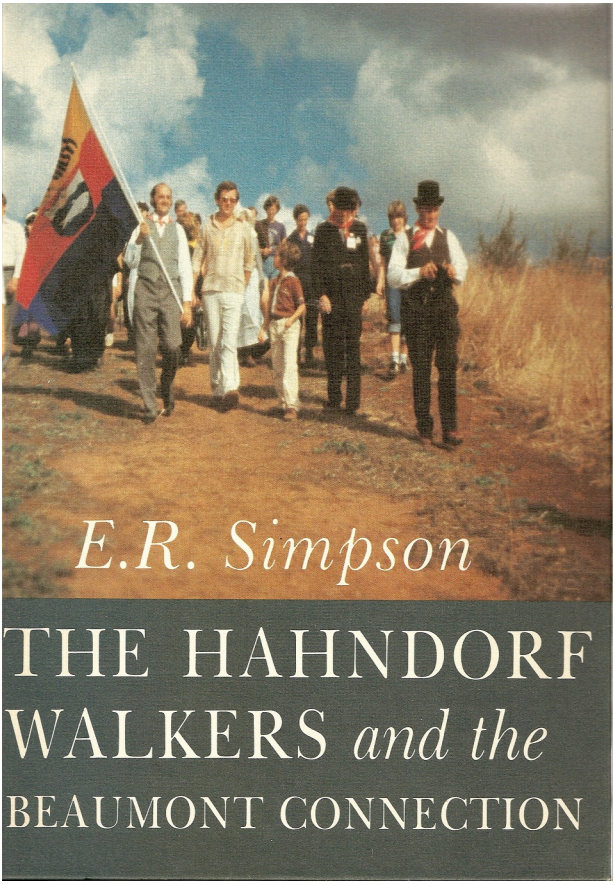
# Burnside Historical Society Inc.

## NEWSLETTER - June 2011

**Volume 31, No 2**



## From the Editor's Desk

Now that the month of May has come and gone I hope that many of you were able to help celebrate the 175th anniversary of the establishment of European settlement in South Australia through participating in the many events both in the city and across the State. Our Society worked closely with the City of Burnside in planning and leading activities to show-case our history. Other events were held at the Library for those not involved in bus tours.

In April we held the AGM and Vice President Meredith Ide was elected as President and Colin Harris is now Vice President. Thank you, Colin for your enthusiastic leadership. John Clark, who was an inaugural member of the Society and who was made an Honorary Life member in 1992, has contributed much to the management and smooth operation of the Society and mines over the years. Thank you, John. He has now retired from the committee and his vacancy has been filled by Charles Grimes.

Our new meeting time of starting at 7.30 pm has been going smoothly and we are grateful for the help of members who arrive early to help set up the chairs and the room.

Recently I had contact from a member of another Historical Society who had grown up in Burnside offering to write about his childhood. If you have any historical information relating to the Burnside area, it would be greatly appreciated. Even old photographs of the area can be copied. Or I can come and talk to you about your memories of the area. If you can help, please contact me at esmyth@adam.com.au or on 8332 8019.

**Elaine Smyth** (Editor)

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## President's Message

I am very honoured to be your President for 2011-12. I have been a long-time resident of the eastern suburbs, a history and geography teacher and Burnside Councillor for the Kensington Gardens and Magill Ward (1989-93). I am an inaugural member of the Burnside Historical Society, and have been Newsletter Editor, a deliverer and most recently Vice-President. I have enjoyed learning about Burnside's history and socio-cultural aspects that influenced its development.

I follow many who have given strong leadership and, with their committees, have enhanced our Society. I pay particular tribute to John Clark for his long committee involvement, three as President and eleven as Vice-President. His contribution to setting up and organising guides for the Wheal Watkins Mines tours is especially remembered.

Thanks also go to Colin Harris as President (2009-11) who worked tirelessly for our Society. As recorded in his President's Report in this edition 2010 was certainly was a busy one. We thank Colin for his effective leadership. Once again he planned and led another informative and enjoyable regional tour, this time to the Upper Spencer Gulf industrial towns.

We welcome Chas Grimes to our committee. In every edition of our Newsletter we list new members. Please make them feel welcome at our General Meetings and on trips. Thanks again to Richard House for his initiative of a preparing a quality brochure publicising our Society. Ask for a copy if you have family and friends who would like to join us. We must replenish our numbers to maintain the viability of our Society.

