



# The Friends of Urrbrae House

Urrbrae House, University of Adelaide, Waite Campus, PMB#1 GLEN OSMOND, SA 5064. Tel 8303 7497

Editor Vicki Cheshire

## Dates for your Diary

**February 7<sup>th</sup>**

**Twilight Concert (5.30 for 6)**

**February 27<sup>th</sup> (fully booked)**

**Lumina Vocal**

**Medieval Celebration**

**March 7<sup>th</sup>**

**Twilight Concert (5.30 for 6)**

April 11<sup>th</sup> Vivente Concert

“May – *About Time; South Australia’s History Festival*”

Many Urrbrae House events to be announced later

**May 30<sup>th</sup>**

**Twilight Concert (5.30 for 6)**

August 8<sup>th</sup> Vivente Concert

**September 12<sup>th</sup>**

**Twilight Concert (5.30 for 6)**

October 24<sup>th</sup> Vivente Concert

## **President’s Report**

A very happy new year to all our members.

2010 ended with our annual Christmas party on December 6<sup>th</sup>. It is always a pleasure to join with the Friends of the Waite Arboretum and the Friends of the Waite Conservation Reserve to celebrate Christmas and the end of the year together. It is good to socialise with old friends and the committee is exploring options for more joint events to share with the combined groups. We have already held a joint committee gathering so I hope that we will be able to do more during this year. My appreciation and thanks to Buzz King for his wonderful music at this event, I have had many favourable comments from those who attended.

The Christmas party also included a silent auction which many members enjoyed and also raised funds. My particular thanks to Samantha Croser for all the work she did in organising this event.

As the year begins we all welcome back Lynette Zeitz to her role as Manager of the Historic Precinct. We also thank Sally Owen for the terrific work she did in holding the fort during Lynette’s absence.

Peggy Rowe, who most of you remember as the former Co-ordinator of Urrbrae House, will now be taking bookings and helping organise our regular concert program. Peggy’s help with this is much appreciated.

Bill Wallace, who has done such a magnificent job in organising the concert program, is taking a well earned rest from this task.

Concerts are the main part of our early events at Urrbrae House in 2011. The medieval celebration to be held as part of the Festival Fringe by the Lumina Vocal Ensemble and Lyrebird Consort on Sunday February 27<sup>th</sup> is, I

understand, virtually booked out. However we do have our regular Monday concerts on February 7<sup>th</sup> and March 7<sup>th</sup> with seats available.

2011 marks a special anniversary for the Friends of Urrbrae House as it is twenty years since the organisation was formed. The committee is planning a celebratory event to mark our 20<sup>th</sup> year so we will keep you posted on that one as plans develop.

Finally, a reminder that your renewal of membership is now due. Your assistance is vital to Urrbrae House and almost all of the projects conducted at the house have benefited from the support of the friends. We also hope that our members enjoy the Friends social and fund raising program. Please renew your membership as soon as possible. A renewal form is enclosed with this newsletter.

I look forward to another great year for the Friends and an opportunity to meet as many members as possible at the house in 2011.

*Yvonne Routledge. President, Friends of Urrbrae House*

## ***Manager's Musings***

Looking out over the rose gardens which are looking glorious thanks to our summer rains, it is certainly lovely to be back as Manager of Urrbrae House after my extended leave. I would like to thank Sally Owen and Yvonne Routledge for the wonderful jobs they did as Acting Manager at various times while I was away.

While January is generally a quiet month in Urrbrae House with few booked events, it has been very pleasing to find that many casual visitors, including grandparents accompanied by school-aged children, have made their way into the house over the last few weeks.

This will be a very brief musing as I'm still catching up on the last of the 653 emails that were awaiting my return to Urrbrae House. However, I would like to make you aware of the forthcoming, *About Time: South Australia's History Festival*. Every year History Week is held in May in this state. However, because 2011 marks the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of South Australia, there will be a month of activities held throughout May rather than usual one week of events. Details about events to be held in Urrbrae House will be provided in your next newsletter.

