

# HSA *History*

Newsletter of the Historical Society of South Australia

ISSN 1444-8459

No. 153, March 2001

## Presentation of History Essay Prizes for 2000

At our February meeting the Historical Society of South Australia's History Essay Prizes for 2000 were presented by the Hon. Legh Davis, M.L.C., representing the Minister for Education. The first prize of \$1,000 and the HSSA's medal were awarded to Mary Bolling of Naracoorte High School for her essay on "South Australian abortion law reform". The essay, which is printed in this issue of the Newsletter, looks at the extent to which the intentions and predictions of pro-abortion groups have been realized since the legalization of abortion in this state in 1969.

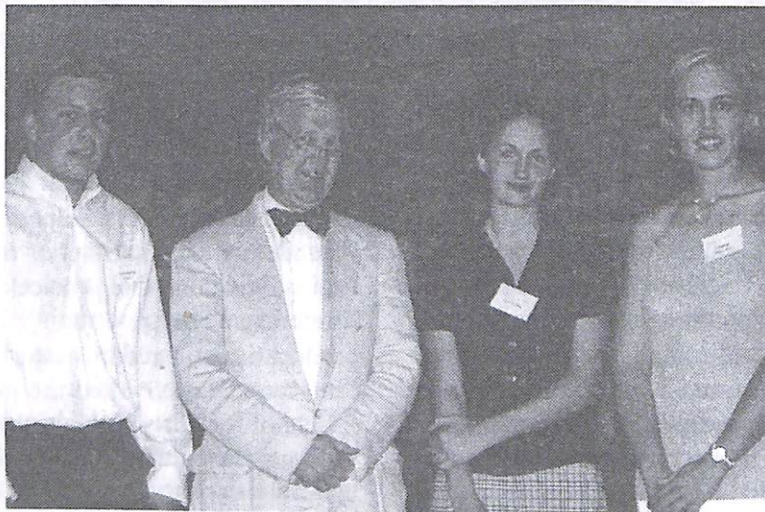
The second prize of \$500 went to Lucy Forster of Birdwood High School for her article on "Charles Kingston: A genuine supporter of women's suffrage or an opportunist politician?", which examines the factors that influenced Kingston's views on female suffrage and whether his change of heart was based on self-interest.

The third prize of \$200 was awarded to Johanna Palenschus of Walford Anglican School for Girls for her essay on "Thistle Anderson's criticisms of Adelaide as a 'Holy Village' at the turn of the century", which discusses the question of whether Adelaide in 1905 was as virtuous as its citizens liked to think. These essays will be published in future issues of *History SA*.

Certificates of commendation were presented to Natalie Atkinson of Mount Barker High School who wrote on the Adelaide Hospital row of 1894-1901 and whether it was a trivial affair or a conflict of major proportions; to Lisa Horsell of Grant High School, Mount Gambier, for her essay on the degree to which politics was responsible for the migration of Irish settlers to South Australia in the early years; and to Andrew Lester of Birdwood High School, writing on the Rufus River incident of 1841 and the success or otherwise of Dr. Matthew Moorhouse in safeguarding the welfare of the Aboriginal people.

The six students have also each been given a year's complimentary membership of the Historical Society.

Thanks are again due to council member Dr. Simon Cameron who co-ordinated the competition and to the History Teachers Association for their ongoing support. It should be noted that the prizes for 2000 were fully sponsored by the Historical Society.



*The presentation ceremony at the Chapel, Prince Alfred College.  
From left: Andrew Lester, the Hon. Legh Davis, M.L.C.,  
Mary Bolling and Johanna Palenschus.  
Photograph by Dr. Simon Cameron.*

## New members

The Historical Society would like to welcome the following new members: Ms. Natalie Atkinson, Ms. Mary Bolling, Mr. Charles and Mrs. Margaret Cornwall, Mrs. Kylli Firth, Ms. Lucy Forster, Mrs. Mary Glaister, Mr. Alan Hills, Ms. Lisa Horsell, Mr. Ron and Mrs. Enid Howard, Mrs. Isabelle Johnstone, Mr. Andrew Lester, Mrs. Patrice Morrison, Ms. Johanna Palenschus, Mr. Trevor Schaefer, Mr. Colin and Mrs. Marie Thomas, Mr. Richard Venus, Dr. Stephen Ward and the Performing Arts Collection of South Australia.

## 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 readings, lectures, discussions, field trips & 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, Dr. C. Garnaut, Mr. J. Healey, Mr. J. Loudon, Ms. J. Palmer.

**Journal Editors:** Dr. C. Garnaut, 8302 0204, and Ms. J. Palmer, 8373 6538.

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

### APPOINTED OFFICERS:

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

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

**Auditor:** Mr. A. Kovaleff, C.P.A.

*History SA* is published with the assistance of a grant from the Federal Department for the Environment and Heritage. Articles may be reproduced without permission provided they remain unaltered and *History SA* is acknowledged.

## From domestic arts to academic rigour

In the early years of South Australia, girls' schools were little more than an extension of the traditional home-based training in the domestic arts, but in the last quarter of the nineteenth century some schools pioneered a more outward-looking education. They adopted more structured curricula and aimed at greater academic rigour which prepared girls for competitive public examinations. The acceptance of women by the University of Adelaide from the start of its classes in 1876 acted as a strong stimulus for such reforms.


In her lecture "Age of Transition: South Australian Private Girls Schools, 1855-1926", to be given at the Prince Philip Theatre, Prince Alfred College, Kent Town, on Friday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, at 8.00 p.m., Dr. Helen Reid will trace the development of girls' schools from the early amateurish ventures to the more intellectually stimulating establishments that were designed to meet the needs of increasingly independent young women.

She will concentrate on four of the most significant and enduring of the privately-owned schools --- Hardwicke College in East Adelaide, which employed the first trained women teachers in South Australia; Mrs. Thornber's school at Unley Park, which had a future Nobel Prize winner as a six-year-old boy pupil; Dryburgh House School at St. Peter's, run by

Mrs. Eliza Kelsey who had to overcome the social stigma of having left her husband; and Yoothamurra School at Glenelg, which expanded into house after house and operated until 1926.

These schools helped to change the social and academic expectations of many young, middle-class girls, widening their choice of occupation and cultural interests. They and their proprietors influenced both educational standards and the position of women in society. They rivalled the government-run Advanced School for Girls and laid the foundations for the later corporate church schools that evolved through the twentieth century. Dr. Reid has used as her sources a number of diaries and memoirs written by the students, speech day reports and newspaper advertisements, and also managed to interview some old scholars and their descendants.

Please note that the evening will begin at 7.45 p.m. with the HSSA Annual General Meeting.

Dr. Helen Reid, O.A.M., has an Master of Arts from Edinburgh University and a Diploma of Education from Oxford. After teaching in a number of schools in Britain and Canada, she came to Australia in 1971 and was headmistress at Walford Anglican School for Girls for nineteen years. She then studied at the University of Adelaide and in 1996 was awarded a Ph.D. in Education. Her book *Age of Transition*, based on her doctoral thesis, was published in 2000 and will be on sale at the meeting. 

## Slate, but you won't want to go home

The first settlers arrived in the Willunga area in 1839 but it was not until the end of the nineteenth century, with the establishment of vineyards and almond orchards, that any form of farming became profitable. However, from the beginning of its settlement, Willunga boasted an industry which provided a valuable building material not only for South Australia but also for export.

In 1840 slate was discovered by two landowners, one of whom, Sampson Dawe, a Cornishman, set up the Delabole quarry, which had its own Wesleyan chapel and a small village of workers' homes. Within a few years, three other quarries were operating, including the Bangor (*shown right*) which was established in 1845 and is the only one still in action today.


This will be the first stop on our Willunga field trip on Sunday, April 29<sup>th</sup>. We will be shown around by Martin Dunstan who has written four books covering the history

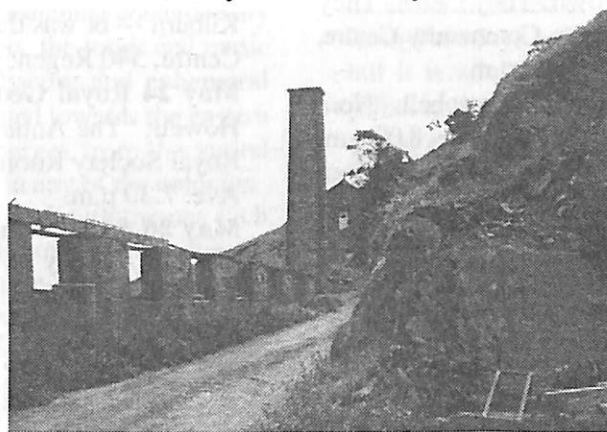
of the district, and whose grandfather took over the Bangor quarry in 1917. We will inspect the quarry face, the ruins of the stone buildings and the Welsh-style, square chimney. Martin will also demonstrate an old, pedal-driven slate-cutting machine which is still on site.

