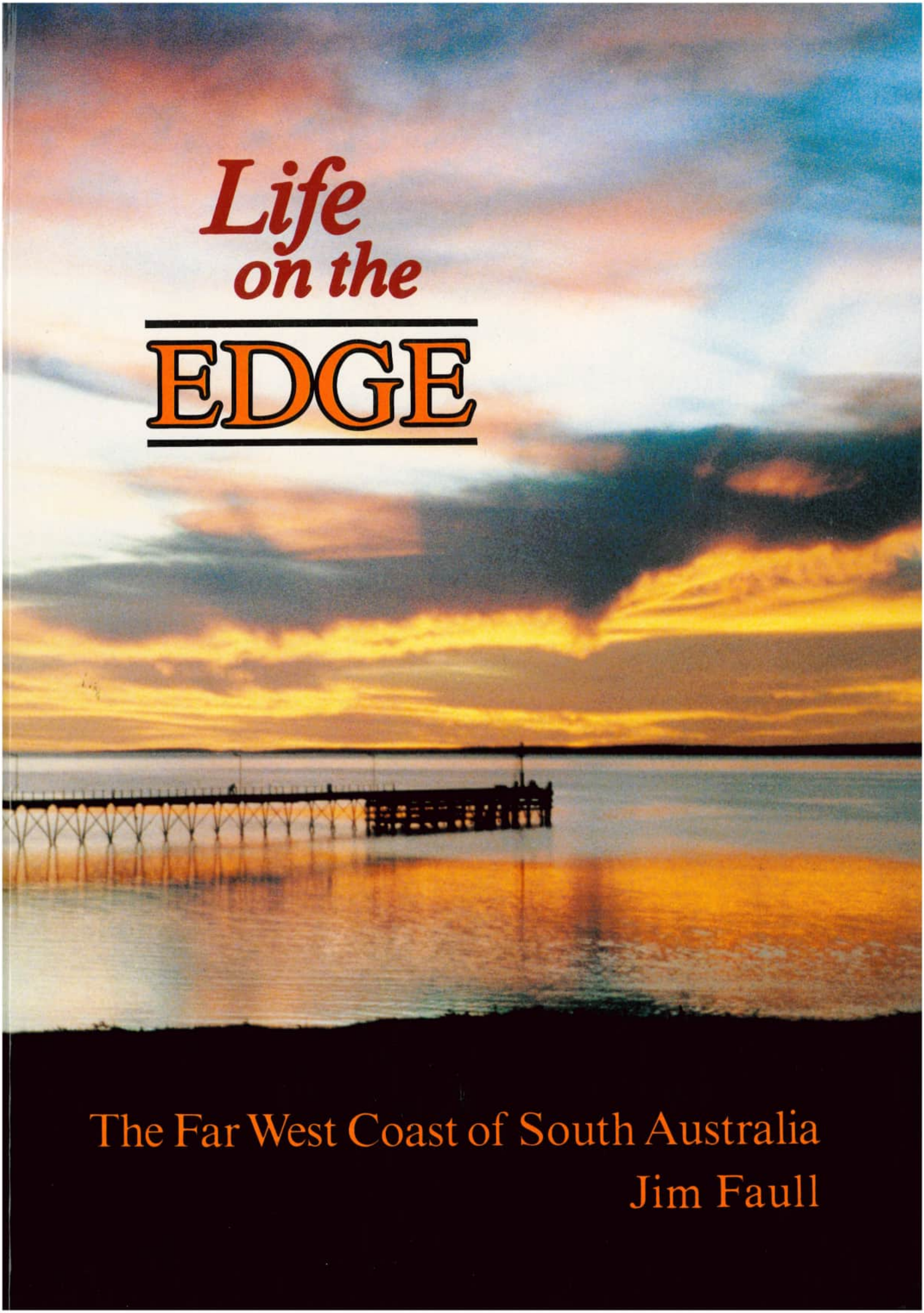

Life
on the
EDGE
The Far West Coast of South Australia
Jim Faull

For the Coasters

The Edge

Life on the Edge — the Far West Coast of South Australia is a title chosen with care. It states the area the book deals with and it hints at a condition — a condition bred by the area and its economic and social forces.

The *Far West* is on the edge of the Southern Ocean and it is on the edge of the Great Victoria Desert. To the rest of South Australia it is also on the edge of the closely settled land.

Life in the *Far West* has struggled on the edge of poverty, on the edge of loneliness and on the edge of racial tolerance.

And yet, for some, the *Far West* is the inviting sea, the memorable sunsets, the King George Whiting, the lobster salads, and the friendly egalitarian society of the Coasters; a place on the edge of Paradise.

Life on the EDGE

The Far West Coast of South Australia

Jim Faull

A South Australian Centre for Settlement Studies Publication.

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Foreword

LIFE ON THE EDGE: The Far West Coast of South Australia is a comprehensive history of people and places encompassed within the District Council of Murat Bay, as well as the areas west including Penong, Fowlers Bay and Coorabie.

In 1985 the District Council of Murat Bay commissioned the South Australian Centre for Settlement Studies to produce a book on the history of our area, and Jim Faull, Senior Lecturer in Geographical Studies at the Magill Campus of the South Australian College of Advanced Education, was asked to be the author.

It was the author's intention to provide a comprehensive and accurate analysis of the history of our region. Jim has enhanced the book by using local reminiscences, as well as the local expertise of Pauline Jolly, Kaye Gregor and Des Whitmarsh, to extend this analysis into the many areas that are accurately covered in this book.

This is a story starting at the beginning of European settlement in our area, which makes it a unique testimonial to the courage, determination and of the isolation of the early pioneers who settled here.

The author has captured the spirit of development and change from the beginning of early settlement, to the modern age of today.

Our area has always suffered from isolation, and as you read this book you will appreciate the modern roads, transport, communications and medical facilities which we enjoy today. The early settlers have given us an excellent foundation on which to develop our area, and as history is repeated this book will be a valuable reference for many years after its release.

The District Council of Murat Bay is most thankful to all who have participated in the production of this book.

As Mayor of the District Council of Murat Bay, I am honoured to commend this book to you, in the year of the Australian Bicentenary.

I am sure that you will spend many enjoyable hours reading it.

MALCOLM J PUCKRIDGE
MAYOR
DISTRICT COUNCIL OF MURAT BAY

This book's use of both Imperial and Metric systems for weights, measures and currency is realistic in historical terms, but is also confusing for those who, today, use one system only. For them the conversion tables below may be useful.

one pound	$2	1 ton	1.016 tonnes
ten shillings	$1	1 gallon	4.54609 litres
1 mile	1.61 kilometres	32° F	0° C
1 acre	0.4047 hectares	1 inch	25.4 millimetres
1 hectare	2.471 acres	1 kilogram	2.2046 pounds

Those who still find the situation frustrating and confusing might take solace from the following:

A Farmer's Lament

Metric conversion has ruined me financially.
When they changed to dollars my overdraft doubled overnight.
Then when I was struggling against this burden, they changed from acres to hectares and my farm is now only half the size it was. Then they brought in kilograms instead of pounds and now I only get half the wool clip I used to.
On top of all this, they brought in daylight saving. At my age the days become too long to get through, so I decided to sell the place. Wouldn't you know it? — now they have changed miles to kilometres and I'm so far out of town I can't sell the b_____ place!!!

From a notice board at the Koppio Museum, S.A.

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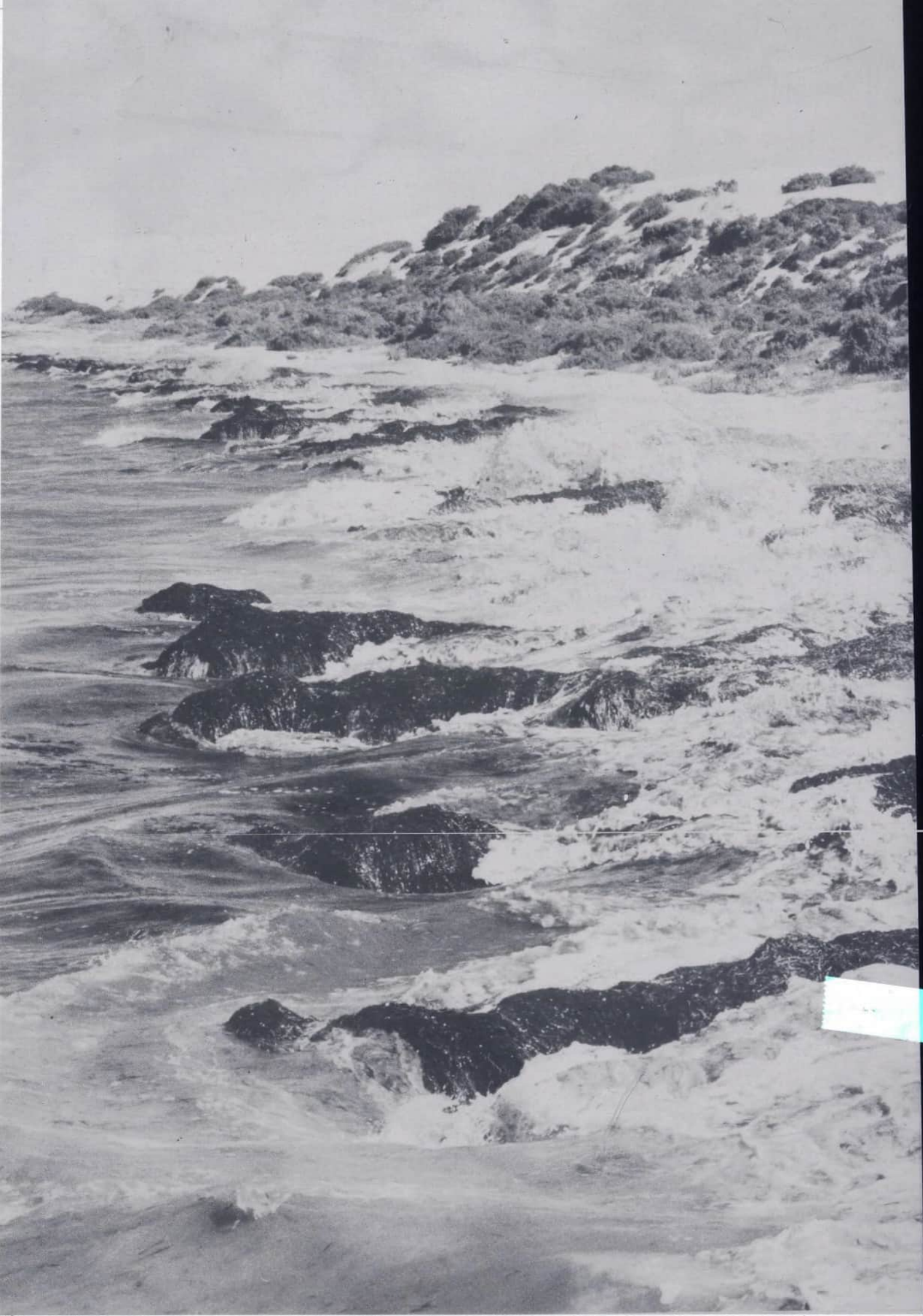
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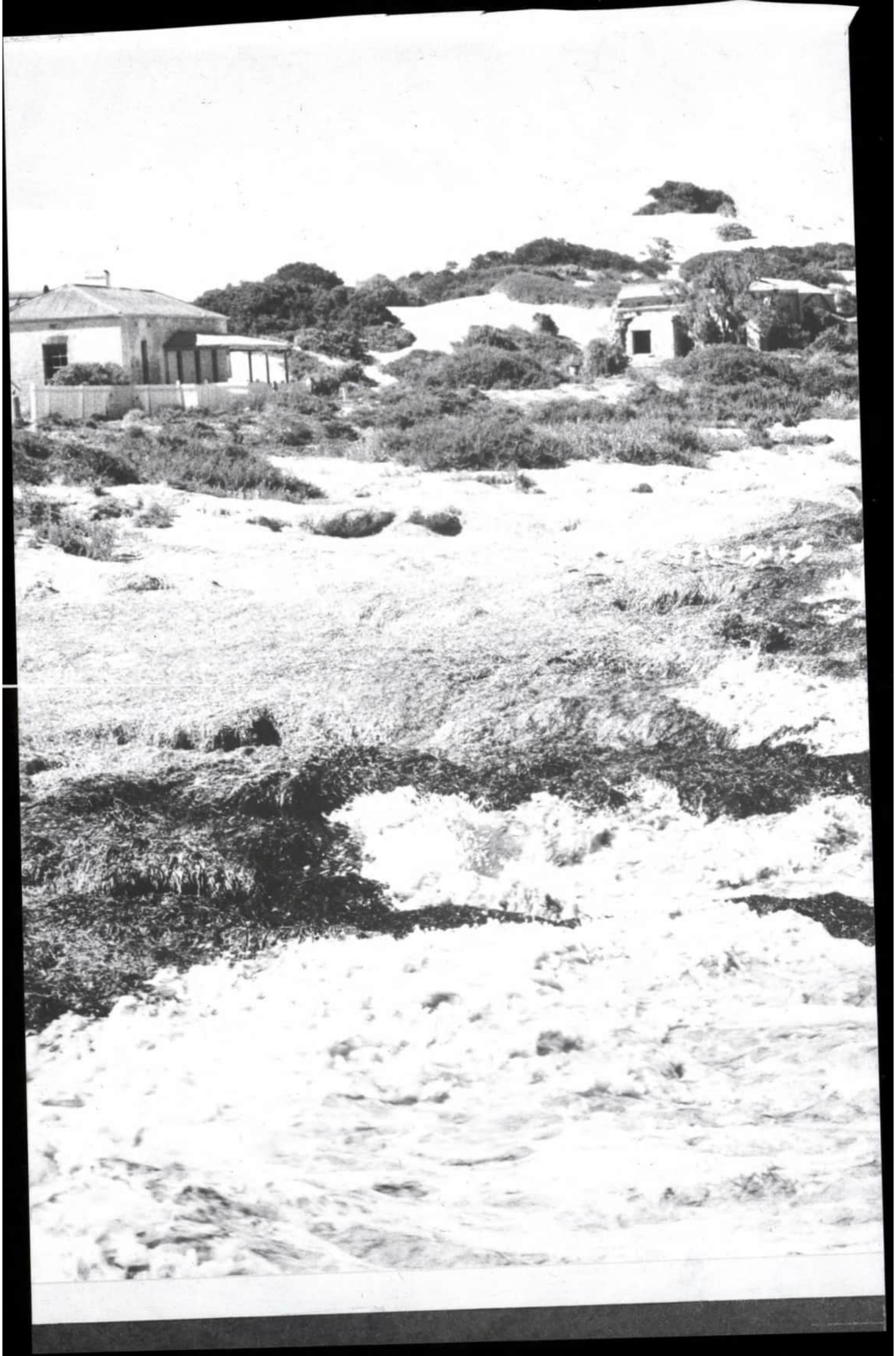
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Shoreline, Fowlers Bay with the old Telegraph Station, the ruins of the old Globe Hotel and the vast dunefields in the background.

1. The Environment and Early Aborigines

The Far West in South Australia is distant, remote and isolated. Few people realise that the long, thin slice of coastal country this book deals with, is further from Adelaide than Melbourne. Nor do they realise that the slice, which sits on the edge of the Great Australian Bight, has an area greater than Yorke Peninsula or that it contains a growth centre which is the fourteenth largest in the state.

Those who live in the east of the state look myopically towards the west and when they get beyond Port Lincoln go into a hazy focus. This book tries to sharpen that focus and tells of the struggle to establish settlement 800 kilometres from the capital city on a landscape sandwiched between the Southern Ocean and the Great Victoria Desert. It is a landscape which is a dry crusty edge to our continent and, in some immortalised words of the 1970s, life on it 'wasn't meant to be easy'.

The distance to the Far West is not appreciated until it is experienced. In the 1860s an Aborigine experienced it by walking every step of the way from Adelaide to his tribal area at Fowlers Bay. He was charged with spearing a well sinker in the Far West, transported by ship to Adelaide, found not guilty and set 'free' in the city. His walk home took many weeks and presumably he followed the coastline to Port Augusta and then continued along the two sided coast of Eyre Peninsula.[1]

In the early 1890s many farming families experienced the distance with waggons, spring carts, horses and cows. They plodded from the farming fringe of central South Australia past Port Augusta and through the Gawler Ranges on long, painful journeys that took up to six weeks.

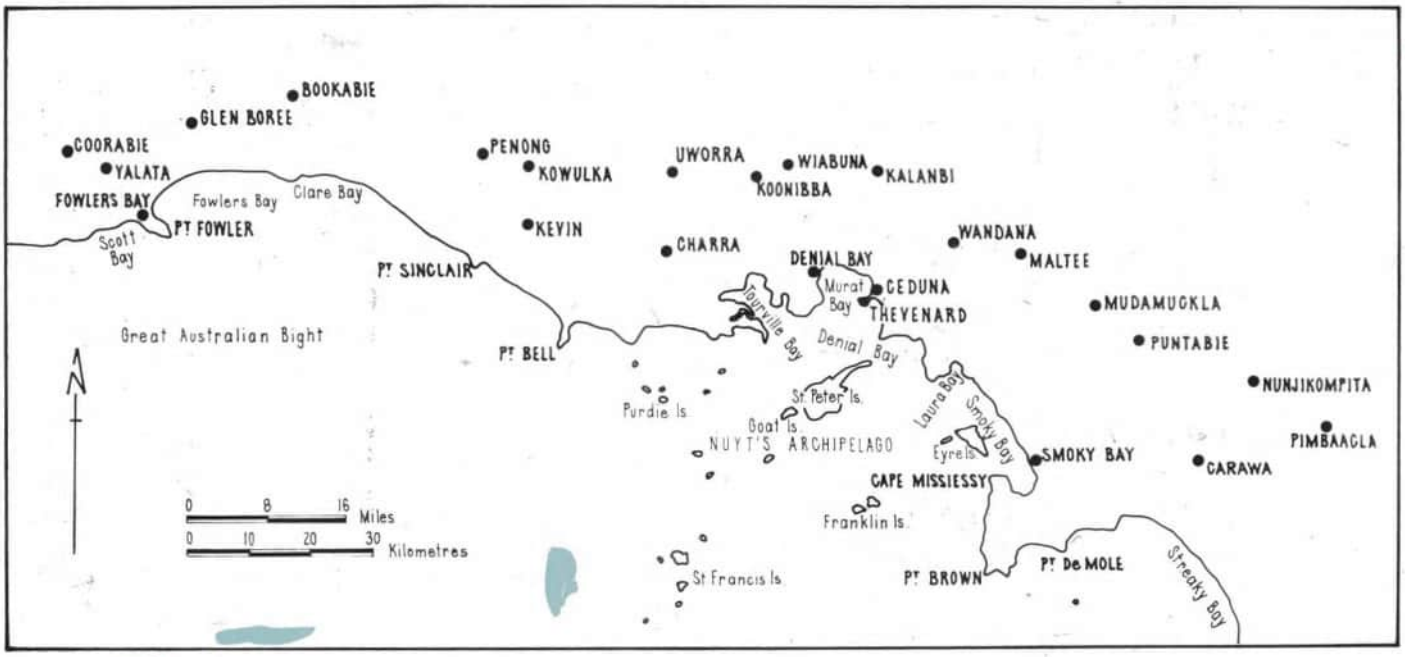
Even today the journey by land is still painful for, despite the advantages of high powered motor cars and smooth bitumen highways, it is nevertheless seven or eight hours of constant sitting in the one spot as a flat and mostly dreary landscape passes by. It is 790 kilometres from the capital of 'mainland' South Australia to Ceduna the capital of the Far West, and to go further to Fowlers Bay it is another 130 kilometres.

The historian Geoffrey Blainey used the thematic title 'Tyranny of Distance' for one of his books about Australia.[2] It is a theme the people of the Far West know all about because for them 'the tyranny' is most pressing.

Yet, in this isolated area, so often forgotten by the rest of the state, a community of some 5000 people has evolved. They live near the edges of several beautiful bays and have not penetrated far inland into the waterless

For years . . . the people of the West Coast have battled on, often times against great odds, and everyone else in the State seemed content to let them battle on.

THE DAILY HERALD, Adelaide, 9/9/11



The Far West of South Australia showing the Western Bays and the communities discussed in this book.

terrain that becomes the desert. These people, the 'Coasters' they often call themselves, have a vast and fascinating history which no single volume can encompass. This work is therefore a beginning, requested by the District Council of Murat Bay and designed to include areas as far west as Fowlers Bay and Coorabie which are well beyond the Council's boundary.

Since 1912 the Coasters have had the service of a local newspaper, the *West Coast Sentinel*, produced at first in Streaky Bay but now with its head office in Ceduna. The *Sentinel* has often taken up the cudgels on behalf of its readers and has freely criticised the South Australian government 'on the mainland' for its apathy and inactivity with regard to the needs of the Far West Coast. In 1926 it was even prepared to call for 'Self Government for the West Coast'. It did so with some powerful words.

> 'The folk in the mainland have little in common with this part of the State, and that fact combined with a spirit of prejudice towards the West Coast by our more fortunate mainland dwellers is more seriously retarding progress than appears on the surface.'[3]

The suggestion that the West Coast should secede provoked a lively local discussion for many weeks and many letters to the editor in the month of April 1926. At other times people half heartedly discussed the concept of a separate state and once the names Flindersland and Eyrealia were being canvassed as likely options. But, simple economics suggested the area would never support itself, and therefore all suggestions about secession have never been taken seriously.

It was two decades after the first European settlers began as sheep graziers in the 1860s that the government in Adelaide formalised the Far West with survey lines. Counties Way, Kintore and Hopetoun were created in 1889, 1890 and 1892 respectively and from 1889 onwards the former pastoral leases were replaced by the 24 Hundreds that are included in the area. In 1925 yet another set of boundaries appeared when the District Council of Murat Bay was formed.

Within these boundaries and across these boundaries the trappings of a rural community gradually appeared, roads, towns, railways, buildings and a

Cactus Beach

. . . it's part of Point Sinclair, near Penong, at the edge of the Nullarbor Plains — but on the surfing map of the world it is a capital, a humpy town where modern swaggies live in powerful panel vans to ride one of the best right hand breaks anywhere.

KEN BRASS, The Weekend Australian, 4 5/7/87

vista of farmlands. All of this was done in an environment soon found to be 'difficult' and, eventually, classified officially as 'marginal'.

The area the book examines extends inland from the coast about 60 kilometres and has Coorabie as its top end extremity and Smoky Bay as its bottom end extremity. The distance between the extremities is about 200 kilometres.

The most appealing feature in this landscape is the series of coastal arcs that form the Western Bays, a descriptive label for the area which is probably better than the more commonly used Far West Coast. The bays are trimmed with abundant beach sands, they are mostly sheltered from bad storms and they are good fishing spots for both professional and amateur fishermen. Additionally, some of the more exposed beaches have booming surf waves, which are popular with board riders of the modern generation. Cactus Beach, near Point Sinclair, is an example which has an Australian wide reputation. It attracts hundreds of visitors each year, many of whom travel thousands of kilometres from all the states of the continent.

Often the beaches are backed by high dunes, the most spectacular of which appear at Fowlers Bay and adjacent to Lake McDonnell. The white sands of the beaches and the dunes are examples of the subdivision called the Semaphore Sands in the geological literature of South Australia.[4] Their location is indicated on the simplified geology map; and they are the first of a series of soft sedimentary veneers that rest upon the underlying basement rock.

This basement is part of the Gawler Craton, a large geologically stable portion of the Earth's crust which has not been disrupted by folding or faulting for 1450 million years.[5] The rocks of the Craton include granites, gneisses and schists, some of which are known to be 2700 million years old.

The coast here is broken into sandy beaches and small cliffy points . . . but the elevation is not great.

MATTHEW FLINDERS,
30/1/1802

Members of the semi-permanent surfing community inspecting the waves at Cactus Beach, Point Sinclair via Penong.
Picture: Simon Bullard.



The entire hinterland appeared sandy and covered by a type of low lying heath, and there was not a single full sized tree.

NICHOLAS BAUDIN,
9/2/1803

Exposures of these ancient basement rocks are confined mainly to the shore line at spots like Cape Beaufort, Rocky Point, Point Brown, Point Bell and Point Sinclair. Inland the rocks appear above the veneer of sediments only rarely, but Inila Rock and Yumbarra Rock, north of Koonibba, are two examples. Out to sea the rocks are the nuclei of the many islands in the Nuyts Archipelago.

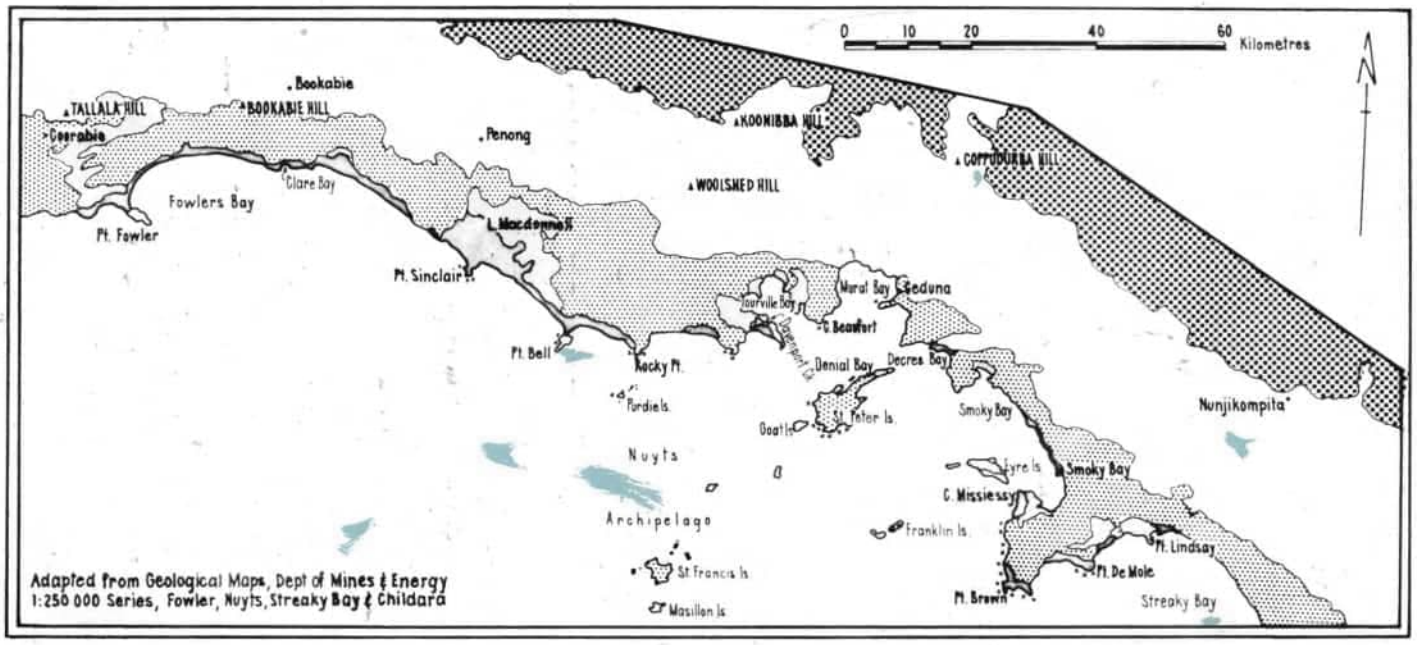
In broad terms, there is a simple geological arrangement of five surface units that rest on the basement rocks. Beyond the coastal dunes the second unit consists of low lying swampy patches which are considered to be examples of the St Kilda and Yamba Formations in South Australia.[6] At Fowlers Bay the unit consists of samphire swamps and dry saline lagoons. Inland from Point Sinclair there is the Lake McDonnell swampy area with the largest gypsum deposits known in Australia, while further along the coast the Tourville Bay area has mangroves and the attractive tidal inlet called Davenport Creek. Acraman Creek on the eastern coastal extremity of the area is a similar but smaller tidal inlet.

Unit three is an extensive area of old coastal dunes which are well above present sea level. Their descriptive geological term is aeolianites and they are part of the Bridgewater Formation which parallels much of the South Australian and Victorian coastlines. In places the formation, with its yellow-brown sands, calcrete horizons and honeycomb weathering, form coastal cliffs up to 50 metres high as for example at Point Sinclair and Point Bell.

Inland the Bridgewater Formation has been reworked by the wind to form a blanket of sandy soil over a wide area. Occasionally, however, the old dune range structures are still recognisable and this is the case with the Main Coast Range south of the Eyre Highway between Bookabie and Penong. Here the 'peaks' include Copper Hill 128 metres and Bookabie Hill 119 metres.

Unit 4 is a broad swathe of flat country interrupted occasionally by gentle undulations with a few prominent rises such as Koonibba Hill 169 metres,

Simplified Geology of the Far West of South Australia.



Coastal dunes — white to pale brown — Semaphore sands

Swamps, intertidal lagoons and inlets, gypsum deposits, lakes — St Kilda and Yamba formations

Aeolianites, former coastal dunes, pale yellow to brown sands, exposed in coastal cliffs — Bridgewater formation

Calcareous brown soils

Inland sands — aeolian, off white and yellowish with abundant dunes

Exposures of basement rocks — granites, gneisses and schists



Point Fowler and Fowlers Bay showing the extensive dune formations, the samphire swamps and the salt pan areas behind the town. S.A. Dept. of Lands Photography.

Woolshed Hill 103 metres and Coppudurba Hill 147 metres. The unit consists of calcareous brown soils which in another context are referred to as loamy mallee soils.[7] Where the rainfall is adequate these are the best farming soils in the Far West. They are comparatively easy to cultivate, they do not become sticky or boggy unless very wet and drainage is usually good. In common with most South Australian soils they are initially deficient in phosphate, but 'when the deficiency is made good (they) can be highly productive'.[8]

Unit 5 is well beyond the coast and extends inland into the desert country. It is composed of white to yellowish sands which centuries of wind erosion have formed into a pattern of parallel sandridges 5 to 10 metres high.

Each of the units originally had a distinctive pattern of vegetation.[9] The coastal sandhills were, and still are, mostly bare, but in some spots sparse cover included sheoaks, spinifex, olearia and coastal acacia. The coastal swamps are little changed with either mangroves or samphire, and pigface is often associated with the latter.

The Bridgewater Formation was originally heavily timbered with large mallee and tea-tree. Occasionally there were small plains with spear grass and wallaby grass and sometimes there were small stands of native pines.

On the loamy mallee soils belt (Unit 4) there were many grassy plains flanked by mallee, black oak, sandalwood and occasional patches of native

Several groups . . . carted sandalwood to Eucla from whence it was shipped to China. They were paid 6 pounds a ton for the wood at the Eucla jetty. The government eventually stopped the enterprise as the trees were being rapidly killed out.

MICK ALLEN,
WCS, 20/5/59



On 12 February 1913, 605 points of rain fell on Penong in twelve hours from 9 am to 9 pm. The downpour flooded Anjutabie flat to a depth of four feet and, coupled with the warm days which followed, provided a novel venue for aquatic sports.

pine. This pattern gradually merged into Unit 5 where myall, saltbush, bluebush and bullock bush were, and still are, the dominant species.

