

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

FOUNDED 1974

P.O. Box 203, North Adelaide, S.A. 5006

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NEWSLETTER No. 14

MAY, 1977

NEXT MEETINGS

JUNE

It was a marvellous talk. (his debating skill, wit & complete identification with Nesbit). Cop, S, to, 2003 & John Playford went back to Nadi's afterwards & enjoyed good conversation. Friends, coffee & liquor until almost 3 in the morning.

Date: Friday, June 3rd, 1977.

Place: State Library Lecture Theatre, Institute Building, North Terrace, Adelaide.

Time: 8 p.m.

Speaker: Mr. Graham Loughlin.

Subject: "Paris Nesbit, Q.C. - Lawyer, Libertine and Lunatic."

Paris Nesbit, 1852 - 1927, was a leading South Australian lawyer, essayist, poet, translator, member of the Labour Party, foundation member of the Liberal Union in 1920, five times parliamentary candidate, principal S.A. parliamentary draftsman for 15 years, and President of the Australian Natives Party. To many South Australians the eccentric Nesbit has always been a legendary figure, though poorly understood.

and showed three times into the Lunatic Asylum.

Mr. Loughlin is a Research Officer in the South Australian Parliament. His interest in Nesbit developed during his thesis work on South Australian Queen's Counsel 1865 - 1972. He is now working on a book about Nesbit.

JULY

also v. good. learnt a lot about early hist. S.A. Labor Party esp.

Date: Friday, 1st July, 1977.

Place: State Library Lecture Theatre, Institute Building, North Terrace, Adelaide.

Time: 8 p.m.

Speaker: Dr. D. Jaensch.

Subject: From Factions to Political Parties, South Australia 1890 - 1912.

The title of Dr. Jaensch's talk is self-explanatory : it will discuss the emergence of South Australia's modern political party system. Dr. Jaensch is a Lecturer in Politics at the Flinders University.

FIELD TRIP - Saturday, June 25th, 1977.SOME MINING AREAS NEAR ADELAIDE*was beautiful in the country
& fascinating.*

Leader: Mr. Royce Wells, who is in charge of the historical section in the S.A. Mines Department.

Area: The Barossa goldfield; the Lady Pearce, the Lady Alice mines and vicinity (now in Parra Wirra National Park); the Montacute mines.

Date and time: June 25th, 1977, leaving from the War Memorial, top of Kintore Avenue, at 9.15 a.m., and returning in the vicinity of 5.15 p.m. Please bring own lunch. The cost is \$5 for members, and \$6 for non-members.

Bookings to be made with payment to the Secretary, Historical Society of S.A., P.O. Box 203, North Adelaide, S.A. 5006, by Monday, 20th June, 1977.

Mr. Wells was co-leader of the April field trip last year to mining areas in the Adelaide Hills, notably Scott's Creek and Echunga. His article "Early Mining in the Adelaide Hills" was published in the Society's Journal, No. 2, 1976, just issued. The areas to be visited on this trip are today little known, but in their time were the sites of significant mining enterprise. This should provide a highly interesting excursion.

People intending to go on this excursion should wear shoes suitable for some slightly rougher country.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 1st April, 1977.ELECTIONS TO THE SOCIETY'S COUNCIL

The following were nominated and declared elected for the stated positions:

President:	Mr. R.M. Gibbs
Vice-President:	Mr. B.J. Samuels
Secretary:	Mrs. E. Ho
Treasurer:	Mr. R.C. Muir
Editor:	Dr. J.M. Tregenza
Councillors:	Dr. P.A. Howell
	Dr. A.R. Hunt
	Mrs. H. Jones
	Mr. D. Manuel
	Miss S. Marsden
	Mr. P. Moore
	Dr. J.D. Playford

*- resigned, Pete Graham
Laughlin (new C. member)
John Playford to be
Editor
→ (8/77 vol. to be 1978 newsletter ed.)*

Due to other commitments, Miss L. MacGillivray was forced to withdraw her nomination for the Council. Under the Society's Constitution, the Council may fill the casual vacancy thus arising.

The President paid tribute to the work of the retiring Councillors - Mr. R. Ellis (Treasurer), Mr. C.B. Campbell, Mr. J.H. Love, Miss L. MacGillivray, Mr. G.A. Stafford and Mrs. E.M. Warburton, all of whom have rendered excellent service to the Society. Tribute was also paid to the fine work of Mrs. J. Chilman, who assisted the Treasurer most ably. Mr. Campbell has kindly consented to continue as Newsletter Editor.

