

No. 172
May 2004

Our New Patron

It gives me great pleasure to advise members that Her Excellency Marjorie Jackson Nelson AC, CVO, MBE has kindly accepted the invitation of the Council to be the Patron of the Historical Society of South Australia in her capacity as Governor of South Australia.



Her Excellency Marjorie Jackson Nelson, AC, CVO, MBE.

Marjorie Jackson (widely known in Australia as 'The Lithgow Flash') was a champion athlete, winning every State and Australian championship for the 100 and 200 yards between 1950 and 1954. At the 1950 Auckland Commonwealth Games she won four gold medals (100 yards, 220 yards and 220 relay), enjoying similar success in 1954 in Vancouver.

The 1952 Helsinki Games were memorable for Marjorie Jackson for several reasons. Firstly, she won gold in both the 100 metres and 200 metres, becoming the first Australian woman to win an Olympic Gold in Athletics, and joining Shirley Strickland as the first Australians to win the Athletics gold since Edwin Flack in 1896. Secondly, disappointment came her way with a dropped baton robbing Australia of a medal in the 4 x 100 metres.

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, on the way to Helsinki Marjorie Jackson met fellow Australian team member and cyclist Peter Nelson, who became her husband the following year.

Peter Nelson died in 1977 of leukemia and in his memory Marjorie Jackson Nelson established the Peter Nelson Leukemia Research Foundation. More than three million dollars has been raised by the Foundation for research into this disease.

Marjorie Jackson Nelson has served the nation and people of South Australia with distinction, culminating with her appointment as Governor of South Australia in 2001. One of her first engagements as Governor was to attend the launch of *SA's Greats, the men and women of the North Terrace plaques*. Her Excellency is now the only living

South Australian who was honoured with a plaque on North Terrace.

Her Excellency continues the tradition of great South Australians filling the role of Patron of the Historical Society of South Australia, following Sir Walter Crocker KBE, who died aged 100 in December 2002.

I am delighted to welcome Her Excellency as Patron of the Historical Society of South Australia.

David Cornish
President

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Society was held prior to the May meeting and was conducted by the Vice President, Dr Geoffrey Bishop, in the absence interstate of the President.

Members were directed to the President's Report contained in the 2003 Journal and were advised of the following recent occurrences in the life of the Society:

- The introduction of three mid week field trips in the city: Ayers House, the Botanic Gardens and the Medina

Grand Treasury Apartments.

- New look *HISTORY SA* with a focus on forthcoming activities of the Society, coverage of society meetings and field trips, articles of interest relating to South Australian history, and history and heritage happenings in the state.
- The purchase of a digital camera with which to record Society activities from the bequest made by Mr Ragless.
- Acceptance of the invitation to the Governor of South Australia to be the Society's Patron.

Dr Bishop acknowledged the State and Federal Governments for grant

funding they continue to provide the Society which enables us to continue providing the services to members and the community. He also advised that Society finances are healthy and our endowment fund is generating a significant return, and council is currently looking into ways in which a portion of this income can be expended to promote a greater understanding of South Australian history.

Dr Bishop thanked the council of the Society for their commitment, and all members for their ongoing support of the Historical Society of SA.

From the President

What a busy and exciting month April has been here at the Historical Society of South Australia! Our April meeting was followed by a Council meeting, then a field trip to Norton Summit, and now by the exciting news that the Governor of South Australia has agreed to be our Patron.

At our April lecture more than 120 members and guests were privileged to hear a presentation by the Director of the Australian War Memorial, Major General Steve Gower AO. In his hour long presentation, we learned of the early days of the War Memorial, its role as a place of remembrance and now as a major national tourist attraction, and of exciting recent developments including ANZAC Hall. Of special interest was Major General Gower's discussion of South Australians who have played key roles in the military history of this country, including Admiral Sir John Creswell, Air Vice Marshal Sir Richard Williams (father of the RAAF), official war artists Sir Ivor Hele and Nora Heysen, and others whose contributions are less well known, such as former Town Clerk of Adelaide, Brigadier W.C.D. Veale.

I reiterate my thanks to Steve Gower for travelling from Canberra to join us. I also acknowledge Wakefield Press for assisting in making available for presentation to our guest a copy of *The Wakefield Companion to South Australian History*.

One of the main points of discussion at the April meeting of the Council was the healthy financial condition of the Society. The Society's Endowment Fund, under the stewardship of Ron Gibbs, is generating a generous return and will be augmented by surplus funds in the next few months. Council will consider in the near future applications for the interest generated by the Endowment Fund.

Tabled at the Council meeting was a letter of thanks (reproduced on page 5 of this *HISTORY SA*) from our February speaker, Julie Reece, for the donation made to assist her to take a second group of students from Mt Barker High School to Gallipoli and the Western Front later this year. Julie and her students are very grateful for our support, and we look forward to hearing from them as a part of our 2005 program.

The Society's Vice President, Dr Geoffrey Bishop, led 43 members and guests in wonderful sunshine on a most enjoyable field trip to Norton Summit on Sunday 18 April. Participants enjoyed the opportunity to visit the recently restored Morialta Barns, the Norton Summit cemetery (including the grave of former Premier Sir Thomas Playford), and the delightful St John's Anglican Church. Our last stop was the ruin of the former vice-regal summer residence at Marble Hill. Dr Bishop is to be congratulated for his knowledge of the Norton Summit district, and thanked for putting together such a successful day out.

