

# HSA *History*

Newsletter of the Historical Society of South Australia

Print Post approved 535806/0005


No. 148, May 2000

## Recipes and reminiscences

Since the first influx of Prussian settlers in the early 1840s the culture of the Barossa Valley has been intimately bound up with its food and culinary practices. Based on ingredients that have grown well there since settlement and on the tried and tested recipes brought from Europe, the characteristic foods of the Barossa have given a unique character to the region and its people. Many of the foods were essentially peasant dishes, prepared from produce that was close to hand, but over the years various traditions have mingled and the Barossa has earned a reputation for outstanding and inventive cuisine.

We will be introduced to some of the staples of German cooking and to their historical and cultural significance in Angela Heuzenroeder's lecture, "A Taste of History: the Food and Culture of the Barossa", to be given at the Prince Philip Theatre, Prince Alfred College, Kent Town, on Friday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>, at 8.00 p.m.

In researching her material, Angela spent a lot of time in kitchens, taking lessons from elderly cooks and recording their reminiscences of life on the mixed farms. From mettwurst to mulberries, from sauerkraut to Silesian Heaven, from noodles to native currant jam, with every dish laid on the table there was a story to be told. She also examined old diaries and letters and copied a number of hand-written recipe books compiled by Barossa women around the turn of the century (especially interesting as they were often written in a mixture of German and English by people whose language, like their culture, was in a state of transition). Her talk will be as much about the curious sources of her information as about the foods themselves.

Angela Heuzenroeder was born in the Barossa Valley and returned to live there after she was married. She is now a post-graduate student at the Research Centre for the History of Food and Drink at the University of Adelaide, where she is researching the food of nineteenth-century Prussian emigrants. She also works as a teacher-librarian at Angaston Primary School, developing children's research skills, and in 1997-98 ran the national Children's Book of the Year Awards. Her book, *Barossa Food*, published by Wakefield Press in 1999, will be on sale at the June meeting. 




*In 1913 a pig slaughtered on the farm provided a Barossa family with ham, bacon and wursts for months.*

## Lecture tapes available

Responses to the questionnaire have shown that there are a number of members who are unable to attend meetings regularly but who would nevertheless like to hear the lectures that are presented. Cassette tapes of the talks may now be ordered at a price of \$5.00 each (to cover the cost of tape, postage and packaging) and will be available within a few days of each meeting. The lectures from 1998 and 1999 may also be ordered.

Please write to the Treasurer at 9 Sierra Nevada Blvd., Pasadena 5042, specifying the title and date of the lecture you require and enclosing a cheque or money order for \$5.00, payable to

the Historical Society of South Australia (or a \$5 note at your own risk). If you do not wish to keep the tape after listening to it, write your name on it, return it with your next order and enclose only \$3.00. (Tapes may be returned only with a further order.)

We would like to stress that this service is not intended to discourage members from attending the meetings! Most lectures are illustrated with slides, people are more interesting than machines and there's always chocolate cake on the supper table. 

## The Historical Society of South Australia Inc.

Founded 1974

P.O. Box 519, Kent Town, S.A. 5071.

E-mail: [hssa25@hotmail.com](mailto:hssa25@hotmail.com) Web-site: [www.history.sa.gov.au/hssa](http://www.history.sa.gov.au/hssa).

Meetings are held on the first Friday of each month at 8 p.m. in the Prince Philip Theatre, Prince Alfred College, Kent Town. All welcome.

### THE OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY ARE:

- To arouse interest in and promote the study and discussion of history, especially South Australian and Australian history.
- 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 co-operate with similar societies throughout Australia.
- To do all such things as are conducive or incidental to the attainment of any of the above objects.

**PATRON:** Sir Walter Crocker, K.B.E.

### COUNCIL:

**President:** Dr. R.P.J. Nicol, 8297 9844.

**Vice-President:** Mr. M. Keain

**Secretary:** Mrs. G. Brown

**Treasurer:** Mrs. A. Huckel, 8277 2953.

**Members:** Dr. G. Bishop, Dr. S. Cameron, Mr. S. Dawes, Mr. C. Deed, Mr. J. Healey, Mr. J. Loudon, Ms. J. Palmer, Dr. P. Payne.

**Journal Editor:** Dr. J.T. Stock, fax 8303 3446.

**History SA Editor:** Mr. J. Healey, 27 Germein St., Semaphore, S.A. 5019. Ph. (08) 8449 2268.

### APPOINTED OFFICERS:

**Consultant:** Mr. R. M. Gibbs, A.M.

**Publicity Officer:** Ms. M. Dunshore

**Records Officer:** Mrs. E. Ulbrich

**Auditor:** Mr. A. Kovaleff

## See this building before it's too late!


Sunday, June 18<sup>th</sup>, may be one of the last chances that members will have to explore the Old Treasury Building (including the Museum of Exploration, Surveying and Land Heritage) on the corner of King William Street and Flinders Street before it is turned into a luxury hotel and closed to public access forever. Michael Taliangis, who worked there in the Survey Division for thirty years and has been custodian of the Museum for the last six years, will guide us on a tour of the building and provide a fascinating and witty commentary on its place in the history of our State.

The original building, a small section of which can still be seen within, was erected in 1839 and the present structure was built around it between 1860 and 1876. Charles Sturt and George Goyder worked here, as did Premiers Charles Cameron Kingston, Sir Thomas Playford and Don Dunstan.

We will begin our tour upstairs in the plush State Cabinet Room, used continuously from 1876 to 1968, which still contains its original furniture, including an oval oak table, leather-upholstered chairs and a cedar bookcase. From there we will descend to the warren of tunnels and cellars in the basement. It was here that the gold brought from Victoria by Tolmer's Gold Escort in the early 1850s was assayed, and smelted

in small furnaces, one of which still remains. Here Australia's first gold coin was minted in 1852 --- the Adelaide Gold Pound --- and here the Survey Division's presses printed most of Australia's maps until 1975. The tunnels used to extend under King William Street to the G.P.O. and under Flinders Street to the Torrens Building but these are now blocked off. We will, however, see other sections where there are steel tracks on which ran trolley-carts that carried building stone.

Back on the ground floor, we will be shown over the Museum which contains a wealth of relics from the days of the early explorers and surveying parties --- items such as Colonel Light's theodolite and wooden tripod (used to survey Adelaide), Governor Gawler's Treasury cash box, hand-cut pegs placed by Poeppel in 1880 in his survey of the S.A./N.T. border, and the original Haddon's Corner post, placed at the north-eastern corner of South Australia in 1885. There are compasses, hydrometers, sextants, clinometers (for measuring the slope of the land) and artificial horizons, as well as old photographs, maps and drawing instruments. The tour will close with complimentary tea and biscuits in the leafy inner courtyard.

The cost of the afternoon will be \$5, payable on the day. Members are asked to meet at 1.50 p.m. at the Flinders Street entrance (just round the corner from King William Street). Photography is permitted throughout the building so bring your camera if you wish to record things you may never see again. 


## Finding the gap

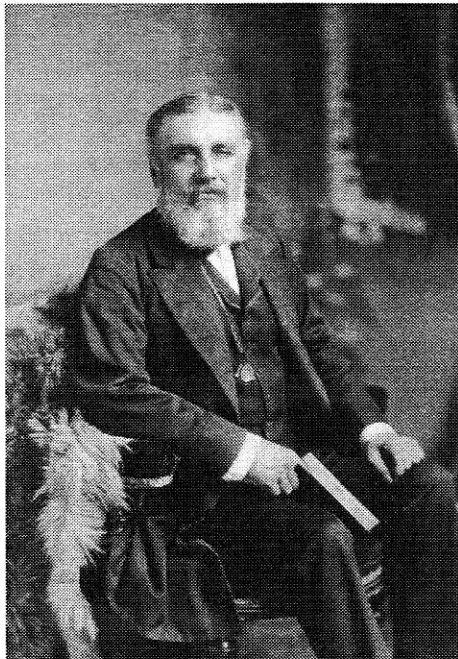
The construction of the Overland Telegraph Line from Adelaide to Darwin, completed on August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1872, stands as one of the great pioneering and scientific achievements in Australia's history. A few hundred men cut and prepared over 36,000 poles, erected them in hand-dug holes and on them strung over 3,000 kilometres of wire. They transported more than 2,000 tonnes of material into the interior as well as several thousand sheep and cattle for food. The line was built in just under two years at a cost of half a million pounds.

