

EXPLORE

The Charles Sturt Memorial Museum Trust Inc.

CHARLES STURT MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2016

ISSUE NO. 25

Welcome to 2016. It is hoped you all had a happy Christmas and New Year and are looking forward to keeping those New Year resolutions.

The Trust was very happy to receive the support of a number of organisations in 2015:

We acknowledge the generous donation of \$5,280 from The City of Charles Sturt for new street signage advertising the "Grange" precinct. This will be designed and installed by Denise Schumann and Associates.

We have also received a grant of \$1,100 from History SA which will be used by our conservator, Anthony Zammit to develop a storage system for our Botany Collection. This includes a book on Ferns with enclosed letter belonging to Sturt's biographer, a hand written booklet listing the fruit trees planted by the Sturt's in their garden, a manuscript listing the flowers and shrubs planted in the garden, two pressed flowers, two pages of ink drawings of seaweed by Mrs Sturt and nine packets of the original seeds bought for Sturt's garden.

The West Beach & Districts Community Bank, which is supportive of the Trust, has recently provided a grant of \$1,100 for the purchase of maintenance tools that will be put to good use by our gardening volunteers.

An application has also been lodged with the Australia Government's Volunteers Fund for \$1,000 for land scaping and gardening which we hope will be successful.

In 2015, a bequest of \$200,000 was received by the Trust for the purposes of constructing a Visitor's Centre. It is anticipated that this facility will incorporate audio visual equipment, a dedicated area where lectures can be delivered to tour groups and visitors to the "Grange", plus being used for social gatherings and weddings. It is also envisaged that it will contain a small kitchen with tea and coffee making facilities and a shop where souvenirs etc can be purchased. It will also provide an outdoor area overlooking the lawns and lake where visitors can sit and enjoy their refreshments and the ambience of our Historic Precinct. Concept and design proposals are presently being prepared and an application will be prepared for the National Stronger Regions Funds to assist with the costs of construction.

The Trust Board welcomes a new member, Raelene Hanley and recognises Merle Weston's contribution to the Trust with her appointment as a Vice President.

The Charles Sturt Memorial Museum Trust recognises that the 18th of January 2016 marks the 170th anniversary of the return of Capt Charles Sturt and his party from their expedition into Central Australia. It was the culmination of that epic venture that began 18 months earlier when, on 10th August 1844, after a breakfast with some 250 guests hosted by the Governor, Speeches made on that occasion anticipated that whilst the party would confront deserts, their impending discovery of new territory would bring "glorious" benefits to South Australia and its neighbours. A public holiday had been granted so the streets were alive with spectators wishing to capture this important event.

The procession set off from King William Street at Flinders Street led by Sturt on his tall grey mount, Duncan, followed by the rest of the party. The painting by S.T. Gill reveals the spectacle in Victoria Square with the bullocks and whale boat to the right.



They were a somewhat disparate group of young and old men chosen by experience, reputation or just plain need. The main link between them was their bush ability and surveying experience.

The full list of the party that accompanied Sturt reads thus:

Mr. James Poole, *assistant*.

Mr. Harris-Browne, *surgeon*.

Mr. McDouall Stuart, *draughtsman*.

Mr. Louis Piesse, *storekeeper*.

Daniel Brock, *collector*.

Robert Flood, *stockman*.

George Davenport, Joseph Cowley, *servants*.

David Morgan, *with horses*.

James Lewis, *sailor*

Hugh Foulkes, John Jones, Adam Turpin, John Mack, *bullock drivers*.

John Sullivan, John Kirby, *with sheep*.

Camboli, Nadbuck and Tampawang – aboriginal trackers

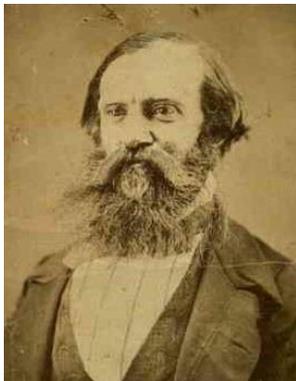
11 horses, 30 bullocks, 200 sheep, 4 kangaroo-dogs, 2 sheep-dogs,

1 boat and boat-carriage, 1 horse-dray, 1 spring-cart.

