



The
Historical Society
of
South Australia
Inc.



NEWSLETTER NO. 58, MARCH 1985.



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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.

COUNCIL:

PATRON:	Sir Walter Crocker, K.B.E.
PRESIDENT:	Mr R.P.J. Nicol
VICE-PRESIDENT:	Dr A.J. Stimson
SECRETARY:	Mr G.D. Haimes
TREASURER:	Mrs E. Ulbrich
MINUTE SECRETARY:	Miss T.M. Donnellan
MEMBERS:	Mr J.F. Faull
	Mr R.M. Gibbs, A.M.
	Mr R.H.B. Kearns, M.B.E.
	Mr D.J.H. Manuel
	Dr J.D. Playford
	Ms E.M. Ramsay
	Mr B.J. Samuels
	Mr R.E. Thornton
EDITOR:	Mr G.D. Haimes
WORD-PROCESSING:	Miss V.J. O'Neill

FOUNDED IN 1974.

COVER PHOTOGRAPH.

"HEAVENWARDS"

A figure leaning on the anchor of Victorian security and clutching her heart, gazes heavenwards to where the spirit of the deceased has flown.

West Terrace Cemetery.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Friday, April 12 (8.00 p.m.)

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

DR. KEVIN FEWSTER: CHANAKKALE - The Turkish View of Gallipoli

Dr. Fewster is the newly appointed Director of the S.A. Maritime Museum at Port Adelaide. He is also the author of a recently released work on C.E.W. Bean, the war historian, and joint author of a soon-to-be released work on the Turkish view of Gallipoli.

Please Note: Nominations for Office-holders and Council Members are being called for at the Annual General Meeting, and new nominations for Council positions will be very welcome.

Friday, May 3 (8.00 p.m.)

Venue: State Library Lecture Theatre

DR. TONY STIMSON: The River Trade and Goolwa

Dr. Stimson is the Vice-President of the Society and a lecturer in history at the Kensington Park College of Further Education.

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** FUND-RAISING TOURS **

NEXT TOUR: SUNDAY, APRIL 21 (2.00 p.m.)

to
WEST TERRACE CEMETERY

(Assemble at the main gate)
TOUR GUIDE - ROBERT NICOL

Our first tour for the year was a great success with 100 people attending. Don't be put off by the venue for our next tour, it's even more interesting than an historic house - a source of art, architecture, history, genealogy, industrial art, poetry, humour and tragedy. That should whet the appetite. For more, turn to the background history of West Terrace Cemetery written for this newsletter by tour guide Robert Nicol - and come along on April 21. Participation will be by donation to the Society (\$2 per adult is suggested). Members and their friends are welcome.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY AFFAIRS

REPORT ON FEBRUARY MEETING

Mr Clyde Cameron, a minister in the Whitlam Government 1972 - 1975, addressed the Society's February meeting, his topic being 'The Labour Movement in South Australia' with particular reference to the card system of voting for pre-selection of candidates. The Society was fortunate to secure Mr Cameron's services as he has given few public lectures since retiring from federal parliament in 1980. Much of his time has been taken up with the preparation of memoirs and books on Australian government practice, and in interviewing prominent Australians for the national oral history project.

In the course of his lecture Mr Cameron traced the origin and development of the card vote, a method of pre-selecting candidates which he made clear he would be very loath to see the South Australian Labor Party abandon, notwithstanding rumblings of discontent within branches about what is seen as disproportionate union influence. The lecture was also laced with personal reflections about men he has known in the course of forty years in the labour movement. Evatt and Menzies came in for more than a glancing blow when he came to the split of 1955, which perhaps was only to be expected, but B.A. Santamaria escaped lightly. Lesser known characters also came into his tale. For instance, few members present would have been aware of his meetings with Archbishop Beovich as the split came to a head, meetings, he said, which went a long way to minimizing the effects of the split in South Australia.

The audience was given a small taste of what to expect when Mr Cameron's books are published. But as he made very clear, that will be a good twenty years hence.

- Tony Stimson
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REPORT FROM THE SOCIETY'S COUNCIL

The Society's Council has been, for the most part, invisible to the general membership of the Society. The Journal, which is published annually, always lists the office-holders and other members of council, and beginning in January 1985 the newsletter will do so also. We hope that this will go some way to making Council more visible. This newsletter contains the first report on the business conducted by Council at its regular monthly meeting, and we hope that this too will become a feature of subsequent newsletters. A Society such as ours has a great deal of on-going business, business which is carried on principally by the office-holders at the direction of Council.

REPORT ON FEBRUARY MEETING OF COUNCIL

Most of the business was carried over from the last meeting. The main items were:

1) Register facsimile project. More than three years ago Council decided to support the publication of a facsimile of the first year of the The South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register newspaper as an important and permanent record of the Jubilee 150. This project has been adopted by the Wakefield Press, subject to adequate reproduction from the originals in the State Library and other libraries, so there is some good news to report. Negotiations are now proceeding to ensure that the volume will be properly indexed, a massive and expensive task.

