

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

FOUNDED 1976

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

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NEWSLETTER No. 18

JANUARY, 1978

NEXT MEETINGS

FEBRUARY

Date: Friday, February 3rd, 1978.
Place: MURRAY HOUSE (the old home on St. Bernard's Road), at MURRAY PARK COLLEGE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION.
Time: 8.00 p.m.
Speaker: Miss Valmai Hankel
Subject: Oenotypophily - South Australian Wine books and wine labels.

The first meeting of the year this is in the nature of a social evening, while Miss Hankel is talking of an interesting subject.

MARCH

Date: Friday, March 3rd, 1978.
Place: State Library Lecture Theatre
Time: 8.00 p.m.
Speaker: Mr. S. MacDonald
Subject: Across Australia by car, 1923 - Captain S.A. White's lantern slides.

FIELD TRIP - PORT PIRIE - 28th-30th APRIL, 1978.

Port Pirie is one of South Australia's oldest regional centres and the scene of pastoral activities, major industries, commerce and shipping. Mrs. Nancy Robinson, author of the centenary history of Port Pirie, Reluctant Harbour, has arranged this field trip with emphasis on the interesting historical features of the city.

THE PORT PIRIE TRIP IS NOW ARRANGED. PLEASE BOOK AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (SEE BELOW)

Date: Friday 28th April to Sunday 30th April, 1978. (However you can join on Saturday morning if you prefer).

Itinerary: Highlights: guided tour of the National Trust museum and of the City's historical architectural features; a visit to Pastoralist's Point and the Cemetery (especially the Italian sector, which reflects patterns of migration from the end of the nineteenth century to post World War II and contains very elaborate tombstones); a walk along the wharves.

The Mayor has kindly offered a Mayoral Reception in the Mayor's Parlour on the Saturday night. This will be followed by a dinner (optional) at a reasonable cost at the Royal Exchange Hotel. There will be a guest speaker who will reminisce about Port Pirie.

Arrangements: Please arrange your own transport. Accommodation is of two kinds:

1. Hostel-type in the Education Centre, which is free, but people must bring their own sleeping bags and buy food.
2. Hotels. If this is preferred please make your own arrangements. Current prices for 2 places are: The Royal Exchange Hotel (\$8 bed and breakfast and \$16 double) and International Hotel/Motel (hotel is \$11.75 single and \$21.50 double, motel is room only at \$15 single and \$19.50 double.)

If you have any enquiries or if you want to join the field trip please notify the Secretary, Mrs. E. Ho by February 7th, 1978 (phone 269 1951 after hours or C/o Box 203, P.O., North Adelaide). Please also state whether you will be attending the dinner.

NOMINATIONS

The Historical Society's Annual General Meeting is to be held in April. Nominations are called for the following positions for the 1978-1979 term of office; President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and 8 Committee Members. Existing members if they wish to continue in office must be re-nominated and elected.

Half the members of the 1977 Council are unable to stand for membership in 1978. If you are interested in being nominated for 1978 but would like to know more about Council membership please contact Mrs. Ho at 269 1951 (after hours). Joining the Council will give you the opportunity to help plan the activities of the Society and your involvement would be most welcome.

Nominations should be sent to the Secretary, Mrs. Ho, by February 10th, 1978. Please treat this as urgent. Nominations should be signed by both the proposer and the nominee.

ACCOUNTS

The subscription account and the brochure of meetings for 1978 are being sent out to members separately.

BOOKS

NEW BOOKS AVAILABLE FROM THE PORT ADELAIDE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

"The Vanished Fleet"

Reviewed by ERN KIRK

Australian author, T.K. Fitchett, has produced this book containing reproductions of his own watercolours besides facts on those proud ships which traded around Australia in past decades of our history. His chapter on The Adelaide Steamship Company Limited is of special interest to us, as are the paintings of some noble ships we knew in Port Adelaide, besides other Ports in our State.

Well do I remember the little QUORNA, for I was in the Police Depot on No. 2 Quay when a fireball rushed through the camp on its way to an explosion as it hit a mast on the QUORNA, taking off the top three feet. Poor little QUORNA. Her hulk finished up as a target for R.A.A.F. bombing practice off Kangaroo Island.