A number of members of our society are active in community radio station 5 MBS. At their suggestion the HSSA has joined 5MBS, which will enable our activities to be promoted through the station's Arts Diary segment. I am confident this initiative will provide successful coverage of our Society.

Would all members please check their address labels to be sure they're financial with the Society? Programs were sent out with the January newsletter so that people could renew their membership on the form on the back of the program. No more copies of 2004 newsletters will be sent to unfinancial members. Memberships can be renewed on credit card by ringing the Treasurer on 8277 2953, or you can find a form on the website www.hssa.org.au

David Cornish
President



Members enjoy the opportunity to share experiences with and ask questions of the Director of the Australian War Memorial, Major General Steve Gower AO, following his presentation to the Society's April meeting.

Denise Schumann *The Dream and the Reality* – *An insight into the life of Captain Charles Sturt* *1795-1869 and the art of exploration*

7.30pm Friday
4 June 2004

Prince Philip Theatre,
Prince Alfred College,
Kent Town

Captain Charles Sturt is well remembered for his achievements as one of the colony's most famous explorers. However, his contribution to the colony extended beyond inland exploration and he remains a formidable and influential figure on the landscape of Australian history. In the latter part of the 18th century, the British Empire saw the Australian continent as a vast and silent place - an unclaimed void waiting patiently for the benefits and opportunities that European discovery and settlement would bestow.

Exploration was integral to colonisation. Important politically, exploration was primarily concerned with surveying, mapping, and ultimately claiming the land and its resources for the British Empire. Along with the men of ambition, there were the dreamers who saw exploration as a metaphysical quest. Motivated by dreams and obsessions that emanated from a more genteel society and a gentler landscape, Charles Sturt's tenacious search for the non-existent inland sea has become the stuff of national legend.

In 1829, Charles Sturt embarked on what was to become an epic journey in

the annals of exploration. In tracing the course of the Darling and Murrumbidgee Rivers he discovered a new river, which he named the Murray after Sir George Murray, then Secretary of State for Colonies. He then followed the Murray River to the Southern Ocean, traversing nearly 3600 kilometres of unmapped terrain.

Aged 49 years, Charles Sturt was driven by a desperate need to secure his family's financial future. He was also driven by a desire to be the first white man to reach the heart of the Australian continent. In 1844, he set out from his home, The Grange, on what was to be an extraordinary journey in search of an inland sea. After enduring extreme physical hardships and severe drought conditions, Charles Sturt and his party came to within 150 miles of the geographical centre of Australia. After fifteen months, Sturt and his companions were forced to retreat to Adelaide, crushed by the climate, the country and a broken spirit.

The story of Charles Sturt is that of an extraordinary idealist for whom luck and rewards were comparatively scant. However, Sturt accepted his fate with the

same stoicism with which he confronted the most arid regions of the Australian continent and pushed out the boundaries of human endurance – "...*there is a destiny for all of us, and unconsciously we are the instrument in our own hands of its fulfillment.*" Charles Sturt 1844.

Denise is a cultural heritage consultant with Schumann & Associates; her work covers designing, developing and managing creative heritage and community arts projects. She has had over twenty years experience as an historical consultant, cultural planner and practitioner using history as a tool for her innovative and radical approach to community cultural development. She is recognised within South Australia and interstate by her peers for her professional expertise and has established a reputation as a heritage adviser committed to high standards and realistic and responsive project management strategies. Denise has worked on numerous projects for Federal, State and Local Government bodies as well as for corporate and private clients.

Patricia Sumerling *Off to the Park Lands – A social history of Adelaide’s Park Lands*

**7.30pm Friday
2 July 2004**

**Prince Philip Theatre,
Prince Alfred College,
Kent Town**

Much has been written about the alienation of the Adelaide Park Lands, the various legislation controlling them and their environmental aspects, while not a lot has been written about what events actually took place on them. Established by Colonel Light as part of the plan for Adelaide, the Park Lands are unique in Australia and became a blueprint for many government surveyed towns around South Australia, each with their own Park Lands. Our city Park Lands were set aside for the citizens of South Australia to become ‘the people’s park’, but they have had a chequered career. While they began as 931 hectares (2300 acres), around 243 hectares (600 acres) have since been

set aside or ‘filched’ for new roads, railway lines, institutional use, water works, observatories, postal purposes, universities, libraries and art galleries.

The Park Lands are referred to in many sporting histories as so many clubs and sports began on them. Apart from sporting activities, there were many weird and wonderful activities, some of which you may not know about. Patricia’s talk is about how the Park Lands were used for sport, recreation, quarrying, grazing, barbeques or even courting.

She will talk about the ‘death holes’; the air raid shelters built during the war; the ‘Siberia’ of the Park Lands; the club

houses called ‘lighthouses’; the corroborees; circuses, the saga of the Push Button Birds; those that lived on the Park Lands, both legally and illegally; and the difficulty of getting married on them once it was legal to marry away from a church or Registry Office after 1963.