Dr. Robert Nicol will then take us on a tour of several of the Willunga cemeteries in which, not surprisingly, slate headstones predominate. Many of the monuments are of a style that derives from the eighteenth century and feature "reader beware" comments and admonitions.

After enjoying our picnic lunches (that we have brought with us), we will be driven around the township and treated to a commentary by Gaye Brown, alighting now and again to inspect the Courthouse, the Post Office, churches, schools and other historic buildings. Slate will again be very much in evidence, having been used for roofs, walls, floors, bridges, footpaths, water tanks and fence posts.

The cost of the tour is \$20, payable in advance. Numbers are limited so please phone the Treasurer, Avis Huckel, as soon as possible on 8277 2953 to make your booking (and have it confirmed) and then forward a cheque or money order to her at 9 Sierra Nevada Blvd., Pasadena 5042, by Friday, April 20<sup>th</sup>.

The coach will leave from the War Memorial on North Terrace at 10.00 a.m., returning at 5.00 p.m. Be sure to bring your picnic lunches and any non-alcoholic drinks you may desire. 



## The stops along the way

The first railway in South Australia, running from Adelaide to Port Adelaide, was opened in 1856 and two of the original stations on the line, Bowden and Alberton, still exist, displaying the characteristic building style of their time. In our May lecture, "The Evolution of the Railway Station in South Australia, 1856-1984", to be given at the Prince Philip Theatre, Prince Alfred College, Kent Town, on Friday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, at 8.00 p.m., John Evans will present a decade-by-decade history of our state's train stations, showing how each


era saw the birth of its own distinctive architectural style. The lecture will feature a series of overhead illustrations and maps showing the locations of the rail networks.

Most of the early country stations were wooden but in the 1880s --- a boom decade for railway construction --- a large number of more substantial stone buildings were erected, many of them

attributed to the firm of Walker and Swann. Notable examples from this decade include the stations at Mount Barker, Mitcham, Mount Lofty and Strathalbyn, all still standing. The Depression of the 1890s brought about a lull in construction but the early years of the twentieth century saw the first of the lines that crisscrossed the Eyre Peninsula and the beginning of the network that serviced the Murraylands.

In 1922 an American, William A. Webb, was appointed Chief Commissioner of the South Australian Railways and set about a massive reorganization of the system. His extravagant programme occasioned much political and public controversy and almost bankrupted the state. His high-handed attitude led to the present Adelaide railway station being built in 1928 without formal approval. The American influence was evident in the grand marble hall and the wide range of facilities including shops, administration offices and a dining room.

After the Second World War, a number of the old railway stations were replaced with more modern ones and many that were of significant heritage value, such as those at Georgetown and Bute, were demolished.

John Evans has had a career in transport and tourism for thirty-four years. He has worked for the S.A. Railways, T.A.A. and, for the last fifteen years, the S.A. Tourism Commission where he is currently Manager of Executive Services. He contributes articles regularly to heritage railway magazines and has one of the largest collections of train orders in the world. 



## Book Review

**Jennifer M.T. Carter: *Eyes to the Future: Sketches of Australia and Her Neighbours in the 1870s* (National Library of Australia, Canberra, 2000)**

This is a very entertaining history book. Jennifer Carter has put together a kaleidoscope of short sketches drawn from writings of the 1870s, interwoven with her own informed and perceptive commentary. She constructs a picture of Australia from a colourful assortment of vignettes depicting a wide range of people, their pursuits, their successes and their failures. To find these treasures she has dug deep into the National Library's Manuscript Collection of letters, journals and reminiscences, as well as researching contemporary books and newspapers, pamphlets, the songs and music of the day and many other obscure and ephemeral publications. The book is weighted towards the eastern states but the tapestry that emerges from the varied threads would be recognizable in any of the colonies.

The twenty-two chapters deal with themes such as the heartaches of courting, the squattocracy, prisons, the difficulties of communication, the inflammable mixture of naval officers and young society belles, the attempted assassination of the Duke of Edinburgh and the dangers of corsets and tight lacing. We are treated to vivid descriptions of concerts, train journeys, hospitals, football matches and even a joss-house. We follow the changing fortunes of blackbirders, cocky farmers, photographers, spiritualists and astronomers, and tour the asylums for the destitute, the orphaned and the lunatic.

Katie Deakin's diary for 1872-75 reveals a touching portrait of a young woman waiting three years for a marriage proposal that never comes. The journal of Lieutenant Charles Norcock gives us dramatic snapshots of gunboat diplomacy in the South Seas. The letters of Midshipman Robin Walpole to his father provide an amusing 1870s version of "Dad, I need more money." And the journal of William Bethell contains, among many other delights, the young man's impressions of a colonial theatre:


*In the evening I went to see The Streets of New York . . . it was acted at the Theatre Royal, Bourke Street. Really the colonists ought to be ashamed of their theatres --- the pit & stalls to say the least are disgraceful, there is no sort of order kept. Men spit and chew tobacco, whistle, in fact do anything they like --- half of them tipsy --- abominable boys shouting all thro the theatre "Apples, Pears, Grapes & Lemonade" more like a bear garden than anything --- really in a town like Melbourne these things should be remedied.*

The book features over eighty black-and-white illustrations, most of them from originals in the National Library Pictorial Collection. *Eyes to the Future* retails at \$29.95 and is available from Imprints Booksellers and Dymocks.

--- J.H.


## New History Centre

The City of Holdfast Bay has established a History Centre at 'Ringwood', 14 Jetty Road, Brighton, to collect, preserve and make available information on the city's history. The collection consists of books, documents, photographs, microfiche records and memorabilia, and small exhibitions will be mounted from time to time. Ms. Dieuwke Jessop is employed part-time as Local History Officer and a new Holdfast Bay Historical Society has been formed to act in an advisory capacity.


The Centre is seeking volunteers to assist the staff and would welcome any additions to its holdings (to be either donated or copied). It is open to the public from Tuesdays to Thursdays, 10.00 a.m. - 4.00 p.m., but it is advisable to phone first to make sure that someone is on duty. 

## HSSA subscriptions due


HSSA subscriptions for 2001 are now due. Please complete the renewal notice issued with the November Newsletter and forward it to the Treasurer, Mrs. Avis Huckel, 9 Sierra Nevada Blvd., Pasadena 5042. If you do not have a form, ring the Treasurer on 8277 2953.

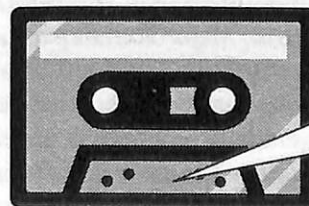
Payment may be made either by cheque or money order (payable to the Historical Society of South Australia Inc.) or by Visa, Bankcard or Mastercard. The Treasurer will also accept credit card payment by phone. Please note that members become unfinancial if subscriptions are not paid by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2001. 

## Grant to HSSA

The Society has again received a grant under the Federal Programme of Grants to Voluntary Environment and Heritage Organizations. This year it is \$2,700 and the money will be used to assist with the costs of producing and posting the Newsletter. 

## History SA deadline

The deadline for all material for the May 2001 issue of the Newsletter is Friday, April 13<sup>th</sup>. It should be addressed to John Healey, Editor, *History SA*, 27 Germein St., Semaphore, S.A. 5019. 



**Our speaker tonight . .**

Cassette audio-tapes of all HSSA lectures, from February 1998 onward, may be purchased at a cost of \$5.00 each.

Send your order, with payment, to the Treasurer, 9 Sierra Nevada Blvd., Pasadena 5042. If the tape is returned, further orders are \$3.00 each

# Robert Torrens was a bastard, but for how long?

by Peter Moore

Sir Robert Torrens was not born a bastard, yet numerous South Australian commentators have decided that he became one. In fact, as in Shakespeare's recipe for greatness, he had it thrust upon him. His perfectly proper birth was rendered illegitimate when he was five and legitimated after he turned seven. Any other instance is a matter of opinion.

