



No. 234 March 2016

From the President

As I mentioned in our last newsletter, the recent passing of Ron Gibbs meant that I came into possession of copies of the minutes of many of the early meetings of the society, along with several letters between our founders at the time of the society's establishment. Rather than 'dry and dusty' records of our society's past, the documents bring our past to life, giving interesting insights into the actions and thoughts of our founders, or, in this month's selection suggesting how our beginning might have been quite different.

Prior to the July 19, 1974, inaugural meeting of the Historical Society of South Australia at the Historical Museum at the rear of the Art Gallery, Brian Samuels actively sought the support of the State's political leaders for South Australian history. Writing in the context of what he described as 'the burgeoning interest in local history and the growth of S.A. history in the schools', Brian, writing on 4 September 1973, to

The Hon. D.A. Dunstan, then Minister for Tourism and Development as well as Premier, noted the need for a historical society devoted to 'the whole extent of South Australian history', providing such services as: 'a clearing house for research, compiling and publishing research guides; the dissemination of knowledge via lectures, a journal and television; a society where the public, teachers, journalists and researchers can share their interests, an advisory service for country people'.

He urged the creation of a History Section in the government bureaucracy whose roles could include 'seeing that contemporary history is written as well and as soon as possible as an aid to decision makers and commentators at all levels, advising the Department of Conservation and Environment, publishing small booklets on the State's history, establishing new and liaising with existing historical groups and organising monthly meetings which may take on a life

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of their own as a S.A. Historical Society'. Less than two months later Brian wrote again to Dunstan with a grander still vision. Envisioning the consequences of 'the forthcoming decentralization' in the State, he suggested to Dunstan that consideration of the existing inhabitants and environment in any decentralisation meant that each new region should have a 'team of resident regional officers', comprising '1 town planner, 1 social worker/sociologist, 1 historian'. He goes on in his letter to describe in some detail the roles these officers could and should play. Sadly, for society in general and professional historians in particular, Brian's vision was not implemented, at least in the format he envisaged.

Our year's field trip program got underway with February's visit to the Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries Costume Exhibition at Ayers House. It being the last day but one of the exhibit, Ayers House was literally packed with visitors. Whilst the bulk of the visitors were women, I was pleased to be joined by a few males. Rumour has it that the success of this event has encouraged the National Trust to pursue opportunities to host similar exhibitions in the near future. The success also highlights the power of such events, albeit ones rooted in television dramas,

to connect a new audience with the events and heritage of our past.

In April we have the pleasure of hosting a tour of the history of Adelaide's water infrastructure, chaperoned by Margaret Ford, assisted by Richard Venus (see page 6). Something we rely on every day and often take for granted, our water supply has a fascinating history. From the first weir on the Torrens, just up the Gorge Road, to the first reservoir for Adelaide, in 1860, at Thorndon Park, our tour follows the track of the water pipes to Botanic Road, where one stone octagonal valve house still exists, rebuilt near its original site. We conclude by visiting the two water tanks that stored water from Thorndon Park and further distributed it south and north. One in North Adelaide served Port Adelaide while Glenelg was served by one in the South Parklands. Now filled in, it is next to one of the remaining benchmarks in Adelaide.

I am pleased to report that membership renewals have been coming in steadily since the start of the year and we have been pleased to welcome new members and the return of lapsed members. A healthy membership strengthens the ability of the society to support new initiatives, as well as to maintain our traditional activities. In the

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interests of ensuring the future viability of our annual grants program, the Council recently, and reluctantly, took the decision to defer the next round of grants until 2018, with applications due during 2017. With the ongoing support from members and an improving national economic outlook in coming years, I am hopeful our grants program, something I regard as a core element of the society's activities, will be back better and stronger.

Yours in history,

Andrew Buxton, President

Resignation from Council

Due to the pressure of other commitments, Elspeth Grant has resigned from the Council of our Society. We thank her for her contribution, and wish her well in her future endeavours.

The website of the Historical Society of South Australia is again up and running. Consult it at www.hssa.org.au

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is given that the **Annual General Meeting** of the Historical Society of South Australia Incorporated will be held at 7.30 pm on Friday 6 May 2016 at the Burnside Community Centre.

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

For further information please contact Anthea Buxton on 0417 834 990.

Andrew Buxton, President

Notable South Australian history books

Have you recently read any books on South Australian history that really impressed you?

If so, why not nominate it (or them) for the HSSA's Keain Medal for the South Australian Historical Book of the Year? To be eligible for consideration for this year's award, the book must have been published during 2015.

Nomination forms are available at our monthly meetings or from Geoffrey Bishop (email gcbishop@westnet.com.au). Entries close at the end of April and the award will be presented at a meeting later in the year.

