

HSA

History

Newsletter of the Historical Society of South Australia

ISSN 1444-8459


No. 154, May 2001

Exploring the explorers

Valmai Hankel has been travelling the outback since 1984, retracing the paths of some of our most intrepid explorers. In her illustrated lecture "Sand and Paper: A Personal Look at Some Australian Explorers", to be given at the Prince Philip Theatre, Prince Alfred College, Kent Town, on Friday, June 1st, at 8.00 p.m., she will discuss six explorers and their expeditions, tell us something of what they were like as individuals and present her own responses to the country they traversed.

John McDouall Stuart mounted six expeditions between 1858 and 1862 and had the distinction of never having lost a man; Burke and Wills led the most expensive expeditionary failure in Australian history; William Landsborough was the first to cross the continent from north to south in 1861-62; John McKinlay sailed a makeshift boat down the East Alligator River in 1866 after being stranded by monsoonal rains; and Ernest Giles wrote highly lyrical and imaginative journals on his five expeditions between 1872 and 1876.

Valmai Hankel has worked at the State Library for 43 years, specializing in South Australian, children's literature and reference services, and has been Senior Rare Book Librarian since 1982. She is an Associate of the Australian Library and Information Association and in 1996 was awarded the Public Service Medal for her work with rare books.

As a special treat to complement the lecture, Terry Saunderson will be exhibiting a number of early printed maps from his collection. These will include maps from Petermann's *Geographische Mittheilungen*, depicting the journeys of Stuart, Giles, and Burke and Wills, all produced within a few months of the expeditions, as well as maps published in 1863 of the routes of Landsborough and McKinlay in their attempts to find Burke and Wills. Also on display will be a 1668 map of New Guinea and the Gulf of Carpentaria, a 1739 German map of the South Pole, Africa and Australia without its east coast, and Louis Freycinet's maps of Kangaroo Island and Port Lincoln. 


A hands-on evening

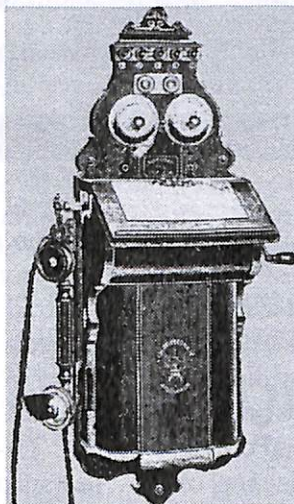
The HSSA meeting to be held at the Prince Philip Theatre, Prince Alfred College, Kent Town, on Friday, July 6th, at 8.00 p.m., will be an evening with a difference. Geoff King and his friends Bob Green, Brian Haskard and John Newgrain will present a talk on "Telephones and Telegraphs: Antique to Modern" and they will have with them three tables of equipment --- old telephones, switchboards, telegraph keys, tape registers and enlarged photographs. They will take us through the history of telecommunications in this state from the building of the Overland Telegraph Line in 1872 through to the mobile phones of today.

South Australia had its first telephones in 1882 and exchanges were set up soon after. The Ericsson wall phone (*shown left*) was introduced in 1887 and lasted for a hundred years, the last one coming out of service in Tasmania in 1987. In 1892 the Ericsson table set, the forerunner of the modern home phone, made its appearance. During the Depression they were sold to farmers for 6d. each but are now worth up to \$2,500.

Each decade saw new developments. Early phones had their own batteries but by the mid-1920s the power units were housed in the exchanges and ten years later the automatic system was phased in. In the 1970s a dog was used to carry wires through the ceilings of buildings such as the Queen Victoria Hospital. He was a Cairn terrier called "Taffy" and had his own union certificate.

After the talk members will have the opportunity to use some of the equipment themselves. You will be able to operate and speak through a 4-line switchboard, tap out a message in morse code and examine the tape printed out in dots and dashes.

Geoff King worked as a P.M.G. technician for over twenty years and has made a hobby of telecommunications all his life. In 1992 he and a handful of like-minded devotees formed the "Bush Telegraph Boys" and took their knowledge and equipment to almost a hundred schools, entertaining 63,000 children over a period of seven years. 



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. 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: Mr. D. Cornish

Vice-President: Mr. M. Keain

Secretary: Mrs. G. Brown, Ph. 8278 5370.

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

Members: Dr. G. Bishop, Ms. J. Callen, Mr. S. Dawes, Mr. C. Deed, Dr. C. Garnaut, Mr. J. Healey, Mr. J. Loudon, Mr. T. Saunderson.

Journal Editors: Dr. C. Garnaut, Ph. 8302 0204, and Ms. J. Palmer, Ph. 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.

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Masks, models and fabulous frocks

Our tour of the Performing Arts Collection of South Australia on Sunday, July 29th, will be a delight for drama and opera buffs as well as providing an insight into both the artistry and the hard work that goes into any stage production. The Curator, Jo Peoples, will escort us around the fascinating collection of costumes, masks, props, stage models, programmes, photographs and theatrical memorabilia housed at the Festival Centre.

We will be able to inspect a number of stage models produced by the set designers of the State Theatre Company. Constructed precisely to scale, they form the basis from which the workshop staff create the final stage sets.


Also on show will be a selection of lavish and immaculately-made costumes used in such shows as *Madame Butterfly*, *The Revenger's Tragedy* and *Me and My Gal*. Most of these are from the early 1980s when the State Opera had their own wardrobe and workshop facilities and even their own milliner.

There are some elaborately painted masks that were made for the Acting Company, the professional wing of the University of Adelaide Theatre Guild. Designed by Tanya Moiseiwitsch and made from

Wettex, they were used in *Hamlet* and in the 1978 Festival of Arts production of *Oedipus*. We will also see the costume designs of Kenneth Rowell which date from the late 1940s and were used in the South Australian Ballet Club's production of *The Listeners*, choreographed by Joanna Priest. Other designs include those created for the State Opera's *Tales of Hoffmann* in 1982.

The library contains a wide variety of books, newspaper cuttings, reviews and other memorabilia that will be available for members to browse through. There are also theatre programmes from the 1880s through to the present, including the "Electric Spark" programmes of the 1890s from the Theatre Royal in Hindley Street.

Jo Peoples has been in charge of the Performing Arts Collection since its inception in 1979. She has been involved in theatre since the age of seventeen, has acted with the Theatre Guild and the Independent Theatre Company and also plays the double bass. She taught drama and voice at Seymour College for ten years and currently teaches the double bass at Concordia College.

The cost of the tour will be \$4.00, payable on the day, and you are asked to assemble by 2.00 p.m. on the forecourt outside the main entrance to the Festival Theatre. The tour will take approximately two hours. 

Rob Nicol retires as HSSA President

After seventeen years as President of the Historical Society of South Australia, Dr. Robert Nicol has retired, due to family circumstances. At the Annual General Meeting of the HSSA, held on April 6th, founding President Ron Gibbs spoke of the many qualities that have made Rob such a respected and popular standard-bearer, and he proposed the following motion:


"That the members of the Historical Society of South Australia record their deep appreciation of the contribution made by Dr. Robert Nicol to all aspects of the life of the Society. We record that Dr. Nicol has been a vital member of the Society's Council since 1981 and its outstanding President from 1984 to the present. In doing so, the members acknowledge the prodigious labours he has undertaken on their behalf and the stimulating effect he has had in furthering the study and appreciation of history in general and of South Australian history in particular.

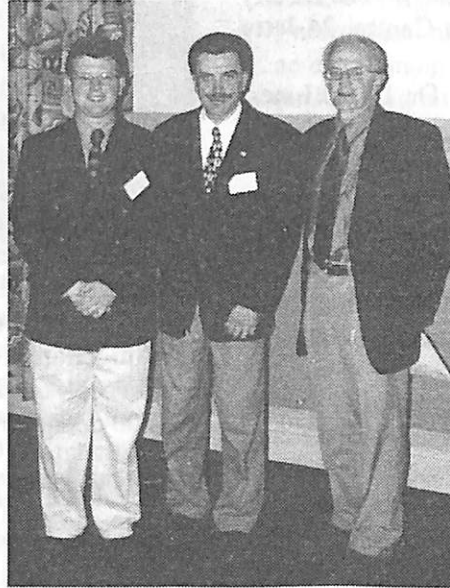
"They also wish to acknowledge the impressive personal qualities he has revealed in discharging these tasks. The members wish to record their highest regard for him, they look forward to enjoying his company and friendship in the future, they wish him well in all that he undertakes and they thank him sincerely for enhancing in outstanding fashion the work of the Society and for enriching the lives of all its members."

The motion was seconded by the Vice-President, Maurice Keain, and carried unanimously.

