

## **Thematic History of the Mount Barker District**

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draft

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## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Background

Several investigations into the history and heritage of the Mount Barker District have been undertaken since the introduction of the legislative controls over state and local heritage places in 1979 and 1993.

A survey was undertaken for the District Council of Mount Barker by Hignett & Company in 1983. Stage 1 of the survey included a detailed history and chronology of the district from the 1830s to the 1970s. Themes are based on those set out in the *South Australian State Historic Preservation Plan: Historical Guidelines* (Susan Marsden, 1979). The survey identified 80 places within the survey area as potential State Heritage Places ('A'), and a further 67 places as potential Local Heritage Places ('B'). The report pre-dated the introduction of formal criteria for assessing local heritage significance under the *Development Act 1993*.

Also in 1983, heritage architect Paul Stark undertook a survey covering parts of the then District Council of Meadows since absorbed into the Mount Barker District Council area. The Meadows Heritage Survey was prepared for the then District Council of Meadows in July 1983, and includes the towns of Meadows, Echunga and Macclesfield. The report is based on extensive research and community consultation to identify places of historical, social, indigenous and environmental importance to inform future planning decisions. It includes a comprehensive historical overview of each region, and an inventory which ranks individual places and items in three categories; A, most significant to the region and possibly of importance to the State; B, of importance to the region; C, relevant to the region and worthy of recording.

In 2004 consultants *Heritage Online* (Anna Pope and Claire Booth) also included a comprehensive thematic history of the District Council of Mount Barker in their *District Council of Mount Barker District Wide Heritage Survey* undertaken for the Council. Like the Hignett report, this was based on the framework established in Susan Marsden's *Historical Guidelines*. Recommendations for State and Local Heritage listing were based on the criteria set out in s. 16 of the *Heritage Places Act 1993*, and s. 24 of the *Development Act 1993*, respectively. There are no formal criteria for Contributory Items set out under the *Development Act 1993*.

The report included historical analysis as part of the recommendation assessment reports for State, Local and Contributory places, and in the descriptions of the Historic (Conservation) Zones. The District Council of Mount Barker Heritage Plan Development Report (PAR), which was substantially based on the survey recommendations, plus some additional inclusions, was authorised on 11 October 2007. A total of 207 places were endorsed as Contributory Items.

*Heritage Online* also produced a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the Gawler Street commercial precinct for the District Council of Mount Barker in 2003, which contained recommendations for Contributory Items subsequently included in the 2004 report.

Historical information from the *Heritage Online*, Hignett & Company and Paul Stark reports has been incorporated and is acknowledged in the preparation of this thematic history.

More recent heritage surveys have used the now widely accepted *National Australian Historic Theme Framework*. The Framework was developed in 1998 and provides links between the different regional stories in Australia's history and the heritage places which help to illustrate, or demonstrate, that history. The framework also recognises that State and Local historic themes have also developed in parallel. It deals only with historic values, although it recognises that natural, social, scientific and aesthetic values may also reside in a place.

In summary, the thematic framework:

- provides a vital structured approach to local heritage survey work;

- guides both the survey work itself, as well as informing the assessment of values of individual places and groups of places arising from a survey;
- helps with understanding the specific history of places in a wider context, relating that specific history to broader historical themes in the local area, including whether such themes are more or less important, with many or few places related to the theme, and provide clues to the relative importance of specific places; and
- provides a safety net to ensure consideration of important themes that are not always obvious amongst the readily-found and most obvious population of heritage places.

This Thematic History uses the relevant themes and sub-themes of the Framework and explores how they relate to the local historical context and identifies how that has shaped the physical environment that exists today.

The following tasks have been undertaken in order to prepare the thematic history of the District Council of Mount Barker:

- Review the existing histories contained in the Hignett & Company, Paul Stark and *Heritage Online Surveys*;
- Source and review other published histories on the development of the district of Mount Barker;
- Prepare a revised brief thematic history of the Mount Barker district.

It is important to understand that this *Thematic History* is not intended as a complete chronological history that records the development of the Mount Barker district since its establishment. Further, the pre-settlement aboriginal history of the Mount Barker area does not form part of this brief thematic history.

## 1.2 Study Area

The study area covers the District Council of Mount Barker municipality, as it is defined at the current date. It encompasses a total land area of 595 square kilometres and supports a population (in 2018) of 35,545, mostly concentrated in the four largest towns.

The main township is Mount Barker itself, now a rapidly growing outer suburb accessible to Adelaide via the South East Freeway along with nearby Littlehampton and Nairne, and the tourist town of Hahndorf. Outside of the main population centres the district is predominantly rural, characterised by numerous smaller historic towns and villages, and farming areas located in the Mount Lofty Ranges.

The District includes the localities of Biggs Flat, Blakiston, Bradbury (part), Bridgewater (part), Brukunga, Bugle Ranges, Bull Creek (part), Callington (part), Chapel Hill, Dawesley, Dorset Vale (part), Echunga, Flaxley, Green Hills Range, Hahndorf (part), Harrogate, Hay Valley (part), Jupiter Creek, Kangarilla (part), Kanmantoo, Kuitpo (part), Littlehampton, Macclesfield (part), Meadows, Mount Barker, Mount Barker Junction, Mount Barker Springs, Mount Barker Summit, Mount Torrens (part), Mylor (part), Nairne, Oakbank (part), Paechtown, Paris Creek (part), Petwood, Prospect Hill (part), St Ives, Totness, Verdun (part) and Wistow<sup>1</sup>.

The highly significant historic town of Hahndorf has been the subject of numerous heritage investigations, and is a declared State Heritage Area.

<sup>1</sup> District Council of Mount Barker website accessed 8 December 2019 <https://profile.id.com.au/mount-barker/about?WebID=10>

## 2.0 Land and Settlement

### 2.1 Earliest inhabitants

The district was originally part of the traditional land of the Peramangk tribe, estimated to number between 300 and 600 people at the time of first European contact. Recent investigations by descendants of the indigenous inhabitants suggest that the numbers could have been much greater, with several thousand persons living in large, widely dispersed camps near the Mount Barker summit, Mount Crawford, Eden Valley and Springton. The traditional range of the Peramangk covered a large wedge-shaped area extending about 100km from Myponga in the south to Gawler in the north, north-east about 50km to the vicinity of Towitta and south-west from the Willunga escarpment 120kms through Kanmantoo, Strathalbyn and Myponga<sup>2</sup>.

Their name for the district was recorded by Teichelmann and Schurmann as 'Womma Mu Kurta', meaning 'Mountain and Plain'. Captain Francis Davison, pioneer settler of Blakiston, noted that they also used the name 'Yaktanga'<sup>3</sup>. The more recent study suggests a more complex collection of subgroups, and another name: 'The Mount Barker horde was known as Ngurlinjeri [Ngurle] hill and [linger] belonging to'<sup>4</sup>.

Physical evidence of indigenous occupation can be found in the various scar trees (related to boat and utensil construction) and shelter trees. Recent archaeological surveys have identified numerous hearth places, stone artefacts and art sites on the banks of the Mount Barker Creek<sup>5</sup>. There are also rock paintings in several other locations, and a known Corroborree ground near Prospect Hill. Sources for the coloured ochres used traditionally by the Peramangk as body paint and for decoration of shields etc have been discovered north of the Mount and at Littlehampton near the brick quarry.

Areas of uncleared indigenous vegetation are evocative of pre-European settlement, with the area on Gemmells Road at Macclesfield, and adjacent area designated 'Aboriginal Reserve' having particular associations. Aboriginal language is commemorated in place names of the district.

### 2.2 Migrating

The motivations that led ordinary people to take the considerable risks involved in crossing the ocean to an unknown land the other side of the world must have been powerful indeed. To risk their own and their families' lives on a three-month sea voyage, to invest everything they owned to equip themselves for their new life, to leave family and friends and all that was familiar to them, knowing there would be little chance they could ever return – this must have required considerable courage and strong faith. The factors that came to bear on the decision to emigrate were either of the 'push' or 'pull' kind, or perhaps more often a combination of both. The push came from hardship and limited opportunities at home: famine, poverty, an entrenched inheritance system which put land ownership out of reach for many, and religious discrimination. The pull was the promise of a better life for themselves and their children through unlimited economic opportunity, the chance to own land, and to practice their beliefs freely. They were encouraged by perhaps romanticised reports of what the new land had to offer from those already in the colony, or who had a vested interest in encouraging immigration.

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<sup>2</sup> Coles, Robin, and Hunter, Richard, *The Ochre Warriors: Peramank Culture and Rock Art in the Mount Lofty Ranges*, Axiom Australia, Stepney, SA, 2010, p13

<sup>3</sup> Hignett & Company, *Mount Barker District Heritage Survey, Stage 1*, November 1983, p6

<sup>4</sup> Coles, Robin, and Hunter, Richard, *op cit* p14

<sup>5</sup> Coles, Robin, and Hunter, Richard, *op cit*, p22

### 2.2.1 *Migrating to escape oppression*

In 1838 a group of Prussian Lutheran families led by Pastor August Christian Kavel and numbering over 200 people, arrived aboard the ships *Prince George* and *Zebra*. They were mainly from rural villages in the province of Brandenburg near Silesia (in the North East of what is now modern Germany), and were escaping religious persecution under the state-controlled Prussian Evangelical Church, under which some Lutherans who continued to practice their religious beliefs were punished by having their land confiscated or were imprisoned. Their passage from Prussia had been arranged and paid for by George Fife Angas, of the South Australia Company, and on arrival they were sponsored by Francis Dutton and his partners to settle at Hahndorf to provide much-needed agricultural labour. They were joined by earlier German immigrants from the established settlement of Klemzig, with new arrivals eventually forming a community of between 600 and 700 German-speaking people. The German influence subsequently spread to other parts of the district, as evidenced by the proliferation of Lutheran churches throughout the Mount Barker district.

German settlers had a profound impact on the district of Mount Barker from the earliest days of settlement. The town of Hahndorf, founded in 1839, retains a strongly German character to this day. Manifestations of its cultural difference include the original 'Huffendorf' layout of the town, the types and styles of buildings and construction methods observable in surviving structures, the proliferation of Lutheran churches and schools and the many German shops and hospitality establishments still producing distinctive German-style products. German farming methods and domestic constructions appear throughout the district and especially in the Hahndorf area, including some rare surviving examples of German farm buildings, early bake-ovens and smokehouses etc.

Mount Barker also attracted substantial numbers of economic refugees. Hundreds of Irish immigrants escaping the devastating potato famine (1846-51) were attracted to South Australia with the promise of employment in the mines and as agricultural workers. Irish colonists settled in the Mount Barker district in the early days, particularly in the workers' cottages around Hack Street, Mount Barker, and also around Blakiston, Macclesfield and in the mining areas of Chapel Hill (near Echunga) and Kanmantoo.

### 2.2.2 *Migrating through organised colonisation*

The colony of South Australia was founded by an act of the British Parliament (*The South Australia Act, 1834*), and based on the principles of organised colonisation developed by Edwin Gibbon Wakefield (1796-1862), and known as the Wakefield Plan. His concept of systematic colonisation argued for concentrated free settlement, sale of land at a 'sufficient price' to deter labouring emigrants from acquiring it immediately (and thus assuring a sufficient supply of labour without convicts), and directing the income from land sales to supporting assisted emigration of labouring families<sup>6</sup>. The South Australian Colonization Commission was set up to manage the sale of land and the selection and emigration of suitable families to provide a future workforce to support capital investment in the new colony.

### 2.3 *Promoting settlement*

The South Australian Association formed in 1833 to lobby for the establishment of the colony. It was a group of intellectuals, radical idealists and philanthropists, including Wakefield and his supporters such as Robert Gouger and Robert Torrens, and George Fife Angas. The Association played a major role in drafting of the legislation setting up the colony, and in promoting it to potential emigrants and investors. Pamphlets were written and public meetings held across rural Britain, particularly Scotland, Cornwall and Devon, where the manifold opportunities on offer in the new land were extolled. Groups such as the

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<sup>6</sup> <http://boundforsouthaustralia.com.au/journey-content/edward-gibbon-wakefield.html> (accessed 27/11/19)

Prussian religious refugees and groups of unemployed artisans such as the Calais lacemakers, and Nottingham weavers were also given special encouragement to emigrate.

The South Australia Company, a private joint-stock enterprise formed in 1836 to invest in South Australian commerce, shipping, land, livestock and mining, complained to the Commissioners that labour shortages and consequent high price of labour hampered its operations in the colony. It actively campaigned for increased emigration to provide much-needed labour to support their investments.

People with specific vocational skills were particularly targeted in a vigorous campaign to attract new settlers to the colony. Farm labourers, shepherds, stone masons and 'all persons connected with building', blacksmiths, farriers, and quarrymen and miners were encouraged to apply for assisted passage. After copper was discovered near what became the settlements of Callington and Kanmantoo in the late 1840s Cornish and Welsh miners and smelters moved into the area in significant numbers. Their heritage is represented in the distinctive cottages and mine buildings they constructed in the first few decades of settlement. Evidence of Cornish and Welsh mining technology and construction methods is also found in the former mining and smelting sites. While the majority of settlers in the Mount Barker district overall were English, there was also a large number of Scottish farmers in the area, notably in Mount Barker itself, where the Presbyterian church was the town's earliest church. Along with the Irish and German immigrants, all left their mark to some degree on the character of the district.

