

THE EXHIBITOR

NEWSLETTER OF THE
ARMY MUSEUM OF SOUTH Australia



AMOSA

December 2023

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Inside this issue



Have you considered?.....

At the museum we are interested in attracting new members to our Foundation to develop and enhance the exhibits. We have a number of areas of work which include timber and mechanical, archiving and clerical, information technology and electronic skills, uniform maintenance, marketing and research. We do have active volunteers who already develop and enhance our displays and assist visitors with guiding and advice. Our volunteer workgroup is aging and we are interested in maintaining these skills through succession by some new member/volunteers. We are a museum focussed on the army history of South Australia and therefore we do get a number of former army personnel giving us their time and effort. We also have volunteers from the Navy and Air Force as well as volunteers who are interested in military history but do not have a service background. We normally attend for a few hours on Wednesday with some work performed

on a Monday. We also have a small band of dedicated guides who will host small groups and visitors on Sundays as they tour the museum or undertake the 'Heritage Walk' around the Barracks. We can cater to your skills and availability. The following nine section areas are operated by volunteers under the guidance and supervision of the unit's military staff.



- Schools Visits Group
- Conservation and Restoration
- Curatorial
- Edged Weapons
- Marketing & Promotion
- Medals and Heraldry
- Research and Education
- Sunday Guides
- Uniforms & Textiles

If volunteering at the Museum sounds like you, please contact Ernie Reichstein at amosahr@amosa.org.au to make an appointment

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2024 ACTIVITIES

Anzac Day

Thursday 25 April

History Lunch

Wednesday 22 May

Theme:

Keswick Barracks:

Past and Present



Catering Corps (AACC) 80th Birthday

The Museum was proud to be able to support the Australian Army Catering Corps in celebrating their 80th Birthday at our museum on 28th October 2023. While the museum was able to supply the venue, vintage cookers and other catering equipment, it was ex-Sergeant William (Bill) Gunter and his Catering Corps support team who made the activity such a success by cooking a variety of food on our 1970-90s era KFM (Kitchen Field Mobile) for the large crowd of visitors to enjoy. Bill spent many of his 20+ years in the army using this type of cooker. South Australia played an important part in the creation of the Catering Corps for two different reasons. It was at Keswick Barracks where Sir Stanton Hicks, then Emeritus Professor of Human Physiology and Pharmacology at the University of Adelaide, was co-opted into the Army to review nutrition, health and hygiene conditions being experienced by soldiers. BRIG Sir Stanton Hicks eventually became the founder of the Australian Army Catering Corps and the first Director of Catering for the A.M.F.

The other great South Australian initiative was the “re-birth” of the steam-cooking system utilised in the Wiles Cookers which were then manufactured in South Australia by the Wiles Brothers and strongly supported by BRIG Hicks. A Wiles cooker, along with several other items of catering equipment, is prominently displayed at the museum (including the KFM used by ex-SGT Gunter for his cooking activities). We were pleased to be able to involve COL Kim Schneider, a previous Deputy Head of the Catering Corps, in the activities and he recounted the various changes he had seen in his 35 years as a soldier and then officer in AACC. COL Schneider is currently writing a book about the history of the Australian Army Catering Corps.

The AACC members currently serving with 7RAR were pleased to be included and brought a range of current equipment to complete the catering display. They also assisted with the catering on the day. The 10/27 RSAR Band joined in the festivities and played throughout most of the activity including Happy Birthday during the cake cutting ceremony. Many thanks to all those who made the day such a great success.

By Greg Rosser, Chairman AMOSAF



The Wiles Cooker on display at the Museum and used for catering during the Vietnam War. On the right we have the audience listening to the address and birthday celebration.



Colonel Kim Schneider gives the keynote address



Greg Rosser speaking of the support to the AACC by Museum volunteers



Cutting the 'birthday cake



Surveying South Australia.....

In 1834, the **South Australian Colonisation Act** was passed in the United Kingdom, leading to the British colonisation of land that is now the state of South Australia. The South Australia Act 1834 set out the governance of the new colony by a new body known as the **South Australian Colonisation Commission**. The Commissioners formed a Board, which had responsibilities for:

- * the disposal of land;
- * an Emigration Fund for conveying poor emigrants from Great Britain and Ireland to South Australia; and
- * appointing a treasurer, assistant surveyors and other officers necessary to carry the Act into execution.

