

# HSA History SA

Newsletter of the Historical Society of South Australia

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No. 158, January 2002

## Digital storytelling

At our first meeting for 2002 Malcolm McKinnon will present a refreshing blend of history, art and electronic technology in his talk "Stories for the Screen: Oral History on Digital Video". Malcolm is an artist and planner with bases in Melbourne and Pekina, and over the past fifteen years he has worked in a number of rural communities on a range of projects, including oral history, exhibitions, urban planning initiatives and community art activities.

His recent work uses digital video as a medium for community history projects, especially those with an oral history component. Malcolm is particularly interested in the local vernacular of communities and he finds digital video a powerful and convenient way of presenting people's stories. He has made several short films, including *Stepping out of the shadows*, dealing with the descendants of South Sea islanders in Mackay, Queensland; *Train Stories*, about Port Augusta and the Trans-Australian railway; and a series of documentaries for regional television stations, linking historical events with present-day activities in enterprise and community development.

He is currently engaged in producing video works for museums in the north of South Australia and in the Wimmera district of Victoria. These are designed to highlight local histories and stimulate people's interest in the museum collections. Yet another way of bringing history alive with the imaginative use of technology.


Malcolm McKinnon will intersperse his talk with excerpts from his productions, shown with the aid of a video projector. Please note that this meeting will be held in the air-conditioned Chapel (just east of the Prince Philip Theatre) at Prince Alfred College, Kent Town, on Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> February, at 8.00 p.m. 

## Sex and suffrage

The first wave of Australian feminists, who were active from the 1880s on, have often been labelled as "wowers", "moralistic", "God's Police", and "spoilers of men's pleasures". The early suffragists have been seen as fearsomely respectable, crushingly earnest, socially puritanical and sexually repressed. But Dr. Susan Magarey will demonstrate just how wrong this view is in her lecture, "The Politics of Passion, Sex and Suffrage", to be given in the Prince Philip Theatre, Prince Alfred College, Kent Town, on Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> March, at 8.00 p.m.

"If you look past the prissy cardboard characters of the books of the period," says Dr. Magarey, "if you decode the euphemisms of the past, you find feminists who were varied, engaging, often sexy, and urgently demanding change to the common experience of sex for women. It was the double standard governing heterosexual relationships that they objected to, not sex itself."

The lecture will offer a radical re-appraisal of suffrage-era feminism, supported by fascinating insights into some of the central figures. Miles Franklin, for example, (*shown left*) wrote a novel, *Some Everyday Folk and Dawn*, that dealt with women first casting their vote at Penrith but was also about the compulsory sex and child-bearing attendant upon marriage.

Dr. Susan Magarey is Associate Professor in the English and History Departments at the University of Adelaide. She is the founding director of the Research Centre for Women's Studies there and the founding editor of *Australian Feminist Studies*. In 1985 she published *Unbridling the Tongues of Women*, a biography of Catherine Helen Spence, and in 2001 *Passions of the First Wave Feminists*, which elaborates on the theme of her lecture. 



## 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.

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**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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## A lofty grandeur

On Sunday, 10<sup>th</sup> March, we will be treated to a guided tour of Barton Vale House at Enfield, built in 1850-52 by the pastoralist Edmund Bowman. Reputed to be the largest home now remaining in private hands in Adelaide, the forty-room, Gothic-style mansion is listed on the Register of the National Estate, where it is described as possessing "immense architectural merit and splendour".


The house was constructed of locally-quarried limestone by Bowman himself, with the help of labourers, and contains over half an acre of flooring. The central hall, with its first floor galleries, rises 45 feet to a vaulted ceiling, and the stairwell features carved balustrades and stained glass windows. For his work on the hall and stairwell, Lyell Rosenzweig won the 1997 South Australian Award of Excellence for Heritage Restoration.

When the immediate Bowman family died out in 1922, the home was bought by the Salvation Army and became a Home for Wayward Girls. It passed to the State remand system in 1947 and was renamed Vaughan House. In the 1980s, after a period of disuse and some vandalism, the Government restored the exterior of the building to its original appearance and replaced the tower, which had been removed in 1944, with an exact replica of steel and fibre-glass.

Peter Smith, an aerospace consultant and vigneron, and his wife Marilyn, who manages the family's bed-and-breakfast business in the Barossa Valley, bought the house in 1995 and have spent a great deal of time restoring the interior, faithfully recreating the original colour schemes (found under many coats of paint), highlighting the elaborate cornices, freizes and ceiling roses, and reproducing the carefully worked wood-graining. Most of the rooms have been returned to the uses they enjoyed in the 1880s and only the ballroom, with its French doors and two marble fireplaces, still awaits restoration.

Peter, Marilyn and their daughter Samantha will escort us around the house, pointing out features of its history that can still be seen in the structure. The cost of the tour will be \$4.00, payable on the day, and you are asked to assemble in front of the house by 2.00 p.m. Proceed from the Main North Road at Enfield, via Warwick Street, Bowman Crescent and McEwin Court to Robinson Place, at the end of which you can turn right, through the double gates, and park on the lawn. 

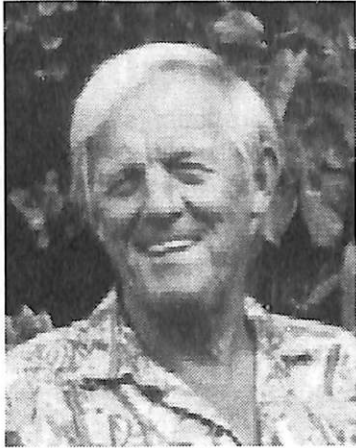
## History SA deadline

The deadline for all material for the March 2002 issue of the Newsletter is Friday, February 15<sup>th</sup>. It should be addressed to John Healey, Editor, *History SA*, 27 Germein St., Semaphore 5019. 

## On your Council

### Alan Fulwood

Alan Fulwood was born in Hahndorf when the Princes Highway was its main street and the tourist boom was yet to come. As a schoolboy he was familiar with the figure of Hans Heysen and with the countryside and the rural activities that he painted. Alan attended Hahndorf Primary School and Oakbank Area School, where he was able to resist the lure of academic work but did well at creative, "hands-on" subjects. He has a vivid memory of producing a poster urging all and sundry to "Visit Historic Hahndorf".




After leaving school, he worked briefly as a painter and a plumber before settling to a five-year apprenticeship as a carpenter and joiner at Mount Barker. During this time he attended the Building and Furnishing Trades School in the former premises of the Adelaide Electricity Supply Company on the corner of Grenfell Street and East Terrace (now the Tandanya Aboriginal Cultural Institute). He later did advanced courses in all manner of construction subjects in a collection of pre-fabricated buildings on Frome Road, over against the fence of the Botanic Gardens.

When he became a qualified tradesman, he began working for the firm of Marshall and Brougham and was soon invited to join the administrative side of the business. He proved to be well suited to this work as he continued in the field of construction management for 35 years, without ever returning "to the tools".


From 1967 to 1985 he worked for A.V. Jennings, always in remote locations such as the Northern Territory, the mining towns of northern Western Australia, and Cabramurra in New South Wales, where he helped to build the highest township in Australia. He then worked as Maintenance Manager at the Adelaide Casino until his retirement in 1996.

