



No. 269

May 2022



MARBLE HILL, the Vice Regal summer residence in Adelaide Hills, built 1878 for Governor William Jervois. From the tower, the Governor could see ships sailing up St Vincent's Gulf and through the Port River. The designing architect was William McMinn.

A budget overrun led the Hon. G C Hawker (Commissioner of Public Works) to invite SA Parliamentarians to see the completed structure in December 1879. Seeing the magnificence of the building, they were convinced that the money had been well spent. (Wikiwand.com)

Newsletter of the Historical Society of South Australia Inc.

FROM THE EDITOR

Lyn O'Grady

As we are all aware over the last few years, nothing ever stays the same – and now the newsletter has changed! Well, why not have a new look. I look forward to your contributions to help make this, your newsletter, an interesting read. I will be looking for short fillers too. (Email details are on the last page).

Another change, this time to our speaker programme. Philip Payton is unavailable for our July meeting so he has swapped with Kay Whitehead. (See page 5)

The recent AGM saw resignations from the Council - Pam Rajkowski OAM, Patricia Sumerling, and Dr David Faber. We thank them for their part in the continuing success of our Society and wish them well in their future endeavours. You will find the 2022 committee members on the back page along with their new roles.

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MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL REMINDER:

Some members are still in arrears. If you are unsure if you have paid your fees for 2022, check with our Treasurer Anne Bowman at the next meeting or contact us through the website at www.historicalsocietysa.com

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have a large range of books and ebooks available at their premises at 16 Rose Street, Mile End; and online
ph: 8352 4455 ask to be added to their email list

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JUNE MEETING:

*Friday 3 June at 7.30pm at
Burnside City Uniting Church, 384 Portrush Rd Tasmore*

**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.**

Isabel Story

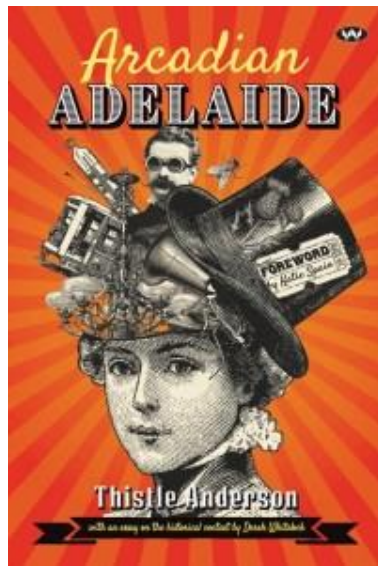
MC 'Thistle' Anderson was the daughter of the Deputy Master of the Melbourne Mint. She emigrated from Scotland as a child, spent her formative years in Melbourne and left her convent school behind to join the chorus of JC Williamson's theatre. She became a writer, enjoyed several high-profile relationships and then married Adelaide stockbroker, Herbert



Fisher in London. Eventually they came to live in our fair city. Here she penned a little book, and then another, which made her notorious, or fabulous, depending on your perspective. Adelaide society took great offense at her shameless no-holds-barred opinions and history but they didn't know the half of it.

At around the same time as Thistle was observing and enduring our 'holy village', another Scot visited South Australia, this time to save

souls and enlarge his coffers. The Reverend John Alexander Dowie was a former South Australian preacher who had migrated to America and made a fortune as a faith healer and founder of Zion City in Illinois. As Elijah the Restorer, his fire and brimstone evangelism brought strife wherever he went. In 1904 he caused a riot at the Adelaide Town Hall. Windows were broken and Dowie had to flee for his life as police tried to hold back the screaming crowd. His visit here thus proved a little shorter than expected. (images courtesy Wakefield Press)



About the presenter:

Isabel Story is a Community Engagement Librarian at the State Library of South Australia. As co-presenter of the Library's monthly Live and Learn program and other events, Isabel researches and writes about lesser-known aspects of South Australian history.

She particularly enjoys telling the stories of interesting women from the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries and is always open to hearing about forgotten characters, historical scandals, local ghosts and weird phenomena.

Dedication

*"To any kindred spirit whom duty
may compel to live in Adelaide, and who,
living there, suffers as we suffer."*

THISTLE ANDERSON

*NB: Philip Payton is unavailable in July so will present his talk on **Vice-Regal Wives and Gubernatorial Reputations** in August.*

JULY MEETING:

CHANGED FROM THE PROGRAM

Friday 1 July at 7.30pm at

Burnside City Uniting Church, 384 Portrush Rd Tusmore

THE TEACHER-EDUCATOR AND THE SUFFRAGIST: Lillian de Lissa's and Muriel Matters' lives and work in Australia and the United Kingdom

Kay Whitehead

This presentation explores connections between the lives and work of two women - suffragist, Muriel Matters (1877-1969), and teacher-educator, Lillian de Lissa (1885-1967). Both were born in Australia but spent most of their adult years in England.