It is to be hoped that our productive relationship with the City of Burnside is maintained. We hope that plans related to Wheal Watkins Mines can be formally established so some tours will be possible. We thank member Dr Ross Both and Mr Greg Drew for their support of Colin Harris in giving expert advice about the mine and its heritage significance.

As you have noted, the Programme Committee has sourced some interesting speakers for the remainder of 2011, providing us with history of local, State and Australian content. Please continue to advertise the topics for these monthly meetings to your family and friends. It's more inspiring to address a large audience!

Please note the change of date for the *tour to the Mitcham Heritage Resource Centre*. It will now take place on *Sunday, July 24th*. This is due to a clash with

the 20th State History Conference, 5-7 August 2011. Some of our speakers are sourced from State Conferences and talks given to other South Australian historical societies.

As part of the State's 175th Anniversary, *About Time*, South Australia's History Festival, organised by History SA, the City of Burnside organised activities within the council area. On the 6th and 14th May, Richard House once again ran four successful, two hour *Bus Tours of Burnside* – one of Burnside's northern suburbs and, in the afternoon to the southern suburbs. On the 7th, 21st and 24th May, Colin Harris and I hosted a *Bus tour of four Burnside historical sites* – to Beaumont House, St David's Church and the old Council Chambers precinct, the Magill Cemetery (tour led by our member, Sandra Lachlan) and the Magill Stone Quarries above Penfolds Winery (tour led by our member, Dr Ross Both).

Our final meeting for the year will again be a *Member's Night: Show and Tell,* on the 21st November. So, seek out those special treasures with an interesting history – family, local, State or wider! Write down the history to share, as we would all enjoy hearing their significance.

**Meredith Ide** JP

## ANNUAL SUBS ARE NOW DUE for 2011/2012

If you haven't already paid please pay at one of our monthly meetings

or send your money to

The Treasurer, Burnside Historical Society,

PO Box 152, Glenside, SA 5065

Single subscription $20

Welcome to the following new members and hope you enjoy the shared interests we have in belonging to the Burnside Historical Society.

**Dianne Wiskich, Rick Moore, Derek and Cathy Branbury, Helen Sanders and Geraldine Kennett**



# 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 20 June, 7.30 pm** - Valerie Sitters
*John Rymill – our forgotten explorer*

John Rymill is the forgotten member of the triumvirate of South Australia's polar pioneers, yet he was arguably the most successful. From boyhood he aspired to be an Antarctic explorer and in fulfilment of that ambition he participated in several Arctic expeditions before leading his own highly regarded expedition to Antarctica. In this venture he combined traditional dog-driving methods with the latest resources available.

Valerie Sitters has worked at the State Library of South Australia since 1966 and is currently a member of the Content Services Team with responsibilities for exploration, shipping, rare books and children's literature. She has researched and written material on these themes for the re-development of the State Library's Mortlock Wing, *Encounter 2002*, the SA Memory website and the 2009 series of events *Exploring Extremes*, a joint venture between the State Library, the Royal Institution Australia and the South Australian Museum.

**Monday 18 July** - Ron Potts
*The Magic Lantern – images from Innamincka*

Those who enjoyed the magic lantern images that Ron Potts brought to us last year will not want to miss his collection of sights and scenes from the Far North East of South Australia taken in the early years of the twentieth century by RB Ewens, a police trooper based at Innamincka.

The images record a way of life long gone and provide a fascinating insight into the difficulties of living and travelling in what was then (and still is) a remote and difficult environment. Because of their high historical value and interest many of the images have been copied and are now held for research purposes in the State Library of South Australia.

Ron Potts is a former Bank of Adelaide Manager who has followed the passion of his father, Ern, for photography. Ern met Police Trooper RB Ewens when they were both stationed at Tailem Bend in the 1930s and it was there that Ern bought both the magic lantern and a large collection of glass plated images from Ewens.

**Sunday 24 July – 1.30 – 4.30 pm—Excursion**
*Mitcham Heritage Resource Centre*

Maggie Ragless, Mitcham's Community Historian, will talk about the relocation of the Council's history records at the end of 2009. They were moved from the old Mitcham Primary School on Belair Road to the former SES building, formerly the old Mitcham Police Station. There will be a tour of the centre and discussion on how it is set up.

