



No. 271

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Sturt Street School opened in 1883

(Image courtesy History Trust of SA)

FROM THE EDITOR

Just as this goes to print, we learn of the passing of Queen Elizabeth II and that King Charles III is now the head of the Commonwealth.

Please note a **speaker change for our October meeting**; the advertised speaker Philip Payton, advised he is now not available. Jenny Hein, speaker co-ordinator, has found an excellent substitute in Rob Kirk and his topic Dr Woodforde. (See pg3 for details).

Podcasts on history - in response to the last newsletter, here's a reader's recommended podcasts sites:

- Archive Fever (Aus) <https://www.archivefeverpod.com>
- Our Town (National Trust SA)
<https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/our-town-podcast-series>
- Talking History (History trust of SA) choose video or audio
<https://history.sa.gov.au/where-to-learn-more/talking-history>

Field Trips and Excursions - HSSA Council members are making plans for some excursions in the coming months. Keep a lookout for an email or check our website or Facebook for details, how to book and where to meet. If transport is a problem let us know. Bridget Jolly checked out the Tonsley Innovation Hub (see p8). Other options are Lot 14 on North Terrace, and a Gilberton guided walk. **Please email any council member if you are interested in one or all of these suggestions and what day of the week suits you best. Also, let us know if you have any suggestions.**

A quick look at our Facebook page will show how busy other groups have been in organising the many and varied activities on offer this coming month <https://www.facebook.com/HistoricalSocietySA> . Plus in the last week I attended 2 events, the dedication of a WWI memorial in Dernancourt and the 14th Merchant Navy Day Service at Port Adelaide.

There is no excuse to be a couch potato, and with free transport all day and night for Seniors Card holders on public transport, there should be nothing stopping us.

OCTOBER MEETING: 7 October at 7.30pm
Burnside City Uniting Church, 384 Portrush Rd Tusmore

DR JOHN WOODFORDE...and Six Parrot Puddings ROB KIRK

The talk is about the early days of Colonial Adelaide through the eyes of Dr Woodforde, survey doctor (and later JP and Coroner) who came out on the *Rapid* with Colonel Light. His diary is used (first May 1836 to 22nd May 1837) beginning with his departure from Blackwall in England, and then various other sources until 11th April 1866, Woodforde's death. We will encounter early hospitals and lunatic asylums, public hangings and soirees at Government House, under seven different governors.

One of Woodforde's sons, John, went on one, and a half of another of John McDouall Stuart's expeditions. An integral part of this talk involves many excellent drawings and paintings of early Adelaide, including lady artists who need much more recognition.

Some of Woodforde's original items will be on display. Rob Kirk's book on Dr Woodforde was printed with a HSSA grant and will be available to purchase on the night.



About the speaker: Rob Kirk is the great, great, great grandson of Dr Woodforde and is also related to Major O'Halloran, the first Police Commissioner. Rob has been a geologist for 45 years and lives on a little farm, with Margy, also a geologist, in the Hills outside of Yankalilla. He is a member of Pioneers Association of SA (PASA) and the Yankalilla and District History Society and has given talks to Probus, U3A, ADFAS and

PASA. His interests include rocks and fossils, Tasmanian convicts and British Roman material.

NOVEMBER MEETING: 4 November at 7.30pm

Burnside City Uniting Church, 384 Portrush Rd Tusmore

THE DARK INHERITANCE OF EDWARD STIRLING: Descendant of Slavery, Colonial Settler and Father of Sir Edward Charles Stirling BETH ROBERTSON

Edward Stirling c1808-1873 arrived in South Australia in 1839 on board the 'Lady Bute' from Greenock, Scotland when he was about 30 years old. He was an illegitimate Jamaican-born child of a woman of West African heritage and one of the sons of the Stirlings of Keir, Scottish landed gentry. Edward's emigration had been funded by his father to remove an embodiment of the family's slave-owning past from the vicinity of his legitimate heir who was about to come of age.



Edward was determined to promote his Scottish identity within South Australian colonial society; as a pastoralist on Peramangk country at Strathalbyn; as a partner in Elder, Stirling & Co. which financed the Wallaroo and Moonta copper mines; and as a politician. Such was his emphatic financial success that his African descent and the compounding 'taints' of slavery and illegitimacy were never publicly acknowledged. However, he remained cognisant of his awkward place in the social order. So too did his oldest son Edward Charles Stirling who, nevertheless, as an anatomist and Director of the South Australian Museum, made a life-long study of human evolution and racial variation. His motivations remain obscure but add further, intriguing complexity to the family biography.

