Burnside Historical Society Inc.

NEWSLETTER
September 2019

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From my Desk

Welcome to the September 2019 Newsletter.

On Friday 19 July the City of Burnside honoured the 100 year anniversary of the consecration of the State Heritage listed Alexandra Avenue and Prescott Terrace Avenues of Honour (plantations of English Oak and English Elm trees) with a moving ceremony at the Alexandra Avenue War Memorial. 19 July 1919 marked the official date of the return of servicemen to Adelaide from WW1. You can read more about the establishment of this plantation and a detailed history of Toorak Gardens in Giles Walkley's article *Toorak the Beautiful* on page 12.

The deadline for the December 2019 issue is **Friday 11 October.** Contributions should be sent to jlbrown@internode.on.net.

Judy Brown (Newsletter Compiler)

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Membership fees are $45 family and $30 single, due in April each year. Subscriptions may be sent to the Treasurer at the Society's address, paid at a monthly meeting or by a direct bank transfer.

The Society gratefully acknowledges annual grant funding from the City of Burnside to help support the production of this Newsletter.

President's Message

Thank you to Colin Harris for chairing the June meeting and Bob Stace for chairing the July meeting. Last year Cathy and I had booked holidays, unaware at that time I would become President. Our June holiday was a trip to the East Coast of NSW. Few heritage buildings remain but the area between Newcastle and Byron Bay remains very environmentally attractive, providing they control future development. Inland there are more towns with heritage buildings. Bangalow, which is East of Byron Bay, has a main street lined with original Victorian buildings that are currently occupied by many interesting shops and cafes while maintaining the heritage architecture. Another inland town that surprised us was West Wyalong. This was a boom gold mining town early in the 1900s and almost all the buildings were built about the same time. This has resulted in both sides of the main street featuring Art Deco style buildings in good condition, giving the town a pleasant united look.

We welcomed Ross and Anne Both onto the Committee at our July meeting and Ken Lawson as a guest. I appreciated their valued contributions toward our discussions. Members are welcome to attend our Committee meetings but please advise me beforehand.

Our Committee is focussed on three areas of activity - meetings, keeping in contact through the Newsletters and regenerating our membership. We have a sound financial position and excellent meetings. Bob Stace and the team will be meeting soon to start planning next year's meeting program. Next year is BHS 40th year anniversary. At our next Committee meeting in August we will discuss this further but ideas from members as always are welcomed.

Our Newsletter is our voice to all members, especially those who are unable to attend meetings. I am encouraging members involved in BHS activities to send in reports and articles for the Newsletter. This keeps all members informed as well as providing public acknowledgement of the wonderful work the sub-committee members are doing to promote BHS objectives and the history of Burnside.

At our Committee meeting comprehensive reports were presented and accepted on the Osmond Gilles Grave restoration project, the combined venture with Burnside Primary School's 150th celebrations and the Oral History Project. Our Society is fortunate to have so many members who support these and other projects that promote the history of Burnside.

Our membership, while now stable, has fallen over the last few years. I have been in two organisations where this occurred, one as President and one as Secretary. In both we developed plans and implemented actions to stem the loss and in both over time the membership increased. We on the Committee are discussing what we can do, and we welcome ideas from members to develop our own plans and actions.

Of course, you all can directly help at our meetings as visitors are identified by an adhesive label on which their name is written. Some could be future potential members and we ask that all existing members seek them out and make them feel welcomed.

Meanwhile, keep warm and the Committee members and I look forward to seeing you at meetings.

Derek Bransbury

New Member

We are pleased that Susan Nichols has joined as a new member of the Burnside Historical Society. Please make her welcome.

Program of Meetings and Events

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 16 September 7.30 pm – Howard Speed

South Australian Colonial Photography

South Australia has a rich colonial photographic history, including Australia's first landscapes, first Art society and first Royal photographer, all of which will be outlined. The works of Townsend Duryea, Robert Tennent, "Professor" Robert Hall, and the Nixon family will also be illustrated. We are fortunate that today's photography has been based on such a sound footing from our early colonists.

Howard Speed joined his first camera club in 1956, and over the years has used the moving image and still images in both black and white and colour. Twenty years ago, the South Australian Photographic Federation appointed Howard as its historian. He has organised two retrospective exhibitions, interviewed and been interviewed about photography and written four photographic histories.

