



INFORMATION NEWSLETTER

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Contacts Mandy Coote 0401 540 024
 Ian Morphet 8298 5585

marionhistoricalsociety@gmail.com

Our March Meeting Stephanie James Irish South Australia

Fittingly, Stephanie James' talk about Irish South Australia occurred on March 17th, the feast day of the patron saint of Ireland, Saint Patrick.

While introducing our speaker, Heather Latz mentioned that all eight of Stephanie's great-grandparents had been born in Ireland and that Martin Kelly, in whose home Marion's earliest Catholic masses were held and who donated land for the building of St Ann's Chapel, was a brother of Stephanie's great-great-grandfather Jeremiah.

Stephanie began her talk by telling us about her Kelly ancestors, and then showed how their characteristics were common to the wider history of Irish immigration to South Australia.

The Kellys came from County Clare, which was the major source of Irish immigrants to South Australia.

There were often chains of migration within families, in that one man and his family would arrive in SA and get established, then a relative and his family would come out and then another – each being assisted by those who had arrived earlier. For the Kellys, brothers John and Martin and their families arrived in 1851, brother Jeremiah and family in 1852 and nephew John and family in 1857.

Many Irish immigrants initially settled in Adelaide, but then took up land in regional areas. All of the Kelly families mentioned above had moved to Mintaro by the early 1860s.

Irish immigrants tended to marry within their communities. Most of the Kelly children married people who had been born in Ireland and, in almost all cases, they were Catholic.

However, 10 to 20 percent of Irish immigrants were Protestant, including some of the better-known ones, such as George Strickland Kingston, Thomas and William O'Halloran, Robert Torrens and Charles Bagot. These people were less obviously Irish than their Catholic counterparts and could choose whether to acknowledge their background.

Irish immigration was actively discouraged by the English promoters of the colony of South Australia. They wanted to foster Protestant dissenters, but not Catholics. For many years there was only one emigration agent assigned to Ireland, compared with a handful in Scotland and over a dozen in England.

Despite this, 7% of the immigrants to SA in the first five years of the colony were Irish and, for the remainder of the 19th century, Ireland was the second-highest source of immigrants after England, easily outnumbering those born in Scotland and Germany.

Stephanie quoted many examples of anti-Irish and anti-Catholic sentiment from newspapers of the 1840s to early 1860s. Job advertisements often included the phrase 'No Irish need apply'. However, there were signs by the late 1870s that anti-Irish sentiment was reducing in South Australia and by 1894, rather than focussing on drinking and fighting, a newspaper article about Saint Patrick's Day described it as 'a special occasion on which to sympathise with Ireland in her sufferings and sorrows'.

Perhaps one reason why the Irish history of SA is not well known is that Irish immigrants moved to every county in South Australia, rather than forming large high-profile communities like the Germans did in Hahndorf and the Barossa. The town of Clare promotes the wine of the region but not its Irish heritage. There has also been a dearth of research about the Irish people and experience in South Australia and of promotion

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and discussion about that research, which Stephanie and colleagues have begun to address with the publication of *Irish South Australia: New histories and insights*.

An underlying theme of Stephanie's talk was the challenges of family history research: the persistence required; the luck and coincidences that can sometimes lead to new discoveries; the sometimes-not-obvious value of 'boring' diaries and letters as sources of information; the potential for family rifts and movements to stymie the handing down of history; and the need to make one's research accessible to and understandable by future generations, rather than leaving behind 'fat files' of disorganised notes that one's children don't know what to do with.

History Festival May 2021

Over 600 events have been advertised in this year's History Festival, which runs throughout May. Events include talks, guided walking tours, bus tours, access to heritage places and much more.

All events are advertised on the History Festival website at <https://festival.history.sa.gov.au/>. There will be no printed program this year. Most events (apart from exhibitions and self-guided walks) require bookings so that organisers can manage numbers in line with COVID-19 directions and contact people in case of last-minute changes.

The Marion Historical Society has advertised two events - a guided mini-bus tour of heritage sites in the central and southern City of Marion on 2 May.

(<https://festival.history.sa.gov.au/events/marion-village-hills-and-coast-bus-tour/>)

and Patricia Sumerling's talk about Bert Edwards on 19 May.

(<https://festival.history.sa.gov.au/events/who-was-bert-edwards-king-of-the-west-end/>).

The Marion Village Museum will be conducting guided walks of the village area on the 16th and 23rd of May.

(<https://festival.history.sa.gov.au/events/marion-historic-village-guided-walk-and-afternoon-tea/>).

Danielle Trewartha of the Marion Heritage Research Centre will be doing a talk on the Extinct Suburbs of Marion on the 12th of May (<https://festival.history.sa.gov.au/events/extinct-suburbs-of-marion/>).

The Living Kurna Cultural Centre is running a Warriparinga history and environment tour on the 8th and 29th of May.

(<https://festival.history.sa.gov.au/events/warriparinga-history-and-environment-tour/>).

News from the Marion Heritage Research Centre

*Next month, for the History Festival, we are presenting a newly-researched and illustrated talk, 'Extinct Suburbs of Marion'.
Wednesday 12th May, 2pm, at the Marion Council Administration building.
Places are limited so please contact us ASAP to book. Free!*

The Heritage Research Centre is open as normal for 2021, and you are welcome to call us on 7420 6455, email us at heritage@marion.sa.gov.au or drop in from 10am to 4pm, Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. We love meeting new heritage friends!

Watch out for our events listed in the Marion Libraries' What's On! brochure, and on the City of Marion/Libraries social media pages.

Next meeting:

May 19th

(History Month)

at 7.30pm at Club Marion
Hills View Room 2/West

Patricia Sumerling

Who was Bert Edwards, King of the West
End?

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