

# EXPLORE

The Charles Sturt Memorial Museum Trust Inc.

## CHARLES STURT MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2017

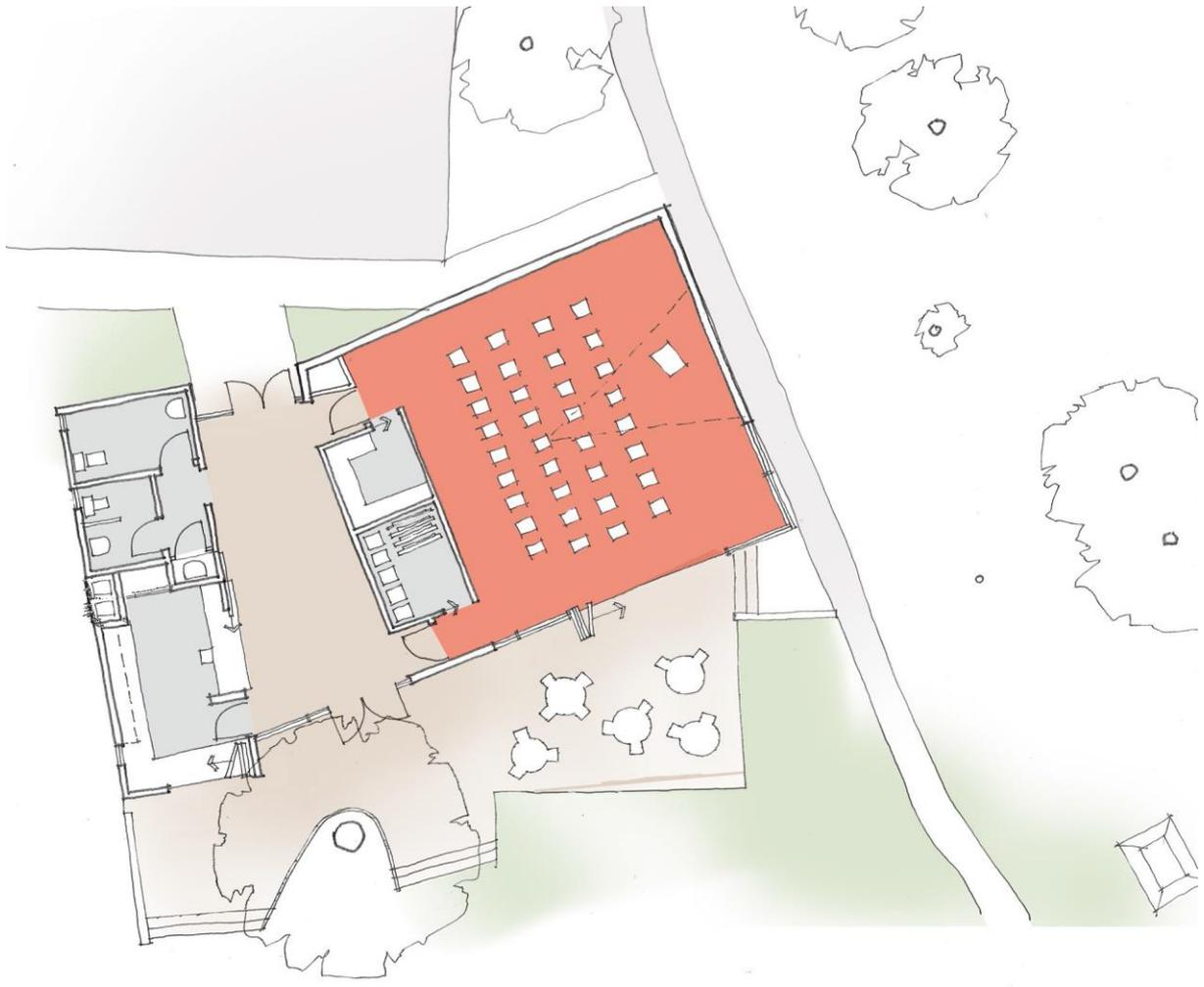
ISSUE NO. 26

A year has passed since the last newsletter for which I must apologise. Commitments have been many with insufficient time to put together the mid year newsletter. None the less I will account for all the events of 2016.

