



No. 272

November 2022



‘Dernancourt residents organized a manifestation of gratitude in honour of its Australian godmother, Adelaide 1922’

## FROM THE EDITOR

Another year has flown by in a blink of an eye! What will 2023 bring? Remember that contributions to this newsletter are welcomed. Tell us about a historical presentation or place you have experienced.

**Council News:** While our meetings are in recess, Council is working behind the scenes preparing for next year. We could do with some help, we are still four persons short of a full complement. Just 6 meetings a year. Give it some thought.

**Programme:** Jenny Hein has finalised the programme and it will be revealed early next year with your January newsletter.

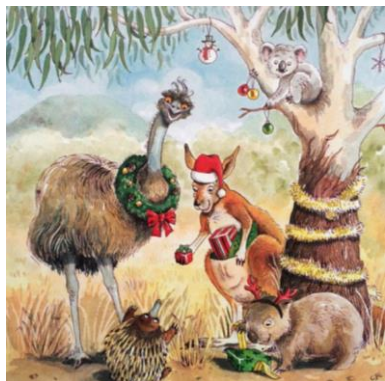
**Excursions:** We would appreciate some guidance as to whether to arrange an event on a weekday or on a weekend. Should it include the option of afternoon tea or lunch? Drop us an email with your preferred day, am or pm and suggestions of what you would like to see or where you would like to go, whether a guided walk, cemetery visit or historic site.

**Keain Medal:** nominations close 28 March 2023, nominate a worthy history book.\*

**HSSA Grants:** applications close 28 March 2023, for up to \$1k.\*

\*Visit HSSA website for details/forms

**Wakefield Press** have some wonderful books of all types for gift-giving to others, or yourself!



Wishing you a very *Merry Festive Season* and a *Happy and Healthy New Year*. See you next year!



## DERNANCOURT MEMORIAL

Lyn O'Grady

In August this year, Tea Tree Gully Council opened a new memorial in the linear park off Lower North East Road and Mahogany Avenue in Dernancourt, commemorating the special connection that existed, and in some ways still exists, between Adelaide and the French town of Dernancourt. The Governor, MPs, local dignitaries, an Indigenous elder, *Alliance Francaise d'Adelaide*, and an Army chaplain and young members of our defence force, all contributed to the event. A sealed canister of soil from Dernancourt's battlefield was interred inside the memorial.

The plaque on the top of the memorial tells the story of both the battle and the naming of the suburb:

## **‘The Battle of Dernancourt, France.**

During the First World War, the small farming village of Dernancourt on the River Ancre in northern France hosted many Australian soldiers, who were billeted in the village. The Village was the scene of much desperate fighting during the German offensive of March and April 1918. The Battle of Dernancourt is known as one of the most decisive battles of the First World War. South Australian soldiers played a crucial role by defeating German attacks, aimed to break the British front around Dernancourt.



(Dernancourt Cemetery - online)

An estimated 1600 Germans and 1230 Australians died as a result, with the Australians awarded the battle honour Ancre, 1918. Only three of the town's 110 houses were left standing at the end of the battle. The village church was used as a

field hospital and the communal cemetery became the last resting place for many South Australians.'

### **'The naming of the suburb of Dernancourt in Adelaide**

Following the Armistice in 1918, the Consul-General of the Ardennes region in France suggested a scheme for the 'adoption' of devastated towns and villages. (At its height the people of Great Britain extended a helping hand to nearly a hundred French towns.) In 1920 at the instigation of Madam Berthe Mouchette, an Adelaide committee [including Eva d'Arenberg, Mr G Anstey<sup>1</sup>] agreed to adopt Dernancourt as its 'god-child' and proposed to collect funds and items to forward to the Mayor of that village.

In 1923 an Adelaide suburb was created by Richard Arthur Hobby on land owned by him. It was named Dernancourt in recognition of the Battle of Dernancourt and our soldiers' ultimate sacrifice. The help given to Dernancourt assisted in cementing the Anglo-French Entente into what was hoped, in the 1920s, to be an 'imperishable friendship'

In due course, Australian 'adoptions' included Poilcourt by Sydney, Villers-Bretonneux by Melbourne and Dernancourt by Adelaide.

