

PRESIDENT'S NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2009

Greetings to all.

Since the AGM both the Committee and Executive have met to plan and implement our activities to promote the cause of history in the coming twelve months. There is a lot on the agenda.

You will note that on our web page we have the updated list of our Executive and Committee members for 2009/10 and we have also posted my report to the AGM for you to check out.

175th Activity At Last

It is over two years since the forum held in the Town Hall to discuss the best way to mark the 175th year of European Settlement in South Australia. The hope was that a committee to organise and coordinate events would be established by the Government and funded along the lines, albeit on a smaller scale, of that for the very successful 150th year events in 1986. This has not happened. Despite a great deal of lobbying and other activity the Government has not made a commitment to the year, but it has recently provided a modest amount of funding to the History Trust to provide administrative assistance to establish a Working Party. I am the Council's representative on this group, which is chaired by Margaret Anderson, Director of the History Trust. It met for the first time this week and has begun the work of identifying aims and themes, and collating the many suggestions for events, projects and activities that could be part of the year.

The group plans to meet again at least twice before Christmas and any ideas or suggestions would be very welcome (even if they have been submitted previously).

Museum of Adelaide

The Adelaide City Council has received a report from consultant Bronwyn Halliday on options for development of a city museum. five options were canvassed in the report which comprised: (1) a stand-alone museum; (2) a 'progressive' museum with a small orientation exhibition which then directs visitors to progress to specially developed related exhibitions and tours of other sites and buildings; (3) a new exhibition in an existing institution; (4) a re-focussing of the Migration Museum to become a Settlement Museum which would include the city museum concept; and (5) an extension and upgrade of the ACC Archives in Topham Mall.

We feel we should have a preferred view on these options and they will be discussed at our December Committee meeting.

Archives

The AGM of the Friends of SA's Archives was held recently and Jack Cross and Alan Jones were re-elected as President and Secretary/Treasurer respectively. A presentation was made of the resources and on-line access to the voluminous Borrow Collection of early South Australiana recently unveiled by Flinders University Library.

The current archive issue is the question of better access to State Records than presently exists at Gepps Cross. Its co-location with the National Archives office in a more

central city location is being advocated. This issue has been taken up by the Council after it was raised at the AGM.

History in Schools

I was delighted to be asked to speak and present the awards for the 2009 Schools History Challenge earlier this week at a ceremony at the Chapel at the Migration Museum. The theme of this year's Challenge was 'Triumph Over Adversity' and the winning essays were most impressive. They ranged over topics such as the arrival of Vietnamese Boat People, responses to the Great Depression, and the First World War, some focussing on the stories of individuals such as Prime Minister Andrew Fisher, immigrant from Europe Regina Zielinski, Eddie Mabo, Nancy Bird Walton, Margaret Preston and Moira Kelly among others.

The Premier's Young Historian of the Year prize was won by Lina Carbone of Birdwood High School who presented a finely researched and sensitive essay on the location and interment of missing Australian servicemen on the battlefields of France. Her particular subjects were the 'Zonnbrecke Five' and the missing diggers of Fromelles.

Meanwhile Daryl Best, Vice President of the History Teachers Association and a member of our Committee, was on the panel judging the Premier's Anzac award. This year over 50 young people (year 9 & 10 students) entered the competition. Six of the successful candidates, having submitted an essay or a video production and attended an interview, will be lucky to go on a trip to the Western Front - a fantastic prize. Daryl reports that the standard of the essays was very high and he will be showing two of the video presentations at our December Committee meeting.

Loveday Internment Camp Exhibition

A new exhibition entitled 'Both Sides of the Wire' was opened earlier this month at the Cobdogla Steam and Irrigation Museum in Barmera. The National Trust of SA and the History Trust have jointly funded the project. The exhibition traces the history of the internment camp and how it operated in World War II from the point of view of both internees and those who guarded them and ran the camp. It features photographs, records and objects sourced from the Australian War Memorial, the State Library and National Archives.

Heritage Survey

The second stage of the South Australian 20th Century Heritage Survey covering the years 1928-1945 by P Bell, C Cosgrove, S Marsden & J McCarthy has been published on the Internet by SA's Dept for Environment and Heritage.

Here is the webpage link:

http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/heritage/resources/20century_stage2.html

The Overview history completed for Stage 1 of the same study (1946-1959) by C Cosgrove and S Marsden was published by the same department in 2005 at:

www.environment.sa.gov.au/heritage/pdfs/surveys/20_century/stage_1.pdf

News from Interstate

The History Council of WA recently discovered there was no legislation regarding European archaeological relics under the Heritage Act in WA. and is currently engaged in

lobbying efforts on the issue. There was also an issue of deposits to State Records WA as the repository does not have enough space to comply with legislation regarding the collection and preservation of state archives.

The History Council of NSW reported they had engaged in a long, yet ultimately unsuccessful, campaign regarding amendments to the NSW Heritage Act. The campaign had served to build the profile of the Council however. As mentioned in my Report to the AGM their new website is well worth checking out.

The History Council of the Northern Territory has been heavily involved in events surrounding the Charles Darwin bi-centenary. A researcher has asked for any information on the Hilda Abbott, wife of former Administrator C A L Abbott.

The centenary of the handing over of the Territory by South Australia to the Commonwealth is on 1 January 1911 and should provide the opportunity for some collaborative commemoration.

Nationally, the Australian Historical Association's Conference will be held in Perth from 5-9 July next year in association with Conferences on Religious History, Sports History and the Women's Network. There is a call for papers on their website which closes on 31 March 2010.

Membership Renewal

On a more mundane note, reminder notices are being sent to unfinancial affiliates, and we would appreciate their return as soon as possible.

I will be reporting again before Christmas.

All best wishes

John Bannon

President