CLARE REGIONAL HISTORY GROUP
NEWSLETTER
AUTUMN 2022

The following lecture was delivered by historian Ian Auhl in 1969. It is particularly interesting for the comments of the time, when the formal recognition and restoration of valuable historic sites was in its infancy.

BURRA IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE
By Mr Ian Auhl

[Delivered at THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE DEPARTMENT OF ADULT EDUCATION –
"HISTORIC COPPER TOWNS OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA" SCHOOL held on 9-11TH May 1969]

There are two histories of the Burra – just as there are two histories of South Australia's other historic copper towns. There is the history of Burra as a mining town from 1845 until 1877 and the history of Burra as the small provincial town which it became after the mine closed.

Burra, the mining town, was also an industrial town, with its own smelting works after 1849 and because of its distance from Adelaide had to learn to be as self-sufficient as possible. It had its own smelters and its own brick-making works turning out fire-bricks for its furnaces and stacks. It had its own breweries – three of them. Most of Burra's buildings came out of the same local quarry and this gave the mine and town an architecture unified by the strong texture of the local stone and by the sound workmanship of the local stone-masons. Mining underground both at Kapunda and Burra was carried out by candle light so both towns had their own candle manufactory.

The copper towns did not have agricultural and pastoral industries to sustain them nor did they need these.

By 1849 there were nearly 5,000 people living in the mining towns gathered around the Burra-Burra mine and it was the nine which gave the towns life and the inhabitants either directly or indirectly, their living. Indeed Henry Ayers, the Secretary of the South Australian Mining Association, claimed that in the early years the whole of South Australia was directly or indirectly employed by the mine. There were thousands of bullock teams on the three roads leading to the mine. Pt. Adelaide was crowded with shipping bringing in new migrants – many of them Cornish miners – and back loading with copper ore from the Kapunda and Burra Mines.

Kapunda, Burra and the copper towns of Yorke Peninsula were all self-sustaining towns in the sense that they lived on their own assets – copper. It was mining which opened up the Mid-North of South Australia. In the wake of the miner came the farmer. By the time the Burra-Burra mine closed in 1877, a pastoral industry had grown up in the surrounding district. Burra and Kapunda did not become ghost towns like Blinman further north. Kapunda became the centre of a thriving agricultural district. Burra managed to survive as a shopping centre and as a market centre of a new agricultural district for the stock and station country of the East.

But the character of the towns changed when mining ceased. Burra changed from a roaring mining town of 5,000 people – Cornish miners, Welsh and German smelters, Irish teamsters and English labourers to a quiet little provincial town – off the road to anywhere and with a rapidly dwindling population. Its miners left to go to the gold-diggings in the 1850's and later in the 1860's to the new copper towns springing up around the mines at Kadina, Wallaroo and Moonta or to other promising mines 200 miles North in the remote part of the Flinders Ranges. Although the mining character of the town changed, the buildings remained. With few exceptions Burra's buildings, both public and private, were erected before the mine closed down in 1877. Burra, like Kapunda, learnt to live on the buildings it had and these buildings have, in the main been adequate for their dwindling populations. At Wallaroo, Moonta and Kadina the old towns are gradually being overgrown by the needs of an expanding population and of new industries. The mining histories of Kapunda and

Burra have been largely forgotten. No Oswald Pryor ever rose in either of these towns to immortalise South Australia's other "Little Cornwalls."

Kapunda, Australia's earliest copper mine, virtually closed in 1878. The Burra-Burra mine had closed the year before when 300 miners were given a week's notice but the Moonta mines did not close down until 1923. At Kapunda the Burra today, there would be no one left who could even remember the closing of the mines. There is no one left to reminisce. The Yorke Peninsula mines did not open until the 1860's when Kapunda and Burra had already exhausted their best ores. Kapunda had no newspaper until 1860. Burra had none until 1872 when the mine had nearly finished its life. This fact makes research difficult. But the Burra-Burra Mine was such a bonanza and created so much excitement in the young colony that the Adelaide newspapers of the time, especially in the first six years of its life, reported on its wonders and its activities almost day by day. Reporters from as far afield as the Sydney Morning Herald were regular visitors to the distant mine and have left us detailed descriptions of the mine and towns both at Kapunda and at Burra. However, there reports lack the flesh and blood of personal reminiscence which Pryor was able to give to his story of his mining towns. The Burra and Kapunda mines were too early for photography to leave us any record, except in their closing years. Fortunately, the artist, S.T. Gill, visited the Burra Mine in1847 and has left us many water colours of the town and the mine which are as intriguing as any photographs, if not as informative.