Its story has been told in numerous books and articles, most of which highlight the dedication, tenacity and leadership qualities of the man in charge, Charles Todd. But history is never made by just one man, as Ren Potts will show in his illustrated lecture, "The Kink in the Overland Telegraph Line", to be given at the Prince Philip Theatre, Prince Alfred College, Kent Town, on Friday, July 7<sup>th</sup>, at 8.00 p.m.

He will not be retelling the well-known story but focusing rather on the minor players who worked on the central section of the line and, in particular, on the difficulties they encountered in finding a way through the MacDonnell Ranges near Alice Springs --- difficulties which, in the end, produced a curious kink in the otherwise straight line. It took three months to locate a suitable gap in the ranges and this constituted a major setback to the schedule.

Despite this the central section of the line was finished on time. The photograph above shows one of the men who worked on the kink and who was instrumental in finding the gap. Who was he? His identity will be revealed at the talk but here is a clue: four geographical features in the vicinity of Alice Springs are named after him --- a Plain, a Creek, a Dam and a Bluff.

Ren Potts was the 1948 Rhodes Scholar for South Australia and has an Honours Bachelor of Science from the University of Adelaide and a Doctor of Philosophy and Doctor of Science from the University of Cambridge. He has lectured at various universities overseas and was for thirty years the Professor of Applied Mathematics at the University of Adelaide. He is now Emeritus Professor and is an Officer of the Order of Australia. In 1976 he published *Mathematics at the University of Adelaide* and in 1999 was the joint author of *Paper Tape and Punched Cards*, a history of early computing at the University. Since his retirement nine years ago he has presented "Fine Music" programmes on the community radio station 5MBS (101.5 FM). 



## Annual Dinner


The HSSA Annual Dinner will be held this year at the 'Pavilion on the Park', on the corner of South Terrace and Peacock Road, Adelaide, at 6.30 p.m. (for 7.00) on Saturday, August 12<sup>th</sup>. The restaurant proved last year to be such a pleasant and convenient venue that we have chosen it again. (The GST has made several other places too expensive.)

The guest speaker will be Channel Nine's Keith Conlon who has recently joined the Society. A graduate of the University of Adelaide, Keith is the presenter of the popular travel-cum-history series "Postcards", now in its fifth year. He has done over 150 programmes which he researches and writes himself with the aim of sharing his passion for South Australian history and


heritage with as broad an audience as possible. He will be lifting the veil on the joys and woes of interpreting history for television and will entertain us with stories about some of the remarkable characters and places he has come across.

The cost of the dinner will be \$32 (GST included) for a three-course meal, exclusive of drinks. Parking is available next to the restaurant, the entrance being off Sir Lewis Cohen Ave. The Glenelg tram also stops right outside at Stop No. 3. If transport is a problem for you, please ring Dr. Robert Nicol on 8297 9844 to arrange a lift.


Booking is essential and you are asked to complete the slip enclosed with this Newsletter and return it,

with a cheque or money order, to the Treasurer, Mrs. Avis Huckel, 9 Sierra Nevada Blvd., Pasadena 5042, by Friday, August 4<sup>th</sup>. 

## New members

The Historical Society would like to welcome the following new members: Mrs. Alison Brain, Dr. Max & Mrs. Elizabeth Bull, Mr. Keith Conlon, Dr. Karen George, Mr. P. Ginman, Mr. Ken & Mrs. Barbara Hayes, Ms. Sue Johnston, Mr. R.J. Kimber, Ms. Margaret Major, Mrs. Joan and Mr. Russell Martin, Dr. M.C. Newland, Ms. Carmela Pascale, Ms. Kathleen Patitsas, Dr. Ieuan & Mrs. Enone Richards, Mr. Rhys Roberts, Mr. Lee Rodda, Ms. Helen Tilly, Mr. Alan Tucker, Mrs. Nelly Wood, Ms. Mary Wynne and Ms. Lynette Zeitz. 

## History SA deadline

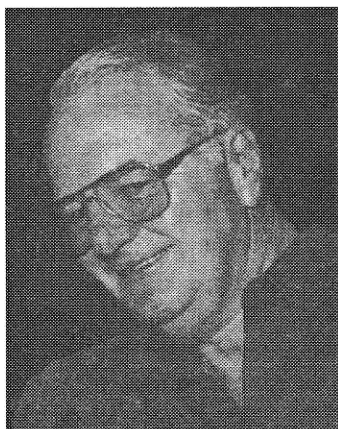
The deadline for all material for the July 2000 issue of the Newsletter is Friday, June 16<sup>th</sup>. It should be addressed to John Healey, Editor, *History SA*, 27 Germein St., Semaphore, S.A. 5019. 



## On your Council

### Colin Deed


Introduced to the HSSA by his partner, Avis Huckel, Colin at first found the sphere of history quite unfamiliar to him and was prone to dropping off to sleep during the lectures. A little embarrassed by this, Avis decided it might be better if they sat in the back row so that no-one would notice. Before long, however, Colin was hooked and is now fascinated by anything historical. As a sales executive for a printing firm, he is constantly publicizing the Society to many of the people he meets in the course of his work and in the last few years has been able to recruit several new members.



He was educated at Unley High School and the School of Printing and Graphic Arts and began work in 1964 as a letterpress printer. In those days the inking rollers on the machines were made of gelatine and Colin has vivid memories of apprentices nibbling them when they happened to feel peckish. He then added to his skills by learning offset and flexigraphic printing and became a quality and production controller, overseeing the making of printing blocks for newspapers and the preparation of artwork for books and magazines.

He worked for seven years as production manager in an advertising agency and served for three years as the Vice-President of the S.A. Division of the Advertising Institute of Australasia. Returning to the printing trade, he was the Manager of Mitchell Press for five years, Sales Manager at another firm for fourteen years and now works as a sales executive for the Graphic Print Group where he has overseen the production of the 1999 HSSA Journal.

A keen sportsman, Colin played district tennis for Glenelg, football for Edwardstown and Port Noarlunga and was a lifesaver for eight years. He joined the Council of the Historical Society in 1997 and has proved to be a valuable member of the team with his contacts in the printing world and numerous other community organizations. He is also responsible for taping the talks at our meetings.

At a recent lecture night Colin was glad he was wearing his name badge for a woman approached him and asked what his father's and sister's names were. Slightly puzzled by this request from a stranger, Colin told her, whereupon she informed him that her great-great-grandfather and his great-great-grandfather had been brothers! She has since presented him with a chart of the family tree going back to 1797 when their forbears lived in Gloucestershire. 

## Mortlock Archives

by Roger André

Of interest for current research into the explorations of Flinders and Baudin and their encounter off the South Australian coast, microfilm has been purchased from the State Library of New South Wales of the journal of Samuel Smith, seaman aboard the *Investigator* from 1801 to 1803.

Donations of original papers of John Benjamin Graham, hitherto held only as microfilm, have been accessioned, documenting Graham's interests in the Burra Mines and Canowie and Curnamona stations. Papers of another nineteenth-century entrepreneur, W. H. Gray, relating to his interests in the Northern Territory, Nullabor Station and Port Augusta, have been added to his record group.


The enduring fascination of the New Australia experiment in Paraguay is reflected in further letters (1894-1908) by Helena Roberta Birks and her little granddaughter Winifred, written from Paraguay and subsequently England. Following conservation they will be incorporated with the Chartier papers. Further papers of amateur naturalist, Kenneth Preiss, have been added to his existing records.

New collections accessioned include those of well-known Anglican clergymen, Bishop Lionel Renfrey and the late Dean Lance Shilton, rector of Holy Trinity, while Cormier family papers document the family's links with Jersey and the careers of François Joseph (Frank) Cormier (1888-1980), master mariner, his nursing sister wife, Alice O'Donohoe (1888-1971), and daughter Kathleen (1917-1997), later Kathleen Baldwin, World War II servicewoman and teacher of Aboriginal children.

