Burnside Historical Society Inc.

NEWSLETTER - March 2008

Volume 28, No. 1

Victorian gold in South Australia!

From the Editor's Desk

Welcome back and wishing you all a happy 2008.

Details of forthcoming events are included in this Newsletter. Further information about activities still in the planning stages will appear in future Newsletters.

Monday 21 April will be our AGM. This is the time for you to select your office bearers and committee for the next year. A nomination form is enclosed in this Newsletter: copy it if you need more. If you would like to participate on the Committee or take a more active roll in the Society, please complete a form, cut it out and send it to the Secretary. All office bearer positions are for one year only and so become vacant at each AGM. Peter Davies has indicated that he will not be continuing as Vice President due to health reasons. There are six Committee members: each year three positions are made vacant and financial members are eligible to nominate for them. Talk to a Committee member if you want more information. Please note the earlier starting time for this meeting – **7.45 pm** – so that the AGM can be completed prior to the guest speaker's address.

The Newsletter Committee would like contributions from you. If you have any historical information relating to the Burnside area, it would be greatly appreciated.
I have a tape recorder if you would like to present the information to me orally and then have it written-up as an article. Even old photographs can be copied. If you can help, please contact me at elainesmyth@aol.com or on 8332 8019.

Elaine Smyth (Editor)

IN THIS ISSUE

President's Chatter	**2**
Program	**4**
Meeting Report	**7**
AGM	**9**
Nomination Form	**10**
Meeting Report	**12**
Further information on Black Family	**14**
Bennetts Magill Pottery	**15**

PRESIDENT'S CHATTER

We are now well into 2008 and March means that the AGM is almost upon us. The past year has been an interesting and happy one and looking through the forward program, I believe that we will be very satisfied with what has been planned.

The summer has been very hot and difficult as we have learned to cope (quite valiantly!) with the drought and the ensuing water restrictions. We have rejoiced when the heavens have opened and the glorious rain has refreshed everything as well as ourselves. Australia is "a land of drought and flooding rains" and we feel sad at the devastation and loss of homes and possessions suffered by our neighbours in Queensland and New South Wales.

On the other hand we have been entertained – and enthralled – by excellent tennis from players with unpronounceable names achieving almost unbelievable shots as they have thrown themselves athletically into battle, and battles they were! Added to that, we had colour and excitement as Australia and India fought out the Test cricket matches. Being a "true blue Aussie" I was pleased that Australia reclaimed the coveted trophy, registering in the process their 16th consecutive win. India is a formidable side, and controversy is never far from the surface when the stakes are high.

I wonder if many of you visited the Art Gallery to see the photographic exhibition of early Adelaide and delighted in the unfolding story of its people and places. Two hours went very quickly (and some photos were missed) but the early photography with such basic technology was amazing. Perhaps I can encourage you to visit Carrick Hill and enjoy the magnificent Robert Hannaford Exhibition!

Some of our members attended the Australia Day Citizenship Ceremony and Community Awards Presentation which was held in Hazelwood Park. The marquee was almost full and, as usual, it was an inspiring event with around 50 people of various nationalities making the commitment to become Australian Citizens. Brunch, served by Lions Club members, brought a delightful morning to a close.

I thank you all for your support and attendance at Society activities. I wish you good health and hope that 2008 will be the type of year that you would desire.

> *Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless.* Mother Teresa

Isabel Williams,OAM, JP

History Week

Friday 16 May – Sunday 25 May

The usual diverse range of activities will be on offer again in South Australia's History Week.

A full program will be available later, but BHS members may wish to participate in the following activities organised by our own Society (full details to be advised).

Bus Tours of City of Burnside

Northern suburbs or southern suburbs
Length, 1½ hours
Led by Richard House

Walks in City of Burnside:

Old Burnside Village – Monday 19 May, 10 am-Midday
Led by Colin Harris

Waterfall Gully – Wednesday 21 May, 9.15 am-Midday
Burnside Community Bus will take walkers
from their vehicles to the start of this walk.
Led by Colin Harris

Rose Park – Friday 23 May, 10 am – 11.30 am
Led by Mary Wilson

Bookings at Council Office

PROGRAM 2008

Once again Peter Davies and his helpers have worked tirelessly to produce an exciting and challenging calendar of activities for us. Details of forthcoming events are indicated below.

Do remember to always check the program in each Newsletter as there are occasions, due to circumstances beyond our control, when dates and/or speakers change from those printed in an earlier issue: additional events may also be arranged.

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 8 pm on the third Monday of the month, unless an alternative time or venue is notified. Admission is free and a supper provided. Visitors are most welcome.

