

History SA

Newsletter of the Historical Society of South Australia

Print Post approved 535806/0005

No. 151, November 2000

Federation Convention Vignettes by Victor Daley

Victor James Daley was born in Ireland in 1858 and emigrated to Australia at the age of twenty. He lived for a short time in Adelaide but from 1882 divided his time between Melbourne and Sydney, working as a freelance writer of poems, stories and articles, mainly for *Punch* and the *Bulletin*. He was a friend of the Lindsay family and of Henry Lawson, and when he died in 1905, his funeral was attended by the greater part of Sydney's literary elite.

He wrote both romantic lyrics and satirical verse, the latter sometimes light-hearted but often quite scathing. Very few of the men he ridiculed, however, bore him any grudge. Alfred Deakin, for example, contributed to, and was patron of, the fund raised for Daley's family after his death.

The set of "Federation Convention Vignettes" printed below were first published in the *Bulletin* on 5th February, 1898. History has perhaps decided, as a recent critic has pointed out, that Daley did not look with kind enough eye on some of the early Commonwealth politicians, but then, it is the duty of the jester to laugh, especially if he sees the emperors without their clothes.

GEORGE REID

A sophist-statesman, ever-gay,
Whose brow no cares corrode;
He loves the shady, crooked way,
And hates the plain, straight road.

BARTON

A full, rich-brained, rich-blooded man,
Who, when the doubting cliques
Exclaim "We might," says out "I can" ---
And knows more than he speaks.

BRUNKER

A pious statesman! Phoenix rare
In any time or clime!
He makes men wish that Virtue were
A punishable Crime.

B.R. WISE

A brilliant man,
Too keen to rise;
Too large of plan,
Too always --- WISE.

ALFRED DEAKIN

A man of talent and of clean good sense,
Who speaks with polished air ---
On silver floods of his own eloquence
He floats to God knows where.

KINGSTON, PRESIDENT OF CONVENTION

His bluff voice has a hearty ring;
The man himself is straight;
He might be almost anything
But --- Maker of a State.

BRADDON

One who, in days gone by, has been
An actor brave in dramas bold,
But who, for this Historic Scene,
Is all too sick, and tired, and old.

VAN DOBSON

Tasmania's Tower of Strength, you see,
First Tory in that little nation ---
An old red sandstone statesman he,
Of Heav'n alone knows what formation.

ADYE DOUGLAS

A reverend figure, Moses-like,
With glances ever rearward cast,
Who, while the Clocks of Progress strike,
Advances backwards towards the Past.

FORREST

A kind of King Dontgiveadam,
Without regalia,
Whose air and carriage say "I am,
By G--d, Westralia!"

The Historical Society of South Australia Inc.

Founded 1974

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

E-mail: hssa25@hotmail.com Web-site: 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. Visitors are always 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

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

APPOINTED OFFICERS:

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Publicity Officer: Ms. M. Dunshore

Records Officer: Mrs. E. Ulbrich

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Mortlock Archives

by Roger André

Papers of individual South Australians predominate in recent donations. Further papers (1863-73) of explorer John McKinlay stem from his role as a Northern Territory land agent, and motion pictures relating to the Simpson Desert expedition of one of Australia's last explorers, C.T. Madigan, have been donated. Interesting albums illustrate J.B. Cleland's field trips of the 1920s and 1930s and two letters by anthropologist C.P. Mountford to Phyllis Johnson are accompanied by biographical notes. Papers of A. Moxon Simpson include his reports on employment security in Papua New Guinea and further papers of his grandfather, Alfred Muller Simpson, founder of A. Simpson & Son, include the latter's tinsmithing apprenticeship certificates. Papers of David Brookman include both his war service records and parliamentary commissions. Likewise, papers of M.F. (Frew) Bonnin include his war service memorabilia. Especially precious is a World War II diary kept by Henry Powell Brooks from his enlistment through to his release from Changi in 1945.


Other diaries of interest are A.R. (Dink) Hawke's diary of farm life at Kadina in 1939, a diary (1868-69) evidently kept by William Henry Sharland aboard the *Coonnatto* and the transcript of a diary written by James Anderson McLauchlan aboard the topical *City*

of *Adelaide* in 1874. An unusual donation has been letters written in Sutterlin script by Bertha Auricht to J. Lademann at Tanunda in 1913.

A diverse collection of photographs represents the work of L.J. Williams. Marie Beare's meticulously organized scrapbook documents the work of war artist and portrait painter Geoffrey Mainwaring and a splendid volume of illuminated parchments, entitled *An age of prayer*, has been presented by The Heritage Scriptorers.

Among business records accessioned are landscape designs for Springfield, c. 1928, by architects Barlow, Hawker and Lawson and records of 5DN assembled by the network's then archivist, Nancy Robinson Whittle. Records of undertakers R.G. and E.G. Le Poidevin list burials from 1894 to 1978 in various locations including Noarlunga and Golden Grove.

Trade and professional bodies are represented by records of the Plasterers' Federation (1924-1972), the Federated Engine Drivers' and Firemen's Association (1937-1957), the Clerk of Works Institute and the Institute of Agricultural Science.

Other items deposited are additions (1920-1992) to the National Council of Women's record group, papers (1963-2000) of the Council of Ex-Servicewomen's Association and an 1899 minute book of the Willunga Young Men's Mutual Improvement Society. Minutes (1926-1935) of Riverside Old Scholars' Association and St. Andrew's Day School (1914-1915) have also been accessioned. 

HSSA news

The HSSA has achieved a markedly higher public profile over the last two years with the establishment of the History Essay Prizes for school students, the sponsorship of the biennial John Tregenza Award for a work on South Australian history and the organizing of the Historical Societies Picnic in Elder Park this November.


Our field trips have been particularly well attended this year: 46 people inspected the St. Kilda Tramway Museum, 36 toured McLaren Vale by coach, a throng of 82 explored the Treasury Building, and 48 toured Port Adelaide and the Ships' Graveyard.

Our programme for next year is enclosed with this Newsletter and members are asked to pass the extra copy on to a friend or colleague. Could everyone make a special effort to do this as a personal recommendation counts for so much?

Subscriptions for 2001 are now due and it has become necessary to increase the rates slightly. They have remained the same since 1997 but increases in all our costs, especially printing, insurance and postage, have now made the rise unavoidable. Nevertheless HSSA rates are still well below those of other similar state-wide organizations.


In addition, members are now getting more for their money. The Journal has undergone a substantial change this year under the editorship of Jenny Palmer and Dr. Christine Garnaut. It has been enlarged to A4 size and will contain three photographic features and a revamped layout. The Newsletter now runs to 16 pages and contains more illustrations and a wider variety of longer articles.

It is hoped that all current members will understand the need for the rise in subscription rates and will not hesitate to renew their membership for next year.


Please complete the renewal notice issued with this Newsletter and forward it to the Treasurer, Mrs. Avis Huckel, 9 Sierra Nevada Blvd., Pasadena 5042. Payment may be made either by cheque or money order (payable to the Historical Society of South Australia Inc.) or by Visa, Bankcard or Mastercard. The Treasurer will also accept credit card payment by phone. 

2001 Journal deadline

Articles on historical subjects relating to South Australia or Australia are invited for the 2001 issue of the HSSA Journal. They should be of no more than 6,000 words and should initially be submitted in printed or typed form to the Editor, HSSA Journal, P.O. Box 519, Kent Town 5071. Photographic essays, with short explanatory captions, are also sought. The deadline for all material is April 30th, 2001.

Before forwarding articles or photographic features, authors should request from the Editor a copy of the "Notes for Contributors" which outlines the length, style and format requirements for all material. 


