

# HSSA *History*

Newsletter of the Historical Society of South Australia  
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## 'Comfort, convenience and beauty' at Colonel Light Gardens

*Historical Society of SA Council member Christine Garnaut worked with the secretary of the Colonel Light Gardens Historical Society, Philip Knight to prepare the text for a recently published booklet on what many believe to be Australia's best example of a garden suburb. The brochure includes a fold out map which enables people to discover Colonel Light Gardens' special planning features for themselves. The article below is taken from the brochure.*

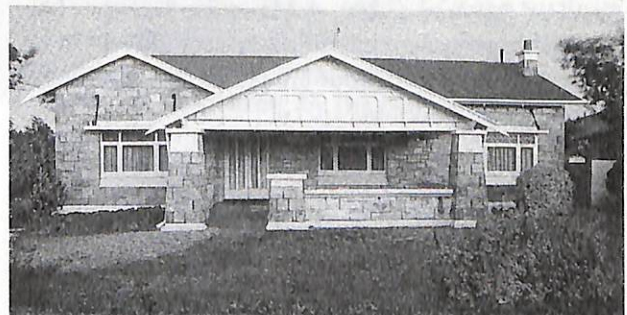
*The September meeting of the HSSA Council congratulated Christine on receipt of her doctorate. Christine will conduct a field trip to her favourite suburb next year.*

In June 1915 the Vaughan Labor Government purchased the property, 'Grange Farm', south of Adelaide, from the trustees of the estate of William Tennant Mortlock. The farm occupied 121.4 hectares and the Government intended to establish the site as a 'model garden suburb'. The Government's decision followed the impact of Charles Reade's lectures during his 1914 Australasian town planning tour. He was sponsored by the British Garden Cities and Town Planning Association and was considered an expert by his colleagues in the field of town planning. Reade promoted the internationally popular model suburb schemes in public lectures and in an official report, *Recommendations in Regard to Town Planning in South Australia*. His planning principles were guided by the garden city movement which aimed to improve the lifestyle and residential environment of all classes of people. Colonel Light Gardens clearly reflects those principles in its design.

World War I interrupted the State Government's intention for 'Grange Farm' and the land was used as an army training camp until 1920. Meanwhile, during 1916, Reade had been employed as South Australia's (and Australia's) first Government Town Planner. In

January 1917, when the need arose to improve the drainage of the camp, Reade was consulted. He was requested to prepare plans for a model suburb and designed a scheme with the working title 'Mitcham Garden Suburb'. His plans were shown publicly and for the first time at the first Town Planning and Housing Conference and Exhibition in Adelaide in October 1917. They were ratified by the State Government in 1919 when the Garden Suburb Act was passed. The Act, together with associated regulations, provided a detailed plan for the suburb's development. One of its innovations was in the suburb's administration – instead of coming under the jurisdiction of the local council, it was controlled by a Garden Suburb Commissioner who had responsibility for all aspects of its development.

The name Colonel Light Gardens was adopted by State Cabinet in April 1921. A booklet was published which outlined the benefits and services available in the suburb and included a plan of the scheme as well as a coloured perspective. The first blocks available for public purchase were in the north-east section of the suburb and were released in August 1921. Additional sales were made in 1922 and 1923. The new suburb offered prospective residents 'comfort, convenience and beauty' with services – gas, electricity, water and sewerage – surfaced roads,



*The popular preference for the Californian bungalow is reflected in this house in Colonel Light Gardens. It features a blend of coursed rubble, fibro panels, false shingle weatherboards and galvanised iron roof (from 'Australian Cottages', Moore and Burke, 1989)*

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## HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC.

Institute Building, 122 Kintore Avenue, Adelaide  
5000 (mailing address only)  
Founded 1974

### OBJECTS

- To promote the collection, preservation and classification of source material of all kinds relating to South Australian and Australian history.
- To publish historical records and articles.
- To promote the interchange of information among members of the Society by lectures, readings, discussions, field trips and exhibitions.
- To arouse interest in and promote the study and discussion of history, especially that of South Australia and Australia.
- To cooperate with similar societies throughout Australia.
- To do such things as are conducive or incidental to the attainment of any of the above objects.

### COUNCIL

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History SA editor: Jim Loudon, phone/fax 8340 3467

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### New members

The Society is pleased to welcome the following new members: H. Cooke, B. Darby, J. Gustak, J. Key, D. Koop, S. MacIntyre, D. Walker and the Colonel Light Gardens Historical Society.

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public transport and views of the foothills. Land sales were slow but steady and by mid-1924 60 houses were occupied or being built. Their style reflected the popular preference for Californian bungalows (although a number of neo-Tudor homes were also later constructed).

In June 1924 development of the suburb was accelerated by the Labor Government's decision to institute a mass housing project, the Thousand Homes Scheme, on a large portion of the undeveloped land to accommodate 363 houses. Two farming properties on the western side of Goodwood Road were purchased as sites for a further 332 houses. (The remaining 305 homes of the Thousand Homes were built in Adelaide's western suburbs.) Although some residents of the northern end of the suburb believed that the Thousand Homes Scheme would devalue their properties and were fearful of 'slum conditions', they were advantaged by the scheme. It quickened the availability of facilities, including shops and parks, and assisted the pace of private investment in the suburb. The Garden Theatre (for moving pictures), sited on Goodwood Road, opened in 1927. Also in 1927 the Garden Suburb Commissioner reported that all available building blocks were sold and that the suburb's initial development was complete.

