



The
Historical Society
of
South Australia
Inc.



NEWSLETTER No. 57, JANUARY 1985.



Registered by Australia post
Publication No. SBH 1254.



THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA Inc.

Institute Building, 122 Kintore Avenue, Adelaide 5000.

OBJECTS:

- (a) to arouse interest in and to promote the study and discussion of South Australian and Australian history,
- (b) to promote the collection, preservation and classification of source material of all kinds relating to South Australian and Australian history,
- (c) to publish historical records and articles,
- (d) to promote the interchange of information among members of the Society by lectures, readings, discussions and exhibitions,
- (e) to co-operate with similar Societies throughout Australia,
- (f) to do all such things as are conducive or incidental to the attainment of the above objects or any of them.

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FOUNDED IN 1974.

COVER PHOTOGRAPH.

The Acacias owner, Sir Edwin Smith, M.L.C., K.C.M.G., in his splendid court regalia. For information on our February tour of the Acacias see story inside...
(Photo from Loreto Convent, with thanks.)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 1 (8.00 p.m.)

Venue: State Library Lecture Theatre
(Corner North Terrace and Kintore Avenue)

The Society is very fortunate to have as its opening speaker for 1985 the HON. CLYDE CAMERON A.O., former federal parliamentarian and minister. Mr. Cameron's topic will be **THE LABOR MOVEMENT IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA**. Most members will be aware that he is exceptionally well qualified to speak on this subject; a brief review of his career in politics includes the following:

A.L.P. Member for Hindmarsh from 1949 until 1980; Australian Minister for Science and Consumer Affairs 1975, Minister for Labor 1972-1974, and Minister for Labor and Immigration 1974-1975; President of the S.A. branch of the A.L.P. 1946-48, 1958-9, 1963-4. His publications include **Grappling with the Giants, China, Communism and Coca-Cola, Unions in Crisis**, and also a contribution of over two million words to the Oral History Division of the National Library of Australia.

We are sure that the opportunity to hear Mr. Cameron will be of particular interest to our members and we are very grateful to him for his willingness to join in our 1985 programme.

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FRIDAY, MARCH 1 (8.00 p.m.)

Venue: State Library Lecture Theatre

Our second meeting for 1985 will be a talk by DR. BRUCE SHAW:

'I JUST WANTA TELL YOU': A glimpse at how east Kimberley Aborigines impart knowledge and values when telling their life histories.

The Aboriginal life histories Dr. Shaw has written up contain perhaps 30% "history" as Europeans understand that term. The rest of their content matter has to do with opinions, speculations, and the communication of values and cultural mores. This informal talk will suggest how one may gain a 'feeling' for a culture through the striking and sometimes poetic utterances of indigenous storytellers. Illustrations will be taken from the remarks of a variety of Aboriginal men and women and will be concerned with the religious life, the local oral 'literary' tradition, and

European-Aboriginal contacts past and present. In doing this we may explore a little of the relationship between history (oral and written) and a people's ethos or world view.

Bruce Shaw began anthropological fieldwork in Kununurra, east Kimberley (Western Australia) under the Department of Anthropology, University of Western Australia in 1970. The Ph.D. thesis he wrote explored the sociology of white Australians in the town. Later as a research student with the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra, he collected Aboriginal reminiscences and life histories from the same area in 1973 and 1974. From 1976-83 he was Lecturer in Anthropology at the Darwin Community College. He moved to the hills of Adelaide where he now lives. This year (1985) he has a post-doctoral fellowship grant with the AIAS and is writing up the last book in this present series of life histories.

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FUND-RAISING TOUR

to

'The Acacias', Sunday, February 17 (2.00 p.m.)

Following last year's tour of the city's West End during Heritage Week, and later in the year the Court Buildings, it has been decided to offer a series of such visits this year - the first, on Sunday, February 17, is of 'The Acacias'.

The original part of the house was built in 1871 by Dr. J.M. Gunson, who also laid out the splendid gardens at that time. But the grand residence that we see today was largely the work of the following owner, Sir Edwin Smith, whose impressive photograph appears on the cover.

Sir Edwin Smith was a wealthy businessman, a member of parliament, and once Lord Mayor of Adelaide. Upon buying the property, he set about transforming it into one of Adelaide's most prestigious houses - and indeed it was to be the scene of many balls and garden parties, many of which were captured in photographs on display today in the house. To the original structure Sir Edwin added rooms upstairs for family and visitors, and in the 1880s, a splendid ballroom with billiard room of equal size underneath.

