



# The Friends of Urrbrae House

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

Editor: Vicki Cheshire

## **President's Report –**

This will be my final report for the newsletter as my term as President ends at the Annual General Meeting in April.

Throughout my term as President, I have been helped at every point by the members of the committee. They have been an extraordinary diligent, committed and supportive team. A number of the long term members of the committee will also be retiring after periods of long and devoted service. I will be acknowledging their contribution at the AGM. However I would like to devote my final piece in the newsletter to the work of the committee and with the aim of recruiting new members to this group.

The role of committee member is one of the most interesting, enjoyable and rewarding roles in the Friends group. There are only five meetings per year including the AGM. In addition there is the opportunity to help organise and participate in the Friends program. This means a chance to participate in the social and cultural life of such a wonderful environment as Urrbrae House. It also involves the opportunity to meet so many interesting people that make up our broader membership. There is a great deal of satisfaction in knowing that we are helping to preserve Peter Waite's legacy by caring for his former home. There is also of course a chance to enjoy ourselves at the same time.

Each member is welcome to bring their own skills and ideas to the committee and all that is required is enthusiasm and a willingness to contribute.

### Dates for your Diary

Feb 25<sup>th</sup> Vivente Concert (5.30 for 6)

**March 5<sup>th</sup> Morning Tea FOUH (10.30)**

**March 18<sup>th</sup> Twilight Concert (5.30 for 6)**

**April 8<sup>th</sup> Presentaion of the FOUH and AGM (5.30 - 7)**

April 29<sup>th</sup> Vivente Concert (5.30 for 6)

May 7<sup>th</sup> Manager's Morning Tea 10.30

I do hope that this may encourage members to consider nominating but if you feel you need any further information or indeed persuasion, I include the following possibilities.

*On Tuesday March 5<sup>th</sup> at 10.30am* committee members are hosting a morning tea in the Urrbrae House dining room particularly designed to welcome our newest members and to meet anyone who has an interest in knowing more about the work of the committee. Please feel free to come along but please could you call one of the contacts below to let us know if you are attending, this will help with catering.

I have also set out the aims of the Friends of Urrbrae House as information that may be valuable to some members.

Continued...

“To raise funds for and foster the care of Urrbrae House and the Historic Precinct of the Waite Campus”

“To promote the cultural and social life of the Waite Campus”

If any members wish to speak personally with someone from the committee please feel free to contact any one or all of the following:

Lyn Mackay 0412 559 626

Lynette Zeitz 8313 7425

Yvonne Routledge 8338 2739

RSVPs are requested to give us an indication for catering purposes.

I will be continuing as a member of the Friends of Urrbrae House so I am sure that there will be many opportunities to meet and talk with members at future events. I take this opportunity to thank all our members for the wonderful support they offer.

*Yvonne Routledge.*

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

### *Floor restorations in Urrbrae House and Child's Bedroom project*

I would like to thank everyone for their understanding about the need to limit access to the house in late November-early December to enable the restoration of floors in the Main Hall, Drawing Room and a downstairs Bedroom. Now that the downstairs bedroom floor has been beautifully restored (see attached photo) a specialist heritage carpenter, who is currently working on an Elder Hall project, from Kolen Carpentry & Joinery has been organised to reinstate the built-in wardrobes which were taken apart many years ago.

I was recently asked by a member of the Friends' Committee about members donating furniture and items that might be suitable for display in the bedroom once the room restoration work is completed. The room will be set up as a museum exhibition room reflecting a 12 year old girl's bedroom as the Waites' youngest daughter, Eva, was aged 12 in 1892. Furniture in the room could include a bed, small table, writing bureau and trunk. Items for display could include girls' clothing, toys, books and personal items such as hairbrushes. Please note that items should be made prior to 1892, be appropriate for a museum display and in the case of wooden items free from pests such as wood borers. If you have a treasure that you think might be suitable that you would like to donate please phone me on 83137425 as I would welcome the opportunity to talk with you.



### *Advisory Board of Agriculture meeting*

We were recently able to help the Advisory Board of Agriculture (ABA) by enabling them (at short notice) to hold a two-day meeting at Urrbrae House on 4-5 February. The Board is the governing body of the Agricultural Bureau of South Australia and is comprised of representatives from the Bureau regions, government departments, the University of Adelaide and Women in Agriculture and Business. The Board provides advice and recommendations on agricultural matters to the South Australian State Government including direct advice to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries.

