

# *A Depression Kid's Story*

*An Autobiography*

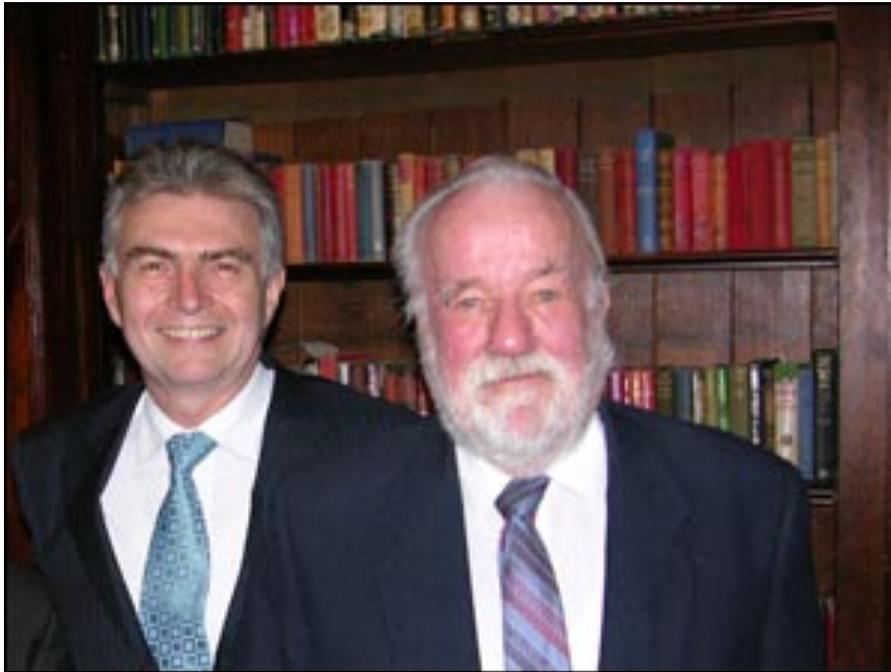
*By*

*Geoffrey H. Manning*



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Hon. John Hill, Minister for the Environment, launched the on-line version of *Manning's Data Base of South Australian History*, on behalf of the SA Library, September 2005.

**Other books by the same author:**

*Hope Farm - Cradle of the McLaren Vale Wine Industry*

*Whisky Makes You Well - The Biography of Frank Maiden*

*Hope Farm Chronicle - Pioneering Tales of South Australia*

*Memoirs of Thomas Frost (ed.)*

*The Romance of Place Names of South Australia (1984)*

*The Tragic Shore - The Wreck of the Star of Greece and a history of the Jetties of Port Willunga.*

*Worth Fighting For - Work and Industrial Relations in the Banking Industry in South Australia*

(In association with Haydon R. Manning)

*Manning's Place Names of South Australia (1990)*

*50 Years of Singing - A History of the Adelaide Harmony Choir*

*The Grange Golf Club*

*A Colonial Experience - 1838-1910 - A Woman's Story of Life in Adelaide, the District of Kensington and Norwood together with reminiscences of Colonial Life (three volumes)*

*Manning's Place Names of South Australia, From Aaron Creek to Zion Hill, Gould Books. (2006)*

**Unpublished Works**

*A Social History of Thebarton*

*Toponymical Tales of South Australia*

*The Russians are Coming - The Defence of Colonial South Australia*

*A Social History of Glenelg - 1836-1936*

*A Social History of the Lower South-East in the 19th Century*

*The Town on Woorlirtina Creek - Naracoorte and District - The First Sixty Years*

*Occasional Essays on South Australian History*

*A Tourist's Guide to the Place Names of South Australia*

*I will fight for what I believe until I drop dead.  
And that's what keeps you alive.  
(Barbara Castle, 1910-2002)*

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## Chapter One

### Childhood to Teenager

#### Prologue

*The more I look at my idle ramblings over past years, the more I regret that my 'education' was restricted to three years of secondary school which was, thankfully, complemented by diverse reading, extra-curricular study within and without the hallowed halls of the Savings Bank of SA, together with an early entry into manhood via the Royal Australian Navy, aged 17 years, where many a lesson was learned in subjects which are of no consequence as I enter my dotage but, perhaps, when I complete my autobiography, have some appeal to the more mordant members of our 21st century citizenry!*

*However, in my meanderings into the social culture of our State, the plight of our indigenous people has been of great concern, while the misery of the working class in the 19th and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries has prompted me to write at length, because I am a direct descendant from that latter genre as disclosed in my preface to my South-East epistle forwarded to you recently.*

*(Extract from a letter to Ms Jan Gaebler Smith of Holdfast Books in 2006)*

#### Introduction

*I've studied books wiv yearnin's to improve,  
To 'eave meself out of me lowly groove,  
An' 'ere is orl the change I ever got:  
"Ark at yer 'eart and you kin learn the lot."  
(C.J. Dennis, *The Sentimental Bloke*)*

Following the cessation of hostilities in World War I my maternal grandfather, more of whom will be said later, perceived greener pastures along the River Murray amidst the newly-founded irrigation colonies and, in the early 1920s, he and his family commenced an overland trek from Mount Gambier that ended at Waikerie. At that time locks were being constructed on the River Murray and at Lock 2, below Waikerie, my father, an itinerant carpenter, was employed – he was born in Chapel Street, Norwood in 1896, the son of George Haydon Manning and Ellen Manning (nee McCullom).



**George Haydon Manning and Ellen Manning**

It was at Waikerie that he met my Mother, Grace Maude Hein, and following their marriage I arrived on this mortal coil on 25 June 1926 at Waikerie.



**Geoff with Grandmother, Annie Hein, and in a pensive mood**

The following year it was reported that:

The huge lock basin is finished... and the men are working on a concrete navigable passway... They inspected the machine sheds, carpenters' and blacksmiths' shops, men's barracks and mess rooms, where over 100 meals, with cook and two assistants, are provided... The married men can buy food at a very little over wholesale prices and the single men's cubicles [are] provided with stretchers, light and wood, and no rent to pay...

The town is laid out in streets and there are 66 galvanised houses with canvas or iron lean-to's. Water in abundance is laid on and this has inspired the thrifty and the flower-lover to enclose little gardens of vegetables and flowers. The school has 10 children on the roll and there have been at least 10 babies playing in the sand. There is a local football club, billiard club, tennis club and cricket clubs. A piano is in the schoolroom where weekly dances are held, the proceeds going to different clubs...

Shortly thereafter our family removed to Peterborough where my father was employed by the Railways Department but, with the advent of the Great Depression in 1929, he was obliged to return to Adelaide in search of gainful employment which turned out to be a labourer's job with the Adelaide Electric Supply Company. This fact was to entertain my mind in latter years as to how he had obtained such a position when thousands of men of a similar ilk were unemployed.

It was not until the time I became involved with the archives of the Savings Bank, following my retirement in 1982, that I discovered that a 'female Aldersey cousin' of my father had married the managing director of the said Company! Thus, it is apparent that the social mores of yesteryear still apply today - It is not what you know but who you know that matters on this troubled planet?

Our rented home was at Albert, Street, Mitcham, contiguous to the Brown Hill Creek which became a favourite haunt of mine and I spent many happy hours there engaged in 'tadpoling'. On Sundays, mother used to dress me up in 'my best bib and tucker' preparatory to attending Sunday school and I recall that, on one occasion, I decided to 'play the wag' and repair to the creek - Alas, I tripped and fell into the water and spent a hapless hour or two attempting to dry off, to no avail. I cannot recall the aftermath other than a smack or two across the buttocks.

I commenced school at Mitcham in 1931 and recall, happily, my fifth birthday when I was the recipient of a 'humming' top. Other memories are of my younger sister, Wanda, being stricken with diphtheria and Mother depressing her tongue with a spoon to enable her to breathe; my best mate, Paddy, an Irish terrier and a constant companion in my frequent excursions to the creek, and the receipt of a parcel of mushroom from my Mother's sister, Mabel Hill, at Yahl Paddock in the South-East and the subsequent sickness from over-indulgence.



**Mitcham School, Grade 2 - 1933. Geoff is third row from front, fifth from left.**

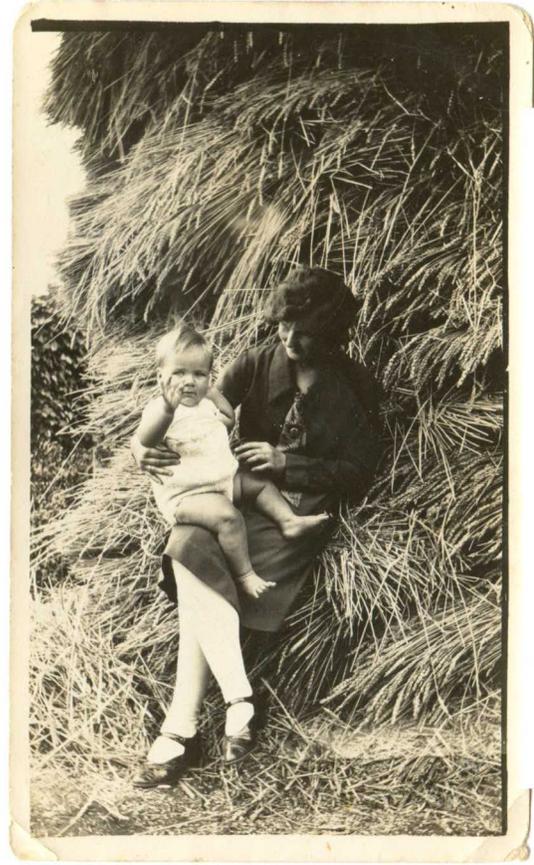
I recall that an eagerly awaited weekly event was the arrival of a comic paper titled "Bubbles" and, naturally, there was always a dispute among we three children as to who was to be the first reader. On one memorable occasion Father arrived home from work to find his 'kids' going 'hammer and tongs' as to whom was to take precedent in traversing its entertaining passages. He solved the problem immediately by placing the said comic in the fire - we never fought over it again but found an amicable solution by taking it in turns.

My father liked to have a punt on race horses and, as a betting shop was contiguous to the Edinburgh Castle Hotel and within walking distance of our home, he was a frequent customer. I recall, distinctly, that one day in 1933 he brought a race card home and asked me to pick out a horse upon which he would place a sixpenny bet. I selected one named 'Valleyacre' that was due to run in a hurdle race at Victoria Park.

Alas, it fell at the first hurdle and had to be destroyed - I have never backed another race horse but, sadly, my son has a similar gene to my late Father and has persistently disregarded the old adage that I have recited to him on many occasions - 'A fool and his money are soon parted!' Later in his life he turned to



Geoff 4 years old, with Sister, Wanda

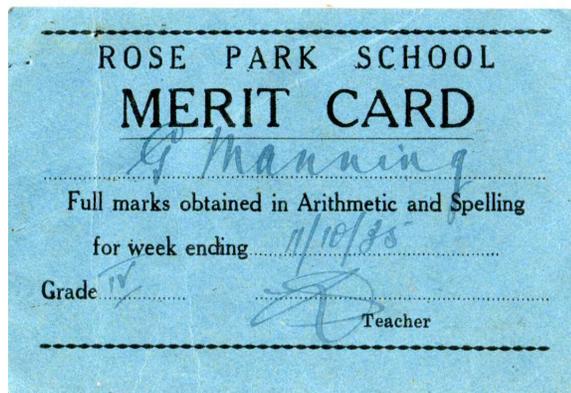


At Waikerie with Aunt – Mabel Hill (nee Hein)

the stock/share market and has assured me, relentlessly, that the buying and selling of shares, including short-selling, cannot be placed in the realm of gambling!

In 1933, the family moved to Montpelier Street, Parkside, from whence I attended the Parkside School and recall that a weekly treat was to purchase my lunch comprising sixpence worth of fish and chips. Leisure activities included digging liquorice root from a creek that ran through the Park Lands and Sunday hikes into Adelaide to visit the Museum.

In 1934, tragedy struck our family when my Father, aged 38, and a survivor of three years in the trenches of France, was stricken with prostate cancer with which he was bedridden until he passed away in July 1936 at Gloucester Terrace, Norwood, the residence of his widowed Mother; at this time I attended the Rose Park School.



Merit Card - Rose Park Primary School, 1935

## *The Depression Years*

*There is always one moment in childhood when the door opens and lets the future in.*  
(Graham Greene, 1904-1991)

One of the regrets of my life is the fact that I never had discourse with my Father; he had suffered the agonies of trench warfare in France and the injustice that was rampant during the depression years of the 1930s when he and his family found themselves subjected to some of the indignities of those troubled times.



**Geoff's Dad, Richard Baker Manning, Waikerie, 1926**



**Geoff's Mum, Grace Maude Hein, c. 1924**

This decade was to see riots upon the streets of Adelaide where workers, armed with iron bars and spiked sticks, and branded as 'communists' by some sections of the press, protested against the action of government in removing beef from the ration issue. Bailiffs, supported by police equipped with batons and sledgehammers, forced families from slum homes into the streets, while malnourished bare-footed children in rags, stood, forlornly, with their parents in queues at soup kitchens and dole centres.

The Great War saw the enlistment of 35,000 men in South Australia, 28,000 of whom saw active service; 6,000 gave their lives for 'King and Country'. These statistics were taken up by historians and others, but little was told of the wounded, whether physically or mentally (my Father was in the former category) who returned and experienced the traumas of re-entry to 'normal' civilian life. For example, in Great Britain there was much talk of 'Homes Fit for Heroes' but little eventuated; much the same occurred in South Australia with the much-vaunted, but ultimately disappointing, initial 'Soldiers Settlement Scheme'.

As for 'returned soldiers', such as my father, the promise of a land 'fit for heroes' proved to be no more than idle rhetoric as misery upon misery was heaped upon a great majority of the working class. Among the aggrieved were 'diggers' and widows of ex-servicemen who were refused a pension from the repatriation authority whose counterpart, the War Service Homes Commission, was 'as ruthless as the banks in evicting those unable to keep up their rent payments.' The memories of that maelstrom of selfishness, greed and oppression are still with me today - on a personal note, the jibes from the more affluent students at my schools to their perceived ignominy of me being on the 'free list' for books and this ever-present after-school activity of being sent to the local butcher to receive the government dispensation of 'meat rations' has, I confess, led me down a certain political path:

The sustenance allowance issued to the unemployed in this State is the lowest in the Commonwealth, in fact it has the doubtful distinction of being the lowest in the Christian world. Can we bring up our children decently on the inadequate allowance of five shillings a fortnight?

(Colonel Light Gardens *Bulletin*, 3 April 1934)



**Richard Baker Manning, Australian Infantry Forces, World War I**

### ***Indoctrination to a Political Path***

*This party is a moral crusade or it is nothing.*

*(Harold Wilson, speech at Labor Party conference 1962)*

A comment made in 1874, in respect of parliamentarians, does not seem to be inappropriate today in South Australia and, possibly, is aptly mirrored in the United States of America where, in late 2008, there is, apparently, a growing civil manifestation against the underlying corruption brought about by hierarchical politicians seemingly forsaking their electoral responsibilities for personal aggrandisement.

Indeed, the current financial crisis is indicative of this phenomenon.

Some of the members bore about them the unmistakable stamp of self-seeking recklessness and vulgarity. The qualities we have always held as belonging to men of honour and gentlemen seemed to be set aside, and in their place came forward meanness, spite, evil speaking, treachery, lying and dishonesty... We have often spoken together with admiration of the higher character of man... but we must not seek it in the House of Assembly, as it is now constituted... there is nothing but waste, noise and confusion.

As to the political path I have followed over the past seven decades, I can do no better than quote the words of James Penn Boucaut, lawyer, statesman, Attorney-General, Premier and a Judge of the Supreme Court in the latter half of the 19th century which reflects much of my adult political thinking:

The whole State is controlled by a coterie of half a dozen men in Adelaide [who] has no love for any man who strives for fair play in the working classes. Our legislation and system of government studies entirely too much the interests of capital... It is not fair to expect the press to help you until you help yourselves. Recollect that the press, like other mercantile institutions, must consider those who principally support it...

I have felt the truth of the sneer - 'the working man cares nothing of politics when his belly is full', consequently he is habitually deceived. I was two years a working man at weekly wages and the iron entered too deeply into my soul to be forgotten. I have never been unjust to capital, but I hate its assumption that capital is Lord over all. Few men have felt so much, as I, the opposition and vile slander of a clique of monopolists, who really govern South Australia and would, if they could, ruin all who stand in their way.

Remember that the opposing class is united and acts on the settled conviction that capital is the Lord over all. Unless you act on settled principles you are defeated at the onset. I have been accused of setting class against class. This is absurd. Class was against class long before I came into the world. Such an accusation is a very common thunderbolt launched by capital...

A great struggle between capital and labour is commencing all over the world. Labour was once enslaved. It now demands entire liberation, and that labour shall no longer be considered so much animal clay. But in order to do this you must be united and true to yourselves.

But, from the social wastage and disillusionment of the 1930s came the hope for the creation of a fairer society among the 'working class' many of whom had experienced the harsh economic conditions and engaged in agitation for a better deal for workers. Unfortunately, these arguments were, generally, about the ways to administer capitalism while not offering any real alternative to it. Indeed, in my lifetime, there is no doubt that, while providing awesome potential for economic growth, sadly, this attribute was invariably outweighed by capitalism's inherent ability to invoke deleterious intrusions into the core of the working class.

In August 1936, my bereft Mother, together with three young children, of whom I was the intermediate, aged 10, were obliged to seek shelter at the home of my maternal grandfather, August Hein, at 16 Wehl Street, Mount Gambier.

John Ruskin, that pillar of English literature, is reported as saying that:

The only history worth reading is that written at the time of which it treats, the history of what was done and seen, heard out of the mouths of the men who did and saw .

For myself, I believe in the truism that when we get older, and no longer have the energy of past years, we are compelled to find other means of filling in the idle hours of retirement. Indeed, in such circumstances time can hang most heavily so may I, with a deal of trepidation and misgivings, recite to you a little of my

history since I was born in 1926 at Waikerie, South Australia, and share with you some of the fruits of my 'hobby' since I retired in 1982.

### *A Few Idle Memories*

*It has been well said, that heart speaks to heart, whereas language only speaks to the ears.  
(St Francis de Sales, 1567-1622)*

In a speech given before the local historical society at Norwood in 2003 I said, inter alia:

It is a pleasure to have my two daughters and son in the audience tonight but I must say, in all sincerity, that while they have extended every encouragement to me in the foibles of my retirement, they are yet to inform me that they have digested a single paragraph of my outpourings over the past three decades. And, might I suggest, here lies a warning for budding family historians who do not have any record of their past - seek information from your aged ancestors before they depart this troubled planet!

It is not my intention to bore you with diverse accounts of the idiosyncrasies of the Manning clan, both maternal and paternal, since the dawn of time. As I stand before you, I can only be described as a conglomerate of a number of races - Maternally, I have German and Swiss blood flowing through my veins and, conversely, on the paternal side the 'glory' of the English grandparent is missing, because those wonderful ancestors were, respectively, of Irish and Australian extraction.

As for the 'Manning' clan I have told the story at length in books such as *Hope Farm - Cradle of the McLaren Vale Industry* and *Hope Farm Chronicle* but, tonight, I would like to digress and look at my maternal ancestors who were in a much lower class, and I use that word in the sense it was recognised in the Victorian era, when they landed on our shores.

Firstly, my grandfather August George Heinrich Hein, arrived from Hamburg, Germany, in the 1870s, aged ten years, with his parents and at that time there was a universal cry from the South East of the colony that labour was required on the fertile lands in that developing district.

Further afield in Queensland a young girl, one Annie Graf, born in Switzerland in the late 1860s arrived in those tropical climes. She had departed from Europe with her mother, a widow of an officer in the Austrian army but, her future life in this new country was to be put in jeopardy because her mother died on passage. Fortuitously, she was 'adopted' by fellow passengers and they settled at 'Sleepy Creek', near Roma, in what was to be called the 'brigalow country.'

In the meantime, August Hein, together with his family upon arrival in the colony were diverted to Port MacDonnell where there was a crying need for labour on both the vast freehold properties owned by squatters and yeoman farmers. There they toiled for many years until the 'brigalow' country in Queensland was opened up for selection and, gathering up their few chattels, my grandfather proceeded by sea to this new 'Garden of Eden.' There he met Annie Graf and, following their marriage, circa 1890, two daughters were born before they realised that their

fortune did not lie at Sleepy Creek.

Returning to Mount Gambier at the turn of the 20th century they were, in turn, engaged in pastoral labours for the proprietor of the Limestone Ridge Run, out of Penola, until they settled at OB Flat where he engaged in the occupation of a market gardener and it was there that the last four children of the marriage were born, including my mother, Grace Maude Hein, in 1901.

Today, in 2008, I recall, vividly, the removal from Gloucester Terrace, Norwood, where my father died, to the South East - across the punt at Wellington and a long haul through an unpaved Coorong, together with sundry stops to permit the ancient 'Diamantina' removal van's engine to recover from a disturbing series of overheating. Thus, a new family life evolved in Mount Gambier with Mother supporting us by engaging in cleaning at the local primary school and multifarious domestic duties for the 'upper class' of the town - the latter was to be the source of cast-off clothing that found its way onto my frame and, thankfully, this continued for the next five years. *(At left - Geoff Manning & Joan Hein - 1940)*



Pleasant childhood memories abound - weekends spent with my mother's kith and kin at Mil Lel and Yahl in the form of Gertrude and Tom White and Mabel and Jim Hill, respectively. As to the former, the Australian 'slanguage' from the cow yard still redounds in my memory, together with wonderful excursions with ferrets, when rabbits were enticed from their burrows only to find their way on to the family's festive board. I recall, also, that my sister, Wanda, and I debated vigorously as to whose turn it was to spend the weekend at Mil Lel - our Uncle kept pigs and fleas wandering from the piggery were prone to come indoors into the bedrooms and cause endless sessions of body scratching

At Yahl, I can still visualise the rows of maize standing in excess of six feet high where we children played hide and seek, while close at hand was a depression filled with water all year round abounding with tadpoles - a treat indeed for a young boy to take home and tend to their well being until they reached 'frogship' when they were released into their parent's previous domain.

In those far off times it was all but impossible for those of the 'working class' to pay for medical and dental treatment and, when undertaken in an emergency, the resultant professional account was paid in instalments. Indeed, I recall an occasion when I was plagued with a toothache because, as I learned in hindsight, two of my front teeth were 'crossed'. In agony, I was taken to a local dentist who informed my Mother that I had an abscess and to have the teeth removed would require a visit to hospital and being anaesthetized - of course, at a price! I recall, aged 12 years, the question being put to me - Have them extracted without going to hospital or resorting to that procedure? My response was to extract the offending molars and so Mr Schonfeldt, (I have never forgotten his name), proceeded to do just that.

My immediate family will be aware that I was never one to break into a broad smile and I now advise, after an acquaintance of more than half a century, that I perambulated Mount Gambier, Adelaide and environs with a horrendous gap in my visage for several years and it was not until I gained employment with the Savings Bank of SA that I was able to consult a dentist on North Terrace and be fitted with a denture - Yes! I remember his name - Mr Daniel!

In my youth at Mount Gambier, I was invited, occasionally, to go with my Aunt and Uncle, Martha and Reuben Walker, a pioneer garage proprietor in the town and a man of estimable qualities, to spend a day or two at their retreat at Donovan's Landing and, in 1937, his 'week-ender' and Tom Donovan's house, in which was housed the 'Tantanoola Tiger', were the only residences within miles.

The history of that 'beast' is as follows and was gleaned from newspaper reports: in 1893 it was said that, 'judging from the accumulated testimony of many reliable residents... there seems to now no reason to doubt that a genuine Bengal tiger is infesting the neighbourhood...', while a year later it was declared to be either 'a tiger, a Chinaman, a neglected house dog, [or] a dingo of gigantic proportions, but the latest idea is that he is a cheetah - the hunting leopard of India.'

Round Kalangadoo there's a hula-baloo and panic at Penola;  
From the Gulf to the Bight,  
They're taking fright, at the thing they call the Tiger.  
Down by Dismal Swamp, over by Tarcoola  
Prowls that fearsome beast,  
That thing from Tantanoola.

Finally, in 1895, the 'tiger', then proclaimed to be a European wolf, was shot by Mr Donovan at Mount Salt on the Mount Schank station and, in 1947, he sold the stuffed and mounted creature to V.A. Willshire, the proprietor of the Tantanoola Hotel.

There, at Donovan's Landing, I spent many carefree days fishing, swimming and generally appreciating the glory of the natural bush land surrounding the place and being amazed at the life style of Mr Charles Hirth who, hermit-like, eked out a living as a fisherman in a shanty on the banks of the river a little upstream from the landing.

I attended the local primary school in Wehl Street North and my Qualifying Certificate is housed in the Mortlock Library (PRG 412). And so my teenage years arrived; I entered the Mount Gambier High School in 1939 under the tutelage of Mr Carthew and a band of wonderful teachers of whom I recall the names of Misses Liebing, Clode and MacDonald, Messrs Hurd, Green, Jolly, Lewis, Magor, Whitelaw and Staude.



**Mount Gambier Primary School 1937, Geoff, aged 11 - top row sixth from left**

With today's class room overcrowding I remember that, in the Leaving Class of 1941, there were but twelve pupils spread equally among the sexes - the names I recall of that class are Patricia Delanty, Margaret Carthew, Merle Healy, Keith Dudley, Brian Mara, Alan Hyde, Murray Richardson and Robert Mohr (later a Judge of the Supreme Court - his father was manager of the E.S. & A. Bank). Fifty years later, I recalled my early school days in a Preface to *The Tragic Shore*:

As a young boy in the depression years of the 1930s I was taught, with Dickensian rigidity, the three 'Rs'... Invariably, my teacher was armed with a steel-lined ruler of prodigious dimensions that was used indiscriminately for both academic and moral persuasion in his daily pursuit for excellence and perfection among his students.

History was a small facet of the curriculum and, when taught, usually comprised of the revelations of the 'glories' of the British monarchy and ancillary praise for its feats of arms which over the centuries, conquered much of the world and established the now extinct British Empire.



**Theatre Pass      Geoff & Euphonium**



Thankfully, today, young Australians are being exposed to the history of their own country and over the past few decades a plethora of South Australian history has been researched and published by competent amateur and professional historians; as I move among younger people I find their interest to be both genuine and positive

After school activities including sweeping out the Capitol Theatre for no recompense other than a free pass to the movies at any time during the week except Saturday nights, and being a member of the Mount Gambier Junior Citizens' Brass Band under the baton of Mr McKenzie. Sport was an integral part of my youth and I played cricket and baseball, the latter of which was introduced into Mount Gambier by Mr Byrom Ascione who, as I recall, was employed by the SA Railways. In the early days of the war the game was given a boost when a team was entered into the association from the RAAF training unit (No 2 AOS) and, together with one from the local Banks and the Federals, under the patronage of Fred Hill, many a spirited game was held on Frew Park.