The Acacias today is the centre of the Sisters of Loreto convent and boarding school. It is a credit to the Sisters that much of the house still retains its original decoration, and yet is used fully by the Sisters and boarders. The large

dining-room is still used as such by the girls for daily meals, while the ballroom has become the chapel. The entrance hall with its Japanese flavour leads into the drawing-room and its annexe, and, apart from some of the furniture and lighting, is as it was in Sir Edwin's day.

We are very grateful to the Sisters for allowing a party of members of the Society and friends to visit the house. All interested are asked to gather at the front entrance to the main house at 1.50 p.m. on Sunday, February 17. The entrance is off Portrush Road closest to Kensington Road, Marryatville. Participation is by donation, a suggested amount being \$2.00.

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NEWS FROM THE COUNTRY

We are pleased to inform members that on November 14 the Murray Bridge and Districts Historical Society was re-formed with an opening meeting and address and lecture from our society's president, Robert Nicol.

The Society is fortunate in having as its new patron Mrs. R. Minge, the Mayor of Murray Bridge. President is Mr. K. Wells, Vice-President Mr. T. Sladden, and Secretary/Treasurer Mrs C. Anderson. Sub-committee members have also been elected under the following sections: research - Mesd. E. Horstmann and J. Allen and Messrs R. Kirtland and T. Sladden; restoration - Mesd. R. Minge, B. Burat and D. Dawson; awareness - Mr. K. Wells and Mrs. C. Anderson.

The lecture for the first meeting, given by Robert Nicol, was most interesting and came under the title of Victorian Attitudes to Death - a fascinating talk and series of slides that promoted much discussion after the meeting on local historic sites and how the newly formed society can become active in their preservation. Indeed they are already in the process of trying to acquire the Roundhouse, a local building of great importance, to guarantee its preservation.

The hexagonal-shaped building was built as the first bridgekeeper's residence in 1876. It was used as the first Mobilong post office in 1880, and a year later was a school and Presbyterian Church. The district's first council meeting was held in the Roundhouse in 1884. It is at present owned by the A.N.R.

We wish the society every success and will be happy to offer any assistance during the forthcoming year

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BOOK REVIEWS

NED KELLY

THE AUTHENTIC ILLUSTRATED STORY

Compiled and written by Keith McMenomy
Introduced by Manning Clark

Rec. retail price: \$29.95 Publication: 15 October 1984

"The ultimate Kelly book.

Ned Kelly occupies a unique place in Australia's history and people far away in Europe and America, who know little else about Australia, have heard his name.

A legend in his own lifetime, Ned Kelly is widely regarded in his native land as an engaging rogue of remarkable talents, who took on the Establishment and went down fighting against impossible odds. Yet this same man murdered three policemen and terrorised a large area of south-eastern Australia for nearly three years.

Perhaps the story of Ned Kelly continues to exercise its strong appeal because it encapsulates some fundamental paradox in the Australian character, where regard for authority and 'respectability' wages eternal warfare with a deep yearning for the 'life of the fearless, the free and the bold'.

Author Keith McMenomy has spent twenty years researching his subject and has assembled an unrivalled selection of Kelly memorabilia. This magnificently produced volume is a big book in every sense, with almost 300 pages and well over 300 illustrations, reproducing contemporary photographs, drawings, maps and official documents. There are 26 pages of full colour showing the famous Kelly country as well as various items of Kellyana.

Written accounts of the subject have from the first, been weighed down with prejudice. But pictures and in particular photographs, can claim a greater impartiality. This emphasis on the contemporary pictorial record helps establish this as the most authentic, as well as the most comprehensive, Kelly book ever published.

Ned Kelly, the Authentic Illustrated Story explores every aspect of the saga. Its momentous highlights - the shooting of the three policemen, the bank hold-up at Euroa, the capture of Jerilderie, the final siege at Glenrowan, Kelly's capture and the trial and execution - are re-told in vivid detail, using eyewitness accounts from many sources.

The question of whether the outlaws and especially their leader, were colonial Robin Hoods or merely ingenious thugs, continues to arouse fierce controversy. Keith McMenomy presents the arguments of both sides in a fair and compassionate way. In so doing, he perhaps gives Ned Kelly the one thing he always believed he had been denied - a fair hearing."

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Eric Gunton, Gracious Homes of Colonial Adelaide, Adelaide, 1983. 152 pp. \$18.95.

