

No. 193

January 2008

# HISTORY SA

The Newsletter of the Historical Society of South Australia Inc.

## An Exciting Year Ahead The Program 2008

Our next program encompasses many facets of our history. Gardens and nature, people and war, buildings and the arts are all covered.

Pauline Payne will start the year with the interesting story of Dr Mauritz Richard Schomburgk growing the Victoria Water Lily. The garden theme will be followed up in June with Pam Tamblyn's account of significant trees in Adelaide; how and why they are so important and the reasons for their preservation. More gardens will be described for us when Angela Heuzenroeder introduces us to gardens of the Barossa. This presentation will be followed by a Sunday visit to some of these gardens, led by Angela.

In May Pat Sumerling will introduce us to the colourful Bert Edwards of Adelaide's west end, city councillor, Member of Parliament, prisoner, philanthropist, and hotel manager. Later in the year Richard Venus will entertain us with the visit in 1898 of the French lady cyclist, influential in the manufacture of automobiles in Adelaide. Peter Adamson in his October lecture will speak of radio and Lindsay Hardy's "Dossier on Demetrius" familiar to many.

To coincide with the spirit of Anzac in April Emeritus Professor Wilson will speak of military matters.

Buildings to be visited on Wednesday mornings include the Catholic Bishop's house, and Bert Stock will take us to the Friends' Meeting House in Pennington Terrace. Of prefabricated Manning design, the building arrived as a gift from British Friends in February 1840. It is the oldest place of worship in Adelaide to retain its original form. We will learn more about buildings when we visit the University of South Australia's Architectural Museum.

Colin Deed has been in contact with members of the Milang Historical Society and organised for us to spend a day exploring Milang as their guests in April. He is also organising a visit to the Austbuilt Museum in Port Adelaide.

This history and more will be available to members in 2008. For further details consult the enclosed program, and don't forget to put it on the fridge for easy reference.

### The Historical Society of South Australia Inc.



Milang will be explored with a trip in April. Photograph of Milang pier c1900, taken by Martin Pulford, (Ron Blum Collection)

### 2008 Program & Membership Form



Pat Sumerling will entertain us at the May meeting with the colourful life of Bert Edwards, the 'King' of the West End. (Caricature from The Bulletin 28 August 1928, photo A768 Adelaide City Archives)

**Membership  
renewal now due.  
See enclosed  
Membership Form.**

## From the President

In an earlier edition of *History SA* I issued the challenge to have one hundred members and guests present at each of our 2007 Discovering SA's History lectures. At the November meeting I was delighted to announce that we had achieved an average attendance of 100.3. This is a wonderful achievement in these times when many groups are experiencing small numbers. On behalf of Council, thank you for so strongly supporting the Society.

The success of our Friday night meetings can be attributed to a number of factors. Firstly, our new venue at Burnside is comfortable, accessible and suits our needs, and will be our venue again in 2008. Secondly, Council's hard work in programming an interesting and varied program is appreciated by members. Thirdly, our meetings are gaining a reputation for being an enjoyable and friendly way to spend the first Friday of the month. Finally, Council has encouraged where ever possible groups who may be interested in the guest speaker to join us.

I look forward to similar support (or even better!) in 2008.

The Society's Council has once again spent an enormous amount of time in recent months putting together the 2008 program. The lecture series involves a range of experts in their fields and our tours schedule will visit places of historic interest. Seymour College will be the venue for the 2008 Christmas party, and will afford the opportunity to visit historic Oodnadatta Cottage. Your copy of the 2008 program is enclosed, and I urge you to mark our dates in your diary now!

At the November meeting Malcolm Elliot entertained his audience with the history of the Adelaide Repertory Theatre, laced with stories of his participation in the company over many years. Malcolm's presentation revived many memories of people, places and productions, and was enthusiastically received and a great finale to the 2007 year.