(image left Muriel Matters – right Lillian de Lissa)



In 1905, Muriel Matters travelled to England and plunged into the suffrage movement and the Women's Freedom League. In 1907 Lillian de Lissa became the foundation principal of the Adelaide Kindergarten Training College. In 1910 they met in Adelaide during Muriel Matters' lecture tour on the British Suffrage

Campaign.

Maria Montessori's ideas about early childhood education in Italy spread like wildfire in the English-speaking world from 1912, and de Lissa and Matters engaged with her work during World War One. In 1914, de Lissa studied with Montessori in Italy, returned to Adelaide before being recruited to England to establish Gipsy Hill Training College in 1917. Matters studied with Montessori in Spain in 1916 and then worked with Sylvia Pankhurst to open a Montessori nursery in the London slums. The presentation concludes with their mostly parallel lives and work in the interwar years, and highlights their commitments to making a more equal society.

About the Presenter:

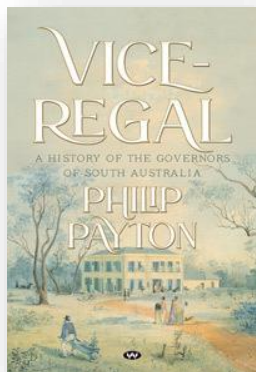
Kay Whitehead is a historian of education and Adjunct Professor at the University of South Australia and also Flinders University where she was a professor in the School of Education for many years. Her main field of research is nineteenth and early twentieth century teachers in Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom. She has published many articles and a book on Lillian de Lissa and her students. More recently, her research has been used to publish a digital 'Timeline of the History of Early Childhood Education in South Australia' on the University of South Australia website.

<p style="text-align: center;">THE KEAIN MEDAL AWARDS</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;">Bridget Jolly</p>
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Our entrée to a book is often from reading the blurb, an interesting if unattractive word which is not in my Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary of 1913 but my concise and shorter Oxford dictionaries say it was US slang coined in 1924. Peter Howell's commendatory eulogy, or blurb, of Philip Payton's VICE-REGAL, a History of the Governors of South Australia, is short:

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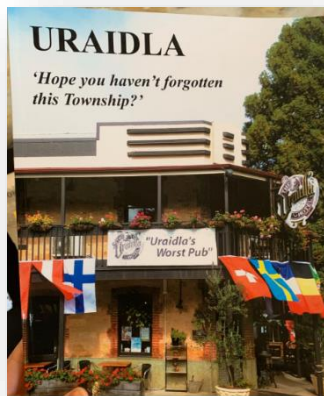


'The Crown's representatives were a fascinating set of individuals', and so true. From John Hindmarsh to Hieu van Le, Payton's enticing chapters enliven the governors within the context of SA's developing history – Foundation, Responsible Government, Depression, up to a new Millennium. The images are of excellent quality, and like a good horse, the book handles well. We could start a book club to read the references Payton gives in his discussion.

Philip Payton will be presented his medal when he addresses us in August.

Geoffrey Bishop is our joint awardee for 2021 for **URAILDA**. '**Hope you haven't forgotten the township?**'.

A project of the East Torrens Historical Society and the Lion's Club, and the prolific skills of its author. The book identifies new research questions, is able to answer many – its blurb is in the author's Introduction – and it presents many before and after (and between) images of the land. Uraidla entices us to again visit Piccadilly Valley, in all seasons, having gained closer familiarity through this local history.



A VISIT TO THE DAVID ROCHE GALLERY

By Vaishnavi Heath

Those of us who arrived early chatted in the neat garden, behind a tall wall hidden from the mundane world on Melbourne Street, North Adelaide. When the glass doors opened, we were welcomed into an airy lobby by a smart professional team and suddenly we were in another world - a fabulous supra-Adelaide world-class gallery.

Adelaide businessman and entrepreneur, David Jerome Roche AM (1930 – 2013), formed the David Roche Foundation in 1999 to preserve his astounding collection of art and design, a rich legacy that he bequeathed to us, the people of South Australia, and to the nation. This private house-museum, was opened in 2016 by former Prime Minister, Paul Keating. The original house, an Australian Federation sandstone villa, *Fermoy House*¹, was Mr. Roche's long-time home, and visiting it had an intimate feel, as if the gentleman himself had invited us in.

