



**No. 282     July 2024**



Frontier Wars, 'On the way to Adelaide in custody' Yorke's Peninsula,  
June 22 1850, watercolour by Edward Snell

## THE FUTURE OF HISTORY?

I was spurred to write some thoughts after attending the South Australian Stories Survey Initiative (SASSi) presentation in May, thoughts that have been on our mind as this Society celebrates 50 years, looking forward, looking back!

Dr Kiera Lindsay also shared the results of the SASSi survey - 259 people are working on 398 projects and are utilising 161 resource organisations. The average age of researchers (excluding university students) is in their 70s; 31% reside in regions, and a great number of people are working on family histories (which when you think about it is how many people become interested in the wider topic of history in general).

Kiera says that 'history is in crisis' – there are now fewer historians employed in universities and often only on 12-month contracts - quite different to the 1970s when there were 450 historians in Australian universities - and history teachers in schools are now less likely to be a history graduate.


The greatest concern for all community groups is the cost of insurance and is one of the causes of the closure of many groups of late. Isn't there a better way to reduce these costs? Is there a way to bring historical societies together under one umbrella? What about sponsors – can successful business leaders help?

Another reason for closure is the struggle to entice new office bearers or volunteers. HSSA is currently embracing succession planning, seeking to increase members on Council, and duplicate skills within it. Is it time to rethink how we do what we do? Is the old formula still working? What people really want these days is possibly different to decades ago etc. How should we embrace the technology of today to reach a wider audience without jeopardising member numbers?

Dr Lindsay says we should interact more with schools – an example she gave was Year 9s doing oral histories which over the years has added a resource to their town's local history collection. She says it's

up to us to impart our passion for history and share this with younger generations. It is through the young that we can foster a love or thirst for history, this can pass onto the child's parents who will possibly as a family visit a museum or event, and it could start a conversation with grandparents too. Have you contacted your local school to ask how you can help? I have. Teachers confess that to organise an excursion these days, they need to plan way ahead and send notes home for permission, do a risk assessment, find extra adults to support with the outing; it's too hard! Bringing history to the classroom is one answer and a fresh new face is more memorable for the student than yet another lesson from the teacher. It can be very rewarding. Contact your local school and offer your services – share your passion for history.

I found the following website very thought-provoking (<https://www.historyextra.com/period/studying-history-is-the-ultimate-passport-to-the-future>) What are your thoughts on these matters? Share them with us.

PS. We should also address the impact that AI will have on history, and storytelling. Perhaps in a later issue.  L. O'Grady

## RENEW OR NOT TO RENEW?

For a few, this will be the last newsletter received because membership hasn't been renewed. We are sorry to lose you. Can you please let us know the reason you have chosen not to renew.

HSSA Council has noticed a backward slide in numbers. **We want to know why? Help us to improve and evolve. If it's transport, we might be able to help.**

**Should we change to daytime talks in Winter or all year? Is it the cost? Give us feedback please.**

MONTHLY TALKS are held at 7.30pm sharp at the BURNSIDE CITY UNITING CHURCH, 384 Portrush Rd, entry off Fisher Street. Non-members always welcome with \$5 cash entry

**FRIDAY AUGUST 2: The Role of Environmental Factors in Shaping Aboriginal/Settler Relations in Country SA - ROBERT FOSTER**

In the last few years we have been researching the nature and extent of frontier conflict between Aboriginal people and settlers in colonial South Australia. This work has generated a large database of information that has cast light on some of the underlying patterns of Aboriginal/settler relations, and how it differed across the colony. There are many facets to that history, but in this paper I will focus on the influence of environmental factors.

**About the Speaker:** Associate Professor Robert Foster is an historian who, until his retirement in December 2023, taught in the History Department at the University of Adelaide. He has published numerous books and articles on aspects of South Australian Indigenous history, including *Out of the Silence: The History and Memory of South Australia's Frontier Wars*, published in 2012 and co-written with Amanda Nettelbeck. His current work is a continuation of that project. More recently he and Paul Sendziuk wrote *A History of South Australia*, published by Cambridge University Press in 2018. He continues to research and write on aspects of South Australian history.



**FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 6: Responses to Bushfires in South Australia from the 1820s to Federation - ELIZABETH BOR**

The impacts of many twentieth and twenty-first-century bushfires in South Australia have been well-documented. Yet little has been written about bushfires in colonial South Australia. Searches in newspapers, police station journals, council minutes and memoirs revealed 450 bushfire reports, and evidence of anxiety about uncontrolled fire throughout the colonial era.

The research revealed that Aboriginal people sometimes weaponised fire to resist European occupation. Although rural colonists learned some fire-management skills from Aboriginal people, they turned to European solutions to develop bushfire prevention, mitigation and management strategies.

During the colonial era, three trends emerged. The colonists realised that their own activities were contributing to the outbreak of bushfires. They did learn from past experiences but the effectiveness of their strategies was limited. By the eve of Federation, South Australians had largely accepted that bushfires were an inherent risk to lives and property in country districts. They tried to minimise their losses with vigilance and communal firefighting, and developed an ethos of collaboration in adversity.



(image: Stephen Calvert. *Bushfire in Australia*. Artwork, [Sydney]: Gibbs, Shallard, c1880, (Out of Copyright), <https://nla.gov.au:443/tarkine/nla.obj-135892575>,

**About the Speaker:** Elizabeth Bor was a primary school teacher and teacher librarian. While in transition to retirement, she enrolled at the University of Adelaide and completed an undergraduate degree with a history major, Honours and a Master of Philosophy.

## KEAIN MEDAL WINNERS

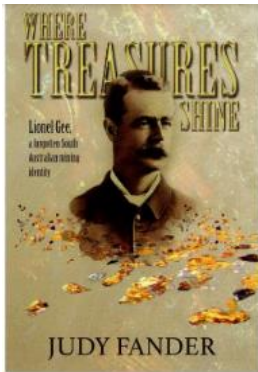
The Keain Medal is awarded annually to the best nominated book on a non-fiction South Australian history or biography that was published in the previous year. A presentation was held at the June talk.



Walter Marsh and Judy Fander (photo Geoffrey Bishop)

This year a decision couldn't be made between two books (a brief review of the books can be found on our website):

Judy Fander, *Where Treasures Shine. Lionel Gee, a forgotten South Australian mining identity* (S.A., Sturdee Press, 2023).



Walter Marsh, *Young Rupert: The making of the Murdoch Empire* (Melbourne, Scribe, 2023)



The Keain Medal Award was the idea of a foundation member of the Society and past vice president, the late Maurice Keain (1938-2021) when he arranged to have one hundred 55mm medals to be struck at the Hafner Mint, Melbourne. One of his passions was collecting coins. The award has been made each year since 2015.

The Society promotes through writing and presentations many aspects of South Australia's history that offers stories of diverse



Maurice Keain

South Australians who have added to our State's quality of life, progress and heritage.

Since its foundation in 1974 the Society has aimed to stimulate public awareness of the State's history and heritage through engagement in public debates, a program of monthly lectures, bi-monthly newsletters and its academically refereed annual journal. Along with the Society's Grant Scheme, the Society supports the publication of South Australia's history with this award. 🌀 L. O'Grady

## HSSA's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

### **SAVE THE DATE: SUNDAY 20 OCTOBER**

We will be celebrating with a 1970s style High Tea at Walkerville Hall in the afternoon of the 20<sup>th</sup> October. Tickets will be on sale in August at \$20 (the cost of catering). Details on how to book will be in the next newsletter.

**Do you have any photos** of field trips, tours, walks, events?

**Do you have any small curios** for a 'what is this' table'?

**Do you have HSSA Newsletters** 7, 14, 18, 24-30, 173, 177, 261. We are scanning a complete set of our newsletters and these issues are missing from our archive.

## TOUR OF SAHMRI - MAKING HISTORY

Our recent field trip to South Australia's flagship not-for-profit health and medical research institute – SAHMRI – was well received by the 16 members who attended. We learnt that it was built 2013, there are over 5,000 windows in the building, researchers from many countries come together for 6 months to collaborate on their research and share findings, tiny samples are stored in liquid nitrogen in the cryogenic facility. It is home to South Australia's only cyclotron, within a nuclear bunker boasting 3m wide concrete walls. It produces radio-pharmaceuticals every day used to diagnose and treat cancers and other diseases.