Substantial additional records of the Aboriginal Education Foundation have been listed as well as significant deposits from the Good Neighbour Council (which lost its *raison d'être* with the implementation of the Galbally Report of 1978) and from the National Health Services Association of S.A. (1952-1983).

Thirteen volumes of Kym Bonython's scrapbooks on Rowley Park Speedway (1954-1973) should warm the hearts of petrolheads.

Reminiscences include those of Roy Roberts, teacher at Tarcoola from 1934 to 1936, and of Max Taylor, who flew on a World War II bombing mission over Burma. Of World War I interest are greeting cards colourfully embroidered by French women and sent by South Australian soldier, Roy Platten, to his fiancée.

To conclude, some interesting works have been acquired for the Pictorial Collection, notably William Marmaduke Hardy's sketch *Rush on! for dinner*, executed aboard the *Moonta* on Goyder's 1869 Northern Territory expedition, George Whinner's *Autumn near Uraidla*, 1934, and Nora Heysen's portrait sketch of Colin Thiele, c.1960. 

# Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,

Congratulations on facing up to the widespread abuse of spell-checkers as criticised in the editorial of the March issue of *History SA*. I can only say "Hear, hear" to the thrust of your argument. Unfortunately, polite rhetoric or exchanges between the multitude of "Alf and Ada Average" usually pass unnoticed and it therefore often needs strong words to grab attention.

I particularly dislike spelling errors when reading a book because, from early childhood, I have read books (and viewed films) as an armchair observer of the situations presented by the authors. Spelling errors invariably jerk me from the atmosphere of the book. As a participant in the industry, I often consider sending a business card, accompanied by a note: "Proof-reading service available!"

Mr. Justice P. W. Young, in an article entitled "The inadequacies of correspondence by computer" which appeared in the *Australian Law Journal*, March 2000, makes comments similar to those in the editorial regarding the failings of spell-checkers and lack of proof-reading.

*A correspondent from Dorrigo received a letter which asked her to "bare with" the writer.*

He goes on to give examples of:

*. . . the problems judges sometimes have with mass-produced letters from computers. A computer sending a letter to The Hon. Justice Xenophon may begin "Dear The" or it may be really intimate and commence "Dear Hon". One of the judges received a letter that mis-spelt "Hon" as "Hoon". The letter thus addressed to "The Hoon Xenophon" went on to urge "You, Hoon" to buy the product.*

Yours faithfully,  
Anne Every  
Adelaide

Sir,

I find the March Editorial objectionable for its content and for the misuse of the *History SA* Newsletter as a forum for arguments on spelling.

The arguments on whether the booklet at the theatre should end with one M or two Ms and an E has little to do with American influence but more to do with eighteenth-century changes in fashion among the compilers of the English lexicon. Would our editor like to add -ME to *telegram*, *anagram*, *epigram*, etc?

The Americans have never doubled the consonant on the past participle, and, like the U, or lack of, in *colour*, it hardly matters. As for *footpath* versus *sidewalk*, I prefer *pavement*. *Alternative* and *alternate* have nothing to do with American spelling; the words have quite different meanings.

If our editor is on a crusade for better English in print he might look at the growing tendency to turn nouns into verbs, as in *impacting upon*, *sourcing*, *exiting*, the demise of the hyphen as in *co-operate* and the misuse of *proven* as the past participle of the verb *to prove*.

John Healey is vehemently anti-Bill Gates and Rupert Murdoch, but I have seen nothing to suggest a better standard of English in the Fairfax newspapers. I might also draw attention to the growing demise of the collective noun. In the U.K. it has gone; in Australia it is optional and inconsistent. Only in the United States do we read and hear that the government, team, council "*is . . .*"

The Editor's attack on the United States describing it as "sick, vicious, shallow", etc. is childish and vindictive. If he wishes to hear good spoken English go no further than hear and watch the American President. For all his faults, his delivery of good, concise, well-modulated English is without equal; but, of course, he is not a Yank, he's from Arkansas.

The Editor might find it more worthwhile to note the historical errors in the newspapers; among the most common: naming Julius Caesar as a Roman Emperor, Captain Cook as "discovering" Australia, and Magellan as the first to circumnavigate the world. There are many more and some space could be made in the Newsletter for similar errors that readers might come across.

T.A. Goodwin  
Mile End

## Editor's Reply:

The current tendency to spell *programme* as *program* has nothing to do with the decisions of eighteenth-century lexicographers. It is simply a result of present-day Australians mimicking American practice. Since *programme* has been the accepted British and Australian spelling for the last two hundred years, I see no reason to change it just because Americans do things differently. And I would not want to add *-me* to *anagram* or *epigram* as this is the way these words have been spelt in English since the sixteenth century.

I did not say that the use of *alternative* and *alternate* has anything to do with American spelling. As Mr. Goodwin points out, they have quite different meanings, a distinction which American usage obscures by using *alternate* for both.

I heartily agree with the writer's other concerns. We should deplore the poor standard of English in Fairfax as well as Murdoch newspapers, the unnecessary transformation of nouns into verbs, the frequent omission of the hyphen, and the use of plural verbs with singular collective nouns.

And yes, errors of historical fact are more serious than those of language. Readers are invited to forward to the Editor examples of common myths and misconceptions relating to South Australian or Australian history (with references, if possible, for both the incorrect and correct versions of events). -- J.H.

Dear Sir,

It was with much glee that I read your Editorial in the March 2000 Newsletter. I heartily agree with your sentiments and view with apprehension the rapid Americanisation (or should that be Americanization?) of the English language.

There is, too, an insidious invasion of American influence in other aspects of life in this land of Australia which is equally worrisome. We are Australians and not Yanks and one of my fears is that we become the n<sup>th</sup> State of the United States of America (or an offshore island of Japan!).

Thank you and many bouquets to you for your stand.

Yours sincerely,  
Colleen M. Lloyd  
Seacombe Gardens

Dear Sir,

Having answered your questionnaire recently, I am rather surprised to find myself writing to you again so soon after. This is just a note to say how much I enjoyed your editorial article in the March HSSA Newsletter. Please do keep up that stance.

And I was happy to see you endorse *Oxford Dictionaries* --- and not just because I worked for the O.U.P. for thirty-five years!

Sincerely,  
David Elder  
Box Hill North, Vic.



## CHAFF MILL VILLAGE

*Luxury apartments in  
the heart of Clare*

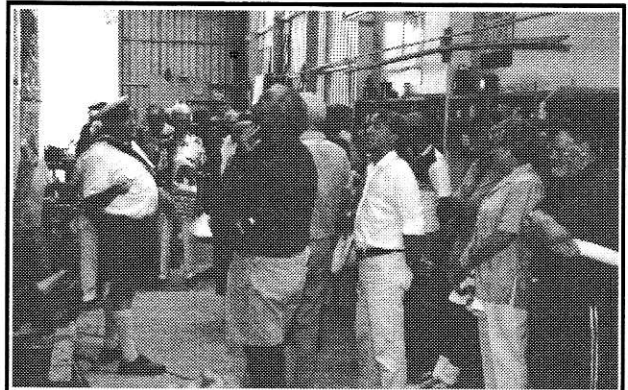
310 Main North Road,  
Clare, S.A. 5453

Phone:  
(08) 8842 1111

Website:  
<http://www.capri.net.au/~chaffmil>

E-mail:  
[chaffmil@capri.net.au](mailto:chaffmil@capri.net.au)

*The owner, Helen Dickeson, is Curator of  
the Clare Regional History Collection.*



*Neville Smith of the St. Kilda Tramway Museum explains the operations of the restoration workshop to HSSA members on the February field trip.*

*Photograph by Max Millowick.*

## Questionnaire summary

The responses to the Newsletter questionnaire (received from approximately 15% of the membership) have provided the Editor with some useful guidelines and many constructive suggestions.

Almost without exception, the replies indicated that the members read most or all of each issue, consider the coverage of forthcoming HSSA functions to be sufficiently informative and/or interesting, think that there are enough items about other topical events, and regard the "Coming Events and Exhibitions" column as a useful part of the Newsletter. Over twenty members attended one or more functions of other societies in 1999 as a result of seeing them listed in *History SA*.

