



Newsletter September 2021

The Friends of Urrbrae House

Urrbrae House, The University of Adelaide- Waite Campus,

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President's report



Lyn Mackay in the Library
Photograph courtesy of Noel Fisher

It is with great pleasure I have re-joined the Friends of Urrbrae House (FOUH) Committee. It has been a number of years since I previously held the office of Treasurer but returning to the Committee feels like I've come home.

My new role now as President of the Friends will come with its challenges especially in our Covid-19 affected world. Restrictions in many areas will have to be adhered to. However, I'm sure together with the whole Committee, we will be able to reinvigorate our program of events and welcome new visitors to the house. We are so looking forward to restarting our Twilight concerts even with reduced audience numbers. Plans are also in

place to create new projects and different types of events to take us into a new era.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank all of our members for their continuing support and for renewing their memberships even though our program of events has been severely impacted in the last 18 months.

Lyn Mackay
President

Introducing the Friends of Urrbrae House Committee 2021/2022

The positions on the FOUH Committee are held by:

President:	Lyn Mackay
Vice President:	Joy Middleton
Secretary:	Pauline Adams
Treasurer:	Vada Osborn
Newsletter Editor:	Sandra Pearce

Other Committee Members: Hetty Cater*, Louise Green, Margaret Neate, Ramute Stankevicius, Bill Wallace, Allan Woodman, with a warm welcome to new Committee members Shelley Pezy and Sue Rogers.

Ex Officio: Lynette Zeitz (Manager, Urrbrae House Historic Precinct)

** Note as of 1 September: Hetty Cater has now resigned from the Committee and we thank her for her work especially in supporting our Twilight concert events.*

Covid-19 restrictions: Impact on FOUH events

“Night Songs” Twilight Concert

Clara Serena Display Launch

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the Friends of Urrbrae House in conjunction with Vivente Music Twilight concert originally scheduled for Monday, 2 August 2021 was postponed until Monday, 18 October at 5.30pm. Anyone who has already purchased a ticket for the concert through Trybooking has automatically had their ticket transferred to 18 October. We are very grateful to musicians Yundi Yuan (piano), Joshua Oates (oboe) and Minas Berberyan (concert organiser from Vivente Music) for their help and willingness to reschedule the concert.

The launch of a display about Clara Serena (see related story on page 6) scheduled for late August has been postponed until late spring (date to be advised) when it is hoped that an easing of restrictions will allow relatives of Clara and Roy Mellish who live interstate to attend the event.

Annual General Meeting 2021

The Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Urrbrae House was held on 27 April 2021. In the absence of the (retiring) President, Bill Wallace, Vice President Joy Middleton presented the President's report. Joy thanked and acknowledged Bill Wallace for his invaluable service to the Friends during his term as President.

Bill's report (below) noted some of the great achievements and projects over 30 years of the Friends of Urrbrae House Committee fundraising and the support of the members in these endeavours.

30th Anniversary of the formation of the Friends of Urrbrae House

Rather than report on events in 2019 and the limited program in 2020 due to COVID, I have chosen to review the past 30 years of the Friends of Urrbrae House, the inaugural meeting of which was held on 17th April 1991.

On this occasion of our 30th anniversary we should acknowledge the establishment of the Waite Historic Precinct in 1991 by Professor Harold Woolhouse, then Director of the Waite Agricultural Research Institute, and his encouragement of a Friends of Urrbrae House.

With an average membership in recent years of 100 (comprising family and individual memberships) we have the support of current and former staff on the Waite Campus as well as those in the community who appreciate the significance of Urrbrae House and its preservation. All acknowledge the historic bequest of Peter Waite of his home and estate to the University of Adelaide and the people of South Australia.

Working with the Managers of the Waite Historic Precinct, initially Yvonne Routledge and currently Lynette Zeitz, the committee has sought to raise funds in support of restoration of Urrbrae House as well as organize functions in the House for Friends to enjoy.

