

# MITCHAM MEMORIES

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NUMBER 2   SOCIETY INCORPORATED   2018

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SA Art Gallery 1926

## **Vol. 11 No. 2 August 2018**

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MHS

# Editorial

The MHS Newsletter is a wonderful collaboration effort. We strive to give you something well worth reading in every edition, such as news on upcoming events, recaptures of past events (with photos!), updates from the Brownhill Creek Association and historical articles about South Australia.

I personally would like to thank Helen Robinson for her work in producing the newsletter. The success of Mitcham Memories is due to her outstanding organisational skill and clear instruction to MHS members for their newsletter roles. Thank you, Helen.

# Disclaimer

Views and opinions expressed in articles in the Newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mitcham Historical Society Inc. While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of articles printed, responsibility is not accepted for any errors they may contain that are out of the Society's control.

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# Acknowledgement

The MHS gratefully acknowledges and thanks Nicolle Flint MP and her office for their assistance in the printing of our newsletters.

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# Calendar

## Program for 2018

### **AUGUST | Speaker Presentation - Associate Professor Ron Danvers**

Date: Wednesday 22nd August

Time: 7pm for 7.30pm start

Venue: Drawing Room, Scotch College

For details see page 14

### **SEPTEMBER | Annual General Meeting & Speaker Dr John Newton**

Date: Tuesday 25th September

Time: 7pm

Venue: Drawing Room, Scotch College

For details see page 10

### **NOVEMBER | Strathalbyn - Langhorne Creek Bus Tour**

Date: Sunday 4th November

Time: 9am

Venue: Mitcham Council Car Park (bus)

For details see page 21

### **DECEMBER | End of Year Function**

Date: Tuesday 11th December

Time: 4pm - 6pm

Venue: The Edinburgh Hotel, Mitcham

For details see page 23

# ● ● ● Chairperson's Message ● ● ●

Welcome to you all,

Our bus trip to Gawler and Riverton included further insights into the area thanks to the memories of our member Philip Atkinson. At the end of the day we experienced a delightful church visit, which was organized by another of our members, Ian Strout. Peter Basedow's precision driving always adds to the enjoyment of the day out.

Dave Cosh organized our local friendly councilor, Andrew Tilley, to conduct walks in Brownhill Creek and provide history of the region. Good attendances reflected the ongoing interest from the broader community in this historic reserve. We are forever grateful to the ongoing efforts of The Brownhill Creek Association, insuring that the area gets the heritage respect that it deserves.

A good time was had by all at the Mid-Year Function. Thanks to Dave Cosh and Peter Basedow for the food and wine; Sandy Matz and Trish Cosh for a friendly welcome; and Philip Atkinson for guidance in the car park. Bruce Hancock, with the help of Louise and Julian, enthralled us with jazz.

We are looking forward to our guest speaker Ron Danvers in August, the AGM in September, a Strathalbyn-Langhorne Creek bus tour in November and our Christmas get together in December.



At the AGM it will be time to thank and say goodbye to Treasurer Brian Angas, Former Chairperson Julie Hogan and committee member Helen Robinson; all of whom have indicated that their time serving on the committee has come to an end. Brian has provided us with timely and accurate financial guidance for over 10 years. Julie's contribution as Chairperson for 10 years is well recognized. Helen's role managing the production of "Mitcham Memories" and scrutinizing the clear definition of committee members job functions is much valued.

We have received nominations from existing members Richard Schneider, Ian Strout and Geoff Sauer. All the nominations have been accepted, subject to endorsement at the AGM. Richard has a background in banking and financial planning and has been nominated for the position of Treasurer. Ian has been nominated in anticipation that his business background will be of assistance in events management. Geoff has a background in alumni relations and secretarial work, and has been nominated for a position on the main committee in anticipation that he will assist in secretarial duties, the production of the newsletter and expanding our membership base.

Thank you for your participation as MHS members. Please ring me if you wish to discuss a matter or float an idea.