The South Australian Commission Land Sale Regulations 1835, authored by the Colonisation Commission in 1835, stipulated that surveys were to be undertaken and maps to be made available prior to sale of the land. The Colonisation Commissioners for South Australia appointed Colonel William Light, Surveyor-General for the Colony of South Australia. In addition, they fitted out an expedition, for the purpose of effecting such survey of the different harbors and the adjoining land as may be necessary to the correct determination of the best site for the first town; appointed Col. William Light to command and take charge of the expedition.



The Cygnet (239 tons) arrived at Kangaroo Island on 11 September 1836 before disembarking passenger/settlers in Adelaide.

It was to consist of the "Cygnet" [239 tons] and the "Rapid" [162 tons] – each would be fully equipped to act independently as necessary. Each vessel to be supplied with one year's provisions, with proper surveying instruments, arms and ammunition, tents clothing, utensils, tools, medicines, and necessaries of all kinds which are likely to be required. Each vessel was also be supplied with a boat fitted for surveying the various inlets, as well as a small portable boat, on a light carriage, for use in the land expeditions. The expedition to be composed of the surveying staff, Captain Lipson RN, two surgeons, and 30 laborers [among whom should be at least 3 common carpenters, 2 smiths, 4 men

accustomed to fell timber, and one shoemaker].

On the passage every convenient opportunity was to be taken for drilling the surveying corps, together with any other persons who may be capable of bearing arms, in order to prepare them, in case of emergency, for the general defence and safety.

THE VOYAGE

The first expedition set sail from England in the year 1836. During that year, nine vessels conveyed the Governor, the Surveyor-General, and other passengers to the new settlement.

Ship	By Whom Sent	Passenger S	Arrived
"Duke of York"	SA Company	38	27/7/36
"Lady M Pelham"	SA Company	29	30/7/36
"John Pirie"	SA Company	28	16/8/36
"Rapid"	Commissioners	24	21/8/36
"Cygnet"	Commissioners	84	11/9/36
"Emma"	SA Company	22	5/10/36
"Africaine"	Various	76	2/11/36
"Tam O'Shanter"	O. Gilles	74	16/12/36
"HMS Buffalo"	Commissioners	171	28/12/36
		546	

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COLONY

On December 28, 1836, Captain John Hindmarsh, R.N., read out the Royal Proclamation of February 19, 1836 and established South Australia as a British Province. The British flag was hoisted near Glenelg and amidst gun salutes from HMS Buffalo Governor Hindmarsh took office. The selection of a site and plan for the layout of Adelaide was made by Col. W. Light, in addition to his task of surveying lands for sale in the country regions. The survey of the country sections went too slowly for impatient potential land owners. The Colonisation Commissioners and Light himself had grossly underestimated the difficulty of making a detailed cadastral survey in unknown country. Light sent his deputy, George Strickland Kingston, to London to ask for more money and equipment. He returned with both, but also with instructions to Light to do a "running survey" which would be less accurate but quicker than the "trigonometrical survey" which Light had been doing. If Light declined to do this, he was to be suspended as Surveyor-General on full pay and to be employed in surveying land at Napean Bay, in addition to other secondary sites, and completing the examination of the coasts and of Lake Alexandrina. Meanwhile, Kingston was to become Surveyor-General.

Surveying South Australia (Continued)

Light indignantly resigned in a letter dated 14 July, 1838, stating that he would not take office under such insulting conditions. Nine of the thirteen surveyors and draftsmen sided with Light and they too resigned. Light and Finniss set up their own private surveying company, Light, Finniss and Co. They had more than enough work and completed a survey at Lyndoch Valley as well as some other towns even though Light was very ill. G.S. Kingston continued to conduct the survey with the remainder of Light's original team which included Nixon – who later joined Light & Finniss in early 1839. Mr. Kingston, who had been charged with the execution of the running survey, soon retired.

“The Commissioners chose Lieut. E.C. Frome RE as the replacement Surveyor-General, who was engaged for a period of ten years and sent out to Adelaide with fifteen sappers as his assistants.” [D. Pike, “Paradise of Dissent”, London 1951 p. 176]

SAPPERS & MINERS

[The Royal Sappers and Miners was formed in 1812 – consisted exclusively of NCO's and OR's. The officers being posted to the Royal Engineers. The two would merge in 1856 as the Royal Engineers.]