Saint Peters Girls' School kindly hosted more than eighty members of the Society at the annual Christmas party, the fourth since Council decided to have an end of year function. Guests at the party had the opportunity to visit the

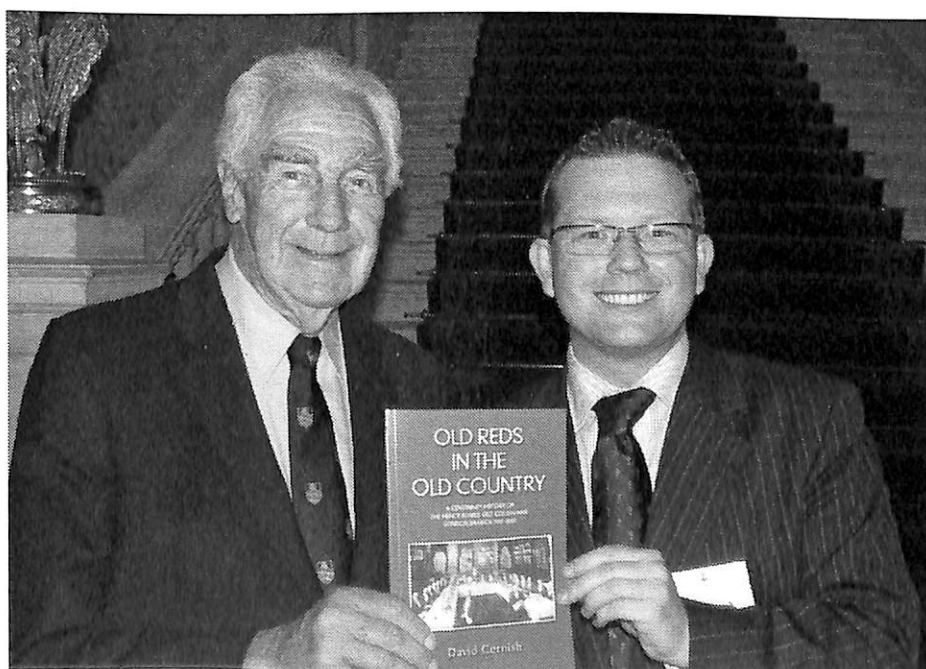
1880's Chiverton, inspect the very professional school museum, and to enjoy the lovely grounds. Kay Fyfe and her team made the HSSA group very welcome and I thank them for their hospitality.

In October I had the privilege of travelling to London for the special dinner held to mark the centenary of the first Prince Alfred Old Collegians Dinner in that city. The centenary dinner, held at the Oxford and Cambridge Club in Pall Mall, was attended by 103 Old Reds and special guests, including the Australian High Commissioner. It was an unforgettable night and for me the highlight was the launching of my book *Old Reds in the Old Country, a centenary history of the PAOCA London Branch 1907-2007*. My year twelve history teacher David Mattingley did me the honour of launching my work.

I spent nearly a week in London and enjoyed everything that great city has to offer, including an unexpected ticket to *Die Walkure* by Wagner at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden! I also travelled to the charming city of Edinburgh and onto the Highlands, travelling by steam train from Fort William to Mallaig, and returning to Edinburgh via Skye, Inverness and Aberdeen. It was a very busy fortnight, but I enjoyed myself immensely.

Thank you once again for your support of the Historical Society of South Australia in 2007, and I look forward to welcoming you to 2008 Society events.

**David Cornish**  
President



David Mattingley congratulates David Cornish on his history of the PAOCA London Branch at the London Centenary Dinner, 6 October 2007.

# Visiting SA's History

April 2008

Sunday – April 13,  
Milang and Environs

We will travel in an air-conditioned bus to Milang where, as guests of the Milang Historical Society, we will visit the Milang Museum and the Railway Museum.

Morning tea and lunch will be included in the tour, and we may conclude with some wine tasting!

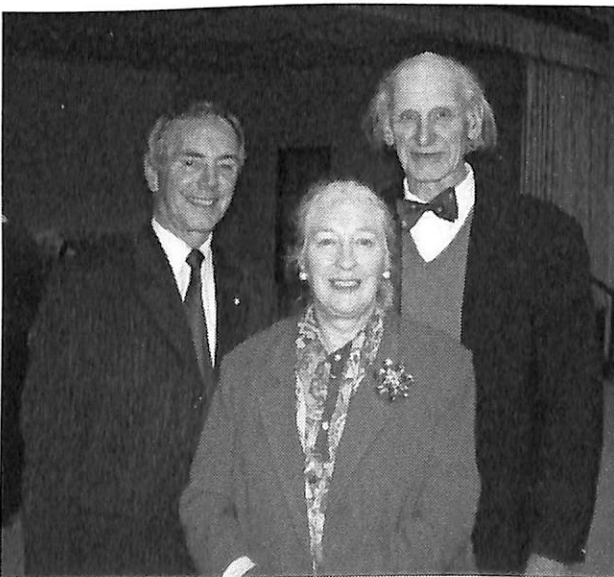
The bus will depart from the Burnside Town Hall car park at 9.30 am. For bookings contact Avis at the next meeting or phone 8277 2953.