John Wood  
0402781601

# Newsletter Notices

## Website Update from Dave Cosh

Society member and Flinders University PhD student Peter Reeve has reviewed and updated the Society's website. Superfluous and outdated information has been removed and users can quickly navigate through the site to find:

- Background history of the Society.
- Contact information for all committee members, banking and membership information.
- The current year's events program, and very importantly, any updated information on forthcoming events.
- Both the current and all archived newsletters.

Newsletters are posted unless requests for email only are received by the secretary. You can of course open any newsletter from the website and download to your device(s).

Online bookings and payments cannot be made via the website but clear instructions on how to book and pay for all events are provided both in the Society's annual programs, newsletters and by email from time to time.

Sincere thanks to Peter for a job well done. Updating the site will always be a work in progress and feedback is encouraged and always welcome.

**Visit [www.mitchamhistoricalsociety.org.au](http://www.mitchamhistoricalsociety.org.au) now.**



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## Historical Walks for the Lung Foundation

Local history connoisseur Richard Irving has organised historical walks, all in the Mitcham area, to help raise funds for research into lung cancer.

So please put the following walks into your diaries:

- Sunday 16th SEPTEMBER: Mitcham Village  
Meet 1.30pm at the Rose Garden, Albert Street (opposite the Edinburgh Hotel Bottle Shop)
- Sunday 30th SEPTEMBER: Brownhill Creek and Ellison's Gully  
Meet 1.30pm at the Manure Pits, Brownhill Creek Road

Please bring a donation, no matter how small, on the day or simply visit this website: <https://donate.grassrootz.com/lungfoundation/shine-a-light-on-lung-cancer/local-history-walks-in-mitcham>

For information please contact Richard at [irvineth@ozemail.com.au](mailto:irvineth@ozemail.com.au) or 08 8272 9707.



**THE MITCHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY INCORPORATED**

**ANNUAL  
GENERAL  
MEETING**

*"The History of Scotch College"*

We welcome Dr John Newton, patron of MHS and  
Principal of Scotch College, to be our guest speaker  
for this year.

**When: Tuesday 25th September**

**Time: 7pm for 7.30pm start**

**Venue: Drawing Room, Scotch College**

**No charge but bookings required**

**RSVP: Sandy Matz**

**0414 747 657 / [smhydepark@gmail.com](mailto:smhydepark@gmail.com)**

**Light supper provided**

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# Recaptured: Mid-Year Function



Report by Dave Cosh



A capacity turn-out attended the Society's mid-year function at Scotch College on Wednesday June 27th. The evening featured French food, wine music and song provided by Bruce Hancock, Julian Ferraretto and Louise Blackwell.

A number of members missed out by not booking early so it is not an exaggeration when we advise "numbers limited – get in quick".

Chef Brenton at Stamps restaurant cooked the cassoulet which met with approval.

The Society is indebted to Scotch College who provided great support on the night and managed the bookings which were made through trybooking.com. Planning for mid-year 2019 is underway, with a proposed date of Wednesday June 19th at Scotch College – a venue that is always popular with members.



## Time for an Update

The installation of the long awaited pedestrian bridge in Brownhill Creek Recreation Park is a good example of how difficult it is to incorporate 'heritage' elements into new infrastructure. With hindsight, much greater community consultation, discussion and flexibility was required! There is no doubt that the community is grateful to finally have a pedestrian bridge and the safety of walkers who use the shared use trail is much improved as a result.

However, the community did ask for a rustic wooden, post-and-rail pedestrian bridge with 1.2m high side rails and received a rather more modern looking recycled plastic bridge with vertical slat side rails measuring 1.5m in height! Apparently under Australian Design Standards all new pedestrian bridges must have vertical slat side rails to prevent a potential climbing and fall hazard. The Department of Environment and Water (DEW) wanted recycled plastic for ease of maintenance.

What the community is most upset about is that the side rails are out of proportion for pedestrians and onlookers, restrict or prevent viewing from the bridge and create a major line-of-sight danger on the road bridge for car drivers and road cyclists. Seemingly, the only sensible solution is to reduce the height of the side rails to 1.2m and restrict the use of the bridge to pedestrians or cyclists who are willing to push their bikes across.