Three quarters of the respondents are interested in updates of Mortlock Library acquisitions, so this will now be a regular feature supplied by Brian Samuels (covering monographs and the oral history collection), supplemented by Roger André's summaries of archival material. (See pages 8 & 5.) Over half the respondents have access to the Internet and of these more than 80% would like to hear about history-related web-sites. The Editor will endeavour to do his best in this regard, although it is very time-consuming extracting information from the "World Wide Wait" and, as one member pointed out, there are many squibs among the crackers. It would be appreciated if anyone who has found interesting material could forward the web-site address to the Editor, with, if possible, a sample print-out.

There have been many interesting ideas for future articles. The Editor has compiled a list of over forty topics from the wide range of suggestions and has already lined up several pertinent contributions. A number of members requested greater coverage of regional history and of working-class people rather than just the rich and famous. These concerns are being addressed and the result will be apparent in this year's Newsletters.

Thank you to everyone for the input!



# New at the Mortlock


Compiled by Brian Samuels from recent issues of *Mortlock Miscellany*, the monthly listing of Mortlock Library accessions, which is available on the State Library's web-site <http://www.slsa.sa.gov.au>. The list does not include archival material which is covered in Roger André's column on page 5.

## MONOGRAPHS

- L. Allery & G. Trimboli: **City of Playford: A Brief History** (City of Playford, Smithfield, 1999)  
 A.M. Bray: **Annals of the Port Adelaide Presbyterian Church** (Bray, Grange, c.1999)  
 P. Bell: **Post-Colonisation Heritage Study of The Levels: Report to MFP Australia** (Historical Research Pty. Ltd., Adelaide, 1996)  
 J. Burns: **A Beach in Time: Memories of Port Willunga** (Seaview Press, Henley Beach, 1999)  
 A. Cafarella: **Corunna Downs: The Invisible W.W. 2 Airfield** (Cafarella, Hawker, 1998)  
 A.R. Cameron: **The Story of the Overland Telegraph Line** (S.A. Postal Instit. Lecture Soc., Adelaide, 1932)  
 N.W. Cormack: **Port Victoria, 50 Years On** (Windjammer 50 Committee, Port Victoria, 1999)  
**Cyclone for Beauty & Protection** (Cyclone Company of Australia, Adelaide, 1948)  
 B. Edwards: **Moravian Aboriginal Missions in Australia 1850-1919** (Uniting Church Historical Society (SA), Adelaide, 1999)  
 E. Giles: **The Journal of a Forgotten Expedition** (Corkwood Press, North Adelaide, 1999)  
 L.H. Griffiths: **Telephone in South Australia: Its Development and History** (Adelaide, 1933)  
 G. Hart: **From Night Clinics to the Internet: A History of Sexually Transmitted Diseases in South Australia, 1916-1996** (Royal Adelaide Hospital, Adelaide, 1999)  
**Heritage of Faith: Essays in Honour of Arnold D. Hunt** Ed. G.W. Potter (Potter, Morphett Vale, 1996)  
 A. Heuzenroeder: **Barossa Food** Photographs by Eric Algra (Wakefield Press, Kent Town, 1999)  
**Historic Buildings Conservation Guide: A Reference for State Government Agencies in South Australia** (Department for Administrative & Information Services, Adelaide, 1998)  
**Historic West Terrace Cemetery** (Dept. of Housing and Urban Development & State History Centre, Adelaide, 1997)  
 T. Howard: **Adelaide at the Pictures: Movie Favorites & Cinemas** (Reid, Wyong, 1998?)  
 D.H. Hunter: **A Short History of YHA Hostels in South Australia 1948-1998** (Hunter, Norwood, 1999)  
 A. Jones & K. Cameron: **Her Majesty's South-Eastern Mails** (Openbook Publishers, Adelaide, 1999)  
**Kangaroo Island Maritime Heritage Trail** (Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources, State Heritage Branch, Adelaide, 1996)

- M. Lohe, F.W. Albrecht, L.H. Leske: **Hermannsburg: A Vision and a Mission** Ed. E. Leske (Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide, 1977)  
**Mount Barker Heritage Walk** (Mount Barker District Council, Mount Barker, 1998)  
**Mount Gambier Cave Garden and Environs Conservation Management Plan** (Fifth Creek Studio for the City of Mount Gambier, Montacute, 1999)  
 R. Parsons: **Migrant Ships for South Australia, 1836-1866** 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Gould Books, Gumeracha, 1999)  
**The Poets** (Penola Branch, National Trust of South Australia, Penola, 1999)  
**Restoration of Ayers House** [Video Recording] (South Australian Film Corporation, Hendon, c. 1998)  
 R. Smith: **Curiosities of South Australia 2** (Peacock Publications, Norwood, 1999)  
 J. Spoehr (ed.): **Beyond the Contract State: Ideas for Social and Economic Renewal in South Australia** (Wakefield Press, Kent Town, 1999)  
 H.M.F. Tolcher: **Rogues and Heroes: Policing the Cooper 1876-1952** (Tolcher, Linden Park, 1999)  
 D.J. Towler & T.J. Porter: **The Hempen Collar: Executions in South Australia 1838-1964: A Collection of Eyewitness Accounts** (Wednesday Press, Parafield Gardens, 1999)  
 D. & C. Tuckwell: **Going Stronger: A Guide to Collecting South Australian Tins, Packaging and Give Aways** (Tuckwell, Craigmore, 1999)  
**21<sup>st</sup> Century Adelaide: What Sort of Urban Areas Should We Prepare For?** (Planning SA, Adelaide, 1999)  
**Uraidla Heritage Walk** (East Torrens Historical Society, Norton Summit, 1999)  
 R. Wight: **A Century of the Adelaide and Suburban Cricket Association Incorporated, 1899-1999** (Wight, Plympton, 1999)  
 E. Zalums: **Index to the Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia (SA Branch) Volumes 41-80 (1940-1979)** (Royal Geographical Society of South Australia, Adelaide, 1997)

## ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

- OH 456 **The Australian Rural History Project** (Additional material) Interviewer: Rob Linn [Sound Recording] 1997  
 OH 524 **John Dowie** (Additional material) Interviewer: Jennifer Palmer [Sound Recording] 1999  
 OH 529 **Tributes to the Life of Don Dunstan** Interviewer: Philip Satchell [Radio 5AN Sound Recording] 1999  
 OH 537 **Reunion of Participants in the Glenelg Centenary Commemoration Day Re-Enactment, 1936** Interviewer: K. Mason [Sound Recording] 1984  
 OH 538 **Exploring Historic Glenelg by Walking or Cycling Tours** Narrator: Dulcie Perry [Sound Recording] c.1982  
 OH 540 **John Cummins Morphett: 'Cummins', the Morphett Family Residence** Producer: Jo Seager [Sound Recording] c.1990 

# Fanny's Folly at Floraville

by Russell Smith

Fanny Gilles was the niece of South Australia's first Colonial Treasurer, Osmond Gilles. Her father, Lewis Gilles, was prone to flights of fancy that occasionally landed him in trouble and Fanny followed in father's footsteps. Before we tell of Fanny's foolishness at Floraville, a little about Lewis, for knowing the father explains, to a degree, the actions of the daughter.

We go back to October, 1842. The Gilles family was living in Launceston, where Lewis had founded the Tamar Bank. Fanny, the eldest of twelve surviving children, had been born in Launceston in 1824. For those at the top of the social tree in that isolated convict colony there were rigid rules to follow and the large Gilles family were part of that circle. Lewis was an active member of the Launceston Club and his wife Mary regularly hosted soirées in their elegant Brisbane Street home. It was an incident emanating from one of Mary's social functions that led indirectly to the family moving to South Australia.

A certain Dr. Pugh and his wife had been sent an invitation to a ball at the Gilles home but failed to respond. When queried afterwards, the Doctor denied having received the invitation but Gilles nevertheless demanded an apology. Pugh refused to say sorry so the offended banker wrote to the Launceston Club pointing out that his fellow member was guilty of tergiversation and of actions derogatory to the character of a gentleman. Dr. Pugh countered by posting a notice in the clubhouse stating that Lewis Gilles was both a liar and a coward. The fight was on.

