



HISTORY·SA

Newsletter of the Historical Society of South Australia Incorporated

No. 212
September
2011

From the President

Our final lecture meetings for the year are fast approaching; this does not seem quite possible but the calendar doesn't lie. Society member Robert Martin is our speaker in October and will relate the unlikely life of Marshal South, 'Port Augusta boy and California icon'. Then in November, our last lecture for this year, tertiary lecturer Darryl Thompson will discuss the early eating-houses and cafes of Adelaide.

In between the lecture meetings there is a visit to the refurbished Museum of Economic Botany at the Adelaide Botanic Garden (see elsewhere in the newsletter for details and bookings). We are fortunate to have the Adelaide Botanic Garden's librarian and archivist Tony Kanellos as one of our tour guides. Tony has a passion for the botanical curating that forms part of his work.

Our end-of-year/pre-Christmas function will be held on Sunday 20 November at another of Adelaide's grand colonial residences, Torrens Park, now Scotch College. The social function will include guided tours of some of the highlights of the property, including the famous Barr Smith Theatre. We have kept the cost to \$25 per person and that not only includes afternoon tea (with a variety of beverages) and the guided tour, but also the up-front hiring fees for the venue. A great property and not to be missed.

The 20th State History Conference was held in early August and many of our members attended and some presented papers. Comments about the conference have generally been very positive and I certainly enjoyed the day that I was able to attend. Margaret Anderson and her team at History SA are to be congratulated in putting together and running such an interesting and professional event. (Having been involved in running past State Landcare Conferences I know only too well the goings on behind the scenes to bring such events together).

The variety of presentations available was almost too great—you couldn't attend everything! I decided to attend some sessions that were outside of my normal areas of interest and found them most rewarding. The sessions included papers on Frances (Judith) Anderson, (Professor Densley Deacon) and Gladys Sym Choon (Prof Margaret Allen), Dr Peter Bell on the myths surrounding convicts in South Australia, and Christine Finnimore and Catherine Manning on a coming display at the Migration Museum, 'Who are we now?' Your Society sponsored the session entitled 'Who are we? South Australian identity'.

Two other papers in the realm of migration were given by Maya Brookes on Lebanese migration pre-1900 and Mia Spizzica discussed Italian civilian internment at Loveday during World War 2—not a happy period in our history. The day ended for me with Ian Schomburgk rethinking our colonial industries, a remarkable period of productivity and inventiveness by a small colonial province.

Sponsors and supporters of the conference included Wakefield Press and Gould Books/Unlock the Past. Both companies had a large range of books and other resource materials on display and for sale.

An afternoon visit to the John McDouall Stuart Collection, housed at the Adelaide Masonic Centre, North Terrace, took place on Wednesday 10 August. Twenty-three members attended this most informative event. HSSA member Rick Moore spoke about McDouall Stuart, the man and his extraordinary journeys of exploration in Outback South Australia, before we viewed the exhibits relating to the expeditions and the men who accompanied Stuart. (If you have not visited the Masonic Centre, do so, it is a most imposing and interesting building—tours are available). It is used by various groups including the University of Adelaide). Our thanks to Rick and Dean Harris for hosting the visit.

In the last edition of the Newsletter I made mention of the Library of Congress on-line play list of some 10,000 classical, popular and jazz recordings dating from 1901 to 1925. Material is continually being made available via the Internet. Recently, I came across another US-based site focussing on vintage photography. It is the Shorpy blog site, named for Shorpy Higginbotham, a twentieth century teenage coal miner (the article did not explain the significance of this). The site offers hundreds of high-resolution photographs of America from as far back as the Civil War, and a wealth of other visual materials. Many of the photographs are from glass negatives and are, to quote, 'so crisp you can see every expression in a crowd'. The website is www.shorpy.com.

Planning is well underway for next year's lecture programme, which once again, promises to be a varied feast of topics. Council members and I look forward to seeing you (and friends) at the forthcoming lecture meetings and the other Society events planned for the last part of the year.

