

HISTORY COUNCIL OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC.

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Issue no. 14

President's Letter

December 2007

Dear Colleagues

Here we are at the end of another year – it is certainly the case that they are speeding up! I can vouch for it. I'm pleased to report on behalf of the HCSA executive that we have had a busy and successful year, particularly in relation to our major aim of putting the *Terquasquicentenary* on the agenda. We have held two forums with diverse interested groups from the public and private sectors and from NGOs. As a result of the second forum we submitted our thoughts on a theme for South Australia's 175th anniversary to the Minister assisting the Premier for the Arts, Minister Hill. We suggested as an overarching theme *South Australia: Imagining Our Future*.

This allows us to ask how we shape ourselves to go forward, looking in part through the lens of the past. We outlined three sub-themes around People, Place and Environment. These themes would enable us to include the city and the regions, science and technological change, and the challenges both now and in the past of our dry and sunny state. We are also hopeful that the major cultural institutions along North Terrace will bring together some of their ongoing digitization projects as a joint SA175th project. I was present at the inaugural meeting of that group at Arts SA and look forward to hearing the outcome of their application for funding. So while we await a government response what other issues are demanding attention?

Port Adelaide precinct: sailing into oblivion?

When we visit many port cities around the world we are attracted to a vibrant mix of old and new, of commercial and residential interests, historic warehouses and shiny modern boutiques and coffee shops, sometimes in the same building. That mix of old and new is particularly exciting, linking a modern future to a proud past.

Are we creating this atmosphere in Port Adelaide? Or is it an opportunity missed in the new developments? Will the old boat building sheds be retained, for instance, as a place for school children and TAFE students to explore and learn about the past and the boat building trade? We do have several heritage vessels there – the *Falie* and the *Nelcebee*, for example. But both require significant conservation work.

We also have an excellent Maritime Museum. Here then is a chance for significant renewal. An enthusiastic lobby group is working towards bringing back another historic vessel, the clipper, *City of Adelaide* built in 1864. But what would it come back to – even if these historically-minded citizens can raise the significant funding necessary for restoration, transport and maintenance of a nineteenth-century sailing ship? Funds have not been easy to come by for restoration of the existing vessels so keen private and public sponsorship is essential. *The City of Adelaide Preservation Trust* has plans for a small interpretive museum, one which they claim would attract many tourists. Better perhaps to expand the current

Maritime Museum, to place it in one of the significant heritage buildings at the Port, such as the Customs House?

Adelaide is highly regarded by international visitors for its preservation of much of its heritage landscape. The revitalizing of the historic Port precinct through a redevelopment of the existing heritage buildings and the Maritime museum would make a fitting project for SA's 175th, attracting tourists and locals alike. A mix of development and heritage is in keeping with world best practice and is more attractive than development alone. It fits very well into our state's strategic plan with its focus on building communities and growing cultural engagement. What is the view of the Premier and the Minister assisting the Premier in the Arts on this matter? Are we willing to revisit the Port or is our new development ensuring that our past is sailing into oblivion? The FAHS e-bulletin (see below) notes that during the recent election campaign in the electorate of Braddon the sum of \$3 million was promised by the ALP for the Burnie Waterfront and Cultural project. Mmmmm

Access to records

Another issue which concerns our members is the difficulty in accessing certain government records. This issue was raised again at our AGM. We are willing to take this forward *with some of our member organizations*. If you provide us with the necessary detail we can *together* lobby for better access. An interesting item in the latest FAHS e-bulletin tells us that more people are applying for ASIO records at the National Archives of Australia and gaining it within the statutory 90 days. Perhaps our problem is peculiarly South Australian.

The Port Pirie District Family History Society is concerned at the cost of accessing older Births, Deaths and Marriages certificates. They suggest we join together to lobby for a unified national policy re access as some states have records available readily on-line. Do others feel strongly about this matter? ***The issue of what we should save and what we can access is a key item for discussion for HCSA next year.***

Working parties

We are keen to energize some of our working parties. For instance the Heritage and Archives working party has much to consider including the question posed above. We need enthusiastic volunteers from our membership to convene that group and take it forward, bringing their deliberations to the committee and the executive. The small executive cannot do it all!

And a very happy festive season to all our members.

Alison Mackinnon, President



News about our members

The Pioneers Association of SA has just completed an index of all its publications (about 115 of them since 1936), which will be available in 2008 to researchers at a nominal cost on CD-ROM as a pdf file. Having taken the Publications Group of the Association about 15 months to compile the index, it will now make locating information among its booklets much easier. The booklets themselves, which predominantly cover aspects of the early history of South Australia, are available for purchase from the Association, but are also available to be consulted at the State Library of South Australia and the libraries at Adelaide and Flinders

Universities, which have complete holdings of them. The Association's latest publication called *Women of Substance* is about to be printed with the assistance of a grant from the History Trust of SA. It records brief biographies of women whose work and ideas influenced the early development of South Australia: Priscilla Wakefield, Harriet Grote, Maria Hack and Harriet Taylor Mill. Congratulations to the Pioneers Association for these initiatives.

The Professional Historians Association (SA) is keen for efforts to continue to lobby the government on the State's 175th anniversary in 2011; the PHA is writing a letter in support of HCSA's submission to Minister John Hill. The PHA(SA) was one of the many voices objecting to the Victoria Park development proposal; they are pleased that it's not going ahead in the form proposed originally.

The PHA(SA) has had a successful Professional Development Program in 2007, including visits to the Wayville Showgrounds to view the Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society's archives; the State Library to view the National Treasures exhibition; the National Archives of Australia's Adelaide office; and the Genealogy and Heraldry Society's Library. Some members also presented a seminar at the University of Adelaide's seminar program for the School of History and Politics; others gave presentations and led tours for the History Trust of SA's State History Conference in this year. The Program will continue in 2008.