Latitude 32° S passes through the middle of the Far West and it should be borne in mind that this is approximately the same latitude as Hawker and Broken Hill, some 400 kilometres north of the latitude of Adelaide. The climate for the area is therefore slightly warmer than Adelaide and would be much more so if it were not for the moderating influence of the sea along the coastal strip. Nevertheless, summers can be very hot as the following official maximum temperatures indicate[10]

Fowlers Bay	119° F	12/1/1939
Ceduna	47.8° C	January 1979 (118° F)

(N B Adelaide's maximum temperature was 47.6° C in 1939)

Extremely cold temperatures are rarely experienced, but occasional frosts occur away from the coast from June to the end of September. The coldest official temperature recorded for the district is 26.1° F at Ceduna Aerodrome, but further inland lower figures undoubtedly occur.

Heat waves in summer sometimes occur and 1939 is remembered by many as the year with the worst example of this unpleasant feature of the weather. Late in January the thermometer soared well over the old century on the Fahrenheit scale for fifteen consecutive days. In Ceduna almost all work came to a standstill. In some instances office work was transferred to the cellars but in shops occupants 'stuck it out' with the thermometer well over the one hundred and twenty mark'.[11]

Coasters can survive the heat but they cannot do without rainfall. In most years they receive an adequate supply of between 10 and 15 inches but drought years are hardships which sometimes come too frequently. Rainfall statistics have been kept at the Penong Post Office since 1892, Ceduna Post Office since 1906, Smoky Bay Post Office since 1912 and at the Fowlers Bay Post Office from 1879 to 1967.[12]

The mean rainfall figures for each of these localities is Fowlers Bay 300 mm (11.8 inches), Penong 332 mm, Ceduna 296 mm and Smoky Bay 294 mm. Other localities that have made recordings are Koonibba 329 mm, Maltee 306 mm, Bookabie 292 mm and Carawa 324 mm.

The shorter the mallee the better the people.

FAR WEST PROVERB

Penong's figures can be used to illustrate the driest years namely 1897 (159 mm), 1914 (184 mm), 1928 (181 mm), 1959 (177 mm), 1965 (186 mm), and 1982 (192 mm). But these years were not necessarily the hardest times for the

district because they were sometimes followed immediately by good years. Really bad times occurred when the drought years came in runs of three or four. Thus 1897, 98 and 99 was terrible with 159 mm, 195 mm and 222 mm respectively; so was 1926, 27, 28, 29 and 30 with 167 mm, 242 mm, 181 mm, 206 mm and 220 mm; and 1943, 44, 45 and 46 was very difficult with 241 mm, 251 mm, 323 mm and 290 mm.

The best years for rainfall, recorded at Penong, were 1916 (490 mm), 1931 (539 mm), 1956 (506 mm), 1968 (548 mm) and 1973 (502 mm).

In the Far West, rainfall, or lack of it, is always a subject of keen interest, and the joy associated with a good downpour is well illustrated by the *West Coast Sentinel's* news of the breaking of the drought in April 1931.

There's some music I can hear
Tis the falling of the rain
In drops so bright and clear
Falling on the window pane.

Tis music sweet that cheers
The falling of the rain
Filling out each ear
Of all the golden grain.

JEFF L MILLER,
DBS, 8/5/09

A GLORIOUS RAIN
DROUGHT WELL AND TRULY BROKEN

> The whole atmosphere of the country around Ceduna and to the westward was changed on Monday night when a glorious rain set in and continued incessantly through the night. The fall of over three inches has been almost unprecedented in so short a time and the rain was of that steady soaking description that is so dear to all agriculturalists . . .[13]

Winds are important in the Far West because those that blow onshore help to moderate the high temperatures in summer. Average conditions are not remarkable for the consistency or the strength of the winds but storms occur periodically and there have been occasional freak conditions which were memorable. Thus on Tuesday, 28 January 1947 a hurricane force storm left a carpet of hailstones at Poochera, 140 kilometres south east of Ceduna, and caused extensive damage at Smoky Bay. Here, as the local correspondent for the *West Coast Sentinel* put it the little church was 'scattered in all directions with Bibles and prayer books under every bush'. At the same time the Smoky Bay hall, a building of cement bricks, was levelled to its foundations. The roof blew off and the four walls fell outwards; yet, astonishingly, a piano was left standing on an undamaged stage.[14]

Another freak occurrence was the Charra 'Tornado' in November 1931. The local correspondent described it thus: 'an elongated and very dense cloud which seemed to put forth long funnel shaped feelers which crept rapidly to the ground, which they hit with great force and surging onwards carried everything before them.'[15] The storm lasted a mere ten minutes and swept in from the north on a six mile front. It uprooted trees, flattened fences, bent telegraph poles to the ground and unroofed dozens of sheds, tanks and houses. J Schultz, the wheat agent of Uworra, had his office and all his papers tossed into the air and scattered across the landscape. The description 'tornado' was well chosen; there is no doubting its similarity to the fearful storms common in the Mid Western states of America.

Animal life in the Far West is interesting because, in the thinly settled environment, sightings of rare species are still common. The western grey kangaroo was originally present in enormous numbers, so much so that early pastoralists paid a bounty for their destruction. This led to several groups of young men earning their living in the Fowlers Bay country in the 1860s to 1890s as 'kangaroo hunters'. Their favourite practice was to build kangaroo yards, long races leading to pens where thousands of the animals were trapped and killed by knocking them on the head with sticks. A government party in 1887 reported that the Nuliah kangaroo yards north east of Penong were still standing and that 'a large quantity of bones showed that thousands of kangaroos had been destroyed'.[16]

Wild dogs were roaming everywhere; often the quiet of the night would be broken by the long drawn out half wail, half howl of their mating cry. I can think of nothing more likely to put the wind up a new chum than that mournful note.

HORACE J SALMON



A night's catch of foxes at Bagster. Keith Freeman with Goldy.

The South Australian Directories recorded that at Fowlers Bay in the 1880s the following men were kangaroo hunters: George Aldridge, A C Braden, Thomas Kent, D P McGregor, C H Melville, J Riddle, W Runsvall, George Saunders, Robert Scott and Edward Westphal.

Wombats have always been numerous in the Far West despite being eaten by Aborigines and also by early settlers when no other food was available. The species construct burrows which are grouped in warrens. Each warren may house up to 10 wombats, which are nocturnal, but sometimes they bask in the winter sun at the burrow entrance.[17]

As with other South Australian districts, the introduced mammals, the house mouse and the rabbit, have at different times reached plague proportions. However, the remoteness delayed the arrival of the rabbit and the first farmers in about 1890, had none of them; but five years later they began to arrive and have been present ever since. The early farmers did have to contend with dingoes in large numbers and only vermin proof fences could control them. The fox, like the rabbit, was also a late arrival in the district and has stayed on.

Snakes have always been prevalent. Those most often seen are the king brown snake, smaller brown snakes, black tiger snakes and the dangerous death adder. The latter is usually restricted to undisturbed coastal dunes and mallee with abundant leaf litter.[18]

It was thought to be a death adder which bit Ceduna's Dr R Gibson in February 1936. He alighted from his car after dark and was bitten on the leg. He immediately applied a tourniquet and had himself taken to the hospital where it was found that the fangs had entered a large vein. The poison therefore spread quickly and Dr Gibson had a painful and worrying time for several days before he was able to make a recovery. His medical knowledge undoubtedly saved his life.[19]

Whilst clearing scrub on Mr A J Jolly's farm nine adders were dispatched and . . . even this record was beaten on Mr Folland's farm where fourteen adders were discovered.

WCS, 18/4/13

Lizards are also abundant and there is the interesting note in the *West Coast Sentinel* of 1927 that Gordon Wright of Charra brought into Denial Bay an iguana (surely a goanna) which measured nearly six feet from tip to tip. It had been playing havoc with his poultry.[20]

The attractions of the marine environment in the Far West have already been mentioned. Added to this, is the fascination of the large sea creatures

which are often sighted and sometimes make headline news. Foremost in this category are the sharks followed by whales and seals.

Shark fishing out of Ceduna has an international reputation fostered largely by Alf Dean, whom Colin Thiele called 'the world's greatest shark hunter' in his biography *Maneater Man*.[21] The book describes many of the thrilling encounters Dean had with sharks in the waters between Ceduna and Streaky Bay, and culminates with his finest achievement, the successful catch of a 2664 pound giant in 1959 on a 130 pounds breaking strain line — an all tackle world record. The monster was 17 feet long.

Alf Dean landed more than forty fish weighing over 1000 pounds, five of which exceeded 2000 pounds. In the local boat the *Victory* with the owner, Ken Puckridge, and crew, Tom Cooper, his fishing expeditions were followed with eager expectations by thousands of Coasters and hundreds of thousands of people throughout Australia. Other intrepid shark fishermen have followed him and, as recent as November 1985, a 17.3 feet monster was landed and hauled in for inspection at Murat Bay by Vic Hislop.

The dangers of swimming in shark infested waters have often been made known to South Australians and, in the Far West one of its saddest occasions was when eleven year old Wade Shipard lost his life in a shark attack at Point Sinclair in February 1975. The *West Coast Sentinel* carried its most tragic headline and wrote its most graphic story about the events of that day. Wade lost a leg in the savage attack and then died during a vain, high speed dash to get him to the Murat Bay Hospital, 100 kilometres away. The shark was caught by fishermen immediately after the attack. It was opened and the boy's leg was removed.



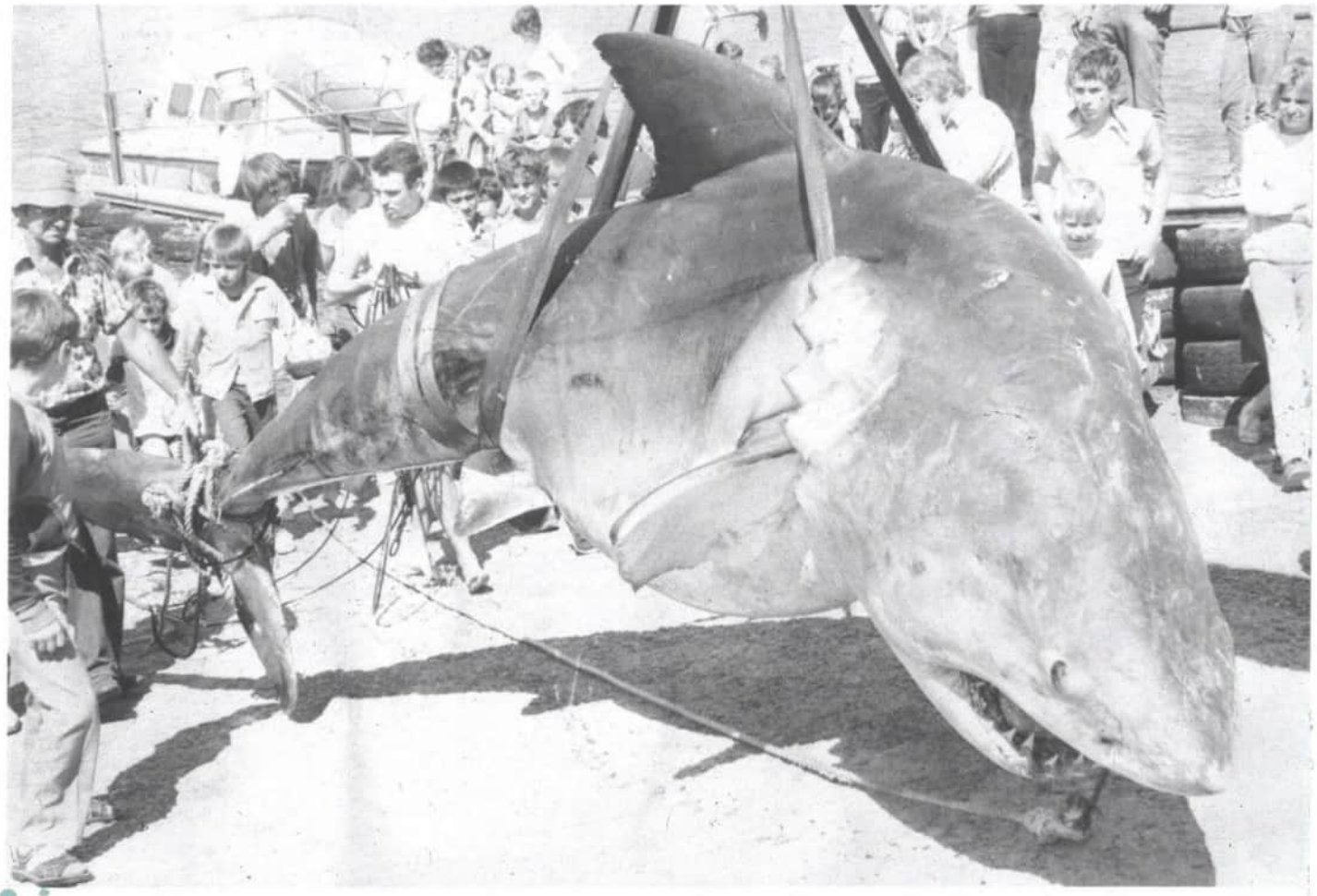
Alf Dean, the internationally famous shark hunter, with one of his best catches suspended for inspection at the Denial Bay jetty.

A safe swimming committee chaired by Mervyn Oats of Penong was formed within two weeks of the shark attack. It worked towards a shark proof enclosure for Port Sinclair and, in October 1977, Rev Donald Grey-Smith dedicated the enclosure and a memorial to Wade Shipard. The plaque on a three tonne stone brought from Coorabie was unveiled by Wade's two grandmothers Mrs Jess Gray and Mrs Vera Shipard. In a touching address, Rev Grey-Smith recalled the evil of the tragedy and gave thanks for the good that had flowed from it in the form of a safe swimming enclosure for all the children of the district.[22]

Whales have always been noticed in the seas off the Far West and, in the years before 1850, there were several whaling stations along the coast (see Chapter 2). Their commercial activities removed most of the whales in the vicinity at that time, but in the last 100 years the number of sightings have been slowing building up. Recently 'as many as five Southern Right whales have been seen from the air near Fowlers Bay'.[23]

The *West Coast Sentinel* reported that two whales gambolled in Davenport Creek in 1962, a sperm whale was washed up on the beach at Denial Bay in 1955, and one, officially measured as 43'6" long by Fisheries Inspector J Green, was stranded at Laura Bay near the house of T W Blumson in 1952.[24] Yet another was a rare Scamperdown whale found washed up on the beach at Wittelbee Point by Walter Johns and friends in February 1986.

Other big game stories include the catch of a giant sting ray by F R Johnstone and Dudley Wright in 1952. It was six foot across at the wing tips, too large to put in their boat so they shot it. Then, in 1956, fishermen from the Underwater Skin Divers Association of South Australia established new records at Point Brown when they speared two 70 lb blue gropers.[25]



This 17.3 feet monster, a typical Far West specimen, was caught and brought into Murat Bay in November 1985 by Vic Hislop.



Left. The shark proof swimming enclosure adjacent to the jetty at Point Sinclair. It was financed by public subscription in memory of Wade Shipard who lost his life after a shark attack in February 1975.
Below. Guilf Edwards, Norm Hurrell and Wilf Bubner with the rare Scamperdown whale which was washed up at Wittelbee Point in February 1986.





Hazards for the motorist west of Penong.

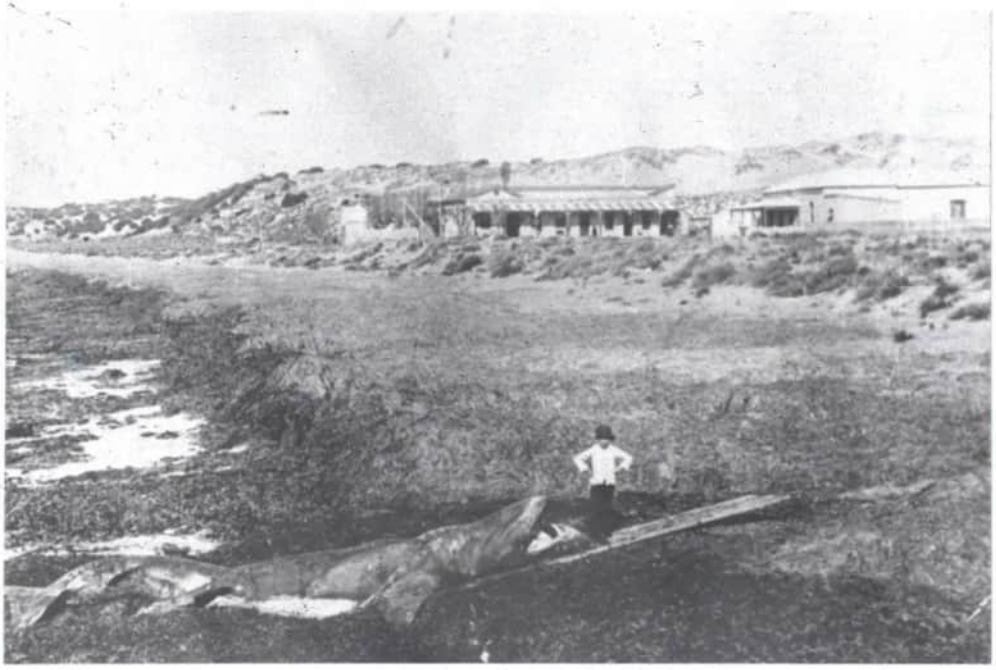
Colonies of South Australia's two species of resident seals, the New Zealand fur seal and the rare Australian sea lion, occur on the islands off the Far West and were noted by early explorers. Many seals still congregate there today and, a count of sea lions made by researchers from the South Australian Museum in March of 1982, indicated 14 at Sinclair Island, 8 at Lound Island, 106 at Purdie Islands, 27 at Fenelon Island, 5 at West Island and 37 at the Franklin Islands. Another count one month later gave even bigger numbers at most of these and other locations.[26]

The South Australian Museum was involved in another way in 1914 when a basking shark 25 feet long was seen and shot by L Laurenti and others in Fowlers Bay. The Museum Director at the time, Edgar Waite, arranged for the huge fish to be transported to Adelaide on the steamer *Rupara*. It was then taken to the museum on a lorry where a special cast was made of it. Painted in lifelike colours it was displayed on the wall of the Museum near the main entrance where it was a startling and major exhibit for more than fifty years.[27] Recently, in a period of remodelling for the museum, the old plaster cast was replaced by a lighter fibre glass model. The old cast was then donated to the Ceduna National Trust Museum in 1986 where it is now a prize exhibit.

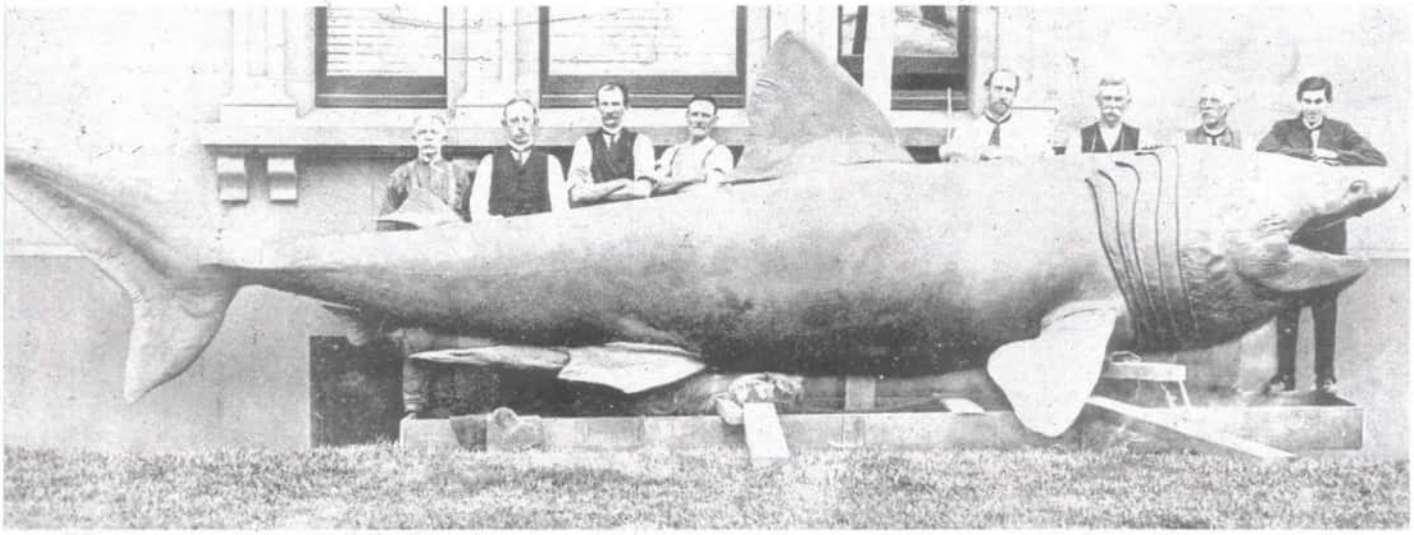
Three other aspects of scientific curiosity associated with the marine environment of the Far West have been turtles, mutton birds and shells. An early explorer (see Chapter 2) noted many turtle shells on the offshore islands and thought they must have been numerous in the area. They are not today but occasionally they do appear. Thus, in May 1959, a large dead turtle 7 feet long and 4 feet across was washed up on Spry's beach at Ceduna. And, in 1979, 'a large leatherback turtle' weighing an estimated 800 pounds was caught accidently in a shark net in Murat Bay.[28]

The abundance of mutton birds on certain offshore islands, also mentioned by early explorers, was investigated by Dr Serventy of the CSIRO in 1957. He chartered a cutter to sail to Goat Island in the month of March and tagged dozens of birds. Amazingly one of them was caught in a Japanese fisherman's net in the Bering Sea near Russia some two months later.[29]

The beaches of the islands and along the Far West coast generally have been a productive area for conchologists — shell collectors. David Howlett, a local fisherman and enthusiastic conchologist, organised a visit of two officials



The basking shark shot at Fowlers Bay in 1914 and sent to the S.A. Museum. Globe Hotel and telegraph station in the background.



The cast of the Fowlers Bay Basking Shark (Cetorhinus maximus) as made for the South Australian Museum in 1914. L to R. J Frost, F R Zietz, J Conroy, R Limb, E R Waite, J and D Rau, H M Hale. From *S.A. Museum Record*, Vol 12, 1956, p 104. The cast is now housed in the National Trust Museum, Ceduna.

from the Museum of Victoria in 1956. They spent three days visiting the islands and collected many rare varieties of shells.[30] They also inspected the large Howlett collection and the collection of Fred Blumson. These two local enthusiasts have displayed their unique shells to hundreds of amateur conchologists over many years and the Blumson collection is now on loan to Ceduna's National Trust Museum. Shells gathered by the Willcox family in the Smoky Bay area form another interesting local collection.

The story of the Far West's terrestrial environment, since first European settlement in 1858, has been mainly an account of man's removal of the vegetation and destruction of the fauna in his quest for manageable farming land. However, in the last twenty years the National Parks and Wildlife Service has introduced conservation policies in the area to retain some examples of the natural environment where possible. In 1969 the Wittelbee Conservation Park was dedicated, 10 kilometres south east of Ceduna. Here on 148 hectares a coastal environment is preserved with a series of dunes, a small area of mallee scrub and a saltmarsh. The Laura Bay Conservation Park, 15 kilometres south west of Ceduna, has 251 hectares and is a similar environment with more scrub and a small tidal inlet, Fox Creek.

National Parks and Wildlife has also preserved four of the offshore island groups as parks namely Nuyts Archipelago Conservation Park (1981 ha), Isle of St Francis Conservation Park (1320 ha), Sinclair Island Conservation Park (2 ha) and Nuyts Reef Conservation Park (5 ha).[31]

The difficulties of the Far West environment are compounded by a lack of good underground water supplies. There are no flowing streams in the area and good fresh water in wells or bores is hard to find. Some indication of the magnitude of the problem was provided by a Department of Mines Survey in 1946. It examined 250 wells that had been painstakingly dug by settlers over a period of more than 80 years, and found that only 55 yielded suitable stock water. In the summary of the report it was conceded that the 'underground water prospects are not favourable, the major problems being abundant salt water, and the unpredictable pattern of the basement rocks'.[32]

Some of the wells in the area pre-date European settlement and therefore belong to the Aboriginal occupance of the Far West. This occupance has not been well documented and there are conflicting views about how many and which tribes were in the area. Tindale, in his *Aboriginal Tribes of Australia*, placed the Wirangu people between the Head of the Bight and Streaky Bay with extensions inland to Ooldea.[33] Neighbouring tribes to the west were the Mirning along the coast and the Ngalea inland. To the north were the Kokata.

One of SA's largest islands — St Peters Island — has been bought by the State Government for $100,000 for inclusion in the Nuyts Archipelago Conservation Park.

ADVERTISER, 5/5/87

There were a few natives . . . (who) . . . came to us after a deal of coaxing as they were first very shy. One came first of all and we gave him plenty to eat and above all, in their estimation plenty of water; of this they would drink as much as ever was given them, often two small buckets, about three gallons, and appeared never to be satisfied.

REMINISCENCES OF THE WHALER, RICHARD COPPING, 1821–1892
State Library of Tasmania

Alternative spellings have been Kukatha, Kukata, Cocotah, Kookata, and Gugara. To the east were the Nano and the Pangkala.

Edward John Eyre was the first to report details about the Aborigines of the Far West. The journals of his exploration expedition in 1841 (see Chapter 2) made incidental comments about 'the natives' whom he found very friendly. They assisted him to find water at several locations and Wilguldy, 'an intelligent cheerful man', accompanied him as a guide. Eyre mounted him on a horse, much to the admiration and envy of his friends all of whom followed the party on foot.[34] Their language, Eyre noted, was nearly the same as that of the Port Lincoln natives and he admired the ease with which they caught their own food as they travelled — snakes, lizards, goannas, bandicoots, rats and wallabies.

At Fowlers Bay the natives included the 'most obliging' he ever met and he commented on two of their curious customs.[35] The first was part of the circumcision rite for 12–14 year old boys. Eyre expressed it in Latin, namely 'Finditus usque ad urethrum a parte infera penis' and thought that the 'extraordinary and inexplicable custom must have a great tendency to prevent the rapid increase of the population.'[36] In George Taplin's book about the Aborigines of South Australia the custom is explained in more detail namely 'He (the initiate) is then laid on his back, and with a sharp flint an incision about half an inch long is made in the urethra between the scrotum and the glans penis'.[37]

The second custom Eyre noted was that many men had a curious brand or mark on the stomach extending above and below the navel and produced by the application of fire.

When George Taplin compiled his book in 1879 he attempted to gather information from people living in the local area. For his 'Tribes in the Western District' he sent out a questionnaire and his best response was from Police-Corporal Chris Provis, who had spent time at Streaky Bay. Details from the Provis answers suggested that the local tribe was the Ku-ka-tha, which roamed from Venus Bay to Fowlers Bay seldom remaining more than a few weeks in any one place. Their marriages were indiscriminate and the names of their children were generally taken from the name of the place where they were born. Their betrothal did not prevent men cohabiting with other women for chastity or fidelity was quite unknown to them.[38]

Polygamy was practised but Provis had never seen a man with more than three wives. He thought the tribe had no government, gave no punishment to offenders, had no kind of sorcery and lived by the rule that 'might is right'. After death the thighs of the deceased were broken and the body was put into a sitting position. A large irregular hole, three or four feet deep was dug and the body placed in it facing eastwards. It was then covered with grass and boughs and the grave was filled in with earth. A large fire was kindled on the grave surface and kept burning for two or three days for the purpose of destroying the body's 'spirit', which otherwise would 'walk about' and injure them.

Of the natives I recall one Yarra Cooney a man of small stature who called himself Mr Cooney; he was very slim and could crawl down a wombat hole with a gun, shoot a wombat in the head, tie a cord around its foreleg, back out and drag the wombat out as well.

FRANK EDSON

Provis suggested that the prevailing local opinion was that the Ku-ka-tha had been cannibals before Europeans arrived in the district, but he had seen no evidence to support this.

Their weapons were the spear and the waddy. The former was a mallee stick about eight feet long, hurled with the aid of a 'wommera' which hooked into a small hole at one end. Provis believed that the spear could be hurled to hit any stationary object up to fifty or sixty yards away. The waddy was a simple stick about two feet long, slightly curved in shape and jagged a little at one end to give a good grip for the hand. It was thrown with much force and generally killed or crippled whatever animal it hit. Provis said that he had seen a man's leg broken and a skull smashed by blows from a waddy.



A collection of Far West Aboriginal artefacts collected in the Denial Bay area about 1900 and donated to the Koppio Museum near Port Lincoln by Mrs S Thiselton.

Another of the observations made by the police-corporal was that when the Ku-ka-tha were moving from waterhole to waterhole the strong men often carried the sick and the infirm on their shoulders — and they did this for weeks at a time. But when they decided that the old or ill person was not going to recover they would leave him or her behind to die and remain unburied. Provis had found two bodies left exposed in this manner.

Ronald and Catherine Berndt have been two anthropologists who, in more recent times, have made comments about the first inhabitants of the Far West. Their work was done mainly at Ooldea, which because of its original permanent waterhole was a great meeting place for several tribes. R Berndt favoured greater 'territorial flexibility' than Tindale's clear cut tribal boundaries and recognised two distinct cultures; the Old West Coast Culture, typified by the Wirangu, and the Western Desert Culture represented in the area by the Kokata (or Gugada — the Berndts have used both spellings).[39]

The Wirangu were practically extinct by the middle of the nineteenth century and had been replaced by the Kokata moving southwards from the desert country. R Berndt, in 1941, quoted a letter from Rev C Hoff which gave information that the Kokata had established themselves along the west coast up to the Great Australian Bight. Their territory also included the Gawler Ranges and extended north to the east-west railway and west practically to Eucla.[40] Hoff had experience with both Wirangu and Kokata people when they moved to the Koonibba Mission (see Chapter 13).

Although Eyre spoke of large groups of natives that followed his travels it is probable that the total number of Wirangu and Kokata in the Far West was never more than a few hundred. This seems likely in view of R Berndt's suggestion that during initial contact (with Europeans) 'the overall Aboriginal population of Eyre Peninsula did not exceed 2000 persons'.[41]

The blacks in this country used to live in dry weather on mallee root water, which was plentiful a few miles inland.

JAMES HIERN, 1908

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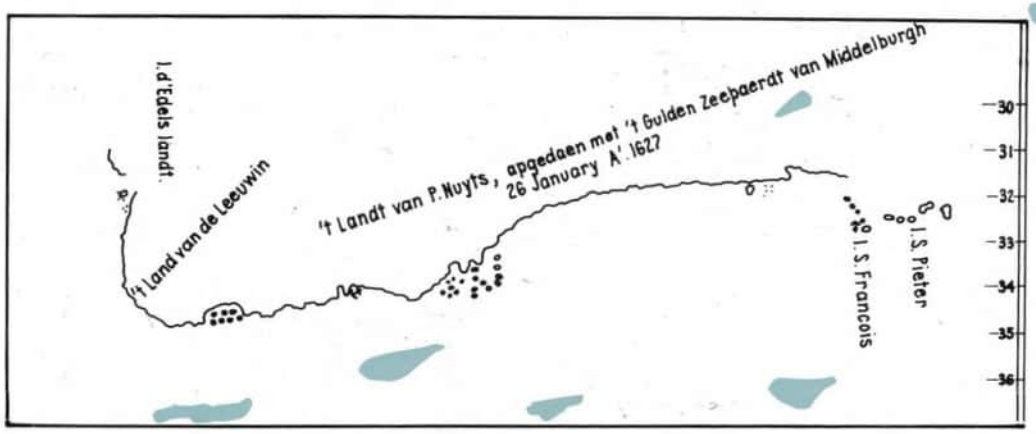
2. Discovery and Reconaissance

This book is published in Australia's bi-centenary year — 200 years after the continent was first settled by Europeans. But, the area of the Far West in South Australia was known to the world for 161 years before that settlement occurred. The area appeared vaguely on maps from 1627 onwards, and, after that, in all the myths that surrounded the Great South Land of the southern hemisphere one thing was certain, there was land at the approximate location of Ceduna today. Thus, in the consciousness of European man, this area was known 200 years before any notion of a colony called South Australia was considered.

