

No. 267 January 2022

From the President

IMPORTANT NOTICE

As we begin the program of general meetings for 2022, we remind you of the public health measures that apply at our meetings:

Face masks are mandatory.

- If you have a medical condition that exempts you from wearing a mask, evidence of exemption must be produced on request.

If you feel unwell, or display symptoms of ill-health, please stay at home.

Please use the QR Code or sign the tracing record on entry.

Sanitise your hands.

Practice social distancing.

From the President

In 2022 our program is a showcase of our state's rich shared histories, of the rich heritage of our multicultural state and of its stature, local, nationally and internationally.

Our program gives opportunities to explore unfamiliar and untold stories that display the significance of South Australian characters and how they contributed to the economic, intellectual and spiritual development and progress of South Australia. Two Adelaide women became activists who showed fierce courage in bringing change. They pursued unconventional beliefs of women's rights to vote, and to alter education systems. They improved the quality of life of not only South Australians but also far beyond our shores in the United Kingdom.

Discover progressive initiatives early South Australian settlers took. Settlers in rural regions, such as the Adelaide Hills, Mid-North and Barossa Valley, constructed churches and war memorial windows and added to South Australia's moral fibre.

By adding other layers of narrative to the dominant

narratives we understand the richness in the stories of our state's history and characters and thus increase how we value our heritage. Members can share remarkable South Australian stories by nominating a book and its author for the Maurice Keain Medal in 2022. New scholarly stories are continually shared in our HSSA newsletter, the Society's annual Journal, and added on the HSSA website.

The HSSA Council is looking forward to meeting again with our members and guests, under Covid requirements, armed with curiosity, queries and new stories, in 2022.

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

From the President

The **Annual General Meeting** of the Historical Society of South Australia Inc. will take place on Friday 1 April, just before the General Meeting.

The new Governor of South Australia, **Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson AC**, has graciously accepted our invitation to be the **Patron of the Historical Society of South Australia**.

Sent with this newsletter is the year's program brochure, including a form for the **renewal of your membership**. Please be prompt with your payment.

The Society's **Grants Program** has been revived to aid projects related to South Australia's history. Grants of up to \$1000 are available. Submit forms by 28 March 2022. Recipients will be notified on Friday 6 May. Forms are available on the Society's website or by application to the Secretary (contact details on page 12 of this Newsletter).

Please consider nominating a book on South Australian history, published in 2021, for our annual **Maurice Keain Award**. Obtain nomination forms from the website or the Secretary.

Fiftieth Anniversary

The fiftieth anniversary of the Historical Society of South Australia will occur in 2024. The Council has convened a subcommittee to prepare for this notable anniversary. If you would like to join this subcommittee, or if you have ideas for ways to mark the occasion, please contact Bridget Jolly on 7200 5455 or Robert Martin on 8362 8262.

Contributing to South Australia's History

Friday 4 February 7.30 pm

Patricia Sumerling

A chronological illustrated talk on the pubs of Port Adelaide and its suburbs

Please note: The speakers originally scheduled for this meeting had to withdraw for health reasons, and the Society had to find a substitute speaker at extremely short notice, given that the newsletter and 2022 program brochure were about to go to the printers. Patricia Sumerling kindly agreed to step in at this very short notice.

This talk will cover the varied history of the hotels of Port Adelaide and its surrounds, including Alberton, Birkenhead, Ethelton, Exeter, Glanville, Largs Bay, Queenstown, Rosewater and Semaphore. As you would expect in a port area, there are some lively tales to be told.

Patricia Sumerling is co-author of the landmark publication *Heritage of the City of Adelaide: An Illustrated Guide*, 1990, and the author of *The Adelaide Park Lands: A Social History*, 2011. She is the author of *Elephants and Egotists: In Search of Samorn of the Adelaide Zoo*, 2016 and debuted as a novelist in 2010 with the historical crime



Prime Minister Bob Hawke buys drinks for all at the Colac Hotel, Port Adelaide, in 1984. On his right at the back is Special Minister of State, Mick Young.

mystery, *The Noon Lady of Towitta*. Having a long term interest in hotel history, her first book on them was *Down at the Local: a history of the hotels of Kensington, Kent Town and Norwood*. She is now completing a social history of the City of Adelaide's pubs that is a section cleaved from a larger project on the social history of the pubs of South Australia.