Mr. David Cornish, former Council member and currently Development Officer at Prince Alfred College, was elected as the new President of the Society, and Janet Callen and Terry Saunderson were also elected onto Council. Profiles will appear in future Newsletters.

Dr. Simon Cameron has had to resign from Council due to the pressure of other commitments and his diligent efforts and enthusiastic input will be sorely missed. He was responsible for establishing the Society's web-site and for initiating and organizing the History Essay Prize.

After six years as the Society's publicity officer, Marcia Dunshore has also had to step down due to time constraints. She has done a sterling job of arranging displays of our activities at libraries, community centres and shopping malls. If there is a member who would be prepared to take over the duties of publicity officer, would he or she contact the secretary, Gaye Brown, on 8278 5370. 



Incoming President David Cornish, retiring President Dr. Robert Nicol and founding President Ron Gibbs.


Quiz Night III

The Society's third biennial Quiz Night is coming up again next month. It will be held as before in the Cambridge Room of the Unley Community Sports Club, 39 Oxford Terrace, Unley, at 7.00 p.m. on Saturday, June 23rd. The evening will again be hosted by 5AN's Carole Whitelock.

Members will form teams of eight or ten to a table and the evening will consist of several rounds of general knowledge and history questions, with the prize being a generous (and easily divisible) hamper of gourmet goodies. There will be numerous other games for which prizes will also be given. The quiz will feature several new rounds this year, including a music quiz, a maths and logic test, and a "Pin the town on the map" game. A raffle with book prizes will also be conducted.

You will need \$8 entrance fee, a number of 20c pieces for the other games, a pen, and some supper to share. All drinks, including tea and coffee, must be bought at the bar.


To be sure of a place, make your booking by ringing Terry Saunderson at work on 8443 5265 or at home on 8443 3149 before Friday, June 15th. You may either arrange a team in advance and book as a group, or book individually and join a team on the night. Please try to spread the word

among your friends and colleagues and don't miss what has proved in the past to be a very jolly evening. 


Annual Dinner

The HSSA Annual Dinner will be held this year in the Gartrell Room at Fernilee Lodge, 569 Greenhill Road, Burnside, at 6.30 p.m. (for 7.00) on Saturday, September 1st. The guest speaker will be announced in the next issue of the Newsletter.

The cost of the dinner is \$36 for a three-course meal, exclusive of drinks. Parking is available next to the restaurant.

Booking is essential and you are asked to complete the slip enclosed with this Newsletter and return it, with your cheque or money order, to Jenny Palmer, 62 Esmond St., Hyde Park 5061, by Friday, August 17th. Enquiries to Jenny on 8272 9507. 

History SA deadline

The deadline for all material for the July 2001 issue of the Newsletter is Friday, June 15th. It should be addressed to John Healey, Editor, *History SA*, 27 Germein St., Semaphore, S.A. 5019. 


Information sought on:

Bills horse troughs

Has anyone seen a cement horse trough in South Australia like the one shown here? They were made in their thousands by George Bills in the latter years of the nineteenth century and donated to towns in New South Wales, Victoria and overseas.




Bills came to Australia in the 1850s, settled in Sydney and established a prosperous wire-weaving business, making bedsteads and mattresses. He and his wife Annis were life members of the R.S.P.C.A. and their compassion for animals prompted them to manufacture and donate over 7,000 troughs for the watering of horses, then the mainstay of commercial transport. Over 1,000 were in use in Australia and the rest were sent to other parts of the world, in particular the United States. In Central Australia they were used for watering camels. Each trough featured a tablet inscribed "Donated by Annis & George Bills, Australia" and some had a small container (*on the right*) from which dogs could drink.

Russell Smith, author of the popular series of books *Curiosities of South Australia*, is trying to determine whether there are any Bills troughs in South Australia. The one shown above is at Kaniva, just over the border in Victoria, but that is the closest one he has found. If anyone knows of any in this state, could they ring Russell on 8337 6269? 

Sports history conference

"Sporting Traditions XIII: Identity and Narrative", the 2001 conference of the Australian Society for Sports History will be held on 10th-13th July at Aquinas College, North Adelaide. It will deal with regional, national and international issues and will be both reflective and forward looking. Australian sporting identities will be examined as will the role of narrative in sports history, in recognition of the fact that some of our best sports writers (of both fact and fiction) are also highly competent exponents of history.

Registration details can be found on the website www.sporthistory.org. For more information, contact Dr. Bernard Whimpress at work on 8300 3853 or e-mail him at whimpyb@senet.com.au. 

Book Review

Ancestors in Archives Revised edition. Compiled by Alison Hoyle (State Records of S.A., Netley, 2000)

This is a book that should be on the shelves of every family historian, not to mention the general researcher. It is an invaluable guide to the wealth of information to be found at State Records and contains descriptions of over 750 series with details of their contents, reference numbers, date range, provenance and accessibility. Section headings include (among many others) Passenger Lists, Land Ownership, Working Life, Aboriginal Families, Schools, Hospitals, Law Enforcement and Coronial Inquiries. Each chapter has an entertaining introduction which gives readers useful background on the times and provides necessary facts about searching the collections.

The book is a vast improvement on the earlier edition of 1991. It places the records in their historical context, arranges them according to the chronology of a person's life and features a number of new entries, particularly in the areas of immigration, social welfare and departmental correspondence. It also contains over seventy photographs and manuscript images.

It retails for \$22.00 and is available from bookshops or direct from State Records, P.O. Box 1056, Blair Athol 5084 (S.A. postage \$7.00, interstate \$10.00). -- J.H.

FOR SALE

A Collector's Item for Local Historians & Pioneer Families

Some facsimile copies of *The Land of Promise* have become available for sale at the reduced price of \$110. The book was first published by Smith & Elder in 1839 and provides the most comprehensive account of the province at that time. It was written for the South Australian Company by John Stephens and contains over 220 pages of exciting and detailed information, including shipping lists, assessments of climate and soil, and discussions of the aborigines and the philosophical foundations of the colony. There are vivid descriptions of exploration, the settlement at Kangaroo Island, the first hanging and the process of land settlement.


It is a beautifully bound publication with gold-embossed images, maps, Colonel Light lithographs and a fold-out of the town acres in North and South Adelaide. Original copies of this book are scarce and sell for up to \$700. Only 300 facsimiles were printed in 1988 and each one is numbered.

To order your copy, phone Dr. Jeff Nicholas on 8449 2040.


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 Neil Thomas' column on this page.

MONOGRAPHS

- A.J. Brown: **Ill-Starred Captains: Flinders and Baudin** (Crawford House Publishing, Hindmarsh, 2000)
- A. Hausler: **Twentieth Century Lyndoch: Know the Past to Shape the Future** (Lyndoch and District Historical Society, Lyndoch, 2001)
- A. Hoyle (comp.): **Ancestors in Archives: A Guide for Family Historians to South Australia's Government Archives**. New rev. ed. (State Records of South Australia, Netley, 2000)
- The Land-Grant Trans-Continental Railway League: Oodnadatta to Pine Creek** (S. Aust.)
- L. Martella: **Port Noarlunga: An Endearing Coastal Town, 1840-1998** (Martella, Port Noarlunga, c. 2000)
- The Milunga & North Arm Company: For the Erection of Wharves, Shops, and Warehouses on Lefevre's Peninsula, Port Adelaide, South Australia** (Milunga & North Arm Company, Adelaide?, 1856)
- North Australian League: Construction of the Trans-Australian Railway to Port Darwin** (Adelaide, 1902)
- M. Press: **Three Women of Faith: Gertrude Abbott, Elizabeth Anstice Baker and Mary Tenison Woods** (Wakefield Press, Kent Town, 2000)
- G. Ralph: **Sir Josiah Henry Symon (1846-1934): A Chronicle of his Life and Notes for Researchers** (Wilmar Library, Adelaide, 2000)
- J.H. Sargen: **Narrow-Gauge Versus Broad: From Adelaide to Port Augusta and Interstate to the West and North** (Areas Express Print, Gladstone, 1911)
- South Australian Surveyor-General's Office: Report of the Surveyor-General upon the Disposal of Public Lands of South Australia, June 16th, 1890** (Acting Govt. Printer, Adelaide, 1890)
- V. Zabukovec: **In Their Own Words: History of the South Australian Country Women's Association 1979-1999** (S.A.C.W.A., Kent Town, 2000) 

New members

The Historical Society would like to welcome the following new members: Mrs. Joan Brewer, Mrs. Elizabeth Conner, Mr. Dean Dowling, Mrs. Judy Gribble, Dr. Don Hopgood, Mr. Dennis and Mrs. Athalie Hoskin, Mrs. Margaret Macilwain, Miss Catherine Manning, Ms. Lee McElroy, Mr. David and Mrs. Kate McInnes, Ms. Sharon O'Grady, Mrs. Ruth Smith, Mr. Peter and Mrs. Lyn Smyth, Mrs. Heather Southcott, and the Department of Social Sciences, University of New South Wales. 