In 2008, Jane Lomax-Smith MP visited Villers-Bretonneux and Dernancourt by invitation of the French Government and met many of the local dignitaries including the Mayor at Dernancourt, France. She didn't know of the *god-child* story until she was made aware of it and was able to re-establish the ties which the local inhabitants had been trying to achieve without complete success.

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<sup>1</sup> Register 22 Sep 1922 p5

In 2009, Mr Lionel Lamotte, the Mayor of Dernancourt, France visited Adelaide. He told a reception that owing to this gratitude, the Dernancourt municipal council gave the name of *Rue d'Australie* to one of the main streets. A school and public hall which they named '*Adelaide Pavilion*' was built from money raised from South Australia. Every classroom has a sign reading '*N'oublions pas les Australiens*' – Let us never forget the Australians.



(photos online)



He added:

“We owe to Australia an immense and sacred debt for the blood that was shed on coming to our help and you have increased still further that debt in aiding us towards the restoration of our ruins.”

In the intervening period back in Adelaide, there has been much campaigning by a number of individuals before the Dernancourt Memorial was officially opened in a quiet river park.

“To avoid it being just a set of stone and bricks, we decided to send a little earth from Dernancourt to give it a soul. That way will make a little more sense to those who visit,” said Lionel Lamotte, president of the Association of Remembrance in Dernancourt, France.’

The soil from the French battlefield was removed during a special ceremony in France in early July, involving dignitaries and local school children, and Jane Lomax-Smith was present.

It was then received with a smoking ceremony before being placed inside the memorial.



I was privileged to be present when Jane Lomax-Smith gave her talk on her return from France in 2008, at the reception for the French Mayor in the Parliament house dining room, and at the official opening of the Dernancourt Memorial by Governor Frances Adamson.

(Photo above Lyn O'Grady)

## NEW SELF-GUIDED WALKS FOR MAGILL

Burnside Council has two new walks, one for the village of MAGILL and the other a guide for MAGILL CEMETERY in Jackson Street. They can be downloaded for free at <https://www.burnsidehistory.org.au/historical-walks> or follow instructions to open on a smart phone.

These walks are No. 9 and 10 in the series developed by Burnside Historical Society (BHS) from the 1980s. Acknowledgements are given at the end of each brochure for those who provided research, information and editing.

A small launch was held recently at Pepper Street Arts Centre for those who helped and supported this latest project. In 2020 I saw an opportunity to develop walks to coincide with the revitalisation of the Magill Village area with a Burnside Community Grant, aided by Michelle Toft of Burnside Council and Jeremy Carter, BHS's Graphic Designer. Dr Geoffrey Bishop wrote the text about Magill vineyards, cellars, wine industry and people involved. Helen Thiselton, Campbelltown

Council's

History Officer with the local Digger's Club provided information and Jim Everett was consulted about the Historic Magill Wesleyan Cemetery.

Bennett's Pottery



Magill Village is on the edge of two councils, Burnside and Campbell-town with Magill Road on the boundary but this hasn't prevented an active village precinct. Places of interest are highlighted and you will notice the diversity. A customer of the Magill Grain Store (est. 1920s) has described it as "a country store in the city." You will learn about local historic industries and businesses still operating, (eg Bennett's Pottery est. late 1880s), about old Magill families, and some heritage listed houses and a State-listed house (Woodforde House built 1856). Along Penfold Road you will learn about points of interest related to the wine industry.



Romalo House 1987 (City of Burnside Local History Collection)

Alas, there has already been demolitions since beginning the project.

- Local Heritage Place *Romalo House's* huge, well-vegetated block has been cleared (2020). Magnificent trees, original native, Hoop and Bunya pines were razed

for developer gain. The house itself is in a parlous condition, the owners promising renovations.

- In 2021 *Leahurst* (est, 1950s) a residential home for retired nurses on the corner of Briant and Magill Roads, was the next large block targeted, by a different developer. No vegetation left but no development started (2022).
- The demolition of a two-storey Federation building (c. 1901) opposite the Magill Shopping Centre is imminent. (It was not listed at owner's request.)
- There is a proposal for the old police station (1909 - Local Heritage Place) on Magill Road to be demolished, all but the façade apparently. Will the cells and stables be retained?
- Mid 2022 another huge unlisted property at 69 Penfold Road, Rosslyn Park (not listed; bought 2019) with many buildings, was completely and quickly demolished.