(Information regarding our talks is always posted at the Library.)

Monday 17 March, 8 pm

"SS Great Britain: a story of a great ship, a great engineer and a great-grandmother."
Speaker: Jim Crompton

The talk will outline *SS Great Britain's* history and will tell why, as a beached hulk salvaged from the Falklands Islands in 1970, she had sufficient heritage value to justify the huge costs involved in returning her to Bristol. Built in 1843 for service between Liverpool and New York, fate decreed that for most of her eventful service life she carried passengers and cargo between Liverpool and Melbourne.

Mary Crompton of Stonyfell, Jim's great grandmother, wrote a Journal in 1866 describing life on board.

Monday 21 April, 7.45 pm – AGM (Note early start)

Adelaide City History
Speaker: Max Winter

An account of what life was like in the City of Adelaide from the chaotic days of early European settlement until more ordered times. There have been huge changes during that period. Some have been quite abrupt, often resulting from factors outside local control. The mining boom in the middle of the Nineteenth Century was like that, as was the Great Depression in the 1930s and the advent of World War 2 a little later. Other changes have been the result of deliberate planning, sometimes by private enterprise or single individuals, and sometimes by governments at various levels. The focus of the talk will be on the way that these factors have affected peoples' lives.

Monday 19 May, 8 pm

The Wildlife of sub-Antarctic Macquarie Island
Speaker: Duncan MacKenzie

For members fascinated by Duncan's presentation on Gluepot Reserve at a recent meeting, this will be a welcome return. Duncan's presentation will recount his Antarctic adventures and research while banding and recording the movements of penguins and seals on this lonely Southern outpost.

Monday 16 June, 7.30 pm

Source to Sea - the Story of the Murray Riverboats
Speaker: Ian Doyle

During the Centenary of Federation a one hundred day journey was undertaken down the Murray from the Kosciusko high country to the sea at the Murray mouth town of Goolwa. A television crew was part of the flotilla and at times the fleet included more than two hundred heritage and leisure craft, paddle steamers and riverboats. Australia has more original paddle boats than anywhere else in the world.

A documentary film, which will be shown, was produced by Ian. It includes memorable vision of many of the paddleboats that took part in the historic journey and includes private family archival footage and historic photographs.

Monday 21 July, 8 pm

C J Dennis - The Untold Story
Speaker: Denise Schumann

Clarence James Dennis was one of Australia's most loved writers and his *Songs of a Sentimental Bloke* (1915) remains a classic in Australian literature. While most South Australians know that CJ Dennis was born in Auburn, in the state's mid-north, very few know that he spent many years living in Norwood. This fascinating talk will look behind the scenes and explore how Dennis' upbringing impacted on his life and how it permeated his writing.

Monday 18 August, 8 pm

Monday 15 September, 8 pm

Monday 20 October, 8 pm

Monday 17 November, 8 pm

SUBS RENEWALS FOR 2008

All subscriptions fall due on **1 April this year.**

Membership fees may be paid at our monthly meeting or posted to the Treasurer, Richard House, at the Society's address indicated on the inside back cover.

Have you been to Beaumont House recently?

Last year Burnside Historical Society donated a garden seat to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Sir Samuel Davenport taking up residence in September 1857. A plaque is to be placed on the seat.

THE HAY FAMILY OF LINDEN AND MT BRECKAN

Monday 15 November 2007

A late minute change of venue to the Atrium did not deter a sizeable audience from enjoying Anthony Laube's carefully researched address and the pre-Christmas conviviality that followed.

It was fortuitous that Anthony should talk on this topic, as President Isabel was able to read to the meeting a draft version of the wording which is to go on a BHS plaque near the former site of *Linden*.

Victor Harbor born and bred, Anthony has used his twenty years at the State Library of South Australia to thoroughly research the history of the notable Hay family, whose patriarch Alexander arrived in South Australia from Scotland in 1839.
A weaver, who worked both on the wharves and as a shepherd, Alexander became a successful merchant, opening a grocery shop in Rundle Street in 1847 and later expanding it to a general purpose store. In 1845 he had married Agnes Kelly with whom he had eight children, of whom four survived. Alexander entered State Parliament in 1857 where he supported free compulsory education, the sale of government land and (ahead of his time) compensation to Aboriginal people for the loss of their land. In 1856 the Hays built an eight room house with outbuildings on their 60 acre estate in what is today Linden Park, calling it *Linden*.