Mortlock Archives

by Neil Thomas


Diaries, reminiscences and letters from a variety of sources feature in recent donations to the collections. They include the reminiscences of James Alexander McLean of the Mounted Police Force and Sheriff of the Supreme Court, written c. 1840, about the early days of the colony. Cornish agricultural labourer John Thomas kept a pocket diary while he worked in the Snowtown area from around 1892 and a descendant has provided a transcript and biographical notes. Another record of farming experiences, covering the period from the 1880s to 1915, is a typescript copy of the recollections of Lyall C. Hill, who farmed on the Adelaide Plains before moving to Yorke Peninsula.

A journal believed to have been written by Lieut. Vivian Dalton Mathias of the British Navy while on service in the Mediterranean from 1866 to 1868, has found its way into the collections through his South Australian sister-in-law. It describes visits to Jerusalem and other places in the Holy Land, as well as Italy. The entries for June 1867 record the arrival and departure of the *Galatea* at Gibraltar, with H.R.H. Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, on board.

A typescript of an 1840 letter from William Archer Deacon to his brother in England describes his success as an hotelier and theatre proprietor in Adelaide, with comments about people and events of the time. Very topical for today are the recent reminiscences of Hawthorndene author Michael Page concerning his experiences writing *Bradman: the Illustrated Biography* in 1983.

Letters written in 1936, mainly from the Daly River area, by Maude, the wife of anthropologist and geologist Dr. Paul Hossfeld, record life in the Northern Territory while she was on expedition there with her husband. To pass the time she started a humorous newspaper, the *Buldiva Bulletin*, which she sent back to relatives.

Colin Nichol's research material (1986-1989) on the Adelaide Central Market include oral history tapes and transcripts. Three interviews made this year about the Bethesda Movement, a pentecostal Christian movement which began in Adelaide, will be available soon. Last year Marisa Loren collected historical accounts and photographs, contained in six albums, of all the churches and parishes in the Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide.

Unusual items include cartoon prints and plates of the comic *Racy Rhodes*, c. 1940, drawn by Max Judd, a 1890s notebook of household hints and first aid remedies of Heinrich Lanckenau, and a certificate of appreciation to Richard Pink, an employee of the Wallaroo Mines, for his part in fighting the fire there on 13th January 1904. 

The Royal Geographical Society of S.A. Library

by Valerie Sitters

Geographical by name but not entirely in its content, the RGSSA library is a richly concentrated source of South Australian history, whether it be exploration, colonization or development, and whether it comes in the form of a book, periodical, map or pamphlet.

Each day that the library is open there is a variety of enquiries made in person, by telephone, letter or increasingly by e-mail. They come from Adelaide and its suburbs, from country South Australia, from Broome, Townsville, Sydney and Melbourne, from New Zealand, Britain, Europe, Canada and the United States. The information requested can be as simple as the detailed list of provisions taken by the Burke and Wills expedition or the name of the highest mountain in South Australia. Intriguing questions can seek confirmation of the correct details of a reference or the location of maps that show the positions of Adelaide's early markets or stock routes.

At this stage, and until our catalogues are fully available through the Internet, people still need to come into the library to access the card catalogues for books and maps. Most of the manuscripts are listed electronically on the Register of Australian Archives and Manuscripts (RAAM) but since they have not been digitized readers will still need to come in to view them. They are usually on microfilm but the more recently acquired manuscripts have not yet been filmed and so the originals are used. Manuscripts include explorers' diaries, some of William Light's letters to Thomas Gilbert, personal accounts by early settlers and Aboriginal vocabularies.

One of my most rewarding pleasures as librarian is to show appropriate manuscripts to the descendants of explorers. Over the last few years there have been Stuart family members, his companions' descendants, and those of Brock, Sturt and Wells. The pleasure that these visitors derive from holding and reading the diaries and letters of their ancestors is mine as much as theirs. When there is not a relevant manuscript in the Society's collection, I am frequently able to direct the enquirer to the appropriate institution, either in South Australia or interstate.

Not all enquiries are as memorable as these. More frequently they are quite prosaic although sometimes tantalizing. If so-and-so was at that place at that time, he might quite possibly have been my great-grandfather! These family tales are often difficult to prove or disprove --- they gather the solidity of truth over the generations as does the hope of being linked to someone famous!

Explorers' maps are analyzed over and over for a diversity of reasons. If you are planning on following

in their footsteps, these documents are essential reading. The positions of camps are vital for a re-enactment, and the locations of wells and the description of the country are of interest to anyone studying environmental history. Again, older maps often display place names that are absent from modern ones and even from the gazetteers.

The Society's *Proceedings* are the most constantly used items in the library. There is a handful of regular researchers who come in and, with a nod and a smile, search the indexes, find the appropriate reference and make their notations. They have a great deal of respect for the articles in the early volumes, only lamenting, as I do, the lack of a bibliography or a guide to sources. Other enquirers may not be familiar with the *Proceedings* but, when these are pointed out, are overwhelmed by the information that is frequently found within. The *Proceedings* are fully indexed --- the first 80 years in paper copy and available for purchase or consultation in the Library, and the latter years since 1980 on a floppy disk which can be searched at your request.

On the Ready Reference trolley, besides the *Proceedings*, there are many books that are among the most heavily used --- the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, early gazetteers for South Australia and interstate, dictionaries of place names, John Greenway's bibliography of Australian Aborigines, the British *Dictionary of National Biography* and Ian McLaren's *Bibliography of Australian Explorers by Land, Sea and Air 1788-1988*. This last is invaluable, an (almost) comprehensive listing of published sources --- books, periodicals and newspapers. McLaren also provides lists of expedition members when known and his indexes include botanists, doctors, wild white persons, surveyors, women explorers and many more. These and other guides provide what may be either the answer or just the first stage of an advanced exploration of the literature on a particular subject.

Members of the Royal Geographical Society may borrow books and journals but anyone is able, indeed encouraged, to use the library's rich resources. Housed within the State Library, it is open three days a week (Monday 1.30 p.m.-5.00 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday 9.30 a.m.-5.00 p.m.) but items can be made available in the Mortlock Reading Room on other days by request.

I can be contacted by phone on 8207 7266, by fax on 8207 7247, by e-mail to valeries@slsa.sa.gov.au or in person at the Royal Geographical Society of South Australia, in the State Library, North Terrace, Adelaide.

Valerie Sitters has been the Librarian of the RGSSA since 1994 and has also worked for the State Library for the last five years in a number of areas including the Country Children's Book Service, Periodicals, Acquisitions and Children's Literature Research. In September she will present a talk to the HSSA on Australian women explorers.

The Adelaide Photographic Cabinet of Henry Anson

Henry Anson was one of Adelaide's early photographers. He was born in 1837 in Bristol, England, and in 1850 emigrated to Australia with his guardian Dr. Benjamin Frankis who established a medical practice in Adelaide and employed him as an apprentice chemist. Henry then worked for A.M. Bickford & Sons as a travelling salesman and in 1861 he married Emily Louisa, daughter of George Francis, the first Director of the Adelaide Botanic Garden. She was an accomplished artist and painted the portraits of John Anderson Hartley (the first S.A. Inspector-General of Education) and John Abel McPherson (the first leader of the S.A. Parliamentary Labor Party).

