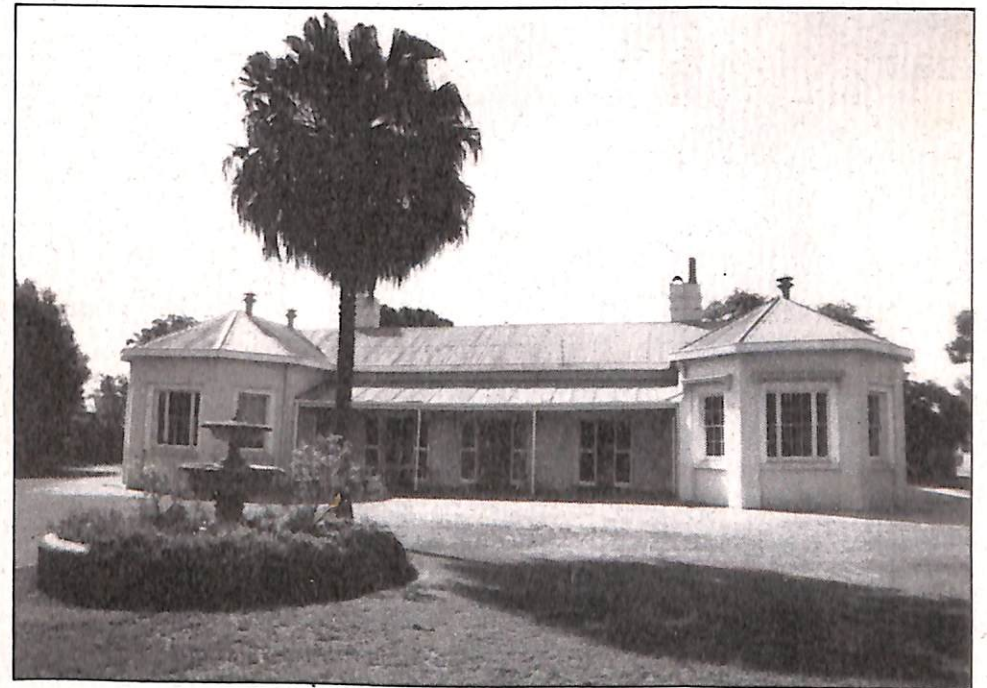




The
Historical Society
of
South Australia
Inc.



Newsletter No. 89 July 1990



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

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Friday, 3 August 1990, 8.00 p.m.

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

Paul Stark: Historic House Presentation - Contrasting Interpretations

This lecture draws on material prepared by Mr Stark as part of his dissertation towards the MA in Conservation Studies at the Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies, University of York.

The lecture will contrast examples of historic houses in England and Australia dwelling on their capacity to impart historical knowledge and the manner in which the interpreted history is presented.

Examples will include some of the 'treasure houses' of England as well as several of the more outstanding and even controversial presentations in Britain. These will be contrasted with the situation in Australia particularly the work of the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales.

The often uneasy relationships within overall property management between conservation of building fabric, the aesthetics of presentation and the dissemination of knowledge to the visitor will be discussed as well as some of the pitfalls for the administrator.

The lecture will be copiously illustrated with slides taken by Mr Stark and should be a useful, albeit brief, introduction to the subject.

Mr Stark is heritage advisor to the Adelaide City Council and has been professionally involved in the conservation of the built environment since 1976. He has contributed to and written several publications and is active in the National Trust of South Australia.

Cover illustration.

Palm House in the grounds of St Peter's College.
Built by William Peacock in about 1849.

-oOo-

Friday, 7 September 1990, 8.00 p.m.

Venue: State Library Lecture Theatre

Hamish Angas: 'Rural Heritage' - An illustrated lecture

The development of rural architecture varies throughout South Australia. In the South East of the State there were a variety of factors which influenced the form and styles of homesteads and rural buildings, including the effect of both the wealth and poverty of the settlers, the importation of ideas and traditions and the ancestry of the immigrants. However the isolation and harsh conditions of the Eyre Peninsula necessitated that the settlers construct a different style of building in order to settle that land. Together with comparisons with different architectural examples from other parts of the State, this illustrated lecture intends to show how various factors influenced the way rural buildings were constructed.

Hamish Angas was the architectural historian for both the heritage surveys of the South East and the Eyre Peninsula and is currently employed as an architect with the State Heritage Branch, Department of Environment and Planning. He is involved in the assessment of buildings and places for the Register of State Heritage Items.

-oOo-

**** FUND RAISING TOUR ****

Saturday 25 August - Sunday 26 August

TOUR TO THE SOUTH EAST

An adventurous weekend tour of this historically important part of South Australia, with an overnight stay and visits to historic properties and towns.