2) Archives. Council has been active in bringing the situation in the Archives to the attention of the government. Many members will be only too well aware that the Archives have been understaffed to the point that late in 1984 stack service was curtailed for a time. The fragmentation of the Archives holdings between the Mortlock Library, which will take the 20% or so which are Private Record Groups or Society Record Groups, and the 'rump' Archives, which will retain the 80% Government Record Groups, has also been a cause for concern. Since December many GRGs have been dispersed to other repositories around Adelaide so that researchers sometimes have to order materials two days in advance. Council has taken this matter directly to the minister and the press, and has ensured that it has been raised in parliament.

3) Council membership. Council accepted with regret Jim Faull's resignation due to ill-health. Jim has been a valuable contributor to the Society's work, for which the Council thanks him.

4) Membership. Last year Council began a drive to increase public awareness of the Society and its activities. The President was interviewed in the press and on radio about heritage matters, notices were placed in the press announcing meetings of the Society, and most importantly, a copy of the Society's 1985 programme was enclosed in a regular National Trust mailing to its 5,500 members in February. We hope that membership will increase significantly as a result.

5) Society headquarters. Council has considered the desirability of establishing a permanent headquarters for the Society. For years our records have been held in the State Library's old Chess Room, and Council has met there on the third Thursday of the month. This room is no longer available to us, and we are grateful to the History Trust for granting us some floor space and a venue for meetings. Our thanks too to the Society's secretary for shifting the accumulated records of ten years!

6) Publications. The editor, Dr Playford, reported that the 1985 Journal would be the largest yet, and that several worthwhile pieces had been received for the 1986 edition already. The task of editing the newsletter is being carried on temporarily by the secretary, Geoff Haimes, but more assistance is needed. Volunteers will be most welcome.

Tony Stimson
Vice President

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THE BREWERIES OF OAKBANK

- Peter Tucker B.Arch., M.T.C.P.(Syd)
A.R.A.I.A., R.I.B.A., M.R.A.P.I.

JOHNSTON'S BREWERY : OAKBANK

J. and A.G. Johnston Ltd., is the company which owns the former brewery, sited by the Onkaparinga River and racecourse at Oakbank. The brewery was known as the Oakbank brewery. This establishment should not be confused with that of H. Pike and Co., which follows in this dissertation.

In the "Cyclopedia of South Australia", published in 1909, the following appears:

"The original founders of this well known brewing firm, Messrs. James and Andrew Galbraith Johnston, came from Campbelltown, Scotland. They arrived in Australia in the ship "Buckinghamshire" in 1839, and subsequently decided to settle on the banks of the Onkaparinga, where they founded and named the now thriving town of Oakbank in 1840. Shortly afterwards the Messrs. Johnston established the present brewery, the operations of which, though conducted on a small scale at the commencement, are now of a very extensive character. The brothers continued sole partners up to the year 1886, when Mr. John Disher Johnston, son of Mr. James Johnston, was admitted to the firm. In the same year, Mr. A.G. Johnston's death occurred, and when Mr. James Johnston died in 1891 their respective sons, Andrew Deans and William Galbraith succeeded to the vacancies this created. With this personnel the company carried on until 1901, when it was merged into the present limited liability company, Messrs. John Disher, Andrew Deans and William Galbraith Johnston being appointed directors. The company brews and manufactures beer, stout, aerated waters, cordials, and non-alcoholic beverages of all descriptions."

In 1868, a journalist writing for the "South Australian Register" stated:

"The buildings are very spacious, the malt floor alone capable of malting 200 bushels per week. Above the malt floor, is a large granary extending over the entire buildings, adjoining which is a kiln, about 18 feet square,

for the purpose of drying the malt. The bottom of the kiln is covered with perforated iron, and is heated from furnaces beneath. The office is situated on the right-hand entrance. Nearly all the mechanical work is done by horse power. Large coppers for boiling the beer are fixed sufficiently high that the liquor can run from them through spouts into the coolers, two in number (sic). The tuns for fermentation are placed in the centre of the cellars, and beneath the coolers are three separate cellars, sufficient to accommodate 100 hogsheads. Large commodious stables for 8 horses, besides sheds for wagons, carts, etc. are erected on the premises, which on the whole are most complete."

Many changes have occurred to the buildings, and to the complex as a whole since 1868. The original brewery established in 1843, was quite small. The three storied, stone brew house or brew tower, and the grain and bottle store were not constructed at that time. The latter building was built about 1902 from local soapstone.

The history of the beautifully proportioned brew tower is not so easily traced. In the preceding quotation, there is no mention of the existence of a brew tower. The operations so described hint that there was a risen section between the maltings and the storage-cellar area. This contained the coppers. A risen section can be seen in photographs of the brewery, which were taken between 1872 and 1886.

