



INFORMATION NEWSLETTER

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Our June Meeting

Robert Pitt

The History of the West Terrace Cemetery

We had a fantastic talk last month from Robert Pitt on the *History of West Terrace Cemetery*. Robert is the CEO of the Adelaide Cemeteries Authority (ACA) which manages West Terrace, Cheltenham, Smithfield and Enfield cemeteries, as well as two in the Holdfast Bay council area, with responsibility for 1,000 burials and 2,000 interments of ashes per annum. The ACA was established by an Act of Parliament in 2001.

The West Terrace Cemetery is the oldest in Adelaide, having been on Colonel Light's original plan. It is an oddity, with the rest of the city having been laid out on a grid pattern, and the cemetery being an egg-shaped area at its corner. The cemetery was established in 1837, with the first interment being in the February of that year. This was Eliza Stace, wife of Joseph Stace, who died at the age of 21 soon after arriving in the colony. She is recorded as being the first white person to die in the colony. The first burials occurred within six weeks of proclamation, despite there being no formal arrangements at that time.

The first Sexton was John Monck, who was appointed on 7 Feb 1837. His time there was plagued with complaints of mismanagement: keeping inadequate location records, graves being too shallow, his side business of producing and selling vaults and stones, and the fact that he worked on Sundays. In 1862, Henry Brooks took over the role, and he was responsible for the current cemetery layout.

While West Terrace is the first major cemetery in Adelaide, the first in the colony was the Reeves Point cemetery on Kangaroo Island. Other cemeteries established near Adelaide are Hindmarsh (1846), Albert Park (1847 – now

closed), North Rd (1853), Cheltenham (1876) Enfield (1876), and Centennial Park (1936). The early cemeteries were strongly denominational, with different Church Trusts managing their own sections. This ceased during the last quarter of the 19th century.

The Smyth Chapel, which was consecrated in 1871, is within the Catholic section of the cemetery, named in honour of popular priest, Father John Smyth. Designed by E.J. Woods, designer of the Adelaide Town Hall and Post Office, the Gothic chapel features eight *grotesques*. Father John Smyth, Archdeacon Patrick Russell and Bishop Sheil are interred in the crypt beneath the chapel.

West Terrace had the first crematorium in the southern hemisphere, built in 1903. The first Cremation was that of a Sikh man, Bishin Singh on 4 May 1903. The crematorium was closed on 1 Nov 1959 and demolished in 1969. 4,762 cremations happened here over that time.

The AIF Section at West Terrace was created in 1921 and was the first military cemetery in Australia. Anzac services and other memorials are held here, often involving school children laying wreaths.

A discovery recently made in the cemetery was of a forgotten burial section after 100 years.

As for the present and future, there is a great deal happening. The word, *cemetery* comes from the Greek word *koimeterion* meaning *a sleeping place*. As Robert points out, it is so much more. Cemeteries are places for grieving and remembering. They connect a community with its past with stories and epitaphs. They provide an urban open space and educational experiences. Cemeteries are evolving cultural landscapes, relating to architecture, sociology and psychology. To foster ownership and respect, all sorts of programs are run, like the *Adopt a Grave* program, involving schools. Day

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and night cemetery tours are conducted, along with other community events. This all helps protect the cemetery from vandalism and promote community participation. History is preserved, along with our memories, and the future is looking good.

Making History Glenthorne National Park

The areas of land to form the proposed Glenthorne National Park include the Hallett Cove Conservation Park.

The park is important for its history: geological history dating back millions of years, the history associated with the traditional owners and recent European history.

From the 1850s the area was farmed and the southern area of the cove itself was cleared of rocks to allow the area to be used for naval exercises and landings.

The area now known as Hallett Cove is recognised for the cultural significance to the Kaurna people. Since 1934 over 1,700 Aboriginal artefacts have been collected and are housed in the South Australian Museum. It has been suggested that people have lived in the area for up to 12,000 years with many camps identified some occupying a hectare or more.

The significance of the geology of the Hallett Cove area is recognised not only in South Australia but internationally. Professor Ralph Tate realised the significance in 1875 when he recognised the smooth glacial pavement dating the landform at 280 million years old but this has since been pushed back to 600 million years.

In 1957 the need to preserve the geology of the area was recognised with Professor AR Alderman recommending this to the National Trust. In 1965 this was achieved when George Sandison donated the small narrow area to the National Trust.

In 1965 more land subdivision was proposed with the conservationists fighting this for 11 years. The government protected the scientific areas in 1969.

In 1970 a further plan for subdivision and a marina raised significant public debate and the government added more land to the protected area and finally in 1976 the Conservation Park was declared, protecting the geological and

historical areas.

The park has magnificent views along the coast, a creek, waterfalls, stunning formations and also conserves flora and fauna. There are many walking trails with excellent interpretive signs showing and explaining the geological features and the chronology of their development.

News from the Marion Village Museum

Just a reminder that the Museum is open every Sunday 2pm to 4pm and is now open on Tuesdays 10am to 12pm as well. Come and have a look at our new displays. Just the thing for a wintery day!

For more information please call Judy Morphett on 8298 5585.

News from the Marion Heritage Research Centre

The MHRC is open throughout the year except January on Monday, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 10am - 4pm. Visitors are always welcome and there is plenty to keep you interested.

Watch out for our events in the Marion libraries' *What's On!* booklet, the local newspaper or this newsletter.

Watch out for the remaining 2 talks, on 19th of August and the 16th of September, in the series about the history of Glenelg's development, by author Beth Duncan.

During May's SA History Festival the MHRC held a display, 'Historic Gems of Glenthorne National Park', at the Cove Civic Centre. If you missed this, watch out for it in other Marion locations in the future!

For more information please call the Heritage Research Centre on 7420 6455.

Marion Historical Society

**Our next meeting will take place on
Wednesday 21st August 2019
7.30pm at Cooina**

Heidi Ing

***Early SA Colonists, (1836) and their
Descendants***

Members – If your contact details change, please advise Ian Morphett on 8298 5585 or email marionhistoricalsociety@gmail.com.

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