What is left of the mining past in South Australia's historic copper towns? What is there worth preserving? What is it possible to preserve? What are the ways and means of preservation?

At both Kapunda and Burra, a little imagination can still conjure up something of the strange mining life of these towns 100 years ago. Some of the transplanted Cornish mining architecture remains – in Burra there is a whole complex of these mine structures. In all the old towns there remains fine examples of Cornish domestic architecture. In Burra and Kapunda there is enough of the old towns and their mines to give these towns a future as tourist towns and to make them places of pilgrimage for those in search of their own past, of South Australia's beginnings and of the earliest era in Australia's mining history.

To be continued.

AN UP-TO-DATE HIGHWAY THROUGH CLARE

BITUMEN WORK IN PROGRESS.

For some time, large gangs of men with engineering plant and machinery have been busily engaged in remaking the Main North Road, or national highway, to and from the north of South Australia in the vicinity of Clare and they will by the end of the week be engaged in the formation and top-dressing work in Main Street. This activity is being carried out by the Highways and Local Government Department, who are in sole control of the national roadways in this State. This project has been in progress right from Adelaide for some considerable time and the widening of the roads, re-surfacing and regrading has imposed a big task on the department. Many dangerous curves along the full route of the highway have been eliminated and at Inchiquin Hill, Dolan's Corner and Kimber's corner on the Stanley Flat Road, extensive works of this kind have been in progress. Super elevated curves and greater field of vision at these danger spots are being completely revolutionized. The actual surface work is a credit to the Highways Government Dept. and the busily engaged lorries with the screenings and top dressings passing through the town Northward have been a busy feature to be observed daily. When completed Clare should have a highway to be proud of. Regarding Main Street, some doubts have been expressed that the Dept. may only top dress the centre portion. Officially the Clare Corporation have not yet been advised, but we are given to understand the work will be done from side to side. If such however should not be the case, we hope immediate representations will be made to do the full width.

Opening of a Sheep Dip

An interesting and pleasant function took place at Stanley Flat on Wednesday 22nd. Inst., when the formal opening of the "Stanley Flat Sheep Dip Limited" took place. Recent legislation makes the dipping of sheep compulsory through the state as far north as Melrose. To comply with the Act about twenty sheep owners of Clare and Stanley Flat combined to erect a co-operative dip, and the committee hit upon the happy idea of combining business with pleasure by inviting the members, their wives and families and such of the general public as were interested, to afternoon tea. Quite a large number were present and rather enjoyed the proceedings. The dip is erected on an acre of ground leased for 21 years from Mr. R.B. James. The land is divided into a convenient number of yards and pens, with the necessary races and the dip itself with its draining yards is very solidly constructed.

The initial trial could not have been more successful and the planning and erection reflect credit on the committee and builders. The cost was something over £100. It is intended to dip sheep for the public as well as for members, so that it should prove a great convenience. The first lot of sheep to receive their inaugural baptism of immersion was 130 of Mr. James', which were run through in half an hour. To one who had never seen the operation before it was interesting and curious to watch. The behaviour of the Jumbucks was very varied. Some had to be dragged by main force to the edge of the "jump off" and shoved in. Others were almost too eager and if not checked would overcrowd the bath. Yet more would rush to the brink where, before taking the plunge, they hung trepidant just like shivering mortals on a cold morning. Once in the bath the great majority struck out manfully, or sheepfully trying to make the landing stage in record time, displaying more of that stupidity for which their race is blamed or famed. A small minority lived up to their reputation, or else were born tired and loafed and wallowed compelling the attendants to tow them along with their crooks. Yet may not this be an example of brilliant reasoning powers as instancing a knowledge of their value and that the owner in self defiance would be compelled to do the work of saving them. Not being a sheep man, I cannot say.