The maltings and kiln were designed in a manner similar to that of the "old" Kent Town Brewery, adjacent to Prince Alfred College, Kent Town. The concrete malting floor was contained in a semi-basement. A large steep was present and the germinating grain was turned by men with wooden shovels. The floor above was a suspended concrete structure supported on wooden columns. The kiln floor adjoined this floor. Both the maltings and kiln were, and still are, clay brick structures.

In 1868 it was stated that the kiln floor was covered with perforated iron, through which the heat could rise. Today, we find that the old kiln contains perforated clay tiles for the flooring. Either the early description is incorrect or else the iron floor was replaced later.

The square brew tower has internal dimensions of approximately 18'6", the walls being 18" thick. The gravitational system of brewing was used. The uppermost floor contained the malt hopper and a cast iron liquor tank. The brewing process began at the top of the tower and finished in the cellars. The beverage frothed and bubbled as it worked or fermented in the casks.

In winter, a fire was kept burning in the cellars to make sure the cellar temperature remained at about 70 deg.F. The casks were cleaned, repaired and sometimes stored on the

verandah outside the cellar.

The aerated waters section of the brewery complex was contained on the ground floor of the brew house and extended back towards the river. The copper kettles and coolers of the brewery were situated above it.

By 1900, trade in general, and particularly that of bottled beer, had increased to such an extent that further expansion was deemed necessary. The grain and bottle store was built, as formerly stated, in 1902.

This building contains two floors, one of which is a semi-basement. The bottles were filled and stored in this area. Pasteurizing of the aerated waters and cordials took place in a small room at the end of the basement. The upper floor of the building was used for grain storage. Sugar and hops were stored if room was not available in the other stores. Large bins held the grain. These bins still exist and are worthy of note. They are square or rectangular in shape, and have sides made from tongue and grooved pinus radiata boards nailed together to form a panel, which is held in position by sliding it between two posts. By the addition or removal of these panels, the capacities of the various bins can be varied.

Throughout the long life of this complex, many changes have occurred. As business increased, additions were made, particularly by raising rooves and thus acquiring additional space vertically.

In 1915, brewing ceased. This was due to two major reasons viz. (1) World War 1 and (2) "wild yeasts". Some elaboration of the second of these causes is necessary.

Prior to January 1st, 1902, the date when brewers were required by Act of Parliament to take out a licence to brew, the alcoholic content of beer was very high. 17% alcohol, by weight, was not uncommon. After this date, these same brewers were forced to make a much milder brew, with the alcoholic content reduced. Consequently, wild yeast attacked beer more readily, since there was not such a high natural resistance.

J. and A.G. Johnston Ltd. reduced the alcoholic content of their beer, and subsequently had trouble with wild yeast. With the outbreak of World War 1 and the problem of wild yeast spreading throughout the brewery, beer and stout production ceased. The Walkerville Co-operative Brewing Company Ltd. began supplying the Company with beer for use in its many hotels. Softdrinks and cordials have continued to be made to the present time.

After brewing ceased, much of the brewery was altered internally. The tuns and vats were removed and burned, while

soft drink manufacture was increased by the addition of further equipment.

The buildings, as seen today, are fully worthy of preservation and restoration. The loss of such a complex would be sad for future generations of South Ausralians, both in an architectural and historical context. Restoration is desirable. Tourism may well be the answer in the future. Perhaps a museum, an art gallery or a restaurant could utilize all or part of the complex. The brewery complex contains so many large spaces without walls, that it could be utilized in many ways and would provide for flexible planning. Another piece of history would thus be preserved.

PIKE'S BREWERY : OAKBANK

The firm of H. Pike and Co. Ltd., "Dorset Brewery", Oakbank, was founded by Henry Pike in 1886. Although a builder and carpenter by trade, he learnt the art of brewing under his mother's guidance. After carrying on his calling of builder and contractor at Mount Barker, and later Oakbank, he began brewing ales and stout in a small way.

The firm was originally called Pike, Son and Beasley, with his son W.H. Pike and son-in-law E.A. Beasley as the other partners. This was later changed to H. Pike and Co. Throughout its life, the firm manufactured aerated waters and tonic ales as well as alcoholic beverages. Brewing continued until 1938, at which time the company contracted with the South Australian Brewing Co. Ltd., for its beer supplies, which were sold in its numerous hotels.

From its humble beginnings in 1886, the firm expanded rapidly. The site area covered was extensive.

The brewhouse, consisting of the tower plus numerous other areas, together with the bottling house, constituted the brewery 'proper'. Boiler and engine rooms, stables and the like, were used by all sections of the firm.

Unfermented beer was pumped to the top of the building into a copper cooling tray, where it again descended under gravity, through the chillers, and into the fermenting tuns. From here it made its way into the numerous hogsheads which were stored in the cellar.