Itinerary

Saturday: Depart Adelaide at 8.30 a.m. and travel via the South Eastern Freeway to Murray Bridge and Tailem Bend for the morning tea stop. From here we continue through Meningie to enter the beautiful Coorong National Park. Passing the tiny fishing settlements of Policeman's Point and Salt Creek we arrive at Kingston for lunch. (lunch en route) On then to Penola which being the first town in South Australia naturally it is steeped in history. At 2 p.m. we meet Mrs Clifford at "Yallum Park" who will show us around this wonderful homestead before taking us to view Petticoat Lane and the Interpretive Centre. After a very interesting afternoon we will then

travel to Mount Gambier for our overnight accommodation and dinner at the Innkeepers Motel.

Sunday: This morning after breakfast we have a tour of this South East city before travelling to Robe to explore this historic port. Return to Adelaide with lunch stop en route. Arrive back around 6.00 p.m.

Cost \$97.00 per person twin share
\$20.00 extra if single room required.

Tour includes: Motel accommodation on twin share basis and dinner and breakfast as per itinerary, and visit to Yallum Park

Tour does not include: Lunches. Items of a personal nature.

Booking is Essential - Phone Maurice Keain, 271 1066
(business hours)

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NEWS

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY 1990 CONFERENCE

'Heritage Conservation: Local Issues and Action'

6-7 October 1990

The programme includes the following papers:

Margaret Henry: 'Saving a City - Newcastle after the earthquake'

Donald Ellsmore: 'After the Disaster - working to preserve our heritage'

Ian Stapleton: 'Heritage or Heritage Style?'

James Broadbent: 'What is keeping? - changes in attitudes to conservation'

Dr Ken Cable: 'The special responsibility of Local Government in heritage conservation'

Dr Ian Black: 'The Sydney Showgrounds - a case study of heritage issues'

Mr Patrick O'Callaghan: 'The architecture of the Sydney Showgrounds'

Dr Rosemary Annable: 'You are the front line in the protection of your local heritage. What can you do?

The conference also includes a forum on Historic Sites and two walking tours: one to Pymont and Ultimo, which begins at the Powerhouse Museum, and another which covers the Memorials and Monuments in Hyde Park and environs.

Venue: YWCA, Wentworth Avenue, Darlinghurst.

Brochure available from Mari Metzke, Liaison Officer, Affiliated Societies, Royal Australian Historical Society, History House, 133 Macquarie Street, Sydney NSW 2001.

Telephone enquiries: (02) 247 6227 or
(02) 247 8001

*** Bookings, including accommodation, must be made no later than Wednesday 29 August 1990. Note - no refunds can be provided for cancellations after Friday 14 September.

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SALE SALE SALE

The Society has for sale back copies of the Newsletter. Within the newsletters are many articles of enjoyable and informative reading. You may purchase your back copies now by sending either a cheque or money order to the Treasurer.
Price 50 cents each.

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ARCHITECTURE WORKING PAPERS

The following papers of South Australian interest are available from the Department of Architecture of the University of Adelaide. Postage will be added to the list prices.

Working Paper No. 1
Helen Temple & David Saunders: 'Architectural History in Australia: A Bibliography of Twentieth Century Publications' \$2.00

Working Paper No. 2
Peter Donovan: 'An Industrial History of South Australia' \$6.00

Working Paper No. 3
Lindsay Harrison: 'Flour Mills of South Australia' \$2.00

Working Paper No. 6
Katrina McDougall: 'Winery Buildings in South Australia, 1836-1936' Volume 1: The Barossa Region \$10.00

Working Paper No. 7
Katrina McDougall: 'Winery Buildings of South Australia, 1836-1936' Volume 2: The Southern Districts \$8.00

Working Paper No. 8
Anthony Moore: 'Brickmakers in South Australia, 1836-1936' \$6.50

Working Paper No. 10
Anthony Moore: 'Breweries in South Australia, 1836-1936' \$6.50

Working Paper No. 12
Susan Phillips & Michael Pilkington: 'Gawler's Industrial Buildings, 1836-1936' \$6.50

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SHEPHERD FAMILY REUNION

Robert and Ann, their children John, Rachel (BEST), Ann Susannah (HYDE), Robert, Elizabeth (BOUTELL), Hannah (SHEPHERD), Mary Jane (HILL), Joseph, George, Emmanuel, Thomas and Hyett arrived on the 'Francis Speight' in 1843 from Appleton-le-Moors, Yorkshire, and settled at Hawthorn Farm, Aldinga. A family reunion is planned for 1993. Register your interest by contacting Robert Shepherd (phone 269 6029), Helen Pearce (phone 79 5065), or Janice Menz (phone 278 5732).

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ARTICLES

OUR HIDDEN HERITAGE:

Some Thoughts on Folklife and Local History

[This article by John Low, Local History Librarian in the Blue Mountains City Library, is reproduced from Locality vol. 3 no. 3, June-July 1989, with permission of the author and the publisher.]

