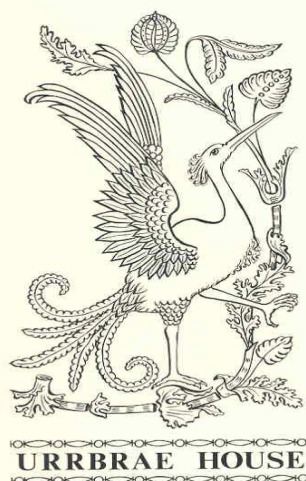


Newsletter February 2014



The Friends of Urrbrae House

Urrbrae House, University of Adelaide, Waite Campus, PMB#1 GLEN OSMOND, SA 5064. Tel 8313 7497

Editor Vicki Cheshire

An exciting year ahead at Urrbrae House

Whilst Urrbrae House is closed for repairs at the moment work is still going on in the background. University Staff are hard at work in their offices and The Friends of Urrbrae House Committee is actively planning the year's events and fundraising programs. We are liaising with the management at Urrbrae House, other Friends groups and Vivente Music to present you with a full and varied year ahead. Please keep an eye out for some interesting opportunities to support Urrbrae House and have some fun and entertainment with us this year.

2014 Membership forms are included with this newsletter, we hope you will continue as Friends of Urrbrae House and make your contribution promptly. We endeavour to keep the costs of functions as low as possible but expenses increasingly eat into our profits. Should you have friends or family who would like to also become members please ask for a form at the next event or they can be found online at:

https://waite.adelaide.edu.au/urrbraehouse/friends/FOUH_Membership_Application_Form.pdf

Apart from fulfilling our obligations to members and the interests of Urrbrae House, the FOUH committee is always looking to expand its membership. More members mean more people with an interest and love for this magnificent mansion that was built in 1891, the Waite Family's legacy to the university of Adelaide and

Agricultural Science in Australia. More members means more people attending functions and keeping the house active and alive! One thing you can do to help is to recommend us to others.

Should you have any enquiries you can contact the president Bill Wallace on 8332 6495 or the vice president Vicki Cheshire on 8370 0032.

Vicki Cheshire

Dates for your diary

**March 24th Twilight Concert FOUH *Fairy Tales*
(5.30 for 6)**

May 5th Talk – Douglas Mawson (5.30 for 6)

May 12th Book Launch* "The Waite: a social and scientific history of the Waite Agricultural Research Institute" (4-6)

May 19th Twilight Concert Vivente TBA (5.30 for 6)

June 8th Film 'Grace of Monaco' Capri Theatre
(3.00 for 3:45pm)

August 17th Colonial Tea Dance TBA

Manager's Musings

The scaffolding is up and preliminary investigation work along the northern balcony and roof of Urrbrae House has started. Unfortunately but not surprisingly, the extreme temperatures of the last month have caused some delays in the restoration work being undertaken. These delays may impact on how soon we can re-open the house to visitors but we are liaising closely with Campus Services to work around the various logistics as they arise.



Restoration work on the northern side of Urrbrae House



“Waste Not” Exhibition

There will, however, be public access to Urrbrae House during the Basketry SA exhibition sponsored by the Friends of the Waite Arboretum which is being set up today as I write these musings. The “Waste Not” Exhibition, which opens on Saturday, 15 February and goes until Sunday, 23 February, is part of the Adelaide Fringe activities. The exhibition is open daily from 10.30am – 4.00pm and is free to the public. Come along and see some incredible artistry and unique creations.

Baskets for sale during the "Waste Not" exhibition

Waite Centenary Dinner

The gardens of Urrbrae House were the perfect backdrop for the Vice-Chancellor's Waite Centenary Dinner on 6 November last year. On a very warm evening over 180 guests celebrated the 100th anniversary of Peter Waite's decision to bequeath the Urrbrae estate to the University of Adelaide. Amongst the guests were Peter Waite's great-grandchildren, James Morgan, Peter Morgan and Marion Wells. The keynote speaker was John Kerin, a major contributor to the state's agricultural industry while long-time supporter of Urrbrae House, Keith Conlon was the Master of Ceremonies for the evening.



