

No. 257 May 2020

## **From the President**

### Editorial / Important Notice

While the COVID pandemic requires the Historical Society of SA to suspend monthly meetings and other gatherings, your Council members are mindful of maintaining communication with the membership, and providing them with significant resources, news and information. You will note this May issue of the HSSA Newsletter is an extra-large one. The editor received more than the average number of contributions from authors who are keeping South Australia's history alive by offering members, who are mostly staying at home during the pandemic, a diversity of articles and content to engage them.

### Meetings for the remainder of 2020

The members' Meetings scheduled for 3 April, 1 May and 5 June have been formally cancelled.

Dates of "Maybe" formal Meetings for the remainder of the year:

3 July

7 August

4 September

2 October

6 November

**NOTE = Confirmation of the date of the next, face-to-face members' meeting will be circulated either in our next Newsletter, or by letter or email, and on the 'news' field of the HSSA website, or on our HSSA Facebook page. PLEASE WAIT FOR CONFIRMATION OF THE DATE OF OUR NEXT MEETING.** This confirmation will be determined by the health officials and our government announcing that the rules for staying at home, social distancing and restricted meeting sizes have been somewhat relaxed. HSSA members and

guests returning to monthly meetings can feel safe once again to resume routines. Our venue has the facility for members to sit at a distance still if they choose to.

The Council is seeking to rebook 2020 speakers for 2021.

#### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The AGM for 2020 will be conducted at the first confirmed meeting later this year. It will occur before the General Meeting and Guest Speaker commence and include brief President and Treasurer's Reports and matters such as elections and membership.

Members may discover non-fiction books with a South Australian historical content they are enthused to share. The Wakefield Press catalogue or wandering through good bookshops or antique bookshops will give readers good ideas. Some book retail outlets may offer home deliveries to minimise social contact and leaving home. You can acknowledge an author by nominating their book for a Keain Medal.

#### **Keain Medal nominations**

The latest deadline for submitting nominations in 2020 was 17 April and the medal presentation was to be at the May meeting. These two occasions have been postponed to a date later in the year, yet to be confirmed. There will be a Keain Medal award this year. Please check confirmation of the dates for these two events by reading the next HSSA Newsletter.

The Keain Medal nomination form is available in both the January 2020 Newsletter and on our HSSA website. Print it off for posting or complete it online. Entries should reach our Secretary, Bridget Jolly as soon as they are completed. See her postal and email contact details on the back page of this Newsletter.

The HSSA Council also invites members to exercise ways in which they can share history stories and memorabilia and thus participate in recording and preserving our state's history.

### **Members' contributions to South Australian history**

While staying at home or taking local walks, members may be immersed in history by encountering, sighting or recalling items, significant events, locations, personalities, public projects (see below), buildings, inventions, or groups, which have made a difference to lives and thus enriched this state's history.

### **Community Project – 'Avenues of Honour'**

A media release of a historical public project in April 2020, by TREENET, mentioned how Australians' annual celebrations of ANZAC Day, parades and services, were cancelled due to the pandemic. The project invites all Australians to commemorate our servicemen and -women in another way. Australians can contribute their local or state knowledge to improve the histories and stories related to memorial trees or 'Avenues of Honour' they recall. Known memorial trees or 'Avenues of Honour' are listed at the website, <[avenuesofhonour.org](http://avenuesofhonour.org)> Contributions are welcome via that website, or by emails to contact <[avenuesofhonour.org](mailto:avenuesofhonour.org)> or by phoning the Director of TREENET, Glenn Williams, on 0448599955.

### **Write an article or memoir**

Many of you will remember or know about events the current media have referred to during this pandemic, such as the Spanish flu, the Great Depression, the World Wars, international conflicts, or any challenges with growing up in remote communities. Do your memories and knowledge of these events, at the personal or local level, include causes, timelines, 'what people endured', leaders, 'how people survived', 'human success stories' and how they 'came out the other side'? Members are invited to put their memories in writing and send their written piece either by post to our Secretary, or emailing it to her as an attachment. The HSSA Council will later contact you regarding sharing your 'history gem' and seeking your permission in how to share it publicly.

### **Photographs and political cartoons**

Have your ancestors, and now you, kept old photographs, political cartoons, brochures, pamphlets, mementos or tucked-away memorabilia around the house, garden or shed that have gathered dust or been ignored but are suitable

for sharing as markers of historical events? Are there names, dates, placenames attached to them?

As a historian yourself you can share your stories and memories by sending details and photographs of such items listed above as attachments to emails to our HSSA Newsletter Editor (see his contact details on the back page of the Newsletter) who can include them, with your permission, in our future Newsletters. Sharing these treasures would be engaging, and create interest for our members.

### HSSA website

A major means of keeping in touch and communicating with our HSSA Council and your Society's members is through the HSSA website.

Members can become familiar with its fields and see where messages or queries can be placed, and what are new developments.

The website does not have the capacity for uploading and storing memorabilia, ephemera and pictures. So, members can choose either to send any history gems to our Secretary or our Editor, or can wait to share them with Council members and other members during supper at the next face-to-face meeting.

### HSSA Journals

The Council is very keen for members to revisit their collection of past Issues of the HSSA Journal and search through them for articles that are their favourites. Members can send by post or email, details of their selected articles, i.e. Issue number, year, author, title, and page numbers, to our Editor, Rob Martin or our Secretary, Bridget Jolly. We are looking to the re-publication of some favourites.

### Contact Us

If you have queries, suggestions, ideas, feedback or submissions, or learn of historical community projects, you can share these by communicating with members of the HSSA Council. A list of some of their names and contact details are on the back page of this Newsletter.

We look forward to learning about some of your marvellous memories and stories and reuniting with you all when we 'come out the other side of this' at our next Members' Meeting.

***Pamela Rajkowski OAM***  
***President,***  
***Historical Society of South Australia.***

## **BRIEF FINANCE REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2019**

In spite of the fact that interest rates are low the Dividends performed well. This will not be the same next year so we cannot relax our Income sources. Should anyone require a full Finance Report, I will forward this to them.

<b>GENERAL INCOME:</b>	<b>\$12 748.36</b>
<b>DIVIDEND/INTEREST INCOME</b>	<b>\$12 131.03</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$24 879.39</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$17 778.80</b>
<b>YEAR SURPLUS</b>	<b>\$7 100.59</b>
<b><u>TOTAL EQUITY</u></b>	<b><u>\$278 109.91</u></b>

*Anne Bowman, Treasurer 8362 7772*

## MEET THE COUNCIL MEMBERS: LYN O'GRADY

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I've been an HSSA member for only a few years but my entry into the local history scene was back in 1999 when my husband and I attended the State History conference at Mannum and discovered historical societies. I visited many of their meetings to find out how they worked, eventually founding one in Walkerville with the help of Rob Nicol, the State Historian and we've done a lot in the 20 years, before it folded a year ago. I have no academic qualifications, just a passion for social history, oral histories and taking photographs, for which I was awarded a Citizen of the Year and a Heritage Hero. I remain the go-to person for Walkerville's local history.

I've been a member of other local organisations, like Women of Walkerville Foundations, Walkerville WatchSA and two resident associations, plus president of the Adelaide & Inner Suburbs National Trust branch which met at Ayers House.

The FALIE has taken my interest in the last couple of years, to digitize the photos, documents and logbooks of this century-old ketch in Port Adelaide. A small number of volunteers meet twice a week for maintenance tasks with the goal of keeping her ship-shape and something to be proud of. Open days and volunteer days are suspended at the moment but scanning documents continues at home.

My paternal family links are with the coastal trade, in particular Port Wakefield Shipping, Coast Steamship and A & E LeMessurier. My grandfather skippered the WARRAWEE and KARRATTA and great-grandfather had the ANNIE WATT for a while and my great-great-great-grandfather carried Governor Gawler ashore on his arrival in 1838. It was the most taxing job he had to do whilst working as a seaman for the South Australia Company because he didn't want to 'drop him in the drink'.

Volunteering for the FALIE has enabled me to learn a bit more about my roots so it's a benefit both ways. History matters to me, and I hope it will for the next generation.

## MEET THE COUNCIL MEMBERS: DAVID FABER

David Faber was born in October 1959 in Hobart, Tasmania, and raised by a Socialist shopkeeper and his working-class wife, from whom he gained his basic values. He began to be fascinated by 'true stories' or histories at about age five, and in politics at about age eight. He was educated at Somerset Primary School, Burnie High School and Hellyer Matriculation College. He emigrated to Adelaide in 1977, and after returning to Burnie to nurse at the North West General Hospital, returned to South Australia to enrol at the University of Adelaide in the disciplines of History, Philosophy and Politics in 1980. There he met the love of his life in a political philosophy tutorial, impressed by her stout defense of the Italian thinker Machiavelli from misrepresentation and misunderstanding. They married and, after his experiencing ill health in his Honours year, emigrated to her native Milan in 1985, where they lived for three years, militating in the ranks of the democratic *Partito Comunista Italiano*. There David taught English pretty badly and learned Italian quite well and researched the origins of the Veneto Anarchist activist Francesco Giovanni Fantin (1901-42), who was assassinated at Loveday Internment Group Camp 14A near Barmera in South Australia on 16 November 1942. Returning to South Australia in 1988, David began work in the National Archives of Australia, the State Records Office and elsewhere on the Australian activities of Fantin and his comrades and his violent death. After many



years of part-time research David took a 2008 doctorate from the University of Adelaide for a thesis about the life and times of Fantin. Its updated essence was reported to the Society in a 2016 essay expounding Fantin's brief biography and David's methodological approach, which won the Wakefield Essay Prize. David has also published with the Society in its 2015 Journal a study of the inaugural South Australian colonial Legislative Council election of 1851, giving a political and class analysis of the liberal landslide which laid the foundations for the Responsible Government which was enacted in 1857. David is currently writing *Green Light: A Brief Political History of the Australian Greens in South Australia 1995-2020*. He has recently signed with the Melbourne Trades Hall publisher Interventions to write a popular biography of Fantin. He is a 'somewhat published' poet and enjoys reading poetry and historical arguments of the most diverse kind, including contemporary political economy. He is an inveterate collector of that old-fashioned information technology, books.