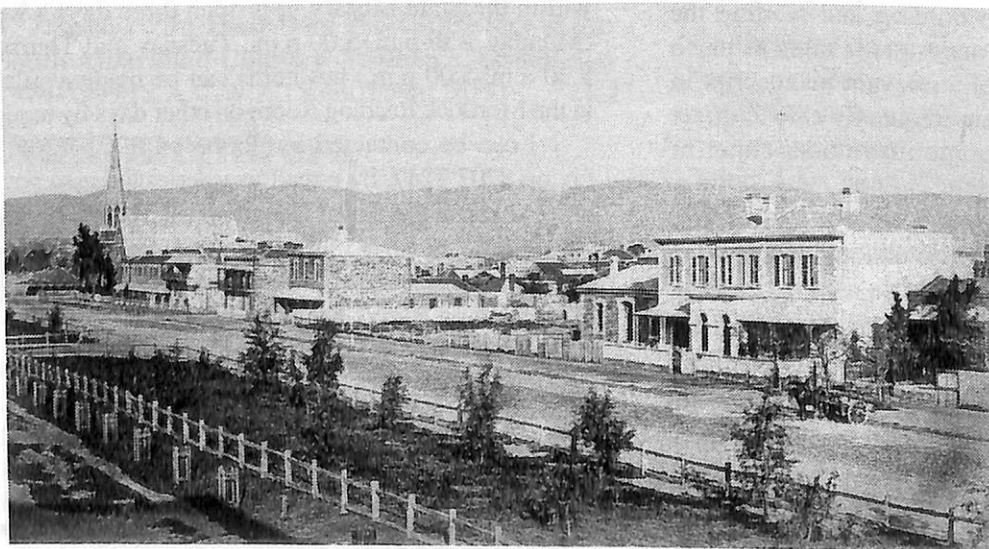
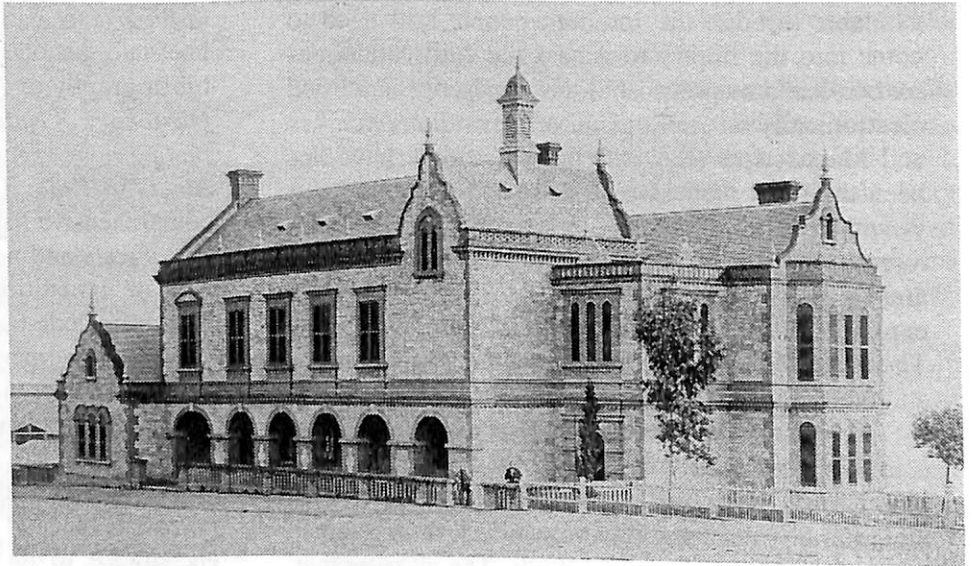
In 1863 Henry Anson set up a photographic studio at 45 Rundle Street and shortly afterwards went into partnership with his brother-in-law William Augustus Francis at 97 Rundle Street. In 1867 he purchased an apothecary shop in Kadina and remained in business there as a chemist and photographer for sixteen years. In 1868 he ventured to the goldfields at Gympie, Queensland, but returned within six months, no richer than when he left. His account of the journey is printed on the following pages. He was a respected member of the Kadina community and when he left the town in 1883 he was presented with an illuminated address, a gold locket and a purse of seventy sovereigns. He and his family then moved to Penny Street, Semaphore, and Henry set up as a chemist in St. Vincent Street, Port Adelaide. He died on 13th June 1893 after catching a chill while out in the rain.

In 1867 Henry Anson produced a book of eleven photographs of Adelaide scenes and buildings. Printed on the front cover is "The Adelaide Photographic Cabinet. Published by H. Anson, 97 Rundle St. Adelaide S.A." Inside is the inscription "*Hic liber ad me attinet*" ("This book belongs to me") together with his signature and the date "2/1/67". The book is now in the possession of his great-grandson Glen Anson of Frankston, Victoria, who has very kindly made available to *History SA* copies of the photographs, five of which are reproduced here. It can be deduced from the dates of construction of the buildings and by comparison with other photos of known date that Anson's photographs were taken in 1865-66. It is not known whether other copies of the book still exist, or indeed whether Henry Anson ever produced more than the one.

An exceptionally fine photo of the original Parliament House on North Terrace.

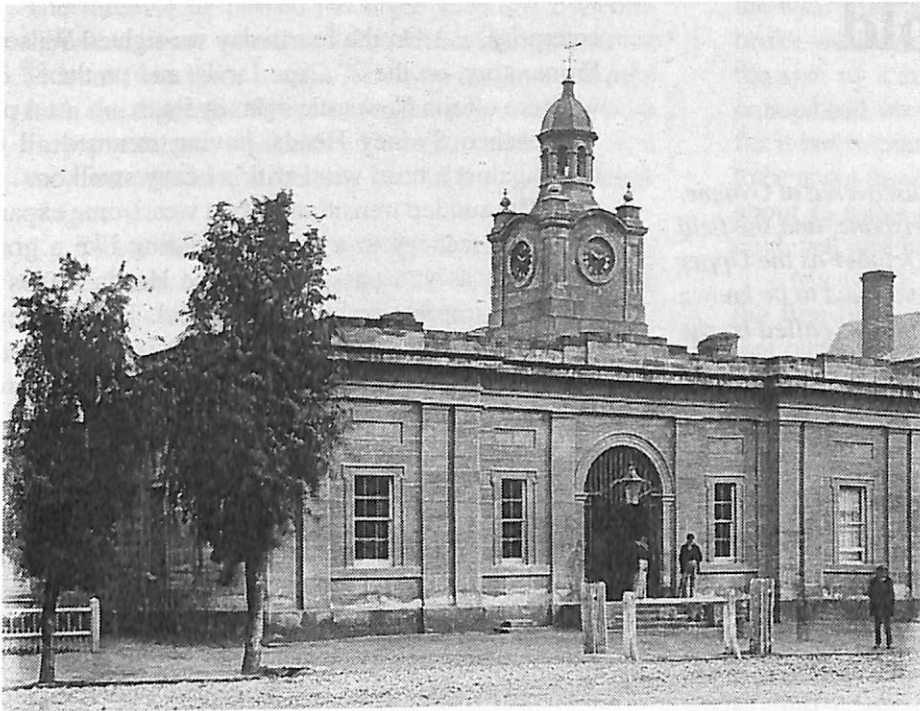
Its first chamber was built in 1843 to house the Legislative Council but the building was transformed in 1855-57 into the handsome edifice shown here in order to incorporate the newly created House of Assembly.

The Lower House sat here until 1899 and the Upper House until 1939.



A view of North Terrace taken from the upper floor of the Institute Building. On the far left is Chalmers (now Scots) Church, erected in 1850-51, with the spire being added in 1856.

North Terrace remained relatively undeveloped until the 1880s when more cultural buildings joined the Institute on the northern side and doctors began taking rooms on the southern.



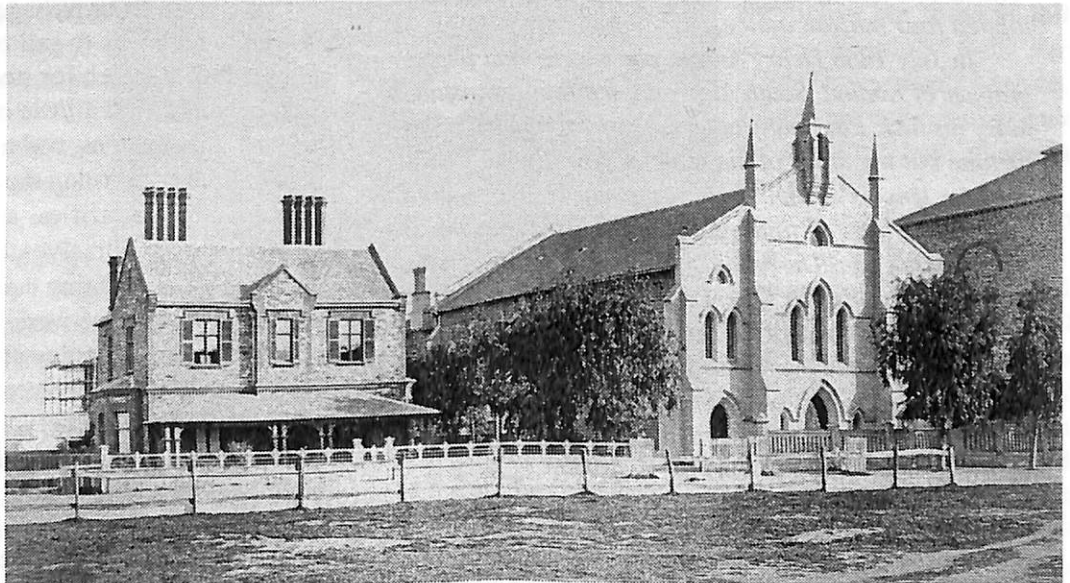
The Adelaide Post Office in King William Street was designed by Richard Lambeth and built in 1849-51 at a cost of £8,000. The clock, made by Thwaites and Reed of London, was installed a few years later.

