January 2019

First Event 2019:

PASA member Ron Featherston will be the speaker at the Pioneer Group Luncheon on Wednesday 6 February.
His topic 1840 - the foundations of the Irish in South Australia will examine the Irish arrivals of 1840 and the crucial role they played in establishing the character of the Irish in South Australia and why they are probably part of your Irish story. Ron’s talk will look at Robert Torrens and his Irish emigration model which both began and ended in 1840 but which would form the building blocks of a family and friendship-based rolling emigration that would continue for several decades. There will be a focus on the Birman which arrived from Cork in December 1840 and the women behind it.
The luncheon will be held in the Walkerville Uniting Church Hall, 17 Smith Street, Walkerville from 12noon to 2.00pm. (continued page 2)
As is usual at our Pioneer Group Luncheons, please bring your own lunch to eat before the speaker commences at 12.30pm. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be provided. No bookings are required, and the cost is $2 (members) and $5 (non-members) payable on entry.

The church hall is opposite the historic Walkerville Wesleyan Cemetery (above) which contains the graves of pioneer settlers and their families. PASA member Jim Everett will lead a tour of the cemetery prior to the luncheon from 11am. Numbers for this tour are restricted, so it is important to book your place no later than 31 January. [Only a few spots remaining, 22/1/19]

SPECIAL PASA HISTORY FESTIVAL EVENT
This is one for your diary!

PASA has organized a Pioneer Group Luncheon during the May History Festival on Wednesday 8 May in the Hall of Pilgrim Uniting Church, Flinders Street, Adelaide from 12-2.00pm. Speakers at the luncheon will be PASA members Brian Stace from Devonport, Tasmania, and Bill Othams from Port Pirie. For several years Brian and Bill have been researching and writing a book about the Coromandel and its passengers and they will be sharing some of this at the luncheon. Entitled, “The 1837 Coromandel: Pioneer young labourers’ lives”, this presentation, using selected biographies from their forthcoming book, will provide a unique insight into the lives of the young married labourers who arrived on the Coromandel and the contribution they made to South Australia.

PASA is also jointly promoting History Festival events at Blackwood and Glenelg featuring Brian and Bill, each with a different focus on aspects of their forthcoming book. Further details of these events will be available in the next newsletter, the PASA Journal and the History Festival Programme. PASA members and their friends are welcome to attend all 3 of these events.

The Coromandel, from a painting by John Ford
TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

The December Quiz sought the identity of the Acting Governor of South Australia during the period between Governors Hindmarsh and Gawler in 1838. The meteoric rise of George Milner Stephen, 1812-1894, (at left) to firstly the position of Advocate General and Crown Solicitor in South Australia in February 1838 and then soon after as Acting Governor, is one of the most intriguing stories of the first few years of the Colony. In 1830 at the age of 18 and after a brilliant school career in Sydney, George Milner Stephen became a clerk in the Supreme Court of Hobart where his elder brother Alfred was Crown Solicitor. When Governor Hindmarsh was looking to find a replacement for Charles Mann as Advocate General in SA, he wrote to Alfred hoping he would fill the position. But through a series of misunderstandings it was George who arrived in Adelaide and inveigled his way into the role. At this time the Hobart press labelled him as “raw and inexperienced .... with neither the educational qualifications or presence” for the position. The many twists and turns in the rest of George’s life are well told in the “Australian Dictionary of Biography”.

This Month’s Quiz reveals another aspect of George Milner Stephen’s interesting life.

This month’s question:

Who did George Milner Stephen marry in 1840?

The photo to the right was taken of Stephen’s wife C1860.

PROCLAMATION DAY LUNCH

Over 100 members and guests attended the increasingly popular PASA Proclamation Day Lunch at the Glenelg Golf Club. A very pleasant lunch was interspersed with hearty toasts and songs to “our brave old pioneers”. Friendships were renewed, new members welcomed and the sweeping view to the Adelaide Hills admired.

Our guest speaker Rob Kirk gave a most informative illustrated presentation on Dr John Woodforde, surgeon on the Rapid and parrot pie.