RGSSA meeting

The Royal Geographical Society of S.A.'s meeting on November 16th will feature a panel of speakers on the topic "What future for the Adelaide Parklands?" The speakers will be Mr. Ted Dexter, the Hon. Ian Gilfillan and Dr. Jane Lomax-Smith. Please note that the venue has been changed. It will not be the Royal Society Rooms on Kintore Avenue. Instead the meeting will be held in the Prince Philip Theatre, Prince Alfred College, Kent Town, from 5.30 p.m. to 7.00 p.m. 

Book note

A. & S. Dolling: The Hand to the Plough --- Die Familie Dolling in Australien: a social history

This book traces the influences that shaped the course of a family group after its emigration from the Province of Brandenburg in 1847 and its initial settlement on an 80-acre section near Hahndorf, just west of Nixon's Mill. It contains excerpts from diaries recording life on board the *Gellert* during the four-month voyage to Australia, contributions from 53 family members and insights into the negotiations and obstacles confronting intending emigrants from Brandenburg. The bibliography includes personal contacts and the fruits of research in Poland, Germany, France and England.

The book is priced at \$39.00 (postage \$6.80) and is available by phoning Alison Dolling on 8362 0319 or Scott Dolling on 8386 2237. 



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

E-mail:
chaffmil@capri.net.au

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

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 2.

MONOGRAPHS

Y. Allen (ed.): **Footprints in the Sand: Kaurna Life in the Holdfast Bay Area to 1850** (Holdfast Bay Reconciliation Group, North Brighton, 2000)

F.P. Bulbeck: **Some Plaques and Memorials of South Australia** (Adelaide, 2000)

E. Cant: **Collecting and Curatorship: The Art Gallery of South Australia, 1920-1959** (Seaview Press, Henley Beach, 2000)

City of Tea Tree Gully Heritage Survey: Phase 2 (McDougall & Vines and DEHAA, Adelaide, 1999)

Clarendon Sesquicentenary, Celebrating 150 Years 1846-1996 (Clarendon Comm. Assoc., Clarendon, 1996)

Clarkson Limited: **Leaded Light Designs** (Clarkson Ltd., Adelaide, 1925)

A.L. Cobiac: **South Australian Deaths, Index of Registrations 1842 to 1915** (South Australian Genealogy and Heraldry Society, Adelaide, 2000)

W.J. Colebatch: **Report on Development of the South East** (Department of Lands, Adelaide, 1933)

R. Collier *et al.*: **Birds, Birders & Birdwatching 1899-1999: Celebrating One Hundred Years of the South Australian Ornithological Association** (S.A.O.A., Adelaide, 2000)

D. Davis: **As Fine a Crop: The Lives of the Wrathall-Bull-Bowyer Family, Pioneers in South Australia** (Davis, Batemans Bay, 2000)

Dennis Country: Boyhood Towns of C.J. Dennis, Creator of the Sentimental Bloke (Rocky River Historic & Art Society, Laura, 2000)

Discover South Australia's Mining Heritage Trails (Primary Industries and Resources SA, Adelaide, 1998)

Early Roofing and Roof Materials in South Australia Text and Photographs by Mark Butcher Architects (Heritage South Australia, DEHAA and the City of Adelaide, Adelaide, 1999)

I. Forbes: **Calvary Hospital Adelaide: In Celebration of One Hundred Years of Service of the Sisters of the Little Company of Mary at Calvary Hospital 1900-2000** (Calvary Hospital, North Adelaide, 2000)

R. House: **Burnside Street Names and Their Origins** 2nd ed. (Burnside Historical Society, Burnside, 2000)

B. Johnston: **Hummock Hill, Whyalla: Early Years and Pioneers** (Whyalla Senior Citizens Welfare Assoc., Whyalla, 2000)

A. Jones: **Redgums, Pines and Pastures: A History of the Tarpeena District** (Jones, Unley, 1997)

B.L. Jones: **Uniting Church in Aust. Tour of West Terrace Cemetery** (Uniting Church Hist. Soc., Malvern, 2000)

Journal of the Elder Scientific Exploring Expedition, 1891-92, Under Command of D. Lindsay (Corkwood Press, North Adelaide, 1999)

A. Kernich: **Barossa Brass Bands: Their Role in the Community, 1855-1999** (Barossa Valley Archives and Historical Trust, Tanunda, c. 2000)

A. Langsford & M. Pharaoh: **In the Footsteps of Sir Douglas Mawson** (South Australian Museum and the University of Adelaide, Adelaide, 2000)

R. Linn: **Breaking the Mould: The History of Sola Optical** (Historical Consultants Pty. Ltd. for Sola International, Adelaide, 2000)

S. Marsden: **Urban Heritage: The Rise and Postwar Development of Australia's Capital City Centres** (Australian Council of National Trusts, Australian Heritage Commission, Canberra, c. 2000)

M.P. Mayo: **Index to Miscellaneous Information and Advertisements Contained in South Australian Almanacks and Directories, 1839-1872** (1947)

The Murray River Passengers' Guide Book (Murray Shipping Ltd., Adelaide, 1922)

New Queen's Theatre: Last Night of the Season, Mr. Coppin's Benefit, Thursday Evening, May 13th, 1847 (Dehane, Adelaide, 1847)

B.J. O'Connor: **Queen's College, North Adelaide 1893-1949** (Queen's College Old Boys' Association, Adelaide, 2000)

R. Parsons: **A Guide and Index to Ship Registers in Colonial Australia** (Parsons, Lobethal, 2000)

A.D. Presgrave: **The Travelling Post Offices of South Australia** (Stuart Rossiter Trust Fund, Bristol, 1997)

H. Reid: **Age of Transition: A Study of Four S.A. Private Girls Schools 1855-1926** (Reid, Hyde Park, 2000)

M. Scales: **An Alchemist's Dream: The Story of A.M. Bickford and Sons** (Bickford, Adelaide, 1990)

N.C. Smith: **4th S.A. Bushmen's Contingent, Boer War 1899-1902** (Mostly Unsung Military History Research and Publications, Gardenvale, 1999)

R. Smith: **Curiosities of South Australia 3** (Smithbooks, Athelstone, 2000)

M.A. Steiner: **Scott Creek from Settlement to Conservation** (Friends of Scott Creek, Adelaide, 2000)

The Story of the Elder Bequest (Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, 2000)

B.M. Terry & M.A. Hakendorf: **The South Australian Centenary Song** (Adelaide, 1936?)

Unveiling of Monument in Honour of First German Lutheran Pioneers at Klemzig on 29th August, 1936 (Adelaide, 1936)

Vice-Regal Summer Residence, Belair National Park, South Australia: 'Old Government House' Rev. ed. (National Parks Commission, Adelaide, 1968)

B. Whimpress: **Corroboree, Adelaide Oval 1885** (Whimpress, Kent Town, 2000)

M.P. Woods: **Towards a Civil Society: Voluntary Community Service and Womanhood in South Australia, 1836-1936** (2000)



Some useful heritage-related websites

Compiled by Brian Samuels

South Australian

Art Gallery of SA	http://www.artgallery.sa.gov.au
Arts SA	http://www.arts.sa.gov.au
Department for Environment and Heritage	http://www.environment.sa.gov.au
Flinders University	http://www.flinders.edu.au
Heritage SA	http://www.heritage.sa.gov.au
Historical Society of SA	http://www.history.sa.gov.au/hssa
History Trust of SA	http://www.history.sa.gov.au
SA Government entry point	http://www.sacentral.sa.gov.au
SA Museum	http://www.samuseum.sa.gov.au
SA Tourism Commission	http://www.tourism.sa.gov.au
Saunders' Architectural Index	http://www.arch.adelaide.edu.au/~saunders/
State Library of SA	http://www.slsa.sa.gov.au
University of Adelaide	http://www.adelaide.edu.au
University of South Australia	http://www.unisa.edu.au

