

Newsletter May 2016

The Friends of Urrbrae House

Urrbrae House, University of Adelaide, Waite Campus,

PMB#1 GLEN OSMOND, SA 5064

Tel 8313 7497

Editors: Vicki Cheshire and Sandra Morrison

President's Report

As I write this report I am reflecting on the "Open Door" held at Urrbrae House on Sunday afternoon, 1st May. As one of the volunteers who gave their time to speak with some of the 150 people who visited the house on a lovely Sunday afternoon, I heard a number of times, "I didn't know this was here!", or "I read about the open house in the history month magazine; "I saw it on Face Book"; "I was walking through the garden and saw the house was open"; "a friend told me about this amazing house"; the reasons that people came to visit.



As a Friend of Urrbrae House, do you talk about it to your friends? We hope to get some new members after the enthusiastic response we had from many of the visitors.

The next event on the calendar is the Annual General Meeting on Monday evening, May 30th, with pre-meeting refreshments at 5.30pm. The AGM will be held at 6.00pm, followed by Tony Kanellos, Cultural Collections Manager at the Botanic Gardens of South Australia and Curator of the Santos Museum of Economic Botany.

His talk will be on "Postcards from the Edge of the City". Tony will speak on a recent book and exhibition at the Santos Museum of Economic Botany, the publication of beautiful Edwardian-era (1901-1914) postcards; pocket sized memories of the much-loved Adelaide Botanic Garden. The evening will conclude at 7.15pm.

Have you ever wondered what the Friends Committee does? Consider nominating to be a Committee member. If you have secretarial skills or have talents that would be useful to a committee (which is everyone) we would love to hear from you. Come along to the AGM and support your Committee of the Friends of Urrbrae House. I can be contacted on 8277 1868 for information regarding Friends of Urrbrae House.

Joy Middleton
President, Friends of Urrbrae House

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Monday 30 May, 5:30 – 7:15pm: Annual General Meeting followed by Guest speaker: Tony Kanellos
Postcards from the Edge of the City

Monday 6 June, 5.30 for 6.00pm: Vivente Twilight Concert



Twilight Concert, Monday 7th March 2016

“Mastery”

Elizabeth Layton and Konstantin Shamray

The first Friends of Urrbrae House Concert of 2016 was resplendent with the newly installed chandelier lighting in the Ballroom. The President, Joy Middleton asked the members attending to take some pride in ‘owning’ a little of the grandeur that this lighting contributes to the house as they were purchased using funds primarily raised at these concerts.

Although the weather was hot outside, the downstairs Ballroom remained cool enough for the capacity audience to enjoy the rarely heard Violin Sonata in C# minor by Pierre de Bréville.

Elizabeth Layton (Violin) and Konstantin Shamray (Piano) provided a spellbinding rendition that carefully balanced violin and piano. This challenging four-movement work allowed both performers to show their ‘Mastery’ of their instruments. The music was atmospheric and emotive, the audience being caught up in the melodies of joy and pathos throughout. The exuberant military style of the last movement left the audience momentarily breathless with admiration that soon spilled over to lengthy, resounding applause.

News that the musicians are working on a CD including this Violin Sonata is a promised treat that I will be on the lookout for!

The Friends of Urrbrae House thank Minas Berberyan (Vivente Music) for planning the year’s concerts and we thank all performers who support us.

Vicki Cheshire

A very successful 25 years of the Friends of Urrbrae House

On Sunday evening 17th April, a Silver Anniversary Cocktail Party celebrated twenty-five years since the inaugural meeting of the Friends of Urrbrae House. A delicious range of canapés with champagne and iced tea was enjoyed by over fifty past and current members.



As guests gathered in the Main Hall they were delighted by Rohmenka Vallance playing her harp in the minstrels’ gallery.

In welcoming guests, Bill Wallace paid tribute to several Foundation Members present on this occasion who had made a large contribution to the committee of the Friends of Urrbrae House.