Under the cool and grateful foliage of spreading gum trees, tea and cake were hospitably dispensed by the Stanley Flat ladies to the visitors. The shade of these trees will prove equally grateful to many generations of Jumbucks in the future. It should be mentioned that a good well of water has been sunk alongside the dip. Assuredly the members of the co-operation are to be congratulated on their enterprise and on the success of their opening event.

From The Northern Argus Friday January 31 1919

CRHG COMMITTEE

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An exciting opportunity - too good to miss?

Dave Willson (Councillor C&GVC), Helen Perry (Chairman CRHG) and Penny Pratt (Member for Frome)

On the 10th of March two Public meetings were held in the Barbara Long Function Centre where Kim Kelly delivered a presentation of Robewalk.com and its Tombstone Tourism App. Attendees included private individuals and representatives from various Mid North organisations (ie Sevenhill, Mintaro Progress Association, Auburn, Rocky River, Burra, Riverton, Mount Horrocks Historical Society, St Marks at Penwortham, plus "delegates" from various church congregations, curators of cemeteries, Clare Regional History Group, Clare Branch of the National Trust, Clare Valley Wine Food & Tourism Centre, Penny Pratt newly elected SA Member for Frome and our Clare & Gilbert Valleys Council. As a result, a few people have submitted stories or indicated that they are prepared to assist. **If you, as a reader of this newsletter, would like to step forward in any capacity, please contact us** (contact details below).

Two weeks later the Robe website designer, Tony Owen, kindly accepted our invitation to discuss the project with a group of seven individuals. Tony offered to provide a miniature sample website (free of charge) with our own photos and stories to use as a demonstration version. This means that the ball is again in our court and with the aid of this "Proof of Concept" version we now have the ability to stimulate interest, encourage local historians to contribute stories and also persuade our all-regional businesses to provide a link to this new project on their own websites.

We have formulated a draft budget of expenditure and potential income via donations. Clearly, it **is essential to pay industry experts** in order for us to produce a professional product that will be simple and easy download, stand the test of time, appeal to a discerning audience and give this project the potential to expand indefinitely.

Ultimately, this initiative will positively benefit the entire Mid North community:

- There are many elderly people in Aged Care Centres who are a wonderful untapped resource of knowledge and experience of what life was like in the past.
- By inviting school children and local readers to conduct captivating interviews for the audio recordings, we will access the resources our visitors and our residents can share. This opportunity will provide a new engagement within the community.
- The project will enhance the experience of all visitors to the Clare and Gilbert Valleys region.
- It will provide a level playing field, providing **every community with an equal opportunity** to be represented and become a "chapter in the history book of the entire region" via this project.
- The audio app and associated podcasts will enable them to explore while they listen to inspirational stories and more easily imagine what life was like in the past.
- It will give tourism a new dimension. Members within each community will also discover so much more about their local history, its buildings, landmarks, and even reason for the names of the streets by means of this technology.

George Hawker, Penny Pratt (Member for Frome), Kim Kelly (Robewalk.com) and Michael Pratt.

If you have any questions, suggestions, wish to contribute verifiable stories or offer assistance of **any** sort, please don't hesitate to contact Sal Hawker (sal@bungareestation.com.au) or History Group Committee members - Gerald Lally (lallygh66@gmail.com), Josephine Hudson (thebiggirl06@yahoo.com.au), Helen Perry (hrperry@bigpond.net.au) or David and Wendy Spackman (hilltop@aussiebb.com.au).

DOLLAR COTTAGE

When William Leigh visited the Fleurieu Peninsula in 1839 he wrote: 'In every part of the neighbourhood I visited, I found the land exceedingly rich, and I should unhesitatingly say, fit for any purposes of agriculture'.

Strathalbyn was established by Scots in about 1840; in all probability they were impressed by the aesthetics of the countryside and how well their stock fared on surrounding land. The name Strathalbyn is of Scottish origin. The township grew and within decades metamorphosed into a flourishing town with a great variety of occupations.

In the 1860s William Close built a house and butcher's shop, adding to the occupations of the town. The house was called Boundary Place but in the 1930s given the name of Dollar Cottage. Dollar is a town in Scotland where the father of the current owner, Betty Westwood, lived.

The shop is said to be one of the earliest surviving shops in Strathalbyn. Together with the house the premises show something of Strathalbyn's social history and much of the history of a 19th century market and workplace on a small, localised scale.