In 1870 Agnes died and Alexander married Agnes Gosse, the latter turning what was now the two storey mansion of *Linden* into the most lavish entertainment centre in the Adelaide of its day. Up to four hundred invited guests were catered for at a time and as many as four thousand of the general public visited when the grounds were thrown open. These extraordinary gatherings were reported widely in the local press. Anthony allowed us to relive those days with his contemporary slides and references to his book *Woman at Sea*.

The 1870s were prosperous years and the wealthy Hays bought land at Victor Harbor, Agnes having been much taken by the picturesque scene of Mt Breckan as viewed from Granite Island. Her wish to have a summerhouse on the site (anything but a shack!) was granted by her husband and in 1879 *Mt Breckan* was built on 160 acres of land for the then huge cost of £12,000. Like *Linden*, this house was filled with beautiful paintings, clocks and furniture and boasted a magnificent dolls' house, a grand piano, a tennis court and peacocks in the garden.

In February 1898, during a heatwave, Alexander insisted on travelling from *Mt. Breckan* to Adelaide for a meeting. On his return he collapsed and died the next morning, aged 78. Under the terms of his will, Agnes retained *Mt. Breckan*, but *Linden* was sold: it was subsequently demolished in 1967. In February 1909, *Mt. Breckan* was badly damaged by fire: Agnes Hay, who spent much of her time in England, never saw it again, as she and her daughter were passengers on the *Waratah* which disappeared without trace at sea that year. William Collin, who – strangely enough – had cancelled his passage on the ill-fated *Waratah*, later rebuilt *Mt. Breckan*, which survives to the present.

Peter Davies

Linden Photo c. 1918

Burnside Library Local History Collection.
From original photo held by Mr & Mrs Peter Wood
who purchased *Linden* from James Hay in 1898.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the **27th Annual General Meeting** of the **Burnside Historical Society Inc.** will be held in the **Burnside Community Centre** on **Monday 21 April 2008,** at **7.45 pm**. *Please note the earlier commencement time of* **7.45 pm for our AGM** *to allow the talk which follows to begin around the usual time of 8 pm.*

A G E N D A

1. Welcome
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the previous AGM held on 16/4/2007
4. President's Report
5. Treasurer's Report
6. Determination of Subscription Fees for 2008-09
7. Election of the Committee for 2008-09
8. Election of the Auditor for 200-09
9. Any other business

The current Committee (elected at the previous AGM) consists of:

President	* Isabel Williams OAM, JP
Vice-President	* Peter Davies
Secretary	* Sharan Northcott
Treasurer	* Richard House
Other Members:	John Clark
	Shirley Sumerling
	* Eleanor Trott
	June Ward
	* Brian Ward
	* Mary Wilson

In accordance with Paragraph 8.1 of the Society's Constitution, the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and three other members are due to retire. The members whose names are marked * (above) are those whose term expires at the 2008 AGM, and are eligible for re-election.

NOMINATION FORM

The following member is nominated to serve on the Committee:

Nominee ……

Address …….

Telephone …….

Committee position ……....

For the term of office between …….. and ……
(e.g. between 2008 and 2009)
* See below

_____

I agree to accept nomination for the above position:

Signature of nominee ……

Proposed by ……...

Seconded by ……...

***** Each year the following are elected for a one-year term:
President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer

** Three Committee Members are elected each alternate year for a two-year term.*

(This page is blank intentionally)

TOUR OF OLD TREASURY BUILDING

Monday 21st January 2008

On 21 January 2008 our members were taken, courtesy of the Medina Grand Hotel, on a tour of the Old Treasury Building on King William Street, Adelaide. The group met in the courtyard and was given an introduction to the history of the building.
It was constructed in 1839, three years after Adelaide was settled and the fountain in the courtyard dates to 1874.

From 1839 to 1909 a number of renovations were made to the building and in recent times some of the original stone walling has been uncovered: the latter can be seen in the guest lounge of the present-day Hotel, which opened in 2002. The pillars outside the lounge are made from cast iron and there is a display of artefacts uncovered during renovations, including bones, cement-filled bottles, an old soft drink can and chains.

The second floor of the Medina contains guest rooms and the old State Government Cabinet Room. Many important decisions were made in this room, including the introduction of the eight-hour day, the Torrens title land records system and the granting of Aboriginal land rights. The room's furniture is original and in excellent condition and in 1968 Premier Steele Hall declared that the room should remain unchanged for the interest of future generations.

The swimming pool was originally outside, in an area containing the horse stables and the spa was a horse trough. Many of the previously mentioned artefacts were found in the trough. An interesting and little known piece of trivia from more recent times is that in the course of their visit to Adelaide in 1964 the pop group *The Beatles* hid in the courtyard to escape the attention of wild fans!