The word folklore is familiar to most Australians. It is however, a term that is generally used carelessly and without much thought. Perhaps, as I would like to suggest here, it deserves more serious consideration from those who work in the field of local history.

In 1987 the Australian Government released the Report of the Committee of Enquiry into Folklife in Australia. The Committee consisted of three prominent Australian folklorists - Gwenda Davey, Hugh Anderson and Keith McKenry. The 306 page document they produced addressed both the nature and diversity of Australian folklore (or 'folklife', as the Report prefers to call it, and as I shall also from now on) and the importance of its collection, conservation and appreciation. After surveying the field and the state of play therein it concludes with a series of substantial recommendations.

The Report is a document all local historians should read for, in emphasising the 'community-based' and 'local' nature of folklife, which differentiates it from 'mass' or 'pop' culture, it places the study of folklife squarely in the context of regional and local studies.

This was, in fact, the position argued by Professor John Ryan, of the University of New England, at the Third National Folklore Conference held in Canberra last year, when he drew some examples for Australia from the Society for Folklife Studies (U.K.). The list of topics he gave as being of necessary concern to the folklife student could easily have been a list compiled by a local or regional historian. It ranged over everything from the history of transport to the growth and decline of communities, to church history, sporting history and genealogy. Folklife, in other words, should be considered an integral part of local studies. (Unfortunately, Professor Ryan's paper was not published in the Conference Proceedings. My reference comes from a summary handed out at his lecture.)

In line with his approach the Report further recognises that both the research and the collections (which include realia, paper-based materials and sound recording tape) which are built up by historical societies and libraries, are of great importance to the student of Australian folklife. "They act," it says, "as custodians of material of significant folklife interest, even though the folklife associations of particular items may not always be well documented or understood." (p.88) In its Recommendations the Report expresses the pressing need for measures to assist in the documentation and conservation of such materials. (See particularly Recommendations 24 and 25).

It was encouraging to hear again at last year's Folklore Conference, the Director of Australian Collections and Services at the National Library, John Thompson, support the Committee of Enquiry's recommendation for the establishment of an Australian Folk Centre that would provide a national focus for action. The National Library has itself proposed to the Government "the creation of a National Folklife Centre based at the Library [though financially and administratively independent] but having as its prime role the documentation

and co-ordination of present and proposed folklife collections and programs throughout Australia. The Centre, as proposed, would also seek to assist individuals and organisations involved in the collection, study or performance of folk material both by means of training programs and by direct grants to allow work to be carried out in the field." (The full text of John Thompson's keynote address will be found in the Conference Proceedings noted in the References at the end of the article.) A resolution was passed at the conclusion of the Conference supporting this proposal.

What this suggests is that such recognition by folklorists of the importance of the work being carried out by local historians and librarians should encourage the latter in turn to look more closely at the concept of folklife. There is need for a greater appreciation of the folklife component of local studies.

Defining Folklife

So, what is folklife and Australian folklife in particular? To answer this there seems little reason to go beyond the definitions arrived at by the Committee of Enquiry:

"Folklife is tradition-based and/or contemporary expressive culture repeated and shared within a community, and accepted by it as an adequate reflection of its cultural and social identity. It embraces a wide range of creative and symbolic forms such as custom, belief, mythology, legend, ritual, pageantry, language, literature, technical skill, play, music, dance, song, drama, narrative, architecture, craft. Its expressions are mainly learned orally, by imitation or in performance, and are generally maintained without benefit of formal instruction or institutional direction." (p.16)

Australian folklife is folklife associated with one or more communities within Australia. This includes, for example, folklife associated with individual family, ethnic, occupational, religious, sporting, special interest, or regional groups." (p.17)

These definitions emphasise a number of characteristics of our folklife heritage. In the first place, it is a shared heritage that is local or community-based. It can reflect both traditional and contemporary perspectives and, for the most part, is passed on by informal means. Its transmission, indeed, is often unconscious, with individuals and communities tending to take their folklife for granted. In a sense, says the Report, it is "an invisible heritage". (p.24)

Four main categories of folklife are identified in the Report: folk crafts and architecture; oral folklife including

speech, yarns, jokes and recitation; music, song and dance; customs, pastimes and beliefs.. Perhaps a few examples from a regional community familiar to me - the Blue Mountains of New South Wales - may serve to demonstrate the perspective that folklife can provide on the character of a local area and thus help to clarify its place in local studies.

Exhibit One

"Australia has a rich tradition of vernacular architecture, the buildings of the 'ordinary person', constructed in unique local styles, often by their owner."
(p.27)

In the Blue Mountains it is possible to identify, largely from oral testimony and the odd reference in old newspapers, a long tradition of, for want of a better term, 'hermit architecture'. This includes not only more conventional style 'huts' but also the careful and deliberate adaptation of caves into habitable dwellings. The domestic possibilities of caves seemed only limited by the ingenuity of their occupiers. Large caves could be divided into 'rooms' and furnished; landscaping and gardening were invariably carried out and one cave I know of even had its own swimming pool constructed. Work begun by one occupier was often carried out by successors.