East Torrens Hotel 1909 now Tower Hotel  
(Burnside Local History Collection)

It is timely to highlight Magill's heritage places as currently the losses of Local Heritage Places along the Magill Walk are: Altered/Different use 5; Demolished 9; Development site 3; Pending demolition 2.

Do the walk in a couple of stages, either on different days or take a break before continuing on. Bring a snack or lunch or visit some of the local shops in the Magill Village.

Pop into the Pepper Street Arts Centre with its regular exhibitions and Dorrit's Café. Alternatively, most of the trail is accessible by car.



Magill Primary School 1956 – now Pepper Street Arts Centre (City of Burnside Local History Collection) The Soldier's Memorial moved from in front of Magill School in 2021 to The Gums in Tranmere, a quieter location for Anzac Day.

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## 20<sup>TH</sup> EASTERN REGION HISTORY SEMINAR

Lyn O'Grady



Hosted by East Torrens Historical Society, an enthusiastic group met at Marble Hill stables for an inspiring talk by Liz Harfull and a guided walk to a lookout by Marble Hill owner Patricia Bishop.

Some delicious country fare was on offer for morning tea and lunch, plus a glass of Marble Hill Rosé. Although there was a thick fog in the morning, it eventually cleared to allow us to appreciate some of the panoramic views.

Projects and helpful tips were shared by various groups eg one group was able to access a council grant intended for seniors when they mentioned that the historical society project would benefit seniors, another group is using QR codes for heritage markers in a cemetery.

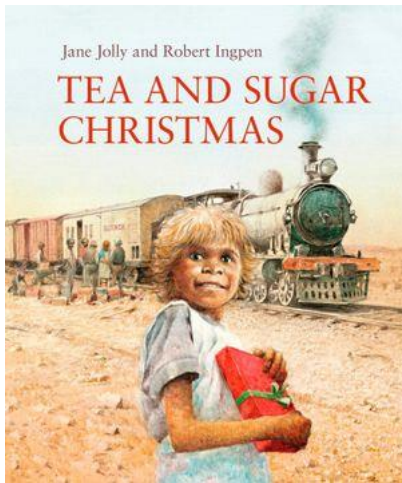


## HSSA Journal opportunities

**Journal Editor** is needed to head the enthusiastic journal team for 2023, plus 2 Journal committee members to replace those retiring. Do you know anyone? The editor's position attracts remuneration from the HSSA Council.

**Call for papers** for the 2023 edition of the Journal. Go to the website for all the information you need.

<https://historicalsocietysa.com/journal-newsletter>



## TEA AND SUGAR

Lyn O'Grady

This book enticed me to do some research on the 'Tea and Sugar' which apparently began in 1915 as a provision train for workers constructing the Trans-Australian Railway. They and their families depended on it for every necessity since the rail link was the only form of transport into the region. When the railway was completed in 1917, settlements had been established along the route at which many railway operational, locomotive maintenance and track repair employees lived with their families, and there was a need to transport food, water and goods to them.

This was achieved by two single-purpose weekly trains, the eastbound counterpart being known as "The Bomber". Sheep were brought on the train, which had its own butcher.

Usually the train was made up of a locomotive and four specialised cars. First, the Pay Van for the railways workers (and sometimes doubled as

a bank agency). Next, the Butcher Van. Orders were ready and waiting. Before refrigeration, there would be a stock wagon where a few unlucky beasts would be unloaded or the butcher would kill and dress on the run. Then the Provision Store for grocery items, books and stationery. In later years, in the refrigerated compartment one would find ice cream and frozen peas. Every six weeks a medical car was hooked up and a nurse sent to check on the wellbeing of the locals. Once a month a film car showed films while the train was in the siding. (Sourced from Wikipedia)

In December there was a Christmas car. The train's engineer Alf Harris, would put on his Santa suit - he did this for 36 years. The children would run to the train, gather inside and receive a present. It didn't matter if their mum had remembered to order a gift, every child received something, a wrapped soft drink or lollies.

After 81 years the Tea and Sugar service ceased. However, the vans have been rescued from the desert, restored and are now housed at the National Railway Museum in Port Adelaide.

To see a 1954 video visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0vAh-p0-cPA> .



(Tea and Sugar – AustralianTrains.com)

# 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

**Website:** <http://www.historicalsocietysa.com>

**Facebook:** @HistoricalSocietySA

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