Photograph of Milang pier c1900, taken by Martin Pulford (Ron Blum Collection)

## Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia 2008

The Journal is one of the three main arms of the work of the Historical Society, with meetings and outings. All members should consider how they can promote its success. Do you know a possible author? Or an interesting subject? Or a collection of documents or images that should be investigated? Or a book to review? On South Australian history of course. We need to work together to maintain the success of our *Journal*. All suggestions are very welcome. Contact the Editor, Brian Dickey, ph. 8278 5386, e-mail [brian.dickey@flinders.edu.au](mailto:brian.dickey@flinders.edu.au)



Adelaide Repertory Theatre stalwarts Janice and Bill Menz (right) thank Malcolm Elliott for his presentation at the November meeting.

## HSSA Subscriptions Due

Membership subscriptions for 2008 are now due.

Please complete the Membership Form on your 2008 Program, then tear off and forward to

**The Treasurer,  
Historical Society of South Australia,  
PO Box 519,  
Kent Town SA, 5071.**

Payment may be cheque, or by Money Order (payable to the Historical Society of South Australia), or by Visa/Mastercard, or by paying in cash at the Friday evening Discovering SA's History.

If paying by credit card please note there is a surcharge of \$3.00 for bank fees. Receipts are sent only if accompanied by a stamped self-addressed envelope.

MEMBERSHIP FORM 2008	
<small>Forward this form with your cheques, money order or credit card details to The Treasurer, Historical Society of South Australia, Inc. PO Box 519, Kent Town, South Australia, 5071. Please tick boxes and enter required information.</small>	
Renewal Member <input type="checkbox"/>	New Member <input type="checkbox"/>
Ordinary Member <input type="checkbox"/>	\$35.00
Overseas Ordinary Member <input type="checkbox"/>	\$45.00
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Please charge my VISA/Mastercard	
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Card Number	
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Signature	
<b>PERSONAL DETAILS</b>	
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Surname	
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State	Postcode
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Mobile	
Email	
I would like to receive my Newsletter via email Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	

## Dr Pauline Payne

### *Growing a Victoria waterlily: Dr Schomburgk's success story*

**7.30pm Friday  
1 February 2008**

**Burnside Community  
Centre,  
Cnr Portrush Road  
and Greenhill Road,  
Burnside**

In 1868 Dr Richard Schomburgk, second director of Adelaide Botanic Garden from 1865-1891, could proudly show visitors the giant Victoria waterlily that many know today as the Amazon waterlily, *Victoria amazonica* (formerly *Victoria regia*). The waterlily was already associated with Richard and his brother, Sir Robert Schomburgk, from the descriptions and specimens they had brought back from explorations in British Guiana. The flowering of this 'vegetable wonder' in the new Victoria House saw newspapers printing hour by hour descriptions of the opening of the flower and 30,000 visitors in a four week period.

The *Victoria* was not easy to grow and the success of the venture helped to build up the prestige of the Botanic Garden and with it Schomburgk's own reputation. In the prosperous years of the 1870s, Adelaide Botanic Garden received better funding per head of population than any other colonial botanic garden in Australia, enabling the addition of the iconic Palm House and Museum of Economic Botany and the planting of Botanic Park.



*The Victoria amazonica as it is seen growing in Guyana  
(Jan Schomburgk)*

In the era that pre-dated CSIRO, the Waite Institute and PIRSA, Schomburgk carried out trials of crop plants, promoted crop diversification and forestry plantations and gave evidence to government enquiries on matters affecting primary industry.

With his trademark diplomacy and balanced approach Schomburgk provided attractive displays of ornamental plants but also carried out trials of crop plants. In turn local residents raised funds for statues and provided zoological specimens for the animal houses and aviaries – these were also the days before the Adelaide Zoological Gardens!