The Blue Mountains have long been seen as a retreat where people have come to escape the crowded and busy city. Though largely undocumented, hermits and loners and their unique architectural experiments are just as valid a reflection of this trend in the region's history as the wealthy businessmen and politicians who built their large country homes and summer retreats.

Exhibit Two

"An ancient and diverse tradition which survives in Australian folklife is folk medicine, whether herbal or otherwise ... Not only home remedies and cures are involved but also beliefs and practices." (p.55)

A recent tourist slogan used widely in promotion of the Blue Mountains exhorted people to "Come Up For Air!" It was the latest expression of a longstanding belief in the restorative qualities of mountain air.

From the 1870s and 1880s when the smell of sewage was an unbearable part of hot Sydney summers and the wind was thought to carry disease, to today when the smell of sewage still lingers in some beach-side suburbs and a brown pall of pollution hangs over the city, the cooler climate and cleaner air of the Blue Mountains has been an attractive lure to citizens of the metropolis. It has been especially so to those suffering from respiratory ailments of one kind or another. The expressions of this folk belief are numerous.

In 1905, for example, visitors to Katoomba were being advised by the current guidebook that the "dry, pure, rarefied air" was of "special value to persons affected by any pulmonary trouble, and all kinds of catarrhs, asthma, bronchitis, malaria, nerve exhaustion, and heart troubles readily yield to its influence. It is obviously free from atmospheric dust and deleterious germs. The mortality among residents is exceptionally low. Pulmonary consumption, as a development disease, is non-existent, and it is authoritatively declared that there has never been a case of consumption among the permanent inhabitants."

Is it any wonder that humorous stories like the following began to circulate among the local wags?: A Sydney visitor began to talk to an old man outside a cottage in Station Street, the other day, and asked him his age. Said the Katoomba ancient, 'I am just over seventy.' 'Well', said the visitor, 'you look as if you have a good many years to go yet. At what age did your father die?' 'Father dead?' said the oldster, looking surprised. 'Father ain't dead. He's inside putting grandfather to bed!'

Exhibit Three

"[Jokes] convey a good deal of information about the attitudes and values of the teller and of the society to which he or she belongs. Like yarn spinning, joke-telling is a popular social pastime. ..." (p.36)

In its heyday Katoomba was a town of hotels and guesthouses, most of the latter run by women who were often single. It was also a town that some argued should have been renamed 'Honeymooney'. Over the years jokes, stories and humorous verse about such subjects as 'widows' and 'love-sickness' have played a large part in the folklife of Katoomba. At the peak seasons of the tourist year humour no doubt helped locals deal with the pressures and tensions created by the enormous influx of visitors. Such folklife expressions as the following are rarely considered in more formal treatments of the town's history.

- (a) A honeymoon couple were being driven out to Jenolan Caves when their car stopped suddenly. 'Well, what are you pulling up for?' demanded Mr Newlywed. 'I heard the lady say STOP, Sir,' said the chauffeur. 'Oh, that's all right,' said Mr Newlywed, 'go ahead, she wasn't talking to you!'
- (b) 'The man I marry,' remarked a Lurline Street widow, 'must be a returned Digger. He must be a hero!' 'He will be,' returned the savage bachelor.

Exhibit Four

"Recitation as a performing art has survived changing times to remain one of the most characteristically Australian aspects of this country's folk culture." (p.36)

Perhaps the best known performer on the Blue Mountains was Harry Peckman (1846-1934), the old Jehu whose coach and livery stables, run with his brother, was one of the most popular on 'the Hills'. His life spanned several eras of the Mountains' history. In the pre-railway days he drove coaches over the primitive Mountain road. During the grand years of the late nineteenth century his guiding skills and knowledge of the region were keenly sought after by visitors both titled and common. And finally, in the twentieth century, as an old man, he watched as the age of the combustion engine gradually rendered obsolete his coach and pair.

An excursion with Harry meant numerous performances en route, from his extensive repertoire of songs and recitations. These covered subjects as various as the rowing hero Trickett, the Boer War, and his beloved Blue Mountains. His remarkable 'Kookaburra' piece with full sound effects and accompanying gestures was an often requested item. One estimate suggested that he was the author of at least a hundred poems and songs, though my researches have only uncovered about thirty. These have survived in a variety of forms including handwritten and typed manuscript, some by his own hand, others copied from memory, published broadsheets and newspaper copy.

Peckman was in the tradition of the bush poet. He was self-educated, a skilled bushman and well liked in the community. He was not a man of wealth or influence, rather an ordinary man passionate about the region in which he lived and compelled to express that passion. His recollections (he was often interviewed by the local press) and his verse tell us things about life in the Blue Mountains we could not hope to learn from a whole archive of council minutes.