## ***A South Australian at the Cape of Good Hope: Reflections on a visit to South Africa***

**Susan Marsden**

Writing *Mr Hill's history painting*, a book about Charles Hill's painting of the Proclamation of South Australia, I've been interested to record what the colonists depicted by Hill took from their ships' stopover in Britain's Cape Colony in South Africa. Several of them collected plants that would thrive in South Australia's similar hot climate, and I was pleased to see those familiar plants in their native habitat, and at the wonderful Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden.



Alex (left) and Susan Marsden at the main conference venue, Iziko Museum of South Africa, Cape Town. (Photo: S. Marsden)

I learnt other, more profound lessons about our own and African histories from my first visit to South Africa. My sister Alex Marsden and I are two historians who made our first visit to South Africa to attend the Commonwealth Association of Museums' Triennial Conference, *Living Forward, Looking Back: Museum Practice for Postcolonial Futures*. This was held at Iziko Museums of South Africa in Cape Town from 9-15 March 2020. Nearly 100 participants from 22 countries discussed

museums' approaches to confronting 'difficult histories', as well as 'repatriation, restitution and reconciliation'. Alex gave a presentation on the Australian Museums and Galleries Association's *Indigenous Roadmap* (also available online).



Guide speaking to conference members at the Castle of Good Hope, where a 400-year history of militarism and colonial repression is being challenged by new interpretation, as shown by new statues (left) of Africans who were activists imprisoned here. (Photo: S. Marsden)

The conference ended two days before the South African government decreed no large public meetings, in response to COVID-19. The coronavirus pandemic could have been discussed in this conference on 'difficult histories', but its focus was the impact of colonisation and 'decolonialisation' of museums, including at conference venues: Iziko Museums, Slave Lodge Museum, Castle of Good Hope, and the San Heritage Centre. There were also presentations about the role of museums as 'sites of conscience', and about the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, a global network of historic sites and museums 'that connects past struggles to today's movements for human rights'. (The Coalition's website now has a page on 'COVID-19 online resources' that is relevant to us all).

My travel diary records that this visit 'taught me a great deal about the histories and museology of countries I don't know well, and, as importantly, from the perspective of their own historians'. As one example, after a visit to the San

Centre, I wrote that 'the people's own name, *San*, not the derogatory "Bushman" was a significant re-education; and also the highly significant lesson about the *San* as the world's oldest living culture ... A panel at *!Khwa ttu* San Heritage Centre explains that, like other original inhabitants of a region the *San* are "the First People of Southern Africa", and "First people in a different sense. We have a ... unique relationship to the earliest people who are believed to have emerged from Africa to populate other parts of the world". There are resonances with First Australians as descendants of that first out-migration, and in their similar experiences under colonial and post-colonial regimes.

There are other resonances in our histories. I was struck anew about the role of the British anti-slavery movement in the founding of South Australia, and so how slavery and 'anti-slavery' affected our separate histories. Many of the men and women who agitated for the abolition of slavery in the British Empire were supporters of the Wakefield Scheme to set up a new, free British province in 'South Australia'. British Parliament passed the *Slavery Abolition Act* in 1833, that abolished slavery in most British colonies, including South Africa, which took effect in 1834, the same year that the same Parliament passed the *South Australia Act*. So, South Australia was the first post-slavery colony created anywhere in the world.

The *Slavery Abolition Act* released tens of thousands of African, Malay and Indian slaves, who had formed an essential workforce in the Cape Colony under both Dutch and British control, as we saw at the Slave Museum and in the exhibition at the famous Groot Constantia wine estate. This Act aroused deep resentment in the Dutch farmers (Boers) of the Cape Colony, and set them off on their Great Trek. As made clear in the excellent Slave Museum, slavery cast a long shadow, hardening Dutch and British colonial attitudes to African peoples through nationhood and into the late twentieth century. Today, the disproportionate percentage of COVID-19 deaths in poor, black populations in Africa and in the Americas (at both ends of that brutal trade in slaves), exposes deep inequalities dating back to the slave era.

## Meet the Old Colonists: Faces of the Destitute Asylum – Part 1

*The State Library has completed a twelve-year project to preserve and digitise a unique collection of photographic mosaics, and to identify the 1700 men and women depicted.<sup>1</sup>*

*This is the tenth in a series of articles that introduces some of the men and women who came forward in the early 1870s to identify themselves as Old Colonists and have their portraits taken by photographers Henry Jones and Townsend Duryea.*

Photographs of any of the thousands of destitute men, women and children who received ‘indoor relief’ at Adelaide’s Destitute Asylum between 1851 and its closure in 1918 are rare. The Old Colonists project reveals nine more, almost doubling the publicly identified number.<sup>2</sup>

In his seminal work on the history of social welfare in South Australia Brian Dickey summarises that,

Every indoor client was destitute – that is, the single primary experience shared by every client of the Board was complete poverty. These people lacked resources or saleable skills, as is quite clear from the registers. They had been at best labourers, domestic servants, shepherds, sailors, and so on.<sup>3</sup>

There was bound to be the occasional anomaly and one of



The northern part of the former Destitute Asylum. The vehicles garaged around the men’s infirmary (formerly the Colonial Store) show the small scale of the two-storey building. The lying-in home, now housing the Migration Museum, is top right. By Henry Krischock, 1936  
SLSA, B 9360 (cropped)

them is the focus of this initial article about clients of the Destitute Board among the Old Colonists.

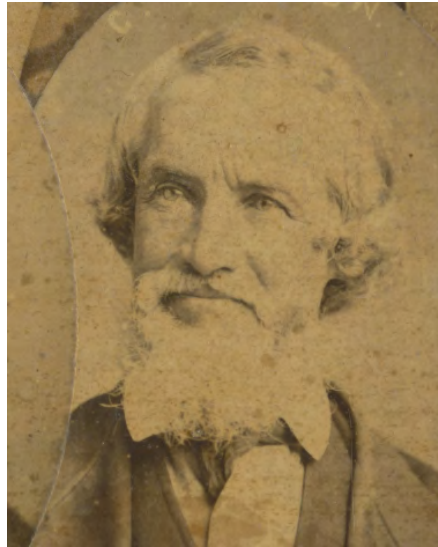
The first South Australian colonists made destitute by infirmity, desertion and bereavement were the responsibility of the Emigration Agent if, ‘under strict enquiry’, no relatives on whom they had claim could be located in the colony. Their first asylum comprised some of the ‘crude, subdivided huts’ lacking kitchens and privies in the west park lands depot, Emigration Square.<sup>4</sup>

In 1849 the Board for the Relief of Destitute Poor was appointed. It reported the need for ‘proper accommodation for the destitute, where salutary rules might be enforced’. An appropriation of £1500

was made to build a destitute asylum, but almost immediately diverted to expanding the overcrowded Adelaide Hospital, on which the destitute also relied. Instead, in 1851 part of the 'late Military Barrack' lying east of Government House became Adelaide's 'depot for the destitute'.<sup>5</sup>

The Destitute Asylum was expanded 'by slow accretion' until it incorporated over 50 buildings in a walled compound of four acres on the eastern side of Kintore Avenue. As archaeologist Susan Piddock has noted, only four of the buildings had a second storey. In 1891 the Board described the site as 'an irregular and inconvenient pile of buildings' but the oft-called for purpose-built asylum never eventuated.<sup>6</sup>

**George Alexander Wilson** was admitted to the Destitute Asylum on at least three occasions. In 1871 and 1881 it is likely that he was convalescing following treatment at the Adelaide Hospital. In 1891 he moved to the Asylum from the philanthropic Cottage Homes for the Aged and Infirm Poor and Widows in North Adelaide. In this era the Asylum housed about 240 men. Wilson was buried from the Asylum in January 1892. Yet he was a scion of a cultured family that had mainly prospered in South Australia.<sup>7</sup>



George Alexander Wilson, 1815-1892  
By Townsend Duryea, c. 1872  
SLSA, B 8235/1/18H

Wilson was the oldest son of Thomas Wilson, solicitor, art collector and author, and Martha, nee Greenell. He matriculated from St. Alban Hall in Oxford aged 17 and taught on the Isle of Wight. He arrived in South Australia on board the 'Surry' in October 1838, ten weeks after the arrival of his parents and siblings on the 'Duke of Roxburghe'.<sup>8</sup>

While his father built a legal practice, was appointed clerk of the Court of Appeals (1841) and was elected the second mayor of Adelaide (1842), young Wilson travelled the Pacific, spending two years on Mauke in the Cook Islands archipelago. After returning to South Australia he consistently recorded his occupation as teacher, although very few details of his employment are known. Like his father, he was an inveterate poet.<sup>9</sup>

Family tradition held that Wilson, with 'his dreamy nature', 'was fated ... to play second fiddle to his brothers'. Charles Algernon (1818-1884) rose in the colonial civil service and was also a renowned entomologist; Theodore Percival (1819-1881) was the first headmaster of St. Peter's Collegiate School; and Edmund Major (1826-1906) established a vineyard at Williamstown. Their youngest brother Theodore Augustus Greenell (known as 'Tag', 1831-1908) was also a career civil servant, albeit on a more modest scale than Charles.<sup>10</sup>

In 1884, when he was 69 years old, Wilson was granted a room in one of the Cottage Homes. That year Tag was working as the sub-inspector of a rabbit destruction party at Naracoorte. He wrote,

Dear George. Herewith I enclose a money Order for £1 that you may be enabled to supply yourself with some few creature comforts in these hard times. I have sent £2 to Sam & Ag by same mail, & only mention this that you may not think I have forgotten them.