The discovery, in 1627, was made by the Dutch, who at that time had interests in the East Indies. Their sailing vessels frequently crossed the Indian Ocean in search of trade. One, the *Gulden Zeepard* (Golden Leopard) made a landfall at Land Van de Leeuwin (Cape Leeuwin today) and then sailed eastwards for 1000 miles. The ship's captain was Francois Thyssen and on board was a distinguished passenger Pieter Nuyts described as an 'Extraordinary Councillor'.[1]



The monument and plaque at Thevenard donated by the Dutch people of South Australia and unveiled in February 1986. It commemorates the voyage of Nuyts and Thyssen in 1627.



A tracing of the chart of the *Gulden Zeepard* in 1627. From Proc. Roy. Geog. Soc. of S.A., Vol. 27.

The voyage of the *Gulden Zeepard* was recorded on a chart, a tracing of which is reproduced here. It shows that Thyssen called the coastline Nuyts Land and that the eastern extremity of the voyage was marked by I S Francois and I S Pieter. Portions of the chart were used by later navigators, Vancouver (1791) and D'Entrecasteaux (1792), and both praised its accuracy. So did Flinders (1802) who believed he rediscovered the group of islands at the eastern extremity of the chart. He identified what he believed was I S Francois and I S Pieter and called them St. Francis and St. Peter islands, names which may have simply honoured the Christian saints but which also might have been derived from the first names of the principal parties, Francis Thyssen and Peter Nuyts. Flinders then gave further honour to Nuyts by naming the total group of small islands Nuyts Archipelago.

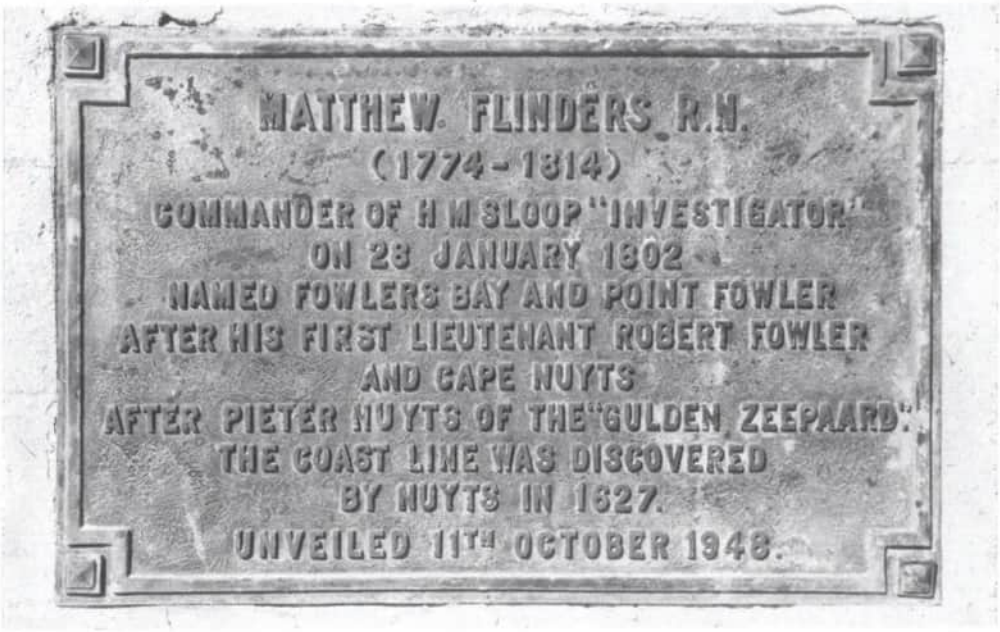
There are no records of what Nuyts and Thyssen thought of the lands they discovered but, any comments they did make to the Dutch East India Company were most likely unfavourable because, save for one enthusiast, nobody did any follow up work to find out more about the new discoveries. The enthusiast was Jean Pierre Purry an employee of the company who, in 1717, put forward a colonising scheme which, if it had been adopted, would have made the Ceduna district an outpost of the Dutch empire.[2]

Purry was convinced that, because of its latitude, the Land of Nuyts would have an ideal climate. He compared its position on the globe with California, Florida, Chile and the Cape of Good Hope, and argued that since all these areas were productive then the Land of Nuyts would bring the company 'immense profits' which could be anticipated 'with inconceivable joy' in 'cheese, wine, olives, tobacco or, chief of all silkworms.'

The Governor-General and his Council at Batavia rejected Purry's scheme and, when he took it higher to the company officers in Holland, they rejected it also. His case was altogether too theoretical they said and they were not even prepared to send out a preliminary group of 500 or 600 soldiers to 'spy out the land'.

Part of Purry's proposal explored the possibility that there may have been giants in the Land of Nuyts, 'not only in stature, but even in intelligence and knowledge, so prodigious that their likes have never been seen or heard of in any other country in the world'.

Purry published his proposals in a small booklet in 1718, and it was soon after this that Jonathon Swift began work on his celebrated *Gulliver's Travels*. He was probably aware of Purry's theories and it is interesting to note that Lemuel Gulliver, 'driven by a storm to the north-west of Van Diemen's Land' was shipwrecked in the vicinity of 30° South Latitude. The only known islands near there were those discovered by Nuyts, and Swift's islands called Lilliput and Blefuscu could have matched St Francis and St Peter. He evidently did not



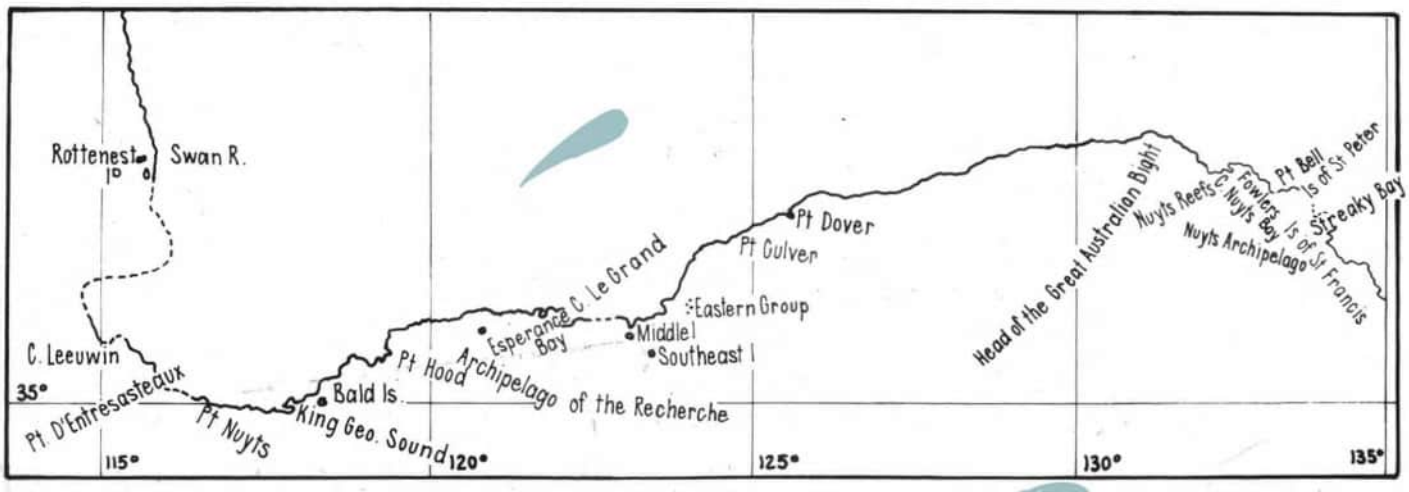
Plaque at Fowlers Bay.

favour Purry's giants however, for he substituted instead the tiny Lilliputians as the inhabitants of this remote part of the world. Since *Gulliver's Travels* was widely read throughout the eighteenth century many people no doubt had some romantic awareness of a land 'north west of Van Diemen's Land'.

After the sketchy facts of Nuyts and the fancies of Purry and Swift, the reality of what really existed in the area came with Matthew Flinders. During his well known voyage in the *Investigator* in 1802 he anchored, on January 28, in Fowlers Bay, named after Robert Fowler the first lieutenant of his ship. Subsequently, he went on to explore and name Denial Bay and Smoky Bay in addition to the islands of the archipelago and prominent features such as Point Bell and Point Brown named after the ship's surgeon Hugh Bell and its botanist Robert Brown.

Flinders, with the assistance of his scientific officers, was the first person to record any facts about the environment of the Far West Coast. To him it was the first portion of what was, in 1802, 'the Unknown Coast' stretching from the end of Nuyts' chart to Van Diemen's Land. His observations still exist in copies of *H M S Investigator's* log book and in Flinders' own work *A Voyage to Terra Australis* published in London in 1814[3].

At Fowlers Bay, Flinders noted that the cliffs and rocks were calcareous and connected to the mainland by a low sandy isthmus. He compared the



A tracing of the chart of the *Investigator* in 1802. From Proc. Roy. Geog. Soc. of S.A., Vol. 27.

shelter offered by the bay as 'similar to that afforded by Torbay', which is in Devon. There was no appearance of fresh water nor any wood of sufficient size for fuel. There were many traces of inhabitants, including some decayed spears, but there were no huts nor any indications that people had lived there in the recent past. Along the beach he found tracks of dogs and what he took to be either emus or cassowarys. His botanists found a 'scantiness' of plants so, as he said, there was 'no inducement to remain longer'.

For the next few days Flinders explored the offshore islands and became convinced that they represented those indicated on Nuyts' chart. He named Sinclair's Rocks, Purdie's Isles, Lacy's Isle, Evans' Isle and Franklin's Isles after crew members, the last being John Franklin, later to become Sir John Franklin, Governor of Tasmania.

On 3 February 1802 he anchored the *Investigator* in the small bay of St Francis Island which he called Petrel Bay, an 'excellent shelter for two or three ships'. Here he found petrels, penguins and a few hair seals. There were many sooty petrels (mutton birds) and a shore party collected 400 in an hour and a half, which made an excellent addition to the ship's rations. Some small



St Francis Island, Nuyts Archipelago. The northern bay Flinders called Petrel Cove, 'an excellent shelter for two or three ships', S.A. Dept. of Lands Photography.

kangaroos were seen but no water was found. The day was an all too familiar February day for the present inhabitants of the Far West — 98° F in the shade!

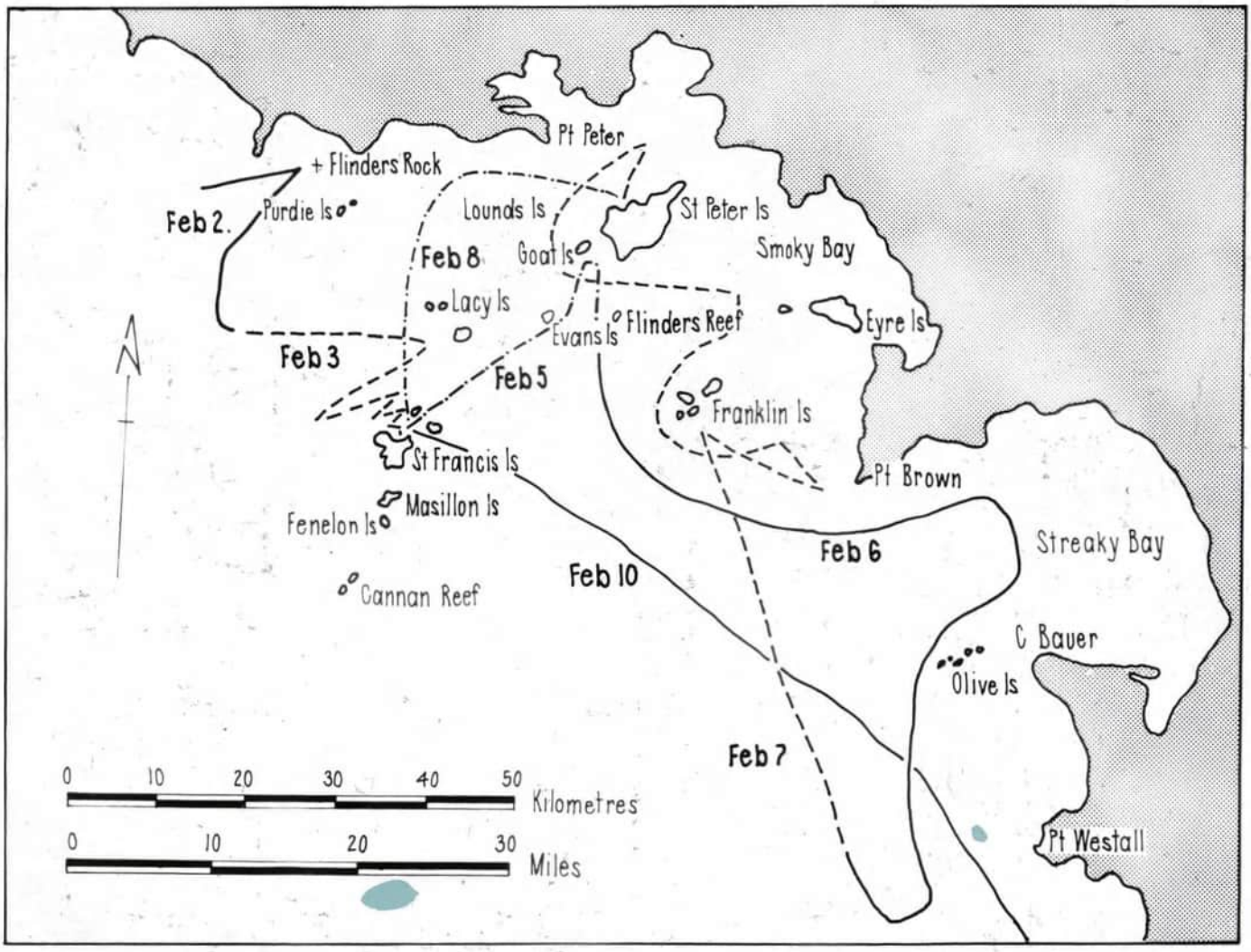
From Petrel Bay, Flinders veered off and reached Streaky Bay on 5 February, but realised that there was 'nearly forty miles of space between Point Bell and Point Brown in which the main coast had not been seen'. When the winds were favourable he returned to this coast naming Smoky Bay because of the 'number of smokes rising from the shores of this wide open space'.

On 7 February the *Investigator* was back in Nuyts Archipelago and shore parties examined St Peter Island. Here they killed '3 or 4 seals of the hair kind'. The mainland ahead of St Peter Island seemed to Flinders to have 'the appearance of being the entrance to a river'. There were numerous smokes in the neighbourhood, many insects which usually frequented rivers, and grass and refuse in the water, all of which 'tended to excite hopes'. He thought that, if a river did empty itself into the bay, the water thereabouts would be fresher than in the open sea. However, when he tested the water alongside the ship for saltiness, his hopes were dashed for results showed it to be 'one-356th part saltier' than his last reading, which had been at King Georges Sound.

On St Peter Island, Flinders noted that the rock of the shore was mainly granite, but that inland it was covered with calcareous stone in places fifty feet thick. 'The soil at the top was little better than sand, but was overspread with shrubs.' He struggled to reach the top of the hill near the middle of the island. The temperature he judged to be 'scarcely less than 120° ' and 'there was not a breathe of air stirring'.

A party went on shore (St Francis Island) at dusk to collect petrels, and in less than two hours returned with sufficient to give four birds to every man on the ship.

MATTHEW FLINDERS



The movement of the *Investigator* in the Nuyts Archipelago region in February 1802. Adapted from a naval chart published in *The Unknown Coast* by H M Cooper.

From that hill Flinders took bearings and named Denial Bay, 'as well in allusion to St Peter as to the deceptive hope we had formed, of penetrating by it some distance into the interior country'. Here he was referring to the hoped for river; he did not discover that there was some penetration into the interior via smaller bays. These were subsequently found by the French navigator, Baudin.

From St Peter Island the *Investigator* proceeded north westward for a short distance and a small island was named Lound's after a crew member. The vessel then 'sailed to the southward' and returned to its former anchorage at Petrel Bay. Here Flinders spent a day making observations of latitude and longitude from a shore position rather than on the ship. His results led him to make some corrections to his charts but by the next morning he was able to take advantage of 'a refreshing breeze from the westward' and set off in the direction of Streaky Bay to continue his exploration of the Unknown Coast.



Nicholas Baudin.

Most of the time Flinders spent in the Far West area was devoted to charting and examining Nuyts Archipelago. In this he was motivated by a desire 'to do justice to the Dutch navigator', but at the same time he was obviously fascinated by the islands for his journal is full of comments about their fauna and flora, whereas the mainland, save for comments at Fowlers Bay, received very little attention. The archipelago has continued to be fascinating to naturalists, botanists and scientists ever since; a party of distinguished South Australian scientists camped on the islands in 1920 and the results of their researches were published in sixteen scientific papers for the Transactions of the Royal Society of South Australia between 1922 and 1924.

Flinders left the area of the Far West in early February 1802 and met the French expedition led by Nicholas Baudin in Encounter Bay on 8 April. Baudin, with his ships *Le Geographe* and *Le Naturaliste*, then proceeded to examine the coastline Flinders had already explored, and on 1 May he was in the Nuyts Archipelago. On 8 May, while still in the Archipelago, he abandoned his observations for the time being and sailed for Sydney to refit his ships. This was accomplished by November 1802 and he set sail again for South Australian waters. By early February 1803 he was making a second examination of the area around Nuyts Archipelago[4].

Baudin died at Mauritius late in 1803 on the journey home to France. The official description of his voyage was therefore written by two of his crew, Francois Peron and Louis de Freycinet, and published as *Voyage de decouvertes aux Terra Australis*, in which all the southern coastline of the continent was called Napoleon Land. Baudin's journal was given in manuscript form to the French Archives Nationales in Paris, and in 1974 it was translated by Christine Cornell and published by the Libraries Board of South Australia.[5]

Peron wrote that one of Baudin's most important instructions was to explore north of Nuyts' Isles of St Peter and St Francis to seek a strait, sea or river, then widely believed to exist. Geographers in Europe had speculated that the long, straight coastline of Nuyts Land had to be broken by a river eventually, and a belief had grown up that somewhere beyond the extremity of Nuyts' chart there could be a large river extending well inland into Terra Australis.

When the French reached the vicinity of St Francis and St Peter islands in May of 1802 the two ships were buffeted by strong winds and there was much sickness amongst the crew from scurvy and dysentry. Peron reported that 'several men had already been committed to the deep and . . . most of the sailors were incapable of duty'. The morale of the crew must have been very low; consider for example Baudin's comment in his journal which said that one of the scientists 'who shall remain nameless, was struck down by a most unusual

illness. He was seized with a fear of dying and was convinced that his career had ended.'

Peron's account mentions that on the ships the water was foul, the biscuits riddled by weavils and the meat rotten. Baudin wrote of 'some serious reflections upon the position (he) was in' and on 8 May he decided to return to Port Jackson for 'truly, we were all very much in need of a little rest'.

Accordingly, the survey was halted but not abandoned, for so much still needed to be done. As Peron put it, 'a second trip to Napoleon Land was . . . imperative'.

The second trip was organised with the ships *Le Geographe* and *Le Casuarina*. *Le Naturaliste* was sent home to France.

On 1 February 1803 *Le Geographe* and *Le Casuarina* were separated in Investigator Strait. They did not meet up again until 18 February at King Georges Sound so, *Le Geographe* alone, with Baudin in command, examined the Nuyts Archipelago area for a second time between 6 February and 11 February 1803[6].

On 7 February Baudin discovered 'a broad bay that stretches North-East by North'. He called it the Bay of Saints but later in the official French publication it was called Murat Bay after Joachim Murat (1767–1815) one of Napoleon's marshals, who was given the hand of Napoleon's youngest sister Caroline and was made King of Naples (1808–1815). This place name, and several others given by the French, were included in South Australia's nomenclature. Elsewhere, when the discoveries were made by Flinders, the English place names were retained.

It is one of the special features of the Far West area that its place name sources are unique in South Australia. In addition to the French and English, there are the Dutch names (Nuyts, St Peter and St Francis) and, later on, when settlement began, Aboriginal names were used and also names such as Scherk, which honoured South Australian people of German descent.

The *Le Geographe* anchored between Tourville Cove and Eugene Island in 6 fathoms of water. Tourville Cove (Bay) was retained as a place name and honours Comte Tourville (1642–1701), Marshal of France and Admiral of Louis XIV's navy. Eugene Island and its small adjacent Hortense Island were named after the children of the Empress Josephine and her first husband Alexander Beauharnais. The names did not survive since Eugene Island was Flinders', and presumably Nuyts', St Peter Island and Hortense Island, missed by Flinders, was eventually called Goat Island.

Other French names in the area which were kept are Cape Thevenard, named after a French Admiral and Minister of Marine; Masillon Island (Jean Masillon, Bishop of Clermont), Fenelon Island (Francois Fenelon, theologian and author), Decres Bay (Denis Decres, Admiral), Cape Vivonne, (Duc de Vivonne, naval officer), Cape Missiessy (Comte de Missiessy, Admiral), Cape D'Estrees (either Jacques D'Estrees, author or Victor Marie, Marquis de Coeuvres, Duc D'Estrees).

From his anchorage Baudin sent two boats ahead of the ship to make soundings. They reported mainly shallow water which would have made it dangerous for *Le Geographe* to proceed further in. They did note what is now called Davenport Creek and this gave 'a moment of joy and satisfaction' but it was later proved that this was not the great inland river the expedition so badly wanted to find.

On 8 February Baudin sent two boats ashore, one commanded by Citizen Bonnefoi (the title indicates that this was the time of the French Republic) and the other by Citizen Ransonnet. With Bonnefoi was Citizen Bernier the



Dune ridge and Davenport Creek inlet with Denial Bay beyond.

astronomer and with Ransonnet was Citizen Faure, a geographer instructed to survey the harbour as accurately as possible.

The boats were away overnight and during their absence Baudin made a comment in his journal, which, in the light of later history, seems to be wrong. He wrote: 'it appears that the bottom we are on has few fish, for not a single one was caught on the line'.

Bonnefoi's boat was the first to return the next day. He reported that the shores of the bay offered 'no resources at all, being entirely without water'. They had grounded the boat, apparently near Cape D'Estrees, to allow Citizen Bernier to go ashore — the first European to set foot on the mainland in the vicinity of Ceduna.

Tragically, Pierre Francois Bernier died four months later on 6 June 1803. The cause seems to have been venereal disease caught while the ship was in Timor. Baudin mentions that many of the crew had gone down with the disease and in the next sentence says: 'Citizen Bernier . . . appeared to be heading towards a serious illness.'

Baudin devoted three paragraphs in his journal to the death of Bernier and was obviously most upset by it. He described him as having a natural aptitude for his science, (astronomy) and did not 'hesitate to say that of all the scientists given to me, it was he who worked the most'.

When Ransonnet's boat returned to *Le Geographe*, Faure reported that the harbour (Murat Bay) was not suitable for large ships for 'at high tide it has only 3 fathoms depth between the sand bars'. There were no rivers; the possibility noted two days before was merely an arm of the sea which disappeared amongst swamps.

On the next day, 10 February, one large boat was sent to Eugene Island (St Peter Island). Baudin described it as a pleasure party and all the naturalists,

huntsmen and dogs went 'to try to bring us something new'. At sunset they returned with several new plants, some birds not seen before, two live short-tailed possums, three dead ones and two kangaroo-rats.

Francois Peron went on this pleasure jaunt in his role as a zoologist and had a narrow escape from death. He went out onto a large sandbank extending from the eastern end of the island towards the mainland. With a friend, Lefebvre, he was trapped by the incoming tide and had to wade through water sometimes over his depth. Since he could not swim he survived only because of the help of Lefebvre who 'guided him amidst the ever rising waters'.

On 11 February, *Le Geographe* weighed anchor and, under the influence of a good south east breeze, sailed westwards passing 'Devon Bay' (Fowlers Bay?), on its way to King Georges Sound.

Peron included some detailed observations of the Murat Bay area when he wrote his part of the official report of the expedition. He stated that no water was found either on the islands or the mainland. Fires indicated the presence of inhabitants on the mainland, two 'unhappy savages' were seen fleeing to the interior and two 'miserable huts' were found composed of the branches of trees roughly interlaced and thrust into the ground.

In observations about animals, Peron wrote of the 'extraordinary dog of New Holland', numerous kangaroo rats on Eugene Island, possums, and evidence of many seals in the archipelago (called the Josephine Islands). Amongst the reptiles he found a new species of lizard and thought that Eugene Island was 'frequently visited by large sea turtles'. He (like Baudin) thought that fish were extremely scarce but the islands were rich in molluscs. There were 'gigantic ants which covered the sand dunes in dark and devouring multitudes', several cockroaches and a small number of grasshoppers.

Peron's general observations were full of pessimism. The area was surrounded by 'a ring of arid dunes', it was 'dreary' and 'even more sterile than those (areas) already described'. Of the archipelago he said: 'Nothing could be more hideous than the numerous isles, which are connected to this part of New Holland; not a tree- not a shrub — not a bush rises above their surface'.

Peron had a dramatic style of writing and frequently made strong statements which ranged from lavish praise to withering criticisms. He no doubt judged the Far West by comparison with areas such as Van Diemen's Land, where he had spent much time. He seems to have been responsible, later, for the attempt to discredit all the discoveries of Flinders, and it is likely that it was he who chose new French place names after the death of Baudin, whom he apparently greatly disliked. The names chosen recognised members of Napoleon's family, distinguished Admirals, Marshals of France and other influential French people likely to give generous patronage to the author or authors. If this was Peron's aim it did not succeed for he died in 1810, aged 35, and Freycinet finished the official report. Neither author was ever generous about the country of the Far West and thus Napoleon Land, like its predecessor, Nuyts Land, was ignored as a prospect for future colonisation.

The first indications of the nature of the interior country of the Far West came with the explorations of Edward John Eyre. He was in the area in August and September of 1839 when, after sailing from Adelaide to Port Lincoln accompanied by his overseer Baxter and two Aborigines, he examined the country along the north western coastlines as far as Streaky Bay, where he established a depot.[8] With one of the Aborigines, Eyre, who was then 24 years old, proceeded along the coast past Smoky and Denial Bays to a little beyond Pt. Bell. By then the scarcity of grass for the horses, and the absence of water, compelled him to return.

During the night I was taken with a fit of spitting blood, similar to those that I had already had on two different occasions, and the sputum I brought up was so thick that one would have said that it was pieces of lung coming away from my body.

NICHOLAS BAUDIN,
3/6/1803

By keeping the axes constantly at work in advance of the drays, we succeeded in slowly forcing a passage through this dreadful country emerging . . . at an open plain behind Point Brown, and in the midst of which was a well of water.

EDWARD JOHN EYRE

On this first expedition into the area Eyre found water only once, a little to the north east of Point Brown, and then it was in such a small quantity and so difficult to obtain that his horses could not get sufficient. When he finally returned to Streaky Bay his horses had been four days without water and most of that time without food. The country he passed through he described as 'dreary' with very dense scrub that made travelling difficult.

Eyre next spent time in the area during his famous overland journey in search of a possible stock route from Adelaide to the Swan River colony. This expedition was supported by an influential committee in Adelaide and Eyre led a group which included Edward Bate Scott, his assistant and companion, John Baxter, overseer, Corporal Coles from the Royal Sappers and Miners, John Houston, driving a three horse dray, R McRobert driving a three horse dray, and Aboriginal boys Neramberia and Cootachach. Later Thomas Costelow replaced R McRobert and Wylie, an Aborigine from King Georges Sound, joined the group. It was Eyre and Wylie who, after many difficulties including the loss of Baxter, shot by natives, eventually reached King Georges Sound.[9]

The government cutter *Waterwitch*, commanded by Mr Germein, was put at Eyre's disposal; he used it as a supply ship carrying stores and water to leap frog from bay to bay ahead of the party as they pushed along the coast.

Early in November 1840, the party was assembled at Eyre's former depot of 1839. On 6 November, the *Waterwitch* was sent to the head of Streaky Bay to land a cask of water and Eyre and his party began their trek on foot. The next day they breakfasted before daylight and, soon after dawn, began hacking their way with axes through dense scrub consisting of 'Eucalyptus dumosa and salt-water tea-tree (the latter of a very large growth and very dense) in a heavy, sandy soil.'

After about 17 miles of slow progress the party emerged at an 'open plain behind Point Brown in the midst of which there was a waterhole in a solid sheet of limestone'. From there the next water was obtained from the *Waterwitch* which was waiting for them in Smoky Bay.

A day of rest was ordered at Smoky Bay and Eyre made contact with a group of friendly Aborigines. They informed him he could find no water for two days but that a place called *Beelimah Gaippe*, which he could find the next day, had ample water. An old man, Wilguldy, offered to be a guide and he was to prove an invaluable assistant. He took them to Denial Bay where they met the *Waterwitch* again and then 'after a stage of twelve miles' they reached Beelimah Gaippe at about noon on 11 November.

In his journal Eyre stated 'the water to which the native took us was procured by digging about four feet deep, in a swamp behind the coast hummocks which were . . . high and bare, and composed of white sand. The water was abundant and good . . .'. This Aboriginal location which Eyre translated as Beelimah is pronounced Ball-a-more in the Far West today.

After a days rest the party moved on, once again through difficult scrubby country, and found water with Wilguldy's guidance at Berinyana Gaippe amongst the sand hummocks a little north of Point Bell. On 14 November they were 'obliged to keep more to the north to avoid some salt lakes and low swamps near the coast' — undoubtedly the Lake McDonnell area of today. Natives accompanied them throughout much of the journey and led them to a watering place among some sand hills called Wademar Gaippe.

November 15 was a difficult day's travel and, at the end of it, Eyre described the lengths to which the natives had to go to obtain water in the area. They called the spot Mobeela Gaippe and it consisted of holes sunk through ridges of loose sand to a depth of 14 or 15 feet, at the bottom of which water was obtained in very small quantities. There were several of these 'singular wells'

only about 'two feet in diameter at the bore, quite circular and carried straight down, and the work beautifully executed'. To get to the water the Aborigines 'placed a long pole against one side ascending and descending by it to avoid friction against the sides'.

Eyre's party members were too clumsy to slither down the poles in such narrow wells so it became necessary for them to open a new well of much larger dimensions, which was not an easy task in loose sand.

The party had been travelling through country where, what Eyre called Mesembryanthemum, grows in abundance. The popular name is pig-face; in November it was in full fruit and 'constituted a favourite and important article of food among the native population.' The fruit is rich, juicy and sweet, about the size of a gooseberry. Eyre's men found it 'an agreeable addition to their fare' which was both wholesome and refreshing, particularly in the hot weather.