Concluding Remarks

In conclusion the Report of the Committee of Enquiry argues strongly that Australia possesses "a vigorous living heritage of folklife" (p.141) but that too often official and public attention is "focussed on material heritage - 'the things you keep' - that the essential intangible elements of our heritage, our folklife in all its myriad forms have been neglected." (p.1)

By becoming aware of the fragile expressions of folklife that surround us - that vast reservoir of popular creativity - librarians, historians and others involved in local studies can contribute a great deal to the collection, preservation and appreciation of this often undervalued part of Australia's heritage.

(Note: All references given in the above article refer to the Committee of Enquiry's Report.)

References

Folklife: our living heritage: report of the Committee of Enquiry into Folklife in Australia, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1987.

Edwards, Ron ed. Proceedings of the Third National Folklore Conference, held in the National Library, Canberra, November 26-27 1988, Australian Folk Trust, Canberra, 1988.

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SCHOOLDAYS AT STREAKY BAY

[The following article has been contributed by Jim Faull, Senior Lecturer in Geographical Studies at the Magill Campus of the South Australian College of Advanced Education.]

My father was appointed to be the Acting Headmaster at Streaky Bay as part of the war effort. He had tried to enlist twice but had been rejected because of poor eyesight. The Education Department gathered together a group similar to my father, active but unacceptable to the armed forces. At a round table discussion the Superintendent of Schools suggested to the assembled group that, as part of their war effort, they could volunteer to serve in some of the outback schools to replace teachers who were leaving for active service.

In a way it was a volunteer position nobody could refuse at that time, so a ballot was conducted and father drew one of the best possibilities, Streaky Bay.

We travelled to Streaky Bay by ship and bus. The ship was the Minnipa and I (who was 9 years old at the time) remember being frightened by two things. One was that we might be wrecked on the mysterious Althorpe Islands and the other was the information that Japanese submarines were in the area and we had to keep our life belts on at all times.

We reached Port Lincoln safely and then boarded the bus/truck for Streaky Bay. It was driven by George Ellis, the electrician at Streaky Bay and he eventually became a lifelong friend.

On board we had two army men coming home on leave. One slept most of the day and the other entertained the children most of the way. He raided the fruit and vegetables carried in the truck portion of the bus and he fed the booty to about half a dozen children.

The bus trip to Streaky was interminable. I can remember my father saying he thought the next stop would be Perth! But, we dropped in at every wayside township and unloaded mail and stores for the townspeople. This all took time, but

it was interesting because it allowed us to get out and walk around towns like Elliston and Port Kenny.

We left Port Lincoln early in the morning and did not reach Streaky Bay until well after dark.

George Ellis dropped us at the schoolhouse. It was a pleasant surprise, large, roomy and adjacent to the school. In fact it was the renovated original school and my bedroom turned out to be one of the old classrooms.

Father was in charge of a three room school with two assistants. There was the junior room (years 1-3), the middle room (years 4-5) and the senior room (years 6,7,8,9).

I quickly sized up the social strata amongst the children. Bob Fosdike was the sporting 'el supremo'. He was outstanding at football, tennis, cricket and swimming. I struggled to come second to him many times. The el supremo in the studies area was Wilbur Harvey. Dad said that Wilbur was the smartest boy he ever taught. He is now an engineer in Victoria and Bob Fosdike is a Manager in a bank in South Australia.

Our youthful forms of entertainment were predominantly sport. We had the use of the school facilities, the cricket pitch across the road, the tennis courts down the road and the golf course between the tennis courts and the cricket pitch. And of course there was the beach where we all went swimming. After graduating in the shallows we swam in the shark proof pool out on the jetty. It was a joke. The holes in the wire netting were so large that it wasn't even whale proof. Nevertheless we enjoyed its use and we became very skilled at diving off the spring boards which were attached to the jetty. We did it so much it is a wonder to me that one of us didn't front up for the Olympic trials in later life.

In school things went well. They were small classes and father was an excellent teacher. Every night he would prepare the next day's work for years 6-9 on the blackboard in meticulous neat printing. It was a mixture of assignments and group teaching where father excelled especially in Geography, History and as a special treat, story-telling, usually on a Friday afternoon.

Annie and Jackie Wombat were the only Aborigines we ever saw in the town. Annie had a soft heart for children; she joined in our Peace March at the end of the war. I remember it well because all the shopkeepers showered us with lollies as we marched down the main street past their stores.

Environment, drugs, greenpeace, conservation and nuclear disarmament were words we never used. There was some smoking amongst the boys but offenders were quickly 'dobbled' in to

others in the small community.

We caught fish from the jetty and occasionally we went out at nights with kerosene charged flares to spear crabs and on one memorable occasion a huge bright red octopus. We also went spotlighting, shooting foxes, kangaroos and rabbits. The latter were present in plague proportions and father with a single shot 22 rifle often brought home our tea after a short walk from the edge of town.