Reviewed by Dean W. Berry

It is a boon to the historical record of Colonial Adelaide that Eric Gunton was commissioned by the proprietors of South Australian Homes and Gardens to write monthly articles for seven years from 1947 on a number of Adelaide's early homes. This record has now been made accessible because these articles, seventy three in all, have recently been published by the author in book form. Further he has brought them up-to-date by the addition of brief contemporary comment.

Gunton, a retired accountant, was ahead of his time in his interest in the subject of gracious homes which did not blossom in South Australia until the advent of the National Trust. In fact the National Trust used the original set of Gunton articles as a guide for the development of some of their historical records. His book gives an insight not only into the types of houses, large and small, built by early colonists but also records the activities of those colonists and refers to subsequent owners and occupiers. Despite the limited length of each article, in all, the names of four hundred and sixty four families are listed in the index.

In this review I will first make a few architectural observations based mainly on the photographs at the head of the articles and drawing also on my own knowledge of colonial buildings. I will then make brief and rather superficial comments on some of Gunton's biographical accounts of the people whom, it is assumed by the author, made the gracious buildings into gracious homes.

The author has not attempted to classify the homes in any way; they are merely arranged alphabetically. Each stands as a separate isolated account with the reader left to observe any more general patterns. The buildings, as illustrated, suggest to me a number of architectural groups.

First there are those delightfully simple structures such as The Almonds of Walkerville, Marybank of Rostrevor and others which indicate that their charm derives from the practical use of a few essential elements and the use of natural materials.

Then there are those which although they began life as simplistic solutions of the early colonists' needs have grown with their owners' success. Frequently the additions have been made on a grander scale than the original structure and a self consciousness becomes apparent. An example of this self consciousness is found at Morialta of Norton Summit where the addition of an attic storey gives the simple restful design of a large house an institutional appearance. Another case in this category is the recently demolished Woodlands - the Edwardstown Castle.

Then there are two cases of the reverse situation - Sunnyside of Leabrook (now known as Beaumont) and Montefiore of North Adelaide. Both of these houses were found to be larger than necessary for those who subsequently owned them. In the case of Montefiore Gunton records that Harold Fisher had the top story removed but makes no mention regarding Sunnyside other than to say "the Sunnyside of today has no top storey." The alteration to Sunnyside was done when the property was acquired by Vincent Zed. Zed had commenced work with J. S. Bagshaw and Sons (now Horwood Bagshaw Ltd) as a blacksmith's striker; eventually he became Manager of the Company.

The third main type illustrated is that developed in later years when the colonist had become a successful businessman and had funds necessary to build de novo in the grand manner. This group includes Paringa Hall of Somerton, Linden of Burnside, Athelney of Hackney, Glenara of Glenelg, Brocas of Woodville and Birksgate and Benacre of Glen Osmond.

In addition to the types mentioned, a few of the buildings illustrated deserve individual consideration because of the unusual nature of their design. Take, for instance Oaklands of Marion - the property which Samuel Kearne, its first owner, purchased in England in 1843. As the Sturt River ran through the property he bought a boat and sailed it to South Australia with his family and servants and building material only to discover the Sturt was not navigable and that his goods had to be carried from the port in wagons. However, the design of his house was unique and the manner in which the balcony of the upper storey is superimposed over the verandah of the lower floor is carried out with such finesse that one wonders whether this was due to the ability of one of our early architects or was the result of pure chance. What a pity that such an interesting early building was demolished in 1967.

Other examples of unique design are Woodleigh of Glen Osmond, Beaumont House of Beaumont and Eden Park of Marryatville. At the other end of the scale is the architectural vulgarity of Carclew of North Adelaide.

Finally there are some buildings illustrated with which it is difficult to agree with the author that they be included under the heading of gracious homes. Unfortunately in every case there is but one photograph from which to make judgement. Stonyfell of Stonyfell is an example, also Sturtbrae of Bellevue Heights seems to belong to this category - however one exterior photograph could belie the situation as Sturtbrae is considered an historic house of the district.

Although the articles consist largely of biographical information on the people who inhabited each dwelling, it is the building which forms the basic element and continuity of these gracious homes. Judgement of Gunton's work must rest heavily on the extent to which he had adequately chosen and portrayed the buildings themselves. More numerous and better illustrations, each carefully dated where possible, would have given a more adequate portrayal of the buildings.