Keith Conlon talking to Marion Wells at the Waite Centenary Dinner
Photo courtesy of University Engagement Branch.

History Month “Open Doors” during SA History Festival

Urrbrae House will be open to the public to explore on Sunday, 4 May from 1.00pm-4.00pm as part of the “Open House Adelaide” weekend during the SA History Festival “About Time”. House maps will be available and Urrbrae House staff and volunteers will be on hand to answer questions. The University's Plant Accelerator on the Waite Campus will be open on the same morning from 10am-1pm so visitors can explore both the past and the future of the campus in one day.

We will have another “Open Door” afternoon at Urrbrae House on Sunday, 25 May from 1.00pm-4.00pm so that visitors who enjoy the house and gardens earlier in the month can encourage other family and friends to also visit.

Continued...

“The Waite: a social and scientific history of the Waite Agricultural Research Institute” – book launch

As some Friends are aware, I have been writing a new history of the Waite Agricultural Research Institute which focuses on developments since 1975 while linking these developments into the earlier history of the Waite and the lives of the people who have worked on the campus. I'm pleased to say that the new book is currently with the printers and will be officially launched at Urrbrae House on 12 May. More information can be found at <http://www.adelaide.edu.au/press/titles/waite/>

A small organisational name change - University Engagement Branch: Stakeholder Relations

Last year Urrbrae House, the Waite Arboretum and the Waite Conservation Reserve became part of the new University Engagement Branch in a section known as “Partnerships and Projects”. This week “Partnerships and Projects” had a name change and will be known as “Stakeholder Relations” in the future.

Lynette Zeitz

Friends Christmas Party

It was good to see a large group of Friends of Urrbrae House, The Waite Arboretum and Waite Conservation Reserve join together on Monday evening 2nd December. Refreshments arranged by members of the Committees of FOUH and FWA were enjoyed.



Volunteer Kate Currier helping with a smile

Joe Bennink (Manager of Community Engagement) was invited to speak to the group and took the opportunity to congratulate the Friends groups on the broad range of functions and projects undertaken in 2013. He thanked those involved with these.

We were sorry to learn that Joe would be retiring from the University in February. He introduced Leah Grantham who would be replacing him as well as Kate Robertson who had recently been appointed as Chief Engagement Officer for the University.

The evening concluded with carol singing in the drawing room; Alison Stephenson playing the piano.

Bill Wallace

Swing into Christmas with the Solstice Singers

On Friday evening 13th December, 80 Friends and other guests enjoyed a unique pre-Christmas concert in the Ballroom of Urrbrae House by the Solstice Singers.

The Solstice Singers, a group of eleven singers, are well known in Adelaide for their diverse repertoire in performances at a range of venues including Ayers House and a recent summer series of ‘Floating Melodies’ aboard Popeye on the River Torrens.



Their Urrbrae House program that was titled ‘Swing into Christmas’ comprised an interesting selection of Carols, the background to each explained by the Ian Boath, Musical Director of the Singers. Those presented were delighted to join in the singing of four well-known Christmas Carols.

Three young flautists: Anita Chaplin, Simone Koch, Cassandra Boath also took part in the program. Beautiful flower displays in the Ballroom, arranged by Allan Woodman, were much appreciated.

Bill Wallace

Department of Agricultural Biochemistry recalled

Dr Vernon Butt, formerly of the University of Oxford, was delighted again to meet with Gladys Hogg on a recent visit. Gladys was the Secretary of the Department of Agricultural Biochemistry at the Waite Agricultural Research Institute and personal assistant to the Head, Professor D.J.D Nicholas from 1977 until 1990.



Vernon, who is 91, first met Don Nicholas in 1940 at the University of Bristol when Don, as a student at Kings College, London, was transferred to Bristol because of the war.

Vernon came to the Department of Agricultural Biochemistry on sabbatical in 1986. The following year Gladys arranged a work exchange at Lady Margaret Hall in Oxford.