Colonel Light Gardens has remained substantially unchanged since the 1920s. The Garden Suburb Commissioner approved the subdivision of Piccadilly Circus, originally intended as the main entrance to the suburb, in the 1940s. The southern portion of Eton Street was also built in that decade. Unused shop sites in the former Bond Street (now Salisbury Crescent) were allocated for housing, and subdivisions of housing allotments were made during the 1960s and 70s in several other parts of the suburb. Due to financial constraints, responsibility for Colonel Light Gardens was transferred to the City of Mitcham in 1975 and the Garden Suburb Act was repealed. Since then the former Garden Suburb Commission depot in Eton Street has been cleared and replaced by houses.

During the 1980s local community awareness of the significance of the suburb's plan led to successful application for funding of the *Colonel Light Gardens Conservation Study*. Following its release in 1989, a Heritage Adviser was appointed.

In recognition of the suburb's unique place in national and international planning history, Mitcham Council has nominated it for inclusion on both the State Heritage Register and the Register of the National Estate.

## Another memorial lych gate is saved

By Tom Dyster

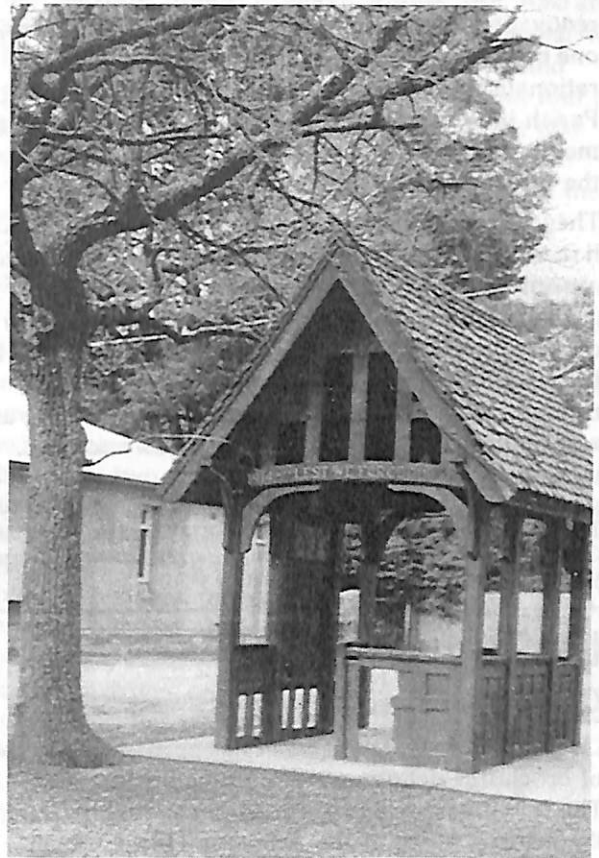
Mention of efforts to save the ailing lych gate at St Margaret's, Woodville, (*History SA*, September 1997) calls to mind the story of another such structure once similarly threatened, but this story ended happily too.

When the historic Congregational Church (by then the Uniting Church) in Orley Avenue, Stirling, was sold in 1986, its 67-year-old lych gate faced possible demolition, at best abandonment and dilapidation. Happily the church fathers let neither happen.

The church was opened in 1882 at a time of rapid horticultural development in the now largely residential near-hills. In its earliest years, known then as the Crafers 'Gong', the church had its congregations swelled for several months of the year by the so-called 'summer visitors'. These were wealthy executives and professional and business folk from the city who had built themselves handsome residences at Mount Lofty and Crafers in which, by way of the newly constructed Hills railway, to escape the summer heat and dust of the 'plains'. Among these were Messrs Chas Birks, Jas Marshall, G. Wills and Anderson of Miller Anderson. Some, like Wakefield Hospital matron Alice Tibbits, settled there permanently and became active leaders of the church.

Through the difficult 80s and 90s and on into the present century the 'Cong' experienced fluctuating fortunes, and congregation numbers waxed and waned. During the record incumbency of the Rev. Thomas Kite (1890-1910) there was development both physically and spiritually in the parish. Extensions were made, including a new church porch constructed by well known South Australian builder Walter Torode, who lived in the district and worshipped at Orley. Moreover, congregational numbers increased as never before. The church also became well known beyond the district. In a picturesque tree-lined back street of the Stirling village, it became a popular venue for weddings, couples coming from the city and beyond.

In 1917 the Rev. A.W. Gordon commenced the first of two ministries at Orley Avenue. Mr Gordon was a man of many parts: army chaplain, poet of some repute, and a member of the Royal Geographic Society. His ministry was interrupted when he served as a stretcher bearer with the AIF in France. On his return from the front he led his parishioners



*The lych gate of the Stirling Congregational Church, as it was in 1986, before being removed to its present site in the grounds of the Uniting Church at Sunset Rock.*

in vigorous moves to set up an appropriate memorial to the many church members and Sunday School scholars who had served during the war. It was decided that this should take the form of a lych gate containing an honour roll of their names.

