



# HISTORY • SA

Newsletter of The Historical Society of South Australia Incorporated

No. 219

March

2013

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Society's program for 2013 was released in late January and it promises to be another good year of lecture meetings and other events. Putting together a program that offers variety for a group with as diverse interests as our membership have is always a challenge. Having said that, one long-time member recently said to me that he sometimes thinks a particular lecture topic is of no interest to him but the reverse is often the case as he finds himself exposed to new topics or opinions.

Our lecture series started in February with Jennifer Hein's paper on 'Fifty Hallelujah Lassies', based on her research into the Salvation Army's first Australian immigration scheme in the mid 1880s. This was followed in March by Associate Professor Peter Monteath looking at the fascinating life of the largely forgotten German anthropologist Erhard Eylmann who published (in Germany) in 1908 his book on

his studies of the Australian Aborigines.

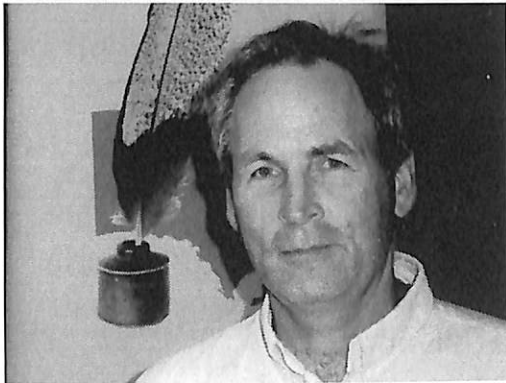
The April lecture, to be given by Mick Bradley and Lance Campbell, will look at the making of their recent book about the streetscape of Adelaide, past and present. Then in May, at the start of *About Time*, we are off to Hollywood to investigate the movie career of John (J.P.) McGowan. Our guest speaker, John McGowan, will reveal how a young man from the mid-north town of Terowie came to go to Hollywood.

History will once again be to the forefront in South Australia with the month-long *About Time* history festival. The program will be released in April and from all accounts will feature hundreds of events. So, get your diary out and work out what events you want to attend - there's always a huge variety, so aim to visit some you've not previously considered attending.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT



February's speaker Jennifer Hein



March speaker and incoming Journal Editor Peter Monteath

As our first two speakers have ably demonstrated, there are lots of aspects of our relatively short 'European history' that have been forgotten but await a researcher to come along and reopen the case, as it were. I was reminded of this when I came across an article about the construction of the

Main Eastern Road, what we now refer to as the Lobethal Road (Magill to Lobethal). The year was 1857 and access to this part of the Adelaide Hills was via a bullock track that was quite unsuitable for horse-drawn vehicles owing both to the steep inclines and the poor condition of the unmade track.

Alfred Hardy, Superintending Surveyor, North Eastern District, was proposing a route for the road which, as he stated, passed through some of the most difficult terrain in the colony. He wasn't wrong there. As if the scarp leading from Third Creek to Norton Summit wasn't bad enough, how the route would go from there to the Forest Range was another matter. This area is the steepest and most dissected part of the Adelaide Hills and required the road to descend to, cross and come out of the Deep Creek valley. Deep Creek is the major tributary of Sixth Creek and its valley is the deepest in the region.

A preliminary survey had been conducted but Alfred Hardy was not happy with the route. In places the inclines were far too steep – some of the gradients were 1 in 2 and he considered 1 in 10 to be the most he would entertain. He offered an alternative route (this was the one the Central Board of Main Roads eventually adopted) and in the wonderful

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

language of the time stated, 'The whole of this line, as hereinbefore mentioned, appears to offer very great facilities for taking a main line of road through this difficult country, at a comparatively moderate cost; and I would respectfully advise that a full survey should be made, and a section taken of the line, by which the Board would be enabled to judge the expediency of adopting this line as a portion of the Main Eastern-road.'