To earn a little 'pocket money' I acted as a caddy at the Attamurra golf links and recall a two-hole course constructed by two friends and myself on vacant ground between Vansittart Park and Eglington Terrace where we learned, collectively, many a lesson in humility. The park, itself, was where I was castigated by a minister of religion for kicking a football (a birthday present) on a Sunday morning while, on another occasion, I recall scaling the galvanised iron fence of an all but impregnable Frew Park on a Sabbath day following Christmas Day, aided and abetted by two school mates, Peter Boase and Ray Wilson.

There, in earshot of pealing bells from local churches and resplendent with a new cricket bat and 'compo' ball, appropriate tests of the equipment were undertaken on the slate pitch, *sans* coir matting, following which a strategic withdrawal was made over the eastern fence, surreptitiously, without interference from either civic or ecclesiastical authority.

Another source of 'pocket money' was one utilised universally by the majority of the poverty-stricken youths of the town, namely, the gathering of empty cool drink bottles that were, in turn, taken to Maloney's factory in Commercial Street, opposite Vansittart Park. It was there that an employee, huddled over a trough where, invariably engaged in washing bottles, he would sniff every 'returned' bottle to ensure that it had not, in a previous life, contained kerosene, phenyl or any other 'offensive' liquid. Having passed this test as to purity, a chit would be handed to we lesser mortals signifying the appropriate amount to be handed over by the company's cashier.

I recall another contribution to these meagre funds in the form of a penny handed to me occasionally on a Saturday morning by my Mother in return for my services on the family woodheap where I split sheoak and gumtree logs for the kitchen stove - Our home had no running water laid on, no electricity or gas - our 'lighting' was supplied by kerosene lamps - while the family 'toilet' was a weather-board 'one-holer' that was removed some 30 or 40 yards from our back door! I shall not seek to hold your attention any further with descriptions of the perils to be encountered while negotiating the nebulous path to this outhouse in the middle of winter under a moonless sky! Fifty years on, I was informed by an Uncle that this edifice had 'self-combusted'.

On a happier note, the family garden contained a mulberry tree whose leaves were a tender morsel for 'silk' caterpillars that were a universal hobby among all school children of that bygone age and, demand for 'leaves' was such, that it contributed to the my coffers. To my mind, it is, indeed, unfortunate that the modern-day child has been led away from such nature studies, for I still recall the wonders of an insignificant worm gorging itself on mulberry leaves, spinning a cocoon from which emerged a moth that laid eggs, the genesis of the next generation. What more did I need in my youth, for I had tadpoles and silk-worms, three meals a day and a warm bed?

### *My Quasi-Fathers*

*I feel like the roots of a great bunch of flowers. The grower gets all the praise, the flowers get the adoration, while the roots that started it all must remain under the ground unnoticed.*

*(Thomas Gallagher in 1997)*

I think my son who, as I write, is an Associate Professor at Flinders University, will agree that I have had a modicum of influence as to the path he has traversed in his life's journey - I was denied that precious ingredient in family relations. However, in retrospect I applaud my Grandfather, August George Heinrich Hein, with whom I shared a bedroom upon the family's arrival in Mount Gambier in 1936.

It was he who introduced me to classic literature and, by the age of 12 years, I was steeped in the works of Charles Dickens and William Thackeray while, in lighter moments, he would lead me to the classic tales of Australia that emanated from Ion Idriess. Further, he was an accomplished, self taught violinist and encouraged me in proceeding with musical study via the Junior Mt Gambier Brass Band.

Upon his departure from this mortal coil, my Mother's youngest brother, Andrew, born in 1911, came into our family - he had been left with three daughters following his wife's committal to a mental home in Adelaide due to 'post natal depression'. I append extracts from a letter written to him in 2004:

To my dying day I will remain indebted to your father for the many kindnesses extended to me among which was the introduction to English literature ... He was, in fact, for a few years, a 'father figure' to me and, of course, you took over that mantle and the entertaining stories of the intricacies of bees and their habits gave me an early insight to some of the wonders of nature and, of course, how could I forget the verbal jousts between yourself and Jim Hill out at Yahl, before a roaring log fire, upon the current political situation and world affairs!



**Geoff's Grandfather, August Hein,  
70<sup>th</sup> Birthday, 1940**



**Geoff & Andrew Hein, Norwood, 2003**

### *Leaving Home and my Early Working Days*

*Show me a man who cares no more for one place than another, and I will show you in the same person one who loved nothing but himself. Beware of those who are homeless by choice.*

*(Robert Southey, 1774-1843)*

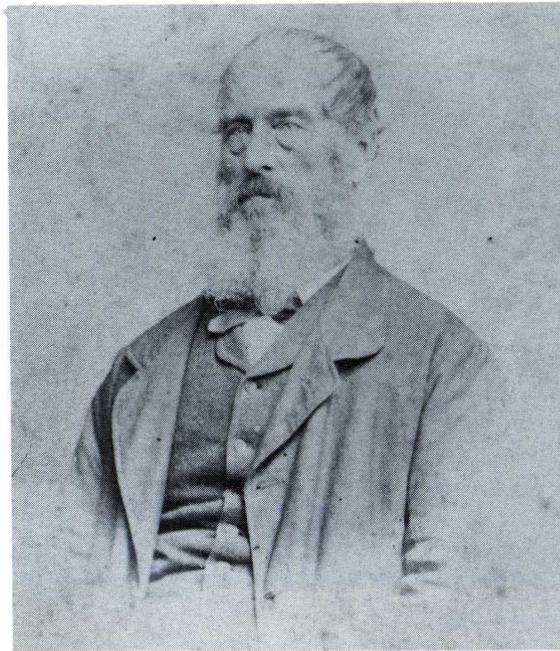
After three years of secondary education I was obliged to leave the town, because of my family's financial circumstances, and proceeded to Adelaide where I was taken under the wing of the Legacy Club in the form of Mr Scott, who had served with my father in the 43rd Battalion in France during World War I. Through that body's endeavours I found boarding facilities at 20 Park Terrace, Gilberton, conducted by Mrs Margaret Young who was to become, intermittently, my quasi-mother for the next 15 years. My 'room' was a partitioned-off pantry contiguous to the kitchen, the overall dimensions being about 15 feet by 6 - my 'half' comprised of a bed and a small wardrobe where I stored my meager possessions.

I gained employment, firstly, in the Factories Department within the State Public Service at 25 shillings a week from which I was obliged to pay Mrs Young the sum of seventeen shillings! This persisted for but a few weeks when my mentor, Mr Scott, called me into his office in Victoria Square and told me that the

Savings Bank of SA was seeking new entrants at the princely sum of thirty seven shillings and six pence per week.

Responding, post haste, to such a visitation from above, I sat for the appropriate examination and believe I was one of 16 young men out of about 100 applicants to be accepted into the Bank's hallowed halls. I might add that my 'surplus' salary of one pound and sixpence was all I had for tram fares (three shillings a week), daily luncheons (a meat roll with a filling such as pickles - six shillings a week): the surplus of about 11 shillings was all I had for clothing and entertainment - the latter consisted of one picture show after work on Saturdays at a cost of sixpence - when I went into the Royal Australian Navy two years later, my bank balance stood at the princely sum of ten shillings.

When I returned from war service little did I know that this facet of the Bank's entrenched parsimony was to engage me for all but a quarter of a century as an active member of our 'industrial union', or 'association', as it was designated for about the first 40 years of its existence. My experiences are told in the book *Worth Fighting For* published in 1989 by the South Australian and Northern Territory Branch of the Australian Bank Employees Union.



*George Pitches Manning, c. 1868*

## Chapter Two

### *The Manning-Aldersey Dynasty*

*Family history, of course, has its proper dietary laws. One is supposed to swallow and digest only the permitted parts of it, the halal portions of the past, drained of their redness, their blood.*

*(Salman Rushdie, 1947-)*

The Vikings from Scandinavia invaded the eastern coast of England at the close of the 8<sup>th</sup> century and, within 100 years, had occupied a large area including the present county of Cambridgeshire. During this time the armies of the mercenaries descended regularly upon England from huge military camps in Denmark. The Viking raids ceased when the Normans invaded from the south in 1066.

The Domesday survey in 1084 was made at the behest of William I for a particular purpose - 'What or how much every body, who was occupying land in England, possessed in land or cattle and how much it was worth.' The name 'Manyng' occurs in the Domesday Book and the earliest records dated 1594 during the reign of Elizabeth I show the wedding of William Maninge, son of Thomas, at Teversham a small village located to the north of Fulbourn Cambridgeshire. The surname is believed to be derived from the Nordic *manyng*, meaning 'valiant man'.

It is evident that the Manning 'clan' prospered because the *Fulbourn Chronicle* of 27 October 1826 records the conviction of Philip and William Hancock for stealing eleven cheeses from John Manning, farmer; they were sentenced to be transported for seven years. Again, on April 13 1839, Stephen Banyard (19 years) pleaded guilty to stealing some flour, 'the property of John Manning, his master. On his master promising to take him back into his employ again, the Court sentenced him to one calendar month hard labour, telling him he could never be too grateful for the kindness of his master.' John Manning died in November 1842, aged 74.

His eldest son, George Pitches Manning (his mother was the former Grace Pitches), was the major beneficiary of his father's estate. Born in 1800, he married Jane Hart (1805-1885) and eight children were born between 1831 and 1845 - the second daughter, Sarah Jane, died in 1846, aged 13 years. By 1849, his eldest child, Elizabeth, aged 18 years, was suffering from consumption (modern-day tuberculosis) and it is apparent that, if her life was to be prolonged, it would be necessary for her to live in a warmer climate. Accordingly, he and his wife decided to migrate to South Australia and, in June 1849, his property was sold for the sum of £6,648 - this included the Coach and Horses Inn in Fulbourn that realised £808. Prior to the family's departure, the following letter was addressed to George Manning and signed by R.G. Turnley, MP, the Rev Dr Hall and then by 'the other respectable inhabitants of the parish of Fulbourn':

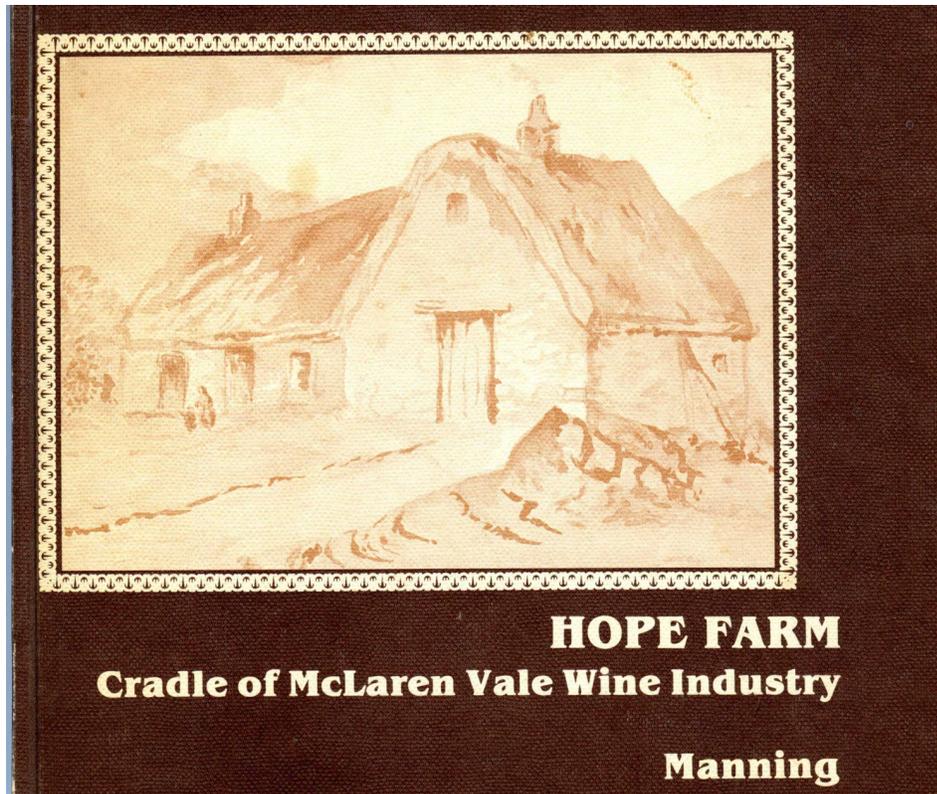
We, the undersigned inhabitants of Fulbourn, amongst whom you have spent the whole of your life hitherto, having learned that you are about to leave your native village and to emigrate to Australia, cannot allow you to take your departure without spontaneously and cheerfully testifying to the high esteem in which you are held by your fellow citizens.

As a man of business your dealing have ever been characterised by straightforwardness and strictest punctuality in the fulfillment of your engagements. As a master, your kindness and liberality never failed to secure the respect and good will of your servants who deplore your removal as an event which will prove a serious loss to them.

As a neighbour you have distinguished yourself by a remarkable peaceable and friendly conduct and a readiness to join in any plans having for their object the prosperity of the parish or the amelioration of the condition of your poorer neighbours. While we regret that you should consider it necessary in order to better discharge your duties to a numerous family to leave the home of your fathers and your native land, we sincerely desire and hope that a kind providence will grant you a safe and pleasant voyage to the land of your destination, and so regulate all your future movements as to secure the abundant prosperity and happiness of yourself and all your family by the important step you are about to take.

On 27 December 1849 the barque *Julindur* of 530 tons slipped from Gravesend wharf and among its passengers were George Pitches Manning, his wife, Jane, six sons and one daughter and Sarah Hart, sister of Jane Manning. The vessel cleared Plymouth and, after a voyage of 101 days, berthed at Port Adelaide on 16<sup>th</sup> April 1850.

In May 1850, George Manning journeyed south in search of suitable land and, in June and July of that year, obtained the land grants of section 513 and 519, Hundred of Willunga which contained 161 acres of virgin land at a total cost of £172.10.0. The land was situated about four miles north of the adjacent villages of Bellevue and Gloucester in the McLaren Vale. At the suggestion of his daughter, Elizabeth, he named the property 'Hope Farm', the word 'hope' being derived from the Middle English term meaning 'a small, enclosed valley'.



#### **The original Manning home at McLaren Vale**

The success of vine plantings by John Reynell, in 1838 at Reynella, prompted him to plant some muscatel grape cuttings alongside a creek that ran through the property. The cuttings were obtained from Reverend Thomas Quinton Stow, the father of Congregationalism in South Australia who, at that time, had a small vineyard and cellar at Felixstow, near Adelaide. A small pug cellar was built in which he made wine for his family and friends. On 30<sup>th</sup> October 1850, Elizabeth Manning married Jefferson Pickman Stow, the second son of Rev Stow, at Hope Farm. The marital home was established at Payneham where her husband was a farmer. She met an untimely death, dying from tuberculosis on 27 October 1852.

By 1855, he had extended his vineyard and was making wine for commercial purposes and the first recorded sales in 1861 show James Black, Thomas Cliff and Mrs Dangerfield purchasing his red Burgundy at four shillings a gallon. In later years Thomas Hardy was a regular customer and, in 1923, Mr R. Martin at the Federal Viticultural Congress in Sydney stated that:

Mr Hardy told my father that Manning never made and could not make bad wine, whereas everybody else could and often did. I account for this by the fact that the old cellar had a thatched roof a foot thick, wooden slabs lining the walls and was protected from the north wind by a hill and gum trees.

George Manning died on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1872 and his sons carried on the business until 1892 when they sold out to Walter Craven when the youngest son, Benjamin Hart Manning was enticed by his wife's parents to settle at Quantong, near Horsham, where, following in his father's footsteps he planted vines and fruit trees. He died on the steps of the Horsham Post Office on 8 April 1906 and is buried at Natimuk cemetery.

George Manning did not live to see his dream come true, but, today, McLaren Vale is indebted to his foresight and pioneering spirit because there is no doubt that his was his perseverance over the period 1853-1862 that attracted others to commence grape growing in the area thereby laying the foundation of an industry which, after allowing for the vagaries of nature, production and market demands is, today, most viable and, in addition, is a tourist attraction encouraged by large and small wine producers each having their own individuality of product. Indeed, a memorial of George Manning's vision is encompassed today by the Seaview Winery that now stands on the Hope Farm of the 19<sup>th</sup> century!



**Plaque at Seaview**



**Wanda & Geoff**

Francis Manning was almost 15 years of age when he arrived in South Australia and, immediately, he assisted his father and older brother, George, to clear and cultivate Hope Farm which adjoined 'Amery' owned by Richard Baker Aldersey. The origin of this family name is open to conjecture because two opinions prevail. Before exploring same it can be stated positively that the family of Aldersey has been settled at 'Aldersey' in the parish of Coddington, Hundred of Broxton, in the County of Cheshire, since very early times.

Some of the antiquaries of the County in the 17<sup>th</sup> century were of the opinion, by reason of certain records found in the Abbey of Combermere, that the name was originally 'Alteribus' which descent began with Hugh de Alteribus who lived in Cheshire at the time of William the Conqueror and this historical record is documented in fragmented form to Hugh de Aldersey who lived in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

It seem more probable, however, the name derives its name from the village that still exists today which is surrounded completely by brooks on the banks of which alder trees grew in great profusion. In old, extant family deeds the name is usually spelt 'Aldersey' the termination 'ey' being derived from an Old Saxon word signifying 'island'.

Such is recorded history; however, in Australia word of mouth passed down to me from my great-aunt, Arabella Aldersey Manning (1867-1949), goes further and states that 'de Aldersey' is of French origin and that the founder of the family in England arrived with William the Conqueror in 1066. A manor house, Aldersey Hall, was inhabited by the Aldersey family until the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and it is remarkable that a family of comparatively small landowners in which part, at least, the old family estates passed in a direct line from father to son through more that 18 generations, extending over a period of

more than seven centuries, there still exists a series of deeds covering, more or less, the whole of that period - see *The Family of Aldersey* in PRG 412 in the Mortlock Library.

Joseph Aldersey who died in 1764 was the grandson of Joseph Aldersey, son of John, whose younger brother, Thomas Aldersey, was 'of Aldersey and Spurstow, Escheator of Cheshire'. Joseph Aldersey, the third, was born in October 1725 and married Mary Haydon of Woburn, Buckinghamshire, on 10 July 1755 - hence the Christian name 'Haydon' that has been prominent in both the Aldersey and Manning families ever since. Joseph Aldersey, the fourth, (1762-1847), a wealthy London merchant, married Elizabeth Baker, the daughter of Anthony Baker who owned a property situated at 'Amery' in Hampshire and it was there that their first son, Richard Baker Aldersey, was born in 1793.



**Richard Baker Aldersey**



**Sheepcote House, England**

'Amery' was to be Richard Aldersey's residence until the time of his father's death at which time he was to be bequeathed the manor house, 'Sheepcote' at Chigwell Row, Essex. His first son, a midshipman in the Royal Navy, had visited Australia in the 1840s. This young man died in 1848, aged 26, and it is thought that this sad loss, coupled with stories he had told about the young colony in South Australia prompted his father to contemplate emigration.

Richard Baker Aldersey was twice married, his first wife dying in October 1832 following the birth of her eighth child. On 1 June 1836 he married Elizabeth Emma Wilkinson, the daughter of Rev Thomas Wilkinson, chaplain of the Tower of London, the ceremony being performed at the Chapel of Saint Peter-ad-Vincula, within the confines of the tower. One child of that marriage was Arabella Harriet Aldersey who was born on 27 June 1837.

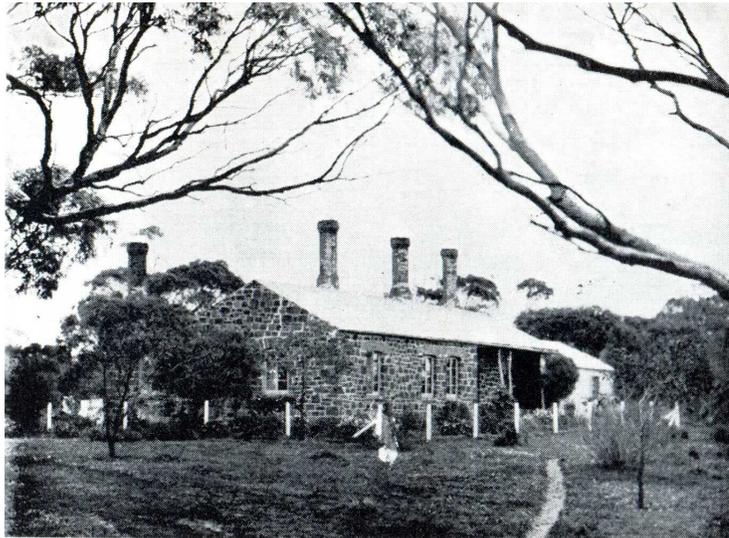
On 8 June 1849, the *Dorothy* arrived at Port Adelaide and among its passengers were Richard Baker Aldersey, his second wife, three sons and four daughters. He bought land in the village of Bellevue, at the western end of McLaren Vale, and built a small cottage by the creek and planted a garden and date palm. The house that still stands today is inhabited and the tall, gaunt, lonely palm still bends in the winds that blow along the valley. In 1851, Mr Aldersey purchased 330 acres of land adjoining Hope Farm and built a substantial house from ironstone found on the property which he named 'Amery' after his birthplace near Alton, in Hampshire.

Sir Samuel Way, who lived close by on Chapel Hill admired this home and commented that its tall, eight-sided, cut brick chimneys were 'gentleman's chimneys'. Richard Aldersey stated that he wished to 'lie where the curlews cried and the sheoaks sighed' and so he was buried in a tiny family cemetery on his

property in 1858. In his will he stipulated that except for his wife no women were to be buried there, so his sister and some of his daughters lie in the Congregational Churchyard.



**First Aldersey Home at McLaren Vale - 1849**

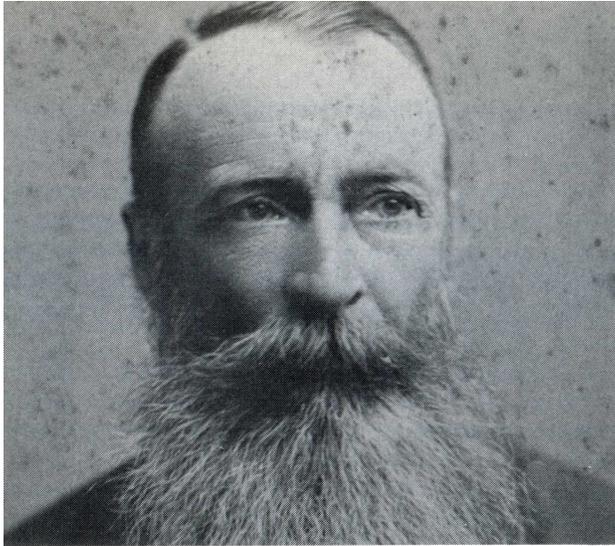


**Amery**

Arabella Aldersey and Francis Manning were married at Amery on 7 June 1859 in the presence of John Brown, of Monopilla, and William Bakewell, solicitor of Adelaide, the Reverend Ridgway Newland of Encounter Bay officiating. After the marriage, the couple set up home on section 74 which had been purchased for Francis by his father in 1857 and they remained there until about 1870 when the land became 'wheat sick' so they removed to section 91 (211 acres) within the Hundred of Neales, near Eudunda, where the last two of seven children from the marriage were born.

In 1872, the overland telegraph line between Adelaide and Darwin was completed. The men laying the line had found gold, gold bearing quartz and other minerals some hundred miles south of Darwin and, by 1875, an exodus of male population commenced from South Australia but, because of the climate and the terrain of the northern gold areas, the number of gold seekers did not reach the levels of the earlier rush to the Victorian goldfields in the 1850s.

Family papers do not reveal the exact month but, in 1872, Francis deserted his family and joined the rush to the Northern Territory. At this time the only means of transportation to that territory was by ship to Port Darwin, a journey of some three weeks from Adelaide. Further research since the publication of the Manning family history in 1980 revealed that he was engaged by an Adelaide syndicate, a member of which was Jefferson Pickman Stow - a prospectus of the company has been lodged in PRG 412 in the Mortlock Library.



*Francis Manning*



*Arabella Harriett Manning*

Arabella, of course, with six children to care for, fell upon hard times but, as the years passed she received financial assistance from her immediate family and aided by a legacy from Mary Ann Aldersey, her stepsister, in 1906, she spent the remainder of her life in relative comfort. She died on 4 December 1910 at 'Epping' Kintore Avenue, Prospect, where she had been residing with her two daughters, Arabella and Anne Marie. Recently discovered documentation has revealed that Francis Manning provided monetary assistance to his 'deserted' family and interested readers are referred to the diaries of Reverend F.W. Cox that are held in the State Library - he married Mary Ainsley Aldersey in 1863.

As for Francis Manning; he went to Western Australia in the 1890s and, writing from 'Red Hill' on his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday on 14 September 1905 to a niece at McLaren Vale, said that: 'I ate a plum pudding to commemorate my starting in my 71<sup>st</sup> year. I can't expect to live many more years. I wish I could find something good so I would be able to come and see you all again. I have rheumatism and my left arm is half-crippled and I can't bend my wrist. God bless you for thinking of your old uncle.'

Research at the Registrar of Deaths in Adelaide and Perth proved fruitless as no record of his death is on file. It would appear, therefore, that Francis Manning, my Great-Grandfather, lies somewhere in an unmarked grave at an unknown place in Western Australia.

## Chapter Three

### My Life in the Navy – 1944-1946

*Older men declare war. But it is the youth who must fight and die.*  
(Herbert Hoover, (1874-1964))

Aged 17 years and six months, I enlisted in the Royal Australian Navy and proceeded to Flinders Navy Depot, Westernport Bay, Victoria, where I trained as a Visual Signalman. In late November I had completed my induction course and, following a rise in pay from three shillings and sixpence per day to five shillings when I reached the age of 18 years, I was drafted to the corvette, HMAS *Pirie*.



1944

To join her necessitated a railway trek from Melbourne to Perth on a 'troop train' and, having joined the ship's company the *Pirie*, in company with *Launceston*, proceeded to Shark Bay, performing electrical minesweeping exercises *en route* - a generator sent electrical impulses down a long cable to a negative electrode at the rate of six impulses a minute, creating an electric field that exploded acoustic mines.

As soon as we anchored in Shark Bay the fishing lines came out and this was what I reported to my Mother:

Fifty percent of the crew are hauling in fish one after the other and the biggest one (a schnapper) was about a ten-pounder. They have caught about sixty or seventy in about three hours and if they keep going at this rate we will be eating fish for the next few days



Transport across the Nullabor by cattle truck



HMAS Pirie crew ashore in Hong Kong

My next sea excursion saw the *Pirie* engaging in exercises with an American submarine *Bashaw* that had just returned from a lengthy patrol into enemy waters:

Half of her crew had been sent back to the United States for leave and to take over another submarine being replaced with new men. To help work up the crew it was necessary for the submarine, before sailing on an operation to spend several days exercising with one of our corvettes. The submerged submarine would stalk *Pirie* and carry out simulated attacks while we would reciprocate with simulated depth charge attacks.