'Ag' was their younger sister Agnes St. John (1828-1895) and 'Sam' her ailing husband Samuel Reynell.<sup>11</sup>

The survival of this letter is intriguing. It is among the papers of Shirley Cameron Wilson, a



'The young haymakers' by John James Halls, c. 1827. George Alexander Wilson, centre, with two of his younger brothers.<sup>12</sup>

descendant of Charles, and co-author of a biography of George and Charles's father, Thomas. The book also celebrates Charles and Theodore, but is silent about George's life after the early 1840s. The year given for his death is two years after the event and Tag's death is not recorded.<sup>13</sup>

The 1866 Destitute Persons Relief Act had confirmed 'the legal responsibility of relatives to maintain their kin'. COVID-19 restrictions have prevented a visit to State Records to look for evidence of any of Wilson's extended family being required to pay maintenance to the Board during his admissions to the asylum.<sup>14</sup>

A single obituary was published on 3 February 1892:

The death is announced of Mr. G. A. Wilson, an old colonist, which occurred on January 24. He was a brother of the late Mr. C. A. Wilson (of the Supreme Court), of the late Rev. S. P. Wilson (the first headmaster of St. Peter's College), of Mr. E. M. Wilson (of Williamstown), and of Mr. [T.] A. G. Wilson (of the Semaphore).<sup>15</sup>

This notice, reinstating Wilson to the family, was probably written by Tag. It refers to Wilson's time spent 'in the South Sea Islands' and 'as a master in several public schools', and to becoming 'very feeble' in old age. The fact of his destitution remains unexplained.

**Beth M Robertson**

State Library of South Australia

<sup>1</sup> The three largest mosaics are 'The Old Colonists Banquet Group' by Henry Jones, B 47769; 'Group of [women] Old Colonists' by Henry Jones, B 19985; and 'Old Colonists 1836-40' by Townsend Duryea, B 8235/1.

<sup>2</sup> Ten photographs of Asylum residents have been identified previously – *Behind the wall: the women of the Destitute Asylum Adelaide* by Mary Geyer, Axiom, 1994; *If walls could speak: 5 stories from the Destitute Asylum*, Education Department / History Trust of South Australia, 2017; SLSA PRG 280/1/7/65 and 66.

<sup>3</sup> *Rations, residences, resources: a history of social welfare in South Australia since 1836* by Brian Dickey, Wakefield Press, 1986, p. 79.

<sup>4</sup> **Emigration agent** – Dickey, pp. 4-5; **crude huts** – *Under the burning sun: a history of colonial South Australia, 1836-1900* by R. M. Gibbs, Peacock Publications, 2013, p. 72.

<sup>5</sup> **Proper accommodation** – 'Report of Destitute Board', *South Australian register (Register)*, 19 January 1850, p. 4; **appropriation** – *South Australian*, 14 June 1850, p. 2; **diversion** –

*Register*, 11 April 1851, p. 3; **destitute depot** – *Adelaide Observer*, 21 June 1851, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> **Slow accretion** – Dickey, p. 27; **buildings** – numbered 'Plan of the site of the Destitute Asylum showing the development of the complex between 1851 and 1885' in Geyer, p. 13; **four acres / pile of buildings** – "'An irregular and inconvenient pile of buildings": the Destitute Asylum of Adelaide, South Australia and the English workhouse' by Susan Piddock in *International journal of historical archaeology*, vol. 5, no. 1, March 2001, pp. 83-84.

<sup>7</sup> **Wilson's asylum admissions** – State Records of South Australia (SRSA) spreadsheet of Destitute Asylum admissions 1870-1906, GRG 28.5; **hospital admissions** – SRSA spreadsheet of Adelaide Hospital admissions 1840-1904, GRG 78.49; **240 men** – Geyer, p. 53.

<sup>8</sup> **Wilson's matriculation** – Oxford University alumni, 1500-1886, [ancestry.com.uk](http://ancestry.com.uk); **Isle of Wight** – *The bridge over the ocean: Thomas Wilson (1787-1863) art collector and Mayor of Adelaide* by S. C. Wilson and K. T. Borrow, 1973, p. 52; **emigration** – [familyhistorysa.org](http://familyhistorysa.org).

<sup>9</sup> **Father in Adelaide** – *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/wilson-thomas-2805/text4005>; **two years on Mauke** – Wilson & Borrow, pp. 186-9; **teacher** – *ibid*, p. 52; another George A. Wilson was teaching in South Australia in the late 1800s (a father of 10) – *Kapunda herald*, 20 October 1891, p. 3; **poet** – Wilson & Borrow, p. 52, p. 122; SLSA PRG 1399/73; and under pseudonym G.A.W. in *Christian Colonist*.

<sup>10</sup> **Dreamy nature** – Wilson & Borrow, p. 122; **Charles and Theodore** – *ibid*, *passim*; **Edmund** – *Bunyip*, 18 May 1906, p. 2; **Tag** – *South Australian Government Gazette*, *passim*, and death notice *The express and telegraph (Express)*, 12 October 1908, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> **Letter** – SLSA PRG 1399/85/11; **rabbit destruction** – *The Narracoorte [sic] herald*, 4 May 1886, p. 2.

<sup>12</sup> 'The young haymakers: portraits of three sons of Thomas Wilson, Esq.' Oil painting by J. J. Halls, c. 1827 in Wilson & Borrow, p. iv. George stands between Theodore (left) and Charles.

<sup>13</sup> Wilson & Borrow, family tree, pp. 322-3.

<sup>14</sup> Dickey, p. 39.

<sup>15</sup> *Express*, 3 February 1892.

## A Treasure in our Park Lands: Elm Carriageway

by Pamela Rajkowski



In this period of the COVID – 19 in which all people are instructed to keep social distance, keep to small groups or stay at home, many seek opportunities to be stimulated, stay healthy and fit. A common resource is walking, in social distancing, either in local streets or parks. Some choose sections of the Adelaide Park Lands. Walking in the Park Lands leads to discovering pathways, avenues, bridges, olive groves and gardens that went unnoticed before and are now like finding treasures. Walking can immerse us in significant history. The tall height of

trees, the fullness of bushes and ornamentation that we can relish in 2020 is due to the planning stages of the Adelaide Municipal Council since the 1840s, 180 years ago.



*Aerial view of South Parklands in 1967 with South Terrace to the west of the Parklands. The avenue of the Elm Carriageway is seen in centre of photo running from Hutt Street to a cluster of trees near Beaumont Road carpark.*

Planning Adelaide in 1837 included what is now the only city in the world completely surrounded by Park Lands. These ‘amply provided open spaces were to be “the lungs of our colonial metropolis” and recreation grounds for the people’. The original planners noted the Adelaide Park Lands had great capabilities for ornamental planting. They are ‘extensive [North, East, South, West], embrace situations by rivers or creeks, have fine flats and gentle undulations and sinuous boundaries’. If properly planted and improved the Park Lands would afford beautiful walks for the general community and these would add immensely to the enjoyment of Adelaide residents. New pathways and promenades were added. By 30 November 1867, a vast amount of works and

expenditure had been allocated to 'beautifying the Park Lands and [tree] plantations and along their river or creek banks as a means of health and recreation for the citizens'. Over many decades the Adelaide City Council upheld the leading principle that its reserves 'belong to the citizens and they should be devoted to the general public's benefit' (*Advertiser*, 18 September, 1882, pg 4).

This article focuses only on where the South and East Parklands adjoin. In August, 1856, the City of Adelaide planners considered that while 'these parks should have trees, grass and defined roads' the South Park Lands in particular were in great want of roads and tree planting.

John Ednie Brown, who arrived in Adelaide in 1878, was a passionate advocate of tree planting. The Council appointed him in 1882 to 'report on a system of planting for the Adelaide Park Lands'. He wrote, 'the spirit of the age, in tree planting, is upon us ... there is nothing which gives some pleasure to town residents as trees planted to align streets and other thoroughfares, e.g. roads, avenues. Their shade makes walking cool and they mellow down sun glare ... trees purify the air and make the city a healthy residence for its citizens'.

Brown's concept reaffirmed the existing Adelaide City Council's planting of deciduous tree species for Adelaide's Park Lands, suited to the climate of Adelaide. The species were selected for maturing to a significant height with generous canopies. By 1867 the Municipal Council had already planted trees that included '4,450 gums, 1,705 native pines, 24 cypresses, 10,600 olives, 105 Moreton Bay figs, 280 English oaks, 50 ash trees, and 1,260 European trees'. Brown continued to integrate gum trees with overseas tree species of lime, beech, chestnut, elm, oak and pine.

Species better suited for planting along creeks in the Park Lands were poplars, birch and willows. A creek running through the East — South Park Lands zone is bordered with these species. This pattern of planting was still undertaken up to 1935.

Citizens wanted the newly planted imported trees protected from damage. Homes had cows in their yards to provide fresh milk to be made into butter,