A prolonged slanging match ensued, the result of which was Gilles' taking Dr. Pugh to court on the charge of libel and defamation of character with damages of two thousand pounds being demanded. The cheeky, perhaps scheming, claimant was eventually put in his place by the judge by being awarded the sum of one farthing! Publicly humiliated, Lewis Gilles then decided to uproot the family and join his successful big brother in Adelaide.

Tragedy struck shortly after they settled into their East Terrace home for Mary Gilles died suddenly in September, 1844. Several friends of Osmond Gilles stepped in and gave support to his unfortunate brother, now in unfamiliar territory and with a large number of children to bring up and guide into the new social

scene. One of the friendly families was that headed by merchant and pastoralist William Younghusband (*pictured below*). His wife Louisa encouraged Fanny Gilles, now aged twenty, to visit their home on a regular basis and despite the age difference the two ladies became close friends.

Younghusband had arrived in South Australia in 1842. It was the right time for the emergence of a visionary man with a mercantile background and he soon undertook several successful ventures. His father owned ships that already traded between England and Australia and William had at one stage skippered one of them on the Calcutta trade route. An early enterprise after arriving in Adelaide was an attempt at creating shipping communications with China but that met with little success. He went through several highs and



lows but eventually established himself in shipping in a big way.

Then followed an expansion of his interests into the pastoral scene and by 1844 Younghusband owned over 2000 sheep and 100 cattle. A younger brother, Edwin, arrived in Adelaide that year but he did not have the business acumen of his brother and became dependent on him. By 1847 William had purchased 374 acres on the Gawler River, a sheep run he named Floraville, previously owned and established by James Ilbery. Edwin Younghusband and his wife Mary moved into the "pretty little villa-like dwelling, a sort of card model fancy" on

the Floraville property while William and his family moved into their newly-built mansion, designed by George Strickland Kingston, in Strangways Terrace, North Adelaide.

As a local landholder, William Younghusband took an active interest in many of Gawler's early developments and was one of the trustees of the town's St. George's Church. Fanny Gilles was a close friend of the wife of Reverend Coombes of St. George's and was occasionally the guest of the family for lengthy periods. The Gilles family had holidayed in England in 1846 and returned on the *Augustus*, along with Reverend and Mrs. Coombes, the friendship of the ladies stemming from that voyage. It was during one of her Gawler sojourns that Fanny met Doctor George Francis Moreton and before long they were talking of marriage. No doubt Mrs. Younghusband and Mrs. Coombes were behind the matchmaking.

During the month of February, 1849, Fanny was at Gawler, staying with the Coombes family and regularly seeing Dr. Moreton. Fate then stepped in with an incident that led to the dissolving of the Gilles/Younghusband family friendship. ⇒

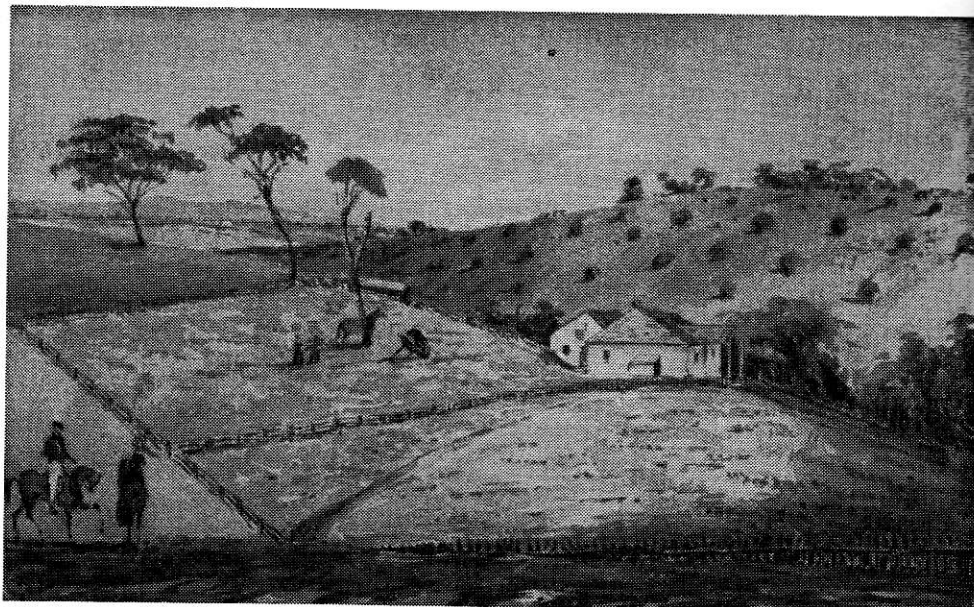
Reverend Coombes was unexpectedly obliged to visit Lake Alexandrina and his wife decided to accompany him. Arrangements were made for Fanny to move out to Floraville during their absence, as a guest of Edwin and Mary Younghusband. The latter were due to depart for England within days but William and Louisa Younghusband intended to come up to Floraville on their departure so the situation was acceptable to all. Living in the house at the time were manager Thomas Mathewson and a female servant, Sarah Quin. There were other servants as well who bunked in out-houses and the barn, and a married couple named Neale were tenants in a cottage on the property, about 200 yards from the main house.

On arrival in Adelaide, Mary Younghusband became ill and Louisa Younghusband decided to remain with her, leaving her husband William to journey to Floraville alone. What occurred that first evening resulted in another Lewis Gilles court case.

The house at Floraville had a verandah along one side with doors from two of the bedrooms, those occupied by Thomas Mathewson and Sarah Quin, opening out onto the verandah. Fanny Gilles was given a bed in Sarah's room, at the prior insistence of Mary Younghusband. The young ladies talked for a while after retiring early, then Sarah extinguished the candles. It was a very hot night and the two took a long time to settle into an uneasy sleep.

The household was awakened about 11 p.m. by hysterical screaming coming from Sarah's room. The shrieks woke the male servant and an aboriginal boy who were sleeping in the barn and even Mr. and Mrs. Neale in their cottage. It was Fanny who was screaming. Sarah fumbled to light a candle, revealing her room-mate sitting up in bed and shaking uncontrollably. Mathewson quickly appeared at the window and William Younghusband at the door, both in their night attire.

When Fanny was able to respond to their anxious questioning she claimed a lady in black had been standing by her bed and had taken hold of her hand. The alarmed Younghusband seated himself by the bed and began bathing her hands and head with cold water. The ghost-seeing guest could not settle down and succumbed to fits of sighing and sobbing throughout the rest of the night. The master of the house remained sitting by Fanny's bed for some time,



*Watercolour of "Gawler Farm" (later "Floraville"), painted in 1842 by Mrs. James Ilbery (née Henrietta Evelina Thomas) who was sister to William Younghusband's wife Louisa.*

*The painting is reproduced by kind permission of the artist's great-grandson, Dr. Peter Ilbery, of Farrer, A.C.T. (See note on page 11.)*

with the chaperoning Sarah Quin trying to sleep just a few feet away.

The unfortunate young lady was still very agitated the following morning and Dr. Moreton was sent for. He stayed all day and into the evening, taking long walks with Fanny in the garden. Within a few weeks their engagement was announced and nothing more was said, at that stage, about the visit by the lady in black.

William Younghusband was probably not amused by the hysterical behaviour of fanciful Fanny and had very likely heard of a few rumours that were circulating around town about that night at Floraville back in February, for when an invitation to the April wedding arrived it was refused. Mrs. Younghusband responded, declining to attend due to her husband's pressure of business. Lewis Gilles wrote to Younghusband demanding an explanation, insisting that his family had been grossly insulted. The angry Younghusband replied, telling Gilles he had "a heated imagination --- a weakness seemingly prevailing in his family".

After the wedding, speculation was rife as to why William Younghusband had not attended. Clearly Dr. Moreton believed his wife or her family had been wronged in some way for on one memorable afternoon, with the passing parade in busy King William Street looking on, the Gawler doctor horse-whipped the unsuspecting pastoralist without warning. Younghusband retaliated, forcing Moreton's head under one arm while he battered his face with his free fist. The parties were separated without serious injury.

