

# HSA

*History*

Newsletter of the Historical Society of South Australia

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No. 157, November 2001

## Governor to attend HSSA book launch

Her Excellency, the Governor of South Australia, Marjorie Jackson Nelson, A.C., M.B.E., has accepted the HSSA's invitation to attend the launch of its publication *S.A.'s Greats: the men and women of the North Terrace plaques*. The book will be launched by Keith Conlon in the Masonic Hall, 254 North Terrace, Adelaide, on Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup> November, at 6.00 p.m.

All members of the Society are invited to the two-hour, catered function. Those who are intending to come and who have not yet sent in the R.S.V.P. slip enclosed with the last Newsletter are asked to forward it to the HSSA, P.O. Box 519, Kent Town 5071, or e-mail [hssa25@hotmail.com](mailto:hssa25@hotmail.com), or telephone Terry Saunderson at work on 8443 3149 or at home on 8443 6063. Please let us know by Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> November, so that we are able to provide the caterers with an estimate of our requirements for the evening.

*S.A.'s Greats* will be available (from the date of the launch) at over a hundred retail outlets in Adelaide, the suburbs and country centres. It is published in soft-cover and contains 200 pages and 168 illustrations. The recommended retail price is \$11.95 (+ \$2.25 postage). If you wish to order copies by post, please complete the form on the flyer enclosed with this Newsletter and return it, with your payment, to the HSSA.

Two illustrations from the book are reproduced above. Do you know who these people are? 



*Who had an adventurous and chequered career at home and at the antipodes?*

## HSSA Journal and 2002 Programme

The 2001 HSSA Journal, edited by Dr. Christine Garnaut and Ms. Jenny Palmer, is enclosed with this Newsletter. The new A4 format, with more illustrations and greatly improved design, has received numerous commendations from members, and the selection of articles in this year's issue has much to interest readers.

The HSSA programme for 2002 is also enclosed.


It has been compiled jointly by all members of Council, with Terry Saunderson responsible for liaising with the speakers and arranging the timetable. It would be appreciated if each member could pass on the extra copy enclosed to a friend or colleague.

This year's field trips were again very well attended. 62 people went on the Stained Glass Windows tour of the city in March, 45 enjoyed the all-day coach tour of Willunga in April, and 46 visited the Glenside Hospital




*Which one is the "Red Devil"? Can you name the other one?*

[Answers on page 3]

in October. In addition, 87 people came to the Quiz Night in June and 45 attended the Annual Dinner in September. Unfortunately, our tour of the Performing Arts Collection had to be cancelled due to unannounced building works at the Festival Centre. 

## New members

The Historical Society would like to welcome the following new members: Mrs. Rosemary Cooksley, Mr. Raymond & Mrs. Dawn Eastwood, Dr. Leigh & Mrs. Ashley Holding, and Mrs. Dorothy Wright. 

## 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:** 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, Mr. Alan Fulwood, Dr. C. Garnaut, Mr. J. Healey, 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:

**Consultants:** Mr. R.M. Gibbs, Dr. R.P.J. Nicol

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

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

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## Mortlock Archives

by Neil Thomas

Donations received recently include records for churches in the city of Adelaide, a range of diaries, and records reflecting a variety of women's experiences, research papers and organizations.


Records of the Baptist Church in South Australia and its foundation have been considerably increased by the donation of material from the Flinders Street church covering the period from 1860 to the 1990s. As well as minute books of all its organizations, there are letters received by its first pastor, Reverend Silas Mead, papers read at its Young Men's Club, correspondence of its secretaries, and photographs, programmes and history files.

The church has also donated a record book of the first Baptist congregation in the State, covering the years 1839 to 1842, with copies of letters sent back to the United Kingdom. A research paper by Brian Jones about the congregation of Stow Congregational Church (now Pilgrim Church) covers the early years and up to 1977.


Diaries donated include one kept by Captain Harry Thomson of the 50<sup>th</sup> Battalion while in France in 1916. The account of his reaction to the Pozières

engagement in August of that year is particularly poignant. There is also James Anderson McLauchlan's original diary of his journey from London to Adelaide on the *City of Adelaide* in 1874, a transcript of which was donated last year by a descendant. A diary of a trip to England made by Edward Jones Tucker in 1885 was written for his sister Jane to read.

Additional interviews with South Australian women who are recipients of Commonwealth honours have been added to the *Honoured Women* oral history project. Phyllis Gall's reminiscences of life as a governess from the 1930s to 1950 on Tuilkilkey, Bimbowrie and Kalkaroo stations in the north-east of the State are entitled *Gentlewomen Preferred*. A small record group from Latvian-born Katrin Rubasko includes correspondence and memorabilia.

Research papers on Edward Hamilton, the Colonial Architect, by Anthony Sherrin, and on the family of Mary MacKillop, by Donald Copeland, will be of interest to researchers. Organizations who have donated papers include the Humanist Society and the Medical Science Club of South Australia. 

## History SA deadline

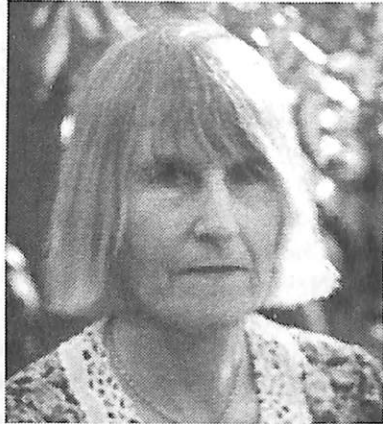
The deadline for all material for the January 2002 issue of the Newsletter is Friday, December 7<sup>th</sup>. It should be addressed to John Healey, Editor, *History SA*, 27 Germein St., Semaphore 5019. 

## On your Council

# Janet Callen

Janet joined the HSSA Council in April this year. Born in South Australia, she completed a Bachelor of Arts degree in French and History at the University of Adelaide and then taught at Darwin High School for two years and at Seaview High School for three years before returning to study at Flinders University, where she gained her Diploma of Education. Since then she has been relief teaching at a number of South Australian schools.


She has also tutored for the Indigenous Education Unit and for the Smith Family in their Learning for Life programme. The latter work has involved her in tutoring disadvantaged school students and in teaching English as a second language.



Janet has written local histories of Blackwood and Eden Hills (published by Investigator Press in 1984 and 1985 respectively), booklets on historical walks for the Mitcham and Noarlunga City Councils (commissioned for the South Australian sesquicentenary in 1986), and, in collaboration with Ann Ward, a book entitled *Adelaide Beach Walks* (1987), dealing with historical features of the beaches from Marino to Outer Harbour.