The significance of these dwellings is the fact that little has changed since the 1930s, and indeed the butcher shop and part of the house retain its 1860s structure. To walk into this house is to walk into an instant feeling of repose. Much has to do with the current owner whose composure and generosity is reflected in the dwelling of Dollar Cottage.

Betty Westwood moved into Dollar Cottage in 1932 with her parents after a forced sale of their farm in nearby Woodchester; a consequence of the Great Depression.

Betty has led a rather busy life, living in London at the height of food rationing in post war Europe and looking after prisoners of war in Borneo as a nurse. Betty recalls how the presence of the nurses gave British, Dutch and Australian soldiers some sense of security amid the chaos of war.

From 1955 to 1980 Betty lived and worked at St Peters College as a Matron, occasionally working at Geelong Grammar. She retired to Dollar Cottage in 1980; her passion is and always has been the environment and she is fondly known as 'The Tree Lady.

As a member of 'Trees for Life' Betty helps to propagate hundreds of seedlings for land owners. She can often be seen on lonely country roads revegetating barren countryside; her own garden is replete with native vegetation.

Dollar Cottage is an example of a heritage listed place that is being used without changing the original character (Betty still uses her 1860s hand pump for drinking water). Betty admits that when she started living at Dollar Cottage her personality changed from being strict and orderly to flexible and relaxed. Her home is an oasis of tranquillity freed from the modern obsessions of security and order: it has instead the most harmonious disorder.   (photo: SLSA)

IT WAS ALL HAPPENING IN DONNYBROOK IN 1877

IN FEBRUARY 1877 AN "IDLER" CONTRIBUTED THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE IN THE NORTHERN ARGUS.

Taking a run over to Clare from my retired haunt at the lagoon, I was surprised to learn that Donnybrook is receiving the lion's share of attention in gossiping circles. I have always taken that place to be a quiet, secluded and unpretending village, where everyone was satisfied with a modest share of this world's goods. But not so. Everything of importance seems to transpire at that fertile spot and it has become notorious in consequence. If a fire breaks out in a paddock, that paddock is bound to be convenient to Donnybrook. If there are any modest and retiring young ladies in the country, Donnybrook is the place to find them. If you drop across a choice collection of spirited youths, you may be certain that Donnybrook claims them all. If you hear the musical strains of a brass band, they are sure to emanate from Donnybrook. If there is anything special in courting, Donnybrook is to the fore. If any person of an evening is seen coming from that direction, he is morally bound to be interrogated with, "Been to Donnybrook, eh?" If there is a case in the Police Court among the ladies, you can lay six to four on Donnybrook, and win in a canter. On the whole then, the brook is becoming quite a fashionable resort. I am told that its wattle clad hills are the chief attraction and the young folks wend their way thither to admire the beautiful works of nature, which to them is a pleasing and never tiring study.

COMMONWEALTH BANK TO BUILD IN CLARE

In December 1946 the Bank purchased the store and residence on the corner of Burton and Main Street for £1,950, with the intention later on when building conditions permitted to erect a modern bank of two storeys with residential quarters for the Manager. The property at the time was owned by Mr. H.H.Pratt and occupied by Mr. T. Raymond trading as Raymond's Shoe Store.

This particular shop had quite a history with years earlier having been the National Bank of Australasia, also a doctors rooms and for several decades the well-known Boot and Shoe premises of French Brothers. In August 1947 it was being partly demolished by contractor Mr. S.P. Stephens of Auburn in readiness for a temporary structure for the Commonwealth Bank Branch. Previously all bank transactions took place at the Post Office.

On November 20th 1947 the Northern Argus announced on Page 1 –

"Another step forward in the progress of the town and district of Clare was marked on Monday last by the opening of a Branch of the Commonwealth Bank of Australia and the Commonwealth Savings Bank in their premises on the corner of Main and Burton Streets".

By making a small addition to what already existed, the Bank had not only been able to convert the shop portion of the building into banking premises but to provide a residence at the rear for the Manager and his family.

Some seven years later Tenders were called for the demolition of the temporary building and construction of the new Bank building with a modern residence being built in North East Clare. During the building the Bank transferred to the old Town Hall with the assistance of the local firm of F.W. Forsaith. It was the Bank's intention to replace the existing structure with a spacious modern building which will be a valuable addition to the town's architecture. The over-all cost expected to be between £35,000 and £40,000.