#### 2.4 *Displacing Indigenous People*

Early interaction between settlers and the indigenous inhabitants was mostly peaceful, although there were isolated instances of violence and theft of supplies from farms. One early account described the local people as 'perfectly friendly, often very merry and amusing. Quick and sharp and ready, life went on easily with them and they were happy....'<sup>7</sup> In some cases settlers gave them food in exchange for assistance with harvesting wheat and potato crops, and with domestic chores such as doing laundry and collecting firewood. By the 1850s there is little further mention of their presence amongst the settlers, with their rather abrupt disappearance left largely unexplained.

Despite the general absence of overt violence in the interactions with the local Peramangk people in the first years of European settlement, co-operation with and tolerance of the white intruders tended to break down as it became clear the settlers were there to stay. Loss of access to traditional food sources such as the once-plentiful kangaroo, and a growing reliance on European goods including flour sugar tea and tobacco, was a source of friction. Settlers complained that local aborigines were becoming a nuisance, demanding supplies and sometimes pilfering from unattended huts and spearing sheep.

It is likely that fierce intertribal conflict between the Peramangk and neighbouring indigenous groups, under pressure from increasing European settlement, coupled with the impact of introduced diseases, especially smallpox,<sup>8</sup> hastened the decline of the Peramangk tribe. The disruption to traditional cultural practices including hunting and seasonal food gathering across an extensive range, and consequent poor nutrition resulting from increasing reliance on rations, contributed further to their demise. According to John Dunn the tribe was virtually extinct by 1884<sup>9</sup>. This 'extinction' has been disputed in more recent research, which has identified living descendants of the original inhabitants and evidence of their presence

<sup>7</sup> May, William, *The Australian Friend*, June 1891, quoted in Coles, Robin & Hunter, Richard, op cit, p23.

<sup>8</sup> Schmidt, Bob, Mountain upon the Plain, District Council of Mount Barker, October 1983, p7. The author suggests that a smallpox epidemic originating in NSW had already decimated the Mount Barker tribe even before the arrival of European settlers in the district, leaving the survivors weakened and susceptible to measles, influenza and the common cold. This was further exacerbated by poor diet as European rations replaced traditional foods.

<sup>9</sup> 'Mount Barker Courier', November 1886, quoted in Hignett, op cit, 1983) p6.



in the area well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>10</sup>. It is probable that scattered survivors retreated southwards to the mission stations on the Murray River, where they mixed with members of other tribes, and their descendants were gradually absorbed into the wider population.

### 3.0 Developing the Local Economy

#### 3.1 Prospecting for precious metals

Alongside agricultural and pastoral interests, a major spur to exploration and settlement was the potential for discovery and exploitation of mineral resources.

In 1845, encouraged by reports of mineralisation in the Mount Lofty Ranges, the South Australian Company sent two Cornish miners to explore the Mount Barker district. They reported to the company's secretary in South Australia, William Giles, that they had found a rich deposit of copper ore, and this was confirmed by the company's geologist, J C Dixon. The company directors in England instructed Giles to purchase the freehold of the land, since under the system of titles at the time mineral rights belonged to the landowner. Accordingly, Giles applied to the Treasury for the area he wanted. Giles' application was refused as an earlier application for a part of the land had already been granted to Duncan and Lachlan MacFarlane of Mount Barker for grazing their sheep. Undeterred, the South Australian Company sought the intervention of Governor Robe on its behalf, but the MacFarlane brothers refused to give way. Eventually the two parties agreed to make a combined application for a special survey of 20,000 acres at the regulation price of £1 an acre. Now fully aware of the mineral deposits, the MacFarlanes, together with their financial supporters, formed the Paringa Mining Company with sufficient capital to purchase 8,000 acres, with the South Australian Company to purchase the balance.

The Mount Barker Special (Mineral) Survey took place in January 1846 and the two companies agreed to divide the survey into 20 strips, each of 1,000 acres, and to select one strip at a time, with the choice of the first strip decided by drawing lots. The South Australian Company chose the name Kanmantoo for their mine while the MacFarlane group's ore body became the Paringa Mine.

In the decade that followed, many more discoveries were made in the district and were invariably given the names of mines in Cornwall. As villages for the miners were established they also were often given names from Cornwall and West Devon, and the district became known as the "Cornwall of the colony"<sup>11</sup>.

#### 3.2 Looking for land with agricultural potential

The hill now known as Mount Barker was spotted as early as 1830, when Captain Charles Sturt, viewing it from Lake Alexandrina, mistook it for Mount Lofty. In 1831, the Mount was officially identified by Captain Collett Barker, and in conceding his earlier error Sturt conferred the name 'Mount Barker' to perpetuate the name of 'an inestimable companion in Captain Barker himself' (Barker had been killed by Aborigines shortly after his discovery). The Mount was climbed in December 1837 by an exploration party including John Barton Hack and John Morphet, Samuel Stephens, John Wade and a local bushman, Tom Davies, who was their guide. Morphet later described the beauty and potential of the surrounding district in glowing terms: 'We were in the most exuberant spirits, and gave frequent expression to our admiration of the country, which was gently undulating, and gradually rising, with bottoms of the fattest alluvial soil, the herbage being more like that of an English meadow in the best part of the country. ... The pasturage is

<sup>10</sup> Hancock, D. 1997, An Archaeological report on a Peramangk Aboriginal location near Springton South Australia, Flinders University, quoted in [https://localwiki.org/adelaide-hills/Peramangk\\_Aboriginal\\_People](https://localwiki.org/adelaide-hills/Peramangk_Aboriginal_People)

<sup>11</sup> Both, Ross, The Kanmantoo-Strathalbyn Mineral Field, SA, 'The Cornwall of the Colony',

superior to anything I ever saw before'<sup>12</sup>.

### 3.3 Laying out boundaries

#### Surveying the Land

The Mount Barker district was one of the earliest to be settled, being the focus of the State's first Special Survey (1839). The district was further opened up with JB Hack's Echunga Special Survey (the 'Three Brothers Survey'), and the Mount Barker Mineral Survey (both 1845). The Bremer Villages (Callington and Kanmantoo) were surveyed in 1856. As a result of these surveys, large numbers of properties were established, both on a large and small scale, and many towns were surveyed and subdivided.

### 3.4 Utilising Natural Resources

#### 3.4.1 Mining

Mining provided a key impetus to settlement of the Mount Barker district, and has played a significant role in its history to the present day. Some of the State's most notable early mines were established in the Mount Barker district. Major mining areas included Echunga/ Meadows (which produced gold and other minerals), Callington/ Kanmantoo (mostly copper), Aclare near Callington (produced the highest volume of silver in the 19<sup>th</sup> century) and Brukunga (iron pyrites).

In 1846, following the Mount Barker Special Mineral Survey, the McFarlane brothers' Paringa and SA Company's Kanmantoo mines commenced operations.

The Bremer mine was opened about 1847 and by 1848 the country's first smelter was established there. The Bremer mine settlement became the town of Callington. Other mines in the area were West Kanmantoo, Wheal Fortune, Margaret, Prosper, Mary, Friendship, Elizabeth and Maria. Also Menkoo and Treseveen.

Miners flocked to the district from the time of the first mineral discoveries in the 1840s. The copper mines and silver mine in the north east parts of the district led to the establishment of several towns and villages including Callington, Kanmantoo, Staughton, St Ives, Thornton, Springfields, Tavistock, and later Harrowgate and Dawesley. Completed largely under the direction of Manager of the South Australia Company, the town plans laid out for these villages were ambitious, often reflecting Light's plan of Adelaide with their public parklands and wide streets, and many allotments were sold speculatively. The expectation was that they would eventually grow to be substantial towns.

Gold discoveries caused the establishment of two thriving (although short-lived) settlements near Echunga – namely Jupiter Creek and Chapel Hill. Another township with roots in the mining industry was Dawesley, which provided accommodation for miners and workers at the smelter at nearby Scott's Creek. There was also a settlement formed adjacent to the Brukunga mine in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The original Kanmantoo underground mine was active from 1846 to 1874, when the collapse of the world copper market forced its closure. Over that period up to seventy men at a time had gained a livelihood working at the mine and the Dawesley smelter, so the effect on the townships was severe. At that time there were around 70 houses in Kanmantoo and South Kanmantoo, many of which were later demolished when Charles Young extended his vineyard. Many miners had moved away, though a few remained working the old mines and supplying small amounts of ore to be smelted at the Paringa mine, which had been leased to local blacksmith Peter Lewis. The discovery of rich silver deposits near the old Paringa

<sup>12</sup> Morphett, J, A letter written to Mr Samuel Dendy, 6 Dec 1837, (quoted in Schmidt, Bob, *Mountain Upon the Plain*, District Council of Mount Barker, Adelaide, October 1983, p6-7)

workings in 1886 led to a few years of renewed mining activity in the district before again declining in the 1890s.

Mining continued to fluctuate for the first decades of the 20th century, copper prices experiencing a brief resurgence in 1905 with the Paringa, Kanmantoo and Bremer mines working, but by 1907 all were again closed. Mining continued spasmodically but by World War I all were shut down. It was not until the development of modern mining methods that attention again turned to the remaining ore deposits, and a new open-cut mine operated from 1970 to 1976. Hillgrove Resources acquired the mining and exploration leases in stages over 2003-2008, and started mining operations from 2011.

### 3.5 Developing Primary Production

#### 3.5.1 *Grazing stock*

The well-watered and lushly-grassed land around Mount Barker provided excellent grazing pastures for stock, convenient to the main route used by the 'overlanders' bringing sheep and cattle from NSW to Adelaide. This quickly attracted the attention of investors and entrepreneurs seeking to set up large sheep and cattle stations to supply the growing markets of the colony. Men such as Captain Finnis, and Messrs J B Hack, Fenn, Bouchier, Scott, Jones and Milne were amongst the first to set up as squatters in the area, anticipating the Special Survey of 1839 by some months. William Bevis Randell and David McLaren had also established a presence in the area on behalf of the South Australian Company by the time the land was released for purchase on 11 January 1839.

Sheep grazing continued alongside agricultural pursuits as a significant economic activity in the district in the early colonial period. Large landholders including William Dutton, Duncan McFarlane, John Barton Hack and John Finnis established flourishing sheep stations, with the South Australian Almanac of 1840 recording that there were 15,900 sheep in the district. The pastoral era was short-lived however, as falling wool prices and the emergence of disease in their flocks soon led these large stockholders to move their flocks to pastoral leases further north. As farms were fenced in smaller flocks bred for meat for local consumption became more the norm in the district, along with dairy cattle and pigs.

#### 3.5.2 *Breeding animals*

By the end of 1839 extensive sheep and cattle runs had been established as holding grounds for fattening stock ready for sale in Adelaide. Lachlan McFarlane had built up a flock of 10,000 sheep at Mount Barker, before an outbreak of 'scab' (ovine psoroptic mange) forced him to move them to the drier Kanmantoo area in 1843. Opening up of large leasehold sheep and cattle runs in the north attracted pastoralists away from the Mount Barker district within a few years, and wheat and other cereal crops came to dominate.

The lush grasslands of the Mount Barker district made it ideal for cattle. Dairy cattle were bred for milk, butter and cheese, initially for local domestic consumption, but towards the end of the 19th century dairying would become a major export industry, with several large milk, cream and cheese factories being established in the district. Breeding bullocks and horses was also a significant industry, essential for all transport and farm work until the advent of the railway in the 1880s and motor transport in the 20th century supplanted them. Horse and cattle studs are still a feature of the area, as are alpaca studs.

#### 3.5.3 *Developing agricultural industries*

##### *Wheat*

By 1840 some early settlers of Nairne and Mount Barker were reaping their first crops, with 500 acres under wheat in the area. Walter Patterson of 'Greenbank' near Mount Barker is credited with growing the first

wheat crop, and early plantings of barley, oats, corn and vegetables (particularly potatoes) were soon flourishing in the district, especially around Hahndorf.

South Australia's expanding population stimulated the demand for flour and bran, and drove prices up. Wheat-growing rapidly took over as the major rural industry in the Willunga and Mount Barker districts. The repeal of the protectionist Corn Laws in England in 1846 (in response to the Irish Famine), and the repeal of the Navigation Act in 1849 opened up export markets for South Australian wheat production, and the Victorian gold discoveries created huge demand across the border. Several flour mills were established in the district to process the grain produced locally and from further afield, beginning with F R Nixon's primitive windmill west of Mount Barker, in 1842. John Dunn also built a windmill at Hay Valley (near Nairne) in the same year, followed by a large steam mill in the Mount Barker township in 1844. These were the first of what would later become a milling empire for Dunn & Co. Just as important were the technological innovations which enabled wheat production to be carried out more efficiently on a large scale.

In 1843 the first reaping machine was used in the area. Mount Barker farmers John Bull and Walter Patterson were involved in the development of the machine, which was manufactured in Ramsay's Foundry in Mount Barker.

Farmers in the Mount Barker area soon acquired an outstanding reputation for their wheat. Prize-winning wheat producers included John Frame of Burnbank Farm (Mount Barker Springs) who won first prize for his wheat in the 1851 Great Exhibition in London, and Allan Bell of Dalmeny Park, who won medals at seven international exhibitions between 1852 and 1878.

Unfortunately the over-specialisation on wheat-growing and intensive cropping over successive years depleted the soil of nutrients, leading to diminishing yields. This was exacerbated by outbreaks of the fungal disease rust, which devastated cereal crops. By the 1880s wheat production in the district had dropped off to the point where it was barely profitable. The drought and general depression that followed affected the Mount Barker farmers badly. It took almost a decade, and the efforts of some of the district's most enterprising citizens, for the district to show signs of recovery.