ANNUAL REPORT

The President stated that a report on the Society's activities for 1976 was printed in the Society's Journal No. 2.

Our Society's Secretary now has a copy of the Federation's Constitution, as agreed to, and other materials from the conference.*

The following were elected to form the executive of the new body:

President:	Mr. Justice R. Else-Mitchell (R.A.H.S.)
Vice-Presidents:	Dr. Murray Verso (Senior Vice-President) (R.H.S.V.); Mr. D. Sprod (T.H.R.A.)
Secretary:	Mrs. N. Phillips (Canberra and District H.S.)
Treasurer:	Mr. H. Harper (R.A.H.S.)

It was agreed by the delegates that a sliding scale of membership fees should be adopted, ranging from \$25 to \$100 per annum, according to the total membership of constituent societies. The Historical Society of S.A.'s membership fee is \$25 p.a.

It is hoped that the new body will be an effective instrument for making the views and needs of historical societies known to the Federal Government. All societies have similar problems with escalating expenses, especially in regard to publishing and administrative costs. The Historical Society of S.A. is facing these problems, and has been unsuccessful in its attempts to gain a grant in aid from the Federal Government to help alleviate them. The Minister of Administrative Services (Senator Withers) in a letter to the Society (dated 3rd March 1977) has stated that "recipient organisations should be national or Territorial in character, which means of course that grants to State historical societies cannot be continued." The Minister, nevertheless, has not closed the door on the possibility of such aid. His letter states: "... I understand that the societies have under discussion the establishment of a national federation. I am therefore writing to all the societies to say that if this proposal came to fruition shortly I would consider recommending to the Government that provision be made in the 1977/78 Budget for a grant to the new body."

Our Society has already supplied supporting material to the new Federation in its approaches to the Government for aid. On a personal level, of course, members of the Society could help by paying subscriptions, if unfinancial, and by recruiting other members.

FIELD TRIP : SOUTH EAST AREA

Any members who would be interested in participating in a week-end field trip to the South East in October are invited to contact the Secretary, Historical Society of S.A., Box No. 203, P.O., North Adelaide, S.A. 5006.

Please indicate whether public or private transport would be preferred. We can hire a 20-seater mini bus for approx. \$430, or arrange for members to travel in private cars. As yet, no formal program for the week-end has been arranged, as the Council needs to know approximate numbers. However, we have had offers from South East country members to lead tours, etc., and there are interesting house and properties which we could visit.

Those who wish to participate are asked to contact Liz Ho, Secretary, by mid-June.

SECOND ISSUE OF THE SOCIETY'S JOURNAL

By now all members of the Society who joined before October 1976 should have received the second issue of the Journal.

This second issue of the Journal (for the year 1976) is available for sale to new members of the Society who have joined since October 1976 (and who will automatically received the third issue of the Journal for the year 1977 without further payment) at \$5.50 and to members of the public for \$6.50, on application to the Secretary of the Society, P.O. Box 203, North Adelaide, S.A. 5006. Postage within Australia is included.

In addition to reviews of books on aspects of South Australian and Australian

history, the second issue of the Journal contains the following articles (three of which are illustrated):

Women at Work in South Australia, 1889-1906, by Helen Jones, Lecturer in History at Kingston College of Advanced Education.

Horse-drawn Vehicles in South Australia by Ian Badger, Librarian at Salisbury College of Advanced Education.

Non-Labor during the Great Depression in South Australia by John Lonie, post-graduate student in the Politics Dept., University of Adelaide.

Early Mining in the Adelaide Hills by Royce Wells, officer in charge of the historical section of the Department of Mines.

Farm Relief in South Australia during the Great Depression by Steve Dyer, post-graduate student at the Australian National University.

Please note that although the Society printed 100 more copies of the first issue than there were members, all these have now been sold.

As the Society's stocks of Journal No.1 are low, the Council would like to increase their numbers. Any members who no longer require their copies and who would consider donating them or selling them back to the Society, please write to the Secretary, Liz Ho, at the Historical Society of S.A. Box No. 203, P.O., North Adelaide, S.A. 5006 (or phone 269-1951 after hours).

AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE COMMISSION

This Federal body is now fully established and has begun compiling its register of "those places being components of the natural environment of Australia or the cultural environment of Australia, that have aesthetic, historic, scientific or social significance or other special value for future generations as well as for the present community". Register forms are available from - The Director, Australian Heritage Commission, Box 1567, P.O., Canberra City, A.C.T. 2601.