Monday 21 October – Helen Stagg

Harnessing the River Murray

Helen's paper takes a journey through the research for her book, *Harnessing the River Murray: stories of the people who built Locks 1 to 9, 1915-1935.** She reveals her motivation to record the stories and experiences of people who did not get the chance to author their own story. Her presentation will include some of the first-hand accounts and oral history which informed her research, including a 'metaphorical literary time-capsule' of letters written by children on the locks in the 1920s.

Helen Stagg grew up in Mildura, Victoria and graduated from the University of Melbourne with a Bachelor of Arts, followed by a Diploma of Education. In 2010, Helen obtained her Masters in History and self-published her book on the locks. Helen has presented papers at national and state history conferences and published in various peer-reviewed journals.

*Available for purchase on the night, $44.95 (cash only)

Monday 18 November - Quiz Night

Come and celebrate another successful year for the Burnside Historical Society by attending the Quiz Night at our final meeting of the year in our usual meeting venue, the Burnside Community Centre Hall. Quizmaster Bob Stace will again test your knowledge of Burnside and South Australian history and also ensure you have an enjoyable evening. Invite friends and neighbours and make up a table of 8 or just come along and join a friendly BHS table.

BYO supper to share on your table. Wine, soft drinks, tea/coffee and nibbles provided. Cost is $10 per person with bookings to Margaret Ford on 0438838894. Prepayment to confirm bookings can be made at our regular meetings or by funds transfer to the BHS -

BSB 105086, Account No 330298840.

(Please identify yourself on the funds transfer and mark it BHS Quiz Night).

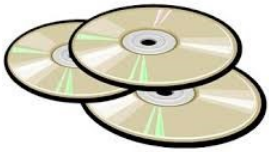
Oral History Project: Final Report

Memory Chains: Living-Working-Playing in the City of Burnside

Oral History summaries for some interviews have been forwarded to Laura Evans, Council's Historical and Cultural Officer. The summaries can be used as a reference of the topics covered. Twelve interviews selected to be transcribed professionally for the 2018-19 Community Grants as well as some other transcriptions completed by BHS members have also been sent. The interviews selected were from Stage One of the project, the 1945-65 period, with Connie Burden, David Queale, Keith Saunders, Caroline Waller, Bessie Welch, Margaret Preiss, Barbara Donnelly, David Mattingley, Jean Jeffries, Ruth Howard, John Maschmedt, Lesley Silverblade. Jan Thornton conducted interviews in the first year of the project (2013) and Anne Both and Meredith Ide continued on into 2017. The interviews selected for transcribing were evenly spread between the three volunteer interviewers.

The BHS Community Grant for 2018-19 totalled $2,200 and $1600 was for this project (separate to the BHS Newsletter grant). All recipients of Council grants are expected to contribute to each project and $500 was added to the grant from BHS funds. This made the total of funds for the Oral History Project $2,100. The invoices for transcriptions totalled $2,276.52 and $150 was paid to Movie Moments for mp3 conversion to enable some interviews to be forwarded to the transcriber. The majority of interviews were converted at no cost through the generosity of an IT person. Total expenses $2,426.52. Two interviews transcribed were lengthy, two discs each (80 minutes total per disc) hence the final cost. They were elderly interviewees who supplied interesting material for listeners, and now readers, of their lives in the Burnside Council area.

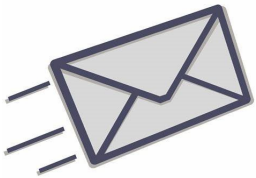
The majority of the discs of interviews, together with cassettes and discs of meetings, were presented to the Burnside Library in May 2014 at a handover ceremony. The Memorandum of Agreement, signed July 2017 was developed by ex-State Archivist and BHS member John Love. It listed specific points relating to expectations between the Library and Burnside Historical Society about the items deposited into the Burnside Local History Collection. In February this year Laura Evans encouraged members to volunteer and be trained to help to continue with the documentation of this project, regarding summaries of outstanding interviews – for 1945-65 and also 1960-80. I believe Laura has investigated a program for transcribing recordings. Unfortunately the application for the Community Grant was submitted before she was employed by Burnside Council.



It is hoped that the contribution by the three interviewers over many hours will provide a valuable resource for students of all ages and be of interest to the general public when publicised. Judy Brown, Joy Taplin, Helen Bills, Roger Bills and Amy Ide have given invaluable support with compiling some summary sheets and transcriptions and also documentation of details related to the interviewees (file copy only). It is fortunate that residents were interviewed about their recollections of living in the City of Burnside as some have since passed away and others sadly have memory loss.