Robert Richard Chute Torrens was named for both grandfathers — Robert Torrens of the petty Derry gentry and Richard Chute of the greater Kerry gentry — when he was born in 1812 (not the 1814 reported ever since his death in 1884; one hopes the entry in the forthcoming British *New Dictionary of National Biography* will rectify this persistent error). He made his entry on 31<sup>st</sup> May in the city of Cork and was almost certainly christened there soon afterwards.

His parents were Robert Torrens of the Royal Marines and Charity Herbert Chute whom Torrens (then a first lieutenant) had married on 8<sup>th</sup> November 1801 at St. Finbar's Cathedral, Cork, in a conventional Church of Ireland service. The consistory provided the special marriage licence the previous week, Lieutenant Torrens and Squire Chute sealed a marriage settlement the Friday before, and the celebrant was the bride's uncle.

Young Torrens was their fourth child, conceived while Torrens (now Major) was on convalescent leave after successfully commanding the "romantic defence of Anholt" the previous March (1811): Major Torrens mixed military duties with political affairs when, around November 1815, his last child was conceived — a daughter born in August 1816 at Tralee, County Kerry. He was known to be "wandering about in Ireland" by October. Perhaps he made it to the christening.

Despite such matrimonial productivity, Torrens *père* concluded, within a year of that last happy event, that his marriage was over and, indeed, invalid. By then Torrens *fils* was little more than five. He had turned seven when, in October 1819, Major Torrens put it about that he had "long been separated and for some time divorced". He can only have used the fact that he was under age in 1801 to escape from his Irish marriage, a manoeuvre that was designed to enable him to marry an English heiress. Clearly there was a lot at stake. A rich fiancée died in 1818 before the pair could marry and another candidate was in the picture by the summer of 1819; she may have been the heiress he finally married in December 1820, Esther Sarah, née Serle.

Major Torrens came to his realization without the assistance of an ecclesiastical court, the judgement

of which that a marriage was null and void was merely declaratory of the fact. (If the grounds for nullity actually existed, the marriage never did; no court order could add anything to change that.) As Major Torrens' birth-date is not known with certainty, we cannot verify his age at marriage. One datum exists that he was right and another that he was wrong about being under age.

What is certain is that the Major behaved as if his decision had bastardised his offspring. This blemish, with potentially unpleasant social consequences for his children, could only be expunged by a public act of recognition of his paternity. Help was near at hand to the Marine barracks to which he was attached. At St. Mary Magdalene's Church of England at Woolwich he had young Robert and his sisters christened again on 18<sup>th</sup> July 1819 — sacramentally pointless but, as the Church of England was "by law established", entering the children into the baptismal register and naming himself as their father was a sufficient public act to return the children to the realms of legitimacy, though of a sufficiently private nature to avoid any scandal.

The major soon became a lieutenant-colonel (August 1819) as well as husband to the heiress (December 1820), both events occurring in England, where his intellectual, commercial and political interests were well and truly centred. There is no evidence that he returned to Ireland until 1839. The boy stayed within the maternal sphere, going to a private academy in Cork and then to Trinity College, Dublin. His visit to Woolwich in 1819 is his only recorded absence from Ireland before 1836.

Thus, father and son did not team up again until young Torrens went to London to learn about customs collection by working as a tide waiter in the customs service of the Port, and the father was the Chairman of the Colonization Commission for South Australia, keen on developing the new colony's customs revenue base. On 19<sup>th</sup> February 1839 young Torrens married an army officer's widow, Barbara Ainslie Anson (née Park) at St. James's, Westminster. In 1840 the father got the son promoted to Collector of Customs at Port Adelaide and the young couple set sail by the *Brightman* in the autumn of 1840 bound for a new life and career in the colony.

There Mr. Collector Torrens plunged into politics, public administration and new-fangled reforms of the land title system, whereby contemporaries and later historians alike would think him, treat him, and even occasionally call him a "bastard". If only they knew.

Peter Moore has a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Adelaide and is the managing editor of Crossing Press. In 2000 he published *Knight Faithful* (on Dr. John Michael Gunson) and this year will release on the internet *Controversial Colonel*, his biography of Robert Torrens, senior.

# So your grandfather was an old duffer?

When researching parish registers, birth, death and marriage certificates, census returns and wills, family historians often come across puzzling terms for occupations that either no longer exist or have been renamed. The following entries are printed, with kind permission, from Andrew and Sandra Twining's *Dictionary of Old Trades & Occupations* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1995). The book contains over 1,500 definitions and is available at \$16.50 from the S.A. Genealogy and Heraldry Society, 201 Unley Rd., Unley.

**Amanuensis** (17<sup>th</sup> cent.) A person employed to take dictation or to copy manuscripts.

**Apronman** A mechanic.

**Backster/Baxter** A baker.

**Bal Maiden** A young girl who worked at the surface of tin and copper mines to free smaller fragments of ore from the larger lumps.

**Barilla manufacturer** A person who burnt certain plants (e.g. saltworts) to obtain from the ashes a mixture of sodium carbonate and sodium sulphate to be used in the manufacture of glass, ceramics, soap and paper.

**Batt maker** A person who made the cotton or wool wadding used in quilts and mattresses.

**Beggar-banger** A parish officer responsible for controlling the length of stay of any stranger.

**Boarding Officer** A person who inspected ships for conditions of quarantine, safety and the prevention of smuggling, prior to their entering a harbour.

**Boniface** An innkeeper.

**Boonmaster** An unpaid parish officer responsible for the upkeep of roads. Also known as a Stonewarden, Surveyor of Highways, or Waymaker.

**Boot Closer** A person who prepared, fitted and stitched together the various parts of a shoe's upper.

**Brightsmith or Whitesmith** A person who finished and polished metals, e.g. tin.

**Brownsmith** A worker in copper or brass.

**Burler & Mender** A highly-skilled person who repaired faults caused during weaving, removed imperfections and replaced missing threads by hand.

**Catchpole** A sheriff's officer who arrested debtors. Also a tax gatherer.

**Chaser** In goldsmithing, a person who engraved figures on the cases of watches, tweezers and toys.

**Chip** A ship's carpenter.

**Colporteur** A pedlar of books.

**Dateler** One who worked by the day, not regularly employed.

**Duffer** A pedlar of fake jewellery.

**Enumerator** A person who collected information from a household for the purpose of a census.

**Fantoccini Man** The proprietor of a travelling theatre similar to, but larger than, a Punch and Judy Show.

**Fencible** In Scotland, a soldier called up for home defence.

**Flusherman** A man employed by the parish to flush out or cleanse the sewers by loosening the deposits.

**Forestaller** A middleman who was in the trade of buying or contracting for any cattle, provisions or merchandise on its way to market, or dissuading people from buying their goods there, or spreading any false rumour with intent to enhance the value of any article.

**Glutman** Slang term for a casual worker.

**Halfin' or Orra-loon** (Scottish) A young farm servant who joined in all the jobs to be done and looked after the odd or unpaired horse.

**Hayward** A parish officer in charge of enclosures and fences to ensure they were in good repair.

**Hogringer** An officer responsible for ensuring that all pigs using the common had rings through their noses to prevent them rooting up the turf.

**Huckster** A person who bought and sold small articles or fruit in the same market, thus raising the price.

**Kibble Filler** A person who filled the buckets for hoisting in mines.

**Lengthsman** A person who cut and replaced the old wooden sleepers supporting railway tracks.

**Mud Lark** A searcher on the banks of a river who paddled in the mud for small pieces of coal, chips of wood or other refuse washed up by the tide.

**Mysgather** A collector of taxes.

**Nipple Chaser** A person on an oil well whose duty it was to procure and deliver to the drilling rig the necessary tools and equipment to carry on the work.

**Picky Boy** A young boy employed above ground at a mine to sort the ore.

**Ponderator** An early inspector of weights and measures at the markets.

**Puddler** A person who worked with a mixture of wet clay and sand that was impervious to water and was used to line a pond or canal. Also a worker who converted pig iron into wrought iron.

**Rattlewatch** A town watchman.

**Rectifier** A person who distilled wines, spirits, and oils.

**Rubricator** A person who printed books or produced manuscripts with red titles or headings.

**Skipkennel** A lackey or footboy.


**Tallyman** A person who kept a tally-shop where goods were sold to be paid for by instalments.

**Tidesman or Tide Waiter** A customs officer who boarded and inspected incoming ships to prevent the evasion of customs house regulations before the cargo was discharged.