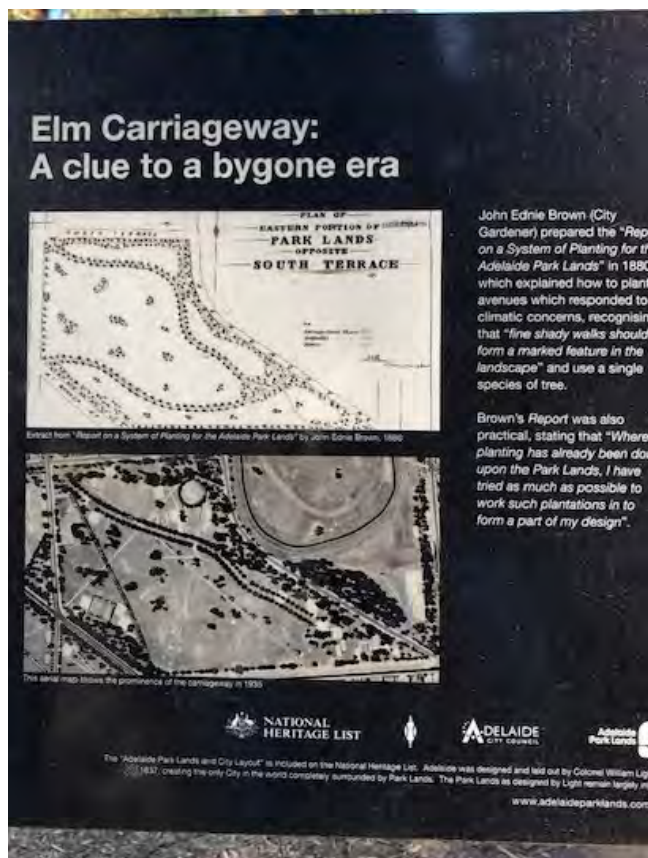
cream and cheese. Horses were used for pulling sulkies, carts and trams. By the 1850s cattle and horses were depastured in the Park Lands. By the 1870s residents reiterated that the Park Lands provided playgrounds for children of Adelaide and the suburbs who had nowhere else to play. Numbers of people found they were alienated from using the Park Lands because the horses and cattle depasturing there were 'a source of terror to young children and nurse maids'. In May 1889 the protests against depasturing animals in the Park Lands, as a threat to the newly planted trees, were refuelled by residents querying if the Park Lands were seen as a source of cheap feed for horses. 'A large number of horses grazing among the young trees in the East Park Lands, when tired of eating grass, [ate] the foliage and bark of trees and crippled or destroyed them ... The duty of the parklands ranger and the Council is to see that the parklands' beautiful surroundings are preserved. Damage to young trees "planted at public expense is inexorable". Rather than permit horses to graze to keep down the grass so as to avoid the danger of fire in summer this can be equally achieved by mowing the grass in that season. The trees [should be given] complete security from injury in their early years of growth. The park lands should simply be for the benefit of people.' ('Horses in the Park Lands', *Express & Telegraph*, 15 May 1889, pg 4) Eventually the 'abuse' of the vegetation of the Park Lands by depasturing animals was ended when cattle were made redundant by corner stores selling milk, and horse movement was restricted to one section of the East Park Lands, the Victoria Park race course.

By 1878 the rate of city building led to increased needs for managed pedestrian and vehicle traffic flow, non-threatening to tree-planting growth, between city and suburbs by traffic routes through the surrounding Park Lands. The notion of 'carriageways', delineated with additional tree planting, in the city then in the Park Lands, was introduced in the 1850s to 1870s. Their width had to permit vehicle transport such as horse-pulled carts or sulkies. These were limited in number. Carriageways were constructed in 1867 for the Morphett Bridge over the River Torrens, along the riverbanks and one across the river at Pennington Terrace.

## Elm Carriageway.

When walking through the eastern South Park Lands I discovered the historic treasure of the unique, wide, shady Elms Avenue Carriageway. A carriageway laid out in the late 1860s in the 'Eastern portion of the Park Lands', was lined with an avenue of English elms. It reflects Brown's tree planting concepts. The route of the Elm Carriageway is from its western end on the corner of Hutt Street and South Terrace and follows a graceful curve to its eastern end by 'Beaumont' Road, towards the corner of Greenhill Road and Fullarton Road. It travels parallel to a nearby creek lined with willows, beeches and poplars.

One can ponder on who travelled between city and suburbs to use this majestic Elm Carriageway. It is connected to the old Mount Barker Road, now Glen Osmond Road, and Greenhill Road. Were they stonemasons, bricklayers, road workers, farmers, milk vendors, storekeepers, stable staff, vegetable growers, and grape growers, fruit growers, and landed gentry of the Adelaide foothills? An aerial photo taken in 1935 and reproduced on a nearby signpost shows the ongoing prominence of the historic Elm Carriageway.



Signboard near Elm Carriageway in South Park Lands

The Council's promotion of panoramic views and beautifying the Park Lands meant tackling obstructions to views. Initially, fencing was needed for protecting newly planted trees and gardens, e.g. from cattle and horses. By 1867 new fencing 'of 3 miles and 10 chains', added to older fencing, included white-painted, low wooden fencing along avenues of trees and later metal hoops edging lawns and floral gardens. The Council's beautifying program required minimising unsightly fences. Fencing was replaced by planting historic hedges. However, as horses and cattle saw these as another source of feed the Council had to select hedge species that cattle and horses were not fond of as fodder. Hedges today in the East Park Lands surround the Croquet Club, established in 1911, and the Adelaide Lawn Bowls Club adjacent to Dequetteville Terrace.

By January 1916, 14 rustic, wooden bridges erected in various localities in the Park Lands, added ornamentation and beauty. One remains in the South Park Lands. The bridge near the Elm Carriageway has been upgraded.

In 2008 the 'Adelaide Park Lands and City Layout' was added to Australia's National Heritage List.

Today, in 2020, when citizens, walkers and visitors walk through the East and South Park Lands they see extensive views of tall gum trees bordering the parks, and the imported tree species, all with lush canopies. They enjoy treasures such as the Elm Carriageway, hedges, bridges and pathways, all products planned by Councillors and staff 140 to 180 years ago, since the 1840s, and significantly between the 1860s to 1880s. With travel limited today by the coronavirus situation, can you walk in nearby streets and parks if not the Adelaide Park Lands, immerse yourselves in their historical significance and discover local treasures?

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Our colleague Douglas Alexander has suggested these educational webinars provided by the National Library of Australia may be of interest to members:

<https://www.nla.gov.au/content/past-webinar-recordings>

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The Globe Hotel, Kensington, 1849, artist unknown, private collection.

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## **The Kensington Hotel, 23 Regent Street**

**by Patricia Sumerling**

This hotel is tucked away in a quiet corner of Kensington. And because of its almost secret location, it is quite possible that some Kensington residents haven't yet discovered its whereabouts.

Former publican, David Pink, spoke fondly of two groups that operated from and dined at the hotel which were both formed before he took over the hotel in the 1980s. One of the groups was an old-time dancing club, and though the meetings moved off the premises some years back, original members booked in every Saturday night for dinner as the 'dance group'. The hotel's other group was its Golf Club which regularly went away at weekends to play

golf. While running the hotel as the 'cosy little local', David Pink freely admitted that with the introduction of a few pokie machines, discreetly accommodated, it 'literally picked our industry up and got it back on its feet. Without gaming, we probably wouldn't be here'. Before David Pink became its publican, the hotel had a reputation for its 'local feel' in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

The Kensington Hotel is the district's oldest pub and has one of the oldest licences in the state, but the present 1882 structure is the third one on this site. The hotel licence dates back to 1840. From this one licence both the present Kensington Hotel and Robin Hood Hotel, on Portrush Road, share the same history between 1840 and 1849. The present hotel was known by several names, making its history complex. It was the Kensington Arms from 1840-1842; the Robin Hood between 1846-1849; and the Globe between 1849-1958. From that date, it has been known as the Kensington Hotel. However, it is important to note that there was another hotel in the district also called the Kensington Hotel, in Shipster's Road between 1882 and 1909, the structure of which survives as Housing SA attached houses.

The original Kensington Arms was one of 53 licences granted throughout South Australia in 1840. Only about a dozen of that number still trade which includes its nearest competitor in the 1840s, the Woodforde Arms (now known as the Tower Hotel) on Magill Road. Before the licences for 1840 were granted, there were about 60 other hotels scattered around the colony.

The newly opened hotel, the Kensington Arms, described as 'merely a mud hut', was advertised in April 1840 by Henry Scott who had opened the hotel in the 'delightful and rising village', together with an attached well-stocked general store. Only two weeks before Scott officially relinquished his licence on 31 March 1841, his hotel was robbed late at night by four masked men. Luckily for Scott he was not there, but the incoming licensees Thomas Ball and his wife were. Possibly there to learn the ropes, they must have wondered whether it was such a delightful place after all, for they were assaulted and tied up. Then the robbers 'shouted' themselves at the bar before taking off in the direction of 'The Tiers' (the Adelaide Hills) with whatever valuables they could carry.

It wasn't long before the zealous Alexander Tolmer, policeman extraordinaire, was on their trail with his troopers. After Mrs Ball

had shown him the break-in point where there was a footprint depicting differing nails in the sole, Tolmer and his men tracked the villains into the hills. And as luck would have it, they discovered the wrenched-off heel-piece of the boot along a hill track. With suspicions as to who the robbers were, Tolmer led his men 'towards certain huts' where several 'rough cut-throat looking rascals' were found relaxing, including the one with the missing heel. With such conclusive evidence, Tolmer drew his sword and arrested them. Leader of the gang, Joseph Storey, was initially given the death sentence but this was commuted to transportation for life in August 1841. One member of the gang was acquitted, while the other two later escaped from the Adelaide Gaol.

The hotel was sold in September 1845 to brothers Robert and Samuel Pepperell for £200 but they found themselves in competition with city publican John Wheland who had opened the nearby Catherine Wheel in August 1842. Located on the corner of Norwood Parade, Hill and Bridge streets, it only operated until 1846.

The former Kensington Arms which was then revamped and relicensed on 9 March 1846, changed its name to become the Robin Hood. Under this banner, William

Beck, 'a man of colour's' opening celebrations landed him in court a few days later. He was fined two guineas for having '... admitted loose and bad characters about his house'.

A year later, in June 1847, when Beck's licence was extended, Thomas Tasker's application for a licence to open a new hotel in the district was knocked back because the male population of the village was less than 40 and considered too small a community to support another hotel. Determined to operate his own hotel, Tasker was able to persuade Beck to transfer his licence to him six months later. But only two years later when the subdivision of Norwood was underway, he tried to transfer the licence in February 1849 to William Akehurst of Bowden.

Akehurst invested £250 for a 14-year lease on the hotel property but unexpectedly at the licensing hearing he was accused of being a Van Diemen's Land convict and refused the licence. Members of the licensing bench were kept informed by the Colonial Secretary in Van Diemen's Land of 'certain classes of persons leaving there for other colonies'. Although Akehurst denied being a convict, the next day when he presented himself at the court with references, the bench members announced

that all his referees were convicts too, even though they had all done their time. At the hearing the question was put as to 'whether we are to have convicts or not for publicans'. For Akehurst, the outcome was bleak for, having been refused the licence, he was stuck with a 14-year lease on the building from which he could not make a living.