**Monday 15 August** - Tony Rogers
*A very different climate: how Europeans settlers coped*

From their arrival in the new colony, migrants had to come to terms with the weather. They quickly realised that they were in a very dissimilar place from the UK and the climate was different. For the early settlers it had been described to them in a very inaccurate way to encourage them to come to the colony. Once they got here, there was the physical evidence of the landscape and the vegetation. They were able to glean information from the local Aboriginals and the sealers. There was also experience in the colony of New South Wales which could be extrapolated to South Australia.

Tony got into writing about the history of South Australian weather by chance when he edited a book for the Bureau of meteorology and since then he has written other books about weather.



**Monday 19 September** - Ken Preiss & Geoffrey Bishop
*Ferguson Park: its history & natural history*

Ferguson Conservation Park on Hallett Road Stonyfell is an outstanding example of the original native vegetation of the foothills south east of Adelaide. Very little of this vegetation type remains on the Adelaide Plains and how this area came to be protected and handed down to the community will be told on the night, along with an account of its natural history and why it is so important.

Ken Preiss has lived in the Burnside area all his life and, as a child, spent many Sunday afternoons walking with his parents over the open ground that is now Erindale. Over the years he became very familiar with the natural history of what was to become the present day park, later becoming a champion of the need to have it properly protected. The park was fenced in 1978 and in 1982 it became the first park in South Australia to have a Friends group formed to watch over its welfare.

Geoffrey Bishop has a background in horticulture with a special interest in native vegetation management. Geoffrey became involved with Ferguson Park when he was preparing a management plan for the park in the 1980s and he is currently President of the Friends of Ferguson Park. Apart from his interest in natural history he has written widely on various historical topics and is currently, amongst other things, President of the Historical Society of South Australia.

**Sunday 2 October - 10.30 am -12.00 midday—Excursion**
*Ferguson Conservation Park*

**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*

Have you seen the new Promotional Flyer for the BHS?

It is a superior production aimed at attracting new members to the Society. The brochure outlines what the Society does and contains a membership form. It is available from Committee members.

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT: AGM 18 April 2011

Since taking over as President of the Society in 2009 the volume of business finding its way onto my desk has constantly reminded me that for a small Society the BHS is a very busy one. Whatever has been achieved in that time has only been possible through the unflagging support of the Society's office holders and Committee members and I extend to them my very real thanks.

Most of our current Committee members and office holders are willing and able to serve for another twelve months and the continuity that this represents will be invaluable in the running of the Society. One significant change is that after thirty years as a Committee member, three of which were as President and eleven as Vice President, John Clark is standing down. John has given outstanding service to the Society, especially through his commitment to the Wheal Watkins Mine tours, and we wish him well.

One further change is that I am not seeking re-election as President at this Annual General Meeting. The two years that I have spent in the position have been rewarding and I would not rule out a return to the role at some stage in the future, but for the time being I need to defer to other demands on my time. Additionally, it is my belief that any community organisation benefits from regular change in its leadership.

In reviewing the past year I would observe that it has certainly lived up to the early predictions that it would be a very busy one. In addition to our usual programme of monthly meetings we had three major events to organise and run – the biennial Eastern Regional History Seminar, our own biennial regional tour and a 30th anniversary dinner for the Society.

The Regional History Seminar held on Saturday 19 June 2010 attracted 55 attendees from historical societies of the eastern suburbs and near Hills and was the ninth held over the past two decades. It was also the second organised by our Society and a hard working committee headed up by our Secretary Sharan Northcott had its efforts rewarded by a very good day of morning presentations and afternoon tours.

Our own biennial regional tour to the Upper Spencer Gulf region was held later in the year, 10-12 September, and was the first occasion on which a Society tour has focussed on the industrial towns of Pt. Pirie, Pt. Augusta and Whyalla. Blessed by benign weather and a countryside looking at its very best after excellent winter rains, it was a most enjoyable and informative tour.

In one of those felicitous meetings of dates that occur from time to time, the dinner that we enjoyed at the Feathers Hotel to mark our Society's 30th anniversary was held on 14 August 2010, exactly 30 years on from the date of the Society's first official meeting.