Alan travels abroad frequently, in search of fine architecture, gardens and art galleries. Last year he visited New Delhi to see the work of Sir Edwin Lutyens, who built much of that city in the last days of the British Raj.


He enjoys the beach, his garden and especially his shed, where he spends countless hours practising the skills he learnt as an apprentice but did not use during his working life. 

## Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Historical Society of South Australia Inc. will be held in the Prince Philip Theatre, Prince Alfred College, Kent Town, on Friday, 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2002, at 7.45 p.m. --- before the usual lecture meeting at 8 o'clock.


Nominations are invited for the positions of President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and the eight Council members, and must be forwarded to the Secretary, HSSA, P.O. Box 519, Kent Town, S.A. 5071, by 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2002. Each nomination must be accompanied by a signed statement from the nominee, accepting the nomination. 

## HSSA subscriptions due


Membership subscriptions for 2002 are now due. Please complete the renewal notice issued with the last Newsletter and forward it to the Secretary, HSSA, P.O. Box 519, Kent Town 5071. Payment may be made either by cheque or money order (payable to the Historical Society of South Australia Inc.) or by Visa, Bankcard or Mastercard. The Treasurer, Mrs. Avis Huckel, will also accept credit card payment by phone on 8277 2953. 

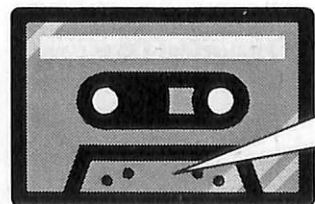
## 2002 Journal deadline

Articles on historical subjects relating to South Australia or Australia are invited for the 2002 issue of the HSSA Journal. They should be of no more than 6,000 words and should initially be submitted in printed or typed form to the Editor, HSSA Journal, P.O. Box 519, Kent Town 5071. Photographic essays, with short explanatory captions, are also sought. The deadline for all material is 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2002.

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

## New members

The Historical Society would like to welcome the following new members: Mr. Henry Krichauff and Ms. Robyn Taylor. 



**Our speaker tonight ..**

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

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



# South Australian Home Builders' Club --- the story continues

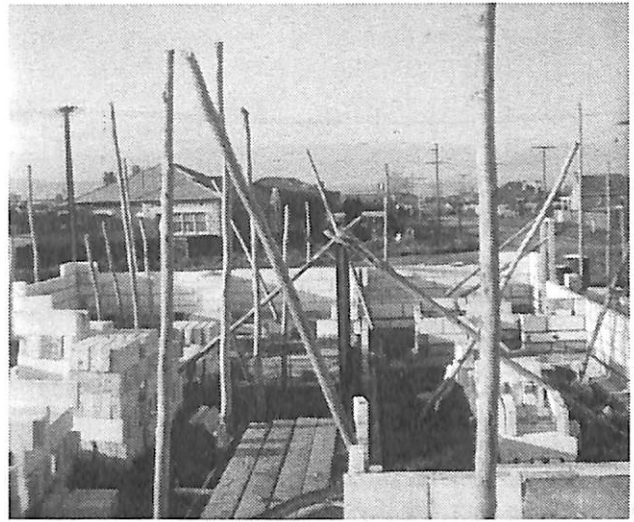
by Christine Garnaut

The September 2000 edition of *History SA* carried an article about the South Australian Home Builders' Club (S.A.H.B.C.). This co-operative venture operated in metropolitan Adelaide between 1945 and 1965 and created the opportunity for people to help one another build a house at a time of building restrictions and material and labour shortages. The S.A.H.B.C. is the subject of a research project initiated by Professor Donald Langmead and Dr. Christine Garnaut of the Louis Laybourne Smith School of Architecture and Design, and other colleagues at the University of South Australia.



Thanks in part to *History SA* readers who alerted former S.A.H.B.C. members to the study, it has been established as a viable and flourishing undertaking. As a result of modest internal and external funding in 2001, the research team engaged in a pilot study that resulted in a successful national competitive grant for 2002.


The initial call for former members realized over 250 names! (The project began with 3.) With the aid of a research assistant, 2000-2001 was spent in establishing a database of members' names and details of their collections; sorting, copying and organizing records lent to the project; and searching for literature about the S.A.H.B.C. and other house-building co-operatives. In November 2000 the team hosted a Memories Afternoon, attended by over 60 former S.A.H.B.C. members, spouses and children. It was a wonderful opportunity not only for the researchers to meet homebuilders but also for acquaintances to be renewed and memories shared.

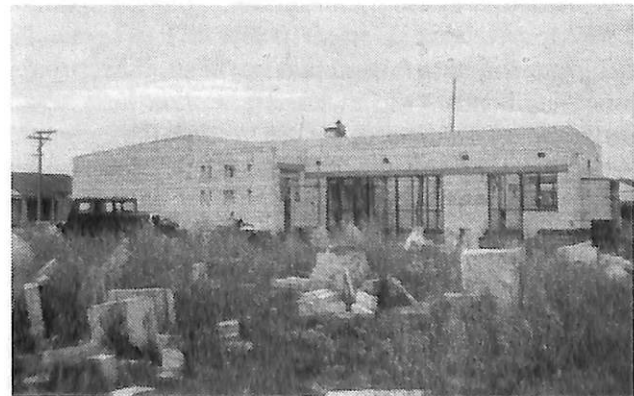


Following an approach by the research team to the S.A. Branch of the Oral History Association of Australia, several oral historians agreed to participate, resulting in a beneficial partnership that utilizes the O.H.A.A. interviewers' professional skills and expertise. As part of the 2001 pilot study, O.H.A.A. members conducted five interviews including one with the daughter of the Club's South Australian founder, Mr. William Ellenby, and others with representatives of the Club's northern and southern branches.

A Community Development Grant for 2001 was secured from the City of Mitcham after scrutiny of the database revealed that approximately 40 houses were located in the Mitcham Council district. The Mitcham grant allowed the researchers to focus on a particular locality and set of resources as well as to photograph surviving houses in the area.

With funding assured for 2002, the research team will continue to assemble and appraise records, conduct additional interviews, photograph surviving houses across metropolitan Adelaide, and begin the task of compiling the undocumented history of this unique social phenomenon.

If you were a member of the S.A.H.B.C. or know of someone who was, and have not yet contacted the researchers, please phone Donald Langmead (8302 0654) or Christine Garnaut (8302 0204). They would be delighted to hear from you. 



*The photographs show the Phillips' house being built by S.A.H.B.C. members at Manningham in the early 1950s.*

# The Flinders Centenary, 1902

by James Potter

In 2002 South Australia will celebrate its first bicentenary. Two hundred years ago the Englishman, Matthew Flinders, and the Frenchman, Nicholas Baudin, met while they were charting our coast. This article looks at some of the events that were held one hundred years ago, when the State was celebrating its first centenary.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1802, Flinders landed on Kangaroo Island. The next day, fresh from a kill of 31 kangaroos --- the first fresh meat for four months --- he sighted and named Mount Lofty. This was from a point later named Kangaroo Head, a short walk from the township of Penneshaw. A range of mountains, no matter how modest, would have interested Flinders since their proximity to the coast would have suggested the existence of rivers. This event provided the centrepiece for celebrations in Adelaide on Saturday, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1902.