The tunnels underneath the Treasury Building were vaults used for the storage and melting of gold and for storing Government files. The tracks of the carts used for transporting items are still visible. All the brickwork in the tunnels is original.
In 1852 gold was transported by the well-known Gold Escort from the Victorian goldfields and stored in the vaults, to be later smelted for the manufacture of coins. There are small ovens close to the entrance of the tunnels which are thought to have been used for this purpose.

All in all this was a very interesting tour and we thank the two guides (both named Mary) from *Ayers House*.

Barbara Harris

Old Cabinet Room in Medina Grand Hotel. Photo G Treloar

Did you Know?

- Magill was originally known as Makgill, and was named after David Maitland Makgill of Fifeshire, Scotland. Established in 1838, it was the first of Burnside's villages.

- Founded in 1855, the Magill School was Burnside's first public school.

- Adhesive postage stamps were first used at the Magill Post Office in 1850.

Further information on the Black family

A further follow-up to Geoffrey Bishop's article "Recollections of two early houses, Mount Lofty"*, in Volume 27, No 3 and Marjory Andrew's information in Volume 27, No 4.*

George Couper Black and his wife Ellen (nee Foster-Barham) lived in Scotland. Two of their sons, John McConnell Black and Alfred Barham Black, came to South Australia. Alfred was born in Scotland in 1858 and married Jessie Howard Clark in 1891. Jessie was born at *Hazelwood Cottage*, which is still standing, overlooking what is now Hazelwood Park. Alfred was an architect and designed *Bell Yett*, Hallett Road, for his mother and lived there after she died until it was sold in 1909. Alfred then lived in rented premises at Kirkcaldy and Parkside before a trip overseas in 1911. On return he lived at Stanley Street, North Adelaide before moving to a new home at 1 Ettrick Avenue, Medindie in 1928. Alfred died there in 1933. Alfred and Jessie had only one son, Geoffrey Howard Barham Black, born in 1893 and later in life a well known eye specialist. One of their daughters, Dorrit Black, was a highly acclaimed artist.

John McConnell Black became a taxonomic botanist of considerable note and he mentions in his diaries that Alfred's wife and daughters sometimes went to their 'place in the hills'. It could be that they went to Keir's Cottage. Some of the grandchildren may know something about the 'place in the hills'.

John McConnell Black had a son, Arnold Barham Black, born in 1889, who lived at Norwood and Broken Hill. When he retired from the South Mine in 1954 he moved to Woodcroft Avenue, St Georges, where he died in 1964. His grandson now lives in the home. Marjory Andrew is a grand-daughter of John.

This information has been supplied by BHS members Marjory Andrew and Rosemary Brown.

References: Warburton, Elizabeth 1981: *The Paddocks Beneath. A History of Burnside from the Beginning,* Corporation of the City of Burnside, Adelaide

Andrew, Marjorie and Clissold, Shirley (Editors): *The Diaries of John McConnell Black*, Vols. 2 & 3. The Board of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide

Black, Arnold: *Mineral Heritage Oration* at The Australian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy Annual Conference, May 1992, Broken Hill.

Bennett's Magill Pottery

Along the foothills of Burnside, on the western scarp of the Mount Lofty Ranges, there are Cambrian sediments which include clays, clay-slates, phyllites and quartzites. The slates were used extensively for building stones in the early years of Adelaide and are popularly described as 'bluestone'. The shaley clay-slates and coarse clays were used for brickworks at Magill, Burnside and Glen Osmond. Finer clays nearby were used as a basis for several pottery enterprises, including Bennett's Magill Pottery founded in 1887 by Charles William Bennett and still in operation in Briant Road, Magill.

John Trewenack, a Cornish emigrant, had established Burnside's first pottery in Sandford Street, Magill in about 1850. This colonial potter was producing butter jars, wine coolers, water coolers, jugs, carafes, vases and chimney pots. In 1856 Trewenack was experimenting with salt-glazed earthenware water pipes that could be used by the City Waterworks Commission for a drainage system for Adelaide. The early death of John around 1883 saw the business decline, although its doors did not finally close until 1914.

Charles Bennett had arrived in the colony in 1849, as a seven year old with his parents, but his father died early of tuberculosis. Charles (1842-1919) and his grandson, William Charles, learnt the pottery craft from John Trewenack. They started their own business further east when Trewenack's was declining, utilizing terracotta clay that lay just below the surface. Nearby, in the hills were stands of stringybark trees suitable for fuel for the kilns. There was also Third Creek nearby for water.