The raw materials - malt and liquor - were transported to the top floor of the brew house. The liquor or boiling water was pumped to a storage tank, and the bags of malt were carried up the stairs on the backs of the workmen. Gravity did the rest of the work. The copper - into which the wort flowed and was made into unfermented beer by the sugar and hops - was situated under an external verandah. It was heated by a separate fire underneath.

The brew tower is beautifully constructed and is extremely solid. Bluestone, sandstone and bricks form the walls of the tower; the timber work is superbly finished in a craftsmanlike manner and was done by Mr. H. Pike. The major cellars are sited so that they are partially dug into the ground. The walls are constructed of a timber framework, clad with galvanized iron externally and timber boarding internally. In the space between the cladding is packed sawdust, an insulation. This sawdust also covers the ceiling.

The old buildings can be seen today and are very much as they existed seventy or more years ago. Only additional sheds have been erected on the site. The old brew tower stands as a memorial to its founder as it overlooks the town and the Oakbank brewery. It reminds us that 'the brewery' was once an important establishment in the early towns of the colony. It has remained a landmark in Oakbank for eighty five years and it is to be hoped it will remain so for many more.

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PUBLIC BUILDINGS IN THE CITY OF ADELAIDE

- RESTORATION OF FACADES

Increasing concern regarding the accelerating deterioration of the prestigious historic public buildings in the City of Adelaide, and the consequent safety risks, led to the formation of a committee, in April 1983, to conduct a detailed inspection and to report on work required to make the buildings safe.

In August 1983, it was recommended that apart from safety work, the Government should give serious consideration to a program of restoration in order to halt the degradation and ongoing safety problems.

This restoration program, estimated to cost \$2.6 million, is now included in the Department's capital works program.

The buildings currently on the program are:

Parliament House
Jervois Wing, State Library
East Wing, Museum
The Art Gallery
The Magistrates Court
The Treasury Building
The Torrens Building

Two officers from the Department have investigated the methods of historic building restoration programs in Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland. Much information was gathered on techniques, methods of documentation, project

management methods, skills training and material (stone) resources. This will be useful information as the Department embarks on its own program.

Accelerating decay on the facade of the Treasury Building has meant that it has been given a high priority in the program, and work is to commence on site early in 1985. Other buildings will follow in order of priority.

The buildings listed above are only a few of the eighty Government-owned buildings in the Register of State Heritage Items, many of which require urgent work to prevent further deterioration of the fabric. Submissions will be put to the Government in relation to these buildings.

Stonework facades deteriorate principally due to crystallisation of detrimental salts just below the surface of the stone. Salts can come from the ground, the atmosphere or from within the stone, and are mobilised by water from the ground, rain or leaking plumbing. Pollutants can contain weak organic acids which, being washed into the stone, can contribute to the decay.

Where a stone has reached a condition where it must be regarded as an ongoing safety risk, it is commonly replaced. This usually involves excavating the decayed stone to a depth ranging between 100mm and 150mm, and inserting and grouting a new stone carved to the exact size of the original, a process involving considerable skill and experience.

It is usual for highly carved and decorative features, such as cornices and string courses (which were originally designed to protect the wall of the building), to be more highly weathered than the ashlar work, due to their unconfined and highly exposed position.

Thus restoration work requires both good quality stone to further protect the building in exposed environments, and artisans to perform detailed carving and fixing. In restoration work, the average quality of both stone and workmanship should be higher than that used in the original building, if the work is to enhance the original building.

South Australia is fortunate that reserves of building stone are larger and more easily accessible than in the Eastern States, but there is a lack of skilled stonemasons to perform the work.

- Public Buildings Department,
"Review of Activities 1983/84"

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Historical Society of South Australia, Inc.

Statement of receipts and payments for year ended 31 December, 1984.

RECEIPTS

Balances brought forward from Jan. 1, 1984

Operating account	544-06	
Deposit stock account	1477-96	
Life membership account	<u>2230-59</u>	9155-61

Subscriptions

Family (47)	940-00	
Ordinary (170)	2720-00	
Institutions & schools (17)	268-00	
Pensioners & students (39)	400-00	
Country (36)	<u>506-00</u>	4834-00

Special Publications Account
transferred from Operating a/c

2295-00

Other receipts

Sale of journals	45-50	
Excursions	219-00	
Donations	86-10	
Grant - Fed. Aust. Hist. Soc.	250-00	

Interest

Operating a/c.	195-16	
Deposit stock a/c	139-93	
Life membership a/c	216-11	
Special publications a/c	<u>138-37</u>	689-57

Sale of books on consignment

1097-80

Raffles

17-60

Suppers

37-52

Advertisement in Journal

50-00

Sundries

6-00

18783-70

PAYMENTS

Publications

Newsletter	1471-22	
Journal	3185-83	
Programme	215-85	
Guide sheets	<u>254-80</u>	5127-70

