



NEWSLETTER – SPRING 2024

Pioneer Service St Mark's Church, Penwortham

A Pioneer Service was held in St Mark's Church on Sunday 1st September. During the service David Spackman spoke about the Spackman & Solly families – both families have ancestors buried in St Mark's Cemetery.



David's ancestor, John Spackman arrived in SA in 1846 and settled in Auburn. He also spoke about Reuben Solly who arrived in 1840 and was recorded as a butcher in Penwortham

St Mark's Church Storyboard On the Riesling Trail

MHHS has placed a storyboard within view of St Mark's church on the Riesling Trail in Penwortham. Along with a photo of the Church, the board gives a brief history of St Mark's to enlighten passersby as to the significant history of the building. A more detailed photo of the storyboard will be included in the next Newsletter



Meredith, David & Mal placing the Storyboard
on the Riesling Trail

Horrocks Vale
COLLECTIONS

AUSTRALIAN MERINO WOOL

Nestled in Horrocks Pass, southeast of Port Augusta in South Australia, is a Marino Sheep Station producing fine Marino wool. What do you get when a couture bridal designer of 25 years marries a Merino wool grazier? A sustainable, wool-based luxury Wedding Dress Collection of course! Nikki Atkinson has done just that. She runs a Bridal Design business in Port Augusta using 100% fine Marino Wool and was recently proclaimed the SA Winner of the 'AgriFutures Rural Women's' Award'.



Nikki was recently in Europe showcasing Australian Marino Wool. She attended the Harrogate Bridal Week as well as meeting with buyers in London & Paris showing what makes Australian Wool so beautiful.



Horrocks of Western Australia

Joseph Lucas Horrocks was born in 1803 (15 years before John Ainsworth Horrocks) in Bolton, Lancashire, England. He was educated and at some point worked as a sick bay attendant in the Royal Navy. In the 1850s he was carrying on a business as a merchant in Manchester and also in a partnership in London. He was declared bankrupt in March 1851. In April 1851 he pleaded guilty at the Old Bailey to forging three bills of exchange totaling £1,247/0/2 and was sentenced to 14 years transportation. He departed Woolwich on 23 October 1851 on board the Marion, arriving in Fremantle on 31 January 1852.



Although having no formal training, Horrocks, as a Ticket-of-Leave convict, performed the role of Medical Officer at the Lynton Convict Hiring Depot in Western Australia between 1853 and 1855, owing to his medical experience in the Royal Navy. He was paid £20 per annum (\$40) with accommodation and rations for his services. After leaving the Depot, Horrocks moved to Wanerenooka where he opened a store.



The ruins of the hospital

In 1859, Horrocks was told of the presence of copper ore at Gwalla near Northampton, WA. He became the leading entrepreneur in its development, employing up to 60 Ticket-of-Leave men, and was responsible for housing the workforce in substantially built miners' cottages at a modest rent and also for building roads and other infrastructure. Gwalla became recognised as the most advanced mining community at the time and a desirable place to live and work. Horrocks was responsible for the building of Gwalla church, unfortunately now no more than a ruin, but which was, in its time, an impressive stone structure with a steeple. The church was non-denominational, to be used by all religions. In 1863 he succeeded in having land set aside for a school, the erection of which was financed by George Shenton.

Horrocks died in 1865 and is buried in the Gwalla cemetery. His achievements mark him as one of the most remarkable of the almost 10,000 convicts who arrived in Western Australia between 1850 & 1868. The little town Horrocks Beach, is named after him.

Although Joseph Horrocks was born in the same vicinity of Lancashire as John Ainsworth Horrocks, we cannot as yet find any family connection



Minnie Berrington's Opal Journey

Why would an English girl from a well-to-do family choose to spend her life working as an opal miner in one of the most barren and unforgiving places in the world? That is exactly what a London typist did in 1926 when she packed her bags and took her younger brother on a voyage to South Australia.