All lecture meetings commence at 7.30 pm on the first Friday of the month at the Burnside City Uniting Church, corner of Portrush Road and Fisher Street, Tasmore.

Contributing to South Australia's History

Friday 4 March 7.30 pm

Bill Othams

Coromandelians: A one-ship study of early European settlers in South Australia

Brian Stace and Bill Othams co-authored *Coromandelians: South Australian Pioneers of the Coromandel*. They both had ancestors who arrived in South Australia on the *Coromandel* in January 1837, sparking their interest in the ship and its passengers. The publication of the book was the outcome of over 10 years of research.

The despatch of the *Coromandel* in 1836 marked a change of policy by the South Australian Colonisation Commissioners and the first selections of free passage emigrants by John Hutt, as Superintendent of Emigration, in implementation of that new policy. The *Coromandel* was the first vessel to carry out free passage emigrants who were not required to have contracts of employment before they left England. The book and this talk are the story of all those free agents, and how they fared.

Brian and Bill are not professional historians, and *Coromandelians* is their first full-length historical work.



They are both retired lawyers, although Bill retired only four years ago. He lives in Port Pirie. Brian lives in Devonport, Tasmania, but has siblings living in South Australia and visited here regularly until the coronavirus struck. If it is possible, he will attend this meeting, but at this stage Bill will be the sole speaker.

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SPEAKERS FOR 2022

by Patricia Sumerling

I never know when I begin seeking out speakers each year precisely whom I'll end up with. But I'm usually surprised whether it was because someone has been dobbed in by a well-meaning earlier listener, or a potential speaker has themselves contacted me.

Please note: The speakers originally scheduled for the meeting of 4 February had to withdraw for health reasons, and the Society had to find a substitute speaker at extremely short notice, given that the newsletter and 2022 program brochure were about to go to the printers. Patricia Sumerling herself kindly agreed to step in at this very short notice, with the topic 'A chronological illustrated talk on the pubs of Port Adelaide and its suburbs' - *Editor*

On 4 March, Bill Othams will give an insight into the 'Coromandelians: a one-ship study of early European settlers in South Australia'.

On 1 April to commemorate the coming ANZAC Day, esteemed historian, Peter Donovan, will remind us of the occasion with his 'History in Glass: The men and images in South Australian war memorial windows'.

The topic not studied before until Chris Burns was awarded a grant to research the architecture of several

hundred postwar churches, we are honoured to share this illustrated talk on 6 May 'A Modern Image: post-war churches in South Australia 1945-1990'.

We are fortunate to have talks on South Australian women over the next few months. On 3 June, Isabel Story, a Community Engagement Librarian at the State Library of SA, will present one of her many talks about interesting SA women. This talk is titled 'Shame, Shock and Awful Strife in the Holy Village: Two sojourners who grabbed headlines across the country and kept the good (and not-so-good) folk of Adelaide vastly entertained in the early 1900s'.

Some more interesting women will be discussed on 1 July by Professor Philip Payton, author of the recent publication *Vice-Regal: A History of the Governors of South Australia*. He will be drawing on his research on the many governors and their spouses, in 'Vice-Regal Wives and Gubernatorial Reputations'.

Another talk on SA women will be given on 5 August by Kay Whitehead, Adjunct Professor at the University of SA, who is a historian of education. Her topic is 'The teacher educator and the suffragist: Lillian de Lissa and Muriel Matters' lives and work in Australia and the United Kingdom'.

Many of us will remember the landmark publication *Barossa Journeys* that was recently reprinted by Wakefield Press. On 2 September Dr Noris Ioannou will speak about the time he undertook the research for

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this book and several others since then, including the acclaimed 2021 publication *Vernacular Visions*. His presentation is titled 'One degree of separation: memories and material culture - discovering and writing the untold history of the Barossa'.