Administration

Subscription	25-00	
Equipment-electric typewriter	268-00	
Postage, photocopying, bank charges, etc.	<u>158-20</u>	451-20

Theatre hire

308-00

Payment for books on consignment

993-04

Transferred to Special Publications A/c

2295-00

Sundries

24-46

Bank balances 31 December, 1984

Operating a/c	3086-34	
Deposit stock a/c	1617-89	
Life membership a/c	<u>2146-70</u>	
Special Publications a/c	<u>2433-37</u>	9584-30

9584

9155

7429

18783-70

I have obtained all the information and explanations that I have required to conduct this audit. In my opinion, the above summary of the Receipts and Payments of the Historical Society of South Australia for the year 31st December, 1984 is a true and fair record.

9th January, 1985

Glen Ralph

B.A., A.L.A.A.

NEW BOOKS AND REVIEWS

CITY LIFE IN OLD AUSTRALIA

by Geoffrey Dutton

Price: \$24.95

Release: November 1984

"An impressive collection of rare photographs depicting the wondrous days of city life before the First World War has been superbly reproduced in a new book by Geoffrey Dutton called CITY LIFE IN OLD AUSTRALIA, (Currey O'Neil \$24.95).

During the 1880s the city throbbed with life; magnificent buildings symbolized the optimism and grand ideals of the age; and the streets were full of the movement of people - the coaches, cabs and horse-drawn trams lent a leisurely and gracious air to 19th century transport.

The many aspects of city life - incorporating all the major cities in Australia - are recreated in over 150 superbly reproduced photographs. The pictures portray the life and pursuits of all levels of society - the working class children playing in the narrow lanes of the crowded inner-city suburbs are juxtaposed with the lavish picnics and dinners of the wealthy. People from all classes watch spectacular street marches, meander along waterfronts, and enjoy a day at the seaside.

Here are the people, the trade, the commerce, the occasions - all evocatively described by foremost Australian writer Geoffrey Dutton.

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BRIEF NOTES ON BOOKS AND ARTICLES

R.M. Gibbs, A History of South Australians (Blackwood: Southern Heritage, 1984). Pp. 278. \$15.95.

An extended edition of the useful and lucidly written book of the same title, originally conceived as a senior school text and first published in 1969, with a further twenty pages added to the chapter on the story since 1945. This work still remains the only one covering the whole period of white settlement. Indeed, as far as general histories go, South Australia lags far behind almost every other State in the Commonwealth. The forthcoming three-volume Flinders history will certainly fill out the picture in impressive detail, but, as Ron Gibbs would be the first to admit, there remains an urgent need for a new one-volume book incorporating the findings of research workers over the last couple of decades and accompanied by the usual scholarly aids such as

references and a bibliography.

Geoff Stokes, "South Australia: Consensus Politics", in Andrew Parkin and John Warhurst (eds), Machine Politics in the Australian Labor Party (George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1983), pp. 132-164.

A detailed and competently organized study of the Labor Party in South Australia. The author, who was for several years a tutor in Politics at Adelaide and Flinders Universities, gained considerable knowledge of that party while participating in several of its policy sub-committees.

-oOo-

Chris Nyland, "The Labor Governments of South Australia 1966-79", in E.L. Wheelwright and Ken Buckley (eds), Essays in the Political Economy of Australian Capitalism, Volume 5 (Australia and New Zealand Book Co., Sydney, (1983), pp. 239-264.

A shortened and revised version of the author's B.A. Honours thesis from the University of Adelaide, this left critique of the Walsh and Dunstan Governments can be read with almost equal enjoyment by conservatives as by those who accept Nyland's assumptions about power and society.

-oOo-

John Warhurst, "Playford to Dunstan and Back", Flinders Journal of History and Politics, vol. 10, 1984, pp. 154-159

Beginning as a review of Sir Walter Crocker's profile of Sir Thomas Playford, the end product is more an overview of writing on recent South Australian political history over the past couple of decades. The author attempts a rough categorisation of the material into three broad strands. He has rather nice things to say about those in his first strand, whom he calls "political scientists". Most of them, we are told, have roots in the Politics Discipline of Flinders University and some have "affection" for the A.L.P. Professor Warhurst, who includes himself in this strand, does not feel so warmly towards those in his third strand, whom he calls "conservatives", and whose number comprises Mr Stewart Cockburn, Mr Ren DeGaris, Dr A.J. Forbes, Sir Walter Crocker and the author of this brief note. One could argue for hours about Warhurst's assessments, but it is a useful review article.

-oOo-

Michael Stutchbury, "The Playford Legend and the Industrialization of South Australia", Australian Economic History Review, Vol. XXIV, no. 1, March 1984, pp. 1-19.

