

SALISBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC. NEWSLETTER

Celebrating over 40 years of "keeping alive the history of Salisbury"



SEPTEMBER 2022



Salisbury & District Historical Society Inc.
3 Ann St Salisbury

Museum Open— 2pm-4pm on the 1st Sunday of the month

Water Wheel Open—2pm-4pm on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month

These times may vary due to long weekends and school holidays.

The Museum and Water Wheel visits can be arranged at other times,
please contact the President on 0408086545

General Meetings and Activities

February 19th Saturday 9:30am

Clean up and Sausage Sizzle

April 6th Wednesday 7:00pm

Ruth Gates (nee Magor) 'Gemima Magor' story

May 15th Sunday 1:30pm

History Month Salisbury walk

June 8th Wednesday 7:00pm

Bob Stace "Life & Times of Colonel Light"

August 10th Wednesday 7:00pm

Terry Sloan "Penfield & WRE" (Cancelled due to Covid concerns)

October 19th Wednesday 7:00pm

AGM "Show & Tell"

December 4th Sunday 12:30pm

Christmas Luncheon (details to be advised)

Trip to Kapunda Historical Museum

Wednesday June 29th meeting at the Museum at 9:45am or at Map the Miner
Kapunda at 11am.

Please contact Terry on 0427277302 for further details.

Report from the President – Des Brown

Greetings everyone; trust you are all well. It was unfortunate that we found it necessary to cancel our August meeting, however with a number of our members having Covid and concern over the State's new peak wave of infections, the committee determined it was the most appropriate action to take for the health and safety of our members.

On June 29th many of us enjoyed a day visit to Kapunda, which included the many historical mine sites around the town, a great pub meal and a tour through the extensive collection of historical items in the Kapunda Historical Museum.

Thanks Terry for organising the day.



Just a reminder that our membership fees for Sept-Aug 2022/23 are now due and we appreciate and look forward to your ongoing support.

Hope to seeing you all at our AGM on Oct 19th.

President's Stop Press Chronicle Saturday 11 July 1903

"First Shipment of Oranges– Salisbury

Mr Edward Tate who has 10 acres of oranges and one and a half acres of lemons, has made his first consignment of oranges to London and they leave by the Oceana today. He has men now hard at work preparing for a second shipment.

For the last year or two Mr Tate has had a yield of nearly three cases to a tree and he considered 7-8 shillings a case for Salisbury oranges a very fair price, whilst others here ask 10-12 shillings. This year's sample are especially good and the flavour excellent".

Salisbury Hospital



In 1928 Mary Diment leased her house on Park Terrace to Sister Isobel Jane Whitford who conducted a hospital there. It was located on the corner of Haigh Street and Park Terrace (now the Aldi site)

This building was rented until 1931 when a move was made to “Harwin” the Wiltshire Street residence built by Mr John Harvey Jnr. It was owned by his daughter, Mrs E.E. Milne.

The hospital was run by a committee until during the depression when it was taken over by the District Council which was allowed to spend money on improvements.

It was leased by sister Stanley but closed down when she left the district in 1940.



A petition of 40 ratepayers asking for the hospital to be reopened or land acquired on which to build a new hospital was conducted in 1943. The council entered into an arrangement to rent the hospital for one year at a weekly rental of £1.7.6.

It contained 9 beds and was purchased in 1941 for £1,450. There was a ward room, two private rooms and another outside known as the sleepout. The old coach house was converted into rooms for the staff. Lights were installed in the wash house and laundry and power plugs put in for the ironing. A light at the main gate with the word “Hospital” was lit overnight and horsehair mattresses were purchased for the beds.



With the construction of the Munitions Factory, which necessitated the building of the cabin homes and later the Housing Trust development at Salisbury North, the inadequacy of the small hospital became obvious.

A new nursery at the hospital was named after Dr Hunter and opened in April 1948. A new x-ray plant was installed at the hospital in June 1948; this Stanford mobile unit meant that patients no longer needed to travel to Gawler for x-rays.

When the Council first took over the hospital in 1940 the annual rate revenue was £3,000. In 1950 it had risen to £5,334 and during the intervening ten years 600 births were recorded.