Sturt's Birthday celebrations were again the highlight of the calendar year. The Sturt Address was delivered by the Sir Eric Neale, former Governor of South Australia. An enlightening speech about the Australian Aboriginals and their interaction with white settlers during colonisation. The firing of the cannons by the Fort Glanville Historical Association gunners, is always a rare and spirited experience for all guests. The Victoriana Society of South Australia are always welcome guests and definitely add to the auspiciousness of the occasion. The provision of a large marquee and chairs by the City of Charles Sturt enable the Trust provide picturesque garden party for the nearly one hundred guests.

This year many guests were eager to view the proposed design for the new Visitor's Centre. KHAB Architects prepared the designs with BUILT providing the construction costs, estimated at \$686,000. This stunning new building will offer a multi-purpose area, suitable for lectures, exhibition space, functions, meetings and additional rooms for research and catering. Our Patron, the Hon. Dean Brown AO and our President, Arthur Jeeves AOM are representing the Trust in negotiations for additional funding.





Donations are being accepted for our Building Fund and as a Gift Deductible Institution all donations are tax deductible.



In 2015 we received funding from the City of Charles Sturt for a new street sign. Denise Schumann & Associates, have once delivered an attractive addition to our grounds.

History SA provided funding for the conservation of Sturt's Botany Collection of seeds, dried flowers and manuscripts. Anthony Zammit produced a beautiful compendium and a unique method of preserving the original garden seeds of Sturt's Adelaide garden.



## **Recently we were very pleased to receive another three grants –**

City of Charles Sturt: \$4,400 to assist with redeveloping the back garden to achieve a heritage garden utilizing Charles Sheppey Sturt's 1896 plan of Sturt's garden C1850.

HistorySA: \$3,800 for the conservation of two Nora Hutchinson water colours of the Grange 1953.

HistorySA: \$3,880 for mounting a temporary exhibition for the History Festival "A House with a History".

Grant funding is not a matter of filling out a couple of forms requesting money for a project. Applications do require significant time and effort. Projects must be tailored to fit the funding bodies criteria and require substantial evidence on how it will benefit the members or community, what sector of the public will most benefit, what historical interpretation will the project offer visitors, how the project will be fulfilled, the expenditure involved and the expected outcomes.

The Trust has been extremely fortunate over the last 15 years in securing funding for the development of a gallery wing, the production of an interactive DVD ROM, collection conservation, exhibitions, house and gallery lighting, soundscaping, printing of booklets and brochures, interpretive signs and panels. Funding was also provided for a ride on lawn mower, garden tools, hot water service, lap top, public address system, power point projector and two IMAC computers. We are continually grateful to all our funding bodies primarily the City of Charles Sturt and HistorySA but without the generous support of West Beach Bendigo Community Bank, ArtsSA, VolunteersSA and SEWPAC our endeavours would be limited.

At the beginning of 2016 the Trust became a Learning Destination for the Children's University and its partner the University of Adelaide. Each student is issued with a Passport to visit various approved destinations where they undertake special activities designed to advance their learning experience. We were pleased to attract many students and their families to the museum with a high rate of educational success.

The Annual General Meeting held in November saw the election of the 2016-18 Board.

Arthur Jeeves	President
Tony Botten	Chair
Paul Hilbig	Vice President
Merle Weston	Vice President
Judith Seedsman	Vice President
Margaret Phillips	Hon. Secretary
David Duffner	Trustee
Graham Pike	Trustee
Sally Pentland	Trustee
Bill Parry	Trustee

In the absence of a nomination for Hon. Treasurer, Arthur Jeeves has accepted to act as Hon. Treasurer. We welcomed Bill Parry as a new Trustee and thanked Raelene Hanley for her service on the Board. The Hon. Dean Brown AO will continue to serve the Trust as our Patron for which we are extremely grateful. He has always had the best interest of the Trust at heart and represents the Trust with great integrity and honour.