Aesthetically, I think the pedestrian bridge looks good from upstream (see photograph A), but beauty is in the eye of the beholder. From the road and shared-use trail the bridge is ridiculously out of proportion (see photograph B). What do you think? Preserving the heritage that we have is seemingly an easier option than trying to recreate it!



PHOTOGRAPH A





PHOTOGRAPH B

On Thursday 28th June 2018, the Wirraparinga Loop Trail Agreement was officially signed. DEW should be congratulated for their role in facilitating the process and Carrick Hill for hosting many meetings and the event. A Wirraparinga Loop Trail Committee, representing all landowners and stakeholders, will now be formed to oversee the implementation of the trail and all aspects associated with it.



A uniform approach will be taken to the overall standard of the trail, trail maintenance, directional signage, interpretive heritage signage, heritage, recreation, tourism and environmental outcomes. They will be a wonderful asset for our community and hopefully a catalyst for establishing a high profile heritage/tourism precinct in our area.

The BCA Education and Revegetation Committee Annual Schools' Environmental Day is being held again, with a planting day in Brownhill Creek Recreation Park. There will be 185 students from four local schools, supported by 3 community groups, who will be planting 2,500 indigenous native plants upstream from The White Bridge. Thank you so much to Trish and Dave Cosh (MHS Deputy Chairperson), the Rotary Club of Brownhill Creek and the Suzanne Elliot Charitable Trust for their generous donations. Thank you to DEW for their expertise and support. Sam Duluk MP is the guest speaker and we are fortunate that Duluk and The Hon. David Speirs MP (Minister for Environment and Water) have enthusiastically backed a \$100,000 five-year program to support native revegetation and habitat restoration in Brownhill Creek Recreation Park. Congratulations to the BCA Ed. & Reveg. Committee for organizing this event.

**Ron Bellchambers**

BCA Community Liaison Officer | [brownhillcreek@gmail.com](mailto:brownhillcreek@gmail.com)

THE MITCHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# August Speaker Presentation

SPEAKER: ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR RON DANVERS

Professor Danvers is an Adelaide architect having worked in Australia, Indonesia and Malaysia. He restored the Barr Smith Theatre at Scotch College - his first major historic interior. This work led to the restoration of the Mortlock Library, the GPO Postal Hall and many other historic interiors including the Ballroom and Dining Room at Adelaide's Government House.

**“BENTHAMITE UTILITARIANS: IMAGINING AND  
REIMAGINING ADELAIDE AND PARIS IN THE 19TH  
AND 20TH CENTURIES”**

When: Wednesday 22nd August

Time: 7pm for 7.30pm start

Where: Drawing Room, Scotch College

Cost: \$5 (light supper provided)

Bookings: Dave Cosh

0417 867 277 / [dave.cosh@colindale.com.au](mailto:dave.cosh@colindale.com.au)

# Historical Research Article

## Ancient Era: Mitcham had a Beach

Richard Irving

This is a very different part of the City of Mitcham's History. In fact, it pre-dates the human history of our beautiful city. "Mitcham", or what would become Mitcham, did indeed have a beach, but we have missed out on it by some 750 million years.

Within the boundaries of the McElligott's Reserve, there is a Geological Trail. This trail shows many interesting features, but there are three which show the existence of a beach all those years ago.



This photograph shows ripple marks, made by wave action on a flat beach.



This photograph shows well-rounded pebbles, indicative of wave action from a beach also.

# Recaptured: April Bus Tour

## Report by Peter Basedow

April was a very pleasant time of the year to visit the Mid-North region. This trip was an extension of our previous tour of this general area.

As usual with a full bus load, we commenced our day with morning tea; this time at the historic restored Gawler Railway Station (which is still the regular railway connection to Adelaide). The cafe at the station provided tea/coffee and luscious homemade scones and cream. A significant feature of the station is the old worldly charming architecture. On permanent display is the fully restored F245 steam train which was fully built in Gawler by local tradesmen.

Philip Atkinson shared his memories of his early years in the region as we toured through different parts of Gawler. Gawler is South Australia's oldest regional town having been founded in 1836 as the hub of the mid North.