Local newspaper proprietor Victor Dumas conducted a vigorous crusade through editorials in the *Mount Barker Courier* to convince local farmers to adopt modern agricultural methods and technology, and more importantly to diversify their production to allow the exhausted soil to recover, and to trial and develop more profitable products.

Another leading local agriculturalist was Amos Howard. In 1889 he discovered subterranean clover (*Trifolium subterraneum*) growing on his neighbour's Blakiston farm, and recognised its potential value for improving pasture and crops. He commenced production and distribution of the plant, which became a reliable annual fodder crop in a variety of soil conditions, revolutionising agriculture in many parts of Australia. In conjunction with local foundry proprietors he helped develop specialised machinery for separating and hulling the seeds, which were sold all over the country.

An important contributor to the district's recovery was a government-led initiative in the dairy industry. To stimulate exports the South Australian Government followed the Victorian lead by offering a bonus for fresh butter sold in London, now made possible with the advent of refrigerated steamer ships. Dairying expert David Wilson, Superintendent of Dairies in Victoria, toured South Australia to encourage local farmers to take up dairying in order to profit from this lucrative and growing trade. He promoted the latest international ideas on herd management, dairy hygiene, pasteurisation and mechanised production methods, and encouraged the establishment of factories based on the co-operative model. In March 1890 the Mount Barker Agricultural Show hosted the 'Government Travelling Dairy', providing local farmers with practical demonstrations of the latest dairying technology and methods. In December 1892 the opening of the Blakiston Dairy Factory heralded the beginning of the dairying era which would lead to

Mount Barker becoming the 'Cream Bowl' of South Australia well into the next century. During the 1920s, the factory was purchased by AMSCOL, and operated until 1965.

### *Viticulture*

One of the first South Australian vineyards was planted in 1836 by John Barton Hack in Chichester Gardens, North Adelaide. They were no doubt European vine cuttings such as Grenache or Shiraz, gathered in Cape Town and hastily planted on arrival. Hack pulled his vineyard in 1840 and transplanted the vines to Echunga Springs near Mount Barker. In 1843, Hack sent a case of wine made from the vineyard to Queen Victoria, the first gift of Australian wine to an English monarch.

Other hills vineyards followed including Charles Burney Young's property 'Holmesdale' at Kanmantoo. The original Holmesdale vineyard was established in 1866, with 25 acres under vines, soon after expanded to 40 acres. The varieties were Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz, Grenache, Malbec and Mataro – the ingredients of the better Bordeaux reds of the day. One of the major influences on colonial Adelaide Hills winemaking was Edmund Mazure, a French trained winemaker who was employed by Sir Samuel Davenport at Beaumont in 1884 and went on to work at Young's Kanmantoo vineyard. Charles Young's son Harry Dove Young took over as manager of the vineyard and winery in 1887. At the Exposition Universelle, the Paris World's Fair of May to October 1889, held to coincide with the official opening of the Eiffel Tower, St George Kanmantoo Claret won the top gold medal<sup>13</sup>.

From 1840 to 1900 a total of 225 grape growers practised viticulture and winemaking in the central Mount Lofty Ranges. However, many of these early vineyards and wineries went bankrupt in the early 1900s due to the removal of Imperial Preference, which had favoured exports of Australian produce to the United Kingdom. For the next 50 years the land was used for dairying, beef cattle, sheep and fruit and vegetable growing, until the wine industry underwent a revival in the 1970s.<sup>14</sup>

### *Honey*

Bee-keeping and honey production was popular from the earliest colonial days, many farmers keeping bees on their properties as a profitable sideline. In the mid 1880s amidst a crisis over the threat to the honey industry from the hive disease 'foul brood', 86 bee-keepers in the Mount Barker area added their signatures to a petition in support of a parliamentary bill aimed at curbing the spread of the disease, giving an idea of the extent to which bee-keeping was being practiced<sup>15</sup>.

### *Tobacco*

There are reports from as early as the 1840s of small quantities of tobacco being grown in the Mount Barker district, though this was mostly used in the production of animal drench to control mites such as those which cause scab in sheep. Treatment involved immersing the animals in a solution of boiled tobacco water, sometimes with salt, saltpetre, sulphur or arsenic added.

Tobacco was again grown at Mount Barker and Macclesfield in the 1920s and 30s, with experimental plantings carried out by the Department of Agriculture and by several local farmers. In 1930 an estimated 80 acres were planted to tobacco across the district, generally as a rotation crop alternating with subterranean clover. At the time, Australian grown smoking tobacco represented less than 10% of total consumption nationally, and it was hoped that local production could compete favourably with the

<sup>13</sup> <https://indaily.com.au/opinion/2015/01/27/south-australias-unsung-hero-wine/> accessed 27/11/19

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.adelaidehillswine.com.au/region/our-story/> accessed 27/11/19

<sup>15</sup> Jolly, Bridget, First flights in South Australia's systematic beekeeping and honey harvesting: accessed on-line 28/11/19 <http://www.sahistorians.org.au/175/bm.doc/first-flights-in-south-australia-part-2.pdf>

imported product. Tobacco of a particular quality was in demand due to the change in public tastes from the heavier pipe and cigar tobacco to lighter more fine-grained leaf suited to the modern cigarettes. The best crop grown in the district was that of Mount Barker grower W E Daddow. Several Macclesfield farmers also experimented with tobacco growing, including James Hendry at Glenhurst Farm, H & C Miller and E Fry. The Department of Agriculture erected two curing barns and a packing shed for those who did not have these facilities. They were situated between Flaxley and Mount Barker on the South East corner opposite the turn-off to Echunga, at the spot known as Cooper's Corner.

Whilst early experiments seemed promising, it was found that local growing conditions were not ideal due to the irregular summer rainfall pattern in the hills affecting the quality of the crop, and prices received were disappointing. By the 1940s tobacco growing seems to have been abandoned in favour of other crops.

#### *Forestry/ Silviculture*

Kuitpo Forest contains one of the State's most significant cultivated forests, and was amongst the earliest to be established with a view to creating a forestry industry. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Conservator of Forests, J E Brown, oversaw the first trial plantations at Kuitpo. Ironbarks were planted at Knott Hill in 1899, and in the following year, South Australia's first *pinus radiata* were planted adjacent to Kuitpo headquarters. In 1903 the stand of *pinus canariensis* was planted near the *radiata*. The mixed eucalyptus plantation was the second in the Adelaide Hills, and the stands of *eucalyptus sideroxylon*, *pinus canariensis* and *pinus pinaster* are among the oldest silvicultural plantations in the Adelaide Hills. The earliest of these trial plantations are now over 100 years old and make a significant contribution to the understanding of the development of forestry in this State. Their experimental beginnings have matured to provide a record of the history of the Woods and Forests Department.

#### *Wattlebark*

Wattlebark was used in the tanning process, and harvesting wattle for sale to local tanners was a useful supplement to farmers' income in hard times. The bark of a local wattle species, *Acacia Pycnantha* was found to be particularly high in tannin, and was harvested in great quantities for local use and for export, particularly in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Wattlebark mills were built at Mount Barker, Nairne and Echunga and a number of former flour mills were converted for the purpose. The process of harvesting involved stripping the bark in sheets, inevitably killing the trees. In some cases plantations of wattle trees were planted as the naturally growing supply was exhausted. Tanners Paltridges at Mount Barker and Timmins at Nairne were involved in wattlebark processing as a side industry.

#### *Clover seed*

A successful local industry grew out of Blakiston nurseryman Amos William Howard's discovery and promotion of subterranean clover as a pasture crop and soil improver. In conjunction with local engineers / ironworks operators Dutch Brothers, Ronald Kaestler and Frank Daniels, Howard developed and manufactured improved specialised machinery to efficiently thresh and hull the seed. Eventually he developed commercial quantities of new varieties of the seed, and the first sales occurred in January 1907. Demand for the product grew rapidly both in South Australia and interstate, and 'sub and super' (subterranean clover and superphosphate) became the formula for soil improvement across the country<sup>16</sup>. It was subsequently named 'the miracle plant of the century' and was credited with transforming millions of infertile hectares into productive pasture<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> Smith, David F, *Natural Gain in the Grazing Lands of South Australia*, Uni of NSW Press, Sydney 2000 (accessed on-line 27/11/19 <https://books.google.com.au/books>)

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.jaunay.com/howard.html> accessed 26/11/19

### 3.7 Establishing Communications

No post offices operated in the area until 1842, when John Banks Shepherdson opened a post office in his hut near Nairne. He later became postmaster at Mount Barker (1847).

The telegraph arrived in Mount Barker in 1860, with the completion of the first purpose built Post Office at 33 Hutchinson Street. By this time most of the major towns had a postal service, usually run under contract out of the local general store. Hahndorf's first post office was opened in 1884, and still occupies the same building, though altered and extended several times. Although it had a telegraph office from 1874, and presumably a postal service prior to that, Callington did not get its first Post and Telegraph Station until about 1885, with a new brick building constructed in 1911. The Post Master there for many years was also the Station Master. Echunga had a post office run by William Gratwick from 1850, with a purpose built office completed in about 1891.

A telephone was installed for public use in the Mount Barker Post Office in 1910. This building still stands (SHP16182), but was replaced by a new post office next door in 1914.

### 3.8 Moving Goods and People

The new town of Mount Barker was established on the main line of road between Adelaide and the Murray, thence NSW and Port Philip. It roughly followed the overland stock route known as Chauncy's Line. In the early days, people rode horses or walked along the rough track made by travelling stock. From Glen Osmond on there was no made road, and the hills through the 'Tiers' was steep, heavily timbered and slippery. Travellers faced added dangers from escaped convicts or bushrangers who frequented the area, and hazardous crossings of the Onkaparinga and Bremer rivers.

With increasing traffic as people moved into the area with their drays and wagons the government imposed a toll system at Glen Osmond, charging a range of fees for use of the road. The money raised was to be used to improve the road, but progress was slow and the Government abandoned the project. A Board of Trustees comprising Smillie, Hack, McFarlane and Finnis took over, with authority to charge tolls and raise loans. By 1845 the road had reached Mount Barker, via Glen Osmond, Crafers, Hahndorf and Littlehampton, and tolls were discontinued in 1847.

In 1841 Mrs Sturdock innkeeper at Nairne had opened the first carrying service. The following year W A Deacon opened a coach and carrying service, leaving Adelaide every Thursday, and the following year Mr Bell of Nairne introduced a service every Tuesday. Similar services were operated by Rounsevell's, Cobb and Co, Hill and Co, and A Thompson, until the advent of the Hills Railway 1883.

In 1850 the main road was re-routed through Nairne, to the disappointment of Mount Barker citizens. Many significant bridges were constructed in the district, with the most common construction method being stone abutments and pillars supporting timber decks. There is also a notable stone-arch bridge at Macclesfield.

The railway linking Adelaide and Melbourne was completed in 1886. Three years earlier the line reached Nairne and Mount Barker, with the section to Callington being completed soon afterwards. The Mount Barker railway station was built of Aldgate freestone, and housed a stationmaster's quarters and a ticketing office. The line was opened on 27 November 1883, though some of the buildings were not yet completed. Construction on a branch line from Mount Barker Junction to Victor Harbor, with stations at Strathalbyn and Goolwa was completed in 1884.

The coming of the railway encouraged a new wave of land speculation. The first new residential subdivision of Mount Barker South, or 'Barkerville', was created on sections 4468 and 4469, comprising together 160 acres, through which the line passed. Advertising for the auction on 12 January 1884 emphasised the

convenience of the land 'only an hour and a half from Adelaide by rail', with blocks located 'within ten minutes walk of the Railway Station'<sup>18</sup>.

Many of the blocks sold were clearly speculative purchases as the 1888 Mount Barker Assessment Books shows much of the land still undeveloped.

The arrival of the railway had a significant impact on the success of the towns it passed. Railway construction boosted local economies by providing employment opportunities. It also increased the need for services such as additional law enforcement to cope with the influx of railway workers during the construction phase.

More efficient transport contributed to the success of local industries and was welcomed as a boon to the local economy, bringing tourists and day-trippers to the town and cutting two hours off the round trip for those needing to travel to Adelaide on business. The 'Courier' reported in 1886 that 3000 tourists had visited in one day. As well as carrying passengers, goods and livestock were able to be reliably and economically transported. The annual Agricultural Show was one of the events expected to benefit from the influx of visitors from Adelaide.

Regular train services operated on the Hills line for a century, but with the dominance of the motor car in the late 20th century passenger numbers declined and passenger services were terminated in April 1984. The accelerated growth of the town's population in recent years has prompted calls to reopen a rail service to Mount Barker to relieve congestion on the South Eastern Freeway.

### 3.9 Water supply

The Mount Barker district is intersected by several rivers and creeks, including the Bremer and Angas Rivers, Echunga, Mount Barker and Jupiter Creeks, along with numerous natural springs which provided reliable year-round water for stock and people. This was supplemented by domestic wells dug by the pioneers in the first few decades of the Colony, structures which played a vital role in the everyday life of the first settlers. Stone water tanks were also used.

After the advent of the railways in 1883 several railway dams were constructed, especially in the Nairne area. The railway stations at Nairne and Mount Barker also acquired large cast-iron water tanks for supplying steam engines.

There were also several large water towers erected to provide reticulated water to the townships.