Marion and Cedric Wells were very active in getting the Friends group established. Marion was the first President serving until 1995 and continuing on the committee until 1999.

The first event of the Friends, June 1991, was the launch of the book by Gladys Hogg entitled 'Peter Waite'. Gladys was on the inaugural committee and continued on to be President from 1998 - 2000. Guests at the 25th celebration were delighted that Gladys had travelled from Victor Harbor to join the celebration.



The first Treasurer was Vada Osborn who continued with this role until 2002 and has taken on the role again since 2013. In the interim, Lyn MacKay was treasurer for ten years.



Jo Prescott was present, her late husband John had lived in Urrbrae House as a youth and had a great passion for its conservation. He was President from 2004 – 2007 and served as Vice President for four years. The reminiscence of Jo as a snapshot of life at Urrbrae House, has been included on page 7.

Dr. Jennifer Gardner was also a valuable member of the committee in the early years before the establishment of the 'Friends of the Waite Arboretum'.

Yvonne Routledge spoke on the formation of the Friends group and the first fifteen years that coincided with her period as Curator of Urrbrae House. She gave particular credit to Professor Harold Woolhouse who, as Director of The Waite Agricultural Research Institute from 1990 – 1995, was very enthusiastic in his vision of an Urrbrae House Historic Precinct to develop closer links with the local and broader community.



Dr. Bill Wallace, Lynette Zeitz, Professor Mike Keller and Yvonne Routledge

Lynette Zeitz, Manager of the Urrbrae Historic Precinct since 2008, spoke of recent major projects supported by the fundraising events of the Friends of Urrbrae House. The restoration of an 1892 era bedroom as used by twelve year old Eva Waite and the recent renovation of the Ballroom were two projects viewed by the assembled guests.

Professor Mike Keller, recently appointed as Dean of Waite, was a special guest. As Head of the School of Agriculture, Food and Wine, which the Urrbrae House Precinct is now part of, Professor Keller spoke of his vision for a greater participation of staff on the Waite Campus in the cultural and social activities of Urrbrae House. He was also keen to increase the awareness of the local and wider community of Adelaide to the beauty and historic significance of Urrbrae House and its surrounds.

Bill Wallace



Peggy Rowe and Dr. Max Tate

Dr. Colin Jenner, Lyn MacKay and Martin Hamilton-Smith



Lynette Zeitz and Margaret Neate



Present Committee Members welcomed guests and served the refreshments.

Allan and Louise



Louise, Ramute and Vicki



Annual General Meeting

Friends of Urrbrae House Monday 30th May

5.30 pm: complimentary refreshments served in the Main Hall

6.00 pm: Annual General Meeting

Minutes from previous AGM and financial statement for 2015 will be available from 5.00pm.

6.15 pm: Guest speaker: Tony Kanellos

Postcards from the Edge of the City

Santos Museum of Economy Botany, Adelaide Botanic Garden

Tony Kanellos is the Cultural Collections Manager at the Botanic Gardens of South Australia and Curator of the Santos Museum of Economic Botany.

Tony will speak on a recent book and exhibition at the Santos Museum of Economic Botany, the publication of beautiful Edwardian-era (1901-1914) postcards; pocket sized memories of the much-loved Adelaide Botanic Garden. The historic images on the postcards offer unique representations of the Garden while the hand-written messages on the back provide a glimpse into everyday life from 100 years ago.

All welcome. No bookings necessary.

Twilight Concert ***Monday 2 May***

Once again we enjoyed a marvelous concert in the Ballroom of Urrbrae House. The first part was the performance of the Sonata No 2 for violin and piano in A Major op.100 of Johannes Brahms by Alison Heike (violin) and Michael Ierace (piano). The performance was exquisite in beauty and clarity.



Brahms was one of the greatest symphonic composers of the 19th Century. In 1886 he settled in Vienna and during his life was very influenced by Clara Schuman. In August 1886, while on vacation, he felt so refreshed and musically invigorated that he composed three of his most beloved Chamber works in just a couple of days. With this Sonata, he was following in the footsteps of Mozart and Beethoven, giving the keyboard top billing.