Meanwhile, Thomas Tasker on his third attempt in March 1851, was allowed to transfer the licence of the first Robin Hood Hotel to its second site on the Portrush Road. This then enabled the old hotel on the corner of Regent and Thornton streets to be rebuilt by owners Richard and Robert Pepperell who had bought the property in 1845. Their new hotel was completed in brick in 1849 to become the Globe Hotel, a name it retained until 1958.

Many hotels by the 1880s were either leased or bought by breweries. In April 1881, the Globe was leased to Alfred Simms who in March 1882, commissioned architects English and Soward, to design a

new 21-room hotel. Six years later it was sold to the South Australian Brewing Company which owned it until 1984.

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## THE LODGEKEEPER FAMILY AT THE ADELAIDE HOSPITAL by Lyn O'Grady

Our forced isolation has given many of us time to revisit family history research. This is a part of my husband's family history...



The Lodge was the gardener's residence built in the late 1860s and demolished in 1932 to make way for the new nurses' home. (SLSA B6120)



The Lodge is on the left (SLSA B25997) c1900

The central block and the west wing of the hospital was completed in 1856, and the east wing was built in 1866-67.

This photo shows the extent of the grounds, the Botanic Gardens bottom right. (SLSA B3718) c1872



Sometime between 1868 and 1874, James Hansen was employed as Head Gardener at the hospital and lived in the Lodge near the corner of North Terrace and Frome Street. He was responsible for maintaining the hospital grounds and policing the entrance.

The belief that gardens are beneficial for patients is more than a thousand years old. They not only provide restorative and pleasant nature views, but also can reduce stress and improve clinical outcomes.<sup>1</sup> Recently, there's been a revival in providing open space and indoor plants for convalescence; they're called Healing Gardens.<sup>2</sup> So James had an important job.



James Hansen (pictured left), this wasn't his real name though. He was Norwegian, born 1852, and changed his name to avoid being detected when he 'jumped ship' in Melbourne. James found his way to Adelaide, got a job as the gardener and in 1876 married a nurse he had met at the hospital.

Briget Neeson was born near Glasgow, Scotland to Irish parents in 1853. They had fled Ireland after one of the family burnt the Irish Flag. Briget had trained and was in charge of the nurses in a big hospital in Scotland before migrating to South Australia in 1875 aboard the ST VINCENT. They had 12 children including one set of twins between 1877 and 1894, lost two as infants, the rest grew up in this two-bedroom Lodge, along with a live-in help!

Living in the city had its benefits according to family legend. The girls used to jump the fence into the experimental gardens in the Botanic Gardens and make fruit salad from the fruit they had picked. The family was friendly with the German curator of the Gardens, Schomburgk. They used to climb the Moreton Bay figs and once were stuck there because a couple sat under the tree canoodling and they couldn't get down until they left, which was late when it was dark.

The boys used to sneak under the big top when the circus came to town. The circus set up just beyond the Exhibition Building on Frome Road on the Exhibition Grounds. The family became lifelong friends of the Wirth's Circus and had free entry every time they were in town.

The eldest, Henry (Harry) became the Collector of Customs at Port Pirie and Semaphore; he boarded the ships to greet the captain to make sure everything was in order etc. He lived on the Esplanade at Semaphore, in the two-storey customs house; he could see the ships coming in and would hurry down to the Port.

Francis (Frank), John and Joseph played league football for Port, South Adelaide and South Australia – there were a lot of muddy socks for washday. Frank Hansen was known as the 'greatest pre-war footballer'. James fought in the Boer War and WWI, at Gallipoli and France,

<sup>1</sup> *Green Plants for Green Buildings – Plants for People Conference 2002 - Health Benefits of Gardens in Hospitals*, by Roger S Ulrich Ph.D.

<sup>2</sup> *Landscape Australia, Healing gardens – Hospital Design Using Nature to Heal and Soothe* by Katharina Nieberler-Walker, Angela Reeve and Cheryl Desha, 2016

and was made Major. Philip and Joseph also served in WWI. Philip died of the Spanish Flu in 1919. John Patrick owned a bookshop in Adelaide Arcade. He also worked on the *Catholic Young Men's Paper* where he met Gaetano Rubeo (of Rubeo Cafe in Ruthven Mansions) and C.J. Dennis in 1910. Gaetano later married one of the Hansen girls (my husband's grandmother).

James Sr died in 1901 and the family had to move house. Briget passed in 1940.



James Hansen is seated on the left, Briget is standing behind the table c1900 (family archive)



Pictured left are workers in the Adelaide office of the *Catholic Young Men's Paper*.

Left to right: Gaetano Rubeo; John Patrick Hanson, who owned a book shop in Adelaide Arcade for 20 years; Eddie McCarron, who owned the Red Lion Hotel; C.J. Dennis, well known South Australian writer and journalist; Mr Madigan, who worked for John Martins; Frank Hansen, a Port Adelaide football team captain who lived to the age of 96; Mr. Cahill, far right and obscured. (SLSA B61934) 1910

## A few isolated, scattered thoughts on a Museum of Adelaide and South Australia

The high-definition online Google Arts and Culture website allows a very close inspection of most works of visual art uploaded there. If we tried such looking in real life, the alarms set off would have us evicted from the art museum. A printed reproduction does not provide such a clear detailed entry: whereas, zooming into Breughel's *Tower of Babel* (the one in Vienna of 1563), for instance, shows us different types of treadmill cranes at work, many aspects of the communal life of a building site, and also where he cursorily brushed in paint to get the job finished for his commissioners. These are not so intriguingly recognisable offline. I was side-tracked to there from a search for images of that most intellectually (and emotionally) rewarding polyptych, Mathias Grünewald's *Isenheim Altarpiece* (c1512-16, Unterlinden Museum, Colmar). The altarpiece is a majestic synergy of meanings directed to the redemption of those afflicted by 'plague', more especially by St Anthony's Fire, a condition with a name more explanatory than COVID-19. The current pandemic was my reason for looking again at the altarpiece (1).

In 2012, the Unterlinden Museum celebrated the 500th anniversary of Grünewald's magnificent altarpiece together with the 125th anniversary of the birth of the German painter, Otto Dix, whose indictments of World War One were directly influenced by Grünewald's imagery. But I somehow slid from the German Renaissance to post-World War One Adelaide and a project by a Viennese architect that reminded me of the perennial issue of a museum of Adelaide (and South Australia?), which arose again at the 2018 State election, but about which debate seems now to have quietened. Will we celebrate the year 2036, a mere 16 years away, as enthusiastically as we did 1936, and the sesquicentenary in 1988? Will it best be done online and virtually?

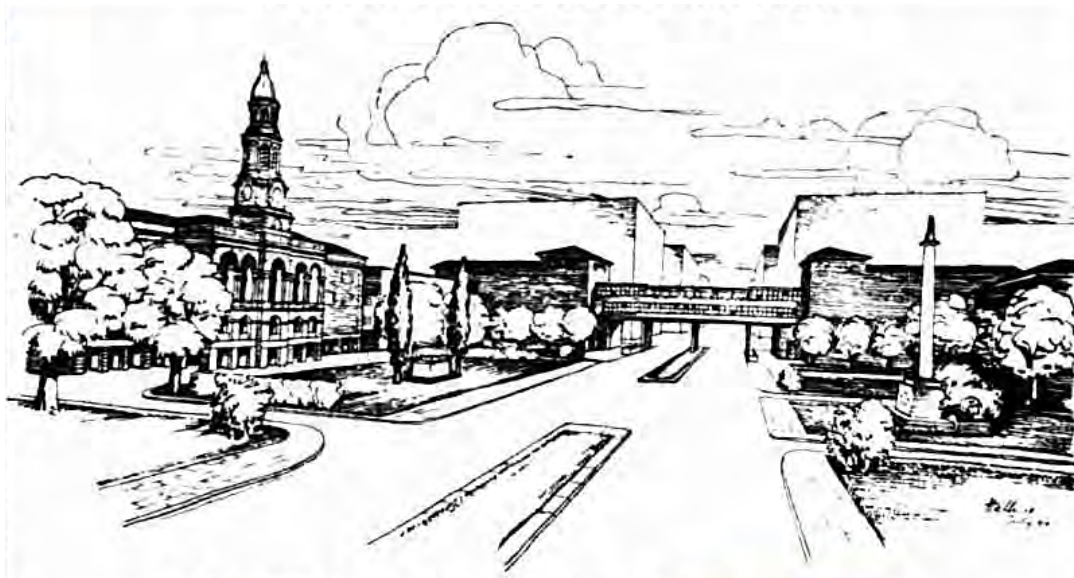


*First view (closed) of the Isenheim Altarpiece (from Dr Sally Hickson, 'Grünewald, Isenheim Altarpiece', in Smarthistory, August 9, 2015, <<https://smarthistory.org/grunewald-isenheim-altarpiece>>, accessed April 4, 2020.*

Possibly the National Museum of Australia's current conversion of its intended exhibition for the 250th anniversary of James Cook's first Australian landing, *Endeavour Voyage: The Untold Stories of Cook and the First Australians*, to a digital video and audio format will set a standard for virtual audience consumption. But will it be 'participation'?