Trying to achieve complete accuracy in the biographical accounts of the many families connected with these gracious homes must have been a demanding and time consuming task. From my own knowledge I was aware of occasional minor mistakes. For example in the section on Carclew although it is correctly stated that James Chambers was the owner of the first house on this site, it does however refer to John Chambers of Carclew. James, John's elder brother lived there - John never did. James Chambers called his home Montefiore House. It was later sold to Dixon who demolished it and called his new building Stalheim. This was later changed to Carclew by Sir Langdon Bonython. The name Montefiore was ultimately used for the house on the opposite corner.

In the section on Rust Hall of Mitcham, it is stated that "Arthur Blyth selected his large block on the sloping hills, and, deciding that he would have a mansion-like residence, he contacted George Kingston, the most competent man then in Adelaide, to make the necessary plans." It continues by saying that "Kingston came to the new colony as Deputy-Surveyor to Colonel Light ... and after nearly two years of strenuous work surveying in the field, he resigned and took up private practice as surveyor, civil engineer, and architect." However, in the section on Marino of Kingston Park the author says "for some eighteen months, George Kingston worked hard with the other men of Colonel Light's surveying staff, but in 1838 he was sent to England with reports on the colony's early difficulties. As a result, he returned with orders which led to Colonel Light's resignation, and George Kingston was appointed in his stead. There was still trouble, however, and as many colonists were keen to obtain George Kingston's architectural advice on the building of homes, he resigned and took up private practice as a surveyor, civil engineer, and architect." There are discrepancies here regarding the time he spent surveying in the field; however the statement in the section on Marino

that after Colonel Light's resignation he was appointed in Light's stead is misleading. He resigned as Deputy-Surveyor but he was never appointed Surveyor-General. Further, his trip to England which was at his own request was ostensibly to recruit additional surveyors in order to expedite the survey - it is hardly thought that he would have been spared for so long merely as a safe hand messenger to convey the Governor's report to the Colonization Commissioners.

While dealing with Kingston who designed Cummings for Sir John Morphett, it gives the opportunity to record the mystery of the missing loggia. There was in the possession of the Morphett family a water colour drawing of Cummings done many years previously in which "artist's license" was the term used for an arched loggia depicted where the large drawing room is now. Artist's license was the only way of describing this situation as there was no indication of arches having been built up or anything like that. However, on one occasion the late afternoon sun threw into relief the careful infilling of an arch never before noticed. Then many mysteries unfolded. Where the drawing room is now there had been originally an open loggia with one arch to its southern end and three to the west. The dining room and the main bedroom previously had french doors opening onto this loggia. The building up of these openings had converted the loggia into a large drawing room with a semi-circular extension added at that time or later. Was it Kingston's or Morphett's idea originally to have an outdoor living room in a hot climate? Probably flies and mosquitoes should take the credit for the creation of this gracious room.

Under the heading of Austral House of Adelaide, the final sentence reads "the old home is now known as Austral House and is owned by the National Trust". In fact the property is owned by the South Australian Government and only a part of the house is leased to the National Trust. It is now known as Ayers House.

In the section on Helenholm of Mitcham, the life of William Finlayson, the first permanent settler in Mitcham, is chronicled in detail. However there is in my possession an un-authenticated record of an interview with Finlayson in his old age which differs to some extent from Gunton's account. For example Gunton states that young Finlayson started life in London working for the City Mission. In the other version he is offered an apprenticeship by a relative in the South of England who is a haberdasher and with the offer goes "the opportunity of learning a trade and sleeping in the attic above the shop and if at the end of three years he gave any indication of promise then consideration would be given to putting him on the payroll!" What an offer! From then on the stories coincide in that to enable him to accept a free passage for married couples to Southern Australia he weds his teenage girlfriend and migrates. According to Gunton he then becomes an auctioneer's clerk, builds his first rough hut and

receives a wage and the gift of a block of land in Rundle Street where David Jones Store now is and builds a more permanent home. The other record says his first employment was with the South Australian Company watering pepper trees recently planted on North Terrace; he gets a wage and the gift of a block of land in Rundle Street. The theme is the same in each case.

There are a few minor inaccuracies - the spelling of the name of James Chambers house - under Contents is Montifiore elsewhere the more customary spelling of Montefiore is used. In the section on Marybank of Rostrevor the present owner is said to be the widow of Arthur Gerald Fox whereas his middle name was Gerard.

It is apparent from this review that Gunton's book has its obvious limitations as a serious historical work. However, as long as these are understood it is nonetheless an invaluable and rather unique record of some of the gracious homes of colonial Adelaide.

(Mr. Dean W. Berry, a well-known Adelaide architect for many years, was President of the National Trust of South Australia 1966-71.)