*Lynette Zeitz*

## ***2011 Twilight Concerts***

Hello, I am Peggy Rowe. Some of you may remember me from when I worked at Urrbrae House. As most of you are probably aware by now, I have taken over from Bill in working with Minas & Erna Berberyan to bring you the Twilight Concerts. I'm sure you will all agree that Bill did a fantastic job and I hope I can do as well.

I have made a couple of changes to the procedure for booking:

Please phone me on 82771426 and if necessary leave a message on the Telstra message bank.

Or Email me on [peggy.rowe@bigpond.com](mailto:peggy.rowe@bigpond.com)

I will return your call or email **only** if there are **no seats** available or if you specifically ask me to confirm the booking. Otherwise assume that the booking is made.

There will be no prepaid bookings - all pay at the door by cheque or cash.

As always PLEASE let me know if you need to cancel your booking, as there is often a waiting list of people who want seats.

All of the Twilight concerts are 5.30 for 6pm and generally go for about an hour.

### **FOUH concerts in 2011 are on:**

February 7

March 7

May 30

September 12

Fliers will be sent out for each date

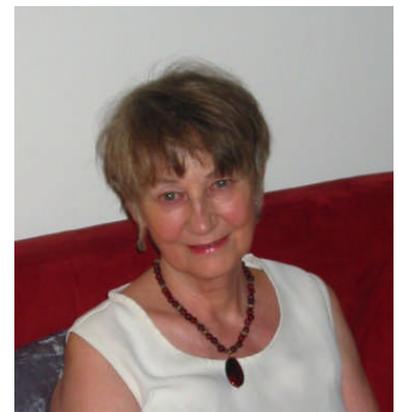
### **Vivente Concerts are on:**

April 11

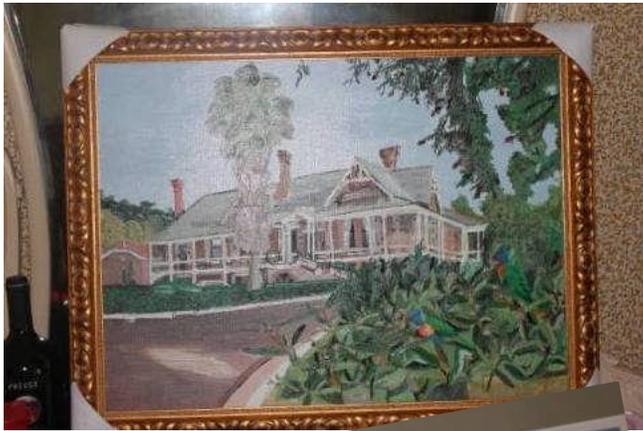
August 8

October 24

The details of these will be supplied by Vivente Music



## Silent Auction



Examples of goods on offer

You may be familiar with the term “a win / win situation” – nothing could be more apt for this very successful event held at Urrbrae House during the Christmas function in 2010. There was a vast array of paintings and prints, new electrical items, vouchers and goods from businesses, some bottles of wine and a few ‘interesting’ items (including antiques) to bid on!

Many picked up wonderful bargains, all in the name of fundraising for the Friends of Urrbrae House.

This event was the initiative of Samantha Croser; a relatively new member of the FOUH committee. Samantha also found time to paint the picture of Urrbrae House shown.

Many thanks go to those who supplied goods, without your donations this would not have been possible. As usual there were dedicated volunteers who helped with the event who deserve more than just thanks.

Thank you to all who bought items on the day – If you are anything like me (also a successful bidder) you must be very pleased with your purchases.

Personally, I hope that this event is repeated at sometime in the future.

*Vicki Cheshire*

Would you like to join the **Urrbrae House Book Club**?

We generally meet at 1pm on the last Monday of the month, and finish at 2.

One book is allocated per month.

**New members are most welcome.**

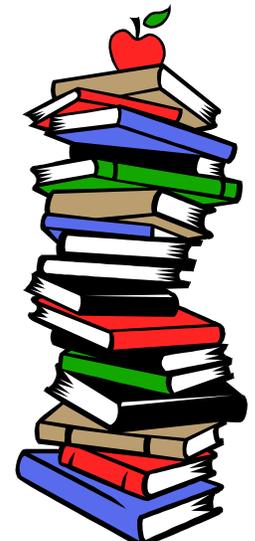
It is a great way to keep your ‘popular reading’ updated!