At present only Commonwealth-owned buildings are given any protection by being placed on the Register, so it is as well to give post offices, country railway stations, etc. top priority. All buildings with National Trust "Classified" status are being submitted by the Trust.

BLUESTONE AND THE ADELAIDE CITY COUNCIL

The City of Adelaide Development Committee has given consideration to the stockpiling of bluestone material to provide a source of supply in those cases where a Council may require a building or an addition thereto to be constructed in that material in order to preserve the historic character of a street-scape or a precinct. Because of the unavailability of bluestone except when a bluestone building was being demolished at the time, the Committee has been able through the Public Buildings Department to obtain land to the north of Yatala Labour Prison where demolition contractors and builders may deposit clean bluestone material free of charge. The material deposited will become the property of the Public Buildings Department which will administer the re-issue of the material for restoration of Government and other works.

Copies of a letter advising contractors of the dump and its location, together with a location plan, may be obtained from the Committee c/- the Corporation of the City of Adelaide. It is suggested enquiries be made to Mr. P. Derrick.

REGISTER OF HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

We are currently preparing a list of Historical Societies in the State. The following are those for whom we have contacts. Please send any additions to Brian Samuels, 63 Jetty Road, Largs Bay 5016, phone 49 8104 (home) or 47 2577 (business) giving full details.

National Trust branches are not included in this preliminary list. Museums are included only if they belong to a group of people that help to run them. Residents Associations are listed only if they have an active interest in history.

Anthropological Society of S.A.
 Australasian Maritime Historical Society
 Adelaide Electric Transport
 Australian Railway Historical Society
 Barossa Valley Archives and Hist. Trust
 Booleroo Steam and Traction Pres. Scty.
 Church of England Historical Society
 Geography Teachers Association
 Hindmarsh Historical Society
 Historical Society of S.A.
 Historical Society of Woodville
 History Teachers Association
 Kapunda Historical Society
 Kimba and Gawler Ranges Historical Society
 Lobethal Historical Society
 Loxton Historical Village Society
 Mallala Historical Society
 Military Historical Society
 Mitcham Village Arts and Crafts Association
 National Trust of S.A.
 Northern Yorke Peninsula Cons. Hist. Scty.
 Pichi Richi Railway Preservation Scty.
 Pioneers Association of S.A.
 Port Adelaide Historical Society
 Port Lincoln Pioneers and Desc. Assoc.
 Royal Geographical Scty of Aust.
 Society for Underwater Historical Research
 S.A. Genealogy and Heraldry Society
 S.A. Methodist Historical Society
 South-Eastern Historical and Rest. Scty.
 Unley Historical Society
 West Torrens Historical Society

Amongst those for whom we require further information are the Gumeracha Historical Society, Riverland Historical Society, the Mile End Railway Museum, the Shiplovers Society, the Saddleworth Historical Society and the Save Kent Town Association.

HAHNDORF

The University of Adelaide has recently published its record of the papers given at its "Hahndorf : Past, Present and Future" seminar.

There are some 20 papers in the booklet, all of which are essential reading to those interested in the destiny of the town. The papers by Ian Harmstorf, Reg Butler, Colin Thiele and John Chappel are especially relevant for those interested in the town's history.

A further recommendation is the cost of the booklet; \$2.50. If you would like a copy, either go to the Department of Adult Education, University of Adelaide; or send \$3 (postage paid) to same place, North Terrace, Adelaide.

THOSE GREEN-FINGERED PIONEERS - by Jean Schmaal

I read the other day of someone who considered that history was a lot of bunk; that it was little more than dry as dust facts and figures about long-dead kings, of great battles fought centuries ago, of long-forgotten causes lost and won.

The sort of history which many people these days are coming to appreciate is of a vastly different flavour. Perhaps that is because it is not the history of those mighty monarchs and politicians and of great battles, but the story of our own land and our own people, and because a great deal of this sort of history is but a glance backwards where past and present tend to merge.

Take gardening, for instance. There's all sorts of fascinating history about South Australia's early gardeners, most of them the virile lovers of the good earth, the plain everyday people - your ancestors and mine.

As a child I had a grandmother who was a splendid gardener, and it was my good fortune to spend many happy holidays with her. She lived at St. Leonards (near Glenelg) only a stone's throw from the historic Old Gum Tree, on what had been a Chinese market garden, so perhaps it was only to be expected that I should grow up to love gardens and history.

