



INFORMATION NEWSLETTER

Number 114 – March 2017

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Our February Meeting

At the February meeting we had an interesting talk from Tony Brooks. Tony came to Australia from England in 1971. After continuing his career as a teacher in South Australia for more than ten years he retired and took up writing “faction” – novels based on historical facts.

The factual characters – heroes and villains in Australia’s history – were the subject of his talk.

The villain Tony most loved to hate was James Morisset, the cruel and tyrannical commandant of the penal colony of Norfolk Island. Among other villains Tony spoke of were mine owners of South Australia’s “Little Cornwall”, some of whom provided such woeful pay and conditions that the miners went on strike – the very first strike in South Australia and the first major industrial action in the whole of Australia.

Among the heroes Catherine Helen Spence was clearly Tony’s favourite. Catherine immigrated to South Australia from Scotland in 1839 with her family at the age of fourteen. She began her working life as a governess, but being an outstanding writer she soon became both a novelist and journalist. Not all of her works were published during her lifetime. Tony told us with great amusement that one of them, “Handfasted”, was considered to be immoral and was not published until 1984. Catherine was also a tireless worker for the welfare of women and children, and although she never married, raised three families of orphaned children. Although not successful in her attempt she was also Australia’s first female political candidate.

Among Tony’s other heroes were Lawrence Frayne, a victim of Morisset’s regime; Captain Alexander Maconochie, who succeeded Morisset and pioneered a humane and successful model for the rehabilitation of prisoners; and Antarctic explorer Douglas Mawson.

From the Newspapers 100 Years Ago

Communication was very limited and water transport was significant 100 years ago. It is also interesting to note the changes in the use of words and in punctuation over the century.

Express and Telegraph (Adelaide, SA : 1867 - 1922), Thursday 15 March 1917, page 2

STEAMER FOUNDERS IN A GALE.

A FAMILY IN PERIL.

AN EXCITING EXPERIENCE.

A sensation was caused in Milang on Wednesday evening by news that a steamer had foundered near Point Sturt, in Lake Alexandria. Messrs. W. & H. Dunk were informed by telephone from Narrung that a steamer, with a barge in tow, had been seen passing Point Sturt, but a little later the barge alone was visible, apparently stationary, and that the steamer had disappeared. A storm was raging on the lake. Even those comparatively shallow waters become very rough during a heavy gale. It was supposed by the watchers that the steamer had foundered, and that the barge was being held to the wreck by the tow line, though apparently no one saw the steamer sink. No sign of any men could be observed on the barge or in the water.

Messrs. Dunk had not a steamer of their own running in the direction where the wreck occurred, and the identity of the vessel that had gone down could not be ascertained for some time. An effort was made to get into telephonic communication with Goolwa to find out what steamer and barge were moving in the part mentioned, but Goolwa could not be “raised.” As soon as the news reached Milang Mr. W. Woodrow and his son secured a motor launch, and accompanied by Mounted-Constable McDonald set off for the scene of the supposed disaster. It was thought the steamer must have foundered in the channel, where there would be about 30 ft. of water. The lake is shallower. Messrs. Dunk lost a barge in Lake Alexandrina recently in 14 ft. of water.

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A Trading Vessel.

People at Goolwa late in the evening reported that the wrecked vessel was the *Merle*, a trading steamer, owned by Mr. Deaner, of Morgan, and that on board were Mr. Deaner, his wife, and three children, and two or three hands. The vessel was only 60 ft. long, and was considered by Milang shipping men to be not capable of weathering a heavy storm. The barge had been on the slips at Goolwa for over haul, and the steamer was towing it back to Morgan.

No Lives Lost.

The search party returned to Milang in the motor boat about midnight, and stated that the steamer had foundered, but all on board were safe. When the steamer was swamping they took to the dinghy and reached the barge. They moored it and prepared to settle down for the night. There are comfortable quarters on the barge, which is fitted up like a store, and the shipwrecked people decided to stay there until morning as they were snug, and there was no question that the barge would ride out the gale. Only the funnel of the steamer remained above water.

While the war continued newspapers reported on everyday life but were grasshoppers that big in 1917? - Or was it just the numbers?

Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Thursday 15 March 1917, page 6

GRASSHOPPERS HOLD UP TRAINS.

BROKEN HILL EXPRESS DELAYED.
Broken Hill, March.14.,

The express arrived two hours behind time this morning. It was stated that the delay was occasioned by grasshoppers obstructing the track at McDonald's Hill, about 45 miles from Cockburn. Mr. A. H. Allen, traffic manager to the Silverton Tramway Company, to-day said a goods train, which left Broken Hill on Sunday last, was blocked by grasshoppers at the sintering works, and had to return to Broken Hill until the line was cleared.

The changes in society and education brought about new requirements in High Schools

The Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929) Thu 15 Mar 1917 Page 5

DEPUTATIONS.
WOODVILLE HIGH SCHOOL.

A deputation, which was introduced by the Hon. J. Jelley, M.L.C., consisting of the Chair-man, Secretary, and certain members of the Woodville High School Council, waited on the Commissioner of Public Works (Hon. H. Jackson), in the absence of the Minister of Education (Hon. C. Vaughan), on Monday last. It urged that a properly furnished room should be provided for the comfort and convenience of the elder girls attending the school, and also that there should be less frequent alterations in the teaching staff. The Commissioner expressed him-self in sympathy with the requests. He said he recognised that adolescent girls needed more consideration than the ordinary primary school pupil, but he pointed out that the provision of such a room at Woodville would result in many other similar requests, of which the cost would be high. He doubted whether it would be possible, at present, at any rate, to take any action. With regard to the transfer of teachers, the teacher had to be considered as much as the pupil, and promotion resulting from seniority and ability could not be withheld because of the needs of any particular school. He regretted that there were so many changes, but he was sure the Director of Education would take care that no unnecessary moves would be made.

News from the Marion Heritage Research Centre

The MHRC is starting the year with enthusiasm. To start with we have a couple of workshops: *Finding Your Family History at the MHRC* (fully booked) and *Introduction to Trove and Ancestry* (1 spot left). We will also have a table at the Marion Celebrates event on Saturday 25 March at the Marion Cultural Centre. Come along and say Hello! Watch the Messenger and What's On! booklet for info about our events each month.

Bookings for events are usually required
Please call us on 7420 6445 or email
heritage@marion.sa.gov.au

Marion Historical Society

Our next meeting will take place on
Wednesday 15th April 2017
7.30pm at Coinda

*The Annual General Meeting
followed by*

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