The wonderful old pastoral station of Anlaby, near Kapunda, and for so long owned by the Dutton family, is included in a presentation about the station's overseers on 7 October by Dr Janet Scarfe. Her talk is titled 'The Campbells of Anlaby: Working and Social Life in Mid-North South Australia'. There is now a history of this family called *The Campbells of Anlaby 1860-1940*, that was published in 2021 by Janet and Suzanne Scarfe.

Our last speaker for the year, on 4 November, is the very well-known Beth Robertson. She is manager of the State Library of South Australia's Preservation Services and was the Library's inaugural Oral History Officer, 1987-1999. She is a great-great-granddaughter of Edward Stirling, and her talk is titled 'The dark inheritance of Edward Stirling: descendant of slavery, colonial settler and father of Sir Edward Charles Stirling'.

To conclude with a request, we are always looking for interesting speakers and I look forward to suggestions of possible speakers or subjects that people want to know more about.

The Kentish Arms Hotel, 23-27 Stanley Street, North Adelaide

by Patricia Sumerling

This hotel was the centre of cricket for many decades because its owner, John Cocker, was 'the father of South Australian cricket', a key figure in the development of the sport in South Australia, and the first curator of the Adelaide Oval.

The site was bought in 1848 by John Collard Cocker who opened a hotel soon afterwards named after his English county origins of Kent, England. For over 70 years the hotel was associated to the Cocker family until it was sold out of the family in 1920. Cocker, born in Hollingborn, Kent, in 1815, played cricket from a young age, appearing in English matches at prominent grounds such as Lords and gaining a considerable reputation as a bowler. When he arrived in South Australia, he formed the Kent and Sussex Cricket Club. Cocker's enthusiasm for the game was not confined by his duties as a publican. Indeed, the nearby flat expanse of Mann Terrace proved ideal as a cricket pitch. His reputation for popularising interest in the game was such that he was entrusted with the preparation of the first wicket at the Adelaide Oval, subsequent to a lease being granted in 1872 to the newly formed South Australian Cricket Association. Cocker remained a prominent figure in South Australian cricket until his death in 1885.

In common with many other hotels in Adelaide, the Kentish Arms was rebuilt in the speculation building boom period of the mid 1870s and 1880s. The original hotel was built on John Barton Hack's subdivision of 1839, the area of which is still characterised by small cottages on narrow allotments.



The Kentish Arms in 1897 when John Selby Cocker was both owner and publican. SLSA B48071

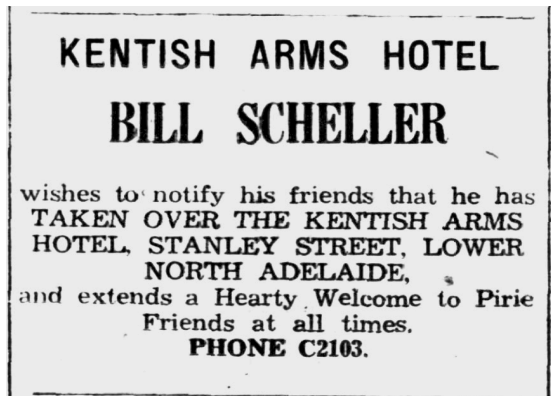
The elegant hotel was rebuilt in 1881 by Cocker's son, John Selby, to the design of architects Hamilton and Campbell. Constructed of squared sandstone with stuccoed dressings, the hotel is a distinctive element in Stanley Street. The arcading that is unusual in an Adelaide hotel adds a distinctive architectural detail to this building where otherwise a cast-iron column supported balcony could have been used. A wonderful example of arcading in a hotel is the three-storey Largs Pier Hotel.

Cricket was the major association to this hotel, but in the 1950s the hotel had its own football team, for in April 1952 it was playing against a team from the Hampstead Hotel in Grote Street in a match that was to be played on the British Tube Mills Oval. Proceeds from the match went toward the Miss Sport and Miss Hampstead Community Hospital Appeal.