Remember the ‘Cows Only signs? It took until 1880 for seventy miles of fencing to be erected to create enough grazing paddocks, the plantations and places to play sport. However, following the establishment of formal parks, it took until 1972 to open them up again and get rid of the cows and horses. How did Town Clerk Veale resolve the problem of Elder Park becoming overcrowded at weekends by new Australians? And what happens when you attempt to design a Japanese garden within an existing park? Patricia’s illustrated history will answer some of these questions.

Patricia has been a Professional Historian for twenty years with a continuing interest in the history of the city. Her talk is taken from a social history of the Adelaide Park Lands that was sponsored by the City Corporation last year. A shortened illustrated history is planned for publication in the future.

Cartoon used with permission from The Advertiser and Michael Atchison. It appeared on 27 July 1972.



"Look at all that lovely land going to waste I mean, it's not natural!"

Field Trips

June and July 2004

9th June – Adelaide Botanic Gardens – 10:15am. Meet at the restaurant for a tour of the Gardens. Cost \$4.00

27th June – Tour of St Mark's College with John Bannon – 2:15pm. Cost \$10 includes afternoon tea.

11th July – Tour of the Museum and Chapel of the Repatriation General Hospital at Daw Park – 1:15pm and 2:45pm. Meet at the front gate. Cost \$5.00, including afternoon tea.

Contact Mrs Avis Huckel 8277 2953 for bookings for Field Trips

New Members

Prof. Chilla Bulbeck
Mr John Calvert
Mr & Mrs Keith Crawford
Ms Sylvia Fanning
Mrs Jolyon Gemmel
Ms Katherine Thornton

Historical Society Profile

Angaston and Penrice Historical Society

The Angaston area is rich in heritage and in recognition of this, the Angaston and Penrice Historical Society was established in 1997. Seven years later, the Society has a membership of 35 interested local people under the guidance of its Chairman Bill Gransbury.

The Society aims to encourage the preservation of local records, historic sites and relics, and encourages interest in the local area through

meetings, excursions, exhibitions and publications. The group meets at 7.30pm on the fourth Tuesday of each month at the Old Union Chapel, Angaston. Enquiries can be directed to PO Box 337, Angaston SA 5353. On Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays, visitors are invited to call at the working Doddridge's Blacksmith Shop in Angaston, which is operated by a sub-committee of the Angaston and Penrice Historical Society.

Notes

Remembrance 2001

A letter received from Julie Reece dated 15th March 2004

"On behalf of the 'Remembrance 2004' team I would like to thank the South Australia Historical Society for the very generous donation of \$1,000 in support of our commemorative work at Mount Barker High School. As with all groups who are involved in fundraising, the difficulties are enormous in achieving the financial goals set by projects such as R2004. Consequently it is such a thrill to receive such significant support from groups such as yours and it is greatly appreciated by all of us involved.

I would also like to pass on my personal thanks to all who attended my talk and who so generously purchased my book. We took over \$500 worth of sales on that very hot night, easily our best presentation thus far. Our book is now fully paid for with all of the original \$22,000 loan I received from the school council for its publishing being completed in just over 18 months. Any money now made from book sales will go direct to Remembrance 2004 in assisting the group's costs and thus continue the commemorative work of the school."

Julie will return for one of our meetings in 2005 to tell us all about this year's trip.

HISTORY SA Editor

It is with regret that Council accepted the resignation of Alison Houghton as a Councilor and Editor of *HISTORY SA*. Alison has been instrumental in the recent changes to this publication and I thank her for her contribution. Council is now seeking a

new Editor for *HISTORY SA*. If you have an interest in South Australian history, a flair for words and an understanding of basic layout software, and would be interested in taking on this position, I would appreciate hearing from you.

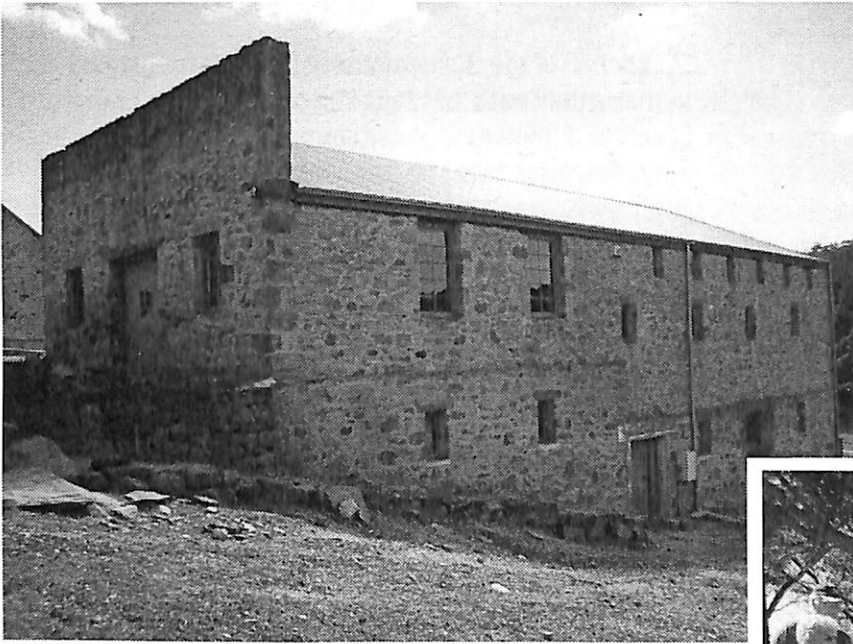
David Cornish, President
Telephone (08)83341200(w)
or dcornish@pac.edu.au