When I came to leave Streaky Bay in 1945 to attend Port Pirie High School I did not know how much I would miss it. Now I do know and I recommend its values and attractions to any prospective settler on the West Coast.

Jim Faull

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The Society has for sale back copies of the Journal. Should you wish to complete your set, replace a lent but never returned issue, have permanently a favourite article or give a most desirable present to a friend then we can help. Send a cheque or postal order to the treasurer.

Price \$15.

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DOCUMENTS

ROBE AND ITS VICINITY - PART 2

By T.L.M.

[Reprinted from the Children's Hour, February 1906. Number 17 in a series entitled 'Our Own Country'.]

After a few years of prosperity Robe began to decline; and this was how the decline was brought about. Wheat, which had been a splendid price commenced to drop, and it did not pay the farmers near Mount Gambier to cart their grain eighty miles to Robe for shipment. So a port was established eighteen miles south of Mount Gambier, at Port MacDonnell, and all the trade of the lower part of the South-East went there.

Then a port was opened at Rivoli Bay, now called Beachport. That took another big slice of Robe's trade away. Later still a port was opened at Lacepede Bay, now called Kingston, and a railway constructed there. That, of course, completely shut Robe out of getting the trade of the South-East. Since then it has had to depend entirely on its own local trade, which is by no means great. Many of the stations in occupation thirty or forty years ago have been abandoned.

Speaking of the early history of Robe reminds one that this place was for some years the home of Australia's poet - Adam Lindsay Gordon. A very great deal has been written about Gordon, and probably most of you have heard or read of him; but it is quite interesting to meet with a man who has personally known the poet, and can tell you a great deal about him. Mr Charles Savage, a member of our Board of Advice in Robe, was engaged on the same station as Gordon for some years; and Mr D. McPherson, an old-time horseowner here, often employed the poet to break in his fiery steeds.

Mr McPherson, who is now a very old man, with long picturesque grey locks, said to me recently, "I remember perfectly well when Gordon first came to the South-East. He had arrived in Adelaide some years prior to that, having been an officer in the British Royal Artillery. He joined the mounted police force of South Australia, and was stationed at Mount Gambier, but left the force and engaged in horse-breaking. While at the Mount he performed the famous 'leap' - springing over a fence on the border of the Blue Lake, and pulling up his horse so rapidly that no damage resulted either to horse or rider. Well, Gordon soon left Mount Gambier, and came to Lake Hawdon Station, not far from Robe. That station at the time was in possession of Mr E. Stockdale. This gentleman was a grazier in a very large way, being the possessor of at least 3,000 horses and 1,500 head of cattle. While on the station Gordon did a lot of horse-breaking and stock-riding. I remember his appearance well. He was extremely tall, being 6 ft. 2 in. in height, of slight build, with very long legs and unusually long neck. He was, without question, the best rough-rider and steeplechase-rider in the country in his day. He frequently attended Robe races and rode in the hunter or steeplechase.

"A flat race interested him very little, and I have known him to walk away during such a race. I had a mare for which I had given £40, which was so wild that no one dared mount her. One day a noted colt-breaker from Victoria got on her back, but she threw him instantly. Gordon was standing near at the time, and I asked him to essay to ride the mare, which he at once proceeded to do. The mare gave the most vigorous exhibition of bucking that I have ever seen in my life, but Gordon sat unmoved.

"He was absolutely the only rider who ever maintained his

seat on that mare's back. He appeared to be quite without fear, reckless and daring. Unfortunately he was extremely short-sighted, and I have often wondered, as I have watched him dashing through the scrub after horses or cattle, that he never met with serious injury. I spent many days and nights with him for years, but really I never knew that he was gifted as a poet, and was quite surprised when the late Rev. J.E. Tenison Woods - one of his most intimate friends - told me that Gordon was the best Latin scholar he had ever come across in Australia.

"He was one who made no pretensions whatever. Among bushmen he was a bushman like one of ourselves, and never showed his superiority in any way. While he was in Robe he received word that he had succeeded to a legacy of £7,000 through the death of relatives in England. He left here soon after, and purchased a place near Mount Gambier, his idea being to buy horses unbroken, break them in, and then sell them.

"I do not know how this venture prospered; but I know he soon purchased another place, known as "Dingley Dell", a little way of the Port MacDonnell Road. In 1865 he was elected a member of the South Australian Parliament for the district of Victoria, which comprised at that time all the South-East. As an M.P. he was not distinguished, as he very rarely spoke in the House. He resigned in 1867.

"The saddest part of my tale has now to be mentioned. Gordon did not long retain the fortune which he had acquired. He indulged in unfortunate speculation, lost most of his money, and his life ended under very sad and painful circumstances."