Australian


Australian Heritage Web Sites	http://www.heritage.gov.au
Australia ICOMOS	http://www.icomos.org/australia
Archives of Australia	http://www.archivenet.gov.au
Australia's Cultural Network	http://www.acn.net.au
Australian Broadcasting Corporation	http://www.abc.net.au
Australian Heritage Commission	http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage
Australian Museums On Line (AMOL)	http://amol.org.au
Australian Science Archives Project	http://www.asap.unimelb.edu.au
Australian War Memorial	http://www.adfa.az.au/~awm
Commonwealth Government entry point	http://www.fed.gov.au
Dept. of the Environment and Heritage (C'wealth)	http://www.environment.gov.au
Directory of Archives in Australia	http://www.asap.unimelb.edu.au/asa/directory
HERA Update	http://www.environment.gov.au/hera
Heritage Victoria	http://www.heritage.vic.gov.au
Ian Evans' World of Old Houses	http://www.oldhouses.com.au
National Archives of Australia	http://www.naa.gov.au
National Centre for Australian Studies	http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/ncas/
National Library of Australia	http://www.nla.gov.au
National Museum of Australia	http://www.nma.gov.au
New South Wales Heritage Office	http://www.heritage.nsw.gov.au
Register of Australian Archives and Manuscripts	http://www.nla.gov.au/1/ms/raam.html

International

Canadian Heritage Information Network	http://www.chin.gc.ca/
English Heritage	http://www.english-heritage.org.uk
ICOMOS	http://www.icomos.org/
Law, Finance & Organisation (Heritage)	http://www.icomos.org/canada/legis/
National Register of Historic Places (US)	http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/nrhome.html
National Trust for Historic Preservation	http://www.nthp.org/
Royal Institute of British Architects	http://store.yahoo.com/riba-net/

New members

The HSSA welcomes as new members: Ms. Michele Slatter and Mr. Michael & Mrs. Sue Welbourn.

Corrigenda: In previous issues of *History SA*, Mr. Lyndon Zimmerman should have been Zimmermann, and Mr. E.G. Crisp should have been D.G. Crisp. 

Glenelg Historical Walks

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Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,

I write to strongly support your "Editor's Reply" to the letter from the Director of the State Library of S.A., published in *History SA*, September 2000.

It is conceivable that the cost of upgrading the Jervois Wing to permit the modern preservation and storage of library materials may be prohibitive, but if so, the Director should tell us. Otherwise her plans are superficial, inappropriate and indeed offensive, although they are, of course, typical of much current bureaucracy, where appearance and "spin" are more important than deep, sympathetic functionality.

One of the joys of my regular research trips to Adelaide has been the opportunity to work in the Jervois Wing, in the tangible shadow of the South Australians I have studied. Walking through it will not be the same.

Yours most sincerely,

Dr. John Jenkin

La Trobe University

Dear Sir,

I applaud Ron Howard's excellent definition of appropriate Mortlock usage as "a dedicated working library and a centre for retrieval, expert advice, reading and study of the Collections of South Australiana" (*Advertiser*, 22/09/00). Why is the Director, Bronwyn Halliday, dedicated to other forms of usage and library practice in the Jervois Wing?

I am reminded, by her stated objectives of high-use public areas, storage of unique materials, greater public access and additional historic highlights, of those "hands-off, just look and move on" libraries in English stately homes. Here can be seen the owners' financial investment in miles of shelved volumes, all battened down behind chicken wire and protected by guides and electronic devices. Is our State Library intending to be the first cab off the rank in the entrepreneurial development of North Terrace?

Much is also made by Ms. Halliday, as in her earlier, desperate Discussion Paper, of the building's failing fabric. She claims that it does not comply with the building code, but then most South Australian buildings do not comply entirely with current standards, any more than the Treasury Building complies with this year's hotel code! The building code is always changing as new materials and skills are developed.

Ms. Halliday has an argument about seismic motion but reinforcement against earthquakes is properly done without major disturbance, permanent relocation of services or alteration of purpose. This fabricated ploy has all the hallmarks of a coven of techno-bureaucrats trying to scare the public.

Yours sincerely,

Sean Dawes

Belair

Dear Sir,

Your readers may be interested to know that Colonel Robert Torrens F.R.S., R.M., M.P., etc., etc. (1780-1864) has recently come in for some very significant international recognition.

Professor Giancarlo de Vivo of the Department of Economics in the University of Naples has edited an eight-volume set of facsimiles of Torrens' economic writings. They are published by Thoemmes Press, London, under the Overstone imprint that honours Lord Overstone, among other things a long-time correspondent of Torrens.

Il professore has written introductions to each volume expounding on the issues in the history of economic thought raised by the eight books that are reproduced in the first six volumes and to the final two volumes of collected articles, review articles and pamphlet tracts by Torrens. He thus advances, most magnificently, the last major effort on the Torrens front, Lord Robbins' *Robert Torrens and the Evolution of Classical Economics* which appeared at almost the same time as Douglas Pike's first edition of *Paradise of Dissent* (1958/9).

South Australians will be interested to learn that the contents of Volume IV consist of the second edition of Torrens' *Colonisation of South Australia* (1836) and his *Minute on the Evidence given by Mr. Wakefield, before the Committee on the Affairs of South Australia* (1841). Torrens' *Emigration from Ireland to South Australia* (1839) is not included, being not an economic work but rather a marketing pamphlet.

Professor de Vivo has been kind enough to acknowledge the assistance I provided, apropos my forthcoming biography of Torrens; hence my interest in drawing your attention to this publishing milestone. I understand that the set costs UK £750 or US \$1,200. One each for the kids at Christmas?

Yours sincerely,

Peter Moore

Katoomba

History personified

Council just had to share this with you. We recently received a computer-generated letter from *Reader's Digest* that was addressed to "Mr. S.A. Historical" and began:

"Dear Mr. Historical,

This is to advise you that in the latest *Reader's Digest* Sweepstakes your name came through the first two stages. Our computer picked the Historical household to receive the chance to win our Grand Prize of \$250,000."

Not only that but "The computer has chosen certain people to receive V.I.P. status and you, Mr. Historical, are among them!"

Gosh! Now, if only we can track down that lovable old member of ours, Stanley Algernon Historical, we might be in with a chance!



More barbarians at the gates

A major Australian business and labour archive is to be mothballed by the Australian National University. The Noel Butlin Archives Centre (NBAC) will be sealed off in its repository in the tunnel at Acton Underhill on the ANU campus. Researchers and the public will thus lose access to these unique records of Australian society.

Historian Dr. John Merritt, representing the Friends of the Noel Butlin Archives Centre, has urged the ANU to reconsider its plan. He said that "the proposed relocation and job cuts will put the University in breach of its legal and moral obligations to the owners of the records and to researchers."

The Archives were established by Professor Noel Butlin in 1953 and now hold 13,000 shelf metres of records documenting the working lives of Australians. They include the records of many great Australian companies, such as Elders, Dalgety, Goldsbrough Mort, CSR and the Adelaide Steamship Co., as well as the archives of the ACTU, most of the national trade unions, and employer bodies such as the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the National Farmers' Federation.