From the comprehensive list of vessels owned by the Company Mr. Fitchett gives us the second MOONTA, and the MINIPPA, recalling the 5-day Gulf Trip, which was a happy little seaward holiday for so many South Australians, and other tourists for the sum of Six Pounds sterling.

Spiced with stories about occurrences to various Passenger ships, this book makes very interesting reading, and while not cheap at \$14.50, it would nonetheless make a valuable collection to an interested reader's library.

"Ketchhand"

Reviewed by JOHN HUNTER

A slim volume, neither a masterpiece of the printer's art, nor of a scholar's pen, but a down to earth story of life aboard Port Adelaide's ketches in the 1940's.

Ron Thiele, the author, came from the country seeking a life at sea, and expresses no regrets at the hardships or conditions under which he worked. The story of how, before his 15th birthday, he found himself at the helm in a storm with the skipper in his bunk recovering from a night out, makes realistic reading.

A book for all who have sailed in ketches, or those who, like myself, have watched from a wharf and wondered. This book can be bought from the Society for \$2.25.

INSPECT THE SELECTION OF BOOKS etc. AVAILABLE FROM THE SOCIETY
at 119 Semaphore Road on Thursday or Sunday afternoons.

DISPLAYS

1. SHIPS : DECEMBER 17 - FEBRUARY 12

In the Historical Museum immediately behind the Art Gallery of South Australia.

The highlight of this exhibition, designed to illustrate the role of ships in early South Australian and Australian history, is the actual size reconstruction of a cross section of a typical Australian immigrant ship of the 1830s and 40s.

A photographic enlargement of a contemporary wood engraving in the Illustrated London News showing immigrants below deck at their first meal on board ship provides the backdrop, and on each side two tiers of wooden bed places have been constructed from plans of the bed places in H.M.S. Buffalo which brought South Australia's first Governor to Holdfast Bay in December 1836.

Viewers will be able to sense the cramped conditions in which most early immigrants travelled to Australia and extracts from contemporary diaries will describe typical experiences on the four month voyage out from Britain.

Relics from the Gilt Dragon, a Dutch ship wrecked 100 miles north of Perth in 1656, and contemporary maps and books, will illustrate the role of Dutch, French and English explorers in defining the Australian coastline.

Other themes illustrated by paintings and relics will be the making of a new Port Adelaide to replace the original 'Port Misery', perils of the sea from storm and shipwreck, and the transition from sail to steam in the later nineteenth century.

Four exquisite models of the historic ships Buffalo, Rapid, Investigator and Geographe, two bronze naval long guns made in 1819 and normally on loan to Government House, and a collection of medals awarded for service and gallantry at sea will also be on display.

Representatives of the media are invited to preview the exhibition at 11 a.m. on Friday 16 December.

For further information please contact Dr. John Tregenza, telephone 223.8494.

Gallery Hours

Monday - Saturday	10.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.
Wednesday	10.00 a.m. - 9.00 p.m.
Sunday	1.30 p.m. - 5.00 p.m.
Public Holidays	10.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.
Christmas Day	Closed

2. Life and events in Port Adelaide during the 1920's and the 1930's; a display of photographs, old newspapers etc. with descriptions of the massive waterside workers' strike, the Great Depression, employment, entertainment, the harbour etc. On display from February 20th to 27th in the Department of Social Security Office, in Commercial Road, Port Adelaide and from February 27th in the Port Adelaide Institute, St. Vincent Street, Port Adelaide. Slides are being presented continuously in the foyer of the Port Adelaide Central Mission during this time.

The display has been researched and put together by a group of young unemployed people participating in the Port history project based at the Port Adelaide Central Mission. If you have any queries concerning the display or the project, any information about Port Adelaide during those years or if you are unemployed and would like to help in the research work of the project please contact Sue Marsden at the Port Adelaide Central Mission, 70 Dale St., Port Adelaide. Phone 47 5822.

3. Port Adelaide Historical Society, 119 Semaphore Road, Semaphore has, besides its regular display photographs relating to the steam train era, in celebration of the centenary of the Semaphore Railway. The display is open Thursdays 1.30 to 4.00 p.m. and from February on Sundays also, 1.30 to 4.00.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1. The Editor,
Newsletter,
Historical Society of S.A.