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PIONEER CAREERS: THOMAS GILBERT

Among the very earliest settlers, Gilbert was a member of the committee for naming the streets of Adelaide in 1837. In that year he was appointed Post Master. He had an unhappy career, however, being censured on many occasions, starting in 1838. He was a member of a board appointed to report on quarrying, lime burning, and brick-making in the Parklands in 1838 and was also asked to report on the proposed Government House.

In 1841 he was censured for carelessness as Colonial Storekeeper.

In 1844 he was again censured for drawing a forage allowance after he had ceased to officially use a horse, and was forced to provide sureties for repayment of the allowance.

In 1844 he took over as well the duties of the Colonial Engineer's Storekeeper.

In 1844 he was censured for inefficiency as Colonial Storekeeper.

In 1845 he was censured for lax control over the issue of rations to paupers and in 1846 there was an enquiry into the

state of his accounts as Colonial Storekeeper.

In 1846 he had duties in the Audit Office added to those of Colonial Storekeeper.

In 1847 he was also appointed Superintendent of West Terrace Cemetery, retaining his other duties.

In 1849 he was asked to explain his failure to account for fees received as Superintendent of the cemetery.

In 1851 his salary was withheld for failure to render accounts of school books sold by him as Colonial Storekeeper.

In 1852 he was censured for neglect of his duty as Colonial Storekeeper. He was also told not to incur any expense without gaining previous authority.

In 1853 his salary was still withheld for not furnishing stationery and cemetery accounts. In the same year the Governor expressed his "unqualified disapprobation" of his failure to supply fuel to certain departments. This was, indeed, a particularly bad year for Gilbert. His salary was again withheld for failing to send in returns and he was also reported for great inaccuracy in his account books and reprimanded for his extravagant purchase of fuel.

In 1854 he was reprimanded for neglect of his duties at West Terrace Cemetery.

He finally retired as Colonial Storekeeper at the end of 1854 and his resignation was accepted early in 1855.

- Robert Nicol

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P.E.B HISTORY EXAMS - 1925

The following examination papers are reproduced from the manual of the Public Examinations Board for 1926 and provide an interesting insight into changing attitudes to history teaching.

The syllabi for the exams comprised book titles only. For the Intermediate exam the Australian title was A. W. Jose: "History of Australasia" chapters I, II, III, IV (b & d), V, VII, VIII; for the Leaving, E. Scott: "Short History of Australia". There was no Australian content in the Leaving Modern History paper.

1925]

INTERMEDIATE EXAMINATION PAPERS

HISTORY

Time: two hours

1. Describe briefly the circumstances which led up to the following battles. Give the date and result in each case: (a) Flodden, (b) Pinkie, (c) Dunbar, (d) Culloden Moor. [25]
2. What do you know of the winning of our Indian Empire? [17]
3. To what do the following men owe their importance in history: (a) Dunstan, (b) Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, (c) Marlborough, (d) Cecil Rhodes? [25]
4. Write notes on the journeys of each of the following explorers: Oxley, Mitchell, Hume. Illustrate your answers by a full-page map. [18]
5. Give an account of the work of Governor Arthur in Tasmania. [15]

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LEAVING HONOURS EXAMINATION PAPERS

MODERN HISTORY

Time: three hours

(All questions are of equal value)

1. Outline the important events of the period 1689-1702 with special reference to those that occurred in the British Isles.
2. Account for the rise and development of the Factory System in England, and explain the methods that were adopted to combat its abuses.
3. Review the causes of the conflict between the Boers and the British in South Africa prior to the outbreak of the Great Boer War.
4. Write briefly on the scientific work of Benjamin Franklin and Sir Humphry Davy. Enumerate the practical effects of their discoveries.

5. Give a brief account of the convict system which was employed in Australia, with special reference to transportation, assignment, abuses, and effects.

6. 'The crime of Serajevo directly affected Austria-Hungary only, but it was Germany which resolved that it should be exploited in order to precipitate the long-anticipated and much-needed war.' Support this statement by an essay setting forth the views of your text-book.

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Your programme for 1985 includes a membership application.

Please cut this off* and pass it on to a friend and encourage him/her to join the Society for 1985. On receiving their application we will forward a copy of the full programme plus the current newsletter.

With Jubilee 150 fast approaching, it is time for the Society to make itself and its work better known. Existing members can greatly assist in this by spreading the word and trying to get at least one new member each for the Society.

* Existing members will in future receive an account with their newsletter when membership renewals are due.

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