Since 1986, Vernon and his wife Glynne have made several more visits to Adelaide usually, as is the case this year, to coincide with the visit of the English cricket team.

Vernon visited Gladys at Victor Harbor where she is leading a full life in her retirement including active participation in the University of the Third Age.

Gladys was a member of the Committee of the Friends of Urrbrae House from 1994 – 2001 and President from 1998 – 2001. The book she published in 1991(updated 2004) on Peter Waite 1834-1922 ‘he story of his life and times’ is still well received by visitors to Urrbrae House.

Bill Wallace

Volunteer Profile – Anne Rabone

Anne Rabone started volunteering at Urrbrae House after the program Delta Dogs, a dog safety program for children in schools, came to an end. Using the internet she found volunteering opportunities within the Urrbrae precinct. Her commitments since then have widened to include playing numerous parts in the schools’ program, joining the friends of Urrbrae House and becoming a member of the committee. Anne has been a valuable participant in events such as the FOUH Twilight concerts, Teddy Bears’ picnic, An Afternoon with Mr. and Mrs. Waite, Dances, Picnics and has volunteered for the University of Adelaide’s Western Region Enterprise Day, just to name a few. She continues to volunteer with the Norwood Pageant (costume design and construction) and the Adelaide Fashion Festival.



Anne brings to Urrbrae House keen management and organizational skills from running successful businesses (DeLights and NeedleWorld) and tertiary qualifications in costume and clothing design. Anne’s love of dressmaking and costuming means that we all gasp with admiration when she turns up in her latest creation!

Most of all we appreciate her big smile, wit and humour, she often has us ‘in stitches’ with her witty repartee.

Vicki Cheshire

Peter Waite – putting experience as an ironmonger to use

As a young man Peter Waite served an apprenticeship as an ironmonger, working at one stage for James Miller at 70 Princess Street, Edinburgh.

The ironmonger

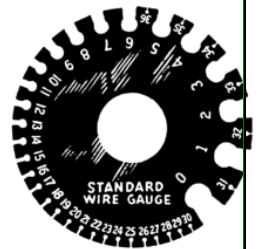
Historically, iron goods were fabricated by hand by skilled metalworkers who could design pieces for custom use, or manufacture generic products for sale. The ironmonger could potentially hold a very high social status in a community, because iron goods were so critical.

Peter Waite arrived in Australia in 1859 with Matilda his wife joining him at the Paratoo property in 1864. Following the severe drought of 1864 – 1866 it is not surprising that Peter, with his background in ironmongery, led the way in the introduction of wire fencing with metal posts to control the grazing of the sheep.

His initial order for wire in 1869 was 265 tons (imported from England), a portion of which was No. 6 and the balance No. 8. He was then of the opinion that a boundary fence required two No. 6 on top, four No. 8 below, and a division fence one No. 6 on top and four No. 8 below, with the strainers 100 yards apart and the posts 9 ft apart. (1)

He undertook various experiments, which he reviewed in 1916 (2):

"In 1889" continued Mr. Waite, "I was of opinion that a fence round my paddock of 134 acres at Urrbrae required to be six-barb wires and the posts 10 ft. apart. Fifteen years after this fence was erected I took out every alternate post leaving them 20 ft apart. Three years later, without restraining the wires, I again took out every alternate post, leaving the posts 40 ft apart. Further down the Glen Osmond and Glenelg road I put up about half a mile of six-barb wire fence, with posts 60 ft. apart, and the strainers 100 yards apart"