Dear Sir/Madam:

Since the publication of the poem TRIO-CORNISH ENGINE HOUSES - BURRA in the October 1977 Newsletter, I have elicited the information that the writer of the poem, Frank McMahon of Ainslie, A.C.T., in 1975, won the award for narrative verse in the C.J. Dennis centenary competition held in conjunction with the Adelaide Arts Festival of that year. I enclose a copy of the award-winning poem, CHAPEL STREET, BURRA, SOUTH AUSTRALIA which Mr. McMahon forwarded to me at my request. I would be pleased if you could find a place for it either in a Newsletter or perhaps in the Journal of the Historical Society.

Yours faithfully,
Ian Auhl.

CHAPEL STREET, BURRA, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Again I hear the strains of "Crimond" sweep
between the dripping cedars in the street

" " " " "

Bleak morning rain had seeped in wedge-shaped strains
where buttresses of grey, grained stonework gripped
tall walls in case the massive fabric slipped
from righteousness. The muted melody
of "Lydia" drifted, blown where wind gusts whipped
and rattled cedar seed-pods through the leaves.

The four-square architectural sermon preached
in bluestone stood and sombered there but glowed
in sound as marching bars of "Oriel" rose
around the masoned coping and where strong
embrasured windows mirrored sills that chose
to set on rock the faith they bore in song.

A row of wet rosettes against the wall
where rain-beads gleamed on shining wheel spokes. Past
restrained, strained, muted, non-conformist glass
the ordered, soaring chords of "Richmond" rolled
across the pagan, tuneless whistle-blast
that winter blows to summon in the cold.

Today the building stands unaltered and
the key-stone tunes its congregation sings
still lilt the wind. And though time's passing brings
me now to quieter reasoned views I've found
that my calm humanism sometimes rings
with curiously shallow, tinkling sounds.

" " " " "

Tin cymbal sounds that drown when cedars weep
or "Crimond" paces down a windswept street.

Frank McMahon

2. (Addressed to the President of the Historical Society, Mr. Ron Gibbs);

Dear Ron,

Earlier this year I discussed with you the possibility that the compilation of historical data in the Planning Section of the Education Department might be undertaken by using retired teachers in a voluntary capacity to assess the various forms of historical document available to the Education Department.

Approval has been obtained for the implementation of this procedure.

I would be grateful if you would arrange for the inclusion of a notice as attached in a forthcoming newsletter of the Historical Society of South Australia.

Yours sincerely,
Dr. P.I. Tillett
DIRECTOR/RESEARCH AND PLANNING.

VOLUNTARY ASSISTANCE WITH SCHOOL HISTORIES

The Education Department receives a number of requests each year from schools, community groups, and individuals for the provision of historical information in regard to schools and other educational matters, often in connection with school or community centenaries or other anniversaries.

With the increasing number of schools approaching their centenaries, the work load on the Statistical Information Unit is such that many of the requests cannot be met either in a reasonable time or to the extent which is desirable. It is impossible at the present time to supplement the resources available for these tasks in the normal manner.

Retired teachers may be interested in voluntarily assisting with this task on a part time basis of, say, one or two days a week, arranged to suit the people involved and varied at short notice as desired. It is hoped to build up a small group of voluntary researchers so that the time commitment of any one person will be light.

The task would consist of searching through Education Gazettes, Annual Reports, and other historical documents held within the head office of the Education Department. From time to time it may be appropriate to obtain information by visiting the South Australian Archives, the State Library, or individual schools. The task would be completed by the preparation of written replies to the persons requesting the information. Some filing and indexing of requests and information sources would also be involved. The work would be performed in the Directorate of Research and Planning, which would provide office accommodation, typing facilities, materials, and administrative support.

Retired teachers living outside the metropolitan area may be interested in carrying out related tasks in their own area. The duties in this case would be to act as liaison officer between the central group and local school communities seeking historical information, and to collect related data locally from newspaper offices, schools, Council offices, etc.

Voluntary researchers would be covered by the Government Insurance Fund against injuries arising from the performance of research tasks. For this reason, the involvement of teachers beyond the age of 70 years will not be possible.