JAMES POOLE, a Surveyor by profession, he was regarded as a “wild Irishman” from Westmeath. Sturt appointed him as second in command of the party, partly because he had already surveyed a section of the route that was to be followed. None the less from the very beginning Sturt doubted whether his assistant’s physique was sufficiently robust. His fears were realised as the expedition progressed with Poole frequently taking to his bed to rest when ‘scurvy’ began to take its toll on his health, however this was not a consequence of any physical shortcoming, but rather Sturt’s failure failing to include a supply of ascorbics in the provisions for the expedition. Poole was the only man of the party not to return from the expedition. He died of scurvy on July 16th 1845.



JOHN HARRIS BROWNE (right) came from Wiltshire England, arriving in South Australia with his brother William. Both were doctors having studied at the Ecole De Medecine, Paris, with John specializing in gynaecology at University Collect Edinburgh. They practiced medicine in Adelaide in a limited fashion, preferring pastoral pursuits at Lyndoch and Booboorowie. Dr. Browne, who had not met Sturt prior to the expedition, came highly recommended by Edward Eyre. When he left with Sturt in 1844 he was 27 years old and was regarded as a “good bushman, placid and wide in his sympathies”. He went as medical officer and was said to be “unusually observant and intensely practical. He was probably the most useful member of the party and, although he suffered like the others from scurvy, his courage and professional skill certainly brought Sturt back alive.”



JOHN MCDOUALL STUART (left), a surveyor by profession, was a Scot from Dysart, Fife. He had attended the Scottish Naval and Military Academy in Edinburgh but decided in 1838 to migrate to South Australia. On arrival he joined one of the surveying parties and found life in the outback exhilarating. He was 27 years old when he enlisted in the expedition. He was a controversial figure, lonely and independent, with a fierce pride and a reputation as a heavy drinker.

LOUIS JAMES PIESSE was a 30 year old Londoner and single when he was selected for the expedition. He came to South Australia in 1838 to establish himself as a land agent on behalf William Glegg, Gover of London. Piesse joined the survey team of Senior Surveyor, John McLaren, working under the direction of Hon. Capt Sturt, surveying District ‘B’ and ‘C’ in 1839 and later in 1843 he was still undertaking survey work at Brownhill Creek. Louis was well known in the colony, having financially contributed to Edward John Eyre’s expedition into the northern interior and written a number of newspaper articles about raising finance to assist German Immigrants in New Zealand to come to South Australia. Sturt had sufficient regard for Piesse, appointing him the expedition storekeeper. None the less one of his contemporaries commented that he wasn’t a good bushman and was most noted for his flaming red shirt and conical hat.

DANIEL GEORGE BROCK was an English blacksmith/gunsmith from Devon, aged 33 years married for 2 years with one son 15 months old. Daniel Brock had been employed by Robert Thomas, founder of the South Australian Register and had worked in the printery before travelling throughout the settled areas of South Australia in 1843 collecting statistics for the printing of the South Australian Almanac. His work in the bush and knowledge of guns saw Sturt employ him as the Bird Skinner and Gunsmith of the expedition. His task was to shoot wildlife, and prepare them for mounting on return to Adelaide. It was unfortunate that his lovely wife Delia, aged 24 years at the time, was a source of angst between Brock and Piesse, because Delia had rejected the latter’s romantic intentions, in favour of those expressed by Brock.