Meredith Ide

Oral History Project Coordinator



Bernd Demasius replies…

Bernd Demasius emailed Meredith Ide on 13 June saying that he really appreciated “Some Demasius gems”, which appeared in the June 2019 BHS Newsletter.

Bernd wrote, “I have recently finished writing a biography on my father, now it’s my mother’s turn. Many, many hours of work have gone into the exercise, it has called for a lot of investigative work and trying to put pieces of a puzzle together. The outcome, however, is rewarding.”
Many readers could relate to that!

Bernd and his wife Ilse travelled late last year to the Argentine and Chile. They finished the Argentine and two days in the far south of Chile, but Bernd became ill and had they had to abandon the trip. Fortunately he fully recovered back home near Hamburg. However Chile was like an appetiser so they will be returning there this coming November. They also hope to visit Estonia and Latvia, following in the footsteps of some of Bernd’s ancestors mentioned in his three part story, in consecutive BHS Newsletters dated March, June and September 2018.

Bernd has given some tentative thought of another trip to Australia in 2021. He said, *“*Hopefully Adelaide will be on our itinerary and we can meet for a cup of tea with some scones?” Members would be very welcome to join in a morning tea with Bernd and Ilse, especially those who have memories of the Demasius Department Store. Perhaps they might like to try vegemite on toast, pavlova or lamingtons or a well-known make of chocolates? What do you think?

Meredith Ide

Click here for some department store memories
from Virginia Trioli.

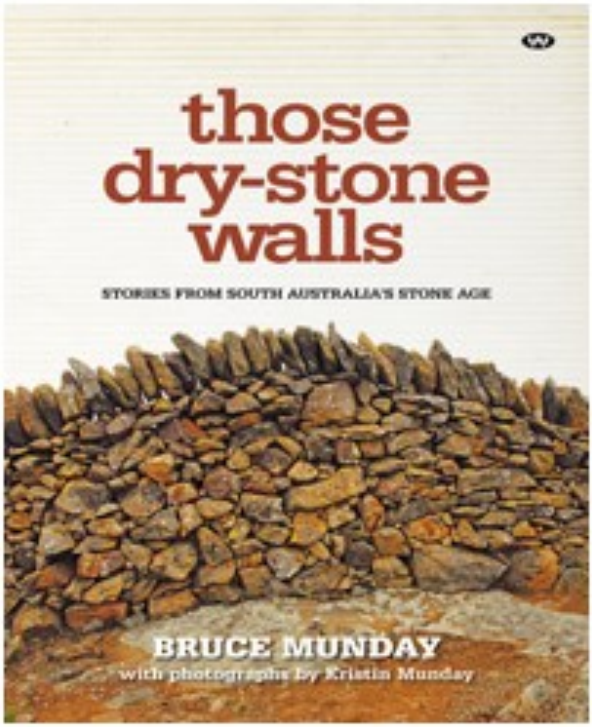
Those Dry-Stone Walls

Bruce Munday is speaking at the Burnside Historical Society meeting on Monday 17 February 2020. We are asking BHS members and friends to find examples of dry-stone walls (no mortar) within the City of Burnside. Please also look out for examples of stone walls such as fences and buildings made *with* mortar. Record where you found them and, if possible, take a photograph that can be shown on the screen at the February meeting.

If you are able to discover the history of the wall or building in question and speak briefly about it at the meeting, that would be appreciated. These details may be published in a future Newsletter.

Any questions? Please speak to Meredith Ide at the September or November meetings or phone her on 0439 478 352'

Those Dry-stone Walls
Stories from South Australia's Stone Age
Bruce Munday, Kristin Munday
Wakefield Press



Osmond Gilles Grave Restoration Project : Progress Report

Osmond Gilles, one of our earliest City of Burnside residents, was the first Treasurer of South Australia; imported sheep that led to the breeding of the famous Merinos; allowed establishment of the first metalliferous mine in Australia, the success of which led to further exploration and mining with major economic and social benefits; planted vines which led to the establishment of Woodley Winery and the internationally successful viticulture and wine production of today, encouraged German migrants leading to the establishment of industry and the on-going immigration of today and secured the Adelaide parklands.