Geoffrey Bishop
President

Visiting SA's History



Members of the Historical Society at the Masonic Centre

Please note change of date

The visit to the Museum of Economic Botany, Adelaide Botanic Garden will be on Sunday 6 November 2011. Meet outside the Museum building at 1.30 pm for a guided tour commencing at 1.45 pm (duration approximately 1.5 hours). The tour will be lead by Mr Tony Kanellos, Archivist/Librarian, Adelaide Botanic Garden.

Bookings are essential—\$5.00 per person (a donation to the Botanic Garden and State Herbarium Library). Please book with Margaret Cliff, telephone 8362 9517

End of year function

Our pre-Christmas social function will be held at Scotch College, Torrens Park, on Sunday 20 November 2011 commencing at 2.30 pm. Afternoon tea, Christmas raffle and guided tours of some of the highlights of the Scotch College (formerly Torrens Park homestead). Entry is from Carruth Road.

Bookings are essential—\$25.00 per person, payable in advance. The cost includes afternoon tea, drinks and a tour. Please book with Margaret Cliff, telephone 8362 9517 or at lecture meetings.

All lecture meetings commence at 7.30 pm on the first Friday in the month at Burnside Community Centre, corner of Portrush Road and Greenhill Road, Tasmore.

Discovering SA's History

7 October

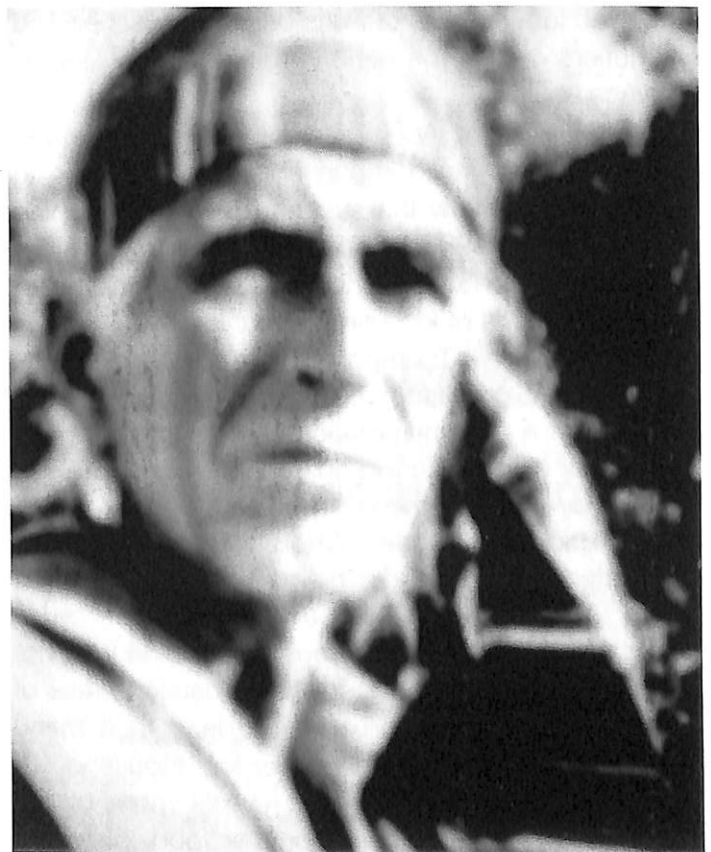
Robert Martin

Marshal South: Port Augusta boy and California icon

In 1948 a man calling himself Marshal South died in a trailer (caravan) in the town of Julian in Southern California. Since 1930, he had made a name for himself by living in the desert with his wife and children, in very simple circumstances, and writing articles about it for the *Desert Magazine*. Interest in him never waned in the decades after his death, but mystery surrounded his early life. He had taken measures to obscure his origin, the least of which was to change his name to Marshal South.

Only in recent years has the mystery of his origin been substantially solved, with American researchers establishing that he began life in South Australia under another name. With a commission from Diana Lindsay, who was editing Marshal's desert articles for republication in a single volume, Robert Martin has investigated his early life, and discovered that Marshal was a precocious writer. He also had a varied and fraught childhood, which probably influenced his eventual decision to live in the wilderness in California. Pastoral stations, St Peter's College, the *Port Augusta Dispatch*, C J Dennis—all were part of his biography by the time he was 18.