During the exercises we had an American submarine officer on board as an observer. As most of the action during these exercises was in the Asdic [anti-submarine detection] compartment the rest of the crew found the operations rather mundane. Exercises were not completed until 0300 the following day and, on conclusion, the ship anchored in Gage Roads off Fremantle.

We sailed for Sydney, in company with *Launceston*, on 31 January and soon ran into heavy seas stirred up by a low pressure system that had just entered the Great Australian Bight. It was off Cape Leeuwin, ten days later, that the destroyer, *Nizam*, was hit by a freak wave and gale force winds that forced her to roll, lose ten of her crew and do considerable damage to upper deck fittings. Our passage was described by a shipmate:

As the ships turned eastwards there was no relief for them. The ships wallowed in the deep troughs between waves and yawed as it rose in the following sea, developing a corkscrew motion as massive waves hit on the starboard quarter. The on-watch signalmen, lookouts and other upper deck cruising watchkeepers were continuously exposed to the prolonged rough weather.

While the watchkeeping stokers from the boiler and engine rooms braced themselves in the waist before running the gauntlet of the rogue seas crashing over the afterdeck while making a short dash along the main deck to enter the hatch leading to their positions down below the water line.

I share with you, the reader, some comments made during the 1990s, and as published in a history of HMAS *Pirie*, when I was asked to reflect upon that particular trip from Fremantle:

By January 1945, I had reached the grand old age of 18 years and some five months. I believe I grew to early manhood in a conglomerate atmosphere of comradeship and apprehension... I can see myself now in daylight hours huddled around the 'stack' [ship's funnel] seeking warmth and comfort from the icy blasts emanating from Antarctica... As I recall, the several days traversing the Great Australian Bight were a nightmare for the 'old salt' and 'macker' [young sailor] alike and must be compared with the typhoon off Okinawa during the invasion of that island.

Finally, as the sea settled into a welcome calm we found the ship off the South-East coast of South Australia near Cape Northumberland. The twinkle of its lighthouse, and the fact that my Mother was only miles away at Mount Gambier, prompted me to think that my country, and indeed my life, would be better served by returning home to the comfort of a family hearth and the immediate love of kith and kin.

We arrived in Sydney in February 1945 and were placed immediately under the control of the British Pacific Fleet among which the *Pirie* was to be the senior ship of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Minesweeping Flotilla. On 5<sup>th</sup> March we entered Seeadler Harbour at Manus in the Admiralty Islands and, two days later, the main fleet arrived after which the business of provisioning, ammunitioning and fuelling commenced for the first involvement with US forces in the Pacific, namely, 'Operation Iceberg', the capture of Okinawa.

The fleet consisted of the battleships, *King George V* and *Howe*; aircraft carriers, *Indomitable*, *Victorious*, *Illustrious* and *Indefatigable*; 5 cruisers and 12 destroyers. Seeadler Harbour, developed by the United States as the largest and most important naval base in the South-West Pacific Area, lay slightly south of the Equator and about 2,000 miles north of Sydney, and was in the centre of the Admiralty Islands, the principal one of which was Manus, a long, narrow, hilly strip of land occupying about 200 square miles.

In a letter to my Mother I reported that:

I'm losing a little weight and beginning to go a little yellow colour from the Atebrin tablets that I take every day. It still rains regularly every day and at the moment a deluge of water is coming down. Yesterday, I went to a U.S. stage show at an aerodrome and, as usual, with the Americans, they put on an A1 show. There were three girls in it which, in itself, was a treat as white females

are a novelty and very scarce around here. The band was a local air force group and they played very well.

We provisioned from American supply ships and our Spartan Australian diet changed somewhat - I still recall today one of our monotonous 'breakfasts' in the form of 'pork and beans' or, to use Naval parlance, 'yippee beans' - I swear that the pig must have walked through that canned delicacy on stilts! The variations to the ship's 'festive board' are explained in this extract from the ship's official history book:

Pilchards and grapefruit became the norm for breakfast. Some found it difficult to accept. Able Seaman 'Toasty' Davis was always buzzing around trying to trade his share of pilchards for an extra tin of grapefruit. While people in Australia couldn't purchase salmon or sardines, Pirie was able to get Marie Elizabeth sardines and Red Sockeye salmon which were the best at the time.

The usual practice of roast pork for Sunday dinner was abandoned and roast turkey was substituted for that day with roast pork served up a couple of times during the week. The Canadian sausages were not liked very much. They had a distinctive flavour - once tasted never forgotten! After 40-odd years their unsavoury taste all but remains on Geoff Manning's palate. On most occasions when the ship received beer it was either American or Canadian.

By late March, the ship was proceeding on a convoy in support of the invasion of Okinawa during which we were confronted by a typhoon that I shall remember for the rest of my days - I might add that it was so severe that an American destroyer was lost when a freak wave turned it over. Here is what I and a shipmate had to say about it:

Left Leyte 29 March with three tankers, etc, going to rendezvous off the northern tip of Luzon to fuel the British Task Force that was operating off Sakashima Gunto in support of the Okinawa operation. The second day out the weather came up rough and continued to get rougher and rougher. It was the worst trip I've done - you couldn't eat a meal in peace or get a decent night's sleep; every morning the mess deck was a shambles, gear from the blokes' lockers, water and foodstuffs all over the deck.

Running with a heavy sea at night has its own hard-worn loveliness. The long streaks of foam are lit eerily by moonlight; the enormous pile up of water which collects, hissing and roaring under the bow, seems suddenly to explode into a broad phosphorous smother which in a moment is left behind. Looking aft one sees the stern cant up, before a black wall of water overtakes, slides underneath, goes past and breaks at the bow, its attack spent. The ship yaws and the compass swings, the quartermaster mutters curses as he braces his feet and hauls the wheel to meet the next ponderous weight of sea.

We had a very tough time the other day and the old tub was doing a 45 degree roll - The safety limit is 47 degrees. We were in fear of rolling beyond this limit but strange to say we managed to stay on top...

A typical Task Unit consisted of three tankers, an escort carrier and escort vessels. At this stage, there was a shortage of store issuing ships and none could be sent forward from Leyte. So, the tankers each carried extra stores; about five tons of fresh vegetables, survivor's kits, aircraft de-icing fluid, lubricating oil, depth charges 20 and 40-mm ammunition, while one tanker in each group carried a medical officer and two sick berth ratings to look after casualties. On the first sorties, the tankers also carried passengers, such as relief officers and men together with urgently required naval and air stores.

On the evening of 3<sup>rd</sup> April our radar operator said there were not many ships on the 'screen' but next morning when he woke up and went on the upper deck for some fresh air there were ships as far 'as the eye could see.' At daylight on 4<sup>th</sup> April, Pirie was ordered to commence delivering mail to the fleet and, having successfully delivered same to five ships, we approached the cruiser *Swiftsure*. Our skipper, Commander 'Ben' Travis instructed me to send a signal requesting permission to come along the starboard side aft, that is, the lee side of the cruiser. This request was refused and, instead, Pirie was instructed to come along the portside for'ard - the weather side of the cruiser. 'Ben' had no alternative other than to obey.

The flat-bottomed Corvettes, in any kind of seaway, were capable of the most violent, unpredictable and hair-raising aquabatics. The cross section profile of their hull amidships would be almost identical to the fore and aft contour of a surfboard. This gave them an exciting facility of 'hanging five' down the sloping face of a mid-ocean greybeard wave, while travelling sideways and downwards, until steered over the crest to snap roll the other way.

Alas, an exceptionally large wave bore down upon us and, immediately, *Pirie* began to slither down its surface finishing up only a few feet from *Swiftsure's* side. Corrective action from the helmsman was to no avail and a great grinding crash ensued - the port wing of *Pirie's* bridge was demolished, the motor boat crushed, the ship's side plates dented and bent but we were still afloat and moving along. I had sought and found shelter on the starboard side. Immediately after the collision the *Pirie's* engineer officer formed a damage control party from the engine room staff who were off duty and began to make temporary repairs to the damage.



**Ship's crew after Okinawa Convoy – Geoff, the dark 'fella' standing in the middle**

The fuelling of Task Force 57 was completed at about 1900 on 5<sup>th</sup> April when *Pirie*, *Bendigo* and the British frigate *Avon* were ordered to escort HMS *Slinger* and tankers *Aaase Maersk*, *Arndale* and *Wave King* to Leyte. I recall that during our return journey, on 6<sup>th</sup> April I received a Morse code light signal from *Slinger* comprising the two letters 'G.O'. (George-Obo), which, when translated, meant 'man overboard'. Alerting the officer of the watch we immediately steamed to the scene but the sea was running at such a height that it was well nigh impossible to make an effective search and so, today, that lone sailor lies in the ocean depths, south of Okinawa. On the return journey, on 6<sup>th</sup> April the Japanese launched 355 Kamikaze planes and 341 bombers on the US and British fleets.

Of course, it's an ill wind that does not blow some good - for the next five weeks we were lying in Leyte harbour out of the danger zone. During this respite I recall that the 'Tokyo Rose' broadcast on a Japanese

short wave station, with up-to-date US music, spiced with many propaganda items were so outrageous that they were a never ending source of amusement among the crew

While resting at Leyte, Stoker Les Lawler had this to say in a letter to his Mother:

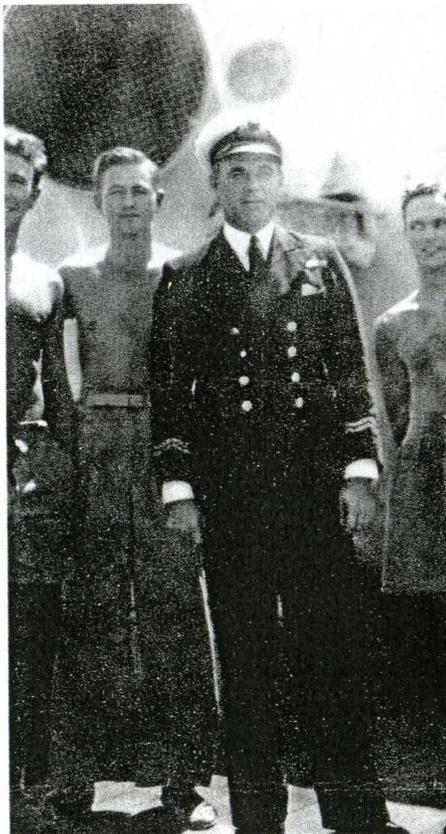
We found out the other day the navy expected to lose at least two 'sweepers' on the last field and they have two standing by to take our place, wouldn't it? There are nine of our corvettes in here at present... [While refueling operations were conducted off Okinawa] I saw a destroyer with a great hole in its side, the boiler and engine rooms flooded. She was towed back by a cruiser and is under repair now. We had a couple of alerts the last few nights but nothing doing. The farthest we've been up is to where the fleet was bombarding but saw nothing. The *King George V* was hit by a suicide Jap [aeroplane] the morning after they left us.

I cleaned my locker out the other day and had a look at my 'blues' for the first time; the mould was well into it but I'll wash it out ... Now we are getting our extra one shilling and sixpence a day tropical money...

. A shipmate offered his thoughts on the enforced 'holiday' at Leyte:

Occasionally, we would get the chance to go over to a bigger ship for a 'picture' show. For about a week we received a bottle of beer each night and do you think we enjoyed it? It was great up there on the fo'castle under a star-filled sky with a great gold moon shimmering on the placid water and a cool gentle breeze blowing. We had shore leave but there was little to do. The Yanks had a canteen but it was out of bounds for the crews of RAN and RN ships.

Naval regulations demanded that everyone had to shave each day unless they had the captain's permission to grow a beard and this approval 'to grow a set' was granted on the condition that the beard was grown for three months. After that period, the 'bearded one' was required to go before the Captain again for a benediction or otherwise to be pronounced upon the efficacy or otherwise of the 'growth'. I recite the following story against myself that appears in the ship's history book:



**Lt. Ken McKenzie**

Many of the younger members of the crew often extended their shaving period to two or three days. On one occasion during the long spell in Leyte Harbour, Geoff Manning was sitting on the chart table relaxing in the forenoon watch when 'Ben' Travis appeared on the bridge.

'Good morning, Manning', he said, as Geoff jumped to his feet. 'Good morning, Sir', Geoff replied.

Ben, who was not always in a good mood in the morning due to 'cobwebs' in his eyes, took a closer look at Geoff and enquired, 'Have you had a shave this morning?' 'No Sir', Geoff replied. 'Put yourself on No 1's report immediately', Ben snapped, 'and get yourself back here immediately. I'll watch till you come back.' Ben, being a 'permanent' naval officer had a working knowledge of signals.

Geoff, not being aware of the correct procedure, or was it that 'he put on the green coat', went to the wardroom flat and knocked on the First Lieutenant's door. On the command of 'come in' he opened the door to find the 'Jimmy' stretched out on his bunk, reading.

'Well, what's your problem', he enquired. 'The Skipper sent me from the bridge, Sir. I haven't shaved today.'

'Well, for Christ's sake go and have one and get back up top', retorted the First Lieutenant, also overlooking the correct procedure. Geoff didn't need any further bidding!

The correct 'procedure' was to report to the Coxswain to be taken before the Divisional Officer who, in turn, referred him to the next First Lieutenant's defaulters. This 'entitled' him to fall in with the defaulters at the next 'Jimmy's' session and appear before him with his cap off.

The *Pirie* was the senior ship of our flotilla and, consequently, had additional crew which prevented many of the crew being unable to find space to sling their hammocks. For many months my sleeping 'quarters' were in a Carley rat abaft the bridge on the starboard side. My 'blankets' consisted of an 'unfurled' hammock with an inflated 'blimp' as a pillow. The rigours of watch-keeping, with accompanying tiredness, left me no time to be concerned with the occasional 'greenie' that came my way. When the ship was warned of the possible presence of Japanese submarines several of my 'friends' who had hammock space between decks offered to swap berths with me - I always declined!

Shipboard pranks were not unknown and the following from the ship's 'official' history is worthy of repetition, A Petty Officer Stoker, who shall remain unnamed, was a tough taskmaster and so one of his underlings decided to levy a penalty upon him:

It was the duty of the watch to make the 'kai' during the middle watch (midnight to 4 a.m.) - this was made from a thick, brown chocolate drink dissolved in boiling water and as much tinned milk that could be scrounged. It was provided as a food and drink to keep watchkeepers sustained and awake during the small hours of the night.

During the watch, the 'offended' stoker raided the Sick Berth Attendant's medical cupboard and purloined half a dozen No. 9s - [a laxative, one of which was more than sufficient for maximum results!] He put them into a seven cup jug of hot kai and warned his 'oppo' (mate) not to drink his; so they emptied their cups down the bilge and the Petty Officer had the other five cups and apparently enjoyed them. He had more runs than Don Bradman until he was clean bowelled!

On a happier note, the ship's company organized a concert at Leyte and I told my Mother that:

For a bunch of amateurs it was an A1 show. The band consisted of a banjo, violin and mouth organ and they put over some good numbers. As you can guess, the jokes in the show were directed mainly at the blokes on board. It lasted for about two hours and the rain was pouring down all the time. We sat through it all. The stage was the work of a genius as we had curtains that were worked by ropes and pulleys and footlights that would put the Tivoli to shame. Our skipper was in convulsions most of the time and was sitting in amongst the boys in the pouring rain and really enjoyed himself.

The washing of clothing was a never-ending chore in the tropics and, while at sea, we were obliged to use sea water aided and abetted by a salt water soap:

Water, heated under the steam pipes in the bathroom turned a curdy white, as did our clothes, the salt making them feel as if they had been starched.. Incidentally, many suffered our only 'wounds' from those unshielded pipes. Rough weather, and matelots' perverted sense of humour, led to many bare bums and other tender parts coming into contact with these plumbing hazards. It's really not surprising that water should have left such a lasting memory.

We headed for Australia in mid-May and docked at Brisbane on the 29<sup>th</sup> following which I was given 10 days leave which allowed me exactly 36 hours at home in Mount Gambier, the remaining time being taken up with train travel! By the end of June we were on our way north again and after a short stay at Manus Island the skipper informed us that we were about to proceed to a rendezvous 300 miles off Tokyo, arriving about 18<sup>th</sup> July and staying in the area about 10 to 12 days oiling the British Pacific Fleet.

After the fleet refueling, the first British aircraft strike at the Japanese mainland was launched from a position about 250 miles south of Tokyo and, in the afternoon, *King George V* and the destroyers, *Quality* and *Quiberon* joined the US bombardment of the mainland. The next refueling programme was disrupted because there was a gigantic typhoon swell running at right angles to the wind and, as the tankers became lighter, they began to roll and yaw prodigiously, at times 20 to 30 degrees to either side of their course, while pitching to such an extent that they were showing their whole stern with their propellers clear of the water.

There was a danger that the storm centre might swing towards the refueling area and, accordingly, the Logistic Support Group that included the *Pirie* was ordered to the south. On 2 August, in company with the cruiser *Ulysses* and the oil tanker, *Carelia*, we headed for Manus Island when, four days later, an atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima.

Following a 24 hour respite at Manus we were at sea again in company with HMAS *Cessnock* and escorting the oil tanker, *Carelia* and a few days later I wrote to my Mother:

Today has been the most exciting day for all of us on board because we heard the news of the possible Japanese surrender and our ears have been glued to the wireless for the news we have been waiting for.

I celebrated my 19<sup>th</sup> birthday off Guam on 25 June and two months later, on 28 August 1945, in a letter home to my Mother said:

We are still at sea and as censorship regulations have been lifted I can now tell you where we are. At present we are about 300 miles off Tokyo and expect to go into Tokyo Bay in a few days. Since we left Australia in June we have had a fair amount of sea time for we have had 62 days at sea and four in harbour at Manus Island, so you can see we have been very busy. While the fleet was shelling Japan we were always a couple of hundred miles away waiting for them to come back and refuel...

The surrender announcement was received in varying ways; this to be expected and the following quotation comes from Iris Nesdale's *The Corvettes*:

Off Balikpapan on HMAS *Junee* men gathered in the wireless office and a journal comment is revealing, '... surrender of Japan. Thank God! Peace at last! But much more work still remains before we see home.'

Somewhere off Guam a young signalman on *Pirie's* bridge received a blast from the wireless office below - 'You bloody beauty! The war's over!'

Mrs Nesdale continued:

[Geoff Manning] translated the message into acceptable language and passed it to the captain who listened quietly to the momentous report, Naval dignity and traditional reserve were admirably demonstrated in his cool, calm acknowledgement. 'Thank you, signalman!' Then silence. But perhaps there was more to it than reserve; a remembering of ships that were lost, of regret for the men who would not return. A thought for wasted years.

### ***Events in Tokyo Bay – September 1945***

*In war, which ever side may call itself the victor, there are no winners, but all are losers.*  
(Neville Chamberlain, 1869-1940)

We entered Tokyo Bay on 31 August 1945 where we awaited the ultimate conclusion of the war with Japan in the form of the official surrender that was signed on USS *Missouri* on 2 September. In letters home to my Mother this is what I had to say:

Here I am anchored in Tokyo Bay. We arrived here this morning after 20 days at sea. We left Manus Island on the 11th August escorting tankers to refuel the British Pacific Fleet about 300 miles south of here. As you can imagine it was a great occasion when we entered this morning. We were the third Australian ship and the first corvette to enter the bay. Two destroyers came in yesterday.

Everybody on board was up and out of their hammocks early to have their first look at Japan. Our first sight of it was a very rugged mountain and coastline with dark clouds hanging around the higher peaks. On the southern shore I noticed some rock quarries but saw no sign of life but British and American Ensigns were flying. On the beaches were a number of damaged and sunken ships. On the mainland large white flags were flying - white is a Japanese symbol of mourning.

We are anchored in Yokohama which is, or was, the chief port of Tokyo and we can see it quite clearly. I was amazed to see the number of chimneys over the factories... It hasn't been a very pleasant day as just after we anchored it started o rain and has continued all day. I hope it clears up tomorrow.

As for the events of 2 September 1945, I leave it to another member of the crew to give his impressions of that momentous day - this sailor was the oldest man on the lower deck and had reached the grand old age of 28 years - the crew's average age was about 21 years:

We did not see the Emperor's barge as it was originally suggested because the USS *Missouri* moved up the Bay. We were all disappointed that the battleship did not stay near us for the signing. Anyway we were all thrilled that we should have the great privilege of being in Tokyo for such an auspicious occasion.

At about 0945 this morning there was a terrific roar coming from the direction of Tokyo and everybody raced out to see what it was all about. What a sight it was - thousands of aircraft coming towards us from as far away as we could see. First of all came a wave of about 50 super fortresses. This was followed by about 20 supers.

Then came several small groups - about 5 or 6 in each. A few minutes later came a huge group of fighters and bombers. I am not exaggerating when I say there were more than 500 planes in the group and what a din they made when they went overhead. The whole ship vibrated with the noise they made. It was truly an impressive sight to see so many huge planes in the air at one time

We were able to listen to the speeches made by President Truman and General McArthur after the signing of the peace. In fact we heard the whole show from start to finish. I thought it was very impressive... Just before the ceremony started to come through a couple of our stokers got a very bright idea. They got an envelope and after putting the necessary address on it they went around and asked everyone to sign it for them. It was not very long before there were others doing the same thing...

As for myself, I sent two such envelopes home to Australia and the one to my Mother survives and is now housed in the War Memorial in Canberra and reproduced in the book *The Corvettes*, by Iris Nesdale. My war time letters are also in the museum and are, in the main, all reproduced in a book entitled *The HMAS Pirie Story* which was published privately in 2000. [In due course, my copy will be lodged in the State Library.]



Australian War Memorial  
Surrender in Tokyo Bay. General Sir Thomas Blamey, with other Australian representatives behind, arrives at table to sign the surrender document on behalf of Australia

### **Surrender Ceremony**

On the 4th September 1945 an aircraft carrier left Tokyo Bay with former Australian prisoners of war (POW) on board and this is what I had to say to my Mother:

I only wish you were here yesterday, Mum, to see the first of the prisoners of war proceeding out of Tokyo Bay on board a British aircraft carrier. They were lined up in orderly fashion on the flight deck dressed in various types of clothing and the Aussie slouch hat was evident amongst them. The carrier steamed among all the British ships anchored in the Bay. The ships' companies lined up and gave them a terrific welcome. On board we kicked up a hell of a row, singing Waltzing Matilda, waving flags and ringing the ship's bell. For our size we made considerable noise.

The ex-POW responded with cheering. It was a soul rending sight to see the lads on their way home. There was an appeal for the POWs who were badly in need of cigarettes the other day and we offered 10,000 and they were delivered to the hospital ship on which they were being comforted. This morning a signal was received from the captain of the carrier expressing his sincere thanks for the gift.

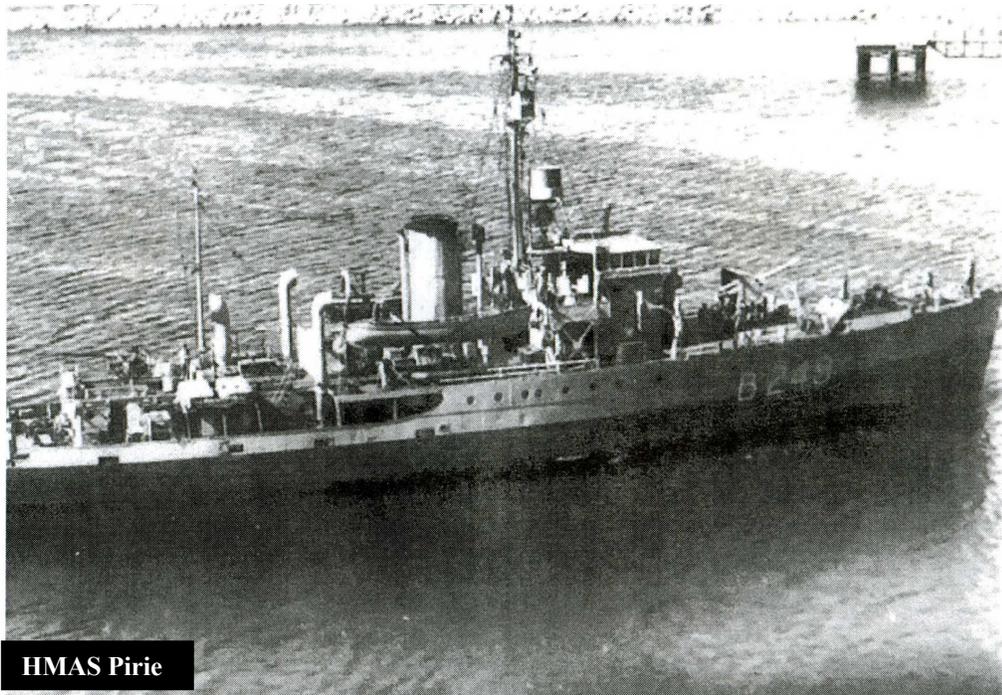
### *Off to Hong Kong*

*Go placidly amid the noise and the haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence.  
(Max Ehrmann, 1872-1945)*

Following our departure from Japan on 5 September the *Pirie* headed for Subic Bay in the Phillipines but on 9 September we were diverted to Buckner Bay in Okinawa because of an approaching typhoon. When we arrived the harbour was full of American battleships; we went alongside the tanker, *Wave King*, and sailed again at 1600 hours after an eight hour spell. The winds had eased somewhat but we were informed that at the height of the typhoon eight aircraft were reported missing between Luzon and Okinawa. We passed through the Luzon straits on the night of the 13<sup>th</sup> and the next day oiled from the *Olna* at about mid-day and sailed for Hong Kong at 1620 hours.

A shipmate described our arrival as follows:

Last night I went up on to the fo'castle, the sea was like molten glass, the sky on the horizon was light blue darkening until overhead it was a deep velvet blue and studded with thousands of stars. The brilliant half moon the night with a silvery light, while the ships in company with all lights blazing completed the perfectness of the scheme. Most of the boys were lounging on the fo'castle enjoying the cool breeze and listening to Chas Weir playing requests on his violin. It was one of those moments that makes all the discomforts seem worthwhile. I was completely at peace with the world – the night seems to do something to you.



**HMAS Pirie**

At dawn today we sighted the rugged peaks of the islands off the coast of China. By 0800 were steaming up Ly-ee Moon Channel, dropped pick at 0930 in the harbour, between Port Victoria and the mainland city of Kowloon. On the way to the anchorage we passed at least a dozen sunken ships, while on shore there was evidence of bombings. As soon as we anchored the ship was surrounded by dozens of sampans, with dozens of Chinese hawking all sorts of souvenirs, silks, etc. The whole surrounding countryside is mountainous and rugged, while the city of Victoria is built on the side of great hill on the actual island of Hong Kong.

A few days later, I conveyed my first impressions to my Mother:

This is a pretty place; the island is mountainous and looks very clean. The city, although badly knocked about, is modern. About a mile away is the city of Kowloon which sends forth some foul odours and when the wind is in the right direction we cop the lot.

The British authorities ashore have established law and order and issued new banknotes and got the local newspapers back in action and arranged transport for the POWs and ex-internees. The old business houses are opening up again and the range of goods displayed is astonishing considering the time this place has been in Japanese possession.