Then it all came out, at the Law and Police Court on October 11<sup>th</sup>: YOUNGHUSBAND v. GILLES --- action for libel --- damages laid at five thousand pounds! It had begun with letters from Lewis Gilles to Marshall McDermott, manager of the Bank of Australasia, and

to the Secretary of the Adelaide Silver Lead Mining Company, stating that their committee member William Youngusband had "performed a deadly insult to a virtuous and motherless girl while under his own roof at Floraville".

Youngusband saw red and took Gilles to court for libel. The result was a soap opera that kept Adelaideans amused and entertained for weeks. Personal letters were produced, read and published. Everyone at or near Floraville on that fateful night was called to explain what they saw or heard. The room plan of the house was carefully examined, with much discussion about door latches, squeaking floorboards and distances between beds. Fanny broke her silence and claimed that during the course of the terrible night her attentive host continually uttered ungentlemanly things to her and that this, on top of her "bad dream", was the reason for her state of agitation while still at Floraville. She had said nothing previously because of her friendship with Mrs. Youngusband.

At the end of it all it was difficult to assess who was telling the truth --- whether William Youngusband might have been "the lady in black" himself or if Fanny and her father were simply habitual schemers. The judge was clearly happy to end the long case and damages were entered at one shilling! No-one won and the reputations of both parties were smeared.

It must have been quite awkward for prominent citizen Youngusband to live down the embarrassing publicity. As well as holding the positions of first Chairman of the Adelaide Botanic Garden and Chairman of the Adelaide Silver Lead Mining Company he held several other important business posts. He was a Director of the Bank of Australasia and of the Glen Osmond Union Mining Company. As well, he became involved in the riverboat trade, building and importing steamers. He was a member of the Legislative Council from 1857 to 1861 and even served a term as Chief Secretary. The site of Youngusband's main office was in King William Street, where the ANZ Bank now stands (and possibly close to where the brawl with Dr. Moreton took place).

There is no memorial tablet honouring William Youngusband in South Australia for he died in Rome in 1863, having contracted typhus and succumbing within a matter of weeks. A South Australian peninsula, a lake, a cape and a mountain were named after him so the name Youngusband will forever be remembered.

The Moretons moved from Gawler to Nailsworth from where George became medical officer to the Yatala Stockade. They had one son, given the Christian name Gilles, and three daughters. The doctor died in 1861 but Fanny lived on to a ripe old age, passing away at her Hutt Street home in 1919.

Lewis Gilles left South Australia in the late 1850s to become Police Magistrate at Warrnambool. He later returned to Glen Osmond and died at the family home "Woodley" in 1884.

The pretty cottage at Floraville, sadly, was burnt to the ground in February, 1873. It was unoccupied at the time and it was never established how the fire started. There were boys working on the neighbouring farm who had been smoking and they were admonished for doing so without the consent of their master but there was no proof that they had caused the fire. The flames were first noticed coming from an area 100 yards to the rear of the house and stables and they quickly spread through the long, dry grass to engulf and destroy both buildings. Today the footings of some walls and the slate flagstone of the front step are all that remain.

There is an interesting sequel to the Floraville story. In the 1870s the spectre of a woman, who became known as "the Grey Lady of North Adelaide", began making ghostly appearances at the former Youngusband mansion in Strangways Terrace. She was often "seen" sitting in a chair in the basement. The popular explanation was that Mrs. Robert Gouger, wife of South Australia's first Colonial Secretary, was buried in the garden and that it was she who was haunting the place. Gouger had a small cottage on the site before Youngusband demolished it and had his own new home built in 1874. In actual fact, Mrs. Gouger died at Holdfast Bay within weeks of the arrival of the *Buffalo* and long before her husband's land at North Adelaide had been pegged out.

Could "the lady in black" of Floraville have re-surfaced in the minds of storytellers as "the Grey Lady of North Adelaide"? An intriguing possibility.

#### References:

- Adelaide Times*, 6, 13 August, 15, 18, 22 October, 1849  
*The Bunyip*, 8 February 1873  
*Chronicle*, 15 February 1873  
*Register*, 10 January 1918  
*Advertiser*, 11 March 1919  
*Biographical Index of South Australians 1836-1885*, ed. Jill Statton (SAGHS, Adelaide, 1986)  
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 Personal communication from Julia Kennewell

#### Note provided by Dr. Peter Ilbery:

My great-grandfather James Ilbery, the former owner of Floraville, was previously a merchant in India and China and arrived in Adelaide from Singapore in December, 1839. He purchased the property on the Gawler River and built the house shown in the painting. His wife Henrietta, who executed the watercolour, arrived in 1840 with her mother, her infant son William and a Burmese servant.

An unfortunate dispute over the branding of cattle resulted in James Ilbery spending a year in Adelaide Gaol, being released in 1843. A second son, Thomas, was born a few months later. The following year the child William suffered a dreadful accident, dying at the age of six after being run over by a bullock dray. He was buried on the property, though the exact site is not known.

Henrietta Ilbery died at Calcutta in 1858.



# Scenes from a life

by John Healey

Many an old book on the early history of South Australia may, upon chance perusal, prove to contain anecdotes which are both delightfully vivid and unexpectedly illuminating. If the book is out of print such gems are likely to remain buried, especially if they are incidental to most research interests. The extracts printed below are taken from Edwin Hodder's biography of George Fife Angas, published in London in 1891 and never reprinted. Angas kept voluminous diaries for almost sixty years which, regrettably, are now lost but Hodder had access to them when he wrote his book and so preserved many details that would otherwise have disappeared into the maw of time.

Though he did not arrive here until 1851, George Fife Angas (pictured right) played a pivotal role in the development of the colony as Chairman of the South Australian Company. In the first months of 1836, having taken up a substantial amount of the land offered for sale under the Colonization Act and thereby rescuing the scheme from collapse, he despatched three of the Company's ships, the *Duke of York*, the *Lady Mary Pelham* and the *John Pirie*, well in advance of the official parties on board the *Rapid* and the *Buffalo*. He then made it his business to promote emigration to South Australia by travelling extensively throughout England, holding meetings, soliciting support from philanthropists and ministers of religion, forming county associations and publishing information for intending colonists.

Such incessant activity eventually took its toll and Angas retreated for a time to his home in Dawlish, Devon. Hodder provides the following sidelight on this interval:

*It is not surprising to find that soon after this there came a reaction, and a significant entry in the diary relates:*

*"Aug. 27, 1836 ---- Here am I laid up, as it were, in ordinary like a ship-of-war dismantled, my physical strength much reduced, and my nervous system shattered to pieces."*

*Days of enforced leisure in the life of a busy man are rarely wasted days; certainly they were not so in the case of Mr. Angas. Writing did not appear to exhaust him; as a matter of fact it was a recreation, and among his papers there are copies of voluminous letters to Governor Hindmarsh on almost every subject that touched the best interests of the new colony. . . .*



*He was greatly aided in the manual labour by two of his daughters, who acted as his private secretaries. For hours together he would pace the room with his hands behind his back, dictating important documents which they would write simultaneously, so as to obtain two copies, and with long practice they not only learned to write with great rapidity, but at exactly the same pace, and so much alike that the two documents would be almost facsimiles. When pressed for time, if the correspondence was not such as to require very careful thought, he would dictate two separate letters simultaneously, giving first a sentence of one and then of the other.*

*His daughters were also accustomed to read books on colonization, and make abstracts and summaries of the contents, and also to make lists of every necessary article for domestic or personal use, garden implements, seeds, and so forth, so that small but important articles, such as pins, needles, tapes, shoelaces, brushes, rolling-pins, pens, or ink, might not be forgotten in sending out supplies to the young colony.*

Hodder then adds a note which cannot fail to charm readers of the present day:

*In his leisure at Dawlish it is refreshing to turn to an entry in his journal in which he records some relaxation from the strain of business:*

*"Jan. 22, 1837 --- I regularly devote from two to three hours a day to the reading of history with my daughters."*

On the 13<sup>th</sup> December, 1845, Angas had a narrow brush with death. He was on board a ship travelling from London to Gravesend when a double collision occurred, first with a large Hamburg steamer and then with a brig. It was at night and there was a heavy fog. Hodder quotes from a letter that Angas wrote a few days later to his daughter Emma (Mrs. William Johnson):