Robert Martin's publications include *Under Mount Lofty, A history of the Stirling district* (1987, second edition 1996) and *Responsible Government in South Australia, Volume Two, Playford to Rann* (2009). He has worked as a tutor and research assistant in Departments of History, Asian Studies, Economics, and American Studies, at Adelaide and Flinders Universities. While he describes himself as a generalist, he supposes that if he is a specialist in anything, it is the history of the Adelaide Hills, he having continued research, writing, editing and publishing in that field for 30 years. As a private folly he translates German poetry.



Marshal South: (above) younger, (below) older.

Discovering SA's History

4 November

Darryl Thompson:

Restaurants, cafes and eating houses of early Adelaide

Paris-trained chef, Darryl Thompson, has worked in a variety of food establishments in Australia and Europe for over 40 years. Born, raised and educated in Adelaide in the late 1960s, he very narrowly avoided obtaining a University degree but, instead, was compelled to join the work force in order to earn a living. Fortunately for him (and subsequently for the Adelaide dining public), he fell by chance into a cooking career. The blend of appetite and excitement of cooking found him as an early graduate from the Regency TAFE in 1977. This then led to a varied career as cook and baker in the Hospitality Industry.

Darryl made two six-month visits to Europe in the 1980s. During his time in England and France, he studied at the Cordon Bleu School in London and, at La Varenne, Ecole de Cuisine in Paris. In France he was employed in a number of Paris based patisseries and charcutiers and at the famous restaurant Le Boudin Sauvage at Orly.

On his return to Adelaide, temporary insanity and a passionate desire to impart cooking knowledge to upcoming chefs saw the start of a 25-year teaching career, when in 1986 he joined the teaching staff of Adelaide TAFE. Since then he has been responsible for training hundreds of food professionals.

One of Darryl Thompson's great passions has been collecting menus, which grew out of a chance purchase of a Commemoration Day Luncheon menu for a dinner held at Glenelg on 28 December 1898.

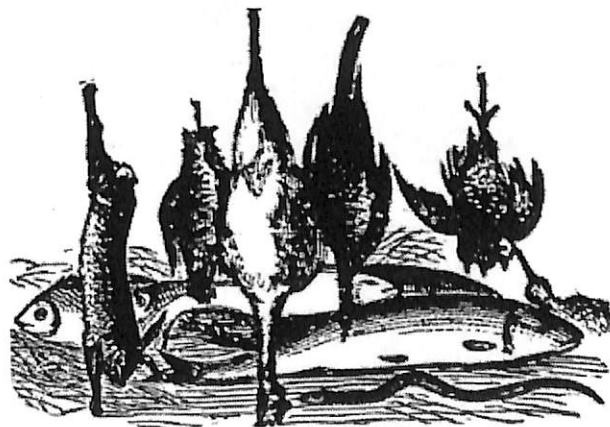
According to the menu, the dinner was prepared by a 'F Bricknell, Caterer'. Who was he? Where was he located, what else did he do? A frustrating visit to the State Library seeking a definitive book on all past caterers and eating houses of Adelaide was not to be found. This has led to the painstaking task of compiling such a list and has also led to a menu collection which now numbers over four thousand.

The reality behind this spin reveals more of the character of Darryl Thompson, a food historian, currently in the process of writing a history of public eating in Adelaide from 1840 to 1960.



Traditional English roast.

**HIS LORDSHIP'S LARDER,
NEXT YORK HOTEL,
IS NOW OPENED.**



Poultry, Fish, Bacon, Eggs, always on hand.

THE Public are respectfully invited to give us a call, where they can have **GRILLED CHOPS, HAM and EGGS, COLD JOINTS, HAM and TONGUE; OYSTERS—Fried, Stewed, or otherwise; TEA, COFFEE, COCOA, at any hour.**

Oyster and other parties supplied.

Country orders punctually attended to.

H. & J. H. WHELAN, Proprietors.

N.B.—Highest price given for Dairy produce, &c.