A provocative and tightly argued challenge to the

"conventional wisdom" that Sir Thomas Playford's "State-induced" industrialization led to a rate of economic growth in South Australia far in excess of the other states. The author, a graduate in Economics from the University of Adelaide who now writes for the Australian Financial Review, is firmly attached to a free-market approach and concludes: "There is little in the evidence ... to suggest that sectoral changes in the South Australian economy under Playford were extraordinarily different from those occurring at the same time in the other states." Hopefully, other scholars will take up the challenge and enable a fruitful debate to develop. See also the same author's "The Dunstan Government and Industrial Planning in South Australia", Australian Quarterly, vol. 53, no. 2, Winter 1981, pp. 198-213.

-oOo-

John Wanna, "Regional Development and Economic Restructuring in South Australia", Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology, vol. 2, no. 3, November 1984, pp. 350-364.

Written from a marxist perspective, this article is concerned with economic developments in South Australia in the context of capital restructuring in the manufacturing sector, inter-state capital penetration and severe labour displacement.

- John Playford

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THE ADELAIDE PUBLIC CEMETERY

WEST TERRACE

From the very beginning of the new colony of South Australia there was a need to make arrangements for burials. The first cemetery was established on Kangaroo Island and the first burial recorded was that of Lucy Ann Beare on 7 September 1837. When the main settlement was moved to the mainland, it appears that several early burials took place before any official cemetery was established. The Colonial Chaplain, Rev. C.B. Howard, recorded, for example, the burial of Eliza Stace, age 21, of "Glenelg Plains" on 9 February 1837. It is probable that these burials took place at Glenelg. The first official cemetery, however, was that on the south-western boundary of the newly laid out city of Adelaide. Originally known simply as the Public Cemetery, it soon came to be known as the West Terrace Cemetery.

Contrary to popular opinion in the twentieth century, this cemetery was not allowed to develop on what had originally been intended for use as parkland. Provision was made for a burial ground on its present site in Colonel William Light's

original and much praised plan for the city of Adelaide. It was to consist of 32 acres in an oval shape, laid out with several pathways and to be attractively planted with suitable vegetation. It took some time, however, before the settlement of Adelaide was sufficiently established to allow formal procedures to be adopted with regard to this public cemetery. In the meantime, the burial ground having been designated on Light's plan several burials took place there, though the first recorded in the West Terrace burial register was not until 6 July 1840.

The conditions for these early burials were at best primitive. There were no gravediggers, leaving relatives to carry out the task, there was no plan or superintendence of burials and grazing animals frequently disturbed graves. In response to complaints, the government began formalizing arrangements and on 15 April 1839 the land was bought in at a cost of £32.

In August 1839 a Board of Trustees was established for the management of the cemetery. It consisted of the Colonial Secretary, Robert Gouger, the Surveyor-General, Captain Frome, and the Colonial Chaplain, Reverend Howard. The new trustees immediately set about organising the cemetery and attempting to eliminate the abuses and problems which had already developed. One of the first items of expenditure was the purchase of a compass for the newly appointed sexton to assist him in defining the boundaries of the graves. Regulations for the management of the cemetery were gazetted on 29 August 1839. The board left much of the day to day running of the cemetery to the sexton, John Monck.

From the beginning there were problems. Monck failed to make a plan and keep a record of leases. There were insufficient funds to cover the cost of enclosing the cemetery and money had to be borrowed from Treasury. The fees were attacked in the press as being inconsistent and in the leasehold section too high - it was calculated that the rate was the equivalent of £15 per square foot or £2,200 per acre. The difficulties for the trustees in maintaining effective control over the management of the cemetery were accentuated by the beginnings of its fragmentation along denominational lines. In August 1843, Mr E.L. Montefiore asked for a small section of the cemetery to be set aside for the interment of Jewish dead, and in January 1845, Rev. Michael Ryan, the secretary of the Catholic bishop, Dr. Murphy, made a similar request for land for a Catholic cemetery. The Jews were willing to abide by the regulations of the general cemetery and so their request was granted. The Catholics, however, wanted complete control over any land made available to them. As a compromise, the government agreed to grant them four acres adjoining the public cemetery. This was the first change to Light's original concept of an oval burial ground. The Catholic cemetery was fenced, at a cost to the church of £30, in January 1845, and

the first burial there took place on 12 April 1845. The cemetery, with its own entrance, was consecrated by Dr. Murphy in January 1846.

By now the trustees of the public cemetery, busily involved with their other activities, were losing control over the cemetery. Complaints about conditions there were becoming more frequent and the government showed great reluctance to spend any further sums on improving them. As a result, in July 1847 the entire board resigned, recommending Monck as the only person with any knowledge of the internal arrangements of the cemetery. It was decided that a government officer "whose present duties are not very numerous" should be appointed to superintend the management of the cemetery. The officer chosen was Thomas Gilbert, the Colonial Storekeeper. Management of the cemetery was to be additional to his existing duties and he was not to reside at the cemetery. The sexton did, and so John Monck assumed even greater power.

