



# NEWSLETTER

INCORPORATING *MITCHAM MEMORIES*

ISSN 2652-6018 (online)

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**No. 4/2021**

## **Publication Notes**

### **Editorial**

The *MHS Newsletter* is a collaborative effort and its purpose is the reporting of activities, publicising the Society's calendar of events, providing stories of historical interest about people, places and events related to the City of Mitcham, and other matters of current interest including updates from the Brownhill Creek Association.

Letters to the Editor are welcome and can be sent by [email](#).

The *Newsletter* is managed and edited by Geoff Sauer.

### **Disclaimer**

Views and opinions expressed in the Newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mitcham Historical Society Inc. Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the content, but responsibility is not accepted for any errors or omissions that are beyond the Society's control.

### **Privacy**

In accordance with the requirements of its Constitution the Society maintains a Register of its members (name, address, telephone number, email address). The information contained in the Register is used only for interactions between the Society and its members. The information is not shared, sold or provided to any third party. Information provided to the Society by email is provided at the sender's risk and the Society will not be held responsible for any unintended use or disclosure.

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Suggestions for stories or events and activities are always welcome and can be emailed to [mitchamhistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:mitchamhistoricalsociety@gmail.com)

### Membership Fees 2022—2023

Membership Fees for 2022-2023 remain unchanged and a new category: Pension/Concession (Family): \$30 was approved. Pension/Concession rates apply only for holders of Commonwealth income tested cards: Age Pension, Commonwealth Seniors Health and Veteran's Gold Card and to full-time students at university, school or TAFE.

## CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

### **Chairperson's Annual Report 2020 - 2021 to the Annual General Meeting of the Mitcham Historical Society**

First, a sincere thank you for the support given to the MHS by our patron, Dr. John Newton, Principal of Scotch College and the College staff. Tentatively we began to plan for, and hold events, as the year progressed. Previously planned events were delayed and reintroduced. Thank you everyone for your understanding and patience.

The Annual General Meeting held on October 27<sup>th</sup> saw the election of the current office bearers and committee. We were treated to an interesting speech filled with recollections of Mitcham by lifelong resident Richard Harris.

We took the delayed bus trip to the Barossa on November 15<sup>th</sup>, and had our best ever year end celebration at The Ed.

A tour with of the Adelaide Town Hall in March with Glen Woodward was followed by a bus trip to Prospect Hill in April.

We participated in the May History Festival with walks in Ellison's Gully and the Brownhill Creek Recreation Park conducted, respectively, by Councillor Andrew Tilley, and MHS member Ron Bellchambers. Both Andrew and Ron have extensive knowledge of the history and other aspects of this area.

Also, as part of the History Festival and to celebrate the Centenary of Colonel Light Gardens, Joanna Wells organised a sold-out lecture by architectural historian Dr. Christine Garnaut:

"A Life in Planning: Charles Reade [1880-1933], Garden City  
Campaigner and Global Planner " *cont'd next page*

Thank you also to the City of Mitcham for supporting this event with a Mayoral Grant.

Our Mid-Year function in June was another sold out event with Thomas K Hardy tantalising the guests with a selection of wines, family stories and an auction of one of his magnums. Peter Basedow and Sandy Matz presented an extremely well catered for supper.

Thanks to Joanna Wells, Professor Warren Jones, Ron Bellchambers and the member for Waite, Sam Duluk MP, we have been able to add certainty to the future of the Waite Gatehouse, although it has become increasingly our realisation that as the North-South corridor is completed that many more heavy vehicles will be encouraged to use Cross Road with a consequential increase in noise, carcinogenic pollution, potential for serious vehicle accidents, and the loss of significant trees and heritage. The campaign to prevent this happening has begun, and with your support we can be successful.

As I complete my term as Chairperson, I reflect on how much I have enjoyed working with the committee on events that we enjoyed together as members. In conjunction with those named for organising events I would like to thank Geoff Sauer for his role as Deputy Chairperson, Secretary and Newsletter Editor, Sandy Matz as Treasurer, Ian Strout as Events Coordinator, Joanna Wells as Membership Officer and Peter Reeve for keeping us IT aware.

We have also added meaning and purpose to our organisation by being involved in the Gatehouse Campaign and supporting endeavours relating to projects in the Brownhill Creek Recreation Park.

