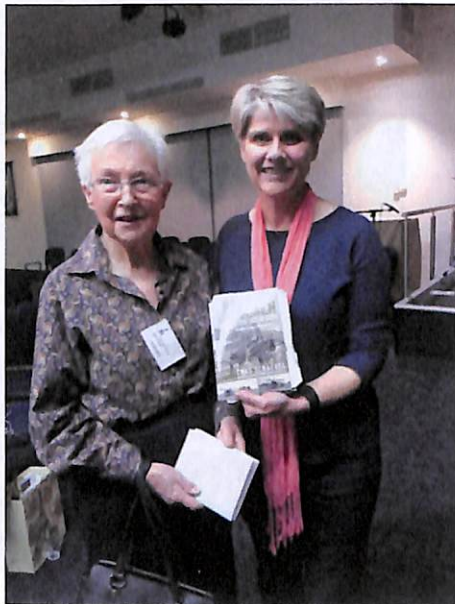


No. 254 November 2019

From the President

The Council of the Historical Society of South Australia wishes the membership everything good for Christmas and the New Year. We look forward to seeing you at meetings in 2020!



Helen Bell, an HSSA member, searched for memorabilia in her home to share with our October guest speaker Lainie Anderson, who spoke on the Ross and Keith Smith brothers who won the air race from London to Darwin in 1919.



Dr Gertrude Glossip, aka Will Sergeant, addresses the November meeting.

From the President

Walking tour – ‘Town Hall Square’

On 8 October a small group of members were guided around Adelaide Town Hall buildings by member Glen Woodward who has been a volunteer Town Hall Guide for 27 years.

The Italianate architecture of the Town Hall tower, in Glen Osmond freestone by Edmund Wright, and the attached Prince Alfred Hotel was studied.

The old Treasury, built in three stages over 20 years, still has part of the 1839 wall by Kingston. The tunnels, with their gold escort story, intrigue all visitors.

At the Stow Memorial Church (Pilgrim Church) their guide Brian Ward told the history of the 1867 building - its unity with the Wesleyan Pirie St church and transfer of their organ, windows and woodwork in 1970. At the rear is the unique ‘Meeting Hall’ also by Edmund Wright. It was attached to the rear of the Pirie St church which was demolished by the Adelaide City Council for the Col Light Centre. Epworth House was saved.

The Meeting Hall was used for Sunday School, Prince Alfred College’s first classes and also

Townsend’s first ‘School For The Blind’.

This cluster of buildings holds the history of Adelaide in the 1850s-60s.

Glen Woodward

Look out for our program of tours and excursions in 2020!



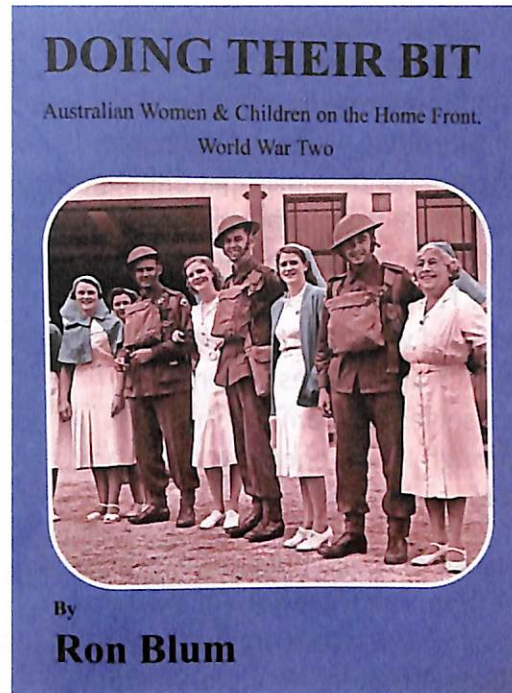
HSSA member Sally Hopton found at home a rare piece of memorabilia, a 1920 invitation to the Ross and Keith Smith brothers event held at Osborne, and shared it with our October guest speaker Lainie Anderson.

BOOK REVIEW

Ron Blum, *Doing Their Bit: Australian Women & Children on the Home Front, World War Two*, Ron Blum, Oaklands Park 2019

Many Baby Boomers grew up hearing wartime stories from their mothers: of food and petrol rationing; of women in munitions work; of knitting socks and sending food parcels to men in the war zones; of making frocks from old curtains; of digging ditches as air-raid shelters. It had some fascination (depending on the skill of the teller) but most likely went in one ear and out the other, mainly because of the lack of specific details.