Our main job here is to escort ship's into harbour through a channel that has been swept clear of mines. A sister ship HMAS *Strahan* struck a mine while on Pirate Patrol – pirates are very active in the area.

The ship's company learned that some Aussie POW's were on a Carrier in the harbour and only allowed 20 cigarettes a day. We got hold of a mail bag and the boys put in all they could spare. The response was A1 as the bag was full when we finished and three mates and I took it over to them. We only stayed half an hour as our boat was waiting for us.

In the short time we were there we did plenty of talking at they pounded us with questions about Aussie and what things were like back home. We did our best to bring them up to date. You can imagine what a thrill it will be for these chaps to get back home again after so many years in captivity. They told tales of Japanese atrocities and many aspects of camp life - Enough to make your blood curdle...



I was appalled at the sight of them with their flesh hanging from their bones and the general emaciated condition of their bodies. However, today, I do not cast the sins of World War II on the souls of later generations of Japanese people, but the sights I saw in Hong Kong will be with me forever. A shipmate recalled:

Saturday, 29<sup>th</sup> September; rained continuously until 1330 but it cleared up just in time for us to go ashore. I met a few repatriated Aussie POW soldiers ashore - they certainly have had a rough spin. They told us that at least half of the 8<sup>th</sup> Division had died in captivity. I went on the gin and wine and got drunk. Wouldn't it?

As a postscript I must report that, upon our way south from Hong Kong, I was transferred to HMAS *Gawler* in November 1945 and in a letter to the Editor of the HMAS Pirie Association in February 2004 said:

I confess, freely, that I must have been the lowliest 'macker' aboard the Pirie, with infinitesimal discharge points... When I departed in Moratai I was 19 years and four months and, as such, may have claimed to be the youngest crew member at that time - but, of course, 'pusser' bureaucracy was lacking in sentiment and esprit de corps and, accordingly, I was thrown out injudiciously...

However, the generous words emanating from the Skipper. Lt. McKenzie, as he bade farewell to we 'discards' remain with me to this day - there was a man with a heart, a soul and imbued with common courtesy and decency - God rest his soul.

We spent a couple of months meandering around the Dutch East Indies, later to be known as Indonesia and I recite a few events taken from *The Corvettes* by Iris Nesdale:

On 9 November Japanese barges led [*Gawler*] in through minefields at Manokwari until she could anchor close inshore, for here the army representatives on board would ensure that surrender terms were being observed.

On 1 December she was ordered to proceed to Labuan to take over as port director and with it the probability that Christmas would be spent in Borneo. This direction was subsequently countermanded and on 23 November she sailed for Menado in the Celebes. Here Dutch troops were embarked for transportation to Gorontala.

Between the Indonesians and the Dutch matters were becoming extremely tense and, by 26 November, *Gawler* was anchored close inshore at Gorontala. The Dutch were greatly outnumbered and their position looked anything but secure. Indonesians were refusing to collaborate with their authorities, but were willing to recognize Australian representation at conference.

Writing home to my Mother I said:

Dutch troops embarked at Menado, were landed in luggers, and later in the morning a party of Navy and Army officers went ashore to have discussions with the Indonesian leaders, whose people were armed and willing to fight. It is only our guns and the bombardment we could throw ashore that is stopping them from getting stuck into one another. Gorontala had already been badly battered during bombing attacks whilst Japanese forces held the port.

Despite unrest natives came alongside the ship to trade what they had - chickens, pawpaws and coconuts in exchange for soap or clothing. Due to the tenseness of the situation our scheduled departure on 28 November was delayed until the arrival of the *Burdekin* that brought Dutch reinforcements. Later, the Indonesian leader was taken into custody aboard that ship and so the situation eased for a while.

On 24 December we pulled up anchor and started for home but it was not to be a hurried journey because we were towing the tug, *Saint Giles*. We called at Wewak, Madang, Oro Bay, Port Moresby and Thursday Island - the trip to Sydney took seven weeks! A few days later we sailed for Port Adelaide where it had been arranged that the ship's company should march along the town of *Gawler's* main street in celebration of the ship's safe return. 'There was a great deal of noise - cheers, applause, a band playing and drums thudding. When the Gunnery Officer called "Halt" only those within hearing did so.'

The ship then returned to Melbourne and was decommissioned; later that year she was sold to the government of Turkey and renamed *Aywalik*. As for myself I was transferred to the Navy Depot in Adelaide and a couple of months later was posted to a rescue tug HMAS *Reserve* following which we proceeded to Melbourne and towed an oil fuel lighter to Rabaul. Returning to Melbourne in November 1946 my discharge was authorized following which I travelled by rail to Adelaide and reported to HMAS *Torrens* at Birkenhead, severed my acquaintance with the Royal Australian Navy and returned to 'civvy' street, Mrs Young at 20 Park Terrace, Gilberton and the Savings Bank of SA.



**Corvette Reunion, Melbourne, April 1988  
Geoff Manning – 4th from left**

*Epilogue*

HMAS *Pirie* was sold to the Turkish government and became *Amasra* from 22 August 1946 following which she searched for mines dropped by the Germans in the Black Sea thereby opening the Bosphorus in September 1947; in 1948 she swept mines dropped in Bodrum Harbour, She was placed in a logistical support fleet on 7 November 1960 and served until 1971 before being retired from service on 26 March 1984.



**Geoff, Iris Nesdale and Peter Cotton**

## Chapter Four

### Return to Civilian Life

*Livin' and lovin'; wand'rin' on yer way;  
Reapin' the 'arvest uv a kind deed done;  
An' watchin' in the sundown of yer day,  
Yerself again, grown older in your son.  
(C.J. Dennis, *The Sentimental Bloke*)*

#### Introduction

*If we see a light at the end of a tunnel, it's the light of the oncoming train.  
(Robert Lowell, 1917-1977)*

When I returned to civilian life, my 'room' at Mrs Young's boarding house establishment was no longer available but she found a space for me in a 19<sup>th</sup> century livery stable that had been converted into two bedrooms and I remained there for a few years until I was promoted to the residence proper – a huge house of about 14 rooms that was once a private hospital.

It is not my intention to bore the reader with my movements within the Savings Bank of SA - my son, Haydon, has the Bank's 'official' file that includes reports on my conduct, etc. Suffice to say, I commenced as a ledger keeper in the chief Adelaide Office in King William Street and, 36 years later, held an administrative position in the Head Office where I was about number ten in the Bank's hierarchical 'pecking order'. During my term as a relieving teller I met my future wife at Port Pirie and we spent 36 happy years together.

#### Locking Horns with the Savings Bank of SA

*I submit to you that if a man hasn't discovered something he will die for, he isn't fit to live.  
(Martin Luther King, 1929-1968)*

#### Introduction

I think I can say that, while showing compassion at times to its servants, the trustees of the institution, appointed by the government of the day, throughout its existence until its merger with the State Bank of SA in the 1980s, acted with paternalism and a monumental lack of empathy in respect of their employees' struggles to improve their living standards. For many years I was involved in the bank clerk's union, attaining life membership, and, with the cooperation of my son, who in recent times obtained a Doctorate of Philosophy with a thesis on white collar unionism, we traversed this aspect of my life in a book titled *Worth Fighting For*.

However, at the behest of my son, I pen a few personal thoughts on this subject.

When I returned from war service it was apparent to me that the conditions of service and emoluments had been eroded by the Board of Trustees who were veritable tools of the Playford Liberal government that were in mortal fear that any gains made in the banking industry would flow on into the public service. Further, I found it more than difficult to reconcile their inherent parsimony with the fact that they were prepared to lend, at the behest of Sir Thomas Playford, the South Australian Housing Trust two million pounds on a 40-year terminable annuity system at the nominal rate of 1½% when the 'going rate' for such loans stood at 4%!

Another matter that stuck in my craw was that I was asked to work many hours of overtime each week without any payment except for receiving £7 each year (it had been set at £2 in 1874) in July to cover 12 months of excess work and 'tea money'. Also of concern was the plight of tellers because all shortages incurred were to be made good by the unfortunate officer and, indeed, in earlier days and additional penalty was sometimes imposed; for example, a teller with six years service found his cash to be £100 short – he undertook to repay it on a weekly basis of £7 - the Board of Trustees demoted him to the status of 'first class clerk' and, magnanimously, decided against reducing his salary!



Geoff Back from WWII - Gwen late 1930s - Geoff & Gwen courting 1956



Shelby, Gwen and Bronwyn with baby Haydon, 1958



Bronwyn and Shelby, 1957



Geoff with Haydon, 1958

At this time the 'Gilbart Lectures' on banking were presented across Australia on an annual basis - James W. Gilbart was the first General Manager of the London and Westminster Bank and his books on banking were highly regarded:

Very prudent classes of proprietors exhort the directors to practice the strictest economy. When rightly understood this exhortation is worthy of applause with which it is usually attended. But it is liable to be misunderstood... The larger portion of the expenditure of a bank consists of salaries, hence an exhortation to economy amounts to 'keep down the salaries of your officers' and as a manager has the largest salary, he will most likely be the heaviest sufferer.

A more mischievous recommendation, when thus understood, can hardly be conceived. Next to having a dishonest manager, the greatest evil is to have one that is badly paid. It is a law of nature that the kindness, liberality, and generosity of others will produce corresponding feelings in ourselves. And it is another law of our nature that when the mind is under the influence of such feelings, it is capable of intellectual efforts of the highest orders.

Sage words, indeed, but in the financial climate of the closing months of 2008, and the obscenity of 'golden parachutes' to men who all but brought the world economy to its knees, some redefinition may be considered to be of paramount importance!

In the early 1950s, I was appointed to the position of 'Relieving Teller' that necessitated travelling throughout the State and, in the process, I was privileged to meet many men who were familiar with working conditions within the bank from the early days of the 20<sup>th</sup> century - never did I hear a kind word about the niggardly Trustees who virtually controlled all functions of the bank.

Between 1913 and 1918 prices increased by 80% and, by 1918, the clerks' classification, in two grades had increased marginally - 1<sup>st</sup> class remained static at £130-200 per annum, while 2<sup>nd</sup> class moved from £80-£120 to £100-£130 which, I suggest, shows the total indifference to their employees living standards. A further indication of their parsimony is their response to the first employee who volunteered for active service at the commencement of World War I:

Those who volunteer for active service, while receiving all consideration the Savings Bank Act permits, must do so without any implied responsibility as to reinstatement, since the Savings Bank is an institution of public service, which may render it impossible at the time to do so.

Unbelievable? Yes! But it is true. See *Worth Fighting For* for its denouement.

Naturally, the staff was indignant as to the treatment handed out to them and, in 1916, pointed out to the Trustees that all banks operating in Adelaide, and other business houses, had paid bonuses ranging from 4% to 10%. Unmoved, the Trustees responded that:

The Savings Bank differs from an ordinary trading institution making profits, in many cases perhaps increased by war conditions, and that on the contrary, the funds under their control consist in the main of savings of those who, not being in the best circumstances, are making a special effort by self denial to provide for times of deficiency and old age. This, it seemed to the board, precluded them from giving bonuses to staff especially at a time when it is the common endeavour to share the burdens of the Empire on patriotic grounds.

The following year they yielded to pressure from the manager and paid a bonus ranging from 5% to 7% but in view of the more generous payments made by the majority of other banks, this decision did little to seal the rift that was gradually widening between staff and management. In 1918, the staff sought a general salary because 'grocery prices had increased by 23% since 1914 and by 8% during the preceding six months.' Unmoved, the Trustees responded by saying that 'the normal end of the year bonus would be paid on the same basis as last year.'

Thus, the seeds were sown for the formation of the South Australian Bank Officers' Association - It is not my intention to traverse this any further because it is covered fully in *Worth Fighting For*. Suffice to say the Trustees fought the first log of claims served on them up to the Supreme Court that upheld the Bank's contention that 'as the Crown fixed the salaries an industrial court had no jurisdiction.' Victory came finally in April 1924 when a Labor government took office in South Australia.

### *World War II and Beyond*

*It is always easier to fight for one's principles than to live up to them.*  
(Alfred Adler, 1870-1937)

The war years of 1939-1945 saw conditions of service and emoluments being eroded by the Board of Trustees who were assisted by a conservative government that, as stated earlier, feared that any gains made in the banking industry would flow on into the public service. These events, coupled with the BOASA's political stance in the nationalisation of banking furore, saw Savings Bank members seceding from that body and forming a local branch of the ABOA. By 1951, the Savings Bank of SA Award covered salaries for officers from the commencement of duty until the completion of 19 years service - at this time the private trading banks award provided for salaries of £353-£653 as compared to £316-£581 in the Savings Bank and, according to a newspaper report of the day they were 'now the lowest paid bank officers in South Australia.'

As for managers of branches, the BOASA award in respect of private trading banks provided a three-year salary range of £585 to £605 for branches with less than six hands - the SBSA had 53 branches in this class of which 25 managers received less than award rates (£545 to £577); further, senior clerks (accountants) were classified within private trading banks in all branches with six hands or more - the

SBSA only classified this office at branches with 9 hands and over. Later, much more will be said of this anomaly.

I now take up the story as from the time I became involved in union affairs.

I married in 1956 and, with a wife, two 'ready-made' daughters, aged 8 and 12 respectively, together with a son who arrived on the scene on 1 March 1958, it was time for me to take some interest in my financial situation. My first step was to undertake a course of study within the Bankers' Institute of Australasia that provided tuition in such subjects as Economics, Commercial Law, Banking-Currency and Exchange, Accountancy - 10 subjects in all which I passed successfully over a period of two years - thus, I was armed with a 'Degree' that would assist me in advancement within the bank.

My second step was to seek a position on the committee of the Savings Bank Branch of the ABOA and this came to pass in the late 1950s - for some time I kept a very low profile for there was much to learn from other members who had been battling against the heinous trustees for many 'moons'.

By the early 1960s, the private trading banks sought to freeze wages for a period of five years; this move, not surprisingly, caused anger and resentment among bank employees. The main aftermath of the banks' action was not, as they thought, a successful freeze, but rather, the maturing of bank employee unionism. Some comparisons of workers, aged 21, were enlightening - Bank officer, £898; Local Govt. Clerk, £970; Council Traffic Inspector, £1,050; Police Constable, £1,105! On 24 December 1963, *The News* had a banner headline - BANK MEN GET RISES - PAY BOOSTS UP TO £205.

By the close of 1963, a set of rules, broadened to cover the whole of Australia, was adopted at a federal conference of bank officers and, on 9 March 1964, additional delegates to the SA Branch of the ABOA were welcomed from the private trading banks and State Bank - the history behind this event which had eluded State associations for over 40 years is told in *Worth Fighting For*.

By 1967, a significant increase in the cost of living prompted the ABOA to seek a 25% increase to the award and, following a breakdown in negotiations, a national strike was called for 3 November 1969. In South Australia:

75% of the banks in Adelaide were closed or inoperative - many country towns completely closed (e.g. Port Lincoln) - Savings Bank of SA members very solid - four tellers at main office included Bank's Secretary - EDP Department closed down.

A few days later, in a *Newsletter* the SBSA branch, of which I was proud to be an executive member, reflected upon the strike as:

No classic student revolt, no radical uprising, but grown men and women overcome by pent-up frustration; people who were tired of being treated as children and fobbed off by promises of a rosy future, when they preferred to have the reality of a livable present.

Following amalgamation of the two SA State associations, as discussed above, a sub-branch was formed within the Savings Bank of SA - I retained my position as SBSA delegate on the State committee and also became Secretary/Treasurer of the newly-formed body, taking over as President in 1968. The next few years were most rewarding as my committee and I set about rectifying many anomalies in respect of employer/employee relationships within the Savings Bank of SA.

#### *Classification of Managers and Accountants & Allied Matters*

To appreciate what was to become a major objective in respect of the classifications of positions within the bank over and above the '19 year of service scale' as prescribed in the SBSA Award, a little background information is essential. By 1949, having experienced the incongruities of salaries and allowances which had arisen as a result of unstandardised and unsystematic methods used in determining this matter, the trustees decided to institute a classification committee similar to those that had been adopted by the State Government Public Service over the preceding 20 years.

Coinciding with this decision was the fact that a variation to the SBSA Award was before Commissioner Stewart who, in a pronouncement that perturbed we mortal unionists, decreed that he was satisfied that the bank's classification made 'proper' provision for this matter and, accordingly, he refused to provide for it in his judgement.

In retrospect, this decision was more than fortuitous because, in the mid-1960s, Murrie Drew, the staff representative on the classification committee was successful in obtaining 'over-award' payments included in the classification. Indeed, it was more than evident that the trustees were prepared to make

concessions provided they were not to be subject to any award agreement enforceable in an arbitration court, *i.e.*, they could be varied at their behest.

However, this system was, in many respects, anathema to the staff as indicated by the refusal of the bank to institute a Promotion Appeals Board - This approach was doomed to failure because the general manager argued that:

Appointments are made by the management in its free and unfettered discretion. The officers of this bank already receive far more consideration in this respect than most of their contemporaries in the banking industry.

As a personal aside, I must comment on the management structure of the bank: prior to 1914 no Roman Catholic had ever been employed by the bank: the hierarchy of management was infested with the worshippers of Freemasonry and to kowtow to these nabobs and seek their blessing was an essential facet to join the ranks of the Bankers' Lodge and engage in its clandestine activities - at one time, prior to my commitment to the union, I was approached with an invitation to enter the ranks of the 'faithful', but declined all of them, immediately.

Indeed, there is no doubt that, on many occasions, promotions were made for reasons other than proficiency as explained by the SBSA Union representatives:

If it is a fact that the selection committee is not always unanimously agreed on the officer selected for recommendation to the general manager, it is not unreasonable to assume that on occasions, an application to an appeals board could be successful. Even if it wasn't the officer appealing would have at least had the satisfaction of stating his case to an independent tribunal and that would mean a lot to him.

This plea fell upon deaf ears and there is no doubt any appeal to the Liberal government of the day would have met with a similar fate!

The one and only Chairman of the Classification Committee from 1949 until 1973 was Mr L.C. Hunkin, a former Labor Member for Norwood in the 1920s, Deputy-Director of Manpower during World War II and brother of the Chairman of the Board of Trustees and, during my tenancy as staff representative, the management was represented by the bank's Assistant General Manager, Colin Walker, who was aided and abetted by the Staff Inspector who was not entitled to vote on any matter before the committee but, on many occasions, made his presence felt at the behest of his management compatriot. Thus, the staff representative was invariably outnumbered in any debate.

However, from the outset I was aware of a certain 'rapport' emanating from Mr Hunkin and many a time he 'stuck in his oar' in my support - I recall the following: The General Manager's private secretary (female) had retired and, in its wisdom the Bank's selection committee selected a lady who was about 25 years younger than her predecessor and, as was the custom, the Trustees required the Classification Committee to undertake a review of the 'work value' of the position, prior to confirming the appointment.

As soon as the meeting commenced, Mr Walker pushed a piece of paper across the desk upon which were some figures which he explained was his suggestion for a 'revised' salary range at a lower level for the position - his explanation was that 'she was a much younger lady' and as such was, in his opinion, not entitled to receive the previously declared salary. To this callous and ill-informed comment I addressed the Chairman and posed a question - 'Are we here to determine a salary rate for a "human body" or assess the work value of a "job"?' With a twinkle in his eye the Chairman said: 'What have you got to say to that Mr Walker?' Yes, you guessed it - precisely nothing, and he said not another word on the subject and the maligned 'young' lady got her predecessor's salary!

As an aside, when Mr Hunkin stepped down following the event which is narrated in the next paragraph, I wrote a personal letter to him and in response he said, *inter alia*:

I felt sad at the break in my association with the Bank and its officers for many of whom I have the warmest regard. I would like to think I did some useful work during my term and that the interests of your members were constantly before me in all our activities for, as you know, that is where my sympathies lay... It was a great pleasure to know you.

Fate was kind to me and my fellow unionists, for the Dunstan government came to power and, at this time, I was President of the SBSA Branch of the ABOA. In 1971, incensed at the bank's ongoing refusal to appoint an appeals committee my branch decided on a different form of attack and enlisted the services of the Federal Secretary, R.D. Williams, who approached the Premier with a view to enlisting his support.

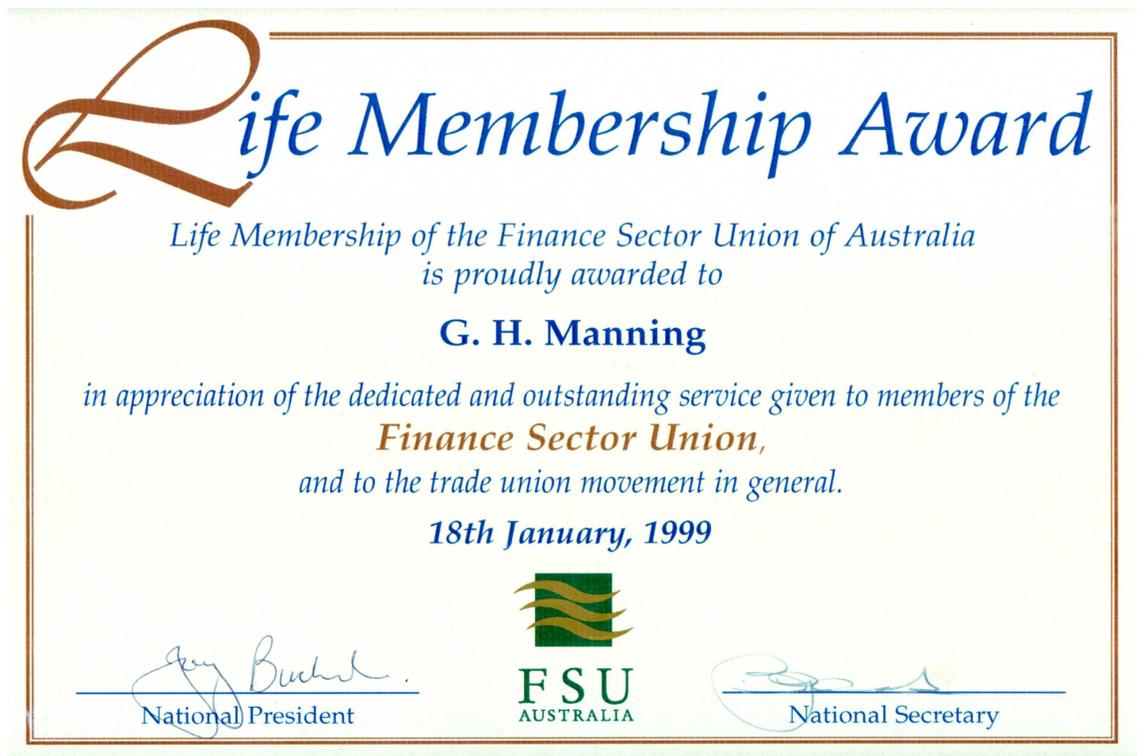
His letters to the Chairman of Trustees on 27 November 1972 and 18 April 1973 brought the protracted grievance to a conclusion:

I have agreed with the Australian Bank Officials' Association to give consideration to the enactment of... provisions relating to the Savings Bank.

The staff classification and appeal provisions have been approved in principle and are presently before the Australian Bank Officials' Association for any comments and submissions the association may desire to offer.

Naturally, this decision was lauded by the rank and file but management, generally, was not impressed but one or two members within the lower echelon, who had former union affiliations, whispered the words 'well done' in my ear. I became the first staff representative on the Classification and Appeals Board which was chaired by the Auditor-General, Mr Ken Boland, and I was to continue in that capacity until about two years prior to my retirement in 1982.

Encouraged with this success, my committee set out to secure a whole range of extra benefits, for example, classification of accountants at six to eight handed branches (this resulted in about 20 young men getting early promotion and substantial salary increases), additional house allowances for managers at 'fringe' suburban branches (the Elizabeth branch was classified as 'country' and thereby attracted a lower rate than its 'suburban' counterpart), a change of system of branch classification (that is, to conform with the private banks' Federal Award that was more generous than that of the SBSA) and the re-engagement of females after marriage (the Bank decreed that 'No female officer on the staff shall continue in the employment of the bank after her marriage, except on the certificate of the General Manager that her employment is required in the interests of the bank.')



One interesting episode occurred during this time - I was elected to represent the South Australian Branch at a Federal Conference in Perth and applied for leave with pay for two weeks but, alas, it was apparent the bank, still smarting from my Branch's 'nefarious' activities, refused to pay me - it was made up to me by the Federal body. Upon my return, one day I was walking through the corridors of power in Head Office when the General Manager, Ken Furze - by no means an avid unionist - confronted me and said: 'Welcome home, Manning', I hope you had a happy holiday?' I responded, 'Thank you Sir. Yes, I did even though, unfortunately, it fell into the "unpaid" category!'

When the dust had settled I was pleasantly surprised when I was informed that I had been accorded Life Membership of the ABOA and as I have said many times to my family over ensuing years I value that honour more than that of being a prospective General Manager of the Savings Bank of SA. Four years later, after 20 years involvement in union affairs, I stepped down from the presidency and committee work but, of course, maintained my membership.

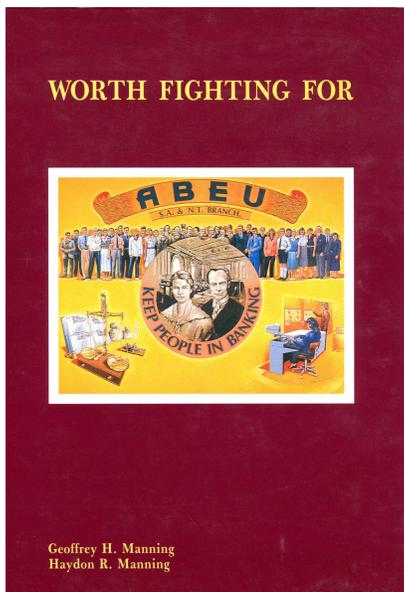
Finally, may I quote a few words uttered by Joseph Benedict Chifley, a former Labor Prime Minister of Australia, which served me in good stead during many traumatic moments within my 'life in the union'?

*I don't care what the privileged classes may say about the labour movement.*

*We work for humanity when we fight for better conditions.*



Receiving *Australian Bank Officials Association, Life Membership*



**Geoff and Haydon, 1989 photography by Shelby**

## Chapter Five

### *Delving into History*

*It is always easier to fight for one's principles than to live up to them.*  
(Alfred Adler, 1870-1937)

#### *Aftermath of my Life at the Savings Bank of SA*

*Things won are done; joy's soul lies in the doing.*  
(William Shakespeare, 1564-1616)

#### *Introduction*

During the late 1970s it was evident to many perceptive people that a plundering of the nation was being undertaken by irresponsible, greedy and predatory 'entrepreneurs' such as Alan Bond and Christopher Skase, aided and abetted by the banking industry - the poor and underprivileged, of course, still remained in our society in spite of statements emanating from politicians in rash and ill-considered pre-election promises.

Indeed, there would appear to be no argument against the proposition that, over the decade of the 1980s, social mores were abandoned and the pursuit of profit put before the long-established precept of accountability.