Rob, a descendant of the Doctor, is pictured at left with Brian O’Halloran; they share mutual ancestors.

Rob’s topic was most appropriate for the occasion as it concentrated on the Doctor’s observations and experiences, particularly his friendship with Colonel William Light, during the first few years of the Colony.

Woodforde was born in England in 1810 and upon his graduation in 1832 became a third-generation doctor/surgeon. The Doctor first met William Light in the Middle East in 1834 when Light was aboard the Nile in the service of the Pasha of Egypt. They struck up an immediate friendship which lasted until Light’s death in Adelaide in October 1839. When Light was appointed as Surveyor General in February 1836, he chose Woodforde as his ship’s surgeon for the Rapid’s voyage to South Australia.
It is the Doctor’s well kept and descriptive diary which provides great insight into the early years of the Colony. Upon arrival at Kangaroo Island in August 1836 the Doctor records his attendance at a marriage onboard the recently arrived John Pirie and noted that “the feast wound up with one or two amicable fights in which the bride and groom were conspicuous”

It was soon after this that Light established a supply camp at Rapid Bay for some of the survey team and the passengers from the Rapid. Woodforde then spent several months there while Light and the rest of the survey team explored the possible sites for the new town from Port Lincoln to the Murray Mouth. Here at Rapid Bay, the Doctor’s diary records how he helped establish a much-needed vegetable garden, tended to the health of the settlers including delivering the first baby born on the mainland, and fished and hunted for game to augment their food supplies.

Dr Woodforde’s description of Christmas 1836 at Rapid Bay echoes the thoughts and experiences of many of the early settlers.

Christmas Day Sunday 25 December 1836: Reminds us of Old England and our friends warming their knees by a rousing fire with all other Christmas comforts. Here, we are boiling under a sun nearly vertical and half of us nearly blind with opthalmia …… it is very distressing and of the purulent kind.

Our dinner today (he was sharing a tent with William Jacob from the survey team) will consist of a piece of mutton (washed thoroughly to remove the flies), some parrots and pigeons, killed plucked and cleaned by me and a plum pudding made by Jacob. All I have to say is that I sincerely hope my dear friends at home are spending a merrier Christmas than we are here. If not, I pity them.

By February 1837 Woodforde and Jacob had moved to temporary accommodation in Buffalo Row in Adelaide where the Doctor commenced his medical practice. He bought land in North Adelaide and then leased land on the corner of King William and Hindley Streets where he built a 2-room hut which served as his home and consulting surgery until a major rebuild resulted in a pleasant cottage which was his home until 1863. In July 1838 Dr Woodforde married Caroline Carter who had arrived in the Colony with the Hack family. He remained a loyal friend and personal physician to Colonel Light through the often turbulent times of 1837-39, writing in his diary, In the selection of the site for the town, Colonel Light has shown in my opinion, great judgement and firmness …… the prospects are very cheering, and I am confident they will continue so under (his) guidance. Dr Woodforde regularly tended to Light during his final illness, was with him when he died in October 1839 and was a pall bearer at his funeral a few days later.

Dr John Woodforde continued to contribute much to the life of the Colony until his death in 1878. “A rich life, well led.”
PROCLAMATION DAY
LUNCH PIX

Fill, fill each sparkling glass boys
And drain your bumpers dry.
Let’s ne’er forget the honour due to brave old pioneers
From a toasting song by H.S. Scarfe 1857

Beneath this gay pavilion
We sip our wine at ease
(L-R) Margaret and Bob Kretschmer and Diana and John Ranford.

Margie and Ian Schomburgk with Pam Stace (centre)

Janine and Ken Horsnell with Di Skull (standing)

(L-R) Jenny Carollo, Graham and Jan Smith

(L-R) Cheryl Williss and Rose Miller

(L-R) Pamela, Paul and Nola Jones

At Right: (L-R) Margaret Speer, Gerry Gillan, John Speer and Elaine Davies

At Left: Jill Leonard (L) and Sue Rankine (R)

(L-R) Joan and Peter Alexander with Christine and Ron Featherston

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