Alfred Adams' lovely stone-arch bridge on Deep Creek is now a Heritage-listed item and remains as a testimony to Adams' building ability. Two more bridges were required on the route from Deep Creek to the Forest Range but that's a story I'm still investigating.

Our AGM will take place at the start of our May lecture meeting (see details below). Do give consideration to serving on Council, either as an officeholder or as a general member. If you have any questions, please contact Terry Saunderson or myself, or speak to any of the present members.

*Geoffrey Bishop*

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**The AGM of the Historical Society of South Australia Incorporated** will be held at 7.30 pm on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2013 at the Burnside Community Centre, Tasmore.

Nomination forms for the following office bearing positions will be available from the Secretary: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and Council Members.

For further information please contact Geoffrey Bishop on 8390 3138 or Terry Saunderson on 8354 2736 (business hours).

*Dr Geoffrey Bishop, President*

# DISCOVERING SA'S HISTORY

Friday 5 April, 7.30 pm

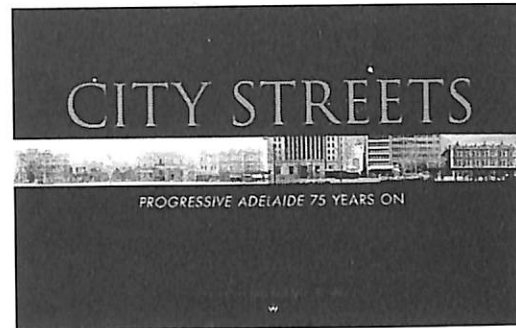
**Mick Bradley and Lance Campbell: Double Vision - The Making of *City Streets***

Lance Campbell is an arts writer and multiple award-winning sports writer. He was arts editor of the *Adelaide Advertiser*, has written satirical columns for *The Adelaide Review*, and has written and contributed to several books. Lance is arts and architecture editor of *SALife* magazine.

Mick Bradley's work bridges the gap between documentary and fine art photography, and his images tell stories from our lives from the 1970s on. Mick honed his craft as a fine art printer, darkroom operator and photographer working for studios in Sydney, Canberra, Adelaide and London. He has created a niche for himself in the history of South Australian photography, while his work appears in books, exhibitions and collections throughout this country and in North America and the UK.

Mick and Lance will give a joint presentation about their trials and tribulations in creating their unique book about a unique city.

The Wakefield Press book *City Streets* is a local bestseller. It is inspired by the efforts of printer Gustav Hermann Baring. Getting on for 80 years ago, Baring



Mick and Lance at work

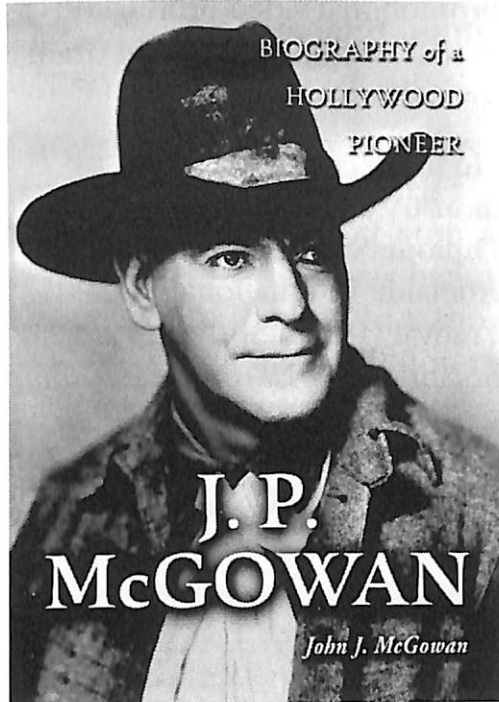
photographed the buildings of Adelaide's CBD for his own contribution to the Centenary of SA. He put the photos in a big, ambitious souvenir book he called *Progressive Adelaide*. Mick Bradley has walked in Baring's footsteps, photographing every location, whether the buildings are still there or not. Lance Campbell has gone looking for the stories those buildings can tell. The result, *City Streets*, is a fascinating juxtaposition of then and now - the same city on the same page, 75 years apart. If anyone has inherited the original *Progressive Adelaide*, please bring it along. It will triple the pleasure.