AUTHOR	TITLE	DATE OF PUBLICATION	pages	cover	Subjects	CRHG call no
The following books were donated by the Estate of Max Atkinson, Snowtown. The gift was arranged by his executor Lyn Forby of Wallaroo.						
Aird, Graham & Klassen, Nic	Beltana - the town that will not die	1984	200	HB	Beltana	SA Bel
Arnold, Ken	Sunshine Harvester Works - Hugh V McKay - an agricultural icon	2005	96	PB	McKay	FH McK
Barritt, Pam	Coorabie & districts sketchbook	1986	40	PB	Coorabie	SA Coo
Branson, Shirley	Go West, young woman	1995	95	PB	Yalanda, Kimba	SA Kim
Brown, Judith	Country life in pioneer South Australia	1977	199	HB	SA General	REF SA Bro
Burfield, Arthur	Booleroo Times - a history of the Hundred of Booleroo 1875 - 1975	1975	192	HB	Booleroo	SA Boo
Burns, Martin	Saint Canice's Southern Centenary - the Catholic Church at Snowtown SA 1882 - 1982	1982	201	HB	Snowtown	MN Sno
Centenary Committee	St. John's Lutheran congregation, Condowie SA - centenary 1876 - 1976	1976	23	PB	Condowie	MN Con
Correll, Reg W	From midgets to giants in agriculture 1894 - 1985 - a summary of minutes taken from the minute books commencing with the foundation of the Northern Yorke's Peninsula Agricultural Bureau Field Trial and Show Society in Nov 1894	1985	96	PB	Yorke Peninsula	SA Yor
Edwards, Milton	To the Mallee born	1993	71	PB	Paruna, Pinnaroo	SA Par
Gray, Marina	I remember - anecdotes of the Terowie Army Staging Camp 1940-1945	1988	24	PB	Terowie, WWII	SA Ter
Guerin, Caroline	One hundred years on the land - the history of the Agricultural Bureau of South Australia	1988	275	HB	Ag Bureau of SA	REF SA Gue

History Committee of Streaky Bay and District	The Streaky Bay - a history of the Streaky Bay District Council area	1988	277	HB	Streaky Bay	SA Str
Hull, Ivan K	The rise and fall of Beltana - a settlement study	1973	42	PB	Beltana	SA Bel
Kirk, Trevor et.al.	Clements Gap district - a brief history	1992	42	PB	Clements Gap	MN Cle

To be continued next issue

BOOKS & CDs FOR SALE

NOYE, RJ **Clare – a district history** (5th ed.) (2021) 298pp. $50 – newly released

ASHBY, Marj **CARINYA 1956 - 1989 A Peaceful and happyhome,** (1989) CWA of SA Clare Branch, Clare, SA **$5**

AUSTIN, Nigel **BOB ROWE – the great cattle trader** (2014) $50

BELLMAN, Elinor A. (1995), **SADDLEWORTH - Hub of the Wheel,** (1995) Saddleworth, SA **$35**

BOND, David **CLARE SHOW "A fine all round display" for 150 years** (2014) Clare SA **$33**

Brinkworth Centenary Book Committee, **MAGPIE CREEK JUNCTION - a history of Brinkworth and district 1892 – 1992,** Brinkworth, SA. Recently reprinted. **$50**

THE CIVIC RECORD 1836 – 1986, Wakefield Press695pp. **$50**

CROSS, Jack, **Two Crosses: Ephraim and Jack - a proletarian history: including life in the unusual village of Armagh 1840 to 1910; as well as on Bungaree Station after 1860,** (2016) Printak Pty Ltd, Adelaide, SA. 145 pages, illustrations,maps, portraits, facsimiles **$30**

DICKESON, Helen, **CLARE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - a history 1856 - 1988** (1993) 120pp. Includes baptisms,marriages, burials, and extensive index. **$14**

ELLIS, Julie-Ann, **HARD-YACKA - The story of a Mid-North town in South Australia,** (1995) Yacka Historical Group **$40**

