



NEWSLETTER

Incorporating *Mitcham Memories*

Heritage Tram Pole restoration: see p.6



2/2024

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 from time to time 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.

Publication details

Formatted and typeset in Microsoft Publisher.
Typeface is digital, *sans serif* Calibri (12pt).

ISSN 2652-6018 (online)

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Contents

2	Publication Notes
3	Contents
4,5,6,7	Chairperson's Message
8	Annual General Meeting 2024 — Report
9, 10	Craiglee House
11	MHS Christmas Function
12,13,14	October Bus Trip Report and Photos
15	Vale CASA stalwart, Tom Matthews
16	Local History Officer recognised
17	Mitcham Local History Service
18	Corporate Members
19	Membership; MHS Objectives
20	Office Bearers

Suggestions for stories or events and activities are always welcome and can be emailed to mitchamhistoricalsociety@gmail.com

The City of Mitcham

The City of Mitcham is Adelaide's second oldest Council area with the District Council of Mitcham proclaimed on 11 May 1853. In 1891 the first National Park in South Australia, and the second in Australia was proclaimed at Belair.

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. For EFT transfers please include your surname. This avoids any confusion or misunderstanding as to the purpose of the funds when they are received.

Chairperson's Message

This is an edited version of the Chairperson's Report to the 2024 AGM.

One of the Objects of the Society is:

3.2 to promote the heritage of the City of Mitcham through assisting in the protection and preservation of buildings, works and sites of historical significance; In May 2024, Bruceden Court (flats) at the corner of Deepdene Avenue and Cross Road, Westbourne Park was provisionally listed on the State Heritage Register as a State Heritage Place. On behalf of the Mitcham Historical Society, the committee made a submission to the State Heritage Council supporting the listing. (Note: the listing was confirmed on 14 November 2024).

History Festival 2024

In May during the annual History Festival, the Society hosted walks in Brownhill Creek Recreation Park and Ellison's Gully – in the last two years almost 200 people in total have attended the 8 walks (generating some \$1000). The Society thanks to our guides for these walks, Ron Bellchambers and Councillor Andrew Tilley.

The Great Air Race 1919

Churchill Fellow, Lainie Anderson gave a talk in the historic Mitcham Institute about the Vickers Vimy and the Great Air Race in 1919 from England to Australia won by South Australians, Ross and Keith Smith. The Smiths had grown up on Mutooroo Station on the South Australian/New South Wales border and owned by Thomas Elder and Peter Waite - when they flew the Vickers Vimy to Adelaide some three months after finishing the race, they flew down Cross Road and did a loop around Urrbrae House.

Chairperson's Message (cont'd)

This talk was open to not just our members, but also to residents of the City of Mitcham (advertised through Mitcham Community News) and 55 attended.

Mid-Year High Tea

The Mid-Year High Tea was held on 21 July in the Drawing Room at historic Torrens Park House, Scotch College. At this year's event John Wood who had recently stepped down from the Committee was presented with Life Membership of the Society and a Premier's Certificate for Outstanding Volunteer Service (to both the Society and to Scotch College).

Parliament House Guided Tour

In October 2023, the Member for Waite and MHS Corporate Member, Catherine Hutchesson MP hosted a tour of Parliament House with morning tea in the members dining room.

Museum of Economic Botany

In November 2023, Life Member, Glen Woodward, in his final tour for the Society led members through the magnificently restored Museum of Economic Botany and other parts of the Botanic Gardens. Lunch followed at the café in the Botanic Gardens.

Bus Trips

Two bus trips were facilitated during the year – one to Meadows, Goolwa with a ride on the Cockle Train and the other to Old Tailem Town, Wellington and The Bend Motorsport Park.

Chairperson's Message (cont'd)

Tram Pole

The historic tram pole originally located in Welbourne Street, Mitcham was gifted to the City of Mitcham by SA Power Networks and the Council agreed to provide the necessary funds for its remediation and relocation. The remediation work is now complete, and the pole will be installed in Sutton Gardens. (front cover photos: the component parts of the pole at the council depot)

Bequest

Earlier this year we received a bequest of \$10,000 - the reasons for the bequestor choosing the Mitcham Historical Society as a beneficiary, are not known, but perhaps the Society's leadership role in the Save the Waite Gatehouse campaign. A plan to use some of the income from the bequest to fund a history project grant for students in schools in the Mitcham Local Government Area is being developed.