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### **Chairperson's Message (continued):**

We have also added meaning and purpose to our organisation by being involved in the Gatehouse Campaign and supporting endeavours relating to projects in the Brownhill Creek Recreation Park. I hope to be involved in future activities in whatever way I can.

John Wood  
(Chairperson MHS 2018—2021)

### **Editor's note:**

At the AGM John Wood was nominated and elected as a committee member. The meeting warmly endorsed a vote of thanks to John proposed by the incoming Chairperson (Geoff Sauer). The meeting noted that John had served as Chairperson for four years, and that he has been a member of the MHS Committee since its first meeting on 17 October 2007.

### **AGM postscript**

A question was asked about how the MHS Committee communicates with the Mitcham Council with respect to matters of heritage. This has to do with maintenance of signage particularly in the Mitcham Village. This will be followed up in the near future.

Sam Duluk MP said that the plains part of the electorate of Waite (Kingswood, Netherby, Mitcham) had been letterboxed with a petition to the state parliament about not making Cross Road a heavy vehicle transport route.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2021

The Annual General Meeting of the Mitcham Historical Society Inc was held on Tuesday, 28 September 2021 in the Drawing Room at Scotch College, Torrens Park. 32 members attended .Apart from dealing with the usual items of general business, the Chairperson, John Wood, presented *Premier's Certificates of Recognition for outstanding volunteer service* to MHS Life Member Glen Woodward and to MHS committee member, Joanna Wells. Each presentation was acknowledged by applause.

Nominations had been received for the committee as follows: Chairperson: Geoff Sauer, Deputy Chairperson: Joanna Wells; Treasurer: Sandy Matz; Secretary: Peter Reeve; and Committee Members: Peter Basedow, Ian Strout, John Wood. All nominees were declared elected to the positions for which they had been nominated, and the members present meeting expressed their support by acclamation. Robert Stone was warmly thanked for his service as Honorary Auditor for 2020 – 2021 and reappointed as Honorary Auditor for the Financial Year 2021 - 2022.

At the conclusion of the formal business of the meeting, Emeritus Professor Warren Jones AO, Convenor of the Protect our Heritage Alliance spoke. His subject was “Campaigns” with reference to in particular, deficiencies in “Transforming Health”, the new RAH, the proposed new Women’s and Children’s Hospital, also the out-of-date and unusable EPAS health record system, the Save the Waite Gatehouse campaign, and the proposal to abolish the Martindale Hall Trust and to make Ayers House effectively offices for a government statutory authority. Light refreshments followed.

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**Mitcham Historical Society Inc  
Officer Bearers 2021—2022**

**Patron:** Dr John Newton, Principal, Scotch College

**Chairperson:** Geoff Sauer M 0412 125 010

**Deputy Chairperson:** Joanna Wells M 0403 335 862

**Treasurer:** Sandra Matz M 0414 747 657

**Secretary (& Webmaster):** Peter Reeve

**Committee Members**

John Wood M 0402 781 601

Peter Basedow: M 0417 809 227

Ian Strout: (Events/Membership) M 0400 027 117

**Contact Details**

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Web: [www.mitchamhistoricalsociety.org.au](http://www.mitchamhistoricalsociety.org.au)

ABN: 52338135115

**MHS Committee meetings 2021**

Monday 25 October,  
Monday 29 November.

If there is an issue you would like to see the Committee consider, please contact the Secretary. The agenda for meetings is finalised on the Friday immediately prior to a meeting.

## **MHS Events Calendar 2021**

- **November 2021 Bus Trip**

The November bus trip to the Mount Lofty region has been fully subscribed. For those who have booked please guarantee your seat(s) by paying for same at the earliest opportunity.

- **Tuesday 7 December**

Christmas Function at The Ed

Closer to the event members will receive an invitation

**Bookings:** Ian Strout (Event Coordinator) M 0400 027 117

## **MHS Events for 2022**

The Committee is developing an exciting and interesting programme for next year. The details will be in the first edition of the Newsletter in January 2022. Members are welcome to offer suggestions as to events, activities and functions they would like to see the Society host.