On 17 November the party reached Fowlers Bay and here Eyre established a depot after finding good water amongst the sandhills. Stores were landed from the *Waterwitch* and Eyre operated from this location until 25 February 1841. During this time the *Waterwitch* returned to Adelaide and was replaced by the *Hero* which brought the native Wylie to join the party. Eyre made several investigations of the country west of Fowlers Bay and became convinced that he would never penetrate it with a large party. Accordingly, he sent most of his men back to Adelaide on the *Hero* and went on himself with Baxter, Wylie and two other Aborigines, Joey and Larry. The killing of Baxter by Joey and Larry and the subsequent heroic struggle by Eyre and Wylie to complete the journey is a well known story in Australian history.

Like Flinders, Baudin, Peron and Freycinet before him, Eyre's writings did nothing to create a favourable impression of the environment of the Far West. He could only report on 'dense scrubby country', 'steep sandy ridges', and country which 'looked very cheerless in every direction'. His main concern always was to find water and it is doubtful whether he could have survived without the help of Wilguldy and other Aborigines.

Eyre was the last of the discoverers. By the end of 1841 the coastline was well known and Eyre had told the depressing news about the interior of the country. Also, by then, the colony of South Australia was firmly established and centralised around the growing town of Adelaide. This development, the work of the Surveyor-General, Colonel William Light, immediately isolated the Far West. And, it has been an isolation which has been there ever since, an isolation which has been a disadvantage settlers have always had to live with.

Although Flinders, Baudin and Eyre were the discoverers their observations and their descriptions were superficial. In each case they were travellers passing through the area as part of a bigger mission. After them a large amount of reconaissance work was necessary to infill the sketchy facts they recorded, and here a variety of people contributed information.

Whalers and sealers undoubtedly knew the Far West coastal area very well, but they left few written records of their activities. The indirect evidence of their visits to the area however is substantial. As early as 23 February 1803 Baudin reported meeting an American sealer at King Georges Sound. He had come from the east and had only three or four hundred skins but wanted twenty thousand.

In the years before South Australia was colonised it was well known that whalers and sealers operated from bases at Kangaroo Island and Port Lincoln. From there they had outposts seemingly at Point Fowler, where an interesting stone lookout used for spotting whales still exists, near Point Brown (actually in Streaky Bay), where iron pots were left on the beaches, and on the large islands of Nuyts Archipelago.

The whalers left behind three large cooking pots that were used for the boiling down of blubber. They were salvaged by farmers who came later and used for water troughs. Each one held about one hundred gallons.

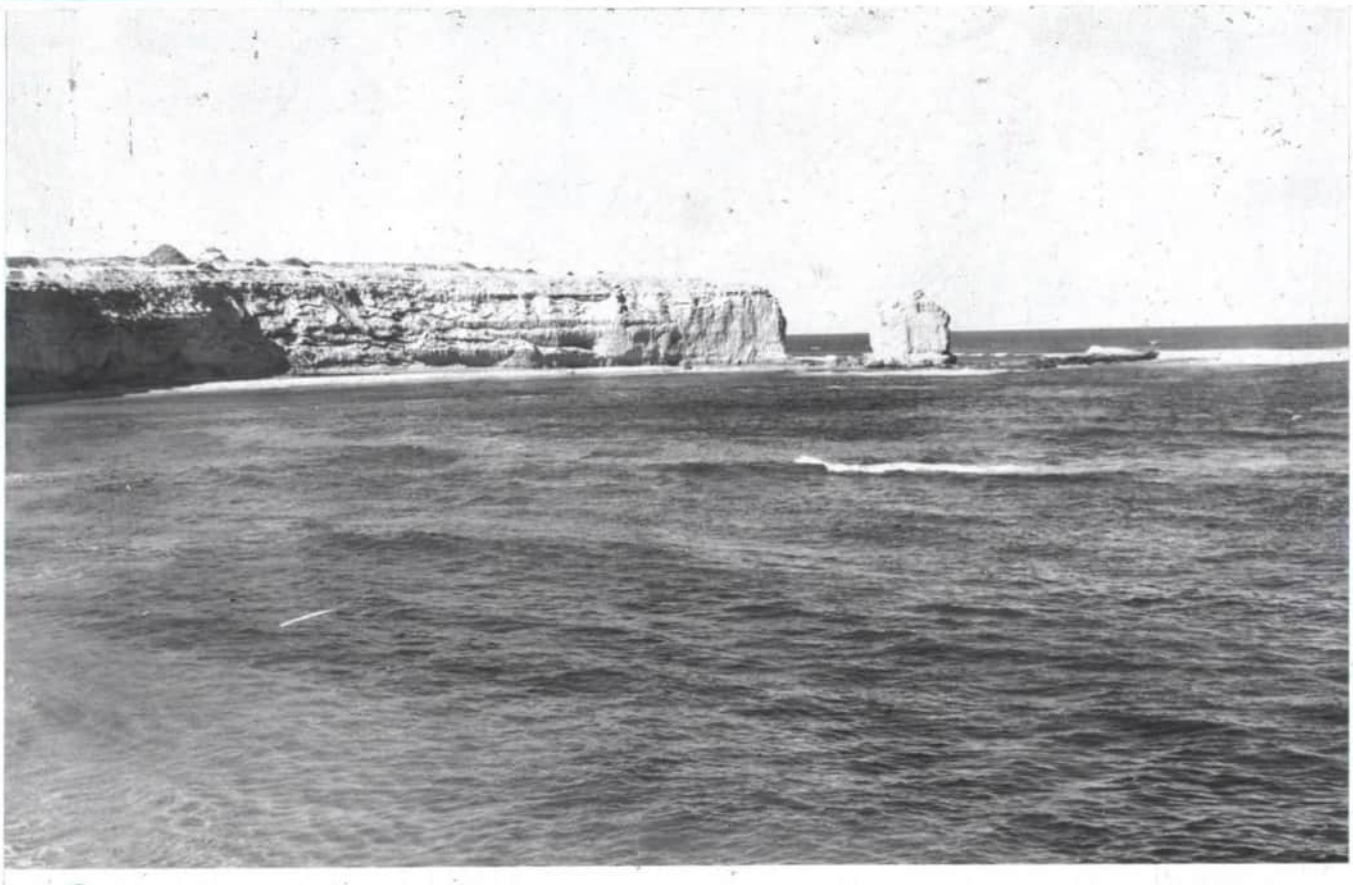
A N HARRISON

Eyre mentioned that while he was in Port Lincoln in October 1840 he met the Captain and Surgeon of 'one of the French whalers in port' and later at Fowlers Bay he found the shores 'strewed in all directions with the bones and carcasses of whales, which had been taken here by the American ship I saw at Port Lincoln.'

There is also the interesting story told by G B Barton in the *Australasian*, 8 November 1902.[10] He spoke of an early sealer named Bryant who made a home for himself on St Peter Island and kept two Aboriginal women called Charlotte and Sally. He built a hut and made a small farm where he grew fruit and vegetables which he could sell to American whaling ships which occasionally visited him. Bryant died suddenly and Charlotte and Sally, each with two half-caste children, stayed on the island. Some time later they were carried off by 'one of the Kangaroo Island gangs led by John Williams, who was notorious for his devilry'. They proceeded to King Georges Sound, but eventually returned to St Peter Island, where they left the women.

Next the women attracted the attention of two sealers named Manson and Jackson and became their housekeepers. On a sealing voyage Charlotte and her children accompanied them in a boat which sank in a storm. Only Charlotte survived; she managed to swim to the mainland where, after spending many nights on her own in the bush, she was able to walk to Port Lincoln and tell her story.

One other story, this time reported in the *Register* in December 1843 told of the journey of George Cummings and Richard Harris that year from 'the whaling station at Fowler's Bay' overland to Port Lincoln. Not only does this confirm that there was a station at Fowlers Bay but the two travellers also mentioned that they called in at a whaling station on 'Peter Island' to obtain provisions.[11]



This scenic stretch of high limestone cliffs near Clare Bay has a detached segment known as Eyres Bluff.

In the records of the State Library of Tasmania the reminiscences of two Hobart whalers mention activities along the coast from Streaky Bay to Fowlers Bay.[12] Captain James William Robinson, 1824–1906, wrote about his visits to Streaky Bay where there was a successful bay whaling operation. He also mentioned a disaster on the Franklin Islands when two whalers were speared by natives. Robinson was not precise about the location of the whaling station in Streaky Bay; nor was he precise about his dates, but he appears to have been talking about the years in the mid 1840s.

Captain Richard Copping, 1821–1892, wrote of successful whaling in the winter months at Fowlers Bay. In one year he mentioned getting about 70 tons of oil there in four months. Like Captain Robinson he was not precise about the dates, but it was before he became a Captain and was therefore when he was a young man, probably in the 1840s.

In the several decades of reconaissance which will now be reviewed three of Australia's famous explorers visited the Far West as part of their journeys. The first was John McDouall Stuart, who on a journey north of Lake Torrens then south towards the sea, made for Eyre's Beelimah Gaippe which he reached in an exhausted condition on 18 August 1858. From there he followed the coast to Streaky Bay, where by then Thomas Gibson was living on the Maryvale pastoral run. This expedition was a precursor to Stuart's better known attempts to cross the continent from south to north in 1860–62.

The second famous explorer to pass through the Far West was John Forrest on his journey in 1870 which was organized in Western Australia to be a 'proper survey' of the 'route taken thirty years earlier by E J Eyre'.[13] Forrest, of course, travelled in the opposite direction to that taken by Eyre and, in 1870, it was a much easier task. He came into Fowlers Bay on a cart track and was met a few miles out by a police trooper who had been sent to welcome him.

Ernest Giles, the great inland explorer, used Fowlers Bay as a base in the mid 1870s. He was employed by Thomas Elder to search for pastoral land westwards to the Nullarbor and then, in 1875, he led an expedition from Fowlers Bay to Beltana via Ooldea.

When Eyre made his first visit to the country just beyond Point Bell in 1839, he was supposed to have been supported by Captain John Cannan sailing along the coast in the *Ranger*. In fact Cannan never found Eyre, but while searching for him he examined Denial Bay and Fowlers Bay. Here he reiterated the belief of Flinders and Baudin that no rivers entered the sea in either bay and like them he was full of pessimism about the quality of the country. He concluded his report to Governor Gawler with the consideration that 'this part of the province, from the barrenness of the land and the scarcity of fresh water, to be totally unavailable for any other purpose than that of whaling.'[14]

In the same year a voyage 'nearly to the western limits on the colony' was made by Capt. John Hart in the *Rapid*. With him were Samuel Stephens and John Hill, who were agents for the London based South Australian Secondary Towns Association. Stephens and Hill were looking for sites for a secondary town in the colony and also for good farming land for Special Surveys. In both quests they were disappointed and, in writing to the *Register*, they spoke of 'inferior country', 'dense scrub' and 'land almost useless to us at present'. They acknowledged that Denial Bay was likely to be a valuable harbour, that whaling stations could be successful, but they could see 'no prospects of early pastoral or agricultural settlement.'[15]

In the next 18 years pastoralists slowly occupied land between Port Lincoln and Streaky Bay and we have already seen that in 1858 Thomas Gibson had a station at Streaky Bay. It was a logical step for people interested in sheep

Leaving (Fowlers Bay) on Saturday, the 13th of March, 1875, I had a strong party with me as far as Youldeh. My second in command, Mr Roberts, Mr Thomas Richards, police trooper — who having previously visited Youldeh, was going to show me its whereabouts — and Mr George Murray; I had with me also another white man, Peter Nicholls, who was my cook, one old black fellow and two young ones.

ERNEST GILES

raising to investigate the country beyond Streaky Bay, and this was first done by two sheep men F Miller and W Dutton in 1857.

W G Harris reported on the journey of Miller and Dutton to the Commissioner of Crown Lands and supplied a map of their travels which was published in the South Australian Parliamentary Papers. The two men travelled quickly with three horses and two Aborigines, who acted as guides as far as Beelimah Gaippe; this they reported was an admirable locality for a depot if a party wanted to explore on a larger scale. While they were there it was like 'a large swamp with water anywhere at a depth of a few inches'.[16]

In addition to the mention of Beelimah their short report concentrated on other watering spots. The limestone well at the back of Point Brown was mentioned and so was the fact that water could be obtained at 'Walyanibbie' by scraping in the sand.

Miller and Dutton were less pessimistic about the countryside than others had been before them. They mentioned areas of good grass, but had to acknowledge the drawback of no permanent water. Nevertheless, their cautious optimism was noted in the discussion of a wider issue, namely the fixing of the boundary between South Australia and Western Australia. Governor McDonnell, fresh from travels between Streaky Bay and Port Lincoln, also spoke well of the possibilities for pastoralism and advocated an export trade in wool from Streaky Bay.

The eastern boundary of Western Australia was fixed in 1831 as 129 degrees East longitude. The western boundary of South Australia was fixed in 1836 as 132 degrees East, so there was a gap of 3 degrees which was labelled 'No Mans Land' and supervised by New South Wales. The stirrings of interest by South Australians for the land beyond Streaky Bay in 1857 and 1858 led to agitation to annex No Mans Land and this was done in 1861 when the South



The Lake McDonnell area between Penong and Point Sinclair.

Australian boundary was adjusted to coincide with Western Australia's 129 degrees East.

The statements made by Miller and Dutton were not readily accepted in Adelaide. Because they were a private party searching for grazing land, many people thought they had made exaggerated claims about the nature of the country. The Commissioner of Police, Major Warburton, himself an explorer of parts of Eyre Peninsula, expressed doubts about their truthfulness and supported a notion that the Government should investigate their claims.

Police Constable James Geharty was given the task of exploring the country north-west of Streaky Bay to check the validity of the Miller-Dutton report. He was allowed 5 to 6 weeks and took with him Messrs Symes and Swan, who were searching for pastoral runs, Mr F Ives, Police Trooper Mudge and the Aborigine, Minnilta.[17]

The Geharty party experienced difficulties not common to other travellers in the area, namely excessive rain in June of 1858. Lake McDonnell was named after the Governor and, at the back of Fowlers Bay, grassy country was discovered which the party optimistically thought might stretch to the boundary of the province. Mr Swan obviously believed so because he was soon seeking pastoral leases in the area.

The Geharty report added to the cautious optimism of the Miller-Dutton report, and for the first time people began to seriously consider some form of settlement in the Far West. Geharty, however, thought that many of the claims made by Miller and Dutton were false and that they could not have possibly covered the area they said they did on a journey lasting seven days. This brought a stinging reply from Frederick Miller, who gave his address as Kalca, Streaky Bay, when his letter was published in the *Register* in December 1858.[18] He claimed that Gerharty had all his facts wrong and called him 'a paltry policeman'.

Despite Miller's comments James Geharty was a man who should be remembered, for the party he led did more than any other group to open up the Far West district for settlement. Geharty remained a policeman all his life, served mainly at Port Lincoln and Venus Bay, and rose to become Sergeant Geharty. After his death in 1898 an obituary in the Adelaide *Observer* suggested that, in his prime, he was a conspicuous person in Port Lincoln. 'His tall handsome figure, his long curling iron-grey hair, his active masterful manner, his wit and repartee, his good nature and wonderful knowledge of bush life, combined to make him not only a valuable police trooper . . . but also an excellent companion in bush travelling'. For his services in leading the investigation of the Denial Bay and Fowlers Bay country Geharty was officially thanked by the government and given an annuity of 50 pounds.

Major Warburton visited the Denial Bay area soon after Gerharty. It was at the end of the Major's explorations in the Lake Gairdner and Gawler Ranges areas and his was yet another exploration party to water at Beelimah. From there he proceeded south to Streaky Bay and Port Lincoln. His impressions of the country around Denial Bay echoed those of Eyre's and were not as encouraging as Geharty's or Miller's.

Also in 1858 there was renewed interest in surveying the coastline. Naval officer Bloomfield Douglas was placed in charge of the government schooner *Yatala* and asked to examine the coast between Point Fowler and Kangaroo Island. The governor Sir Richard McDonnell accompanied him on the first portion of his voyage and later disembarked at Streaky Bay.

Douglas reached Fowlers Bay in April of 1858. He found abundant water by sinking a few feet in the sandhills and suggested 'an open sloping plain near the best landing place (as) the best site for a township'. But, he thought that the

Geharty's baptism into the brotherhood of explorers was a rough one. A week's travelling found him and his companions battling against the barriers of the west with sodden and depleted provision packs, soaked by the uncertain June rains.

BESSIE THREADGILL



Mounted Trooper, later Sergeant James Geharty, leader of the reconaissance party which brought W R Swan to Fowlers Bay in 1858.

country behind the bay would be of 'extremely doubtful' value for pastoral and agricultural pursuits. The harbour he anchored in he called Port Eyre leaving 'Fowlers Bay to designate the entire space between Point Fowler and Point Sinclair'.

In Tourville Bay Douglas found 'a navigable creek having nine feet on a bar at its entrance at low water', and thought there was a very 'eligible spot' for a township nearby. The creek was named Davenport, after the Honourable Samuel Davenport.

Next Douglas made a quick run to Streaky Bay to disembark the Governor and his party. On the way he named Waterwitch Channel after Eyre's supply cutter. He returned to Davenport Creek after the governor left him and commenced 'a minute survey of Denial Bay . . . extended to Smoky Bay'.

During the course of this survey the first positive comments about the Denial Bay area were recorded. Douglas thought there were 'some excellent tracts of land on the north-east side of Tourville Bay', and that it was worthy of 'the attention of sheep farmers'. The natives told him there was no permanent water in the area but Douglas wrote 'with the apparatus for boring, or well sinking, it may be quite possible that water might be procured'.

A published chart of Douglas' voyage was prepared by his assistant C De Mole. On it, some additional place names which appeared for the first time were Yatala Channel, Eyre's Island, Laura Bay, Mt Younghusband (on St Peter Island), Hart's Island, Point De Mole, Point Collinson and Cannan's Reef. Douglas had at his disposal earlier unpublished charts made by Hart and Cannan so there is no way of knowing whether the 'new' names came from those charts or were chosen by Douglas and/or the governor while he was on board.

Major Warburton returned to make further investigations of the far western coast in 1860. His main objective was to examine No Man's Land because the annexation of it by South Australia was then imminent; on the way he had to pass through the Fowlers Bay area. He made use of the schooner *Yatala* to reach Fowlers Bay and a party of police troopers brought horses overland from Port Lincoln. By then W R Swan had settled at Fowlers Bay on his Yalata head station and Warburton recorded that, from this gentleman he received 'much kindness'.[19]



W R Swan.

Warburton was the first to make extended comments about the dominating environmental feature of Fowlers Bay, the sandhills. He described this 'extraordinary local feature' as unstable and 'trackless as the sea'. The dunes were 'so varying from time to time' that an inexperienced person would soon lose himself in attempting to cross them'. They were, however, 'magnificent reservoirs of rain water', except that the sand moved so often and 'filled in wells almost as fast as they were sunk'.

Warburton pushed through dense scrub and desolate country to examine No Man's Land. It was a long and difficult journey which proved that the country had little real value and was hardly worth annexing. Not far out from Fowlers Bay the 'gallant major', so called by journalists of the day, lost his sword, torn from the side of one of his men as he struggled through scrub. It lay where it fell for more than forty years and was eventually found by Aborigines who gave it to Richard Thelwall Maurice. He donated it to the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia (South Australian Branch) and it can be seen today in the Society's rooms in the State Library of South Australia.[20]

There was one other notable explorer who must be remembered, particularly in the Fowlers Bay area. This was the same Richard Thelwall Maurice, son of the pastoralist Price Maurice; he added nothing to the knowledge of Fowlers Bay, but used it as a starting point for inland



Gravestone, Yalata Head Station cemetery.

explorations to the Rawlinson Ranges and across the continent to the Cambridge Gulf near present day Wyndham.

Maurice, or RTM as he called himself, was born in Australia and educated in England and Belgium. At his father's expense he travelled in America and New Zealand, but in his early manhood he lost his parent's patronage and launched into a dissolute life interrupted now and then by his explorations. He lived for a long time with the George Murray family at Yalata Station and, according to local legends, spent much of his time in the Globe Hotel at Fowlers Bay.

RTM's private papers, including details of his explorations, are lodged in the Public Record Office in Adelaide.[21] Amongst them is correspondence with fellow explorer and friend Winnecke, and one revealing passage indicates the nature of his problems:

Fowlers Bay
August 17, 1899

Mr Dear Winnecke,

Here we are again as the clown says in the Circus.

But before beginning let me inform you I have sworn off whisky from this day evermore and when I say that I need say no more. I gave my friends here a terrible fright by having a fit which they ... thought would remove RTM from this material world ... Rather than risk any more of these sensational acts — have knocked it off for ever ...

In the small cemetery close to the ruins of Yalata Sation there is a large tablet which records the death of RTM in 1906. He was 49 years old.

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1 Fenner, C. 'The First Discoverers of South Australia — the Tercentenary of Nuyts', P R GS. Vol. 27, pp.23–8.

2 Buchanan, Mr Justice 'Proposed Dutch Colony in Nuyt's Land', P R GS. Vol 19, 102–108.

3 Cooper, H C, used material from the Fair and Rough Log Books of the *Investigator* for his publication *The Unknown Coast* (1953), and the Libraries Board of South Australian produced a facsimile copy of *A Voyage to Terra Australis* in 1966.

4 Cooper, H M *French Exploration in South Australia*. (1952).

5 Journal of Nicolas Baudin 1800 to 1803, Libraries Board of South Australia, translated by Christine Cornell.

6 *Le Geographe* was 124 feet long, 30 feet wide at the main beams and had a draught of 14 feet 4 inches. It carried a crew of 124 (see note 5).

7 Unless otherwise stated the source for all place names is:
Cockburn, R *Place Names of South Australia*, reprinted as '*Whats In a Name*' (1985).

8 Eyre, E J *Journals of Expeditions of Discovery into Central Australia and Overland from Adelaide to King George's Sound in the years 1840–41*. (1845).

9 Ibid.

10 Moore, H P 'Notes on the Early Settlers in South Australia prior to 1836', P R GS., Vol. 25, pp.81–135.

11 *Register*, 16 December, 1843.

12 FWLHN Copies of these reminiscences were obtained from the Special Collections, State Library of Tasmania, by Kaye Gregor when she was researching material on the history of Smoky Bay.

13 Crowley, F K *Forrest 1847–1918*, Volume 1, p.39.

14 Report of the Select Committee on South Australia, House of Commons, London, Appendix pp. 226–227.

15 *Register*, 16 October 1843.

16 SAPP, No. 192, 1857–58.

17 Threadgill, Bessie, *South Australia Land Exploration*, 1856 to 1880 (1922), pp.35–41.

18 *Register*, 7 December 1858.

19 *S A Advertiser*, 26 December 1860.

20 Proceedings of the Royal Geog. S. of S A Vol. 19, p.112.

21 Papers of R T Maurice, PRO.

3. Barr Smith's Sheep Run

It has already been shown that W R Swan visited the Fowlers Bay area in 1858 and that he had established his Yalata head station there by 1860.

Swan was then 40 years of age and was a typical South Australian 'squatter', a man prepared to live in remote areas where he could ultimately make his fortune by sheep raising. He already had considerable experience working on the Pekina run in South Australia's Mid North and on a northern Port Lincoln run, both of which were owned by Price Maurice, an older and more successful squatter.

Rodney Cockburn, in writing about Swan in *Pastoral Pioneers of South Australia*, commented that he 'wrapped himself in wool and was born for broad acres'.[1] He recognised possibilities for sheep farming at Fowlers Bay, but had to work within the system of pastoral leases which prevailed at the time, and he also recognised that he needed a strong partner to help him develop the country.

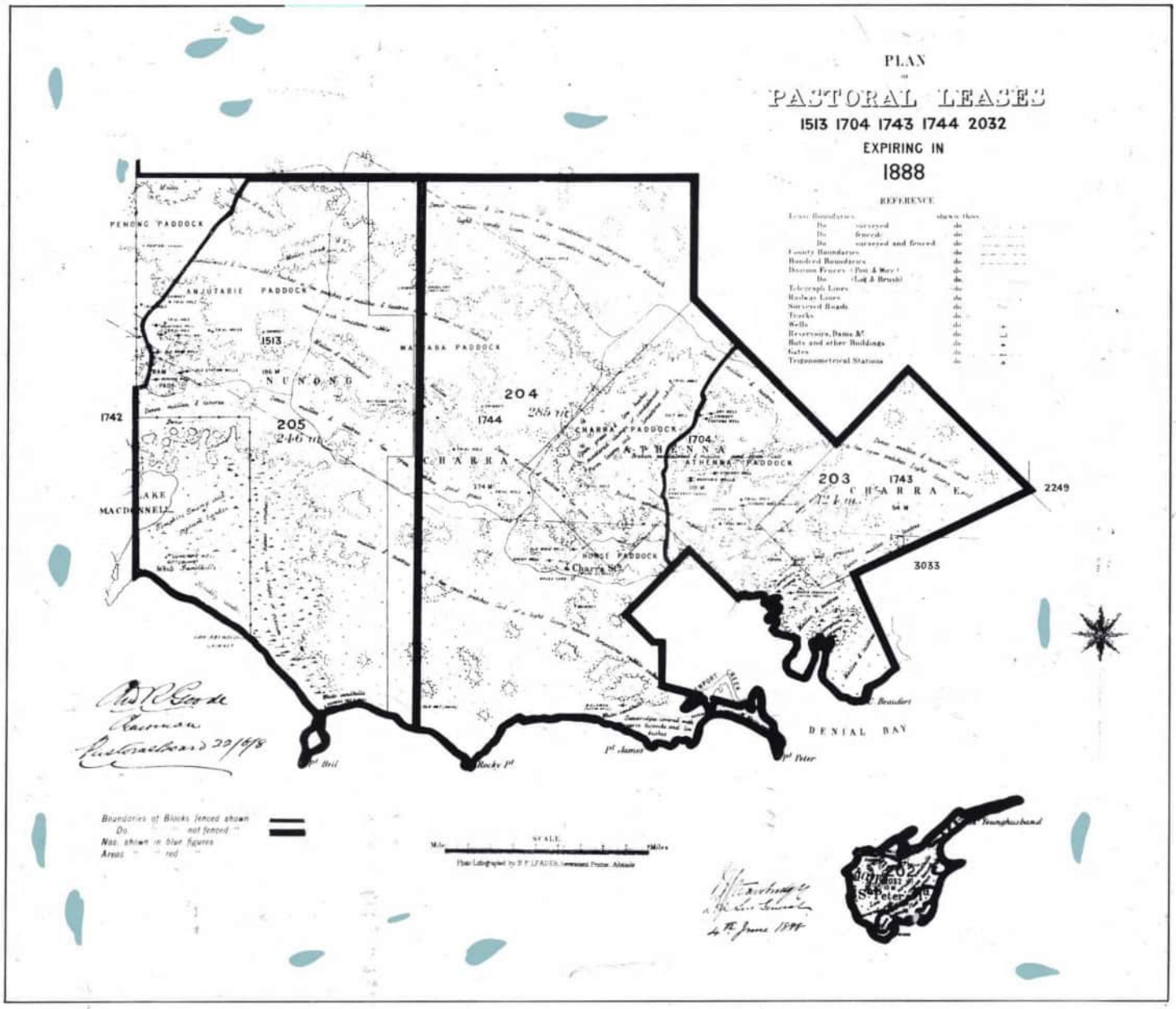
In South Australia, Pastoral Leases became available from 1851 onwards. Originally they were 14 year leases and subsequently it was possible to renew leases under this system until 1888. The lease areas were designated in three classes, first quality land at 1 pound per square mile, second quality 15 shillings per square mile and third quality at 10 shillings per square mile. In the Far West the leases were always considered to be third quality land and their disposal was always a matter for negotiation between influential pastoralists and the Lands Department in Adelaide. They were first allotted in 1860 and 1861, after W R Swan made his interest known, and were for a term of fourteen years at 10 shillings per square mile. Then, after a series of bad years in the mid 1860s, the leases were all surrendered in December 1867 and new leases were drawn up for 1868, with a twenty one year term at a reduced annual rental of eight shillings and four pence per square mile. In 1879 the rental dropped again, in most cases to as little as two shillings and sixpence per square mile.[2]

W R Swan chose as his partner Robert Barr Smith, and he could not have done better. Barr Smith had arrived in South Australia a few years before from Scotland via Melbourne. In 1856 he married Joanna Elder, sister of Thomas Elder, and entered the partnership called at that time Elder, Stirling and Company.[3] Subsequently it became Elder, Smith and Company and, with further name changes, it survives today as one of Australia's biggest companies.

Robert Barr Smith never lived on his Fowlers Bay leases, indeed it is not certain that he ever visited them, but he did finance their development. He had



R Barr Smith.



The Nunong, Charra and Athenna segments of the Fowlers Bay Run in 1887. Source SAPP 56/1888.

at his disposal ships to send goods to Fowlers Bay and, with the oversight of Swan, he paid for such things as well sinking, house and hut building and the supply of sheep.

The allocation of the first set of leases in the Far West in 1860 and 1861 is a confused set of lease numbers and vague descriptions of areas taken up. Many speculators heard that W R Swan was interested in the area, they knew he was a good sheep man and therefore they also applied for leases in the Fowlers Bay area. In many cases the people concerned never saw the land and, when they discovered the problems of raising sheep in such a remote, wild dog infested area, many of them didn't even bother to stock it. However, some did, and apart from Barr Smith and Swan, who will be dealt with in some detail later, it needs to be noted that Jeffery Thurgood Miller, John Marrabel, William Dutton, Robert Love, Henry Hawson and several others made valiant attempts to develop pastoral runs in the area.

Jeffrey Thurgood Miller was a relation of Frederick Miller, who had done reconaissance work in the area in 1857. Jeffrey, with a partner John Marrabel, was granted Pastoral Lease 877 on 1 January 1861 over an area of some 68 square miles at an annual rental of 34 pounds. Two further leases numbered 1033 and 1153 granted on 1 July 1861 and 1 April 1865, respectively, increased

the holding to just under 190 square miles.[4] It was called Nunong Station and its shipping point was Point Bell.

Jeffery Thurgood Miller was unable to make a success of Nunong, but he stayed on in the area and worked on the Yalata Station as a boundary rider and overseer for many years. His sons and grandsons also stayed in the district and took up farming in the Bookabie area where the Miller family is still well known today.

On 1 January 1868 the three original leases of Nunong Station were combined into a new lease number 1513 in the name of Robert Barr Smith and William Swan.

East of Nunong, William Dutton with a partner J H Browne, took up leases which they called Charra Station.[6] After one good season, Dutton bought Browne's share and then attempted to carry on alone. In an indication of just what his difficulties were, he once spent 500 pounds digging a well to a depth of 200 feet and got nothing but salt water.

William Dutton was actually Charles William, a son of Charles Christian Dutton, who has a place in South Australian history because he and four other men disappeared while taking cattle from Port Lincoln to Adelaide in 1842. All the party were killed by Aborigines.

Charles William Dutton could not make a success of Charra so he sold out to Messrs Barr Smith and Swan. In 1865 he returned to the Port Lincoln district and became a manager for the pastoralist W R Mortlock.