Books are provided from Burnside Library at a minimal yearly fee.

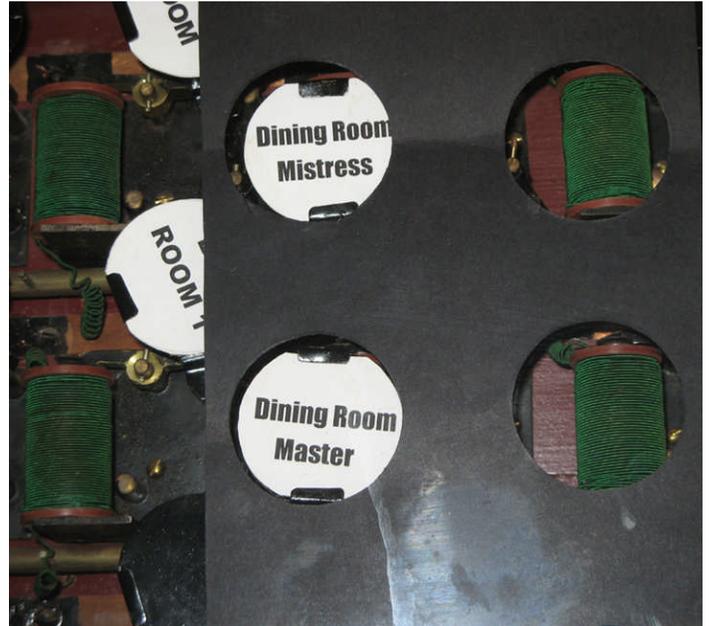
(Books are given to you at the meeting and returned for you)

Discussions are informal.

For information please contact Lynette Zeitz 8303 7425.



## Ring, ring, ring ... ..



The Bell System Restoration Project at Urrbrae House has been completed and was demonstrated at the Christmas Party. Once again when the call button is pressed at either end of the dining room table the call is registered on the Dining Room Masters or Dining Room Mistress indicator on the Annunciator and a bell rings to alert the servants who would have been in the adjacent Butler's Pantry. A few other call buttons within the House have also been reactivated.

The link between a call button in the Servery and the Main Hall has also been restored, as would have been used by the Servants to summon the Waite family and their guests when a meal was ready.

There were several stages in the project:

- Tracing the wiring links between call buttons and the annunciator with replacement of some of the main electrical links. In the case of the Dining Room where a wire option was no longer feasible a wireless link was used.  
(We think Peter Waite would have approved of taking advantage of new technology as appropriate.)
- Restoration of the annunciator including reconstruction of some of the indicator vanes.
- A thorough clean up and repair of the LeClanché batteries. The cleaning up of the heavily corroded batteries required careful work.
- Construction of a cabinet to display the LeClanché batteries. The cabinet where the batteries were originally kept was located above the rear stairs used by the servants, its discrete location actually the main reason why the batteries have been preserved. To make the display of these historic batteries more accessible a new cabinet has been constructed and located on a restored Servery bench.

*Continued ...*

We greatly appreciate the long period of voluntary time Bernard Arnold and Deane Kemp devoted to this project, doing initial research on the system and undertaking its renovation. We would also like to acknowledge the support of Craig Brown from Property Services.

Kate Mc Dougall who has oversight over the Heritage Buildings of the University, provided helpful guidance on the project and prepared the drawings for a new cabinet for the batteries.

The cabinet was constructed by Quentin Bay from the Furnishing section of Marlestone TAFE using Western Red Cedar to fit with other furniture in the area. It is a fine piece of work. Dino Nardecchi and his students from the same TAFE area did an amazing job on restoring the wood on the Servery Bench.

Funds from the Friends of Urrbrae House were used to support the project with the main expenditure being the employment of an electrical contractor for part of the work and the construction of the cabinet for the LeClanché Batteries.



*Bill Wallace*

## **The Urrbrae House Annunciator System**

Annunciator systems evolved in large houses to summon servants to the various rooms. Originally, these systems were entirely mechanical through levers and rods. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century electric systems became available and the Urrbrae House system is typical of the early variety.

