

EXPLORE

The Charles Sturt Memorial Museum Trust Inc.

CHARLES STURT MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

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ISSUE NO. 36

Welcome to another issue of our newsletter which sees us celebrate 18 years since the first publication. In January 2004 we took extreme pride in announcing the launch of the new gallery wing on 27th November 2003 and the unveiling of the exhibition “The Dream and The Reality: An Insight into Captain Charles Sturt 1795 – 1869” by Denise Schumann & Associates.

This year we celebrate another milestone, the construction of the Visitor Centre, starting in February. Thorne Construction of West Lakes have been engaged to undertake the build with the completion date anticipated to be August 2022. The official launch will also see the opening of a new Exhibition “Antipodean Dreams” by Denise Schumann & Associates.

The last six months have been very busy as we worked through the finer details of the design of the Visitor Centre with Khab Architects. Selecting doors, skirting, architraves, sinks, tapware, hardware, tiles, paint colours, vinyl flooring, lighting and electrical connections. Not to mention fridge, oven, stove top and dishwasher selections. In backdrop to these discussions, we have been steadily seeking opportunities to raise further funds to assist with additional unforeseen costs.



We are extremely pleased to announce we are the recipients of \$48,898 from the **Copland Foundation** for the implementation of an exhibition in Gallery 3 & 4, titled *Antipodean Dreams*, to be developed by Denise Schumann & Associates.

The Foundation manages the legacy of Alexander Ewart Copland, a wealthy Melbourne businessman and vocal advocate for the National Trust (Victoria). He had a passion for conserving historic architecture, if not able to save a whole building, he at least attempted to rescue its architectural features. He had a particular fondness for clocks, cars, furniture and curiosities and his legacy supports the fields that were important to him.

The **History Trust of South Australia** has also funded the museum \$4,809 for a projector for the audio/visual space. While another success was \$2,430 Federal **Volunteer grant** through **Mark Butler, MP Member for Hindmarsh** to purchase cleaning appliances and small kitchen electrical equipment to assist our volunteers in the maintenance of the museum.

We were pleased to welcome David Spiers, Minister for Water and the Environment, to the museum in June along with our local Member of Parliament for Colton, Matt Cowdrey. The Minister was pleased to discuss the project with our Patron, The Hon. Dean Brown AO, and Trustees, Merle Weston, Margaret Phillips and Prof. Scott Smith after touring the Grange. State funding of the Visitor Centre was discussed and we were pleased to hear that Heritage SA were preparing a Heritage Tourism funding opportunity for heritage sites to upgrade their facilities. We have made application and hope our application for \$50,000 is successful.

We are grateful to the **City of Charles Sturt** for funding the restructure of the museum website by graphic designer Brooke Muckersie. It is now easier to find information about our services, background to the formation of the Trust, the life of Sturt and the history of the Grange. All our newsletters are available to read, with a linked enquiries email and connection to Facebook. Nothing but positive feedback has been received. Please check it out on www.charlessturtmuseum.com.au or join our Facebook page – Charles Sturt Museum.

VISITOR CENTRE

The Visitor Centre is a major project for the Trust and will see the museum transformed into a high class heritage tourism destination of National and State importance.

We anticipate that construction will begin in February and be completed by August. The Museum will be closed at the end of January to allow for the removal of all contents, and closed for the entirety of the project including the development of the exhibition spaces and mounting of the exhibition “Antipodean Dreams”.

DONATIONS TO BUILDING FUND

We would like to extend our appreciation to the Heather Sturt-Haaga and Paul G. Haaga Jnr (right) of California for their donation of US\$1,000 to the Building Fund.



We are most appreciative of members, friends and visitors who have also made donations but we are still seeking additional contributions to ensure that we can install air conditioning, buy new kitchen appliances and install specialised museum floor coverings and track lighting. If you haven't donated, please consider.

[Your donations will be tax deductible due to our Charitable status so seriously consider making a contribution to The Charles Sturt Memorial Museum Trust Inc. Building Fund – Bendigo Bank BSB 633 000 Account No. 160636544](#)

ACTIVITIES

October and November were a busy months. We welcomed the St Bedes Church members and the Henley & Grange Historical Society to the museum. Their visits were followed by a visit by the Armstrong Siddley Car Club and the Kalyra Bellvue Heights Village.

The grounds laid host to a Hen's Party in the Heritage Garden and two funeral services in the Park. The Trust Christmas Party was a great success, held inside due to the day's 35 degree heat but it didn't stop members inspecting our beautiful heritage garden and taking in the lovely sunshine.



Two Armstrong Siddley vehicles.



A gathering of Hens (far left)

The main gallery in use as a dressing room for the cast of the film *Arthur Hardy* (left)

On 15th -17th November Adelaide film producer Tom Goodall hired *The Grange* as a film location for a new film titled *Arthur Hardy – The Forgotten Hero of the Hills*. Charles Sturt was a good friend of Arthur Hardy and visited him frequently at his farm at Paradise. It was Hardy who rode out to meet Sturt on his return from central Australia and watched on, in disbelief as Mrs Sturt collapsed in the doorway on seeing the black and scurvy condition of her husband.