Next to Charra was Athenna Station. This was taken up by Robert Love under Pastoral Leases 853 and 1002 granted in 1860 and 1861 at the usual yearly rental of 10 shillings per square mile. It was another unsuccessful venture and, in 1868, the two leases, together with a third that had been obtained in 1866, were combined into a new lease 1704 and granted to Robert Barr Smith and William Swan. The lease was for 21 years over 119 square miles at the reduced rate of eight shillings and four pence per square mile.

Robert Barr Smith had the lease for land around Murat Bay and for a time he also had most of the land around Point Brown and Smoky Bay. The Point Brown peninsula was originally leased in 1861 and 1862 to Captain Henry Cowell Hawson an explorer and pastoralist from the Port Lincoln district. At the same time Andrew M Wooldridge and a Mr Heath took up much of the Smoky Bay Country. According to Rodney Cockburn in *Pastoral Pioneers of South Australia*, Wooldridge drove 3000 sheep overland via Port Augusta to stock his run. The sheep were shorn at William Horn's woolshed near Streaky Bay and their first bales were shipped on the *Lady Hinton* in 1865. This was the first shipment of wool from the West Coast direct to England.[7]

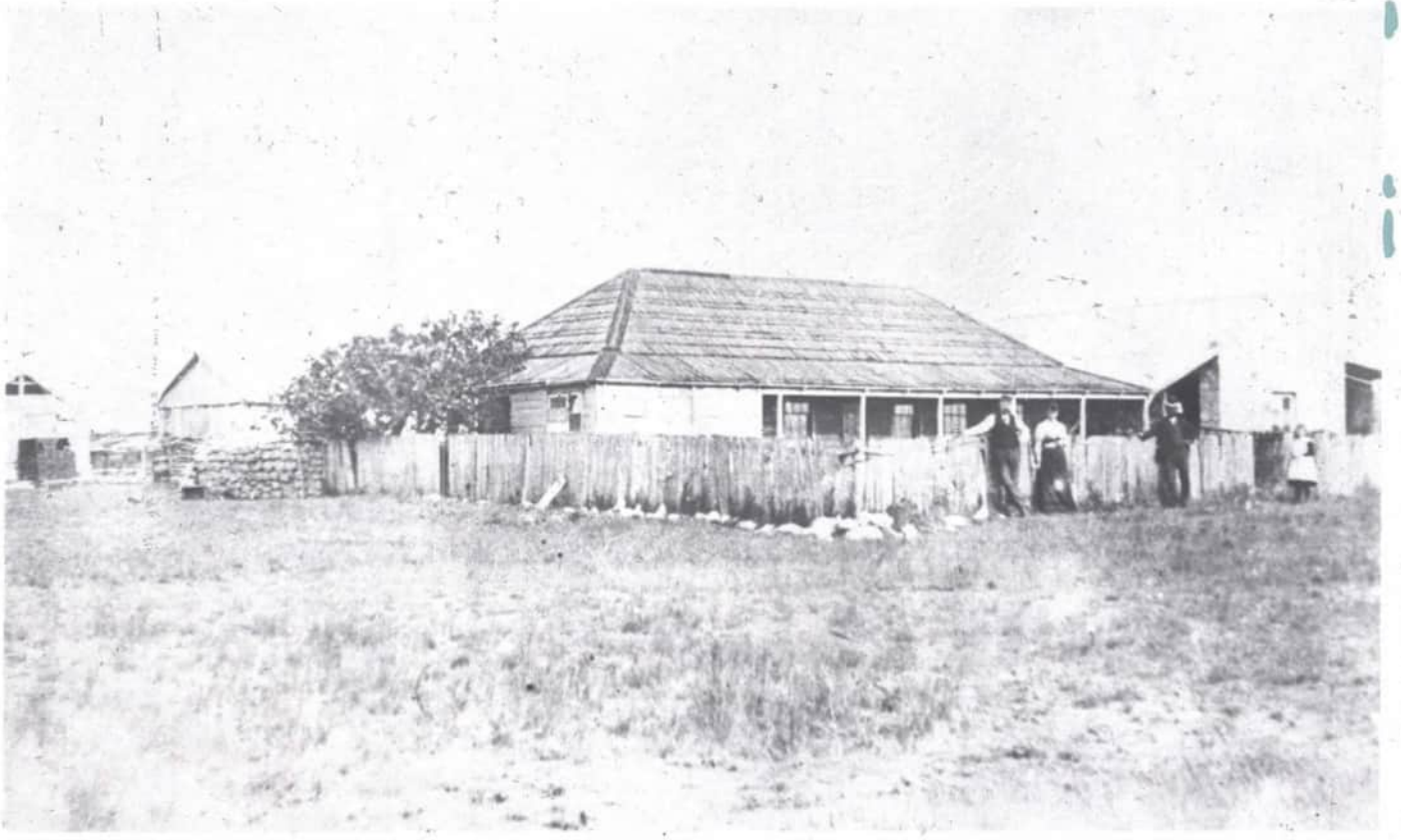
The leases of Wooldridge, Heath and Hawson were acquired by Robert Barr Smith and Thomas Elder in 1868, but in 1880 they were transferred to Thomas Chalmers Watson, a bachelor who established himself in the homestead at Point Brown station.

What was called the Chillundie Run, east of Murat Bay, was leased to William Hosken and three members of his wife's family Henry, John and Elijah Broadbent in 1867. It was 175 square miles at a rental of eight shillings and fourpence per square mile, later reduced to two shillings and sixpence per square mile. A further 41 square miles were leased at Laura Bay in 1875 and, at the same time, the leases of Samuel Goode, Charles Goode and William Horn were taken over — an addition of another 84 square miles. In 1876 the Broadbents assigned their interests in all these leases to William Hosken, who worked and lived in the area and spent a great deal of money well sinking. Here he had only one success, the Waranda Well, and it allowed him to run 2000 sheep.[8]

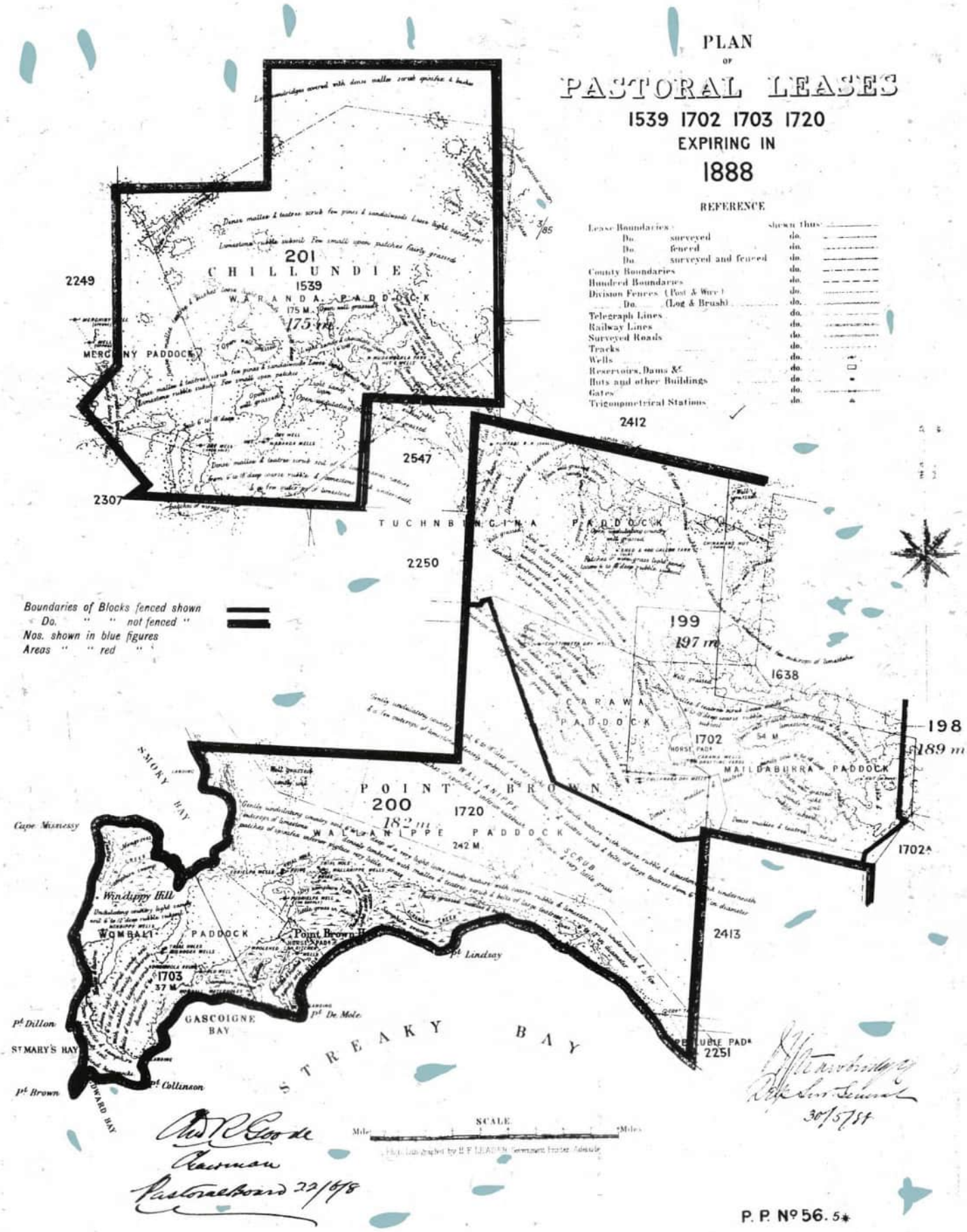
William Hosken died on his property in 1881. The cause of death was a heart attack brought on while he was chasing sheep. He was 65 years old and his lonely grave is still visible at Waranda today. Elizabeth Hosken then sold the leases together with 1500 sheep to Walter Ifould for 1500 pounds. Ifould in turn sold to Robert Barr Smith and William Swan, but made a tidy profit — his price was 2200 pounds.[9]

In the area which is today the Hundred of Goode, James and Philip Hiern took out leases in 1882 on two runs covering about 200 square miles. James Hiern seems to have been the only one to have lived and worked in the area and, since he became a pioneer of the town of Ceduna, something of his personal history should be recorded. He was a son of the Rev Henry Hiern of Devon who migrated to South Australia in 1852. The Reverend Hiern drowned in a boat in the Port Adelaide river and Mrs Hiern, with a large family, bought a small farm at Gumeracha. James Hiern began his working life on that farm and then worked on a Mannum sheep run owned by the Randell family.[10] In 1860 he was employed by a James Thompson to take 2500 sheep to Venus Bay and then to help him set up a sheep run at Witera. From there Hiern wandered far and wide over Eyre Peninsula working for sheep men and attempting several times to set up a run of his own. He was a victim of the water shortage in the Far West for he spent much of his time and money in digging wells which were mostly unsuccessful. Finally, he accepted a position as agent for Wilgena pastoralists, and set up a store and a woolshed on the shores of Murat Bay. Here he became a local identity known as 'Jimmy Hines', but he had no success as a storekeeper and was overwhelmed by W H Betts' store when that was established. Hiern then went to live in Adelaide where his impoverished condition put him in the Destitute Asylum, and later, his failing health sent him to the Home for Incurables where he died in 1920.

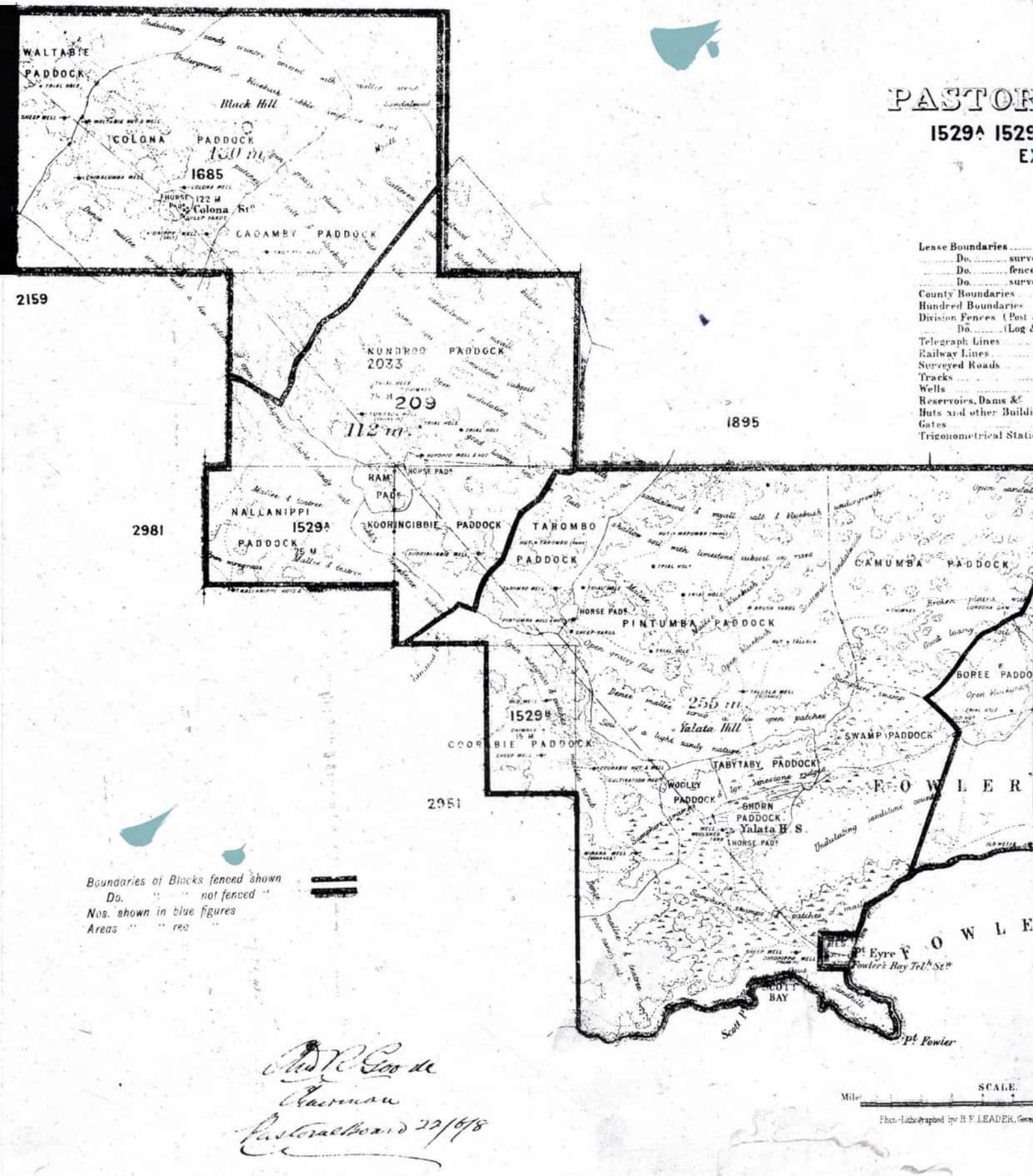
As has been indicated, one by one the original leaseholders gave up and the partnership of Robert Barr Smith and William Swan took them over. It is not



Point Brown head station now demolished. The materials were used in the construction of several buildings in the Smoky Bay district.



Point Brown and Chillundie Pastoral Leases in 1887. Source SAPP 56/1888.



The Fowlers Bay Run, 1887.
Source SAPP.

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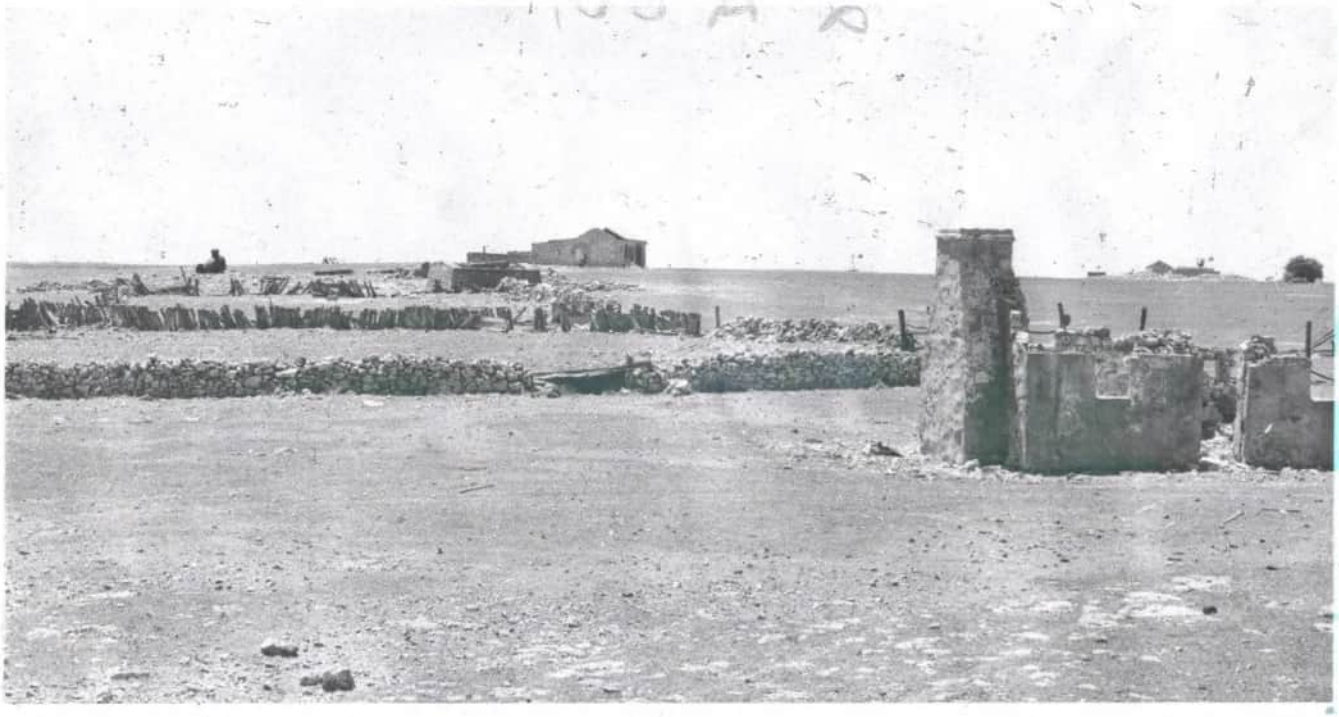
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P. P. No 56. /.



The stone fences of the sheepyards at Yalata, Head Station. Old woolshed at top of the hill in the centre.

difficult to find reasons for this, the isolation, the difficulties of getting sheep to the area, the dingo problem, and most of all the lack of water for their stock. The last was only discovered after several years of fruitless well sinking which drained the financial resources of the smaller leaseholders and led them, in most cases, to seek easier parts of the State for their sheep runs. By contrast, the strong finances of Robert Barr Smith, and the support of Elder Smith and Company (in which William Swan was a prominent shareholder), were sufficient to withstand the difficult conditions, helped no doubt by some lobbying which pushed the rental fees down from 10 shillings per square mile to 8 shillings and 4 pence per square mile.

Thus, by the late 1860s, the enormous Barr Smith Sheep Run was created. It has gone by two names, the Yalata Run, named after its original head station, and the Fowlers Bay Run. At its height it stretched from beyond Colona in the west to beyond Point Brown in the east. In a general sense, for many of the years between 1868 and 1888 it *was* the Far West.

While Robert Barr Smith provided the financial resources to back the run and the ships to relieve its isolation, the workings of the vast sheep empire were left to a series of managers. The first of these was his partner and the founder of the run, William R Swan. He stayed only a couple of years and established the original Yalata Homestead on the edge of the beach at Fowlers Bay on a site developed much later as the Globe Hotel.



James Armstrong.

William Swan had other pastoral interests, some as far afield as New South Wales and Queensland, and, as has already been mentioned, he was a shareholder in Elder, Smith and Company. In 1876 he married a widow Mrs Laing-Henderson at Torrens Park, the home of Robert Barr Smith. The couple then purchased Stradbroke Estate near the suburb of Magill and enlarged and improved an existing house. They turned it into a mansion suitable for a wealthy retired pastoralist, who entertained lavishly, particularly for members of the Adelaide Hunt Club.[11]

William Swan was replaced briefly by a brother Henry Charles Swan as manager, but by 1862 James Armstrong was manager and also a partner in the enterprise. He was joined by a cousin John Murray, who came as a wool sorter

in 1865, and then, in 1867, by George Wright Murray who came as a jackeroo. Thus the Fowlers Bay Run, although a Barr Smith empire, also became a family business for the Murrays. Here the patriarch was William Murray of Glen Osmond, a nurseryman, a jam manufacturer and the first Conservator of Forests in South Australia.[12]

William's sister Mary married Francis Armstrong and it was their son James who came to manage Yalata Station.[13] Francis and Mary came with him initially and their daughter Esther married Captain William Tulloch, at that time mate of the schooner *Daphne* but later master of the vessel *Wollamai*, which became a regular supplier for the Fowlers Bay Run and later for the entire Far West.

William Murray had nine children and three of them worked on the Fowlers Bay run. They were John (1849–1932), George Wright (1851–1933) and Alexander Borthwick Cowan (1858–1908).[14]

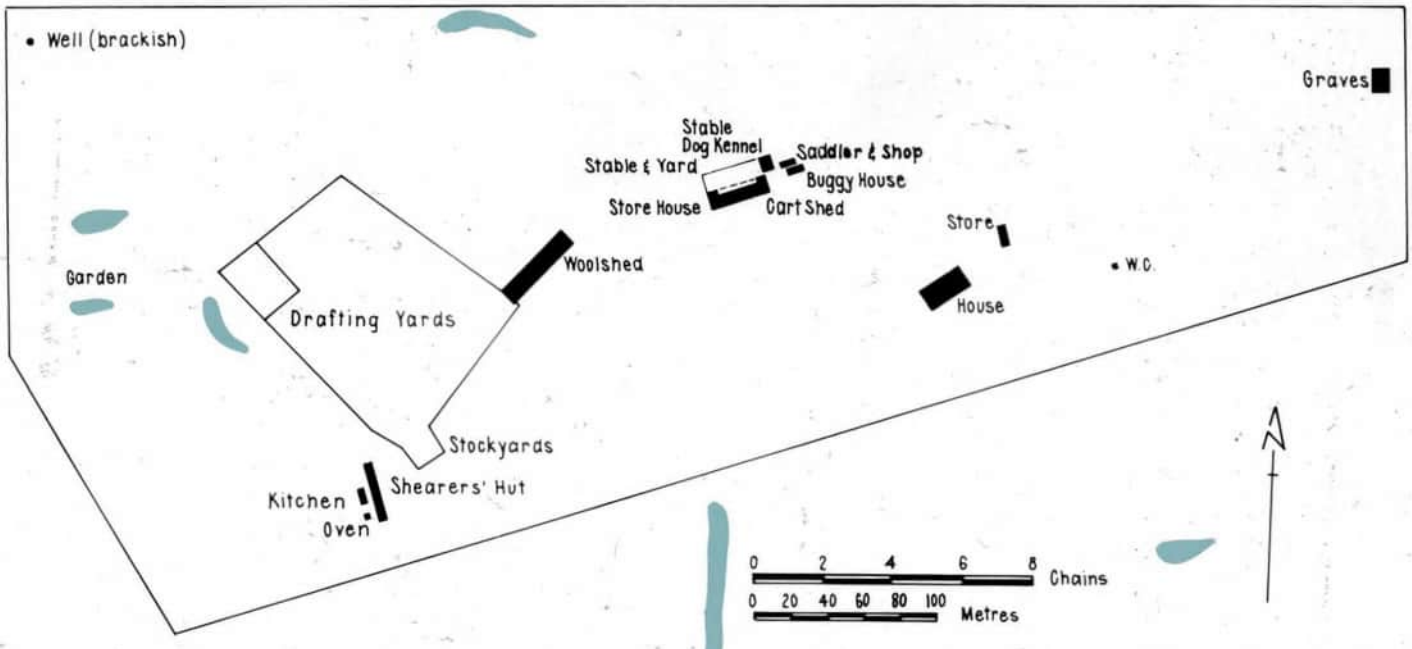
James Armstrong, who married a Miss Weir, left the partnership in 1874, taking with him 44,000 pounds. With George Wright Murray, he went to New Zealand where he purchased a property called Akitio, near Wellington, and ran sheep, cattle and horses on 24,843 acres of freehold land.[15] George Murray married while in New Zealand, and he was present when his cousin James drowned while trying to cross a flooded river with a herd of cattle.

John Murray took over management of the Fowlers Bay Run when James Armstrong went to New Zealand. But, tragedy struck him also. He married Jessie Hillam and she died after childbirth in 1880; she was 26 years old. Her baby William Priestly Murray survived. John Murray left the Yalata Homestead soon after; by then it was established at its present position (although now in ruins) 7 miles from Fowlers Bay, and the tombstone of Jessie Hillam Murray is one of several in the small Yalata cemetery.

John Dinnison was a temporary manager for a few months until George W Murray returned from New Zealand and took the position. He brought his wife and two daughters Margaret Armstrong (b. 1880) and Jessie Hillam (b.1881) and moved into the house at Yalata. There he stayed until 1922 and, in 1904, well after the Fowlers Bay Run had been cut up for small farms, he bought what was left of the Run from Robert Barr Smith for 3000 pounds, 'including the six camels he had worked as a team for many years'.[16]



Yalata Station, Cemetery.



Plan of the buildings associated with Yalata, the Head Station of the Fowlers Bay Run.



Bookabie Cemetery.

The vast Fowlers Bay Run was a sparse community of intrepid adventurers for twenty years. In a sense it was the 'wild west' of South Australia; indeed some youths from well known families were sent to work there, no doubt to turn them into 'men'. Thus Thomas Playford, later to be a politican and grandfather of Sir Thomas Playford, was there in 1883. He was replaced by 'Young Beck', and in 1884 'Young Short', son of Bishop Short, was sent over for a while and so also was 'Young Jackson' the chemist's son from Kapunda.[17]

The Run was organised with a head station, Yalata, a series of major outstations Colona, Penong, Charra, and a group of minor outstations Bookabie, Cundilippy, Nundroo, Pintumba and Pedinga. In 1883 George Murray and wife were at Yalata, Charles Godlee and wife were at Colona, Edward Roberts and wife were at Charra, Mr and Mrs Higgins were at Penong, Mr and Mrs Aldridge at Pintumba, Mr and Mrs Bishop at Cundilippy, Mr and Mrs Miller at Bookabie, Mr and Mrs Weir at Nundroo and Mr Stanley at Pedinga. Additionally, in the community beyond the Fowlers Bay Run, Thomas Lloyd was on Wookata Station, Mr and Mrs Saunders were at Nallanippi, Mr Hiern was at 'Mercanie' and Mr Watson was at Point Brown.[18]

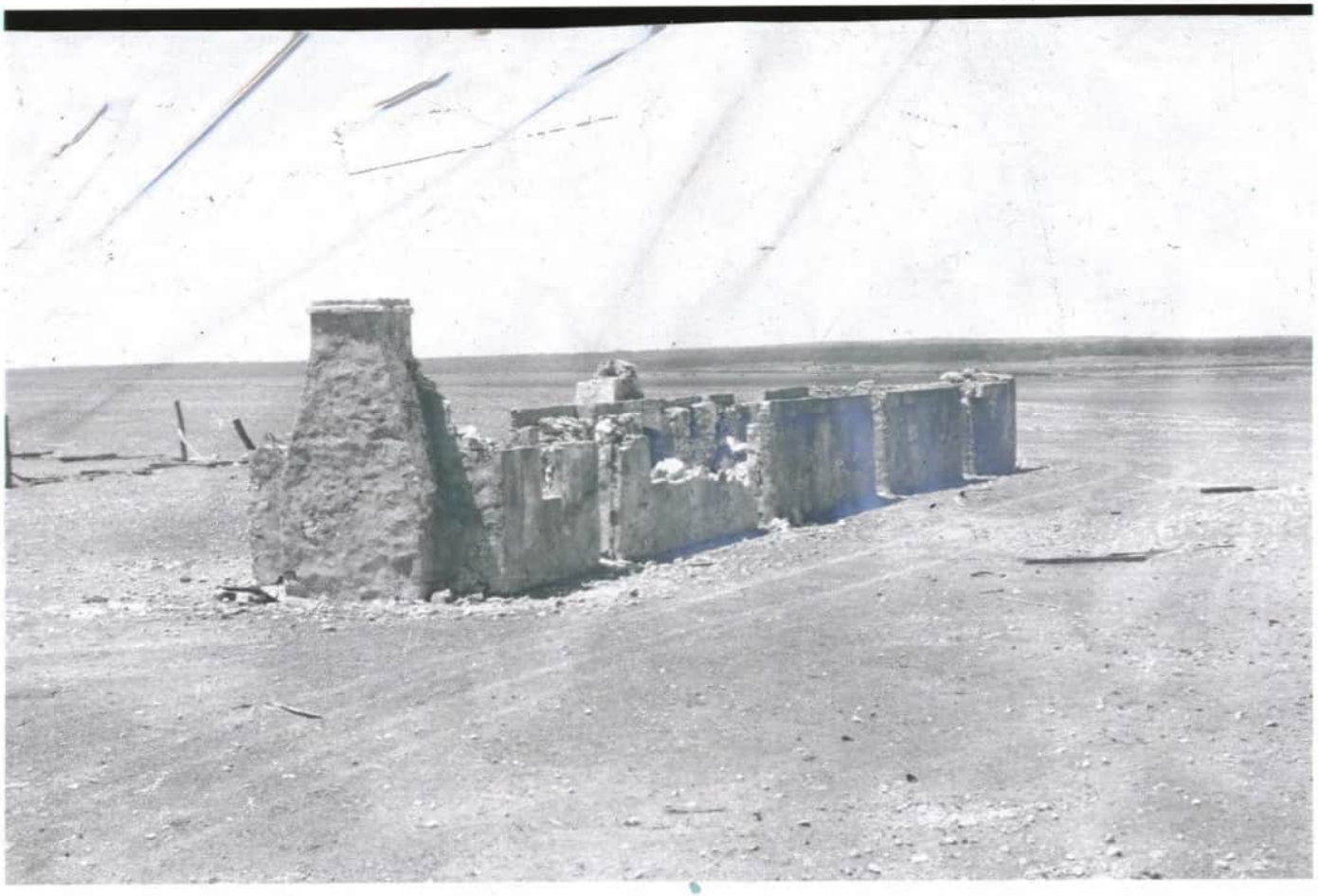
Edward Roberts, who was really W E Roberts, deserves recognition as a pioneer of Point Bell and Charra. He was born in Surrey, England in 1836 and migrated to Queensland with his family in 1848. After a few years he came to South Australia as a young man and worked for a time on Kangaroo Island. In 1860 he went to Point Bell to work for Marrabel and Miller on their Nunong Station. Here a workmate was Patrick Dowling and Edward married his daughter Mary at St Patrick's Church, West Terrace, Adelaide in December 1864. Edward received a special dispensation to be allowed into the Catholic Church. The couple returned to Point Bell and, when the Nunong lease was transferred to Smith and Swan, they moved to Charra to manage that section of the run. Edward and Mary remained at Charra for the next 20 years and raised a family of 8 sons and 4 daughters. When the leases expired in 1888 they shifted to the Streaky Bay area where Mary died in 1908 and Edward died in 1914.[18]

Patrick Dowling had two other children who contributed significantly to the history of the Far West. A daughter, Julia, married Jeffery Thurgood Miller in 1865 and went to live at Bookabie when the Nunong lease was transferred. And, Patrick's only son, James Patrick, was a policeman who spent some time in charge of the Fowlers Bay Station.