The system comprises the indicator board with two bells (one internal calls and one front door), 22 electro-magnetic relays with room “flags,” a LeClanché 8-cell (12 volts) battery, and bell-push switches in the various rooms, all connected in an electrical circuit.

When a servant was to be summoned, the bell-push was pressed, the bell on the indicator board sounded and the corresponding “flag” dropped to appear in a window in the glass front, showing which room required attending. In responding, the servant reset the “flag” by pushing a rod on the side of the board.

There is also a large bell located in the foyer. This was to call the gentry to the dining room. It is operated from a bell-push next to the servants’ dining room door.

The LeClanché battery was invented by French engineer Georges LeClanché in 1866. It was a primary electrical cell (in contrast to re-chargeable batteries). It generates a nominal 1.5 volts per cell. The electrolyte was ammonium chloride solution in water with a carbon electrode (positive) and a zinc electrode (negative). It required maintenance by replacing water evaporation, and periodically, a fresh solution and replacement of the eroded zinc electrodes. Modern “dry” cell batteries are made on the LeClanché principle.

*Bernard Arnold*

### ***Volunteer Profile: Hazel Douglas***

I joined the committee of the Friends of Urrbrae House in 2009, having worked at the Waite Institute from 1981-85 as secretary to Oscar Jones who was the Secretary of the Institute. It was a job I loved and those were perhaps the halcyon days at the Waite, a great place to work with the full range of characters – amenable, difficult, amusing and dour – from academic staff to postgrads, farm workers and the admin team. And what a setting! Driving up that long drive from Fullarton Road was like going to the countryside for the day. Urrbrae House housed the student canteen in the basement and the staff club on the first floor and many were the lunches, sometimes with speakers and even 'themed' lunches, like Bastille Day when we dressed for the occasion. Such a memorable 4 years, so I felt I should give something back now and joining the committee seemed a good choice, since with a job I am not available for other volunteer activities during the day.



As to my life, I was born on the West Coast of Scotland, at the age of 10 went to the equivalent of St Trinians in North Wales, worked in London, then 4 years in East Africa after which I came to Adelaide in the early 70s. In 1980, after 4 years with what was then the Children's Hospital, I worked in Darwin (drove there), then in Weipa (more driving and there was no actual road) then back to Adelaide and the Waite. After leaving in 1985 it was back to Queensland and Cairns for 2 years. Off again in 1987 and back to England until 2002 when, encouraged by Sue and Bryan Milligan (retired Asst. Farm Manager) who visited me in Cheshire in the seemingly endless rain, I came back to Adelaide. I've done 43 moves, admittedly some of them only into short term accommodation, but nevertheless packing and unpacking – you learn never to pack the kettle.

Initially my training was in Business Management and Administration but in fact I've done all sorts of things, a huge variety of jobs from hospital, school and university admin., professional cookery, freelance magazine writing, public relations for the Jamaica Tourist Board in London, an airline and the East African Safari Car Rally in Kenya, a casino in London, and training guides and co-ordinating a tour programme for the National Trust in Cheshire where I also did 3 years re-homing dogs with the RSPCA.

It's not been dull.

*Hazel Douglas*

### **Friends of the Waite Arboretum and Friends of the Waite Conservation Reserve**

Events for 2011 for your diary:

7.30 – 10 pm Monday 18<sup>th</sup> April in Urrbrae House - Friends of Waite Arboretum  
AGM & illustrated talk by James Smith, FauNature “Hollow Habitats”.

7.30 – 10 pm Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May in Urrbrae House - Friends of Waite Conservation Reserve -  
AGM & illustrated talk by Dr Peggy Rismiller, Pelican Lagoon Research & Wildlife Centre on echidnas.

We welcome the following who joined  
as Friends towards the end of 2010:

Barbara Jones  
Alister and Maureen Richards

### **A note from the treasurer**

Please note that your membership fees are due, a renewal form is enclosed.

Please check closely that your contact details are correct especially telephone, address and email. Feel free to ask for another form for your friends.

Lyn MacKay