**Troner** An official in charge of weighing goods at the tron, a large beam or scales set up in the marketplace for the weighing of heavy wares.

**Upholder** Either an undertaker or an upholsterer.

**Whitewing** A street sweeper.

**Whittawer** A harness and saddle maker. Also a person who converted skin into white leather. 

# 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 9.

## MONOGRAPHS

**The Adelaide Parklands: Submission to the Interim Advisory Committee on the National Estate** (Adelaide City Council, Adelaide, 1974)

**Australian Folk Discography** (Moonlight, Golden Square)

**Australian Garden History Society 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, Mount Gambier, 1999: The Changing Rural Landscape: Gardens, Vineyards, Forests** (A.G.H.S., South Yarra, 2000)

**G. Barlow: Barlow 1770-2000: A Family of Coach-builders from Staffordshire to Adelaide** (Barlow, Swan Reach, 2000)

**R.D.B. Brown: The History of South Australian Orchestras and the Norwood Symphony Orchestral Society Incorporated** (Brown, Norwood, c. 2000)

**L.A. Fenwick: Return to Booleroo Times** (Booleroo 125 Book Committee, Booleroo Centre, 2000)

**The History of Adelaide Arcade** (Adelaide Arcade Pty. Ltd., Adelaide, 199-?)

**K. Inverarity: Detestable To Desirable: A Short History of J. Inverarity Pty. Ltd.** (Inverarity, Thebarton, 2000)

**R. Linn: Pathways for Power: The Story of Electranet SA** (Historical Consultants Pty. Ltd. for Electranet SA, Adelaide, 2000)

**J. Mannion & M. McKinnon: No Place Like Pekina: A Story of Survival** (Pekina 125 Committee, Pekina, 1999)

**H.A.E. Meyer: Manners and Customs of the Aborigines of the Encounter Bay Tribe, South Australia 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.** (Blackwood, 2000)

**P. Moore & P. McDonald: Advance Australia: South Australia and Federation: A Guide to Published and Archival Sources held in the State Library of South Australia** (Libraries Board of S.A., Adelaide, 2000)

**D. O'Connor: No Need to be Afraid: Italian Settlers in South Australia between 1839 and the Second World War** (Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1996)

**A. Patience: Leadership in Contemporary Australian Politics: Lessons from the Dunstan Era**

**The Penfold Cottage Story** (Adelaide?, 19-?)

**S. Piddock: Accommodating the Destitute: An Historical and Archaeological Consideration of the Destitute Asylum of Adelaide** (Manuscript, 1996)

**J. Quiggin: Globalisation, Democracy and Public Prosperity** (Don Dunstan Foundation, Adelaide, 2000)

**Railmac Books & Postcards 1981-2000** (Railmac Publications, Elizabeth, 2000)

**R. Sallis: Railways in the Barossa Valley** (Sallis, Parafield Gardens, 2000)

**Sir Mark Oliphant: Memorial Ceremony, Friday 18 August 2000, Bonython Hall, University of Adelaide** (S.A. Government, Adelaide, 2000)

**State Funeral, Funeral Mass for the Honourable Dame Roma Mitchell 1913-2000, St. Francis Xavier Cathedral, Adelaide, Friday 10 March 2000** (S.A. Government, Adelaide, 2000)

**Unveiling of State Memorial to our Pioneers by His Excellency the Governor, Major-General Sir Winston Dugan at Glenelg, Sunday, 27 December 1936, Order of Service** (Government Printer, Adelaide, 1936)

**The Wonderful Apostolic Strasburg Clock: The Only Perfect Model of the Great Astronomical, Musical, Mechanical & Apostolic Clock Ever Constructed** (Advertiser, Adelaide, 189-?)

## MICROFICHE

**Port Augusta Burial Register; Port Augusta, Old Port Augusta, Port Augusta West, Old Port Augusta West Monumental Inscriptions** (S.A. Genealogy & Heraldry Society, Adelaide, 2000?)

**Port Lincoln Burial Register and Monumental Inscriptions** (S.A. Genealogy & Heraldry Society, Adelaide, 2000?)

**Port Pirie Monumental Inscriptions** (S.A. Genealogy & Heraldry Society, Adelaide, 2000?)

**S.E. District Local Government Areas Of Grant, Lacedpede, Naracoorte & Lucindale, Robe, Tatiara, Wattle Range: Burial Registers and Monumental Inscriptions** (S.A. Genealogy & Heraldry Society, Adelaide, 2000?)

**Whyalla Burial Register and Monumental Inscriptions** (S.A. Genealogy & Heraldry Society, Adelaide, 2000?)

## ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

**OH 566 Recordings made at South Australian School of Mines and Industries Annual Demonstrations [Sound Recording] 1938, 1940.**



## 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 form to Jenny Palmer, 62 Esmond St., Hyde Park 5061. Photographic essays and shorter occasional pieces are also sought. The deadline for all material is May 14<sup>th</sup>.

Before forwarding submissions, authors should request from the editors copies of the Style Guide and the Notes on Contributions. Enquiries may be made to the above address or e-mailed to [jpalmer@adelaide.on.net](mailto:jpalmer@adelaide.on.net) or [christine.garnaut@unisa.edu.au](mailto:christine.garnaut@unisa.edu.au).



## State Library news


The Library administration now seems to have taken the liberty of renaming the Jervois Wing. Recent press releases refer to it as the "Mortlock Building", which is incorrect. It was the collection of books, periodicals, photographs and archival material that was named the Mortlock Library of South Australiana when the latter was formally established in 1983. The Annual Report of the Libraries Board of S.A. for the year 1983-84 explains that "the title constitutes a formal recognition of the Mortlock family's generosity to the State Library and the substantial contribution of the Mortlock bequest to the development of library services".

The building, on the other hand, was named after Sir William Jervois, Governor of South Australia from 1877 to 1882, who laid the foundation stone on 7<sup>th</sup> November 1879. He was described by the *Register* as "not only one of the ablest and most judicious but also one of the most deservedly popular of our Governors". If the authorities have any regard for history, the building should continue to bear his name.

The Library administration would also do well to read the text of the original appeal launched when the Mortlock Library was established. It states: "The Jervois Wing is historically and architecturally the ideal location for the Mortlock Library. The interior is to be fully restored to its original Victorian dignity --- an interior which has been described as arguably the best example of any mid-Victorian library interior in Australia. Its architectural style and its place in the history of South Australia make it the most appropriate home for the State's major historical collections."

There is a small piece of good news, however. It was decided recently that the Library will no longer charge fees for the publication of material from its collections. This policy will apply not only to non-profit organizations and private, self-funded ventures but also to commercial publications. Only in exceptional circumstances, such as large print runs of stamps or coins, will a fee be imposed. The State Library is following the example of the National Library, Canberra, which found that the cost involved in administering the fees was greater than the income generated.

It is still necessary to apply, prior to publication, for permission to reproduce library material. Permission will be freely given in exchange for agreement to acknowledge the Library in the appropriate manner. All requests should be made in writing to the Associate Director (Library and Information Services), giving details of the items required and their proposed use. Further information may be obtained on the internet at <http://www.slsa.sa.gov.au/products/reprofee.htm>.

Readers should also note that the Private Record Groups (PRGs) are now being held at the Library's Netley store. Two retrievals are done per day and requests may be made in person or by phone. 

## Mortlock Archives

by Roger André

Reflecting a once comprehensive network of branches, Bank of Adelaide balance books for Port Adelaide, Bligh and Truro have been deposited, together with general ledgers for Snowtown and Port Pirie, a scrapbook containing salary lists and *pro formas* and travel diaries for staff trips to England. The records cover the period 1876-1930.

Legal documents (1894-1955) make up the recent accession for the John Martin's business record group, among them contracts and receipts of employment and severance.


A map reflecting the wartime regulation of industry has been incorporated in the records of the Adelaide Milk Supply Co-operative. Produced c. 1941, the map delineates the areas that were allocated to the different processing companies for cream collection.

Records of the South Australian Baptist Union have been augmented by a deposit of minutes, reports and course notes (1938-1992) from Burleigh Theological College, records documenting the operation of the Lavis Free Kindergarten (1914-1964) and records of the West End Baptist Mission (1936-1969). The South Australian Ornithological Association has brought its records further up to date by lodging the minutes for 1975-1989. The collection of S.A.O.A. minutes dates from 1899.