Osmond Gilles 1788-1866

In late 2012 Anne Both reported to BHS Committee that the grave of Osmond Gilles, located in West Terrace Cemetery, was in a neglected state and in urgent need of restoration. Following discussions with Robert Pitt, CEO of Adelaide Cemeteries Authority (ACA), and a report by ACA's Heritage Advisor, the Committee adopted restoration of the grave as a major BHS project. Meredith Ide (then President) and Ross Both held a series of discussions with ACA, the Heritage Advisor and Monumental Masons. To start the process of raising funds for the project, ACA provided 'seed' money of $2,500 and BHS contributed $500. ACA also committed to covering the cost of repair and replacement of the ironwork fence around the grave (approximately $3,500).

In 2018 it was decided to make a public appeal for funds in conjunction with National Trust of SA so that donations could be tax deductible. A brochure was prepared and, as well as being distributed to BHS members, it was sent to other historical societies and various organisations identified as having historic links with Osmond Gilles. As a result of approaches to several politicians, the Minister for Infrastructure approved provision by the ACA of a further $5,000. BHS also donated $2,000 from the surplus of the 2018 regional tour.

S D Tillett was the only stone mason prepared to submit a quote to undertake the restoration in accordance with the specifications provided by the Heritage Advisor.

An application for an SA Heritage Grant resulted in the award of $4,000. An application to Burnside Council for a Community Grant was unsuccessful and a subsequent request for a donation was also unsuccessful. Further recent donations by BHS members have brought us to within $2,200 of the amount needed and BHS Committee has authorised a loan from general funds to enable the project to be commenced. The Sub-Committee will continue with fundraising efforts and tax-deductible donations may still be made at www.nationaltrust.org.au/osmond-gilles-grave-restoration.

The generosity of all BHS members and other individuals and organisations who have made donations to this project are greatly appreciated.

Derek Bransbury, Anne and Ross Both, Meredith Ide
Osmond Gilles Grave Restoration Sub-Committee

Link into Burnside

Photo Video Competition

Photograph something on the Local Heritage listing within the Burnside Council area that MUST be protected.

Sponsored by the South Australian Heritage Council

Please click here for details.

Do you remember the 2003 demolition of Fernilee Lodge, an 1880s mansion on Greenhill Road, Burnside, that had no local or state heritage protection?

See the mansion here in all its glory.

Toorak the Beautiful

Adelaide's Toorak was the creation of the land agents, Jackman & Treloar. Comprising 59 acres (24 ha) bounded by Kensington and Tusmore (Portrush) Roads, Grant Avenue and Giles Street, it is now just a corner of broader Toorak Gardens. Much was made of the fact that the position was more elevated than North Adelaide and that a view of the sea could be had from it. Burnside District Councillors rejected the name 'Toorak'. When the agents continued to promote it as such, the Council requested the Postmaster-General not to deliver letters within the area. But, like Brighton, Fitzroy and Hawthorn - other borrowings from Melbourne - the name stuck.

Before 1908, the land belonged almost wholly to the South Australian Company which let it to the Prescott family of farmers. *Knighton*, a villa built *c*. 1880 by the widow of John Hallett, a pastoralist whose name was given to a town amidst his considerable holdings in the Mid-North, is the oldest surviving building on a plot which used to stretch farther along Portrush Road. *Attunga*, of 1900-01, also still stands at the rear of another block running 200 yards along Kensington Road. Benjamin Burford, one of the sons in partnership with W H Burford, the soap-and-candles magnate, commissioned this grand mansion which displays some Art Nouveau elements but, in 1907, it passed to Otto von Rieben, a businessman who had amassed a small fortune in Broken Hill.

Word got out that suburban Rose Park was to be extended across Prescott's Farm and two parties seized the opportunity to purchase sizeable properties which addressed the grounds of *Attunga*. On the west, Mrs Sarah Cook, a daughter of Edward Spicer and sister of Lady Edwin Smith (of *The Acacias*, a short walk up the road), raised *St Buryan's*. On the south, Frederick Dancker, a notable architect already responsible for designing both *St Buryan's* and *Attunga*, built a substantial house for his own family. Furthermore, before the Surveyor-General approved the plan of subdivision in 1910, Dancker and von Rieben between them bought the remainder of the land enclosed by what became Hewitt Avenue, Moore Street and Watson Avenue - and sat on it.

Intending to establish a superior estate, the agents laid out allotments averaging 75 feet (23m) wide and 160-260 feet (49-79m) deep. They stipulated that houses, at a minimum cost of £600, should be constructed of stone, brick or concrete, with roofs of tile, slate or iron. A set-back of 30 feet (9m) was required to provide for gardens largely in the public domain - open space which was supplemented by a communal reserve dedicated to bowls, tennis and croquet. Purchasers were not obliged to build.