The second part of the concert was the performance of the Piano Quartet No 1 in G minor, K478, by Wolfgang Mozart. For this Michael and Alison were joined by Imants Larsen (viola) and Ewen Bramble (cello). It was an unforgettable performance.

Mozart was very much influenced by his father Leopold while living with him and his sister in Salzburg. However he decided to move and live permanently in Vienna in 1781. Here he was an independent musician, deciding to teach, compose, and give concerts. He produced most of his major works in the ten years before his death in 1791. He composed this Piano Quartet in 1785, his first in the Chamber Music Repertoire.

We thank all the musicians for giving us such a delightful concert.

Hetty Cater

Manager's Musings **Celebrating Peter Waite's Birthday**

It seems very fitting to be writing these musings on the 9th May as Peter Waite was born on this day in 1834. I am sure that no-one at that time could have imagined what an impact he would have on the development of agricultural science in Australia and across the world.

The University has been celebrating Peter Waite's birth and legacy in a couple of unique ways on the Waite Campus in the past few days. Firstly, last Friday the Waite Research Institute hosted the sixth annual Peter Waite Day on the lawns of Urrbrae House. It was a wonderful celebration of the uniqueness of our co-located research precinct and the sense of community that exists amongst the campus partner organisations. The celebrations included what is now a lively annual bocce competition.

On the 9th May, Urrbrae House treated staff and students on campus to a free lunch-time concert "A Celebration in Song" by acclaimed harpist and soprano, Emma Horwood. The positive response to the concert amongst students was especially pleasing and there are plans to develop further lunch-time concerts on the campus later this year.

Lynette Zeitz

Manager, Urrbrae House Historic Precinct
The University of Adelaide - Waite Campus
9 May 2016

Peter Waite – choosing good people to assist you.

Peter Waite's daughter Lily once said that her father never did anything that he could get someone else to do. He had the ability to pick men and that more important quality of getting them to do what he wanted without rancor. ⁽¹⁾

Two such valuable men to Peter Waite, in his pastoral pursuit, were Christopher Wade and Andrew Smith.

Christopher Wade was an Irish immigrant who had invested money earned on the Victorian gold fields in horse and bullock team and carried out well sinking and carting for James Deas Waite. James was a brother of Peter, and was tragically drowned in March 1863 while attempting to cross a ford on horseback. ⁽¹⁾

Following the death of his brother, Peter engaged Christopher Wade to manage Paratoo and Pandappa Stations. When the big drought of 1864-1866 devastated the northern areas of South Australia, Christopher was given the task of walking 12,000 sheep to Penola in the south-east of the state where



arrangements were made for their agistment. When the drought finally broke, Wade returned with a considerably increased flock. Without such a bold manoeuvre the drought would have been ruinous. ⁽²⁾

After the drought Peter Waite and Thomas Elder greatly expanded the number of their pastoral leases. Peter was familiar with the type of country from his earliest days in South Australia and was able to direct its management through able men like Christopher Wade and Andrew Smith.

Andrew Smith, another Scot arrived in Western Australia in 1875, going to South Australia a few years later and gaining employment with Peter Waite at Paratoo Station. In 1887 Andrew was appointed general manager of

Mutooroo, a position he held until his death in 1924.

In 1919 Ross and Keith Smith, sons of Andrew, made the first flight from London to Australia in their Vickers Vimy aircraft taking 27 days and 20 hours. The challenge had been set by the Australian Prime Minister Billy Hughes with a prize of £10,000 to be awarded for the first machine to fly from London to Australia in 30 days or less.