ROBERT FLOOD –Not much is known of Flood but he was engaged in New South Wales by Sturt as a stockman to drive cattle overland to South Australia in 1838. Sturt regarded Flood as ‘one of the most experienced stockmen in the colonies’. Whilst the Central Expedition was camped at ‘Lake Victoria’ in September 1844, Sturt sent James Poole, Harris Browne, Mack and Flood to catch some of the wild cattle in the area. Not finding any bullocks Dr Browne decided to shoot a young bullock for food but he only wounded it, following which it charged he and his horse. Finding that the ramrod of his gun was missing he gave the weapon to Flood and tried to escape the wounded animal. In an endeavour to assist Dr Browne, Flood tried to load the weapon using a stick as a ramrod but an accident occurred. Whilst loading the weapon it discharged, fracturing three of the fingers on his right hand, which later required two of his fingers to be amputated.

GEORGE DAVENPORT was from Leicestershire England. He had arrived in New South Wales as a 24 year old having been convicted of highway robbery in the Lent Assizes Stafford in 1829 and sentenced to transportation for life. He was listed as a Leicester stocking maker and an officer’s servant. When Davenport arrived in Sydney, he was disposed to Government House and then sent to Norfolk Island in 1831, where he came to the attention of Captain Sturt. Following Sturt’s return to Sydney in 1834, Davenport was assigned for employment by Sturt at Bargo Brush and provided a Ticket of Leave on 18/2/1839 to remain in the District of Yass. He accompanied Sturt to Adelaide as an Unassisted Immigrant passenger in 1839. His ticket of leave was altered in August 1841 to the Port Phillip area to allow Davenport to serve Evelyn Sturt in Victoria and at his station in Mt. Gambier. Sturt considered him a good friend and always spoke highly of him.

DAVID MORGAN was 35 years old and had served as a chainman with Colonel Light in the first surveys of the City of Adelaide, retiring when Col Light was forced to step down. Before coming to Adelaide he had served in the navy, predominately in South America under Capt Sir Thomas Bouchier. He was an Adelaide Lodge member of the Odd Fellows of the Manchester Unity and was one of the first five police troopers appointed in South Australia. On meeting Governor Gawler when he arrived at Holdfast Bay, Morgan was appointed his orderly. While serving in the Police Force in 1843 he accompanied Sturt and Governor Gawler on expedition to the River Murray mouth. He was known to Dr Harris Browne, both having been travelling companions on the voyage of the ‘Orleana’ to South Australia. Obviously Sturt had been advised of Morgan’s good service record.



JOSEPH FISHER COWLEY (right) was from Dursley, Gloucestershire, arriving in Adelaide with his brother as a 14 year old in 1838. He was only 20 years old when he joined Capt Sturt’s expeditionary party, joining George Davenport as a servant to Sturt.

Brock described him as “a young man rapidly learning the profane language of the party... but for this he would be a decent lad.” He was deeply attached to his aged parents, both decrepit and his half pay is devoted to their support. Sturt believed him to be ‘a fine young lad whose moral courage inspired confidence’. He had accompanied Sturt, Flood and Lewis when they became the only white men to reach within 150 miles from the centre of the continent. Cowley also shared the distinction with James Lewis of having come upon the first patch of Sturt’s Desert Pea while out searching for the hobbled horses.

JAMES LEWIS was a Welshman from St. David's Monmouthshire and had arrived in South Australia aboard the Rapid with Col. Light's survey party. He attended Trinity Church on North Terrace as did Captain Sturt. James was a good friend of Col. Light and it was he who gave Mrs Lewis the first dog that came to South Australia – a fine specimen of the Newfoundland breed.



James was 31 years old, married for three years, father of two sons, when he joined the expedition. He had been a member of the survey department and assisted in surveying Districts 'A' & 'B' from South Terrace to Mt Terrible. In 1842 he went with Lieutenant Frome from Adelaide, north to Blackrock Hill, Mt Remarkable and back to Clare. Lewis was part of the first party to climb the Summit of Mt Bryan and build the first cairn.

He had a great interest in sailing and in 1841 was a member of a cutter crew on a sealing expedition to Port Vincent, during which the vessel was blown out to sea, leaving Lewis and four comrades marooned on a reef, where they remained for six weeks subsisting on limpets. It was because of his nautical background that he was selected by Captain Hence Sturt's to crew the whale boat when the expedition reached the mythical 'Inland Sea'.