The first thing a stranger notices on approaching the township of Robe is the number of hedges of African boxthorn which are in existence. Some of the little cottages have their grounds completely surrounded by this hedge. The boxthorn shows most vigorous growth in the soil of Robe, and in a few years it attains a height sufficient to hide from view the objects within the grounds which it encloses.

There is a very nice hedge of this plant at the school, and it remains beautifully green from about April to December.

The next thing the stranger observes on entering Robe will be the level roads and carefully kept footpaths. The road is an ideal one for the cyclist, while the paths are all kerbed, kept free from weeds, and covered with a limy soil that makes them clean, hard, and comfortable to walk on. Robe is quite a small township; but there are many towns of much larger size where less care is taken with the roads and footpaths.

The third item to occupy the notice of the stranger will

be the ancient character of most of the buildings. Like many of the townships in the Mount Lofly Ranges and to the south of Adelaide, Robe was established when the State was young, and hence we see old-fashioned styles of architecture and buildings going to decay. The road into the township winds along till presently we are parallel with and quite close to the sea, so close that a child could easily toss a stone from the road over the sea wall. At this point, between the road and the sea, is an esplanade, separated from the track by a post and wire fence, along which a boxthorn hedge grows. The esplanade has been planted with buffalo grass, and tamarisks, pines, and other varieties of trees are also to be seen.

The esplanade is flanked on the seaward side by a stone wall, which was intended as a protection from the force of the waves. But strong as this wall was, it was not sufficiently so to resist the wear and tear of the ocean, and enormous gaps have been made in it, while the mighty sea is slowly but surely forcing its way inwards, and wearing down the esplanade, till miniature bays and inlets are formed. Standing on this esplanade you command the whole view of the semi-circular Guichen Bay.

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"KODAK" IN ADELAIDE

[Taken from Faulding's Christmas Journal, 20 October, 1912]

Marked progress has been made of late in the South Australian business of Kodak (Australasia, Ltd). The firm has recently found it necessary to completely alter and re-fit their premises at 37 Rundle Street, placing them in the forefront of Adelaide business establishments so far as appearance and convenience are concerned. Wunderlich art metal ceilings have been installed throughout, and the walls are finished in an artistic shade of grey, setting off to the greatest advantage the magnificent display of enlargements made on the famous pearl bromide papers, the originals of which were taken on Australian-made Austral standard dry plates. Viewed from the entrance to the store, the first thing to catch the eye is a handsome all-glass showcase, mounted on a receding base of American oak, in which are displayed a high-grade selection of cameras manufactured by the firm, including Graflex, Premo, and special models of Kodak cameras. Immediately on passing this case a magnificent array of fittings, all mirror-lined and filled with all manner of photographic novelties and accessories are represented for inspection. One notable feature of the store is the longest glass counter case in the city, having an unbroken line of 30 ft. in length. The makers certainly deserve commendation for this beautiful piece of work. A great many difficulties had to be overcome in the transportation and placing in position of such a weighty thing, but, by means of a specially constructed lorry and a

number of men, it was accomplished satisfactorily. Continuing on to this is a handsome oak counter of beautifully inlaid wood of selected grain. The walls are fitted with the very latest design of showcases, all being mirror-lined and showing the least possible amount of wood. The idea throughout has been to combine convenience with beauty of appearance. Everything is within easy reach of the assistants, and no case is above seven feet from the floor. All fittings are nickelled, and only the best American oak has been used. Altogether the contractors and designers are to be congratulated on the chaste and elegant results secured. The entrance to the wholesale and country department is made by means of an ornamental stairway, and it is surprising what an immense stock is here revealed to the uninitiated. The offices of the company are situated on this floor, where a busy band of helpers are at work despatching kodaks, films, and photographic materials to all parts of the State. Professional photographers are also seen viewing apparatus of various kinds peculiar to the craft, and in this department the firm are showing hundreds of varieties of mounts. Anyone interested in the art, either in a professional or amateur way, can be assured of a hearty welcome from the manager and his staff of assistants.

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NEW PUBLICATIONS

D. Percival & C. Westney

Fence People: Yarns from the Dingo Fence

(Hutchinson, Australia, Milsons Point, 1989)

Over 60 of this book's 175 pages are devoted to South Australia, and feature two-page cameos of people and places along the fence. The characters and characteristics of the outback are well captured, usually in the interviewees' own words.

The following general information about the fence is taken from the introduction to the South Australian section.

"The Dog Fence Act of 1946 provided for the establishment of a continuous dingo-proof buffer fence, running from the New South Wales border to the west coast. It was to be made up of pre-existing private fences, and administered by a Board.

The South Australian Dog Fence works. 'Our dogs inside would be minimal - a very, very small number,' says Bryan Lock, Manager of Dog Fence Administration. In spite of some

very old sections of fence (a century old in places), and some extremely difficult country, and notwithstanding the carping of New South Welshmen, this fence is doing its job, and doing it cheaply.

With an annual budget of \$272,000, Bryan says, 'There's no way you could say we weren't running on a shoestring. We're extremely cost-effective, when compared with other States.'