The General Post Office was built on the block to the left in 1867-72, after which the clock seen here was transferred to the Parkside Mental Asylum (now Glenside Hospital).

The Adelaide Post Office was demolished in 1886 to make way for the north wing of the G.P.O., constructed in 1891-92.

The Pirie Street Methodist Church was built in 1850 and the manse next to it in 1853.

The manse was demolished in 1925 and replaced by the Epworth Building and the church was knocked down in 1976 to make way for the Colonel Light Centre.



King William Street looking north, with the original "Bee Hive" (centre) which at the time was the premises of I. Simmons, Tailors and Hatters.

It was built in the 1840s and was replaced in 1895-96 with the present Gothic Revival structure.



In quest of gold

Part I

by Henry Anson

In September 1867 gold was discovered at Gympie, about a hundred miles north of Brisbane, and the field was officially proclaimed on 30th October as the Upper Mary River Goldfield, though it continued to be known as Gympie Creek after the local nettle (called by the Aborigines "gimpi gimpi") which grew in profusion there. Hundreds of people were soon flocking to the site, many of them with no experience at all of gold-digging.

By the end of 1868 the town of Gympie consisted of two rows of bark huts lining the main street and over the first five years it developed a population of about 5,000. The alluvial gold was soon worked out but many diggers remained to mine the reefs. There was a share market boom in the 1880s and gold production continued at high levels until the early twentieth century. By 1927, when most of the mines had closed due to diminishing returns and rising costs, the total official output had topped four million ounces.

In July 1868 Henry Anson, pharmacist and photographer of Kadina, South Australia, left for Queensland to try his luck. Like many others, he was not to make his fortune but the story of his journey reveals the extraordinary lengths to which men of the time were prepared to go in the hope of finding a few nuggets or even just a flash in the pan. The following extracts are taken from Anson's booklet "In Quest of Gold: A Narrative of Personal Experience of a Trip to the Gympie in 1868", printed privately at Kadina in 1877. This and the accompanying photographs have been kindly supplied to History SA by Henry Anson's granddaughter, Mrs. Dorothy Wright, of Ashburton, Victoria.

"Come up on Monday, 'Old Hoss', we sail Thursday." Such was the intimation I received by telegram on the 27th June, 1868, from a very intimate friend and chum, with whom I had decided to try my luck at what was then a new gold "rush" in Queensland. Rumours of fabulous riches to be obtained at the new diggings had reached Adelaide from time to time for some months before this, and culminated in statements so positive that the "gold fever" spread with a rapidity which reminded one of the old days of 1851 and '52, when that El Dorado, the Forest Creek, was in its infancy and Bendigo yet unknown.

Acting on my instructions I left Adelaide for Kadina, on the 29th June, 1868, to join my friend Dick, who had engaged our passages from Wallaroo to Newcastle, in the ill-fated *Kadina*, of which Captain Blanche was then master, than whom no more genial man or better seaman ever trod the deck of a merchant vessel. After a day or two pleasantly spent amongst old friends, we sailed early one morning, taking with us the best of good wishes for the success of our

enterprise. . . . On the fourth day we sighted Wilson's Promontory, on the 7th Cape Jarvis, and on the 8th day we were off the Newcastle lights at 5 a.m. . . . At 4 p.m. we reached Sydney Heads, having steamed all the time against a head wind with a heavy swell on. . . .

The sudden transition from a wearisome expanse of ocean scenery to a scene unfolding like a grand panorama as you pass through the Heads leaves an indelible impression on one's mind. But whatever romantic sympathy is developed by such a picture is rudely dispelled on arrival at the moorings, where a crowd of hungry-looking, live-by-their-wits sort of people clamorously dispute the privilege of carrying your luggage, and trust to your generosity to be adequately remunerated. This was a luxury we could not afford to indulge in, however, and so we shouldered our traps and carried them off to the Edinburgh Castle in Bathurst-street, where we made our first halt on *terra firma*. The next day we spent in strolling about the city and down to the Circular Quay, where, eighteen years before, I had landed from the *William Hyde*.

We booked our passages for Brisbane by the *Lady Bowen*, which was to sail on the following morning, and paid £2 10s each for steerage accommodation. We then began to find a little of the gilt wearing off our brilliant anticipations, bad news and doubtful rumours being afloat concerning the diggings, but we were not to be daunted by trifles, and were fully determined to test them for ourselves. . . .

The weather during the trip was all that could have been desired and we were abreast of Moreton Island light-house on Thursday at 2.30 a.m. A steady steam up the rather shallow river, which meanders through some very pretty scenery, brought us to the wharf at about 8 a.m. . . . We found the reports from the Yabber Diggings very encouraging and arranged to start on our long tramp at midday. . . .

We turned our back on the city at 12.30 p.m. after having purchased a small tent, a tomahawk, a "billy", some pannikins and provisions, and directed our march towards a place called Pine River, which we intended to make our first stage, and were told it was about 12 miles, but found after travelling ten we had five more to tramp. It was dark by the time we got to Petrie's accommodation house [*see map on page 12*] where we were very glad to put up for the night. Walking for pleasure may be all very well, but we soon found out that tramping with a swag on one's back was quite a different matter, and both Dick's feet and mine became even at this early stage very sore.

As our experience of bush life was very limited, we thought it would be useful to have a mate who had done a little roughing and soon found one that suited us among our late fellow passengers with whom we arranged to try our luck together. He was an old sailor and seemed an honest, rough and ready sort of fellow. He had only one eye and his name was Jack.

The three of us passed the night at Petrie's accommodation house where we heard rather an unpromising account from three or four men who had just returned from the diggings. Fever and ague, they told us, were very prevalent, and indeed one of them was in a very wretched state, having just had a severe attack of ague.

However, early next morning we started off again, Dick's feet a little better but still too sore to allow him to wear his own boots, which were nearly new, so he tried a pair of mine but did not find them any better. He then cut down his own but after walking a few hours he had to go barefoot. At about 3 p.m. we reached a place called Stewart's Ferry, where there was an eating-house, but as we could not get any bread until it would be too late to go further, we made up our minds to camp, at which I was not at all sorry as my feet were very sore and Dick was almost crippled. This place was 18 long miles from Petrie's, but we passed through some very beautiful country, magnificently timbered, well watered and well grassed. During the day we met several returning from Yabber, most of whom spoke of the diggings in very disparaging terms, but it was noticeable that none of them had stayed long enough to give the diggings anything like a fair trial, and so we paid little attention to their croakings.

At about 5 o'clock the next morning, seven or eight of our late passengers arrived and took possession of the punt and, as the proprietor was not there, ferried themselves over. One returned for us and we crossed over also, making a mental resolution to pay our fares when we returned that way. Our next stage was about 20 miles, to Durunduan Station, which we reached at about 4 p.m. We bought a 5lb loaf of bread for 3s, 4lbs of flour for 2s, and some beef, and after refreshing the inner man we pushed on about four miles further to a place called Many Smoke Creek, where we camped for the night, intending to remain there on the following day, Sunday, to rest our feet, and move on to Kilcoy on the Monday. We had not camped at the Creek more than about two hours before the weather, which had been magnificent up to that time, got suddenly threatening and in a very little while big drops of rain began to patter on the tent, which speedily thickened and finally came down in torrents which continued nearly all night, swamping our tent, spoiling our damper on the ashes, and making us generally miserable. During the night we could hear

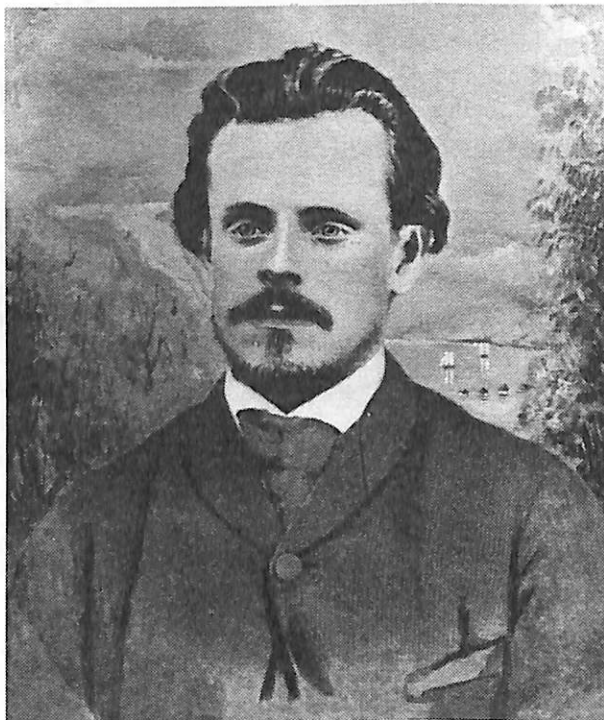
the water rushing down the Creek, and when daylight broke we found Many Smoke Creek had swollen to the size of a small river, which we could not have crossed had we wished to do so, and there was nothing for it but to march to Kilcoy Station, which was said to be about three miles beyond Kilcoy Creek, altogether about 15 miles off, on which weary tramp we started cold, wet and hungry.