The ANU Executive proposes to fund the Archives Centre for only two more years (2001-2002). Staff levels are to be cut to two professional positions, opening hours will be reduced and the University

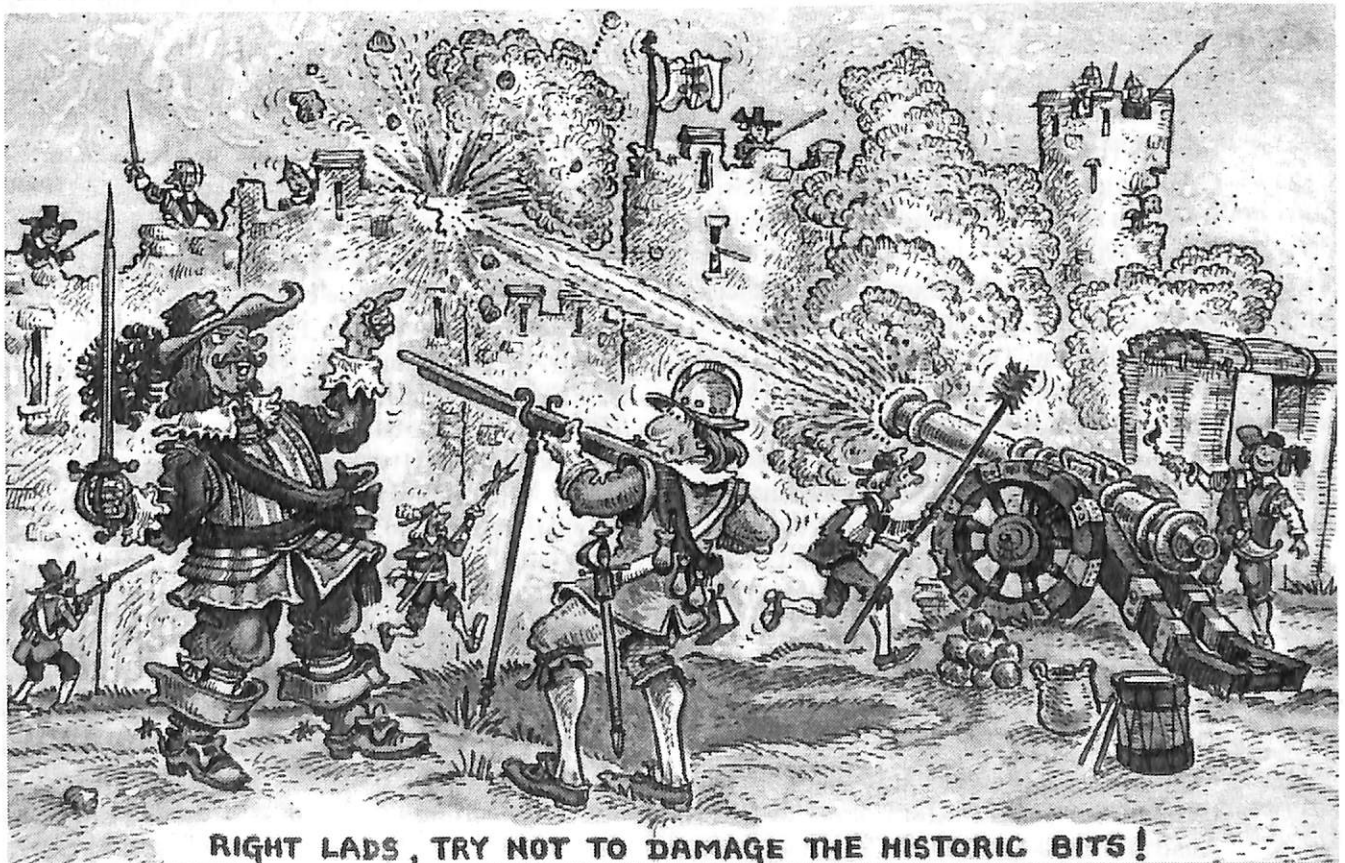
Archivist is to be relieved of her responsibility for the NBAC.

There has been widespread criticism of the ANU's down-grading of the Archives. The Australian Society of Archivists unanimously demanded at its national conference last month that "the ANU develop a stable long-term funding arrangement for the Archives as appropriate for a national institution holding a large proportion of the archives documenting Australia's rural and industrial heritage".

In Melbourne, Professor Geoffrey Blainey said, "The Noel Butlin Archives are a major source for those studying Australia's history. Nobody can investigate the history of Australian businesses and trade unions without using these Archives. It would be a tragedy if this outstanding collection continues to receive a low priority from the Australian National University, its present owners."

Stuart Macintyre, Professor of History at Melbourne University, said that "the Noel Butlin Archives are one of this country's great historical treasures. They consist of the records of major businesses and trade unions reaching back well into the nineteenth century. Future generations would find it hard to comprehend that such a vital resource should be squandered."

"Historians, archivists and librarians are horrified by this vandalism", Professor Macintyre said. "Business, professional and trade union representatives are highly concerned by the irresponsibility of a public institution. It is unthinkable that it should throw off its obligations and endanger such a crucial national asset."



RIGHT LADS , TRY NOT TO DAMAGE THE HISTORIC BITS !

Early descriptions of South Australia

Compiled by Brian Samuels

The following lists of sources are designed to assist authors and researchers to locate useful background material on South Australia. The nineteenth-century list was carefully chosen to include what I believe to be the most useful works. Note, however, that they cover the whole State and hence many localities receive only a few lines, and some none at all.

The regional listing is not comprehensive, but comprises a selection of less widely known pamphlets and books. The majority of these works can only be consulted in the Mortlock Library of South Australia. Brackets around an author's name indicate that authorship has been attributed. An asterisk denotes a work containing substantial historical as well as descriptive material.

These lists formed the basis for the chapter entitled "Bibliography of Descriptive Works" in Andrew Peake's *Sources for South Australian History* (Tudor Australia Press, Adelaide, 2nd edition, 1998), although some of the citations here are a little fuller and the sizes of the regional works are indicated.

NINETEENTH-CENTURY WORKS

- 1839 R. Gouger: **South Australia in 1837** London [Facsimile edition 1962]
- 1839* [J. Stephens]: **The Land of Promise** London [Facsimile edition 1988]
- 1843* J. F. Bennett: **Historical and Descriptive Account of South Australia** London & Edinburgh
- 1846* F. Dutton: **South Australia and its Mines** London [Facsimile edition 1978]
- 1847 G.F. Angas: **Savage Life and Scenes in Australia and New Zealand** London [Facsimile edition 1969]
- 1848 W.B. Wilkinson: **South Australia: Its Advantages and Resources** London [Facsimile edition 1983]
- 1849 W.B. Wilkinson: **The Working Man's Handbook to South Australia** London [Facsimile edition 1962]
- 1849 C. Sturt: 'An Account of the Sea Coast and Interior of South Australia' in C. Sturt: **Narrative of an Expedition into Central Australia** Vol. 2. London. Also reproduced in C. Sturt: **Journal of the Central Australian Expedition 1844-1845** London, 1984.
- 1851 Old Colonist: 'Sketches of the Present State of the Colony of South Australia'. Originally appeared in the *South Australian Register*. Reprinted as E.M. Yelland (ed.): **Colonists, Copper and Corn in the Colony of South Australia 1850-51** Rev. ed., Adelaide, 1984.

- 1858 [F. Algar]: **A Handbook to the Colony of South Australia** by the Editor of the *Australian and New Zealand Gazette*, London [Facsimile edition 1981]
- 1862 F. Sinnett: **An Account of the Colony of South Australia** Adelaide [Facsimile edition 1979]
- 1862 R. Harrison: **Colonial Sketches** London [Facsimile edition 1978]
- 1862 W.R.H. Jessop: **Flindersland and Sturtland** London
- 1866* A. Forster: **South Australia, Its Progress and Prosperity** London
- 1866 R.P. Whitworth: **Bailliere's South Australian Gazeteer and Road Guide** Adelaide [Facsimile edition 1991]
- 1875 R. & F. Hill: **What We Saw in Australia** London
- 1876* W. Harcus (ed.): **South Australia, Its History, Resources and Productions** London
- 1883* J.P. Stow: **South Australia: Its History, Productions and Natural Resources** Adelaide [2nd considerably expanded edition, 1884]
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History SA deadline

The deadline for all material for the January 2001 issue of the Newsletter is Friday, December 8th, 2000. It should be addressed to John Healey, Editor, *History SA*, 27 Germein St., Semaphore, S.A. 5019. 📖

The memoirs of "Honest Tom" Playford (1837-1915)

Part I

Introduced by John Healey

In 1909 the Honourable Thomas Playford, who was Premier of South Australia in 1887-89 and 1890-92, began writing his memoirs. He completed 30,000 words, bringing the story of his life up to 1876, but there the narrative stops. The original hand-written document, in the possession of the Playford family, was transcribed some years ago by Dr. John Playford and passages have appeared in several books, but the memoirs have never been published in full. The following extracts are taken from a copy made available to History SA by Ruth Playford Smith, of Hawthorn, Victoria, who is a great-granddaughter of the Hon. Thomas Playford. The illustrations on pages 10-12 were kindly provided by Mary Playford-Snarskis, of Norton Summit, who is also his great-granddaughter.