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of John Howland, our most esteemed Life Member. John had been in ill health for a number of months until suffering a heart attack which led to his passing. Board Members attended his funeral on 21<sup>st</sup> November, at Semaphore with Arthur Jeeves providing an exemplary eulogy. John will be remembered as a fine contributor to the Trust for over 20 years as a Henley & Grange Council representative, a Trustee and Chairperson. He will be sadly missed.

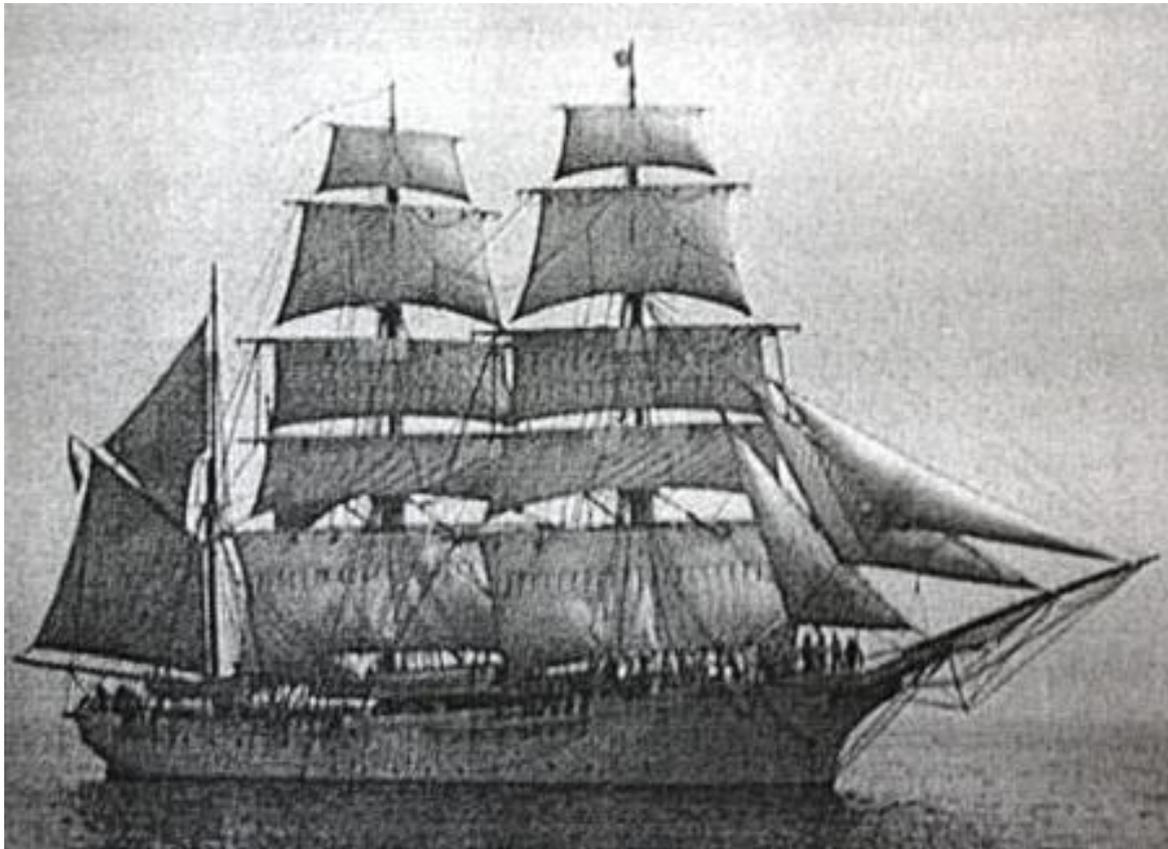
As on previous occasions, a short historic piece to enlighten the reader

### STURT'S RETURN TO ENGLAND IN 1853

The Sturt family had decided to return to England in late 1852. Sturt had retired as Colonial Secretary in 1851 due to poor eyesight, he had bid his first born son Napier a sad farewell on his return to England for schooling, and his servants had abandoned the family for the goldfields. There seemed no reason to stay. Sturt's agent booked the family passage on the *Barbara Gordon*, a three masted wooden barque of 338 tons, due to sail on 15 February 1853 under the command of Capt William Lilley. It was judged to be a first class vessel with superior cabin and steerage accommodation. Only a small number of cabin passengers were on board, many being acquainted with the Sturt family.