One of our flagship events over many years has been the Wheal Watkins Mine tours and throughout the year I have been reporting through our *Newsletter* columns on the efforts that have been made to have the Mine re-opened after it was closed for safety reasons in 2006. At the Regional Seminar reported above it seemed as though our efforts had been successful, with then City of Burnside Mayor Wendy Greiner advising in her opening remarks that the Council would add $16 000 from its own sources to the $30 000 anonymous donation brokered by our Society and a $25 000 State Heritage contribution. This was the total funding identified previously as necessary for the safety works needed to re-open the Mine, but to our dismay we were advised in December 2010 that a new safety audit had reported so adversely on the Mine that the Council was unlikely to proceed with the scheduled safety works, favouring instead its permanent closure.

We have since engaged in some strenuous lobbying, including meeting with the new Mayor of the City of Burnside, David Parkin. There can be no guarantee that we will sway the Council in the direction of safety works and a re-opening, but some progress has been made and we will continue our efforts.

Closer to home, our programme of monthly meetings has again been popular and it is important to thank all of those who make the meetings possible: the members of the Programme Committee who have sought out the many interesting speakers; the helpers who put out the chairs and tables; the supper providers, coordinated most efficiently by Hazel Newton and Sharan Northcott; Glen Woodward who helps with hospitality and table decorations and our audio technicians John Love and Brian Ward. The latter two have persevered with equipment that continues to be more than a little challenging at times and through their efforts we continue to have amplification and sound recording of our meetings. In relation to the latter, a change of equipment in the hall has resulted in our meetings now being recorded in digital format.

Thanks must go also to the *Newsletter* Committee, our tireless Editor Elaine Smyth and the Society members who distribute copies of the *Newsletter* within their local areas. Through their combined efforts, and with financial support from the City of Burnside, we continue to produce and distribute a newsletter of quality and substance.

In my report at last year's Annual General Meeting I drew attention to the Society's declining and ageing membership. The trend continues and it really does behove us all to recruit new members, a task that will be aided by a first class brochure about the Society prepared recently by our Treasurer Richard

House. As I have noted previously, it is unrealistic to expect that many of these will be young people, but we should be recruiting actively from the pool of recent retirees.

Although I will not be continuing as President I will maintain an active involvement in the Society and its affairs. I thank everyone for their support, wise counsel and encouragement over the past two years and extend to my successor my very best wishes.

**Colin Harris** PSM
**President**

The **20th State History Conference** will be held on **5-7 August 2011** at the National Wine Centre, Hackney Road, Adelaide.

**In Perspective: rethinking South Australia's history**

For further details contact Mandy Paul (08) 8203 9808 or

Email: statehistoryconference@history.sa.gov.au

## Bound for South Australia 1836

History SA recently launched a blog *Bound for South Australia* tracing the journey in 1836 of the first ships that set sail for South Australia. Entries to the blog are updated weekly so that readers can follow the voyage.
The website is http://boundforsouthaustralia.net.au

**National History Teacher's Conference** is to be held in Adelaide at Loreto College on **3-5 October 2011**. Details www.htasa.org.au

**The Australian Mining History Association's Annual Conference** is to be held at Hahndorf, **14-17 September 2011**. The theme is Australia's Earliest Mining Exploration which refers to the first era of metal mining in Australia which took place in the Mount Lofty Ranges in the period 1841-51. Pre and post tours. Details www.mininghistory.asn.au/conference or contact Greg Drew on 8278 6732.



# TREASURER'S REPORT: AGM 18 April 2011

I am glad to report a profitable financial year which has enabled us to transfer $1282 to the General Accumulated Funds Reserve.

This profit was achieved mainly from

- surplus from running the Eastern Regional Seminar
- surplus from our weekend to the Upper Spencer Gulf
- improvements on bank interest received
- and generous donations

There was a loss of $166 incurred on the cost of producing the newsletter because of the cost of purchasing new computer software (*Publisher*) for use during the assembly work. The balance in the Newsletter Reserve has been reduced by that amount. The Community Grant of $650 from the Burnside Council which went towards the newsletter costs would have been adequate if we had not also had the cost of the computer software.

The loss of $462 on the cost of the dinners at the Feathers Hotel was because of the costs for invited guests and gifts. $290 was also spent on having some promotional flyers printed. These are suitable for leaving in public places for promoting the society showing its aims and activities. They also contain the membership application form.