John Monck's position was a curious one and well illustrated the conflict between public and ecclesiastical control with which the cemetery was to be plagued for much of the 19th century. He had arrived on the "Buffalo" in the service of Rev. Howard and had actually been appointed sexton by the Colonial Chaplain. He was not actually, then, a government officer, and when Gilbert was appointed over him was greatly resentful of the fact. The seeds of future problems were sown.

In the mean time, the Surveyor-General was directed to have a large scale plan of the cemetery made and to investigate the best means of having the area properly laid out and drained. His report outlined the basic problems which were to make the cemetery a source of controversy and public complaint for the rest of the 19th century. The greatest problems were the high water table, which in winter meant that graves were frequently flooded when dug, and the fact that much of the drainage of the city flowed directly into the cemetery. The fact was that the site had been poorly chosen by Colonel Light who appears to have made no attempt to ascertain the nature of the land in relation to the rest of the city or the suitability of the soil for burial purposes. The government, however, was not prepared to approve the expenditure which would have remedied the problems. John Monck, in residence at the cemetery, continued in virtual control while the absentee superintendent Gilbert showed little interest in affairs there. Indeed, his indifference led on a number of occasions to his being censured by the government.

The denominational division of the supposedly public cemetery continued. In 1851 an additional 2 acres was made available to the Jewish community. Public complaints about conditions also continued, culminating in 1854 in a

parliamentary enquiry. The committee of enquiry heard evidence from those responsible for the cemetery, from undertakers and from clergymen and doctors. Its report caused a considerable public scandal. On the question of management, the committee reported, "facts showing the greatest carelessness, negligence and mismanagement". The granting of portions of land to particular denominations was condemned and considerable abuses connected with the leasing arrangements were reported. The committee singled out for particular condemnation the activities of the sexton, who had charged his own fees and run a successful sideline as a stonemason. The committee also investigated the burial of the destitute poor and condemned a practice which had been allowed to develop of not having any minister to perform many of the burial services. There were also complaints about the use of shallow graves and the health risk to the community which the whole cemetery provided. All the medical witnesses argued that the site was most objectionable and was only chosen by Colonel Light because he lacked adequate knowledge of the land and the prevailing weather conditions.

The condemnation of the cemetery by the parliamentary select committee was almost total. "After the most careful consideration of the whole of the evidence, your committee have come to the conclusion that no time should be lost in selecting another site for a public cemetery for the city, and closing that on West Terrace". The recommendation was that the new cemetery should be free from ecclesiastical control and should be so managed that all the objections made to West Terrace would be overcome. This was to be the first of several calls for the establishment of a new public cemetery for Adelaide during the second half of the 19th century. The report was finally adopted in parliament, and it was widely assumed that steps would be taken to ensure that its recommendations were carried out. In fact, little in the way of reform was achieved. Early in 1855, Thomas Gilbert's resignation was accepted and he was replaced, both as Colonial Storekeeper and Cemetery Superintendent, by John James. Real power, however, remained in the hands of John Monck.

The new superintendent found he had no control over the Anglican or Catholic cemeteries and only limited control over Monck, who was also employed by Bishop Short as sexton of the Church of England section. Other change was left until the government had time to consider the whole question of the need to regulate all cemeteries in the colony. West Terrace continued to be neglected, with inadequate resources made available. The denominational division was continued and extended, when the Society of Friends was also allocated a portion in 1855 for the use of its adherents.

The result of the government inaction was that the whole question of the condition and management of West Terrace remained a controversial issue which continued to surface and

plague the government. In 1861 a new superintendent, H.E. Brookes, was appointed, with responsibility for the cemetery alone. He saw it as his duty to continually point out the problems of the cemetery and produced a series of reports exposing the appalling conditions for burials there. He complained of overpowering smells and noxious effluvia. In one report, he claimed the cemetery was little better than a swamp and wholly unfit for a graveyard. He argued that a new site should be found and that further expenditure on West Terrace was a waste of public money. In the light of these reports and the continuing public disquiet the matter of burial and cemetery reform was again taken up in parliament. It became clear, that the problems exposed in 1854 were simply continuing. Finally, the government attempted to bring some degree of uniformity and control to the whole problem of burial. An Act for the Regulation of Cemeteries was passed in 1862 which provided for the listing and general regulation of all cemeteries in the colony. Regulation 14 appointed the superintendent of the West Terrace Cemetery as superintendent of cemeteries generally.

At West Terrace itself, Brookes suggested and had approved numerous changes to the administrative and financial system and the fee structure as well as to the regulations governing the depth of and number of burials allowed in graves.