'Rufus' writing in the Register ⁽³⁾ following the death of their father wrote:

'I once visited the office of the veteran pastoralist, Peter Waite and saw him, pointer in hand, before a large map studying the routes and landing places in connection with the epic flight made by Ross and Keith Smith, the sons of Andrew. He said in his quiet, definite way, that he was always certain that Ross and Keith would succeed because "they are sons of Andrew." I drew Mr. Waite on to say something in regard to the father of the two hero aviators, and I cannot do better than quote his own words, published at the time. "Some of the greatest work in this State has been done by Andrew Smith. He arrived at Paratoo in 1879, proceeded to Mutooroo, and has built up, improved, and converted a waterless region into a productive wool country. Last year 129,000 sheep were shorn on the run."

Peter Waite continued:

"Andrew Smith has been everything on the run up to general manager. When I told him I was going to appoint him manager of Mutooroo he was very bashful. I told him I was satisfied, and, in giving him advice, said we had nobody to follow, but had to hit out on our own. My parting shot to him was, 'and if you don't make any mistakes you'll get the sack. My point is that a man learns by his mistakes, and unless he makes mistakes he never does anything'".

Bill Wallace

Acknowledgements:

Photographs - State Library of South Australia.

(1) Morgan, James Waite (2011) The Premier and the Pastoralist.

(2) Hogg, Gladys (1991) Peter Waite: The story of his life and times.

(3) The Register (p 9) 20 November 1924

<http://oa.anu.edu.au/obituary/smith-andrew-921>

Professor James Arthur Prescott and Urrbrae House

I first started going to Urrbrae House in about 1940. Perhaps some of you are of sufficient long standing to have known my father-in-law Professor James Arthur Prescott, the second Director of the Waite Agricultural Research Institute.

When the first Director Professor A.E.V. Richardson left, Professor Prescott was appointed Director, and consequently was expected to live in Urrbrae House.

When the family of Professor James, his wife, Elsie, and son John Russel, (Named as a tribute to Sir John Russell of Rothamsted Agricultural College, England) moved into the house it was still very much in its original condition, and Professor Prescott was determined that it should be kept as a historic building and nothing should be altered.

The family spent much of their leisure time in the small room now devoted to History, which was easy to heat in winter. Their cooking was done on a small gas stove in the Butler's Pantry. The rest of the house was virtually un-used except for their large bedroom, the smaller near-by bedroom for John, and the near-by bathroom. The large drawing room they furnished but did not often use. There were still servant's quarters adjoining, I believe, and son John studied in a small room which I cannot now be sure of identifying.

After John and I became engaged and John went to a position in Melbourne University his parents asked me if I would like to join them for a meal on Thursdays after finishing work – (I was a Technical Research Assistant in the Department of Agronomy) and of course I accepted the invitation. The next Christmas I decided to “show off” by making them a Christmas cake, but when it was ready to cook the Gas Company went on strike and I could neither cook it at my parents' house nor in the stove at Urrbrae House! But in the big original kitchen there were two wood stoves and I had the temerity to suggest to my future father-in-law-to-be obliged me by lighting a fire in one of these and tending to it! What a wonderfully kind man he was.

Professor Prescott's stewardship of the House meant that it was no wonder that his son John, was also interested in preserving the House.* On our return to Adelaide after many years we were shocked that this was not something that some later people held as important. Renovations had damaged historic features, the past and present Friends are succeeding in restoring the balance. I would love to be able to see a wood stove in the old kitchen!

Josephine Prescott.

*Prof. John Prescott, Friends of Urrbrae House President 2004 – 2007 and served as Vice President for four years.

We welcome the following new members.

Professor Mike Keller
Rosemary McKay
Peter & Alison McWilliams
Reece Perry
Allan & Laurie Perryman

Membership Renewal

Thank you to those who have already renewed your membership to the Friends of Urrbrae House for 2016.

If you are unable to continue as a member or have any queries contact Bill Wallace.

billwallace01@gmail.com.au or telephone 8332 6495

To access previous FOUH newsletters please use the link below:
<http://www.adelaide.edu.au/waite-historic/friends/urrbraehouse/newsletters/>