Why does it work? Because South Australian wool growers believe in it. In the words of the Vertebrate Pest Control Authority, 'The future of the wool industry in South Australia is dependent upon the area enclosed by the Dog Fence being maintained in a dingo free condition, and the fence being maintained to an adequate standard.'

The situation is clear-cut: there are no sheepmen outside the fence, and no cattlemen inside. Since the sheepmen agree that their livelihood depends on the fence, there is no room for the sheep versus cattle squabbles which plague the Queensland Barrier Fence. South Australian pastoralists look after their own fence; the same system in Queensland was a spectacular failure.

Twenty-nine landholders (including three local boards in the Far West) maintain the 2225 kilometres of Dog Fence, and they like it that way. 'It's our fence, and it's our responsibility,' says James Morgan, manager of Mulyungarie. 'It's up to the graziers to support their own problems, not for the government to be paying out for it. That's the way we feel.'

Hughie Lightburn, ex-manager of Commonwealth Hill and Lake Everard, recalls, 'It was the most important part of the job on the station. We always prided ourselves that this piece of dog fence was the best dog fence in Australia. It's the most important fence in this country, and it's only as strong as its weakest link.'

Fence owners contribute around forty percent of the cost of maintenance, and all the labour. Levies collected from 763 wool growers in the north of the State are matched on a dollar-for-dollar basis by the Government, and cattlemen outside the fence make a small contribution in return for a perfect boundary fence.

About ten percent of this revenue meets administrative costs; the reason why South Australia is able to maintain a viable fence on such a low budget is that overheads are minimal. Only two Government employees are involved, and their salaries are paid by the Department of Lands.

Fence owners are subsidized for each kilometre of fence, but they accept that the real costs are very much higher. 'You can't really put a price on keeping dogs out,' says

James Morgan."

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The Hazel de Berg Recordings

(National Library of Australia, Canberra 1989) 151pp.

This excellent listing is arranged alphabetically by interviewee and includes brief synopses of contents. The following is from the introduction by Tim Bowden of the ABC.

'In his survey of the National Library's oral history holdings in 1974, Graeme Powell summarised the de Berg collection:

One can state definitely that almost all of Mrs de Berg's interviewees have been people of some importance, most of them are exceptionally articulate, some of them are very outspoken, and hardly any of them have written autobiographies.

Consequently, many of the tapes contain information that has not been recorded in any other form, and that will be of interest to scholars working in several fields, particularly cultural history.

Her work continued for another invaluable ten years. The variety and range of interviewees is extraordinary. In her 27 years of interviewing she recorded 1290 men and women including Dame Mary Gilmore, Sir Robert Helpmann, Dorothy Green, Professor Manning Clark, Faith Bandler, Peter Sculthorpe, Eleanor Dark, Lord Florey, Grace Cossington Smith, Sir John Ferguson, May Gibbs, Ian Fairweather, Christina Stead, Cardinal Gilroy, Kath Walker (i.e. Oodgeroo Noonuccal), Arthur and Robin Boyd.

There is a tendency in official correspondence to refer to Hazel de Berg as 'a gifted amateur' and one senses a slight element of academic condescension in the phrase. Her achievement is her riposte: it lies in the voices of all those notable Australians now permanently held in the National Library of Australia's oral history collection. It remains a truism of oral history that people are extremely difficult to interview after they are dead. Thanks to Hazel de Berg's unswerving, dedicated work we now have a massive irreplaceable and priceless audio archive. This collection and published catalogue are enduring tributes to that most admirably gifted of amateurs, Hazel de Berg.'

Copies of transcripts and recordings are available for a fee, subject to individual access provisions.

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AUSTRALIAN FOLKLIFE - SOME RECENT PUBLICATIONS

- R Edwards 200 Years of Australian Folk Song Index 1788-1988
 (Rams Skull Press, Kuranda 1988)
- J Factor Captain Cook Chased A Chook Children's Folklore in
 Australia (Penguin, Ringwood 1988)
- W Fahey The Balls of Bob Menzies Australian Political Songs
 1900-1980 (Angus & Robertson, North Ryde 1989)
- T Radic Songs of Australian Working Life (Greenhouse
 Publications, Elwood 1989)
- G Seal The Hidden Culture Folklore in Australian Society
 (OUP, Melbourne 1989)
- G Seal &
R Edwards Australian Folk Resources A Select Guide and
 Preliminary Bibliography (Australian Folk Trust,
 Canberra 1988) \$7.00

The Australian Folk Trust (PO Box 156, Civic Square ACT 2608) also produces a monthly newsletter covering current developments for \$10 pa, while since 1987 there has been an annual journal Australian Folklore emanating from the Centre for Australian Studies, Curtin University of Technology, GPO Box U1987 Perth 6001. (\$20/issue, back copies available)

Brian Samuels