We hope that some members will take the opportunity to visit the newly constructed Amazon Waterlily Pavilion at Adelaide Botanic Garden.

Dr Pauline Payne is an Adelaide based historical consultant. A graduate of the University of Adelaide and Oxford University she is also a Visiting Research Fellow in the School of History and Politics at the University of Adelaide. She is President of the History of Science, Ideas and Technology Group (SA). Her publications include *Thebarton Old and New* (1996), *The Australian Barley Board: Making the Right Moves 1939-1999* (with Peter Donovan) (1999) and *Helping Hand Aged Care 1953-2003: a History* (2003). Her new book '*The Diplomatic Gardener: Richard Schomburgk – Explorer and Botanic Garden Director*' is currently in press and we anticipate that it will be available for sale at the February meeting.

## John Mannion

### *A Largely Forgotten Story, Post War Migration in Peterborough*

**7.30pm Friday  
7 March 2008**

**Burnside Community  
Centre,  
Cnr Portrush Road  
and Greenhill Road,  
Burnside**

John Mannion's talk deals with displaced people, particularly those who became part of Arthur Calwell's post-war migration scheme.

Displaced refugees from war torn Europe were welcomed to help build railways and hydro-electric schemes and to rebuild run down services in Australia. Many found work in the Peterborough Division of the South Australian Railways entering a two year contract. Other regional and remote areas became home for single men and later families. The impact of Calwell's scheme was wide spread in Australia and changed the lives of many people for ever. Our society has been enriched by these immigrants.

John grew up in Orroroo and then was sent to the Playford Power Station at Port Augusta "to get a trade." This was his first contact with European migrants. He later worked with aboriginal stockmen, displaced from their culture, on a Northern Territory cattle station and with post war migrants on the Leigh Creek



*(John Mannion)*

coal fields. Next he lived and worked with migrant families in the railway town of Peterborough. Working beside displaced people and witnessing at first hand their courage and struggles deeply influenced John and he went on to gain qualifications in History. He has worked as an oral history officer, given papers at conferences, and produced several publications.

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#### **National Heritage Listing of Adelaide Park Lands**

The Adelaide Park Lands have been nominated for the National Heritage list. The decision regarding the inclusion, due to be made in November 2007, will now be made in November 2008. The former Federal Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, Malcolm Turnbull, recently announced the extension of the period for determining whether to include the Park Lands. (information from *Heritage Living*, National Trust of South Australia, Spring 2007)

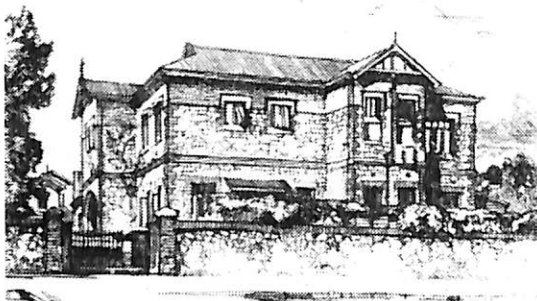
#### **State History Conference 2008, "Changing Places; Changing Lives."**

The 17th State History Conference will be held 1-3 August in Adelaide. The focus will be on the history of communities and working lives which are disappearing in the face of rapid change in technology and lifestyle. Challenges facing museums, historians, and heritage experts in their attempts to record and preserve the past will be examined.

Abstracts of papers relating to these issues are due by 29 February 2008. Further details are available from Jan Mudge, Public Programs Officer, History Trust of S A, GPO Box 1836, Adelaide 5001. Ph 08 8203 9877, e-mail [jmudge@history.sa.gov.au](mailto:jmudge@history.sa.gov.au).