The proposal to convert the privately run hospital to a District Hospital was discussed at a meeting sponsored by the local Chamber of Commerce in August 1952 in which the medical officer stated that hospital facilities comprising 11 beds and a 10ft x 8ft theatre under the veranda, were inadequate to serve the growing needs of the community. At the time there were 12-14 midwifery bookings a month. The meeting felt that the hospital should be taken over by a board of management which might attract a government subsidy, to control the affairs of the hospital. In December a public meeting elected Drs. F. Trembath, T. Yates and Messrs. B. McEwan, S. Hausler, W. Harvey, P. Gryst, K. Asche and J. Coombes.

In 1953 it was proposed that a 30-bed hospital with adequate surgical and obstetric facilities be established.

Until the Board officially took control, the hospital was managed privately and because matrons like Matron Murdoch, who served for five years, worked tirelessly the hospital paid its way. With a board of management, the matron became a paid employee with set hours and the hospital soon had financial troubles.

A meeting of ratepayers and members of the Hospital Board on 27 August 1956 unanimously agreed to hand back the Salisbury Hospital to the council. The meeting was told that expenditure at the hospital was exceeding income and it was felt that the conduct of the institution was beyond the powers of an honorary board.

In a letter to the council in April 1956 the Chairman of the Housing Trust, Mr. J.P. Cartledge, suggested that the best solution to the hospital problems was to establish one large hospital at a suitable site at the southern end of Elizabeth. A poll was held in 1956 and residents decided by a three to one majority in favour of a community hospital to serve the Salisbury Elizabeth district.

A tender of £290,000 from joint contractors, for the first stage of the building of the new hospital – to be called the Lyell McEwin Hospital in honour of the Chief Secretary – was accepted, but meanwhile the Salisbury Hospital continued.

With the sudden resignation of Matron Tomsett, Mrs M. Banwell was appointed matron in January 1958 and under her control the large deficit of the hospital was turned into credit (the first time since the council took over from the board in 1956).

Matron Banwell was appointed as matron of the Lyell McEwin Hospital when it opened on 22 April 1959.

Many of the members of the Historical Society were born in the Salisbury Hospital.

John Harvey Jnr., who built this house in 1907, could never have imagined that it would become a hospital, court house, Council Engineering office, music school, then demolished to be replaced by a pizza hut which was then demolished and replaced by KFC.

Compiled by Lynette Potter utilising various sources of information from the book 'Salisbury, South Australia, A History of Town and District' by H. John Lewis



Salisbury Hospital
Closed 1959
In 1960's it became the
Local Court House and
Council Engineering Offices



Lyell McEwin opened April 1959

ALMOND GROWING IN SALISBURY



The hard-shell almond is said to have been first introduced into South Australia via Kangaroo Island from the vessel Duke of York in July 1836.

The hard shells were soon superseded by other varieties including Hatch's Nonpareil, Chellaston, Johnson's Prolific, Stockhams Papershell and the Brandis variety said to be developed by George Brandis from the Gepps Cross area in September 1841.

By the 1950s there was up to 300 acres of almonds in the Pooraka area. Yields were affected greatly by the climatic conditions with the average crop of 12 pounds per tree per year, generally reduced to six or seven pounds during a dry year. In Salisbury, isolated areas were planted commercially, but the returns were not profitable except where it was possible to irrigate.



In the early 1950s Dudley Magor from Winzor Street, who was a poultry farmer, decided to diversify. His brother Howard, also a poultry farmer and almond grower at Virginia, planted the first ten rows of seedlings on Dudley's property, which were progressively added to. The trees started producing during the late 1950s. The variety was known as Californian Paper shell. These proved popular because the shell could be removed easily by hand and were a good eating almond.



The property of 20 acres included 90 rows of trees with 45 trees per row, plus 3 acres of trees around the 5 acre house block, a total of around 4,600 trees. Every July Clarey Brown, another local Salisbury resident, would bring over his beehives to do the pollinating. The bees usually travel only a certain radius from the pollinating tree, so every 7th tree in each row was a Strout variety, which became the pollinizing tree. The first blossoms would be out in early August.