Gordon Short, of the self-named Exchange, accumulated adjacent lots with a view to selling prime sites for flats once restrictions were lifted. But, perceiving quicker returns, he and a dozen others built more than one house. By their provision of 'house and land packages' and a service whereby landholders could obtain a bespoke design at a discount from their in-house architect, Jackman & Treloar both set and controlled the aesthetic tone of the neighbourhood.

An Alexandra Avenue residence designed and built by S P Boyce in 1911 for George Brinsley, commercial traveller. This model is repeated several times in Toorak.

At least 13 'packages' were prepared by the architect-builder, S P (Percy) Boyce, and some 16 houses were individually designed by J H Laity. Apart from their building experience, these two men were chosen because they shared their employers' Methodist faith and ethics. Jackman & Treloar were pleased to call Laity's houses 'Sydney bungalows' owing to their sophisticated Late Federation styling. Since the great majority of houses were built within a ten-year period - up to 1920 - most display similar characteristics, with a few 'Canadian' and Californian models intervening between return-verandah villas and bungalows of the Gentleman's type. Six architects: Frederick and Eric Dancker, Frederic Krichauff, Eric McMichael, Philip Claridge and Alex Brice called Toorak home. The Danckers, especially, made a significant contribution to the locality, designing up to ten houses, while to McMichael seven or more can be ascribed. Three builders: Frederick Jeffery, Thomas Baxter and Charles Muller also lived or built their own homes there.

This Watson Avenue residence was designed by JH Laity in 1913 for Theo Howe, Adelaide manager of WD and HO Wills, tobacco processors

Perhaps the most interesting of the few two-storeyed designs is Mr Krichauff's own 357 Portrush Road. The former chief draftsman in the Works & Buildings Department incorporated two flanking, first-floor sleepouts under the roof of imported English tiles. These tiles appear again at *Parkwynd*, (105) Hewitt Avenue where, over two levels, Kenneth Milne tricked out with river stones a wondrous bungalow for Mrs Toms, the widow of a successful sporting goods retailer. For breadth and repose on one level, it is difficult to look past William Stanton's 148 Grant Avenue. Eric McMichael's design for the bank manager invests it with security and command. 16 Giles Street by the same hand for Frederick Simonett, manager of Torrensside Woollen Mills, shows comparable aplomb notwithstanding a more playful mien. Grandest of all, however, may be Harold Hercules Pittman's 3 Moore Street - a Neo-Tudor pile put up in 1930 by Norman Fisher to requite an empire-building motor dealer.

Complete concrete construction was little represented but Percy Culley, a designer-builder whose firm was called, 'Ferro Service Ltd - Australian Bungalow Craft Artists', erected three adjoining houses in Grant Avenue. One of these, despite the strictures, sported a white-striped, green 'Ruberoid' roof. Objections to that saw it grudgingly replaced by asbestos cement shingles until these, too, were overlaid by corrugated iron. Opposite, at 140 Grant Avenue, Charles Muller engaged the Conrad brothers, architects, to plan his roughcast, concrete-walled and severely boxlike *Harcourt* where sleepouts opened from each of the upper-floor bedrooms.

At 134 Alexandra Avenue, Harold Hayward, a shipping clerk, commissioned a stock design which he sold on to the grandfather of Sir Robert Helpman, the choreographer, who passed through this and two other nearby houses within the same family. And the champion of reinforced concrete in domestic buildings, the builder-architect Walter Torode, accepted from William Foote, a prominent importer, an opportunity to demonstrate his systems at *Belvoir*, 21 Giles Street - a house which, unloved, crumbled before the bulldozer only 50 years later.

To read the gossip columns of the day is to witness the friendliness of the earliest residents. Many neighbours feature in the lists of guests attending receptions, card parties, informal chamber concerts and the like. Miss Jeffery taught music at home in 7 Giles Street while Miss Florence Cooke, a proud Mus. Bac., took students both in the city and at the Toorak School of Music at *Elouiera*, 142 Watson Avenue. Ensembles involving these women and the Matthew girls of *Karuma*, 117 Alexandra Avenue, were known to entertain gatherings in the roomier houses. Farther up Watson Avenue, at *Omoa* (148), Letitia Baxter, widow of the builder, Thomas Baxter, ran a neighbourhood kindergarten.

Here, as much as on the 'athletic lawns' which became a popular social centre once the clubhouse had been built, the main topic of conversation was the Great War. The War affected everyone: sons enlisted; sons did not return; parents and siblings and fiancées were left bereft. To one degree or another, the people of Toorak volunteered their help.

