feeling knowing some predators were nearby, but we all left safely....

On **Sunday** morning **John Zwar**'s paper in the *Of Plants and People session* and entitled *Myall, Mangroves and much more – the story of The Australian Arid Lands Botanic Gardens and Pt Augusta* would be of special interest to our touring members. Another session I moved into was about *People of the Murray and Lakes*. I heard two speakers – **Helen Stagg** *The fabric of life on the Murray River; through a child's eyes* – a fascinating research with recollections of two children of lock/weir builders, one her mother, over a twenty year period. People worked hard and made do, supporting each other with the River Murray as their backdrop. "It's life that makes us tough", one said, "I think togetherness is an important part of life – sharing even if living in poverty". Their bond with the River continues. **Ken Strother and Terry Sim** spoke next detailing *Stories from The Lakes and Coorong*. They have a lifelong interest in the Lakes, have talked to over one hundred people who have a connection with Lakes Alexandrina and Albert and the Coorong.

Following morning tea, **Ann Herraman** delivered the first of four papers given on *Regional History - From the River to the Mount; social and economic development in the Mount Barker region, 1831-1891*. It is based on the first observations of Captain Charles Sturt of the broad Mt Barker region from 1830 to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the same session, **Kate Walsh** delivered a refreshing diarised account of a three week holiday of a group of ten Adelaide friends, in Bridgewater in 1938. It presents us with 'an intriguing historical document', containing 'some interesting reflections on the physical and social landscapes they interacted with.'

**Jenny Hein**, studying a Master of Theology, spoke about the history of the Salvation Army, describing how it moved rapidly northwards into mining and light industrial towns and south to what's now known as the Limestone Coast. She gave examples from the Fleurieu Peninsula. A Victor Harbor resident observed the Army was 'more entertaining than cock-fighting.' Some Aboriginal people were involved in mainstream leadership positions at Port McLeay. The final *Regional History* paper came from long time residents of Pinnaroo, **Max and Enid Wurfel**. They described how the long-awaited railway from Taillem Bend to Pinnaroo country came about after three years of debate, with a Bill passed in 1903. The deprivations and hardships of Annie Hensley, the only white woman in the district in its early years were described and the problem of the early settlers

Sourcing water from a well on the Hensley's property, dug to around 60 metres deep with pick and shovel!

**Terry Sim**, who once worked in the Fish section of the South Australian Museum, spoke first in the session, *Histories and Heritage of the Murray and Lakes*. He spoke about *A fresh history of the Lakes*. He emphasised the need to document the changes to these significant stretches of water. He has carried out research using a variety of written sources, such as newspapers and parliamentary reports. He maintains there is evidence that the Lakes were naturally fresh at the time of European settlement.

**Rodney Barrington's** interest in the State's railways extends to the *Railway river ports in South Australia*. The first South Australian railway interfaced with the River Murray at Goolwa in 1851. The treacherous journey through the Murray mouth was replaced, in fact, by a horse tram conveying traffic to sea-going vessels at Port Elliot. Rodney talked about the river trade and how from 1878 a rail connection to North West Bend, present day Morgan, captured trade from a large area of Victoria and New South Wales and reduced freight movements to Goolwa. River ports were created at Milang and Murray Bridge. Rail infrastructure remains largely intact in the four river ports. **Peter Harden**, the final speaker for the session, talked about *River heritage treasures of South Australia*. The crossing of the Murray and the building of the Roundhouse in 1873 at Murray Bridge, as the bridge keeper's residence, are linked to the early beginnings of the development of our Colony. The overland trade routes from the eastern states cross at Edwards Crossing. Peter described the stages in the construction of the road bridge, the first to span the Murray. It was started under Mr Frank Rees George, and when completed in 1879 was the biggest steel structure in Australia. It was modified to take the railway, 40 years before a separate rail bridge was completed in 1925. Road traffic lessened following completion of the Swanport Bridge in 1979, 100 years after the first bridge was completed.

### **Meredith Ide**

Please note that I have written the sessions that I attended in more detail and copies of these will be available at meetings to borrow and hand on to other members.

# Merry Christmas

## **BURNSIDE HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.** **PO Box 152, Glenside SA 5065**

### **OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the Society shall be:

- 2.1 to arouse interest in and to promote the study and discussion of Australian and South Australian history and in particular, the history of the City of Burnside;
- 2.2 to promote the collection, recording, preservation and classification of works, source material and artefacts of all kinds relating to Burnside history;
- 2.3 to assist in the protection and preservation of buildings, works and sites of historical significance in the City of Burnside;
- 2.4 to co-operate with similar societies and other bodies throughout Australia;
- 2.5 to do all such other things as are conducive or incidental to the attainment of any of the above objectives.

### **OFFICE-BEARERS FOR 2010-2011**

<b>President:</b>	Colin Harris, PSM (8331 3571)
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Isabel Williams, OAM, JP (8379 4090)
<b>Vice-President:</b>	Meredith Ide (8365 3049)
<b>Secretary:</b>	Sharan Northcott (8332 1761)
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Richard House
<b>Committee:</b>	Margaret Beare, John Clark, John Love, Eleanor Trott, June Ward, and Isabel Williams OAM, JP

### **Newsletter Subcommittee:**

Elaine Smyth, Editor (8332 8019), Peter Davies, Barbara Parker, PSM and Elizabeth Rogers, OAM.

**Contributors:** Apart from the Newsletter Subcommittee, we are fortunate to have several occasional contributors whose names appear with their articles in the relevant issues.

**Distribution Organiser:** Shirley Sumerling (8364 3505)

### **Program Subcommittee:**

Colin Harris (Chair), Meredith Ide, Shirley Sumerling and Mary Wilson

**Supper Co-ordinator:** Hazel Newton

**Meetings** of the Society are held in the Burnside Community Centre, corner Portrush Road and Fisher Street, Tusmore (car park and entrance off Fisher Street) at 8 pm on the third Monday of the month unless an alternative time or venue is notified. Admission is free, including supper. Visitors are most welcome.

**Membership fees:** are \$30 family, and \$20 single, due in April each year and may be sent to the Treasurer at the Society's address (above) or paid at a monthly meeting.

**Front Cover:**

Port Germein Hotel, High Street, Port Germein.  
Photo by Barbara Parker, 2010

This hotel dates from 1881 when the district was an important producer of wheat. A 1646 metre long jetty was built so that the wheat could be taken out to the sailing clippers anchored out where the water was deep enough for them to load. This jetty was said to be the longest in the southern hemisphere. The sailors drank at the hotel on their too-brief shore leave.



Port Germein Hotel, 1998, photo J Graham

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