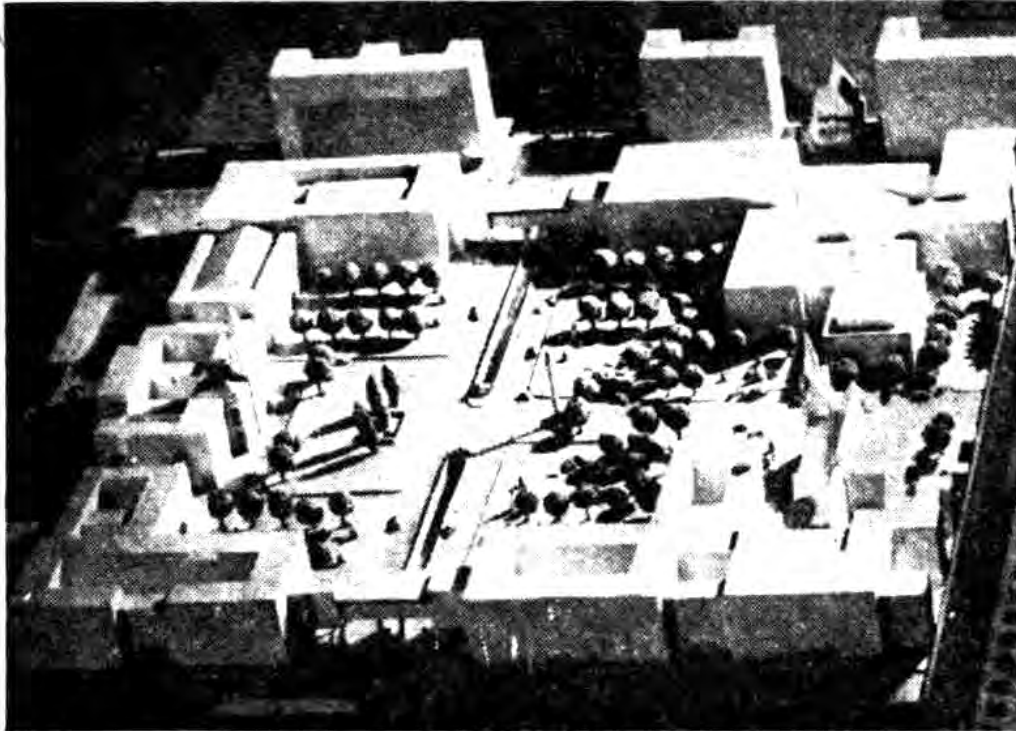
### A bicentennial museum?

In 1944, the city council announced a proposed 'city museum' as part of a re-vamped civic centre and Victoria Square. It was to be 'devoted to the history of Adelaide and South Australia, and [show] their present technical, cultural and economic status, with their plans for future development' (2). A hefty objective. The impetus that spawned Otto Hellwig's idea for Victoria Square was answered in an anachronistic style greatly lacking in contextual sympathy: Viennese International Style for post-World War One social housing reform and town planning was out of order here. Otto R. Polak-Hellwig (1885-1958) had lived in Australia for four years before his proposed re-designed civic centre. The corporation's collection was to be housed in one of his block-towers connected by an overway (3). Is a civic collection just the start of a museum of Adelaide, or of Adelaide *and* South Australia? Where do we start? The creditable recent argument to retain Port Adelaide's Shed 26 (built in 1956 and closed in 1988) for museum purposes (4) has prompted some reflections on whether the exterior appearance or style of a museum building matters or needs to 'signify' our expectations.



*A re-designed civic centre in Victoria Square by Otto Hellwig. 1944. View to the south. An enlarged and heightened Town Hall tower (left) allegedly suited the plan.*

Are online resources and digital wizardry in viewing and interpretation so lacking in empathy and experience of their subject that after the COVID-19 shut-downs we will revert to normality? Will we ever have a museum of Adelaide, as suggested by many, including Wilfred Prest some eight years ago? (5). Maybe on the cross-roads of crisis we will choose a future direction fertilised by all the re-arrangements, lack the need for museum architecture and, instead, warehouse the objects we digitise.



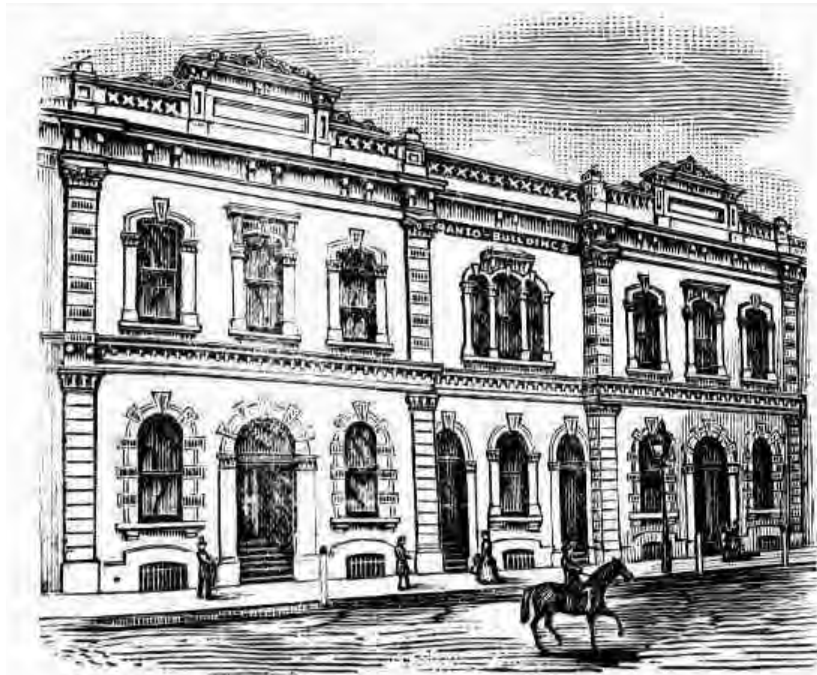
*Joseph Choate, art master at St Peter's College, Hackney, made a scale model with his students of the proposed new Victoria Square centre from wood, cardboard and bread (6). An underground tram- or rail-way was to run down the centre. North is to the top. 1944.*

Until recently, the *Saturday Paper* (publisher Morry Schwartz) ran full-page pictures and notes on items both historical and artistic in the national collections that are housed 'on Australia's behalf' in Canberra. The run of these objects, part of the 'vast ... cultural holdings of Australia' chosen from museums or elsewhere (e.g. Canberra airport), can be seen at [thesaturdaypaper.com.au/incanberra](http://thesaturdaypaper.com.au/incanberra). Forty-eight items, one year's worth, have been illustrated and reviewed; one hopes the newspaper continues this exposé. The related periodical, *Monthly* (Schwartz Media), has given reading relish with similar objects, that seem to follow the format of that mixed platter laid out for us over the last several years: radical objects (*History Workshop Journal*, 2011 to 2019); a plethora of 'significant objects'; *A history of the world in 100 objects* (the BBC's 2010 Radio 4 program, with a companion book and a travelling exhibition); and books such as *A History of Women in 100 Objects*; *A History of the World in twenty-one Women*; and *The history shapers: South Australian history in 100 objects* (7). More recent is Carolyn Collins and Roy Eccleston's *Trailblazers. 100 inspiring South Australian women* (Wakefield Press, 2019). A fellow-traveller might be 'A History of South Australian Agriculture in 100+ Implements'—if we still had them as the collection they were for several years from 1936.

#### **To learn by 'visiting a well-arranged Industrial Museum'**

But, a step backwards. Collection and classification was at the heart of early colonial museum promotion. Generally a room was all that could be managed for what was essentially practical information for instructional purposes to further the colony's economic growth. An early proto-museum, the small displayed collection of the South Australian Chamber of Manufactures—destined, with a fair wind, to be a technical, technological or industry museum—they were interchangeable terms—began in a new office cum warehouse 'complex' in Santo's Buildings, Waymouth Street. In 1870, the year when Melbourne's Industrial and Technological Museum was being established, the Chamber suggested its establishment of a permanent Exhibition or Museum of Commerce – with the names and addresses of manufacturers and merchants where the goods could be obtained. The

Chamber's reach included obtaining samples of cereals and processes of paper-making from London, and tiles from Belgium once exhibited in Adelaide; it subscribed to the apiarist journals of England, America and Australasia, exchanged reports with South Kensington Museum (the Victoria and Albert Museum) and the Edinburgh Museum of Science and Art (originally the Industrial Museum of Scotland, now National Museum of Scotland), and sought to exhibit models of the mine workings of Kapunda and Moonta (1877). Its scope was panoramic. From its 1875 exhibition in the Adelaide Town Hall of 'the latest mechanical inventions and appliances' from local initiatives, the Chamber desired 'a permanent exhibition of manufactures' for technological education for apprentices, artisans and budding inventors– which seems to equate with a museum.



*Santo's Buildings, Wymouth Street, Adelaide, designed by the architect Daniel Garlick (1818-1902) and built in 1877, was the location of the Chamber of Manufactures' office from 1877 to 1889. The three facades were styled for distinctive commercial flair (Frearson's Monthly Illustrated Adelaide News, 16 October 1880, p16).*

Possibly if an agriculture museum had existed the Chamber would have passed to it the grass tree resin donated by F Pflaum & Co that it exhibited at its offices and a species of Indian wheat from Professor John Custance with the soil and sub-soil in which it grew. The anatomical models of the Ligurian bee stolen in 1894 from the Chamber's museum (by that time in the Jubilee Exhibition building), a multi-reversible scarifier share by H J Keipert & Co of Laura (probably from the Crown Foundry) would also have suited. There were many more items from this primary producing colony. In 1884 the Chamber tightened its ideas for a standing museum of South Australian industries(8), distinguishing its concept for a technological museum from the objectives of the South Australian Museum, its devoted building then in progress, but to the Chamber too general for the purposes it believed South Australia needed, and the Botanic Garden's Museum of Economic Botany that opened in 1881 and which the Chamber considered too limited.

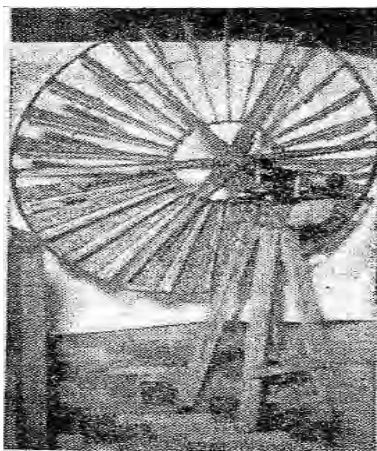
What should be the specialist focus for a museum of Adelaide? Named museum concepts, some realised, within the metropolitan shadow have included a folk museum (behind the Institute), a natural history museum (support in 1838 for a museum to collect and classify, and a mineralogical museum suggested from 1840); in early 1869 the Adelaide Lunatic Asylum, North Terrace, was viewed as perfectly placed for a museum in all its branches; and an education museum and a nautical museum were wished for early. In the State's centenary year use of the buildings behind the Public Library for 'an Australian national museum of colonial history' (quite a compendium)

was urged (9), as was a museum of agriculture. For want of dedicated collections space, Austral House (Ayers House), North Terrace, became the object of many disparate claims for accommodation; from historical relics to the 'black pros' (nurses) of the Royal Adelaide Hospital.