Among the summer accessions of personal papers, a letter to the electors of Waroora written by W.J. Verco in 1887 is accompanied by correspondence relating to its discovery some fifty years later. Reminiscences of Barbara Andrewes, née Smith, (1829-1912), recall life in South Australia in the 1840s and diaries and notebooks of Reverend Fred Albury span 1916-1991.

Literary manuscripts are occasionally donated, the latest being a short story for juvenile readers by Lyn Malin, entitled *When baby koala ran away*.

Further Symon family papers include notes on the sale of Manoah and photographs of the Symon family and Sir Josiah's property at Auldana. Papers (1945-1994) of Kelvin Roberts relate chiefly to his career in photography, and 26 motion picture films by Leonard Peterson, jeweller, musician and photographer, capture pre- and post-war family activities.

Papers of Averil Holt, who, sadly, died last year, derive from research for her histories of Hillcrest Hospital and Port Adelaide Casualty Hospital. 

Roger André will retire from the State Library at the end of March and the editor of *History SA* would like to thank him most sincerely for contributing the very useful "Mortlock Archives" column since November 1999. It will be continued by fellow librarian and HSSA member Neil Thomas.

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

## Part III

*Concluding extracts from the memoirs of the Hon. Thomas Playford, supplied to History SA by Ruth Playford Smith, of Hawthorn, Victoria.*

I had when quite a youth taken a great interest in politics. At that time the great question of the day was State Aid to Religion, and the people were divided into those who were in favour of and those against State Aid to Religion. Roman Catholics, Church of England and Wesleyans were as a rule in its favour; Congregationalists, Baptists and other sects mostly against. For years the question was fiercely fought before it was finally won by those against and set at rest in our Colony for ever. I used to attend all the political meetings I could and was from the first against State Aid.

The most notable contest on the subject of State Aid to Religion was in the City. Sir J.H. Fisher, our then leading lawyer was for and Mr. Forster, Editor of the Register, against. On polling day [1855] I with H. Prince made into town with blue and white rosettes on our breasts and horses. Forster's committee rooms were in the Exchange Hotel, Hindley Street. There we first went. While there a mob of men rushed out of a side street and attacked Forster's men in the hotel. They drove most of them into the street and the rest onto the balcony where a stand-up fight raged with sticks and parts of broken chairs. Prince and I looked on, when we heard a shout from King William Street and saw Inspector Tolmer running at the head of a lot of police towards the hotel. Tolmer was a very active man. He climbed up a pillar and was on the balcony mixing in the fight in no time. The police soon cleared Fisher's men out of the hotel.

In the meantime a mob of Fisher's men stood in the street opposite the Blenheim Hotel, another of Forster's houses. A number of Forster's committee came on the balcony and one spoke to a crowd below when a shower of stones greeted him and the rest on the balcony, and it was fun for us to see how they picked up chairs to shield their bodies from the shower of stones. They all at last got inside the hotel, but the stones played havoc with the glass windows. Nearly all were broken and all would [have] been if Tolmer's men had not rushed from the Exchange Hotel and dispersed the mob.

After this the street looked pretty clear and Prince and I rode down the street. When we came opposite the Black Bull Hotel which then stood back some distance from the street, we saw a little mob of men

in front of it. A number rushed out into the street and caught hold of our horses' bridles and threatened, in language more forcible than polite, to pull us off our horses if we did not pull off our colours. At this moment a Catholic priest ran up and ordered the men to take their hands off our bridles and leave us alone. This they did. The priest then said to us, "Young men, I would advise you to take those rosettes off for your own safety, for there is a lot of excitable and many drunken and half drunken men about who might do you harm and you might not be lucky enough to have a protector like I have been to you handy." We thanked the priest and took his advice. Forster was elected. It was open voting and what the result would be was practically known by noon, and Fisher's supporters were wild at their want of success.

After Welbourne was by my father turned out of what is now known as Drysdale [at Norton's Summit], my father let it [to] Mr. Bishop at £60 a year. I at that time was anxious to make a start in life on my own account, settle down and get married, and after a great deal of trouble I obtained a promise from my father that when Bishop's lease was up, the garden and land should be given to me. I would then be 22 years of age. In the meantime I had by carting, salary as Secretary, and by the profit of our road contract, earned and saved a nice little sum of money. My cousin Hague owed me £60, so without asking my father for money I had enough to purchase a cart and horse, tools and seeds, and pay the wages of one man till the summer crops were ready for sale. Bishop's lease expired on 11 July 1859, and on the day after I took possession. In the meantime I had engaged Mr. George Story to work for me. He was about 9 years older than I, had a wife and two children.

The garden consisted of about 4 acres of swamp and hillside land; 3 acres of swamp land could be irrigated. A very small portion was planted with apples and plums. In the swamp there was about one acre of raspberries; the rest of the swamp and some of the high land was cultivated for vegetables which paid well in summer. At first I used to obtain 4/- a dozen for turnips, 2/6 for carrots and other vegetables in proportion, against 1/- for turnips and 1/- for carrots now. For raspberries we obtained 18d per pound. Mr. Reynolds had a jam factory at Fullarton and paid me that price. They paid so well that I planted another acre, but year by year the price came down until it fell below 6d. Then finding out they did not pay I grubbed them all but a small [section]. Others did likewise and the price went up. Mr. McEwen, the jam maker, then told me he was willing to give me 6d a pound for all I could supply and that he believed I could rely upon their never falling below that price in future. As they paid well at that figure I replanted, but in a few years down came the price and out they were dug never to be replanted by me.

The house was a tumble-down pisey-built one, only kept from falling by iron bars, consisting of three small rooms in front with three small lean-to rooms at the back. In the centre of the middle lean-to was the fireplace, on three sides of which one could sit. We had plenty of wood and could put on big logs; and during the frosty winter nights a roaring fire was kept up. Mrs. Story used for a time to bake her bread in a camp oven. The chimney was a wooden one. The danger of burning the place down was so great that after a year or two I employed Mr. Hague to build a brick one and make a proper fire with hobs and at the same time place a Yorkshire iron oven at the side, building it with bricks with a flue that returned into the chimney.

Before I got married, at one end of the house I built a weatherboard room with a fireplace of brick, and at the back a little paling lean-to. When married we lived in this, and our bedroom was the adjoining pisey room. Story had the other two rooms and their lean-tos. A few years after our marriage I built of pisey a two front roomed and two lean-to roomed house (pictured right). Mr. Story and I did all the work except make the doors and windows and build the fireplace, chimney and fix the oven. When this was finished my wife and I lived in the original house until the new house of stone and brick was built higher up the hill at the back (shown on next page). Then the old house was used for storing apples, pears and onions. It was subsequently pulled down and on its site now stands the tennis court.

I called the place Drysdale from the maiden name of my grandmother Perry, whose father was a Scotch gardener, born in Perth, who came to London, and was head gardener to, I think, the Duke of Devonshire.

The people who lived in the neighbourhood when I first went into the hills were Bishop, adjoining; Welbourne, ditto; Norton; Greenham (I purchased his land for my son Thomas after Greenham's death); Sutton, a storekeeper; Giles of Grove Hill; Pearce, who then lived where my son-in-law Cowling now lives; Gepp, who kept the Rock Tavern; Bier, where Smith now lives; Jennings; Hartsman, where Pellew now resides; Lorne, now owned by Smith; and the Hon. John Baker of Morialta; Lindan (Baker bought him out and he removed to Sixth Creek); Bungay, (Cross [lives there] now); Mr. Ellis, who worked for me for years; Mr. White, who worked for Greenham

and took land from him as part of his wages, where Giles lives now.

Mr. Merchant, Mr. Bungay and Mr. Davis were the only persons who lived then at Cherryville. Merchant and Bungay were sawyers, and carted with bullocks their timber down onto the plains by an awfully bad and steep road called French's pinch road. All the previous mentioned are dead except Merchant, Bungay and Pearce.