About the speaker: Beth M Robertson is a great-great-granddaughter of Edward Stirling. She is manager of the State Library of South Australia's Preservation Services and was the Library's inaugural Oral History Officer, 1987-1999. Her out-of-hours research obsession is the 1,730 men and women depicted in the Library's Old Colonists photographic mosaics collection dating from 1872.

TWO MYSTERY BRONZE DIES

Peter Fleig



Recently, two bronze dies were sold by an Adelaide auction house, which described them erroneously as two dies for striking the medals that were awarded at the Adelaide Jubilee International Exhibition in 1887. These bronze dies are in fact designed to impress an ink image onto a flat surface such as paper.

The raised parts of both dies will clash if pressed together; impressions made by each die on paper with soft underlay will not show real embossing. While they are in the (reversed) form of obverse and reverse of the *First Order of Merit* medal awarded at the Adelaide Jubilee International Exhibition in 1887, the medal part of each die is approximately 33½ mm in diameter, which is less than the 75 mm of the actual award medal that was given out at the exhibition.

The medal parts are backed by a 39×39mm integral plate, each with four holes for screws with chamfered heads. Although the thickness of one plate is different to the other, the overall thickness of both dies is approximately 4mm.

The dies were apparently designed to be screwed or bolted as a pair to a plate or roller. Looking at it another way: the dies seem to

have been turned on a lathe from two solid cuboidal blocks of bronze to leave the raised cylindrical medal parts standing proud. These were then meticulously engraved with the obverse and reverse designs, which may have incurred reasonable cost.

Origin or purpose of the dies remains a mystery. There seems to be no record of these dies having been used on any known document or for a newspaper of the period. Speculation suggests that they may have been produced privately for an organisation or well-off individual who had won this award at the exhibition and wanted to make a paper image of the medal for record or advertising purposes; or, were they part of an abandoned plan to use the die images on a certificate? The large monochrome professionally printed certificate that eventually accompanied each *First Order of Merit* medal has no image of the medal on it.

The auction house that sold the dies had apparently acquired them several years previous at another Adelaide auction, giving us no real provenance for the items except perhaps that they probably originated in South Australia. Olson Badges, who took over the workshop of Adelaide's renowned medallists Schlank, have no recollection of these dies. While they may have been engraved interstate, their maker remains unknown, as does their purpose.

right: the actual Jubilee Exhibition First Order of Merit medals (etsy.com)





**XVIth EASTERN REGION
HISTORY SEMINAR 2022
Re-imagining local history
after 40 years**

**SATURDAY 22nd OCTOBER
9.15am–3.30pm**

Marble Hill Stables, 314 Marble Hill Rd

Programme highlights:

Guest Speaker: **Liz Harfull**, Adelaide Hills author, journalist, photographer and consultant: ***Giving a voice to Women's Stories in Local History.***

Guided tours: of Stables and grounds including hilltop lookout (no public access to main residence which is a building site)

Registration fee of \$45 includes morning tea and lunch. Visit website for registration and programme <https://www.eths.ws/>

Register by Friday 7th October **Enquiries:** Dr Geoffrey Bishop
gcbishop@westnet.com.au M:0468345025 / 83903138

Personal Safety: due to uneven terrain, suitable footwear recommended and possibly a walking stick.

**Seminar hosted by East Torrens Historical Society
and Marble Hill Heritage**

STURT STREET SCHOOL REUNION 2023

Kathleen Patitsas

Next year Sturt Street School turns 140. Over the years, hundreds of migrants, especially Greek and Italian, spent significant time at the School as 'New Arrivals', mostly living in the South West corner of the City. In addition, teachers were trained there from all over the State, especially in the skills of English as a Second Language, and for the multi-age classes in one teacher schools in rural and Outback Australia. *Polis*, a new City of Adelaide local history group,

(which meets at the Minor Works Building Community Centre, at 22 Stamford Court, City on Mondays at 3 pm) would like to hear from old scholars and former staff who would be willing to share their stories of Sturt Street School with us. **Please contact Kathleen Patitsas** on 0448893591 or this email address kathleen@kathleenpatitsas.com.

Tonsley Innovation Hub

Bridget Jolly

When very young, going to the southern beaches was a 'packed lunch job'. We had to turn off Goodwood Road which had ended at the 'White House' and head downhill westward along Quinlan Avenue to join South Road at Clovelly Park where there was a sprawling industrial motorcar factory site, now Tonsley Innovation Hub. I never saw the other side of it until decades later.