The main restoration projects that have been undertaken include:

- ❖ *Conservation of the original invitations to Peter and Matilda Waite for the Federation Celebrations;*
- ❖ *Restoration of the Ballroom including Roman blinds and chandeliers;*
- ❖ *Conservation and restoration of the Main Hall Mantle Clock;*
- ❖ *Restoration of 1892 Children's Bedroom;*



Servants' Bell System



The Ballroom before and after restoration



Colin Jenner, Elma Lippett and Bill Wallace at the 2009 FOUH Bush Dance

- ❖ Conservation and framing of the *Mary Queen of Scots* [Harriette Steele] Tapestry donated by Susan Dutch on behalf of the Andrewartha family;
- ❖ Replacing leather on the chairs in the Dining Room;
- ❖ Restoration work in the former Morning Room, developing and implementing the Peter Waite Exhibition, a permanent exhibition on the history and restoration of the House opened in 1994;
- ❖ Restoration of the bell system including Leclanché battery cells and Annunciator; and
- ❖ Conservation of Drawing room Curtains.

The most successful and continuing event that has been presented by the Friends is the Twilight Concerts and for these we are most indebted to Minas Berberyán and Vivente Music for the very high calibre of musicians including colleagues of Minas in the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra.

The restoration of the Ballroom and donation of a Grand Piano by Margaret Neate has allowed for a regular audience of 90 patrons and our main source of income in recent years. Minas and Vivente Music have been presenting concerts in Urrbrae House since 2005.

Other functions for the Friends have included choral concerts, a bridge morning, Ceilidh, Bush Dance and Colonial Dance.

From memberships and profits from functions the Friends of Urrbrae House have contributed over \$120,000 on items of conservation and expenditure on The House.

I would like to acknowledge five of the earlier Presidents who made great contributions to Urrbrae House: Marion Wells (Gt Granddaughter of Peter Waite), Gillian Robertson, Gladys Hogg, Professor John Prescott and Elma Lippett.

Bill Wallace
Retiring President

Award of Honorary Life Membership – Vada Osborn

In recognition of her many years of outstanding contributions to the organisation, Vada Osborn was awarded an Honorary Life Membership to the Friends of Urrbrae House at this year's AGM. Vada is a Foundation Member of the Friends. From 1991 she served as Treasurer for the first twelve years of the organisation and has resumed this role for the past eight years.

The Committee has greatly appreciated her financial expertise, advice on the current financial situation and her dedication in ensuring that the overall finances are thoroughly documented and audited. Vada is also one of those quiet, hard-working Committee members who never seeks the limelight but without whom the Friends Committee would not be able to function.



Vice President Joy Middleton presenting Vada Osborn with her Life Member certificate and gift of thanks

Annual General Meeting Guest Speaker – Professor Martin Cole

“The Future of Food” Talk

I was delighted to be able to introduce our Guest Speaker, Professor Martin Cole, Head of School, Agriculture, Food and Wine at the University of Adelaide.



Lyn Mackay and Professor Martin Cole

Professor Cole was previously Deputy Director of CSIRO Agriculture and Food. He has also held positions as Director of the US National Center for Food Safety and Technology, a board member of Food Standards Australia New Zealand and Chief Scientific Adviser of v2 food, an Australian based producer of plant-based meat substitutes, a partnership between CSIRO and the food industry.

Professor Cole's talk focused on the importance of food security in the 21st century, and agricultural, manufacturing and consumer options that might ensure a better future for our planet. Issues discussed by Professor Cole included the potential breakdown of critical systems on multiple fronts – due to global pandemics, climate change and rising hunger – each of these challenges tied to and impacting on a fragile food system. Food systems' transformation requires new

and better solutions; and Professor Cole outlined acceleration and transformations of sustainable food systems using new technologies as the way forward.

Professor Martin Cole's presentation was thought provoking giving us a new insight to the future of food production.

**Lyn Mackay
President**

Together in Music

Clara Serena Kleinschmidt was born in Lobethal in 1890 and supported by Peter Waite and family for studies at the Elder Conservatorium in Adelaide and Royal College of Music in London. She proceeded to gain great distinction for her operatic singing in the UK and leading Concert Halls in Europe. Her accompanist was the gifted pianist Roy Mellish who performed entirely from memory.