Members got busy and in a matter of three months the funds had been raised, the structure completed and the monument officially opened and dedicated.

At a special ceremony on 8 May 1919, all local clergy and members of local government, along with members of the newly formed RSL, gathered to witness the unveiling by the original Officer Commanding the famous fighting 10th Battalion, Colonel Price-Weir. Some problems had been encountered getting an accurate list of names together. Some were actually submitted after the unveiling, so that a small supplementary plaque had to be added. The lych gate soon became a Hills landmark and was a much sought after subject for amateur photographers.

For over 60 years it graced Orley Avenue. Several

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renovations were carried out in this time, one a major one by the Youth Group in 1955. Then, with the rationalisation of buildings in the Stirling Uniting Parish in the 1980s and the sale of its three original member churches, a decision needed to be made about the future of the lych gate.

They shifted it, lock stock and barrel! They resited it in the grounds of the new Uniting Church building at scenic Sunset Rock. There it is no more a gate than it was at Orley Avenue; not does it serve in funeral ceremonies the traditional purpose of a lych gate, if it ever did. But it is preserved as a cherished and respected war memorial as was always intended, and as a reminder of an historic church that once was.

#### References

Records and minutes of Congregational meetings 1882-1991; *The Independent and Presbyterian*, 1881-90; *The Adelaide Observer*, various years; *The Mount Barker Courier*, various years; *The Congregationalist*, various years.

## Let Tom Dyster be your guide on Hills walks

Over recent years Tom Dyster has prepared a number of brochures detailing walks in the Stirling area. The brochures, which are free, are available from the Stirling office of the Adelaide Hills Council. The walks covered in the brochures are Crafers, Stirling West, Stirling Main Street, Stirling Cemetery, Mylor, Bridgewater and Aldgate.

## New address for Mt Lofty Historical Society

The Mount Lofty Districts Historical Society Inc. has a new address, which is c/- Coventry Memorial Library, PO Box 21, Stirling, 5152.

Correspondence should be addressed to the Secretary, Robert Martin.

### Advertising

*History SA* accepts advertising for goods and services appropriate to its readership. The rates are \$100 for a full page, \$65 for a half page and \$35 for a quarter page.

Copy or finished artwork, together with a cheque for the appropriate amount (made payable to the Historical Society of SA, Inc.), should be sent to the Editor, Jim Loudon, 1 Ashley Place, Ridleyton, 5008.

## Annual grant established for Port Adelaide history

The Port Adelaide Historical Society will make available an annual grant to encourage and recognise efforts made in recoding the history of Port Adelaide and surrounding districts.

Funds for the grant – to be known as the Mavis Hoey Memorial Grant – will come from interest received on a long-term deposit of \$2,000. Mrs Hoey was a foundation member of the Committee of the Society and was a Committee member from 1972 to 1991.

It is envisaged that work submitted for the award would be in areas such as chronologies, oral history, the history of a building, industry, trade or craft, or the history of an organisation, society or church.

Applications for the grant must be made on the appropriate form available from the Secretary, Port Adelaide Historical Society, PO Box 154, Port Adelaide, 5015. and must be lodged with the Secretary by 31 March each year. Applicants do not need to be residents of Port Adelaide.

The recipient of the grant will be announced at the Society's annual general meeting, held in June of each year.

More information about the Mavis Hoey Memorial Grant can be obtained from the Secretary.

The award selection panel, nominated by the Committee of the Port Adelaide Historical Society, will take into consideration the value of the contributions to the history of Port Adelaide and adjacent districts, the originality of the work and the quality of the presentation.

## 'History Alive' in Adelaide Hills

A community history body known as History Alive Inc. has been established in the Adelaide Hills with Malcolm Carr as president (tel. 8399 4115).

An office and display area are planned but in the meantime, Jane Winchester of the Adelaide Hills Library, Woodside, is taking information and stories concerning Hills history, or she can arrange for someone to call at the home of anyone with information to impart.

Mr Carr says all types of pre-1950s material is being sought, including household items, farm implements and trade tools. These items, which may either be donated or made available on loan, will be used in a museum recalling the early Adelaide Hills community. The postal address of History Alive Inc. is PO Box 1, Woodside, 5244.

## On your Council

# Doctoring at the Port but his heart is in Athens



Borderline baby boomer and member of Generation X, living in Glenelg and working as a GP in historic Port Adelaide, Simon Cameron sees everything in historic terms.

He is married, with three young children who, he says, already know the name of Matthew Flinders' ship.

Simon was born in Millicent, educated at Marryatville High and graduated from Flinders University, after which he did a Masters degree at Adelaide. He used every elective study opportunity to pursue his interest in history – from Ancient to Latin American, with Greek history as his favourite.

He has worked in London and New Guinea, and backpacked through every country that can boast a castle, but Athens is where his heart is.

Says Simon, 'The world is a wonderful place when you look at it, and history provides one of the valuable tools for taking it in.

'I am distressed by the lack of emphasis given to historical training and education. History influences our every action and I devote all my spare time in presenting it to anyone who cares to listen, through walks, lectures and books.