Retired teachers who are interested in taking part in this scheme are requested to write to the Principal Planning Officer, Education Department, Box 1152 G.P.O., Adelaide, S.A. 5001 enclosing brief details of their association with the Department.

Enquiries may be directed to Mrs. Sue Pender, telephone 227.1883.

RESEARCH

1. The National Parks and Wildlife Service of South Australia is currently carrying out research on several of the state's parks, using funds and staff from the State Unemployment Relief Scheme. The research is not unlike a stocktaking for the parks, as it involves surveys of vegetation, soils, fauna and visitor use. The other area, in which I am working, is History and Background Information. This entails research into Aboriginal usage, early European exploration, settlement, record of land ownership, agricultural and mining development, the reasons for acquisition by the government and use since dedication. In effect; land-use history. The sum of all of this information, scientific and historical is to be used in the management of the parks. As outlined in the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972-74 management plans will be drawn up and released for public consideration.

The parks being studied in the present programme are Cleland, Horsnell Gully, Morialta and Sandy Creek, east of Gawler on the Lyndoch Road.

The historical information has intrinsic value and interest for staff and the public, as the history of each park. It also provides useful data for "the preservation of historic sites, objects and structures of historic or scientific interest within reserves". National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1972 Part 111, Division V (37b).

These may range from the ruins of old goldmining towns, such as those of the "Victoria" township in the north of Para Wirra Recreation Park to a small hut and bore such as found in Sandy Creek Conservation Park. Occasionally ruins have been found to have been occupied by significant figures in South Australian history. One example is the ruin near the entrance to Cleland Conservation Park, which records show was once owned by George Tinline. Tinline was a key figure in guiding South Australia out of financial difficulties in the early 1850's. He was instrumental in developing the Bullion Act which allowed gold to be used as currency, to overcome the shortage of money the colony was then suffering, partly due to the gold rushes in Victoria.

The history is also of use for people interested in fauna and flora as it helps to explain how the present distribution patterns arose. Some information on the influence of the Aborigines on the land, and its nature at the time of European settlement is another part of the puzzle. It adds light to information on Aboriginal management of the land before European Settlement, as well as acting as a bench mark for studying European settlement. Detailed and accurate records on vegetation are relatively scarce and scattered.

As well as micro-scale information the study can be seen as part of broader historical aspects. These include agricultural management, attitudes and methods as seen in timber clearing and entrepreneurial ventures, such as the tobacco farm in Cleland in the early 1920's. Attitudes to conservation have altered and some trends are evident in the history of the parks. Social attitudes and recreation patterns can also be observed.

Other aspects of South Australian history are also touched upon, sometimes areas relatively untouched. One example would be the occupation and use of land in the Barossa and near Sandy Creek by American and Australian troops during World War II. The war consciousness of people there and in Adelaide during those years was surprisingly extensive. Air raid shelters were built and practices carried out in Adelaide, a fact not many of the younger people today are aware of.

The study has also come across many of the primary source historians' problems. One is the mortality of history, the information, stored in people's minds. Certainly a source that needs verification or cross-checking to be sure of accuracy, but often the only source of detailed information, especially for an obscure park, such as Sandy Creek. A vast amount of information, on Aborigines in South Australia was lost through people not making records, or not making the effort to study the tribes. Some was salvaged when in the late 1920's Tindale interviewed the last full blood of the Kurna tribe, the tribal group of the Adelaide plains and Western Hills face. However this information is only a fraction of what could have been saved. Similarly a vast amount of information on pioneering settlement and land use in the 19th century has been lost. There is a need and value in schools and tertiary institutions developing and using these personal and local sources of history, while available. Historians, teachers, students and society as a whole could benefit from projects involving such research. The history-consciousness of South Australians has been lacking, has

improved, but still has a long way to go before being satisfactory.

Any queries concerning this project, whether assistance required or offered should be directed to David Jones or Chris Williams of National Parks, Wildlife Services, 135 Waymouth Street, Adelaide. Phone 212 1688 Ext. 21.

DAVID JONES.

2. The Legend of George Ezekiel Mason PART 2. By Jean Schmaal. Part 1 was printed in the last newsletter, in October, 1977 (No. 17).