Since the early days of the colony a shipping landmark had been placed on Mount Lofty summit. An ornamental wooden structure was built in 1865 to serve this purpose, as well as to provide shelter for tourists. By 1885, because of its exposed position and the energetic carvings of many visitors, it had fallen into disrepair and was replaced by a 50 foot (15 metre) masonry tower. This is the column that remains today. In March 1902 the encroaching scrub was cleared away from the column, a block of granite from Monarto was inserted 10 feet (3 metres) above the ground and a metal plate with an inscription honouring Flinders was attached (*see photo next page*). On the designated Saturday at 4 p.m., with the assistance of the Governor of South Australia, Lord Tennyson, the obelisk became the "Flinders Column". In his speech Tennyson alluded to how "the broad scene of wild nature" of 1802 had become "the happy homes of 100,000 people" in 1902. According to the *Register*:

*Arrangements had been made to flash a heliographic message to Kangaroo Island which can be clearly discerned from the top of the mount on a clear day, but unfortunately a thick haze made it impossible*

*on Saturday to see further than the eastern shore of St. Vincent's Gulf. In the circumstances no attempt was made to utilise the mirror for signalling purposes.*

This message would have been aimed at Kangaroo Head, where another ceremony was taking place at the same hour. The local M.P., Charles Tucker, in the presence of the population of Hog Bay (later Penneshaw) was unveiling a 15 foot (4.5 metre) cairn of Murray Bridge stone dedicated to Flinders. Tucker commented that "the obelisk would for all time record the age of the island so far as history went back and remind generations to come of the heroic work of the great navigator". It remains there today, albeit on private property.

On 24<sup>th</sup> March 1802, Flinders left Kangaroo Island to investigate St. Vincent's Gulf, passing land that was "mostly low and composed of sand and rock with a few small trees scattered over it", the land that is now called the Adelaide Plains. By 8<sup>th</sup> April he and his vessel H.M.S. *Investigator* were in the bay that was soon to be named Encounter. At about 4 p.m. a white rock was reported from aloft, but soon materialized into Baudin's ship *Le Géographe*. That evening the two captains met on board the French ship. One hundred years later, Audrey Lady Tennyson, wife of the Governor, wrote:

*On April 8<sup>th</sup> we go down to Port Victor to unveil a tablet there in his [Flinders'] memory, as having on that date, 1802, planted the English flag on South Australia and encountered the French there, the bay now bearing the name of Encounter Bay, who were on their way there to take possession, but were a few hours behind the Englishman, having wasted time on the way catching butterflies and picking up shells in Van Diemen's Land.*

Despite a rather muddled account, she had the correct date, and on this day in 1902 her husband unveiled a metal plate attached to a granite rock on the summit of The Bluff at Victor Harbor. The encounter of the two ships, which this plate commemorates, actually took place at a spot seven miles from The Bluff, but the *Register* reassured its readers that "competent judges affirm that the boulder to which the plate is fixed could have been distinguished from the decks of both vessels with the aid of a good telescope". Today's visitors to that boulder should also

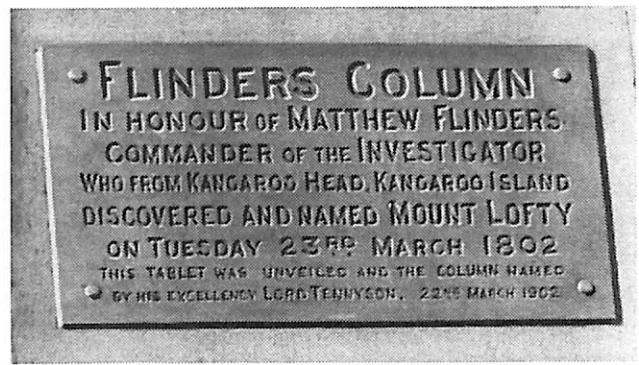


*The Governor, Lord Tennyson (centre), at the unveiling of the tablet on the Flinders Column, Mount Lofty, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1902.*

know that "the inscription does not face the exact point, but for all practical purposes it will serve as an indication to the locality". The major speech at this ceremony came from Simpson Newland, who represented the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia (S.A. Branch). He commented that "for years neglected and almost forgotten, his [Flinders'] work has since been fully recognized and will live forever", and lamented that "when Flinders beheld the area, hills and valleys were clothed with noble forest trees and shrubs right to the water's edge. Granite Island and The Bluff on the sheltered side were similarly covered. Gone now are forest giants, shrubs and prolific bird life."

However, the attending Victor Harbor inhabitants were possibly preoccupied in their thoughts by the characters in Newland's recently published novel *Paving the Way*. The residents of the Encounter Bay district, where the action in his book took place, were curious to know whether they were the originals of its various characters. This curiosity was especially apparent in regard to Petrel, the heroine of the tale, but, as Newland later admitted, "this paragon of women was only known to me in imagination". With the ceremony concluded, the visiting dignitaries returned to Adelaide by special trains that evening. In 1802, the two captains remained in contact until the following morning, Flinders then heading east and Baudin sailing to Kangaroo Island.

In the 1902 celebrations, the presence of Flinders' descendants was often noted. Lord Tennyson himself was said to be related. Mr. E.P. Pilgrim, a grand-nephew of Flinders, and his sons (one of whom was named Matthew Flinders Pilgrim) were to be seen in Adelaide and Victor Harbor. Also mentioned were members of the Chambers family (their grandfather married Henrietta, Flinders' half-sister) and Prof. W.



Flinders Petrie, the explorer's grandson. In 2002, Matthew Flinders' great-great-granddaughter, Lisette Flinders Petrie, will give a lecture in Adelaide and will visit Kangaroo Island.

In April 2002 Victor Harbor will be host to the event "Three Visions of the World Coming Together". In 1902 the indigenous component of this title was sadly lacking but it was an opportunity for the State to contemplate 100 years of European presence.

#### References:

- S. Barker and M. McCaskill (ed.): *Discover Kangaroo Island* (R.G.S.S.A., Adelaide, 1999)
- A. Hasluck (ed.): *Audrey Tennyson's Vice-Regal Days* (N.L.A., Canberra, 1978)
- C. Hodge: *Romance of the South: back to Victor Harbor, historical notes on Encounter Bay* (W.K. Thomas & Co., Adelaide, 1928)
- Memoirs of Simpson Newland* (F.W. Preece & Sons, Adelaide, 1926)
- Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia (S.A. Branch):
  - Volume 5 (1901-02): "The Flinders Centenary"
  - Volume 40 (1938-39): J.M. Maughan: "Flinders Column, Mount Lofty"
- Observer* 24/3/1902, 29/3/1902
- Register* 24/3/1902, 8/4/1902

## 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>. Neil Thomas' "Mortlock Archives" column has been held over until the next issue.