She also did part of the research for Rob Linn's books *Bungaree: Land, Stock and People* (1992) and *Frail Flesh and Blood: the health of South Australians since earliest times* (1993).

Janet wrote articles on the horse trade between South Australia and India between 1868 and 1939, which were published in *Heritage Australia*, the magazine of the Council of National Trusts of Australia, in 1988, and in the *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia* in 1995. With Gisela Heathcote, she was responsible for the article on "Horses in South Australia" in the *Wakefield Companion to South Australian History*, to be published shortly.

Janet and fellow HSSA member Marie Steiner are currently researching the lives of the passengers from the *Nashwauk* after it was wrecked at Moana in 1855. The study will trace the histories of the (mostly Irish) immigrant girls who ended up in servant depots at Mount Barker, Willunga, Clare, Gawler, Kapunda and Encounter Bay. 

*History SA* is now printed by Eureka Corporate Group,  
306 Grange Road, Kidman Park 5025.

# 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 page 2.

## MONOGRAPHS

G.C. Bishop: **Tolley: A Family of Winemakers: A History of Tolley Wines, 1892-1992** (Tolley Wines Pty. Ltd., Hope Valley, 1994)

R. Foster, *et al.*: **Fatal Collisions: The South Australian Frontier and the Violence of Memory** (Wakefield Press, Kent Town, 2001)

T.J.R. Jenkin: **Place, Image and Environmental Conflict: World Heritage and the Lake Eyre Basin** (Royal Geographical Society of S.A., Adelaide, 2001)

Kapunda Historical Society: **Not Without Courage: The Story of Hawke and Co., Kapunda, South Australia** [Videorecording]


F. Kelly: **Did You Know? Colin Thiele and His Books** (Auslib Press, Adelaide, 2001)

Marine Board of South Australia: **Mercantile Navy List: Masters, Mates and Engineers** (Government Printer, Adelaide, 1879)

E. Nicholls: **Harnessing Horse Power: The Life and Time of the People within the District Council of Peake** (Coomandook, Peake and Districts Historical Society, Coomandook, 2001)

North Australian League: **Construction of the Trans-Australian Railway to Port Darwin** (Adelaide, 1902)

**Records of the S.A. Museum: Cumulative Index, Vols. 1-27, 1918-1994** (S.A. Museum, Adelaide, 2001)

**A Walk Through the Past: A Pictorial History Depicting Scenes from the Thomas Hardy Wine Empire, 1850-2000, Commemorating 150 Years since the Arrival of Thomas Hardy in Australia** (Hardy, Adelaide, 2000) 

## Who are they? (From page 1)

1. The redoubtable and hot-spirited Alexander Tolmer (1815-1890), who was South Australian Police Commissioner in 1852-53. He is wearing the Order of the Tower and Sword, presented to him when he was seventeen by the Portuguese Emperor and Empress after he had distinguished himself (and been twice wounded) in their civil war. [Photo courtesy S.A. Police Hist. Soc.]

2. The "Red Devil" is the Bristol monoplane on the left. Standing beside it is its owner and pilot Harry Butler (1889-1924), who made the first Australian mail service flight over water in August 1919, flying from Adelaide to Minlaton. [Photo courtesy Ron Blum Collection]

# The SAGHS library

Just as the library of the Royal Geographical Society of South Australia is of value to historians as well as geographers, so the library of the South Australian Genealogy and Heraldry Society holds a great deal of material that is of use to general historians, not just those researching family trees. The library is situated in the old Institute Building at 201 Unley Rd., Unley, and has a very comfortable, well-stocked reading room, with adjacent areas for the use of microfiche and microfilm.

The following summary is taken from the SAGHS Library Guide, compiled by Robert Blair and issued in August 2001.

The collection of printed and written works is comprised of books, periodicals and manuscripts, among which may be found:

- General Australian and South Australian reference material, including biographies, diaries, directories, biographical indexes, gazetteers, as well as studies of convicts, shipping, religious organizations and businesses
- Histories of South Australian towns, districts, institutions, schools and churches
- Government records, including South Australian Government Gazettes, Parliamentary Papers and Debates, Year Books and electoral rolls
- Newspapers --- a substantial collection of South Australian newspapers from 1836 on, covering both city and country, including a complete run of the *Register* (1836-1931)
- S.A. Directories and telephone directories
- Atlases, including large-scale maps of Australia, the British Isles, Europe and South Africa, and Australian street directories
- South Australian and interstate shipping records, including passenger lists, applications for free passage, shipboard diaries, and indexes to ships arriving, passenger arrivals, intercoastal and inter-colonial shipping, deserters and shipwrecks
- Australian and overseas journals of historical and genealogical societies
- General overseas reference material, including British census indexes, monumental inscriptions, parish registers, directories and Scottish clan histories.

The SAGHS library also contains a number of very useful general indexes, including:

- Adelaide Hospital Admission Register (1840-1904), indexed by surname and giving the patient's address, age, religion, occupation, illness and, in most cases, the ship of arrival and length of residence in the colony
- Blair Newspaper Index to the *Register* and some country newspapers between 1862 and 1886
- BDM Certificates Index

- Cemetery Index --- headstone transcriptions from most S.A. cemeteries, listed by surname and cemetery
- Destitute Index
- German, Jewish and Scottish Indexes
- Marriage Index
- Parish Register Index --- from Roman Catholic, Anglican & Presbyterian churches in S.A.
- School Admissions Index
- S.A. Parliamentary Papers Index to People
- Sudden Deaths in the Colony Index.

Many of the SAGHS records are held on microfiche and microfilm, including:

- South Australian  
Birth, death and marriage certificates  
Cemetery records  
Church records  
Newspapers  
School records  
Shipping indexes
- Interstate  
Various indexes of births, deaths and marriages, cemeteries, probates, electoral rolls and shipping details
- Overseas  
International Genealogical Index  
GRO Indexes --- BDMs in England and Wales (1837-1980)  
Numerous British census indexes, directories, church registers and probate indexes  
New Zealand BDM records, electoral rolls, probates and shipping lists.

In addition, a large collection of Australian and overseas records are held on computer.

Many of the records that are used frequently by historical researchers can be accessed more easily and in more detail at the SAGHS library than elsewhere. For example, information can be taken from birth, death and marriage certificates without having to apply to the BDM Registration Office. The editor of *History SA* can also attest to the friendliness and efficiency of the SAGHS staff, who are always ready to assist in tracking down elusive sources.