Possibly the first attempts at gardening in South Australia were made by the sealers on Kangaroo Island in the early 1800s. The first organised settlement of South Australia began when several shiploads of immigrants landed on Kangaroo Island, where they waited for Col. Light to show up. At Kingscote there still stands the oldest fruit tree to be planted in South Australia, in 1836; a mulberry tree which still fruits each year. Some say it was planted by Johannes Menge, South Australia's first geologist. Others claim that Thomas Beare who came on the "Duke of York" in July, 1836, was the gardener.

Before making his final decision on the site of Adelaide, Col. Light made visits to other parts of the new colony. One of the places he visited was Rapid Bay, and, whilst he explored inland, some of the men who stayed behind set up what was probably the first garden on the mainland.

Eventually Light made his decision, and once surveying work was begun people began to set up their homes. Many of these founding fathers had brought seeds and little trees with them, hoping to establish their own gardens. With no native fruits or vegetables to draw on, considerable difficulty was experienced as far as the provision of food was concerned. Very little provision had been made for the first settlers in this regard. For nearly 2 years they existed on salt pork, ship's biscuits, rice and poor quality flour from Van Diemen's Land, and such game as they could shoot in the surrounding scrub. The biggest problem, however, was water, and because of this gardens were few and far between. The new settlement's water had to come from wells or the River Torrens. In the latter case, water carters brought it in large barrels on horse-drawn wagons. It cost from 1/6d. to 2/6d. for 50 gallons. At that price gardens had to struggle on the best they could without water. It was not until the end of 1860 that water was laid on to the city.

Col. Light had "a well of capital water" in the garden of his cottage at Thebarton. He was an expert gardener and was regarded as the most successful gardener in the Province at that time.

The Germans who had settled at Hahndorf soon proved themselves to be efficient gardeners. Cucumbers and other vegetables which were sown directly the ground could be cultivated were carried to Adelaide, some 20 miles away, on the backs of the gardeners who regularly walked to and from the city. They travelled in batches, starting in the evenings so that the produce would keep fresh. They had regular camping places, and there they stayed to rest awhile and sing. On arrival in Adelaide early next morning, the girls offered such items as spring onions and radishes from their baskets at 1d. a bunch. Their produce

sold readily. On those rare occasions when they had nothing else to do, the women went long distances around Hahndorf on the travelling stock tracks in order to gather the droppings of the cattle for their gardens.

One of the pioneers and oldest residents of the Lower Murray River District was Thomas Lampard. In 1843 he took up his abode on the banks of the Murray near Wellington, and was one of the first to put a plough into what was then truly the wilderness, though by no means uninhabited, as the aborigines were numerous and anything but docile. He soon had a fruit garden unequalled in the Colony, and produced and marketed the first fruit east of the Murray. The garden went with the 1870 flood, excepting willows, poplars and a few quince trees, which were still to be seen many years later.

Incidentally, fertilizers as we know them today were in earlier times very much a thing of the future. It was common practice for farmers to clean their stables and spread the animal manure on their paddocks. They also gathered up bones of animals, burned and ground them, and then spread the resulting bone dust. At one time Mr. W.F. Jaensch, a pioneer of the Murray Bridge area, was asked for permission to collect bones on his property, which he owned towards Tailem Bend. Permission was given, but Mr. Jaensch was most irate when he inspected the contents of the man's tip-dray and discovered that skeletons of several aborigines (no doubt collected from a native burial ground) had been included. He indignantly insisted that the human remains be returned to their last resting place.

Though it seems hard to believe, snails were introduced by a Gardeners' "Improvement" Society, when a Mr. Selway introduced them to West Terrace cemetery, though it is held in some quarters that that dubious honour belongs to Samuel Way for wishing to provide delicacies for his thrushes.

In 1853 there was a Produce Market in King William Street. "Yesterday morning the new market was opened by an attendant of a single cart, and a number of boxes of fruit were offered, all as we understand from the gardens of George Stevenson, Esq."

One early gardener to whom we owe a great deal was Mr. A.W. Howard. In 1889 he discovered and developed subterranean clover. He was a florist and nurseryman at Blakiston (near Nairne) at the time. In 1900 he harvested his first seed which he presented to neighbours in order that they could experiment with it. I believe it was Mr. Howard who brought a lovely rose with him when he came on the ship "Lightning" in 1870. This was "Mrs. John Laing", a lovely old-fashioned tea rose, which had taken prizes at the Chelsea Rose Show in England. To the best of my knowledge "Mrs. Laing" is still flourishing from cuttings handed down the generations.