The Honourable Tom's father, the Reverend Thomas Playford, emigrated to South Australia with his family in 1844. He had served as a Life Guardsman for twenty-four years, fought in the Battle of Waterloo, and then became a Millenarianist preacher. Arriving in Adelaide, he set up a Non-conformist chapel in Hindley Street and then in Bentham Street, and he had land at Mitcham and Norton Summit.

His son, the Honourable Thomas Playford, known in politics as "Honest Tom", attended Mr. Mugg's school at Mitcham, worked a small farm there by hand and at the age of twenty-one became a pioneer orchardist at Norton Summit. In 1868 he entered Parliament as the member for Onkaparinga, beginning a career that was to last for almost fifty years. He was a Minister in several S.A. governments and served two terms as Premier. A long supporter of Federation, he was elected as a Senator to the first Federal Parliament and was Government Leader in the Senate during Deakin's prime ministership. He retired at the age of seventy and two years later began his memoirs with the story of his founding ancestor.

I was born at No. 1, Patriot Square, Bethnal Green, London, on the 26th November 1837. My father Thomas Playford was born at Barnbydon, a little village in Yorkshire near Doncaster. His father was a founding and never knew his parents.



The Honourable Thomas Playford
1837-1915

My father told me that near Doncaster there lived an agricultural labourer and his wife. Their first child, a daughter, had come into the world but a few weeks when a lady in a carriage drove up to their cottage door and inquired if they would consent to take charge of a boy infant. If so, they would be paid liberally. They consented and the lady instructed them to have the infant christened and named Thomas Playford. A sum per year was agreed to be paid for his keep. One year's payment was paid in advance and they were instructed to call at a bank in Doncaster for future payments until he was 14 years of age when he was to be apprenticed to a farmer until he was 21. He was then to call at the bank where he would be given £500 to enable him to take and stock a farm.

All took place as the lady promised. My grandfather leased a farm at Barnbydon, stocked it, and married a Miss Tomlinson; and my father was their first born. My grandfather never troubled himself about who his parents were except to ask the bank manager if he could tell him. The manager said it was a secret and he could not tell him because he did not himself know. When my father came back from the war after Waterloo he was so interested in the subject that he called at the Doncaster bank, and was informed by the manager that the money given to the foster father and to my grandfather was remitted to them by Drummond's Bank, London, and they paid it in accordance with instructions received from that bank. Who provided the money he did not know.

My father called on the manager of Drummond's bank, London, and told his tale. The manager was much interested and said he would have the matter looked up and desired my father to call in a week's time, which he did, and was informed that it had been looked up, but the bank's books showed it was a secret account and the names of the parties could not be divulged. So ended my father's attempt to find out who his father's parents were.

My father was born in 1795 and at 15 was 6 ft. 2 in. high and never increased in height. He had to leave home at that age. He was seduced by or seduced the school mistress of the village, a woman of more than twice his age. She being in the family way, he was packed off to London to be out of the road. She gave birth to a female child who my aunts told me used to call them aunties to their great annoyance, for her mother never left Barnby Dun.

Young Tom Playford was seven when the family emigrated. When writing his memoirs in his seventies

he remembered little of his life in London but his childhood in South Australia was clearly recollected.

The ship was one of about 400 tons with a poop in the stern where the cabin passengers were accommodated and the chief mate and captain. Another part of the ship was set apart for what was called the intermediate and another for the steerage passengers. There were only two cabin passengers, five or six families in the intermediate, including our family. The steerage was full of Government emigrants.

I remember but little of the events of the voyage. Two only — one when a shark was hooked and pulled on board. Master shark was very lively, and soon had a large part of the deck to himself. He was killed at last by a blow of an axe by the carpenter. The other was the hooking and pulling on board of an albatross, the largest bird that I had seen. After a long examination of this beautiful bird by all on board I am glad to say the captain gave orders for the hook to be taken out and the albatross was thrown over the ship's side. I watched him fly away apparently none the worse for his detention and the wound caused by the hook.

We at last after a long passage came to anchor off the Semaphore, the wind not being favourable for boating up the Port River. My father, I and others landed in a boat on Lefevre Peninsula at Larg's Bay and we took a long walk to the Port River. My father and a few others crossed and went in a so-called Port cart to Adelaide to arrange for lodgings and my father to see his sister. The rest returned to the boat and with it to [the ship].

This trip I enjoyed immensely after being cooped up in the ship for over 4 months. For the first time I saw lizards, a large brown snake, a few land birds, including two magpies. The next day a favourable wind brought us to Port Adelaide, a very small place in those days. A bullock dray took us and our things to my Aunt's boarding house in Hindley Street, where we stopped for a week or so, and then moved into a 4-roomed paling cottage near the east end of Rundle Street, belonging to a carpenter named Rowe.

At this time or just before, the South Australian Company cut up into allotments a section at the foot of the hills with the Brown Hill Creek running through it and called it Mitcham. My father purchased three one-acre allotments and on it had a stone house of four rooms erected thereon by contract. While the house was building we stayed in the paling bug-infested house in Adelaide. My poor mother used often to refer to the awful time she had in bug hunting in that wretched tenement.

My father was very fond of flowers and the land at Mitcham was one acre of it made with a garden, part flower beds and part planted with vines, peaches, apricots, plums, etc. The other two acres were kept at first for a horse paddock and afterwards planted with wine vines, and we used to make wine. If the fermentation season was favourable the wine was good; if otherwise it was poor to bad, being only fit for vinegar. At that time we did not know how to regulate the fermentation by adding spirits.

My father was a most sincere Christian, holding peculiar views. One was that no minister should be paid, and he never received a penny from his congregation. He was imbued with the true missionary spirit. When

he came to the Colony, outside Adelaide there were no churches or chapels. At Mitcham, until the little Union Chapel was built, he used to have services and preach once a week in our parlour. In the Mount Lofty ranges there was a scattered population of splitters, sawyers and teamsters who carted the timber to Adelaide and the Port. They were without any religious instruction whatever. There were a number of rough godless characters among them who came from Van Diemen's Land and were old convicts who had served their time in that island and who had learned to work in timbers. My father went among them and held services at Brook's barn, Mount Lofty, and at Mr.

Norton's house at Grassy Flat, now known as Norton's Summit. He also preached at Gumeracha in Mr. Randell's house, at Mr. Roberts, Kensington, and at Mr. Ridley's, the inventor of the reaping machine.