My rough notes mark down July 20, 1868, as the first black-letter-day on our journey and record that our troubles commenced with having to strip and wade through a swamp waist deep in water and mud, and after a weary march of about eight hours, finding that to attempt crossing Kilcoy Creek that night would be a deliberate suicide, we were, as may be supposed, in a pretty fix, each of us wet through, my mate completely knocked up, no tucker and barely tea enough to make one billy. There was, however, no alternative but to be as jolly as possible, and I think even Mark Tapley would have considered himself justified under the circumstances in feeling quite lovely.

We pitched our tent in the scrub, lit an enormous fire a few yards away and presently another a little further off. Whilst one-eyed Jack and myself were so occupied, Dick had sat down by the camp and when we returned he was to

our alarm looking as much like a ghost as ever I wish to see him, and shivering as if he had an attack of ague, a pretty place and a lively time for a case of this sort. We set to work, got him inside the tent, made him some hot tea, and after giving him a dose of chlorodyne (of which I had a small store) had the satisfaction of seeing his general appearance very much improved and Richard as much himself again as was possible.

This trouble warded off, I next proceeded to our swags, at which stage I should have been a good subject for a comic cartoon in the *Lantern* or *Portonian*, and cannot do better for description than extract a paragraph from a letter to my friends at home subsequent to this occasion: "Picture to yourselves the following scene in the bush. Time about 9 p.m. on a very dark night, and a drizzling rain, and the wind now and then shaking big drops of water from the branches of the tall saplings under which we were camped. A whole fallen tree on fire and more timber heaped on it, making together an enormous bonfire; myself standing as near this furnace as possible in a small puddle, drying trousers and ⇒



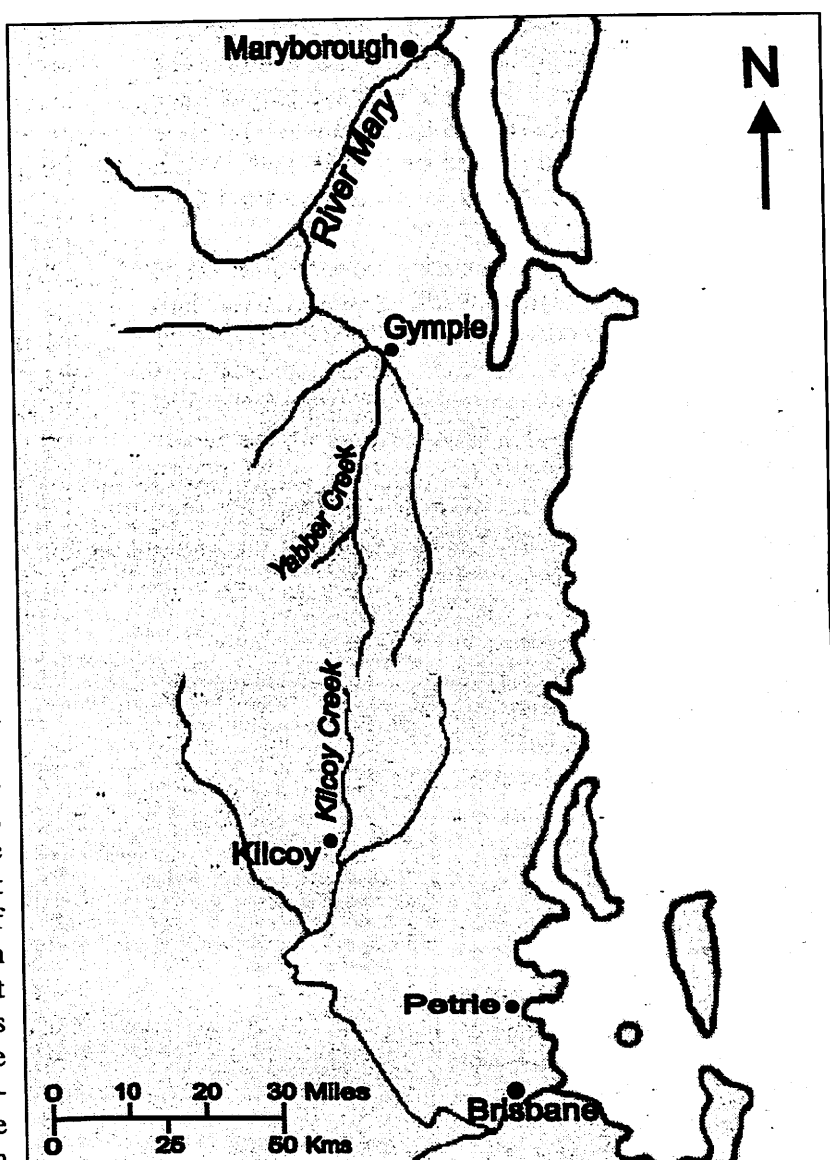
Portrait of Henry Anson painted by his wife Emily.

other articles of apparel and being, please to observe, 'bootless, breechless, stockingless and hatless'. If you can imagine all this, you will have in your mind's eye an exact representation of the happy and enviable condition of your humble servant."

Having accomplished the drying process, we turned in to get a refresher in the way of sleep, but our mate Jack was filled with superstitious dread and would persist in sitting at the door of the tent all night with tomahawk in hand, "because," said he, "there's no knowing what strange things may come about on such a night and in such a place as this". The only occasion, however, he had to use it was to chop a centipede in four parts, each quarter, he declared, being four inches long. I did not see it, so cannot vouch for his accuracy.

The next morning, to our delight, broke clear and dry and the sun shone out warm and bright. Dick was much better, though still weak, and our only anxiety now was whether we could cross Kilcoy Creek or, if we turned back, get over Many Smoke Creek again. Jack went away to prospect and returned with the news that a party of three or four had just forded from the station side, the water being still breast high, but brought with them such deplorable accounts of the prospects at Yabber that we were induced to hold council together and concluded we had better turn back and make tracks for Gympie. We left this little Eden about 8 a.m. on the Tuesday, and arrived at Durunduan Station again about 3 p.m. of the same day, having had nothing but tea and tea-leaves since the previous Saturday night. . . .

Having had a clear day's spell at Durunduan, we started on the Gympie track, and were told that the next station was about fifteen miles, which may have proved correct perhaps, had we been on horseback. As it was, however, we tramped from 8 a.m. till dark and did not reach it then. Our road this day lay over some of the most hilly country I ever saw, up steep hills and along sidelings, where it seemed as if one false step would precipitate us into the gullies beneath, beyond hope of rescue. A party had evidently tried this track at some time with a vehicle and at the worst places had eased it down by ropes, as a few of the trees round about bore traces of the ropes having cut through the bark as it worked on them. Even this attempt appeared to have failed as we saw at one place the shattered remains of a dray about a hundred yards beneath us. Timber, grass and water were here in abundance and twice this day, on top of the highest ranges, our road led through dense, swampy groves about a mile long, where the trees were so numerous



and the top foliage so thick that, although a bright mid-day sun shone unobscured by a single cloud, in some parts of these groves it was like the dusk of evening, yet beautiful too, but with a sort of cheerless, gloomy beauty that commanded rather than attracted admiration.

We left our camping place about eight the following morning, and reached the station we had been looking for about three miles further on. Here we replenished our stores and pushed on to the next station, pitched our tent about 4 p.m., having crossed the River Mary five times during the day. A storekeeper from Gympie camped with us this evening and gave us such a glaring account of reefing and general business prospects of this place that we felt quite cheery and sanguine.

We left this camp directly after breakfast the following morning and made about fifteen miles by 1 p.m. Here we intended to lay in store and push on a little further but found the storekeeper out of everything but sugar and salt so we had no alternative but to wait till the pack horses arrived, which were expected in a few hours. They had not come in, however, by 10 p.m. and we turned in hungry and discontented. During the night we were aroused by the bells and general commotion which the arrival of three or four horses,

laden with flour; tea, &c., created, so got up, bought stock and set to work to cook damper and Johnny cake, enough to last two days when we hoped to have our tent pitched on the diggings.