The district also includes Mount Bold Reservoir, which was filled for the first time in 1937, nearly doubling metropolitan Adelaide's water storage capacity.

### 3.10 Developing Local Industries

The district was a significant provider of construction stone, with several quarries operating successfully for many decades. Near Macclesfield, significant marble quarries produced marble used all over Australia, including 1,000 tonnes for the South Australian War Memorial on North Terrace (1927-29) and three pieces for the Canberra Memorial in 1959.

Brickmaking became a significant industry for the district, particularly in Littlehampton where there were three brickworks during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, one of which survives to this day. There was also a significant brickworks near Nairne/ Brukunga, and several smaller scale brickmaking facilities in Mount Barker and Hahndorf.

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<sup>18</sup> 'Plan of the Township of Mount Barker South', reproduced in Schmidt, 1983, op. cit., p99



Iron and brass foundries became important industries, producing a wide variety of agricultural implements and machinery and employing a large workforce. Ramsays, Salman's and Dutch Brothers all operated thriving workshops from the 1850s, developing and producing innovative products for local and intercolonial markets.

### 3.10.1 Foundries

Along with blacksmith's and wheelwright's shops in almost all of the townships, there were several significant foundries or iron works, producing agricultural machinery on a large scale. These included Ramsay & Co, Dutch Brothers and Salman's Foundries at Mount Barker, Daniel's Blacksmiths at Mount Barker, and Haebich's Smithy at Hahndorf. Earlier heritage surveys identified former smithies at Kanmantoo, Macclesfield, Mount Barker, Nairne, Meadows, Hahndorf, Harrogate as well as former wheelwright's shops at Hahndorf, Mount Barker, and Macclesfield. Many of these businesses produced and repaired much-needed standard farm machinery, such as ploughs, harrows, harvesters and chaff-cutters, some developing specialised equipment such as seed hullers and pea-harvesters, cream separators, etc.

James Garden Ramsay established his Foundry and Manufactory on Pridmore Terrace, Mount Barker in 1856 and within a few years was producing a wide variety of agricultural implements for local and intercolonial markets<sup>19</sup>. At its peak the foundry and metalworks employed up to 70 men, and was at one time the largest business of its kind in the colony. The busy workshops turned out everything from huge bridge girders, gears for milling and agricultural machinery, ploughs, scarifiers, reaping and winnowing machines, harrowers, chaffcutters, earthscoops for building dams, vehicles of all kinds from heavy drays and buggies, to domestic tools such as fireplates, fire irons and ovens. The business closed down in the mid 1870s. James Ramsay entered politics in 1870 and was elected to represent Mount Barker in the SA Legislative Assembly, and later the Legislative Council, where he served until his death in 1890. He served terms as Commissioner of Public Works and Chief Secretary during his political career.

The Mount Barker Ironworks was established by Charles E Dutch around 1852, and was carried on by his sons as Dutch Brothers Ironworks until the late 1930s. They became recognised for their innovative products, especially the 'Dutch windmill' and other farming implements. They later added the successful 'Victor' cream separator to their product range. The firm employed over 50 men during its heyday selling its products across the country, supplying and installing equipment for the mines at Broken Hill, Moonta and Grunthal (near Balhannah).

After the closure of Ramsay's Foundry a former employee William Salman Senior and his son William Harris Salman, set up in business as the Mount Barker Perseverance Foundry and Ironworks, commencing around 1893. W Salman & Co erected new workshops near the railway station in 1910, intending to nearly double their current workforce of 30 men. They were able to take advantage of their proximity to the railway to export their agricultural machinery to markets as far away as NSW, Victoria and Western Australia.

### 3.10.2 Milling

Several significant flour mills were established in the district to process grain from the local area and from further afield.

By 1842 John Dunn had constructed the district's first mill at Hay Valley. In the same year Nixon constructed a stone windmill near Hahndorf. By 1844 Dunn had established a large steam mill on Cameron

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<sup>19</sup> Hallack, E H, *Our Townships, Farms and Homesteads*, Southern Districts of S A, W K Thomas, Grenfell St, Adelaide, 1892, quoted in Hignett & Co, *op cit*, p30

Street Mount Barker. A second mill was later built on the southern side of the town, operated by William Wedd of the Mount Barker Steam Mill Company. In 1856 the company secured a site for the erection on a steam flour mill on the Great Eastern Road leading to Wellington. The mill, known as the 'Emu Steam Mill', was operated by Wedd from 1857 to February 1869, when it was sold at auction to John Winzor of Adelaide and subsequently leased to John Ledger. While being overhauled in preparation for the harvest in December of that year, the mill, insured for £850, was completely destroyed in a fire.

Four mills were built at Nairne (Nairne Flour Mills in 1847, Johnson's in the 1950s, Dunn's Albert Mill in 1857, and another whose name is unknown in the mid 1800s), and others at Hahndorf (Wittwer's 1864), Callington, Meadows (Burley 1840-63), and a watermill at Willowdene near Macclesfield.

### 3.10.3 Tanning

South Australia's first tannery outside of Adelaide was established by Henry Timmins at Nairne around 1851. In 1853 Carl Samuel Hermann Storch constructed a tannery near the Hahndorf windmill, moving nearer to Verdun in 1858. There were also several wattle-bark mills in the district, including significant ones at Hahndorf and Mount Barker. Paltridge's tannery and bootmaking business was operating in Mount Barker by 1854.

### 3.10.4 Pigs and smallgoods

The pig industry flourished from the 1880s, supplying significant a smallgoods manufacturing industry in Nairne, Mount Barker, Littlehampton, Dawesley and Hahndorf. One of South Australia's largest smallgoods manufacturers Chapman's Smallgoods operated a large factory based in Nairne from 1899, providing local employment for over a century before relocating to Murray Bridge in 2002.

### 3.10.5 Brewing

By 1850 breweries were operating in Mount Barker and Littlehampton. Benjamin Gray and Francis Robert Hunt's brewery was established in that year on what became known as 'Brewery Hill' in Littlehampton. Miel's Brewery was in operation at Littlehampton by 1892. The brewery at Macclesfield was established next to the Goat's Head Inn in 1851.

### 3.10.6 Sawmills

From earliest settlement here was an ongoing industry across the district in harvesting native timbers for building, fencing, and to provide timber supports for underground mining operations both locally and later at the Broken Hill mines. Felling and processing of timber for building purposes was associated with the forestry industry established at Kuitpo. Several timber mills operated at Kuitpo (some of which lie outside the Mount Barker district) and at Meadows, Macclesfield, Nairne, Echunga and Mount Barker. The Anderson Sawmill in Mount Barker had government contracts to supply railway sleepers for the railway line to Victor Harbor. There was also a consistent demand for firewood to supply steam-operated machinery for milling, mining and foundry workings, as well as for domestic heating. This industry provided regular employment for timber cutters and carters as well as sawyers over many decades.

### 3.10.7 Publishing

Mount Barker boasts one of the longest-running and most important rural newspapers in the State, the *Mount Barker Courier*.

The weekly newspaper was founded as The Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha

Advertiser on 1 October 1880, price 3d. (3 pence) for 4 pages. Charles M R Dumas was sole proprietor, and its offices were on Gawler Street, Mount Barker. Dumas, an energetic and progressive advocate for the district, ran the paper for 54 years, and served as president of the South Australian Provincial Press Association from 1915 until his death. He served on the local Council for nearly two decades, as auditor and Chairperson, was a member of the South Australian House of Assembly from 1898 to 1902, representing the electorate of Mount Barker. Dumas was heavily involved in local concerns: He was a life member of the Mount Barker Agricultural Society as vice-president.

He was a foundation member of the Onkaparinga Racing Club, and never missed a meeting on the course. He was a committee member of the Mount Barker Institute for many years, serving as its president from 1910 to 1912. Even in old age he was an enthusiastic sportsman, playing regularly for the Mount Barker Bowling Club, of which he was elected patron in 1934 shortly before his death.

In 1893 the title was changed to *The Mount Barker Courier and Southern Advertiser*, and in 1960 this was abbreviated to *The Mount Barker Courier*, and to simply *The Courier* by 1983.

## 4.0 Building Settlements, Towns and Cities

### 4.1 Planning Urban Settlements

#### 4.1.1 Selecting township sites

The pattern of development of the towns and villages of the Mount Barker district reflects the systematic approach to settlement based on the sale of land, and the influence of speculative private investment. It proceeded from an ideal of recreating a European-style rural landed gentry, and substantial yeomanry class.

The 'Register' in 1839 carried an advertisement that a town was to be laid out within two miles of Mount Barker (ie the mountain) on the well-known station first selected by Mr Coghill. Apparently this project came to nothing.

In early 1839 investment partners William Hampton Dutton, Duncan McFarlane and Captain John Finnis paid £4,000 to finance the first Special Survey of 15,000 acres in the Mount Barker area. This gave them the right to select 4,000 acres for themselves once the survey was completed, the remainder to be made available for purchase by other settlers at a fixed price of £1 an acre. The Mount Barker Special Survey was undertaken by Frederick Robert Nixon of the Surveyor-General's Office. McFarlane subsequently nominated 4,000 acres on behalf of the partners, taking in sections later to become Mount Barker, Littlehampton, Hahndorf, Blakiston and Ambleside.

In February 1839 they announced their intention to lay out the township of Mount Barker on an 80 acre section divided into half acre allotments, and offer for sale the remainder of their 4,000 acres in five and 80 acre sections.

Within an eighteen month period Special Surveys were completed as follows:.

Mount Barker District—W H Dutton (1st survey: 11 Jan 1839)

North of Mount Barker—M Smillie (6th survey: 24 Jan 1839)

The Meadows south and south-west of Mount Sturt—C Flaxman (7th survey: 31 Jan 1839)

The Three Brothers west of Mount Sturt—JB Hack (11<sup>th</sup> survey: 31 Jan 1839)

South-east of the Three Brothers and east of The Meadows—J Morphet (25<sup>th</sup> survey: 8 July 1839)

About the upper course and branches of the River Angas—GF Davenport (37<sup>th</sup> survey: 12 June 1840)

In addition there was the Mount Barker Special (Mineral) Survey – SA Company and Paringa Mining Company (1845).

These Special Surveys encouraged closer settlement in those areas selected for the quality of their land and natural resources, and opened the way for the establishment of towns and villages.

#### 4.2 Establishing towns

Captain Charles Sturt first drove cattle overland from NSW through the district in 1838, describing in glowing terms the potential of the district for agricultural and pastoral pursuits. 'I could not have imagined a tract so rich and beautiful, so well watered and undulating ... anything would grow'. His view was corroborated by another overlander, Joseph Hawden, who described it as 'equal in richness of soil and pasturage to any I have seen in New Holland'.<sup>20</sup>

In anticipation of the Special Survey and release of land for purchase a small number of settlers had erected rough shelters on the Mount Barker creek, four miles east of the present township, at a now-forgotten locality known as 'Teakletown' (possibly named after David Teakle, storekeeper and farmer). At the same time, large tracts of land were being occupied by squatters, including Messrs J B Hack, Bourchier, Fenn, Jones, Miller and Scott, as well as William Bevis Randell and of the South Australian Company. By 1839 many other early farmers were arriving in the district, especially at Hahndorf, around Nairne and Mount Barker, and in parts of the Echunga area.

Of the six oldest townships in the Adelaide Hills, four are located in the District Council of Mount Barker: Nairne and Hahndorf (established 1839), Mount Barker (1840), and Macclesfield (1841). With the establishment of mining and other local industries and the need to provide services for farmers and travellers passing through the district several other significant towns developed, in what was becoming one of the busiest and most prosperous areas of rural South Australia.

Other early towns included Echunga, Meadows, Flaxley, Harrogate, Littlehampton, Blakiston, Bugle Ranges, Prospect Hill and Wistow. Small but significant settlements were located at Paechtown, Friedrichstadt, Biggs Flat, Bull Creek, Paris Creek, Hay Valley, Mount Barker Springs, Springfields, Meaford, Totness and Brukunga.

Each township and village followed a similar pattern of development as rural service towns, functioning as social and economic hubs for the surrounding districts. Their character tends to reflect the changing fortunes of the area, expanding or stagnating according to the district's prosperity or otherwise. Within a few years the simple improvised dwellings of the early pioneers gave way to more substantial stone and brick houses as settlements became established. Typically the first significant buildings were hotels or inns, then stores, blacksmiths and wheelwrights, mills, police stations and court houses, churches, schools, post offices, public halls and recreation facilities and gardens.

Buildings became larger and grander as an expression of the community's confidence. Events such as the building of roads, bridges, and railways tended to accelerate development and trigger speculative investment in towns that benefited from these improvements, and to set back those that did not. The success of businesses in the towns rose and fell with the fortunes of local farmers, and when rural prices fell

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<sup>20</sup> Hignett & Company, *Op. cit.* p7

there was less money for everyone. Where a town had its own industries such as flour mills, tanners, iron works and mines that employed significant numbers of people, there was a multiplier effect with benefits passing on to shopkeepers and other suppliers of goods and services. When enterprises folded, due to outside competition or loss of markets, or mines became worked out, people left to find other work and the effect was felt on the town's prosperity.

#### *Hahndorf (1839)*

The first German settlers established themselves in Hahndorf in 1839, making it Australia's oldest surviving German settlement. The township was one of the earliest settlements outside of Adelaide, and became one of the most significant locations for German settlers in South Australia. It has a large proportion of surviving early German buildings, in recognition of which the town was designated as a State Heritage Area in 1988 (State Heritage ID -13673). The town has retained many reminders of its distinctive ethnic origins, which are reflected in the architecture, pattern of land use, German place names and cultural practices.