# Christmas Function at St Peter's Collegiate Girls' School 25 November 2007

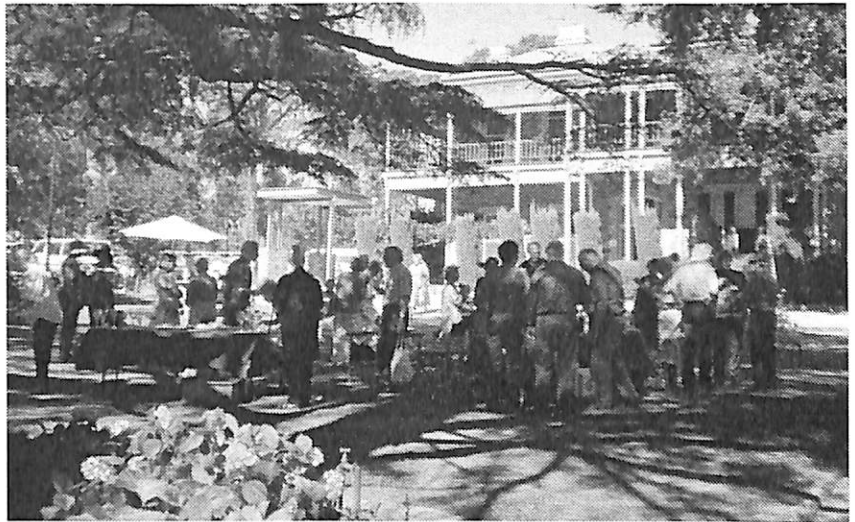
Eighty five members gathered under the shady trees on the lawns in the beautiful grounds of Chiverton, formerly the home of the Ferguson family, and now part of St Peter's Collegiate Girls' School. After a brief introduction outlining the history of the school and its move, fifty years ago, from the old site in Kermodie St, we were shown over part of the old house.



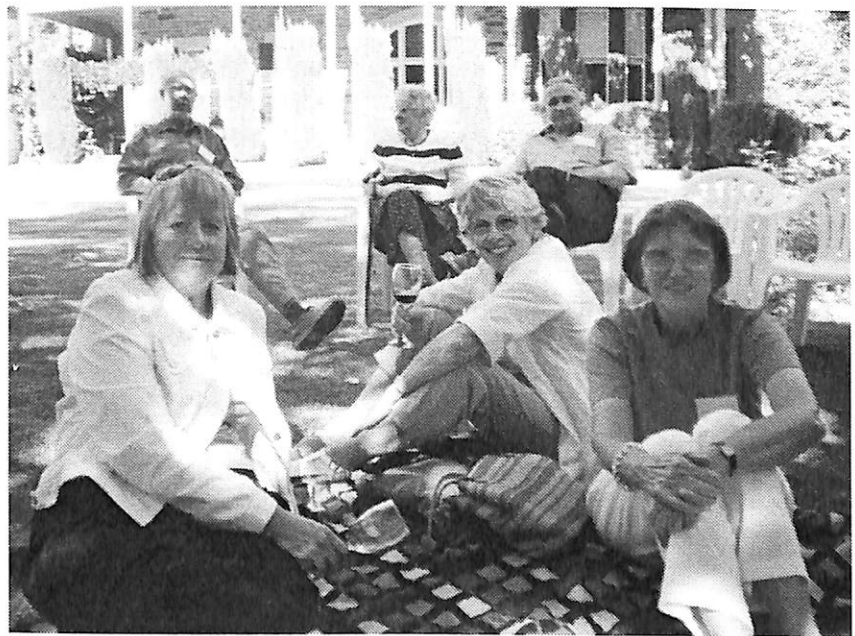
*The original site of St Peter's Collegiate Girl's School, Kermodie St (Margaret Ford)*

The present 9 acre property was purchased in 1949 and after years of fund raising a three storey block of class rooms was established. The old stables were converted into an art centre and students moved to the new campus in 1957.

We spent time in the school museum where old uniforms and photos were on display. Back in the garden afternoon tea was served and a highlight of the afternoon was the raffle, the prize of course being the Christmas cake baked by the President! This was won by Tess Donnellan.



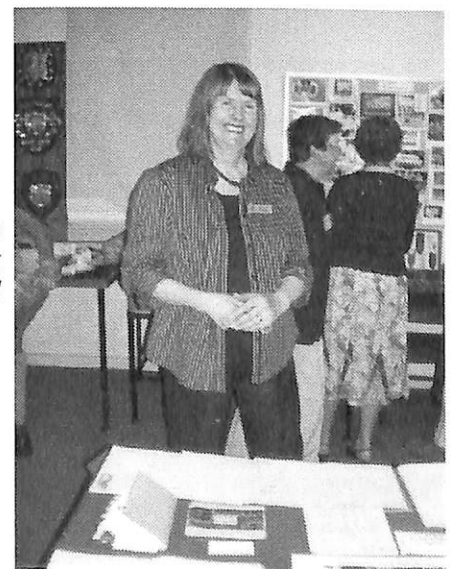
*HSSA members enjoy the Christmas Function.*