The South Australian Contingent

On the 19th September, 1840, one sergeant, two corporals, and twelve privates landed at Port Adelaide, South Australia, from the “*Recovery*,” an emigrant ship. The Royal authority for the organization of this party to carry out the surveys of the colony, under the direction of Lieut. E.C. Frome, Royal Engineers, was dated 2nd July, 1839. Lieut. E.C. Frome RE was appointed Surveyor General & Colonial Engineer. The sappers and miners were to be employed as civilians on survey duties and colonial engineering projects, by the government. The party was composed of men chiefly from the survey, married, with families, and well adapted for the service of the settlement. “On June 26, 1847 a new contingent arrived on the Barque “*Royal George*,” from London and Portsmouth. Corporal Croker, wife and six children; Dawson, wife and three children; Young and wife; Loveday, wife and three children; College and wife; Partridge and wife; Brooker, wife and three children; all of the Royal Sappers and Miners ... in steerage.” [South Australian, Tuesday, 29 June, 1847, p.2]

EXPENSES

“At first all expenses were borne by the Commissioners, but eventually they were defrayed from the colonial revenue. The working pay of the party continues to range between 1s. and 5s. a-day each, exclusive of regimental allowances and rations. The sergeant in charge receives the highest rate, and the privates seldom less than 2s. a-day each.” [SA Register, August 24, 1844]

ACCOMMODATION – Royal Sappers & Miners

Initially, 8 cottages on Gover Street, North Adelaide – No. 880 on provincial survey map - rented. Sold 1840. North-

terrace Barracks: south of the Torrens River near Government House. “Sappers & Miners Barracks:- The Sappers & Miners have recently been expelled from their Barracks near Government House, and have taken up their quarters at the Native location on the Torrens, below the City Bridge. They complain loudly and with reason of the change. No body of men has ever conducted itself with more propriety than this party, nor has done more effectual service in the department in which they were employed; and if they have been well remunerated they deserve it.”

[South Aust. Gazette & Colonial Register, Sat., 19 JUL 1845, p.2] “Sappers and Miners quartered near the old brewery.” [South Australian, Monday, 2 December, 1850, p. 2]

THE SURVEYS

Soon the men were dispersed over a wide extent of the province, surveying a wild unoccupied territory, and also in setting off and surveying blocks of land for the emigrants. The duty was not without its trials; and for months the surveyors obtained no better shelter than the bush, the shade of some bold cliff, or the cover of a frail canvass tent. Some of the party were constantly at Port Adelaide engaged in the contingent duties of the station, such as working at their trades, drawing, &c., and in superintendence. A portion of the detachment is constantly retained at Port Adelaide for the departmental works, and the other portion is detached into the bush, north, south, and east of Adelaide, and also to the district of Mount Gambier, surveying sections of land for individual purpose and colonial allotment. “In 1844, when it became indispensable to effect some changes in the surveying department and in the mode of its action, in consequence of the increased population of the colony and its great inland distribution, His Excellency Captain G. Grey expressed before the Legislative Council his sense of the accuracy and ability with which the detachment had conducted the surveys, and added, that no greater efficiency could be desired in effecting the trigonometrical survey than that displayed in their labours.” [SA Register, 24 August, 1844]. In addition to the surveying tasks allocated, the Sappers & Miners also performed a number of engineer tasks.

Bridge building and repair

“A bridge, was recently erected, by the Sappers and Miners, [connected with the Survey Department] over the Onkaparinga River, on the North-west side of Noarlunga ... The bridge itself is built of wood, and is at once light, neat, and substantial. The design and execution alike reflect great credit upon the parties' by whom it was put up.” [Southern Australian, Friday, 26 March, 1841, p.3] “Bridge across the Sturt at Marion. This bridge is of seventy feet span, framed and put up by Corporal Finley, Royal Sappers and Miners, and is a most creditable work. Some of the emigrant labourers have also been employed in the construction of the bridge and approaches. It is just finished, and will be

Surveying South Australia (Continued)

open in a few days.” [Southern Australian, Tuesday, 15 February, 1842, p. 3] “Alterations and repairs to the old bridge over the Torrens on the Port Road. This has also been executed very creditably by Corporal Finley and other members of the detachment of Sappers and Miners, by whom all the bridging of consequence in the colony has been carried out.” [Southern Australian, Tuesday, 15 February, 1842, p. 3] “On Sunday last, the neighbourhood of the Torrens presented a most animated appearance, the river having swollen, and, in many places, overflowed its banks. ... Saturday evening ... it was blowing a hurricane ... between seven and eight o’clock ... [Sunday] ... it was found, that the Frome Bridge, recently erected over the Torrens ... , had sustained considerable injury, that the Chain Bridge, a little lower down the river, had been lifted up, and floated away en masse, and that the City Bridge, the great thoroughfare from Adelaide to the Port, although recently repaired by the Sappers and Miners, and pronounced to be safe, has been completely undermined, and that huge masses of it have been borne down the stream.” [SA Register, Wednesday, 25 September, 1844, p. 3]