There was one unusual expense incurred during the year which was the sum of $565 for the cost of converting the recordings of our meetings from tape to disk. This has been an ongoing expense now for three years, costing $2293 to date and will continue till all relevant tapes have been copied. As this is a special expense the cost of $565 has been taken from the General Accumulated Fund which is a reserve kept specially for these types of expense.

As always, society membership fees are the main income for the society and the membership is now standing at one hundred and fifty five. That is a net decrease of eight since last year.

**Richard House**
**Treasurer**

## BURNSIDE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### Income and Expenditure Statement for the year ended 31st March 2011

| 2009/2010 | Income | 2010/2011 |
|---|---|---|
| $34.00 | Subscriptions 2008/09 (Single) paid late | |
| $1,969.00 | Subscriptions 2010/11 (Single) | $1,960.00 |
| $820.00 | Subscriptions 2010/11 (Family) | $780.00 |
| $0.00 | Surplus on mines tours | $0.00 |
| $0.00 | Surplus on running Eastern Regional Seminar | $192.19 |
| $0.00 | Surplus on Upper Spencer Gulf tour | $1,066.38 |
| $266.21 | Bank interest on Cheque and Savings accounts | $374.69 |
| $5.00 | Sundry Sales - tape of meeting | $0.00 |
| $132.00 | Donations | $445.00 |
| $1,108.80 | Transfer from accumulated fund for tape copying (see * below) | $565.40 |
| $950.00 | Council Grant for Newsletter | $650.00 |
| $0.00 | Council Grant for Street Names project | $0.00 |
| $0.00 | Council Grant for Parks and Gardens project | $0.00 |
| $0.00 | Council Grant for Oral History project | $0.00 |
| $0.00 | Council Grant for Plaques Records update | $0.00 |
| $5,285.01 | **Total income** | $6,033.66 |
| | **Expenses** | |
| $1,108.80 | Project to copy tape recordings of meetings to discs (see * above) | $565.40 |
| $137.68 | Printing and Stationery | $207.60 |
| $266.43 | Telephone, postage and PO Box | $205.79 |
| $660.00 | Use of hall and hire of amplification equipment for Beaumont meeting | $812.97 |
| $147.90 | Supper costs | $114.09 |
| $130.00 | Subscriptions to other societies and seminar fees | $130.00 |
| $11.00 | Loss on Feathers dinners (guests and admin costs) | $462.78 |
| $757.34 | Insurance | $901.65 |
| $87.50 | Gifts | $127.05 |
| $39.98 | Tapes and minor equipment | $14.95 |
| $0.00 | New Burnside Historical Society flyers | $290.00 |
| $674.82 | Newsletter (printing $497.48, admin $131.55, software $187.00) | $816.03 |
| $0.00 | Street Names project | $0.00 |
| $18.00 | Parks and Gardens project | $0.00 |
| $0.00 | Oral History project | $0.00 |
| $0.00 | Plaques Record update project | $0.00 |
| $225.00 | Depreciation on equipment (projector,tape recorder, data projector) | $269.00 |
| $4,264.45 | **Total expenses** | $4,917.31 |
| $1,020.56 | Surplus (Deficit) for the year | $1,116.35 |
| $763.35 | Transfer to General Accumulated fund | $1,282.38 |
| $257.18 | Transfer to Newsletter loss to Council Grant Reserve (Newsletter, Parks & Gardens and Oral History projects surplus) | ($166.03) |
| $1,020.53 | **Total** | $1,116.35 |