## Library opening hours:


Tuesday	10.30 a.m. -- 9.00 p.m.
Wednesday	10.30 a.m. -- 4.30 p.m.
Thursday	10.30 a.m. -- 4.30 p.m.
Saturday	10.30 a.m. -- 4.30 p.m.
Sun (2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> in month)	1.00 p.m. -- 4.30 p.m.

Use of the library is free for SAGHS members. The charge for non-members is \$14 per visit (all day if necessary). There is a small charge for the use of computers and microforms.  
Enquiries: SAGHS Library (08) 8272 4222

## Noel Butlin Archives Centre saved

The Society has received good news about the Noel Butlin Archives Centre (NBAC) at the Australian National University. In the November 2000 issue of *History SA*, it was reported that the Archives were to be mothballed and sealed off from researchers as a result of funding cuts. Established in 1953, the Archives comprise 13,000 shelf metres of records covering the history of major Australian companies, national trade unions and employer bodies, reaching well back into the nineteenth century.

The Friends of the NBAC and many leading Australian historians have been campaigning to save this outstanding collection and their efforts have now been rewarded. The Australian National University recently announced the establishment of the A.N.U. Archives Programme, which will bring together the University Archives and the NBAC. Recurrent funding for the programme has been allocated, ending the year-long uncertainty about the future of the NBAC and its services. There is now a stable base from which it can continue its role of preserving and promoting the national record of Australian business, labour, industrial and rural activity.

The announcement has been welcomed by historical organizations around the country and shows that heritage collections can be saved by determined and concerted action. 


## Websites

[www.heritage.gov.au/ourhouse](http://www.heritage.gov.au/ourhouse)

The Australian Heritage Commission has recently published a book on the Internet, entitled *Our House: Histories of Australian Homes*. Edited by Dr. Susan Marsden, it describes over forty homes from all States and Territories, covering farmhouses, bungalows, flats, cottages, shacks and terraces. Each story includes an account of the house's origins, the social history of its residents and a selection of photographs.

There are seven homes in the South Australian section, among them a cottage, 'Dunmoochin', in the West End, Mocatta House at Hackney, a mine doctor's cottage at Burra, and Holowiliena Station in the southern Flinders Ranges.

[www.jcu.edu.au/aff/history/index.htm](http://www.jcu.edu.au/aff/history/index.htm)

The Electronic Journal of Australian and New Zealand History publishes articles, book reviews and conference papers, relating to both general Australian history and specific topics in each State. The article "Mills, Millers and Millwrights: how the Machine Age came to South Australia", by HSSA members Jennifer Carter and Roger Cross, gives an account of the mills established in South Australia in the early 1840s. Philippa Martyr's "When Doctors Fail: Ludwig Bruck's *List of Unregistered Practitioners* (1886)" examines the many, quite respectable people who practised various forms of medical treatment in colonial Australia without official authorization. 

### The Shandean view of history

When a man sits down to write a history --- tho' it be but the history of Jack Hickathrift or Tom Thumb --- he knows no more than his heels what lets and confounded hindrances he is to meet with in his way, or what a dance he may be led, by one excursion or another, before all is over.

Could a historiographer drive on his history, as a muleteer drives on his mule --- straight forward, for instance from Rome all the way to Loretto, without ever once turning his head aside either to the right hand or to the left --- he might venture to foretell you to an hour when he should get to his journey's end; but the thing is, morally speaking, impossible. For if he is a man of the least spirit he will have fifty deviations from a straight line to make with this or that party as he goes along, which he can no ways avoid. He will have views and prospects to himself perpetually soliciting his eye, which he can no more help standing still to look at than he can fly. He will, moreover, have various

Accounts to reconcile,

Anecdotes to pick up,

Inscriptions to make out,

Stories to weave in,

Traditions to sift,

Personages to call upon,

Panegyrics to past up at this door,

Pasquinades at that --- all which both the man and his mule are quite exempt from.

To sum up all, there are archives at every stage to be looked into, and rolls, records, documents and endless genealogies, which justice ever and anon calls him back to stay the reading of. In short, there is no end of it!

--- From Laurence Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (1760-67)

# Ghosts of the Garden

## Part III

by Russell Smith

We continue on our historical walk through Adelaide's Botanic Garden, seeking out the sites of those buildings, statues and other features that have disappeared over the years, as well as taking a look at interesting facts relating to some of the survivors. To date we have covered the area around the entrance gate off North Terrace and on down the Main Walk.

At the end of the Main Walk, where the Owen Fountain once stood, we veer to the left towards the Francis Arbour. This present-day picnic pavilion has a long and interesting history but before delving into that it is worth pausing to admire the huge camphor laurel tree.

This magnificent specimen was planted in 1870 and is one of the largest camphor laurels in South Australia. The tree was very likely positioned to complement the building that stood then on the site of the Arbour. This was the Garden's first museum and by 1870 it contained a vast collection of wood samples from around the world. The more-than-useful native of China growing just outside would have provided an ideal living exhibit. The wood and oil of the camphor laurel have been highly prized for centuries for their aromatic and medicinal properties.



### The Rustic Temple

The first museum was originally known as the Rustic Temple. It was erected in 1863 and, as well as displaying the wood samples, it also housed dried plants, seeds, fibres and, at varying times, other interesting curiosities such as native artefacts, coral, wool, wax flowers and vegetables, essences from indigenous plants, paper specimens, silk cocoons and a collection of wheat ears.

The Rustic Temple was a relatively small, single-roomed structure, which was flanked on either side by greenhouses. The woodwork and panels were all worked over with an intricate trellis, constructed personally by director George Francis. It had a paling roof. The resulting rustic appearance, coupled with the columns adorning the entrance, prompted the name. The museum was tightly packed with display cases. A two-sided case filled the centre of the room, while all the walls were furnished with upright ones.

In 1867 the Garden purchased a collection of 180 model fruits, which were given prime display space in the central cabinet. It was a very special collection for the perfect-in-every-way models were

of a revolutionary papier-mâché composition that far outshone in quality and price the old wax models available up to that time.

Providing suitable space for the display and the preservation of the fast-growing collection became huge problems towards the end of the 1870s. The present Museum of Economic Botany was then planned and eventually opened in 1881. The majority of the material was transferred to the new, much larger building and the old museum was then used solely for the display of wood specimens. From that time on it was referred to as the Wood Museum.

A fascinating adornment stood for many years at the top of the steps leading to the entrance (*see photograph on next page*). This was a two-ton petrified stump of a tree that was an ancestor of the Araucaria. It

dated back approximately 35 million years. The unexpected treasure had been presented to the Adelaide Botanic Garden in 1878 by the Imperial Gardens in Vienna and came from the estate of Prince Schaumburg in Bohemia. The curiosity is still within the Garden and is on display in the Class Ground (*photo left*).