Building Works

“Fitting up a store and adjoining dwelling-house in Grenfell-street, as Barracks for the officers and men of the company of the 96th Regiment; constructing cells, dry-room, Commissariat store, cooking house, sheds, &c., This work was performed by the men belonging to the detachment of Royal Sappers and Miners, assisted by occasional parties from the emigrant labourers.” [Southern Australian, Tues., 15 February, 1842, p. 3]. “AGRICULTURAL AND HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY’S GRAND EXHIBITION. We should not omit to notice the active and zealous labours of the Royal Sappers and Miners, in **erecting the pavilion**, which, in the opinion of all who saw it, was constructed in a most tasteful, elegant and substantial manner. We can assure the Sappers and Miners that the Committee, and all interested in the proceedings, highly appreciated their excellent conduct...” [Southern Australian, Friday, 16 February, 1844, p.2]

Mapping

“May 8 - Corporal Ide and Private Baker, of the Royal Sappers and Miners made a chart of the bay [Lake Frome]...” [Southern Australian, Tuesday, 18 June, 1844, p. 3]

Exploration

“EXPEDITION NORTH – DEPARTURE OF Mr. EYRE. ... Mr. Eyre is accompanied by Mr. Scott, Mr. Baxter, overseer, **two Sappers and Miners**, and two Sydney natives. Ample provision has, we understand, been made for a period of six months...” [Southern Australian, Friday, 19 June 1840, p. 3]

Prospecting “... Some splendid specimens of copper ore have been discovered at Hummock Hill, to the north of Gulf St. Vincent. The Sappers and Miners have surveyed five sections, on the surface of three of which copper in masses has been found. It is now supposed that the Kapunda lodes are but branch lodes of the monster one at Razorback; and a comparison of their directions, it is thought that they meet on the eastern side of the main range, about half way between the two mines. ...” [SA Register, Wednesday, 13 August, 1845, p.3]

Overland route to Mt. Alexander. [Castlemaine, Victoria-gold discovered 1851] “The Surveyor-General leaves Adelaide this day with a party of Sappers and Miners, for the purpose of surveying the overland route to Mount Alexander. [SA Register, Wednesday, 21 January, 1852, p. 3] It is the intention of the Government to send out the Sappers and Miners for the purpose of sinking for water on the overland route to Mount Alexander....”

[SA Register, Saturday, 17 January, 1852, p. 3]

Gun Salutes/Signals “North-terrace.

“Until the signal staffs are erected [West Tce and Glenelg to indicate arrival of vessels], a gun will be fired every day, commencing from the 1st April, from the barracks of the Sappers and Miners, precisely at 12 o’clock at noon – the time will be taken from a carefully regulated chronometer. After the signal staffs are erected, the time will be marked by the dropping of a ball from the masthead at the same hour.” [Southern Australian, Thursday, 16 April, 1840, p. 4]

OPENING OF THE NEW PORT

On Wednesday last the New Port of Adelaide was opened by His Excellency Governor Gawler assisted by David MacLaren, Esquire, Manager of the South Australian Company, in the presence of the largest assembly of colonists ever congregated in South Australia, upwards of five thousand persons being present. On the procession arriving at the commencement of the road [... from the road to Adelaide to the Port...], the Governor’s flag was hoisted at the new flag-staff, and a royal salute was fired by the Sappers and Miners from the guns placed on the Government Wharf. The salute was repeated by the vessels in the river ...” [SA Register, Saturday, 17 October, 1840, p. 2]

Royal Salutes

“At one o’clock a royal salute of twenty one guns was fired by the Sappers and Miners from the artillery in front of their barracks, which was responded by the vessels in the harbour at Glenelg”. [SA Register, Saturday, 30 May, 1840, p.6]

GUN SALUTE – BIRTH OF THE DUKE OF CORNWALL

“Monday was observed as a holiday at the public officers, in honour of the birth of the Duke of Cornwall. As the usual royal salute was about to be fired at the Barracks, we regret to learn, that two of the Sappers and Miners had their hands so dreadfully shattered with the gunpowder, as to render it likely that they will have to undergo amputation.