HAYNES J. & SCHMAAL, E.J. **CLARE – A BACKWARD GLANCE** (1980) **$8**

HEAD OF THE RIVERS – Black Springs, Manoora, Waterloo (1992) **$25**

Johnson, Winifred N.
  COTTAGES AND CAMEOS OF CLARE (1988) by 100pp, illus. **$25**
  CLARE CAMEOS (1986) Includes oral histories of our olderClare residents as interviewed by Win in the State's Sesquicentennial year. 2nd ed. **$15**
  BLYTH - a silo of stories 1860 - 1990 A comprehensive history of the town and district of Blyth, including familystories, farming, community and sporting activities.
Excellent photographs, many in colour. **$45**
  THE METHODISTS OF CLARE 1851 - 1977 (1994) 124pp. Indexed. **$12**
  FROM WHERE I SIT (2010) A Collection of articles onchosen themes written over past times **$16**
  A HISTORY OF NGADJURI LODGE TRUST (2010) **$10**
  JUST AS IT WAS (2010) The story of Win's life with humour and affection. 96pp including photos. **$20**

JENNER, Rosemary, **Mintaro recollections (2020) $30**

JONES, Coralie, **CLARE VALLEY, SA** A pictorial souvenir.(2014) **$20**

USBs and CD-ROMS

HEADSTONE PHOTOS FROM LOCAL CEMETERIES

(USB) (2005) $15

THE ANNUAL REPORTS OF ROTARY CLUB OF CLARE 1964 –

2011 (DVD) **$20** Limited release

FEDERATION CD ROM - history of the Clare & Gilbert

CARDS FOR SALE

Local images on a blank card for your personal message **$3**

KEAIN, Maurice **From where the Broughton flows – a history of the Spalding district** (1976) 214pp **(15)**

LALLY, Gerald A.

HILL RIVER A Valley of History (2004) $30

  A LANDMARK OF FAITH Church of the Immaculate Conception, Mintaro and its parishioners 1856–2006 (2006) **$35**
  TIMES PAST – a pictorial history of Farrell Flat (2012) 194pp. **$30**

TWO CHURCHES – Catholic faithful of the Clare Valley (2019) **$50**

LALLY, Gerald, et al, **SOUTH CLARE SPORTS CLUB – Celebrating 50 years of success 1960 – 2010** (2010) **$20**

LINN, Rob, **The story of Bungaree Station** (2011) (Illus) **$17**

NEILL (nee Mickel), Laurel, **"A WALK WITH LAUREL" a walking tour of the buildings and families of Farrell Flat from the memories of the period 1929 – 1939** (2012) **$5**

NOYE, Robert J. **TALKING HISTORY – Tales of Clare SA** 50 articles published weekly in *The Northern Argus* (2003) **$15**

PATTULLO, William
THE LAND HISTORY OF POLISH HILL RIVER 1842 - 1990 (1991) Details the ownership history of 120 sections of land in Polish Hill River, to the edge of Mintaro township. **$25**
THE OWNERS OF STANLEY FLAT 1836 – 1986 reprinted 2015 **$30**

SCHMAAL, Jean
  THE INCHIQUIN STORY, Clare & District Branch, National Trust, (c1986) Clare SA **$5**
  A QUAINT COURTHOUSE (1987) Clare & District Branch, National Trust, Clare SA **$5**

SEMPLE, Carolyn **"TO THE BEAT OF A DRUM" – Gum Creek School 1898 – 1957** (2018) $20

SIMONS, J.J. 'Boss' **THE CLARE I REMEMBER** 13 articles published in *The Northern Argus* in 1944, describing the Clare of Simons' boyhood in the 1880's and 1890's. Fully indexed. **$15**

TILBROOK, EHH 'Clarion" and TILBROOK, M , **THE PATHS OF GLORY LEAD BUT TO THE GRAVE a history of Clare Cemeteries** (originally published in *The Northern Argus* in 1939) Re-released with updated index **$20**

WARRIOR, Fred et al, **Ngadjuri – Aboriginal people of the Mid North region of South Australia**, (2005) Meadows SA, SASOSE Council Inc **$40**

WILSON, John

  Bob's railway – turbulent political times in SA & a remarkable railroading dog, (2019) **$78**

  The Riesling railway (2018) Photographs, illustrations, maps, drawings, USB **$110**