The year 1853 was one of great importance to South Australia, for it was then that the first successful navigation of the River Murray was achieved. A description of this mile-stone event shows how Mason played his part in the historic undertaking.

"Capt. Cadell stood in the bows of the "Lady Augusta" and by his side was Mr. Mason, sub-Protector of Aborigines at Wellington, who had staked out the channel of Goolwa, and to whom every point is as familiar as the Thames to an old river pilot. Mr. Mason mentioned that the land about Point Pomonda is infested with venomous black snakes 5 or 6 feet long. They have been driven down by the sheep and cattle into the extreme point, where the swamps prevent the animals feeding. There they breed to such an extent that he has sometimes shot as many as twenty in a single day. Their chief food is frogs with an occasional rat or mouse by way of variety. Five miles above Point Pomonda is the entrance to the Murray The land is a native reserve on four sections and is of good quality. Upon it, and about a mile within the entrance of the river, is Mr. Mason's house, being a stone building in the early English style. Here the steamer anchored and the "Eureka" took in about 30 tons of fuel, which Mr. Mason had had cut and stacked by the natives who assembled in great numbers around his house, and were very active in putting it aboard. Mr. Mason had also erected a convenient jetty, alongside which the steamer was placed and the fuel rapidly taken on board. He has, according to his usual custom, been extensively active in this matter and deserves the thanks of all those who wish well to the expedition. This officer is a great favourite with the sable gentry. They have a burial ground of their own a little distance from his house, and they declare that, when he dies, the white men shall not touch him, for he is the blackfellows' brother and must be buried with their most solemn honours - the principal feature of which appears to be the exposure of the body upon a high stage or platform, till one would fancy that there could be little of it left to bury At the Rufus Mr. Mason, sub-Protector of Aborigines, met Sir Henry with two boats manned with native crews, who had brought them up from Wellington."

With the discovery of gold in Victoria, Wellington became the "gateway of hope" for many thousands of South Australians bitten by the "gold bug", and the principal job of the police was the recovery of stolen horses at the Wellington ferry, because many were "borrowed" by diggers anxious to reach the fields. It was by this ferry that Tolmer's Gold Escorts brought back nearly two million pounds' worth of the precious stuff between 1852-1853.

When so many of the able-bodied white men hurried off to the goldfields a crisis in the relations between settlers and the aborigines seemed imminent. Fears were felt that the natives would seize the opportunity to attack the ill-protected stations. On the contrary they seized the chance to get a living by work and not by plunder. Reports from all over the country showed that aborigines had stepped into the vacant places of shepherds and other country workers. Most of the harvest was taken off by these people, using sickles. Their new responsibilities seemed to develop their trustworthiness and upwards of 200,000 sheep were in charge of the native shepherds. In some areas the native women took over the work of the shepherds - "sheepy shepherd"

as they were known.

About this time the whaling fisheries near Encounter Bay closed down and the former whalers also turned their heads to the east. Here again it was feared that the natives, who had assisted in the rendering-down work of the whale blubber, might well prove troublesome to the unprotected white women in the area. Mason was sent down to look into the situation, police protection having been withdrawn from the district. For many years since the operation of the whale fisheries at Encounter Bay large numbers of the natives had been attracted there because of the large quantities of ready food from the catch. Mason found that, with the deprivation of this source of "tucker", their only crime was to steal food.

"The male part of the European population of the Bremer district have been absent some months at the diggings, and the females who have been left state that they have no complaints against the natives, whose conduct they say has been quiet and peaceable. The Murray tribes are now proceeding to the agricultural districts to assist at the harvest and in sheep washing."

"It is quite evident to persons residing in the country districts that, were the natives determined to commit any outrages on unprotected females they have daily opportunities of doing so, with but slight chance of detection. On the contrary the women are glad to receive their assistance in procuring firewood occasionally", he reported.

When Tolmer, then Commissioner of Police, announced that a Native Constabulary had been formed in 1853, it seemed only natural that Mason (on 26th April of the following year) should receive his appointment as Inspector of Native Police at Wellington. His salary was £100 a year. On his staff he had one European corporal and twelve native constables, six of whom were mounted. He was advised

"Arms, accoutrements and clothing for the native constables shall be sent to you as you entrain men. A horse for yourself shall be sent whenever you wish, as also horses for your six mounted constables as you are ready to receive them."