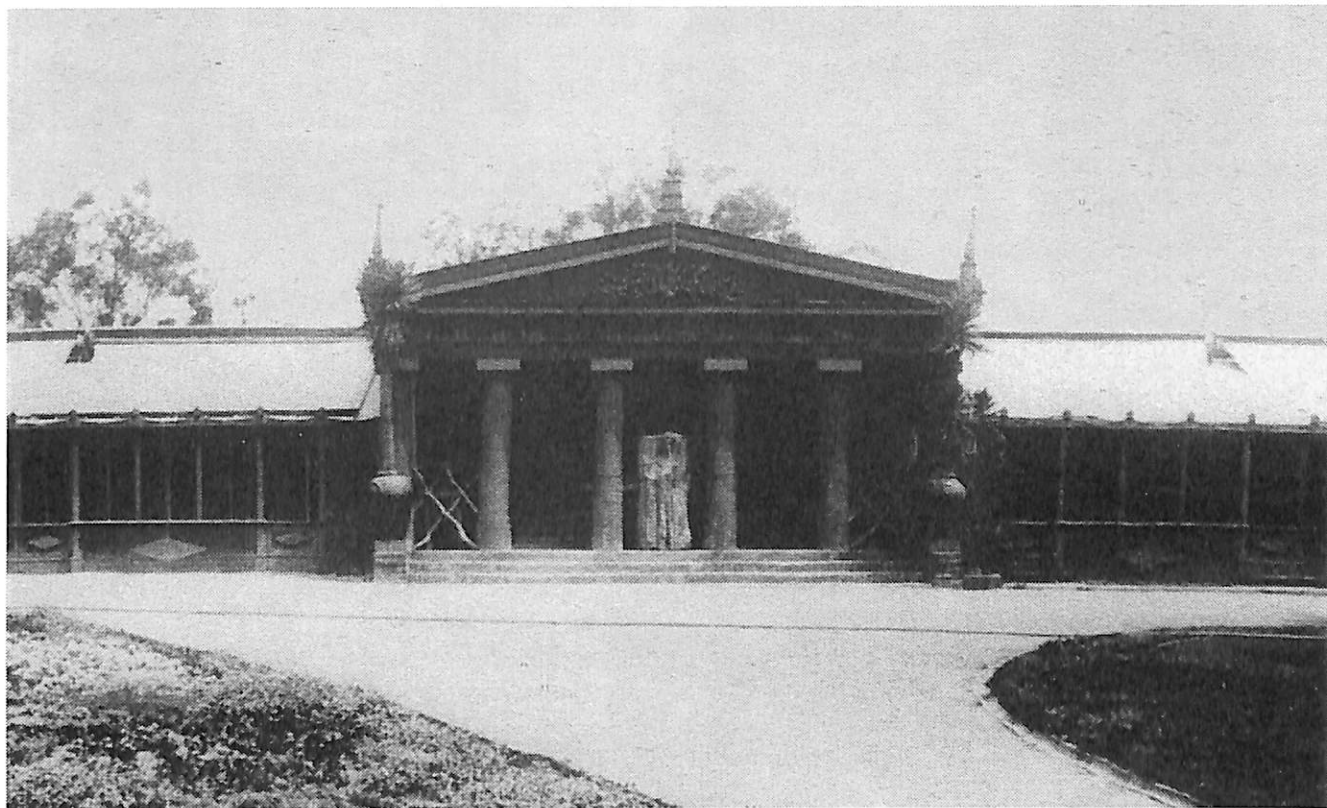
The days of the Wood Museum came to an end during the early 1890s for by then the old building was in extremely poor condition and in need of major structural repairs. All remaining exhibits, including the petrified stump, were subsequently transferred to the Museum of Economic Botany.

The re-built, upgraded, thirty-year-old structure was then given a new purpose, becoming a shelter room for the public. Shortly afterwards a Mrs. Calder was granted permission to turn the shelter into a refreshment room at an agreed rent of one shilling a week. This became the Garden's first refreshment room and remained the only one until 1907 when the present Simpson Kiosk was opened.

More renovations were then carried out, altering the old building so that it became once again a public shelter room --- today's Francis Arbour. Regrettably, virtually nothing of the original Rustic Temple remains.

### The aquarium

The view from the Francis Arbour towards the Main Lake is quite pleasant with its sweeping lawns and thick groupings of trees and shrubs. At the time of the Rustic Temple it was very different. Ornate flower beds were a feature and they were set in lawns divided by curving paths leading down towards the lake, beside which was a large aquarium, measuring 82 feet long and 42 feet wide (*see photo on page 8*).



*The Rustic Temple, later the Wood Museum, erected in the Adelaide Botanic Garden in 1863.*

The aquarium was constructed in 1866. It was one of many improvements and initiatives made by the second director, Dr. Richard Schomburgk, immediately after he settled into his position. It was built for the display of water lilies and other aquatic plants, as well as a range of gold and silver fish. The depth of the water was only 10 inches, which meant it remained relatively warm throughout most of the year.

It was in this aquarium that Dr. Schomburgk first attempted to grow the giant waterlily, *Victoria regia* (now *Victoria amazonica*). Several years earlier he had accompanied his brother, Sir Robert Schomburgk, to British Guiana and it was there that he first sighted the spectacular plant. Sir Robert had been sent to British Guiana as a commissioner to determine the colony's boundaries and the two brothers travelled extensively within the region.

Dr. Schomburgk's predecessor, George Francis, had earlier tried to grow the waterlily through the efforts of Board member Dr. William Wyatt, who trialled the seeds in a glasshouse at his home "Kurralta" at Burnside. Real success, however, had to wait until late 1868 following the building in the Botanic Garden of the Victoria House.

During construction of the aquarium a single water-spout was positioned in the centre. In 1881 that was replaced by a beautiful statue acquired from Berlin --- "Venus Rising from the Sea" (see photograph on page 9). Venus stood on a base comprised of two boys sitting on dolphins. The base was actually a small fountain with water jetting from the mouths of the dolphins.

A different statue of Venus was purchased by the Garden much earlier, in 1867. This piece, the original of which was sculpted by Antonio Canova (1757-1822), has survived and can be found in the Italianate Garden to the north of the Museum of Economic Botany.