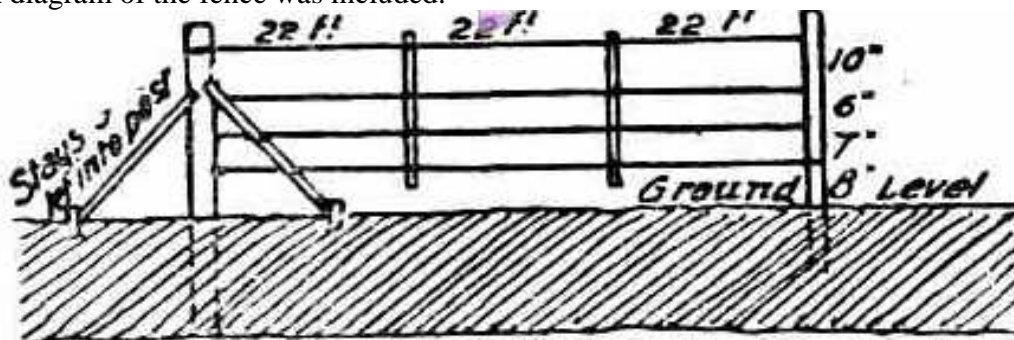
Peter Waite later patented a rigid special steel wire being offered for sale in 1897 as the 'Waite Special'. This was exhibited at a machinery display in West Australia in 1903 by Messrs. Elder, Shenton and Co., of Fremantle, who were the agents for the manufacturers (3).

The originator of the 'Waite's Special' was Mr. Peter Waite, one of the principal pastoralists of South Australia. It is manufactured in England under letters patent, and it is claimed for it that nothing more rigid can be obtained in Australia. With it wire of a smaller gauge, as compared with other wires, gives equally good results.

The material is also especially useful for dropper fences, four droppers of wood being used between each post, and under this system three-quarters of the posts required with softer wires are saved. "Waite's Special" is now used extensively in all the States of Australia, the well known Beltana Station, in South Australia which probably has an area of 6,000 square miles, being fenced entirely with it.

In a report in the Sydney Sunday Times in 1911(4) credit was given to Peter Waite as the designer of a four-wire fence which was as effective as a six-wire fence for the management of sheep.

A diagram of the fence was included.



A much bigger metal construction project undertaken by Peter Waite from 1877 was the development of steam driven excavation of large dams to collect rainwater.

Mr. Waite, from a long experience in sheep farming in the north, knew how essential it was to secure a large supply of water which, in the event of there being dry seasons, would be available for all the requirements of the station, and in order to ascertain the most efficient and expeditious manner of carrying out sinking operations he made a trip to the old country. At Leeds he paid a visit to the extensive steam plough works of Messrs. John Fowler & Co. He made known his mission to the members of the firm, and as the result he returned to the colony with a steam plough and scoops. The scoop was not all that could be desired. It was yet somewhat clumsy in construction, and although it performed its work fairly well it was evident that further improvements might with great advantage be made. Nothing daunted, Mr. Waite set to work, and in a comparatively short time sent home instructions to the Messrs. Fowler to construct a third scoop on improved principles suggested by himself. In due course this machine arrived in the colony, and was dispatched to Paratoo (5).

The apparatus is as simple as it is effective. Two locomotive engines of some 16 horse power nominal stand on opposite sides of the reservoir, and by means of a wire rope coiling itself round a drum placed horizontally under the boiler work first of all a plough weighing some four tons, introduced to tear up the ground to a depth of from eight to fourteen inches, and then an enormous scoop of about equal weight introduced to carry off the loosened earth (6).

For a cost of £9000 it was shown that a reservoir eighty yards square at the surface with a depth of twenty-four feet in the centre and capacity of seven million gallons could be excavated in six months. Normally a reservoir of similar capacity constructed manually with the assistance of bullock-scoops took about two years to build and cost up to £3000.

The Government took a great interest in the dam building project and in December 1878 the Hon Thomas Playford with the Engineer-in-Chief and Engineer of Waterworks inspected the dam building operation.