Arriving at the age of 56 years in 1982, and with the imminent amalgamation of the two State banks, I decided to take three months long service leave when, after meeting two long-lost cousins, who were steeped in Manning family history, I delved into my paternal ancestry the result of which is mentioned earlier in this epistle. Little did I know that this was to be a catalyst for further research into other aspects of the State's history as evidenced, today, by twelve published books and reams of unpublished material.

#### *Retirement*

*It is better to be seventy years young than forty years old.*  
(Oliver Wendell Holmes, 1809-1894)

I now advance to the years following my retirement in 1982 which occurred just prior to the amalgamation of the Savings Bank of SA with the State Bank of SA and the ensuing onslaught on the State's coffers by Mr Marcus Clark and his gang of 'gung-ho' and irresponsible bankers. I was asked to put all archival material held by both Banks into some semblance of order and after many months of backbreaking, but enjoyable, labour I had prepared Series Lists of its content - A copy is held today by the State Library.

To the bank's credit the Archive was housed on the first floor of its King William Street office and accessible to the public and was well received, especially by many people researching their family history, because it was a simple fact that anybody who had a few shillings to spare deposited it with the Savings Bank of SA and, accordingly, much background information on depositors was available for research from the year of the Bank's foundation in 1848.

In its In-House magazine of August 1991, an article headed *Bank Archives Reveal our Early Pioneers*, read as follows:

Under the watchful eye of noted author and former SBSA manager, Geoff Manning, South Australians are finding out about unknown relatives and tracking down addresses, arrival dates and signatures of their ancestors.

The records include account ledgers, registers of depositors and indexes from 1848, withdrawal order books from 1850-1876, mortgage loan applications dating back to the 1850s and a comprehensive collection of rules and regulations for SA clubs and societies from 1880.

The archive, situated in the bank's library on the second floor of 97 King William Street, is opened from 9.30 a.m. to 11 a.m. every day. Further evidence of its intrinsic worth was contained in a letter from the bank to the Minister for Education and Children's Services:

In 1990, realizing that we had a wealth of historical information that was not being used because we 'did not know what we had', we set about cataloguing and indexing the material. The result is we have a searchable data base and catalogued archive of material representing records of the Savings Bank of SA (1848-1984), The State Bank of SA (1896-1984) and the merged State Bank (1984-1994).

This material represents a marvelous resource for our school children. Early records of colonial life give a picture of real people in a way that history books simply cannot convey. The annual hand written reports from the country branch managers during the depression years give a picture of life that today's youth simply cannot fathom.

Throughout the Bank's history, any club or society opening an account was required to lodge a copy of their rules and regulations. The result is a comprehensive collection of pamphlets that enables one to 'map' Adelaide's social history...

This material is currently used by the bank to research our past practices as they relate to current business needs; to supplement displays for our branch network and community requests; and to answer historical questions that come from students, researchers and the general public... We have the rich store of information, but your teaching professionals hold the key and expertise for making it useful to children in terms of appreciating the past and learning for the future.

But, it received a cruel blow when private enterprise took over the bank and, as is the way with such bodies, the goals of profit and shareholder satisfaction were deemed to be more important than civic responsibility in respect of the State's heritage. The archive was closed and its content spread out over metropolitan Adelaide and, to the best of my knowledge, is gathering dust within the Public Records Office and elsewhere.

### *The Place Names of South Australia*

*The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul.  
(Bible - Proverbs)*

A Canadian expert once said in respect of the science of toponymy - that is the study of place names - that: The leading principle in an investigation is to trace their origin back through the documents to the very earliest discoverable form, if possible, to the first written form. Often this gives the origin at once, particularly if it is a name given by explorers. Where it is not plain, reference to contemporary history usually shows the event and under whose patronage the exploration was undertaken.

In South Australia we are, indeed, fortunate that much primary source material is available for those attempting to seek the truth in respect of the origin of place names. Unfortunately, however, in the past some South Australian nomenclators have accepted conjecture and hearsay and the aftermath of their less than deliberative conclusions has led to many fables being implanted as fact into the State's history.

In discussing toponymy in South Australia I must acknowledge two young surveyors who, I believe, were instrumental in having their peers and the general populace taking an interest in a small, but vital, part of our heritage. They were Charles Hope Harris and Horace Cobden Talbot who were employed in the Lands Department in the 1860s. They gained their surveyor's licences in 1869 and 1872, respectively, and as they mapped place names being implanted by settlers they, fortunately for posterity, recorded their findings.

In September 1893 C.H. Harris presented a paper to a meeting of 'The Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science' entitled Geographical Nomenclature of South Australia in which his main object was to:

Account for the introduction of well-known European names into South Australia, and to narrate incidents, both of geographical and historical interest, connected to them... Some of the facts given are gathered from official sources, the remainder have been contributed by old residents, and authenticated by reference to documentary evidence contained in letters and diaries of early colonists.

In the course of his oration he castigated the nomenclatorial habits of some Governors who had ignored:

The wealth of history and romance that is wrapped up in the names given by the natives to various natural features and localities; we have obliterated them for the sake of names more dear to vice-regal representatives, such as Alice, Caroline, Anna, Joanna, Julia, Laura, George, John and James...

We are said to be making history, but are we not lacking in courtesy in effacing the history of a less fortunate people whom we have displaced... It surely is not necessary to close the annals of this inoffensive simple race, certainly it is not generous of us to destroy their only records, nor is it wise to exclude from mental view the panorama of their past.

In examining a list of place names and their meanings he presented, it is evident that Mr Harris had not checked all the information supplied back to primary sources. For example, on page 24 he claims that Sibsey, Stickney and Spilsby Islands were named by Flinders after three of his crew drowned on 22 February 1802, when in fact they honour parishes in Lincolnshire, England: further, the date of the tragedy was 21 February.

H.C. Talbot did not publish any of his nomenclature records, which, today, are held in bound volumes in the Department of Lands and, as with C.H. Harris, he is guilty on occasions of accepting hearsay and instances are to be found throughout his work. However, he compiled and published a booklet entitled *The Early History of the South-East District of South Australia* in 1921 and one significant error in it has been perpetuated by Rodney Cockburn and local historians, namely, that the town of Mount Gambier (laid out, originally, as 'Gambierto[w]n') was created by Hastings Cunningham in 1854 when, indeed, a few minutes research at the General Registry Office would have elicited the fact that E.P.S. Sturt was the subdivider, circa 1849.

The third and most lauded pioneer of nomenclature was Rodney Cockburn (1877-1932) who, as a young reporter with the *Register*, developed a healthy appetite for toponymy and, in 1908, published a book entitled *Nomenclature of South Australia* which was reprinted from a series of articles from the *Register*, *Observer* and *Evening Journal*.

As to its content the *London Daily Telegraph* opined that 'there can be no question of the value of the kind of information contained in these articles', but, as we shall see later, its publication saw a series of errors enter into local nomenclature which were to remain unchallenged for almost eighty years.

However, in 1940 the Nomenclature Committee, the predecessor of the present-day Geographical Names Board, did record in its minutes that:

Mr Cockburn's publication is a most useful reference and it is generally recognised as a very creditable production. Many names, however, are missing and further research has indicated that some of the references are not correct.

Following his death in 1932 his widow sold a revised manuscript and research notes to the Mitchell Library in Sydney and, later, a typed copy was acquired by the South Australian State Library and this was the basis for the book *What's in a Name* as published in 1984 by his son, Stewart Cockburn who, in a Preface, stated that it was 'a tribute to the quality of the author's research that so few mistakes have been discovered in it', to which any perceptive person may have been excused for posing the question as to whether any basic research back to primary sources had been undertaken over the period 1932-1984? - the answer, I suggest, would have been an unequivocal 'No'!

A facet of the publication of Rodney Cockburn's *What's in a Name* that deserves a mention is a review that appeared in *The Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia* in 1985; the reviewer, Mr Graeme Pretty of the SA Museum and a member of the Geographical Names Board said, *inter alia*:

... [Rodney Cockburn]... now an acknowledged public authority on the subject and an adviser on it to parliament, obviously had access to the relevant government documentation. Finally, as he declares in his introduction, experience taught [him] the folly of presuming in an area where nothing short of rigid documentation is acceptable.

It appears that this supposedly objective opinion was made without any specific detailed analysis being made of Rodney Cockburn's work which, as a result of my research over the past six years, I believe has an error factor of at least ten per cent. Further, another of the reviewer's statements, namely, 'We can safely regard the work as authoritative and in the future, as in the past, simply cite "Cockburn" as our

source' appears to be the height of folly in view of the considered opinion expressed by the Nomenclature Committee in 1940.

Mr Pretty concluded his review by saying:

We shall hope that the private papers of Rodney Cockburn, now in the Mitchell Library, will prove to contain original correspondence upon which the published derivations are based and that Stewart Cockburn can find some time to incorporate references to them in future editions.

It would appear that the suggestion fell upon deaf ears for subsequent editions have been a facsimile of the first.

The late Justice Charles H. Bright in his introduction to *The Confidential Clerk* made some illuminating comments in respect of:

The tendency for later historians to continue to express the same views as their predecessors despite the later evidence. This is perhaps because the latter material often consists of scraps of circumstantial evidence which, considered singly, appear insignificant, but which, taken collectively, present a picture which is inconsistent with earlier views.

In a comprehensive and analytical review of this book which appeared in the *Advertiser* on 18 February 1984, Mr Stewart Cockburn who, at the time, was in the throes of publishing his late father's work on South Australian nomenclature, made the prediction that Mr Bright's book:

Is going to deliver a large jolt to professional writers of history and biography in Australia who have often taken in each other's washing and accepted secondary sources for their information, instead of going back to primary sources.

In a foreword Sir Walter Crocker was to conclude that:

Some errors, some of them enshrined in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* and in our standard histories, are at length, cleared away.

Thus, the message to historians was loud and clear - seek out primary sources and avoid secondary sources, hearsay and conjecture as you would the plague!

I believe that it is the inherent duty for historians of each generation, be they amateur or professional, to 'constantly interpret the past' and reappraise the findings of their predecessors. Early in 1984, with the words of Messrs Bright and Stewart Cockburn ringing in my ears, I, tentatively, and I confess, with certain misgivings, approached Mr Max Medwell of the Department of Lands and Secretary of the Geographical Names Board with a view to obtaining expert advice as to where the truth might be found in respect of the derivation of place names in South Australia.

In July 1984, a minute recorded by the Geographical Names Board stated that 'the Secretary [Mr. Max Medwell] advised that a Mr. Geoff Manning was at present searching the Board's records, seeking the origin of place names not included in the Cockburn reprint *What's in a Name* as it was his intention, in conjunction with Mr. Stewart Cockburn, to publish a supplement to the volume when a reprint is warranted. The Board ratified the Secretary's action in allowing Mr Manning access to the records. The Chairman to investigate the proposal from a Departmental point of view.'

You may well ask as to what prompted me to enter into this search - In the mid-1970s I was looking into the Manning family history and discovered that one of my ancestors had settled at McLaren Vale and at that time recorded nomenclature by both H.C. Talbot and Rodney Cockburn said that it was named by David McLaren when on a trip to Happy Valley and Hurtle Vale in 1837, but no source for the opinion was given by either gentlemen. This was disputed by Mr J.D. Somerville, who quoted from J.C. Hawker's *Reminiscences*: '... The Valley of McLaren, named from Mr [John] McLaren, Land Office, who surveyed it.' In support of this statement the *South Australian* of 7 October 1845 said: '... named from Mr McLaren, of the Survey Office, who surveyed it'. Indeed, it is most unlikely that the party travelling to Hurtle Vale in 1837 would have been far enough south to traverse the McLaren Vale.

In an effort to resolve the matter I corresponded with Mr David Elder, the author of *William Light's Brief Journal and Australian Diaries*, and he said:

As I understand it McLaren arrived at Kangaroo Island on 21 April 1837... and the *SA Gazette & Colonial Register* for 8 July 1837 included a paragraph or two welcoming McLaren to

Adelaide... This makes me wonder if Talbot was right in thinking that McLaren led an expedition to this area so soon after his arrival in Adelaide...

Later, Mr. Cockburn was averse to an intermingling of my findings with his late father's work and, following the publication of my *Romance of Place Names of South Australia*, in 1986, I received consolation in respect of its obvious imperfections from Mr. Hans Mincham, author of the monumental work, *The Story of the Flinders Ranges*, when he confessed to me that he was still striving for perfection, even after several reprints and revisions.

On 15 November 1986 a review that appeared in the *Sunday Mail* said:



**History in SA will take a knock from a new book by an Adelaide man.**

Years of research have brought author Geoff Manning to re-write the nomenclature of SA.

He has challenged the origins of scores of place names in the book, *Romance of Place Names in SA*.

It will upset some cherished ideas about names of suburbs, towns, streets and landmarks across the State.

The Geographical Names Board secretary, Mr Max Medwell, says in a foreword: "This book will soon become recognised as the authority on the subject and will be referred to by librarians, newspapers, historians and the public at large."

Another comment was made by Dr Brian Dickey, Reader in History at Flinders University, who said:

Dictionaries of place names can be a great help - or they can authorise myths which though comforting have little relation to the truth. Manning corrects hundreds of myths given momentum by Cockburn, though in a drier style. There are none of the gentle essays on the state of things that made one tolerate Cockburn's loose scholarship. *The Romance of Place Names of South Australia* will therefore become our modern reference work on the subject.

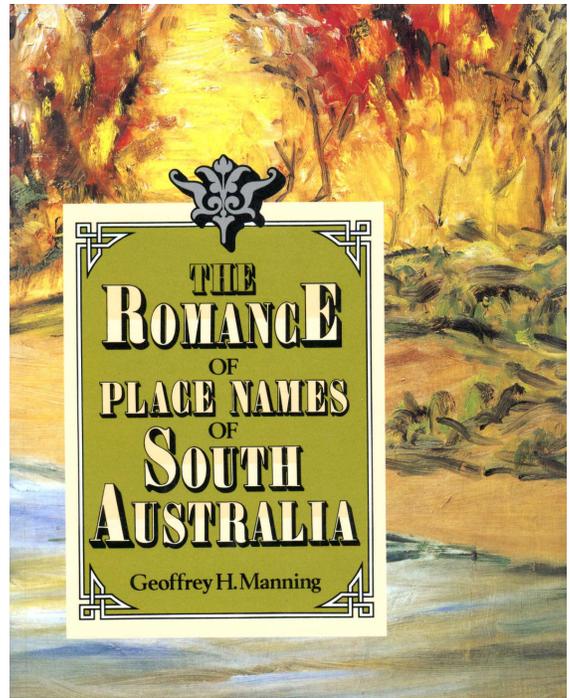
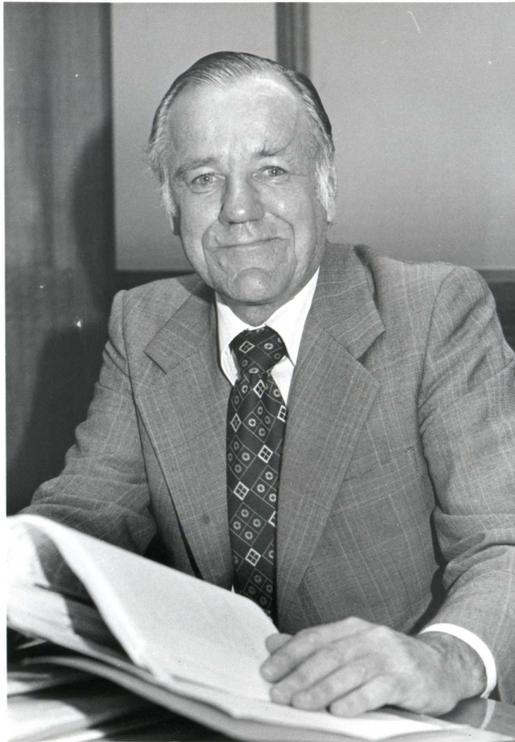
Taking umbrage, Mr Stewart Cockburn responded to this considered opinion and said that he was:

Sceptical of many of [Manning's] 'corrections' to my father's work... I would rejoice at [the] opportunity to defend and promote the integrity of my late father's work and the accuracy with which he performed it. It would be a good opportunity to air, beside yours, the opinions of scholars of his own time who were more familiar with his life-long research than you appear to be.

Dr Dickey responded politely:

You and I may have disagreements about the relative qualities of Cockburn and Manning. Let me assure you that at no time did I entertain any other view of Cockburn's book than one of respect for an achievement well done in the years before World War I, combined with a certain mild concern that modern scholarship might pass it by. When it was republished it was the best we had. Manning's book is clearly better, no question about that...

Nothing I have said was intended to denigrate or put down Cockburn's book, except in the sense that I made it plain that I regard Manning's as better. Potential buyers are entitled to such guidance... He is right and Cockburn is wrong on many occasions...



**Cover painting by Gwen Manning**

I, too, have the greatest respect for the pioneering work of my predecessors because it is their work which has provided a basis for later research. My own study has caused me to be grateful for those pioneers. But it has also revealed that they were not always correct and that the study of toponymy needs constant revision.

By 1990, as put succinctly by Ms Susan Marsden in her foreword to my 'follow-up' edition titled *Manning's Place Names of South Australia*, '[my] search had become compelling' - thus, the secondary stage of the work was completed, albeit not without certain, to use printers' parlance, 'literals' and other errors - some due to deficiencies in my own basic research and others found within the Department of Lands that had remained unchallenged for decades.

The historian, Dr Rob Linn reviewed this edition in the following terms in the *Journal of the Historical Society of SA*:

For many years now I have held the opinion that South Australian researchers need more general information on the basic facts of the State's history - good reference guides. A number of books have appeared since 1966, like Andrew Peake's *Sources for South Australian History* and Peter Howell and Brian Dickey's really excellent *South Australia's Foundation, Select Documents* that assist with such information. Other books such as Elizabeth Kwan's *Living in South Australia: A Social History*, have also given us an amount of general research information.

Geoffrey Manning's new edition of this book on South Australia's nomenclature provided perhaps the best example yet of a fine reference volume for South Australian researchers. He has meticulously researched the origin of names of districts, towns, localities and the like. Moreover, he has given us the sources of information; a rare treat indeed. The book is more than mere nomenclature. A total read will give a feel for the history of the State's survey and settlement.

I first turned to one of the areas I knew most about: an area out of Truro on the east side of the ranges running to the Murray Flats. Manning had an entry for the particular property I had researched, Baldon Station; had noted the original name for the area (a very fitting one), The Dustholes; and had listed the most obvious geographical feature, Accommodation Hill. In each case Manning's reading of the Department of Land's sources was impeccable. Moreover, his cross references to other nomenclature on the area and properties connected with the major land owner in that part, Lachlan McBean, were 'spot on'. He explained where other sources of

information stood on the nomenclature and opened up, in effect, a field of research on this one district and property.

My assumption after this test case was that if Manning was so scrupulously correct in an isolated instance for a little-known property, his work must have enormous merit. The first edition of this book, while good in itself, has here been fully updated. It beats any other publication on South Australia's nomenclature hollow and will – and must – be the starting point for all research in this field. While there is a good deal of room for argument about whose version of South Australia's place names is correct – a debate I will not enter to in this review – Manning at least provides us with his logic for his choice and his research. This is all that can be asked of any writer.

All these good qualities are met with an excellent job of production. Gillingham Printers have provided a beautifully typeset and designed book that is a pleasure to read. The typeface is clear, eminently suited to such a large work, and the reproduction of many excellent maps and illustrations is first rate. The retail price is very reasonable for the quality of production.

So, if you want to have a read that will consume your mind for days and find out about South Australia from Aaron Creek to Zion Hill, as well as the origins of street names in Adelaide and North Adelaide, this book is a must. It is an outstanding contribution to the history of South Australia and a credit to Manning's dedication and thoroughness.

In 1996, I was engaged in an effort to entice the responsible authorities to rename two merged councils as 'Munno Para' in lieu of 'Playford' and, in a letter to the *Advertiser* that was published on 5 December, Stewart Cockburn said, *inter alia*:

I thank Mr Geoffrey H. Manning for his gracious tribute to my late father, Rodney Cockburn, as 'the father of nomenclature in SA'. My father died in 1932, his book which I republished in 1984 under the title *What's in a Name?* is now long out of print and Mr Manning has deservedly become today's acknowledged authority in this field. His major compilation *Manning's Place Names of South Australia* reproduces and supplements the best of my father's work and supplies derivations of hundreds of place names added to the map during the past century.

A third edition appeared in 2006 titled *Manning's Place Names of South Australia - From Aaron Creek to Zion Hill* and the following extracts are from various reviews and comments on my work on the place names of South Australia over a period of about 20 years:

Despite his respect for his predecessors, Geoff Manning makes it clear that toponymy – like any other area of historical research – needs constant revision as the researcher checks primary sources and discovers new evidence. His thoroughness, both in the research itself and his documentation of it, provides a model that many historians could well emulate.

Geoff Manning describes his work in toponymy as an exercise in patience and logic and one which he has found profoundly satisfying. The author's patience and logic have produced an invaluable historical reference work and his pleasure is apparent in a book which is a most satisfying read.

Geoff Manning's great gift to the people of South Australia is the clue to understanding the background to these stories. His extraordinarily thorough and painstaking research over decades has built on the foundation of earlier writers to create a wonderful fabric of colour, vitality and human endeavour. In so doing, he has created his own story that interweaves the fabric as we go from place name to place name with personal insights, discoveries and dilemmas. It is a delight to read his piquant thoughts.

From my reading of his first publication of South Australian place names to this present, updated work, I have never ceased to be amazed by his skill and craftsmanship. *From Aaron Creek to Zion Hill: Place Names of South Australia* is made to be read, not just used as a reference. I can only urge everyone with an interest in South Australia to rediscover their own State by reading it. Geoff Manning's achievement is truly remarkable.

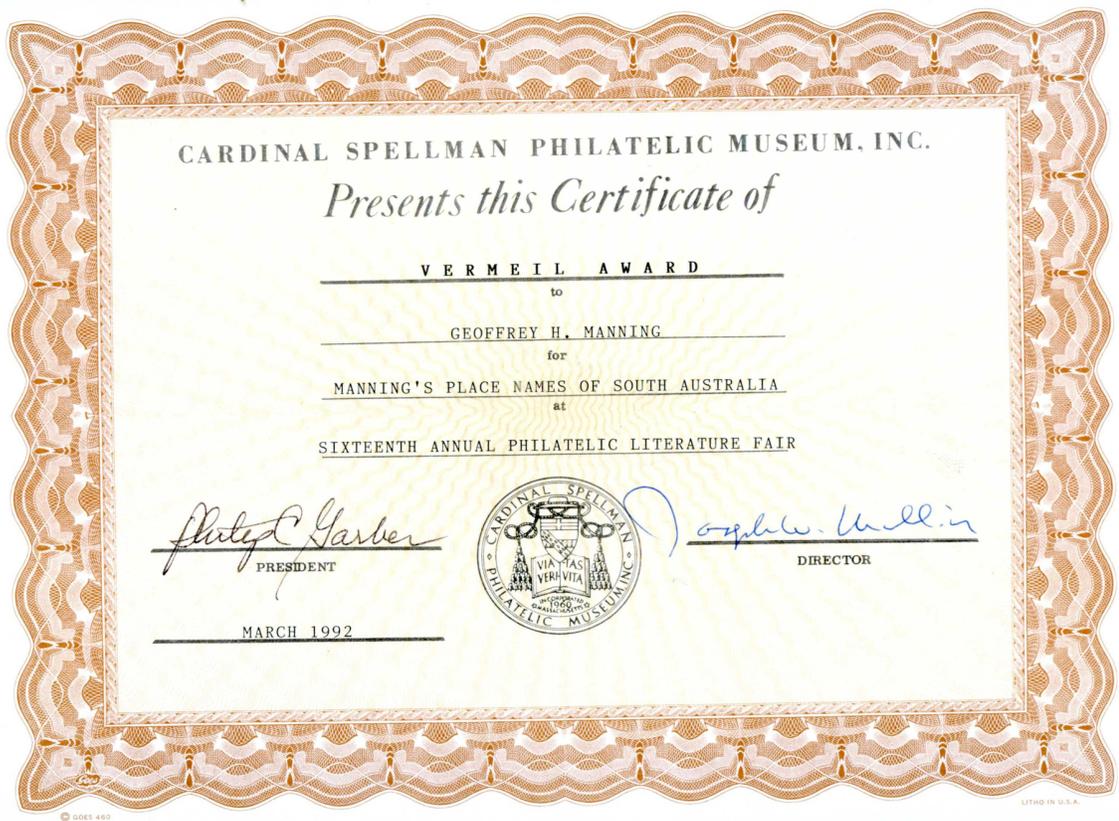
The latest contribution to the Australian scene is *Australian Place Names* published by the Australian Broadcasting Commission which, as far as South Australian nomenclature is concerned, was compiled, partially, following a unique collaboration between the authors and Mr Stewart Cockburn, for the former extended special thanks to the latter 'for permission to print some 20' names appearing in the 1984

publication. Apparently, no indication as to the authenticity of Rodney Cockburn's work was passed on to the unwary authors?

In such a new work that, apparently, passed through the hands of *The Australia Nation Place Names Survey* at the Macquarie University where 'helpful suggestions' were made, any reader should expect to receive many interesting sidelights to our history based on reliable research. However, it is apparent that neither the author, nor the University 'experts', were aware of the ignominy heaped upon Cockburn's work. Surely, any author should studiously avoid guess-work for, as the Reverend James B. Johnston once said; 'bad guesses are sure to bring shame and confusion.'

The book is riddled with errors in respect of South Australian nomenclature and readers are offered a plethora of falsehoods and, it must be said that the proof-reading or, perhaps, ignorance of historical fact, leaves much to be desired, for example, under 'Lake Bonney, SE', the name 'Henry's' should read 'Henty's'. By basing their work on information to be found in local histories, government websites and those of a similar ilk, the authors have produced a book that, as far as South Australian nomenclature is concerned, contains a host of inaccuracies and errors of fact.

The authors have committed an historical disservice, as far as South Australian nomenclature is concerned, by, apparently, accepting, as fact, information emanating from secondary sources and undertaking little or no basic research within primary sources. It can only be hoped that the fruits of their research that has resulted in an insubstantial presentation of a smattering of the State's total nomenclature, have not spilled over into other States and Territories. If it has, then, I would suggest that the book is all but worthless as an historical reference tool.