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Discovering SA's History



29 to 31 Rundle Mall was occupied for many years by Frederick Bricknell, restaurateur and baker.

[FOOTNOTE: His Lordship's Larder was located next door to the York Hotel on the south-eastern corner of the intersection of Rundle and Pulteney streets. In 1910, the larger, prestigious Grand Central Hotel was built on the York Hotel's site and, perhaps, adjoining land.

By 1929, the building had become the premises of Foy and Gibson, which was sold to Cox Brothers in 1956. In the 1950s, there was an official opening—and/or a major sale to reduce accumulated stock—at Cox Foys on the southern side of Rundle Street west. A large crowd assembled and the mounted police attended. The jostling mob displaced one of the shopfront windows and Constable Grey exhibited extreme tolerance by allowing a child to play with his tail.

Eventually, ETSA occupied the ground floor of Foy and Gibson's former store, and State government departments were located in its upper storeys; at least some of these had been housed previously in the Exhibition Building. In the 1960s, the Highways Department was again relocated, to a new building in Walkerville. ETSA's building was vacated gradually after a small electrical fire occurred in the 1970s, and was replaced by a carpark and shops.

I worked in a bank on the northern side of Rundle Street—opposite Cox Foys—in 1957/8, and in an upper storey of ETSA's building, from 1960—Editor]

JACKMAN'S DINING AND COFFEE ROOMS

48 & 50 KING WILLIAM ST.,

ADELAIDE.

OPEN from 7 A.M. to 6 P.M.

LADIES' ROOM UPSTAIRS.

**ICED DRINKS AND ICE CREAM DURING
THE SUMMER.**

Dated 1883

Contributing SA's History

on her ordinary safety' and '... frightened to put on too much pace with the motor'.

After its successful run in Sydney, the machine was again not performing properly and Ullmo arranged to get a second machine sent to their next stop, Junee, where she was scheduled to appear on 17 August.

But then, the evening before the event at Junee, Ullmo sent a telegram saying that Serpolette was ill. Many spectators had journeyed a long distance to the event and the community was deeply disappointed.

That was almost the last mention of Serpolette in the Australian papers. She returned to France on the *Australien* which departed Sydney on 3 October and reached Marseilles on 6 November. Learning of her departure, the Adelaide paper, *The Critic*, made the cruel and dismissive comment that '... Serpolette has packed up her bloomers and left these shores, unwept, unhonoured, and unsung.'

Serpolette appears to have been dragged (somewhat reluctantly) out of retirement. In fact, during an interview in Western Australia, she confessed to a woman reporter that she was not really very fond of bicycle riding '... and the skirts which Australian ideas of modesty and the tracks which West Australian ideas of roads have forced upon her made it anything but a pleasant pastime in Perth'.

Her promotional tour could hardly be considered a success. She made only a handful of public appearances and her intended assault on records just didn't happen. There was no competition with another female despite the claim that '... Serpolette, now in Sydney, is still spoiling for the blood of an Australian lady cyclist'. In fact there was only one report of a cyclist (in Western Australia) accepting the challenge to race her but, by then, Serpolette was booked on a boat to travel to Adelaide.

However, her visit was not without some impact. A few months after her departure from Adelaide, the local paper noted: 'A pleasing feature of Saturday's proceedings was the great number of the fair sex daintily spinning along various parts of the route, and from the tasteful costumes worn it was evident that Mlle. Serpolette's visit has had a beneficial effect.'

But more to the point, Tom O'Grady, the foreman at the Vivian Lewis Cycle works who worked on the machine, was inspired to build a small kerosene fuelled engine. This was attached to a racing triplet which, about nine months later, became the first locally built 'automobile' to run around the streets of Adelaide. About 18 months after that, Lewis displayed a

complete four-wheeled motor car built in their Freeman Street (now Gawler Place) workshops.

Thus Serpolette's visit and demonstration of the Gladiator motor-tricycle was the (unintended) catalyst for the manufacture of automobiles in South Australia—an enterprise which developed into a major local and export industry which continues today in the form of General Motors-Holden.