*Liz Sawyer, Sylvia Fanning and Marg Cliff relax in the pleasant surrounds of St Peter's Girls School at the Christmas function.*



*Tess Donnellan is presented with the President's Christmas cake having won the raffle at the Society's Christmas party.*



*HSSA members enjoy the opportunity to inspect the St Peter's Girls School museum.*

# State Library Archives

By Neil Thomas

## Recent additions include:

Diaries continue to be donated to the archival collection. Samuel Hosking from St Ives in Cornwall wrote his on board the *Tarquin*, August –December 1864 en route to Port Adelaide. It also contains much writing on religious subjects and ends with a summary of the food rations on board. William Arthur Lucas came out on the *Orient voyage*, July-October 1876. He became a long-serving member of the *Advertiser* printing staff. Two diaries kept by the Rev. John Crawford Woods and his second wife Catherine, nee Simpson have been transferred from Flinders University. The Unitarian minister's diary was the last he kept, 1894-1895, and his wife wrote hers while travelling after his death, during 1906-1907. Edna Myrtle Ingham went to England for the Coronation in 1937 and kept a diary of the voyage on the *Moldavia*. Typescripts of the reminiscences of Watervale pioneer Francis Treloar and his wife Sarah's three diaries have been donated, with papers of their son Arthur and later generations of the family.

A collection of letters kept by Amy Cleland, daughter of Henry Giles and grand-daughter of William Giles, relates to the Giles family 1839-1920. Among the papers of the Williams family of Kapunda is an indenture for R.H. (Harry) Williams, apprenticed as a tailor for three years with Frank Fisher and signed 16 February 1884. The conditions of his employment and instruction are mentioned in the document. Papers relating to the history of the first stripper machine, including letters between author Jack Reddin and Dr Les Jones, 1980-1999 about the Ridley-J.

Wratham Bull controversy, have been accepted. A volume recording firstly the minutes of the Orroroo branch of the National Defence League from 1882-1895, was later used as a roll book of the Black Rock branch of the SA Farmers' and Producers' Political Union in 1908, with names of women members in a separate section. A large album of 300 photographs made up for the Rural Youth Movement covers activities of the organisation across the state from ca. 1952-1956.

World War One service papers and letters have been donated about members of the Ashenden family, and for Walter Henry Allison from Milang. A reminiscence by W. Douglas Mackenzie of a little known discovery of another Japanese midget submarine in Sydney Harbour in April 1943, evidently kept secret from the press, is accompanied by copies of the Naval 'Daily Narrative' for the period, that records the submarine having passed through The Heads. Mr Mackenzie was on an Army training exercise nearby at the time.

There are additions to the SA Ornithological Association's papers covering a century of records. John Lesses, UTLC Secretary from 1983-1993, has donated his bound set of copies of minutes, agendas, reports and incoming correspondence for that period. A scrapbook made by the son of Adelaide journalist and caricaturist Lionel Coventry has reproductions of his father's works. (The State Library holds three original Coventry caricatures, of Sir John Glover and Victor Richardson.)

**Deadline for newsletter articles and entries Feb 14, 2008.**

**Historical Society of South Australia Inc.**

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**or email [secretary@hssa.org.au](mailto:secretary@hssa.org.au)**