**' ... to get together a historical collection of things that have something to do with our agricultural progress'**

Is it time to lament the loss of a collection of pioneering farming relics, donated from all parts of South Australia, that once was promised longevity in a proposed permanent Museum of Agriculture? Collected for the 1936 centenary on the Show grounds at Wayville, for the 1938 Show the commemorative museum (i.e. collection) was re-arranged for better viewing of its about 280 objects, e.g. 'new relics' in the form of tillage machinery; a Strawsoniser machine for distributing manure; a drake screen; a swing or wheel plough; and a bleacher (for drying fruit), a corn cobbler; wind- and steam-powered inventions of Charles Dutch of the Mount Barker ironworks (founded in 1850); and a fluted red gum threshing roller (made in 1856) that lay outside the Department of Agriculture pavilion. Ninety-three-year-old M W Burge, formerly of a farm and vineyard in the Lyndoch district, watched Edward Springbett help cut down and shape the tree into a roller. In 1923 the senior dairy instructor, Herbert Apps, saw it when inspecting Friesian heifers, and 13 years later encouraged its inclusion in the centenary exhibition (10).

The farmer and Minister of Agriculture and Local Government in the Richard Butler government, Albert Blesing (1879-1949), appointed a committee for the purpose of establishing the centennial museum: Walter John Spafford (1884-1962), Director of Agriculture; H T Gray of Da Costa Park, Glenelg (steward of the collection); George H A Mahood, who grew up as a farmer in the Wirrabara district; Leslie Samuel Smith (1888-1940), and Colonel Charles Philip Butler (1880-1953), whose pen-name as agricultural editor of the *Advertiser* was Yattalunga, had begun its work by mid-1936. (11). The government provided freight for suitable items. Placards with names and addresses of donors and the details supplied of the object's history were to be prepared(12). Gray was a very eager encourager: can we enthuse people today? He was given a potato digger once used in the Adelaide Hills and, from Quorn, an unusual chisel hammer once used for dressing millstones. Triangular fencing wire was another find, small but significant, as was a man-trap made in 1865 and the first fire pots used in the Murray district to keep frost from vines. Are these merely items of agricultural practices or can a history of Adelaide and South Australia be constructed from them and their ilk? Unfortunately, something went awry, and this major collection was not nurtured or protected long-term.



*Charles E Dutch's model no. 4 self-regulating windmill with vertical and rotary motion, made in 1867, was shown at the Chamber of Manufactures' exhibition in 1875, and at the Centennial Exhibition at Wayville in 1936. The windmill was considered suitable 'for all purposes, including pumping, sawing, chaff-cutting, etc. ... adapted to both vertical and horizontal work (13).'*



*'Working model of vertical oscillating steam engine made in 1867' by Charles Dutch. This was shown at the first exhibition of the Chamber in 1875, and presented by Dutch's sons for the Centennial Exhibition (14).*

The first items for the pavilion named 'Agricultural Museum' arrived in August 1936, leaving little time for their repairs and sprucing. They included the first reversible plough share (known as the Heithersay, of 1880); an Egyptian plough once used on the Adelaide Plains; a mole-drain plough, and a Scotch swing plough (in all, 18 ploughs were eventually included); a pan for hand-broadcasting seed; a human bucket yoke fashioned from the bent limb of red gum; an early version of the stump-jump plough; a coffee roaster and large agricultural implements such as a cultivator, scarifier and a Universal tractor of 1908 (said to be the first used in South Australia), and a sturdy red gum lathe made by Frank Potts (1815-90) at his Bleasdale winery and used for 45 years for making wooden cask and vat plugs. A huge jinker with iron-clad wheels pulled by 36 bullocks that carried the first boiler from Adelaide to the Burra mines in 1846 probably took pride of place. This was then 'the only jinker of its kind in the colony (15).' At the other extreme of size was part of the steel comb of the original stripper made by Ridley. And other small, large and incomplete items numbered 170 in 1936 and about 280 in 1938. In 1939, Gray wanted to complete a group: he said, 'We have the bullock dray, yoke, bows, cued hooves [and] we can get the language, but we haven't got the [old bullock] whip yet'. Has the infamous language of the bullocky been preserved? An old whip with 'plenty of handle' and a greenhide fall was donated the following month (16).

The idea for a museum of agriculture was publicly proposed most likely first in 1860 and again in June 1874 when the Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society (RAHS) urged such a formation (17). The Bureau of Agriculture established a museum by 1893, housed on the ground floor of the former Legislative Council building, North Terrace. Might the RAHS collection have acted, as the founders of the Bureau museum wished, to furnish knowledge, settle doubts, and clinch theories? (18). These are, undoubtedly, some of the essential and comprehensive objectives of any social history museum. But there are many more 'essentials'. And what are the 'necessaries', for example for a *Museum of Adelaide and/or South Australia (in 100 Objects)*? Do these need a building?

With the destruction of Shed 26 we lost an opportunity for on-site waterfront interpretation, for recorded reminiscing within the workshop walls and for a space to house related artefacts. A year or so ago an old Caterpillar D7 bulldozer that first came to Kangaroo Island in 1951 as part of soldier settlement, was donated to the Soldier Settler Museum at Parndana, Kangaroo Island. Although a medium-size 'dozer', its physical presence evoked wide-ranging memories. Interaction within the three-dimensional space of real objects is a requisite of museum experience.



*The remains of Finniss' water-mill in 1969. These gears of red gum were part of the 1839 saw-mill of John Cannon at First Creek, Waterfall Gully, that became Finniss' flour-mill, operational from April 1842. The wheel was seventeen feet in diameter. The remnant of what was believed to be the oldest mill in the colony used to be by the Burnside tram terminus (the intersection of Glynburn and Greenhill Roads), and was lent by the Burnside Council in 1949 for display in the agricultural museum (Photo: John Miles, A richness of people, South Australian Chamber of Manufactures, Netley, South Australia, 1969, p3).<sup>3</sup> (19)*

Would the agriculture museum have held the tools that measured and cut the cogs and flutes of these two artefacts?



*An Onkaparinga threshing roller on Windmill Hill, Mount Barker. Unrelated horseworks machinery is in the background (Photo: author, c, 2002 (20).*

When the land surveyors and the dentists held Australia-wide conferences, they put together respective pop-up 'museums' for the duration (21). In 1842, the auctioneer, John Bentham Neales, offered 'for public competition' Robert Hall's splendid and unique 'Museum of South Australian

Birds [mounted under glass] for Exhibition and Sale' (22). Our philosophical and practical definitions of museum will probably change in the period after our 'lock-down' as much as they have from Neales' day to the intervention of coronavirus in 2020.

## *Bridget Jolly*

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<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, it does not give such clear detail as of other works.

<sup>2</sup> Otto Hellwig, 'Adelaide's heart remodelled', *News*, 14 August 1944, p2

<sup>3</sup> 'Adelaide's heart remodelled', p2

<sup>4</sup> David Eccles, 'Shed 26 battle ends with a bang and a whimper', *In Daily*, 4 July 2019,

<<https://indaily.com.au/news/local/2019/07/04/shed-26-battle-ends-with-a-bang-and-a-whimper>>, accessed 8 September 2019

<sup>5</sup> W Prest, 'Make our history a drawcard for state', *Advertiser*, 4 July 2012, p22

<sup>6</sup> 'Model of Square to be Inspected', *News*, 14 November 1944, p3

<sup>7</sup> Maggie Andrews and Janis Lomas, *A History of Women in 100 Objects*, The History Press, 2017; Jenni Murray, *A History of the World in 21 Women: A Personal Selection*, Oneworld Publications, 2018; Geoff Speirs, *The history shapers. South Australian history in 100 objects*, Axiom Publishers, 2016.

<sup>8</sup> Foundation of a Colonial Museum in London was proposed from before 1879, but came closer to a blueprint in that year. The British government was to buy the site and the colonies, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Ceylon, but not India, were to pay for the building where activities would further trade and commerce.

<sup>9</sup> *News*, 3 April 1936, p7

<sup>10</sup> Vox, 'Out Among the People', *Advertiser*, 20 October 1936, p21

<sup>11</sup> Leslie Smith was secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, having progressed from accountant to chief clerk and then secretary in 1934. He died in 1940 ('Death of Mr. L.S. Smith', *Advertiser*, 30 November 1940, p18). Butler's father and a brother were both one-time premiers of SA; he himself was a World War One veteran, worked on the land, and was interested in stud stock and South-East pasture development.

<sup>12</sup> 'Museum of Agricultural Implements', *Quorn Mercury*, 31 July 1936, p4

<sup>13</sup> 'For exhibition', *News*, 4 December 1935, p4

<sup>14</sup> *Advertiser*, 15 November 1935, p27

<sup>15</sup> Speirs, *The history shapers*, pp32-33

<sup>16</sup> Vox, 'Out among the people', *Advertiser*, 30 August 1939, p23, and 12 September 1939, p17. The fall is a single piece of un-braided leather between 25 to 76 centimetres long depending from the whip and to which a cracker can be attached if wished.

<sup>17</sup> 'A Museum of Agriculture', *Adelaide Observer*, 6 October 1860, p2. A Chamber of Manufactures sub-committee of Samuel Davenport, the two vice-presidents, and E W Pitts, was charged with investigating its formation.