At this time the Police Station was on the eastern bank of the river, in the neighbourhood of present-day Brinkley Reserve.

The uniform of these Native Constables consisted of a cabbage tree hat, two strong guernsey shirts, two Scotch twill shirts (cotton) one pair of grey Sydney tweed trousers, one pair of moleskin trousers and a pair of boots worn as the season directed. The constables were recruited from the Murray and Lake Alexandrina tribes; they were to be paid 1/- a day and armed with carbines, and the whole under white command.

Although this was far less than a white constable received, it was better than the natives received in civilian employment, and was in addition to keep.

Mason was a man of many parts; he was possessed of considerable mechanical ingenuity, and planned and superintended the making of the first Wellington ferry, and the following letter to the Commissioner of Police (Warburton) in 1854 indicated his capabilities.

"Sir -

I have the honour to acquaint you for the information of His Excellency the Lieut. Governor that the lifeboat belonging to the "Jane Loveat" (wrecked in Discovery Bay (South Coast) in 1853) which I have been using for the last 12 months, has been

sold to Mr. Randel of Gumeracha, to whom I have delivered the boat on that gentleman presenting an order from Messrs. Samson and Wickstead on that he had become the purchaser.

I am now without a boat of any kind for service on the Lake, and have, therefore, been unable to comply with the request made by Capt. Cadell that I would proceed to the Goolwa to pilot the "Lady Augusta" once more across the Lake to prevent a recurrence of the accident which happened to the seamen on her last downward trip. His Excellency the Governor on his last visit to the Lake gave instructions to have a certain part of the Goolwa Channel east of Dr. Rankine's Station marked with buoys, chains and cantledge and I beg to suggest for the consideration of His Excellency that instead of using the buoys for that purpose, beacons should be formed by placing four pine poles in a pyramidal form, well secured at the top with iron hooping and braced together with cross braces. This form of beacon would stand any swell that could rise on that part of the channel and would not be so expensive as buoys.

The above work I can perform with the assistance of the natives as soon as I am supplied with a boat for that purpose. I beg to suggest that the description of boat most suitable for service on the Lake is a whaleboat 25' in length, 5'6" beam and built sufficiently strong to convey the pine poles across the Lake for the purpose of keeping up the beacons when required."

Mason lived for many years in the Wellington district. He was a remarkable linguist with a rare understanding of the native dialects, and when trouble was experienced in the north (made the more difficult to control by the terrain, which favoured the natives) and the west coast, Wellington and the Coorong were quiet owing to Mason's good work and the fact that he had gained the confidence of the local aboriginal population. (He was almost worshipped by these people.) Even before his appointment as Inspector of Native Police, the following anecdotes illustrate his influence over the native people.

"When within a couple of miles of Salt Creek we were met by from sixty to seventy natives who offered to assist us with the exhausted horses, and gave us to understand that they knew we were coming, because other natives along the Coorong had made signal fires conveying the intelligence."

These natives gave food and shelter to the party which was able to resume its journey, leaving the horse to be brought later to Wellington by one of the natives. After about a month, when it had completely recovered, it was indeed brought to Corporal Mason at Wellington as promised. Considering that this tribe was the same which had a few years before cruelly murdered the passengers and crew of the "Maria" one might naturally have supposed them to have nourished feelings of revenge against the police. Another remarkable instance of their forbearance and regard was an official report by Mason of a helpless wayfarer, who was found in a dying condition on the Coorong by the same tribe, which could have shortened his existence with one blow of the waddy, and possessed themselves of his swag of blankets without fear of discovery. Instead, they carried him by relief parties a distance of from sixty to eighty miles to Wellington, and supplied him with fish and whatever food they had by the way.

In 1856 (at the time when the Native Constabulary disbanded) Mason left the Police Force. He had been appointed a sub-Protector of Aborigines in 1849, and when he ceased service as a police officer he continued for many years with his work among the indigenous people of the Lower Murray.