"Time is the limiting factor, but I guess history always tells us that."

## On your Council

# First the loathing, then the love of history

Unlike Avis Huckel, our well-organised treasurer who wrote in July 1997 of her interest in history, I loathed history at school and continued to loathe it right up to 1974, when I migrated to South Australia. Which is hardly surprising, considering I went to 13 schools throughout England and all I had rammed

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into me were 'princes in bloody towers' and '1066 and all that', Never mind that when I was a 12-year-old living in one of the prettiest villages in England called Castle Combe, in all weather fair and foul the youth of the village gathered nightly at the 600-year-old village cross to 'hang out', without once asking why it was there. Further, we'd play in the nearby woods amid the grassed-over medieval mounds and take it all for granted, never curious enough to enquire of their origins. They were there for us, and we never doubted it'd be any different.

When I was 17 in 1962 I went to live in Singapore with my parents. I had a love affair with the place and again took the place for granted, with all its exotic colonial buildings and temples, and in that time only two or three 'tall' buildings appeared on the skyline. But when I went back for a sojourn in 1992, I wished I hadn't. I left wondering whether I had actually lived there because so much of the place I knew had disappeared under concrete, glass and marble, and all the exotic smells of rotten pineapple, frangipani, ghee, durian or dried fish had been driven out. I was very moved by the experience, but what little I did find of old Singapore I made the subject of an article 'In search of Singapore', which was published, fully illustrated, by the *British Weekly Telegraph*, 16 July 1992.



When I grew up some more and lived in London, I became a ground hostess for British European Airways for a year (and that job was grossly romanticised), and then I got married. In 1970 I joined my husband with my little boy in Genoa and La Spezia in Italy.

My husband was working as an engineer on a 120 ft luxury three-masted schooner weighing 300 tones that had been salvaged from the Greek Islands and was being restored and fitted out at great cost (£300,000). That yacht was named the *Dodi* after the indulged son of an Egyptian shipping owner. Well that's what he was then – but he was definitely behaving as though he was 'on the up', as I remember. And yes, it is one and the same family that hit the headlines recently.

Things didn't work out with Mr Al-Fayed and we returned to England in the depths of winter. Believing that England in winter was only bearable if you could have a burrow to hibernate in, or if you

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could escape to warmer climes, we did just that – we escaped.

After our short time in Italy, the tranquillity of those wonderful wine-growing hills and the little remote villages that hug the western coast, basking in winter sunshine, stayed with us when we began contemplating emigration.

We considered many of the usual destinations such as Canada, New Zealand, or South Africa, but not Australia I'm sorry to say. Then Uncle Percy from Adelaide was in England with cine-film of Canberra and a place with hills similar to the Italian region where we had stayed so briefly. Till then, Australia to me had only meant Sydney and Bondi Beach! On learning the hills were the Adelaide Hills, we knew that's where 'home' for us was going to be.

So we came here and I knew nothing, absolutely nothing, about the history of South Australia. But then, lo and behold, in Athelstone where we had settled, old places were being demolished on a regular basis. Despite the colony being set up in 1836, there in Athelstone cottages dating from the 1840s were being bowled over without protest. I was astonished that such a thing could happen when such places were associated with the earliest days of European settlement.

For the first time I was actually living in a place that was being destroyed around me, and I 'got involved'. One thing led to another and I went to University and discovered HISTORY.

For the first time I met a couple of academics who actually enjoyed teaching history and even made it exciting. And that was a revelation, for I was inspired by their enthusiasm, and it was infectious because I caught their disease.

I believed if I could become inspired by a subject that had always bored me to tears, then maybe I could do the same for others. So that's why I undertake the types of walks I guide around the city, or become involved in the particular subjects that I choose.

I'll continue this outpouring in the next newsletter, if the readers can cope. (*We'll give it a try – Ed.*). All I can say for now is my friend Sally, who happened to be a member of the Historical Society, brought me along one night specifically to help her do the washing up after the meeting. Despite this, I came again. In the next episode I'll reveal all about a chap called Peter Donovan and how he gave me direction in history.

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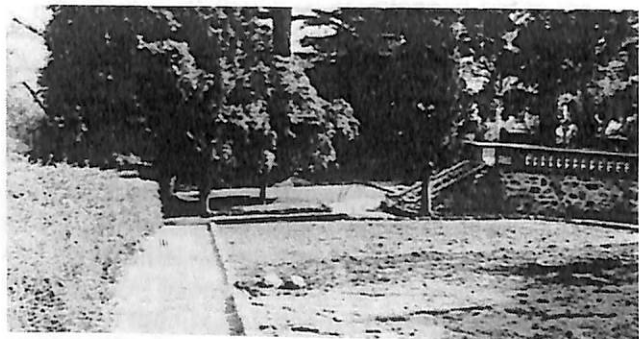
## Government Gardens, Belair (3)

# A heritage garden concept, 1975-95

by Pam Tamlyn

While today the State Flora (former Woods and Forests) Nursery and the gardens of the Old Government House complex at Belair have their own identities, there are still features within each to remind us that, together, they formed the Government Garden precinct on the Government Farm in the latter half of the 19th century. The Nursery was developed on the old Government Garden site from 1885, with the adjacent former Governor's summer residence in use as the Nursery Curator's house. The Nursery remained under the jurisdiction of the Woods and Forests Department when the rest of the Government Farm became the Belair National Park, in 1891. In 1958, the Nursery Curator's cottage and its surrounding garden of about one acre were transferred to the Commissioners of the National Park to be managed as a heritage site in Belair National Park, leaving the remaining nine acres of the Nursery under the Woods and Forests Department to develop further plant raising and sales over the next 20 years.