### MONOGRAPHS

- Bruce Harry and Associates, David Lemessurier Architects: **Conservation Study of the Former South Australian Institute Building, Adelaide** (S.A. Dept. of Housing and Construction, Adelaide, 1989)
- B. Clarke & K. Sumner: **Kumarangk - Hindmarsh Island: Whose Truth?** (Uniting Church in South Australia, Adelaide, 1997)
- D.A. Davis: **In Loving Memory: Paradise Square & Melrose Public Cemetery: A Brief History and Appreciation** (Davis, Mannum, c. 2001)

- Heritage of the Upper North** Prepared by Austral Archaeology Pty. Ltd., in association with Flightpath Architects and Historical Research Pty. Ltd. (Dept. for Environment and Heritage, Adelaide, 2001)
- D. Jaensch: **Community in Action: Paper presented to State History Conference, Pekina 27 May 2001** (History Trust of South Australia, Adelaide, 2001)
- Moonta Mines Conservation Area: Interpretive Concept Plan** (Department of Environment and Planning, Adelaide, 1983)
- Mount Pleasant Historical Research Group: **Mount Pleasant: A Brief History** (M.P.H.R.G., Mount Pleasant, 197-?)
- Ngarrindjeri Dreaming Stories** (Dept. of Education, Training and Employment, Adelaide, 2001)
- Ngarrindjeri People and Environment: Past, Present and Future: A Cross-Curriculum Resource for Upper Primary Students** (Department of Education, Training and Employment, Adelaide, 2001)

## Launch of *S.A.'s Greats*

Four hundred people attended the launch of the HSSA publication *S.A.'s Greats: the men and women of the North Terrace plaques* at the Masonic Hall on November 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Photo: Rebecca Cordingley

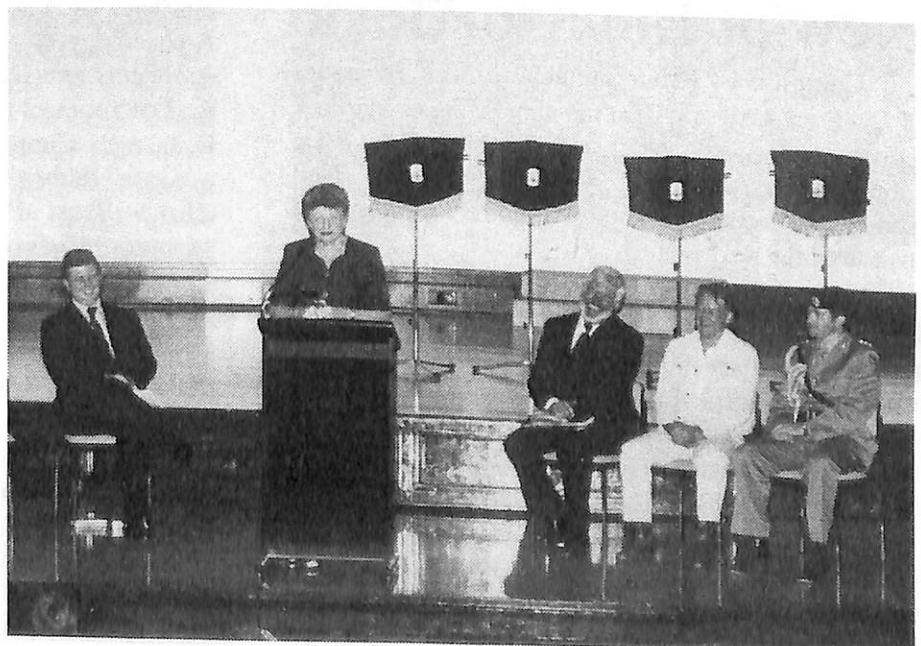


Left to right:  
David Cornish, President of the HSSA  
Her Excellency, the Governor of South Australia, Marjorie Jackson Nelson;  
Gaye Brown, Secretary of the HSSA;  
Keith Conlon;  
John Healey, Editor of *S.A.'s Greats*

Photo: Karin Dunsford

Mr. Keith Conlon, presenter of the television programme 'Postcards', launched the book, and Her Excellency, the Governor, responded with some personal thoughts on what it means to be honoured by a plaque on North Terrace.

Photo: Rebecca Cordingley





Guests at the launch included representatives of a wide range of historical societies, cultural organizations, libraries, museums, heritage collections and well-known state and national institutions, as well as many relatives and descendants of figures in the book.

Photo: Christine Garnaut

Three of the figures commemorated by plaques are still living --- the Governor, Marjorie Jackson Nelson, and artist and jazz musician David Dallwitz, seen here at the launch, and Sir Walter Crocker, former diplomat and now patron of the HSSA.

Photo: Christine Garnaut



Council member Alan Fulwood sells a book to Ian Schomburgk, great-grandson of Dr. Richard Schomburgk, one of S.A.'s Greats.

340 copies of the book were sold at the launch and by the end of November a further 300 had been sold in bookshops and by post.

Photo: Christine Garnaut

# Ghosts of the Garden

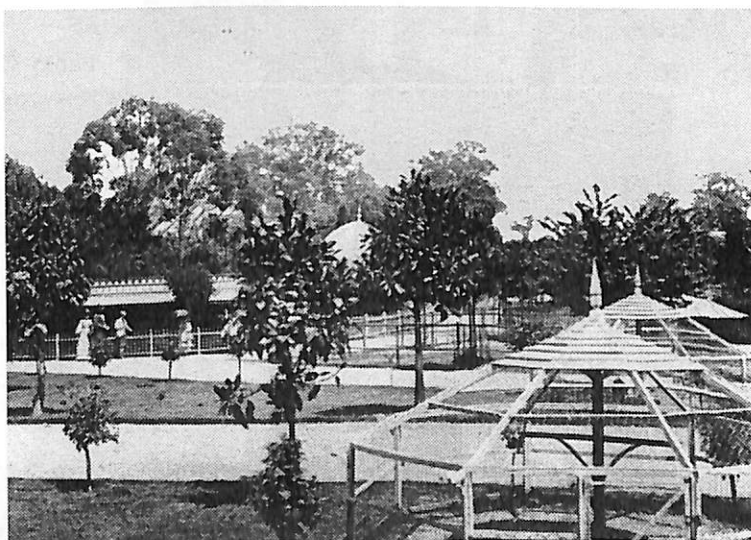
## Part IV

by Russell Smith

Leaving the Economic Garden by a central path on the eastern side we come out onto a broad expanse of lawn featuring some century-old plane trees, a delightful mulberry arbour and an ancient river red gum. The latter is estimated to be over 250 years old.

The present site of Adelaide's Botanic Garden is known to have been a regular camping ground for the local Kaurna people as well as for visiting Ngarrindjeri from the River Murray. A long scar on the side of the old river red gum appears to be the result of a canoe being cut from the trunk many years ago.

This lawn area today is a pleasant, peaceful corner of the Garden but that was not always the case. Had one stood by the old tree back in the 1860s and 1870s there would have been distinctly different smells and noises and certainly a lot more activity, for here was the home of many large, carnivorous animals, the prime exhibits of Adelaide's first zoo.



*Aviaries and animal enclosures were a feature of the Adelaide Botanic Garden in the 1860s and 1870s.*

### The zoological collection

Within months of the Botanic Garden opening to the public an application was made to the Government for extra funds so that a small zoo could be created within the grounds. The application failed. Nevertheless, members of the public began donating the odd swan, or duck, then an owl, then more ducks and all were accepted. Problems commenced however when people began bringing in wallabies, wombats and kangaroos. Their feeding and housing had to take second place to the maintenance and continuing development of the Garden itself and funds were very tight.