Following the ***History Trust of South Australia's*** very successful *Country Connections*, the 16th State History Conference, the History Trust has now issued the call for papers for the 17th State History Conference to be held in Adelaide on 1–3 August 2008. The theme is *Changing Places: Changing Lives*. See the History Trust's website for details. Abstracts and biographies are to be due by 29 February 2008.

The History Teachers Association of SA is putting the finishing touches on the program for their Annual Conference for 2008. The conference focus is on *History and the Arts* and the program committee welcomes suggestions and offers for workshop presentations. Please contact Andrew Buxton (see below) with your ideas.

The conference is being held at the Hindmarsh Education Centre on Friday 13th June. The HTASA is also always on the lookout for relevant historical materials to distribute to members, either in hard copy or by email. Please note that Institutional members of the HTASA (\$80) may participate freely in every mailout to members.

The HCSA 2008 Public Lecture

We have not yet confirmed the speaker or date for the 2008 public lecture. Those who attended Susan Magarey's splendid lecture this year might note that her biography of Dame Roma Mitchell, *Roma the First*, written with Kerrie Round, has now been released by Wakefield Press.



The History Council's website

Have you provided your organization's events? The address is <www.historycouncilsa.org.au>. The website is member-driven, so it is an important means of communication between the Council and the broader historical community. Features include a readily updated 'What's On' calendar, and links to member organisations and other useful websites. We have appointed a web manager as an interim step while we establish this as a vital administrative position for the Council. We are very pleased that the Historical Society

of SA will join us in this venture. All members are asked to use the HCSA website to email their organizations' url and calendar of events to the secretary or web manager (including your permission for adding the links and events to the HCSA calendar). You are also reminded to ensure that a link to the HCSA website is added to your organization's website.



Practicalities

The HCSA is going modern – and technological. After the 2007 AGM all communications will be sent to members of the Council and the wider membership through e-mail. We do appreciate that this may cause difficulties for the very few members who do not have e-mail. However, we believe that all members have access either to others in their organization who do have e-mail and can pass all messages on, or to local libraries with e-mail facilities and assistance. Please let us know if you cannot access either of these sources. We are a very small organization with no formal secretariat and can no longer send communications in mixed mode. The exception to this will be AGM material, which requires you or your organisation to submit documentation.

While we do not have the funds to support a full or even a part-time secretariat, we would consider sharing an administrative assistant (or secretary) with one of our member organizations – perhaps on an hourly-paid model. Please let us know if you are interested. Perhaps you have someone in place who could spare a few hours for us! Indeed, there may be scope for several of our organisations to rationalise or co-ordinate their services – let us know if you would like to discuss this notion..



The Federation of Australian Historical Societies (Inc) (FAHS)

FAHS has recently issued an e-bulletin. You might like to visit their website <http://www.history.org.au> to read it. Items of note include the issue of ASIO records (see above) and an item noting that the World Monuments fund is very critical of Woodside Energy's proposed \$11 Billion Pluto Gas processing plant at the Burrup Peninsula, which threatens the rock art, arguably some of the oldest in the world..



Please remember to recruit new members to the History Council

Your organisation needs to be a financial member of the HCSA in order to participate in HCSA activities We welcome our newest members and renewals, the Adelaide Catholic Archives, Adelaide Gaol Preservation Society Inc., City of Playford Library History Service, National Trust of South Australia: Penola Branch, South Australian Museum, and Bev Bills, Robert G Hensel and Elizabeth Sawyer.

The membership/renewal form can be downloaded at any time from our website at <www.historycouncilsa.org.au>. Tax invoices can be provided on request from the Treasurer.

SUBSCRIPTION COSTS FOR 2006/2007 FINANCIAL YEAR	
Corporate membership	
\$250.00	Major organisations, including state organisations, government

	departments
\$150.00	Medium organisations, including regional organisations
\$100.00	Professional organisations
\$30.00	Small organisations such as voluntary and local bodies
Individual membership	
\$30.00	Individual
\$20.00	Individual concession (student/pensioner/unwaged)



Current Executive and Council members

Executive (6 members max.)

President	Alison Mackinnon, Hawke Research Institute, University of SA, < president@historycouncilsa.org.au >
Vice President	Wilfred Prest*, University of Adelaide, < wilfrid.prest@adelaide.edu.au > (08) 8303 5883
Secretary	Annette Mills, State Library of South Australia < secretary@historycouncilsa.org.au > (08) 8207 7347
Treasurer	Bernie O’Neil, Professional Historians Association < bernard.oneil@adelaide.edu.au > (08) 8261 0077
Members	Christine Finnimore*, Migration Museum, History Trust of South Australia, < cfinnimore@history.sa.gov.au > (08) 8207 7697 Andrew Buxton*, History Teachers Association SA, htasa@chariot.net.au and abuxton@pac.edu.au (08) 8334 1200

Council (14 members max.)

Kirsty Buchan	Australian Society of Archivists (SA Branch)
Peter Brinkworth	Pioneers Association of South Australia
Ruth Dickson	State Records of South Australia
Ian Stephenson	National Trust, SA
David Lemmings	History Department, University of Adelaide
Greg Slattery*	Rocky River Historic and Arts Society
Carol Fort	History Department, Flinders University
David Cornish	Historical Society of SA
Martin Lambert	Engineers Australia
Myra Oster	Friends of the Lutheran Archives

* = Co-optees



Forthcoming Executive and Council meetings

Meetings of the History Council are held generally on the first Tuesday of the month (any changes to the dates, venues or times will be advised):

- Executive – Tuesday, 4 February, 4.30–6.30 p.m., State Library of SA
- Council – Tuesday, 4 March, 5.00 –7.00, venue to be confirmed