When we came to the Colony, the Adelaide tribe of Aborigines (at that time they were mostly called Blackfellows) numbered about 400. They were a lazy lot, and when the kangaroos and other animals and birds were driven away by the guns of the white man they were supplied with rations by the Government. A number of them used frequently to camp for a few days at a time when I was a boy on the side of the creek near our house. On one occasion they had a grand corrobbery in Torrens Park, just below Mitcham. I was present and counted about 40 ochre-ornamented male natives go through their capering performance to the accompaniment of a number of lubras who beat time, on hollow pieces of bark by some and by others striking two sticks together. I know I laughed and enjoyed the sight immensely. It was a strange sight, as seen by the glare of the fires and torches, and the blackfellows appeared to enjoy the fun as much as I did. ⇒



*Self-portrait of Life Guardsman (later Reverend)
Thomas Playford, c. 1818.*

The poor Adelaide blackfellows did not last long. In a few years they had all gone to their long home. The white people killed them by the diseases we introduced and by mistaken kindness. Venereal disease killed a large number. The black husband would sell his wife to a low white who would in some --- I think I may say many --- cases be diseased. The woman caught the disease and would contaminate her husband. They had no knowledge of the disease and did not ask for medical aid until too late. Measles killed a number, and our mistaken kindness was the cause of the death of many more. Before our advent the natives used the skins of kangaroos, dingoes and possums to protect their bodies from the cold and to sleep in. We thought we were doing them a good turn when on the Queen's Birthday every year we gave them blankets. The skins they used before they got blankets were roughly tanned and were impervious to water; they wore the fur or hair side next to their bodies. When they retired to rest the tanned side of the skin was placed next to the ground or on top of leaves which were often



The home of Rev. Thomas Playford and his family at Mitcham, c. 1870.

wet. They were thus protected from damp. But this was all changed when they obtained blankets. When it rained their blankets got wet; they wore them wet, they kept in them when wet, and lung disease developed and numbers of them died of consumption. From all these causes in about 30 years the Adelaide tribe of natives were exterminated.

My father, with his land order for a country section, selected 40 acres on the hills at the back of Mitcham and applied for a special survey of a section to include the land Welbourne had squatted on near what is now Norton's Summit. The land was surveyed and was paid for by my father by part of his order.

When we went to Mitcham there were very few people living in it or near it. I can only remember Mr. Drummond, the Presbyterian minister; two Mr. Harrisons; Mr. Foulks, wife and daughter; Mr. Finlayson, who had been a shepherd to the South Australian Company (the sheep had been removed and he had given to him one of the company's sections adjoining Mitcham which he farmed, ploughing with bullocks and growing hay and wheat); Mr. Grainger, a bachelor and member of the Legislative Council; and Mr. Bragg, with a wife.

There was no school to go to and, my father being away nearly every day in the week preaching, my mother did what she could to teach the children,

which was but little for we kept no servant and household work took up nearly all her time.

About two years after our coming, the number of families increased and the want of a school was seriously felt; also the want of a place of worship. Our little parlour was at times too small to hold with comfort all those who came to hear my father preach. My father, Drummond, Finlayson and others moved in the matter and the South Australian Company gave them permission to erect a chapel that was to be used as a school in the week, on the reserve next to our land. They with the help of the S.A. Company raised sufficient funds to build a small room with a little porch in front. I think it would seat about 100 people.

The walls were bare stone and no ceiling. Desks that would lift up were fastened to the walls for school purposes. A tiny platform at one end, on which was placed a tiny table, served for pulpit; a chair to sit on with deal forms completed the furniture.

This building had a double debt to pay. On Sundays and one evening a week it was a Chapel, on five days a week it was a school.

It was not a denominational one but a Union Chapel where any Protestant Minister or local Preacher was welcome to hold forth, and among the preachers were Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians --- all Protestant sects except the Church of England.

When the school was ready to be occupied the next thing was to get a teacher, and the choice fell upon a Mr. Thomas Mugg, who had been a cabinet maker in London and was the father of quite a lot of little Muggs, the youngest George being older than I. He had no experience or training in teaching. At that time we in the Colony had to put up with men and women as teachers without their being trained because none were to be obtained, and make the best of what were sent to us by the education department who gave some slight assistance to country teachers who would not be able to live on the fees charged without it.

Mr. Mugg was a good Christian man. He used to lead the singing in Chapel being armed with a tuning fork which was struck before he started the tune and held up to his ear with an air of gravity that was quite amusing. His voice was not melodious but rasping. His idea of time was awfully defective. He had a trick of dwelling on some notes for such a time as to be exasperating and the slow time in which he sang took all life out of the singing. There

were only three branches he could teach at all --- reading, writing and arithmetic. Geography and grammar he knew nothing about and did not attempt to teach. When he read it was with a slight Cockney twang, the v's and w's being reversed and the silent h being not heard where it should and loudly heard where it should not. To him I owe the trouble I have had with that letter.

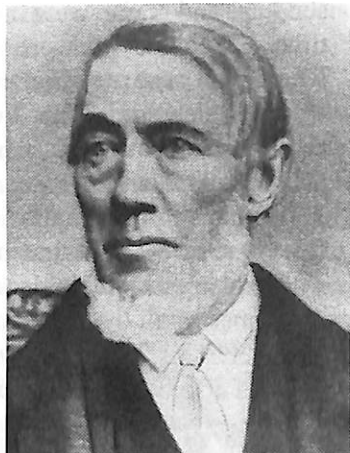
Writing was his strong point. He could write like copper plate, but it was awfully slow work and he taught us in the same way, our up strokes to be thin, and down thick in the middle. But to do this meant such painfully slow work that when I left school and my father took me in hand, and impressed upon me the necessity of writing quicker, I failed to get into a good running hand and could not write well unless I wrote like copper plate.

Arithmetic he could teach fairly well. He opened the school with about 20 pupils which before I left had increased to between 60 and 70.

I was fonder of play than learning and, although the biggest boy in the school, was by no means the best scholar. My eldest sister was much better than I and used to get prizes when I failed. In fact I do not remember obtaining a single prize book among the number that were given annually. My verbal memory was bad. I could remember facts and repeat them in my own language but the exact words I could not. Names and dates were always difficult to recall and have been so all my life.

However when about 13 years old I had practically learnt all that Mr. Mugg could teach me and my father said it was no good my staying at school any longer and took me away. When I first went I was just able to read, make pot hooks and hangers on a slate, and that was about all. When I left I could read fairly well, write in my teacher's style, and in arithmetic could do a rule of three sums and simple vulgar fractions and that was all.

I have said I was always very tall for my age. It runs in the family on the side of the males but not in the females. I was fond of play and larks of all sorts. Our Mr. Mugg was a firm believer in Solomon and would not spare the rod and spoil the child. He kept a good supply of canes not for ornament but for use and used them frequently but I am not prepared to say cruelly. I think I can safely say that I never knew him punish a child without a cause. I being often up to mischief came into a fair share of his cane. There was



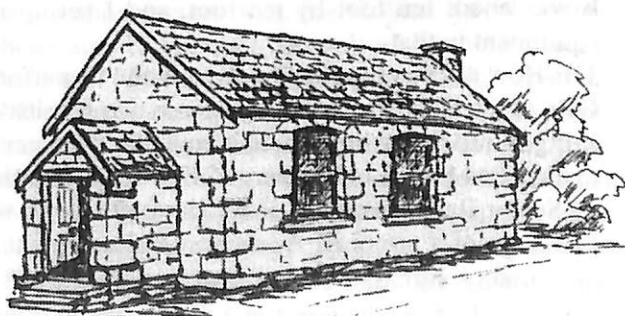
*Thomas Mugg, c. 1860.
Photo courtesy of Mitcham
Local History Collection.*

one thing we soon found out, that the caning was always most severe if the youngster did not cry when beaten; only give a good howl or two and he would stop.

I remember well one occasion when he lost his temper and beat me and his son George most unmercifully. During the dinner hour George and I had caught hold of one of the girls and held her while a boy kissed her — she told Mr. Mugg who got enraged at our conduct and got his cane to work on our backs as we sat with our heads on the desk. First one and then the other were severely beaten until the cane gave out and another was procured which was savagely used until the old man had to give up from sheer exhaustion. George and I never gave out a cry; if we had I think he would have stopped before. It made him savage and he made up his mind to go on with his caning until we cried. I showed my mother my back which she said was all black and blue and wanted to tell my father and get Mr. Mugg called over the coals but I persuaded her not to, for I knew full well that my father was a disciple of old Solomon and would most likely say it served me right.