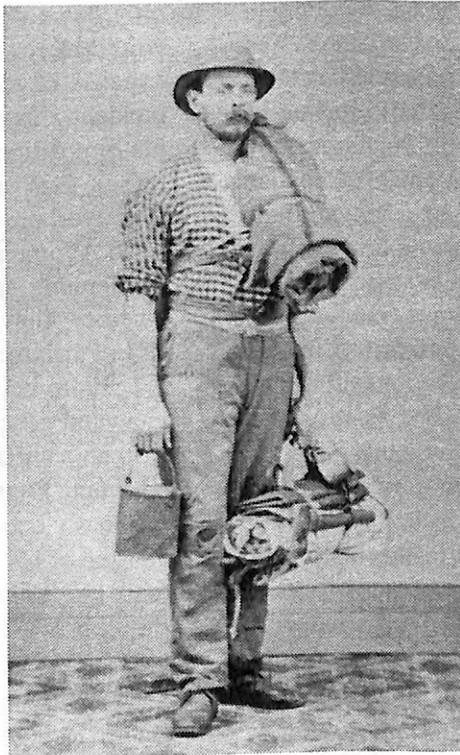
In this we were not disappointed, as on the following Monday at 1 p.m. we arrived at the end of our journey and camped on the River Mary, in a place called the Pocket. Three of our party were by this time quite used up so after the tent was pitched and everything in general made as comfortable as possible, Joe and I went into the township to reconnoitre. My first impressions of Gympie diggings were too confused to describe the novelty of being in such a place at all. The sudden transition from the solitude of the bush, where we could see nothing inanimate but hills, dales, trees and rocks, and nothing animate but wild cattle, kangaroos and emus, and strange appearance of upturned land with yawning pits on every side, all this and much more to me both novel and curious were too much for my bewildered mind and seemed only chaos, and I concluded to be shy of first impressions and wait till I had been here a little longer before I ventured an opinion.

Whilst in the township we heard of a so-called new discovery about fifty miles away but in what direction nobody knew. After investing in a frying pan, tin dish and some sausages, we returned to the tent to discuss the news we had picked up, which, taken as a whole, was anything but satisfactory or cheering. All the alluvial at Gympie was said to be worked out, or at any rate what little remained was principally occupied by Chinamen, who on all diggings are content to work much poorer ground than Europeans can live on. Reefing was certainly going ahead but there were then only three or four that had proved themselves to be hot, and these had been working for months, of some of which I shall be able to speak presently. The next day, Tuesday, we got at the direction of the new rush and, as it was stated to be alluvial and pretty good, we thought it advisable to rush also, so, as Dick was quite unable to travel, I took out miners rights for myself and two others and started arranging for Dick to remain and recruit while we prospected, when, if it turned out right, one of us would return for him.

We left Gympie at 6 p.m. and tramped till about three the next morning when we camped, had a billy of tea and coiled ourselves up in our blankets by the fire and slept till daylight. We made an early start, overtaking another party of about a dozen and, after

we had trudged about fifteen miles, met the Gold Commissioner returning who told us there was no gold, no provisions and an awfully rough country to travel over. This was very like a sell and we had no alternative but to turn back and make tracks once more for Gympie, where we arrived the following day by 2 p.m. This trip, which made a little over 200 miles that I had tramped since leaving Brisbane, completed our journeying for the time, and the next thing to do was to consider our future action.

Our prospects looked certainly very gloomy, no alluvial diggings and reefing out of the question with the low state of our exchequer. Fortunately for me an Adelaide friend had favoured me with a letter of introduction to a photographic artist at Gympie, which was the means of my obtaining an engagement as photo-operator with a Mr Müller, then carrying on business as a tobacconist at Gympie and about to open up photography also. With this engagement I closed on the Friday following our return to Gympie and Dick, whose health and spirits were not equal to roughing it any more for the present, decided to take the next coach for Maryborough and thence to Brisbane by steamer. Thus, after breasting the stream of our difficulties so long and so far, I reluctantly bade him adieu and Godspeed on the morning of August 1, and retraced my steps to the tent with a heart full of disappointment at the failure of our hopes and regret at the loss of a genuine friend and genial companion.



*Henry Anson in Queensland,
kitted out for the diggings.*

I struck the tent and packed up my swag that evening and obtained a bed at the pub. from which the coach left, intending to remain there till Monday morning when I was to enter on my new duties. Whilst waiting, however, for the breakfast bell to ring on Sunday morning, the landlady came to me and politely suggested that if I had no coat of my own to wear (which was really a fact) perhaps I would have no objection to accept the use of one belonging to her husband, as the gentlemen might object to my sitting at table without one. Now, as Mr. Thosley, her liege lord, was just about three times my size, I could not help but realize how much superfluous coat I should have to contend with and, as somebody else has said, on account of the muchness I declined, so paid for my bed and went away, taking refuge at a pub. where the dress circle was not likely to be so particular. There I remained till next morning when, nothing loth, I reported myself to my new employer as ready and willing for work.

[To be concluded in the next issue of History SA.]

Second Prize – HSSA History Essay Awards 2000

Charles Kingston: genuine supporter of women's suffrage or opportunist politician?

by Lucy Forster

The Constitution Act Amendment Act passed on 18th December 1894 gave South Australian women the right to vote on the same terms as men. South Australia was the first of the Australian colonies to give women the franchise and the first democracy in the world to allow women to stand for Parliament. The legislation passed during Kingston's Premiership was initiated by men either convinced of the justice of the cause or pressured from outside Parliament by women's organizations such as the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, or motivated by political self-interest. The most prominent of these politicians was Charles Kingston, the Premier. He hailed the provisions of the Act as being the colony's greatest constitutional reform. However, what were the motivations for his fight for women's suffrage? Was he in fact a true supporter of the cause or an opportunist politician?

There is certainly evidence to suggest that Kingston was a genuine supporter of women's suffrage. His government has often been described as one of the most radical and reformist governments in the history of South Australia and Kingston himself has most often been remembered as a social reformer. Historian Margaret Glass wrote that "he introduced much radical, progressive legislation; thanks to him, South Australia led the world on the enfranchisement of women".

Alfred Deakin had a similar opinion of Kingston, who he claimed "was an Australian patriot with a clear vision for the future of this great land".

Evidence of Kingston's reformist nature can be found in his 1893 policy speech, in which he included radical reforms such as progressive tax reforms, old age pensions and female franchise. Kingston's actions in recognizing Mary Lee's work through the Women's Suffrage League as the foundation of Australian women's enfranchisement also seems to suggest that he was a true supporter of reform in this area. When he paid tribute to Lee for being the moving force in what he earlier described as the greatest constitutional reform ever effected in South Australia, it appears that he recognized the abilities and the changed status of women.

At the time, even some of Kingston's critics were convinced that he was a genuine supporter of women's suffrage. No mention of "political opportunism" was made by Black (an *Advertiser* Hansard reporter) who had consistently expressed a negative view of the Premier, habitually calling him the "Burly Bully". Black wrote in his diary that: "He [Kingston] had piloted women's suffrage legislation splendidly."

However, a closer look at Kingston's political career reveals that he was not always such an enthusiastic advocate of women's suffrage. He opposed the 1890 Women's Suffrage Bill on the grounds that it allowed only those with property to vote, which he believed would increase the power of the Upper House at the expense of the House of Assembly. As an isolated incident, this resistance from Kingston could indicate his opposition to property qualifications in general rather than an opposition to women's suffrage. However, previous to this Kingston had opposed an 1886 Women's Suffrage Bill on a gender basis, challenging supporters of the Bill and questioning whether "they would go so far as to allow women to sit in Parliament".

From being an opponent, he then modified his view and gave qualified support to the cause, making women's suffrage one of his earliest measures after becoming Premier in 1893. Despite the fact that he had previously opposed reforms in this area, Kingston made a virtue of his change of mind: "We, the government, think that adult suffrage is a right thing. It is only very stupid people who refuse to change their views when they see them to be wrong." (*Observer*, 22 July 1893)

When announcing universal suffrage as part of his government policy, Kingston again defended his change of mind after an interjector asked him, "How long have you made up your mind?" To which Kingston replied, "Not very long," and then added that it was "characteristic of the wise to alter their opinions".

Superficially it appears that Kingston was a true advocate of women's suffrage and this is certainly how he has been remembered. However, if we analyse the reasons for Kingston's change of heart, the question of political expediency is pertinent. The question is: was Kingston "wise" to change his mind because he believed that women's suffrage was natural justice or because it was a way of maintaining power? For some, like Black, no sign of political opportunism was evident but others were more suspicious. The *Register* was certainly sceptical of Kingston's rapid change of heart:

Who can wonder at the elation of the Women's Suffrage League as they contemplate the rapidity and the relative thoroughness of Mr. Kingston's conversion? There is more joy over the prodigal convinced of his error than on account of the steadfast consistency of those who need no convincing. (10 July 1894)

There are several factors both within and outside Parliament that may have propelled Kingston into action

on the women's suffrage question. Kingston's change of heart probably had much to do with the growing Labor Party. Votes for women were part of Labor's platform and Kingston needed the support of the Labor members to hold office. In the Upper House, Richard Baker claimed that Kingston was "simply the nominee of the Labor Party".