Surveying South Australia (Continued)

The accident arose from neglecting to stop the vent-hole, while the gun was being loaded the second time.” [Southern Australian, Tuesday, 12 April, 1842, p. 3] “*Corporal John Coles* lost his right hand except the thumb and the top of his left hand forefinger. At the Adelaide Hospital, Colonial Surgeon, James Nash, performed minimal amputation of the damaged areas as Corporal Coles was concerned to not have his entire hand amputated. A whale-bone prosthesis was made by Robert Norman an Adelaide surgeon-dentist. The fingers could be flexed by tightening the strings which were attached to a ring on the remaining right thumb. The catgut pulleys were interlinked with small spools,

carefully worked into the knuckle joints, manoeuvred by the limited lateral mobility of the only remaining digit, the right thumb, over which a ring was placed which attached to the pulleys. The prosthetic hand was described as ‘beautiful in its mechanism and accurate in its working that Corporal Coles could pick up a button or a sixpence with pleasing facility’. [eHiver.com/collections/5254/objects/387275/equipment-corporal-coles-prosthetic-hand] A number of the Sappers & Miners, took their discharge and remained in the colony, some as surveyors, others in business or trades.

By Paul Longstaff Research

2023 Conservator Course

On the 24th September, I flew off to sunny Singleton to attend the week long ‘Introduction to Conservation’ Course to be held at the Australian Army Infantry Museum (AAIM). This was the sequel to the ‘Introduction to Museum Studies’ course I had attended with Terry Izatt earlier this year at the Australian Army Museum of Military Engineering (AAMME) at Holsworthy. These courses are now run in-house by the Australian Army History Unit (AAHU) to train selected people in basic conservation techniques to be applied to stored and incoming artifacts. They used to be held under the auspices of an outside university and the Australian War Memorial (AWM).



One of the main display areas of the Museum showing the Bell UH-1D 'Iroquois' Helicopter suspended from the ceiling

The participants for the second course are greatly reduced as much of the content is practically oriented and there are not enough resources and space to accommodate the numbers that attended the first course. The ‘Conservation’ course builds on the much of the theoretical teaching of the ‘Museum Studies’ course with many practical exercises enacted with

good results. I count myself fortunate to have done both courses in the same year before the theory completely dissipated in my head!

The highlight for me was not only being able to visit the Infantry Corps Museum exhibits for one, but also to see the various rare and experimental items in their store that would not usually be put out on display. This ranged from tiger striped camouflage jungle fatigues to rare weapons that the most avid firearms aficionado would drool over. I was informed by their curator that they wanted to place AAIM as the repository for technical reference pertaining to small-arms and field gear.

The other great thing about the course was the ability to network and compare notes with other AAHU staff from other museums in the network. From those contacts I was able to give and receive handy information on procurement of items that the Army Museum of South Australia (AMOSA) may need for future projects.

I also hope to incorporate some of the practical exercises learnt during this course into short lessons to AMOSA volunteers and students undertaking the Work Experience program.

Each of the courses attended were conducted at the two premier examples of the AAHU Museum Network, built to purpose. It showed attendees what was possible when conservation resources were optimal. Of course, the reality is that most of the other museums are constrained by limitations such as space for storage and/or conservation or age/unsuitability of premises.

In summary, the courses showed me that, although we come from all types of Corps and backgrounds, we each use our unique individual experience, along with that of our colleagues and volunteers, to work with what resources we have at hand and ‘improvise, adapt and overcome’ to deliver the best historical experience to our visitors!

By Adrian Li, Curator—Military

A Satisfied Customer.....

Keven Draper gave Greg Rosser a 'thank you' letter he received from a family thanking the Museum (and him) for identifying and sorting out the family's medals.

To Kevin Draper
Volunteer at SA's Army Museum

Please pass on my thanks to you
and all the wonderful volunteers who
give so much of their time to
commemorate former service personnel
and honour the service that so many
have given.

Many families have no doubt been
much better informed of the contribution
made by their forebearers.

That is particularly true for me
and my son and his family.

The 3 grandchildren have a much
better understanding thanks to the
opportunity to visit the museum.

Please also pass my thanks on to your
wife for her assistance in helping you.
With much gratitude.

Sincerely Margaret Spinggay AM