*History of the Adelaide Benevolent Society book launch*

On 7 February the Adelaide Benevolent Society launched their new history written by Rob Linn, *The History of the Adelaide Benevolent and Strangers' Friend Society 1849-2012*, at Urrbrae House. The Adelaide Benevolent Society has been working since 1849 to improve the lives of South Australians in need. One of the Society's past benefactors was Miss Lily Waite who is briefly mentioned in the book. Lily Waite died in 1953 and bequeathed £3,000 to the charity. His Excellency the Governor, Kevin Scarce, and Mrs Scarce attended the launch and were given a tour of Urrbrae House.

*"A Celtic Journey" by Emma Horwood - Fringe concerts at Urrbrae House*

Amanda and I have been pleased to be able to facilitate "A Celtic Journey" by acclaimed harpist and soprano Emma Horwood and Adelaide Symphony Orchestra principal percussionist Steven Peterka being held in Urrbrae House during the Fringe Festival. Emma and Steven are exploring Celtic music across the ages from ancient musical roots to traditional folk songs and works by contemporary Celtic artists. Three programmed concerts on 17-19 February have sold out so yesterday we were able to help Emma to offer a fourth concert on Sunday, 24 February at 3.00pm. Ticket details are available through FringeTIX.

*Urrbrae House Schools' Program*

Our primary schools' history program for 2013 was booked out by the beginning of February. What an affirmation of the great work done by everyone involved in the program.

*A slight change to the Manager's Morning Teas in 2013*

The Manager's Morning Teas are provided by the University to show our appreciation of the wonderful support we receive from the Friends of Urrbrae House. The Morning Teas are an opportunity for Friends to catch up with each other, some of the FOUH Committee members and myself over a cup of tea or coffee. This year I have also decided to add a small theme to each event that I hope might be of interest to the Friends. All morning teas are held in Urrbrae House from 10.30am-11.30am. The morning teas are informal and free. All Friends and supporters are most welcome to attend.

*Retirement of the President of the Friends of Urrbrae House*

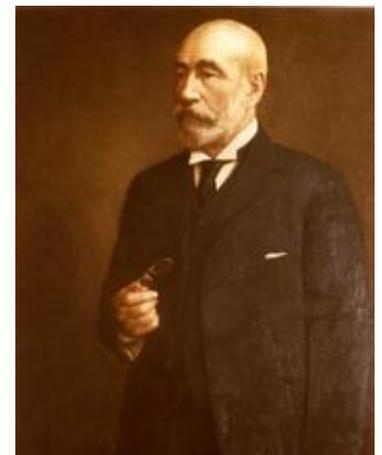
Yvonne Routledge will be finishing her term as President of the Friends of Urrbrae House in April and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Yvonne for her hard work and commitment to Urrbrae House and her support in the last three years. We are still looking forward to seeing Yvonne at events in the future but know that she has exciting outside projects planned and wish her well with them.



Matilda Waite with children:  
James and David. (1876)



Peter Waite with children: Lily,  
Elizabeth and Agnes. (1876)



Peter Waite: this portrait  
hangs in the Dining room.

Lynette Zeitz

## **A Garden Party at "Urrbrae" 1910**

*As taken from the Adelaide Chronicle (p54) Saturday 17 September 1910*

*"The grounds surrounding "Urrbrae", Mrs. Peter Waite's picturesque home at Mitcham, were a beautiful blaze of all kinds of lovely flowers on Friday, September 9, when a large number of friends drove out to a garden party. The afternoon was not by any means a desirable one for an outdoor function, as steady rain fell during most of the day, so that nearly all the guests, with the exception of a few who strolled round the garden in between the showers to admire the masses of monster violets, pansies, and roses, remained in the house, the time passing very pleasantly with merry chatter and listening to the tuneful airs played by a string band.*

*Mrs. Waite received in the drawing-room which was charmingly decorated with bowls of exquisite double pink peach blossom and roses. Peach blossom also adorned the large square hall. Tea was served in the drawing-room, and although the air was damp, it was perfectly mild and calm, so that little groups of friends congregated around the small tables set out in the verandah and enjoyed their tea whilst admiring the lovely green parks below. Pink and red ranunculi formed a graceful decoration on the tables.*

*The hostess was attired in a handsome black silk gown, with lace effects on the bodice. Miss Lily Waite wore a smart navy blue Russian coat and skirt and a blue tricorne hat. A cream cloth coat and skirt was worn by Miss Eva Waite...."*

As a regular volunteer at Urrbrae House I can just imagine the atmosphere and see the beautiful layout of the drawing room and verandah. I will think of the Waite's Garden Party at the next string ensemble event to be held in the drawing room. Perhaps you would like to attend a recreation of this garden party atmosphere at one of the FOUH events into the future? Minus the teeming rain, of course.