So, in May 1859 another approach was made and this time the all-clear was received and a small budget created. An advertisement was placed in the *Advertiser* announcing "that preparations have been made for the introduction into the Garden of waterfowl and other birds and interesting, harmless, little-known animals and that contributions were sought with all charges of conveyance being cheerfully paid".

This brought a flood of response and so began what was to become a very large zoo in the Botanic

Garden. Within a relatively short time, the collection of "harmless, little-known animals" included baboons, snakes, llamas, camels, a Brahman bull and even an alligator. One wonders how the gardeners reacted and coped when some of the new additions arrived, often with very little warning.

Cages and aviaries were positioned in several different sections of the Garden but the main displays were always in the area adjacent to the old river red gum. The ever-popular monkey house was at the southern end (where the restaurant now stands) and a series of cages stretching northward were home to the various big cats and several other ferocious, crowd-drawing creatures. As early as 1864 South Australia's first resident tiger and an American bear were there and a pair of lion cubs arrived just a few years later.

At one period during the very early days there

was great controversy and much pointing of fingers when four ducks were found dead, and a pair of parent swans attacked and killed their four offspring before suddenly dying themselves. The swans were considered quite valuable, as they were the first of their breed to have been brought into the colony. Director George Francis was furious. He immediately placed the blame on Mr. Burford of Grenfell Street, declaring that

arsenic emanating from Burford's candle-manufacturing plant had found its way through the city sewers and into the lake.

Burford counter-claimed that perhaps Francis himself was to blame, through laying baits for stray dogs coming into the Garden. The real cause was never established but the ever-so-special swans were at least stuffed for posterity and placed on display at the South Australian Institute.

Dogs were a continual problem as they were always getting in and attacking animals. The public also created problems. Harassing the poorly caged creatures became a regular sport of unruly children and resulting accidents occasionally happened to both visitors and Garden staff. On one occasion, William Whitehead, a boy in the employ of the Garden, was savagely attacked by a monkey and spent several weeks recuperating in the Adelaide Hospital next door.

There was one unusual happening that could have had an interesting result. In early 1867 Dr. Schomburgk, the second Director, travelled to the eastern colonies

on a collecting expedition and returned with a large quantity of plants and seeds, as well as a pair of Tasmanian Devils, a male and a female. Disaster struck when he landed with his treasures at Port Adelaide. One of the little Devils escaped. To add to the Doctor's embarrassment, the other then escaped on arrival at the Botanic Garden. Pleas were placed in the newspapers requesting colonists not to destroy the strange animals if sighted but to attempt to capture them and return the fugitives to Dr. Schomburgk.

There were no immediate results to this call for help but six years later, in 1873, a most amazing thing occurred near Piccadilly in the Adelaide Hills. A settler named Schocroft trapped a very strange animal. He decided to take it down to Adelaide to see whether Dr. Schomburgk could identify it and, if he so desired, accept the funny but ferocious little fellow as an exhibit in the Botanic Garden. Schomburgk immediately identified the captive as a Tasmanian Devil and presumed that it was most likely the one that had escaped from him back in 1867. The little Devil subsequently ended up on display within the Garden after all.

Nothing more was ever heard of the other escapee. Who knows? Had the two escaped together and headed to the hills, the Mt. Lofty Ranges might today be overrun with their descendants.

Animals remained an integral part of the Garden's attractions until the early 1880s. Towards the latter days there was considerable public condemnation of the housing and treatment of the larger creatures. In 1878 the *Adelaide Punch* declared, "The cages in which the animals are confined are a nuisance to themselves and a positive evil to the spectators. A very powerful and malodorous perfume is continually hanging about the menagerie. Would it not be more suitable to place the animals in the Botanic Park and there form the nucleus of a zoological garden?" And that is exactly what happened, three years later.

Leaving "the lawn of the bear and the big cats", we move out into the Moreton Bay Avenue, planted in 1866, and head towards the statue of "The Amazon", visible at the southern end.

### The Amazon

The Amazon statue (shown above) first came to the Adelaide Botanic Garden in 1867. It was imported by Julius Schomburgk, a brother of the Garden's Director, and then purchased for the Garden through

public subscription --- a case of brothers helping each other and the public helping both.

The striking work of art is a small but faithful copy of a famous sculpture by Prussian August Karl Edward Kiss (1802-1865). The Amazon on her horse is supposedly defending herself against a tiger. Imagination is required these days as the lady's spear has been missing for several years. Garden management decided some time ago to discontinue repairing or replacing the forever vandalized or stolen spear.

The Amazon statue was one of several imported at the time by Julius Schomburgk. The consignment was placed on display and offered for sale at the city premises of Meyer & Co. There was little immediate response. This led to a plea appearing in the newspaper from an anonymous correspondent signing himself "Art-Lover". Perhaps "Art-Lover" had a vested interest. He stated, "Mr. Julius Schomburgk has imported the



statues, I fear to an unprofitable market, the taste for the fine arts not being in the ascendant in this young colony."

He carried on by suggesting that a subscription be organized for various items and in the case of "The Amazon" he proposed that the gentlemen of Adelaide should come to the party. "Art-Lover" kicked off the proposed subscription list with a £1 donation.

Others followed and before long there was enough money in the kitty for "The Amazon" to be purchased and presented to the Botanic Garden.

### Diana's Island

The Amazon now stands in an enclosed garden but years ago, from this location, a path led to a land bridge across to Diana's Island, a delightful picnic spot on the Main Lake. The island was so named because its centrepiece was the statue of Canova's Diana.

The lake itself was formed by George Francis and was one of his very first projects when establishing the Botanic Garden in 1855. Prior to that, the area was simply swampy ground that was subject to continual flooding. A watercourse from the East Parklands fed the swamp. Francis had his team of labourers dig a trench from the swamp to join it to First Creek, further down in the Garden, and then began marking out the boundaries of his proposed lake. The lake was fully formed well before the Garden opened to the public in 1857. In Francis' detailed 1864 plan of progress made, an island ⇨



*Diana's Island, with its rustic arbour (right), in 1908.*

in the lake, with its land bridge running from today's site of "The Amazon", can be clearly seen.

It is not known when the statue of Diana was purchased by the Garden but on an 1874 map the island in the lake is referred to as "Diana's Island", so it was certainly in place by that date.

Several years later, probably about the time of the opening of the kiosk in 1907, an attractive rustic bridge was built to take visitors to the island from the vicinity of the kiosk. Diana's Island became a very popular picnic spot, with a Moreton Bay fig tree spreading shade across most of it. There were many tables and chairs, a rustic arbour as a play area, and lawn stretching down to a wicker-work fence protecting children from the water's edge.

In 1871 the Main Lake was completely remodelled and Diana's Island ceased to exist. Her statue, however, is still in the Botanic Garden, in an equally prominent position by the Main Walk.

### **The Victoria House**

Diana's Island was directly west of the present position of "The Amazon". On her eastern side was, and still is, the Victoria House. A straight path did, in fact, lead from the side of the Victoria House to the land bridge to the island but today we have to detour via several modern paths to get to the home of the giant waterlily, which is at the rear of the Schomburgk range of glasshouses.