Mr Day of 105 Alexandra Avenue founded the Toorak Sandbag Club, whose members met on weekends to stockpile defences against enemy attack. When volunteers exceeded 20, the working bees were transferred to Luke Darby's pony paddock behind *Prymbah*, 2 Moore Street. A not uncommon sentiment was expressed by Mr Day in February 1916 when he said that, 'Those who for some reason or other remain in this state instead of going to the Front cannot do better than give a practical demonstration of their sympathy for the lads in khaki by making sandbags.' Charles Muller initiated the Harcourt Fund for Disabled Soldiers, towards which a group of building tradesmen raised £300 at a time to build, gratuitously, £250 cottages on land worth no more than £50. Each cottage was raffled for £500 and the profit of £200 reinvested in another project. Equally sincerely, fund-raising tennis tournaments were held at the McMichaels' *Ferham*, 24 Giles Street, and the Andrews' *Gladesville*, 139 Grant Avenue. Elsewhere, Mrs Bramble, wife of the Deputy Postmaster-General and a tenant of Julia Hallett on Portrush Road, produced *The Patriotic Cookery Book* and donated royalties towards reparations. Otto von Rieben, the acknowledged 'Lord of the Manor', made a contribution too, by hosting periodic fêtes in aid of a local memorial to the fallen.

Journalist Fred Johns led the campaign within Toorak Gardens to finance the planting of trees in Victoria Avenue as well as the casting in bronze of a soldier in action sculpted by Web Gilbert. A greater gesture still was Mr von Rieben's gift in 1944 of the entire *Attunga* property to the Council to form the nucleus of the Burnside War Memorial Hospital.

In 1914, immediately before Australia's engagement in World War One, residents - among them farmers like Robert Gardiner of 134 Alexandra Avenue who managed stations remotely - the more worrying concern was drought. Those who did not install windpumps battled to maintain newly-planted gardens and to dodge inspectors seeking to fine people watering for the sake of appearances. *The Mail*, then a recently-launched weekly, enthusiastically carried progress reports of the development of 'Toorak the Beautiful' and its gardens. Mr Foote and his young bride, wrested from the Sydney stage, were regularly commended for their showpiece - a backdrop, covering a whole allotment, to the bowling greens. In the eyes of estate agents, these greens, together with an increasing leafiness, added to the allure of Toorak. Adopted by agents and nearby residents alike, a warranted cachet attaching to the estate led to the blurring of its limits.

When land at Toorak Gardens, a wider area to the south, came to be sold by Parsons & Wilcox from 1917 onwards, the overlap lost further definition. But in mid-1916 a new Council ward, Toorak Ward, had established an official boundary - deemed to reach down the avenues to Prescott Terrace and to include Swaine Avenue. The first Councillor elected was a well-regarded gentleman farmer, Joseph Rooney of *Ardee*, 113 Alexandra Avenue.

An agreeable price for the land behind *Attunga* in the grasp of Mr Dancker and Mr von Rieben took Jackman & Treloar many years to negotiate. Announced for part-release in 1917, it was not until 1920 that 11 large lots along Hewitt and Watson avenues and the west side of Moore Street were sold mostly to existing residents of Toorak. Values had risen 300% over the 12 years since 1908. Although Percy Johnstone, solicitor, made a profit of more than £400 when selling his Conrad-designed house in Alexandra Avenue, this was not enough to buy Lot 6 in Hewitt Avenue, let alone subsidise No. 116 to the design of his brother-in-law, Philip Claridge. Mr Johnstone would again find Harold Hayward next door in a third Toorak house made to measure by Ferro Service Ltd but, on the other side, William Bolitho, a manager of Dalgety & Co. who had transferred after an interval from 329 Portrush Road. Having sold all his furnishings handcrafted by Patrick Gay, Mr Bolitho refitted another house built in the characteristic English Counties manner of Eric Dancker.

Lapbrisk, in Alexandra Avenue, designed by AS & FH Conrad in 1913 for Percy Johnstone, solicitor. One of six houses in Toorak attributed to the Conrads.