George Murray was the overall manager of the Fowlers Bay Run from 1881 until the leases expired; Ed Roberts and the various other men mentioned above were overseers of their territory and several flocks of sheep. The sheep were supervised by shepherds, some of whom were Aborigines. They lived in small huts, most of which have now disappeared from the landscape, but occasional chimney remnants can be found in some areas. Besides these shepherds, the Run employed a variety of labourers, teamsters, fencers, and, of course, once a year, a gang of shearers who arrived and left by boat.

The names of many of these early workers on the Fowlers Bay Run will probably never be known, but one source does give some helpful information. It is a long narrative poem *Fowlers Bay in Sixty Nine (1869)* written by George Cook. Within its 21 verses some notable characters are mentioned. Thus there is James Armstrong, 'boss and manager', Larry Weir, Ted Aldridge, 'shrewd and practical', Tom Cartland, 'poet of the West', Bill Davidson, 'a good old sort', Corporal Richards, Private Gossland, 'Old' Waugh, Billy Nelson, Dick Collins 'the gossip of the Bay', Billy Harris 'the mailman', Charlie Dinning, 'a lady killer', Jimmy Miller, Gilbert Robertson, Fred the Frenchman, Jack

Opposite page.
Above. The ruins of the shearer's quarters at the old Yalata Head Station.
Below. The Merghiny hut and later the first house of the Bowell family. It shows the typical Far West building technique of random limestone rubble, pug filling and a galvanized iron roof. The hut was a landmark in the Far West from the 1870s onwards as it was built near the all-important Merghiny Well.





Dealtry, Steve Eggleton, 'of gentle birth', Alf Warren, Dan Halcott, Jack Hemming, 'Old' Dalton of Cooroona Hut, Joe Ford, Dave Washington, 'who loved a girl some other chap has wed', 'Old' Slocum, Morgan Bevan, Sam Ware, Alf Welcome, Peter Bouland, Jack Roberts, Joe May, Fred Gasquoine, Poor little Sutton, 'hen pecked man', Peg Leg Harry Scrivener, Young John Murray, Hugh Harper, Pat Dowling, Bill Petrie, Jack Melsher 'with his bullock team', Jim Dowling, Jim Delaney, John Lambert, Poor Gibbs, 'who sleeps now at Penong', Jack Reece, Jeff Miller Senior, Charlie Saunders, Jimmy O'Donnel, Bill Roberts, Old Wilsher, Frank Scott, Jack Reeves, Dan Webb, Jerry Haggerty, Jim Barton, Andrew Nicholson, Peter Stevens, Bill Lister and Harry Yates.

The first priority for the Run was drinking water for stock and Barr Smith and Swan tried to do something about this in 1859. They asked George Wollaston to take a party of well sinkers to Fowlers Bay in that year and, what turned out to be a fruitless exercise, was recalled by Wollaston in his 90th year.[19] He left with Captain Hay on the schooner *Daphne* with 'four well sinkers and a fine outfit'. They pitched camp at Eyre's Depot out from Fowlers Bay and waited for the arrival of a support team bringing horses up from Port Lincoln. When they did not arrive Wollaston selected 'a favourable spot on a fine open plain for the first well'. It was about 12 miles inland in the Bookabie area and everything, rations, water and tools, had to be carried there by the men.

A 'semi-civilized' native was asked to help the cook Thomas Shepherd carry the food and water rations and, when he did not reach his destination, Wollaston walked back towards the coast in search of him. After about four miles he 'stumbled over the naked body of the cook' with a long spear thrust through his throat. Remarkably, he was still alive. Wollaston removed the spear and carried Shepherd to the coast where he signalled the *Daphne* at anchor in Fowlers Bay.

There were some sequels to this incident which are mentioned elsewhere in this book, but relevant here is that Wollaston's party gave up well sinking and returned to Adelaide where Shepherd made a full recovery.

Subsequently, of course, all the pastoralists had to tackle the problem of well sinking and records in the Lands Department indicate dates for the following successes:[20]

Charra Well,1868
Anjutabie Wells, 1868, 1870
Anjutabie Horse Well, 1875
Anjutabie Whim Well, 1876
Bookabie Well, 1866
Pintumba Well, 1876
Kooringabbie Well, 1866

William Marks (a well sinker) arrived at Fowlers Bay . . . towards the end of November 1867 in the schooner Lucy. Conditions on the small boat must have been crowded and uncomfortable. Apart from passengers and general cargo there were 200 sheep on board.

E HASENOHR

Another obvious early requirement was sheep and, at first, it was not considered possible to bring them up the coast from Port Lincoln, so the first young ewes were brought on the ship *Violet* from Guichen Bay in the South East of the State in 1860 (see Chapter 14). Later sheep were moved overland quite freely and we have already seen that Andrew Wooldridge brought his from the other side of Port Augusta. By the 1880s, sheep were grazing all up the West Coast and, in 1883, Jeffery Miller was reported as being in charge of several men who were going to Lake Hamilton station to get fresh supplies of sheep for the Fowlers Bay Run.[21]

According to an official history of Elder, Smith and Company the Fowlers Bay venture 'struggled unavailingly against isolation and poor rainfall, but with the appointment of James Armstrong as manager it turned the corner'.[22] In 1868, when the Run had absorbed most of the leases from Fowlers Bay to

Point Brown, it had 49,987 sheep, 40 cattle, 40 working bullocks and 35 horses. That year it sent away 655 bales of wool as follows: 300 on the *Carranjah*, 132 on the *Veralain*, 16 on the *Duke of Sutherland* and 177 on the *St Leonards*. In 1870 the Run produced 672 bales and, in 1871, the tally was 1019 bales of wool and 18 bales of skins and hides.[23]

Ultimately, in the late 1880s, just before the leases expired and 'the country reverted to the Government', the Run carried 120,000 sheep and its wool clip exceeded 1800 bales.[24] Robert Barr Smith and William R Swan were, by then, reaping huge profits from their enterprise which began in 1858. Some of the profits were put into charitable causes throughout the State, but both men no doubt used a lot of their Fowlers Bay money in the maintenance of their mansions, Torrens Park and Stradbroke House respectively.

The diary of Mrs Thomas Richards gives a fascinating account of life at Fowlers Bay and on the sheep run for the years 1881 to 1884. Mrs Richards was the wife of Corporal Thomas Paul Richards who was placed in charge of the Fowlers Bay police station in 1867. He stayed at that post for 17 years and should be remembered as one of the great pioneering policemen in South Australia. Most of the time he was on his own with the nearest fellow officer at Streaky Bay. At different times he did have an assistant and Mrs Richards records that Trooper P LeMessurier joined him in 1881.

It is unfortunate that Mrs Richards' diary is extant only for 1881 to 1884. It is not known whether she kept one before that, but since she seemed to be an avid writer and an intellectual woman, it is probable that she did. Besides writing, she collected botanical specimens for Baron Von Mueller of the Victorian Botanic Gardens, and rock specimens for the renowned geologist Professor Tate. These she sent off from time to time on available boats. In 1877 she was given the honour of sending the first message from Fowlers Bay to Eucla when that portion of the telegraph line was completed.[25]

The diary is full of details about the household chores, what she cooked for meals (cockles and periwinkles occasionally) and her inner thoughts about her life and her husband (he forgot her 38th birthday on 15 August 1883!). But interspersed amongst all this, there are many fascinating references to life in the Far West community.

One continuing theme was the widespread consumption of alcohol by the men folk. Thus, in May of 1881, she reported that the *Grace Darling* arrived at 9 am and brought bottled beer. There was 'much drunkeness in the town that day as all the able bodied men in the district went on a spree'.

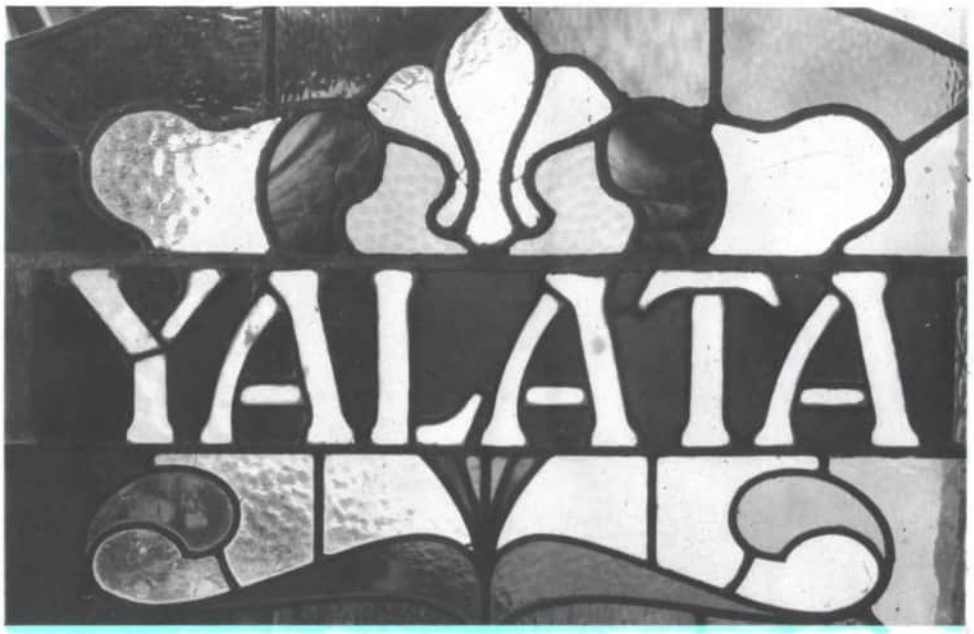
On 28 June 1882 she had this to say about Trooper Le Messurier who lived with them: 'he went to bed delightfully drunk, was sick all over the clean bed and that was not all! I was never more disgusted.'

On 11 November 1882 when the *Grace Darling* was again in port she wrote: 'There were eight jackasses drinking and singing the whole day and night, Melville, Gaskell, Harrison, Lloyd T, Lloyd E, Beadon, Thompson and Herbert. About midnight I heard a great noise and feared it was the Black's Camp — got out of bed, went to the window and found it was the white folks singing 'Marching Through Georgia'.

The drink got to her husband on several occasions. In 1883 there is the comment: 'Tom Richards is an alcoholic driving his wife to distraction'. And later, during the same bout of drinking, which she tried to control by driving Tom all over the district in a buggy, she said: 'Fancy Tom having to leave here in disgrace after being here 16 years and nearly 21 years in the police force.'

She need not have worried because when Tom did leave in February 1884 he was promoted to Sergeant at Port Augusta and he subsequently had a distinguished career with postings at Mount Barker and Moonta.[27]

> *. . . A large amount of grog selling is carried on by the coaching vessels to Streaky, Venus and Fowlers Bay e.g. Wollamai, Grace Darling, Lady Robinson.*
>
> W H BETTS TO COMMISSIONER OF POLICE, 1886



The stained glass window which was originally in the door of the Yalata Homestead. Now in the National Trust Museum, Ceduna.

The diary records some interesting forms of entertainment. In 1881 she played croquet at Yalata with Tom, Mr Dyke, Mr Godlee, Mr Wemyss and three Misses Dinnison. Later in the year there was a dance at Yalata when Mr Wemyss 'gave us the great Scotch dance the Highland Fling dressed in his kilts'.

On New Years Day 1883 she was 'at the race-course by 10 am'. Twenty seven adult white people and 9 children attended the races that day plus 'a number of blacks'. 'Unfortunately', she wrote, 'the men distinguished themselves by getting roaring drunk'.

Occasionally, she went further afield with Tom on his rounds. In June of 1883 they were together at Penong for a dance, and she commented: 'We were very surprised and pleased at the Ballroom. The best part of the woolshed with a boarded floor was very nicely converted into a nice room, the walls covered with mallee bushes and a pair of shandeleers (sic) made of fencing wire.'

The diary is also interesting because of some of her intimate details of the characters who lived and worked on the Fowlers Bay Run. In February 1883 she recorded: 'Mrs Murray sent Patty into me with a note: she had been cheeky to her and we were to let her go with the blacks'. Earlier she said, 'Mrs Murray is a strange woman, I can't understand her'. Then in September 1883: 'Mr and Mrs Murray came in about 2 pm with their two little girls. They kept me running, upsetting everything and trying to knock the ornaments off the bedroom mantle piece with a long stick.'

Also about the same time: 'Harrison and Gaskell had a fight this morning'.

Historically, the diary is also important because it pin points some of the events of the Far West. Thus, in 1882, the mailman was Henry Squires, but the first trip of what was called 'Montgomerie's contract' was made on 17 April 1883 by a young man called Old who 'brought the mail up'. While the shearers came every year, it was nice to know that on 14 August 1883 the *Wollamai* arrived with about 70 shearers who then walked to Yalata. Later, on 29 September, she recorded that the shearers left on the *Grace Darling*. Then, later again in the same year, she recorded on 11 November that 'Langley and Albert Campbell were the mail drivers'.

One special event that Mrs Richards did record was her change of house. On 21 June 1883 she wrote that she had 'shifted all the things from here to the

Fred Wilson, a mail driver and a champion whisky drinker, had a 'unicorn team', two polers and a single leader.

JEFF MILLER

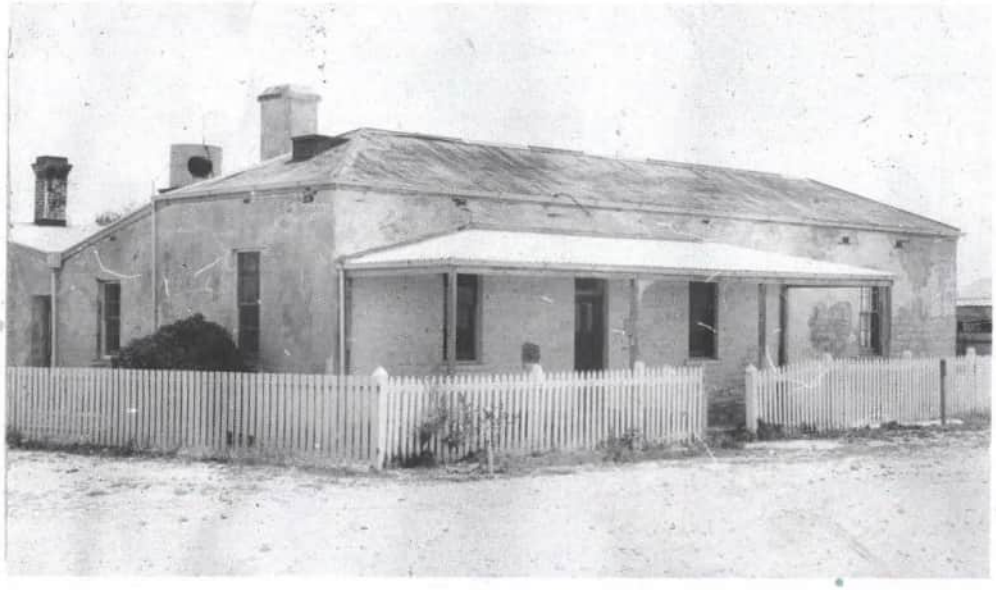
new place'. This was the stone police building erected in that year and still standing today at Fowlers Bay. Before that she lived in 'my little wooden home of the last 16 years — my first and only home since I became a wife'. She was sad to leave it and found the big new stone house cold and uncomfortable.

Some of her tours of the district were adventurous, particularly those she undertook without her husband. In 1883 with two unnamed women and a black boy 'to open the gates', she made a journey of six days to Streaky Bay. The first night the party slept at Yalata, the next at Bookabie with the Millers, then at Penong with Mr and Mrs Higgins, Charra with Mr and Mrs Roberts, and finally two stops at Laura Bay and Wallanippie when they slept out in the open. The diary records lots of gossip at the stopovers and, in all cases, she stayed up late at night engaged in conversations with the people they stayed with.

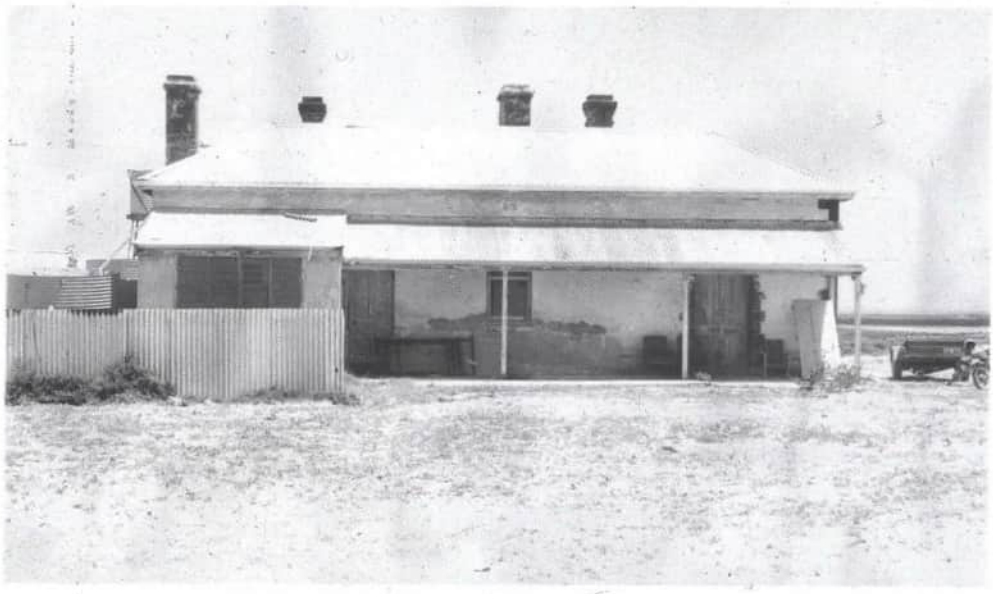
There is also in the diary a detailed and sympathetic description of a kangaroo hunt. It was at Penong and four buggies and a cart went out laden with spectators to watch the event. Some twenty horsemen and a number of blacks went out to round up 'the poor things for the slaughter'. 'Soon we heard the dogs bark and the blacks hoot so we took our seats'. The terrified animals

When the telegraph line was completed to Fowlers Bay in 1877 a stone building was erected by J A Freeman of Streaky Bay.

JEFF MILLER



The Fowlers Bay telegraph station and post office built in 1877 and now a private residence.



The old Fowlers Bay police station built in 1883.

An early mail driver to Fowlers Bay told a new chum that the local kangaroos were trained as letter carriers. 'They meet the coach', he said, 'and I give them their master's letters which they put in their pouches to carry home'. The new chum was a bit skeptical until a kangaroo hopped up to the edge of the track and sat in front of the advancing coach. The driver shouted: 'Nothing for you today', and the animal turned and hopped off into the bush.

Local story attributed to R T MAURICE

charged down a narrow race into a well constructed yard and Mrs Richards wrote of them as 'poor things hopping wildly round the yard, then sitting up with hands clasped on their chests, their poor hearts beating fast with fear'.

A little later in the description it was: 'while these poor things were being killed and scalped we ladies went to choose a place for lunch'.

R T Maurice also wrote about kangaroo hunts in his private papers.[28] He dwelt on the fact that the whites found it advantageous to employ blacks because of their knowledge of the ways and habits of the kangaroos and their ability in tracking and shooting them. Thousands of dozens of skins were sent away to Adelaide where they were sold at auction and then shipped, principally to America, to be used for the insides of railway carriages, book bindings and gloves.

Maurice also commented on the payment for the Aborigines. 'For supper the married ones received a quart pot of tea, 2 slices of damper and half a stick of black tobacco. The single ones had a pannekin of tea, a slice of damper and a quarter of a stick of tobacco unless they were conspicuously lazy, when they got nothing at all. If the natives worked well and remained for any length of time their bonuses were increased, ranging from pipes to boots, hats, handkerchiefs etc.'

Eventually, the kangaroo hunts and the vast sheep run disappeared from the Far West. However, their legacy is still there in the remains of a few kangaroo yards and in buildings like the Penong woolshed, the ruins of the Yalata woolshed and sheepyards, various wells and, basically, all the old paddock names such as Pintumba, Kooringabbie, Boree, Pennalumba, Bookabie, Cundilippy, Inguree, Anjutabie, Watraba and Athenna. And, beyond the Fowlers Bay Run, the other sheep runs also disappeared, but their paddock names have remained also, Wallanippie, Carawa, Waranda, Nunjikompita, Pimbaacla, Petina and Merghiny.



The Penong woolshed with the Murray family home in the right background.

In one locality the change from pastoral to farming occupance did not occur. This was on St Peter and St Francis Islands where the former, in particular, was ideal for sheep raising because it did not require fencing, it had no troubles from dingoes, nor any trouble from Aborigines occasionally stealing an animal for tucker. The leasing of this island is therefore a separate history which bears examination. It was originally allotted to Robert Barr Smith in 1865, reallotted with a reduced rental in 1868 and like all other leases it expired in 1888. During this period employees of Barr Smith used the island for sheep raising and a house was first built there in 1882.[29]

The island was offered for sale in 1888 and since there were no buyers it was rented to William Hosken of Kangaroo Island. He transferred it to Luke and John Henry Hosken in 1893, who were described at that time as sheep farmers of St Peter's Island. James Tainsh, Alfred Tainsh and William Tainsh acquired the lease in 1902 and, in 1916, it was altered to a Miscellaneous Lease. It was then allotted to Allan Septimus Puckridge, Horace Puckridge, James Cuddleford and William Thomas Bryant all farmers from Warrow. Subsequently, transfers were made to William Lionel Ayliffe (1919), Fred Hubert Collins (1919), Albert James Thompson of Talia (1920) and William Henry Clarke grazier of Ceduna, and his wife, in 1925. It became a Perpetual Lease in 1929 with an annual rental of 110 pounds and the Clarkes remained in possession until 1935. Transfers then went to S H Hansen, farmer and fisherman in 1935, and to H V A Thiselton farmer and grazier of Denial Bay in 1943. In 1944 it became a Pastoral Lease for a term of 42 years and H V A Thiselton kept it until 1970 when it was transferred to Murray Leonard Collins and John Ernest Nicholls, both farmers of Ceduna.



Police Corporal Thomas Richards, Fowlers Bay, 1867–1884.

In the 1980s the lease was owned by Mr and Mrs G Williams and, two years after they were both killed in a car smash, the South Australian Government bought the island for $100,000. In May 1987 it was added to the Nuyts Archipelago Conservation Park and placed under the control of the National Parks and Wildlife Service.[29]

St Francis Island had a similar history of leases and transfers, but it was acquired by the South Australian government for Conservation purposes in 1967. Thomas Lloyd was one of its earliest lease holders; he was there when the town of Ceduna first started and, at different times, he supplied fruit and watermelons to people at Ceduna and Denial Bay. A Maguire made a visit to the island with Mr Lloyd in 1909, helped him catch some ration sheep, ate some of the luscious watermelons that grew in abundance, and stayed in a comfortable building a half a mile from the landing, Petrel Bay — the beautiful little harbor of St. Francis.[30] He also mentioned guano deposits on the island which had been worked under special leases in the early 1880s. Several caves contained hundreds of tons of guano; 'in fact', he said, 'one cave had quite a long tramline running into it at one time with trucks to carry the guano to the shute . . . to be shipped to some port'.[31]

References

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3 Cockburn, op.cit. 2/122.
4 All details of Pastoral Leases were obtained from the Pastoral Lease Books, Lands Department, Adelaide.
5 Cockburn, op.cit. 1/121.
6 Ibid, 1/206
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12 Gill Thomas, *The History and Topography of Glen Osmond*, 1905, p.134.
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21 Diary of Mrs Richards, op cit
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23 Barr Smith Papers ML
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27 *Register*, 5/2/1902
28 R T Maurice Papers, PRO
29 WCS 13/5/87
30 Proc. Roy. Soc. of S A Vol 21, pp.70–71
31 Ibid, p.72

4. Bartlett's Country — The California of South Australia

The pastoral leases held in the Far West were due to expire in 1888 and the Commissioner of Crown Lands had to decide whether to renew them, or to recommend that the land should be subdivided for agricultural settlement. At the time there was a strong demand from at least two directions for new agricultural land. Firstly, second generation farmers, the sons of the pioneer farmers in the central areas of the state, were looking for new land to start farms of their own. And secondly, this was the time just before the widespread introduction of superphosphate into South Australian farming. Soil exhaustion was a problem in established farming areas and, with no fertilisers being used, many farmers with small holdings considered that their future would be more secure if they sold their existing farms and took up bigger farms 'further out'.

Thus, as the date for the expiration of the pastoral leases drew near, the popular pressure was towards resumption of the leases and survey of the land for farming purposes. This pressure was strongly applied by small farmers, many of whom belonged to the Farmers Association, but it was also resisted by pastoralists. Their arguments were that the soil was too poor for small scale farming, that there was insufficient water, that the rainfall was inadequate and so on.

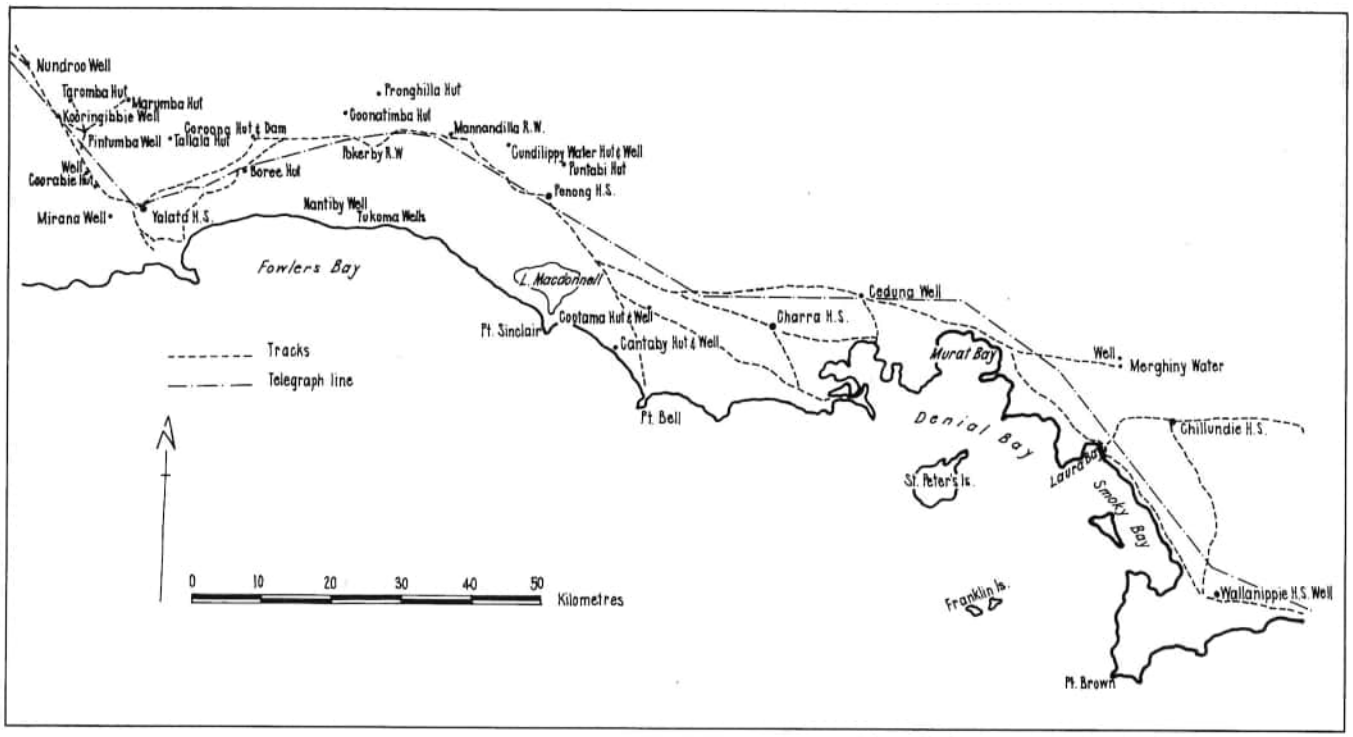
In 1887 small farmers, and the whole idea of opening up the Far West lands, gained a champion in the political arena when Harry Bartlett was elected as a member for Yorke Peninsula.

Harry Bartlett was born at Helsworthy in Devon in 1835 and, prior to his arrival in South Australia in 1858, he was a Clerk on the Isle of Wight. He worked in pastoral and agricultural pursuits on Yorke Peninsula before his election, and his parliamentary career, which lasted until 1896, included constant agitation 'to have the large estates in the colony cut up and made to carry human beings instead of sheep'.[1]

Bartlett was the farmers' candidate on Yorke Peninsula. He lived in the Hundred of Moolywurtie and had great support from the nearby towns of Maitland, Ardrossan, Curramulka and Minlaton. But his support was not universal for the *Yorke's Peninsula Advertiser*, printed in Moonta, suggested that it was only because he was a local man that he was elected. Beyond that, they thought he 'had no single qualification for parliamentary life'. They extended sympathies to the other successful candidate Mr Caldwell because he was 'sent in with such a feeble colleague'.[2]

Bartlett should be confined in gaol, and if Bartlett went to Fowlers Bay he would stand a very good chance of being lynched.

DAVID MCKENZIE, SAPD, 24/10/1899



The Far West Coast in the years immediately prior to farming settlement. Source Australian Atlas 1886.

There was certainly no polish about Bartlett's oratory in the House of Assembly, but he was a blunt and persistent agitator who often stirred the Government into action. Consider for example the following extract from one of his speeches.[3]

> 'The dews are very heavy on the West Coast land and the rainfall was also tolerably good (Mr Stock — 'Oh we have heard all this before'). And he would say it again (Hear, hear). He was in no particular hurry so long as he was bringing under the notice of Hon. members something in reference to the welfare of the farmers (Hear, hear). He represented a more deserving class than the Hon. member and he hoped a more respectable class.'

The Commissioner of Crown Lands, faced with widespread agitation to open the West Coast lands for agricultural settlement, and urged on by Harry Bartlett, invited three practical farmers to inspect the land between Streaky Bay and the Western Australian border. The men chosen were William Earle, farmer and postmaster from Moolywurtie (now Pine Point), Peter Anderson, a farmer from Calca near Streaky Bay, and George Mayers, a farmer from Colton near Elliston. They sailed from Port Adelaide on 26 July 1887 and reached Port Lincoln the next day. From there they took the mail coach to Streaky Bay and began their examinations beyond Streaky Bay on 30 July. They returned to Adelaide on 18 September.[4]

Earle, Anderson and Mayers were reasonably optimistic about the area.[5] They noted that vegetables grew at Charra and at 'all the huts' and 'in some cases, fig and other fruit trees showed splendid growth'. At Wookata (Mr Ifould's station) they saw a crop of wheat, twenty acres in extent, and 'plants of oats and wheat (were) often found by the tracks'. They separated the area they covered into the Nullarbor Plain District and the Fowlers Bay District, and for the latter they concluded thus: 'We are of the opinion that from Colona to Parla Peak the country is well suited for subdivision into small agricultural holdings and we recommend that the necessary surveys should be proceeded with at once.'