## Comments on Other Published Books

*Man does not live by words alone, despite the fact that he sometimes has to eat them.*  
(Adlai Stevenson, 1900-1965)

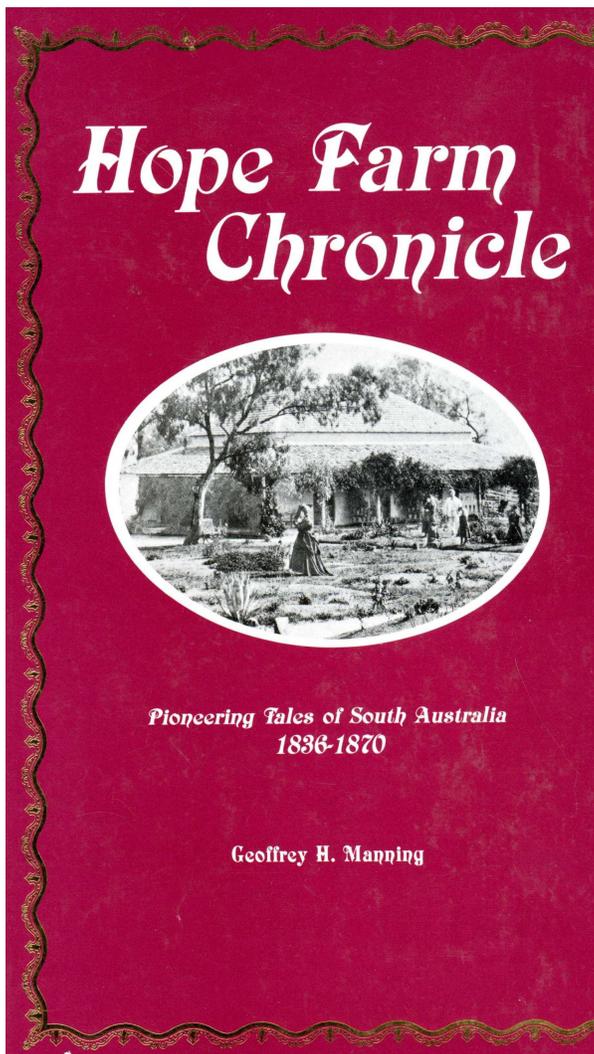
### *Hope Farm Chronicle – Pioneering Tales of South Australia 1936-1870*

During the course of research for *Hope Farm - Cradle of the McLaren Vale Wine Industry*, I unearthed many reminiscences written by early settlers and, at times, there emerged fragments of colonial life and experience which, I believed, should not be left to gather dust in the State Library. They were the men and women who toiled to tame the country and their stories are the stuff of which history is made.

However, to record their memories in tabular form would have been both disjointed and wearisome. Accordingly, from the known facts I contrived many meetings and conversations; all material used was factual, sources credited at the rear of the book, newspaper reports and extracts lodged with the National

Trust, Willunga Branch, and the complete story woven around my great-great-grandfather, George Pitches Manning who arrived in 1850.

On 12 August 1884 Bill Reschke in the *Sunday Mail* presented extracts from the book covering the voyage out from England and concluded:



*Hope Farm Chronicle* from there takes form as conversation pieces drawing a finely detailed picture of our State through discussions between Manning and men from fronts in the development of their land and hopes. It makes absorbing reading bringing SA's great triumphs and leaps backward and forward into human scale.

In a review in the *Advertiser*, on 1 September 1984, Derek Whitelock said, *inter alia*:

#### *Clever Approach to Local History*

Aching gardeners will be enchanted to know that the chiropractor's friend, soursofs, were deliberately imported from Tasmania whither the beastly things had been introduced, of course, to McLaren Vale in the early 1850s because the pioneers thought their bulbs added piquancy to pasties.

Brandy and soda, a popular colonial drink, was called a 'spider' because flies so often got into drinkers' mouths they needed 'spiders' to was them down.

The lovely Bugle Ranges in the Adelaide Hills were named for a wandering bullock with an eye for good pasture. His owners, the Hack brothers, turned Bugle loose, followed him then profitably took up the land he selected.

The Kurna Aborigines greatly prized the red ochre obtained from a deposit at Moana. They daubed their dead with the ochre before smoking them over slow fires and burial on platform trees.

*Hope Farm Chronicle* brims with information like this supporting John Ruskin's dictum:

The only history worth reading is that written at the time of which it treats, the history of what was done and seen heard out of the men who did and saw.

[The author] 'contrives' for a lively array of colonists from bullockies and gold diggers to a 'lady missionary' in China to drop in at Hope Farm and reminisce away over the port to old George about their diverse SA experience. The result is an unusual perhaps seminal and extraordinarily interesting book...

*Hope Farm Chronicle* stands out in the teeming army of local histories as a striking little example of how well it can be done. Warmly recommended.

The Standard Book Company, then trading in Rundle Mall, saw fit to advertise the book in its front window:



### *Whisky Makes You Well – The Biography of Frank Maiden*

Francis James Maiden (Frank) was born on 3 June 1895 at Pamamaroo, some ten miles north of Menindee on the River Darling in New South Wales. A midwife brought him into the world, she having walked five miles from her residence after being alerted by his elder brother, Charlie, who summoned her after a hurried dash on horseback from the Maiden family homestead. Frank had little formal education and, in retrospect, he told me: 'A child couldn't live the same today as I did growing up to manhood: all you wanted in those days was a reasonable amount of common sense and a will to work' and when you consider what he accomplished in his lifetime there can be no doubt that he had those two attributes in over-abundance.

At a very early age he helped his father on the family property and by the age of nine was able to drive safely and control a horse and buggy and within a further four years was handling a unicorn team of 'four reins'. His late 'teens found him engaged in the horse and motor coach trade out of Broken Hill and, in 1929, he established the Murray Valley Coach Service from Mildura to Adelaide. With the advent of air services Frank realised that they could make inroads into his business so he sold up in 1937 and returned to his first love, the land.

In 1982, I was invited by his daughter, Mrs Claire Eaton, to write his biography following which our respective families spent a pleasant fortnight motoring to Mildura, along the River Darling to Menindee

and then overland to Broken Hill and Adelaide. On 3 January 1983 I received a letter from Frank's wife in which she said, *inter alia*:

Claire has just finished reading to us the Maiden script; we were all enthralled, it is so interesting and quite humorous. I suggested that it would be good in serial form in the Broken Hill or Mildura papers; Claire thinks it would make a good film. I wish you and Gwen could have been here, we felt quite excited and think we may have a best seller...

*The Tragic Shore*

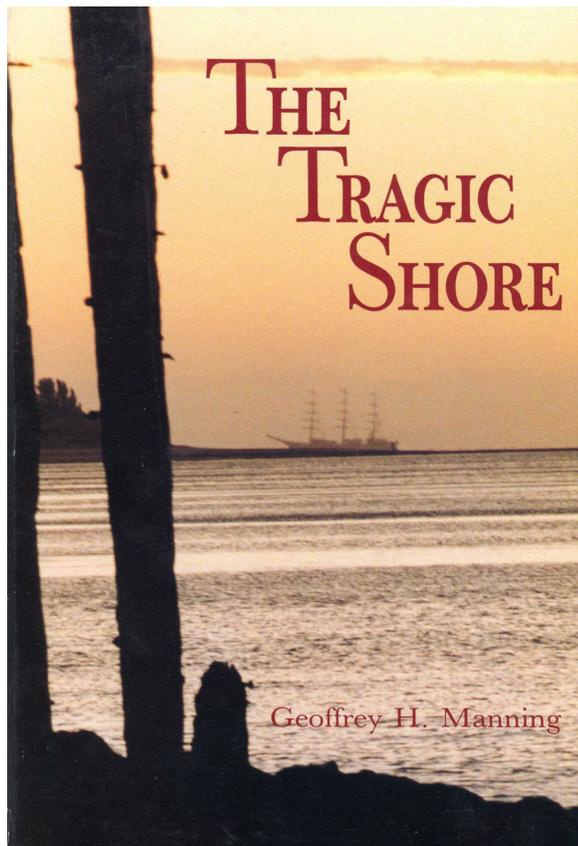
*The Wreck of the Star of Greece and a History of the Jetties at Port Willunga*

In a foreword to this book Sir Walter Crocker said:

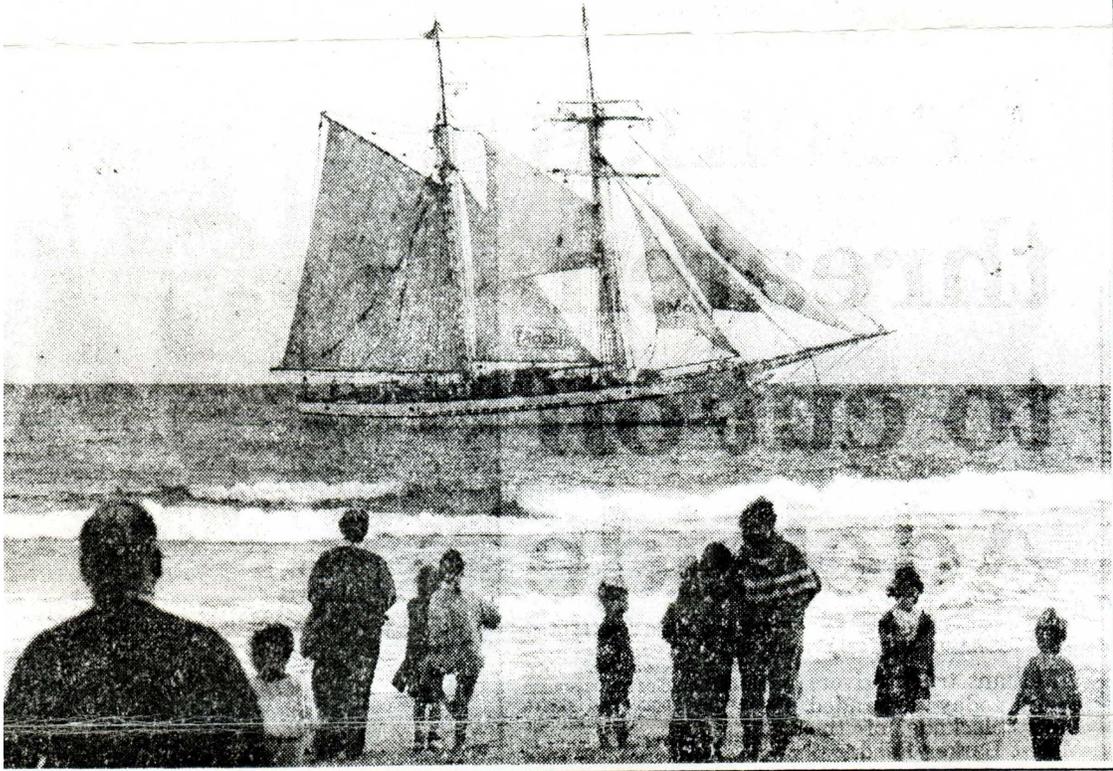
This aptly named book tells the story of what happened, the faults observed or alleged and the pretty piece of footwork and buck passing by the bureaucrats and the politicians involved. That was a century ago. The book shows that while maritime transport has changed dramatically human behaviour, no less dramatically, remains about the same.

Mr Manning, an authority on the region, has made a mark for himself by his books. In the Tragic Shore he treats us once more to his customary reliable research and interesting narration. Our interest is heightened by the illustrations and by the supplementary chapters on the jetties at Port Willunga.

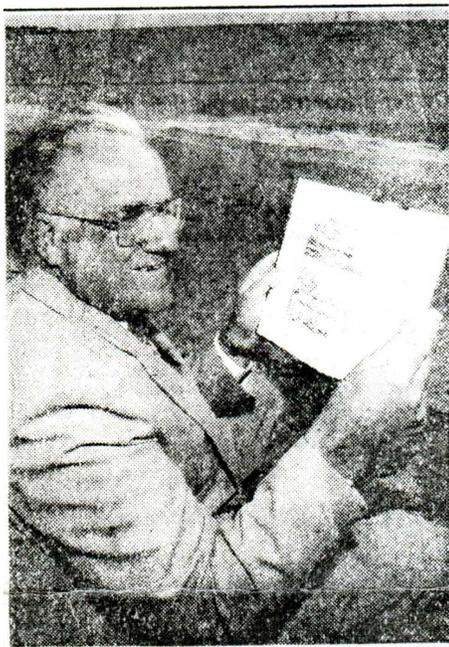
The book was launched at Port Willunga on 13 July 1988, exactly 100 years after the wreck, by the Minister for Emergency Services, Dr D.J. Hopgood, M.L.A. and Deputy Premier, who remarked that it was 'a very absorbing read.'



# Tragedy relived 100 years later



**IN MEMORY:** *The One And All anchored near the Star of Greece wreck for yesterday's ceremony.*



*Author Geoffrey Manning at Port Willunga with his book on the Star of Greece.*

By **TIM BOYLEN**

The drama of a night on the cruel sea has been recaptured a century after the event.

On July 13, 1888, the cargo vessel Star of Greece sank off Port Willunga, south of Adelaide, killing 17 of her 28 sailors.

That disaster created the substance for *The Tragic Shore*, by Geoffrey Manning, of Grange.

His book was launched yesterday, 100 years and about nine hours after the vessel foundered.

Mr Manning, 62, is a former bank executive and also a survivor of stormy seas.

An RAN signalman during World War II, he was in a ship that survived a typhoon so ferocious it crippled an allied battleship.

"I'm not a great lover of the sea," he said yesterday ... "unless it's in the Pacific on a balmy night when the sea is calm and there are no Japanese subs around."

There were no subs nearby when the Star of Greece, challenging a storm to return to Britain as quickly as possible, was buffeted on to a reef.

It ran aground at 3 a.m. but was not sighted from the shore for another four hours. Rescuers were thwarted by heavy seas.

Through inaction and procrastination a government rescue team did

not arrive with vital equipment until too late, Mr Manning said.

The crew attempted to swim ashore. Most were mutilated by wreckage awash in the boiling surf.

Information for the book was researched by the National Trust (Willunga), and Mr Manning then spent three weeks writing it.

"I worked on it night and day. It almost caused a divorce in the family," said the married father of three who wrote the book without charge.

"It's a pleasure to see it in print ... that's my reward," he said.

For the book launch about 500 people gathered on the beach opposite the wreck, which is several hundred metres off the Port Willunga caravan park.

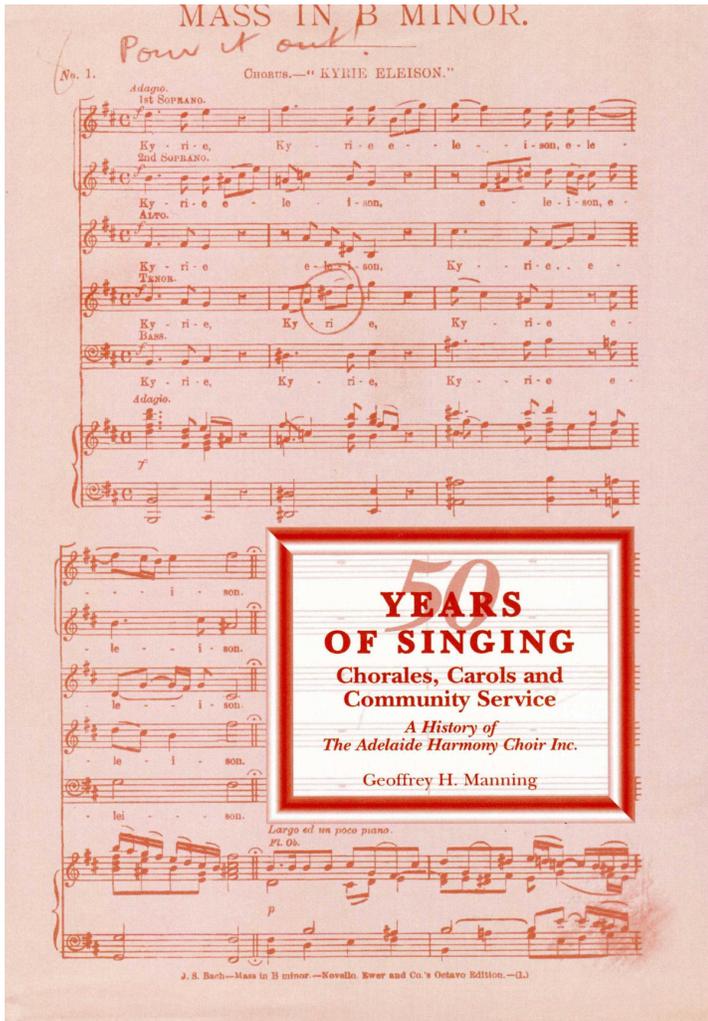
The SA sail training ship One And All anchored near the wreck.

A floating wreath given by the original Belfast-based owners of the Star of Greece was roped to the wreck by Aldinga diver Alan Hale. Aldinga Primary School students Adam Hamdorf, 11, and Rhiannon Smith, 8, joined him in his dinghy trip to the wreck site.

A plaque in memory of the dead sailors was unveiled in the caravan park by the Minister of Emergency Services, Dr Hopgood.

He said the book was "a very absorbing read".

*50 Years of Singing – Chorales, Carols and Community Service: A History of the Adelaide Harmony Choir*



In her foreword, Her Excellency, the Honourable Dame Roma Mitchell, AC, DBE, Governor of South Australia said:

In this lively history of the Adelaide Harmony Choir, Geoffrey Manning takes us *da capo* to those post-war days when Lewis Dawe and a handful of other singers set out modestly ‘to be of service among the churches on pleasant Sunday afternoons.’ Geoffrey Manning’s history will be of interest not only for its chronicle of the creation and development of the Choir, but also because of its important review of early music-making in South Australia. This makes fascinating reading.

Following a Choral Service in Saint Peter’s Cathedral, the book was launched at Saint Mark’s College on Sunday, 18 February 1996.

*Memoirs of Thomas Frost*

Sir Walter Crocker in the foreword wrote that:

Contemporary records have thrown a good deal of light on what life was like. This book, edited from the diaries of Thomas Frost covering the second half of the nineteenth century and from the reminiscences he wrote in the 1890s with an exactitude as notable as his copperplate calligraphy, throw a special light on what it was like. Frost’s reminiscences recount his experiences as a labourer, gardener, shepherd, cowherd, drover, miner, house-repairer, builder, contractor and, ultimately, architect with such well-known buildings to his credit as Brougham Place Church and Whinham College (now the Lutheran Seminary).

This book is to be welcomed as an addition to the relatively small corpus of authentic documentation for South Australia’s first and founding century. Frost had the essential stuff of the creative pioneer, not the exploiter or scrounger. It is highly fitting that his name be revived at this time...

Our thanks are due to Mr Manning for the part in this revival which was more than competent editing and to Mr Peter Cotton, the publisher who, in addition to bringing to the venture his knowledge of South Australian history and his enthusiasm for Frost’s manuscripts, has given us a book of singular quality and charm, reflecting the long and high traditions of his firm for quality printing, typography and scores of illustrations.

In a review Dr John Playford said, inter alia:

The fascinating text is supplemented by hundreds of splendidly reproduced photographs, many of which came from the extensive collection held in the South Australian Archives.

### *The Grange Golf Club*

At the outset I should reproduce portion of a letter I wrote to the Chairman of the Grange Golf Club Historical Committee:

I thank you and your committee for inviting me to research and write the Club's history. Personally, it has given me a vehicle to express, not only my abiding interest in certain aspects of the State's social history, *per se*, but also to pay tribute to the game of golf with which I have had an abiding affection for over fifty years. I am cognisant of the fact that it would be impossible to prepare an initial draft without expressions of dissent being forthcoming.

Consequently, the draft before you has been adapted from initial work I gave to two colleagues for critical comment some two months ago - it was, in effect, an extension of the initial drafts which I supplied to you in April. They were critical of certain aspects of my 'social' history content and, accordingly, I modified it - the result is now before you.

Thus, I believe I can honestly say that the draft has, in a strict historical sense, received the approbation of those skilled in the research and presentation of local histories, where the pitfalls of parochialism are so evident as to react to the detriment of the author and, by natural progression, to the publisher - in this instance The Grange Golf Club...

From all this I feel it is essential for me to place on record some of the essentials of the author/employer relationship, as I envisage them. Accordingly, the following comments are presented for your committee's deliberation and, I hasten to add, they are made without any personal animus.

Within the draft I have seen fit to comment and develop certain social themes such as:

The place of sport in colonial and contemporary society and its role in the creation of a national mythology.

Past conflict between religious authorities and sportspersons and its effect on society.

Avarice among colonial speculators and the mirroring events of the 1980s.

Land degradation and abuse on LeFevre Peninsula since European settlement.

The changes wrought upon native flora and fauna by the intrusion of white settlement on LeFevre Peninsula and remedial measures undertaken.

The abuse and degradation of the Aboriginal people, etc. (*I make the obvious comment that if a reader is not enamoured with social history a remedy is readily available by turning to Part II and elsewhere.*)

Of course, I am fully aware that there will be wide and divergent opinions as to whether all or any of these subjects should be aired in a history of the Grange Golf Club; for myself, I am inclined to allow posterity to decide as to the efficacy of my general treatment of the subject... You may care to give the draft to an independent historian for analysis and opinion as to its intrinsic worth as a history *cum* social document. In this respect, I would remind you that, from the outset, I made it clear to your committee that my history would not be of a 'parochial nature' and would include material peculiar to the district and its history which impinges on the life and times of The Grange Golf Club.

Finally, the book was published with compromise being evident from both sides.

In a letter dated 22 October 1996 from 'Great White Shark Enterprises', Greg Norman sent a 'Foreword' for the history and, as an aside, made the following comments: 'West Lakes is all where it all started, and I hope I am part of the history of The Grange Golf Club... Give my best to all my friends at Grange. I wish you every success with the forthcoming book and, incidentally, I would appreciate receiving several copies for my own library.'

On 9 July 1997, Mr Peter Cotton, the printer of the history and Managing Director of Gillingham Printers, himself a golfing 'addict', sent a copy of the book to Mr Norman - it is worthy of repetition in full:

This letter accompanies a copy of the book 'The Grange Golf Club' with which you are familiar. I thank you for your ready acceptance to write the foreword and the content of it. Your contribution has added stature to the book, Thank you.

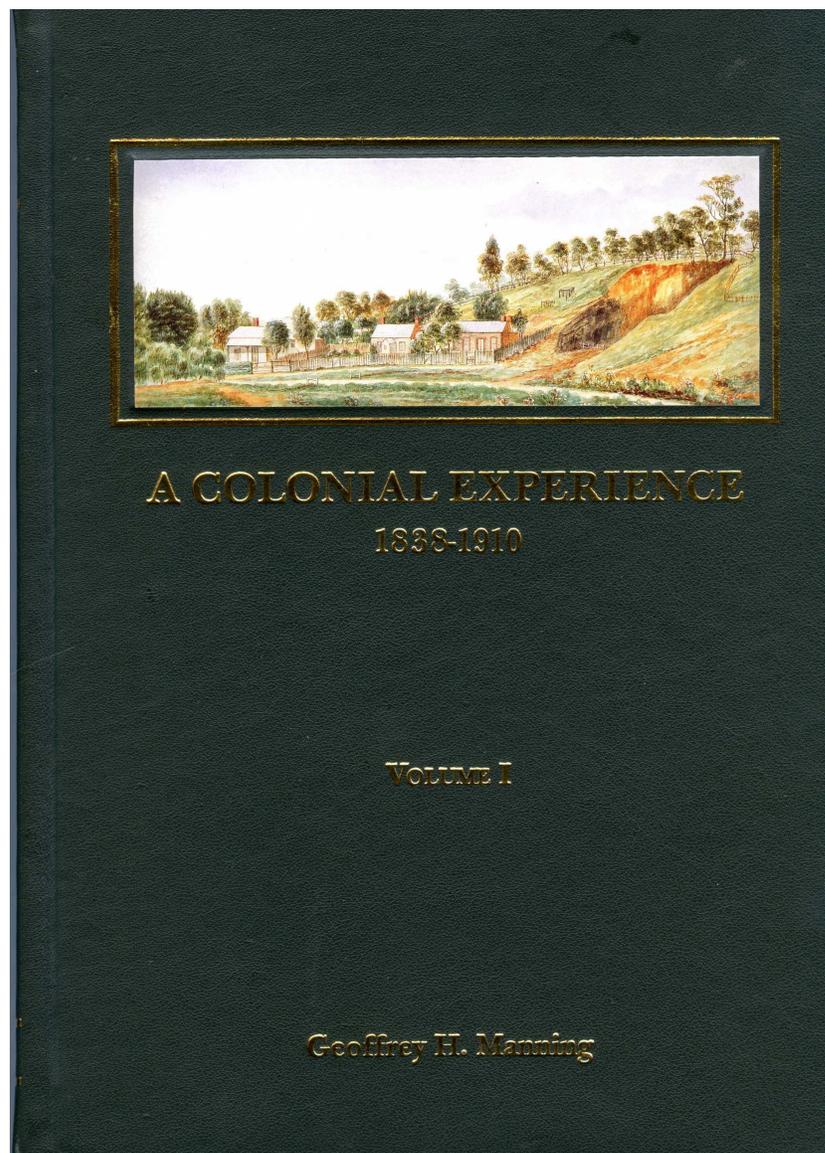
Having acknowledged that, I introduce myself as being intimately associated with the contents of the book as designer, assisting with its production, a friend of the author and adviser to the history committee.

The book deserves the highest commendation particularly for its contribution to the noble game of golf. It is a model which could be followed well by any golf club which published its history. This story embraces more than just the parochial details of events and personalities; it details the background history of the district, its flora and fauna.

If you agree with these sentiments, would you kindly use your good offices to pass on this copy to a recognised golfing journal in the USA with the suggestion that an article be written, not necessarily a review, to assist other golf clubs how to approach the publishing of their own stories and thereby enhance the game of golf.

To the best of my knowledge, Mr Cotton received no response to his plea!

\*



### *A Colonial Experience*

In June 2000 I received the following advice from Mr Simon Kelly, the President of the History Teachers' Association of South Australia; it was addressed 'To Whom it may Concern':

Through the agency of a mutual acquaintance, I was recently entrusted with the manuscript of Mr Geoffrey H. Manning's latest historical work, 'A Colonial Experience'. I presented it at the History Teachers' Association Committee Meeting on 9 May and later to Dr Deborah Kelly, Acting Executive Officer, Department of Environment and Heritage. I subsequently met with Mr Manning for the first time, at his residence on Sunday 21 May.

At this meeting I conveyed to Mr Manning the unanimous positive feedback I received for 'A Colonial Experience'.

Experienced teachers of Australian history are impressed by the readability of the text, the comprehensive approach complemented by the accessibility of focus topics and issues and the extensive referencing. Essentially, it is a teacher and student-friendly history of our State with immediate applicability to the year 12 Australian History course and ready potential for use in earlier years, typically Year 9 History and Year 11 Australian Studies.

Mr Heide represents a different audience. He is a passionate Australian of Austrian heritage, multi-talented, a recognised friend of the indigenous and devoted advocate of native animals. Mr Heide found the manuscript enhanced his understanding of many aspects of South Australian history and provided him with particular insights into people and places who have shaped his adopted home, State-wide and locally.

Dr Deborah Kelly, Veterinarian, was generally impressed by 'A Colonial Experience', but particularly welcomed the environmentally-focussed chapters, an often overlooked dimension of social history. Entries on the Parklands, Reservoirs and the Norwood Bird Fancier, Bear-baiting, Quarantine operations, et alia, provided her with retrospective windows into past and contemporary issues and, upon publication, she foresees use of anecdotes and references in her various public presentations.