In the 1960s Dudley Magor was known as one of the most prolific individual growers in Australia, the result of many new growing methods; these included his pruning method of only leaving the main branches, and during early winter he would plant the legume Tick Bean, which in the Spring would then be ploughed in to help fertilize and put nutrients back into the soil. The rows between the trees would then be further ploughed, harrowed and rolled flat during late Spring.



Irrigation during early summer was a new innovation vital to maintain the quality and quantity of the crop. A bore on the property supplied the water which was channelled into trenches along the rows of trees; previously growers had relied just on the rainfall.



To harvest the almonds, the trees were generally hit with sticks to knock the almonds off, which consequently fell on the ground. Dudley designed an apparatus to catch the almonds. He took his design to Brian Tilly of Paraweld in Gawler Street to be made. It involved 12 foot square aluminium trailers which would fit underneath each side of a tree. The trailers were fitted with pneumatic tyres, so it was easy to move them from one tree to the next. Small canvas skirts around the trunk to the trailers prevented more ending up on the ground. This harvesting method with the trailers proved very successful, and he had four in use at the one time (two per row).



Once the almonds were harvested, they were spread out onto hessian sheets and left to dry in the sun, usually 1--2 weeks depending on the weather. Dudley had his own cracking machine, so everything was done on the property. The kernels moved from the cracking machine onto a moving canvas along a table where they were manually graded non-damaged, chipped, or broken, into separate half cases, then bagged, labelled and transported off to the Almond Co-Op at Edwardstown.

Dudley's crops yielded two and a half times more than the general average and he was known as the 'Almond King' of South Australia.

With the end of the orange orchards along the river flats due to a root disease known as Armalaria, most land owners were faced with the problem of what to do with their holdings. At about this time, Salisbury and Elizabeth were expanding rapidly and the Salisbury Council very wisely took the opportunity to acquire a substantial number of properties for future parks and reserves; others were used for market gardening.

One property owner, Mr John Moss, decided to try a different venture, namely to grow almonds under irrigation in 1965. He planted trees under irrigation which produced within the next 4-5 years. He also had his own cracking machine, and other growers used it too. Soon a larger machine was imported from America that could cope with one tonne of kernels a day. Cracking up to 100 tonnes a season leaves a lot of residue of shells and husks, which was used for garden mulch and added to stock feed as the husks have a very good food value.

Dudley's 20-acre orchard was sold in the mid-70s for housing, and half of the house block was subdivided during the early 1980s. The remaining half, which included the farm house itself on the corner of Winzor Street and Spains Road, was purchased by the Hollywood Plaza Shopping Centre in the mid-1990s, and is now a car park.

Compiled by Jennifer Paine utilising information from an interview with Mr Roy Magor and the book 'Salisbury, South Australia, A History of Town and District' by H. John Lewis

Snapshots from the past



John St Buildings & Businesses

Snapshots from the past



If you wish to see more historical photographs, please refer to our
Flicker account www.flickr.com/photos/sdhsphotos and select the "Album" option



Salisbury & District Historical Society Inc.

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*The Salisbury & District Historical Society was established in 1981.
The Society was formed to promote the discussion and study of South Australian
and Australian history, particularly within The District of Salisbury.*

*Other tasks include the collection, recording and classification of works, source
material of all kinds relating to the history of the District of Salisbury and to
facilitate access to the collection by the community.*

SDHS Committee 2022

President: Des Brown 0408086545
Vice President: Alice Foster
Secretary: Jennifer Paine
Treasurer: Terry Sloan
Salisbury Council Rep: Shiralee Reardon

Committee Members: Jim & Glenyss Trenorden, Delwyn Ayling, Simon Hales,
Dennis Wright and Raelene Brown

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While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the articles printed, responsibility is not accepted for any errors they may contain that are out of our control.

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Photo Gallery: - www.flickr.com/photos/sdhsphotos/

*Our Newsletter is printed courtesy of the Office of the
Hon Zoe Bettison MP, Member for Ramsay*

We recognise the Kurna Aboriginal People as the Traditional Owners of the Adelaide Plains in South Australia