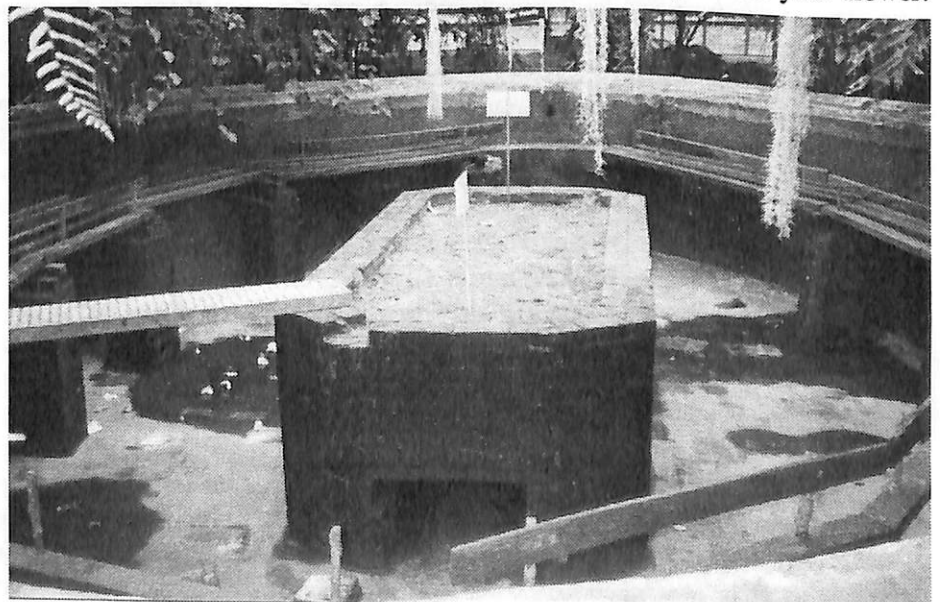
Very little of the original structure of the Victoria House remains as it has been completely rebuilt more than once over the 130-plus years since it was constructed.

From the earliest days of the Garden various attempts had been made to grow the wondrous waterlily *Victoria regia* (now *Victoria amazonica*) but with only mediocre success. A specially built glasshouse and a pond with an intricate heating apparatus was required and Dr. Schomburgk provided that in 1868.

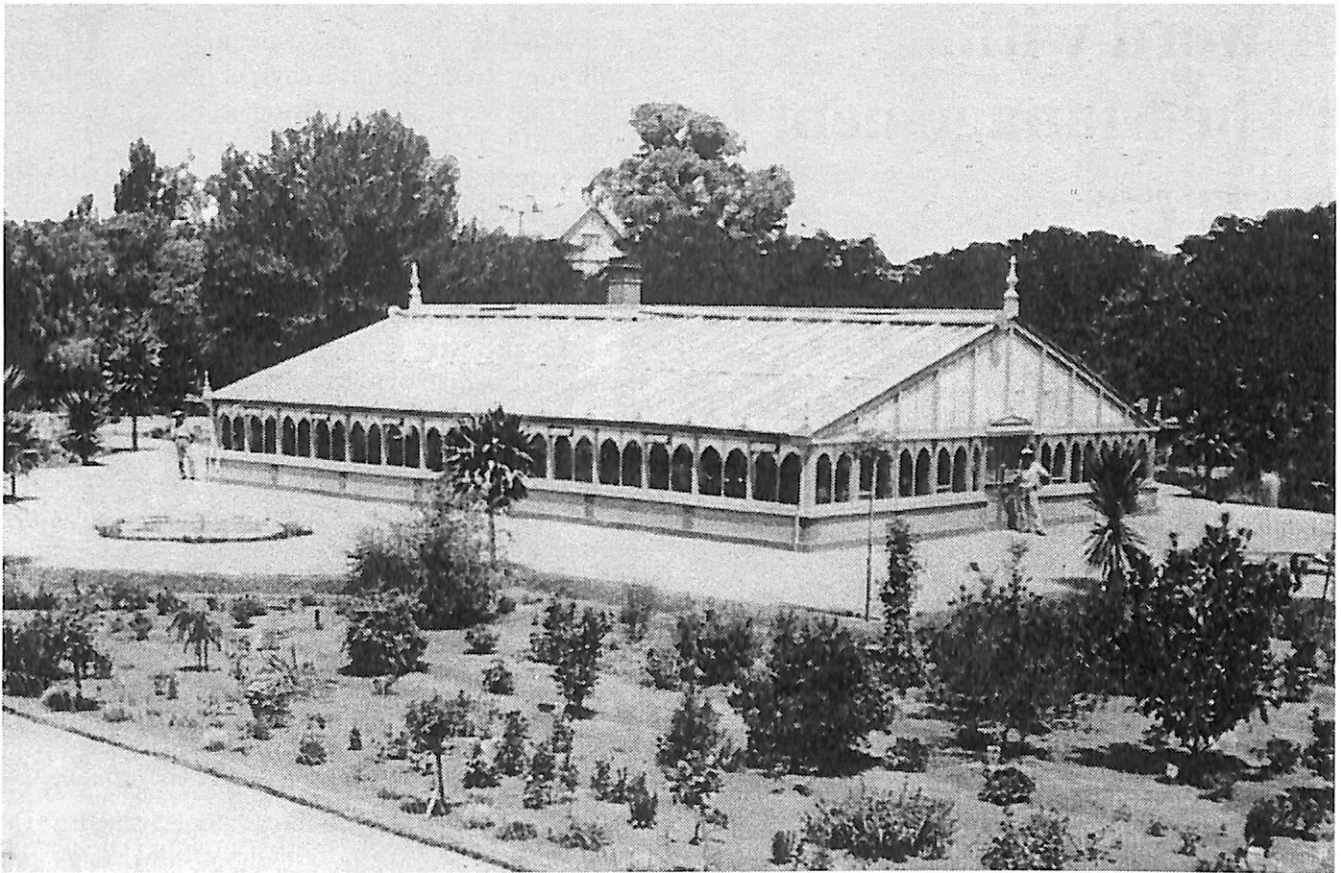
Schomburgk himself designed the glasshouse and four Adelaide tradesmen shared the building contracts, which totalled £506. The

construction of the oval pond, measuring 36 feet by 26 feet, and in which the temperature of the water was maintained at 85° F, was a major achievement in its day. As a result, Adelaide became the only place in Australia where the *Victoria regia* could be grown successfully.

The first lily was planted in the pond on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1868. Its largest leaf measured four inches in diameter. The progress of the plant was followed by all of Adelaide as the press gave week-by-week reports on its growth. By October some of its leaves had grown to a staggering five feet in diameter, and when the announcement came of a bud beginning to open, the Garden became packed with visitors hoping to get a glimpse of the one-day-of-the-year flower.



*The heating apparatus in the Victoria House, exposed when the pond was drained in 1997 for maintenance work.*



*The Victoria House, designed by Dr. Richard Schomburgk and completed in 1868.*

The bloom itself was over twelve inches in diameter. In the morning it expanded with pure white petals, exhaling a wonderful fragrance. About midday it acquired a tinge of pink, which deepened to purple as the afternoon progressed, and then at nightfall it withdrew beneath the surface, never to be seen again.