*Although certainly I expected to have finished my course on the moment of the steamboat's collision, it was to me a very interesting circumstance, although awful indeed. I stood at the companion, and never moved until I started off and took refuge in the brig. My mind was calm and peaceful, nothing painful in my feelings except the idea of cold water. I saw everything from first to last that took place, and heard everything, sad as it was. I was employed in intently watching all that was going on.*

To this philosophic observation Hodder appends the following footnote:

*This story reminds us of the great lion story in Livingstone's Life. When on the ground, with the lion over him, and being shaken as a terrier does a rat,*

"the shock," he says, "produced a stupor similar to that which seems to be felt by a mouse after the first shake of a cat. It caused a sort of dreaminess in which there was no sense of pain, nor feeling of terror, though quite conscious of all that was happening. It was like what patients partially under the influence of chloroform describe, who see all the operation but feel not the knife. . . . The shake annihilated fear, and allowed no sense of horror in looking round at the beast. This peculiar state is probably produced in all animals killed by the carnivora; and if so, it is a merciful provision made by our benevolent Creator for lessening the pain of death."

It will be remembered that when Livingstone returned to England he was asked what he was thinking of when in the lion's grasp, and he answered quietly, "I was thinking with a feeling of disinterested curiosity which part of me the lion would eat first!"

Angas himself finally emigrated to South Australia in 1850, arriving at Port Adelaide on the *Ascendant* in January, 1851, accompanied by his wife and youngest son. His two eldest sons, John Howard and George French, and his eldest daughter Rosetta were already here.

The 1840s had seen a growing dissatisfaction on the part of many South Australians with the system of government that had been instituted in 1842. There was no elected parliament and the Governor had the power to nominate the seven members of the Legislative Council. A succession of rather high-handed Governors --- Grey, Robe and Young --- did little to address the colonists' concerns and it became evident to the authorities in Britain that reform was essential. In 1850 the British Parliament passed the Australian Colonies Government Act which gave South Australia a Legislative Council of twenty-four members, sixteen of whom were to be elected, thus giving the colonies a chance to draw up new constitutions for themselves.

**REVIEW: *This Everlasting Silence: the love letters of Paquita Delprat and Douglas Mawson*, ed. Nancy Robinson Flannery (Melbourne Univ. Press, 2000)**

Paquita Delprat and Douglas Mawson were engaged to be married when Mawson set out as leader of the Australasian Antarctic Expedition of 1911-1914 (the expedition which included his legendary lone trek of 100 miles). For twenty-seven months the young lovers wrote constantly to each other but the letters were only forwarded in batches when a ship could get through, so they knew little of each other's activities and feelings. After twenty-two months without a single letter, Paquita wrote, "this everlasting silence is almost unbearable".

The letters reveal in Mawson a poetic sensitivity not emphasized in the biographies, an enchantment with the polar landscape and a boyish preoccupation with future plans. They show Paquita maturing into an

A copy of the Act was despatched to Adelaide on board the *Ascendant*, the ship on which George Fife Angas was also embarked. We were lucky to get a Constitution at all, as Hodder recounts:

*It had been an ambition of his [Angas] to be the personal bearer of the official copy of the New Constitution Act to the colony, and application had been made to the Colonial Office to this end, but it was found to be contrary to precedent, and red-tape triumphed, the important document being sent from the Colonial Office in charge of a clerk, who was instructed to take it on board the Ascendant and deliver it into the hands of the captain.*

*But he had gone ashore, and as the ship was on the point of sailing, the clerk, either through negligence or from not understanding the importance of the papers with which he was entrusted, gave the package to a steward, who, being very busy, thrust it into the nearest place of safety. The ship sailed, and if the captain gave a thought to the matter at all, he merely supposed that there had been some delay or fresh arrangements had been made.*

*On arrival in Adelaide the proper authorities came on board to demand their Constitution and receive it with due honour, for advices from England had informed them that it would arrive in the Ascendant. The captain, of course, protested that he had seen nothing of it, and there was a great hue and cry for the lost Constitution, until one day shortly after, in turning out the captain's soiled linen for the laundress, it was found, to the great amusement of every one, at the bottom of the bag, the place in which the steward had hurriedly placed it for security!*

#### References:

- Edwin Hodder: *George Fife Angas, Father and Founder of South Australia* (Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1891)  
R.M. Gibbs: *A History of South Australia* (Balara Books, Adelaide, 1969)

educated young woman but they also reveal her growing doubts about Douglas's love as the silence lengthened. In August, 1913, she wrote: "Are you frozen? In heart I mean. Am I pouring out a little of what is in my heart to an iceberg?" And a month later: "Oh Douglas don't don't let Antarctica freeze you." To which he replied: "No! I am not frozen in heart you may be sure, this is where the warm hearts are bred."

This is the first publication of the letters in their entirety, Nancy Flannery having only recently discovered Mawson's half of the correspondence in the unwitting possession of a family member. She provides a concise introduction and an unobtrusive commentary to guide the reader through the intricacies of locale and timeframe and the result is a beautifully produced book.

It retails in hardback for \$29.95 and is available at major bookshops.

-- J.H.

Second Prize 1999 History Essay Awards

# The demise of cameleering in South Australia

by Fiona Laughton

Economic factors were major catalysts in the decline of cameleering in South Australia. However, government regulations, influenced by social attitudes of the time, also had significant impact on the demise of the industry. The decline in demand for camel transport in South Australia had a detrimental effect on the Afghan cameleers who provided it, whether they were self-employed as carriers or working as employees of other Afghans or European Australians. Some effects were unemployment, loss of livelihood and a general decay of predominantly Afghan townships that had flourished in outback South Australia during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

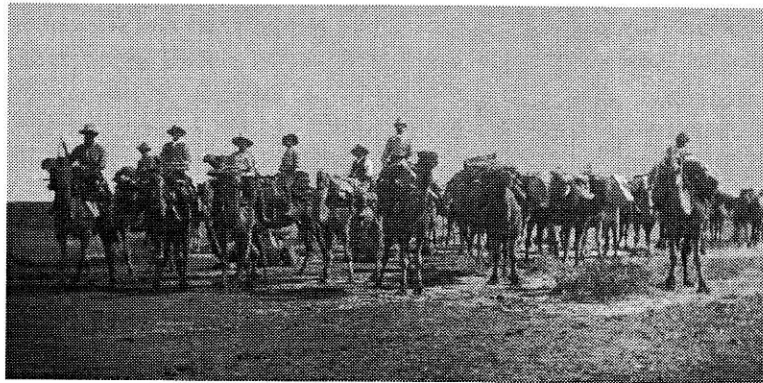
The effectiveness of camels as a solution to the problem of transport in the arid interior of South Australia saw demand for cameleering at its highest in the second half of the nineteenth century. However, circumstances did not stay favourable for the Afghan cameleers for long. Declining demand for cameleering first becomes evident in relation to the cameleer's employment on government-initiated infrastructure projects. Camels, and therefore the Afghans who worked them, played an integral role in the construction of the Adelaide to Darwin Overland Telegraph Line, which was completed in 1872. They carried supplies and tools for the construction of the line and the telegraph stations and for the needs of workers. The Afghans also made a significant contribution to the construction of the railway line from Port Augusta to Alice Springs, completed in 1889.

The completion of these projects obviously forced the cameleers to seek alternative employment. Despite the fact that the telegraph project was prolonged by the necessity to replace wooden telegraph poles with iron ones after many were damaged by white ants, meaning prolonged employment for the Afghans, it was inevitable that they would eventually have to find work elsewhere. At this stage, work for them

was far from scarce, and some began their own carrying businesses, being highly successful doing so. Others found work accompanying Europeans on expeditions of exploration, their camels proving indispensable on many occasions.

While it is argued by some that even in the nineteenth century cameleering was steadily declining, it is generally agreed that the 1920s and 1930s saw cameleering in South Australia diminish most noticeably. It is somewhat ironic that the railways which had been a source of employment for the Afghans later became a source of their demise as the line "essentially followed the main camel routes that started out at Port Augusta or Beltana". Rajkowski also points out that this irony extends even further because some descendants, particularly around the Marree area, found employment "working for the iron horse that replaced their ancestors' camel strings".