The University of Adelaide Reunions

Did you or someone you know, graduate from the University of Adelaide in 1954, 1974 or 1984? If you have not yet received an invitation to your reunion, please contact Ms Kim McBride at the Alumni, Community Relations and Development office on 8303 3196 or email: kim.mcbride@adelaide.edu.au

HSSA Activities

The Historical Society's April 2004 Field Trip was to Norton Summit and Environs Sunday April 18, 2004 and was ably led by Geoffrey Bishop, our Vice-President.



First stop on the Norton Summit field trip was a visit to the recently restored Morialta Barns. It is hoped ownership and use issues can be resolved to enable a viable future for this wonderful collection of stone buildings.

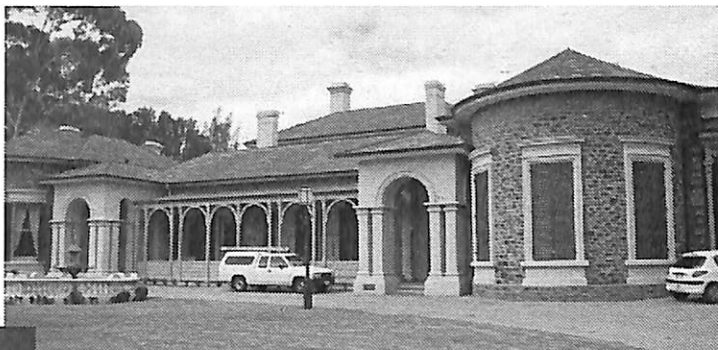


Field trip participants pay their respects at the grave of South Australia's longest serving Premier, Sir Thomas Playford, at the Norton Summit Cemetery. Sir Thomas's stone bears the inscription 'Premier of this State for 26 years' and 'A good man who did good things'.



The ruins of the vice-regal summer residence at Marble Hill were the last stop on the Norton Summit day trip. In a quiet corner can be found headstones for three dogs, each stone stating the name, breed and dates of the dog's life, and the phrase 'came to South Australia with Lady Muriel Barclay Harvey'. Lady Muriel's husband, Sir Malcolm, was Governor of South Australia from 1939 - 1944.

Historic Ayers House on North Terrace was the venue of the first HSSA mid week tour. The Botanic Garden and the Medina Grand Treasury will be visited later this year as the second and third mid-week outings.



*Left, Ayers House
Volunteer, Nina Chicco
explains the intricacies
of Victorian bathing*

*Right, Kitchen area. A Victorian kitchen has
been successfully recreated in the basement
of Ayers House. The original gas fittings,
remaining from the time when this area
stored food and wine, are still in place.*



*Images of Sir Henry and Lady Ayers are displayed side by
side in a room dedicated to the life and times of Henry Ayers.
Sir Henry was seven times Premier of South Australia, a
great entrepreneur and businessman. His wealth was largely
derived through his involvement in the Burra Mines.*

Bound For South Australia

HSSA President David Cornish describes his friendship with a former Australian Diplomat, and the unique gifts his friend has made to two South Australian institutions.

A chance meeting in a Canberra shopping centre in early 1993 resulted in a friendship with two very special people, Tom Holland¹ (b.1921) and his wife June (b.1926), who were on holidays in Australia from England.



Tom and June Holland, Adelaide 2001 (David Cornish)

Tom and June both came from South Australia before Tom's career as an Australian diplomat took them to eleven countries and retirement in London, before returning to Canberra to be closer to family. Tom came from an Adelaide family and June from the Murray mallee farming community of Halidon. Despite not having lived in South Australia for more than half a century, both Tom and June retain their affection for their birthplace and visit regularly.

From his childhood, school and university days, service as an RAAF pilot during World War II, his career as a diplomat, and as a family man, Tom Holland amassed a personal archives of

amazing proportion. Importantly, Tom appreciated the value of what his archives contained and started to consider where items should ultimately be deposited.

In recent times Tom has seen fit to donate items from his collection to the State Library of South Australia, the Prince Alfred College archives, the City of Unley Museum and the Australian War Memorial. It has been my pleasure to play a small part in carrying out his wishes.

