

## A Pioneering Architect

Henry Colls Richardson arrived in Adelaide as a three year old. Following his schooling, he tried his luck on various Australian goldfields, before using the skills learnt from his father to become a builder and contractor. After his marriage to Jane Reynolds, they lived in Sturt Street, Adelaide and when Henry began practising as an architect during the 1870's, he set up his office at the same address. He worked as a sole practitioner for his entire career.

In 1878, Henry was elected as a member of the Adelaide City Council, serving the Grey Ward for four years and nine months, with three years as alderman. This position saw him chairing every permanent committee and he was involved in the inauguration of the sewerage system, the construction of the Torrens Weir and the Morphett Street Overway Bridge.

One of Henry's early architectural works was additions designed for the Ferguson residence in Wakefield Street. Following its completion, the 'South Australian Register' reported "*He has put up what is rather a novelty in the way of verandahs. It consists of cast-iron ornamented frieze work with brackets.*" This was one of the earlier uses of cast iron which became very popular in Adelaide hotels and residences in the 1880's and 1890's.

The late 1870-80's saw Henry's business increase and commissions included alterations and additions to shops, businesses and residences. In addition he was in the vanguard of designing the new return verandah "gentlemans villa" including the Delano House at Queen Street, Norwood. His architecture was mainly domestic or smaller scale commercial or community buildings. The latter included the Blackwood Hotel and extensions to the East End Market. A notable exception was the industrial complex at Burfords Soap and Candle Works on Sturt Street, Adelaide which was one of his larger commissions. Henry's sister Mary had married Adelaide soap-making industrialist William Burford.

Henry Richardson was one of the first members of the South Australian Institute of Architects formed in 1886. Possibly his most significant contribution to South Australian architecture was his early use of decorative cast iron in residential work which contributed to a particular South Australian style so recognisable and valued on our villas today.

From information provided by Susan Benham Page,  
Henry's great, great niece  
February 2015



Delano House, Norwood

## Henry Colls RICHARDSON [1837-1910]

Married Jane REYNOLDS on 24 April 1866 at  
Sturt Street, Adelaide

Departed 29 May 1840 from Plymouth

Arrived 6 September 1840 at Port Adelaide on  
the

## Lysander

Children of Henry & Jane:

Adopted

Reine M TUCKER m H F BATCHELOR  
(birth-death dates unknown)