A commercial slump followed in the years immediately after the Great War. One of the few purchasers at this time within the remnant of the estate in its north-east corner was Mrs Aland, the widow of a Riverton farmer. As the economy regained pre-war vigour in the mid-1920s, the similarly undeveloped corner of Grant and Cudmore Avenues also finally found appeal among farming families. To suit such landed gentlemen, robust bungalows of mostly anonymous provenance were built here on the threshold of the fresher, geometrically laid out fields of Toorak Gardens. Mary Aland's happily -proportioned Arts & Crafts bungalow of 1918 vintage at 134 Watson Avenue proved to be a late instance of informality laid over a symmetrical plan where the talent of an unstated architect (Albert Conrad is likely) was induced to bloom in the hothouse atmosphere which enveloped the idealistic Toorak - The Home of High-grade Houses.

Giles Walkley
2018©

Burnside Primary School 150 years

In 2019 Burnside Primary School celebrates 150-years of education.

Margaret Preiss, nee Jarvis, a past student at the school and her daughter Ally Preiss, also a past student of the school, expressed a keen interest for the Burnside Historical Society to mark this anniversary. Margaret has a special little book with a book plate that reads: *Presented to Margaret Jarvis, dux grade 1 1935*. What a wonderful prize to keep and treasure. Margaret Preiss also amassed over many years a large collection of school photos.

It was helpful that Ally, as a member of the Burnside School Foundation, kept the Society up to date with plans for 2019. A delightful photo was taken of five generations of the Preiss family, all of whom had attended Burnside Primary School. This photo was used as the logo on the advertising banner for all school events in 2019.

The Burnside Historical Society approached the school in late 2018 with a view to planning a special joint event in May, as part of the SA History Festival. The date was to be Monday 20 May, with the aim of holding an evening presentation of student work to the Society, parents, old scholars and the public. Work began in December when the Burnside Historical Society team of Bob Stace, Ally Preiss and Margaret Ford (a past member of staff) met with the 2019 year 7 teachers, Cindy Karlis, Tony Probert and Grace Lamont, to discuss what the students might attempt and how the Society could help. Over the summer holidays Cindy, the team leader, planned a unit of self-guided work for the students for term 1 this year.

Way back in 1991 Margaret Preiss had given a talk to the Burnside Historical Society about Burnside Primary School. She said then, “Two early school admission registers existed in 1969 and were considered too valuable to remove from the school. However, they had disappeared.”

Miraculously, the registers were found in 2019 to tell interesting stories about the names and occupations of the students who attended Burnside Primary School from earlier days. Parent occupations included shepherd, saddler, servant, coach driver, winemaker, groom, blacksmith, and gentleman. In earlier days, if the address was Stonyfell, the occupation was invariably mason or quarryman. What would a survey of Stonyfell occupations reveal in 2019? Those old registers reflect a difference in the value of education in years gone by. “Florence, 12, was removed from the school because her parents believed she had finished her education.”

Leaving school at an early age was common. Margaret Preiss found “Two 13-year olds got jobs as tram conductors and young Clara Slape left because she had gone to a ‘situation’.”

In January 2019, on the hottest day of the year, Bob Stace, Ally Preiss and Margaret Ford met with the teachers to outline ideas and practical support the Society could provide. Bob gave a lesson to all three classes about the history of South Australia and the foundation of Burnside. This set the scene and gave the students a context for their research. On another day in term 1, Margaret Ford, Bob and Ally, with Margaret Preiss, took the three classes out to follow a self-guided walk of Burnside. The Society, which is proud of the series of historic walks it has produced over the years, found the Burnside guide a practical way for students to learn about the community around their school. The walking guides are freely available and easily accessible on the Society webpage. The Society hopes the City of Burnside Council will re-print some hard copies of the walks, as it has done in the past.

For some of the students it was their first walk around the suburb to explore the old village of Burnside and its high street. One highlight, mentioned by one teacher and some students, was meeting a famous person at her gate, as she returned to *Ivymeade*, a historic home in Nilpinna St, built about 1850. Coincidentally, Eileen Harris, mother of member Colin Harris and a former student, now aged 96, lived in the coach house of *Ivymeade* as a child and walked each day to Burnside School.

On another occasion Margaret Ford gave a lesson on how to use Trove to access early newspapers and photos. Among these archived photos, we found a picture of a school picnic at Henley Beach, an annual event previously described by Eileen Harris.

The Society team researched topics and provided relevant articles and books to help the students. The students were guided to past newsletters of the Society which offer many excellent resources and information about many places and people in the Burnside area. Students were provided with detail to access an online e-Memorial, vwma.org.au/explore/memorials/1057, an index to all those young men whose names are included on the Memorial Gates on High Street.