Next to the SAHMRI is the new Bragg Centre for proton therapy and research costing \$500m and contains the



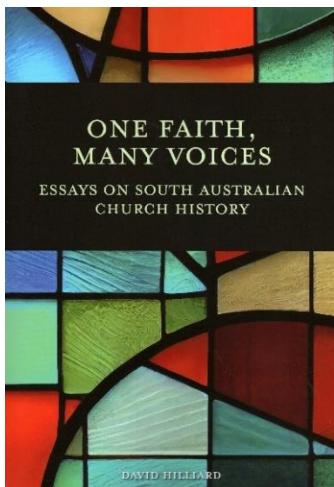
Some of the group who went on the tour first synchrotron in the Southern Hemisphere to deliver proton therapy. This highly targeted radiation destroys tumours while preserving healthy surrounding tissue. This precision makes it a game-changer for cancers in vulnerable areas like the brain and spinal column, particularly in children. There are over 1000 diagnoses a year of brain tumours and only 10 each year are sponsored by the Australian government to be treated in America. With this new facility it will be able to treat 100 a month.

There are two ways that individuals can get involved – one is to donate, the other is to register for clinical trials (apparently many trails fail because of insufficient volunteers). Go to <https://sahmri.org.au/involved>,

🌀 L. O'Grady

## A NEW BOOK ON SOUTH AUSTRALIAN HISTORY

### ONE FAITH, MANY VOICES: Essays on South Australian Church History



Dr David Hilliard, who taught History at Flinders University for many years and is a long-time member of the Society, has recently republished a selection of his articles exploring different areas of South Australia's distinctive religious history.

This illustrated book of 196 pages comprises nine essays:

- The city of churches: some aspects of religion in Adelaide about 1900
- A view from the pew: worship and preaching in 1890s Adelaide
- St Patrick's Church, Grote Street, Adelaide: a short history
- The transformation of South Australian Anglicanism, c.1880-1930
- Dissenters from dissent: the Unitarians in South Australia
- Emanuel Swedenborg and the New Church in South Australia
- Anglicans in South Australian public life
- Religion in Playford's South Australia
- How did Methodism shape South Australia?

The book is published by the Uniting Church SA Historical Society and sells for \$30. It can be obtained from the publisher or from the author at the monthly meetings of the Historical Society of South Australia.

Publisher: [manager@ucsahistory.org.au](mailto:manager@ucsahistory.org.au)

Author: [dvdh@internode.on.net](mailto:dvdh@internode.on.net)

## BOOK REVIEWS, PATRICIA SUMERLING

**Michael Veitch - *HELL SHIP: the True Story of the Plague Ship Ticonderoga*, Allen & Unwin, 2018**

**Deborah J. Swiss - *THE TIN TICKET: the Heroic Journey of Australia's Convict Women*, Berkeley Publishing Group, New York, 2010**

The first is a history about the magnificent Yankee clipper ship, the *Ticonderoga* that carried over 800 impoverished emigrants, mainly women from Ireland and England and the Highlands of Scotland, from Birkenhead near Liverpool to Melbourne in 1852. It was the biggest, the slickest and the most hygienically prepared ship of its day when it was built in 1849 in New York as a three masted 51.5 metre (169 foot) vessel. Catering for passenger comfort, the captain and part owner, Thomas Boyle, left nothing to chance for his passengers on his most beautiful ship. Unfortunately, despite all the efforts striven for with loyal crew, dedicated doctors and matrons, no one could have predicted the devastation caused by the outbreak of typhus that wiped out over a quarter of the passengers and the voyage was viewed as one of the 'most calamitous in Australian history'.