# DISCOVERING SA'S HISTORY

Friday 3 May, 7.30 pm

## John McGowan:

Hollywood's First Australian,  
John Paterson McGowan



South Australian-born John Paterson McGowan (1880-1952) was the first Australian to make a significant career in Hollywood. He was an actor, director, writer, producer and industrial advocate.

In fact he began his career several years before Hollywood itself was born, starting out in 1909 as an actor with the Kalem Company in New York.

Many years later, his long-time friend and colleague, director/producer Ford Beebe

voiced the opinion that McGowan was: "the most colorful character in Hollywood". Beebe also said he "stood in awe" of this man who, in a thirty-year performance career, reaching from the Silent Era to the start of Hollywood's Golden Age, directed or acted in the astonishing number of over 600 productions, a figure which places him amongst Hollywood's most prolific performers.

McGowan was born in the South Australian railhead of Terowie in 1880 but spent his childhood in Sydney. He left Sydney in his teens, embarking on a life of adventure. He served in the Boer War, then moved to the United States to participate in the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. He began work as an actor with travelling theatrical companies before entering the emerging motion picture industry in 1909.

As a director, J.P. McGowan specialised in action-packed movies. He played a substantial part in the development of successful film-making techniques, elements of which can be detected in Hollywood action movies to this day.

Many of his early productions were railroad dramas, and publicists dubbed him 'The Railroad Man'. Most of these productions starred McGowan's first wife, the daring stunt

# DISCOVERING SA'S HISTORY

performer Helen Holmes, and their highly successful collaboration, beginning with the long-running series *The Hazards of Helen (1914-1915)*, became a Hollywood legend.

After his retirement from the screen, McGowan became Executive Secretary of the fledgling Screen Directors' Guild where his energy and strength of will found new purpose during the Guild's crucial industrial battles with the powerful studio moguls in 1939. The resulting benchmark agreements laid the foundations for many of today's motion picture industry awards.

In 1951 the Guild honoured him with Life Membership, an award which placed McGowan in the company of Hollywood luminaries such as D. W. Griffith, Charlie Chaplin and Walt Disney. He is the only Australian to have received this award.

John J. McGowan (no relation to his subject!) is the author of *J. P. McGowan - Biography of a Hollywood Pioneer* (McFarland Publishers, North Carolina, 2005).

He has written and directed documentaries and educational productions for national television, and is an experienced journalist who has worked in newspapers, radio and television.

He was employed for 16 years by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation as a television producer, writer and director.

He has also written and directed television commercials and promotional video productions as well as documentaries and drama for radio.

He has received a number of industry awards including a Diploma of Merit from the Adelaide International Film Festival (1975) for the documentary *Beyond is Anything - Sidney Nolan and Ern Malley*, and the inaugural Australian Human Rights Commission Media Award (1984) for *Six Australians*, a six-episode documentary series chronicling the lives of six contemporary indigenous Australians.

He now works as a freelance writer /director. His biography of J. P. McGowan was the result of over 20 years' research in the US and Australia.

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

## VISITING SA'S HISTORY

**'Down at the Local' - A historical pub tour in Kensington, Norwood and Kent Town (by small bus for 23 passengers)**

**Tuesday, 16 April, 10 am - noon    Members: \$20    Visitors: \$25**

**The tour begins and ends outside the Kensington Hotel in Regent Street.**

**Patricia Sumerling** will be your guide for this tour which will include the social histories and architecture of about 16 hotels. There is a refreshment stop at the 1848 Rising Sun Historic Inn in Bridge Street which was beautifully restored in about 1984. There is also a visit to the Tap Inn, the former Kent Town Hotel, to see how a pub looks after a \$13 million makeover almost 10 years ago.

**For bookings contact Margaret Cliff at Society meetings or on 8362 9517.**



Former Family Hotel, Norwood

# CONTRIBUTING TO SA'S HISTORY

## HSSA Grants for 2012 announced

Twenty-three grants were made by the Society in the 2012 round of its grants scheme. In all, 42 applications for funding were received totalling an amount of \$38,000. The assessment panel comprising Geoffrey Bishop, Patricia Sumerling and Bernard Whimpress had the task of evaluating the projects and determining the amount of each grant. A total of \$10,000 was allotted, an increase of \$3000 over the previous year. The list of recipients and the title of their project is given below.

Some great projects are happening 'out there' and the response to the scheme is ample evidence that history groups and individual researchers are looking for financial support for their work.

One of the projects that the Society supported was the reprint of the Moculta District Historical Society's brochure for the Shannon Family Mausoleum at Moculta. This site is generally open during *About Time*, so do check the program as it is well worth a visit.

Applications for the 2013 grants will be invited from September and close 31 October. Application forms will be available from the HSSA website.

## Recipients of HSSA Grants for 2012:

Appila Improvement Association	Jack Babbage's Appila
Architecture Museum, School of Art, Architecture & Design, UniSA	South Australian Soldiers' Memorial Gardens
Burnside Historical Society Inc	Memory of Chains: living - working - playing in the City of Burnside 1945-1965
Coromandel Valley and Districts National Trust Branch	Preparation and display of the Coromandel Valley story
Dr Daniela Rose, Flinders University of SA	Italian Civil Alien Corps in South Australia, the 'forgotten' enemy aliens

Dr Joshua Nash	Interpreting Kangaroo Island fishing culture historically
Dr Mayumi Kako, Flinders University of SA	Historical study of the role of nurses during the Spanish Influenza outbreak between 1918-1920 in SA
Girl Guides South Australia	Centenary publications: celebrating women's history in SA
John McDouall Stuart Society	Map and plan restoration
Marion Historical Society/City of Marion	Heritage preservation, storage and mounting for the cultural heritage collection at the Marion Heritage Centre
Millicent National Trust Museum	Abbott buggy upholstery restoration
Moculta District Historical Society Inc	State Heritage Listed Shannon Mausoleum Brochure
National Trust SA Tea Tree Gully Branch	Interpretation of the post office
Peter and Carla Magarey	Recollections of Taplan and Loxton, South Australia: an historical account
Pichi Richi Railway Preservation Society Inc	Signage - directional and interpretive for the museum within the station precinct
Port Noarlunga Surf Life Saving Club History Cttee	Stage 3 History
Ronald M. Gibbs	<i>Under the Burning Sun: A history of colonial South Australia 1836-1900</i>
SA Genealogy & Heraldry Society Inc and Friends of Lutheran Archives	Prussia - South Australia - Poland
Salisbury & District Historical Society Inc	Display of artefacts in museum
Southern Eyre Peninsula Family & Local History Group Inc	Daguerreotypes Display Cabinet

St Augustine's Anglican  
Church of Unley

Self-guided tour of the stained glass  
windows of St Augustine's Church

The Muriel Matters Society  
Inc

A Short History of Muriel Matters

Wooden Boat Association of  
SA Inc

Bill Villiers: A Fisherman's Story

### **Report from Port Noarlunga Surf Life Saving Club**

As the result of a grant from the Historical Society of SA, Port Noarlunga Surf Life Saving Club was able to undertake a project that has been a dream for a long time, that is, to recognise the founding of the club by the Royal Life Saving Society. Port Noarlunga Life Saving Club was formed in January 1933 following a community meeting held as a result of four people drowning at our beach.

However, in 1952, along with other clubs in South Australia, we joined the Surf Lifesaving Australia Association. This division left beach patrols to surf lifesavers and still water (i.e. pools and river) patrols to the Royal Life Saving Association.

A group within the current club thought the foundation members should be recognised and an honour board seemed to be the most appropriate way of doing

this. There is a total of 164 men and 31 women who were active and associate members between 1933-1952. Women were allowed to be active members while affiliated with Royal Life but not so with Surf Life Saving until the 1970s. Approximately 164 lives were saved during this period.

Some 28 men joined the armed services during World War II, almost the entire male active membership, with the balance of male active members being in reserved occupations.

It was therefore left up to the women, along with a number of teenage schoolboys, to undertake the duty of patrolling the beach at Port Noarlunga - thus we have the proud record of continuous community service since 1933.

Research undertaken turned up some interesting club members' stories.

*Howard Salter* was Mentioned in Despatches, having been

wounded in North Africa. He was sent home and we believe, was the first patient of the Repatriation Hospital; he became a subject of a local newsreel.

*Geoffrey Burgan* was shot down over North Africa, captured and put in a POW camp. He somehow obtained his jailors' autographs, escaped, returning to allied lines. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. The next we heard of him was in Ceylon; the Japanese had just bombed Darwin and the fleet responsible then pushed on into the Indian Ocean. Included in their fleet were four aircraft carriers. Twelve obsolete RAAF Bristol Bombers were sent to take on this formidable fleet. Burgan's aircraft failed to return from this mission. He was listed as Killed In Action.

*Reg Ellis* trained as a pilot, being tutored by the local schoolteacher, Paul Hillbig, for the RAAF entrance exam. Gaining his wings he left for England by a ship which was torpedoed on the way. On his arrival, he became a flying instructor. He flew 10 missions towards the end of the war as a Lancaster pilot. On one of the missions, down to two engines and with no undercarriage, he made a forced landing at an American base in France. Being a top cricketer, he was selected in the Australian unofficial test team

at the war's conclusion. Australia was not expected to do well as the majority of those that would have been first picks were in Australia or the Pacific theatre. However, the five test series was drawn - two wins each and a draw. Reg is going strong and still drives his car.

The honour board that your organisation helped fund has produced some interesting stories and rather than being just a list of names, each we are finding has a story to tell.

We have acknowledged the Society's help at the base of the honour board with the words *South Australian Historical Society Grant 2012*.

Thank you for your support.

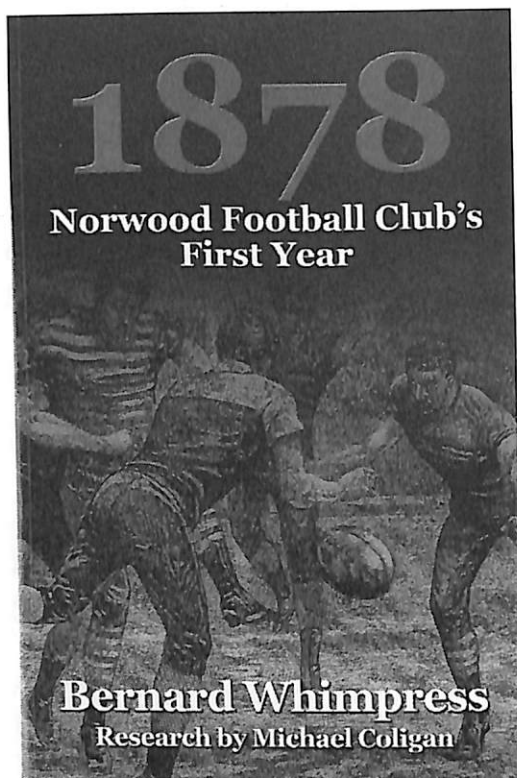
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Each day is a little bit of history.

*JOSÉ SARAMAGO, Baltasar and Blimunda*

History can be well written only in a free country.

*VOLTAIRE, letter to Frederick the Great*



## ABOUT A BOOK

### *1878: Norwood Football Club's First Year*

Bernard Whimpress

When former Norwood Football Club full-forward Michael Coligan rang me last October and asked whether I would look at a mass of research notes he had compiled on Norwood's first year I was excited by the prospect.

When I read the 125,000 words of material Michael asked whether there was a story there and, if so, would I be interested in writing it. There was. I was. It was too good an opportunity to miss.

If readers can forgive any delusions of grandeur in the comparison I'm about to make, my task was like that which faced Michelangelo with his huge block of marble before beginning the sculpture of *David*. He knew *David* was inside but first he had to do lots of removal work, chipping away and then crafting, shaping and polishing. Whereas Michelangelo took three years, however, I took three weeks.

In creating *1878: Norwood's First Year* I did lots of removal. The 125,000 words was reduced to 25,000 and the crafting meant cutting to the core of the story:

- the founding of the club and the key drivers in that foundation;
- the triumphant playing season and the fierce off-field disputes caused by Norwood's poaching of players from other clubs;
- the biographical information on the players;
- and a glance at what the future would hold for several players and identities.

Finally, as part of the shaping process it was important to recognise that football clubs do not spring to life and exist in isolation and so a brief picture was presented of South Australia and Norwood in an appendix, 'Colony and Town'. Perhaps as

# DISCOVERING SA'S HISTORY

an indication that footy did not mean much to the colonists in 1878, the *South Australian Register* in its diary of the year, published in January 1879, made no mention of the fledgling sport.

Writing *1878* provided a great deal of pleasure and was something of a homecoming or perhaps one might say that it provided several homecomings.

First, as a small boy in Murray Bridge, I grew up listening to my mother's stories. And some of the most vivid stories told by a former Evandale girl, a Legacy girl, a convent school girl, an apprentice tailor, who adopted the Redlegs in her teens in the 1920s, were those of her first male heroes - Roy 'Cool Alec' Bent, Alick Lill, 'Wacka' Scott, 'Tiger' Potts and Bernie Schumacher - who would live again 30 years later as household names.

In the late 1950s I sometimes listened to radio broadcasts on 5KA by Tom Warhurst and Max Hall and learnt that Warhurst was a Norwood man. At the 1960 South Australian National Football League grand final I sat with my father in the outer ground on the eastern side of Adelaide Oval while my mother sat with her two younger sisters in the Members' Stand. Unfortunately, despite my barracking, the precise ruck work

of 'Big Bill' Wedding, the ball-gathering ability and neat passing of rover Haydn Bunton, the explosive power of Ron 'The Tank' Kneebone at centre-half-back, the cool head of captain Peter Aish at full-back, and no doubt the exhortations of coach Alan Killigrew, the Red and Blues went down to North Adelaide by five points.

As a keen and improving golfer in the country and city I put aside football interest until adopting Norwood as a regular follower from 1969 to 1975. This was a second homecoming. After playing golf on Saturday mornings at North Adelaide for seven years I would sit with my two aunts in the Sir Edwin Smith Stand at home games and when the match ended always bought the most delicious pasties I've ever tasted from a man dipping his arm into a hessian bag by the bus stop on the Parade. For away matches I sat or stood wherever I could. Norwood finished ninth that first year but the 1975 premiership ended a 25 year drought.

By that time I'd begun writing on football for my paper, *Football Times*, and then spent five years with the SANFL as editor of the *Football Budget*. It seemed prudent to become a neutral observer, although it's true to say I was passionate, and that passion culminated in my first book,

# DISCOVERING SA'S HISTORY

*The South Australian Football Story* in 1983. Writing *1878*, my second football book after a 30 year hiatus, thus brings back many memories of things past - a third homecoming.

Following my years at the League my interest in football waned. Apart from the occasional article or chapter on football, my sports writing was devoted mainly to cricket, and the sports I played were golf and tennis. While I retained a soft spot for the Redlegs it was only rarely that I would meander into the Norwood Oval, mount a Cooper's Ale on one of the 1880s turnstiles which serve as tables in the bar at the north-western corner of the ground, and chew on a sausage sandwich or two. Sadly, the pasties are no longer sold from hessian bags!