The culmination of all this detailed student work, was the public event on Monday 20 May when nearly 170 parents, members, old scholars and members of the public came together to see the 77 projects prepared by the students. The display included models, videos, charts, books and dioramas. Tony Probert spoke on behalf of the three teachers, outlining the process and explaining how important the project was to the students.

When four year 7 students, Alana, Charlotte, Finnley and Summer, stood to talk to the audience, to tell about their work and what they learnt, the audience was captivated and impressed.

The night was an excellent example of what young people can achieve with the help of their whole community. We hope we have established the next generation of historians.

Old scholars read about and attended the event, in addition to the Open Day on Friday 7 June.

Robyn Upton (nee Hastwell), a former student from the 1950s, wrote her memoir of school days.

With the blackboard behind her, my teacher would say, "Can you hear a pin drop?" All would be silent, as she dropped a pin on the wooden floorboards. It worked liked magic. I don't think I ever heard that pin, though I listened intently. This was my grade 1 teacher at Burnside Primary School in 1953.

My memories of that year were having chalk dust on my clothes, as we learned to write and do our sums on a slate board with chalk and seeing the alphabet written at the top of the board in beautiful writing. We made baskets of fruit and animals in plasticine. The desks were arranged in rows with several children clumped together on bench seats.

Another past student Elspeth Hamann (nee McLeod) sent her year 1 class photo from 1949 and included her 1949 handwritten list of the students in her class.

The Society pays credit to the year 7 teachers, Cindy Karlis, Tony Probert and Grace Lamont, in addition to Deputy Principal, Angela Elkin, who enthusiastically worked with the Society during this project. The whole journey has been an exciting and happy experience. When the Society team, plus President Derek Bransbury, visited the school at the end of term 1 to see the finished projects for the first time, we were pleasantly overwhelmed and thrilled by the detail and variety of the work.

Your Society works in the broad community to foster a love of history, with a dream of enticing and including the younger generation into our membership. Who knows, perhaps one of these present-day scholars will chair the Burnside Historical Society in the near future.

Margaret Ford

Burnside Historical Society Inc.
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 things as are conducive or incidental to the attainment of any of the above objectives.

SUBS RENEWALS FOR 2019/2020

All subscriptions fall due on **1 April each year**: Subscriptions may be paid at our monthly meetings, by direct bank transfer, or posted to the Treasurer at the Society's address indicated on the inside back cover.

Subscription Payments by Direct Bank Transfer

Bank Name	**BankSA**	Account Name	**Burnside Historical Society**
BSB	**105 086**	Account No	**330298840**
Your Name	Ensure that this field shows **your name** clearly		
Amount	$30 for a single member or $45 for a family		
Message/Reference	Please also enter **your name** in this field		

Please **never** pay your subscription as an over the counter deposit.

The Society welcomes donations made by members. These extra contributions to our funds will be put to good use in our ongoing projects to record the history of the City of Burnside.

Burnside Historical Society Inc.
PO Box 152 Glenside SA 5065
burnsidehistorysoc@gmail.com

OFFICE-BEARERS FOR 2019-20

President:	Derek Bransbury 0413 173 384
Vice-President:	Vacant
Secretary:	Margaret Ford OAM fquared@bigpond.com 0438 838 894
Treasurer:	John Thomas AM john@johnthomas.com.au
Public Officer:	To be advised
Committee:	Bob Stace, David Monceaux, Ross Both, Anne Both

Meeting apologies: Please phone Membership Officer Ally Preiss 0409 716 582 or email aapreiss@live.com.au

Newsletter Subcommittee
Judy Brown (compiler), Colin Harris PSM and Elizabeth Rogers OAM (Joint Editors)
Contributors: Apart from the Newsletter Subcommittee, we are fortunate to have members who contribute occasional items and their names appear with articles in the relevant issues.
Distribution Organiser Liz Silz 8364 0855

Program Subcommittee: Ally Preiss, Bob Stace, Meredith Ide

Plaques Subcommittee: Colin Harris PSM (Chair), Ken Lawson, Dave Monceaux (co-opted)

Mines Subcommittee: Meredith Ide, Dave Monceaux

Osmond Gilles Grave Restoration Subcommittee: Anne Both, Ross Both, Derek Bransbury, Meredith Ide

Publicity: Derek Bransbury

Recordings of Burnside topics: Help wanted

Audio: Dave Monceaux

Front cover: *Web Gilbert's sculpture of a soldier in action, atop the Alexandra Avenue War Memorial*

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