Rev. George Taplin (founder of the Point McLeay Mission Station) whilst he admired Mason and claimed him as a friend, said of him -

14th April, 1859 - Went to the house of Mr. Mason, sub-Protector of Aborigines, first thing this morning. I there met Mr. Goyder, the Assistant Surveyor-General with a survey party. He kindly offered to show me some land which would be available for the purpose of the Association. I was taken to Section 3, which is tolerable land with a good river frontage, about three miles from Mason's. I think that the fact of Mr. Mason being resident in the vicinity would be an objection to this piece of land. He has no faith in any effort for the religious welfare of the natives. He says, "Oh, I feed them and make them comfortable in this life, and I do not believe God would damn them in the next; at any rate I leave that to His mercy." I think these sentiments would be calculated to exercise an evil influence on any effort made in the vicinity of the person holding them. His indifference would produce indifference in the natives."

"Mr. Mason recommends Point McLeay at the entrance of Lake Albert as the locality of the Institution, as that is a central position, is good land, is a great fishing place for the natives. I obtained such information from Mr. Mason."

When Mason left the Force he and his family took up residence on the Aboriginal Reserve at Brinkley, where, in the days of Governor Robe a shooting Lodge-cum-summer-residence had been built, but was never occupied by His Excellency. Here the Mason family lived until the thatched-roof mansion was destroyed by fire. (Its ruins are still standing on the old reserve.)

There was an inquest into the fire - held on 24 August 1867. The following is a report of that inquest -

"A fire occurred on the morning of Sunday 18th instant at Mr. G. Mason's which resulted in a total destruction of his residence situated about one mile from Wellington. An inquest was held on Monday at East Wellington before Mr. E.C. Hughes, S.M., when the following evidence was taken. George Mason deposed - "I reside near East Wellington. About 9 o'clock yesterday morning my daughter Margaret came into the room where I was sitting and told me that the house was on fire. I immediately ran outside and saw flames coming from the centre chimney. The flames were rising 6' out of the top of the chimney. I put my daughter Margaret on the roof and handed her a bucket of water. The house was thatched with reeds. The top of the chimney was about 9 feet above the roof. I told my daughter to pour water on any pieces of soot that might fall on the roof. I threw some water up the chimney that was on fire. I also closed all the doors to check the draught. In about 20 minutes after the roof took fire close to the chimney, apparently caused by the falling soot. I then got my daughter off the roof and endeavoured to save what furniture I could, as the flames were spreading rapidly. It was a 2-storeyed house containing seven rooms. There was only one fire in the house at the time and that was a small one in the kitchen. I believe that the soot had been smouldering for some time before it broke out. The chimney was cleaned about seven weeks ago. I believe that the house would not have been burned if the roof had not been a thatched one. The Police Station at Wellington was burned down some time ago under similar circumstances. The building was the property of the Government. I have the lease of it and there are about three years of the time unexpired."

After hearing two other witnesses, the jury, through their foreman Mr. Cooke, returned the following verdict -

"That the fire at Mr. Mason's house was accidentally caused by the kitchen chimney taking fire and communicating through all the thatched roof. And the

jury wish to attach a rider to the effect that the Government should take steps to put the house in repair as the walls are but little injured."

And - human nature being what it is -

"1868 - The good folks at Wellington express much indignation at the action of some persons who have removed the cut and dressed window sills, copings and large stone lintels over the doors, also doorsills and verandah posts from the building known as the Government House and recently occupied by Mr. George Mason when Protector of Aborigines. This building cost nearly £1,000 and although gutted by fire required comparatively but little outlay to make it a complete substantial residence, the stonework being thoroughly sound. Surely the Commissioner of Crown Lands will make enquiries respecting this."

..... to be continued.

3. Members' research work or interests. One of the important objects of the Historical Society is to promote the interchange of information among members of the Society, on South Australian history - and this newsletter provides each person an opportunity to inform other members of research they have carried out, reminiscences or queries. If you can please fill out the following form (adding further pages if you want) and send it to the Editor, Ms. S. Marsden, C/o Box 203, P.O. North Adelaide, 5006.

NAME:

RESEARCH/AREA OF INTEREST (you may have had work published, written a thesis or collected family history or have information about your local district etc.):

CURRENT RESEARCH/QUERIES:

CAN BE CONTACTED AT: