



# HISTORY • SA

Newsletter of The Historical Society of South Australia Incorporated

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July

2013

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Well, it was a very busy time for history during May for *About Time*, South Australia's History Festival. It may now be behind us, but our and many other historical societies around the State continue to promote and record local history. The organisers of *About Time* at History SA did a great job - well done!

Recently our members and friends have enjoyed addresses to the Society by Robert Foster and Karen Magee, and a visit to the SA Maritime Museum.

Our lecture programme continues in August and September when our guest speakers will be Skye Krichauff and Bruce Munday respectively. Skye speaks on settler descendants' memories and narratives of Aboriginal-settler interaction in the colonial mid-north and southern Flinders Ranges, and Bruce's topic is 'Those dry-stone walls: stories from South Australia's stone age', the subject of his recent book of the same name.

For our next *Visiting SA's History* we will be visiting Campbelltown's Food Trail on Wednesday 21 August. The trail is an initiative of the City of Campbelltown to promote the numerous makers of food and wine in its district. We will visit three enterprises, all operated by emigrant families who will tell us their story. This is 'modern history' not to be missed.

Then on Sunday 13 October, we head off to Yankalilla and Normanville as guests of the Yankalilla Historical Society. This is a full-day bus trip which will include lunch. We will visit a number of historic sites in the area including Bungala House at Yankalilla. Bookings and payments for both the Campbelltown and Yankalilla visits are now open and can be made at our lecture meetings or by contacting Margaret Cliff.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

One of South Australia's well-kept secrets was the subject of a recent article in *The Advertiser*.

I refer to Constantia Furniture of Port Lincoln. The maker of high quality timber furniture has been located in Port Lincoln since 1977. It was established by Bernhard Koker who migrated here from Namibia (formerly South West Africa), bringing with him five generations of skill as furniture craftsmen. Individual items of his furniture sell for \$50,000 to \$200,000.

I recall visiting Constantia Furniture's premises when on a visit to Eyre Peninsula some 20 years ago. The quality and design of Mr Koker's furniture was outstanding. Over time he had built up a collection of timber from about 150 exotic and native trees. I recall him saying he was especially fond of using the timber of the local Drooping Sheoak (*Allocasuarina verticillata*), which he was salvaging from the thousands of dead trees that literally litter the open limestone areas of southern Eyre Peninsula.

One of his commissions was to design and build the ornate central table and Hansard desk for the new Parliament House in Canberra in 1988. The table took two years to make and weighed two tonnes.

The business has now moved on to the next generation. Mr Koker's daughter, Summer, has taken over the running of the business over the past decade and is one of four furniture makers keeping the family tradition alive. To quote from Nigel Austin's article (*The Advertiser* 9 February 2013): "These trades that offer such great value need to be preserved," Ms Koker said. "My father encouraged me to develop my own concepts for design and utilise the constant technological advancements in the industry to avoid the physical impacts associated with what was once hard labour".

Some of the timbers she uses are no longer commercially available and can cost up to \$150,000 per cubic metre. 'Consideration for our environment is a priority and we have ... developed a range of traditional and organic wood finishes that have been improved for contemporary use and they are very popular throughout Australia,' said Ms Koker.

If you are travelling that way, do visit Constantia Furniture and take one of their guided tours; you will not be disappointed!

*Geoffrey Bishop*

## News from HSSA Grant Recipient

One of our grant recipients for 2012, Dr Daniela Rose, has forwarded an article from the Flinders Institute for Research in the Humanities newsletter *Viewpoints* No 2 /2013. Daniela, who is Lecturer, School of Language Studies, Flinders University, spoke at our meeting in September 2010 about the migration of Calabrians to SA.

The *Viewpoints* article is as follows: 'Daniela Rose has been awarded a Historical Society Annual Grant for a project titled "Italian Civil Alien Corps in South Australia, the forgotten enemy aliens". The project explores the experiences of Italian migrants who were obliged to serve in the Civil Alien Corps in SA during WWII working on projects of a non-combatant nature such as construction, salt production, cutting and handling timber and scrub clearing.

'Although numerous studies have focused on the internment of Italians during WWII, to date there has been very little research to explore the issues related to those enemy aliens who were removed from their usual occupations and loved ones to serve in the Civil Alien Corps and subjected to discrimination and loss of liberties.'

## Adelaide's Last Winery

Over the past year or so the Society has been giving our guest speakers (and raffling) wines from Patrilli Wines. As our Society has a strong Adelaide-based membership, I thought it appropriate to use wines from what is Adelaide's only remaining production winery, namely G. Patrilli & Co. Pty. Ltd. Now, having said that, I should say that Penfold Wines still produce wine at Magill from their famous Magill (formerly Grange) Vineyards. Patrilli are unique in that the whole of their production takes place at their cellars in the suburb of Dover Gardens.

The family-owned and operated company was established in 1926 by 21-year-old Giovanni Patrilli who had arrived from the Italian province of Piedmont in 1923. He and fellow immigrant, Christiano Bissacca, bought land and planted a vineyard at Dover Gardens which, at that time, was semi-rural, open land. Over the ensuing decades the vineyards were extended to 60 acres. Most of their wine was sold in bulk to merchants in Adelaide, Melbourne and Queensland or, in Italian tradition, to local customers at the cellar door.

Encroaching suburbia saw the company establish vineyards at

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Blewitt Springs and Aldinga. They also purchase grapes from growers in other districts of South Australia. Giovanni died in 1968 and the operations were taken over by his children, Peter, John, Geoffrey and Ines. In recent years, Geoff has handed over the winemaking to his nephew, James Mungall, who is assisted by Ben Heide.



The company logo (shown here) is Le Porteur, taken from an old French lithograph. Patritti Wines produce an extensive range of fine wines, both fortified styles and table wines. And, for the non-wine drinkers, they have developed a great range of non-alcoholic wines and fruit juices.

A visit to the winery to try their unfiltered apple juice (and the wines) is highly recommended.

*Geoffrey Bishop*

### Meetings of The Royal Geographical Society of South Australia Inc.

Thursday 22 August - Tony Rogers: *Weather and the science of settlement*

Thursday 26 September - Lewis Yerloburka O'Brien: *The role of the Kaurna people in their environment and interactions with other Aboriginal groups*

Meetings are held at Goodman Lecture Theatre, Adelaide Botanic Gardens (off Hackney Road) commencing at 5.30 pm - all most welcome.

In a certain sense all men are historians. Thomas Carlyle

Friday 2 August 7.30 pm

Skye Krichauff

*'It felt like we were the original owners': the benefits of drawing upon both history and memory when examining settler descendants' consciousness of the nineteenth century past.*

Skye Krichauff is a PhD student who is researching Aboriginal and settler histories in the mid-north and southern Flinders Ranges (the country of the Ngadjuri and Nukunu). Interested in the relationship between history and memory, Skye seeks to understand how and why stories of the colonial past are narrated, represented and remembered by individuals and collectives. Her research is based upon personal experience, interviews and site visits conducted with settler and Aboriginal descendants, local histories, and archival material. Between 2004-09 Skye worked with the Narungga Aboriginal Progress Association as a history researcher. Between 2004-08 she was employed as research assistant on an Australian Research Council funded project investigating frontier violence in



Skye Krichauff

South Australia and the Northern Territory. In 2008 Skye completed a MA through the University of Adelaide in which she explored relations between the Narungga and Europeans in the nineteenth century. *Nharangga Wargunni Bugi-Buggillu: A Journey through Narungga History* (based on her MA thesis) was published by Wakefield Press in 2011. Skye is currently involved with the international 'Social Memory and Historical Justice' project which is based at Swinburne University's Institute for Social Research in Melbourne.

# DISCOVERING SA'S HISTORY

Friday 6 September 7.30

Bruce Munday

*'Those dry-stone walls:  
stories from South  
Australia's stone age'*

Walls and fences mark and defend boundaries. As the early pastoralists pushed out into the unknown, stock never moved far from available water and were tended by shepherds. But when the vast pastoral runs were broken up for farming and shepherds saw a better life calling on the Victorian goldfields, the fence soon became a consuming interest.

Rural fences in the mid-nineteenth century were about function and cost. Very few post-and-rail fences have survived 150 or so years of fire, termites and rot, but we still have hundreds of kilometres of stone walling for various purposes and in various styles and materials. All built without mortar. Many are beautiful, most are heroic, and all tell us something about lives lived before ours.

Even the simplest man-made forms give us a glimpse of early European settlement here, while their durability states the obvious about the material and underlines the skill and toil of our forebears.



In South Australia it is difficult to come by historical mentions of dry-stone walls. Reading about early settlement, even where miles and miles of walls were being built, one gets the impression that this was pretty humdrum stuff – just putting up fences. But those were times when labour was cheap, materials free and lifestyles limited.

Bruce Munday's talk will use dry-stone walls as a framework for understanding aspects of early settlement in South Australia, and will highlight the challenge of conserving important elements of our heritage.

Bruce Munday grew up in Geelong with a burning ambition to play football for his beloved Cats.

When that was not going to happen, he completed a PhD in physics and then spent three years researching the magnetoelastic properties of antiferromagnetic materials. Alas, he found that his penchant for the esoteric cut him off from many of his friends. So

he moved into teaching where he had a captive audience.

In 1974 he and Kristin bought a farm in the Adelaide Hills. There they raised sheep, cattle and three children, and planted many trees. When the kids left home Bruce established his own business as a communications consultant in natural resource management and discovered how much he enjoyed sharing stories with people living on the land - particularly those who love the land and want to conserve it.

Kristin grew up in Melbourne lacking any ambition to play football but with an abiding passion for photography.

**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.**

## *Speakers for 2014*

If members can recommend a speaker for the Society's 2014 program, please contact Patricia Sumerling with the details.

Telephone: 8362 8262

Email:

[psumerling@optusnet.com.au](mailto:psumerling@optusnet.com.au)



The President, Geoffrey Bishop, with the guest speaker, Robert Foster, at the June meeting.

**But then history does not only consist of documents.**

**John Lukacs**

## Flavours of Campbelltown: The Food Trail

**Date - Wednesday 21  
August bus tour  
commencing at 10 am; meet  
in Hamilton Terrace,  
Newton (off Gorge Road)  
opposite La Vera Cheese  
(16-18 Hamilton Terrace)  
by 9.50 am.**

**Cost - \$25 per person  
payable before the visit**

**Bookings required -  
Margaret Cliff at meetings  
or ph. 8362 9517**

**Enquiries after Friday 16th  
August to Margaret Ford-  
Feckner ph. 0438838894**

A tour with a different flavour: the stories of three successful migrants working with smallgoods, coffee and cakes.

Travel in a bus to meet three migrants in their business premises. They will tell their stories of arriving in Adelaide and setting up successful businesses. Hear their first impressions of Adelaide and how they prospered. Jose arrived from Portugal in 1983 and started making traditional smallgoods like prosciutto, chorizo and jamon for which he has won awards and

acclaim. Mario Gabrielli saw his father install an espresso coffee machine in 1956 in a shop on the Glynde corner to provide new arrivals with coffee like they enjoyed in Italy. Finally we will meet Elbio, a Latin American, whose patisserie specialises in unique handmade gourmet cakes and pastries. Elbio embraces a Latino flavour influenced by Italian, French and Spanish cuisine. Both Jose and Elbio sell their products to top restaurants all over Australia. Come prepared to listen, buy and taste.

A long history of migration of people from many different backgrounds has enriched the cultural heritage of the city of Campbelltown. The changing food culture of the area has been just one of the many ways in which the city has benefitted from migration, predominantly from Italy. About 10 years ago people in the community became aware of the delicious range of food products made locally. Indeed the author believes the variety of produce equals that found in the Central Market. The council saw a 'buy local' possibility and produced a book, map and website to advertise businesses and nominated Michael Keelan as the inaugural ambassador of the *Flavours of Campbelltown Food Trail*. Nearly 20 food and beverage businesses in the area are publicised to encourage visiting, trying and buying. The

# VISITING SA'S HISTORY

food trail aims to encourage people to buy quality South Australian products. If you cannot come on the tour, get a group together and visit for yourself. Did you know there is a cheese factory making specialty Italian cheeses including stracchino? Did you know there is a bakery that makes specialty cakes sold to over 300 cafes and specialty cake shops all over Australia? Did you know that there is a smallgoods producer who has won national medals at major shows for his prosciutto and jamon? Did you know the oldest espresso machine in Adelaide sits on display in a coffee shop at Newton?

*Margaret Ford-Feckner*

History is the essence of innumerable biographies.  
Thomas Carlyle

**The National Centre of Biography** is digitising compendiums of Australian biography that are out of copyright and making them freely available via the web. South Australian items that are already available from <http://ncb.anu.edu.au/NCB-digitised-biographies> include:

Cockburn, Rodney. *Pastoral Pioneers of South Australia*, vols 1 and 2, indexed by A. Dorothy Aldersey, Blackwood, South Australia, Lynton Publications, 1974 (21 and 26 mbs)

Loyau, George E., *The Representative Men of South Australia*, Adelaide, G. Howell, 1883 (23 mbs)

Loyau, George E., *Notable South Australians, or, Colonists - Past and Present*, Adelaide, G.E. Loyau, 1885 (23 mbs)

*Brian Samuels*

From *The Advertiser*, 28 August 1937, p11. Contributed by Brian Samuels:

## Man Whose Job Is Letting People Have A Look In

by a Correspondent

LETTING people have a look in is the unusual job of Mr. George H. Marshall, of Clapham.

I first met him one afternoon recently when the sun and the wind were both doing their best to drive away threatening rain-clouds which still hung low over the Adelaide Plains.

He was sitting in his snug, pine-walled shop at the Windy Point reserve look-out on the main Adelaide-Belair road.

"You want to see the camera obscura?" he said. "Why, certainly."

Often I had heard of this camera obscura, but did not know quite what it was. Mr. Marshall soon put me wise. We went into a white-painted weather-board structure resembling a small lighthouse, perched on the edge of the reserve.

Inside in the darkness was a round concave table several feet

in diameter. It was painted a neutral color—ash grey. "Just as artists paint their canvases a neutral foundation color," explained Mr. Marshall.

Overhead on the roof a reflector picked up the view and through a powerful camera lens projected it on to the table, where it glowed in natural color.

As Mr. Marshall swung the viewfinder around he indicated places of interest. "There's Scotch College, and there's Centennial Hall . . ." and so on. He said that he knew most of the southern suburbs almost as well as if he had tramped every street of them.

I was gazing at a scene of wattle-clad hills climbing skywards when suddenly to my surprise a car flashed in the sunlight. It was just as if I had been looking at an oil-painting of a rural scene and one of the cows suddenly moved off behind the frame. It seemed hard to realise that it was not a painting.

On a clear day the camera has a range of 60 miles. Mr. Marshall is particularly proud of tributes paid the device by sightseers.

One noted Victorian Salvation Army woman leader even went so far as to preach a sermon on the camera obscura's beauties—or rather the view which it reflected.

# CONTRIBUTING TO SA'S HISTORY

Sunset is not the best time for a view, says Mr. Marshall. The best time is at dawn on a frosty morning when a ground mist is just fading away from the tree-tops. Two parties have made special trips up to Windy Point to see the dawn. One party came from Hilton and the other from Victoria. Several of the visitors stayed up at the reserve all night so as not to miss the dawn.

"Sunrise is more beautiful than sundown," said Mr. Marshall, "because at sundown the best part comes first, and then the colors fade dismally away, whereas at dawn it is becoming lighter and the whole scene is stirring into life."

By moonlight on a clear night, with the red glow from a passing train's furnace staining the dark valley below the sight is weird.

Mr. Marshall knows of only two other camera obscuras in Australia—one on a pylon of the Sydney Harbor bridge and the other at White Hill, Brisbane. The present camera at Windy Point is the latest of three. The first was wrecked during a storm on the night of the Port Pirie floods in August 1934. The second was wrecked by vandals in 1935.

Mr. Marshall's first camera obscura was in England—at his hotel in the well-known Happy

Valley, Llandudno, North Wales. Below the hotel, in the valley, was a natural amphitheatre on which during public holidays nigger minstrels played before the holiday-makers. The camera obscura was erected outside Mr. Marshall's hotel, so that his customers could see the minstrels.

Born in 1869 at Woolwich, on the Thames, Mr. Marshall first came out to Australia in 1888. After serving his time as an apprentice in the sheet-metal trade in Adelaide he returned by wind-jammer to England in 1890. Between then and 1913, when he returned to Australia, he tackled almost every kind of job. After coming back to Adelaide he followed his trade until the depression. Since then he has been at Windy Point.

During the summer he sleeps at Windy Point on a level plot of ground below the main reserve. With the stars twinkling above him and the city lights blazing below he says "It's a good life."

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God alone knows the future,  
but only an historian can alter  
the past.

Ambrose Bierce

# 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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