The depth of the dam when visited was 23 feet 9 inches, and afforded an excellent test of the capabilities of the machinery, for as the depth to which a dam can be sunk by means of bullocks is somewhere about 12 feet, the working of the plough and scoop at this greater depth is a clear proof of their value, more especially when we add that they are found to excavate quite as easily and as cheaply at the deeper as at the shallower level. In a country where evaporation is so great as it is in South Australia, say from 4 to 6 feet per annum, it will be at once realised how important is the gain from a greater depth of water, securing thereby possibly a three years' supply as against the one year's supply in the 12 foot dam, giving the added advantage of a longer time for chance of rains to refill; practically, in short, under ordinary circumstances making the water permanent (7)

In February 1883 the Commissioner of Crown Lands and several other Government Officials and people from Terowie including Mr Edwin Stephenson JP made a further tour of the current dam building activities. At lunch the Commissioner asked those present to honour the toast of 'Success to the enterprise.' He continued:

"The community was much indebted to the patriotic and energetic efforts made by Sir Thomas Elder and Mr. Waite in introducing machinery for the purposes of water conservation, and he could not allow that opportunity to pass without expressing, on behalf of the Government, and he thought also on behalf of those present, thanks to those gentlemen for what they had done in this direction. (Hear, hear.) The action they had taken had induced the Government to purchase the machinery which had been seen that day. He had had the pleasure last year of seeing some of the excavating machines in work at Paratoo, and he then saw the admirable uses to which they were put. He believed that with them the Government would be able to conquer the desert land in the northern parts of this colony". (5)

When Peter 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 he has been interested.

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.

Having prepared these dams Peter Waite was also keen to ensure they were used to best advantage by the sheep. He wrote:

“These holes should all have a good area of quick-growing trees planted round them, and the water should be pumped into troughs. The loss in letting sheep and cattle into the large holes is very great. Sheep will carry out with them about as much as they drink in addition to making the water to a certain extent filthy. The trees could be watered by the same appliances used for filling the tank and troughs, and they would in time prevent the scorching hot winds from having such an effect as they at present have, besides giving shelter to the stock when they come to water. It is miserable at present to see large bodies of sheep coming to water at one of these holes on a vast plain with no shelter whatever, and when a wind blows as it usually does in summer you can see nothing but a vast cloud of dust, causing the poor animals to drink double what they would have done had there been proper shelter. The injury to the wool is also a very serious matter”. (8)

This shows also the concern Peter had for the welfare of his animals.

References

- 1: Register (p14) 15.10. 1913
- 2: The Register (p11), 28.6.1916.
- 3: The West Australian (p10), 21.10 1903.
- 4: Sunday Times (Sydney) (p16), 2.7. 1911.
- 5: South Australian Advertiser (p6), 22.2.1883
- 6: South Australian Register (p4S), 28.12.1878
- 7: South Australian Advertiser (p 5), 24.12.1878
- 8: South Australian Register (p4), 18.5. 1878

Bill Wallace

The Friends of Urrbrae House Committee

Committee nominations are now open; there are vacancies for general members.

If you have an interest in the Waite Campus and/or Urrbrae House, have attended events here, been a helper or volunteer - please let us encourage you to apply to be on the committee.

The task is not onerous, with only five meetings each year and assistance with some functions. *New members are not asked to take on any of the administrative roles.*

Let me assure you that the present committee is comprised of people with excellent skills, who work harmoniously with respect, there's a true sense of camaraderie in which I am proud to take part.

Please contact

President: Bill Wallace on 8332 6495 or

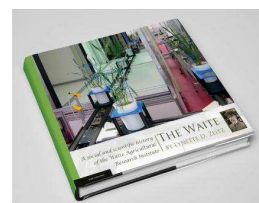
Vice president: Vicki Cheshire on 8370 0032

Vicki Cheshire



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Book Launch: THE WAITE

Our own Lynette Zeitz, Manager of the Urrbrae House Historic Precinct, has devoted much of the past few years to the writing of a book linking the more recent history of the Waite with its earlier history following Peter and Matilda Waite's gifts to the University of Adelaide of the Urrbrae estate (including Urrbrae House), the adjoining Claremont and Netherby estates, and funds that made possible the establishment of the Waite Agricultural Research Institute within the University.

These gifts remain one of the largest public benefactions in South Australia's history. Lynette's book *The Waite: a social and scientific history of the Waite Agricultural Research Institute* will be launched on the afternoon of **Monday, 12 May** at a ceremony on the lawns of Urrbrae House at a celebration for the whole Waite community, including the University and collocated partners.