HUGH FOULKES was a Welshman from Denbigh, Flintshire and was 58 years old when he joined Sturt's expedition. He had served in the 23rd Regiment of Foot, Welch Fusiliers 1804 – 1815 and was pensioned from the Veterans Regiment Chelsea after having been wounded in the foot by a musket shot during the campaigns in Spain. He had been awarded the Peninsular Medal with three clasps. – 'A' for Battle of Albuera on 16 May 1811, 'C.R.' for Ciudad "Siege of Ciudad Rodrigo 19 January 1812" and 'B' for Badajoz "Siege of Badajoz 6 April 1812". His military career stood him in good favour with Sturt, even though it was said he was too 'decrepid' for the journey by Browne. His knowledge of bullocks was well known from working at the Government Farm (Belair National Park) and had been called as an expert witness in several court cases.

ADAM TURPIN was a 45 years old Englishman when he signed up for the expedition as a bullock driver. He had married the widow Mary Ware and with her four children lived in the Goodwood area.

The Central Expedition was an important event in the lives of all party members and thereafter in the newspaper articles of the time. Any newspaper story thereafter linked their lives with their significant journey. But their return to Adelaide did not match the pageantry of their departure. Most of the party straggled back into town, dirty, long haired, sickly and in need of a bath and a good meal on 28th January 1846.

The Chronicle of 10th August 1944 wrote of the event "As it made its way through the streets to Victoria Square, the people gazed curiously almost unbelievably at the weird procession of gaunt men, their faces hidden in unkempt hair, for whom prayers had been offered up in the churches for months past, and who had nearly all been accounted lost. The most singular sight, however according to an eye witness, was the remainder of the sheep following the drays from habit as quietly as a rear guard of infantry.

Sturt however, due to poor health, had already been met by two friends, Charles Campbell and Arthur Hardy at Moorundie and been brought back carriage, accompanied by Stuart. They had arrived in Adelaide, on 18th January 1846 and reached Grange at around midnight whereupon Charlotte, his wife, finding his appearance so shocking, immediately collapsed to the floor.

Ill health though could not detain him from a civic welcome already planned for the 20th at the Freemason's Tavern in the town. McDougall Stuart was fortunate to be in attendance but the rest of expedition party could only send their apologies. Two hundred and fifty guests attended to celebrate his return and whilst Sturt had failed to reach the geographical centre of Australia, find new productive territory, or his 'Inland Sea', he was rewarded for his efforts. In 1847 Sturt was awarded the prestigious 'Founder's Gold Medal' by the Royal Geographical Society in London, and upon his return to South Australia he was appointed 'Colonial Secretary'. Public donations in South Australia enabled him to purchase Section 1003 along the foreshore of Grange and he became renowned for the publication of his Journals.

The other members of the expedition did not receive the adulation accorded to their leader, but they were long remembered for the part they each played in that epic venture, whilst some went on to greater things.

John McDouall Stuart continued to explore the continent. Recognising the problems experienced by Captain Sturt's slow moving bullock wagons and stock whilst traversing the very arid areas of the interior, he based his expeditions on a smaller number of lightly equipped mounted horsemen, with aboriginal guides and spare horses. He went on to lead six expeditions into the interior, on the last of which he distinguished himself when he became the first white man to traverse the continent south to north, and to successfully return in 1860-1861.

At the other end of the scale was **Adam Turpin** who returned to labouring and in August 1847 was charged with being a dangerous lunatic after a violent attack on his wife. He had been ill for several months, suffering from fits and rages. He was gaoled for a fortnight and released to his wife but died four months after his release.

Daniel Brock returned to find his infant son William had died. Brock settled at Port Adelaide where he carried on business for several years as a Custom-House agent. He died aged 57 years after a long and painful illness. Brock was highly respected in Alberton and when he died the procession consisted of 23 vehicles and pedestrians. At his funeral at the Alberton Baptist Chapel an appropriate emblem was placed, on top of his coffin in the shape of a handsome bunch of the Sturt Pea. The specimens of which collected by the intrepid party, of which he was one.