Friday 1 April 7.30 pm

Paul Stark

The portable cottages of Henry Manning: system building meets systematic colonization

The 1830s in Britain was arguably one of the most exciting decades in human history - the Age of Reason was being translated into an Age of Wonder.

It is no coincidence that in this decade, the term 'scientist' was coined, Faraday heralded the age of electricity and Darwin was aboard *Beagle*. Perilous questions of democracy emerged from the Great Reform debates and links in the Great Chain of Being were stretching to breaking point.

Enter industrious men and their families into a world of both commerce and populations on the move: new worlds initially defined not so much by the extent of land colonised but the means of their provisioning from home. Two such men were the entrepreneurial carpenter Henry Manning and the workaholic apostle of progress, John Claudius Loudon. The former successfully constructed 'flat pack' cottages in some volume, the latter, described as a horticultural John Knox, would influence the pattern of streetscapes and landscapes



A Manning cottage at Seppeltsfield

way beyond his shortened life. They converge in this review of Manning's portable cottages brought to Adelaide, and Loudon's lavish description of one in his *Encyclopaedia* of 1833.

Paul Stark is a registered architect and has a long association with heritage conservation in SA. He has represented the field in various ways including written reports, evidence to Courts, papers to international and national conferences, and interviews on radio and television. Paul managed the City Council's Heritage Incentives Scheme, growing the annual grants scheme from \$100k to over \$1M in some years. His advocacy of good conservation extended to collaborating with other States, resulting in two national technical conservation guides (one gained a national award). He has also been employed by Government as a past Minister's delegate on State heritage matters and assisting the urban design of historic precincts.

Friday 6 May 7.30 pm

Jo Peoples

Dorrit Black and Les Ballets Contemporains

Known largely for her landscapes and her support of modern art, Dorrit Black also studied impressionism. After several trips to Europe to undertake further studies, she returned to live in Adelaide in 1935. Several years later in 1938 a young man called Joseph Siebert, son of the local undertaker Frank Siebert, established his own dance company which he named Les Ballets Contemporains. What drew Dorrit Black to design sets and costumes for several productions in this small local company in the 1940s? And even to play a small walk-on role in one of these ballets?

Jo Peoples is an actress, musician (double bass) and voice teacher, and for 35 years was Curator/Exhibition Coordinator for the Performing Arts Collection, which she helped Colin Ballantyne establish in 1979. As an actress she has appeared in over 50 stage productions and some minor film roles (most notably playing Cate Blanchett's mother in



Dorrit Black

'Parklands'), played in the pit for countless stage musicals, in the back-up orchestra for George Benson and Olivia Newton John, and has been a member of the Unley Symphony Orchestra (with whom she still plays) since 1980. She retired from the Performing Arts Collection at the end of 2014.

This meeting will be a contribution to HistorySA's 2016 History Festival.

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, Tusmore.

DISCOVER THE HISTORY OF ADELAIDE'S FIRST RESERVOIR, THORNDON PARK - BUS TOUR, WEDNESDAY 20 APRIL

Discover the history of Adelaide's first reservoir, Thorndon Park (1860). See where the first weir in the upper Torrens was situated and follow the distribution of water from Thorndon Park, down Payneham Road to southern and northern collecting tanks. See a valve house and a benchmark and understand the part they played in establishing the infrastructure of Adelaide for a gravity-fed system of water distribution.

Gather at the Thorndon Park Reservoir carpark, at 5 Hamilton Terrace, Paradise, at the northern end of Stradbroke Road, at 9.45 am on Wednesday 20 April. The tour will begin at 10:00 am sharp. It is due to conclude at the same carpark at 1:00 pm.

The tour host is Margaret Ford, assisted by Richard Venus. Margaret can be contacted at 0438838894 for more information. And Margaret will be at the Society's April meeting to answer questions.

The cost of the tour is \$25. Book with Margaret Cliff at 8362 9517 or at a meeting. Book early as there are only 20 spaces on the bus.

Wear walking shoes, bring a hat and any food or water you want.

Contributing to SA's History

What are you reading?

E.P.F. Lynch (edited by Will Davies), *Somme Mud*, Random House Australia 2006. - This year, 2016, marks the centenary of the campaigns on the Somme during World War I. Private Edward Lynch enlisted in the Australian Army aged 18 and served in France for the whole of his war service. On his return to Australia in 1919, Lynch wrote *Somme Mud* in pencil in 20 school exercise books, perhaps in the hope of coming to terms with all that he had witnessed and experienced in the Somme trenches. His writings remained known only to Lynch's family until 2002 when his grandson lent them (now typed) to Will Davies. Lynch wrote his story as a novel but it is apparent that the main character's experiences are his experiences. It is a compelling story of friendships that developed under unbelievably awful conditions. The story is told with dignity and wit.