Working with Michael Coligan on *1878* has also been a delight, not least because Michael began his league career in 1969 and so another reconnection with the past was made. When the book was launched by former *Advertiser*, *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Australian* journalist Mike Coward at the Norwood Hall of Fame dinner held at the Italian Club on 22 February, I was fortunate to dine in select company. At my table the famous old-timers apart from Coward included venerable *Advertiser*

journalist Gordon Schwartz, the no less venerable ABC commentator Roger Wills, legendary club forward Roger Woodcock and his brother Brian (a Reserves Magarey Medallist), and Wally Miller, the heart and soul of the Norwood Football Club for more than 50 years, who wrote a foreword in the book. I'll be spending more time at Norwood games from now on.

As a final note I should add that *1878* is the first publication undertaken by the Norwood Football Club History Group. Copies can be obtained for \$25 from Ross Dillon's Bookshop on the Parade at Norwood, from Dymocks in the city or by emailing [susan@sbpconsulting.com.au](mailto:susan@sbpconsulting.com.au)

We cannot escape history.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, annual message, Dec. 1, 1862

You know you're getting older when you notice that more and more history questions happened in your lifetime!

TOM WILSON, *Ziggy*, Jul. 3, 1999

## Trollope in South Australia

The year 2012 marked the 140th anniversary of Anthony Trollope's extensive tour which resulted in the 1873 publication of *Australia and New Zealand*.

The celebrated novelist arrived in South Australia aboard the SS *Alexandra* from King George's Sound on 6 April 1872 and was taken in hand by Thomas Elder whose hospitality he enjoyed at the Adelaide Club and elsewhere, although he would have steered clear of South Australian wines which he condemned as 'heady' and 'certainly unpalatable'.

Trollope, to whom the description 'city of churches' has been ascribed, found Adelaide a 'pleasant, prosperous town' akin to Philadelphia, and while noting that it was 'peculiarly the idea' of the founders of South Australia 'that there should be no dominant church', observed the Church of England had 'assumed a certain ascendancy'.

Thanks to Elder, Trollope ventured far afield, visiting the Moonta and Wallaroo mines and the nearby Doora mine and travelling north to Elder's stations beyond Goyder's Line where he found 'little to gratify the eye'. The countryside around Mount Gambier, however, he deemed



Anthony Trollope (1815-1882)

'very pretty and un-Australian'. His final station stay (he had visited Lake Albert Station and Poltalloch) was as the guest of John Riddoch at Yallum Park near Penola. He reached Hamilton, en route to Melbourne, on 14 May 1872.

Overall, Trollope demonstrated keen enthusiasm for Australia where his son, Frederick, had settled, but an allusion to the colonists as blowhards to one degree or another drew the ire of the press and his return visit in 1875 was not such a happy one. The return trip did not include South Australia.

*Roger Andre*

Sources: Anthony Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand*, Chapman & Hall, London, 1873 - 'South Australia'. *Register*, 22 Apr. 1872, p.5. *Register*, 23 Apr. 1872, Suppl., p.7. *Register*, 27 Apr. 1872, p.5. *Argus*, Melbourne, 17 May 1872, p.4.

# CONTRIBUTING TO SA'S HISTORY

## NOTICE BOARD AND TABLE

Have you noticed how a lot of our members and friends gravitate to our notice board and table?

Help is needed to supply posters, brochures etc. If you see something and think it may interest others, bring it along for the board or table. All help is greatly appreciated, with country items especially welcome.

Need help? See Colin Deed at meetings or phone 8277 2953

## THE SHED PRIZE

A big thank you to those who donated books etc, which has saved the Shed Prize from going into liquidation. The response to my request has been amazing, some 40 books till now, on a wide variety of topics. These donations will help by adding to our raffles.

When you've read your 'prized' book why not donate it back to the Society to be re-raffled, or share it with other members? Looking forward to more books and items in 2013. Please see me at meetings or phone 8277 2953 -  
*Colin Deed*

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