Waite Gatehouse

The original intention of the Department of Infrastructure and Transport was to demolish the Waite Gatehouse on the southeastern corner of Cross and Fullarton Roads to facilitate the widening of that intersection. At the time, the University of Adelaide was not interested in saving the building. Following an intense campaign led by MHS Deputy Chairperson, Joanna Wells, the building was deconstructed and has now been rebuilt adjacent to the Urrbrae House rose garden in Claremont Avenue, Netherby.

Website

The [MHS website](#) has been completely renewed.

Chairperson's Message (cont'd)

17th Eastern Region History Seminar

Geoff Sauer attended this seminar in September 2024 hosted by the Campbelltown Historical Society – also present were representatives of the Burnside Historical Society, Tea Tree Gully Historical Society, Mt Lofty District Historical Society, East Torrens Historical Society and the Pioneers Association of South Australia – and reported on the activities of the Mitcham Historical Society over the last two years.

Conclusion

The Society is in a financially strong position and that can be very much attributed to John Wood's wise counsel and who stepped down in June – John served on the committee for 17 years from the time of the Society's incorporation in 2007.

The Society is run by volunteers who give generously of their time and expertise, and I offer my sincere thanks to my fellow committee members for their support over the last year: Joanna Wells (Deputy Chairperson), John Fraser (Treasurer), Peter Basedow, Ian Strout (Events Coordinator), Alicia Siegel (Minutes Secretary), Phil Menzel, Iain Waddell-Smith and Francesco di Zazzo. A special thank you to Sandy Matz who stepped down from the Committee in July after 8 years and during which time she served variously as Secretary and Treasurer. I extend my sincere thanks to you, our members, for without you and your support, the Mitcham Historical Society would not exist.

Geoff Sauer
Chairperson, Mitcham Historical Society

Annual General Meeting 2024

The AGM was held on 16 October 2024 in the Drawing Room at Scotch College and was attended by 35 members. Members noted the strong financial position of the Society with just under \$30K in the bank.

Geoff Sauer was re-elected Chairperson and the following elected to the committee: Peter Basedow, John Fraser, Francesco di Zazzo, Phillip Menzel, Alicia Siegel, Ian Strout, Iain Waddell-Smith, and Joanna Wells.

Membership Fees for FY2025 – 2026 will remain unchanged, that is: Individual: \$35.00; Family: \$45.00; Pension/Concession (Individual): \$25.00; Pension/Concession (Family): \$35.00; Corporate: \$160.00.

The Guest Speaker was Susan McCormack, Director, Carrick Hill who spoke about “The Making of a Museum: the origins and development of the Ashmolean Museum”. Founded in 1683, the Ashmolean is the oldest public museum in the world and Britain's first museum, and Susan explored the origins and growth over time of the Ashmolean. This museum (in Oxford) came into existence in 1682, when the wealthy antiquary Elias Ashmole gifted his collection to the University. It opened as Britain's first public museum, and the world's first university museum, in 1683. Though the collection has evolved considerably, the founding principle remains: that knowledge of humanity across cultures and across times is important to society.

Susan McCormack was presented with a voucher from Mostly Books which she said would be used to add to the research book collection at Carrick Hill.

Craiglee House — Blackwood

One of the oldest substantial homes in the Blackwood district is 'Craiglee House' at 183 Coromandel Parade in Coromandel Valley and was built by Alexander Murray in 1844. By 1845, Murray had established an orchard including plums, apricots, apples, pears, mulberries, and gooseberries. Murray and his son Alex became the first biscuit manufacturers in South Australia producing around 165,000 pounds of biscuits annually. The Murray Biscuit Factory, a substantial stone building, was established on the Craiglee landholding near Craiglee House.

'Murray catered for the welfare of workers. On Craiglee land there was a large recreation area which consisted of playing fields and an artificially formed pool in the river. The pool was large enough not only for swimming, but also for boating. At the time there were trout in the river too, and so the employees could go fishing in their off-duty hours. Houses were built on Craiglee to accommodate workers in the factory...'

When Murray senior died in 1880 his son Alex and his wife Elizabeth Murray nee Cumming continued to reside at Craiglee. The couple had one daughter, Nellie, who married Lachlan McTaggart of Wooltana Station to whom ownership of Craiglee passed. The couple moved to Wooltana but by 1915 were spending most of their time in semi-retirement at Craiglee. Lachlan McTaggart died in 1936 with Nellie continuing to live at Craiglee until her death in 1964 ending the Murray families 120-year occupancy of Craiglee House.