The day was dreary and grey when I went on a reasonably leisurely guided walking tour of the Tonsley Innovation Hub. It takes one hour. Because of COVID we did not go inside the university or TAFE buildings but walked past them through the vast MAB (Main Assembly Building), peering through their glass walls and dodging the rain falling from the open roofs of the Forest Plaza and other green recreation areas. The route is all flat, no stairs or humps. But it's visually, aesthetically cold. The steel frame of the assembly building is original; there are gantries to be seen; and alpha-numerical postings on pillars (I think left-overs from the Mitsubishi and



Chrysler works, but possibly useful for orientation to a meeting point across that ocean of concrete).

The self-driving vehicle of the development has a yellow end and a blue end, and I wondered if one colour was for an anti-clockwise route, the other for coming home (?). There is some literal history on show: alcoves



or shelves showing current robotic models, devised collaboratively; the development of refrigeration; and of x-ray machines. The latter is connected to the Micro-X Rover, a light-weight, nano-techno-logical x-ray machine that South Australia exports, and the wonderful MRI machine invented to fit into an ambulance that is on the list for

future exports. We tend not to tell ourselves enough about such successful innovations.

The 'old boiler', the former source of factory electrical and steam power, was considered for a micro-brewery, but this and its possible development (as a gin distillery) is currently halted. COVID seems to have kyboshed the first plan. Hydrogen Park SA is a small affair in comparison to what is housed under MAB, but set to replicate itself regionally; its fuel is a blending of hydrogen and natural gas.

ZipTrak (track-guided blinds) has its distribution centre there; and Zeiss its optical and optoelectronic industries but I'm uncertain how extensive; and the Global Centre for Modern Ageing pays a \$5 voucher to over 65s who road test appliances and devices, and does far more, including work with Autism SA, across the way, on eye-control equipment. Tesla has an office under construction and is very guarded about itself: it is to be a service point for energy storage batteries and electric vehicles.

There is limited interest in seeing plumber apprentices dig channels in sand pits inside the building, or groups of earnest people conversing in meetings or designers glued to computers showing extraordinary pictures. But otherwise, the complex is fascinating. **If you would like HSSA to organise a tour of the Hub, please contact a council member.** (images by Bridget Jolly)

An online exhibition –
The Overland Telegraph Line: a transcultural history

The new five-part website (www.otlhistory.sa.gov.au) launched on 22 August 2022, *‘revisits the history of the Line as a transcultural frontier ... [and] aims to reframe the Line’s significance through a more inclusive cultural narrative by highlighting the consequences of the Line’s path through Aboriginal Country, and the vital role played by other non-Europeans in its construction and along its route ... [The] website foregrounds the Line’s place both as a tool of colonial expansion and as a complex zone of cross-cultural contact and exchange.’* (From History Trust of South Australia events@history.sa.gov.au)

This outstanding and indispensable history is in most part produced by Amanda Nettelbeck, Mandy Paul and curators and archivists of the History Trust SA (Jacinta Koolmatrie and Mandy Paul), the State Library of SA (Clare Parker and Jeremy Sibbald) and the SA Museum (Philip Jones and Jared Thomas).



(Extracts gathered by Bridget Jolly)

Right: Bob Carew up an OTL pole, photographed by Jack Laver. 1921 (SLSA, PRG 1365/1/133)

MERCHANT NAVY DAY SERVICE

report and images by Lyn O'Grady



Beginning in 2008, the members of the Merchant Navy Association have organised annually a special service on third of September at wharfside at the end of Timson Street, Port Adelaide, to remember and honour those men and women of the merchant navy who lost their lives through service to their country. (It's on the anniversary of the first attack on an Allied merchant ship in World War II, only hours after Britain declared war on Germany in 1939.)

The exact number of Australians who served or died during wartime service in the merchant navy is unknown. However, around 1,000 are known to have died serving the Allied cause during the two World Wars. Their courage and bravery kept the supply lines open and underpinned the allied victories in Europe and in the Pacific.

The ode: *They have no grave but the cruel sea. No flowers lay at their head. A rusting hulk is their tombstone: afastr on the ocean bed. They shall grow not old as we who are left grow old. Age shall not weary them, or the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them.*

Historical Society of South Australia Inc.

PO Box 519, Kent Town SA 5071

MEETINGS ARE HELD FIRST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH at 7:30pm
Burnside City Uniting Church, 384 Portrush Rd Tasmore

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

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