Friends and supporters in the wider community are warmly invited to attend, in particular the various Friends and volunteer groups associated with the campus.

FOUH members are recommended to advise the University Engagement Branch, email:

peter.burdon@adelaide.edu.au of your intent to attend.

Events to look forward to:

Monday 24th March Twilight Concert *Fairy Tales* 5.30 for 6pm A recital in the magnificent drawing room by three of the Adelaide's most distinguished chamber musicians: Mitchell Berick – clarinet, Imants Larsens – viola, Michael Lerace – piano. The program will include the popular trio by neoclassical French composer Jean René Désiré Françaix and exquisite Märchenerzählungen (Fairy Tales) by R.Schumann.

NB Contact change: Booking enquiries to Bill Wallace Ph: **8332 6495** or email: billwallace01@gmail.com. Unless requested you will be told if seats are **not** available. Payment is to be made at the door upon arrival. **Bookings are essential as seats are limited;** as we usually have a waiting list, **please advise of cancellations.**

Sunday 4th May Urrbrae Open House* 1 to 4pm Urrbrae House will be open to the public to explore on Sunday, 4 May from 1.00pm-4.00pm as part of the "Open House Adelaide" weekend during the SA History Festival "About Time". House maps will be available and Urrbrae House staff and volunteers will be on hand to answer questions. The University's Plant Accelerator on the Waite Campus will be open on the same morning from 10am-1pm so visitors can explore both the past and the future of the campus in one day. Enquiries to Lynette Zeitz: 8313 0425.

Monday 5th May AGM and Guest Speakers 5:30 for 6pm Our guest speakers will be Mark Pharaoh, Head of the Mawson Centre at the SA Museum and Emma McEwin the great granddaughter of Sir Douglas Mawson. They will discuss the achievements of Mawson as a scientist and person. The FOUH AGM will take ten minutes; the talk will be inspiring and informational. All welcome.

Monday 12th May Book Launch* "*The Waite: a social and scientific history of the Waite Agricultural Research Institute*" 4 – 6pm on the Urrbrae House Lawns Author: Lynette Zeitz, manager Urrbrae House.

Monday 19th May Vivente Concert "*To be advised closer to the date*" 5.30 for 6pm
Booking enquiries: Vivente Music, call **8296 6851; 0401 021 065** or email viventemusic@yahoo.com.au

Sunday 25th May Open Door Afternoon at Urrbrae House* 1 to 4 pm Urrbrae House will be open to the public. House maps will be available and Urrbrae House staff and volunteers will be on hand to answer questions. Enquiries to Lynette Zeitz: 8313 0425.

Sunday 8th June Film Event "*Grace of Monaco*" 3.00 for 3.45pm seating In the historic (1941) Capri theatre 141 Goodwood Rd, Goodwood. The story of former Hollywood star Grace Kelly's marriage and life during a political dispute between Monaco's Prince Rainier III and France's Charles de Gaulle in the 1960's. Directed by Olivier Dahan, screenplay by Arash Amel. Starring Nicole Kidman as Grace Kelly, Tim Roth as Prince Rainier. The historic Wurlitzer Organ will be played at 3.45. This is a joint fundraising event for the Urrbrae House Precinct: FOUH and FOWA. **THIS WILL BE A FABULOUS AFTERNOON SO PLEASE ORGANIZE A GROUP BOOKING OF FAMILY & FRIENDS.** \$15.00 per ticket. Tickets will be available for purchase at FOUH events leading up to this date.

Booking enquiries to Bill Wallace Ph: **8332 6495**, email: billwallace01@gmail.com.

Monday 17th August Colonial Tea Dance Put this date in your diary! This very popular event is being repeated this year; arrange to bring a group and have a really fun afternoon. Please watch for the notice closer to the date.

**Event provided by University Engagement*

You can view this newsletter online at:
<http://www.waite.adelaide.edu.au/urrbraehouse/friends/>

**We welcome the following
new FOUH members:**

Barbara Jones