Joseph Cowley was attracted to the hotel trade, holding a licence for the Robin Hood Hotel in Gouger Street for a short time before heading for the Victorian goldfields. After finding gold at Daisy Hill in Victoria he secured a licence for the White Horse Hotel in Amherst. He died at the age of 55 years.

David Morgan, following his return from Central Australia, went to cart copper ore from the Burra Burra Mines to Port Adelaide. In 1850 he travelled to the Californian gold diggings, returning in 1853 to be part of Inspector Lamp's gold escorts between Adelaide and the Victorian goldfields. Later he became a guard at the Stockade and then served seven years as a trooper in the police force, stationed at Wellington. Morgan resigned to take up a position as a Warder at Redruth Gaol.

James Lewis on his return was engaged as a carrier on the Port Road before the railway had been established. In 1851 he went overland to the Victorian diggings with teams, returning to South Australia in 1852. He continued farming at Richmond until 1881 when he went north to Balaklava.

Louise Piesse returned to work with his brother as a land agent but as Piesse had been left to undertake the dismissals of the men there was a certain amount of angst toward him. Mack had been dismissed earlier by Sturt for insubordination which forced Piesse to order the others to carry all their goods for the last hundred miles". His sacking of Davenport for misconduct also found him in court in March 1846. Piesse had met Davenport at the sale yard whereupon Davenport accompanied by John Jones "began groaning and hooting" at Piesse. The court heard this was not an isolated incident. On this occasion Davenport was accused of calling out to Piesse in King William Street "Sheepskin! Old sheepskin! Old sheep's-head!, Davenport was charged with using abusive language in a public place, found guilty and fined five shillings and twenty shillings costs.

A year later Piesse moved to Calcutta India where he set up as a tea merchant. He married and returned to Australia to live in Bendigo New South Wales in 1849 where a son was born in 1850. At some stage he and his wife returned to Calcutta where Louis worked as an engraver until he died in 1881 Dehra Dun Uttaranchal India.

For **Hugh Foulkes** it was most unfortunate, as at the end of March 1846 his home at Brownhill Creek was entirely consumed by fire before any assistance could be rendered. Sturt raised public monies to rehouse Foulkes and the family moved to Mitcham. In 1851 he found himself unemployed but armed with references from Dr John Harris Browne, Bishop Augustus Short, Capt Charles Sturt, Major O'Halloran and Thomas Gilbert he secured work as a gardener at the Government Farm. He had accumulated some money during the 1850's, owning three adjoining cottages in Wright Street. He died in October 1873 at Myponga aged 89 years.

John Harris-Browne joined his brother in pastoral pursuits and by 1860s had leases from Streaky Bay to the mid north down to the south east, including 15 stations. Together they were the biggest exporters of wool from South Australia. He returned to England in the 1870s and died in Bath England in 1904.

George Davenport initially found employment as a servant with Andrew Robertson. He would have come highly referenced from both Charles and Evelyn Sturt. . Within a couple of months he married Anne Giles on 14th March at Holy Trinity Church. On the advice of Sturt he invested his lump payment for the expedition into property in Wright Street Adelaide. He took up the hotel license for the Gothic Hotel in Wright Street, holding it until 1850 before securing the license for the Talbot Inn in Gouger Street. A license he held until his death in 1871. Only in 1852 did the license transfer to another to allow George to travel to the goldfields. His family report that he found a 4lb 3oz gold nugget which fetched 248 pounds. George maintained a close association with the Sturt Family particularly Napier Sturt whom he fondly regarded.

Robert Flood accompanied A.C. Gregory on a later expedition and worked for John Harris Browne for a couple of years before working as a stableman at a country inn. "Dr. Browne reported that this 'dissipated old scamp' eventually died in an asylum".

Sturt's Expedition into Central Australia immortalised all its members in the history of Australia, whilst their names are forever etched on the many memorials commemorating that epic journey.