*Vicki Cheshire*

## **Friends of Urrbrae House Christmas Party**

Our joint Christmas Party, in conjunction with the Friends of the Waite Arboretum and the Friends of the Conservation Reserve, was held on Monday December 10<sup>th</sup>. We returned to our traditional format of holding the event in the house early in the evening. It is correct to say that attendance was down on earlier years. This may be explained by the change in the date. We usually hold our party on the first Monday in December but we changed to the second Monday because of work being conducted on the floors in Urrbrae House. The later date probably clashed with end of school events and other commitments that tend to increase as December progresses. The advantage was that we all had the opportunity to view the beautiful new floors in pristine condition.

Personally, the lower numbers gave me the opportunity to have lengthier chats with old friends and colleagues which was a great pleasure. Speeches were admirably short, but gave a clear outline of the activities of each group, giving plenty of time for socializing and catching up with members' news. I believe that all who did attend enjoyed the event and it was a good opportunity for all of us to wish ourselves and the house a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

*Yvonne Routledge*

### **F.O.U.H. Morning Tea March 5<sup>th</sup> 10.30**

You are invited to join members of the FOUH committee in the beautiful dining room at Urrbrae House for a warm welcome to our new members and some informal discussion about the ongoing support for Urrbrae House in 2013.

Lyn Mackay 0412 559 626  
Lynette Zeitz 8313 7425  
Yvonne Routledge 8338 2739  
RSVP's are requested.



## ***Looking after a quarter of a million sheep!***

In the Primary School Program at Urrbrae House 'A morning in 1892' those playing the role of Peter Waite amaze the children with the fact that by 1874 (only fifteen years after he had arrived in South Australia) Peter was overseeing 260,000 sheep (1).

In 1870 there were 42m sheep in Australia, mainly in Victoria and New South Wales (2) and 6m in South Australia in 1876 (3). The contribution of the properties managed by Peter Waite was thus a significant one.

When Peter Waite arrived in Australia in 1859 he worked with his brother James for three years before purchasing the adjoining Paratoo Station with Thomas Elder (1). Paratoo had 5,000 sheep on it.

An early challenge was the Great Drought of 1864 -1866.

'The heat was extreme. There were choking dust storms and water sources failed. Hot winds and lack of feed killed off great numbers of stock and native animals' (4).

Peter arranged for over half his sheep to be agisted to the south east of the Colony so these could be brought back in good condition when the drought broke in 1866 (1).

Many of the pastoralists lost up to ninety per cent of their stock (5). The drought did however result in improved management of station holdings with Peter Waite leading the way through the introduction of fencing, reduced stocking rates, the sinking of wells, scooping out dams and the control of dingoes and rabbits. It was this astute and careful management that allowed the rapid build up of the sheep numbers on the properties he managed in the next eight years.

In an article in The Register (p14) on 15 October 1913 on Peter Waite, 54 years after he came to South Australia, his contribution to the pastoral industry was reviewed:

*Mr. Waite was not slow to see the advantage of fenced paddocks, as against open country, and in 1863 commenced fencing. During 1870 and 1871 the enormous quantity of 265 tons of wire (imported from England) was erected. When Mr. Waite took charge of Beltana, Umberatana and Murnpeowie in 1869 they were practically unimproved, but between that date and 1890 no less a sum than £214,000 was spent in fencing and watering. Since then a further large amount has been expended in additional subdivision in sinking wells and in making dams and tanks, and a similar development has taken place on all properties in which Mr. Waite has been interested.*

*Some idea of the expenditure in money and labour under one head alone may be gathered from the fact that Mutooroo, Lilydale, Mulyungarie, Lake Charles, Murnpeowie, and Mount Lyndhurst are all vermin fenced, the total mileage being 1,001 miles. The result of this extensive system of improvement is shown by the fact that the number of sheep on Paratoo rose to 260,000 in the year 1874, while on the Beltana properties there were at a later date 383,000.*

Last year when Tom Brinkworth bought the 33,000 hectare Uardry Station, in southern New South Wales, with a carrying capacity of 25,000 sheep it took the total number of sheep owned by the Brinkworth family to around 350,000 (6). Their properties stretch from Mount Gambier in South Australia to large holdings along the Darling River in western NSW.