In 1917 when Clara and Roy married they were disappointed not to have the approval of Peter Waite.

After Clara's career in Europe, she and Roy returned to Adelaide to enjoy being with their families. Roy died in 1970 and Clara in 1972. Their ashes were placed in the Centennial Park Cemetery.

In 1995, Mary McLeod (a niece of Roy) and Penny Bentley (another family member) arranged for the ashes to be transferred to the Rose Garden at Urrbrae House with two dedicated rose bushes. A memorial plaque was placed adjacent.



Margaret Neate, Mary McLeod and Bill Wallace inspecting the plaque.



Allan Woodman

Recently, Margaret Neate drew the attention of the Committee of the Friends of Urrbrae House to the deterioration in the condition of the plaque.

The Committee agreed to have a replacement plaque made. Allan Woodman oversaw the arrangements for this with Tillet Memorials.

Bill Wallace

Manager's Musings

Pivoting through challenging times

I think we are all now very accustomed to the fact that circumstances and plans can change very rapidly in the continuing Covid-19 pandemic. I would like to thank staff, volunteers, Friends, University colleagues and the wider community for their understanding when activities have to be changed, postponed and sometimes cancelled due to changed Covid-Safe restrictions and lockdowns. I have been very impressed with and grateful for everyone's flexibility and understanding over the past few months.

While Urrbrae House is part of the University of Adelaide, we are also an accredited museum which means that the Urrbrae House Historic Precinct has its own Covid-Safe plan lodged with the SA Government. Currently, as an indoor public space, masks must be worn inside Urrbrae House and everyone must complete their Covid-Safe Check-In on arrival.

30 Years of the Friends of Urrbrae House

This year marks the 30th Anniversary of the Friends of Urrbrae House. While we have not been able to hold the sort of celebrations to mark this occasion that we would have liked, I want to particularly acknowledge the contribution that the Presidents and all FOUH Committee members have made to Urrbrae House over that time.

As Dr Bill Wallace finished his latest term as President in April, I want to thank Bill for his commitment and dedication to supporting Urrbrae House since he first became President of the Friends in 2008. He has been an inspiration to many of us and incredibly generous with his time for which we are very grateful.



Past Presidents of the Friends of Urrbrae House in 2011.
Front row: Yvonne Routledge, Elma Lippett, Marion Wells, Gladys Hogg (with University volunteer patron, Lindsay McWha)
Back row: Dr Bill Wallace, (with University of Adelaide Vice-Chancellor, Professor James McWha), Professor John Prescott

Move of the reconstructed Gatehouse/The Lodge (built c. 1883-1884)

As reported in the last newsletter, the State Government is taking responsibility for relocating the heritage-listed Gatehouse (originally known as the Lodge) which was slated for demolition as part of the widening of the intersection of Cross and Fullarton Roads. The Gatehouse will now be dismantled and rebuilt off Claremont Avenue near Urrbrae House, just to the west of the Labyrinth. Dr Kate Delaporte, Curator of the Waite Arboretum, University representatives and myself have been involved in meetings with Department of Infrastructure and Transport representatives and contracted firms to provide input into the project planning and design of the relocated Gatehouse. A good overview of the project development to date can be found in the online *In Daily* news article dated 19 August 2021: See <https://indaily.com.au/news/2021/08/19/modern-new-look-for-historic-urrbrae-gatehouse>

New Urrbrae House Co-ordinator: Kathryn Pearson

In April 2021 we said good-bye to Barbara Wills who had filled in the role of Urrbrae House Co-ordinator on a short-term contract basis following the retirement of Amanda Jackson in August 2019. I am very grateful to Barbara for her help and support to our volunteers during especially demanding times in 2020.