The other part of the original Government Garden, the garden which surrounds the Nursery Curator's cottage, was to become an integral part of the restoration of the building to its original function – that of a mid-Victorian vice-regal residence. A major restoration of the Old Government House complex began in 1972 and in 1975 it was decided to design the degraded garden around the building entirely as a mid-Victorian garden of the popular 19th century Anglo-Italian style. Such a style was considered in keeping with the new image of the house and in 1978 work commenced on the garden according to the new layout.



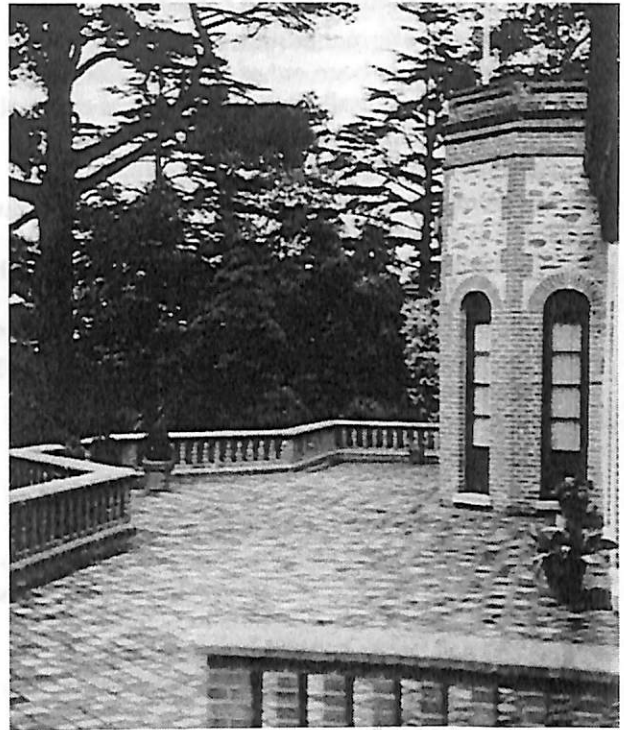
*A new layout in the Anglo-Italian style was implemented in 1978.*

Large trees from the turn of the century were left standing, as were some of those which had been planted later, in the 1920s and 1930s. The Aleppo pine, planted c. 1900, is reputed to be largest of its age in South Australia, and the radiata pines, of like vintage, are testimony to their fast adaptation to the South Australian climate. White and Himalayan cedars and two species of Italian cypresses, planted c. 1925, add to the dense canopy on the western side of the main building. Two large old, rotten cypresses overhanging the older, smaller cottage on the same site, and restored as a Servants' Quarters, were removed in 1986. Some stone retaining was done around a new lawn at the back of Old Government House and also in the upper part of the garden to make elevated rose beds. The rest of the garden was levelled and gravel pathways were laid out. Most of the plantings in the new beds on the lower level were of species known to have been used in Victorian times. The Italian theme of low growing monoculture was adopted, and this then blended into the more traditional cottage style of annuals and perennials. This was followed in the 1980s by the introduction of a large collection of over 60 varieties of significant heritage roses. Species included representatives of early forms of roses from Europe, the Middle East, China and North America, all of which could have been seen in a mid-Victorian garden. By 1986 the majority of these roses, nearly all noted for their remarkable fragrance, were in place and thriving (1).

Complete with its handsome balustrade, the large terrace around the building was totally rebuilt in 1978. The ivy which had grown rampantly over it in the 1960s was removed from the stonework and a few terracotta pots of English box and camellias were added as highlights on the terrace. The ivy was not completely discarded as some of it was planted, along with ground hugging convolvulus, under the big trees on the lower level. The shade from the trees also provided cover for rhododendrons and camellias, with an attractive display of hydrangeas in summer. From the late 1980s, the garden in front of the Servants' Quarters was extended to include a wide variety of herbs, including some lesser known ones.

While the present garden around Old Government House does not reflect how the site appeared for a great many decades, it does present the image of a garden of the Victorian era. It features old, exotic trees, with a profusion of cottage plants and herbs and, in Spring, hundreds of heritage roses in bloom. Many long-time favourites in flowers and shrubs make an ever changing display. A heritage sundial (2), to commemorate the centenary of Belair

National Park in 1991, graces one of the rose gardens. The old fashioned Swan Bush was planted to encourage (successfully) the return of the Wanderer butterfly, and to acknowledge the building's first occupant, Sir Richard MacDonnell, an *eremophila macdonnelli* was planted. This would have been the only plant indigenous to Australia in the garden but it did not survive the wet Hills environment.



*The Old Government House terrace as it is now.*

The garden is now a popular setting for weddings and is a very pleasant venue, particularly late on a summer's day, for heritage-style events on the terrace, bringing to mind a scene reminiscent of the Victorian era.

