



INFORMATION NEWSLETTER

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Our May Meeting

Cancelled due to Covid-19

Hopefully we will be able to resume our activities before the end of the year.

Captured in the nick of time

The Marion Council twice tried to add a substantial early 20th-century stone and brick house at 3 Franklin Street, Sturt to its list of Local Heritage places, but its owners successfully opposed both nominations. Recently they sold the property to the Adelaide Benevolent Society, an independent not-for-profit organisation which has been providing affordable housing to disadvantaged South Australians since 1849, and which already owned the dozens of flats on the land around the house.

Heather Latz wrote to the Adelaide Benevolent Society to request permission to photograph the house and property and on the 20th of February 2020 she and Danielle Trewartha met a staff member there and took about 200 photos inside and outside to add to the Marion Heritage Research Centre collection. The house has now been demolished.



Household chores in the 1930s

The 21st of April 2020 marked the one-year anniversary of the death of our long-standing member Rhonda Woodward. Her daughter, Judy

Jauncey, has begun to sort through Rhonda's records and memorabilia and send us copies to be donated to the Marion Heritage Research Centre and the Marion Historic Village Museum.

Two of the early donations are documents written by Rhonda's brother Keith (1921–2009). One describes the chores that he had to do while growing up in the family house at 257 Sturt Road, Sturt. These included wood-splitting, cleaning cooking pots, shoe-cleaning, helping with fruit-preserving and many other things, but here's a description of his least favourite chore.

“The worst thing about being the oldest male in a family was having to ‘bury the dog!’ The outer suburbs where we lived had no ‘Night Man’ to service the outdoor ‘dunnies’, so it was Dad’s job to attend to this unmentionable chore, but only after the eldest son had dug a pit in the household vegy garden. This hole progressed in an orderly fashion through the vegy patch where there was always a ‘fallow’ patch left for this reason. I suspect that it was every father’s ambition to one day have an eldest son to whom he could pass on this whole operation! I remember watching this job moving ever closer to my domain as I approached my teenage years, knowing that I would soon progress from digging holes to having the task of filling them, and the few years that I did in fact have this job have thankfully been almost deleted from my memory! But I do remember that at the outbreak of WW2, I joined the RAAF and gleefully passed this unspoken task on to my younger brother, who wasn’t in the least bit impressed at his promotion from ‘hole digger’. It’s possible that his elevated status prompted him to join the Navy as soon as his age permitted it!”

A Quiz Question

*How well do you know your
South Australian History?*

When did the registration of births, deaths and marriages commence in SA?

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Charles Sturt Museum - Grange

When Charles Sturt arrived in Adelaide after overlanding cattle from NSW he was offered a position of Surveyor General in 1838. He returned to NSW and sold his property there and returned to Adelaide with his wife and two sons in 1839. He was offered the position of Assistant Land Commissioner and eventually took up the position of Register - General.

Soon after his arrival Sturt bought 390 acres at Reedbeds, a descriptive name that was appropriate at that time but is now not an appropriate descriptive name for the dry sandy area we now know as Grange.

At that time there was low swampy reed area known as Witongga stretching behind the coastal dunes from what is now Glenelg to the Port River. Witongga was a summer living place for the Kaurna people with plenty of food; mussels, waterfowl, yabbies, small animals and snakes. Flora included river red gum, sheoak, tea tree and wattles. Reeds were used for weaving baskets, nets and string.

Sturt named his property "Grange" and in 1841 built a brick cottage followed by a rendered nursery section with bedrooms for the children, laundry, kitchen and servant's rooms. The property eventually had extensive outbuildings including stables, coach house, harness room and an underground dairy.

Grange was located in:

... a very pleasant situation in a natural park of shady red gum trees ... they would look across to the still largely tree-covered Adelaide Plain ... The creek, which came winding southwards through the paddock, the upper reaches of the Pt. Adelaide River, ... and behind the house began the tea-tree and other flowering sandhill scrub which at that time was all that lay between them and the sands of an exceptionally wide beach.....

<https://www.charlessturt.sa.gov.au/community/arts,-culture-and-history/kaurna-culture/witongga>

Sturt resided at the property until 1853 and ran it as a farm; he was a keen gardener with a vast orchard of pear, apple, plum and grape vines, oats and barley for his horses. Dairy cattle, pigs, geese, pheasants, turkeys and beehives completed his farm. He also ran hunting, with hounds, from his residence.

In 1853 Sturt and his family returned to England to enable the completion of their children's education.

After his return to England the property was leased to various tenants until 1877 when the property was sold, in 1878 it was subdivided to form the suburb of Grange.

Grange House stayed in private hands until 1957 when the Henley and Grange Council bought the property which was preserved, restored and opened to the public. It was placed on the Register of the National Estate in 1978.

The museum comprises two main sections with one wing holding a display of Sturt artifacts and information on his expeditions and the other wing furnished appropriately with furniture of the period of Sturt's residency including some of Sturt's own furniture.

Only a small section of land remains and the landscape has been changed dramatically.

The museum includes a garden area that is currently being redeveloped using plants that would have been available in the period of his residence.

Definitely a place to add to our bucket list of places to visit after we have all been released.

Answer to the Quiz Question

The registration of births, deaths and marriages commenced in SA in 1842

Sources: *South Australian Year Book*

News from the Marion Heritage Research Centre

Looking for more history to do at home? Ancestry Library Edition has free access to online users, extended now until the end of May! Just go to the City of Marion website, select Libraries, select Online Resources, and find the link to Ancestry. Pop in your library card number & pin to start enjoying it at home!

Remember, we are still able to help with your historical queries; just email heritage@marion.sa.gov.au

Keep well & enjoying our quieter life. Danielle

Marion Historical Society Next meeting:

Meetings are cancelled until further notice during COVID-19 restrictions.

The secretary will maintain contact with members by email and the Facebook page will be updated each month to advise about the status of that month's meeting.

Sadly the proposed meetings of our society have been cancelled until further notice. Such a great program had been arranged.

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