The introduction of motor vehicles to the outback during the 1920s further accelerated the replacement of camels as the most efficient form of transport. Carrying



*The Elder Scientific Exploration Expedition setting out from Cootanoorinna in 1891. In the nineteenth century, camels played a major role in the exploration of the outback. Photograph courtesy of the Royal Geographical Society of S.A.*

contracts that had once been won by the Afghans were now granted to new trucking companies. Rajkowski mentions Harry Ding as an example of a person whose trucking business operated extensively throughout outback Australia, soon replacing the services provided by the cameleers. A number of Afghans returned to their homelands and out of those who chose to

remain in South Australia some attempted the transition to trucking. Stevens suggests, though, that most lacked the financial means to do so. Others gave up carrying altogether and took up hawking in the outback settlements, or found work on the railways.

As demand for camel transport decreased, oversupply of camels resulted. The *Observer* reported in December 1925 that by that time Marree had a population of "about 2000 camels running at large" but "only 400 were required to do any work, and only then for about six months of the year". In 1934 the *Sunday Mail* stated in hindsight that unemployment threw "many Afghans and their camels into idleness". The camels became concentrated around Ghan Towns where the Afghans depastured them on town reserves.

Several problems emerged that inflamed the anti-Afghan sentiment which existed in some outback communities. McKnight argues that there were in fact three outcomes emerging from this situation that combined to cause conflict: overgrazing destroying precious vegetation; camels wandering away from reserves onto



*Camels paving the way for their replacement:  
the surveying party for the East-West Railway, c.1910.  
(The flag marks the S.A./W.A. border.)*

*Photograph courtesy of the History Trust of S.A.*

private property where they broke fences, destroyed water holes and competed with stock for feed; and the refusal of Afghans to pay agistment fees. The *Observer* gave evidence of this: "A leasee of Government water at Farina has several hundred camels on his property which he is compelled to water and feed. He can collect no fees." This report refers to the situation as a "menace" and states that action must be taken "before it assumes proportions too great to be adequately dealt with". Such reports, aimed at European Australian readers, were unlikely to present the situation with sympathy towards the Afghans' plight.

Signs of the effects the situation was having on the Afghan community are evident as early as 1917. Letters from the police at Marree in 1917 indicate that Afghans organised a petition requesting the extension of depasturing time and reduction of agistment fees. It was sent to the Crown Lands Ranger who recommended to Police Inspector Thornton of Port Augusta that the requests be turned down. He suggested that "the time the Carriers be allowed to remain on the Reserve be increased to six weeks" but "the fees should not be reduced". At a time when employment was becoming increasingly scarce, the money needed to pay agistment fees was almost non-existent amongst most Afghans.

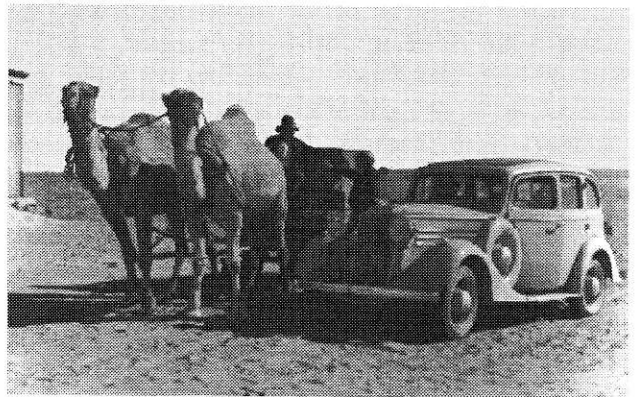
Grievances about the camel "menace" did not go unheeded by government authorities. Cigler argues that lack of legal justification for the Afghans' position, limited command of English and "almost no elements of persuasion and influence at their disposal" were key reasons behind this. It is just as likely though that their side of the story being overlooked was equally due to their being a minority Asian group in a "White Australia". Regardless of the extent, each of these reasons combined to contribute to the demise of cameleering. McKnight summarizes the situation effectively in his statement that the Afghans and their camels "had outlived their usefulness to society".

By 1925 newspapers like the *Observer* were reporting that around two thousand camels were "practically running wild in certain parts of the far north". Such descriptions of the situation naturally would have strengthened prejudices against the Afghans.

The camel's reputation had been reduced from that of a highly-praised ship of the desert to a virtual menace, and with its reputation went attitudes towards Afghans. Although often racially motivated, dislike for the Afghans was expressed on the grounds of economic argument; their camels were depleting scarce resources of water and feed. According to Cowlshaw, the few cameleers who could still find work as carriers regularly undercut the market, providing haulage at a fraction of the cost of bullock teams who were also still operating. This would have further irritated Afghan/European Australian relations.

Under pressure from pastoralists and far north white communities, the State Government introduced the Camels Destruction Act in 1925 as a means of controlling and regulating the over-supply of camels. It gave the occupier of any land the right to "destroy all camels trespassing upon the land . . . after the expiration of one month from the publication of the latest notice of his intention to do so within three months after the expiration of one month as aforesaid". The Act was amended in 1926 to include the exemption of any camel that was registered, having a registration disc attached around its neck.

The Afghans now found themselves in an impossible situation. They could not afford to depasture their animals legally, nor could they afford to pay the required registration fees. What many Afghans saw as their only means of livelihood was being destroyed. Looking back on the situation, Charlie Dadleh of Marree (a second generation Afghan whose father owned a small camel stud) is recorded by Stevens as having said "the Afghans . . . hated the whites for these destructive acts, and for having no pity on them or their animals". In 1927 a letter was sent from the Marree Ghan Town to the South Australian Government in which the Afghans expressed their position and tried to persuade the government to be more sympathetic towards them. One section of the letter reads: "It means great loss to us poor people besides our feeling hurt as no one like to see their property taken from them when that is all the property we have to earn our living." It is evidence not only of the degree to which ⇒



*The camel gets a glimpse of the future.  
Photographed by Frank Hurley at Farina, c. 1920.  
Photo courtesy of the History Trust of S.A.*

the Afghans were affected, but also the difficulties they faced in asserting a position in society.

Rather than see their camels destroyed, some Afghans turned them loose in the desert, unknowingly forming the beginnings of feral camel herds in South Australia. For many, the Camels Destruction Acts were the ultimate injustice and a number of those who had not already done so left Australia for their homelands. Those who remained faced the prospect of having to find alternative employment or grow old amidst a population that was generally hostile towards their plight.

During the 1920s and 1930s "the Afghans found themselves in perhaps the saddest plight of their history in Australia". Facing an age of improving technology, living in a country whose social policy of the time was restrictive to non-white peoples, and where economic conditions made employment hard to find even for whites, demise seemed inevitable for cameleering and the cameleers. The contribution the Afghan cameleers made to the development and progress of South Australia has left a lasting impression, yet ultimately this was a contribution resulting in great personal cost for many Afghans.

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#### REVIEW: Peter Christopher: *Paddlesteamers and Riverboats of the River Murray* (Axiom, 2000)

Did you know that the Paddlesteamer *Adelaide*, built in 1866 at Echuca and still operating from there as a tourist vessel, is the third oldest paddlesteamer in the world? Or that there really was a bunyip in the River Murray --- the P.S. *Bunyip*, which went up in flames in 1866, killing four people? Or that in pre-Federation times, shifting cargo from one bank of the river to the other was equivalent to exporting it to another country and had to be supervised by a Customs officer?

These are some of the interesting snippets of information in Peter Christopher's book, which is not intended as a substantial history but rather as a concise guide to most of the significant craft on the Murray today. It contains details of over fifty vessels, giving each boat's dimensions, type of engine, date and place of construction and current use, together with a colour photograph. Interspersed are brief tales of life on the river from the time of the early explorers, through the heyday of working riverboats at the end of the nineteenth century, to the present-day revival when many of the original paddlesteamers have been restored and a considerable number of new ones built.

The 80-page paperback retails for \$9.95 and is available at most bookstores.

-- J.H.

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