## BALANCE SHEET as at 31st March 2011

| 2009/2010 | | | 2010/2011 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **General Accumulated funds** | | |
| $6,609.28 | As at 1st April 2010 | | $6,263.83 |
| ($1,108.80) | Transfer to Income and Expenditure for tape to disc copying project | | ($565.40) |
| $763.35 | Surplus (Deficit) for the year | | $1,282.38 |
| $6,263.83 | As at 31st March 2011 | | $6,980.81 |
| | **Mines Account Reserve** | | |
| $3,113.28 | As at 1st April 2010 | | $3,113.28 |
| $3,113.28 | As at 31st March 2011 | | $3,113.28 |
| | **Council Grants Reserve** | | |
| $564.76 | As at 1st April 2010 | | $821.94 |
| $257.18 | Surplus (Deficit) for the year | | ($166.03) |
| $821.94 | As at 31st March 2011 | | $655.91 |
| | Being - Newsletter | $352.92 | |
| | - Street Names project | $0.00 | |
| | - Parks and Gardens project | $67.79 | |
| | - Oral History project | $50.00 | |
| | - Plaques Reprint project | $185.20 | |
| $10,199.05 | **TOTAL EQUITY** | | $10,750.00 |
| | **Members equity is made up from** | | |
| | **Current Assets** | | |
| $3,146.09 | Bank of South Australia cheque account | | $3,322.21 |
| $6,899.59 | Bank South Australia Express Saver Account (Internet only) | | $7,256.79 |
| $10,045.68 | **Total** as at 31st March 2011 | | $10,579.00 |
| | **Non Current Assets** | | |
| $1,125.00 | Equipment as at 31st March 2010 | | $900.00 |
| ($225.00) | Less depreciation @ 20% | | ($269.00) |
| $900.00 | **Total** as at 31st March 2011 | | $631.00 |
| $10,945.68 | | **Total Assets** | $11,210.00 |
| | **Current liabilities** | | |
| $620.00 | Subscriptions in advance for 2011/12/13 (Single) | | $400.00 |
| $150.00 | Subscriptions in advance for 2011/12 (Family) | | $60.00 |
| ($23.37) | Expenses in advance re Eastern Regional Seminar - June 2010 | | $0.00 |
| $746.63 | | **Total Liabilities** | $460.00 |
| $10,199.05 | **TOTAL NET ASSETS as at 31st March 2011** | | $10,750.00 |

### AUDITOR'S STATEMENT

I have examined the books and records of the Burnside Historical Society Inc. The Balance Sheet and accompanying Statement of Income and Expenditure present a true and fair view of the Society's affairs as at 31st March 2011, according to the books, records and information submitted

## Brock Reserve: walking trails and the Brock Family history

17 January 2011

Chris Hughes, treasurer of the Burnside Branch of the National Trust, spoke to us on the lawns of Brock Reserve on Dashwood Road at the top of Glynburn Road and opposite *Beaumont House.* Chris was appropriately dressed, as Kenneth Brock would have been in the 1930s. The Brock family was the last of the private owners of *Beaumont House* prior to the National Trust taking it over in 1970 after Kenneth and Lillian Brock had died. The Brocks had no children so in 1967 they had willed the property to the National Trust, complete with money invested to maintain it.

A variety of olives had been planted by Sir Samuel Davenport, sourced from Mediterranean countries. He also established an olive factory a little to the south west of Beaumont House and this only closed in 1962. Kenneth Brock was a strong advocate of the olive tree and revitalized the olive industry at *Beaumont House* during his occupancy from1936--70. When Brock moved into the house after marrying Lillian Bennett, (the owner of *Beaumont House)* there were 29 acres around the house and 14 of these were planted to 1400 olives. Brock then started an olive nursery and sold the plants to clients all over Australia. He also wrote a pamphlet on growing olives. In 1966, when the Department of Transport planned to build a four lane highway to the Hills via Beaumont the property was divided into four sections and many olive trees were uprooted. Brock Reserve was on this route and at the time was probably an olive grove.

Lillian had been living at *Beaumont House* on her own for seven years after the death of her previous husband, Richard Bennett. She was an animal lover and had many exotic birds in aviaries and some koalas. She was also a keen horse woman. The depression years had taken their toll so she had to sell off some of the property during this time. Kenneth Brock was a great grandson of Daniel George Brock who had accompanied Sturt in his quest for the centre of Australia in 1844-45. On this journey Daniel kept a secret journal and prior to his death Kenneth gave $13 000 as a bequest to the Royal Geographical Society of SA to publish the journal and to support an annual Brock Memorial Lecture.

Brock Reserve was also the start of the walking trail used by the Hahndorf women as they brought their produce to market in the city. It now forms part of an extensive network of walks across the foothills of Glen Osmond and Rob Marshall followed Chris Hughes with an account of his work in making these tracks. The City of Burnside, together with conservation volunteers, has helped



Rob ensure that the tracks have a gentle gradient of no more than 1:10 and are safe to walk. Rob has also designed pamphlet boxes and together with his wife, Dr Sue Barker, has prepared walking leaflets for some of the walks. Rob is now busy developing other tracks across the Hills Face. Gleeson's Ridge walk was the original route into the hills for bullock teams and amongst the interesting information conveyed by Rob was the fact that bullocks preferred a straight route rather than curves, even if the straight route was steep.