The second year after I came to Drysdale I stood for the District Council, but was defeated by a few votes. I tried the next year [1861] and was returned. The year after I was elected Chairman and continued to occupy that position without a break for 21 years,

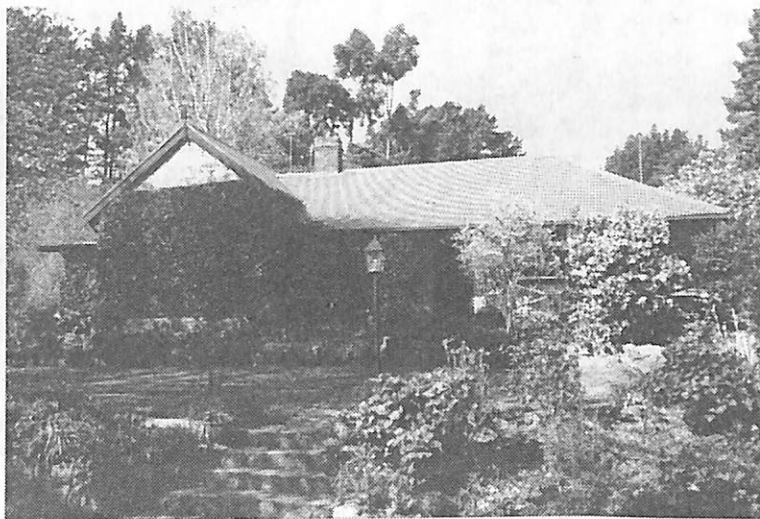
when I resigned because my Parliamentary and Ministerial duties prevented me from giving proper attention to District Council work.

When I came to Drysdale the whole section, except the few acres cultivated, was covered with a forest of stringy bark and scrub. Bit by bit the trees were cut down, the scrub cleared, and the land so cleared trenched and planted with cherries, apples, plums and pears, and gooseberries were

planted between the fruit trees, to give some return before the bearing of the trees. Six or seven years after planting, the gooseberries would be uprooted and the trees would have all the land to themselves.

Before I became a member of Parliament at least 15 acres had been so cleared and planted. At this time there was no payment of Members. I was ambitious, I flattered myself I would be able to show that I had some ability and would be capable of performing my Parliamentary duties with credit, but I had not the means to spare the necessary time from my garden without help.

By this time my father's 21-year building leases had fallen in, and he was in receipt of a comfortable income. I told him my wishes, and asked him if he would help me. He said he had at one time hoped that I would become a preacher of the gospel but that he had now given up that hope for he had found that I was only a doubting Thomas. He thought it best after all for me to follow my own inclination, and that he would allow me 10/- a day for every day I was away from my garden attending to my Parliamentary duties. He trusted that if I was elected I would always place the good of the people before any gain for myself. I was to be truthful and strictly honest in all my dealing and all would go well with me. ⇒



*The cottage at Drysdale, built in about 1862 by Tom Playford and George Story. Constructed of rammed earth, it is now lived in by the Hon. Tom's great-granddaughter.*

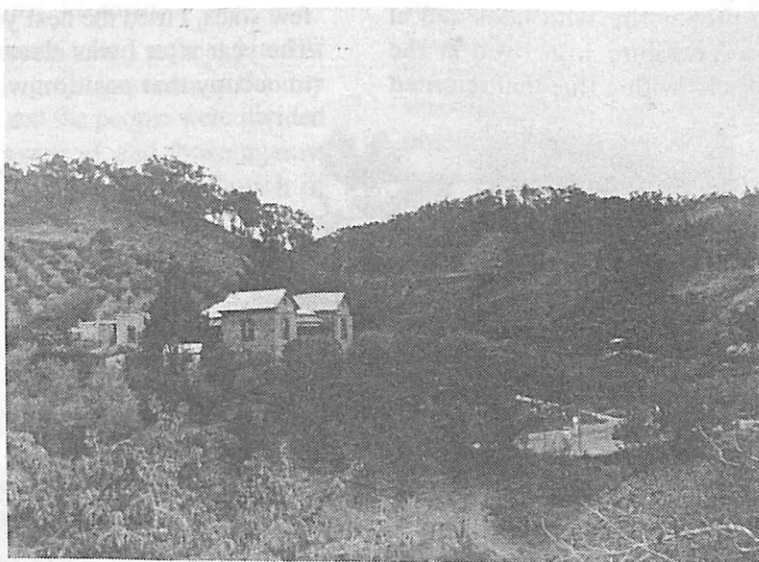
In 1876 I joined the Boucaut Ministry: the late Sir W. Morgan, Sir J. Colton, the other members --- Ward, Way, Playford and Boucaut --- are alive now (April 1910). At that time Hanson was our Chief Justice. He lived at Cox's Creek at the back of Mount Lofty and died suddenly, at a time when we were in recess and Boucaut had started on a trip north to examine the country and report on the best route for a railway north of Port Augusta. He had arrived at his father-in-law's station beyond the Burra when he got a telegram telling him of the death of the Chief Justice. He at once returned to town and called a Cabinet meeting to consider who should be the new Chief Justice. First we had to consider the claims of the two puisne judges, Gwynne and Stow. The first was strongly objected to by Colton, on moral grounds. Stow was considered out of the running on similar grounds (drink in his case). And we considered that Boucaut should take the position, Way saying that after Boucaut he ought to be chosen but that he would cheerfully vote for Boucaut.

Now Boucaut did not like to break up the Ministry by taking the Chief Justiceship and finally declined the position, and Way, a very able young lawyer, was chosen. Stow's and Gwynne's friends were furious. Stow had a large number of friends both outside and in Parliament and the Ministry was much weakened by this appointment, which was very unpopular. Outsiders did not give Way the credit for the ability we knew he undoubtedly possessed and considered he would turn out a failure. They were mistaken; he was a great success. Not one of his decisions has been reversed by the Privy Council and he is acknowledged throughout the Commonwealth as the ablest of all the judges. So much for the value of public opinion which is so often formed on insufficient knowledge.

Boucaut not being able now to examine the country and report on the best route for the great northern railway from Port Augusta, I was chosen and immediately started with the Deputy Surveyor-General [William] Gosse and Mr. E. Cooke, one of the members representing most of the country we should have to pass through. [Several days later] we drove to Beltana Station where Phillipson, the manager, and his sister made us most welcome and administered to our comfort. This station was owned then by Sir

T. Elder, who was the first to import the camel into Australia, and a number were kept at Beltana for breeding purposes.

Both Cooke and I had seen camels before but we had never ridden one. To give us a new experience, Phillipson had some yarded and one riding female camel brought into the enclosure round the house just after breakfast. . . . Phillipson insisted upon me mounting. At last I consented, on condition that Gosse got on with me. This was done. I sat behind Gosse, who had hold of the cord fastened to the nose of the



The 'new house' of stone and brick built at Drysdale c. 1870.  
It was destroyed by fire in 1983.

Photograph (c. 1890) courtesy of Mary Playford-Snarskis.

beast to guide her by. The gate was opened. Out we went on the road. We went along nicely for some distance. The motion was a swinging one, not at all disagreeable but for one not accustomed to it I should say very tiring after a long ride. At last we came opposite the stockyards and the camel refused to go any further. When Gosse struck her, she knelt down, then got up and tried to turn round, making a moaning noise all the time and chewing her cud all the time. I wanted to get off when she knelt down but Gosse would not hear of it. He said he was going to conquer her and make her go where he wanted her. The camel was equally determined and was conqueror in the end. And she managed it in an unexpected way. She kept chewing her cud while the battle was going on until she had accumulated in her mouth a mass of green vegetable slimy material, and then turning her head, looking Gosse full in the face, she squirted the foul slimy mass right over his face and clothes, I getting a little of it where Gosse's body did not shelter me. Having delivered her fire she knelt down, and Gosse and I were only too glad to get off.

I will now give a sketch of my opinion (from intimate acquaintance) of some of the politicians I have referred to.

Boucaut --- A good lawyer, a fair speaker, at times rather involved. He had the best interests of the Colony at heart. His policy, called then broad and comprehensive, was a good one --- open up the country by public works, provide by taxation to pay for what is bound to be a loss of most of these until development by means of them has taken place. The Parliament accepted the public works part, and refused the taxation part. This resulted in a few years in a deficit which amounted to £1,250,000 in 1887, when I became

Treasurer for the first time. He has been a fair Judge, but at times crochety. Retired now.

Hawker --- The son of an Admiral, came with money to S.A., took a run (Bungaree), entered Parliament before I did, was for some years Speaker. He was a well-educated gentleman, one of the best prepared speakers in the Parliament but not good in impromptu reply. He had one failing: he occasionally drank to excess and then his conduct was outrageous. At a dinner at his house he got drunk on one occasion and from the upper story emptied the contents of a coal scuttle over a number of ladies who stood below. When in the Morgan Ministry he got drunk at a public meeting, conducted himself so shamefully that on getting sober he felt that his only course was to resign. He sent in his resignation but Morgan, on his promise to abstain from drink in future, refused to accept his resignation and for a year he kept his promise.