Across the road, in the other part of the original Government Garden, on the State Flora site, are some fine examples of bunya pines, English oaks and cork oaks dating from the end of the 19th century, and the butt of the first cork oak planted in the Government Gardens in 1864 has been retained there as a heritage feature.

The former Woods and Forests Nursery continues as State Flora to provide, as it always has, many South Australians with native plants and trees, keeping alive a tradition begun on its site over 100 years ago.

(1) For a detailed description of the development from 1979 to 1986, see 'Old Government House Gardens, Belair, South Australia' by Richard Nolan in *Garden Journal*, 1987.

(2) Designed and manufactured by sundial consultants, Sundials Australia, John Ward and Margaret Folkard,

## For the bookshelf New edition for Kavel's People

A book by HSSA member David Schubert, *Kavel's People: from Prussia to South Australia*, has been reissued in a new edition, with corrections.

David says the original edition sold well for a history book; it has been out of print for five years and has been continually requested. It was originally an SA Jubilee 150 project, launched in the Klemzig Pioneer Cemetery.

*Kavel's People* tells the story of the first main group of German Lutherans to come to SA in 1838, led by Pastor August Kavel. The story is told largely by the emigrants themselves and their contemporaries, through diaries, letters, journals, newspaper articles, etc. It details their personal experiences – why they left Prussia, what happened on the voyage (including storms, sighting of birds and fish, and deaths), and their initial settlement in SA.

After a few weeks at Port Adelaide, most moved to Klemzig (named after their German home village, now in Poland), where they grew vegetables next to the Torrens and built their houses, church and school. Some then trekked over the hills to Hahndorf, and some settled at Glen Osmond. Later, many other Germans to SA followed, and shiploads also went to other States.

Author David Schubert is descended from some of the original group. He says the book originally arose out of an interest in his own family history, and sees it as complementary to his other book about German settlers, *Because of Their Beliefs* (based on a 1931 German history).

*Kavel's People* is available from the publisher, H. Schubert, 42 Cheltenham Street, Highgate, or selected bookshops, for \$25.

## CORRECTIONS

The Display Coordinator at Old Government House, Belair, has indicated two errors which crept into her article when it was being keyed in for publication as 'Picking up the threads of grandmother's quilt' in *History SA*, July 1997.

1. Jesse Catt was a stockman at Blanchewater, in the Far North, not at Blanchetown as indicated in the article.
2. The donor of the quilt was Mrs Steuart, not Mrs Stewart.

## Tarpeena history joins growing list

*Redgums, Pines and Pastures: a history of the Tarpeena district*, by Alan Jones, was launched last month, making it the eighth of the author's country histories.

The 288-page, soft-cover book tells the story of the Tarpeena district from the pioneereing sheep stations of the 1840s through the (unsuccessful) attempt to settle small farmers in the 1860s to the establishment of clover pastures on smaller intensive grazing properties between the mid-1930s and the late 1950s.

It also tells of the pines which were first planted in the district in the mid-1920s and of the soldier settlers who took up properties in the Pleasant Park area in 1950.

Tarpeena town, 26 km north of Mount Gambier, was surveyed in 1860. It was small but busy as a change station for the horse-drawn passenger and mail coaches until the railway reached Mount Gambier in 1887, then it was almost deserted for 50 years.

In 1937 SAPFOR (now Auspine), one of the largest private sector companies in the timber industry, established its regional headquarters on the outskirts of the town. When the first pines were ready for felling and milling in the 1940s, the town population increased rapidly.

HSSA member Alan Jones tells the story of the town against the backdrop of the district's primary industries.

Other local histories written by Alan cover the districts of Curramulka, Snowtown, Lameroo, Karoonda, Bordertown-Keith-Padthaway (Tatiara) and Lyrup, and Port Vincent town and port.

*Redgums, Pines and Pastures*, can be obtained from the author at \$42 if picked up personally, or \$47 posted.

Alan can be contacted by telephone after working hours on 8272 7519, or by mail at 42 Salisbury Street, Unley, 5061.

### History SA deadline

The deadline for all material to be submitted for the January 1998 issue of *History SA* is Friday 24 December 1997.

# 'What joy and comfort the nurse imparts ...'

by Geoffrey Manning

*One in a series drawn from Mr Manning's researches into life in the Adelaide suburbs of 90 years ago .*

## The district nurse

The excellent system upon which the District Trained Nursing Society is based has been the means of placing many benefits within reach of those who would have been denied them.

One must see the nurse's work in order to fully appreciate the good she is doing among that section of the community to which her efforts are confined. Her duty at the best is not light.

Usually mounted on a bicycle, she begins her round as early as the average businessman reaches his office, but sunset does not always find her labour ended. Sometimes in the summer, particularly when typhoid is prevalent, it is not completed until late at night.

Bodily fatigue often combines to make her day more arduous, but withal you find her the same - patient, hopeful, painstaking and ever ready with a smile and kind word for the sufferer. What joy and comfort she imparts many can testify.