Of the three practical farmers the most publicly prominent was the Yorke Peninsula man, William Earle.[6] He had arrived in South Australia from Cornwall in 1866 and, from that time, had held numerous jobs including miner, surveyor, teacher, clerk for two District Councils, post master and farmer. He was one of the first councillors of the Yorke's Peninsula District Council in 1888 and was a prominent public speaker, generally on the theme of assistance for the small farmer. In 1890 he made an unsuccessful attempt to enter politics as 'the farmers' candidate'. Earle was very optimistic about the Fowlers Bay district and undoubtedly influenced many farmers from Yorke Peninsula to settle there. One person he certainly did influence was his farm neighbour, Harry Bartlett, who had scrub blocks adjacent to Earle's in the Hundred of Moolywurtie.[7]

Predictably, Harry Bartlett was the first politician to follow up the recommendations of Earle, Anderson and Mayer. In a speech to the House of Assembly in December 1887 he moved 'that the recommendation of the gentlemen sent to examine . . . on the West Coast be adopted.'[8] The speech brought several facts to light, namely that the Farmers Association favoured the report, that 'a strong memorial' from 43 farmers of Yorke Peninsula favoured the report and urged action, because many of them were likely to 'follow the example of others and seek (land) . . . outside the bounds of the colony'.

Bartlett argued that, if the land could be occupied 'by a yeomanry, it would carry a larger number of sheep than it now did and would also grow an enormous quantity of wheat.' He was very optimistic. It could be 'the California of South Australia', and altogether the country was 'admirably adapted to settlement by a large population.'

He also had a word or two to say about some detractors of the report. 'No sensible man would think that the report of three practical men was all moonshine, as had been represented by a man named Murray, living on the Nullarbor Plains, in a letter most likely written in his master's office.' This was a reference to G W Murray's letter to the *Register* in November 1887 which gave his views on the report made by Earle, Anderson and Mayer. Murray said the report was 'exaggerated and misleading'.[9]

Bartlett's speech fell largely upon deaf ears. It was late in the day and the chamber was so empty that an adjournment was taken because of a lack of a quorum. Bartlett apparently did not pursue the matter further, but the government decided, without his prompting, to follow up certain aspects of the report.

In November 1888 J Moule, Member for Flinders, asked in the House of Assembly whether the Commissioner for Crown Lands had yet decided what lands were to be thrown open for grazing and cultivation blocks on the West Coast.[10] The reply was that the government had decided to offer between 300 and 400 square miles of the Charra station.

Three surveyors were sent to the Far West on 16 November 1888. They were E B Jones, W R Murray and H J Cant. Each had a survey party and their instructions were to survey and cut up into suitable blocks the Hundreds of Horn, Bartlett, Moule and Catt in the County of Way. The *Register* reported their return in July 1889 and claimed that 'some of the finest lands in the colony have been subdivided.'[10] The 279,177 acres surveyed were described as a huge undulating plain, composed of belts of large and small mallee and tea tree interspersed with patches of grass-covered plains and stretches of salt, blue, cotton and box bush country. The blocks were surveyed in varying sizes depending upon the nature of the country. Some were as small as 661 acres

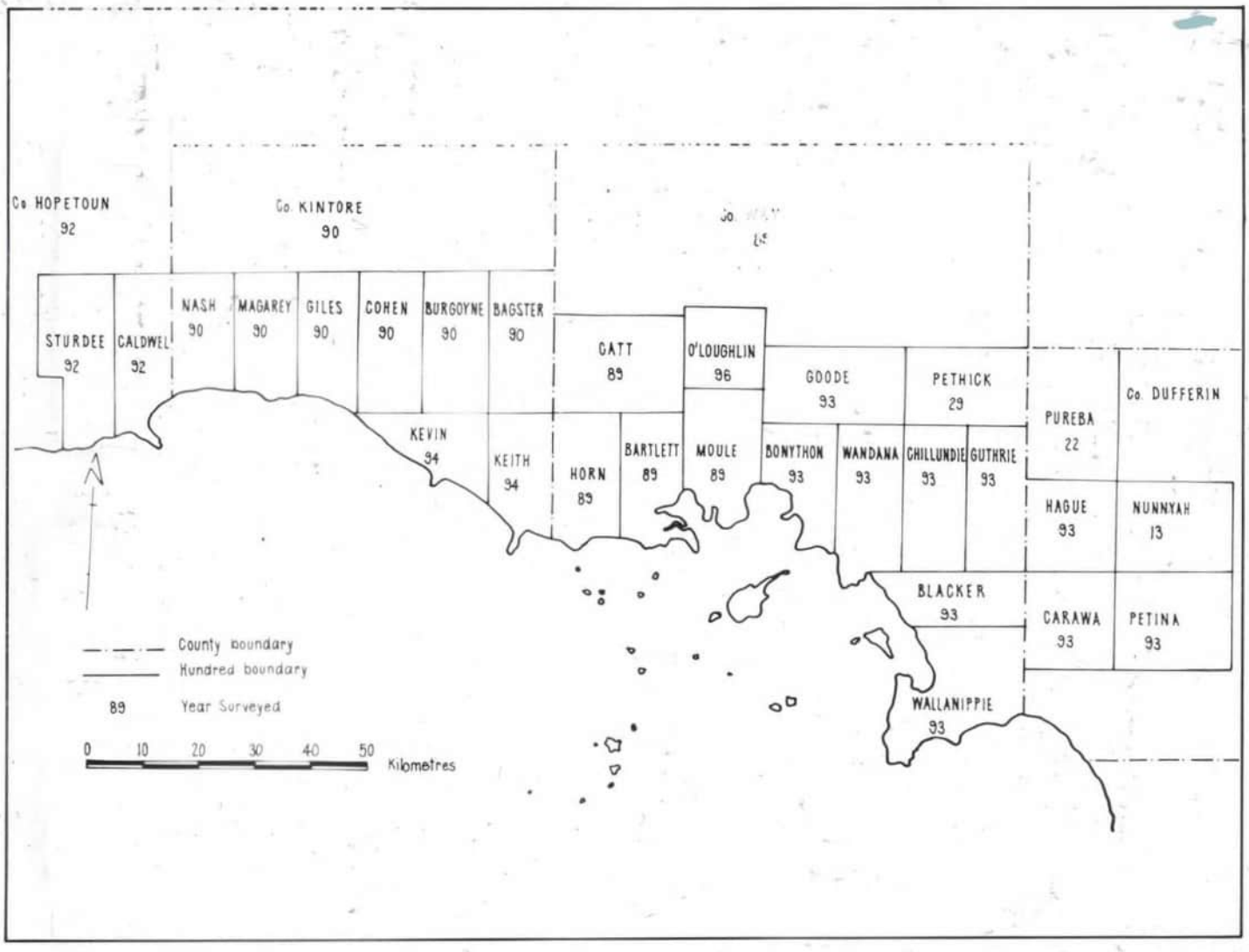
(Block 14, Hundred of Bartlett) and the range was up to 18,457 acres for a block in the Hundred of Catt.

The blocks were made available under regulations proclaimed in Act 444 of the South Australian Parliament in 1888. Herein, for the first time, provision was made for leases of agricultural land as Right to Purchase Leases or Perpetual Leases. Superficially, these leases appeared to be most generous, and many farmers were tempted to sell their small freehold farms in other parts of the state, to keep their horses, ploughs, waggons etc. and use their capital to give themselves a good start on a larger Far West property, which only required an annual rental.

The conditions for the leases were published in the Government Gazette of 20 June 1889 when the Far West blocks were first advertised. Application for the leases had to be made to the Commissioner of Crown Lands by sealed letter, enclosing 20 per cent of the first years rent. The leases were for a term of twenty one years with right of purchase, or at the option of the lessee. A perpetual lease was available subject to a valuation every fourteen years.

There were many other conditions. Rent was to be paid annually in advance, lessees had to pay all rates and taxes due on the land, the land had to be fenced within the first five years 'with a fence or wall, ordinarily capable of resisting the trespass of cattle'. The lessee had to destroy and keep the land free of vermin.

From late in July 1889 the blocks were available to selectors by application to the Western Lands Board. A typical written application follows:



The area discussed in the book divided into its Counties and Hundreds.

Charra Lands

To the Hon. Chairman & Gentlemen of
the Western Land Board
South Australia

I am applying for three blocks for myself and two for my wife, Margaret Dunnet. No 1, Hd of Bartlett is an inferior block, but has water on it, and could be used as summer country. Nos. 5 & 6 Hd of Catt is fair winter pasture, but no water, by having those three blocks the one could be worked with the other.

My wife is applying for No. 10 Hd. of Horn, for cultivation purposes & No. 9 adjoining which is an inferior block to have access to the Charra well.

Trusting our applications will meet with your approval as I want this land for a home, having been an unsuccessful applicant on a previous occasion, for the Maryvale Lands and also was not successful in obtaining a pastoral block North West of the land I now apply for, at the sale held last December in Adelaide.

My brother D F Dunnet will answer any questions in support of our applications.

I have the honour to be your obedient servant.

July 16th 1889

Address:

J Dunnet, Farmer, Bulgana, Great Western, Victoria

The first landholders in the Hundreds of Bartlett and Moule; 1889 unless otherwise indicated.





The Western Lands Board sat at Port Lincoln on 30 July 1889 and made the first allotments of agricultural land in the Far West.[11] The successful applicants were:

Hundred of Bartlett: Block 1 James Dunnet; block 5 F Edwards; block 7 Jones and Palm; block 13 A Nulsen; block 12 A S Tudor.
Hundred of Catt: Block 2 C A F Nulsen; block 3 Jean McQueen, block 4 Jean McQueen; block 5 James Dunnet
Hundred of Horn: Block 10 W Hall
Hundred of Moule: Block 2 A Edwards; blocks 3 and 4 George Starling; block 5 D F Dunnet; block 6 George Parsons

By 8 August, the Western Land Board had moved to Streaky Bay to hear applications. Its members were W Strawbridge (Chairman), G W D Tolmer, D McKenzie, G G Wollaston, J R Montgomerie and the Secretary, Mr Manning. The allotments they made at this time were added to the allotments made in Port Lincoln and were published in the South Australian Government Gazette as follows on 26 September 1889.

Hundred of Bartlett: Block 3 T H Kelsh; block 8 F Hickinbotham; block 9 E J Kelsh; block 11 A Nulsen
Hundred of Horn: Block 11 J Dunnet
Hundred of Moule: Block 1 W McKenzie; block 10 C Parsons

Some applicants had second thoughts and the following letter, copied in its original style and spelling, tells its own story.[13]


APPLICATION FOR LEASE WITH RIGHT OF PURCHASE.

Curramulka
June 10th 1890

To The Commissioner of
Crown Lands
The Hon. J H Howe

Dear Sir,

I applied for land on the Whest Coast in the hundred of Moule for my sons. It was alloted to them I had not seen the Land. I whent by the Government Gazette seeing price the Land board had put on it, it was some of the best land thear. I have been to see the Land and have just come back; it is all dence scrub. I dont think the Land board ever saw the Land or thay would never have put two pence per acer on dence Scrub. Land in the same hundred is valued at one peny good clear Land it with good grass on it, now Sir. I hope you will alow my dedposets to go for another selecton as all scrub is of no use to us.

Yours truly
J Parsons

The surveyors Jones, Murray and Cant reported there was a large area of good country between Penong and Pokerby (Bookabie) which could also be cut up for agricultural purposes, so the Commissioner of Crown Lands asked the Western Lands Board to examine it. They reported to Parliament in November 1889 and concluded that the area offered a good living for 'settlers who secure sufficient land to enable them to combine grazing with cultivation.'[14] They noted the 'entire absence of wallabies and rabbits' in the area and warned of the difficulties of obtaining water. The government had already provisionally marked out six hundreds in the area and, in 1890, these were proclaimed as Bagster, Burgoyne, Cohen, Giles, Magarey and Nash. These names, like the four that proceeded them, (Moule, Catt, Horn and Bartlett) all honoured South Australian members of parliament at that time.

The six new hundreds were taken from a portion of the Fowlers Bay Run. This was not good enough for Harry Bartlett who moved in the House of Assembly, 'That in the opinion of this House the whole of the Fowlers Bay run should be at once resumed and surveyed for farming purposes with a view to establishing a large settlement of agriculturalists on our West Coast lands'. He didn't succeed in getting the motion carried but he did spark off a lively debate.[15]

Bartlett began with his usual ploy, an attack on the squatters. Every practical man that visited the area he noted, 'praised it up'. But, every squatter and every squatter's nominee said the land was not fit for farmers. He looked forward to the day when 'larger trade would be done at Fowlers Bay than at Port Adelaide' and when there was a railway constructed through the back country 'from Fowlers Bay to the Musgrave Ranges'. Mr Kimber had told him that fruit trees and vines would grow at Fowlers Bay and wherever fruits and vines would grow cereals would grow also. Mr Rounsevell interjected here with 'Absolute rubbish'.

The Hon. T. Playford responded to Mr Bartlett and attacked him at his weakest point. He was the 'honorable member who had not even seen the land'. And, later, Playford mentioned that the hundreds cut up in the area actually had one called 'Bartlett' so his name was to be 'immortalised in a spot where his foot had never trod'.

Mr Moule entered the debate and was a bit testy. It was he who had first agitated for the opening of the West Coast lands and Mr Bartlett, 'posed as the discoverer of the west coast but as a matter of fact he had never been there'.

Harry Bartlett kept up a constant barrage of interjections during this, and all subsequent debates, on the matter. He refused to be subdued and never missed an opportunity to promote his version of 'Bartlett's Country', the 'California of South Australia' where thousands of farmers could settle and live the good life.

Whatever was said in parliament was largely ignored by the Commissioner of Crown Lands. He had decided that the edge of the far western coast could be opened up for settlement as far as the Nullarbor and he proceeded to do this. After the surveys of 1889 and 1890, further hundreds relevant to this book were opened up in 1892 (Scherk and Caldwell) and in 1893 (Bonython, Goode, Wandana, Chillundie, Guthrie, Hague, Carawa, Petina, Blacker, Wallanippie). Kevin and Keith were added in 1894, O'Loughlin 1896, Pethick 1929, Pureba 1922 and Nunnyah 1913. Like so many of the place names in the district, the Hundred names were a mixture of Aboriginal words and honours given to parliamentarians. Exceptions were Pethick, which was named after Norman Pethick a surveyor, who late became Surveyor-General, and Kevin and Keith, which were the christian names of the deceased son of Charles Cameron Kingston, the Premier of South Australia.

The Hundred of Scherk suffered a name change under the Enemy Names legislation in 1916. Scherk became Sturdee. It was reported that Mr Scherk took it in a jovial manner saying that henceforth he wanted his friends to call him Mr Sturdee rather than Mr Scherk.

After the survey of the lands between Charra and Fowlers Bay, the government followed up a Harry Bartlett suggestion and made the steamer *Governor Musgrave* available for farmers who wanted to inspect the new lands. They were charged a nominal sum to go and several politicians went also; Harry Bartlett was not one of them.

Twenty seven farmers and gardeners secured a passage and some who later became known in the Far West were C Parsons sen, W V Wall, H F Koch, J H Smith, J Edwards, J Leopold and F J Smart. The ship, under Captain Clare,

How many scores of times have members of Parliament been accustomed to have the West Coast literally forced down their throats: to hear of the great grassy plains and mallee hills which are to be converted into gardens of Paradise; of the ejection of the bloated squatter and the establishment of innumerable homesteads on the enormous sheepwalks for which Mr Bartlett has such an unqualified abhorence?

REGISTER 30 1 1891

It is rarely that one sees such an undisturbed hill of sand. There is not a tree or bush to be seen, only the white sand towering high above surrounding hills.

REGISTER REPORTER AT FOWLERS BAY 1891

(hence Clare Bay) sailed from Port Adelaide on Tuesday, 20 January 1891 with the politican Mr Caldwell appointed manager of the party. They landed at Fowlers Bay on Friday, 23 January. Arrangements were then made to meet the ship again at Murat Bay on the following Tuesday.[17]

The party collected Tom Kent as a guide. They discovered that 'this kangaroo hunter' was 'a genial, good natured fellow', the son of the late Dr Kent in Adelaide, after whom Kent Town in that city was named. The son, with his wife and family, had established his own Kent Town behind the sandhills at Fowlers Bay.

By one o'clock on the Friday the party started overland, in 'four four-in-hands' and 'three pair buggies', and camped the first night at Pennalumba Well. They 'passed a very enjoyable evening' around a campfire 'with songs and recitations'. The next morning many of the farmers walked to Bookabie examining the land as they went. It was very hot weather (the temperature reached 100° F) and they were glad of refreshments provided by Mr Miller at Bookabie. They met his son Joseph, aged eighteen, who was convalescing after stepping on a death adder with his bare foot and being severely bitten.

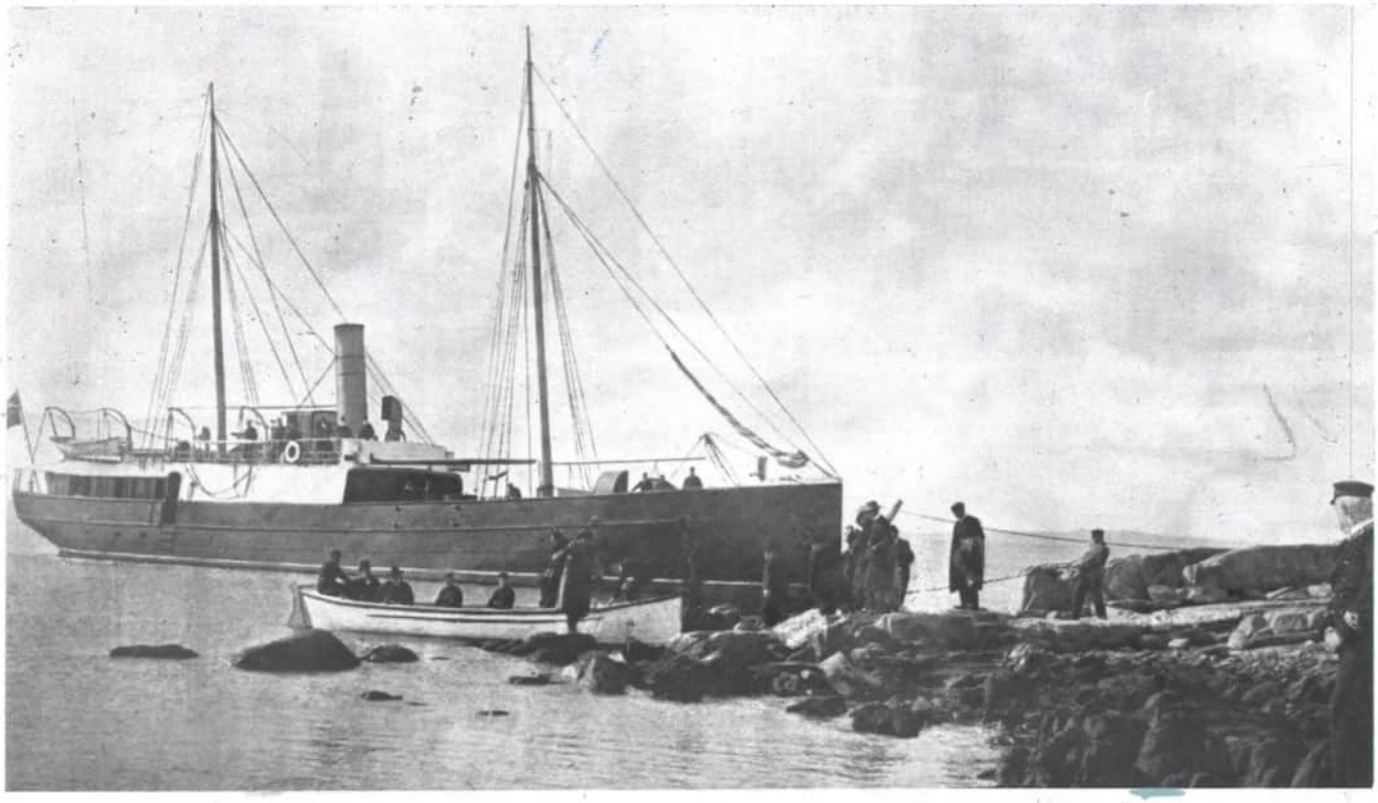
It is however evident that when Mr Bartlett foreshadowed the settlement of thousands of people on such limited holdings . . . he knew nothing of what he was talking.

REGISTER, 10/1/1891

In the afternoon the waggons and buggies took the party to Penong where G W Murray, who travelled with them, killed a sheep and provided an excellent evening meal for everybody.

On the Sunday a divine service was held in the Penong woolshed led by the politicians Mr Warren and Mr Caldwell, and on the Monday morning the party left for Charra where they camped for the night. On the Tuesday they reached McKenzies Landing at about 9.30 am where the *Governor Musgrave* was waiting for them.

The newspaper correspondent who travelled with the party thought that the country examined in their 90 mile journey overland was 'not up to expectations'. He thought that some of the farmers would make applications for the land, but stated that 'none of the gardeners who went over will advise their friends to take up any of the land.'



SS *Governor Musgrave* which brought interested farmers and gardeners to the Far West in January 1891.

In the five years 1889–1894 the first agricultural settlers of the Far West received their farms at regular intervals from the Western Lands Board. Allotments continued for many years afterwards, but the following were given land on either perpetual lease or right to purchase lease up until the end of 1894. To these, of course, must be added the first allotments of 1889 mentioned above.[18]

Hundred of Bagster: John Brown Richardson, Thomas and Sons, Richard Davey, John T Davoren

Hundred of Burgoyne: John Thomas, William Saunders, John D Rickaby, Carl Julius Leopold, John Shiphard jun, Joseph Davey, McDonald and Parker, Shipard Brothers, John Davey, A B C Murray, Richardson, Thomas and Sons, Thomas Freeman, Thomas Jenkins, Charles White

Hundred of Cohen: Annie M Trewin, George E Trewin, William V Wall, Paul Smith, Joseph M Edwards, Patrick Farrelly, Frederick B Langley, Harry A Weber, William Reinsvale, William H Mildren, Jacob L Mildren jun.

Hundred of Giles: R Scott, Thomas D Kent, Charles Struthers, Charles Parsons, Michael J S Barber, D P McGregor, John Grundy Jun., H A Weber, Mary Barber, Ernest Whitehorn, Clift Brothers, Enoch Gale, D Gray, Thomas Giles, Frederick Clift, James Miller

Hundred of Magarey: J H Tonkin, William Marshall, Ernest Whitehorn, Nicholas Nicholls, Frederick W Dolling, George Mahar, Jeffrey Miller, Joseph Miller, David Gray, Hugh Miller, Duncan P McGregor, Enoch Gale, James Dunn, Gilbert J Gale, Charles B Atkins, Frederick Wilson, Catherine L Marshall, William Fabian, Andrew M Scott, Annie M Dunn

Hundred of Nash: Joseph Dangerfield, James Drever, Frederick W Smart, Michael O'Dea, Francis Forbes, Andrew Struthers, Frederick W Dolling, Jeffery Miller, Benjamin J Miller, George E Saunders

Hundred of Bartlett: Oliver Ollsen, William J Roberts, Wallace D Gale

Hundred of Moule: Hermann F Koch, Johann Detloff Elias Meier, Johann Gottlieb Handke, John H Moule

Hundred of Caldwell: Charles B Beck, George W Murray, George Mahar, R B Rickaby, William H Betts, John Roberts, James C Riddle, David Riddle, Harry S Rumball, Harry W Darby, Jesse Kendrick, Samuel J Edwards, Herbert L Sommerville, Edward J Johns, Thomas S Price, Charles McLeod, Thomas Young, Felix Tomney

Hundred of Catt: Robert Whitelaw, James Dunnet

Hundred of Horn: James Dunnet

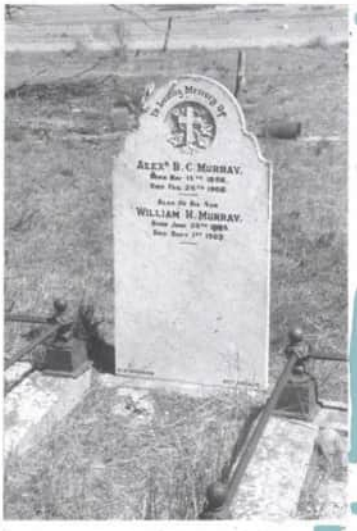
Hundred of Scherk (later Sturdee): David D Murray, Henry Green, James C Riddle, John Place, Harry W Darby, Andrew Struthers, Joseph Carlisle, George Cabot, John D Green, R Kappler, David Riddle, Edward McManes, William Harrison, William and John Sherriff, James F E Dangerfield, F F Nulsen, Frederick Kloock, Albert Dangerfield, Henry Brown, Andrew Goodall, William G F and Arthur H Wheare.

Hundred of Blacker: Timothy Sheehan, Joseph P Sheehan, Henry Reid, William J Hewton, Johann Karl H Rogasch, Johann Wilhelm Hirte, H W Scharnberg Jr, Benjamin Heaslip

Hundred of Bonython: Joseph E Dinsdale, Richard and Benjamin Hatcher, John F Foley, William Wright, James Smith, James Tomney, George Tonkin, William Brine, Michael McInerheney, William J Symonds, John, George and Joseph Eastwood, Charles A Tonkin, Frederick and Alfred Mahar, Bernard Gaffney, Harry H Whittle, Joseph E Packer, Charles Horn, Patrick J Feehan, Frederick W Croser and Henry D Male, Samuel Fletcher, Arthur and Peter Glacken and Thomas Hunt, Ernest W and Edward A Watson, George R and Thomas Spry



Coorabie Cemetery.



Penong Station Cemetery.



Penong Cemetery.



Denial Bay Lutheran Church Cemetery.



Some of the pioneer families in the Murat Bay district.
Back: W Bubner, G Tonkin, W Mudge, Tom Mudge, T Collins, C Collins, H B Smith.
Front: E Watson and Gwyn, Mrs W Mudge and child, Mrs G A Tonkin and Lil, Mrs E Watson and Ivy, F Tonkin, C A Tonkin and Dorrie Watson.

Hundred of Chillundie: John T Mullin

Hundred of Guthrie: John Glacken, Alfred Rawlins, Frederick Lloyd, Henry W Talbot, Thomas and Benjamin Townsend, James E Talbot, Thomas Talbot, Frederick Philbey

Hundred of Wandana: Joel Lowe, John E Lowe, John and William Warren, John T Collins, Mark Renfrey, Richard L Spry, Duncan McLeod, William A Greig, Amos Bickley, Frederick Bayne, Karl J Bubner, William J Bubner, Charles A Kolosche, Benjamin W Janetzke, Charles L W Eickler, Johann R Milich, William A Oliphant, Winnifred Costello

Hundred of Carawa: William J Crocker, John T Potter, Richard H and Frederick R Tucker, George Crocker, James Sheehan jun., James E Talbot, Alexander J Whittle, Michael Bolend, Ernest Lovelock, Arthur J Dunn

Hundred of Wallanippie: William Warren, Richard E Talbot, Edward Hewton

From amongst these first allottees the largest landholders were James Dunnet, 33,782 acres (Bartlett, Catt and Horn), A B C Murray 8767 acres (Burgoyne), William Wall 7796 acres (Cohen), Paul Smith 7838 acres (Cohen), J H Tonkin 8730 acres (Magarey), Frederick Dolling 8820 acres (Nash), Jeffery Miller 10,340 acres (Nash), Hermann Koch 23,042 acres (Moule), William McKenzie 17,800 acres (Moule), George W Murray 19,303 acres (Caldwell and Scherk), David D Murray 7331 acres (Scherk), David Riddle 7390 acres (Scherk), Thomas Freeman 5296 acres (Bagster).

Most of these large blocks were in the 'top end' of the district where the Western Lands Board recommended settlers should combine grazing and cultivation.

In the central and 'bottom end' of the district where cultivation was expected to be the sole activity 'large' blocks were more of the order of 2000 to 3000 acres.

Some examples of the finance required for right of purchase leases were, in pounds, shillings and pence:

Nicholas Nicholls (Magarey) Block 5 2699 acres; 8.8.8 per annum or purchase price 1012.2.6

John Shipard jnr. (Burgoyne) Block 7 2025 acres; 16.17.6 per annum or purchase price 1265.12.6

Thomas S Price (Caldwell) Block 17 4716 acres; 39.6.0 per annum or purchase price 3947.10.0

James Tomney (Bonython) Block 7 1911 acres, 7.19.3 per annum or purchase price 955.10.0

James E Talbot (Guthrie) Block 8 3533 acres; 14.14.5 per annum or purchase price 1766.10.0

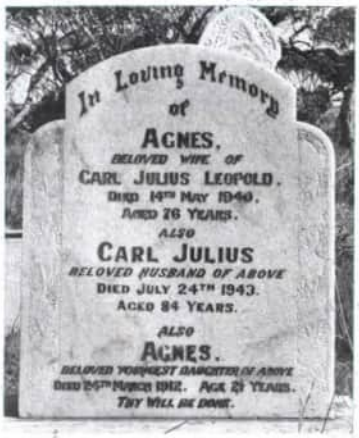
Perpetual Leases were originally far less popular than Right to Purchase even though they usually required less money for the annual rental.

The first allottees made up a frontier population dominated by young, single males. There were many groups of brothers, the Shipards, the Tonkins, the Lowes, the Riddles, the Dunnets, the Hatchers, the Eastwoods, the Glackens and the Watsons to mention only a few. There were also some father and son combinations and a sprinkling of family groups. In many cases the young men came first, worked their allotments for a year or two, and then returned to their former home area either to collect their families or to select a bride to share the farm life on the new frontier.

From these early names, many are still recognisable in the district today. They are genuine 'Coasters' descendants of the first allottees and members of families that have been on the land for nearly 100 years. But, there are also



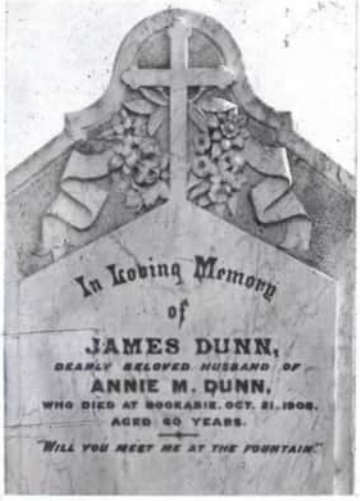
In front of an old straw shed some of the original farmers in the Murat Bay district. The group includes: F Croser, Bert Hickman, Lou Will, Con McInerheny, George Tonkin, Pat Tonkin, Tom Collins, Joel Lowe, Carl Will, Arthur Gleeson, Bill Banks, W J Symonds, Ben Hatcher, Thomas Hunt, E Watson, Jim Talbot, Ted Watson, Jack Lowe, Henry Will, Frank Edson, H Washington, Jim Whitelaw, W Moreland, Bill Tainsh, Sam Stasinowsky, Ted Moody, Tom McInerheny, Albert Stasinowsky, Victor Stasinowsky (baby), Francis Tonkin (boy squeezing through in the second row).



Penong Cemetery.



Penong Cemetery.



Bookabie Cemetery.

many names not found in the district today, which indicates that there were many who came, tried hard for a few months or a few years, and then gave up. It was not an easy land to settle and many surrendered their leases and saw them re-allotted to other people.