When Bill Scheller and his wife Betty took over the licence after the war in 1946 it was probably in search of a safer occupation. He was publican until 1954 before he and his wife went to manage the Colonel Light Hotel in Currie Street between 1970-74. He was a well-known sportsman originally from Port Pirie who went on to work in several gold mines in Western Australia. He was a 'toolie' in the Youanmi Mine in the Murchison Region where accidents were

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frequent. He was lucky to be alive for on 4 September 1940 his workmates, despite great danger to themselves, rushed to his aid when he was trapped by falling ore. It took more than three hours to release him by using relays of workers who assisted with the aid of ropes to haul him safely from danger.



Scheller's advert, *Recorder*, 13 December 1946 p5

[This article is a foretaste of my next publication, *Adelaide's Hotels: A Social History*, which is part of a larger project, *The History of South Australia's Hotels*.]

References – Wikipedia for John C Cocker; ACA, ACC Rate Assessments, J McLellan, *Adelaide's early inns and taverns*, 1941, p.24; *SA Register*, 9 August 1879, p.2, Tender by Campbell & Hamilton for additions to Kentish Arms Hotel, 5 August 1879, 2 January 1880; *Mail*, 26 July 1930, p.2, Adelaide Oval tells history of cricket; *Westralian Worker* 20 September 1940, p 4, Heroic Rescue; *News*, 16 April 1952, p.21, Football to help appeal.

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HINDMARSH ISLAND LONG AGO

MEMORIES OF MANY YEARS

by T. P. Bellchambers

[Thomas Paine Bellchambers (1858 – 1929), the naturalist who founded the Humbug Scrub Sanctuary near Gawler, wrote many articles for the newspapers in the 1910s and 1920s. In this article, published in the *Register* of 16 April 1918, he recalls his earliest days in South Australia, after he emigrated from England in 1876, aged 17. – *Editor.*]

This is the place, stand still my steed,
Let me review the scene.
And summon from the shadowy past
The forms that once have been.

July, '76, found my mate and me in Adelaide looking for a job. We were straight from a stranded vessel in the gulf. We had had a drunken captain, and lively and exciting had been the experiences of the last few days. However, as these happenings antedate the matter in hand, I will leave them out of this article. We were both from the village of Keymer, in Sussex. We separated to meet later in the day; and my mate secured a job. An old dame from the country engaged him for work on a road contract. We were strangers in a strange land, and when he told me of his job we decided to hang together. I was introduced to the lady in question, and it was agreed that I should stay with them and help until I got work near my mate. Two days later saw us on top of [a] coach bound for Strathalbyn, all agog to study the scenery of our new country. Being dressed in the old-country style, we were picked out as new chums all along the route, and in some places we

were greeted with most uncomplimentary language. However, these pleasantries were soon forgotten in studying the bird life and the flora. As we passed through the stringy-bark, hundreds of black cockatoos were seen, and the noise they made was deafening. Their numbers were remarkable. The scenes by the way — the impotent gesticulating rage of an old boozier as one of the "pubs" at sight of the new chums, and the chase of a runaway coach provided plenty of interest for the earlier part of the journey. From Strathalbyn to Goolwa was by tramway, which place we reached pretty late. I was up early next day, and got my first sight of the grand old Murray, on whose banks and bywaters so many of my after years were to be spent. After I had been some time awaiting a job, a rider came along looking for volunteers to help to raise the Mundoo. She had been burnt and sunk at her moorings off McBeath's place. He was her skipper, and they were going to tackle the job on the morrow. My mate and I went on as bucket men, filling and emptying the barges by means of which the Mundoo was raised. A cold wet job it was, but to my mate and me a welcome change. We got her up, and I think she is still running. Capt. McBeath shortly afterwards gave £900 for the Amphibious, which he ran for many years to Mannum. The captain and his son Shanney were well-known river men in the early days of the wheat-carrying trade, and well respected. On the opening of the Murray Bridge he took a large party of the islanders up for a trip. I remember I felt some disappointment at not being included.