The historic character arises from the town's unique hybrid town plan and is strengthened by a significant concentration of early 19th century buildings with a distinctive German (Prussian) influence. The layout of Hahndorf is typical of Silesian traditions due to the early settlers originating from the provinces of Silesia, Brandenburg and Posen, which were part of the Prussian Empire.

In December 1838, 38 Lutheran families arrived aboard the *Zebra*, captained by Dirk Hahn. Captain Hahn negotiated a contract with Hampton Dutton, Duncan McFarlane and John Finnis, for 52 German families (including earlier arrivals from Klemzig) to settle on 240 acres, comprising sections 4002, 4003 and 4004 of the newly surveyed Mount Barker Special Survey district. They were to live rent free for the first year, with all provisions. Hard-working experienced farmers and agricultural labourers were urgently needed to develop the new district, and the sober, God-fearing German folk were eminently qualified. Of the original 240 acres situated on the north-eastern side of Main Street 19 acres were allotted for houses and for constructing roads, and the remainder was for cultivation. The plan for the village was laid out by Hermann Kook, who produced a traditional German style 'Huffendorf' plan comprising 54 small farmsteads arranged in a U-shape, with strips of farmland extending behind each house allotment, and the Lutheran Church (now the site of St Michael's) as the central focus inside the U.

The new settlement was named Hahndorf (Hahn's Village) to honour Captain Hahn. Each of the families received allotments of land, German-style farmhouses were built and small businesses established. Hahndorf became an important supplier of fresh fruit and vegetables to the Adelaide Markets. In the late 1840s a split in the Lutheran Church, coupled with additional land surveys and the growing importance of the great Eastern Road, meant that activities became focussed along Main Street, and Hahndorf evolved from a farming village to a major service centre. Wheelwrights, smithies, publicans, shopkeepers, carpenters and joiners soon established their business along Main Street, servicing both the local and neighbouring communities as well as catering for the increased through-traffic. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Hahndorf was a prosperous town, and traces of German influences had spread across the wider district<sup>21</sup>.

#### *Nairne (1839)*

Nairne was the first South Australian town to be officially registered. It was founded by Matthew Smillie, a Scottish lawyer, in 1839, and named after his wife Elizabeth Corse Nairne. His original acquisition of 4,000 acres was subdivided into 80 acre lots for wheat farming, with provision for the township, a school, church etc and was offered for sale. Like Mount Barker, flour mills needed to be established, and one of the mills,

<sup>21</sup> [https://localwiki.org/adelaide-hills/A\\_Brief\\_History\\_of\\_Hahndorf](https://localwiki.org/adelaide-hills/A_Brief_History_of_Hahndorf)

the Albert Mill, just off the main street, still remains. There are many buildings of historic interest remaining, including the old Police Station, the Catholic Church, the Miller's Arms Hotel, the railway station, and the Institute. A major industry carried on through most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was bacon curing and smallgoods production.

#### *Mount Barker (1840)*

Many of the district's earliest farmers established themselves around the foot of the Mount, including at Mount Barker Springs, but the town of Mount Barker itself grew in its current location from 1840, following F R Nixon's Special Survey of the District of Mount Barker, Hundred of Macclesfield. He designated a picturesque, gently sloping location at the junction of two creeks for the private township of Mount Barker. Sections 4467, 4473, 4472, and 4477 were surveyed and laid out into 169 town allotments and 41 suburban allotments of various sizes, along with provision for roads and public reserves. Additional allotments were later laid out on Section 4478 as Mount Barker North.

The first structures in the town comprised mainly slab huts, with a few more substantial stone buildings appearing from 1842. The most notable construction observed by a visitor in 1845 was Duncan MacFarlane's handsome stone barn, but there was also a courthouse, police station, school, steam flour mill (Dunn's), an inn (Gloag's) and some private dwellings<sup>22</sup>. By 1851 the population was estimated to be around 250 or more, occupying 60 tenements. The overall impression was not favourable, however, with 'Old Colonist' commenting: 'some rubbishing fencing, piles of brushwood round the mill, together with the confusion of the blacksmiths' and carpenters' yards give it a factory-like effect, which the volumes of smoke heighten into dinginess'<sup>23</sup>. These obvious signs of industry, were nevertheless indicative of a community well on the way to establishing itself as a major service centre for the surrounding district.

Within a few years the town had grown and a local correspondent wrote much more positively (though perhaps a little defensively) about its progress:

'Our township is one of the oldest in the colony, and although its progress has not been so rapid as that of some other of our provincial towns, that progress has, nevertheless, been steady and sure. We have two steam-mills, a foundry, two or three tanneries, a parchment manufactory, watchmaker, engraver, builders, cabinetmaker, coopers, shoemakers, butchers, bakers, surgeon, chemist, and auctioneers; with drapery, grocery, and ironmongery establishments, both numerous and respectable. We have five schools, four chapels, police-station, local court, two solicitors; and last, although far from least, we have a printing and publishing establishment, from which is just about to be issued one of the largest works which our provincial press has produced. A weekly broadsheet too has been more than talked about, and will doubtless before long become a "great fact". And before the end of the year we expect the redemption of the promise by Government of telegraphic communication with Adelaide.'

*Adelaide Observer, Saturday 19 June 1858, page 4*

#### *Macclesfield (1841)*

George Davenport was one of the directors of the South Australian Company in England. He and partners Frederick Luck and Roger Cunliffe paid £4416 for a Special Survey of 4416 acres. His eldest son (George) Francis was sent to select the land, arriving in Adelaide in February 1840. Francis chose land on the upper reaches of the River Angas, including a site for what is now the town of Macclesfield, for what was to be the last special survey. The town was laid out by the government surveyor in October 1840, and named after the Earl of Macclesfield, to whom George Davenport was a steward in England. The town plan included

<sup>22</sup> Dutton, F, *South Australia and its Mines*, Boone, London, 1846, quoted in Hignett & Company, p27

<sup>23</sup> Yelland, E M, (ed), *Colonists, Copper and Corn in the Colony of South Australia*, Hawthorn Press, Melbourne, 1970, p181

parklands set aside for public use, land for a Burial Ground, a Church and a Reserve for government use.

Francis went back to England in 1841, returning with his wife Sarah, and brothers Samuel and Robert in February 1843. Sadly he died two months later, leaving his brothers to manage the survey and land sales.

The first hotel, The Goat's Head Inn, was established by 1841. It was later known as the Macclesfield Arms, Davenport Arms, and now Three Brothers' Arms after the three Davenport brothers. Several cottages had been built and gardens established. Records show that at this time there was a shoemaker, a wheelwright and a blacksmith established in the town. The brewery next door to the hotel was opened by 1851, and later converted to a butter and cheese factory which operated from around 1903 to 1937. During the Victorian gold rush era the town became an important stopping place on the route from Adelaide to Melbourne, via the Wellington Ferry. Macclesfield became the administrative centre of the Kondaparinga District Council, when it came into existence in 1853. The first Council meeting was held on October 22, 1853 in the Davenport Arms Hotel.

The 1850s was a period of rapid growth. Churches were built by the Anglicans (1856), Wesleyans and Congregationalists (1858), a fine Roman Catholic Church, designed by Wright & Woods, was completed in 1867. Macclesfield's first school was built in 1855, together with an adjoining house for the teacher. A second hotel, Matthew Linn's Macclesfield Hotel, was opened in 1855.

#### *Meadows (1839)*

The name 'The Meadows' was first used in 1839 to describe the 4000 acre parcel of land otherwise known as the Seventh Special Survey. On 31st January 1839 Charles Flaxman Edward Little and Thomas Stamford applied for a Special Survey of 4,000 acres to be undertaken in the hills area south of JB Hack's Echunga Survey. The Meadows Special Survey was completed by 23 December 1839, and Flaxman selected Sections 3486 and 3491. Section 3487 was granted to Edward Little and 3490 to Thomas Stamford. The first land was sold in 1840, and settlers gradually took up land in this region, establishing a scattering of farms.

Allen's Almanac of 1844 recorded that one of the most established holdings in the area was that belonging to TH Stamford and Robert Burley with 43 acres of wheat, 4 acres of barley, 1 acre of oats, 1 acre of potatoes, 1 acre of peas, ½ acre garden, 100 cattle, 2 horses and 40 pits. Robert Burley also established a mill which was later converted to a sawmill.

By 1842 there was a weekly mail service between Adelaide and The Meadows. Although a postmaster was appointed in 1850, there was no separate post office building until the 1860s. Prior to that, the Post Office was part of Gadd's general store which also accommodated the privately-run school.

In 1853 the District Council of Kondaparinga was declared. Council held meetings in the Oddfellows Hall prior to the erection of the Council Chambers in 1893.

Though the farming population was becoming more numerous and well-established there was little development in the township prior to the subdivision of two sections north of Mill Street, which was then the main street. Subdivision into town allotments of Charles Flaxman's Section 3491 occurred in 1859, followed by Section 3486 in 1866. By early 1868 the township included an inn, two stores, a blacksmith, butcher, tan yard, three shoemakers, a carpenter, a flour mill, a licensed surveyor, a school house and two places of worship, the Primitive Methodist Chapel (1855) and the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel (1856). The main road from Happy Valley and Clarendon reached Meadows in 1864, and what is now Mawson Road became the main through-road.

St Georges' Anglican Church opened for services in 1870, a schoolhouse was completed in 1872 and in 1884 the Post Office removed from Murrie's store to its present site. The Oddfellows' Hall opened in 1880.

In 1884 George Vickery laid out an additional portion of Section 3486 as township allotments, one of them being purchased by the Kondaparinga Butter Factory Company Ltd in 1889.

A new school was begun in 1910, an Institute constructed in 1914. In 1938 Meadows celebrated its centenary, and this was also the year that Battunga Park was declared open, the main road was bitumenized, and mains electricity was connected to the town. The South Australian Farmers' Union premises, now the hall, and a new cheese factory for the Kondaparinga Dairyman's Co-operative Association, were also erected in that year.

Many of the township and district's early buildings were destroyed in a disastrous Black Friday bushfire in January 1939. Bushfires have been a recurring threat in the district especially in the vicinity of Kangarilla, Meadows and nearby Kiutpo State Forest, including the Ash Wednesday fires in the 1980s.

Timber milling was established as an early industry due to the plentiful supply of red gum in the area. By 1870 a saw mill was operating in the area and in 1899 William Durward established the first commercial forest plantation. In 1917 a small mill opened behind the present Kuitpo Forest Headquarters. The timber milled here was for use in the Broken Hill mines.

#### *Echunga (1847)*

The area was initially settled in 1839, following John Barton Hack's Special Survey of the district. Gold was discovered at Chapman's Creek in 1852 and Echunga became the first proclaimed goldfield in South Australia, with diggings soon operating at Jupiter Creek and Chapel Hill. The town of Echunga was laid out in 1849 by wealthy English Quaker Jacob Hagen, who had taken over Hack's extensive estate after the latter was bankrupted in 1843. Hagen arrived in South Australia, with his wife and daughter, on 23 December 1839. In September 1847 he was granted sections 3876 and 3879 in the Hundred of Kuitpo. Within a short time he subdivided part of it and sold allotments to individual buyers. Although a Quaker, Hagen built the first hotel (the Hagen Arms, 1848), and gave land for St Mary's Church of England (built 1851) and its cemetery. He was appointed to the Legislative Council in 1844 by Governor Grey and became a director of the Montacute, Paringa and Britannia mining companies. When the District Council of Echunga was declared in 1853 he became its first chairperson.

The town's post office was opened in 1850 and its police station in 1874. At its peak Echunga had grown to a population of 1,200, but its prosperity did not survive the gold rush days and it returned to being a small rural service town within a few years.

#### *Kanmantoo (1849)*

The village of Staughton had been founded near the present site of Kanmantoo to cater for the miners following the commencement of operations of the South Australia Company's there in 1845. In 1849 the company's manager W Giles was the instigator of the survey of the new township of Kanmantoo, and 38 township allotments were offered for sale, followed later by Kanmantoo South. Many of the miners and smelter workers took the opportunity to purchase land there and build houses in the new town, which grew to considerable size. Hotels were opened in 1856 (Black Dog Inn), 1857 (Britannia), and 1870 (Miners Arms). When mining activity declined in the 1870s Charles Burney Young bought up many of the properties in Kanmantoo South to extend his Holmesdale vineyards, demolishing some 44 cottages to make way for new vine plantings.

#### *Callington (1849)*

The town of Callington was laid out in 1849, following the discovery of copper the year before, and the opening of the Bremer Mine. By 1857 the mine had been sold to the Worthing Mining Company, which



installed a Cornish steam pumping engine in 1861 to dewater the mines. The main shaft of the Bremer mine reached 600 feet with side tunnels every 60 feet. The Bremer Smelting Company erected a smelter near the mines in 1848. The Callington Inn opened in 1851, a Lutheran Church was built in 1864 and a fine police station, cells and stables designed by the Chief Colonial Architect was completed in 1866.

#### *Littlehampton (1849)*

Littlehampton was laid out in 1849 by carpenter and cattle dealer Benjamin Gray, who named it after his native town in Sussex. In the plan of the township deposited in the General Registry Office in 1857, the town was shown in three divisions: the portion owned by Benjamin Grey and his partner Robert Francis Hunt, a portion owned by Thomas Biddles, and another by John Foster.