From Beaumont House Samuel Davenport had a track to what is now Cleland Conservation Park, land used by him for sheep grazing. The track still exists and emerges onto the Waterfall Gully Road between Chambers Gully and Woolshed Gully (where the ruins of Davenport's old woolshed remain to the present). The Zig Zag track from Woolshed Gully is the original route to the hills via Mt Lofty and notable nineteenth century landscape painter Eugene Von Guerard painted some of his early landscapes of Adelaide from along this track.

Rob feels that Adelaide lacks walking trails close to the city. Some were started in the 1970s when the RED Scheme for the unemployed enabled work on tracks, but it has taken another thirty years to bring some of the work to fruition. A good example of his own dictum, Rob believes that people should walk up to 15 kms per day! At the end of his address Rob took the group to the start of the walks from Brock Reserve to explain in more detail what is behind the track construction.

**Elaine Smyth**

## A tale of two towns: Cold War tensions in Outback Australia

Monday 21 February 2011

In what might have been sub-titled 'a tale of two lap tops' whose malfunctioning aborted her power point presentation, Iris Iwanicki presented a most compelling account of the development of Cold War towns, Woomera (the case study in her 'Role of cultural heritage in the sustainability of planned communities') and Radium Hill.

Iris graphically described the dropping of the Atom Bomb on Japan as a profound moment in history; after the war Russia, fearing economic revival in Europe, broke off several agreements with UNESCO, and the UK, traumatized by the effect of the Nazis' V2 rocket, wanted a place to test weaponry – a country with a stable government and a venue with open skies and large tracts of land.

Thus Woomera, in a State with a significant munitions and research facility at Salisbury, and vast areas of 'vacant' land, was born. In 1947 the newly formed Department of Housing and Supply was given the task of devising a model community in a corner of the rocket range, adapting the modernist planning existing in the USA from the 1920's. The Radburn Plan envisaged neighbourhood units centred on a school, with 'fingers of green' through which children could walk to school. Prefabricated metal houses were re-assembled on site (becoming a 'silver city' of hot little boxes).

Iris outlined the three stages of development of the town – its establishment, followed by the 'boom', burgeoning to a population of 7,000 by 1956, followed by the inevitable 'bust' in the 70's and 80's when the town effectively shut down, before the US Narrungar project towards the turn of the century and then its use as a detention centre prior to the establishment of Baxter near Pt. Augusta. Today only 200 or so people remain, with fond memories of the days when people 'busied' themselves with sport, theatre and the natural environment; now in the process of managing decline, the town is still controlled by the Department of Defence.

In Iris's second study, the State Government under Sir Thomas Playford took the lead when uranium was discovered at Radium Hill, 140 km from Broken Hill, building the infrastructure for the export of the ore to the US and UK. From 1954 to 1961 the community, representing 17 nationalities, thrived but, after those seven years, the Housing Trust removed the houses, leaving little for former residents to visit and recall, particularly the hierarchical layout of the town, with the nadir being the single men's quarters. A museum exists to strengthen the sense of cultural heritage that remains in the minds of those past inhabitants.

Iris predicted that fly-in/fly–out teams to remote towns (as with Moomba for example) will be the way of the future. She also rued the fact that our present day consumer society is less sustainable than it was then.

In thanking Iris, President Colin Harris encouraged members to visit Woomera which, unfortunately, is not heritage-listed.

**Peter Davies**

## Half day tours/excursions

**Sunday 24 July,** 1.30-4.30 pm,
Mitcham Heritage Resource Centre

**Sunday 2 October**, 10.30 am -12.00 midday
Ferguson Conservation Park



# Pioneer Women's Trail

This Trail has been developed between Verdun and Beaumont to follow the path used by the early Hahndorf women as they brought their produce down to the markets in Adelaide at a time when fresh produce was in short supply in the colony. The Trail now leaves from the south eastern corner of Brock Reserve on Dashwood Road, Beaumont. The original route came down the Beaumont spur and headed north west to cross the present day Sunnyside Road.

Lutheran refugees from Prussia had arrived in South Australia in 1838 and they settled in the picturesque Onkaparinga River Valley near Mount Barker, naming the area Hahndorf after the sympathetic Captain who had helped them. In February 1839, in the hottest part of the year, they climbed the Beaumont foothills, carrying their goods mostly on their backs, depositing them on top of the hill, and descending for those left behind. It took them two days of effort to get all their possessions assembled at the top of the spur.