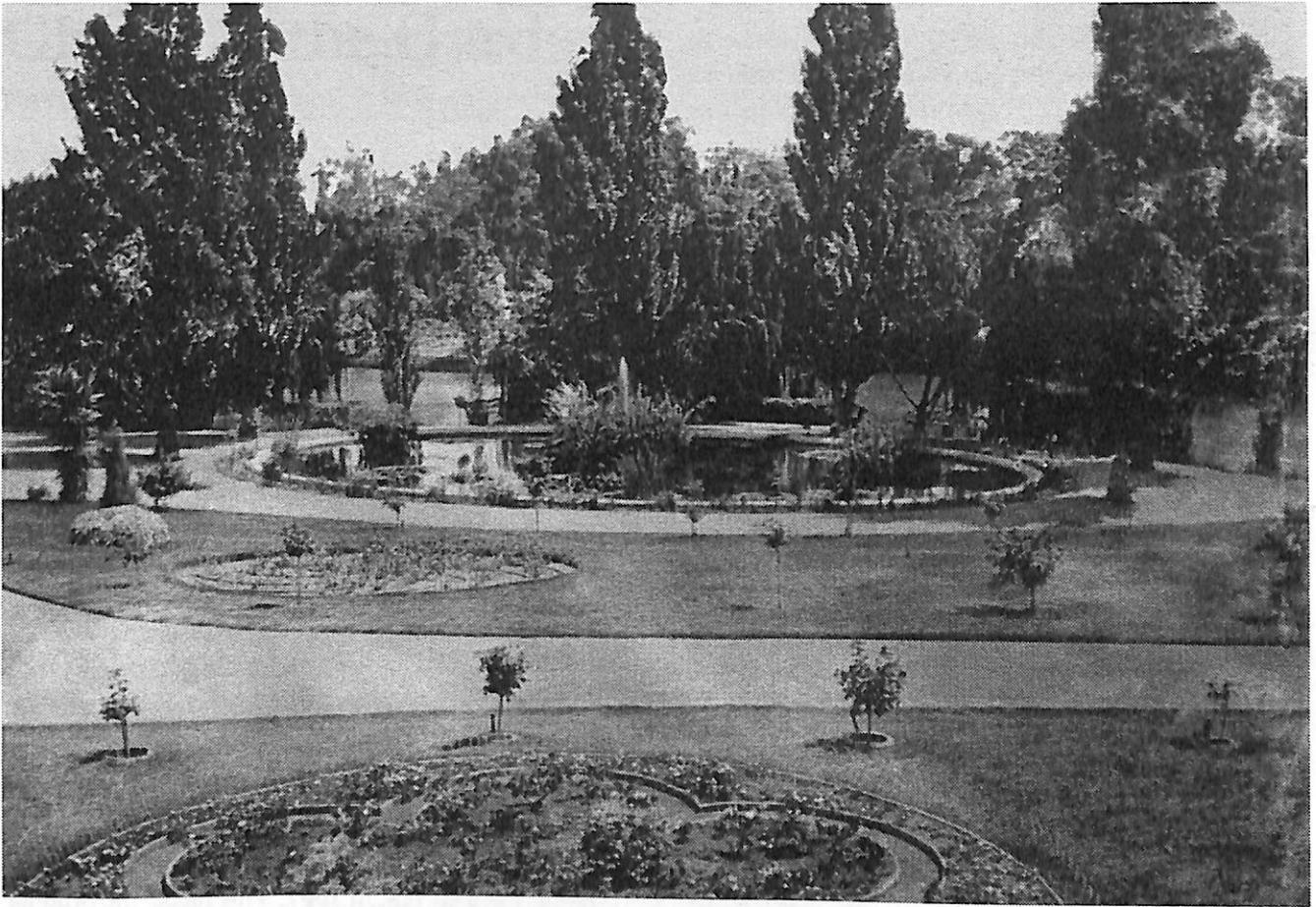
The end for the aquarium and its "Venus Rising from the Sea" centrepiece came during the 1970s. The site is now part of the area devoted to the cycad collection.

Moving on from the Francis Arbour we come to the jewel in the crown of the Adelaide Botanic Garden, the 1877 Palm House.

### **The fairy palace and Peter Pan**

The need for a new glasshouse had been realized for a few years leading up to the completion of the Palm House. The Garden's quite beautiful yet troublesome original conservatory off the Main Walk was already ageing and causing endless maintenance problems. It was also proving to be too small and restrictive for the displays that Dr. Schomburgk wished to create. When the imaginative director read a description of a palm house recently erected in Germany, he immediately wrote to the owners for particulars. That was in late 1874.

The owner of the attention-gaining structure was a Mr. Rothermund, a merchant of Oberneuland, near Bremen. This gentleman subsequently sent the plans to Dr. Schomburgk, who convinced the Board to apply to the South Australian Government for funds to erect a twin of the Oberneuland palm house in Adelaide. A grant of £1,000 was enough to set the wheels in motion. ⇨



*The aquarium in the Adelaide Botanic Garden, 1866.*

Iron-work and panes of glass were ordered from the same Bremen manufacturer who had supplied the material for Mr. Rothermund. While waiting for these to arrive, work was commenced on preparing the site. No less than 4,000 cubic yards of soil and debris were brought in to create the terrace on which the glasshouse was to sit. This proved to be a huge and expensive task. Land preparation and erection costs would finally total almost £1,900, as against just £1,240 for the iron-work and glass from Germany.

When the material did arrive, on the *Monat* on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1875, all the panes of glass were broken and the order had to be re-submitted. Nevertheless, completion came on target and opening day was celebrated on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1877. Lady Musgrave, wife of the South Australian Governor, Sir Anthony Musgrave, performed the ceremony. This was probably her final official duty in South Australia as Sir Anthony's term as Governor came to an end that week. She referred to the palm house as a "fairy palace" and was clearly impressed by it. Perhaps opening day may have been brought forward a little to accommodate Lady Musgrave, for some of the statuary was not yet in place, having only just arrived on the *Torrens*. Dr. Schomburgk was not able to attend because of illness.

As guests filed through the fairy palace there were "many and loud expressions of surprise and eulogy". Everyone was delighted by the grotto, which

was possibly the main inside attraction. It was constructed of stalactites especially imported from the Black Forest in Germany. At the back of the grotto a cascade streamed down the rocks and, as the sun shone through the blue panes above, reflections were cast on the flowing water. On their way home, visitors could look back and continue their admiration of Adelaide's latest pride and joy as its positioning ensured that it could be seen from North Terrace.