While I am but one conduit of reference I can say, with some confidence, based on the feedback I have received that 'A Colonial Experience' will have market appeal to educational sectors and to those with an interest in State and local history.

Flowing from this glowing 'recommendation' Gillingham Printers were invited to undertake the role of publisher and in celebration of its 125<sup>th</sup> year as commercial printers. The book was launched at the Gillingham Hall, Annesley College on 8 November 2001 when I had this to say:

First of all may I thank Valmai [Hankel] and Eric [Sim] for their kind words about *A Colonial Experience* which, to my mind is a fragmented history of South Australia as seen through the eyes of the working class. If you read the Preface to my book you will, no doubt, deduce as to where I stand in today's political spectrum, but I hasten to add that, with one exception, I have not interposed any modern-day political or social theme into the text of this book. In fact, I can say with all honesty that it is an undistorted reflection of what was being said and done in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the words come from all sections of colonial society via the newspapers of the day.

The exception is to be found in the Prologue where the narrator asks the reader for compassion and understanding when she discusses the political and social ramifications of legislation affecting the working class by capitalists and employers and of 'the power wielded by colonial aristocracy in the formative years of South Australia.' Those insinuations flow from my interpretation of the evidence available in primary sources housed in the State Library and elsewhere.

Some 20-odd years ago I first walked into the premises of Gillingham printers in Currie Street and was ushered into the presence of the Managing Director, Mr Peter Cotton. Little did I know that from that meeting was to flow a long and rewarding personal friendship and an ongoing relationship with the Company - now in its third decade.

It was Peter Cotton who, in 1982, encouraged me into my research into the place names of South Australia which culminated in two books being published on the subject the last of which, I am reliably informed, is the most sought after reference book in the State Library, its nearest challenger being *How to Grow Marijuana at Home*.

Further, my dear departed friend, at my suggestion printed and published facsimile editions of John Stephen's *Land of Promise* and John Lewis's *Fought and Won* and was persuaded to

publish the magnificent *Memoirs of Thomas Frost* in a limited edition following my editing of Frost's manuscript which is to be found in the State Library. Need I say any more about a company that has other than monetary 'profit' on its agenda?

Perhaps not, but in conclusion I must inform you that Gillingham's have printed all of my 10 books on SA history and I say, sincerely, that if it were not for the generous financial terms accorded me over the years, those published under my name would not have seen the light of day.

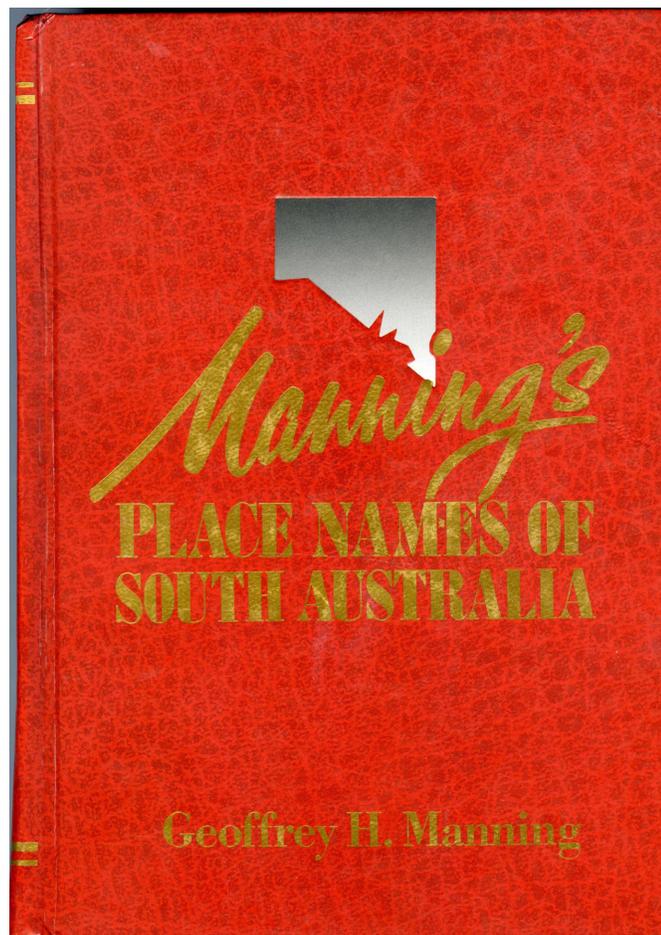
And so I say, God bless Gillingham's and may the company be guided towards further success, prosperity and ongoing magnanimity over the next 125 years.

The following is an extract from a review that appeared in the *Advertiser* on 1 December 2001:

Poring over newspapers in the Mortlock Library he 'came upon snippets of history, many of which are possibly unknown to historians...' These snippets, in particular those contained in Letters to the Editor, seemed to Manning to give a different view of Adelaide than those recorded by some modern-day historians and he began to believe there was a history of Adelaide that was yet to be written.

The result is Manning's new book in which he uses the fruits of his research and a fictitious character, Helen C. Spencer, to record 'A Woman's Story of Life in Adelaide, the District of Kensington and Norwood together with Reminiscences of Colonial Life.'

Spencer's story makes fascinating reading as she guides us through the streets and houses of Adelaide and in particular Kensington, Norwood and Marryatville, writing on subjects such as Domestic Matters, Pastimes and Entertainments, Larrikins, Destitution, the Law Courts, The Parklands and a myriad of topics in between. This is a history of the real people of Adelaide...



## Chapter 6

### *A Quest for a More Frequent use of Mellifluous Aboriginal Place Names*

*The memory of deadly battlefields and desperate sieges is preserved in the title of some beautiful hamlet; while the scattered inhabitants of a secluded village rejoice in the borrowed plumes of some crowded European city. English and colonial statesmen are immortalised in hundred, river or agricultural area and royalty has not been forgotten... It is a matter for gratitude that... some of the euphonious and appropriate native names have survived the ordeal.*

*(Advertiser, 12 August 1882)*

#### **Introduction**

*For many years after the proclamation of South Australia the privilege of bestowing geographical names remained the prerogative of His Excellency, the Governor, but later a section was included in the Crown Lands Act transferring this authority to the Government of the day. This system gave free play for the exercise of much personal patronage, so much so that when I took stock of South Australia's nomenclature in 1908 I found that fifty per cent of our place names perpetuated those of men and women more or less deserving of such honour, while only fifteen per cent were traceable to the Aboriginal dialects.*

*(Rodney Cockburn, 1877-1932)*

In a few following paragraphs, and in a philosophical mood, I traverse a path or two I have followed since my retirement in 1982. Little did I know that I was to spend much of the next three decades researching and writing on various aspects of South Australian history and while, perhaps, the most satisfaction has been gained from my work on place names, I also obtained much pleasure from the many essays I have written on the plight of the Aborigines in our society and, perhaps, my general concern was best conveyed in a foreword I wrote to the book *A Most Suitable Place*, a history of Mount Gambier by Jan Mayell and Pam O'Connor:

The land occupied by the town of Mount Gambier and environs was once a hunting ground for the Booandik people who roamed the countryside leading a nomadic life; at the core of their belief was an understanding of a certain spirituality attached to the land - they perceived themselves as the stewards of creation.

The disposition of their land was, generally, met with apathy by the European invaders as evidenced by the words of the Colonial Secretary, Robert Gouger, who suggested that 'no legal purchase of land on their behalf, or in any other mode, has yet been made, nor do I think that with proper care it is at all necessary.'

However, discerning settlers with a hint of Christian principles were to say that, in the midst of colonists growing hundreds of bushels of wheat on Aboriginal hunting grounds, they denied them the 'crumbs that fell from the table.' They posed a profound question in the *Adelaide Times* in May 1851 - 'How can God's all-seeing eye approve of this?' Sage words, indeed, in modern-day Australia where the 'Mabo' and 'Wik' decisions in respect of Aboriginal land tenure are the subject of ongoing debate.

On the other hand, the European interlopers were urged in terms borrowed from the Old Testament, 'to be not slothful to go, and enter and possess the land. When ye go, ye shall come unto a large land, a place where there is no want of anything that is in the earth.'

Thus, the invading colonists saw the country as an environmental and social wilderness over which they were to preside as 'godly stewards', with the primary task of bringing the land into production.

The early European occupiers of the South-East land, generally, entertained exaggerated notions of the right of property over all others. Further, none but the most luxuriant, grassy lands were settled upon and even these places were selected with caution, because there was no running water to be found and many of the swamps showed signs of drying up at certain times of the year.

In but a few years following their intrusion, the reign of brute force over the indigenous people became ascendant as opposed to that of justice and equity. Gradually, the Booandik people dwindled away in misery, poverty and wretchedness, whilst around

them the squatters' wealth increased upon the Aboriginal' decay and death. The Catholic priest, Tenison Woods, who served his church in the area, was to say that he had 'seen them dying to starvation within a stone's throw of abundance and luxury' and named only four pastoralists who had 'cared for the blacks'.

In 1865, Rev J.E. Tenison Woods sought to clarify certain assertions made previously to the Editor of the *Border Watch* and to plea for a radical change to the methods employed by the government in the treatment of the local Aborigines:

Your correspondent has called attention to the sad state of the natives in this district. Well I say most conscientiously that a more hideous crying evil does not exist among Christians. These poor savages after being degraded and diseased by the vices of - shall we call it civilisation - are but to die, in our midst, of starvation... I have seen them dying within a stone's throw of abundance and luxury. I have seen them so corroded by disease that they might be said to be rotting away even in life, and there was none there to give aid. I have even found one lying in the water where he had been left by his companions whose emaciated condition would not enable them to carry him further through the morass. I have known them to die of cold, starvation and of drunkenness and all these things amongst men who had grown rich on their lands and boasted of the Christian name...

I assert most vehemently that we are bound to do something for them if only to smooth their path to the grave. True, the government does something but a more wretched inefficient system could not be devised. Here is a specimen - The Crown Land Ranger [Mr Egan] lives with his son who keeps a public house. It is a wayside inn far from any police protection - at least 18 miles. Here the rations are kept and there the blacks congregate in numbers, and there also congregate the usual society of a bush public house. Imagine the rest. Alas! I have often wished there were no rations at all.

Here is another instance. Blankets are, or should be, provided for the natives. The other day a poor native dying at my place [and] suffered much from the cold. I applied for blankets for him. Yes, I was told there are blankets but they were at Robe 25 miles away. Another instance; this native friend - a good, poor lad with many fine points in his character, savage though he was, and I wished to have him buried with some respect to his human nature and the thought that Christ had shed His blood for him after all. Oh, yes, he could be buried at government expense but no coffin would be allowed! What, then? A cart, could he have blankets? They were at Robe. Could he have any covering? The government would not pay for it. Poor Tommy! He sleeps in an old cloak of mine; his pillow, I trust, none the harder for the treatment of the more civilised brethren...

Oh, good people of Adelaide who respect your characters as men of humanity and wish your names to go down to posterity with something better than execration for your treatment of this fast-fading race, do something for them in the name of God. If you only saw their state, if you only saw their rations - but I have said enough - for I feel sure better days are in store.

I should like to add the names of those settlers in the district who have distinguished themselves above all others in their care for the blacks and their unfailing kindness to them - Messrs Lawson, Bonney and McLeod in the Tatiara; Henry Jones, James Hunter and Andrew Watson for the rest of the district.

### ***The Quest for a More Frequent use of Mellifluous Aboriginal Place Names***

*In regard to the minor features of the country to which the natives have given names, the Government would take the present opportunity of requesting the assistance of the colonists in discovering and carefully and precisely retaining these in all possible cases as most consistent with propriety and beauty of appellation. All information on this subject should be communicated in precise terms to the Surveyor-General who will cause memoranda to be made of it, and native names, when clearly proved to be correct, to be inserted in the public maps.*

*(Governor Gawler, Government Gazette, October 1839)*

As succinctly put by Rodney Cockburn, this was a lofty and commendable sentiment which, however, was soon broken down by the vanity of mankind:

Right up to the year 1916, apart from the bestowal of official place names, an uncontrolled 'go as you please' characterised the creation of new appellations in connection with the widespread division of private estates. To that face is attributed largely the serious redundancy which has crept into our nomenclature and which is the cause of so much vexation to the postal department, traders, and the community in general.

I have always contended that the surest safeguard against the duplication of place names is to draw freely upon the Aboriginal dialects, affording as they do unlimited opportunities for distinction and exclusiveness in christening.

I hold similar views to Mr Cockburn and, over the years, have attempted to sway local government authorities to consider Aboriginal names for councils and corporations - to date I have yet to 'break my duck'!

Further, in May 2002 I spoke to a meeting of the West Torrens Historical Society and, hereunder, is an extract that traverses some past history on the struggle to have Aboriginal names used more frequently in the State's nomenclature - a fragment or two were used in various submissions to local authorities:

As long ago as 1839, Governor Gawler implored the local European populace to 'carefully and precisely' retain those Aboriginal names 'as most consistent with propriety and beauty of appellation' and to this suggestion Rodney Cockburn, the 'father' of local nomenclature research, was to comment in 1908 that 'all of our vice-regents have not shared Governor Gawler's love for native vocabularies' and, indeed, pronouncements over a century or more from State and local government authorities indicate all but universal dissent from the Governor's edict.

I am not alone in decrying the absence of action by those in authority - for example, a citizen of Adelaide said the following in 1876:

It's the practice [to foist] the unbaptised portion of the names of men more or less before the public on districts already known by native expressions, which, to say the least, are more euphonious and familiar... [This practice] will be sadly discovered a century hence, when puzzled topographers seek to know when and how certain places were so labelled.

May I add the word 'Amen!' and quote the words of another dissenter in 1882:

The memory of deadly battlefields and desperate sieges is preserved in the title of some beautiful hamlet; while the scattered inhabitants of a secluded village rejoice in the borrowed plumes of some crowded European city. English and colonial statesmen are immortalised in hundred, river or agricultural area and royalty has not been forgotten... It is a matter for gratitude that... some of the euphonious and appropriate native names have survived the ordeal.

Do Cockney names sound better than Nuccaleena, Angipena, Paratoo, Kapunda, *etc?*... There used to be a watercourse up north called 'Breakfast Time Creek' because the old bullock-drivers, starting early, always made it at tucker time. The natives called it 'Malthicowie' (cool water) which was certainly as appropriate and much more musical...

Charles Hope Harris, an early SA surveyor and nomenclator, in an address given in 1893 to the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, said:

We are said to be making history, but are we not lacking in courtesy in effacing the history of a less unfortunate people whom we have displaced... It, surely, is not necessary to close the annals of this inoffensive simple race; certainly, it is not generous of us to destroy their only records, nor is it wise to exclude from mental view the panorama of their past.

Coming closer to home; in October 1997 the *Weekly Times* had a headline - *Council Holds Back on Consummating Name* - and went on to say that 'Like a modern woman the West Torrens Thebarton Council is still umming and ahing over the make up of its double-barrelled name.' A Hilton resident, Mr Mark Glazbrook suggested the 'City of Light', while Mr Kevin Kaeding of the Thebarton Historical Society, said that if the council was to abandon its original title it should consider taking an Aboriginal name such as 'Kawandilla', 'after the Kaurna aboriginal local district now known as Richmond and Cowandilla.' This, as we all know, was refused.

And this blatant neglect continues, the most recent example being the demise of 'Mudla Wirra' for 'Playford' in the Elizabeth/Salisbury area, while closer to home' The City of Norwood, Payneham and Saint Peters' is said to be a stopgap name and I await anxiously if there is any support forthcoming for my plea that local anthropologists be consulted at the SA Museum with a view to obtaining a suitable Aboriginal appellation for the City - The Corporation of Norwood & Kensington was the first municipality outside the City of Adelaide, having received the grant of separate municipal government on 7 July 1853 and if the new body was to adopt an Aboriginal

name it would be a 'first' within the inner metropolitan area. Of course, we have the recently created City of Onkaparinga, which embraces outer metropolitan and rural areas.

In my opinion South Australians have shown a deplorable lack of good taste and originality in the selection of names, especially those of suburbs. Native names with the exception of three (Taperoo, Medindie and Cowandilla) have been entirely discarded in favour of imported appellations, which destroy the identity of the place, while its imported names, from personal experience, has led to a Babel of increased confusion - There was another suburb created in 1927 and known as 'Waldaree Park' (Aboriginal for 'acacia'), but it was swallowed up in Gepps Cross.

*A new name for the Jamestown District Council*

I was invited to make a submission to this Council and responded as follows:

I thank you for the opportunity to participate in the process of selecting a new name for several councils that are in the throes of amalgamation.

The Aboriginal tribe that lived in the area were the Ngadjuri people (sometimes shown as Njaduri) and to the west of them were the Nukuni tribe who occupied the area from Crystal brook to Port Augusta. Ngadjuri means 'we men'.

Several names were given to the Ngadjuri people by their neighbours - Weirameju ('gum tree man' and Manuri ('inland people'). A sub-group of the Ngadjuri was the Minbara group that occupied land between Tarcowie and Mannanarie - they were the last 'wild group' in southern South Australia.

The last survivor of the Ngadjuri was Gunala ('third child'). He was interviewed in 1940 by two anthropologists who completed a vocabulary of the Ngadjuri. From this I proffer the following melodious words and their meanings:

Mirli – ancestral being	Bundi – green bush
Bitana – flat country (a plain)	Burjari – tribal country
Wonguri – hollow in a creek bank	Bindigaru – small magpie
Walibara – the Milky Way	Bildapalda – opossum rug
Bulkara – sandalwood tree	Gudaki – white cockatoo
Ikari – the sky	Wildu –the Southern Cross
Linjura – spirits or ancestral being	Mindaba – spirit men
Nadlandarra – strong wind	Mitjimitji – stingless bee
Judali – small bush with medicinal qualities	Walbula – clover
Nudlaru – a curlew	Wakala – a crow
Mutana – to dance	Alawarra – evening
Mindaba – medicine man	Witjililki – willy wagtail
Nalpara – noise	Nawala – wild pears
Gurini – rainbow	Jatamulka – talk by sticks

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*The 'New' City of Playford*

When the Elizabeth and Munno Para councils merged in 1996 the name 'Playford' was selected for the new body. As an advocate for Aboriginal names for such bodies I addressed the *Advertiser*:

My attention has been drawn to a proposal of the councillors of Elizabeth and Munno Para to create a 'City of Playford'. By this action more than 140 years of history is to be cast aside for it was in 1853 that the District Council of Munno Para was founded.

Sir Thomas must, surely, 'turn in his grave' for, during his lifetime, he was loath to have his name plastered over the map of South Australia and, to his credit, he resisted all efforts of others to do so. Accordingly, it is, indeed, unfortunate that his wish is to be sullied.

In October 1839, Governor George Gawler caused to be published in the *Government Gazette* a notice in which he requested 'the assistants of colonists in discovering and carefully retaining' Aboriginal names when they were 'consistent with propriety and beauty of appellation.' 'Munno Para', I believe is in this category.

Rodney Cockburn, the 'father' of nomenclature in South Australia, was an early champion of the use of Aboriginal words as place names - he once said 'they are as mellifluous as a bar of good music'. How infinitely better are names such as 'Kapunda', 'Onkaparinga', 'Nuccaleena' and 'Paratoo' - surely, they are to be preferred to the thousands of mundane European names that abound on our landscape, many of which are a blight on our nomenclature.

Accordingly, I would implore the propounders of the name 'Playford' to reconsider their choice - Sir Thomas would certainly approve of such action. Perhaps, a telephone call to his descendant(s) might resolve the problem?

Later, I wrote to the *News Review* and said *inter alia*:

It is apparent that only one side of the argument was presented and, without any personal animus may I refer interested parties to a letter in the *Advertiser* on 5 December 1996 from E.M. Newman which may cause the local 'city fathers' to reconsider their decision...

Today, the matter of place names for merging councils is being considered throughout South Australia... and I quote from a letter appearing in the *Weekly Times* on 4 December 1996:

By choosing an Anglicised name ... councils have ignored the option of recognising our indigenous past... Now we have a chance to acknowledge the presence of the original inhabitants... [let us] stand apart from the ill-informed remarks of the Pauline Hanson's of this world.

The letter from E.M. Newman included the following words in support of my argument:

I agree with Geoffrey H. Manning that more care should be taken with South Australian place names. In 1955, when a satellite city was planned north of Adelaide, many citizens were hopeful that it would be called Munno Para after the district. The then premier, Thomas Playford, who was just as big an Anglophile as then Prime Minister, Robert Menzies, insisted that it be called Elizabeth after the Queen; of course, he got his way.

On 28 November 1996, the following appeared in the *Advertiser* above the name of 'Stewart Cockburn':

I agree with what Mr Manning says about the importance of adding more Aboriginal names to the map, especially when they are attractive and musical in sound... In New South Wales they are fonder of native names. Lovely examples there include; Jindabyne, Mittagong, Molongolo, Mitta Mitta, Kurrajong and Killara.

I believe Mr Manning is also right when he says that Sir Thomas Playford would, if he were alive, oppose the renaming of the merged corporations ... but in this case, I think the authorities who advocated the changes are right.

Sir Thomas was never an easy man to overrule in his lifetime. Now he is dead those who wish to recognise his enormous contribution to the establishment of Elizabeth and Munno Para are entitled to give his name to the new city, of which he, and he virtually alone, was the political architect.

On 4 December 1996, the *News Review* reported that 'Tom Playford, junior, and his sister, Dr Margaret Fereday', had been consulted and they had informed the council that calling the new city 'Playford' would do their father 'a great honour'. And so it came to pass, but one wonders if Governor Gawler found a moment to 'turn in his grave'?!

As a postscript, I might add that I received a letter of 'condolence from Michael Burke of Blakeview who had expressed similar views as mine - In response I said:

As expected, the city fathers have no intention of reconsidering their decision ... However, a little good came out of it all for I have been requested by the D/C of Jamestown to supply a working paper to assist it and other councils in the area to arrive at a name for an amalgamation of a number of bodies...

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*The 'New' City of West Torrens*

In 1996, the merger of the Thebarton and West Torrens Councils was mooted and once again I entered the fray - Initially, I forwarded two letters to the *Advertiser*:

... It is hoped that before the civic authorities place a selection of proposed names before the ratepayers that the officers of the councils pause and consider most carefully the reason(s) behind their collective choice. Having devoted some 15 years to nomenclature research within South

Australia, may I make a small contribution to the debate in respect of the name to be applied to the new civic authority?

Over a century ago, a disgruntled citizen took exception to the parlous method of naming physical and man-made features and he concluded that:

South Australia has shown a deplorable lack of good taste and originality in her selection of names, especially those of suburbs. Native names, with the exception of two, Medindie and Cowandilla, are entirely discarded in favour of imported appellations which destroy the identity of the place. If South Australia must import her names, let her select those not likely to induce a babel of increased confusion,

I received support from a councillor, Holly McNamee:

The pre-amalgamation discussions of Thebarton and West Torrens Councils obviously include the choice of the name for the new city. The lack of originality in suburb names of which Mr Manning speaks is depressingly evident in these deliberations. Names presented include 'Torrens' (simply removing the 'West') and 'West Torrens' (indicating a complete subsuming of Thebarton).

Thebarton Council has indicated an interest in exploring the use of a Kurna name... The Aboriginal community has taken the exploration of a Kurna name for the new council very seriously, indeed as one step in the reconciliation process.

Later, a petition from 400 residents petitioned the Thebarton Council to take on the name of 'West Torrens' but 'the origins of [it], which was left on the front counter are a mystery, with no one, including the first signatory, owning up to being the organiser':

At its latest meeting [the council] took little notice of the petition, instead discussing a report outlining Aboriginal names for the amalgamated council. The report's author, Kurna Heritage Society, had suggested Kurna words for unity like *Inbarendi* and *Taikurendi*. But Cowandilla, a misspelt Aboriginal name for the area, received the greatest support.

In due course and, to the best of my knowledge, the name 'West Torrens' was adopted without the recitation of any public notice of the reason behind the decision!

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*The 'New' City of Charles Sturt*

Bloodied but unbowed, a little later I entered the lists again when it was announced that a merger was to take place between the Hindmarsh, Woodville and Henley and Grange councils.

There is no doubt that since the foundation of South Australia many outlandish names have been taken to designate certain spots but, unfortunately, the majority of them were not at all appropriate. The complaint went on to say; 'To name rivers, counties or streets after Australian Governors may be pardonable, but the evil is the extent to which it is carried, and the same may be said of all other names affixed to places, for surely the inventive genius of the country must be dormant.

Look at the name 'LeFevre Peninsula' and its Aboriginal name *mudlinga* - which rolls so comfortably from the tongue. The English title was bestowed in 1837 and commemorates a gentleman who was connected with the foundation of the colony in London. The Aboriginal word means 'place of the nose' and its derivation comes from a north to south view of the area that holds a striking resemblance to a hooked and flattened nose...

In looking for a name for the new authority the research, following discussions with the Aboriginal population, should encompass the names applied to the district. In this respect Professor Norman Tindale's map of the area, showing such indigenous names should be consulted. For example - *karra-wirra-parri* - 'red gum forest river' - River Torrens; *karraundongga* - 'red gum spear place'; *tambawodli* - 'a camp on the plain'; *wongayerlo* - 'the water where the sun sinks' - Saint Vincent Gulf; *mikawomma* - 'the plain; etc.

Other research should include an investigation into the early 'European' names applied to farms, etc, within the district. These are to be found in British parliamentary paper, Colonies - Australia, a copy of which is held in the Mortlock Library. One such name that comes to mind is

'Tenterden', a farm held by R. Cunningham in 1840 on section 409 of the 'Adelaide District' near 'The Half-Way House'.

To conclude, one can do no more than invite our 19<sup>th</sup> century friend to have the last word: 'Would it be too much to ask of the namers, that any district having already a suitable native name may be allowed to keep it.

On 30 October 1996, the *Weekly Times* announced that the new name was to be 'Charles Sturt' - 'Hot' favourite 'Adelaide West' was the first choice but in the final round only made it to second place after adjudicators ruled an earlier decision out of order. My response was published in the *Advertiser* on 8 November 1996 and a condensed version in the *Weekly Times* on 27 November - the former read as follows:

The name, Charles Sturt, is commemorated in South Australia by many physical features and others such as the County of Sturt, while a recent pronouncement heralded the birth of a new city which will carry his name.

To many, Charles Sturt stands out as a folk hero in Australian history where he has been described as 'modest and retiring', 'chivalrous', 'high-minded', 'brave as a paladin', etc. Essentially, most of the literature on Sturt is uncritical.

Edgar Beale, in his book *The Chipped Idol* has subjected old evidence to closer scrutiny and his findings bring many surprises. For instance:

His Murray voyage, its results half-anticipated, was no eye-opening revelation; he falsified identities of some of his men and allowed history to neglect most of them; his input to Australian exploration was largely a product of obsession and selfishness. This, and his alleged blindness, ill-health and poverty were symptoms of what eminent modern opinion confirms medically to have been a queer psychological make up in him.

Beale continues:

So badly did he contradict himself, indeed, that he betrayed himself... His mental state made him generally oblivious of any consciousness of guilt...