Arriving at Riverton (about 90 mins from Adelaide), we were hosted by the local volunteers at the Scholz Park Museum which is a unique example of early life in the area around the Gilbert River. Located in the Main Street it was the home and business premises of the Scholz family for over a century. The Museum encompasses the cottage, wheelwright and black smith shop.

Angus Scholz first settled in Riverton in 1865 and built the four-room stone cottage in 1872. The business employed many locals as wheelwrights, blacksmiths, coach builders and machinists. All of whom manufactured many of the reapers, drays, wagons, ploughs and farm machinery. It was operational until 1966 and was bequeathed to the local community on the understanding that it was to remain intact. We were fortunate to tour the operational workshops and watched local volunteers show examples of black smithing over hot embers.

Our final visit for the day was the little-known Hamilton Anglican Church which housed an amazing collection of silverware.



# Gawler & Riverton

Photos by Dave Cosh

SCHOLZ PARK



JOHN & TRISH



A GREAT BARBECUE LUNCH WAS  
PROVIDED BY LOCAL VOLUNTEERS  
WITH GOOD COUNTRY FARE.



SANDY WITH MALCOLM KEAST -  
RIVERTON LOCAL

# Historical Research Article

## Sir Thomas Elder's Bequest to the Adelaide Art Gallery

Julie Hogan

The Art Gallery of South Australia, founded in 1881, contains a treasure house of Australia's "finest, largest and oldest public art collections"(1). For over a hundred years, generous private patronage has amounted to almost ninety percent of Adelaide's collection, comprising of "gifts of works of art or purchases made with private money"(2).



SIR THOMAS ELDER

However, initially in the early 1890s, the Gallery was housed in the Jubilee Exhibition building with overcrowded displays in small rooms. The conditions were so inadequate that the major galleries of Victoria and New South Wales "threatened to withdraw" from loan arrangements(3). Pastoralist and businessman, Sir Thomas Elder came to the rescue of the gallery, for the purchase of pictures only, he donated in 1897 the sum of £25,000 - approximately \$12 million today(4). This was the first and largest bequest to any Australian museum at the time, until 1905 when the National Gallery of Victoria received proceeds from the Alfred Felton Bequest, with more than 15,000 pieces of their art collection worth some \$2 billion in 2012(5).

However, it was Elder's bequest that finally persuaded the SA Government to build a permanent home for the gallery's collection. Initially the collection was housed in the Mortlock Library until the first stage of the proposed four-stage building was erected, being the Elder Wing(6). The grandeur and Victorian architectural style of the Elder Wing was attributed to the Gallery's curator, Harry P. Gill. Gill designed the glass skylights to follow the curve of the ceiling, the red-brown colours for the walls for the first three galleries but he had to fight with the Public Works Superintendent, C.E. Owen Smyth over the "latter's cost-cutting"(7). Builders N.W. Trudgen & Co, spent £21,600, using SA Auburn stone (a type of thick slate) for the external rusticated basement cladding and golden-coloured Murray Bridge limestone for the main outer walls(8).

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## Sir Thomas Elder's Bequest to the Adelaide Art Gallery

Using Elder's bequest, Gill purchased major contemporary European artworks that were more interesting than the Gallery's previous conservative acquisitions of mainly British art, which were considered dull and remained in storage (9). Gill's European purchases included French & Belgian Impressionist painters, Henri Fantin-Latour & Émile Claus, Swiss-Italian Symbolist painter Giovanni Segantini and controversial British illustrator, Aubrey Beardsley(10). Gill's Australian purchases included contemporary art with Tom Robert's Australian icon *A Break Away!* (1891), Frederick McCubbin's *A ti-tree glade* (1897), Sydney Long's *The Valley* (1898), and Hans Heyson's *Mystic Morn* (1904) and later work from Arthur Streeton, Margaret Preston and Bessie Davidson(11). Gill's astute purchases influenced many interstate Australian artists to send work to Adelaide's exhibitions, allowing for Adelaide to boast having the most balanced collection of Australian contemporary art rather than parochially limiting its collection like other colonial galleries at the time(12).