Ron Blum's *Doing Their Bit* certainly packs plenty of detail into an amazingly slim package. In an A4 illustrated history of just 78 pages we learn via 18 well-organised chapters of the roles of the revived Cheer-Up Society, the Schools Patriotic Fund (SPF), the SPF Hostel, the author's own memories of war-time schooldays, the Royal Navy Friendly Union (a strictly South Australian body), the Girl Guides Thrift Campaign, the Fighting Forces Comfort Fund, the Red Cross at Home, various means of war-time fundraising, the Country Women's Association, women munitions workers, the Australian Women's Land Army, the Australian Women's Army Service, the Women's Royal Australian



Naval Service, the Women's Air Training Corps, the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force, radar stations and a final article titled 'SA Women's Great War Effort' which appeared in *The Advertiser* on Victory in the Pacific (VP) Day on 15 August 1945.

Acronyms abound but a helpful list of abbreviations is listed in the preliminary pages.

The core images are the magnificent photographs from the Krischock Studio owned by Blum. The studio founded by Harry Krischock (who died in 1941) provided photographs to the *Advertiser* and its weekend paper, the *Chronicle*, from 1910 and was carried on by his sons Keith and Bill. As Blum points out in his preface most of the 193 photos in the book were taken by Bill Krischock so that this is predominantly an Adelaide story. However, in order to provide a wider coverage other pictures were sourced from the *Argus* Newspaper Collection held in the State Library of Victoria.

It is easy enough to slap a book of photographs together but what is

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truly exceptional about *Doing Their Bit* is the utmost care with which Blum as designer (as well as author and publisher) has produced each page, frequently adding pictures of badges, coupons, recruiting posters and cartoons to enrich an enthralling story. The greatest care has also been exercised with picture captions (some of which are mini-essays in themselves) and among the most thorough I have encountered in any book.

Because of the richness of the imagery whether it be the photo of the Legacy boys and SPF lads marching in King William Street in the Victory Parade; the teenagers (male and female) at Pope Industries, Beverley working on artillery shell components; Prime Minister Robert Menzies inspecting a .303 cartridge-making machine at the munitions factory at Hendon; or women of the Land Army operating a grain harvester; it is easy to overlook the high-quality of the text.

To do so would be a mistake because Blum's writing is wonderfully succinct and adds so much to the pictures.

On page 49, for example, is a superb shot of female workers on a train to the Salisbury Munitions complex. Blum tells us that this complex was huge, 'about 20 square kilometres in size' and linked with 66 km of roads.

In 1941 a 6 km branch railway line was run from the existing broad gauge going north to Port Pirie, to the Salisbury plant with three stations within the complex for workers. 25 passenger trains ran to the site daily, 19 from the Adelaide Railway Station, six from

Gawler and elsewhere, serving three shifts per day, six days a week. Freight trains also went to the Salisbury plant sidings running to a number of the buildings. A rail loop at the end of the track enabled trains to return without uncoupling the engines. In addition a narrow gauge tramway connected many buildings.

On page 22 there are three photographs of 10 and 11-year-old John Dinning of Mundalla who earned many badges from the Schools Patriotic Fund for collecting bones which were then transported to the city. Of itself this would not explain much but Blum reveals that:

With the fall of the phosphate island of Nauru in August, 1942 fertiliser in Australia became in short supply and threatened food and crop productivity ... Animal bones contain a lot of nitrogen and phosphorus and other mineral substances and after grinding down and mixing with slaughter-house waste can be made into bone meal, a slow release fertiliser rich in phosphorus and protein.

On the previous page there is also a lovely personal touch with the author explaining that he had become an SPFer at the age of seven and earned an SPF badge with six bars (illustrated) which were first issued in 1940. He then adds:

The next step would be to aim for a spitfire plane badge ... To do this first collect five celluloid wings ... each worth £1 of scrap. The set could then

be redeemed for the fighter plane. The war ended before the author could achieve his spitfire.

War's end sounds disappointing!

Ron Blum is to be congratulated for this absolutely engaging history as are Open Book Howden for the high-

A QUICK TRIP TO BROKEN HILL

Whilst sorting through the Society's archival collection, Colin Deed came across the following account of a trip to Broken Hill in 1888. It was written by Edmund Milne Harral, an illustrator and commercial artist working for the 'Pictorial Australian', and submitted to the Society 20 or more years ago by his grand-daughter Margaret Berndt. Harral came to South Australia in 1885 in a vain attempt to recover from tuberculosis. He died in 1891. This letter was addressed to his brother William back in England after the trip to Broken Hill over the days 11-13 January 1888. An official party was taken to the opening of the Silverton Tramway, which ran from Cockburn on the South Australian border to Broken Hill via Silverton, and completed Broken Hill's rail connection with Adelaide. Harral made sketches (see overleaf) which appeared in the 'Pictorial Australian' on 1 February 1888. I have added a few endnotes to make things clearer. – Editor.

quality printing and reproduction of the illustrative material. Only 200 copies have been printed so it is hoped that an enterprising publisher might take the opportunity to reprint the work and make it available to the much wider audience it deserves.