**website [www.hssa.org.au](http://www.hssa.org.au)**

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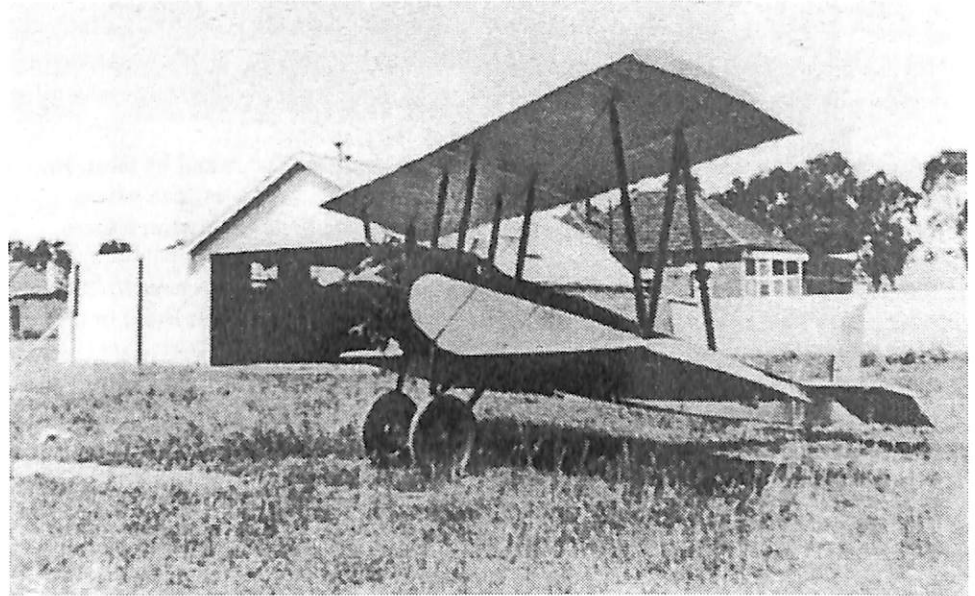
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## Acklands Gardens (Edwardstown) Aerodrome

This aerodrome was on land near the present day Southland Mitsubishi premises on South Road. Arthur Wilkins, a pioneer of aerial photography, operated out of Edwardstown where he built a wooden hangar and a small air strip. In the 1930s he mounted a Graphlex camera he had converted for aerial photography behind the cockpit of his fabric covered Farman Sport biplane. The films were developed in a dark room he created in the back of the hangar. Wilkins is believed to have taken at least 3,000 aerial photographs of farms, factories, and schools. These photos created great interest in the early days of aerial photography but his business declined with the onset of World War 11. After the War the spread of housing made flying in and out of the aerodrome hazardous but it was used for some crop dusting planes, and for a few years air craft were checked there for air worthiness.



*Farman biplane in front of hanger house in background rented by the Critchley family*

(adapted from an article by John Bodnar in *The Australian Aerophilatelist* Number 84 January-March 2007, supplied by Neil Stallard.)

### Centenary Lamps on North Terrace, Adelaide

Standard lamps along North Terrace, installed as part of the Centenary Celebrations of 1936, are being replaced by modern lighting. The decorative old lamps once lined the principal streets of Adelaide but with the upgrading of North Terrace modern structures have replaced most of the old lamps. Two of the 1936 lamps remain.

### Our Railway History - Bob the Railway Dog

Bob the sheep dog was born in 1885 at Terowie. He belonged to Mr W.S. Ferry of Peterborough, who was a railway guard. From the age of 18 months Bob travelled on the trains and became the railway mascot, going interstate and even attending the opening of the Broken Hill line and of the Hawkesbury Bridge in N S W. Bob died in 1895 after a visit to a Hindley St butcher's shop, where, barking at a passing dog, he suffered a heart attack. This information and more can be obtained from the concourse of Adelaide Railway Station.

### Regional Museums Worth a Visit

The following museums have been drawn to our attention by the Salisbury Historical Society as being interesting to visit while travelling: Koppio Museum on Eyre Peninsula (near Cleve), Homestead Park at Port Augusta, Jindera, 15 miles north of Albury NSW, and Tatura, near Shepparton, Victoria. Tatura has a section on War time internment camps.

### Book Review

Farina, *From Gibbers to Ghost Town*, by Rob Olston. (Bundinyabba Publications, Ballarat, 2007)

Rob Olston is clearly fascinated by the history of the outback. He has produced several booklets on Farina which was a town on the railway line between Copley and Maree. His publications include *Postmarked Farina- Letters of an Outback schoolteacher*, *Arno Nietz 1918-1919*. The response from former residents and their families has led to this most recent publication and Olston's often expressed hope that it "might ignite the interest of the serious researcher."

An eye-catching cover, an interesting arrangement of a page of illustrations followed by a page of text and several pages of colour photographs in the centre make an attractive presentation. Rather than chapter headings there is a List of Contents covering many varied topics such as Deaths and the Cemetery, Races and Other Entertainments and Two Weddings and a... The text is an accumulation of information, trivial and significant, recorded for possible future reference. This is a fine memorial gift for those who have lived in the town.

Marie Steiner