Minnie came from a wealthy family, but her father lost his fortune at the gambling tables in Cannes and Minnie's mother was left to fend for herself and care for her four children. She too died when her youngest son was 15 years old, leaving Minnie to care for him. It was 1925 and there was economic stress in England, so Minnie decided to head for South Australia with young Victor on Australia's assisted passage scheme. Australia did not disappoint, although Minnie disliked her job as a housekeeper in Adelaide. Victor joined a band of outback suppliers sending regular letters and photos to his sister, begging her to join him. She leapt at the opportunity and boarded the *Afghan Express* at Adelaide Railway Station, disembarking at a siding called William Creek.

Victor and his friends often spoke of opals, and Minnie became fascinated with the idea of digging up her fortune. After arriving at Coober Pedy, she settled into a life of intense heat, blowflies, ants, mice and centipedes – luckily Minnie had never been faint-hearted! She acquired a license and became the first woman to work independently, digging and blasting her own shafts. Although she was 'petite' she matched the men in stamina and soon became 'one of the guys'. Minnie worked at Coober Pedy for seven years, but it was when she heard rumors of a new opal field Minnie finally found her real home. The place was called Andamooka, and finding life at Coober Pedy had become 'tame', she and a friend set out on a truck for Andamooka.

Minnie Berrington could easily be described as the 'mother' of Andamooka. She was there when it was still as barren as the moon and one of the first claims staked was in Minnie's name. The little town soon grew and Minnie saw the first shop and a small school established. She worked as the postmistress, handed out miner's rights, distributed food stamps and was the designated police officer, all while searching for opals. Due to her failing health, she had to reluctantly leave Andamooka, but remembered her time in the opal fields as "the most exciting time of my life". She died on 13th April 2001 at the age of 103.

Edited extract from an article in *Traces* magazine Edition 24

Recommended further reading; "*Minnie*" by Marianne Van Velzen



Minnie at work in Andamooka



Minnie's mode of transport in the desert

It is with regret that we acknowledge the passing of Geoff Treloar, a long-standing member of the Society and descendant of one of the first families to settle in Watervale.

Geoff was responsible for the restoration of a very important historical artifact. In 1998 he commissioned Artlab to restore the 'Treloar Hair Wreath' made by his great-grandmother Sarah Treloar in 1880. He subsequently donated it to the Society. The wreath is now in the custody of the Art Gallery of South Australia.



Sarah's hair wreath, made from the first curls of her ten children born between 1850-1872 in Watervale



Camel Trains to Steel Wheels

At the State Library of SA

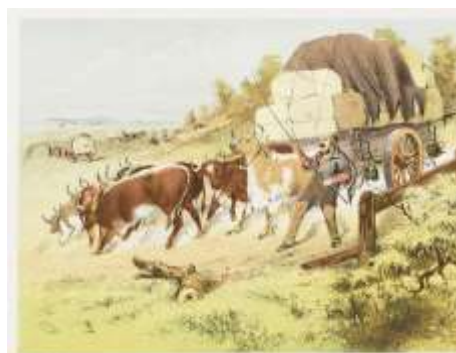


This exhibition features fascinating archival records, photos and footage that captured the events and challenges from the railway's first 60 years, including its impact on First Nations people.

On until 24th January 2025

Acquisitions & Donations

ST Gill Print "Wool-drays" – 1865
Donated by member Jim Cowan



President	Wendy Spackman (0417175234)	Newsletter: Jim Morran & Meredith McInnis
Vice-President	Meredith McInnis	Minute Secretary: Jim Morran
Secretary	Mal Paterson	Publicity: Meredith McInnis
Treasurer	David Spackman	Public Officer: David Spackman

General Committee: Eugenie Booth and Pam Datson

Contact

Secretary: Mal Paterson - Phone: 8843 4123

Correspondence to: Secretary MHHS
PO Box 38, WATERVALE, SA 54

Email: mhhsinc@gmail.com
Website: www.mthorrock.org

Research Officer: Janet Morran - Phone: 0493 255357

Details of charges for research undertaken by the Society are available on request





PENNY PRATT MP
 MEMBER FOR FROME
Shadow Minister for Regional Health Services
 Shadow Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention
 Shadow Minister for Ageing
 Shadow Minister for Indigenous Health
 08 8842 3403
frome@parliament.sa.gov.au
 853 Main North Road
 (PO Box 1242)
 CLARE SA 5453