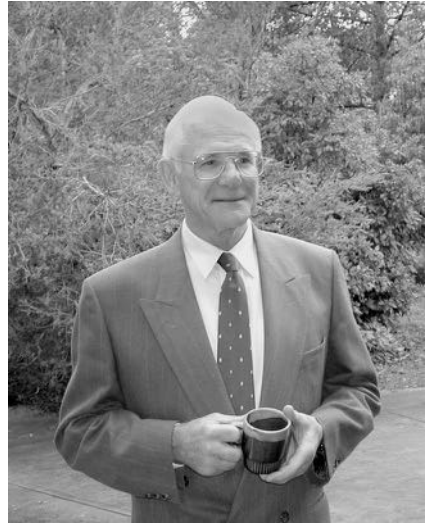
## **Remittances to the Society**

When making payments to the Society by EFT or by cheque please ensure that you indicate what the payment is for e.g. membership, bus trip, etc. This avoids any confusion or misunderstanding as to the purpose of the funds when they are received.

### **Vale MHS member: John M. Dibben OAM**

John Milne Dibben, the eldest of five children, was born on a farm at Pinnaroo in 1929. Following the family's move to the city, John completed his primary school years at Westbourne Park before going on to matriculate at Unley High in 1945.

He had a long association with the Anglican Parish of Mitcham beginning in 1942 when the family moved from Colonel Light Gardens to North Parade, Kingswood not far from the now former Parish Hall on Princes Road. He was active in the Youth Fellowship, taught in the Sunday School, was a member of the St Michael's Dramatic Society and captained the parish cricket team. A keen sportsman, John also played football and golf.



In October 1946, as part of St Michael's Patronal Festival, a grand Debutant Ball was held with 19 girls from the Parish making their debut. One was a young Ruth Smith who lived in Fife Avenue Torrens Park and was partnered by John Dibben. In 1952, John and Ruth were married by the Reverend Pearman (who John had known from Pinnaroo) in St Michael's, and later established their own home in Ashbourne Avenue, Kingswood.

Following school John studied accountancy and became a Chartered Accountant and Auditor. For over twenty years he was Company Secretary and Finance Director for Lloyds Holdings Ltd, and following his retirement in 1978, he established his own business consulting practice and became a board member for

John's flair for figures, innovative thinking and wise counsel benefitted not only the Parish of Mitcham but also the whole Anglican Diocese of Adelaide. He served as a member of many Diocesan bodies including St Peter's Cathedral Council, as Bursar of St Andrew's School at Walkerville, and was involved in the establishment of the Anglican Development Fund (now Anglican Funds) which he regarded as one of his chief accomplishments.

In 1958 John and Ruth's only child, Carol, was born. Sadly, she had a rare muscular disability which confined her to a life in a wheelchair. In the early 1980s the family moved to Mead Street, Belair, where Carol lived independently in her own flat. She was on the point of buying her own unit when she died suddenly in April 1985. Later that year John and Ruth (with help from several parishioners) paid for new carpet to be installed in St Michael's in her memory. Carol was the first physically disabled person in South Australia to be awarded the Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award posthumously. Her motto was "*Disability is a state of mind*". John became an active member of the Crippled Children's Association (now Novita Children's Services Inc.) serving on the Somerton School Management Committee and as a Board Member. He established and managed the founding of the FOKUS Society providing accommodation and training of disabled young people. Through John and Ruth's generosity 'The Carol Dibben Encouragement Award' has been donated annually since 1985 for a senior student who has worked diligently to achieve their personal goals. John Dibben was awarded the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) in January 2009 *For service to the community of Adelaide through a range of church, social welfare and disability organisations.*

The above is a slightly edited version of the obituary by MHS Life Member Pamela Oborn for the St Michael's Parish Herald. *John Dibben was a member of the Mitcham Historical Society from its inception in 2007 and Honorary Auditor from then until 2018.*

## URRBRAE HOUSE TOUR

On Tuesday 12 October, a small group of members visited [Urrbrae House](#) on the Waite Campus of the University of Adelaide for a guided tour of the house. Guide (and MHS Life Member) Glen Woodward told the history of the house and gave details of Peter and Matilda Waite.



Dating from 1891 built by Nicholas Trudgen and designed by architects [CH Marryat](#) and [EJ Woods](#), the interior decorations were by Aldam Heaton, a contemporary of William Morris, and Heaton's only Australian commission. The company produced lavish interior designs for the White Star Line, including the Titanic. Glen Woodward led us through many of the rooms in the house and explained what each room's purpose was. Urrbrae House contains the first domestic refrigeration plant in Australia designed and installed by Wildridge and Sinclair of Sydney for Peter Waite in 1895. The plant consists of four rooms: plant room containing the compressor, electric motor and other equipment, freezer or chiller room and two cold rooms.