Bernard Whimpress

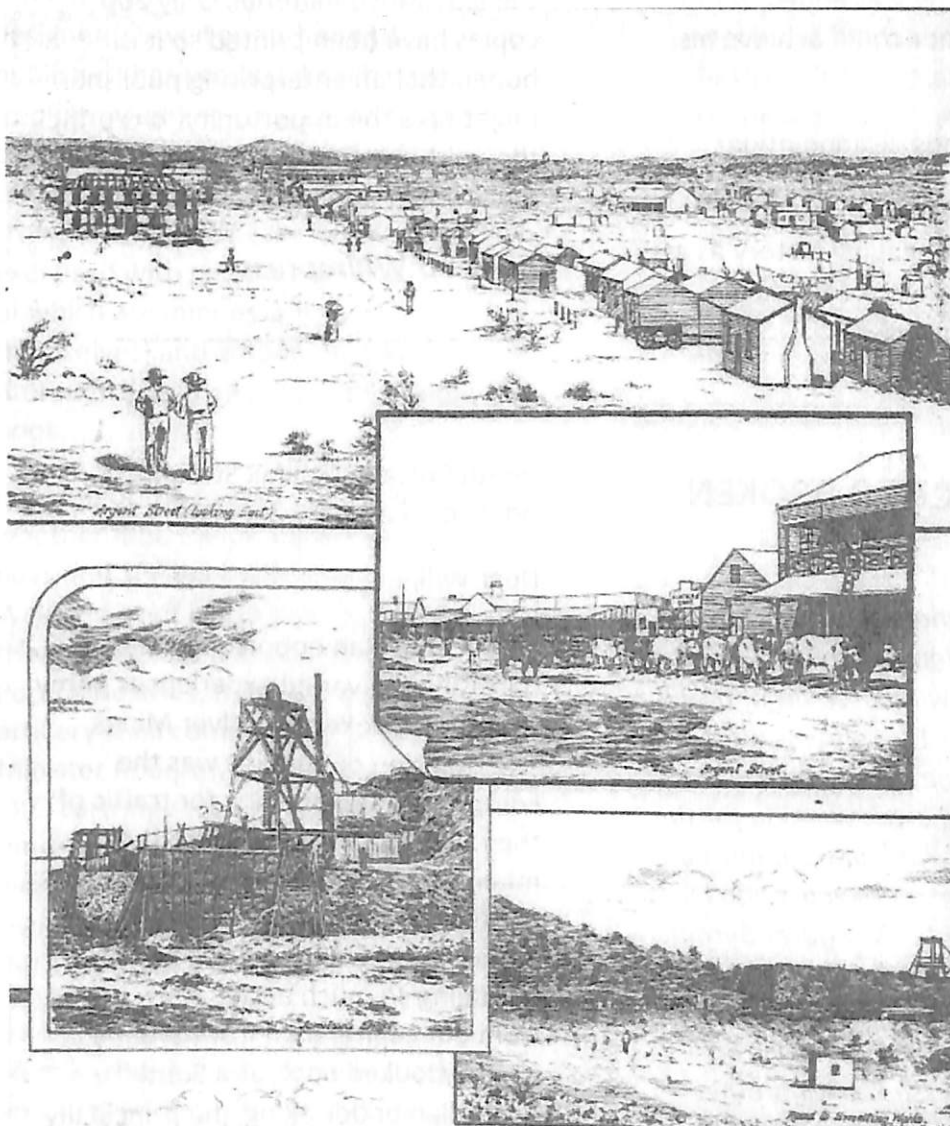
Heath Cottage, Halifax Street,
Adelaide, February 2nd 1888

Dear Will,

At last I have an opportunity of narrating the varied experiences of my trip to the Broken Hill Silver Mines. The occasion of our visit was the completion and opening for traffic of the railway from Adelaide to the mining district. This, now world famous, silver field is in New South Wales several miles over the border, but being so much easier of access from our capital than from Sydney, it is really looked upon as a South Australian undertaking and principally worked with S.A. money.

The company (1) issued only 50 invitations, 25 for N.S.W. and 25 for our colony, so considered myself most fortunate in receiving one as representative of the only Adelaide illustrated newspaper. Our party included the principal members of the Government, Sir E. Smith (2) and the Duke of Manchester (3). I may here say that all fared exactly the same in all respects for out here, as in America, there is little starch in society.