<sup>18</sup> 'The Agricultural Bureau Museum', *Adelaide Observer*, 28 January 1893, p11

<sup>19</sup> 'Mr. Finnis's Mill', *South Australian*, 21 March 1843, p2; 'Historic wooden wheel for display', *Advertiser*, 15 June 1949, p2; and see Glen Woodward, 'Down by the Creek: Burnside's first Industrial Zone', Burnside Historical Society Inc., *Newsletter*, vol 33, no 3, September 2013

<sup>20</sup> Some history and speculations about the Onkaparinga threshing roller are in B Jolly, 'Sketch notes on South Australia's Onkaparinga threshing roller, and some antecedents', parts 1 and 2, at <<http://www.sahistorians.org.au>>.

<sup>21</sup> The 8th Australian Dental Congress mounted a museum in the Masonic Hall, North Terrace, showing the history of dentistry from the early nineteenth century ('Museum to depict dental history', *Mail*, 19 August 1933, p4)

<sup>22</sup> 'Advertising', *Southern Australian*, 1 November 1842, p3. Neales arrived in South Australia in 1838 ('The late Hon. J.B. Neales', *Adelaide Observer*, 2 August 1873, p3e-f)

**BOOK REVIEW****Penelope DeBelle*****Red Silk: The life of Elliott Johnston QC*****Wakefield Press, Adelaide 2011**

As we approach the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the year of publication of this excellent biography and the death in the same year of its illustrious subject, the time has come to pass it in review. Empathetic and respectful of this long-standing doyen of the Adelaide Bar, it is unlikely that there will be scope for another biography covering the same terrain for some time to come. *Red Silk* is thus an established standard work, which has stood the test of time.

That said, it is instructive to precis the life as outlined by DeBelle of the much loved and distinguished barrister, Supreme Court justice and Royal Commissioner Elliot Frank Johnston (1918-2011), known to so many simply as 'Elliott', as DeBelle styles him. He achieved the highest judicial office of any Communist in Australian history to date. [The highest elected political Communist official was another people's lawyer, Fred Paterson (1897-1977), who served two terms (1944-50) as the Member for Bowen in the unicameral

Queensland Parliament, before his seat was redistributed from underneath him]. It is part of their legend that both men encountered repeated attempts to frustrate them professionally because of their beliefs. So much for the limits of freedom in capitalist society.

Democracy is a work in progress, to which they both contributed.

To begin at the beginning, Elliott was something of a filial chip off the paternal block. His father, William Stewart Johnston, of 39 Balham Avenue, Kingswood, had been dux of his primary school and inducted the infant Elliott into the English poetic tradition, featuring Shakespeare of course. Johnston senior, who was of Midlothian Scottish stock, was evidently a humanist, and Elliott's progressive politics was to be built on that foundation. Schooled in his earliest years at Highgate and Unley Primary schools, Elliott attended Unley High for two years, before taking in 1932, in the depths of the devastating Great Depression, the Elder entrance exam and completing his secondary education at Adelaide's premier Dissenting academy, Prince Alfred College. At PAC, over four years, Elliott won many awards, and despite the disability of blindness in his left eye, was an enthusiastic participant in football and cricket. It was all part of the varied liberal

education fostered by the College. He was a devoted lifelong fan of his local Sturt Football Club. Elliott's strongest subject was English. He joined the debating team in an institution which encouraged free exchange of ideas on contemporary issues of socioeconomic equity and war and peace, about which Elliott was passionate. In his leaving year Elliott won, at his second attempt, the George Thorburn Melrose Shakespeare Prize. At this stage Elliott was a progressive Christian, as Paterson had been before service in the Great War had cured him of belief in a benevolent deity. Elliott's family had also been touched by the war, like so many. His second name memorialized one of his mother's siblings, who had died on the Somme.

Several men of his mother Elsie Elliott's family, of Cornish extraction, were in the law. This seems to have been the origin of Elliott's aspiration to follow suit professionally, along with his love of language and debating.

At the University of Adelaide Elliott read law and threw himself into related extracurricular pursuits. He was to say that he might have done even better as a law student but for his passion for oratory, which was, nevertheless, to stand him in good stead in his ultimate vocation. As a

student activist he was passionate about student representation and free speech on campus in conjunction with the themes he had advocated at College. He thus incurred the wrath of the University authorities, including varsity luminary, geologist and explorer Sir Douglas Mawson, a very conservative and patriotic man, who, if memory serves me correctly, had been a leading proponent of Conscription during the Great War, and who resented Elliott's efforts to establish a Radical Club to expound support for the war effort, but without the suspension of one's critical faculties. The Club was banned for the duration of the war and Elliott suspended for a symbolic fortnight, but not before Elizabeth, a sporty, young and keen-witted exponent of the well-heeled Teesdale Smith family, wrote in the campus press in his defense. After accepting an invitation from Elliott to lunch, a love was to blossom into a marriage of enduring passion, membership of the Communist Party of Australia in 1941 and partnership in the law to the benefit of the community, the poor and the labour movement. Elizabeth was after all the daughter of a decorated Gallipoli veteran who encouraged critical thought about contemporary socioeconomic regimes at home.

It is only constructive criticism of Debelle's work, the wealth of detail of which enables us to pose the question, to note that she seems at times, despite appreciating Elliott and Elizabeth's fundamental decency and intelligence, perplexed by the political life choice which animated all aspects of their partnership. Debelle repeatedly describes Elliott's politics as perplexingly 'naïve' and 'odd'. They, like their contemporary Brecht, would have described the world they lived in as bizarre, and communism as corrective commonsense. In due course, having initially supported the Russian and Chinese revolutionary experiments, they were, being critical, ultimately disappointed by the Stalinist and Maoist heresies. Given the blanket hostility of the capitalist press and the State, and the reclusiveness of the regimes which claimed to be socialist through and through, good information was hard to find, even for those who like Elliott went on extensive meet-the-comrade trips. This was so even after the travesty of the 1937 Moscow Show Trials. By this time the threat represented by the Fascist Axis, principally in Spain, was obscuring critique of the 'socialist' regimes and was paramount in progressive minds. There was no good reason moreover to relinquish the essentially critically humanistic and scientific inspiration

of Marxism. Doubtless again, they would have agreed with Brecht that just as capitalism and the human aspiration to fly had had their crimes and tragic birdmen, so the historical building of socialism was bound to experience failures along the way. Just as the misery and 'sound economics' which was part and parcel of the Great Depression had rallied many talented intellectuals and workers to the moribund leadership of the Communist Party of Australia, so the noble defence of the revolutionary proletarian motherland by the Red Army, although laboring under Stalin's ham-fisted leadership, likewise rallied many of Elliott and Elizabeth's generation and calibre. Their disposition to be joiners and doers, in other words, encountered a receptive context. Even the anti-socialist Churchill was realist enough to be praising the USSR as a 'glorious' ally and presented Stalin with a ceremonial sword. With the rapid advent of the Cold War in 1945, the cultural antagonisms of the interwar period were wholeheartedly resumed, once again making discrimination difficult for people of good will. It was a fine old conflict, as the communist among the aristocratic Mitford girls said, and the only show in town for a bright and serious person. Debelle's skeptical perplexity is a little misplaced, but

does not obscure her achievement. It just overeggs her journalistic detachment a tad, getting somewhat in the way of her profound respect and sympathy with her subject. If this is the principal finite limitation of her biography, it is nothing which can't be accommodated within the elastic confines of historical debate.

Having set the scene, we refer those keen to come to terms with the further careers of Elliott and Elizabeth in the law and South Australian society to DeBelle's account. There his impeded rise in his profession is tellingly and accurately related. Elliott's delayed rise to silk demonstrated the limitations of South Australian liberal conservatism. The illustrious Dunstan's reluctance to elevate him to the bench showed the limitations of antipodean social democracy. At the height of professional and social controversy about his standing and politics, the media grilled him. Could he honestly swear an oath of allegiance to the legitimate head of State, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II her heirs and successors? Elliott charmingly pointed out that he could. What about *The Communist Manifesto* of 1848? Didn't it enjoin insurrectionary violence? No, it didn't, Elliott demurred. All the journalist could cite in response was Marx and Engels' invitation to the working class to make the ruling class

tremble. As if in their paranoia they didn't tremble at every election campaign. Gaudron J (who also considers Elliott's politics had naïve aspects), in her foreword suggests that Elliott might only have flourished as he did, contested, unimpeachable and unstoppable, within the jurisdiction of the 'Paradise of Dissent'; it is a compliment which should be graciously received. But it needs once again to be recognized that the capitalist utopia of the Province of South Australia established in 1836 has evolved into a State which is, like all capitalist States, Janus-faced. It has conservative and progressive aspects. These trends face one another in reciprocal tension, perhaps a little more so here than generally. Elliott and Elizabeth were two South Australians who helped our community punch above its weight. Elliott's personal poetic motto was 'Excelsior', Ever Higher. He was an aspirational Australian, a description conservatives like to arrogate to social climbers and two-bob liberals. Their aspirations were as genuine and human as they were. Excelsior Elliott and Elizabeth, their legend will live long.

**Dr David Faber, College of  
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Flinders University**

See the Society's website for back issues of the Society's Journal.

### REQUEST FOR SPECIALIZED HELP

I have some interest in **Dr Cecil Madigan**, who pioneered a route across the Simpson Desert in 1939.

I have been a keen 4wd traveller and explorer for over 40 years. But for COVID-19, some friends and I were going to traverse the Simpson via what is known as 'Madigan's Line', which route Madigan pioneered using camels.

One of my objectives was to recreate the navigational methods Madigan used to find his way. To this end, I have wanted to understand what equipment Madigan used (theodolite?) and specifically what model, if at all possible.

I have done a considerable amount of googling, and have emailed two descendants of Cecil Madigan, but as yet have no replies, nor luck in getting any detail on Madigan's equipment or methods. Does your organisation have any reference material that might help me understand what navigational methods and equipment Madigan used to find his way across the Desert? Any information you can provide would be greatly appreciated, conversely, if you can point me at any one or any organisation that might help, I'd be very grateful.

*Jim Impey*, Melbourne, 0499 800 059

Thanks to all contributors to this special edition of the HSSA Newsletter. Contributions to the next edition are welcome: the deadline is 8 July.

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