I was very fond of play, and was the best marble player in the school and the most skilful at rounders and other games. I did not play cricket until after I left school when a club was formed at Mitcham. We practised on the green and played matches with Morphett Vale, Unley and other clubs, winding up the day with a dinner, songs and recitations. I was very fond of the game but was only a fair bat. But I was a good bowler. My height was in my favour. We bowled in those days underhand, no other bowling being allowed. But after I left Mitcham for Grassy Flat, now Norton's Summit, overhand bowling came gradually into fashion, which is now universal. I never played cricket but once after I left Mitcham and that was in a match between the Press and the Parliament when I made a small score. I recollect while in the field and running after a ball, I fell down and my friend, C.C. Kingston, said I shook the ground and cracked the evaporation dam built across the Torrens.

[To be continued in the next issue of History SA]



Artist's impression of the Chapel and Schoolroom situated on the Mitcham Reserve, 1847-1870. The drawing is by Pamela Oborn and is based on eyewitness descriptions, including those of Tom Playford, who was taught there by Thomas Mugg.

Interview with Gordon Ragless, who monitored enemy radio traffic during World War II

Eavesdropping on the enemy

Gordon Beaumont Ragless is a great-grandson of John and Elizabeth Ragless, who came out to South Australia in the barque *Eden* in June, 1838, with their seven sons and three daughters. Gordon was born in 1909 and lived at "Wattiparinga", the family almond grove and vineyard on South Road, Marion. While still at school he built his own crystal set and was a founding member of the Blackwood Radio Club, formed in 1923.

During the Second World War he was one of a small and secret group of Adelaide wireless operators who listened in on enemy radio signals from a building in Somerton Park. Now 91, he was interviewed

recently by the editor of *History SA* about his wartime activity.

JH: Gordon, how did you graduate from a simple crystal set to full-scale transmitters and receivers?

GR: I always wanted to transmit as well as receive but to do that you had to have a licence, which you got by sitting for your Amateur Operators Proficiency Certificate. You had to do a theory test and a Morse Code practical test at the rate of twelve

words per minute. I got my licence in September 1928 and I first came on the air in my bedroom. My call sign was VK5GR and I was in contact with all parts of the world by Morse Code. Then in 1930 I built a shack in the back yard with the help of a bricklayer. It was about ten foot by ten foot, and I set up my equipment in that.

JH: How did you become involved in the war effort?

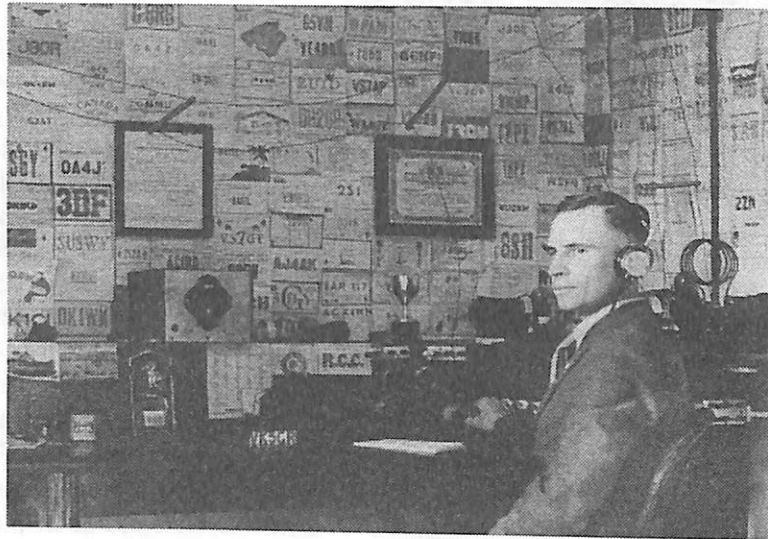
GR: At the outbreak of war my licence was terminated. If it got into the wrong hands it could be detrimental to the allied forces. In February 1942 I was approached by Senior Radio Inspector H.W. Harrington who was in charge of a group of Adelaide wireless operators monitoring signals coming into and going out of Australia. I joined the group and my companions were Ivor Thomas, Harry Roberts and Arnold Bryden. I'm the only one of the original four still alive.

The P.M.G.'s Department had a frequency-measuring station in Scarborough Street, Somerton Park, where we were stationed. It had been an old

Army drill hall that the P.M.G. had taken over for storage and there were two rooms for us. Anyway, we were working round the clock in six-hour shifts, being paid a telegraph operator's top wage. Our main job was to detect anything that the enemy was sending and there were a lot of messages all the time. Of course we were sworn not to tell anyone where we were or what we were doing. In other words, we couldn't blab. I was going out with a lady at the time and it didn't help the cause, not being able to talk about it.

JH: What sort of signals did you pick up?

GR: One of the first unusual messages we received was sent by an Adelaide station and it was giving the names of all the boats in Port Adelaide and Outer Harbour. This, no doubt, was directed to the enemy. We had also been picking up another signal that was



Gordon Ragless in his radio shack at the family home at Marion, photographed when he won the Australian section of the British Empire Transmitting Contest held in 1934.

one continuous note, usually in the early hours of the morning. This was a direction signal sent by a mother ship to guide midget submarines back to it. When we reported that there was an enemy ship, probably with midget submarines, in Australian waters, the authorities laughed at us. However, when the Japs struck Sydney Harbour two weeks later, they had to admit that we were right.

We were hearing the signals for about a fortnight before the attack was made. We always reckoned that if our authorities had been a bit more on the ball, they could have stopped it.

JH: Did you listen in on world traffic as well as local?

GR: Oh, yes. HQ sent us a list of about six different frequencies to monitor twice a night and copy any five-letter-coded material. The experts did the decoding, of course.

Once I came on at 6 a.m. and found Harry Roberts quite excited. "I got the buggers!" he said. "They jumped from one wavelength to another, but I got them! The next schedule's at 6.30 so I'll stay with you." I plugged in another set of headphones and there was a repetition of the same signal. When I made my copy and compared it with Harry's, they were identical. We got these repeated messages for several weeks and we found out later that it was diplomatic traffic from Berlin to Tokyo. You see, radio signals couldn't be sent over the North or South Poles because of the

interference, so what they were doing was this. The first message, in the evening about 11.00 p.m., was sent from Berlin to Java, which was occupied by the Japs. It was then relayed early in the morning from Java to Tokyo and we were getting both copies.

We heard on the grapevine that our authorities were highly pleased. The signals stopped eventually because the actions of our forces indicated to the senders that they were being intercepted.

JH: Was it just enemy messages you were listening to?

GR: Oh, no. One night when I was on duty, a hailer station sent "HELP" repeatedly and then there was "Swat the Japs off the map!" I said to myself, "What's the good of calling for help if you don't say where you are?" Soon the time came for me to change to a different band to listen on, so I rang Harrington to ask what I should do. He said, "That's a hoax. Shift to the new band."

I went back to the operating deck and the signal was still going and then, as I was hoping, he sent a series of figures which I guessed were the latitude and longitude. There was a rough map in the operating room and with a ruler and two pieces of string I plotted the position. It was in the North Indian Ocean. What was I going to

do? It was no use ringing Harrington so I rang the RAAF in Darwin which was the nearest establishment to do any good. I gave them the full details --- the sound of the signal and the position and so on --- and the operator said, "We'll fix it." He sounded bloody cocky to me on the phone.

The next day I checked the "HELP" station on the receiver and he was exchanging coded messages with Darwin. We heard afterwards on the grapevine that the RAAF boys had flown a plane over and found a U.S. patrol boat stuck on a reef. All the crew were rescued.

The P.M.G. boys used to drink with Harrington at the Windsor Hotel in Victoria Square and apparently Harrington's reaction was "Ragless showed initiative." It was just as well I did. I was responsible for breaking the rules and saving those blokes. Now and again we showed that we were more efficient than the Services and I think a bit of jealousy crept in.