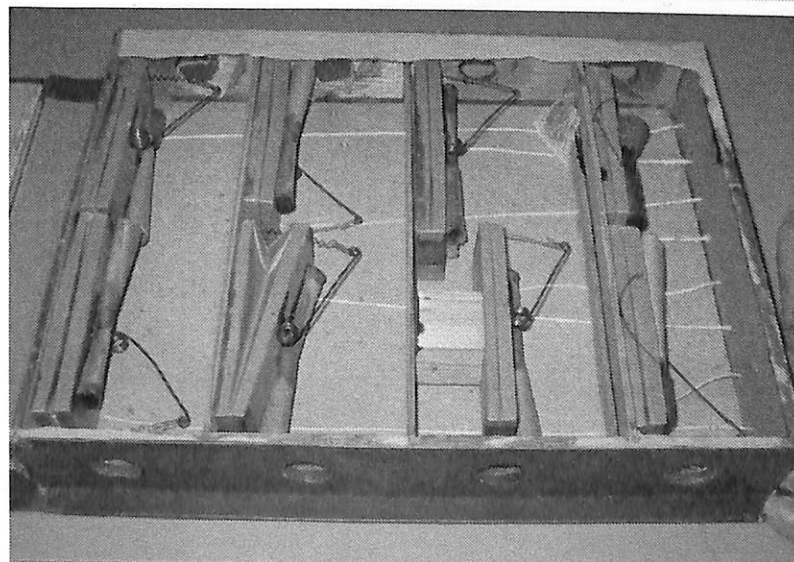
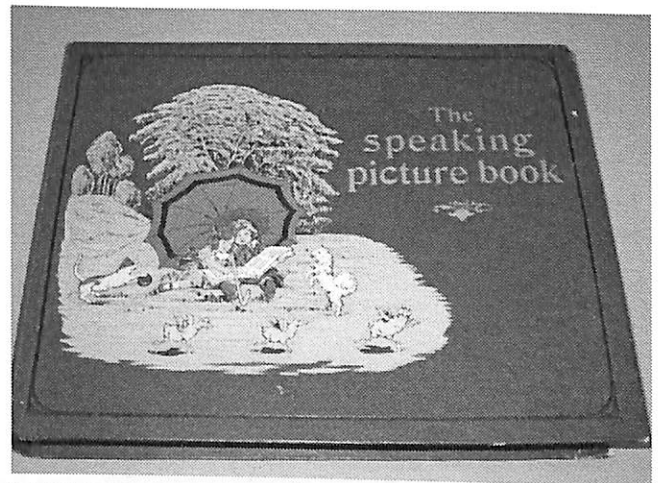
A 1920s Childhood

The Children's Literature Research Collection at the State Library is now the home to several wonderful examples of children's literature and games from the childhood of Tom Holland. Some of these items found their way to the State Library in my luggage following one of my fairly regular trips to Canberra; others have been received by Valerie Sitters² of the State Library.

Among the gems in his collection is a Speaking Picture

Book circa 1924. This delightful book consists of stories and poems about various animals and contains a series of 'voice boxes' which mimic the sounds of animals such as a cat, cockerel and lamb. The voice boxes are housed at the rear of the book and comprise a series of 'bellows' which, when a string is pulled, make the appropriate animal noise. Eighty years on the sounds are recognisable, and no doubt brought great excitement to the young Tom and other children over the years

Among the board games donated, and of particular interest to South Australia, is the 'Sir Ross Smith Aeroplane Race Game'. The triumphant arrival of the Smith brothers at Northfield following their epic flight from England

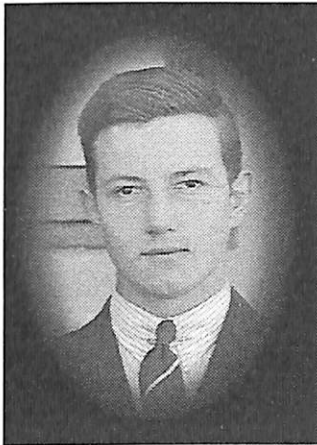


The Speaking Picture Book cover, above, and left, view of the mechanisms which make the various animal noises. The mechanism second left in the front row is in the noise making position. (David Cornish)

to Australia in 1919, and the accidental death of Sir Ross in 1922, would have still been fresh in the memories of South Australians in the 1920s.

An important figure in the childhood of Tom Holland was his grandfather, Thomas Corin Holland, who was an Adelaide solicitor and Mayor of Unley from 1894-1896. The Unley Museum³ now has in its collection photographs of Tom's grandfather in mayoral robes, and also his gold watch.

A 1930s School Boy



Tom Holland as a school Prefect, 1938 (PAC archives)

Tom Holland attended Prince Alfred College from 1930-1938 and was a Prefect in his final year. The Prince Alfred College archives (established and curated by HSSA member Brian Baldwin⁴ from 1987 until his recent

retirement) has received many items from Tom Holland's collection, including his Prefect's boater band, photographs, souvenirs, event programs, prizes and autobiographical notes.

It is unusual for items such as texts and examination papers to have survived from this period. Included in Tom Holland's donation are a collection of texts for Latin and Greek (he was the last Princes' student to learn Greek), Hope Crampton's *Gaudissart: a guide to better French* (MUP 1935), and a series of school term examination and answer papers.

Of particular interest are the ten examples of weekly reports, term reports, certificates for answering well in examinations, and rare examples of correspondence lessons sent to students during a poliomyelitis epidemic in 1938, when schools were closed to reduce the possibility of children being infected. The signed dance card for the 1938 *Rouge* gives an indication that the young Holland was not short of partners at the annual school dance!

An indication of the regard in which Tom was held during his school days was the awarding in 1938 of the Frank L. Hunter Prize for the student who had the best influence on the school. This was the first time the recipient was determined by the students, rather

than the Headmaster, confirming his position as a leader amongst his peers. The handsome leather bound prize presented to Tom remains a cherished item in his collection, and sits on a shelf of prizes awarded to him during his time at the school.