In telling the story of his own great-great-grandfather, Dr James William Henry Veitch, author Michael Veitch has undertaken research into a breathtaking saga that immediately captures the reader into smells of vomit, and unbelievable descriptions of the motion of the ship in stormy weather, the onset of typhus throughout the ship followed by the unrelenting screams of dying patients. Although I didn't suffer seasickness reading this gripping tale, I really felt I endured that 90-day voyage too. I have read many tales about migrant ships, but this is the first one that explains everything you needed to know before attempting such a voyage yourself. On reaching Port Phillip Bay, the plague ship hoisted the yellow flag, and with many of its remaining passengers suffering from the various degrees of typhus they were quarantined at a beach at the eastern

head of Point Nepean (Abrahams Bosom) which became a future quarantine station. But the passengers' ordeal was far from over. Caused by body lice but without there being an understanding of the causes of infection, this disease took hold and was simply left to run its terrible course. Veitch's history is a fine example of impeccable research and superb writing. Years before this I read his marvellous and absorbing history of the Bass Straits islands, *The Forgotten Islands*.

In contrast to this very fine history, I picked up in Bali another early voyage history in a bookshop, but this time it was of the trials and tribulations of several convict women who were transported to Van Diemen's Land from England and Scotland in the 1820s and 1830s. All these women spent time at Hobart's notorious Female Factory that was a former rum distillery known as the Cascades. Although this was another saga of a long voyage, this one was followed by the dreadful experiences that these plucky women endured after disembarkation. I mention this book for a particular reason, for it left me somewhat startled. Titled *The Tin Ticket* for the medallions placed around the necks of those convict women who were visited by the prison reformer, Elizabeth Fry before their voyages, this tale was penned by American, Deborah J Swiss.

Although I read a well-researched story of unbelievable suffering and punishment heaped upon these women, it was what was written between the known facts that made me sit up and take note. This author chose the 'reconstruction' method or what now might be termed 'speculative' history. This is to give readers an idea of character traits or feelings that these women may have experienced, but we have no real idea what emotions they ever endured because they certainly never wrote of them. Because I have not knowingly read a book like this before, what concerned me most is that this author never mentioned anywhere in her history that she was using this method. This is certainly a method I can say I am not comfortable with. After I decided to read the history as a novel, I tried not to let the speculative history get in the way of an otherwise good read.

## Historical Society of South Australia Inc.

PO Box 519, Kent Town SA 5071

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

**Website:** <https://historicalsocietysa.com>

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/HistoricalSocietySA](http://www.facebook.com/HistoricalSocietySA)

### HSSA COUNCIL MEMBERS:

**President,** Newsletter Editor, Facebook, Youtube

Lyn O'Grady 0409 305 908 [lyn.ogrady@gmail.com](mailto:lyn.ogrady@gmail.com)

**Vice-President:**

Dr Geoffrey Bishop 8390 3138 [gcbishop@westnet.com.au](mailto:gcbishop@westnet.com.au)

**Secretary,** HCSA rep, Journal Editorial Committee:

Dr Bridget Jolly 7200 5455 [brimar@esc.net.au](mailto:brimar@esc.net.au)

**Treasurer:**

Ms Anne Bowman 8362 7772 [annebowman1943@gmail.com](mailto:annebowman1943@gmail.com)

**Membership,** Newsletter & Journal distribution:

Mr Robert Martin 8362 8262 [psumerling@optusnet.com.au](mailto:psumerling@optusnet.com.au)

**Speaker Co-ord,** Website, Journal Editorial Committee Chair

Dr Jenny Hein [jenny@hein.com.au](mailto:jenny@hein.com.au)

**Field Trip Co-ord,** AV streaming:

Ian Sellick [cedric@senet.com.au](mailto:cedric@senet.com.au)

**Journal Editorial Committee,** Monthly Raffle:

Joshua McDonnell

**Member:** Terry Saunderson

**HSSA JOURNAL Editor:** [Karen.agutter@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:Karen.agutter@adelaide.edu.au)

**COMMENTS & CONTRIBUTIONS** (*no more than 1000 words*) are  
welcome by 25 August 2024 Email [lyn.ogrady@gmail.com](mailto:lyn.ogrady@gmail.com)

**HISTORY SA ----- ISSN 1444-8459**