— "Eat-a-Penny."—

Soon after my arrival I met one of Mr. Price's daughters, Llama, and as she was the first person to show a sympathetic

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interest in me, a stranger among strangers, her personality naturally impressed itself on my memory. The first kindly word of sympathy amid sordid and uncongenial surroundings, it was like dew from heaven. Later on I became acquainted with Mr. Price (of Shorthorn fame) and found him a pleasant and kindly man. He it was who introduced the hares to the island. Later I was engaged as shepherd by an old gentleman whom the neighbours designated —"eat a penny," Getting across to the place on the Monday, I was set to work ploughing in company with one of the Tremaines, a very decent fellow. When Sunday came around, I had a tiff with the boss, as our ideas of a fair thing were at variance. I reckoned that if I ploughed on week days Sunday was for rest; but his idea was to plough six days and shepherd on Sundays. He also had an idea that the working day ended at 10 p.m., and my idea was that sundown was the limit for the wages (from 10/ to 15/ a week). Sunday was the only day on which I got any chance to study the fauna and flora of the island. Game was very plentiful. Large numbers of curlews, or stone plovers, found shelter among the sheoak, and early one morning I came full butt on to the last surviving kangaroo. We were both surprised and stood staring at one another for a time. This poor lonely beast was protected by the islanders, but on the arrival of a new manager for Grundy's estate, was shot. One day my mate and I, going further afield than usual, came across a very heavy belt of tea-tree fringed by a narrow swamp. This we crossed, and found ourselves in the midst of a Nankeen heronry, the croaking birds circling up into the blue in hundreds, and many of the trees containing four and five nests. Further in were the native platforms of the dead, where the mummified bodies of the blacks were laid

to rest under the leafy canopy of the tea-tree, with the herons for neighbours and the murmur of the ocean for a requiem.

—"Sport."—

Swans there were in thousands on the rivers and lakes, and large numbers used to cross over the island to their feeding grounds. This flight took place at night, and when there was moonlight parties of young fellows would cross from Goolwa and take their stand on the sandhills, a windy night being most favoured, as the swans then fly low. I have heard on good authority of bags amounting to 50 birds. This seemed to me a shameful thing, as very few of the birds were used. It was done chiefly for "sport." But worse than this was done around the lake shores, where, for the purpose of procuring swansdown, the wretched birds were penned up and starved to eliminate the fat from the skins— starved almost to skeletons before they were killed. Whether this practice is yet carried on I do not know. On my first visit to the island chapel a negro occupied the pulpit (Campbel), but the attention of the young folk seemed to centre on the new chums, which I found rather embarrassing. My boss, a son of "Eat-a-penny," said to me one day, "Look here, Tom, if you care for riding you can on Sundays run that mob of horses in and take your choice." I thanked him, and for several Sundays did so, but as often as not came back leading the horse. I was no coltbreaker, and he did not tell me that these horses had scarcely been handled. I know I thought them rough customers.

—Snake Pie.—

One day the boss, in talking about snakes (these reptiles were plentiful on the island) mentioned that they were good to

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eat. I asked him if he would be game to eat them, and he said yes he would. So one day, being short of mutton, I fetched him along a fine big snake, from which I had cut the head. This he proceeded to cut in sections after he had skinned it, and, putting some fat bacon with it, made a pie. Dinner time came, and we each had a helping of the pie, which I must say made a very passable dish; and if we had had the bliss of ignorance we could really have enjoyed it. As it was, there was a fair amount left. Says the boss, "What are we going to do with it?" Now it happened that there was on the island an old couple, an ancient schoolmaster and his wife, to whom the neighbours were in the habit of sending food and other little helps. So I suggested that as we would be passing there with the team that afternoon we should present them with the pie, and get at the same time an unbiased opinion as to its merits. This was done, and the pie was much enjoyed. So you see it is just prejudice that leaves the snake out of the everyday menu. The old folks never would believe it was snake pie they ate with such relish.

Contributions to this newsletter are always welcome. The deadline for the next edition is Sunday 6 March.

Wakefield Press, our generous sponsors, have their premises at 16 Rose Street, Mile End. Their telephone number is 8352 4455.

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Patron: The Governor of South Australia, Her Excellency the Hon. Frances Adamson AC

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