I am delighted to announce that after a couple of months of having no-one in the role of Co-ordinator, in June we were able to recruit Kathryn Pearson from within University to the now continuing position of Urrbrae House Co-ordinator. Kathryn has previously worked in the Medical School and Adelaide Health Simulation within the University, and has years of community experience with theatre companies around Adelaide. Kathryn's position is part-time (0.7 EFT) and she will be in the office on Monday, Tuesday (half day only), Wednesday and Thursday. Her telephone number is 83137497 and her email is urrbraehouse@adelaide.edu.au



Kathryn Pearson

House tours and opening hours

During winter we have continued our free small group (up to 10 people) tours of Urrbrae House on Mondays and Tuesdays, and the first Sunday of the month. Bookings for all of our tours can be made via Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/o/urrbrae-house-11204435850> In addition, Urrbrae House has enabled general public viewing of the upper level public rooms on Tuesdays and Thursdays 11am-3pm. No bookings are required to come into Urrbrae House during these times but room capacity limits must be observed.

SA History Festival May 2021

It was wonderful to be able to take part in the South Australian History Festival. During May we hosted an art inspired by history exhibition entitled “Echoes: Six visual artists respond to the rich history of Urrbrae House” and welcomed over 600 visitors to the exhibition. I would like to thank the visual artists who contributed to the exhibition with such a diverse and beautiful range of works: Michelle Driver, Yasmin Grass, Bruce Nuske, Abram Phillips, Maureen Prichard and Julie Strawinski. In particular I want to acknowledge Julie’s hard work in curating the exhibition. I would also like to publicly thank Julian Tremayne from the University Library for his assistance in hanging the exhibition and Greg Mackie, OAM, Chief Executive Officer of the History Trust of South Australia for officially launching the exhibition on 2 May 2021. To our ten volunteers (Allan, Bianca, Jen, Joy, Lyn, Maddy, Marylou, Natalie, Ramute and Steve) who welcomed visitors during the exhibition – many thanks as I could not have run the exhibition program without you.



Lynette Zeitz and Julie Strawinski



Untitled by Ruth Tuck

Artworks on display in the Drawing Room and downstairs Hallway
We now have two works by South Australian artist, Ruth Tuck OAM (1914-2008) on display in the Drawing Room. The large untitled floral work (pictured) was gifted to Urrbrae House by the artist. A smaller work entitled “Trees at the Waite Institute” (1948) was painted by the artist when her children attended the Netherby Kindergarten. The painting was gifted to the Waite Arboretum in 1993.

Also now on view in the Drawing Room are three framed reproductions of the 1890 architects’ plans for the current Urrbrae House by C. H. Marryat and

E. G. Woods. These have previously been located in the downstairs Hallway where we have now hung historic photographs of the Waite Agricultural Research Institute.



Urrbrae House and the
Waite Agricultural Research Institute in 1938

“First Foods” (Indigenous Plant and Knowledge) Garden near the Battery House

During August there has been substantial progress on the landscaping for this new garden which will feature Australian First Food plants and be wheelchair accessible. The development of a collection of plants used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as sources of food has been made possible thanks to funding from the Yitpi Foundation. In addition, to being open for the general public to enjoy, the garden will also serve as a research garden within the School of Agriculture, Food and Wine.



The new garden is developing

Restructuring and further staff losses at the University of Adelaide

The University of Adelaide is currently considering a number of options to address the financial challenges facing the higher education sector. These options include a major restructure of the University's five faculties into three larger faculties, and targeted job cuts. Currently about 130 professional staff and 70 academic positions are anticipated to be lost in the next year.

Lynette Zeitz
Manager, Urrbrae House Historic Precinct

Urrbrae House on social media

Have you checked out Urrbrae House on Instagram and Facebook? It is a great way to see what's happening around the historic precinct each week. Lynette regularly posts on a wide range of topics including brief histories of roses (see her choice of a "Rose of the Week"), features on Urrbrae House collection items, the volunteer flower arrangers' weekly displays, event updates, stories from the past, University activities and just some inspirational photographs capturing the beauty of our unique site.

FOLLOW the Urrbrae House Historic Precinct on Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/urrbraehouse> or
LIKE the Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/urrbraehouse>

To access previous Friends of Urrbrae House Newsletters please use the link below:
<https://www.adelaide.edu.au/waite-historic/friends/urrbraehouse/newsletters>