From that day until modern times the Palm House has continued to surprise and delight visitors. Even juvenile non-admirers of the beauty surrounding them found pleasure over the years in using the balustrades bordering the steps as slippery dips. That pastime was ended in 1902 when the director, Dr. Maurice Holtze, had the balustrades covered in barbed wire. There have been periods when the lovely old building needed more important attention than budgets and circumstances permitted but following full reconstruction during the mid-1990s it is once again as beautiful as on the day it opened in 1887.

One of the original items of adornment within the Palm House was a decorative, circular, cast-iron basin, approximately 1½ metres across, with a central jet of water. It was in fact a small fountain. This was positioned at the opposite end to the grotto and sat low to the ground. Years ago the basin-cum-fountain went missing. As recently as 1996 one matching the original in every detail was purchased for the Garden

through the Australian Open Garden Scheme. The replacement so closely resembles that shown in old photographs that it is widely believed it may even be the one that first graced the fairy palace.

There was another interesting feature added in 1925. Two Adelaide sisters living in London presented the Garden with a replica of Kensington Garden's statue of Peter Pan. The copy of the sculpture of the boy who wouldn't grow up was only 18 inches tall but it was nevertheless very special for it was one of only three such miniatures made by the creator of the original, Sir George Frampton. The little Peter Pan was placed in the grotto within the Palm House and remained there for fifty years until 1975, when a thief or thieves quietly whisked it away. It has not been seen since.

### The old Class Ground

Leaving the Palm House by its northern entrance we cross the path to the recently created Economic Garden, an area better remembered by the current generations as the old Rose Garden. It was not always a rose garden for that only came into being in 1917. Prior to that, this site was the location of the Garden's first Class Ground, established by Dr. Schomburgk during the early 1870s. Here emphasis was placed on displaying plants in their family groups and assisting in their classification. It became a well-patronized, living classroom for the botanically curious public of the day.

The delightful Coalbrookdale fountain in the centre was placed there during the days of the Class Ground. It came from the same Shropshire ironworks as the "Boy on a Swan" in the Nelumbo Pond and was a gift from the Barr Smith family in 1908. Even



"Venus Rising from the Sea"  
in the Adelaide Botanic Garden aquarium

earlier than that, in 1874, a small fountain welcomed visitors to that area. Fountains, it seems, played a much bigger role in decorating the Adelaide Botanic Garden than they do today.

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

Photograph of petrified tree stump by Russell Smith. Other photographs in this article, and the top photo on page 12, courtesy of Botanic Gardens of Adelaide, Archive Collection.

## Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir,

Congratulations on the recent issue of *History SA*, especially the first of James Potter's notes on First Creek and Russell Smith's ongoing notes on the Botanic Gardens. I look forward to the next instalments.

The article on First Creek prompted me to think about other creeks and I was fascinated to realize that one of the tributaries of Fourth Creek runs off the road into our gateway and then down to and along the Lobethal Road past the Scenic Hotel and thence to Morialta. Any guesses as to the time it takes a Pooh stick to travel from our garden to Morialta?

One link between the two articles is the demise of great-grandfather Richard Schomburgk's daughter Antonia from typhoid, contracted by drinking water from a Botanic Gardens well. Having recently prepared a paper on pre-Federation engineers, I have been reading accounts of the events that led to Adelaide's being the first Australian city, in 1881, to have deep drainage, an innovation supported by Schomburgk and by Dr.

William Wyatt. It was a near miracle that anyone survived prior to that. One of Schomburgk's ship-board colleagues from the *Princess Louise*, engineer C.H. Ohlfsen Bagge, helped to sewer Sydney in 1890 and the accounts of that city before sewerage are harrowing.

Another passenger on the *Princess Louise* was Friederich Lindrum, the first of the billiards champions, who gained Australia's first (I think) gold medal in London for wines from his Norwood vineyard in 1873.

James Potter also refers to Dr. Kent's steam mill. Miller John Ridley imported the colony's first steam engine in 1840. Sadly, it was sold for scrap in about 1960! Kent's engine and mill opened soon after Ridley's. Kent was involved in lime burning and distilling, and possibly aided C.J. Carleton with Australia's first smelting operation --- of the Glen Osmond silver-lead ores. He was also involved in a dispute with Robert Torrens about land, which led to his refusal to allow the extension of Rundle Street through the brewery site at Kent Town --- hence the Rundle Street-Norwood Parade dog-leg.

Ian Schomburgk, Ashton

# A walk along First Creek (Part II)

by James Potter

If we head in a south-east direction, First Creek makes its last Norwood appearance at the southern end of Queen Street (where in 1875 a large and deep hole, used as a tip, filled with water and became a major danger to children) before reappearing in the grounds of Loreto College. The walker is now entering Marryatville, although the suburb could well have been called Sandford or even Brunskillville.

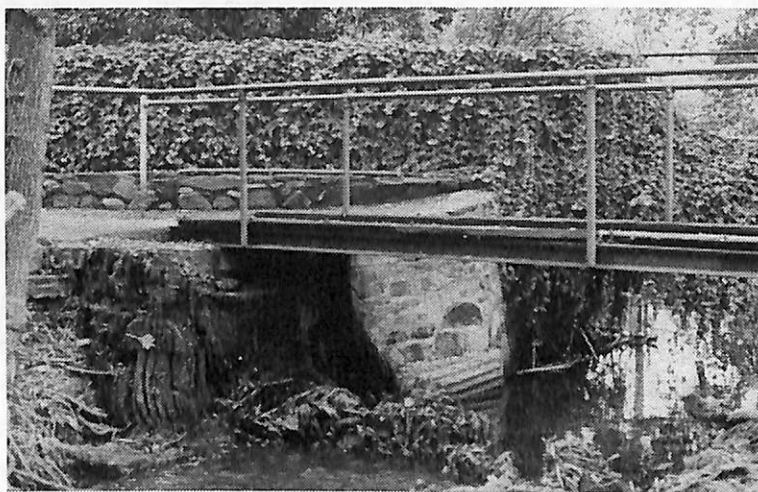
The land in this area must have been a very attractive proposition, being watered by both First and Second Creeks. (The grounds of Marryatville High School are blessed with Second Creek at the north-east extremity and First Creek flowing through its south-west section.) George Brunskill, an 1839 settler, purchased most of it. By 1848, Kensington Road having just been constructed, he was selling part of it. The *Adelaide Times* carried the following advertisement from Brunskill in which he showed some wit and salesmanship:

*Several persons anxious to locate in the delightful village of Kensington object that the population is too dense; and to obviate this difficulty, the proprietor of part of Section 290 which forms the southern boundary of the village now offers that lovely spot in blocks suitable for suburban villas. It commands a splendid seaview, running water and purest springs at 25 feet.*

He donated land for St. Matthew's Church but retained ownership of most of this area, building a home at the corner of Portrush and Kensington Roads on the south bank of First Creek. He called this 'Sandford' (after his home town in Westmoreland). In 1870 it was replaced by 'The Acacias', which was enlarged by E.T. Smith, brewer and Lord Mayor of Adelaide, and is today the major Loreto College building. Subsequently Brunskill built another 'Sandford' on Second Creek (near Dudley Road, the site of a major brickworks) and then a third house of the same name on the north side of First Creek adjacent to The Crescent. This building was replaced in 1891 by the current house 'Eden Park'. In 1923, Mrs. Reid, a daughter of Brunskill, recalled her father bringing home in a pot the Norfolk Island pine which now stands in the grounds.