## **Urrbrae House Tour (cont'd)**

After the house tour we took the opportunity to walk through the rose garden which is in its spectacular spring glory. Lunch followed at MHS corporate member, The Ed.

## **Community Alliance S.A. Annual General Meeting**

On the evening of Wednesday 6 October 2021, Joanna Wells (MHS Deputy Chairperson), Ron Bellchambers and I as members of MHS attended the Community Alliance SA Annual General Meeting.

Mitcham Historical Society is a member of Community Alliance SA and we were interested in how to engage with those who share our concerns about the heavy freight vehicles using our suburbs as transport corridors.

We were particularly interested in the attendance of Professor Chris Daniels and he Minister for Environment, the Hon David Speirs to discuss Greening Adelaide and what this means for our urban environment.

The Minister was an apology, but Professor Daniels presented on how Green Adelaide would become a cooler, greener, wilder and climate resilient city, but no mention was made connecting these 4 objectives to the movement of heavy transport through our suburbs.

In a brief but private conversation with Professor Daniels we were able to raise our concerns but realise that there is a lot more work to do over the coming months to prevent Cross Road from being decimated in the attempt to connect the South Eastern Freeway to the yet to be completed North-South Corridor.

John Wood

## **MITCHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc**

The Mitcham Historical Society (MHS) was formed on 9 November 1977 as a sub-group within the Mitcham Village Art & Crafts Association Incorporated, with aims and objectives including to foster an awareness, preserve and maintain the character of Mitcham Village, to promote the study of local and South Australian history and to promote the collection, and preservation of material relating to local and state history.

The committee also formed the nucleus of a consultative group available to advise on local heritage matters. After years of lobbying, the Mitcham Urban Conservation Area of some 29 hectares was placed on the Register of the National Trust in Canberra.

The Mitcham Village Conservation Zone, an area originally established in 1840 still retains much of its original colonial architecture and is one of the oldest European settlements in the State.

(The District Council of Mitcham formed in 1853, and was the first local government body to have been proclaimed outside of the City of Adelaide).

The Society helped in the formation of the Council funded Mitcham Heritage Research Centre -this group of volunteers is committed to historical research and maintains, enlarges and promotes the Local History Collection begun by the Mitcham Historical Society.

The MHS became an independent organisation on 25 September 2007. The MHS is not only an interactive social group promoting the education of historical matters, but also involved in raising public awareness required to preserve the heritage in the local area.

It is only through the efforts of concerned individuals and groups such as the MHS, that the City of Mitcham's heritage can be protected for the benefit and appreciation of future generations.

## **MHS ACHIEVEMENTS**

In addition to the history of the MHS on the previous page, together with the Brownhill Creek Association, the MHS contributed financially and in other ways –

- to the successful No Dam in Brownhill Creek campaign,
- provided funding for the Shelter Tree project and the
- Tom Price Memorial in Brownhill Creek Reserve

and has also

- provided financial support for the restoration of the heritage listed stables now the Scout Hall in Maitland Street, Mitcham,
- together with the Heritage Alliance and the Member for Waite led the campaign to save the Waite Gatehouse,
- and is playing a major role in the campaign to stop Cross Road becoming a major heavy vehicle freight route,
- hosted a Lecture to mark the Centenary of Colonel Light Gardens in 2021.

For four and half decades and only with the assistance of dedicated volunteers and the support of the community, the MHS has achieved much in preserving Mitcham's history and ensuring that its heritage is an enduring legacy.

## **NEW MEMBERS**

New members of the MHS are always welcome – if you have friends or acquaintances who are interested in preserving and protecting the history and heritage of the City of Mitcham, please encourage them to contact Joanna Wells: 0403 335 862.

Membership fees: individual \$30, family \$40, concession/pensioner \$20 (individual) \$30 (family), corporate \$150.

## THE NEW MHS LOGO



Recently the Committee approved the design for a new logo for the Mitcham Historical Society and the logo was circulated to members.

The stylised keystone bridge you may recognise as the old bridge in Mitcham Reserve and is symbolic as a bridge from the plains to the hills. The water symbolises Brownhill Creek which flows from the hills to the sea, and the eucalyptus leaves and nuts represent the significant amount of ancient native vegetation across the Mitcham LGA.