Geoffrey Bishop

Heike B Gortemaker, *Eva Braun: Life with Hitler*, 2011. - I found this 'ground breaking biography' by 'one of Germany's leading young historians' in an Op Shop and couldn't resist buying it for a dollar. Boy, oh boy, was I in for a page-turner. How much did any of us know about Eva Braun, Hitler's devoted mistress, and wife but for merely two days? Always very curious about her, I confess to knowing very little. Claimed as the first comprehensive biography about her, this is a riveting and absorbing account of how she, as assistant to Hitler's photographer, lived in his world from the mid 1930s, having first met him in 1929 when she was only 17. 'A fiercely loyal companion', she was a willing victim when she went to her death,

undoubtedly loved by Hitler, as the First Lady of the Third Reich and whose very existence was kept secret until near the end of the war. There are also many new and startling insights into Hitler's relationship with the men at the top that might surprise you. Certainly stuff I have never read before. The book has passed through several friends rather briskly, so frank and highly readable was it. Out of five, it certainly nudges five stars for me.

Patricia Sumerling

Stuart Macintyre, *Australia's Boldest Experiment, War and reconstruction in the 1940s*, Newsouth, 2015. - A very readable text based on vast research. Examining a critical decade in Australia's modern history. The key players include Curtin, Chifley, Menzies, Dedman, and Coombs.

Robert Martin

Readers are invited to share information on books they have been reading. The entries should be short, giving title, author, publisher and a short comment on why you like the book. We are restricting this to books on history, but from wherever, not just South Australia or Australia. Send your contribution to the Editor, Robert Martin, at psumerling@optusnet.com.au

Wakefield Press, our generous sponsors, have moved their premises to 16 Rose Street, Mile End. The new telephone number is 8352 4455.

The Baker's Flat Trouble

[The area of Kapunda situated east of the mine site was occupied by Irish families who paid no rent or taxes. Moves to evict them were for a long period unsuccessful. The 'Circle of Friends' who published *Memories of Kapunda and District* in 1929 did not indicate the individual authors, but this extract from Chapter 11 was written by Mr J. von Bertouch. He is mentioned in the text as a surveyor. *Maurice Keain*]

A serious matter was the eviction of adverse occupiers of land owned by registered proprietors of the land known as Baker's Flat. Various efforts by former owners to take possession by force met with discomfoting results. Once a labourer while attempting to fence the land, was tarred and feathered, and the proprietor, James White, generally known as "Nobby White," is reported to have been thrown into the River Light; and James Wharton White was met and pelted with rotten eggs. The men remained in their huts while the women attacked, and he had to retreat very much discomfoted. Later, when men began to fence, women sat in the post holes, and defied the workers to put them out. On another occasion, in attempting to survey the property, Colonel Lovely, a licensed surveyor, was not permitted to carry out the

survey. However, he managed a survey by triangulation methods to fix the positions of fences, buildings, &c., from high points of surrounding hills, but of no practical results for the R.P. [Real Property: *Ed.*] Act title holders. At a later date, when Mr. Fawcett became the proprietor, he was determined to fence his part of the land after the decease of an adverse occupier named Goorty, and instructed J. von Bertouch, a licensed surveyor, to define his boundaries, with the promise of police protection. That surveyor, however, determined it wiser not to unduly incite the occupiers and do the survey; but Mr. Fawcett, fearing trouble, caused the police to be ready behind a hill nearby while the surveyor was at work. When the surveyor had been at work a short time, he observed the occupants of the huts excitedly running from house to house (like swarms of ants) in preparation for attack. Twenty eight women and five men marched from the southern end of the property, and after crossing the River Light they encountered a teamster with a waggon load of fence posts. The teamster was roughly handled, the horses were unhitched, and the load of posts capsized - or thrown out - thence the crowd proceeded towards the surveyor; each and all had heavy sticks, used as walking sticks, but presumably intended for use as shillelaghs. On approaching within a chain of the surveyor he