This was a very busy area in the 1850s. As well as the brickworks, a brewery had been built, and George Hall began his beverage business in a shed on the banks of Second Creek before moving, in later years, to Third Creek. After losing First Creek beyond the High School property, the walker will rediscover it in Hanson Reserve (where there is, incidentally, a nice example of a gum tree and Moreton Bay fig growing in harmony) and Tusmore Park, as we enter the Land of the Grand Properties. First Creek becomes a feature of an area brimming with names lifted from the English countryside.

George Reed arrived in Adelaide in 1838 as an employee of the South Australian Company. He built on a property that he named Heathpool after his home town in Northumberland. It was said that when Reed



*An ancient river red gum (left) used as a support for a bridge over First Creek at The Crescent, Marryatville.*

first saw his land he was so unimpressed that he returned immediately to the ship and booked a return voyage --- an unlikely event since three of his family had died on the outward voyage. He remained, of course, and grew extensive citrus groves for many years. He and his family never quite came to terms with the Kaurna people who used his creek frontage as a camping site. The family

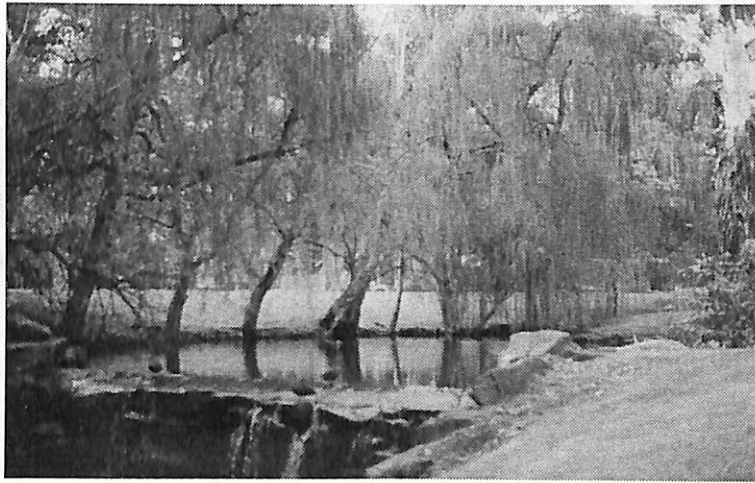
was obviously still in control when the land was subdivided for suburbia, as Northumberland names abound: Newcastle, Wooler and Northumberland Streets; Alnwick Terrace; Stanington, Rothbury and Lesbury Avenues.

As the ground steadily rises, we enter a series of suburbs named after the properties established in the 1850s and 1860s that utilized the waters of First Creek: 'Knightsbridge', 'Tusmore' (built by William Rogers from Tusmore, Oxfordshire), 'Linden' (the home of Alexander Hay from Scotland) and 'Hazelwood' (built by the Clark family from Birmingham). John Howard Clark, editor for some years of the *Register*, presumably gave his name to Howard Terrace, the site of the original Clark home.

Parts of some of the original homes still remain but as private property. The two magnificent Moreton Bay fig trees to be found where Tusmore Avenue crosses the Creek are remnants of the old 'Tusmore' property. The two pillars that heralded the gateway to 'Tusmore' have been re-erected in Tusmore Park. It takes little imagination to see an avenue of gum trees leading away from these gates, and a short detour to Greenhill Road, opposite Devereux Terrace, will turn this vision into reality.

Hazelwood Park, where First Creek can be followed unhindered by suburbia, is interesting for its grove of grey box gums --- the dominant tree that flourished in an arc to the south of Adelaide from this area westward towards Glenelg. Although it was largely removed by the 1860s, its remnants prompted the naming of a suburb, Black Forest.

There is a small park where First Creek crosses Glynburn Road and from here, if one looks southward and upward, the view is that of the property held by Samuel Davenport in the latter half of the nineteenth century. It extended from his elevated home, Beaumont House (now a National Trust property), down to and across First Creek. It was a well-watered holding, there being in the vicinity no fewer than eleven small creeks flowing from the nearby hills. Today only one can be seen, flowing along Dashwood Road and through Beaumont Common --- the home of more grey box gums. These creeks eventually find their way to the south-east corner of the parklands and become the Parklands Creek.)



*First Creek in Hazelwood Park.*

Recognizing the Mediterranean climate of Adelaide, Davenport planted a vineyard and extensive olive groves, and crushed the colony's first supply of olive oil.

As we progress toward the waterfalls and the headwaters of First Creek in the Cleland Conservation Park, we pass the sites of nineteenth-century market gardens and orchards and enter a landscape much loved by generations of Adelaide families. It gained popularity as a picnic spot in the early years of the twentieth century as public transport spread, but well before that 'The Waterfall' was a cherished spot for many visitors. In 1908 May Vivienne wrote in *Sunny South Australia*:

*I take a pony cart from town and drive along the charming rustic road with beauty spots on every side reminiscent of old England in their singular loveliness. The Falls are not huge but extremely pretty and the drive between the great mountains where the sun seems always excluded is an ideal one for a hot summer's day.*

On a mercilessly hot day in March 1862 James Brook, a lawyer's clerk, mounted his horse and

*at 4 o'clock started with Miss Ifould for a ride to the Waterfall --- until we got well into the gully the heat was intense --- but we found the place cool and with beautiful shade. We walked to the top, sat down by the side of the creek and ate some fruit and drank the cool water. We were charmed with the wild romantic*

*scenery of the waterfall and we stayed there until the sunlight had crept up the eastern side of the gully.*

Young Bingham Hutchinson, Emigration Agent and perhaps the first European to see the waterfall, wrote in the *Register* in July 1837:

*Our first attempt to gain the summit of Mt. Lofty was by tracing the course of the brook which flows from a ravine in the direction of the Mount as seen from Adelaide. Our progress was slow and attended with great difficulty from the luxuriance of the plants and underwood by the side of the brook being in many places over our heads and the lower parts interlaced with creeping plants. We were agreeably surprised by seeing a wall of rock about 50 or 60 feet high, which stretched across the ravine, and from the top of it left the brook which had so long been our companion.*

He had travelled the length of First Creek in this, the first of three expeditions that attempted (eventually successfully) to climb Mount Lofty from its western side. They were made over three consecutive Saturdays in April 1837. And before any of these Europeans, the Aboriginal tribes

had made a campsite of this beautiful area.