This further emphasises the significance of the Peter Waite's effort in managing a similar number of sheep without the travel and communication supports of today.

1. Morgan, Sir Edward (1972) 'The Waites'. Unpublished manuscript held in the Archives of the Urrbrae House Historic Precinct.
2. Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia No. 52, 1966 p 936
3. [http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/aghistorystock/beef/herd\\_expansion\\_and\\_distribution](http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/aghistorystock/beef/herd_expansion_and_distribution)
4. <http://history.flindersranges.com.au/living-with-the-land/water>
5. <http://www.southernaustralianhistory.com.au/overview.htm>
6. <http://www.abc.net.au/landline/content/2012/s3605404.htm>

Bill Wallace

*Note from the committee: this newsletter is sent to you via mail along with the AGM notice. Future newsletters and events notices will be sent via email as requested.*

## **Events to look forward to:**

**February 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> 7-8.15pm; & 24<sup>th</sup> 3-4.15pm** **Fringe concert by Emma Horwood** Acclaimed harpist and soprano Emma Horwood and Adelaide Symphony Orchestra principal percussionist Steven Peterka in an exploration of Celtic music across the ages. A stunning journey featuring music for harp, voice and percussion, from ancient musical roots to traditional folk songs and works by contemporary Celtic artists. Ticket details available at <http://www.adelaidefringe.com.au/fringetix/a-celtic-journey/c313a>

**February 25<sup>th</sup>** **Vivente Concert "Immortal & Beloved Letters" 5.30 for 6pm.** Featuring Minas Berberyán and Erna Berberyán on violin, Imants Larsens on viola and Cameron Waters on cello; guest narrator: Vic Rowe. Program includes Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's String Quartet No. 21 in D Major K. 575 nicknamed "The Violet" and Ludwig van Beethoven's String Quartet No. 11 in F minor Op. 95 nicknamed "Serioso".

Bookings enquiries: Vivente Music, call **8296 6851; 0401 021 065** or email [viventemusic@yahoo.com.au](mailto:viventemusic@yahoo.com.au)

**March 5<sup>th</sup>** **F.O.U.H. Morning Tea 10.30 - 11.30** Join members of the FOUH committee in the beautiful dining room at Urrbrae House for a warm welcome to our new members and some discussion about the ongoing support for Urrbrae House in 2013 in a relaxed, informal morning tea. Please bring your friends for a look at this magnificent dining room that was once a part of the home of Peter and Matilda Waite.

Lyn Mackay 0412 559 626; Lynette Zeitz 8313 7425; Yvonne Routledge 8338 2739.

RSVPs are requested for catering purposes.

**March 18<sup>th</sup>** **Twilight Concert 5.30 for 6pm Kegelstatt** Mitchell Berick - clarinet, Imants Larsens - viola, Mark Sandon - piano In translation from German, "Kegelstatt" is a playground for Skittles (an old European lawn game, a variety of bowling). Why Mozart named his famous trio for clarinet, viola and piano, K.498 - "Kegelstatt"? The answer to this and an expert interpretation of the work together with Bruch's trio op.83 will be heard from three superb Adelaide musicians. This is an event not to be missed!

Enquiries: email [peggy.rowe@bigpond.com](mailto:peggy.rowe@bigpond.com) or phone 8277 1426

**April 8<sup>th</sup>** **The Way Forward** a presentation of the FOUH- 5.30 – 7pm **ALL WELCOME**

**AGM** will be 15 mins of the evening.

5.30	Refreshments and social occasion
6.15	AGM business meeting
6.30	"The Way Forward" A presentation of the history, aims and future of the Friends of Urrbrae House
7.00	Close

**April 29<sup>th</sup>** **Vivente Concert 5.30 for 6pm** details to be advised

Bookings enquiries: Vivente Music, call **8296 6851; 0401 021 065** or email [viventemusic@yahoo.com.au](mailto:viventemusic@yahoo.com.au)

**May 7<sup>th</sup>** **Manager's Morning Tea "About Time" – It's History Month 10.30 – 11.30** A special tea during History Month incorporating historic photographs (pre-World War II) related to Urrbrae House and the Waite Agricultural Research Institute.

We welcome the following members who have recently joined as Friends:

Mr Stacy and Mrs Orr

You can view this newsletter online at:

<http://www.waite.adelaide.edu.au/urrbraehouse/friends/>