greeted them with, "Good morning to you all," and receiving no response, but on nearer approach to him he said, "Begorra, can't you speak, and can't you answer when a man bids you good morning?" They remained silent, but surrounded the surveyor, getting in his way while chaining with his clerk assistant. The Theodolite had been removed to safety behind the hill, where the police were in hiding while the gang attacked the teamster. Finding the people obstructing his work, the surveyor jokingly asked them if they wanted a job, offering them 7/6 per day, but as he said he could not afford to employ them all for he was only earning his salt, they began to comprehend that he was not at war with them and let him go on chaining. However, three of the men followed him, and later said to Mr. von Bertouch, "We did not like to attack you, as you have always been our friend at election times." The survey lines had not been defined by pegs, but cunningly by small white stones laid exactly on the line as a guide for the fencers. These white stones remained unnoticed by the opponents, but were a good guide to the fencers. The fencers set to work daily, but each night the "Flat" people tore up the posts and wires when re-erected. Day and night both parties kept going, the latter destroying the work of the former. Thereafter Supreme Court action started to settle the

controversy. Mr. P. McM. Glynn acted for the defence of the adverse occupiers, and Mr. A.W. Piper, K. C., represented the land owner. The Court procedure was very interesting, and the unusual circumstances created considerable public interest. Witnesses of both sides were called and cross-examined, and arguments on legal and technical points raised. Then the surveyor, Mr. von Bertouch, was called by Mr. Glynn, who tried for a considerable time to trip the surveyor into admission that fence posts, having a thickness, must, if standing on a boundary line, be partly on the land and partly on the road. However, the surveyor maintained that in country lands, fence posts, although having thickness, were deemed to be on the line, and would not admit that part of the posts were on the road proper. Eventually the Judge (if memory is correct it was Judge Bunday), who tried the case told Mr. Glynn that Mr. von Bertouch knew what he (Mr. Glynn) wanted to be admitted, but stuck to his interpretation, and answered accordingly. The case went in favour of the owner of the land, but the Judge directed or explained how, under circumstances, the occupiers could obtain a R. P. Act title for the definitely walled in or fenced in little blocks surrounding their occupied huts or homes for a lengthened period of 40 years. The defeated parties requested

their solicitor for an explanation in the precincts of the Court, but receiving none approached the surveyor, who gave them the desired explanation. After that the surveyor had their instructions to obtain R. P. Act titles for their severally occupied little pieces of land, and no further enmity was shown, and thus ended the Baker's Flat trouble.

[*Editor's note:* The above Court case took place in 1902.]

'It may seem unfashionable to say so, but historians should seize the imagination as well as the intellect. History is, in a sense, a story, a narrative of adventure and of vision, of character and of incident. It is also a portrait of the great general drama of the human spirit.' - Peter Ackroyd

'A man acquainted with history may, in some respect, be said to have lived from the beginning of the world, and to have been making continual additions to his stock of knowledge in every century.'

- David Hume

From Brian Samuels:

There are new South Australian newspapers in Trove for you to enjoy. Find them here:
<http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper?q=>

Australian Christian

Commonwealth (1901 - 40)

Blyth Agriculturist (1908 - 54)

Border Chronicle (Bordertown, 1908 - 50)

Christian Colonist (1878 - 94)

Critic (Adelaide, 1897-1924)

The Express (Adelaide, 1922 - 3)

Glenelg Guardian (1914 - 54)

The Pennant (Penola, 1946 - 54)

Port Adelaide News (1904)

Port Adelaide News (1913 - 33)

Quorn Mercury (1895 - 1954)

Sport (Adelaide, 1911 - 48)

The Terowie Enterprise (1884 - 91)

Yorke's Peninsula Advertiser (1878 - 1922)

Yorke's Peninsula Advertiser and Miners' and Farmers' Journal (1875 - 8)

Yorke's Peninsula Advertiser and Miners' News (1872 - 4)

Contributing to SA's History

NOTICE BOARD and TABLE

The Notice Board and Table need your help in supply. Whether it is advertising for other clubs or societies, notices, brochures, booklets etc, all would be greatly appreciated.

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

THE SHED PRIZE

Your donated book(s) have been so good it has enabled The Shed Prize to be 2 - 3 books per raffle which in turn gives the ticket holder a better chance of scoring a prize.

Looking forward to more books in 2016. If you need help to carry or collect, please see Colin Deed at meetings or phone 8277 2953.

**Historical Society of South
Australia Inc. PO Box 519
Kent Town SA 5071**

Email: secretary@hssa.org.au

Website: www.hssa.org.au

President: Mr Andrew Buxton

Vice-President: Dr Adrian Brown

Secretary: Ms Anthea Buxton
0417 834 990

Treasurer: Ms Anne Bowman:
8362 7772

Bookings: Ms Margaret Cliff:
8362 9517

Newsletter Editor: Mr Robert
Martin 8362 8262
psumerling@optusnet.com.au

Journal Editor: Professor Peter
Monteath 8201 5568
peter.monteath@flinders.edu.au

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for submission of articles for the
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