The *Register* had a similar view on Kingston's motivations for supporting women's suffrage. While it welcomed the ratification of the Act, it had a few harsh words about Kingston, who it claimed:

... has had to bow in some matters to superior power. The Act on which he prides himself so much --- that of conferring the franchise on women --- is a case in point. In this matter he has had to dance to the piping of the Labor Party. (22 December 1894)

There is sufficient evidence to support this view even in Kingston's 1893 policy speech mentioned earlier as an example of his reformist nature. It seems that much of the content of the policy speech, which included women's suffrage, was simply "borrowed" from the U.L.P.'s platform for its first general elections in 1893. In fact, the content of this speech was found to be quite amusing to some because of its radical nature. This may have been considered uncharacteristic of Kingston as he had previously opposed a number of these reforms, including women's suffrage. A junior officer attached a memo to Kingston's speech, informing the Senior Assistant under Secretary Bramston that:

The new Premier's speech reads almost as if it were a practical joke. This programme includes progressive land tax, progressive income tax, progressive probate and succession duty, progressive mulct of civil Servants' salaries, female franchise, the referendum, elective ministries . . . old age pension, &c, &c.

In South Australia, the press reacted with scepticism to Kingston's policy speech. The *Observer* informed readers of "A Vote-Catching Policy."

In the Upper House, Richard Baker quoted from Gilbert and Sullivan in order to describe the policy speech:

*Always ready to vote at the trades hall call,
And never thinking for themselves at all.*

This implied that Kingston had no convictions of his own but was merely acting on behalf of the Labor Party in order to gain its support, which he saw as crucial in giving him the numbers to defend himself against a strong Conservative opposition.

At the time there was also an inference that Kingston had been won over by two respected members of his Ministry, Dr. Cockburn and Frederick Holder, both ex-Premiers who publicly advocated the reform on the grounds of social justice.

Indeed, had Holder's ministry lasted longer than four months, he may well have introduced the Bill during his term as Premier. Kingston needed the support of these two men. During this period of time it was

difficult for a Premier to keep his ministry together. Ministries tended to last months rather than years; since 1856 there had been thirty-six ministries in forty-four years. The inference is that Kingston had decided to support the women's suffrage issue in order to guarantee the continued support of his ministers, which he needed to retain power. This evidence tends to support the view of the *Register* which claimed that Kingston was not a genuine supporter at all but was laboriously led by others:

First, Mr. Kingston opposed women's suffrage. Then he was open to be convinced of that fact. Then he proposed it with the referendum condition. Then he agreed to support a modification of that plan. Now he has abolished the condition all together, and probably he will soon consent to advocate woman's claims to a seat in Parliament. (10 July 1894)

Public opinion was another factor that would have definitely influenced Kingston's decision to support women's suffrage. The growing public support for the vote for women was evident in good attendances at suffrage meetings, numerous letters to newspapers and parliamentary petitions circulated by the Women's Suffrage League. The Great Petition of 1893 held 11,600 signatures. It was not coincidental that the Women's Suffrage League canvassed in West Adelaide, Kingston's electorate, for many of the signatures.

Prior to the presentation of the Great Petition, the W.C.T.U. and W.S.L. had introduced a combined deputation to Kingston. It asked the government to reintroduce the Women's Suffrage Bill with the referenda clauses eliminated. To this Kingston was non-committal. However, with the introduction of the petition he acted almost immediately, indicating that he had succumbed to the pressure of the Women's Suffrage League. After the vote for women was finally won, Kingston paid tribute to Mary Lee for her efforts in the campaign. However, the implication to be drawn from a cartoon of the day was that he was not a genuine supporter but had been sufficiently tamed by the pressure of the Women's Suffrage League, headed by Mary Lee.

Giving in to the Women's Suffrage League may be seen as an example of political opportunism in order to guarantee Kingston's survival as Premier. The Women's Suffrage League had a considerable influence over urban electors. Kingston's support came mainly from the city where women outnumbered men and votes for women were likely to be votes for Kingston and his supporters. There were also other motives behind Kingston's *volte-face*. Opponents of the Kingston Government saw the actions of Kingston as political opportunism. They suspected that he was trying to alter the Constitution in order to reduce the power of the Upper House. Incidentally, this too was a Labor objective. Hence, for Kingston, the women's suffrage issue may have been a tool to attack the Upper House. Even in 1899, for example, through the ⇒

Household Suffrage Bill, he sought to abolish property qualifications for the Legislative Council for married women. Conservatives were aware that this was his underlying motive. Sir John Downer in the Legislative Council claimed: "This Bill is introduced as a menace and a threat to the Legislative Council."

This is consistent with Kingston's opposition to the 1890 Women's Suffrage Bill which was going to give the vote only to women with property. But it also suggests that he was not a genuine supporter of women's suffrage but rather saw the issue as a political tool, reinforcing the notion of Kingston as a political opportunist.

While Kingston is most often remembered as a social reformer and has received praise for his role in the introduction of women's suffrage in South Australia, evidence suggests that his motives were largely opportunistic. He was not a genuine supporter of women's suffrage but used the issue to ensure the continued support of the Labor Party, which he needed to remain in power.



Surviving records from Mitcham, 1901

by Maggie Ragless

"What did your community think of Federation in 1901?" This was a question asked of an historian by a journalist looking for a series of retrospective features for the local paper. Where would we start? What has survived and where are the extant records? In 1901 there was no local paper for our district and Mitcham people who were involved in the Federation process recorded no comments locally. Surviving Council records are patchy. Certainly there are the minute books but not a mention of Federation. Other records are the Rate Assessment Books, Main Road Minutes, Finance Minutes, Cash Books, Cash Journals and Government Grant Cash Books.

The Main Road Minutes were recorded each month except during Spring and began in January with a list of tenders accepted for road work and the location and amount of stone to be laid. Fences on Mount Barker and Bull's Creek Roads were "in a very bad and dangerous state of repair" and it was resolved that a Government Grant be sought. In June the Clerk was directed to reply to a circular from the Commissioner of Crown Lands and wrote that "this council has always been careful to prevent any disfigurement of Bridges etc. on the Main Roads by sticking of Bills etc. thereon".

The Council Minutes for 1901 reveal the resolution that Council would pay the cost of tyres for the Clerk's bicycle, seeing that it was used for Council work by both the Clerk and his assistant. Notices were to be posted at the dam in Brown Hill Creek and the ford at W.W. Winn's stating that no bathing would be allowed between sunrise and half an hour after sunset.

He supported or opposed reform legislation according to prevailing public opinion. He opposed the 1886 and 1890 Women's Suffrage Bills but, as a result of the efforts of the W.S.L. and the W.C.T.U, saw public opinion sway towards the introduction of universal suffrage. After the presentation of a petition containing thousands of signatures supporting women's suffrage, he finally approved the introduction of a bill to give women the vote on the same terms as men but not the right to sit in Parliament.

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Mrs. Davies Thomas was permitted to plant a few English trees in front of and west of her house at Blackwood. Many years later she donated to Council a patch of uncleared scrub which today bears her name.

The cost of connecting the Council office with the telephone exchange was to be obtained, but whether such a connection took place is not recorded. Griffith Brothers were to be thanked for their gift of fifty packets of tea for the poor of the district and the Clerk's salary was raised. Quarry proprietors were informed that Closet Accommodation (toilets) was to be provided at quarries and tenders were called for delivering quarry rubble for forming about eight chains of road in Clifton Street, Hawthorn.

There are a number of photos "c. 1900" but only three were positively identified as having been taken in 1901. These show the laying of the foundation stone for additions to Kalyra Consumption Home at Belair, a group playing quoits in National Park, and Dr. Gault sitting proudly in his new car (the second imported to South Australia) in front of his home "Ardmeen" at Hawthorn. We hope more may appear during the year.

Lists of people who lived in the district can be obtained from the S.A. Directories, the Rate Assessment Books and the S.A. Genealogy and Heraldry Society's births and deaths indexes, but the district electoral roll closest to Federation is for 1905. This raises the question of how much of this material, meagre as it is, will survive for another hundred years and what we will consider worth recording and preserving from today for the bicentenary of Federation.

On 13th October this year the Mitcham Historical Society will host the biennial Eastern Regional Seminar in Mitcham Village. The theme will be "Our District in the Year of Federation, 1901". It may well reveal aspects of our history not previously researched. 