Harvey White and wife Rosemary purchased the substantial estate and lived in Craiglee House where they subdivided the grounds including selling 'The Biscuit Factory' which was converted to a residence. The Whites are understood to have lived very simply

Craiglee House — Blackwood (cont'd)

doing very little in the way of modernising or maintaining Craiglee House resulting in it becoming very rundown. In the 1990s a further joint subdivision between Rosemary White and the current Craiglee House owner occurred with a view to restoring Craiglee House from the proceeds. Craiglee House is constructed from stone taken from a nearby quarry (now the site of 'Warrawee House') and is believed to have originally been a 'two up and two down' Georgian style residence with a concave verandah and balcony to the southern elevation.



Historical photographs indicate that around the late 1800's the home was extended with further and larger 'two up and two down' rooms. Dating of the doors and feature ceilings in the upstairs formal rooms suggests that further work was undertaken in the 1930's. Awaiting its restoration, today Craiglee House consists of 8 main rooms, an entrance hall and stairwell and a number of stone 'lean to' rooms including the servants' quarters, kitchen and two sunrooms as well as outbuildings.



2024 MHS Christmas Function

Tuesday 10 December
from 4.00pm – 6.00pm
at The Ed, High Street, Mitcham

Celebrate with fellow Mitcham Historical Society members
in the beautiful beer garden
at The Ed
Finger food and nibbles provided-
Drinks at your own expense

Bookings are required (for catering)
***If you are registering for 2 people, you will need to
provide both names***

Please note: this is a “members only” function

Register by [email](#) or phone **M 0400 027 117**
By Tuesday 3 December 2024

Mitcham Historical Society

Bus Trip: Sunday 27 October 2024

18 members participated including the volunteer bus driver and Honorary MHS Member, Peter Williams. These trips would not be possible without a volunteer driver as the cost of hiring a bus driver would be prohibitive. We once again had a beautiful spring day, and the first stop was the Yankalilla Bakery for coffee/ tea and cake. Here, we were met by Margaret Morgan a member of the Yankalilla and District Historical Society for our tour which included the stunning scenery of Torrens Vale and Hay Flat. A highlight was a visit to the heritage listed sheep dip in Hay Flat. Nigel Pile, a lifelong farmer of the district gave the history of the dip. Margaret Morgan has an encyclopaedic knowledge the history of the region dating back to 1839 and 1840 when the first surveys of the Yankalilla and Rapid Bay areas were conducted.

Some of the unsealed roads were challenging due to corrugations. Please drive to the conditions if you visit the area. We returned *via* Normanville to the Yankalilla Hotel for lunch. After lunch we visited the Yankalilla Museum and were met by one of its volunteers, Ross Trigg, who gave the members a brief history of the Museum and the area. The museum has an extensive collection reflecting the rural and social life of the district and is regarded as one of the best rural museums in the state. Exhibits include a real church relocated from Inman Valley, early settler's cottage, blacksmiths shop, nursery, shop, multiple sheds of farm machinery and much more. Displays include the farming, mining, and maritime histories of the area as well as a range of memorabilia and photographs depicting early life in the district.

Photos (below) clockwise from top: the sheep dip, Nigel Pile, Ross Trigg, points of interest, the deadly Allen scythe (*ca.* 1935).

Ian Strout



Yankalilla & District Historical Society Museum

L to R: Ian Strout, Colin
Cooter, Ross Trigg



Farmall Tractors
1935 — 1947

Radar antenna from
HMAS Hobart which is
now a dive site in
Yankalilla Bay



Shearer 4 furrow
stump jump plough

vale *CASA stalwart, Tom Matthews

Tom passed away on 22 November 2024 at the RAH subsequent to a fall at his home the week before which caused significant internal injuries. He also had pneumonia and only one functioning kidney.

Tom was one of 12 foundation members of CASA. He attended all of the planning meetings from 2010 to the official launch in 2011. He held positions of President and Secretary and was a member of the committee until its November 2024 meeting.