Morgan had to go to England on private business, so he resigned the Premiership. He came to me and said he intended to recommend the Governor to send for me to form a new Ministry. I told him I considered he had overlooked the claims of Hawker, who was an older man and had been longer in Parliament than I. He said he had considered Hawker's claims and he felt he could not be trusted. He would most likely get drunk and break up any Ministry he might form. I said he has now been sober for a year and that the responsibility of the position of Premier would keep him sober and I felt it was due to Hawker to at least give him a trial. Morgan gave way, waited on the Governor about noon, and recommended him to send for Hawker. This was at once done and Hawker asked until noon next day, to give him time to make choice of a team which request was granted.

In the afternoon Hawker came to my office and consulted me on personnel of the Ministry he was to form. We agreed on the names to be submitted to the Governor at noon next day and I went at night to my sister's at Mitcham and told her the new team had been agreed upon and that I was to continue in my old post of Commissioner of Crown Lands.

When Hawker left me he was perfectly sober and I went to my office in the morning with no suspicion of any trouble and went on with my work, when about 11 o'clock Hawker came in. I saw at a glance that

he had been drinking and that he was still under the influence of drink. He said, "I have come to ask you a question. Do you think I ought to form a Ministry?" Seeing the state he was in, I answered at once, "No." He said, "I have just left Morgan and he said the same. I will now write to that effect to the Governor." With that he left the room, wrote to His Excellency declining the task, giving no reasons, and His Excellency thinking that we of the old Ministry could not form one, sent for one of the opposition who did form one. Thus, through the drunkenness of Hawker, one of the strongest

Ministries was broken up due to my loyalty to a colleague who was not worthy of the trust I reposed in him.

Charles Mann --- A very able lawyer. He was the soul of honour, his word was his bond. He had two faults. Indolent except when roused, and fond of gambling. His earnings were large but gambling kept him always short of money, and he died in debt. He was a good speaker with a profound knowledge of men . . . Unfortunately Mann had one great failing. He was a confirmed gambler and his losses in betting on races and with cards were so heavy that he was always in financial difficulties in spite of his large income. He often played cards all night and although he was not a hard drinker, yet by keeping late hours, he undermined his

constitution and died early in life and, what was worse for his family, in poverty.

One day, wanting advice on a very important question, I went to his office to see him about 2 p.m. He was not in. His secretary said he did not know where he was. I said it was very important, I should see him at once. He said he might be found at the Globe Hotel, an hotel racing men much frequented. I went there but could not see Mann in any of the rooms. I asked the landlord. He gave an evasive answer. I told him it was very important that I should see Mann at once. He then went upstairs, knocked at a door, was told to come in. We did and found Mann and a number of other men playing cards each with a little heap of matches in front of them. The game played was nap, the matches represented money. It might have been penny nap or from that to a pound or more. But here was the Attorney-General of the Colony gambling in an hotel at three o'clock in the afternoon.



*Playford's parliamentary colleagues.  
Top: James Boucaut, Samuel Way  
Bottom: George Hawker, Charles Mann*

First Prize -- History Essay Awards 2000

## Abortion Law Reform in South Australia: Have the intentions been realized?

by Mary Bolling

When the liberalization of abortion laws was first debated within South Australia, pro-abortion groups publicized their intentions of achieving legal abortion on demand and of giving women the right to choose. Legalized abortion, they predicted, would solve the "backyard" abortion health problem, and enable the South Australian Government to address the social problems causing unwanted pregnancy. These intentions and predictions, although criticized by anti-abortion groups, were the basis for the Criminal Consolidation Act Amendment Act passed in 1969. Legalization has brought about these groups' recommendations, as abortion is apparently on demand, and acceptance of a woman's right to choose is widespread; predictions regarding the resolution of social and health problems, however, have not been fulfilled. This is demonstrated by escalation in abortion numbers, increasingly loose interpretation of the Act, and the emergence of abortion-related health hazards. While some intentions of those favouring law reform were achieved with South Australia's legalization of abortion, many predictions have not been realized.

The South Australian abortion debate began with the introduction of Attorney-General Robin Millhouse's Bill for an Act to amend the Criminal Law Consolidation Act, 1935-1966. The law since 1876 stated "any woman . . . attempting to procure her own miscarriage", or "any person who, with intent to procure the miscarriage of any woman" was guilty of a felony and liable for life imprisonment; in spite of this, one central pro-abortion advocate, the Abortion Law Reform Association of South Australia, argued that "abortion is already a widespread practice in this and other communities" (Ref. 1). Although stating that "there is little data on which one can base a scientific estimate of the number of illegal abortions in South Australia", ALRASA nonetheless estimated 5,100 abortions were currently performed on South Australian women annually. Having presented this estimate, ALRASA stated "it is evident that prohibition of abortions does not prevent them occurring" and recommended that "the only way to prevent illegal abortions occurring is to amend the law so that no medically induced abortion will be illegal". ALRASA believed this would enable the South Australian Government to address the problem of illegal abortion.

In their preamble, ALRASA referred to "society's real task. . . of [reducing] the number of women who find themselves in a situation where they regard abortion as the only acceptable answer for them", which could be addressed in "a situation in which all these problems can come to light". A second active pro-abortion force was the South Australian Humanist Society. In outlining their position, they agreed that "given adequate sex education, the need [for abortion] would be far less than it is at present" (Ref. 8). These two statements sum up the foremost social prediction made by the pro-abortion groups: that legalization of abortion would allow South Australia to address the problems that cause unwanted pregnancy, hence reducing demand for abortion.

Pro-abortion groups, in these arguments, were obviously intent on legalizing abortion. Their recommendations acknowledged no alternative solutions to that of legal abortion; the intentions of these groups have clearly rendered their arguments biased. Anti-abortion groups, on the other hand, favoured several alternatives. Writing to the Select Committee, Adelaide's Roman Catholic Archbishop argued that "instead of liberalizing abortion, steps should be taken to provide mothers in distress with medical, social and psychiatric care they need" (Ref. 8). The Lutheran Church within South Australia displayed a similar view, stating "abortion is not the solution to a social problem" (Ref. 8). In the same documents, both church groups outlined their moral opposition to abortion, based on the premise that human life, given by God, must be protected at every stage. This can be considered religious bias.

Anti-abortion sentiment, however, was not based simply on religion. Dr. Cleary, Reader in Pathology at the University of Adelaide, referring to various surveys, demonstrated England's experience "that people stopped taking contraceptives because abortion is now available as a substitute", suggesting South Australia's experience would be similar (Ref. 8). The Lutheran statement also predicted "increase in demand for abortion". These fears regarding the outcome of legalization were typical of anti-abortion groups, and seem justified, as it was known that other places had experienced these problems.

The ALRASA submission rejected such views, stating "the main factor operating against an inordinately high abortion rate in Australia is contraception" (Ref. 1). It based this argument on the coincidence of very high abortion rates and lack of efficient contraception in some "less sophisticated countries". ALRASA believed that "economic and personal convenience will persuade most people towards contraception, and away from abortion", and that following a legal abortion, women "can receive the care and advice which will enable [avoidance of] further unwanted pregnancies". While anti-abortion groups presented concerns as legalization was debated, pro-abortion groups made these further predictions to dismiss anxiety.

Yet despite liberalized abortion laws and further Government efforts to address problems, these predictions have not been realized. Since 1970, the South Australian Government has attempted, through funding to the Family Planning Association and sex education programmes, to limit unwanted pregnancies. Hospitals with abortion services also offer counselling to the same end. Numbers of legal abortions, however, have risen steadily since 1970, from 1,330 to the 1998 figure of 5,482. In 1978 a continuing rise in the number recorded in the under-20 age group was particularly noted, in spite of the fact that "it had been hoped that educational programmes in schools and elsewhere might have brought about some reduction" (Ref. 5). The number of women under 24 having an abortion in 1978 was 2,319, out of a total of 3,906; even though sex education is taught in both primary and secondary schools, 1998 saw teenage abortions account for 21.3% of all abortions performed. It is also worth noting that in 1998, 36.9% of abortions were for women with one or more previous abortions, apparently reflecting the use of abortion as a contraceptive measure. The legalization of abortion has seen an increase in abortion numbers, in spite of extensive efforts to prevent unwanted pregnancy. This outcome is clearly contrary to the predictions of pro-abortion groups.