The educational value of her work none can compute. Willing and forbearing, she instils into the homes of the poor many of the principles of health and sanitation and when the maternal head of the household is afflicted, her deft hands often find scope for little touches here and there that perchance have not appealed to one of tender years upon whom the responsibilities have devolved. Nurse is deservedly popular with the children. Young though they may be, they welcome her visits to the humble cottage for they know that she is a benefactress come to aid them in their direst need.

The first call on a recent day was to a little fellow of eight years who was suffering from spinal curvature and an abscess. The wound had to be syringed and plugged and the doing of these duties completed 222 visits to this patient alone. A mile away, an incurable patient was found to be restless and suffering great pain. An injection brought speedy relief. The gracious thanks emanating from her patients is a small reward for her life of self-sacrifice and loving service.

## The lantern operator

I asked our local lantern operator how long he had been at the job and he entered into an interesting

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discourse on the profession and the latest form of public entertainment, the cinematograph:

Oh, since I was at school. After seeing one of the crude instruments of my early days exhibited at a Band of Hope meeting, I procured materials and directions and made a magic lantern and began to experiment with it with a two-wick oil lamp. The views which had particularly struck my fancy were gaily coloured slides depicting people in action. This business is constantly growing in importance. No university, college, or public school even, is complete without its lantern outfit and shutters to darken its lecture room at midday for demonstration purposes; and it is beginning to be recognised that education through the eye to the mind is quicker and more permanent than the tedious drumming of abstract information.

I expect to see the day when many costly chemical and other experiments will be adequately illustrated in progress to our State school students by means of the cinematograph. There are some funny incidents occasionally when lantern slides get out of order. At a missionary lecture the announcement, 'The next picture will show you one of our best-loved teachers surrounded by his domestic circle' was followed by the appearance of a burly cannibal and his 15 wives!

The common house fly has several times bothered me exceedingly. In the summer evenings these pests often get magnified. In one instance, when a lady vocalist was engaged on an illustrated song and had come to the death bed scene, her equanimity was completely upset by a tittering audience, which, as she had her back to the screen, was totally inexplicable. A fly had settled on the lens and appeared as a fearful monster two feet long, tickling an angel's foot. The lantern was never more popular than it is today. The favourite subject here for lecture purposes appears to be first-rate views of Australian scenery.

The cinematograph? Well, it is a great institution and can be made a powerful factor in public instruction and entertainment but a high grade of picture must be insisted upon. I shall never forget the thrill that went through me when I first saw an exhibition of the triumph of science represented in the realm of animated pictures. Before they are safe for indiscriminate use some less combustible material must be invented for the films.

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### The plumber

Our plumber maintains that he works hand in hand with the doctor for the public good and insists that modern civilisation owes a debt to him that is not satisfied by remuneration for his work. His duties? Well, this is how he sums them up:

1. to keep water out of houses (roof work);
2. to get water into houses and store and distribute it where required;
3. to get water out of houses after it has served its purpose.

He also undertakes the functions of galvanised iron worker, gas fitter, glazier, copper smith and tin smith and in connection with the more restricted operations, as a lead worker, from which the name of his trade is derived (Latin *plumbum* – lead). He also works hand in hand with the smoke-test man as many residents have learned to their cost. After the vicious smoke has curled its way through tiny leaks, the owner of the premises is given a mandamus to have the vents repaired within a certain number of hours.

The man with the fire pot and soldering iron is called and in exchange for hard cash, the customer has the satisfaction of knowing that the shining patches put on the pipes have possibly saved him from falling victim to fevers and various other diseases. Just now it appears that the increasing adoption of Marseilles tile roofing will displace to a large extent the use of galvanised iron for the covering of suburban villas, but the plumber is not disturbed by that. He holds that the fortune which brought him the harvest of deep drainage work when times were bad will enable him to profit by a later march of science.

In support of this contention he submits that already English architects are talking about a renaissance of the old ornamental and artistic lead water heads, gutters, down pipes, sundials and the like to lend attractiveness to the plain brick fronts of the more modern houses. He also points with satisfaction to the larger popularity of small gables and turrets which also make more work for the plumber.

The ordinary man in the street can find cause for marvelling at the facility with which the plumber can lift a globe of molten solder on his iron and smoothly run it along just where it is required, while in his own hands the feat is well nigh impossible. His tools comprise implements of the most awkward appearance and of many materials, including flannel, wool, copper, iron and steel; and in many of his operations he does not despise the grease from a

tallow candle; in others he seeks the aid of the hardest of all substances, the diamond.

One of his mysterious masterpieces of work – an evidence of skill rather than a result of commercial value – is the manufacture of pipe in the form of a double cross (six ends) beaten in one piece out of a flat sheet of lead. This is accomplished by first hammering the ductile metal into somewhat the form of a football case and afterwards, by dint of much patience, drawing one portion out and delving another part in on mandrels until the desired result is obtained.

#### Footnote

These tales have been adapted from a series of articles in the Register over the period July 1907 to February 1908.

## On 'home ground' in City of Charles Sturt

*At the invitation of the Woodville Historical Society, SA Historical Society Council member Sean Dawes addressed their meeting on 18 August. Here is an account of his talk.*

Recent Council amalgamations have given an opportunity to honour persons rather than to parochially forge an array of geographical names into extravagant letterheads! Thus we have the City of Charles Sturt, within which lies Sturt's cottage (?) / house.