He also began a consistent plan of the cemetery and located on it as many graves and leases as possible. Until then, no such plan had been kept, and everyone was very much reliant on John Monck's memory. Brookes continued to call for a new site but was prepared to agree that his programme of improvements aimed at eliminating the causes of many complaints, would also eliminate the need to move to another site for some years to come.

For the first time, West Terrace cemetery began to take on a well ordered appearance. Paths were laid out, graves clearly marked, depth of graves strictly supervised, an effective burial register was kept and an attempt was made to beautify the ground by planting trees and shrubs. As superintendent of cemeteries, Brookes was also able to intervene in the denominational sections. He particularly criticised conditions in the Catholic Cemetery, where he complained of offensive smells and shallow water-logged graves. The Anglicans were not free from problems, however, and in the wake of the continuing controversy over church control over such a large section of the cemetery, Bishop Short finally decided to surrender the Church's grant. Brooke's position was thereby greatly strengthened.

Despite these apparent improvements, the condition of the cemetery was to remain the subject of complaints and public debate for the rest of the century. Given the uniformity of support for establishing a new cemetery, from

Brookes himself, from the press and from the Corporation of Adelaide, it is remarkable that so little was achieved. However, as Brookes' improvements began to take effect, the public complaints about its condition abated and the superintendent initiated a number of temporary measures made necessary by continuing postponement of closure of the cemetery. An area of land on the north of the cemetery which had never been enclosed although it was part of the original land set aside for burials, was exchanged with the city council for a considerably larger area between the western boundary of the city and the railway line further west. It was also decided to re-use ordinary burial allotments and to treat them as new ground. Brookes continued his complaints against the Catholic cemetery and opposed moves to extend it in 1871 and again in 1874. Finally, in 1879, he suggested that the Catholics be allowed to use an unused section of the Jewish ground until the whole cemetery was closed.

This would, he believed, be absolutely necessary in 3 or 4 years. The Jewish authorities agreed to this, having been assured that a similar section would be made available in the new cemetery when it was opened. They soon regretted this action when it became clear that the proposed new cemetery would not be opened, and they had themselves to pay £75 for a small extension at West Terrace. It had, however, allowed the Catholics to continue using West Terrace.

Continuing delays in opening a new cemetery, meant that further means had to be adopted if West Terrace was to be continued to be used for general burials. In 1880, Brookes, reported that there was sufficient land unoccupied to last from 3 to 4 years. In fact re-use of land and small extensions and the use of areas previously reserved for planting allowed it to be kept in use for much longer. In June 1884, Brookes reported he could only keep the cemetery going for another 18 months. Then, at the very end of his career he came under the supervision of C.E. Owen Smyth, the Superintendent of Public Buildings. Smyth introduced further changes, including the levelling and reuse of old graves, designed to prolong the life of the cemetery. Despite strong objections from West Adelaide residents and businessmen the Catholic cemetery was expanded by using an unused portion of the Quaker ground. The problems could not be put off forever, though. In 1900, Smyth reported that he could keep the cemetery going for only a few more months. Finally, the government decided on an extension of West Terrace Cemetery rather than the establishment of a new public cemetery. This was despite opposition from West Adelaide residents, despite the opposition of the Central Board of health and despite the opposition of the Adelaide City Council. In 1903, then, an additional area was enclosed for burial purposes. It wasn't until the 1920s and 1930s that a number of new general cemeteries were built in the Adelaide suburbs and the real pressure was taken off West Terrace.

In the 20th century, a number of significant developments took place at West Terrace. The first crematorium built in Australia was opened there in 1903. Indeed it was the only Australian crematorium until 1925. Unfortunately the building was demolished in 1969. The A.I.F. cemetery was also established, the first burial taking place in 1920. This was the first cemetery in Australia to be dedicated to the burial of World War I servicemen. The use of the general cemetery, however, steadily declined as new cemeteries were established in the suburbs. By the early 1970s large sections had fallen into disrepair after years of neglect, and finally in 1975, the State Government assumed control of the entire area, including the denominational sections. Since then some work has been carried out in an effort to improve the appearance of the cemetery by a programme of tree planting and by cleaning some monuments and repairing damage. Considerable work was also done on the Smyth Memorial Chapel in the Catholic cemetery. Opened in 1871, this Chapel is considered an important example of gothic revival architecture. It was designed by architect E.J. Woods and used for reading part of the burial service at Catholic funerals. Beneath its floor are buried Bishop Sheil who died in 1872 and Father John Smyth, the Vicar-general of South Australia, who died in 1870, and whose remains were re-interred in the chapel. Some work has also been done in promoting the historical value of the cemetery, including the writing by myself of a small, illustrated brochure; and genealogical information on tombstones has been systematically recorded. No new leases have been granted since 1975 and all leases will now expire in the year 2032. By then, it is to be hoped, the heritage value of the cemetery as a whole will be generally accepted.

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SOURCES

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