Abortion legalization was not enacted to the extent intended by ALRASA, which could explain failed predictions. The eventual Amendment Act justified abortion if "the pregnancy involved greater risk to the life . . . or greater risk of injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman than if the pregnancy were terminated". Consideration of her "actual or reasonably foreseeable environment" and any "substantial risk that if the pregnancy were not terminated . . . the child would suffer from physical or mental abnormalities as to be seriously handicapped" was also allowed (Ref. 7). These provisions do not constitute ALRASA's recommended situation, that abortion be allowed if "it is in the best interests of the pregnant woman and in accord with her conscience" (Ref. 1). The law does not allow abortion "on demand", indicating the apparent failure of this pro-abortion intention.

Since legalization, however, abortion has not been practised within the letter and spirit of the law, according to historians Overduin and Fleming. Although both have religious bias, one as a Lutheran Pastor and the other as an Anglican priest, the escalation of numbers over the past thirty years also reflects their contention of easily accessible abortion. Barbara Baird's 1990 research into abortion in South Australia similarly reflects this loose interpretation of the law. One interviewee outlines how easily she obtained a legal abortion in 1976, as the doctor "absolutely agreed that [her] career was important" (Ref. 3). This case is one of the 96% of abortions performed between 1975 and 1979 for "psychiatric" reasons. The rate of

abortions performed on these open-to-interpretation "psychiatric" grounds --- 97.6% in 1998 --- reflect that abortion "on demand" has been achieved.

Feminist issues, as well as social problems, concerned pro-abortion groups pre-1970. Legalized abortion, these groups intended, would allow the "basic human right . . . every woman should have" (Ref. 1). The already illustrated accessibility of abortion shows that many doctors and a large proportion of society have upheld this right. This seems to suggest that, in regard to the feminist argument, the intentions of pro-abortion groups have been realized.

Removal of the immediate physical risk associated with abortion has also been addressed. Regarding abortion complications, ALRASA argued that illegal abortion was generally regarded as dangerous, while about 8% of legal terminations have medical complications. While South Australia has few recorded complications (0.7% of abortions in 1998) as such cases must be reported within 14 days, this cannot be considered an accurate figure. The 30% greater risk of contracting breast cancer following an abortion, proven by British studies involving tens of thousands of women (Ref. 9), and the link between abortion and later sterility, demonstrated by experienced professionals such as Melbourne obstetrician and gynaecologist Ian MacIsaac (Ref. 10), renders the 14-day-limit complication records unrepresentative. As "backyard" abortions similarly posed these long-term risks, it can be inferred that a woman now faces less risk in undergoing an abortion; as abortion numbers climb, however, more women are exposed to these long-term risks. An intention of pro-abortion groups has, however, been realized --- the reduction of immediate physical health risk associated with abortion.

In ALRASA's submission, psychological complications associated with abortion were also mentioned. They stated "many [reports] indicated very favourable results . . . others allege that abortion is followed by feelings of remorse or guilt, but these are not of a serious nature". ALRASA do not explain the basis of this conclusion, other than attributing such feelings exclusively to Roman Catholics. Yet in non-Christian Japan, a 1963 survey found that 73.1% of women felt "anguish" at having an abortion (Ref. 8). ALRASA were biased in totally dismissing the idea of post-abortion trauma while available research did indicate its existence.

Since legalization, debate has continued over the existence of post-abortion trauma. Frank Weston's 1973 article on psychiatric sequelae in South Australia, studying 154 women, shows the great majority without psychiatric disturbance post-abortion (Ref. 12). Due to Weston's involvement with the ALRASA submission and his strong pro-legalization stand, however, his findings can be presumed to be biased.

Weston's findings are challenged by many international reports. The United States Institute for ⇒

Pregnancy Loss, an independent body which looks to provide accurate, objective and current information on all forms of pregnancy loss, found 19% of women having an abortion will suffer all the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, and approximately half have at least some of these (Ref. 4). Within South Australia, no similar report exists to either support or reject these figures, but the research of Adelaide doctor Toni Turnbull has indicated the existence of post-abortion syndrome. In 1985 she attended a South Australian conference on "Women's Health in a Changing Society", presenting her own experience of post-abortion syndrome cases. The audience booed her report and, at her suggestion of further South Australian studies of the syndrome, 90% voted against such action (Ref. 2). Researching her book *Giving Sorrow Words*, journalist Melinda Tankard Reist interviewed 250 Australian women who experienced grief after an abortion (Ref. 11). Her work, similarly, has received criticism from feminist groups.

While post-abortion syndrome certainly exists in Australia, some feminist factions, even in the medical profession, seem unwilling to recognize this fact. Pro-abortion groups demanded the right to choose, but this cannot be considered an informed choice if South Australian women are not made aware of the psychological risks involved in abortion. One can question, therefore, whether the right to choose has entirely been achieved.

Pro-abortion groups, and particularly ALRASA, publicized several intentions and predictions. As legal abortion on demand has been achieved, their foremost intention has been realized. This has seen the removal of some immediate health risks associated with illegal abortion. Predictions regarding the social problems leading to abortion, however, have not been fulfilled, as rising abortion numbers reflect the unaddressed problems necessitating abortion. South Australian women's right to choose was also intended; while women can choose abortion, lack of awareness in society of the likelihood of psychological sequelae reflects the possible absence of an informed choice. While legalization of abortion within South Australia has brought about some intentions of pro-abortion groups, predictions made in abortion law reform debate have not apparently been realized.

#### References:

1. ALRASA: *Submission to the Select Committee on the Criminal Law Consolidation Amendment Bill, 1968* (Adelaide, 1969)
2. Australian Festival of Light Resource Paper: *Abortion Grief: Australia's Hidden Tragedy* (Adelaide, 1988)
3. B. Baird: "I Had One Too" --- *An Oral History of Abortion in South Australia Before 1970* (Flinders Press, Bedford Park, 1990)
4. C. Barnard: *The Long Term Psychological Effects of Abortion* (Institute of Pregnancy Loss, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, 1990)
5. Committee Appointed to Examine and Report on Abortions Notified in South Australia: *Ninth annual report* (Government Printer, Adelaide)
6. Committee Appointed to Examine and Report on Abortions Notified in South Australia, *Twenty-Ninth Annual Report* (Government Printer, Adelaide)
7. *Criminal Law Consolidation Act, 1935-1980*, Section 81, (1) & (2), 82a, (1) & (3)
8. J. Fleming and D. Overduin: *Wake Up, Lucky Country* (Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide, 1980)
9. A. Gordon: "Abortions raise risk of cancer" in *Herald Sun*, 14 August 2000 (Study of Britain's Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists)
10. I. MacIsaac (Seminar "Post Abortion Sequelae", June 1990): *The Facts* [leaflet] (Women Hurt by Abortion Australia, Kent Town, 1995)
11. M. Tankard Reist: *Giving Sorrow Words* (Duffy and Snellgrove, Sydney, 2000)
12. F. Weston: "Psychiatric sequelae to legal abortion in South Australia", *Medical Journal of Australia*, 17 February 1973, pp. 350-354.

Mary Bolling matriculated last year from Naracoorte High School after moving from Birchip, Victoria, where she was educated at home by her mother up to Year 10. She intends to spend this year working and in 2002 will begin a course in media studies at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology.

## New research service at State Records

A new research service has been instituted at State Records (S.A.) for all current South Australian residents. If you are unable to attend the public search room at Netley (on the corner of Marion and Richmond Roads), the Reference Services offer one free, 30-minute search in any twelve-month period. The search may include any of the following:

- Validation of personal information (for example, from school records) for rights and entitlement purposes
- Guidance and advice as to the records likely to be relevant to the topic
- Confirmation of correct references
- Supply of copies of documents, if the user provides full archival references (costs apply for this service).

Researchers should write to Reference Services, State Records, P.O. Box 1056, Blair Athol West 5084, providing full details of their search enquiry, their full name and both residential and postal addresses.

Interstate or overseas researchers, and South Australian residents who have already received a free 30-minute search within the previous twelve months should write to State Records Consultancy Services, at the above address, for an extended search. The cost for this service is \$37.00 per hour. State Records may be e-mailed at [staterrecords@saugov.sa.gov.au](mailto:staterrecords@saugov.sa.gov.au). 