By 1890 Littlehampton's industries included factories producing bricks, jam, sauces, bacon and wattle extract, as well as the brewery and a sawmill.

One of the earliest establishments in the town was the brewery, established in 1850 by Gray and Hunt. Under various leases the Littlehampton Brewery continued to operate until the first decade of the twentieth century. In 1880 Gray leased land adjoining the main road to Henry Appleton Monks who established a butcher shop there which quickly diversified into a bacon curing business as well, and expanded steadily under various commercial arrangements for a number of decades. The Grays sold the whole former Littlehampton brewery site to the Monks family during 1921. In 1927, Monks disposed of their meat processing venture and the accompanying land to Queensland firm Foggitt, Jones Ltd, who transferred the whole operation to a vast modern plant.

The Great Eastern Hotel was opened by Thomas Biddles, in 1854. He sold the hotel along with the rest of his 500 acre landholding, known as Tara Estate, in 1868.

The soil near Littlehampton was found to contain exceptional clay seams and shales ideally suited for brick manufacture, and several brickworks were established, producing hand moulded refractory fire bricks and house bricks. These included the Australian Brick Company, the SA Fire Brick Company and Coppin Brothers Littlehampton Brickyards. In 1910 a new company, the Littlehampton Brick Company, was formed, absorbing the Australian Brick Company and several other smaller brickyards in Littlehampton. The new company operated on a much larger scale, constructed new kilns and installed up-to-date machinery. Over a century later this firm is still in business in the same premises.

#### *Dawesley (1857)*

Dawesley takes its name William Bower Dawes of Nairne, who laid out the town on part section 4414, Hundred of Kanmantoo, as accommodation for workers at the nearby Scott's Creek copper smelter then under construction for the proprietors of the Kanmantoo mine. Sale of allotments was conducted at the District Hotel, Nairne, on 4 May 1857. In October that year a second subdivision sale of blocks from 11 to 70 acres was held with reserves set aside for a church, school and quarry and provision for a large population. The smelting works were now in full operation affording employment for a great number of workmen. A sale of 14 allotments in the 'rising township of Dawesley' were offered for sale in January 1863. A shop and residence was built for Elias Davies in 1873, and on completion Mr Davies secured the licence to operate a Post Office in the town. Davies also ran a bacon factory in the town from the mid-1870s.

### 4.3 Establishing commercial services

#### 4.3.1 *Hotels*

Dozens of 19<sup>th</sup> century hotels or former hotels survive, several in each of the major towns. Hotels or inns were frequently amongst the first buildings to be erected, as a precursor to a new settlement.

Hotels were an essential service in the earliest days of settlement, providing shelter and refreshment for weary travellers and stabling for their horses, as well as being an invaluable meeting place and source of local knowledge about the area and conditions. As communities became established, hotels played an important role in addition to offering hospitality, serving as meeting places for local community associations and sometimes as temporary council chambers and courthouses.

Gloag's 'Mount Barker Inn', built in 1842 in Cameron Street, was one of the first stone buildings in Mount Barker, though publican John Gloag was possibly already operating an inn on the site from 1839. Gloag later opened the Crown Inn in Hutchinson Street (1844) which still stands and is now the home of the RSL. The Scotch Thistle Inn (now the Hotel Barker) was licensed in 1846, and the Globe Hotel in Pridmore Street (1858-1870) later became a doctor's residence and hospital, now a private residence.

As early as 1840 a roadside 'grog shop' was being run by a widow at Nairne on the site of the present District Hotel (built 1851). The first licensed hotel in Nairne, the 1840 Nairne Arms, ceased trading in 1852 but still survives as a private house. It closed because of competition from the 1848 New Nairne Hotel and the licensing of the Crooked Billet, now known as the Miller's Arms, which operated as an inn between 1851 and 1860.

Perhaps the most impressive of the early hotels was the Oakfield Hotel, built for Lachlan McFarlane in Mount Barker in 1861. It operated as a hotel until sold in 1878 to the Barr-Smith family as their summer residence, and renamed Auchendarroch. In 1922 it became a rest home operated by the Memorial Hospital, and later became a wartime hospital and convalescent home. After several years of neglect it was purchased by the Wallis family in 2000 and now forms part of a bistro/ tavern, function centre, and cinema complex.

As a result of an influx of Irish settlers around Blakiston, the Blakiston Arms Hotel, first licensed in 1851, changed its name to the Dublin Castle Inn, and an area nearby became known as 'Little Dublin'.

The completion of the railway in 1883 opened up the Mount Barker district to tourism, and there was an immediate influx of weekend visitors from Adelaide, providing a boost to accommodation providers such as Grays Inn, Mount Barker Hotel and Gloag's Hotel which all underwent substantial additions during this period.

Several of the earliest hotels are now demolished, or have been converted to private residences and much altered. Amongst those that have survived are the former German Arms Hotel at Hahndorf (first licensed in 1839, present building dates from 1865); the Hahndorf Inn (first licensed in 1854 as the Australian Arms Hotel, the present building dates from 1863 when it was known as the Union Hotel); Gray's Inn (1855) at Mount Barker and also the former Crown Hotel (1851, now RSL club rooms); the District Hotel at Nairne (built on site of the Nairne Arms, first licensed 1840 - the present building dates from 1851). The Great Eastern Hotel at Littlehampton (1854) survives in a much altered state.

#### 4.3.2 *Shops*

Shops including general stores and a variety of specialty stores were scattered throughout the towns of the district in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the majority being in the major towns such as Mount Barker, Nairne and Hahndorf.

The 1893 Mount Barker Assessment Book lists the establishments in the town as comprising '30 shops, 2 killing yards, 1 sawmill, 1 sanitorium, 1 sausage factory, 4 brickyards, 3 offices, 1 flour mill, 1 woodyard, 1 printing office, 2 blacksmiths, 1 bank, 3 hotels, 1 brewery, 2 quarries, 1 bakery, 1 tannery, and 1 foundry'<sup>24</sup>.

#### 4.3.3 *Markets*

The 1851 plan of Mount Barker shows a triangular allotment located in the south-east of the township, adjoining the Mount Barker and Littlehampton Creeks, designated as a market. There are occasional mentions of markets being held in the yards of various hotels, where farmers bartered or sold excess produce or livestock, but the first regular stock markets seem to have been instituted by Monks and Peake auctioneers around 1900. In the early 1900s Bennett and Fisher began to conduct regular markets in the town. Benjamin Fisher, a founding partner in this company in 1899, had connections with Mount Barker and this became their first country branch when established in 1909. Their fortnightly stock sales were held in yards located towards the eastern end of Gawler Street, adjacent to Gray's Inn, only moving from this site in 1979. Bennett and Fisher also conducted markets at Nairne once a month.

#### 4.3.4 *Banks*

Most of the district's most significant bank buildings were constructed in Mount Barker, with the earliest examples being the National Bank, and other outstanding examples of their class being the ANZ and BankSA banks. There was also an ANZ opened in Hahndorf, and there is a BankSA branch in a former house.

### 4.4 *Building homes*

Sites for townships were chosen for their natural attributes, most importantly the availability of a reliable water source and proximity to established roadways, but also for their access to native timber for cooking and heating, and pleasant outlook. The town plan generally was based on a grid pattern, typically following the line of road and natural topographical features such as rivers, creeks and gullies. Allotments were generally large by today's standards providing enough space for the householder to have a vegetable garden and an area for chickens and sometimes a cow or goat. Roads were wide, but often just an unmade track which would be either muddy or dusty, depending on the season. Convenient access to running water was a bonus, but most householders would have collected rainwater in tanks or sunk wells on their properties.

In the Mount Barker district the pioneer settlers built using materials available on site, such as rough sawn timber slabs for huts and barns, timber lintels and roof shingles, and half-timbering for German places. Field stones were used to construct chimneys and hearths, and windows, where they existed, were without glass. Floors were usually beaten earth, ceilings sometimes lined with canvas and limewashed along with internal walls. John Dunn recorded that his first small dwelling at Hay Valley (near Nairne) in 1840 had walls made from bunched reeds, and a roof constructed of bark and reeds.

The first pisé cottage in the area was built by Duncan McFarlane on the banks of the Mount Barker Creek. It was demolished in the early 1900s and the Roman Catholic Church today stands on what was McFarlane's orchard.

There is also a rare example of prefabricated timber houses known as Manning Houses at Blakiston. Two of these houses were imported by Captain Francis Davidson and erected on his property in March 1840. Other rare surviving construction materials include pug for walling wattle-and-daub for walls and infill, hand made bricks and thatched roofs. The major significant roofing material is now corrugated iron, although

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<sup>24</sup> Hignett & Co, op cit, p29

there are also several Willunga slate roofs in the district, and some timber shingle roofs have survived under later iron. Design of buildings varied from English Irish or Scots vernacular style to traditional German – with the latter including the distinctive half-hipped steeply-pitched roofs, and the combined loft-houses, barn-houses and shop-houses.

Stone construction replaced earlier techniques as good local building stone was sourced and quarried. A large proportion of surviving buildings feature stone walls ranging from random rubble with lime mortar to fine cut and dressed stone in a wide variety of colours, including the distinctive purple sandstone seen in Macclesfield and rose pink in Mount Barker and Nairne. Many 20<sup>th</sup> century houses feature limestone from Murray Bridge and Mount Gambier.

Bricks were produced in the district from early days, later becoming an important industry based in Littlehampton. Red brick quoins, dressings and chimneys are observable on most of the domestic and public architecture from the 1860s to about 1920. Brick walling is represented to a lesser degree, but became more common after 1900.

Some timber framed buildings survive, though these were never common due to lack of availability of suitable timber locally, and were more vulnerable to decay and loss by fire. A small number of examples of weatherboard or pressed tin-clad timber-framed houses dating to the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century have been identified. Timber construction, in the form of split gum slabs, is more commonly associated with farm outbuildings, of which there are a number of surviving examples in the district.

In pioneering days buildings were roofed using readily available materials, including reeds, thatch and split timber shingles. Some early buildings used roofing slates, which became available after the discovery of slate deposits near Willunga in 1840. Imported corrugated galvanised iron (cgi) roofing became available from the 1850s and was the predominant material used until the 1920s, when terracotta and later cement roofing tiles became available and fashionable. Many of the earlier houses were re-roofed over the years, some retaining their original shingles under the iron. Verandahs are almost universal, generally roofed with cgi and displaying a variety of profiles including bullnose, concave/ 'eyelash' or raked. Many feature decorative cast iron lace or timber fretwork valances and/or corner brackets to timber posts, which may be turned or chamfered. Smaller cottages generally have verandahs to at least their front elevations, with larger houses, particularly the popular asymmetrical villa style, featuring returns on one or two sides. A less common style of overhanging verandah forming an unbroken extension of the main roof line is seen in some early cottages, and is a feature of German influenced construction, but became popular in the 1920s 'Californian' bungalow.

## 5.0 Working

This heading has been inserted to reflect the use of the *National Australian Historic Theme Framework*. The topic of working has primarily been covered in this document under the heading of Theme 3 – Developing the Local Economy .

## 6.0 Educating

### 6.1 Associations, libraries and institutes for Self-education

Most of the towns established their own institute and library to provide cultural and educational resources and a meeting place for local residents. Mount Barker's Institute was founded in 1856, though it did not get its own premises until 1874. It functioned as the cultural centre of the district, beginning as a lending library/ reading room, and expanding its activities to include lectures, musical concerts and soirees,

theatrical performances, balls, public meetings, etc. In the 1890s alterations and additions (largely financed by a generous gift from the Barr-Smiths) provided a well-equipped theatre, dressing rooms, electric lighting etc. It continues to provide a venue for local community as Mount Barker's Town Hall.

Hahndorf's Mechanics Institute was established in 1861, occupying the front room of a private house until getting its own building in 1893 (later altered to become the Soldiers Memorial Hall). Echunga's first Institute was built in 1879, but was replaced by the Echunga Memorial Institute in 1956. Macclesfield's Mechanics Institute opened in 1881. The handsome building was designed at no cost by the Adelaide architect, FW Danker, a relation of the town's storekeeper H Danker, and constructed using the distinctive local 'purple' limestone.

## 6.2 Schools

### 6.2.1 *Private and Church Schools*

Several of the wealthier settlers engaged private tutors for their children, but it is likely that most children of labourers and the less well-off would have had no access to education in the first few years of settlement. The exception was the Lutheran school at Hahndorf, established in 1839 (probably in the first Lutheran church building), and believed to be the earliest recorded school in the district. A purpose-built school house was later constructed at 64 Mount Barker Rd in 1871.

In 1848 a small stone school building was erected at Blakiston opposite the impressive new St James Church of England Church.

In most cases, however, accommodation was makeshift: Mr Henry Bonner, who had previously tutored the Patterson family, conducted a school in Mount Barker in 1847 using the unfinished Presbyterian Church, even though no floors or windows were fitted to the building at the time. Around the same time Mr Dempster had established a school near the Paringa and Kanmantoo mines with an enrolment of about 20 children, with another 15 adult miners attending for instruction in the evenings. Around 1850 Rev Alexander Law's 'Boys' Academy' was conducted in an underground room at the Presbyterian Manse in Mount Barker.