This and other revelations in the book lead to the conviction that, while Sturt carried out his government duties in a responsible manner, his contribution to the progress of SA to say the least was minimal during his years of intermittent residence here from 1839.

Over the past 160 years SA has shown a deplorable lack of originality in its selection of names, especially those of suburbs. Aboriginal names, with the exception of two, have been entirely discarded in favour of imported appellations which have destroyed the identity of the place...

In respect of local authorities, the names 'Munno Para' and 'Mudla Wirra' are welcome exceptions to mundane British names prevailing in this field of nomenclature.

Are we to left burdened with the 'City of Charles Sturt' which smacks of Anglophobia? Can't we find a melodious Aboriginal name appropriate for the district?

To this end I implore the authorities to reconsider the name and consult with the Geographical Names Board and to examine Professor Norman Tindale's files of Aboriginal names at the SA Museum.

In any event, can ratepayers be told the logic underlying the choice of the name by the propounders?

To my mind, in today's multicultural society and with many descendants of the original inhabitants (the Kaurna people) living in the district west of Adelaide the name is most inappropriate.

Two responses were published, the first being from a Henley & Grange councillor who suggested the while the name was not 'original', it was 'neutral in the sense in that it is not a combination of or use of a suburb name within the council area. It is also relative because Sturt lived and housed his family at Grange for a time' - I wonder whether the councillor was aware of the fact that he arrived at Grange in 1840 'under a cloud' because he left his city rates unpaid for the year 1840!

In respect of an Aboriginal name the response was indicative of a certain indolence within the municipal servants, paid and unpaid alike:

If an Aboriginal name was to be considered, there was a need for a volunteer with time and energy to do the research to produce a list, with supporting comments, of suitable names. As no such person was forthcoming and there was little support for an Aboriginal name, we were left with those that came from the research of the volunteers/councillors [a strange comment, indeed, in view of his previous remark?] of both councils...

To this laissez-faire approach I said:

May I ask if the committee conducted a broad enquiry into suitable names or relied solely on their own internal resources which, to my mind, would have been a most invidious approach to the subject and deserving of censure from concerned ratepayers?

In direct contrast... the Jamestown Council executive officers, and others engaged in merger discussions, have sought advice from an historian. Accordingly, after appropriate research in the State Library and elsewhere, they have been provided with a discussion paper containing appropriate names drawn from Aboriginal vocabularies, 19<sup>th</sup> century pastoralists and explorers, prominent citizens born in the area, etc.

The second response was from a gentleman living at Macclesfield who said:

I was surprised to read Geoffrey Manning's article where he denigrates Charles Sturt to further his opinion that a new city should not bear his name, Why not just say that the name Sturt is more than adequately represented in this State, To this extent I agree, at the same time, pointing out that Aboriginal names are well represented far and wide.

In using the iconoclast Edgar Beale to attack Sturt's reputation is disappointing. Beale's *The Chipped Idol* was written nearly two decades ago as a revelation that would besmirch Sturt and his many achievements. This it failed to do being only Beale's obsessed interpretation of known material.

One of the discarded suggestions, St Vincent, I thought a fine sounding name but it commemorates a British naval victory and that would never do as Mr Manning would like this even less.

My immediate reaction was to deduce that this 'opinion' was laced with a copious dose of rhetoric, coupled with a paucity of substantive evidence and that the sarcasm in the concluding paragraph demanded a response. Accordingly, I forwarded the following to the *Advertiser* but it was refused publication:

In branding Edgar Beale as an iconoclast I believe that [the writer] was a little unkind. Edgar Beale is a noted author and holds a doctorate in literature from the University of Wollongong and, in respect of the unsustainable accusation levelled against him has 'previously gone on record' as saying Sturt had 'the finest character of all the Australian explorers'.

However, Beale had a change of heart, for after reading the revelations of Daniel Brock upon Sturt's conduct and character and, complemented by opinions from Dr J.H. Browne, he concluded: 'The conflicts of evidence were found to include many anomalies and contradictions, most of them from the pen of Sturt himself at varying stages of his life, that he was in danger of qualifying as a rank liar.'

To give but one example documented by Beale: Sturt claimed that he had joined 'Hill's division in the Pyrenees before the Battle of Garris [15 February 1814] and fought through the remainder of the campaign...', but Army lists show that he was still in England in April 1814. Sturt's name does not appear in the regimental medal rolls and 'with his lifelong hunger for distinction' it can only be concluded that 'he did not apply... because he was not entitled...'

This apparent shameless lie is substantiated by Beale from named primary sources. Behind all the rhetoric emanating from Sturt's admirers none of them have, to the best of my knowledge, produced any substantive rebuttal of Beale's findings since the book was published in 1979 by the Sydney University press.

[The writer's] gentle sarcasm and forecast as to my probable response to the suggested name of 'Saint Vincent' for the new city are accepted without rebuke for I declare, publicly and fervently, that I disapprove of the 'Anglophile tradition' of place names which, as I have said before, has 'destroyed the identity of the place.'

In deference to his 'nomenclature', my research suggests that 'Saint Vincent Gulf' honours the Earl of St Vincent, a title bestowed upon Sir John Jervis whose name is already on our map in the form of 'Cape Jervis' and, in my opinion, is not worthy, in titular form or otherwise, of a further memorial.

Indeed, at the risk of being accused of xenophobia. I would commend *Wongayerlo*, the Aboriginal name for the gulf (meaning 'the water where the sun sinks), as a most appropriate substitute for [the writer's] 'fine sounding name'.

And so another battle was lost but not before firing a shot or two across the bows of the 'infidels'!

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*Contest for a New Corporation Name*

In 1998, Norwood, Payneham and St Peters Council embarked on what was bound to be its most perilous journey since the previous year's amalgamation when the following appeared in the *Eastern Courier* on 23 August:

The issue has been fraught with controversy in other amalgamated councils, most notably Onkaparinga, which abandoned its City South moniker after public outcry. Last week, Norwood, Payneham & St Peters formally adopted a process for choosing a new name. They plan to ask locals to enter in a competition next month... In the past, Dunstan, Mary [*sic*] Spence and East Adelaide have been among the names floated for the new council...

My 'entry' to the competition was as follows:

Today, there is abroad within our community a debate in respect of the justice meted out to the indigenous population of our country over 200-odd years of European occupation.

Accordingly, alluding to governmental nomenclature, may I repeat a few words uttered in 1893 by C. Hope Harris, surveyor and nomenclator, in defence of the application of Aboriginal names:

We have obliterated such names for the sake of those more dear to vice-regal representatives, such as Alice, Caroline and Anna... We are said to be making history, but are we not lacking in courtesy in effacing the history of a less fortunate people whom we have displaced...

It surely is not necessary to close the annals of an inoffensive race; certainly, it is not generous to destroy their only records, nor is it wise to exclude from mental view the panorama of their past.'

I commend these words to our city's municipal representatives and request them to seek out suggestions for an appropriate Aboriginal name for our community. To my mind, a name such as 'Tandanya' is to be preferred over 'Dunstan', 'Mary Spence' and 'East Adelaide', as espoused in your publication of September 16.

Indeed, there is a marked paucity of Aboriginal names within the Adelaide 'family' of corporate bodies and one which, to my mind, should be remedied.

By 2008, nothing had transpired from the 'competition' and so I made a direct approach to the council and said:

In 1998, following the merger of three eastern suburb councils a 'competition' was conducted in respect of a new name for the merged body to which I responded as set down in an attachment.

Over the ensuing years I have continued my research into the place names of South Australia and, in particular, delved into the history of our indigenous people. Accordingly, bearing in mind the recent 'apology' extended to the Australian Aboriginal population by our Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, I suggest the time may be propitious for your Council to bring finality to the dilemma that has, apparently, plagued it during the past decade.

If, perchance, there is an element of appreciation of the sentiments expressed Mr C. Hope Harris, as stated previously in my letter to the *Eastern Courier* on 23 August 1998, I append the fruits of my labour since that time which, I trust, can be used as a 'working paper' if your Council should decide to proceed with further deliberations :

In a poem titled 'Aboriginal Nomenclature by a Native' that appeared in the *Register* on 11 October 1893, one verse reads:

Tan-dan-yer (This is Adelaide,  
or was its older name).  
The name it bore among the tribes  
Before the white man came.

The following is a legend of the Aboriginal people who inhabited the district around Adelaide:

In the land of Tandarnya [*sic*] lived Nanto Boorkoo,  
A red-haired, white-headed 'old man' kangaroo,

As an infant, named Tarnda, from cloudland he came,  
In a fur-lined skin bag of traditional fame.

With his home ties all sundered, still human right through,  
The longer he wandered the wilder he grew,  
'Till for wronging a totem in tribal dispute,  
His manhood forsook him, and left him a brute.

Oppengarrie, his comrade, saw Pindi-mew land;  
So, thinking at once there was danger at hand,  
Called Kar-rie and Dlarbie to drive them away,  
Or poison the waters to shorten their stay.

Still they came to Tandarnya, where ready to fight,  
Stood many Tra-binna, but Tarnda took fright,  
He crossed Karra-weera, with moon-catching strides,  
And reached Penna-Yoona, where Pongkie resides.

Then, transformed to Monana, he taught far and near,  
The arts of tattooing and throwing the spear;  
Sent carved message sticks among tribes near the sea,  
To hold at Tandarnya a boora-kooree.

Now Monana took counsel, and rose to proclaim  
That Tarnda and Nanto and he were the same;  
Yet the future, he said, held a further surprise,  
For a white kangaroo would appear in the skies.

Looking upward a long spear he suddenly threw,  
Which flashed like the lightning, and stuck in the blue;  
Another, another, another was spun,  
And each spear held fast in the preceding one.

Thus the distance was bridged from the sky to the ground,  
And the last to a wadna with sinew was bound,  
Up by this slender column the warrior sped,  
And happy Monana thus climbed overhead.

Kirkoata laughed feebly, Cooracka sung low;  
Ungkarie, disconsolate, hopped to and fro;  
While Cadna and Wonggo hid sadly away,  
For the 'joy of Tandarnya' departed that day.

An explanation of the Aboriginal terms is as follows: *Tandarnyungga* (*sic*) was the name of the tribal district east of Cowandilla and south of the River Torrens; *nanto* means 'big kangaroo'; *boorko*, 'old man'; *tanto*, 'a bag'; *totem*, some living creature held sacred as a symbol of a tribe; *oppengarrie*, 'an emu'; *pindi-mew*, a reference to ancestors; *kar-rie* (or *wirrarie*), 'sorcerers'; *dlarbie*, 'evil spirits'; *tra-binna*, 'men arrayed for war'; *korra-weera*, 'one name for the River Torrens'; *penna-yoona*, 'tall grass trees'; *pongkie*, 'a reflection of one's self in water'; *Monana*, an alternative name for the spiritual being, *Wano* (*See Nuriootpa*); *boora-kooree*, 'a corroboree'; *wadna*, 'a climbing stick'; *kirkoata*, 'a laughing jackass'; *cooracka*, 'a magpie'; *ungkarie*, 'a female kangaroo'; *cadna*, 'a lizard'; *wonggo*, 'an opossum'.

The 'post contact' name given to Adelaide by the Kaurna people was *kulkamaiwar* - *kulkun* - 'burning', *maiye* - 'wind' and *war* 'at'.

The Kaurna people believed they were the children of Monana who, long ago in the *Alcheringa* ('the Dream Time'), had climbed up into the sky from his home in *Pindinga* ('Kangaroo Island'). Here by the river was one of their favourite camping places, *Tambawodli* ('the camp on the plain'). To the west, *Wongyerlo* ('the water where the sun sinks' - Saint Vincent Gulf), flowed past

*Mudlungga* which was separated by a sea creek from *Yertabulta* ('place of slumber' - now the Port Adelaide district), believed to be where the birds flew each night to sleep.

*Mudlungga* ('the place of the nose') is now known as 'LeFevre Peninsula' although the Kaurna name is still the more appropriate. The first people, being true antipodeans, navigated by the Southern Cross. Consequently, unlike the newcomers who navigated by the Pole Star, they were in the habit of viewing their country from the north to the south. When thus viewed on a map, the striking likeness of the peninsula to a hooked and flattened nose is at once the vindication of the name and a tribute to the powers of observation of the Kaurna.

*Wongayerlo* yielded an endless supply of shellfish, and during many a long summer evening the Kaurna camped on *Mudlungga* to cook the day's catch in their camp fires. *Wongayerlo* had many fish, too, especially in the sea creek and south of *Witungga* (The Reedbeds) near *Patawilya* (Glenelg - 'swampy green place'), where there were plenty of *takaringa* ('mullet') and *yerdli* ('spotted whiting').

There were many richly beautiful places in *Tandanya* ('red kangaroo place') - *Mikawomma* ('the plain'), where Kilkenny now stands, was the home of the emu and the wild turkey, and in umbrageous gum trees the kookaburras laughed as the parrots annoyed the magpies with incessant chattering.

Everywhere were the *Wapara* and other types of native pigeon. In *Witungga*, at the head of the sea creek where the river of *Tandanya* lost itself in the reeds and the lagoons, and in *Kertaweeta* ('black forest'), lived the swamp parrot whose eggs were so good to eat.

Over countless aeons the Kaurna people roamed this rich unchanging land. Every year the *dikeri* ('grass') grew green and fresh to feed the kangaroo, and every year at *Tinnakialpa* ('the time when the ground burns the feet'), the grasses grew yellow. This was the time when fire came to eat the grass and make room for *erlipinna* ('the grass seeds') to grow again.

Every night, *Goondooloo* ('the emu of the Southern Cross'), lit a camp fire in the sky beside *Wadliparri* ('the river in the sky with reeds and waterholes in which lived water monsters - the 'Milky Way'), to enable the Kaurna to find their way to the home of their spirit ancestors. The Orion belt was *Tinninyarra*, a place where youthful hunters stalked kangaroo and emus across the vast celestial plain known as *Womma*, while the Magellanic clouds were *Ngakallomurro*, representing the ashes of rainbow lorikeets that were trapped and put to death.

But the land was to be changed beyond recognition following the arrival of a second nation of people - the white Europeans. Since their coming, scarcely more in time than a twinkle of an eye of *Goondooloo*, all *Tandanya* has changed. All the Kaurna, all their kangaroos, all the trees and birds, most of the fish and the Aboriginal meeting places have disappeared under the European onslaught. No more is the water fresh and clear in the drinking places and even *Wongayerlo* grew so hungry that he had eaten the sands of the beaches.

One month later my letter was acknowledged and the usual platitudes included the following:

Should the Council wish to pursue the issue of a new name for the City, then your suggestions will be taken into account. Again thank you for taking the time to put your proposal together and bringing it to my attention.

### **Conclusion**

I conclude with some appropriate words given by Rodney Cockburn to the Royal Geographical Society of SA (circa 1930):

I think it may be fairly said that the community in general has a very real desire to see Aboriginal names preserved for all time. Scarcely a week has gone by in the past twenty years but that I have been asked by the newspapers, or by individuals, to supply Aboriginal words suitable for the naming of houses, streets, subdivisions, racehorses, greyhounds, ships, yachts, row boats, nursing homes and other subjects, including a new brand of pickles, a girl's social club and a new Church of England diocese.

One of my delights on a Sunday afternoon is to paddle slowly around the suburbs in a motor car noting the display of hundreds of house names for the adoption of which I have been responsible. The only trouble is to avoid duplication, the desire for exclusive house tags being almost as keen as a woman's anxiety to be seen in a distinctive frock.

## Chapter 7

### *Epilogue – Reflections from the Past*

*Scars have the strange power to remind us that our past is real.*  
(Comac McCarthy, 1933-)

#### **Introduction**

*Those that desire to write have no time to lose; for time has shaken me by the hand and death is not far behind.*  
(John Wesley, 1703-1791)

After reading a draft of my idle ramblings, my son suggested that I should cover a few domestic matters such as holidays, overseas excursions, sport, etc and, accordingly, I have searched the inner recesses of my mind and recite the following anecdotes.

#### ***Fishing Holidays***

*Fishing is unquestionably a form of madness but, happily, for the once-bitten there is no cure.*  
(Lord Home, 1903-1995)

Happy recollections about annual vacations abound and, in particular, the many fishing excursions to the West Coast and Port Neill, in particular - indeed, in recent years my son and I have made a couple of nostalgic visits to that place when our 'roles' were reversed - he now untangles my fishing lines and attends to other fishing misdemeanors that are peculiar to both the young and aged.

I introduced Haydon to fishing at an early age on the Grange jetty and, to this day, can still hear his resounding pronouncement to the assembled anglers - 'Dad, I have caught one' – as he pulled a tommy-rough up from the deep. In later years, we spent many happy weeks at Arno Bay, Port Neill and Coffin Bay; while we fished my wife, Gwen, an avid painter, found many scenes to transfer from her palette.

#### ***Overseas Excursions***

*A man travels the world in search of what he needs and returns home to find it.*  
(George Moore, 1852-1933)

My wife and I had several overseas trips to the United Kingdom, the continent, Canada and the USA, Hong Kong and New Zealand and perhaps the one I recall best of all was a tour behind the 'Iron Curtain' prior to the levelling of the Berlin Wall.



**Geoff and Gwen in South France, c.1980**

## Sport

*What I know most surely about morality and the duty of man I owe to sport.  
(Albert Camus, 1913-1960)*

I played both cricket and baseball in Bank teams until I received a serious injury to my right leg in 1954 after which I took up the royal and ancient game of golf. My first club was at Marino – an 18 hole layout with ‘scrapes’ later to be converted to a nine hole course with ‘greens’ - as I write in 2008 it is still in use. Following my marriage, in 1956, I was introduced to the Grange Golf Club by my wife’s brother who was a member and it was there that I enjoyed more than 30 years of play and, following my resignation in the early 1990s, I was invited to write its history.

As I proceeded with the requisite research much personal retrospection redounded in my memory such as:

The Sunday morning working bees that added to the camaraderie pervading the club, while at the same time seeing our labours improve the course and help keep the annual fees within bounds for members such as myself who struggles to maintain a home and family in those stringent post war days.

The inherent ‘wowsersism’ of the Playford era and the tolerant attitude of law enforcement officers in turning a blind eye to minor breaches of the licensing laws.

My first hole in one at the 12<sup>th</sup> hole of the West Course - the aftermath is, perhaps, best left untold!

Winning the B Grade Club championship in 1967.

Suffering the trauma of my handicap blowing out from 12 to 18 in the space of six months after reading, and practising, the advice in Ben Hogan’s book on how to improve and perfect my game.

Friends and departed playing companions that included Cedric Orchard and Murray Ede whose company I was privileged to share and enjoy over three decades of golfing at the Grange – How could I forget Cedric’s quirt, unobtrusive humour and Murray’s extensive golfing vocabulary, heard at its best when his ball came to rest in a painful lie in the rough?



### **Premiershship Team – Metropolitan A Division - 1947**

Back – Ern Gluyas, John Wise, Fred Bickford, Norm Bice, Sel Wedd, Bruce Cumming, Errol Dolan, Jack Daw Front – Neil Blundell, Neil McLaren, Brian Caddy, Gordon Rhodes, Peter Noblet, Geoff Manning

*John Blundell*

## *A Personal Aside*

*If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away.*

*(Henry David Thoreau)*

In 2008 I wrote an article titled *The Betrayal of Aborigines in Colonial South Australia - A Review of the South Australian Company and the Angas Legend Revisited* and I sent a copy to my friend and fellow historian, Peter Rymill at Penola. In correspondence that followed I said:

Please forgive me for interposing some personal reflections into this exposition but, with advancing years, I find myself, at times, getting a little angry when writing on social matters and, of course, you deserve an explanation. I am a victim of the menial environment that engulfed my formative years and made me what I am today - my widowed Mother was hard pressed to clothe and feed three children and I was the only one to get a secondary education (my sisters went out to domestic service on completion of primary school) and those three years saw me on the 'free list' and the memory of taunts that flowed profusely from my more affluent fellow students still beleaguer me today - later, my younger sister, Wanda, was to become a professional ladies' hairdresser.

However, this torment fermented an insatiable desire within me to better myself and attempt to outdo those juvenile miscreants - I was elected Head Prefect in my final year and captained the school's cricket team - hence, today, for better or worse, I walk in a lane left of centre and I recall, following my discharge from the Navy, hearing Ben Chifley talking at the Norwood Town Hall about the Labor Party's 'Light on the Hill' - a few of his words that I adhered to during my working days and revere in my twilight years read as follows:

If I think a thing is worth fighting for, no matter what the penalty is, I will fight for the right and truth and justice will always prevail.

I practised the 'carrot' method in my 'management' years in the banking profession and, when I left, I was sent into retirement by many co-workers who, I say modestly, heaped kind words upon me in respect of what they perceived within me as common courtesy and decency which I had displayed when directing them in respect of their daily chores. And, to give you some indication as to where I am coming from, I didn't get a Life Membership of the Australian Bank Employees' Union through kow-towing to management and turning a blind eye to the many inequities in the Act of Parliament that controlled the Savings Bank of SA and the persistent niggardly attitude of a succession of government-appointed Trustees. Note the words of Commissioner Webb in the State Arbitration Court in 1921:

Here are a number of men apparently greatly satisfied and they won't meet the trustees because they are frightened ... There are a great many adults in the Savings Bank who are not receiving a living wage... The men don't want bonuses, they want a fair wage.

Such parsimony persisted during my 42 years of service and, for many years, I engaged myself in Union affairs and brought about many improvements in working conditions and terms of employment. Never did I resort to frontal assaults but at all times I, courteously employed the 'carrot' supported by facts and logic - it worked, and I venture to say if I had been bombastic and dictatorial the road would have been much more difficult to traverse, Indeed, as I have proceeded along my life's path the following adage has been ever present - 'Scars have the strange power to remind us that our past is real' - For further reading refer to my published tome - *Worth Fighting For - A History of Bank Unionism in South Australia*.

So, Peter, to paraphrase Brian Dickey in his introduction to Jim Moss's *Sound of Trumpets*, please do not 'fly off in disgust' when you read my 'social theories' but 'walk with me in an open search for better understanding. It is there to be had.'

## *My Descendants – Natural and Otherwise*

*A child is not a vase to be filled, but a fire to be lit.  
(Francois Rabelais, ca. 1494-ca.1553)*

Edmund Burke (1729-1797) once said that ‘we begin our public affections in our families’ but, I confess, it was not until I married in September 1956 that I realised the import of the innate thrust of those sage words. Having been ensconced into a ‘non-family’ environment at the age of fifteen years, I entered into another life that, in retrospect, has accorded me an ongoing measure of paternal satisfaction.

My two step-daughters, Shelby and Bronwyn, married at an early age, vis a vis the modern-day norm of 30 plus years. Accordingly, today in 2008, I have been blessed with five grand-children and three great-grand children – as to the former, Alison and Elizabeth Drew, David and Thomas Doull and Samara Manning their presence has enriched my life while the latter, Tully and Chrissy Miller and Sean Doull have given me the opportunity to make a worthwhile contribution to their ongoing education and welfare.

### *Gardening*

*God Almighty first planted a garden; and, indeed, it is the purest of human treasures.  
(Francis Bacon, 1561-1626)*

I was blessed with a ‘green finger’ and, no doubt, the appropriate gene was inherited from my maternal Grandfather, August Hein, who was an avid horticulturist. Following my marriage in 1956 I dug up much of the backyard at The Grove, Woodville, and set about establishing a garden in which I grew a great variety of vegetables ranging from the humble potato to the exotic root plant, salsify, commonly known as the ‘garden oyster’. I also dabbled in flowers such as gladioli and roses and, for a time grew a host of cyclamen plants in a glasshouse.

### *Epilogue*

What more is left to say? As I pen these final words, and having completed a final check of my autobiography, the words of that delightful and troubled comedian, Spike Milligan stir within my inner being - ‘I woke up this morning and I was still alive, so I am pretty cheerful!’

My life has been blessed with much happiness – caring parents, a wonderful ‘foster’ mother in the form of Mrs Young and my first wife, Gwen. Following our marriage in 1956 I asked her whether she wanted to go on working, as she had done since the loss of her first husband – her immediate response was a categorical ‘NO, I much prefer to stay at home and look after you and the children.’ At the risk of being adjudged a ‘male chauvinistic pig’ I say that our family have proceeded through life all the better because of this ‘in-house’ filial attention.

Our three children conjure up the words of Ian McEwen that have always been before me - ‘I’ve never outgrown that feeling of mild pride, of acceptance, when [my] children [took my] hand’ and I would like to think that I have played a small part in instilling into them lessons I learned on my tenuous path through this mortal coil. Individually, and collectively, they have brought happiness into my life, never before experienced, and imbued me with an innate pride, with but an occasional tear, I say to them:

I wish your Mother was here today to share with us these final thoughts taken from *The Sentimental Bloke* by C.J. Dennis:

*Yeh live, yeh love, yeh learn; an’ when ye come  
To square the ledger in some thoughtful hour,  
The everlastin’ answer to the sum  
Must alwus be, ‘Where’s sense in gittin’ sour?’*

*An’ I am rich, becos me eyes ’ave seen  
The lovelight in the eyes of my [Gwendolyn];  
An’ I am blest, becos me feet ’ave trod  
A land ’oo’s fields reflect the smile o’ God.*

*Livin’ and lovin’; learnin’ day by day;  
Pausin’ a minute in the barmy strife  
To find that ’elpin others on the way  
Is gold coined fer your profit - sich is life.*

*An' when I take a look along the way  
That I 'ave trod, it seems the man knows best  
Who's met wiv slabs uv sorrow in 'is day,  
When 'e is truly rich an' truly blest.*

*Sittin' in the evening in this sunset land,  
Viv 'Er in all the world to 'old me 'hand,  
A son, to bear me name when I am gone...  
Livin' and lovin' - so life mooches on.*

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### *Postscript*

*Under democracy one party always devotes its energies to trying to prove that the other party is unfit to rule -  
and both commonly succeed and are right.*

*(H.L. Mencken, 1880-1956)*

For my son, who has veered to a 'rightist' path from that which I had inducted him in his formative years, I observe, today, a Conservative George Bush 'nationalising' the insurance, banking and motor manufacturing of the USA. Forgive me for visualising both Karl Marx, and my revered Ben Chifley, passing overhead in a spiritual mode and applauding such a circumstance. Indeed, Chifley's political life was emasculated by his proposed bank 'nationalisation' plan which was subverted by that pillar of Empire and 'monolith' of monarchy, Sir Robert Gordon Menzies, who, in the late 1930s, wore the cognomen of 'Pig-iron Bob' - He permitted the sale of Australian scrap iron to Japan and I recall my Grandfather, August Hein, saying to me - 'Geoffrey, one day we will get it all back for nothing!!!'

On another thoughtful note - I have said to you that I visualise the decay of the 'American Empire' - perhaps, not in my time but in a predicative mood I say to you that that country cannot continue to 'print' the 'Almighty dollar' and/or borrow externally to sustain its economy; indeed, hyper-inflation is just around the corner and its final demise only a matter of time.



**At sea again, on the ferry departing Wallaroo for Cowell, April 2008**