Many Chinese who came to Australia in the days of the Victorian Gold Rush in later years became successful market gardeners. Before the building of the barrages across the Murray mouth, thousands of dead fresh-water fish collected on the river banks and began to create a nuisance. One wily Chinese gardener collected as many of these dead fish as he needed, and having trenched a large plot for cauliflowers, placed many of the dead fish therein in rows, and over each dead fish planted a young cabbage or cauliflower. The result was such a crop of vegetables as the residents were astonished to see, and all the credit was given by the consumers to gardeners in the hills, never dreaming that they were locally grown, with dead fish being used as fertilizer.

Others, using the ancient Chinese method of disposing of sewage, grew wondrous crops of water melons. Until it was discovered how these succulent items were fertilized, many a small boy "borrowed" a melon from time to time.

But to get back to that green-fingered grandmother of mine. In her early married life she lived in the Adelaide Hills with a family of very lively children. The pride of her life was a magnificent cherry tree, but try as she might to keep enough of the annual harvest to put into jams

and preserves, her efforts proved fruitless; both her own and the neighbours' children, like so many young blackbirds, beat her to them regularly. Finding, as many of us do, that talking gets nowhere, she applied psychology to her problem. Making sure that the yard was full of youngsters she procured one of the large bedroom utensils in popular use in those days, and filling it to the brim with very pale tea, she wended her way between the children and sloshed the contents over the crop. Her action brought results. The story quickly went the rounds - "Don't touch Mrs. Armstrong's cherries whatever you do - SHE EMPTIED A GREAT BIG POT ALL OVER THEM!" That was the end of her problem, and she had full and plenty from her cherry tree from that day forth.

I hope that this light-hearted story of our pioneering gardeners shows that history is a many-splendoured subject to be enjoyed in divers ways. History points to pride of ancestry; in gardening there is always promise of things to come, surely together they make a happy combination.

BOOK REVIEW

Ian Auhl: FROM SETTLEMENT TO CITY A HISTORY OF THE DISTRICT OF TEA TREE GULLY 1836 - 1976 (Lynton Publications Pty. Ltd.)

Members will be interested to know of Mr. Auhl's latest book From Settlement to City A History of the District of Tea Tree Gully 1836 - 1976.

Handsomely produced, the book gives a detailed account of a district whose history has been little recorded. It should prove a valuable addition to the growing ranks of local histories. It has a special interest, for, as Mr. Auhl explains in the Preface, it deals with the history of an area which has experienced "dramatic transformation of the local landscape during the past decade".

The book, of 384 pages, is hard-bound, with a dust wrapper, and has many illustrations. The publishers are kindly making it available at a special concession price to members of the Historical Society. It is available at \$10, post free. Orders should be sent to Miss B. Deverson, Lynton Publications Pty. Ltd., 19 Kauri Road, Hawthorndene, S.A. 5051.

LETTER TO EDITOR

(Please note that these are welcome - on any aspect of the Society or the State and Colony's history.)

Dear Sir,

Thank you for printing my article on Blinman in the March Newsletter of the Historical Society, but there is one word incorrectly typed which alters the information I gave.

I wrote: "The Blinman area school were the proud possessors of an Indian ink drawing of Mr. Kekwick" and the Newsletter states (near the end of the first paragraph on Page 6) "an indian ink drawing by Mr. Kekwick". This, of course, is not correct, and I would not like anyone to think they had a "find".

So could this matter be mentioned in the next Newsletter, please?

Yours,

(Mrs.) S.E. Pritchard

SUBSCRIPTIONS

These are now well overdue. If you wish to continue receiving the Journal and Newsletter, please send renewal immediately to the Society's address; and according to the following schedule.

Ordinary Member	\$8
Life Member	\$100
Family Membership	\$10
Country Member (50 km from GPO)	\$5
Junior Member (under 18)	\$4
Pensioner	\$4

Could members make a special drive this year to encourage friends and acquaintances to join the Society. We think you will agree that the Society has already been of great benefit to its members and to the life of South Australia as a whole. Help make it bigger and more effective with many new members this year.

NEWSLETTER

Please note the new address of the Editor for future sending of articles, letters, etc.

Craig Campbell,
10 Molesworth Street,
North Adelaide, S.A. 5006