By the 1850s a number of schools had opened. At different times a plethora of small private schools operated all over the district, some of those recorded in Mount Barker itself were:

Miss Walker's school in the original Primitive Methodist chapel in Dutton Place, Miss Doolittle's in the cellar of the Methodist Lecture Hall, Miss Price's Finishing School in Arts and Music in the Mill House, Misses Bonnar and Cruikshank's in the Lecture Hall, Misses Gowers' in the Post Office, Miss Harrison's 'School for Young Ladies', Miss Walker's 'School for Very Young Pupils', in the Methodist Chapel, Miss Henderson's select Ladies' boarding school Melton House, Miss de Mole's in Harrowfield's House and Miss Deelette's in the Institute.

In 1855 Mr Henry Bonnar was appointed headmaster of the new Mount Barker Springs School. In 1862 the stone Burnbank school (still standing) was erected there on land donated by J Frame, with contributions from people in the general area.

Another early teacher held in great esteem was a prominent Latin scholar, Victor Dumas. With his wife he utilized a cottage and a two-storey house in Walker St in 1854 for their 'School for Boys and Girls'. Their second son Walter was to be the editor of the Mount Barker Courier at its inception on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1880.

Schools were also opening in other areas, such as the Hahndorf Academy, T W Boehm, in 1857. In 1857 also Joanna Davey began the Kanmantoo School, having previously operated a small school at the nearby mining village of Staughton. The first licensed school in Nairne was opened in 1851, with an enrolment of 33 students. The teacher was Mr John Forsyth. Four years later a second school opened, making two

schools in the town. This second school lasted until 1870, when it closed. E H Hallack in his travels of 1892 refers to a 'Do-the-Boys' Hall school (probably Dotherby') in Nairne.

There were schools attached to some of the churches including Anglican Schools at Blakiston and Echunga, Catholic in Mount Barker and Macclesfield, and several Lutheran schools in Hahndorf. There was also a school at the Salvation Army home Eden Park near Wistow. In recent years a number of new private schools have opened including the Mount Barker Waldorf School and Cornerstone College.

### 6.2.2 *Public Schools*

The Central Board of Education was established under the 1851 *Education Act*, and was responsible for licensing private school teachers and inspecting schools to ensure they met appropriate standards. It was not until the 1875 *Education Act* that education for children at primary level became compulsory. The first government schools in the district were established in the 1850s, with most opening between 1876 and 1880. Mount Barker did not get its first State primary school until 1877, with others opening at Macclesfield (1857), Echunga (1862), Echunga Goldfields (later Biggs Flat), (1863), Nairne (1876), Hahndorf (1878), Springfield (1879), Kanmantoo (1880).

The South Australian Education Act 1875 provided for free and compulsory education for children from seven to 13, and resulted in the establishment of state schools in most settled areas. Every township had at least one school by the end of the 19th century. In 1876 the existing Nairne school received Public School status, and had an enrolment figure of 112. The first new state school in the district was opened in 1877 on the Adelaide Road Mount Barker with an enrolment of 163 students. The first headmaster of this school was Thomas W Walters. The school moved to new premises in 1965 and the original stone school is now business premises.

In 1908 Mount Barker High School became one of the first high schools to be established in the State. The school originally occupied part of the Primary School on Adelaide Road until moved to newly-built accommodation on its present site in 1914.

The original 1862 Burnbank schoolhouse survives and is now a private residence. Other surviving public schools range from the substantial two-storey building with attached residence at Hahndorf (1878), to the tiny 1893 old Meadows schoolroom which is now housed in the Prospect Hill museum. Some of these schools, such as the former Mount Barker Public School, now have other uses but most still survive as part of modern school complexes.

### 6.2.3 *Kindergartens*

A significant Methodist kindergarten was established at Mount Barker in 1924, with another in Edinborough St in Nairne.

## 7.0 Governing

### 7.1 Administration

#### 7.1.1 Developing local government authorities

The earliest local government authorities were the district road boards, set up by the colonial government in 1849 to make and maintain main roads and district roads. Board members were elected by the district's citizens, and held fortnightly public meetings at which locals could lobby for their projects. The Board had powers to award contracts for road and bridge construction, appoint engineers, and employ day labourers

to work on maintaining the roads. This was an important source of local employment for farmers and agricultural labourers between busy times on farms. The board also initially had powers to levy a vehicle tax – the ‘dray tax’ – but this proved very unpopular and was withdrawn, and henceforth road boards were given an allocation from the colonial government. The Mount Barker Board briefly collected a toll on vehicles and stock using the Great Eastern Road. Other civic responsibilities including running the local pound, dealing with rubbish, sewerage and noxious materials, issuing slaughtering licenses and managing cemeteries and public parks were held by various local boards of health and government appointed health inspectors.

In June 1852 the *Districts Councils Act* was passed providing for independent municipal government. The following year on 1 September 1853 the District Council of Nairne became one of the first Councils to be established outside Adelaide. The Council first met in the Assembly Rooms at the Crooked Billet, later in the school, then a purpose built room in Allargue Street.

A month later in October 1853 the District Council of Mount Barker was established. The Council first met in the Gloag Hotel, then in the new Institute constructed in 1856. In 1939 after amalgamation of several former district councils, a purpose built Council office was constructed on Mann Street.

The Kondoparinga District Council was also founded in October 1853. From 1880 the Council met in the Oddfellows Hall in Meadows until constructing their own Council office in 1893.

From 1853 the Echunga District Council met in the Hagen Arms Hotel. The Council included the Echunga, Hahndorf (where one side of the main street was in the Echunga Council area) and Crafers Wards. During 1865 the Echunga Council also met in the German Arms Hotel at Hahndorf. The Echunga Institute was constructed in 1879 and became the usual home of Council, although they occasionally met in other venues such as the Halfway House Hotel at Stirling East (early 1800s). In 1883 the Crafers Ward was severed from the Echunga District Council. The three wards were then known as Echunga, Hahndorf, and Jupiter Creek. In 1933 the Echunga District Council became part of the Meadows District Council and Hahndorf joined Mount Barker.

The District Council of Macclesfield met in the Davenport Arms Hotel from its formation in October 1853 until 1886. After 1886 they spent half a year at each of the Davenport and Macclesfield Hotels until purchasing the Institute in 1891. The Council became part of the District of Meadows in 1935, which by then included Echunga, Macclesfield, Kondoparinga and Clarendon. In the 1990s a large section of the Meadows District combined with Mount Barker to form the current District Council of Mount Barker.

### 7.1.2 Policing and Courts

The earliest records of an official police presence in the district date from 1840, when there were policemen stationed at Mount Barker and Nairne. In Nairne the first police station was established in the town’s first public house, the Nairne Hotel (now the District Hotel, it was reconstructed in 1851). A purpose-built police station and cell block were constructed in Nairne in 1863.

In Mount Barker, a station was constructed on Gawler Street in 1840. Stone stables were added in 1848, and the original station was extended in c1852. The current station and cells were constructed in 1875. The stables and the earliest stone-work in the predominantly 1875 police station date comprise the State’s oldest surviving police buildings. The Mount Barker court house (1865) is one of the State’s oldest intact court houses. The judiciary consisted of local Justices of the Peace, including D McFarland and John Dunn.

One of the State’s finest police complexes was erected in Callington in 1867. The design of the Echunga police station (1874-1880) is attributed to G T Light, and probably replaced an earlier lock-up (1854) built during the goldfields era. The State’s oldest non-purpose built police station is located at Wistow where a 1850s cottage was requisitioned for police purposes from 1882-84 during the construction of the railway.

### 7.1.3 Health Services

In the early colonial period there were few medical practitioners in the district, and settlers had to rely on neighbourly help, as it was almost impossible to visit the city for medical aid. In the early 1860s Kanmantoo had a resident doctor, Dr John Weld, who was the council's health officer. He later moved his practice to Nairne, then Mount Barker<sup>25</sup>.

Dr William Inness is believed to have been the first resident doctor in the Mount Barker district. On his death in 1849 Dr Andrew Chalmers, a young Scot who had come out as surgeon-superintendent on the immigrant ship *Princess Royal* the year before started a medical practice in his home, the former Crown Hotel and later RSL Clubhouse in Hutchinson Street. He died in 1862 while still only 42. Dr R Robertson arrived around 1860, and remained for nine years, during which time he served as official medical attendant to the sick and poor of the town. Later doctors included Drs Weld, Forster, Dean and Bickle. Drs Dean and Bickle lived at 'Arcacia', the former residence of J G Ramsay. Later Dr Bickle purchased land which had once been leased as a market place, and built a new home there 'St. Leonards' in Druids Avenue, which subsequently became the home of most of the town's medical men.

Nurse E J Thomas ran a small private hospital in Nairne in the early 1900s, but there was no hospital in Mount Barker at the time. During the 1918 influenza epidemic, an empty house on Wellington Road, built by Thomas Paltridge, was used as a makeshift isolation hospital. As the house was for sale, Dr Wunderly approached Mrs Barr-Smith for financial aid, to purchase it as a memorial to soldiers of World War I. She generously gave the required amount of £1,350, and the townspeople subscribed a further sum to furnish it. Soon after Nurse Thomas closed her hospital at Nairne and donated much of her equipment.<sup>26</sup>

The Mount Barker Soldiers' Memorial Hospital was progressively extended and upgraded, with a maternity section added as a World War II memorial, until undergoing complete redevelopment in 1987.

### 7.1.4 Welfare services

Prior to the development of a state sponsored welfare system care of the elderly, sick or destitute within communities was generally seen as the responsibility of their relatives. In newly established communities people were often separated from family support, and had to rely on charity through friendly societies, churches and council committees. The Adelaide Destitute Board was established in 1849 to provide relief to those in need, and councils such as those in the Mount Barker district liaised with the Board to identify worthy cases and apply for aid on their behalf. Councils were funded to provide temporary 'outdoor relief' in the form of medical care, medicines and rations, to needy people within their communities. They also arranged accommodation at the Destitute Asylum in Adelaide for the homeless and elderly, for pregnant unmarried women and deserted wives. Elderly people suffering from dementia frequently ended up in the Parkside Lunatic Asylum. Poor widows or unmarried women without means of support, orphans, the elderly and incurably ill had few options open to them other than to be admitted to a state institution in the city. Orphans were often fostered out or adopted, sometimes becoming victims of exploitation and mistreatment.

Societies such as the Independent Order of Oddfellows, Ancient Order of Foresters, Masons and Druids, in some cases provided sickness and death benefits for their members, and some local philanthropists made provisions for the deserving poor. A group of 12 comfortable row houses, known as Salem cottages, was built in Druids Street Mount Barker by John Dunn in 1879 for the widows of the men that worked in his flour mills, and administered by a Trust. Some still remain.

<sup>25</sup> Mills, A R, *Kungna Tuko: A History of Kanmantoo* (3<sup>rd</sup> edn.), Hyde Park Press, Adelaide, 2012, p128

<sup>26</sup> Trigg, Jean, and Robertson, Marjorie, *History of Mount Barker*, 1950, Manuscript courtesy of Mount Barker Branch of National Trust of South Australia, [https://localwiki.org/adelaide-hills/History\\_of\\_Mount\\_Barker#18](https://localwiki.org/adelaide-hills/History_of_Mount_Barker#18) accessed 20/11/19



## 7.2 Civil defence

Like many colonial communities Mount Barker had its own Volunteer Rifles Corps formed in the 1860s. This followed the passing of *Act No. 2 of 1854*, entitled 'An Act to organize and establish a Volunteer Military Force in South Australia', in response to a perceived military threat from the French, and later the Russians.

The Adelaide Regiment of Volunteer Rifles, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel BT Finniss, was formed in 1860, following a number of companies raised in 1859. The South Australian government provided uniforms and rifles, but the units were largely self-managed within local communities. Nairne was the first country town to raise its own company, commencing in August 1859. In 1864 the Nairne group amalgamated with the Mount Barker Volunteer Rifles, but this appears to have been disbanded around 1870.

Concern for the possibility of external threats persisted (though switching to Russia), and kept the colonial government's attention focussed on maintaining military readiness throughout the period.

Various parts of the Bremer Valley and Nairne districts were used for military manoeuvres between 1879 and the mid 20th century. Military Road was named in 1880. In 1908 the Nairne military base was located on the west side of Mount Barker Summit, later moved due to noise and danger to townspeople. In the same period, Charles Hannam's Mine Paddock at Kanmantoo was used for cavalry exercises, and mineshafts and workings around McFarlane Hill provided war experience for horses. The scarp of Bremer Range provided a target area, and artillery units were stationed at Crofton. In the 1930s, paddocks near Millbrae and Burnbrae were used for manoeuvres, and between 1939 and 1942 there were several mock battles staged in the Kanmantoo area. Vehicle testing also took place and historic sites such as the Paringa mine were used for target practice.

## 8.0 Cultural Life

### 8.1 Recreation

#### 8.1.1 Sports

As in most communities sport and cultural pursuits played a valuable role in the social life of the inhabitants. Land was set aside for recreational purposes in the first town surveys, providing public space for organised events and informal recreation. Mount Barker had a Cricket Club and Football Club by the early 1880s, and Tennis, Croquet and Bowling clubs by the early 1900s. Additional land was gifted for public recreational use by benefactors such as John Dunn, who donated the land for Dunn Park sports ground.

Church picnics, sports days, pigeon-shoots, ploughing matches, horse racing and hunting to hounds, along with other outdoor entertainments, provided welcome diversion from the demands of the working week, and opportunities for making and maintaining social connections.