Due to depart on the same day was the barque *Henry Tanner* under the command of Capt. H. Vaggary. It was advertised as "Epam nondas", superior first class barque with excellent cabin accommodation for passengers" having just received a new fit out. *SA Register* 5/2/1853 p1.

Although their passage was booked, their shipping agent urged the family to travel aboard the *Henry Tanner* because of its superior accommodation. The rescheduling of the vessel's sailing date to 17 March 1853 was ideal as it allowed for the sale of their household furniture and stock on the 10 March 1853 and the welcoming of their new tenant Capt George Frederick Dashwood the Collector of Customs.



*Henry Tanner C1853*

According to Mrs Napier Sturt's account "The class of passenger aboard the *Barbara Gordon* was more conducive to the Sturt family but took direction from their agent as to the superior accommodation on the *Henry Tanner*. While the accommodation was good, the passengers in the Saloon were less than desirable, most having come from the goldfields and were raw in terms of social mores. Mrs Sturt and daughter had their meals in their cabin, while Sturt and his boys dined in the Saloon where they were teased and bullied. The Commander had little control over his men or the passengers with fights breaking out and one man thrown overboard. Even Sturt was grabbed from behind and nearly thrown overboard while he stood on the deck. Saved in the nick of time by the timely intervention of a butcher. A mutiny broke out amongst the crew until the

passengers came to the aid of the Commander and order was restored.” *Life of Charles Sturt, Beatrix Sturt*

While the *Henry Tanner* sailed in March, the vessel caught up with the *Barbara Gordon*, south of Madagascar. The Sturt's spent a couple of enjoyable afternoons with the passengers aboard the *Barbara Gordon*, before both vessels set sail, keen to minimize the risks from an approaching hurricane. The Captain of the *Henry Tanner* chose a course out to sea while the Captain of the *Barbara Gordon* selected to hug the coast. It was the last time the vessels saw each other.

The hurricane lasted two days and three nights. (Beatrix Sturt). The *Barbara Gordon* was wrecked on a reef east of Quoin Point, Ratel River, east of Gunners Point at Die Dam and sank on 5 May 1853. (Other reports saying it was a reef east of Guinness Point Cape L'Agolhas.) A newspaper report in the SA Register 30/7/1853 p2 indicated the “vessel is lying on a reef immediately behind Mr Breder's house and about a mile from the beach, the masts are still standing and as yet no part of the cargo has come ashore”.

The crew and passengers did make it to a raft trying to reach shore but one sailor Henry Seymour and 5 passengers drowned. A Coronial Inquest heard from G.W. Leith, that Seymour had enlisted as a seaman under an assumed name and when washed up on the beach, he had a canvas belt round his waist containing £44/5/-.

Those that perished were Mr William Radish aged 31 yrs & Mrs Radish aged 25 yrs and their child Fanny aged 4 years, Mrs Hay 35 years, Mrs Dalton 66 years  
Dr Chambers aboard the *Geelong* reported that “We saw a barque to leeward of us on that night, close in with the shore, and we were in a very heavy south west gale, under close reefed topsails, all that night, and have no doubt it was her from the situation of the place she was wrecked in” SA Register 30/7/1853 p2

Napier Sturt was waiting for the arrival of his family at Portsmouth when he met Captain Lilley's son. Apparently the Captain's son had been on aboard the *Barbara Gordon*. During the storm the Captain had lashed his son and himself to a spar. Both were rescued by a passing ship but the captain through exposure and despair had lost his senses. His son said that the enormity of the loss of life and the terror of the storm had impacted on his father and he had not recovered. (Beatrix Sturt)

According to Beatrix Sturt, the family landed at Plymouth to stay with relatives only to find the relatives had gone to London to meet the *Henry Tanner* on its arrival. They hastened to London only to find that Napier had fallen ill and the family had to wait two weeks to all be reunited in Cheltenham Gloucestershire, but externally grateful that their agent had re-booked their passage to England.

Margaret Phillips  
(Hon. Secretary)