During her Australian visit, a number of reports were published about her successful cycling career. Presumably statements were made at interviews, probably by the promoter Ullmo (Serpolette is said not to have spoken English), or a press release was handed out. There was clearly some significant exaggeration of the claims made on her behalf for her professional cycling career but they were, nevertheless, soundly based on fact and her achievements merited her inclusion in a set of portrait cards 'Les Vieilles Gloires' issued by the tyre maker Dunlop at the end of 1896.

Sometime after a race in Rouen in May 1897 she is said to have retired but, according to the West Australian newspaper in April 1898, she reappeared 'eight months ago' (making it about August 1897) riding the motor-tricycle—hardly a long retirement.

One assumes from this that she had sufficient profile in the sport to have been recruited as a demonstrator for Gladiator, riding both cycles and the motorised pacing machine. Or was she, in fact, employed as a working pacer, driving the machine for other cyclists?

Renate Franz, convenor of the 2011 International Cycling History Conference, is quite convinced that 'Serpolette' is a name adopted by this young woman to hide her true identity in an era when it was not really respectable for women to take part in professional racing. Serpolette was a character in the very popular opera of the time, 'Les Cloches de Corneville' by Robert Planquette, 1877, and descriptions of the Serpolette character sound similar to descriptions of Serpolette the cyclist.

Two reports in Western Australian newspapers give Serpolette a first name: 'Anthelmina' (although the second article simply appears to be the same typesetting as the first made up into a new page). This may have been an Australian reporter's version of the French name Anthelmine.

So we may never uncover the true identity of this woman and discover where she came from and what became of her. She may well be one of those cycling women who, as Renate Franz said, 'vanished somehow in the dark'.

Contributing SA's History

Historical Society of South Australia Grants Scheme 2011

The HSSA Grants Scheme for 2011 was launched at the State History Conference. The closing date for applications is Friday 16 September 2011 and successful applicants will be informed by 31 October 2011.

Application forms and background information are available on the Society's website:

www.hssa.org.au

or from the Grants' Convenor by email:

secretary@hssa.org.au

Book Sales

The Society and Wakefield Press conduct book sales at the Society's lecture meetings. If you have published a book (or have friends who have) please speak with Margaret Young about having your book available on our book table.

The Society's highly successful publication *SA's Greats: the men and women of the North Terrace plaques*, edited by John Healey, is available at our meetings (\$11.95) or by post (\$15.00 including postage in South Australia). Please send your order and payment to HSSA, PO Box 519, Kent Town SA 5071.

Invitation to Book Launch

Members of HSSA are cordially invited to attend the launch of Jean Prest's biography of Sir John Langdon Bonython at Carclew, North Adelaide on Friday 28 October 2011 at 11 am.

See Darryl Thompson's lecture (page 4)

Advertisements for cafes were generally very unimposing, far less decorative than advertisements for department stores and other retail businesses.

This one dates from 1901:

L. COOK, | **THE BEST ASSORTMENT**
BEEHIVE BUILDING, | **OF**
2 RUNDLE-ST. | **CAKES IN ADELAIDE.**
| **PRICES MODERATE**

And here is another:

LIVE TURTLE—JAMES
of the LONDON CHOP-HOUSE, King William-street, begs to inform his Friends and the Public generally, that he has just received a quantity of Live Turtle from Singapore, which may be now seen at the London Chop-house.

REAL TURTLE SOUP may now be had DAILY from 1 o'clock till 4. Price 2s 6d per pint, Wine included.

8 September.....

Deadline for articles for the January issue of the newsletter is 13 January 2012



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HISTORY·SA

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NOTE

Change of dates

Visiting SA's History

Museum of Economic Botany

Adelaide Botanic Garden

WAS [as per program] Sunday 16 October

NOW Sunday 6 November at 1.30pm

End of year Christmas Function

Scotch College, Torrens Park

WAS [as per program] Sunday 27 November

NOW Sunday 20 November at 2.30pm

Book with Margaret Cliff 8362 9517 to register your attendance

Check Page 2 of your September newsletter