



INFORMATION NEWSLETTER

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Our June Meeting Beth Ingram Moving to Marion in the 1950s

A great turn-up of 28 people, including some welcome new faces, came to our June meeting to hear Beth Ingram speak on the topic of “Moving to Marion in the 1950s”.

Beth, her husband Rob, and their baby son Paul moved from Campbelltown to the Marion Council area in 1958. They bought lot 36 on Darling St, Darlington (which area became the suburb of Sturt) for £575. A photo of Rob and Paul beside the real estate sign on their block showed only one house nearby. There they built their own house for £2,725. With a newly built house among empty paddocks and no fences, the ground was very muddy at times before they established their garden. On the upside, the empty paddocks were very convenient for lighting a bonfire on Guy Fawkes night! The location was also very convenient to public transport. As Rob needed their Austin A40 for work, Beth would catch Worthley’s bus to visit her family at Glenelg, and Henstridge’s bus to go to the city.

Apart from a short time when the family needed to take out a second mortgage, Beth was a stay-at-home mum, as were most in the day. Two more children were born to them at Sturt, and were baptised at the very new Church of St Margaret of Scotland on Diagonal Rd, wearing the same baptismal gown that their brother Paul had worn, as was customary. Between looking after the home and children, making most of the family’s clothing and her high level of community involvement, Beth was a very busy woman! One very cute photo showed Paul going off to kindy in hand-made clothes, complete with a matching shirt and dilly-bag.

The children went to Darlington Primary School where parents (especially mothers) assisted with the variety of school-based sports. Beth learned to score for the baseball team and belonged to the mother’s club, which also provided something of a fan-club!

Some other children’s activities included catching tadpoles in the Sturt River when it was still free of its later concrete lining. Paul also caught yabbies, which became the family’s seafood cocktail at Christmas. Children’s birthday parties were also very popular, with an array of home-made treats like jelly boats, curried eggs and fairy bread. The streets around Sturt were bitumen strips and there were still no footpaths in the 1960s. Out there the children rode their bikes and played football in relative safety.

Over time many more houses were built of various origins – Housing Trust, War Service and self-built homes made for a varied community. The paddocks disappeared bit by bit. Marion Shopping Centre was built nearby in 1968. Eventually, in 1993 St Margaret’s closed and the Fresh Choice Restaurant was built, closing a few years ago. A service station was proposed for the site and the spirited community showed that it could still work together as in the early days: successfully opposing the neighbourhood-unfriendly development.

Beth’s engaging and lively talk was liberally illustrated with photos of the Sturt area, community activities, sports clubs and popular food items from the fifties and sixties, and also with a memorabilia table displaying ceramic wall ducks, a Bakelite phone, a 1958 baby bottle, 1950s icing kit, decanter and glasses and a recipe book with everything from food to medicinal remedies.

A great talk and trip down memory lane!

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From the newspaper 100 years ago

I wonder what people in the future will think of our medical position with the Covid pandemic if they look back 100 years.

The terminology, “prevalence of sickness” would indicate that it has been a significantly bad year but there is no mention of influenza.

Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Thursday 21 July 1921, page 6

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

The winter of 1921 will be long remembered for the prevalence of sickness. The infectious diseases returns presented to the Central Board of Health continue to reflect the amount of illness throughout the State. The figures before the board on Monday showed that there were 69 cases of diphtheria, 63 of measles (including 34 at Bethany and nine at Angaston), and 26 cases of scarlet fever. The infectious disease mortuary returns showed that there were three deaths from diphtheria at Adelaide, and one each at Edithburgh, Murray Bridge, and Mount Gambier. One death from pulmonary tuberculosis had occurred at Adelaide, and one at Mount Gambier. One death from puerperal fever was reported at Adelaide, and one death from typhoid fever at Eudunda.

It is interesting to see that some of the diseases referred to have been virtually relegated to history or managed by modern medical practices in Australia. But the place names and numbers of cases indicate that Bethany must have been far larger in 1921 than it is today.

Spanish Flu and Covid 19

Comparisons are frequently made between the Spanish Flu and the Covid 19 pandemics and the National Museum of Australia provides interesting information to enable comparisons to be made.

Being remote, Australia had the advantage of time to make preparations, including quarantine. It was agreed that the federal government would take responsibility for organising maritime and land quarantine and the states would arrange emergency hospitals, vaccination depots, ambulance services, medical staff and public awareness measures.

Commonwealth Serum Laboratories (CSL) was established during the First World War to alleviate Australia's dependence on imported vaccines. In 1918 it developed its first, experimental vaccine in anticipation of pneumonic influenza reaching mainland Australia.

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Between 15 October 1918 and 15 March 1919, CSL produced three million free doses for Australian troops and civilians. It later evaluated the vaccines to be partially effective in preventing death in inoculated individuals.

Maritime quarantine contained the spread of the virus until its virulence lessened and restricted its eventual introduction into Australia to a single entry point.

Soon each state made their own arrangements for handling and containing outbreaks, including organising their own border controls.

In Australia, while the estimated death toll of 15,000 people was still high, Australia's death rate of 2.7 per 1000 of population was one of the lowest recorded of any country during the pandemic.

Nevertheless, up to 40 per cent of the population were infected, and some Aboriginal communities recorded a mortality rate of 50 per cent.

[Influenza pandemic | National Museum of Australia \(nma.gov.au\)](https://www.nma.gov.au/influenza-pandemic)

Marion Heritage Research Centre

August is Australian National Family History Month, and the MHRC is hosting 4 different talks over 4 weeks on the family history theme.

2pm, Monday 2nd August

Researching Family History on Computer

2pm, Tuesday 10th August

Where Did They Live? SA Land Research

2pm, Wednesday 18th August

Family History DNA for Beginners

2pm, Tuesday 24th August

Looking After Your Family Treasures

Book now, as places are limited.

7420 6455 or heritage@marion.sa.gov.au

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

Marion Historical Society

Next meeting:

August 18th

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

Clem Latz

Georgiana Molloy – WA Colonist and Botanist

All visitors are Welcome