ART GALLERY CIRCA 1910

By the 1990s, inflation caught up with the Elder bequest and the remaining funds were used to purchase two modernist artworks by Roland Wakelin and Jeffrey Smart(13). It would have been interesting what the conservative Elder might have thought of these two purchases. Perhaps Elder may have been also “amused” by the Gallery's extensive collection of Morris & Co. furnishings, which is the finest outside of Britain(14). Elder's sister Joanna Barr Smith and her children were among “Morris & Co's most ardent customers”(15).



# Historical Research Article

## Sir Thomas Elder's Bequest to the Adelaide Art Gallery Julie Hogan

Overall, I believe Elder would have been impressed on the high quality of paintings purchased from his bequest. Through his love of his Flinders Ranges properties, he would have especially admired Tom Robert's outback landscape *A break away!* of which at the time was not popular with critics. Through Elder's bequest to the Art Gallery of South Australia, South Australians and visitors to our state have enjoyed an important legacy available for future generations.

ELDER WING, ART  
GALLERY OF SOUTH  
AUSTRALIA



### References:

(1) Ron Radford et al, Treasures from the Art Gallery of South Australia, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, 1998, p. 4., (2) Ibid., (3) Ron Radford & Art Gallery of South Australia, The Story of the Elder Bequest: Art Gallery of South Australia, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, 2000, p.8., (4) Ibid., (5) Radford et.al, Treasures from the Art Gallery of South Australia, p. 6., (6) Radford, The Story of the Elder Bequest, p. 10., (7) Ibid., (8) Ibid., (9) Ibid p. 14., (10) Ibid., (11) Radford et.al, Treasures from the Art Gallery of South Australia, p. 6., (13) Radford, The Story of the Elder Bequest, p. 14., (12) Ibid p. 18., (14) Ibid p. 19., (15) Ibid.



# **MHS BUS TOUR**

## *Strathalbyn - Langhorne Creek Bus Tour*

**When: Sunday 4th November**

**Time: 9am departure**

**Meet: Mitcham Council Carpark**

**Cost: \$85 MHS members or \$95 non-members**

**RSVP: Dave Cosh**

**0417 867 277 / [dave.cosh@colindale.com.au](mailto:dave.cosh@colindale.com.au)**

**or Peter Basedow**

**0417 809 227 / [peter@basedows.com.au](mailto:peter@basedows.com.au)**

**Limited seats! Book early!**

*Come and enjoy!*



# Recaptured: Ellison's Gully

## Report by Dave & Trish Cosh

On behalf of the Society, fifth generation resident of Brownhill Creek and Mitcham City Councillor Andrew Tilley conducted two walks alongside Ellison's Creek starting at the manure pits on Brownhill Creek road and going as far as the Mitcham water works several kilometres into Ellison's Gully.

The walks were offered to the community in conjunction with the 2018 SA History Festival which ran from 28 April to 31 May. Seventy people in total attended the two walks, and the \$150 raised as donations has been given to the Brownhill Creek Association. Not many MHS members attended, suggesting that most with an interest in the area have walked the gully with Andrew before. Those who did attend learned of the walks via the Mitcham Community News and/or the SA History Festival Brochure. The positive feedback received from the walkers was gratifying.

The Society is indebted to Andrew for his willing support which is gratefully acknowledged. His knowledge of the area is unsurpassed and his family history is most interesting.

The committee is now planning the 2019 program and suggestions from members for walks that enhance awareness of Mitcham and its history will be most welcome.



MAY 13TH 2018



# *End of Year Function*

Join fellow  
members for  
Christmas drinks at  
**The Ed**

**When:** Tuesday December 11th

**Where:** Edinburgh Hotel, 7 High St,  
Mitcham

**Time:** 4pm

**RSVP:** Dave Cosh 0417 867 277 /  
dave.cosh@colindale.com.au

OR

Sandy Matz 0414 747 657 /  
smhydepark@gmail.com

Light snacks will be provided.  
Purchase own drinks.

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## Corporate Memberships

It is with pleasure that we present here, the names of  
our Corporate Members,

Namely:



This Fine Day Cafe