I also heard the report of the first landing of Japanese forces in New Guinea. It was a message in plain language (that is, not coded) saying that Japanese troops in large numbers were coming ashore at some

creek --- I forget the name of it. When I reported it, the chap who took the message said, "They've landed in Australia!" I said to my mate, "I think this fellow's up a wattle." And I rang the chap back and said, "Get your maps out! This creek's in New Guinea!"

One thing we had to do was to report Service personnel indulging in private message-sending. Most of this referred to cheap grog and nice girls but sometimes they gave information that would be useful to the enemy. On one occasion I heard a bloke say, "I hope none of those P.M.G. blokes are listening in." He was a sitting duck because when he began sending official messages again, on the same frequency, he gave his call sign!

JH: What was security like at your quarters?


G.R.: At one stage we heard that the operators at the broadcasting stations had been issued with firearms. This was in 1943 so it looked like the right time for the Japs to be landing in Australia and we would have been top-priority targets. We wrote a letter to the powers-that-be, requesting that we be issued with firearms, and the answer was that they couldn't agree but they would ask the police force to call in on the dog-watch (midnight to

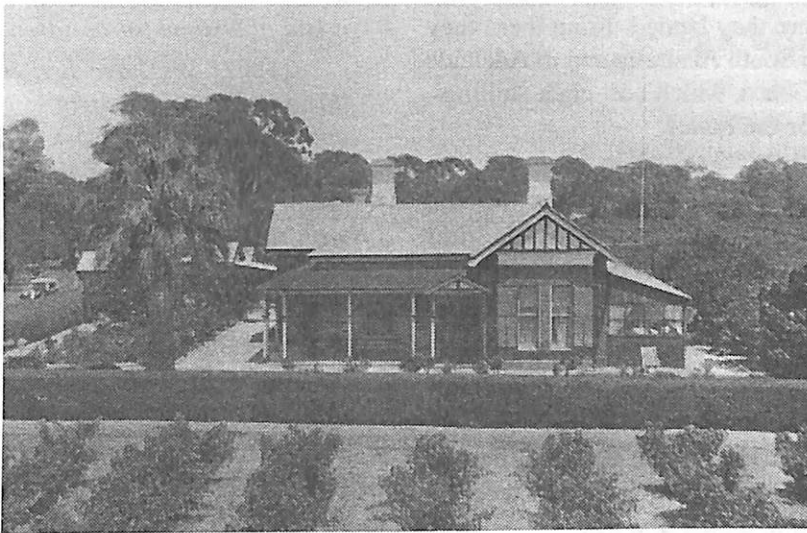
6 a.m.) "to see if everything was all right". So they'd ring the bell at the back door and ask "Are you all right?" But, of course, by then we'd already opened the door and invited them in for coffee.

JH: Was it all work and no play?

GR: Oh, no. Three of us --- Bill Pitchford, Ford Wells and myself --- were in Melbourne once on holiday. Three young bucks on the town. We were walking past a shoe factory in Little Collins Street when a shoe came flying over the wall with a note attached that said "I like the one in the green shirt." That was Bill so he went out that evening with the girl who'd thrown it and Ford and I went to the Victoria Street markets. We were strolling along the footpath when these two footpads came up, one on each side of us, and growled, "We want your wallets!" Ford was quick off the mark and he snapped back, "Try the other side, mate, we're working this one." And they left us!

JH: What did you do after the war?

GR: I worked with my father and my brother on the vineyard and almond orchard we had at Marion. I spent the rest of my life as an almond and grape grower. Radio was just my hobby. 



"Wattiparinga", the Ragless home and vineyard at Marion, 1940. Gordon's aerial can be seen on the right, and his radio shack immediately to the left of the house.

Letters from Aldinga

by Martin Dunstan

The following extracts have been taken from unpublished letters written to relatives in England by members of the Parker family, who settled in Aldinga in 1858. William Parker and his brother Edwin were the first to arrive and William, writing from "Mr. Wilson's Farm, Port Willunga, near Adelaide", described the voyage out in a letter to his mother Ann. On board, he worked in the passengers' galley, helping the cook at a rate of £2-10-0 for 30 days, which gave him a total of £3-15-0, a sum that covered their later travelling expenses. They saw only two islands, Madeira and Tenerife, before reaching Cape Otway just 150 miles from Melbourne, where they landed. From there they took a steam vessel to South Australia and in Adelaide caught the Willunga Coach, which cost eight shillings, and thirty shillings for the boxes.

In his letter William says:

There is no fear of being lonely out here, for you can not sit down for one moment without the flies alight on you like a shower of rain and actually bite till they fetch blood.

To try and find a husband for Jane [still in England] we have placed a likeness of her in the window and hope to find her a husband.

Edwin Parker, in a later letter, said that he was working on a threshing machine, for which he received six shillings per day and tucker and grog.

They are not giving such good wages this summer as they were last, the wheat being so cheap. The farmers are only getting about 5/6 a bushell. We can get a bag of flour, 2 cwt., for £1-18-0.

The flies about me while I am writing this, there is some on my hands, some on my face, some on my hair and sometimes some of them fly down my throat. (The letter is covered in brown stains, one with the imprint of a fly's wing.)

The following are from letters written by various other members of the Parker family:

[1859] *We have got a road cut through the Mount Lofty Ranges or a chain of hills, witch is three miles long, then you see what is called the Bush. This is a Rough Country indeed, mile after mile you may travel over Hills and down the Gullies. This is covered the same as the Scrub with large trees. The largest there is the Gum tree. There is one of these about 4 miles from us that has burnt inside and there was a man, wife and eight children lived in it 3 months or more, 5 of them sleep in a root, so it was a pretty good size.*

(This supports the story in Adele Pridmore's history of McLaren Vale, *The Rich Valley*, which says, "Mrs. Semmens often told her children that until Mr. Hewitt

had built his home the family lived in the hollow trunk of a huge tree nearby and in view of the persistence of this legend and of the fact that the family came to their holding in the summer, it may have been possible for some of the Hewitts to camp on that unusually swampy ground.")


I have been at work in the Bush building a Shepherds Hut out of Gum tree split and the Roof of Bark, the Chimney of wood outside and stone within, the cracks between slades filled with mud. I suppose you have heard that we have a baby and it died four days after it was born. I have to undertake for it, as the coffin would have cost 30/- if I had it made.

I see that an English summer is about 90 degrees and ours is over 110 in the shade, so you can understand it is a poor time for children cutting teeth.

[1862] *We have had a very bad season here this year on account of a general failure of crops and in consequence work of any description has been very scarce, as this Colony depends almost entirely on the crops. Men are walking about in all directions with their blankets on their backs looking for work. Hundreds have walked from 300 to 500 miles in search of employment. I know of a cottage containing 4 rooms well-furnished inside with water tank 4,000 gallons and stable, near the seaside with $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre of land that I could buy for 118 Pounds cash. The cottage alone when I first came out cost 400 Pounds to build. It is a fine time for a capitalist to come out here and speculate on property.*

[1873, from Grandmother Ann Hill] *I can not wright much as I am gettin to old. I am in my 75 year and I can not think wat I want to say. So you must wright to me but you must not expect me to anser your letters very often as it is so much trubel to me and I have no one to do it for me.*

[1878] *We have the All England Eleven (Cricketers) in Adelaide. They are to play 22 colonials tomorrow and Saturday and I think I shall go and see them. I don't know of anything to tell you unless I write a complete history of the Colony. Abel William tells how he is soon to be appointed Telegraph Clerk at Aldinga, where a line is being erected to.*

[1883, Eliza Parker in a letter to her grandmother] *I shall be 25 years old next April. There are not many girls out here that stay at home with their parents so long as I have done. They all marry about twenty in this Colony. For my own part I think about 25 or 26 is quite soon enough for young girls to settle down in life.* 

Martin Dunstan is the author of four books on the history of Willunga from 1837 to 1975 and will be guiding us on our inspection of the Bangor Slate Quarry in April next year.