We were ushered into a cool hall overlooking a courtyard, as in a Roman villa, where we sat on modern crystal-clear chairs between gigantic white marble Roman statues. This was the Roman Room. The Director, Robert Reason, gave an introductory talk here and, via video, the late Martyn Cook, Mr. Roche's long-time friend and former Museum Director, spoke to us.

¹ David Roche purchased his home in early 1954 and named it *Fermoy House* after his French-Irish grandparents.

We were about to see one of the world's finest collections of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century English Regency and French Empire fine and decorative art, *objet d'art*, and furniture, as well as Russian Imperial opulence collected over decades of trips to Paris, London, Moscow, St Petersburg, New York and Rome. All had been selected according to their dizzying provenance, beauty, colour and form.



We split into two groups of half-a-dozen, and followed our guides along different routes through meticulously presented corridors and rooms. In the hallways, gilt-framed paintings of horses were hanging above doors up to the ceiling, with barely a space between them. We were shown through themed rooms, each with their own unique and fascinating chandeliers. Every wallpaper told a story, the bespoke carpets we were walking on were each chosen for a reason; every

window was hung with thick, rich rucked drapery. Cabinets were filled with porcelain from the very best European factories.

In the dining room there was furniture used by Napoleon Bonaparte; a soft Chinoiserie bedroom was decorated with delicate hand-painted wallpaper; the den contained an awe-inspiring display of ceramics and canine paintings; in Mr. Roche's own strongly-Neoclassical leaf-brown room was a round table carrying an iconic micro-mosaic of a smiling boyish bacchant.

Over three-thousand artefacts of fabulous artistic and historical significance covered every wall and surface: paintings, sculptures, candelabra, glass, clocks, metalwork, embroidery, and especially, furniture and choice ceramics - all selected for their exquisite craftsmanship in luxurious materials.

There were captivating collections of walking canes, hat-pins, small boxes, miniatures, intaglios, Staffordshire figurines and even silver and coral baby rattles.

The nearest there was to a "downstairs" in *Fermoy House* was Mr. Roche's kitchen, with his old original cooker and sink, surrounded by glorious collections of folk art, whimsy, china chickens, naïve craft, and pictures



along with antique mechanical moneyboxes and toys. My favourite find was a Royal Doulton perfume bottle shaped like a book.

In what is now the Russian Room, Mr. Roche would receive guests to discuss his other passion - dogs. The wallpaper here is royal blue with bold gold stars like that in the Pavlovsk Palace in St Petersburg; all around were malachite objects, mahogany, busts, bureaus, military paintings and a striking portrait of Catherine the Great.



An adjoining room houses the “dog library” containing books on breeding and showing pedigree dogs. Cynophiles have a soul-mate in Mr. Roche. Luxury kennels for his purebreds—especially Afghan hounds, Smooth Fox Terriers and Irish Blue Terriers—were built outside *Fermoy House*. During his lifetime, Mr. Roche’s dogs won more awards than any other exhibitor in Australia. Abroad, he judged in some twenty-five countries, and at Crufts in

1969 he was the youngest-ever, and the first Australian, judge. Clearly, he applied his fine eye to assess perfection in dogs, as well as in antiques. Even visitors who are not dog-lovers cannot fail to appreciate the moving and affectionately-rendered paintings of dogs in the collection, mostly by specialists such as Edwin Landseer.

Our tour ended near the administration and research area which houses Mr. Roche's antiques library. As we stood thanking our guide, I took the opportunity to venture a final question, which was



that there didn't seem to be any religious artefacts, not one. Our guide replied that indeed there was, and we were standing right by it - a humble, Spanish, seventeenth-century walnut statue of Saint Roch - the Patron Saint of Dogs.

Where the dog kennels once were, three spacious galleries now adjoin the original house and, the day we visited, there was a sartorial exhibition. Displays are always changing and I look forward to future exhibitions. One visit to the David Roche Gallery is certainly not enough! (images courtesy Angela Bannon & David Roche Gallery website)

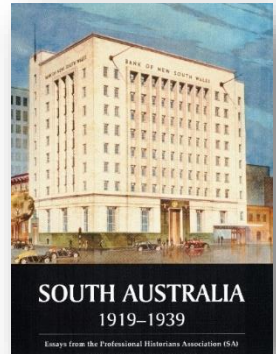
Editor: Follow the link below to access podcasts, videos and a virtual tour of *Fermoy House*. <https://www.rochefoundation.com.au/multimedia/>

BOOK LAUNCH

SOUTH AUSTRALIA 1919-1939 - Essays from the Professional Historians Association (SA)

MONDAY 30 MAY at 5-6:30pm – Hetzel Lecture Theatre in the Institute building North Terrace – the book will be on sale for the special price of \$40 (p26 of History Festival program)

South Australia bookended 1919 to 1939 with a pandemic and an epidemic. This collection of essays opens up new perspectives on a little researched period of the history of SA. It studies the flu and polio outbreaks, examines significant examples of the built heritage, the rise of the aviation industry, the work of individual artists exhibiting their creations, the lively literary scene, the attempt to erase Germans from the map, women in pubs, the contribution of the churches, and much more.”