Within weeks the women and girls were carrying baskets of vegetables and dairy products on their backs or on yokes across their shoulders to market twice a week. They left the village at about midnight and walked the 35 kilometres along the rough bush track to Adelaide. When they arrived at a stream in the foothills, near present day Beaumont (probably Waterfall Gully Creek), at about 4.00 am they would wash their weary feet and tidy up ready for their arrival in Adelaide.

Once there they hawked their wares trading them for items they needed at home. Their homeward journey load often contained sewing thread, needles, sugar, tea, tobacco for the menfolk and two bricks for building the new church.

As other villages were established in the vicinity of Hahndorf those residents also used the Trail. It was a potentially dangerous walk for there was always the possibility of attack by ruffians, bushrangers or robbers, many of whom lived in hide-outs in the thick scrub of the Tiers. The Trail was well used up until the 1850's when roads to the area had been built and horse drawn transport could be used to carry the goods.

In 1980 members of the Hahndorf Branch of the National Trust followed the Trail which was drawn on a map produced by surveyor Nixon in 1841. The first public walk along its full length took place in April of 1980 when the National Trust was celebrating its Silver Jubilee.

Since 1980 thousands of enthusiastic walkers have followed in the footsteps of those early pioneers. It is not necessary to walk the full distance at once. There

are car parks along the way where it is possible to walk sections at a time. For some of the way it passes through Mount Osmond Reserve and then Cleland and Mount George Conservation Parks. Brochures outlining the route are available at the start in Brock Reserve. The Trail also links to other walking Trails in the Adelaide Hills region.

Adapted from the Walking SA's brochure that was published by the Office of Recreation and Sport.

**Elaine Smyth**

## Honorary Life Members

Over the years the following have been awarded Life Membership in recognition of their outstanding contribution to the Society over a period of time. The following list includes the service cited at the time of their recognition.

**Margaret Preiss** (1988) – six years service on the Newsletter Sub Committee

**Elizabeth Warburton** (1988) – six years service on the Newsletter Sub Committee

**Richard House** (1989) – seven years as Secretary/Treasurer

**John Clark** (1992) – three years as President, four years as Vice President and for many other services performed over that period

**Ted Bayfield** (1995) – twelve years providing amplification and making tape recordings of the meetings (deceased)

**David Reid** (1995) – six years as Secretary and Treasurer and for many other services performed over the period (deceased)

**Barbara Parker** (1998) – six years as President, two years on Committee, seven years as Editor of Newsletter and for many other services performed over the period

**Elizabeth Rogers** (2005) – three years as President, two years on Committee, seven years as Editor of Newsletter and four years on the Newsletter Sub Committee

**Elaine Smyth** (2005) – ten years as Secretary and for many other services performed over that period

**John Love** ( 2008) – for long term service, serving on the inaugural Steering Committee and the general Committee, especially making contributions regarding archiving and preservation of recorded material



**BURNSIDE HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC**., PO Box 192, Glenside, 5065

**OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the Society shall be:

* 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;

* to promote the collection, recording, preservation and classification of works, source material and artefacts of all kinds relating to Burnside history;
* to assist in the protection and preservation of buildings, works and sites of historical significance in the City of Burnside;
* to co-operate with similar societies and other bodies throughout Australia;
* to do all such other things as are conducive or incidental to the attainment of any of the above objectives.

**OFFICE-BEARERS FOR 2011-2012**

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|---|---|---|
| **President:** | Meredith Ide, JP | (8365 3049) |
| **Responsible Officer:** | Isabel Williams, OAM, JP | (8379 4090) |
| **Vice-President:** | Colin Harris, PSM | (8331 3571) |
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| **Treasurer:** | Richard House | (8552 4723) |
| **Committee:** | Margaret Beare. Chas. Grimes, 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), 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 7.30 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 now $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:

Pioneer Women's Trail

Re-enactment of the original walk held on 20 April 1980 and organised by Beaumont House Committee and Hahndorf National Trust as part of the Silver Jubilee Celebrations of the National Trust of SA. Some of those participating were descendants of the original walkers.

The photo, by Lady Downer, is from the cover of Elizabeth Simpson's book *The Hahndorf Walkers* published by Beaumont Press in 1983.

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