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The distance to B. H. is 334 miles. We left Adelaide at 7 a.m. and at 9 a.m. arrived at Riverton to a sumptuous breakfast. Soon after leaving here we changed to the narrow gauge and for the remainder of the journey travelled in luxurious saloon cars. At the end of the train was a van well supplied with edibles and liquids and with a couple of waiters to serve them. At each stoppage the latter came round to supply us with ice soda water etc etc, and you will understand how we relished these creature comforts when the thermometer registered 100 degrees in the shade. The railway

passes through what is usually named the South Australian desert, the most dreary arid, trackless waste one could conceive – East West South and North, nothing but scrub, which, I should think, extends the way we journeyed, about 200 miles. But midway across this barren land we came upon a most delightful oasis, viz, a little wayside station (4) where a jolly good dinner of several courses awaited our devouring, for this was 7 p.m. and our appetites were keen. Having done justice to the good things provided, we resumed the journey and about 9

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p.m. were all deposited at Silverton, there to spend the night.

It was a night too. I shared an apartment with two other fellows, one a N.S.W. legislator who came to bed in the small hours Very sick. The heat was fearful. I don't think I slept many minutes altogether, was glad to tumble out soon after daybreak and so got my sketches made of this little township before breakfast. We made a start about 9 a.m. and quickly reached our destination, where a motley crowd awaited the arrival of the train.

After the Duke had declared the railway open we were taken to this celebrated mine and shown the different workings and processes of extracting the silver from the ore. It was most interesting and to those who happened to be shareholders, a most gratifying sight. It is only two years since operations were commenced here and now 60,000 oz. of silver are turned out per week: and dividends amounting to £225,000 have already been paid. The original Broken Hill mine shares were issued at £20 per share. Today they are eagerly bought at £320.

Around this mine have sprung up many others – some may prove good, but most profitless. No doubt, anyhow, the mining fever is so great here now that shares in everything are rising tremendously. Investors and brokers are making fabulous sums of money, some even £10,000 per week. The reaction will come sooner or later, but those who have their money in the 2 or 3 original mines have not much cause for fear as the prospect for them is brilliant. Of course to buy at the present price is absurd. One

street in Adelaide is a scene of great excitement every day – hundreds of people representing all classes of the community buying and selling shares (5).

The remainder of the day I spent in sketching and never shall I forget the trying ordeal through which I had to pass – Imagine a place so completely burnt up, not a blade of grass, not a particle of shelter and the heat of the sun about 170 degrees (6); add to this dust such as I never experienced before (enveloping the place like a fog) and you may perhaps realize my position in having to sketch in the open. Must also tell you that the ground was so terribly hot that all the time had to keep picking my feet up, for it felt like standing on hot coals – Brothers of the Brush in England, how would you like to sketch under these conditions! The township would present a novel experience to an English eye, but is, without exception, the vilest place I ever saw. The habitations are principally wood or iron and a good number reside under canvas.

In the evening we were entertained with a splendid banquet such as one would expect in a city and not in an outlandish place like this.

We turned our backs on Broken Hill about midnight and commenced the homeward journey during which we were as hospitably treated as on the outward trip. I should dread spending a night in Broken Hill for, of course the rough element strongly predominates and I was told that as the night wore on it was pandemonium. The miners make plenty of money and spend it in riotous living.

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I arrived home on the Friday afternoon, very tired and sleepy, but the trip was enjoyable, interesting and novel to see. Our entertainment must have cost the company several hundred pounds for no expense was spared and we were royally treated.

Since writing about those shares they have risen from £320 to £380!!

Edmund

(1) The Silverton Tramway Company.

(2) Sir Edwin T. Smith (1830-1919), brewer, politician and philanthropist, was on this occasion the Mayor of Adelaide.

(3) William Drogo Montagu, 7th Duke of Manchester (1823-90), succeeded to the dukedom in 1855. Later in the month of January 1888 he was in Sydney for the celebrations to mark the 'centenary of Australia' (one hundred years after the First Fleet arrived). He was an investor in mines and land in Australia but regretted he had left it too late to buy Broken Hill shares.

(4) This was at Mannahill.

(5) The Stock Exchange was in Pirie Street at this time.

(6) This Fahrenheit temperature is of course an exaggeration.

WHAT ARE YOU READING?

Angela Woollacott, *Don Dunstan: The visionary politician who changed Australia* (Crows Nest NSW, Allen & Unwin, 2019)

At last, 40 years after he resigned as premier, and 20 years after his death, we have a full biography of Don Dunstan. By any account, he was one

of the most important figures in the 20th century history of South Australia, and this book argues it was the same for Australia. I thought I knew a lot about Don, but I learned much more from this fine book.

Robert Martin

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