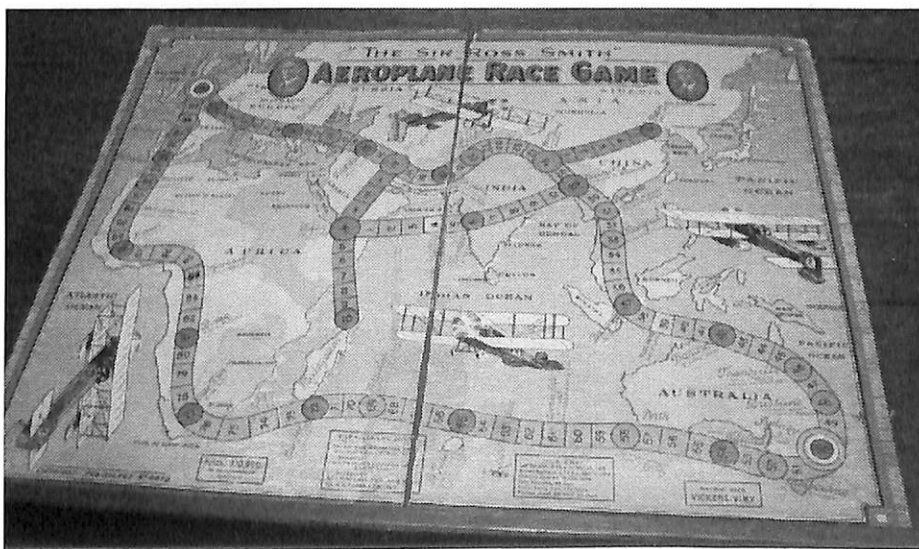
The papers donated to the Prince Alfred College archives provide a unique and fascinating snapshot of one student's education at Princes in the 1930s.

War Service

Tom joined the RAAF and left Australia for pilot training in Africa on the Cunard liner *Queen Elizabeth* (the largest vessel afloat at the time), which sailed in the company of her sister ship the *Queen Mary* to Egypt. Here he transferred to another Cunard vessel the *Mauretania* for the voyage to Durban. From this period of his life Tom has donated to the State Library of South Australia examples of wartime flying maps, publications such as *Rafter* (printed in Rhodesia) and *Tee Emm* (a training memorandum for air crews), text books, notebooks, and notes relating to training and operations.

Tom Holland has also lodged with the State Library nearly 2000 pages of letters written during this period to his family. The letters describe his training at Somers training camp (Victoria), his voyage to Africa on the *Queen Elizabeth*, further training in Rhodesia, and his journey from Southern Rhodesia to England.

Notes on operational flying from Gibraltar, Morocco and the Azores are also included. A description of Tom piloting a Hudson bomber in the Mediterranean and sinking the German U Boat U447 on its maiden voyage can be found in *Australia in the War of 1939-1945, Air War Against Germany and Italy 1939-1945* (AWM 1954), which is still widely available. Tom's wartime flying also included missions in the Atlantic, for which he was awarded the Atlantic Star.



The Sir Ross Smith Aeroplane Board Game is an action packed game simulating a race from England to Australia. Naturally, the countries traversed which were a part of the British Empire are coloured pink! (David Cornish)

Two unusual items from this period were presented to Prince Alfred College: the remains of the propeller from a Tiger Moth aircraft crashed in Rhodesia by an instructor and in which Tom was flying, and the altimeter from the Hudson bomber Tom was forced to land in the Moroccan desert, leaving him stranded for several days. These items were eventually transported from Canberra to Adelaide in my checked luggage!

The Kingston Map

During a visit to Adelaide Tom presented me with a package and said 'This is an old map which belonged to my grandfather who was a solicitor'.⁵ You are the President of the Historical Society of South Australia. Could you please advise me where I could donate it?' On inspection the map proved to be a map of Adelaide by George Strickland Kingston, prepared by J.C. Hailes of London in 1842, and dedicated to 'Her Most Gracious Majesty Adelaide, the Queen Dowager'.

The map, which is hand coloured and mounted on linen, has the title: 'Adelaide, South Australia, showing the nature and extent of every building in the city, as surveyed and laid down by G.S. Kingston Esq; and by special permission dedicated by Her Majesty's very obedient servants G.S. Kingston and Edward Stephens, the proprietors, through their agents, Edmund J. Wheeler and Co., London.'

The detail on the map is exquisite. Every plot has reference to its owner or the nature of the premises, descriptions of building materials used, and minute circles highlighting wells in North Adelaide. Land mark buildings designed by Kingston are depicted in detail, including the east wing of Government House, the original Treasury building on Victoria Square, Holy Trinity Church and the Adelaide Gaol.

Only partly realising the value of the item in my care, I contacted Valerie Sitters and made a time to take the map in for inspection. Sharing the map with Valerie was a wonderful ex-

perience and, as she commented, she didn't expect to see another Kingston Map in such good condition and with its original slipcase. At this time we discussed options for its preservation and possible place of deposit.