Throughout October 1868 no less than 30,000 people passed through the Victoria House and that was at a time when the entire population of South

Australia was only 170,000. The establishment of the Victoria House and the successful growing of the *Victoria regia* were probably the most notable of the many and varied achievements of Dr Schomburgk.

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

Photographs of "The Amazon" and the Victoria House heater by Russell Smith. Other photographs in this article courtesy of Botanic Gardens of Adelaide, Archive Collection.

## Cultural heritage grants

Government grants allocated under the Cultural Heritage Projects Programme were announced recently by the Commonwealth Minister for Environment and Heritage, Senator Robert Hill. Forty-five projects with a total value of \$3.5 million were approved out of a total of 286 applications received. This satisfied 11.4% of the requested funding.

The programme gives priority to conservation works that will be completed within eighteen months on places of national significance. The applications were assessed on project and conservation management, including past performance, public access opportunities and other social and economic benefits.

Nine South Australian projects were approved:

- Conservation of the historic Randell Dry Dock and Key's Beam Engine [Mid-Murray Council] ... \$38,445

- Gallery restoration at the Royal S.A. Society for the Arts [State Library of S.A. Foundation] ... \$94,500
  - Fitzroy House [Dr. H.M. Thomas] ... \$144,864
  - Conservation of Chateau Tanunda [IVIVI] ... \$85,000
  - Conservation of Port Adelaide Uniting Church [Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (S.A.)] ... \$26,000
  - Conservation of Nor' West Bend Station [Nor' West Bend Station] ... \$17,000
  - Conservation of Custom House at Pt. MacDonnell [Ms. Moira Skinner] ... \$38,948
  - Roof restoration of Hahndorf Academy [Hahndorf Academy Foundation Inc.] ... \$100,000
  - Restoration of the Ernabella Hospital [Pitjantjatjara Yakunytjatjara Media Aboriginal Corporation] ... \$205,000
- Total for South Australia ... \$749,757

# A word with "The Management"

by Geoffrey Bishop

When Brian Bennett of radio station 5DN interviewed former television personality Alistair McHarg in December 1996, Brian was astounded by the public response and said on air of Alistair, "You've certainly made a place for yourself in people's hearts and minds."

Alistair McHarg was one of the pioneers of live-to-air television in South Australia and is fondly remembered by many South Australians for his fine Scottish accent, his lovely singing voice, his piano playing and his quick wit. He has been retired from performing for 25 years now. He had always said he would "give it away before it gives me away, and I did just that".

Alistair started in the entertainment business when he was thirteen years old. He came from a musical family and believes he was very fortunate because he was brought up in the Salvation Army. The McHarg family were from Ayr in Scotland and Alistair started in the junior band of the Salvation Army when he was just five years old and later moved up through the musical ranks. This gave him a good grounding in music before he went to the Royal Academy of Music in London.

He was the youngest of eight sons and so, as he says, "I sort of came up with the resolve that I should play all the brass instruments --- none of them terribly well --- because if anyone was sick or was off, they would say, 'Alistair, you play horn tonight,' or 'You play trombone tonight.' The knowledge he gained proved invaluable in later years when composing music as he could voice the different instruments.

Alistair started his performing career in a local theatre called the Ayr Gaiety. He recalls: "It is still one of the most famous theatres in Scotland. It's a beautiful theatre --- it used to be owned by a family called Popplewell from the north country [of England] and they were just marvellous. They loved the theatre. It was like being in a family. The old father was the boss and there were two sons and their wives."

Alistair studied at the Carnegie Institute at Dunfermline in Fife and later at the Royal Academy of Music in London where he "studied very, very hard and had wonderful, wonderful teachers". It was here that he developed his love of the lyrics of songs. "Music's fine, but the words are what attract me. If the words are no good, I won't sing a song. I had this wonderful professor who used to say to me, "McHarg, McHarg, it's a lovely instrument but you're not telling me a story."

He studied voice at the Royal Academy off and on for about seven years. His chief teacher was

Professor Marcus Thompson and for piano he studied with Alex Rollo. "In those days, of course, you had to pay. I was very fortunate that most of the time I was at the Royal Academy of Music I was also playing the Victoria Palace in the West End of London, in the Crazy Gang with Bud Flannagan. My agent was Chesney Allen. I was able to do two shows at night as we did then in the Victoria Palace and do my studies at the Royal Academy through the day."

He also went to the College of Acting while he was in London. In spite of this, Alistair never succeeded in losing his Scottish accent, but then, as he says, "It hasn't done Sean Connery any harm, has it?"

His first (and only) movie was *London Town* in 1946. "It was the first technicolour musical made in Britain after the war. It was directed by the American producer Wesley Ruggles and starred a brilliant comedian called Sid Field, and also in the cast were dear friends of mine, Kay Kendall, who unfortunately is no longer with us, and Petula Clark." The film was not a great success. Alistair recalls that James Agate, of the *Daily Express*, wrote a memorable critique: "This film wasn't released, it escaped."

Alistair is modest about his celebrity status. He says, "I go and I do my job and I come home and I'm very grateful for my God-given gifts. You must never say to me, 'You're lucky.' No, the only thing I'm lucky about, in my opinion, is the fact that the good God was kind enough to give me a voice and musical ability. Of course, it's up to you then to do the work."

Alistair started in television in Great Britain and did guest appearances on Kenneth McKellar's show for the BBC. He then had his own programme, *The Pleasure of Your Company*. He came to Australia for the Tivoli circuit in the days when they had theatres in Melbourne and Sydney.

He recalls, "I came in a show with Alec Findlay, the Scottish comedian. I came to Australia for five months, 41 years ago, and never really went back. After I'd been here for a year, having finished the Tivoli circuit contract, I was asked to do some cabaret. My first cabaret was the Pier Hotel at Glenelg, with the Western family. They made my stay so welcome and that's one of the reasons that I fell in love with Adelaide. And, of course, there was the Badenoch family of Badenoch Sunshine Bakeries. Mal Badenoch was a fine jazz pianist and invited me to come to Adelaide. So I did and his family became my family. I've really grown up with Mal and Gené's four children.

"Mal was doing a programme on Sydney television. I got involved in TV and appeared on *Melbourne Tonight* with Graham Kennedy. I also had an afternoon musical quiz show called *Keynotes*, which was my own, but I didn't decide the content. It was given to me to compere. It only lasted for a few weeks but I'm eternally grateful for it --- it was a beginning.



*Alistair McHarg (left) with Bill Lancaster, Director of the Adelaide Zoo (centre), and chimp.*

Alistair was booked to perform in Adelaide on television and in cabaret. His agent was one of South Australia's best-known agents, Alex Reagan. Alistair did a number of solo acts but also performed with Kahmal. "I kept on with my singing and when I came over to Adelaide, I did a lot of work with Ernie Sigley, on *Adelaide Tonight*, of course, and with Kevin Crease, Leone Gay and Joan Disher, who were with Channel 9. The marvellous Bill Davies was then the General Manager of Channel 9. I was very fortunate that I had Bill Davies as my boss and then at 10, as it used to be, I had David Hall. So I had, I think, two of the best television bosses in the place. It was all live-to-air work. There was no video-taping in those times and filming was very expensive. It was a warts-and-all presentation."