Bennett's Magill Pottery is now in its fifth generation and John Bennett is the current custodian, dividing his time between the office and the work room. His father, Robert William, still drops in to help when needed. The fundamental techniques and skills have changed little over a century except that the wheels are now driven by electricity and the kilns are gas-fired. The recent drought and competition from importers have made times difficult, but the business still does well, particularly through filling special orders. Garden pots, fountains and bird baths are supplied to nurseries in South Australia and Victoria and tessellated tiles are in demand for the restoration of heritage homes. The company also supplies raw clay to educational organizations and to potters, who often return with their handiwork for firing.

Commissioned works are produced, but many of the items routinely turned out are products that have remained in demand since the earliest days. Included in these are stoneware jars and demijohns which were used to store preserves prior to refrigeration, canisters and bread crocks from the days when bread was delivered daily and families were large. Reflecting current times, pet food and water bowls are popular, along with garden pots which are increasing in demand as gardens shrink in size. The stoneware for the latter is fired at high temperatures to produce durable, water-holding vessels. Fires in 1940 and 1956 badly damaged the factory, but on each occasion the affected structures were replaced and the business continued.

The clay is no longer mined on site, but brought in from other locations and stored in the original pug holes: unfired seconds and broken pots are recycled into the process that produces workable clay. The finished product is classified as green ware and left to dry before being fired in one of the two kilns. In the kilns the load can be spoiled if a pot explodes, making the opening of a kiln an unknown and possibly disappointing outcome. The glazes are mixed by hand and consist of cobalt, chrome oxide and colourings to produce the required tones.

Burnside Local History Collection
Inside Bennett's Pottery, 1956

William Charles Bennett was a Burnside Councillor and Alderman from 1931 to 1950 and his son, William Reginald, represented Magill Ward from 1958 to 1964. Nearby Bennett Crescent and Bennett Reserve perpetuate the name of the family and this much-loved Burnside business.

Elaine Smyth

References: Warburton, Elizabeth 1981: *The Paddocks Beneath. A History of Burnside from the Beginning,* Corporation of the City of Burnside, Adelaide, p 203, 240-241

Ifould, Percy, 1956: "Primary production, mining and other industries", *The First Hundred Years: A history of Burnside in South Australia,* Corporation of the City of Burnside, p 39-41

Ward, Amanda: 2007, "Potted History*", SA Life*, December 2007/January 2008, p 138-139

Lost Book

When Dr Jeffrey Nicholas spoke to the Society on Monday 15 October 2007 about *The Founders of South Australia: Who should we venerate?* he brought with him some books for display and others that could be kept.

Accidentally someone has taken home one of the display books. If you took a book on that night could you contact Peter Davies to check if it is the one Dr Nicholas has lost.

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 2007-2008

President:	Isabel Williams, OAM, JP	(8379 4090)
Responsible Officer:	" " " " "	
Vice-President:	Peter Davies	(8379 1039)
Secretary:	Sharan Northcott	(8332 1761)
Treasurer:	Richard House	
Committee:	John Clark, Shirley Sumerling, Eleanor Trott, Brian Ward, June Ward and Mary Wilson. Co-opted: John Love	

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: Janet Clark (8379 6756)
Mailing Distribution: Bob Brown

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: currently $25 family, and $17 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:

Ovens in the vaults of the old Treasury Building. Photo G Treloar, 2008

In the early 1850s South Australia struggled with a financial crisis resulting from a mass exodus of its younger male population to the newly discovered Victorian gold diggings.

To reverse a massive outflow of capital stemming from the exodus, an assay office was established in the vaults of what was then the Treasury Building in King William Street, Adelaide. Gold mined by the South Australian diggers was brought from Victoria under armed escort to the office and received and smelted for £3.11.0 per ounce. This price undercut the ruling Melbourne price by 10/6 and in 1852-53 a total of 328 502 ounces worth £1182 286 was brought back to South Australia. The gold escort service was terminated in December 1853, South Australia having by then been hauled back from the brink of bankruptcy.

These ovens in the vaults of the old Treasury Building, now the Medina Grand Hotel, are believed to have been used for the smelting of the gold.

Disclaimer

Views and opinions expressed in articles in the Newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the Burnside Historical Society Inc. While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of articles printed, responsibility is not accepted for any errors they may contain that are out of the Society's control.

The Privacy Act

A member's personal information collected by the Society, for example name, address and telephone number, will only be used for forwarding of the Newsletter and relevant information concerning the Society. The information will not be shared, sold or given to any third party without the member's consent.
Any e-mails will be treated as above. However, any information sent by e-mail will be at the sender's risk and the Society will not be held responsible for any unintended use or disclosure of this information.