He was passionate about 'putting the people back into planning', living more sustainably (including better designed, passive buildings) and advocated to have more meetings with the Planning Minister and other MPs to ensure CASA had a 'seat at the table'. He worked with colleagues to develop for CASA a 2026 State Government Election Strategy and a 'CASA Report Card' to gauge the values of election candidates - this was his final legacy for CASA.

His advocacy and friendship will be greatly missed.

CASA is an umbrella organisation for over 30 residents' associations and community groups from Adelaide and other areas of South Australia, with a reach of over 25,000 people in South Australia. The aim of CASA is 'To Put People back into Planning and Development in SA'. Since its inception in 2011, CASA has been actively involved with the planning reform process and has consistently engaged with the State Government and the Local Government Association as it supports the aims of the process in principle, namely to 'provide consistency, clarity, certainty, transparency and accessibility for all'.

The Mitcham Historical Society is a CASA member.

Local History Officer recognised

Congratulations to Mark Winders, Local History and Cemetery Officer at the City of Mitcham, who has been awarded the Darren Leuders Customer Service Award for 2024 by the Cemeteries and Crematoria Association of SA (CCASA).

This annual award recognises a staff member of a CCASA member organisation who delivers exceptional customer service in the industry.

Mark has been with the council since 2000 first as a volunteer, then from 2009 in his current role. His extensive knowledge of the Mitcham General Cemetery and its records has been invaluable to both Council and the community, helping countless families locate burial plots and uncover detailed family histories.

Mark's passion goes well beyond research and administration. As the enthusiastic and knowledgeable tour guide of Mitcham's cemeteries, he brings history to life. His tours are delivered with the energy and flair of a charismatic circus ringmaster, setting a vibrant tone that leaves participants captivated and eager to explore the fascinating history of Mitcham's cemeteries.

His unique talent as a captivating tour guide shines through in every tour he leads, with engaging tours at the Mitcham General Cemetery, Mitcham Anglican Cemetery, and Historic St Marys Anglican Cemetery on South Road, St Marys.



Mitcham Local History Service

The Mitcham Local History Service was established by the City of Mitcham in 1986 to preserve and promote the history and heritage of the Mitcham district. Located at the Mitcham Heritage Research Centre within the Mitcham Cultural Village, the local history service is an excellent resource for anyone interested in the history of City of Mitcham.

Knowledgeable staff and volunteers are available to assist you with personal and curriculum based research, guided tours and history related events.

The Mitcham Local History Service also offers a range of history related events and displays throughout the year. Check the City of Mitcham's website and social media pages or contact the City of Mitcham on 1300 133 466 for updated information.

Location: Mitcham Heritage Research Centre, Mitcham Cultural Village, 103 - 105 Princes Road, Mitcham SA 5062

Telephone: 8372 8261

Opening Hours:

Tues 9am to 1pm

Wed 9am to 1pm

Thurs 9am to 1pm



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,
Hotel (08) 8373 2700 Cellars (08) 373 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 21st Century.” Carruth Road, Torrens Park, (08) 8274 4333

Louise Miller Frost MP

Federal Member for Boothby
Shop 2, 670 Anzac Highway
Glenelg SA,5045 , (08) 8374 0511

Catherine Hutchesson MP

State Member for Waite
1/7-9 Young Street
Blackwood SA 5051
(08) 8278 5844

This Fine Day Café

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

Mitcham Historical Society Inc

Membership

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 Ian Strout on 0400 027 117.

Membership fees

Individual \$35; family \$45; concession/pensioner \$25 (individual) \$35 (family), corporate \$160. Note: 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.

Objectives of the Mitcham Historical Society

- arouse interest in and promote the study and discussion of South Australian and local history and in particular, the history of the City of Mitcham;
- promote the heritage of the City of Mitcham through assisting in the protection and preservation of buildings, works and sites of historical significance;
- foster, create and maintain public awareness of the Mitcham Village and its history;
- promote the collection, recording, preservation and classification of works, source material and artefacts of all kinds relating to local and State history;
- co-operate with similar local, state and national societies and bodies.

Mitcham Historical Society Inc

Officer Bearers 2024 — 2025

Patron:

Trent Driver
Principal, Scotch College

Chairperson: Geoff Sauer M 0412 125 010

Minutes Secretary: Alicia Siegel

Committee Members

Peter Basedow: M 0417 809 227
Ian Strout: M 0400 027 117 (Events)
Joanna Wells
John Fraser
Iain Waddell-Smith
Phillip Menzel
Francesco di Zazzo

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