I relayed to Tom Holland the value of the map and the wonder with which it had been received at the State Library, adding that they would be happy to receive the map and to undertake minor conservation work on both the map and case. Tom requested that I facilitate with the State Library the donation of the map, with the honour of officially presenting the map to the Director on Tom's behalf, falling to me.

A couple of years later in an interview in *The Advertiser* with the then Director of the State Library, Bronwyn Halliday, the following paragraphs caught my eye: "Recently someone rang and said they knew a man with an old map," she says. "It turned out to be the full size 1842 Kingston map of Adelaide, in perfect condition. We have one in very poor shape. We are not aware of any other full size ones." The map was drawn by George Kingston, SA's pioneer architect and surveyor.

"We were so thrilled", Ms Halliday said.

Few people know the story behind those paragraphs and as the 'someone who rang', I was delighted that my behind the scenes work had resulted in such a treasure coming home to South Australia.

In Appreciation

Tom's contributions to the State Library and Prince Alfred College archives have been worthwhile and generous, ensuring valuable items have been deposited where they can be accessed, enjoyed, and most importantly, conserved.

I consider it a privilege to have been able to assist Tom Holland to have the satisfaction to know that items he has lovingly cared for over his lifetime are being looked after and appreciated.

¹ I am grateful to Tom Holland, who kindly agreed to be the subject of this article.

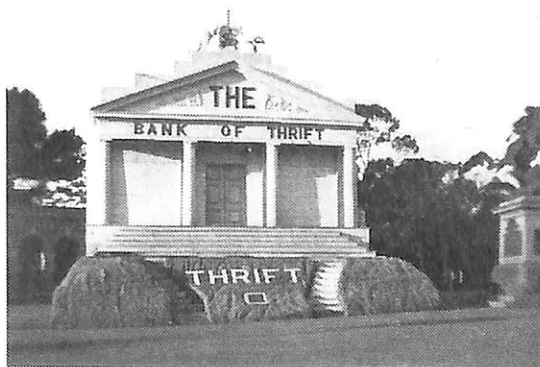
² I thank Valerie Sitters for her assistance with this article. Valerie will present *A Land Upside Down: 19th century Australian children's literature* at the September meeting of the HSSA.

³ Kate Walker kindly assisted with details of Mayor Holland's years of office.

⁴ I also acknowledge the assistance of Brian Baldwin, who quietly endures my forays into his archives!

⁵ Thomas Corin Holland, a solicitor and Mayor of Unley 1894-1896.

Query Forum



The statue on the right seems to be the famous leaping horse on the corner of King William Street and North Terrace, and the arches in the background seem to be those which originally formed the entrance to

Government House, but what is "The Bank of Thrift"? Is it simply some kind of advertising, for I'm sure there was never a bank in this position? And why was it erected, if indeed it was simply advertising? For some sort of anniversary, perhaps, or for a festival of some kind? Does anybody have any ideas?

Please forward responses to Alan Fulwood c/- PO Box 519 Kent Town 5071

Book Review

This Grave and Burning Question: A Centenary History of Cremation in Australia

Author: Robert Nicol, immediate Past President of HSSA and former State Historian of SA

Publisher: Adelaide Cemeteries Authority

Available from monthly meetings of HSSA for \$35.00 (RRP \$45.00)

Review by Alan Fulwood

This book is not for the faint hearted. It contains multiple references to such pestilences as typhoid, leprosy, small-pox, plague and scarlet fever, to name but a few. This is accompanied by grisly descriptions of the conditions under which our ancestors, in all the states of Australia, lived, died, and were buried often in "fever fields awash with noxious gases", or, in some cases "carried away by alligators" [sic]. However, for those interested in, or fascinated by, these matters the author has presented, in an orderly fashion, a masterly collection of facts and figures. Nicol has detailed how the bodies of those afflicted by these unspeakable aberrations, and those who were not, were disposed of; from the first days of settlement to the present time. In particular he has chronicled the emerging interest in cremation, state by state, with comparisons to other parts of the world. We are led through the first crude open-air burning of the body of deceased Chinese leper Foo Choo at Victoria's Point Nepean Quarantine Station to the hygienic cremations of today and the search for the ideal crematorium.

Surprisingly perhaps, we learn that the pioneer cremationists were, more often than not, highly literate, well-educated men (and some women) and part of the colonial intelligentsia, all dedicated to the art of cremation,

and opposed to earth burial. Astounding to note is the number of public meetings, lectures and discussions on the subject, which the public not only attended, but also did so in droves. Our author makes much of the large amounts written in the popular newspapers at the time concerning this controversial subject. Even the "Dawn" had a voice on the subject; Australia's first feminist publication, founded in 1888 and edited by women's rights campaigner, Louisa Lawson. Opinions from all the mainstream churches – The Unitarian, Anglican, Presbyterian, Baptist, Catholic and Independent congregations are well documented in this publication.

The construction of purpose built, attractive crematoria did not seriously begin until the 1930s, using the latest equipment. This seems certain to have prolonged the life of our forests for when the widow Elizabeth Inger Henniker was burned on 19th March 1895, three tons of firewood and a keg of kerosene were used to assist her departure.