They had good fun presenting the shows. Alistair recalls that Ernie Sigley was always playing pranks and getting into trouble. On one occasion, Alistair was performing "My Granny's Highland Home" and he couldn't stop laughing. Eventually the cameras revealed the reason: Ernie was under the piano and had a feather duster up Alistair's kilt!

That incident aside, the tartan is an important part of Alistair McHarg's heritage. The McHargs are members of the Clan Graham of Montrose. McHarg

is actually Graham spelt in reverse. The family fled to Ireland during the reign of James II and changed their name. "Ma" in Ireland means the same as "Mac" in Scotland, that is, "the son of".

But, to return to television. *Adelaide Tonight* commanded large viewing audiences. The producer used the station's own resources and engaged guest artists from interstate and overseas. Wally Lund directed the studio orchestra and they had a chorus and dancers. *Adelaide Tonight* went to air four nights a week. As Alistair says, "It was very spontaneous. We practised in the afternoon and went to air that evening." He also took part in the Channel 9 Telethon which raised funds for various Adelaide charities. He recalls, "These were run by Bill Davies, in a very efficient manner."

One of Alistair's fondest memories is his association with the South Australian Police Band. Over the years he has written music for and conducted the band on many occasions. "The band was founded and conducted by Alex Radcliffe and, from time to time, he would allow me to conduct his band! I wrote a march which I called "Fort Largs" after the police academy there, although the recording I have of it is by the band of the 4<sup>th</sup> Military District."

A trip he made back to Scotland in 1985 laid the foundation for the Police Band's successful visit ⇒

to Edinburgh in 1990. The last occasion on which he conducted the band was in that year when they performed his tone poem "The Highlands" at the Adelaide Festival Theatre. An earlier broadcast of the work amused Alistair as it was in "A programme of British composers", namely Alistair McHarg and Gustav Holst!

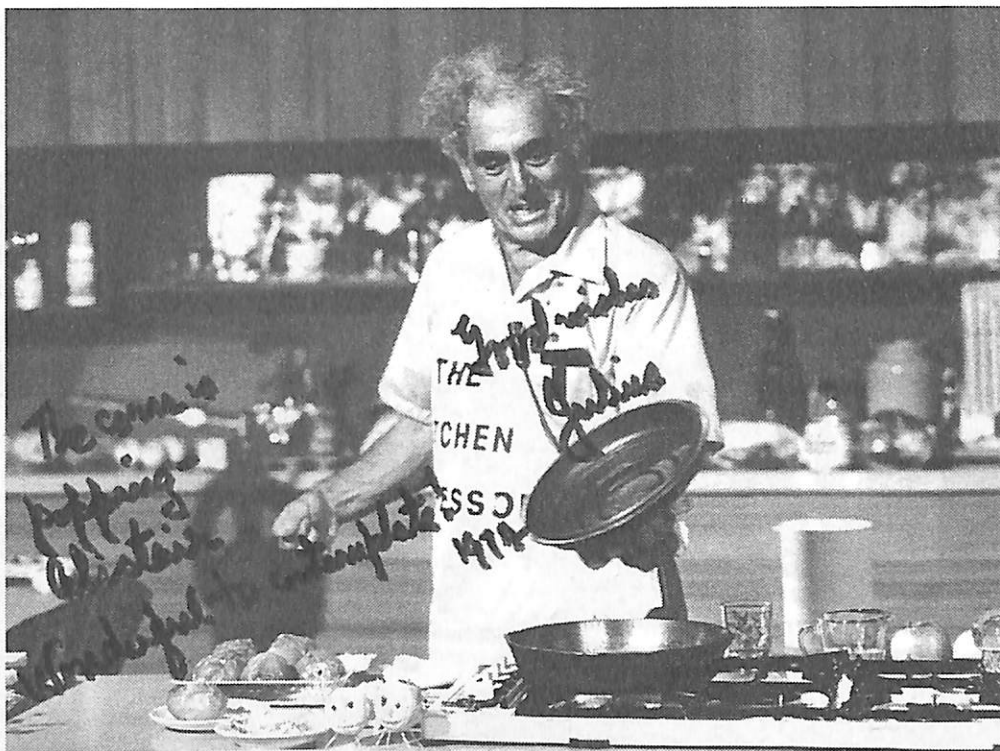
He has also had many other compositions performed in public. He is particularly proud of a hymn ("Jesus Answers Prayer") that he wrote 61 years ago. "The Australian General of the Salvation Army was telling me recently that the hymn is now in its 56<sup>th</sup> reprint and it's sung in countries all over the world. So I feel very privileged and humble; I feel that somebody up there must like me."

Alistair did a request programme on Channel 10 in the 1970s. "It was a wonderful hour of television. Listeners used to write in or ring in with requests and I would play the piano and sing them. I also did the *Saturday Tonight* show with Noel O'Connor.

Other names of the period come up in talking with Alistair. "Warwick Prime? I think Warwick is back in Western Australia. I wonder how the stock markets are doing? Every time you saw Warwick, it didn't matter what was going on, he had his head stuck in the papers checking on the stock markets!"

Two of Alistair's most memorable programmes were *The Music of Easter* and *The Music of Christmas*, which he made in the late 1960s. They involved ecumenical choirs and the S.A. Police Band. Alistair wrote the script, which was read by Paul Griffiths, and he conducted the performances. Guest performers included Rae Cocking and "the delightful and very talented" John Farnham. Alistair went on to do a number of other programmes with Farnham.

Another productive friendship was with Professor Julius Sumner Miller. Alistair interviewed him at short notice and the two "clicked". The gruffly-spoken American soon moved from "McHarg" to "Alistair" and a strong friendship developed. Alistair did three one-hour programmes with the professor, entitled *Julius Sumner Miller: The Man*. "The suggestion for the series came from the professor after our initial seven-minute slot which went on for much longer than that. He offered to do a programme at no cost to the studio and David Hall jumped at the opportunity."



*Julius Sumner Miller in typical form. The inscription reads: "The corn is popping, Alistair. Wonderful to contemplate! Good wishes, Julius, 1974."*

Alistair was forced to reduce his television work in 1969 following a serious operation. However, he resumed his career as an entertainment director on cruise ships. "I said, 'I don't know anything about cruise-directing a ship.' They said, 'That's all right, we'll teach you', which they did. Finally I finished up on the *Fairstar* and then they decided, having lost the line voyage contract to a rival firm, that they were going to cruise full-time and I was with them for about eight-and-a-half years, cruising the Pacific and, of course, the Far East as well. They were a wonderful line to work with."

"I'm very, very grateful to what I refer to as 'The Management' for my life in music. I should explain that. Once, on a discussion programme on Channel 10, they were chatting away about things and the subject went on to religion, which is something I try to avoid, you know. I have my own deep feelings about things but I preferred not to get involved with this discussion.

"However, there was a mention on the programme of God being a *he*. Now, there was a young girl there and she went bonkers at this --- this was so long ago, I mean, even Germaine Greer hadn't really come to the fore yet. This little girl went right off --- how did we dare to say and accept that God was a *he*. She was beginning to get so upset and I said to her, I can only speak for myself, but I will tell you this, that from now, for the rest of my life, I will always very reverently refer pure and simply to 'The Management'. So every time now, as all my friends know, when I say I'm just having a word with 'The Management', they know who I'm reverently referring to." 