The Annual General Meeting was held at 10.30am on Saturday 6th November with a light luncheon to finish the occasion. Members heard a detailed Annual Report from the Board Chair, Tony Botten with an update on the progress of the Visitor Centre. The Financial Report was tabled and discussed in particular the financial considerations in relation to funding of the Centre.

Our Heritage Garden continues to flourish thanks to the hard work of Richard Nolan and Anne McCutcheon and their band of volunteers. Special thanks to the **City of Charles Sturt** who generously finance the garden project.



The **Museum's Facebook page** frequently details some interesting stories about items held in the Collection. These are a couple –

Sir Ivor Hele renowned South Australian artist is famed for his painting 'Sturt's Reluctant Decision to Return' which is held by the Art Gallery of South Australia. The painting had its origins with Charles Fenner, President and later Chairman of the Historical Memorials Committee (1938-41) established by the Royal Geographical Society of SA.



Fenner had organised the centennial memorial trip of Sturt's expedition in 1929 and was keen to promote the legacy of Sturt. Fenner and his wife Peggy travelled to England in 1931 where they met with Anthony Sturt (great great grandson of Charles Sturt). Fenner later approached Ivor Hele to paint a portrait of Sturt on horseback. An image that reveals the difficult decision made by Sturt, to abandon his dream of finding an inland sea. A copy of the painting can be seen at the museum.

Sturt and his dogs on the River Murray Expedition

Rarely mentioned is the fact that explorers used dogs on their explorations. Introduced into Australia during early settlement of New South Wales, they not only served as pets but were used in hunting and shepherding sheep.

On the River Murray Expedition Sturt was given two dogs by a Mr Maxwell to use as guard dogs at campsites during the evening. One evening Sturt writes –

“I had walked out with McLeay a short distance from the river, and had taken the dogs. They followed us to the camp on our return to it, but the moment they saw us enter the tent, they went off to hunt by themselves. About 10pm one of them, *Bob*, came to the fire, and appeared very uneasy, he remained for a short time, and then went away. In about an hour, he returned, and after exhibiting the same restlessness again withdrew. He returned the third time before morning dawned, but returned alone. The men on the watch were very stupid not to have followed him, for, no doubt, he went to his companion, to whom, most likely, some accident had happened. I tried to make him shew, but could not succeed, and, after a long search, reluctantly pursued our journey, leaving poor *Sailor* to his fate. This was the only misfortune that befell us, and we each of us felt the loss of an animal which had participated in all our dangers and privations. I more especially regretted the circumstance for the sake of the gentleman who gave him to me, and on account of his superior size and activity. The loss of poor *Sailor*, our misfortunes recommenced”.

The Trust was extremely pleased to accept a donation of nine original Government Gazettes, the earliest dated 4 November 1847 and the latest a framed gazette dated 6 December 1849 issued by Charles Sturt, Colonial Secretary. A position he only officially accepted on 25 August 1849 when he arrived in Port Adelaide. We are grateful to Michael Schied who delivered them on behalf of Brenton Whittle.

VALE: The Trust was sorry to learn of the passing of Caroline Susan Sturt (1941-2021), great great grand daughter of Captain Charles Sturt. She died in Kingston-upon Thames hospital on 29 March 2021. She was the eldest daughter of Mr Evelyn Sturt and Hon. Mrs Penelope Sturt and sister to Pamela and Gerard. Formerly an SRN nurse, she was a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and an adventurous world-wide traveller with close ties to Australia'. *The Telegraph* 8/4/2021. She came to South Australia initially in 1967 as an official guest to the public opening of *The Grange* 2nd October and to represent the Sturt Family in the hand over the Sturt Family Collection of artefacts, furniture and library. For many years she was an annual visitor to regional Horsham, Victoria. (Seen pictured at The Grange in 1967)



VALE: We were saddened in July by the passing of long-time supporter of the Trust, Joyce Walkley of Jetty Street, Grange. Joyce was an early member of the Trust and a regular attendee of Captain Sturt's Birthday Celebrations and a great joy to welcome. She is remembered fondly as the guest who would cover her ears in the knowledge that the replica Sturt's cannon would be fired with a deafened bang. The Grange held a special place in her heart and in 2006 the museum laid host to her 80th surprise birthday party organised by family and friends.

Joyce lived all her life in her family home at Grange. Her father was the first Town Clerk of the municipality of Henley and Grange in 1916. Joyce attended Grange Primary School and achieved the Dux of the School in 1938. She went onto attend Croydon Junior Technical School specialising in applied art, having a love of sketching. In August 1940 she submitted an entry to the Navy League's "Title Wanted" contest and won herself a Morris 8/40 car with her submission of "The Sailor's Port-trait". Only 14 years old, she had to wait two years before she could learn to drive it and continued to drive the Morris for most of her life.