Nicol has added a light touch to an otherwise sombre subject by including some delightful cartoons. Sir Henry Thompson 1820-1904, being particularly poignant and photographs of South Australia's own Robert Barr Smith and Joanna Barr Smith (who gave £1,000 to the Cremation Society of Adelaide). Lastly, Sir John Dawner who was actively involved in finding a suitable Adelaide site for Australia's first modern crematorium.

The burning question, of course, does not concern the content of the 332-page book or the quality of the presentation, which is first class, but who will buy it and who will read it?

Deadline for newsletter articles and entries June 4, 2004.

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Coming Events

Brighton Historical Society

Holdfast Bay Council Chambers – Jetty Rd, Brighton 7.30pm

3 June 04 – Judy Jeffery – Unusual Finds at State Records

1 July 04 – Lesley Abell – The Changing Role of South Australian Piers & Jetties

Burnside Historical Society

Community Centre – Corner Portrush & Greenhill Rds 8pm

21 June 04 – Elizabeth Olsson & Richard Trevaskis – A Source of Innocent Merriment: Some history of Gilbert & Sullivan and performances in South Australia

Campbelltown Historical Society

2 Newton Rd, Newton – 8pm

8 June 04 – Bernie Matson – Overland Telegraph and its historical association

13 July 04 – Edith Jarman – Royal Flying Doctor Service

Enfield & Districts Historical Society

Enfield Community Centre – 540 Regency Rd, Enfield – 7.45pm

23 May 04 – Museum Day – Sunnybrae farm – 10am

7 June 04 – Tours of Museum Sunnybrae farm – 10am-noon

23 June 04 – Margaret Zweck – History of Buttons

Friends of the South Australian Museum Inc.

Contact 8207 7389 for details

28 May 04 – Ancient Flint Boxes and Firearms

9 June 04 – Cath Kemper, Curator of Mammals – The Whales of South Australian Waters

John McDouall Stuart Society Inc.

4 June 04 – Stuart's Statue in Victoria Square – Plaque unveiling, commemorating William Feinke, James & John Chambers

Migration Museum

2 June to 27 August 2004 - Gallery 2 & Community Access Gallery

The Contribution of Migrants to the Church of Adelaide

Port Adelaide Historical Society Inc

Semaphore Library – Semaphore Rd, Semaphore – 8pm

19 May 04 – Tony Harris – Royal Flying Doctor

16 June 04 – Errol Chinner – Philately & AGM

Royal Geographical Society Inc

Prince Philip Theatre, Prince Alfred College – Dequetteville Tce, Kent Town

27 May 04 – 5.30pm – Mark Headland – Capturing the power of the wind – wind energy

24 June 04 – 7.30pm – Student Representatives from each University – An Evening of Ideas

Salisbury & Districts Historical Society

Contact Society for details – 8250 5077

23 May 04 – Walk around Salisbury

South Australian Genealogical & Heraldry Society Inc.

Society Library – 201 Unley Rd, Unley – 7.45pm

19 May 04 – Nick Vine Hall – My ancestor came by ship. How do I find out which one?

28 July 04 – Graham Jaunay – Researching the maternal line

South Australian Maritime Museum

Lipson Street, Port Adelaide

April to September 2004 – Urban

Dolphins, The Port River Pod.

Experience how dolphins investigate and live in the Port River world.

Tea Tree Gully & Districts Historical Society Inc.

20 May 04 – Ian Stratford – Mediaeval Life & Times and in particular

Archery, Meeting at Old Highcombe Hotel Folk Museum at 7pm

16 June 04 – Lennox Pawson – Scottish influence in South Australia, Meeting at City of Tea Tree Gully Library Learning Centre at 10am

Victoriana Society of South Australia

Partridge House – 38 Partridge Street, Glenelg – 8pm

14 June 04 – 7.30pm – Celebrate

Queen Victoria's 184th Birthday with supper and dancing

Walkerville Historical Society Inc.

Walkerville Town Hall – 7.30pm

19 May 04 – Lannah Sawers – Gilberton Swimming Pool

16 June 04 – Peter Morgan – The Morgan and Waite Families

West Torrens Historical Society

Kandahar House – 327 Marion Rd, Nth Plympton 7.45pm

24 May 04 – Craig Hill – Olives in West Torrens

28 June 04 – Presentations – The Story of Netley

A Public Meeting presented by

Payneham Action Group RESIDENTS ARE REVOLTING

How can local communities prevent unsuitable development and demolition of heritage sites?

5 June 04 – 7.30pm

Payneham Community Centre – 374 Payneham Rd, Payneham –

Ph: 8365 4038

State Library Public Programs

www.slsa.sa.gov.au or Danielle

Disibio, Events Officer for more details – 8207 7213

Every Thursday in May, June & July – Introductory tour of the Family History Area

24-28 May 04 – History Week Tours

31 May 04 – Meet the Specialist – Family History

1 June & 6 July – Introduction to Family Search Website

1 June 04 – Caring for your family treasures

First Wednesday of every month – White Gloves Tour

8 June 04 – Identifying and dating 19th century photographs

Second Wednesday of every month – White Coats Tour

18 May, 15 June, & 20 July – Useful Websites

13 July 04 – Finding families in newspapers

29 July 04 – South Australian resources in the Family History Collection