The essays are wide-ranging, entertaining and accessible, supported by many contemporary images, in black and white and colour. (*Price \$45 + postage*) phone orders to Anne 0416 326 815. Published by Professional Historians Association (SA) Inc 386 pages.

BOOK LAUNCH

MURDER IN THE COLONY, by Paul Tucker

An anthology of all 391 reported murders in South Australia from 1836 to 1886, from stabbings to shootings, to shipwreck massacres and the case of Elizabeth Woolcock - the only woman executed for murder in South Australia.

Further information and ordering through Wakefield Press

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GRANTS SCHEME 2022

Bridget Jolly

The Historical Society of SA was very pleased to be able to reinstitute its Annual Grants Scheme for 2022. The nine applicants were all awarded the amounts they requested, to the total of \$8,534 and all have been notified of their success.

Their projects and requests are:

- the social and ecological transformation of the Renmark district (Erawirung country) through orange-growing in the post-war period, 1948 to 1971; the topic (Amanda Wells, University of Newcastle PhD candidate).
- the publication of a monograph, *Encounters*, that explores accounts of Indigenous sovereignty and includes accounts of water culture in the lower Murray River and research into the Kaurna people (Karen O'Brien, University of Sydney).
- assistance for editing, layout and image fees for the book *Dr John Woodforde ... and six parrot puddings*. Dr John Woodforde died in 1866 (Robert Kirk, Yankalilla).
- towards publication costs of *South Australia: 1919–1939. Essays from the Professional Historians Association (SA)* (Professional Historians Association [SA]).
- towards a commissioned history for the 100th anniversary celebration, *A Bold Story Well Proven* (Knights of the Southern Cross (SA) Inc).
- towards travel and archival research costs for the publication of Johann Ferdinand Mueller's (1813–1891) autobiography (Samuel Doering, Truro).
- for copying and reproduction expenses for an exhibition in the south-west of Adelaide for the 2023 History Festival called 'Re-imagining Burford Close: a Housing Trust Community' (City of Adelaide Local History Group).
- for digitising *The History Project 1970 to 2000*, by a professional archivist to meet Trove and State Library of SA standards. The records are of the Old Town of Hindmarsh: Bowden, Brompton, Ovingham, Croydon, West

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Hindmarsh and Hindmarsh village (Hindmarsh Residents' Association Community Archive Inc.).

- support for writing a biography and exegesis, *Women in leadership/commerce: colonial businesswomen 1834 to 1901, Adelaide, SA*, including questions about Kaurna women's trading (Ani Peters, Christies Beach)

OVERLAND TELEGRAPH SESQUICENTENNIAL SYMPOSIUM

Thursday, 21 July 2022 from 9.30 AM – 1:00 PM ---at the University of South Australia, City West Campus, Allan Scott Auditorium (room H2-16) 61-68 North Terrace, Adelaide

The OT-150 Symposium will feature a kaleidoscope of speakers presenting newly researched information about the Overland Telegraph Line, what preceded it, the heroic efforts to build it and what followed. All speakers are experts in their topics, bringing interesting facts and themes that will stimulate your thoughts, not only on this historical event, but also on the developments it wrought on the social and economic fabric of colonial Australia.

Opening by Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson AC, Governor of South Australia. <http://www.ot150.net/events-symp.htm>

OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT TO MARBLE HILL

JUNE 22 1-5PM - bus is leaving Walkerville Civic Centre to visit Marble Hill Stables for its panoramic views, a glass of Marble Hill Rose and afternoon tea, with an illustrated talk by Patricia Michell on the restoration of the main house – Tickets are \$80 plus \$12 online booking fee – Bookings: Walkerville Council 83427100 – fundraiser for Women of Walkerville Foundation. (no tour of the house as it is still a building site).

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

**MEETINGS HELD FIRST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH AT 7.30pm :
Burnside City Uniting Church, 384 Portrush Rd Tasmore**

Patron: The Governor of South Australia,
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CONTRIBUTIONS to this newsletter are always welcome. The deadline for the next edition is **Sunday 3 July**. Email lyn.ogradey@gmail.com

HISTORY SA ----- ISSN 1444-8459

Newsletter of the Historical Society of South Australia Inc.