#### 8.1.2 Parks and gardens

Creating attractive parks and gardens was integral to the Victorian nature aesthetic, and ideals of healthful living, and was something that even the smallest towns and villages aspired to. This was particularly demonstrated in the Adelaide Hills environment where the 'Devon-like' climate and fertile soils made it possible to grow European trees, flowers and shrubs to beautify private gardens and public spaces, and provide a reminder of 'home'. Land was designated for public parks in the original plans of the private

towns of the Mount Barker district, several of which showed the influence of Colonel Light's plan for Adelaide, with surrounding parklands. Within a very few years of settlement many hundreds of trees had been planted to enhance the appearance of the streets and provide shade and places for public recreation. The Adelaide Botanical Gardens with its inspired director Richard Schomburgk played a part in encouraging an appreciation of trees and providing a supply of new plants, along with the South Australian Woods and Forests Department. The wide streets of new suburban subdivisions in the 1880s soon were lined with avenues of Oaks, Elms, Beeches and London Plane trees, with stately pines providing deep shade in the recreation grounds and willows along the creek lines. English-style clipped hedges for privacy and hawthorn hedges to contain stock were also widely used. Druids Avenue (formerly Dutton Place) in Mount Barker was planted with 70 oak trees in 1890 by members of the Ancient Order of Druids as a gift to the town. Following World War I memorial trees were planted as Avenues of Honour, and Memorial Parks paid tribute to local soldiers who served. Arbor Day was marked annually by tree planting ceremonies involving the district's school children, who were rewarded with refreshments and a half-day holiday for their effort. There was an appreciation also of the magnificent red gums native to the area, some already hundreds of years old at settlement. Individual trees such as the enormous red gum that once arched across the road to touch the balcony of the Miller's Arms Hotel were local landmarks, as were the famous gum trees beloved by Hahndorf artist Hans Heyson.

## 8.2 Forming Associations

### 8.2.1 *Friendly societies*

Many of the friendly societies established groups that met in local halls and institutes. Only a few purpose-built halls were constructed with several others being established in existing buildings.

The establishment of various clubs, societies and associations helped cement social cohesion and also provided a form of welfare within newly established communities. It was also a way of achieving mutual aims through co-operation to advance the interests of members.

Branches of established British fraternal societies including the Oddfellows, Ancient Order of Foresters, Rechabites, Druids and Freemasons were formed in many of the townships. An Oddfellows branch with 42 members existed in Nairne by 1847, and Mount Barker had a Foresters Court and Oddfellows Lodge, along with a Volunteer Rifle Corps and Literary Institute, by 1866.

Establishment of Mount Barker's Independent Order of Rechabites (c1880), Druids Lodge (1889), and Prince of Wales Masonic Lodge (c1890s), reflected the town's growing population in the latter part of the century.

The first meeting of the Mount Barker Agricultural Society was held in the Nairne Arms in 1846, and the society continued to make a significant contribution to the social and economic life of the district for almost 120 years through its annual shows and other activities supporting the interests of local farmers and producers.

## 8.3 Worshipping

One of the founding principles of the establishment of South Australia was religious freedom, and this attracted many settlers who were members of various dissenting sects, and held non-conventional beliefs. Even for those members of the established denominations there was a strong impetus to band together for religious observance, and to build churches. Construction of churches and chapels was encouraged by a government subsidy towards the cost of building, as it was seen as an important social benefit in providing stability and a sense of belonging within a newly established community. As well as moral and spiritual guidance and social connection for their congregations, churches also provided practical services in education, health and welfare for the poor. Ministers of religion were educated men and women in an era

when education was not universal, held high social status, and were frequently called on to serve as members of local committees formed to address needs within their communities.

South Australia's first rural Church of England was constructed in Blakiston in 1846. The St James Church is now the second-oldest Anglican church in the State. Anglican churches were later built at Hahndorf (1885), Echunga (1851), Macclesfield (1856) and Meadows (c.1870).

The State's oldest surviving Presbyterian church, St Andrews at Mount Barker, dates from 1847, though it was not completed until some years later. The building was originally intended to be a joint denominational church, but was taken over by the Presbyterian congregation in 1858. Prior to this, from 1842 church services were conducted in Duncan MacFarlane's barn, until the Presbyterian Church at Nairne was built in 1846.

The first recorded church to be constructed in South Australia was Congregational, and the denomination was prominent in the first few decades of settlement. By 1848, they had already constructed eight churches and been instrumental in the construction of at least two Union Chapels. The 1848 chapel at Macclesfield is one of only three Congregational churches which survive from this period.

The country's longest continuous Lutheran congregation was established in Hahndorf in 1840 in the location of St Michael's Church (current church constructed 1859). The Salem Lutheran Church was built at Callington in 1865.

South Australia's only Unitarian Church to survive from the 19<sup>th</sup> century was constructed in Shady Grove in 1865. One of the earliest Quaker churches and cemeteries was also constructed in Mount Barker, although now only a couple of gravestones survive.

The denomination with the most widespread presence in the district was the Methodists, the three principal sects having constructed dozens of chapels in the district during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The first Methodist congregation in Mount Barker met in a room in Dunn's mill hut and later in a slab church in Cameron Street, built with red gum posts, earthen floor and bags for windows. The first stone church (later the lecture hall) was opened in 1851. The Primitive Methodists constructed over 47 churches in the Mount Barker circuit extending beyond the district boundaries. The Wesleyans also spread widely and had the second-largest number of churches in the district.

There was only one Bible Christian chapel erected in the area. This was constructed in 1854 in Harrogate.

Mount Barker's first Catholic church was built in 1851 near the present Catholic Cemetery and named after St. Francis de Sales. It was followed by churches at Kanmantoo (1858) and Macclesfield (1867).

The Society of Friends also had a strong presence in Mount Barker, with early settler Joseph May building a meeting house on his property 'Fairfield' before 1854 to serve the Quaker community of the district, which included prominent pioneer J B Hack and his family.

#### 8.4 Remembering the Fallen

World War I, 'The Great War', of 1914-19 was seen by many Australians as test of loyalty to the British Empire, and practically every town and village across the nation sent off sons, brothers, fathers and husbands to fight Britain's enemies in Europe. Many never came home, and their loss touched a whole generation. As a means of coming to terms with the enormous nationwide grief that followed the war, many towns in the Mount Barker district erected war memorials in prominent positions as a tribute to those who served. There were also memorial halls and parks established to commemorate the fallen, and several memorial avenues were planted in the district. The Soldiers' Memorial Hospital at Mount Barker was established and named in honour of those who served in the Great War, and additions were made after World War II were named in honour of local servicemen and women from that conflict. Traditions

such as Anzac Day and Remembrance Day continue to be observed annually across the district, and the Returned Services League is represented in most towns.

## 8.5 The Arts and Sciences

### 8.5.1 *Fine Art*

The district has been associated with several significant artists, most notably the internationally-renowned painter Hans Heysen. In addition to established galleries such as Heysen's house 'the Cedars' and the Academy at Hahndorf, there are many small galleries and craft shops dotted throughout a district renowned for tourism.

### 8.5.2 *Music and Drama*

The Mount Barker Institute provided a focus for cultural activity for many decades, with musical and theatrical performances a regular and popular form of entertainment. Visiting and local artists presented concerts, reviews and plays, and a wide variety of travelling acts from opera and vaudeville to performing dogs billed as 'the acme of all canine acts'<sup>27</sup> and 'South Australia's Blondin' whose performance on a high wire stretched between the rear of the Institute Hall across the road to the yard at the back of the Mount Barker Hotel drew gasps from the enthusiastic crowd<sup>28</sup>.

The owners of Auchendarroch, wealthy businessman and philanthropist Robert and Joanna Barr Smith, were great patrons of the arts and took a keen interest in local performances as well as hosting amateur theatricals and tableaux of their own when in residence during the summer. Their home, the former Oakfield Hotel was remodelled in 1878 in the 'French Renaissance of the Modern School Style' to become a spectacular thirty-roomed mansion extensively decorated with wallpapers, fabrics, carpets and furnishings from William Morris & Co. The renovations and additions included a theatre and ballroom, regularly used to entertain locals and visitors to Mount Barker. The house was surrounded by a large English style garden with a croquet lawn, rose garden, orchard and many beautiful exotic trees, including over 50 oaks, and was the scene of many garden parties attended by locals, including an annual Christmas party put on by Joanna Barr Smith to which all the local children were invited<sup>29</sup>.

In recent years Mount Barker has become known as host of some significant music and cultural events. In particular, the large Dunn Memorial Church has been a significant orchestral and choral venue in the district.

### 8.5.3 *Science*

Several of South Australia's most notable early botanists lived and farmed in Mount Barker. These included Ferdinand von Muller (Bugle Ranges) and Krichauff and Fischer (also of Bugle Ranges). Another significant scientist and farmer who influenced the area was Douglas Mawson, famous Antarctic explorer, whose own property was outside the district boundary (south of Meadows), but who also worked on land within the district round Meadows.

Aboriginal writer, scientist and inventor David Unaipon was born at Point McLeay Aboriginal mission but spent some years living at Kanmantoo in the home of Charles Burney Young, patron of the Aborigines' Friends' Association, who provided him with a classical education and encouraged his interests in science

<sup>27</sup> Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha Advertiser, Friday 3 February 1922, page 3

<sup>28</sup> Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha Advertiser, Friday 4 February 1881, page 2

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.adelaide.edu.au/library/special/stories/barr-smith/interests/>

and philosophy.

By 1909 David Unaipon had developed and patented a modified handpiece for shearing. He was obsessed with discovering the secret of perpetual motion. In 1914 his repetition of predictions by others about the development of polarized light and helicopter flight were publicized, building his reputation as a 'black genius' and 'Australia's Leonardo'. Between 1909 and 1944 Unaipon made patent applications for nine other inventions, including a centrifugal motor, a multi-radial wheel and a mechanical propulsion device, but the patents lapsed.

Sir Douglas Mawson, scientist, university lecturer, and celebrated Antarctic explorer, owned a 1,200 acre property near Meadows. This property, known as Harewood, was his retreat from city life. In 1920 Mawson founded South Australian Hardwoods Ltd. and established a mill adjacent to the Kuitpo Forest.

## 8.6 Living

### 8.6.1 Significant people

Prominent people who made a significant impact on the development of the district and indeed the State include John Barton Hack, Samuel and Robert Davenport, Matthew Smillie, John Dunn, George Goyder and Robert and Joanna Barr Smith, Joseph Hagen, Sir Hans Heysen, Duncan McFarlane, Pastor Fritche and Francis Davison.

People of outstanding national significance who lived and worked in the district include Ferdinand von Muller and David Unaipon.

## 9.0 Marking the Phases of Life

### 9.1 Birth

Most women gave birth at home, attended by a local midwife or neighbours. Medical practitioners were not generally available in the district until the 1860s, and in any case were not considered necessary for most births. It was an elderly midwife from Callington who attended the safe delivery of the Coleman triplets at Kanmantoo, causing quite a sensation in the early 1900s. Private 'lying-in' homes and 'rest homes' such as Nurse Thomas' hospital at Nairne provided limited nursing care for pregnant women and their babies, but it was not til 1949 that the district had its first dedicated birthing facility, in the Mount Barker Soldiers' Memorial Hospital Maternity Wing. Large families were common, although local cemeteries bear witness to the many children who died in infancy as the result of common diseases such as measles, diphtheria and whooping cough.

### 9.2 Childhood

Children attended school and also worked from an early age, helping at home or on the farm, and caring for younger siblings. They were often taken out of school to help at harvest time. Boys were employed at the mines from around the age of 12 or 14, and might be apprenticed to other trades around the same age. Girls entered domestic service or worked as farm labourers. Charles Young arranged for children at Kanmantoo to be excused from school to help harvest grapes on his vineyard, establishing a custom observed well into the 1900s.

### 9.3 Courtship and marriage

Many of the pioneer settlers arrive in South Australia as assisted immigrants with their wives and children,

as the Wakefield system promoted the family unit as the ideal, to avoid the problems arising from gender imbalance experienced in other colonies. The presence of women was seen as a steadying influence in pioneer societies, and men with family responsibilities were thought more likely to stay in one place, thus maintaining a reliable labour force (this theory was largely debunked during the gold rush era when many wives were abandoned while their menfolk succumbed to gold fever). A young single man starting out on the land needed the practical help of a wife and children to work beside him, and marriage was of course actively encouraged by the church. The German immigrant women of Hahndorf gained a reputation as hard-working farmers, well used to the physical work involved in agricultural work, and able to put in a full day's work in the field while caring for children and the domestic work.

Single women could be perceived as a potential moral threat, so were married off early. Many young women married within their close family and friendship groups, who in many cases had come out on the same ship, and marriages between cousins was not unusual. It was also very common for men to marry twice or three times, as the rates of death in childbirth remained high throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Even as late as the 1920s the puerperal death rate was one in every 187 births<sup>30</sup>.

#### 9.4 Death and dying

When Mount Barker was first laid out land was set aside for a cemetery between Walker and Stephen Street, but it was decided this was too close to the heart of the township, so the 30 or 50 graves were removed to the 'Triangle' an area of public land at the western end of Mann Street. Cottages later built on the former cemetery site became known locally as 'Resurrection Row' or 'Dead Man's Row'. The Triangle site was used up until 1850, when the graves were again shifted to the present cemeteries on the eastern outskirts of the town.

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<sup>30</sup> Stevens, Moya, *More than a Hospital: the history of the Mount Barker District Soldiers' Memorial Hospital and the Adelaide Hills Community Health Service*, Mount Barker, 2009, p47

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