There are actually two old keystone bridges in Mitcham Reserve and photos of the two are on the opposite page.

The larger keystone bridge built in 1875 by John Prince junior was washed away in 1875 and had to be completely rebuilt in 1876.

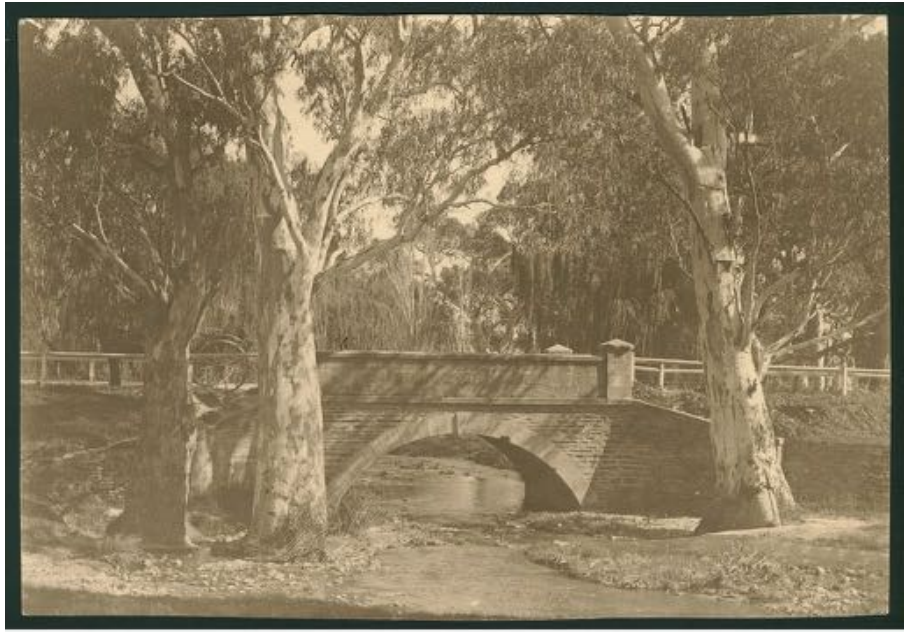
Logo design by [DesignLab](#) at Norwood



Photos: GS October 2021

## The new logo and the bridges (cont'd):

This photograph of keystone road bridge is in the State Library of South Australia database (B13518) and is dated approximately 1899.



## MITCHAM LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTION

The [Mitcham Local History Collection](#) collects, collates, catalogues and stores information concerning the City of Mitcham to archival standards. The collection consists of historical information about the City of Mitcham, and includes:

Publications, directories, electoral rolls, historical research files, local newspapers, maps, plans, local cemetery records and indexes, Old council minutes, correspondence, reports and indexes, 4000+ photographs including special collections, rate assessments, Council surveys building applications, local school and organisations' records and histories, family histories including letters and diaries, oral histories

The collection can be accessed at the Mitcham Heritage Research Centre, Mitcham Cultural Village, 103 - 105 Princes Road, Mitcham SA 5062, Telephone: 8372 8261, Tuesday—Thursday 9.30am to 4.00pm.

Tram ca 1911, corner Albert and High Streets, Mitcham.  
(SLSA B37906)



B 37906

## MITCHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC CORPORATE MEMBERS

MHS gratefully acknowledges the support of its Corporate Members

### [The Edinburgh Hotel and Cellars](#)

a famous beer garden, premium wine cellars, and innovative cuisine  
1 -7 High Street, Mitcham, H p. 8373 2700 C p. 8373 2753

### [Scotch College](#)

“ . . . a culture of wellbeing and educational attainment which is zealously focused, creating a stimulating and relevant learning experience in preparation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.” Carruth Road, Torrens Park  
p. 8274 4333

### [Nicolle Flint MP](#)

Federal Member for Boothby  
Shop 2/670 Anzac Highway, Glenelg East 5045 p. 8374 0511

### [Colindale Design](#)

Bespoke interior design specialising in end-to-end design resolutions for residential and small-scale commercial projects.  
p. 8271 1483 m. 0418 816 403,  
Studio: by appointment only: 21 Albert Street, Mitcham,

### [This Fine Day Café](#)

Cafe, gallery and gift shop, contemporary works by local artists; including original jewellery, children's gifts and retro ornaments. 13 Welbourne St, Mitcham m. 0413 293 542