



INFORMATION NEWSLETTER

Number 124 – March 2019

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Our February Meeting

The Visit of Prince Alfred to South Australia.

Jason Shute, our first speaker for the year, gave us a great start with his interesting and well-researched talk on the visit to South Australia of Prince Alfred, the fourth child and second son of Queen Victoria.

The 1860s were a turbulent time in South Australia. There was social unrest due to the bad economic times. The social unrest in turn produced political unrest. Governments were elected only to fall again, sometimes within weeks or months.

In 1866, many companies were collapsing, and the Burra mines were losing hundreds of pounds every day, although there was, at least, a good harvest that year. Such was the situation when Henry Ayers began his fourth term in as many years as premier, in the May of 1867. It was a bad time to be premier – everything was falling apart.

Ayers had been an eminent businessman and had managed the affairs of many others, but even he seemed unable to turn the colony around. He was even confronted by the unemployed on his own doorstep. This situation was the backdrop of the proposed royal visit of HRH Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh.

Prince Alfred had set sail on the steam frigate, Galatea, in the January of 1867, on a world tour. Having visited many countries and had many experiences, including a visit to the Exposition Universale in Paris, Prince Alfred crossed the Indian Ocean from Africa to Australia. He arrived at Glenelg on 31 Oct 1867. He was the first member of the royal family ever to visit Australia.

A carriage picked up Prince Alfred from the Glenelg dock. Massive crowds were assembled to greet him, and children sang the National Anthem. People lined the road as he

made his way to the city. Darkness was beginning to fall, and 40,000 gas lights illuminated the public buildings. Many businesses were decorated with bunting and other buildings displayed pictures of the prince.

An official reception was held in the Adelaide Town Hall that evening. The prince spent three weeks in Adelaide, staying at Government House. Some of the highlights of his visit were: laying the foundation stone of the new GPO; a kangaroo chase in 100-degree heat; and an opening ball at the Town Hall. A painting depicting the ball, by James Shaw, is on display in the foyer of the town hall.

The visit was popular, and raised the spirits of the colony, possibly accounting for the fact that the Ayers government lasted over a year on this occasion. At the end of his tour of Adelaide, Prince Alfred reported to the press: “I have noticed in Adelaide an absence of the poor and rowdy class, so numerous elsewhere”. This would have been a popular remark for the government, which had recently legislated to not accept convicts in the colony.

Unfortunately, the prince did not have the same good fortune everywhere in Australia. In Melbourne the visit was dogged by social unrest, and in Sydney he was shot by an Irish nationalist extremist. His wound was fortunately not life-threatening, and he was able to continue his tour soon afterwards. Although he requested clemency for his assassin, and although the assassin, O’Farrell, was thought to be mentally ill, he was hanged on 21 Apr 1868. This was Australia’s first political assassination attempt. After leaving Australia, Prince Alfred continued on to New Zealand.

Jason delivered his talk in an interesting and lively manner, accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation. An excellent first meeting.

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Making History Glenthorne National Park

Plans are in place for the creation of a new Glenthorne National Park comprising O'Halloran Hill Recreation Park, Marino Conservation Park, Hallett Cove Conservation Park, Happy Valley Reservoir, areas of the Field River Valley and the Glenthorne property.

All these areas are steeped in history, geological, Aboriginal, early European and recent.

O'Halloran Hill Recreation Park. The land was cleared and was farmed for 90 years. The land was acquired by the Government starting in the 1970s and declared a park for recreation and to protect the Hills Face Zone from development.

Marino Conservation Park. Again, the land was used for grazing, cultivation and quarrying. The park was proclaimed as a conservation park in 1989 to help protect its remnant coastal vegetation.

Hallett Cove Conservation Park, is one of Australia's most outstanding geological and archaeological sites, recording an Australian ice age some 280 million years ago and providing more than 1,700 Aboriginal artefacts.

The area was proclaimed as a conservation park in 1976 for the protection of its outstanding scientific and historic features.

Happy Valley Reservoir Built between 1892 and 1897 and with public access prohibited, the natural "bush" of the reservoir's enclosed catchments are home to kangaroos, echidnas and koalas.

The Field River Valley is privately owned. The Worthing copper mine was established in the 1840s and fossilised remains of a 70,000-year-old diprotodon together with Indigenous cultural artefacts have been found.

Glenthorne "farm". The property has a well-documented history. Settled in 1839 Glenthorne has been a farm, a training ground for military horses in before and after WWI, a research facility from 1949, and is now set to become a heritage precinct within Glenthorne National Park.

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Glenthorne National Park Open Days

The park is holding three open days in April where you can access the Glenthorne property and take a guided tour.

The park will be open from 12.30pm to 4.30pm and a ranger-guided tour is available

Sturdy walking shoes, sunscreen, a hat, and refillable water bottles are recommended.

The open days be held on the 5th ,6th and 7th of April 2019.

Details are available on the website

<https://www.glenthorne.sa.gov.au/home>

News from the Marion Heritage Research Centre

The MHRC is open throughout the year on Monday, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Visitors are always welcome and there is plenty to keep you interested.

For the May SA History Festival we are holding a display, '**Historic Gems of Glenthorne National Park**', from 3rd to 16th May at the Cove Civic Centre. Bookings not essential. Just pop in any time during the library's hours.

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

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

Marion Historical Society

**Our next meeting will take place on
Wednesday 17th April 2019
7.30pm at Cooina**

**Annual General Meeting
(no speaker)
followed by**

Members show and tell.

*Please bring items of interest along to
share with other members*