Rather than raking old embers, Sean chose to present snapshots of a life and allow the citizens to assess their choice of namesake. He pointed to Sturt's birth in 1795 at Chunar, where his father was judge in the administration provided by the East India Company; his departure, aged five, for England and an education; later to cram for an army career.

Sturt saw himself as indigent but, although not born to the purple, he was adequately blue and significantly well connected to garner assets which maintained him well above any poverty line. His 1813 ensignancy in the 39th Regiment was a gift of the Prince Regent, and Sturt purchased a further lieutenantcy and captaincy by 1825. Curiously, any nod to additional promotion during his 20-year army career seems unrecorded.

It was, perhaps, unfortunate for Sturt that, unlike many his age, he missed the Napoleonic Wars, serving only in Quebec and being shot at in upper New York State; followed by three years in Cherbourg and seven in Ireland. At most he gained a personal servant, sufficiently long-serving to be known both as John and Joseph Harris!

Like so many, Sturt blossomed in Sydney. He arrived in 1827, possessed of talents in natural sciences, draughting and writing, and was soon Governor Darling's military secretary. Sturt's contemporaries, however, did not know him as a man of affairs: his talents in trade and politics were not on any grand scale. They lay with exploration and, importantly, with discovery. Particularly, with his 1828 work of circumventing the marshes of the Macquarie and establishing its role, and that of the Castlereagh and Bogan rivers, with the Darling.

Subsequently, Sturt tracked the Murrumbidgee and Murray and sailed the South Australian length of the river system, more to confirm the geography than to discover more opportunities. But upon his return he gained public acclamation in Sydney; some recognition in London among promoters of colonisation, and doubtless earned his place to prosper later in South Australia.

The hero was also unmarried and 35. In 1832, with failing sight (which lasted another 37 years), Sturt returned to London, wrote, and had published his *Expeditions*, and met and married Charlotte Christiana Greene of Bordeaux – a lady he described before their marriage as having 'neither youth nor beauty', but was nevertheless pleasing, gentle, firm of mind, musical, affectionate and cheerful, aged 33 and sharp featured. It was, however, a long, fruitful and devoted marriage.

A distinction of Sturt's was his composure with the aborigines; passing among some 4,000 while sailing the Murray, often with over 100 at his camp sites, and attracting about 600 at the Murray/Darling junction. His was a peaceful incursion – something learnt early in NSW, which he maintained on all later expeditions. Not that he took their advice, but he did respect their persons, if not the land.

In 1851 the Sturts retired to Cheltenham where Charles, as well as seeking gubernatorial honours, acted as consultant on many things Australian – even promoting the European inhabitants as Australians. But in 1869 he was still plain Captain. It seemed the royal extension of the Order of St Michael and St George, with its recognition of foreign-born aspirants, was the vehicle for a knighthood. It was granted by Queen Victoria, but Charles had departed on his final journey before his KCMG was formally accorded. The Queen, however, by special decree gave Charlotte the right to be addressed as Lady Sturt. Doubtless a quality which Charles had long recognised, even though she had understated her age for the 1841 Adelaide census!

## Varied program for 1998 taking shape

The HSSA program for 1998 is taking shape and the complete program will be published in time for distribution early next year.

Already we can look forward to Norris Ioannou talking on Barossa food and folklore, Peter Tregenza on the founding of St Peters College, and Robin Coles on the history and art of the aboriginal people of the Mount Lofty Ranges. Paula Furby will speak on SA women painters; Dr Ann Geddes will speak on 'classical Adelaide'; and Ron White's address will mark the 70th anniversary of the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Then there will be Dr Pauline Payne on Thebarton, old and new, Maggie Ragless on the adventures of a local history officer, and Peter Moore on Colonel Robert Torrens.

Projected field trips include one to aboriginal rock art in the Mount Lofty Ranges led by Robin Coles, to link with his talk on the same subject. Simon Cameron will lead members on a walk through historic Glenelg, and Christine Garnaut will host a field trip to Colonel Light Gardens (see story page 1 of this issue). The pubs of Kensington and Norwood will be the focus of a walk led by Pat Sumerling.

Again, a lively and interesting program, so watch out for details in the New Year and have your diaries handy.

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## Coming events

If you have a meeting, a dinner, an outing or any other historically oriented event you would like to bring to the attention of readers, please submit the details to *History SA* for publication.

**17 November:** Burnside Historical Society meeting. John Moore, 'Pulteney Grammar School'. Burnside Community Centre, 8 pm.

**19 November:** Morning bus tour of historic points of interest in Burnside, as part of Burnside's Jacaranda Festival. Details from Burnside City Council.

**19 November:** Port Adelaide Historical Society, Ted Lloyd talks on his recent visit to Tasmania. In the Society's rooms above the Semaphore Library, 8 pm.

### Exhibitions

*Selling a Dream: promoting Australia to postwar migrants*, Migration Museum, Kintore Ave, Mon – Fri 10 am – 5 pm, weekends 1 – 5 pm, to 31 January.



GLORY TO GOD

A VERY  
HAPPY  
CHRISTMAS  
TO YOU!

IN THE HIGHEST