The landscape forces us to retrace our steps to Glynburn Road, but in our imagination we could travel over Green Hill to the north, find the path of Second Creek and continue our travels down the hill and onto the plain through a continuing landscape full of history.

**Photographs:** James Potter

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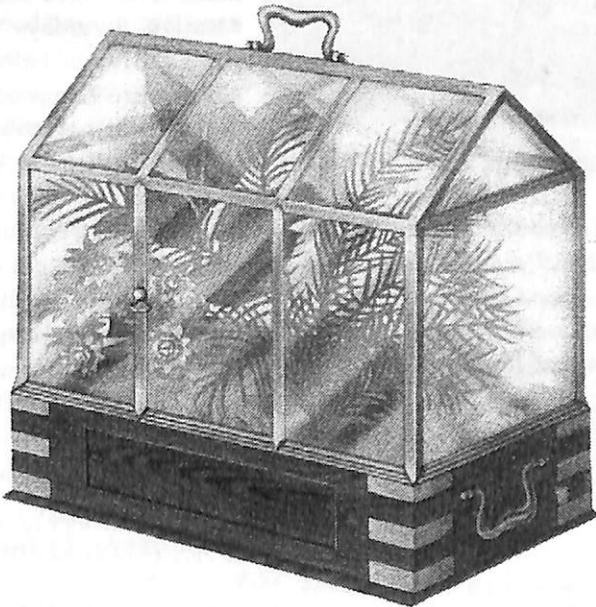
James Potter has a B.Sc. in Chemistry and a Graduate Certificate in Applied Historical Studies from the University of Adelaide. He has published mathematics text-books and is currently a teacher at Siena College.

# The Wardian case

by Eric Sims

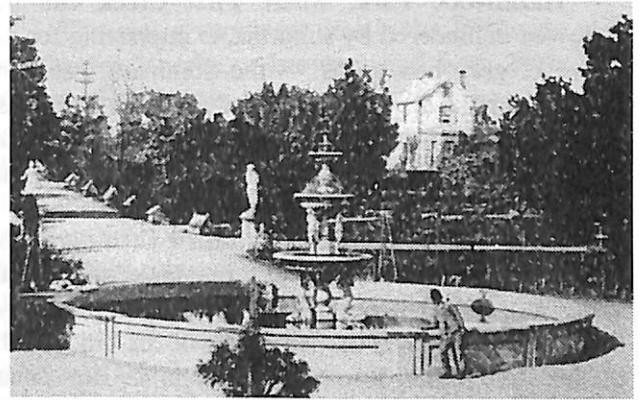
Over the centuries many exotic plants were introduced into the gardens of Great Britain from overseas countries, but for every successful introduction countless numbers perished in transit. Although some could be imported as seeds (if kept dry and safe from rodents), inevitably the hazards of slow travel in boxes of soil on the decks of sailing ships proved too much for vulnerable plants. In addition to the vicissitudes of climate and salt spray, there were two other less obvious hazards. One was the ship's cat, who was naturally tempted to dig in the soil around the plants. The other was the gnawing of their roots by rats, to prevent which the collector was advised to mix small bits of broken glass in the soil.

All these problems were solved by the introduction of the Wardian case in early Victorian times. This was the invention of Nathaniel Ward (1791-1868), a medical practitioner who worked amid the grime of London's Dockland and whose hobby was natural history. One day early in 1830 he noticed that some seedlings had sprung up in moist soil in a loosely-closed bottle in which he had shut up a hawk moth pupa the previous summer. These seedlings continued to grow



without any additional air or water. Ward realized that he had stumbled upon a completely autonomous, self-regulating system, in which the evaporation given off by the plants condensed on the glass and trickled back into the soil, whilst at the same time the atmosphere in the closed container was purified by the plants.

He then had some miniature glasshouses made, sealed with paint and putty, and in them he developed a "veritable botanic garden under glass, which entirely filled the backyard and overflowed into the house and up the stairs". This greatly impressed a famous visitor, John Claudius Loudon, who was, among other things,



*Wardian cases, shipped from England, lining the Main Walk of the Adelaide Botanic Garden in 1871. Some were exchanged with other gardens, many were sold to local nurserymen, while others were used, as seen here, in the Garden, probably to display exotic plants.*

the proprietor of the *Gardener's Magazine*. He helped publicize the principle, with Michael Faraday and John Lindley also playing a part in spreading the word.

The potential value of the cases in the transport of flora across the seas was not at first fully appreciated. However, in 1834 George Loddiges, the owner of a well-known nursery in London, realized the commercial implications and packed a consignment of plants in Wardian cases to be sent on the long and difficult voyage to Australia. When news of their safe arrival in Hobart many months later reached London, nurserymen started placing huge orders for exotics from every corner of the globe.

After the repeal of the Glass Tax in 1845 the Wardian case became relatively inexpensive and was adopted with great enthusiasm by Victorian England. At last the craving for orchids, pitcher-plants, aspidistras and the like could be fully satisfied, and the cases (*shown left*) became features of many homes. They usually contained ferns and were often of highly ornate design. More importantly, the case became Britain's grand weapon in the struggle to bring new crops to different parts of the Empire. They were used to transport tea plants from China to India, quinine trees from Peru to India, and young rubber trees, raised from Brazilian seed at Kew, to Ceylon and Malaya.

It is nice to know that far-distant Australia played a part in this development, which had such important economic consequences, though it is also rather sad to think of the ruthless stripping of so much beauty from the forests of the world that then ensued.

[Reprinted from the *Gazette of the Friends of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens*, Vol. 20, No. 5 & Vol. 21, No. 1.]

Dr. Eric Sims, A.M., practised as a paediatrician in Adelaide for forty years, including five years as Medical Superintendent of the Adelaide Children's Hospital. He edited the Hospital's Journal for forty years and also co-edited, with Anna Cox, the *Gazette of the Friends of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens*.