In some cases it is evident that the allotees never intended to settle on their blocks. They were simply names put in by other people, who in time had the blocks transferred to their own names. The practice was known as dummying; it was common in other parts of South Australia and, a suspicious Commissioner of Crown Lands, asked the Fowlers Bay police officers to investigate certain land transactions in February 1894. The reply, which came from M C Wells, acting in his capacity as Crown Lands Ranger, was that 'Blocks 8, 9, 10, Hundred of Cohen held under lease by A M and G C Trewin have not been occupied or resided on by the lessees, but have been occupied, utilised and improved by Mr D F Dunnet who also appears to have the use of Block 6 . . .' Later he added: 'Blocks held under leases by F Hickinbotham, E J Kelsh, H F Kelsh, T H Kelsh, W G Thomas and John Martin are being utilised and have been improved by Mr James Dunnet.'[19]

There seems to be no doubt that, initially, the Dunnet brothers wanted to be graziers rather than small farmers, and that they engaged in dubious practices to get the use of as much land as possible. They were ultimately frustrated by the Commissioner of Crown Lands and his investigations; David Dunnet left and went to Western Australia, but James Dunnet adapted to official requirements and became a very successful mixed farmer.

Not everybody believed Harry Bartlett, William Earle and others who continually boosted the new country. Some visited the area and were not impressed. The opinions of one such person, Harry H Whittle from Baroota, were published in the *Register* of 3 August 1889. He had made a trip to the 'far famed Charra lands' and was very disappointed with the appearance of the country. He already lived in one of the 'uncertain hundreds' beyond Goyder's Line but with all its faults he would sooner have one acre there than five acres at Charra. His soil was much better and the Charra lands had serious shortages of water.

Despite this, and other similar comments published from time to time, there was no shortage of farmers who were attracted to the large acreages and, apparently, cheap lease conditions that 'Bartlett's Country' had to offer.

The list of 220 or so first allottees is an indication of the people who first tried to farm the area but it is not necessarily a good indication of who were the persistent and the successful farmers. Many of the best farmers did not arrive until after 1900, and it is difficult to pin point the arrivals of many of these because no annual records of farm ownership can be found before the District Council of Murat Bay began keeping records in 1926.

The origins of the farming population were diverse. Some, such as George and A B C Murray, had been there since the pastoral days. Jeffery Miller had been a boundary rider for Yalata station, Charles Beck was an overseer at Yalata, James Riddle was a kangaroo hunter, so was Robert Scott, and John Green was a teamster.

Then there was a group who simply moved further up the West Coast from locations around Streaky Bay and Elliston. Thus, Joseph Sheehan and Henry Reid came from Calca, Thomas and Benjamin Townsend from Streaky Bay, the Shipard brothers from Colton, the Mahar family from near Elliston and the Kelsh brothers from Streaky Bay.

By far the largest group came from farming areas on Yorke Peninsula and in the mid north of the state. Joseph Edwards came from Port Broughton, John and Joel Lowe from Kadina, Thomas Freeman from Wokurna, Harry

Weber from Wandearah, Thomas Rickaby from Minlaton, John Rickaby from Port Rickaby, Richard Davey from Redhill, Paul Smith from Port Broughton, H W Schoenberg from Mambray Creek, John Glacken from Mount Rat, Thomas Hunt from Koolywurtie, Thomas Price from Eurelia, Johann Gottlieb Handtke from South Kilkerran, William Saunders from Wandearah, Ernest Lovelock from Curramulka, Enoch Gale from Redhill, Carl Julius Leopold from Quorn and Nicholas Nicholls from Brentwood.

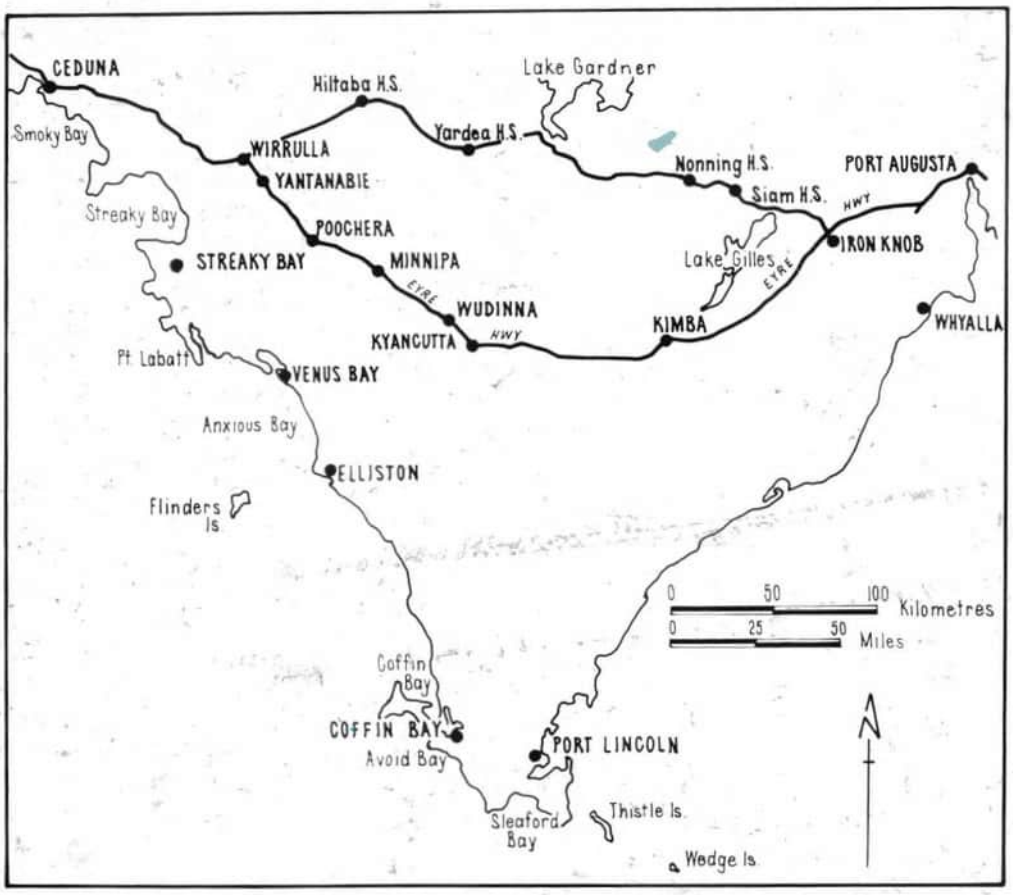
Apart from these three main source areas, there were a few farmers who came from more remote locations. For example, Johann Karl Rogasch and John Wilhelm Hirte came from Katyil near Dimboola in Victoria, and Robert Whitelaw came from Rapid Bay.

Getting to the new farming areas was a problem of gigantic proportions for many of the new settlers, particularly those who came from Yorke Peninsula and the mid north. There were two choices, overland via Port Augusta or, along the coast by sailing vessel to Denial Bay or Fowlers Bay. The first was arduous and dangerous, the second was, for many, too expensive.

The overland trip was frequently a journey of epic proportions, hundreds of miles beyond Port Augusta through barren, waterless terrain a daunting experience, and since it was frequently done in covered waggons that 'rolled westwards' comparisons with the well publicised and romanticised conquest of the American west can often be made.

From dozens of examples of the overland trek only a few can be quoted.[20]

August Heinrich Hoffrichter (junior) and his wife Maria Bertha (nee Jericho) packed as many goods and personal belongings into an English waggon as possible. This was drawn by five horses and driven by August. Behind came a covered spring cart drawn by three horses urged along by Maria who, at the same time, kept an eye on their three young children, one a baby of six months. They left South Kilkerran with the Handtke family on 8 February



Eyre Peninsula showing the overland route taken by many pioneers of the Far West via Yardea, Hiltaba and Wirrulla. Also shown is the modern Eyre Highway.

1892 and travelled through Kadina on to Port Wakefield then along the Main North Road. Friends at Melrose advised them to turn back warning them of the heat, flies and incredible shortages of water. Despite this, they pushed on, but the cows tied behind the waggon had to be sold at Port Augusta because of hoof soreness which barely allowed them to walk. They crossed the gulf at its most northerly point, pushed westwards through sparse station country and eventually reached Wirrulla. From there it was a comparatively short trip to the blocks of both families a few miles north of Denial Bay. They were 45 days in the bush; cooking was done in camp ovens along the way, laundry only at Government tanks, and drinking water for adults, children, and the stock had to be carried in a hundred gallon tank on the waggon. Incredibly, there was even a shortage of firewood along some parts of the track, so the wives and children sometimes collected camel dung to use as fuel.

The Hoffrichters took up a block originally allotted to Hermann Koch in 1891. He had surrendered it but had left behind a two-room pug and timber slab house which became the Hoffrichter home for a few years.

Ellen Collard Brown, later Mrs John Edwin Lowe, who was born in 1875, recorded for her grandchildren the story of her overland experiences when her family travelled to the Hundred of Bagster in January and February, 1891.[21] Ellen was then 16 and she remembered well the waggon with its eight horse team, a spring dray covered in and drawn by two horses, and a spring cart drawn by a bay mare called Rose. They had some geese and fowls in coops on the back of the waggon. The journey took a month, a week of which was used to spell the horses.

The Browns pitched camp every night and cooked their food using saucepans and frying pans standing on branches over the camp fire. For bread they made camp ovens, they carried drinking water with them and enough water for the horses to have a taste during the driest stretches.



Some of the pioneers of the Hundred of Goode assembled as a Chinta Sports Committee. Back: E Nicholls, Bill Banks, Henry Will, Lou Will, Carl Will, Alf Jolly, G Tonkin, A Stasinowsky, Harry Smith. Centre: George Moreland, W Morcom, H Leckie, Charlie Geue, Charlie Lutz, H Tainsh. Front: Mary Morcom, Art Moreland, S Stasinowsky.



The Tonkin family in 1924.
Back: Mrs Olive Holmes, Frank, Perc, Mrs W Croser, Hurtle, Mrs Elizabeth Napper.
Front: C A (Pat), Mrs Mary Collins, Mrs Jane Tonkin (mother), J T Tonkin (father), George.

At the government tanks and wells they had to hold their half crazed horses back and lead them up one or two at a time for a drink. Ellen was bitten by a normally quiet mare which resented being held back on a hot February day.

At the end of the journey the family camped near the Charra well in tents and dug outs for several months while a house was built for them on their property at Watraba.

Edward A Watson travelled overland from Yorke Peninsula accompanied by Lou and Carl Will in a spring dray with four horses. They came on the usual route via Yardea station and, at one stage, one of the men had to walk along the side of one horse to support it on the dry, rough road. It was so weak they feared it might stumble and fall over. The trip took three weeks and on the track they passed the bones of three horses and the burnt remains of a saddle and saddle bags.

There were many quite large 'expeditions' during the 1890s and the early 1900s when groups of families travelled together. They would assemble at Port August and strike out for Corunna Station (Iron Knob). From there it was on through Siam Station, Nonning Station and Yardea Station. After Yardea, it was usually direct to Wirulla and from there, individual waggons would disperse to their allotments. Although the large parties made it difficult to get sufficient water and feed for their animals, there were compensations. Always, somebody in the party could shoe a horse, mend some harness or do other repairs. There was always someone to kill and dress a sheep, plenty of hands to help with the cooking and, along the bad sandy stretches, horse teams could be doubled up to pull the waggon through. For the children who went it was a great adventure, something they talked about to their grandchildren in later years.

Food for pioneers

Wild turkeys — one every two weeks
Dried quondong pie with cream
Mallee hen — roasted
Roast wombat
Kangaroo meat
Rabbit pie

From THE EARLY DAYS BY MARJORIE JENKINS

The Thiselton party was one such large expedition. It came overland from Stone Hut in 1910 with horse and bullock teams on a journey of seven weeks. Wesley Thiselton, with his wife Harriet and three children, settled at Denial Bay. Dan Thiselton, wife Emily and four children, settled at Point Bell and so also did brother-in-law Charles Brooks with wife Elizabeth and five children.

Amongst the many other 'overlanders' were C A (Pat) Tonkin from Koolywurtie in 1894 with ten horses, a waggon, a dray and a spring cart in 21 days; John Oats and children, after the death of his wife, from Yanyarrie to Fowlers Bay; the Saunders family from Wandearah to Penong in 1891; Frank and John Gregor with Ern Lovelock from Curramulka to Smoky Bay in 1895; James Stiggants with his wife, two sons and brother-in-law Ern Gravestocks from Mount Templeton with two waggons, a tip dray, a plough, a spring cart and one cow.

There were also some variations on the full overland route. Thus, John Henry Will in 1901, when 16, rode his bicycle from Wauraltee to Wallaroo and boarded a boat for Cowell. From there, he rode his bike to Chinta over sandy bush tracks to where his brothers Lou and Carl had taken up land. W H (Bill) Watson was another young and determined cyclist. He left Minlacowie in 1904, rode to Wallaroo, caught a boat to Port Lincoln and then rode to Murat Bay where his uncles Ern and Ted Watson had farms. The Drevers came from Hoyleton where they had been share farming. They loaded their German waggon and horses on a boat at Wallaroo, took it off at Port Lincoln and then came up the coast to Streaky Bay. Some time later James Drever hitched up the waggon again and went on to a block allotted to him at Bookabie.

George and Mary Mahar had a shorter overland trip and so also did Mr and Mrs J Chandler. The Mahars travelled from Wild Dog Valley near Elliston in a dray drawn by three horses. They sent their farming equipment by boat from Elliston to Fowlers Bay, picked it up there and started farming at Bookabie. The Chandlers made their overland trip from Cleve to Merghiny in 1905.

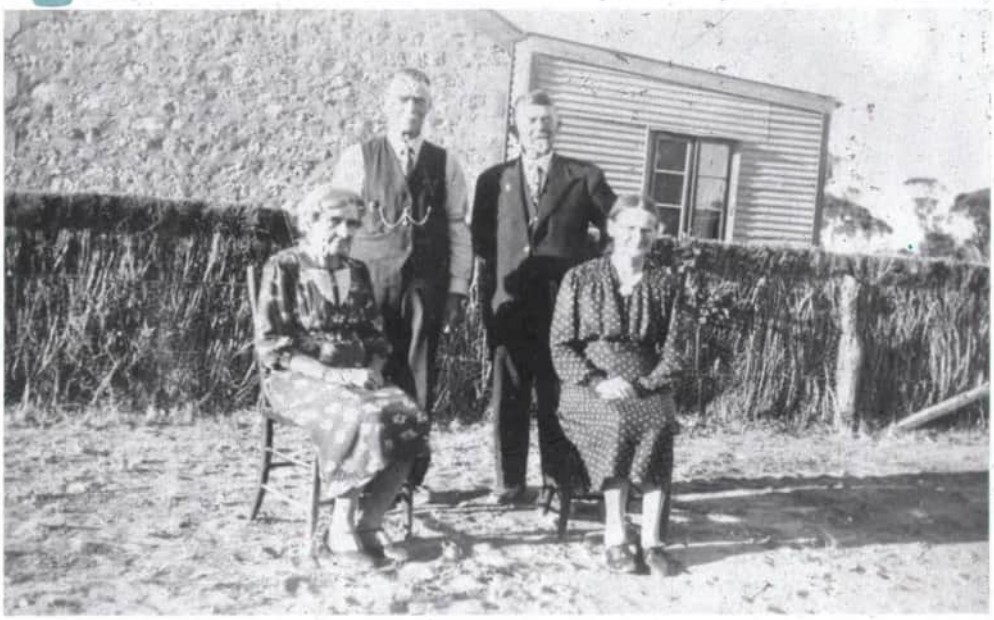
The people who chose to come by sea were numerous. E E E Lutz in his memoirs described how his family of five with the J D Meier family sailed on the *Wollamai* from Ardrossan in August 1893.[22] Their goods and chattels included five horses, two cows, a three furrow stump jump plough, a four foot mould board, a 4'6" Woods stripper, a toy Winnower, a spring cart, a light waggon, iron and timber to build a house, and a good supply of groceries. The boat took three weeks to reach Denial Bay where they were put ashore in a dinghy. The stock were put over the side and towed to the shore; the goods and chattels were hauled ashore in waggons at low tide.

The *Wollamai* was the most popular boat on the West Coast run. It was 107'6" long 23'6" wide and could sail in water 9'5" deep.

Many families chose to send their menfolk overland and the women and children by sea. Thus, sisters Mabel and Mary Tonkin came on the *Wollamai* to housekeep for their brothers Pat and George, who were establishing farms. Mrs Thomas Hunt and her family came on the *Wollamai* in 1895, but Thomas Hunt had overlanded a few months earlier.

Others who came on the *Wollamai* included Mrs Bawden and her daughter in 1898, and Mr and Mrs E A Hasting with 5 children. Theirs was a good trip which lasted only six days. Mr and Mrs Burser and 4 children came on the *Wollamai* with Mrs Arnold and her baby. On another trip there was Herb Watson with his wife and baby son. And Bert Tremaine came when he was 13, to work as a house boy for Fred Lloyd at Smoky Bay.

The *Wollamai* was not the only boat transporting families to the new country. Carl Theodor (Ted) Schwarz, Herman John (Jack) Schwarz and Lou



At the rear of the home built by Ted Schwarz at Maltee. Left Jack Schwarz and wife, right Ted Schwarz and wife.

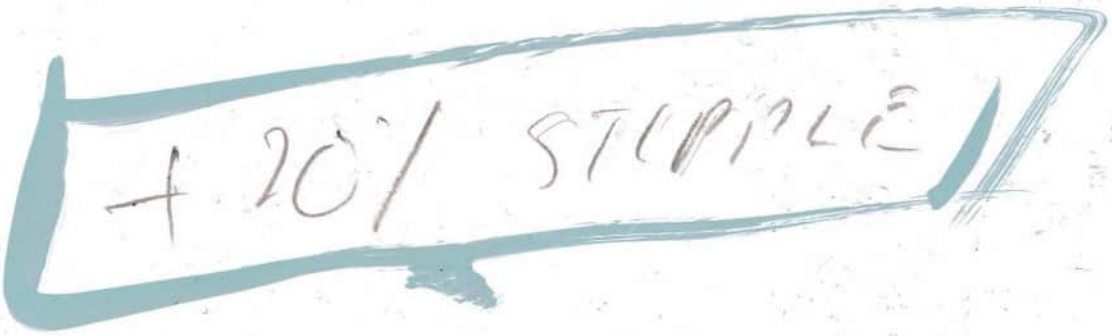
Hoffrichter sailed on the *Rachel Cohen*. Their trip was very rough so Ted and Lou got off at Elliston and rode bicycles while Jack stayed with the boat. They all met again at Denial Bay. The *Argyle* was also used on occasions and W O Caddy from Kapunda sailed on it to Smoky Bay when he was 17. He had a job there working as a farm hand for Harold Tremaine.

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2. *Yorke's Peninsula Advertiser*, 25/3/87.
3. SAPD 16/12/92.
4. *Register*, 19/9/87.
5. Report on Nullarbor (sic) Plain and Fowlers' Bay Country, SAPP 98/1887.
6. *Pictorial Australian*, Feb-March, 1890, pp.21 and 22.
7. See *Salt Winds Across Barley Plains*, by Beryl Neumann, pp. 41-42.
8. SAPD 8/12/87.
9. *Register*, 24/11/87
10. SAPD 6/11/88
11. Western District Applications, PRO, GRG 35, No 113.
12. *Register*, 1/7/89
13. Western District Applications, op cit.
14. Report of the Western Lands Board re Resumed Lands at Fowler's Bay SAPP 141/1889.
15. SAPD 20/11/89
16. Unless otherwise noted the standard reference used for places names is *What's in a Name? Nomenclature of South Australia*, by Rodney Cockburn.
17. *Register*, 30/1/91
18. The names of the allottees were from the periodic lists in the Government Gazettes for the years 1889 to 1894.
19. Police Books of the old Fowlers Bay Police Station PRO (Restricted Access).
20. FWLHN Numerous family histories are included in these files.
21. The record of the Brown's journey was made by Laura Bowell, later Mrs W Oats as part of a project called 'What My Grandmother told me' for the Charra Branch of the Women's Agricultural Bureau.
22. Lutz, E E E, *My Memoirs of 68 years spent on the West Coast of South Australia, 1893-1961*, p.1.







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Getting wheat to the ports in the early 1900s. A 102 bag load brought into the Murat Bay wheatstack on the corner of McKenzie Street and O'Loughlin Terrace by Ern Watson.

5. Optimism, Pioneering and Realism, 1889–1926

When the farmers reached their allotments in the Far West they had common problems; water to be found, a house to build, scrub to clear, seeding to be done, fences to be erected and so on. There are dozens of tales of 'life on the edge' in the first few years, on the edge of poverty, on the edge of starvation, on the edge of despair. From amongst the many, two have been chosen, one because it graphically illustrates the hardships of the early life and one because it eloquently gives a women's perspective, something often forgotten in the literature of pioneer farming.

James Drever heard of the Far West country in a letter from his brother who had settled at Streaky Bay. At the time he was share farming 100 acres at Hoyleton; the letter told of thousands of acres that could be obtained for a few pounds a year. James, with his wife and a young family, joined his brother at Streaky Bay and waited for land to be allotted 200 kilometres further to the west.

In February of 1891 he was allowed to inspect the available blocks and the country was at its best with grass two feet high in many places. He made a selection and, in March of 1891, the Western Land Board allotted him block 9, Hundred of Nash, 1717 acres on a right to purchase lease.

The story of this farm was told by son James H Drever, seventy years later, in an article published by *The Sunday Mail* in September 1960.

When James senior returned to Streaky Bay after inspecting his block, he collected some supplies in the town and travelled in his waggon to his brother's place where his wife and family were awaiting his news. He arrived in the early hours of the morning, and went to bed without unloading the waggon. In the morning his pregnant wife let her husband catch up on some sleep and, without help, tried to unload a bag of flour from the waggon. This brought on a miscarriage and twenty four hours later Mrs Drever died.

James H Drever wrote: 'I was only five years old, but it is as clear in my mind today as it was then how Dad had us all kneeling around her bed while he prayed to God for strength to look after us kids. It was not to be, as I don't think we were ever all together again. Kindly neighbours took two of us each and looked after us as well as their own.'

James senior moved to Bookabie to start his farm. He built a small shanty and put in a little wheat. There were no rabbits in the area then, so the grassy plains amongst the scrub could be cultivated and a crop left to grow.

Those were the awful days, bad seasons, no water, terrible hot weather, March flies, snakes and tribes of wild natives which we were all afraid of.

MRS F HURRELL

In 1892 James took his eldest son up to Bookabie for company. He was 11 years old at the time and still went to school. James continued to cultivate the plains ground, but in 1894 the rabbits started to arrive. In 1895 James H, eight years old, came to the farm and went to school at Bookabie while his father and brother worked, spending most of their time clearing scrub with axes.

The rabbits swarmed on to their little bit of wheat and, since they had no money for wirenetting fences, it was a day and night job trying to keep them out of the crop.

James H wrote that, at that time, they had just managed to pay expenses. They had no money, the nearest doctor was more than 200 kilometres away, there was no telephone and their only link with the outside world was a sailing ship which called once every six to nine weeks at Fowlers Bay.



The smoke house constructed of limestone and pug by James Drever in the 1890s and still intact in 1987.

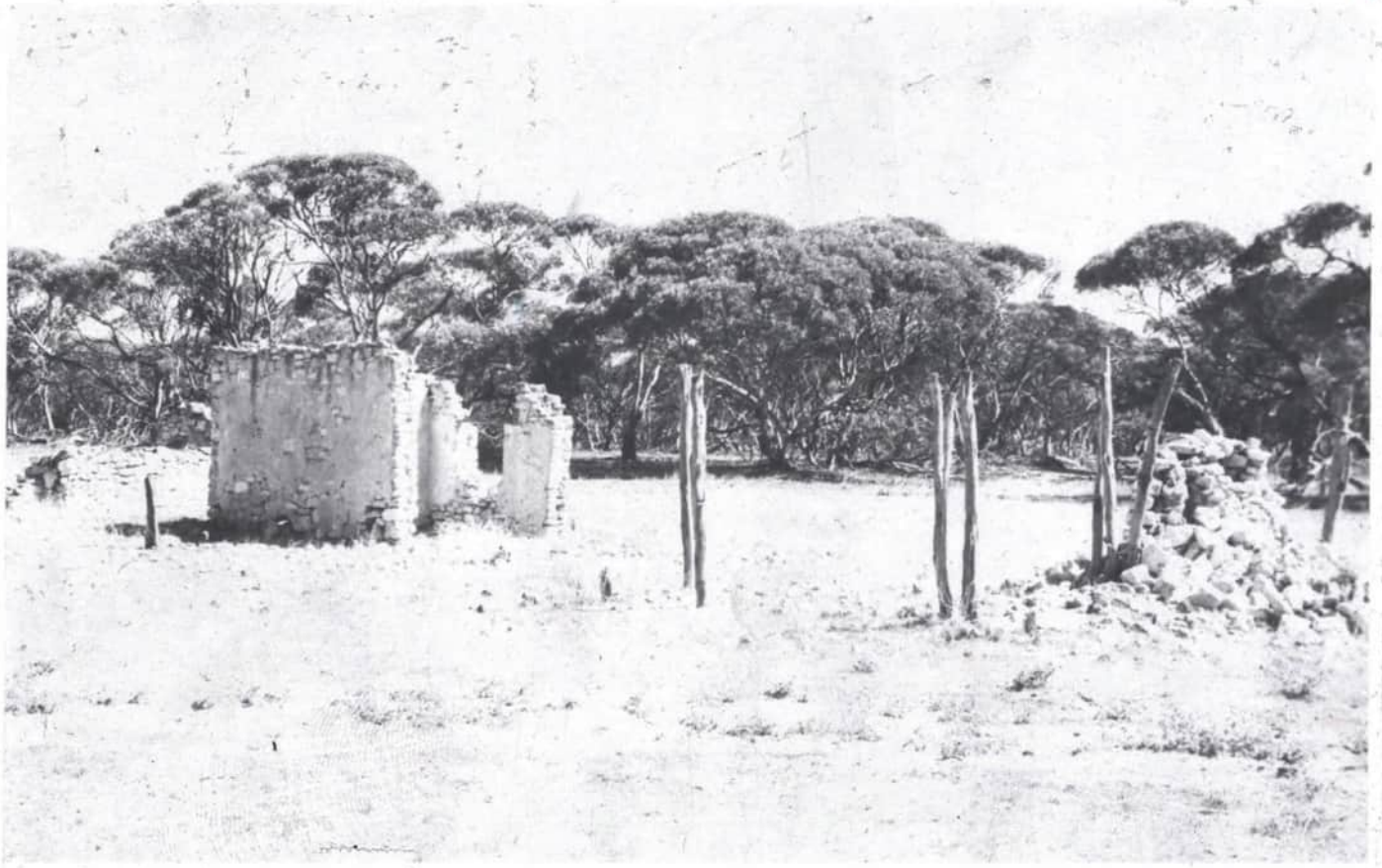
In 1896 the Drevers began to really struggle. James had to mortgage what little he had to buy food and clothes. The farm in that year yielded 17 bags of wheat, not even enough for seed for the following year. 1897 was worse and James was plunged further into debt. There was never enough money to buy food so the family frequently existed on wombat, rabbits, lizards and purdies (witchetty grubs).

James H remembered that, in the beginning, 1898 was the worst year of all. The few stock they had managed to accumulate all died, and even most of the rabbits died because there wasn't a blade of grass anywhere. Then, in October, they had a heavy thunderstorm which brought the crop along a bit and they finished the year with 27 bags.

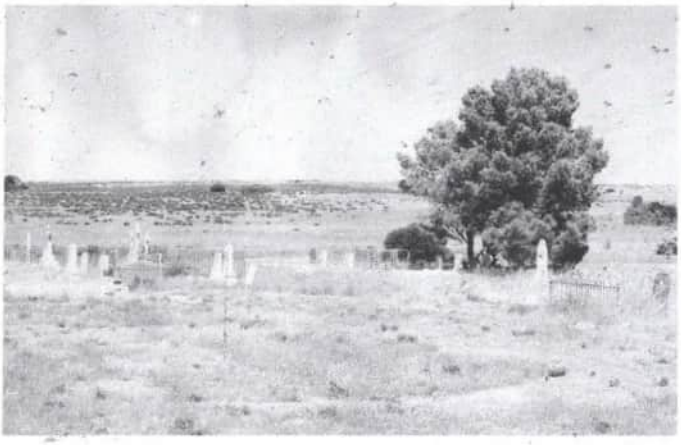
Their 14 year old sister joined them in 1898 and James bought ('I do not know how' James H said) a cow and a heifer. From then on they had milk, butter, cream and milk puddings, all of which seemed like great luxuries.

The seasons improved and the family managed to get an old three furrow plough which would cultivate the scrub lands. A wire netting trust was formed

Ruins of James Drever's farm, Hundred of Nash, as seen in 1987.







Carawa Cemetery set in typical Far West mallee and Coorabie Cemetery in open plains country. Both cemeteries contain graves of many of the Far West's pioneers.

in the district and James obtained a couple of miles of the precious material which helped in the continual battle with the rabbits.

Despite the good seasons, the Drevers could only grow enough to clear expenses. They had to repay their borrowings from previous years and they were always heavily in debt to the local storekeeper. What wheat they got had to be carted 18 miles to the coast over sandhills, 12 bags a load, in a cart drawn by four horses. The cart also had to be used to get all the family's water because they never had enough money to buy cement to build a tank.

James H remembered that his sister had hardly any clothes and that she wore bran bags with three holes cut in them at home to save the few dresses she did have.

By 1904 only James and James H were still battling on the farm. They couldn't get wheat to grow well without fertilizer and they had no money to buy it. The rabbits were still eating them out every year and it was a constant struggle to have enough money to buy food. In 1906 James H took a job on the erection of the dog fence from Bookabie to White Well, a distance of 91 miles, and in 1907 James asked the local storekeeper to foreclose his mortgage. The farm and everything was sold and there was just enough money to clear his debts. Sixteen years of hardship and struggle had repaid him financially with nothing.

Mrs T McFeat recalled in her old age the time she farmed on the Far West coast with her first husband Johann D Meier. With her four daughters and Johann they paid 30 pounds for passage on the *Wollamai* and reached Denial Bay on 23 October 1893.[1]

Mr Handtke, an old Yorke Peninsula friend, collected the Meier's and allowed them to camp in his implement shed for a few days while they unloaded the boat and prepared to move on to their block in the Hundred of Moule.

At first they did not know where the block was. It had to be found with the aid of a map and then a track had to be cut into it with axes. Maria Meier had never used an axe before, but she worked side by side with her husband and got badly blistered hands. The four girls walked behind clearing the track as their parents cut down the mallee.

After a long search they found the boundary pegs for their block and then, in a small clearing, Johann built a 26 feet long galvanised iron house using materials he had brought with him plus some of the best of the mallee branches as uprights and rafters. He put a partition in the middle of the house and used one side for a bedroom, the other for a living room. For the first twelve months Maria did all the cooking behind a tarpaulin shelter in a camp oven, but after that a fireplace was constructed in the house.

The blacks were a nuisance and frightening at times . . . they were always hanging around looking for food, clothes and water. Once when Mum and Dad were away working in the paddocks they turned up at the house. Myra and I hid under the bed trembling and took the cat with us in case they took it for food.

MRS E LOWE

There was no water for stock; it had to be carted from the well on James Dunnet's Charra Station 20 miles away, two or three times a week. This was usually an overnight journey so Johann took one of the girls with him for company and Maria stayed home with the three other girls.

As soon as the house was erected Maria took up her axe again and, alongside her husband, began clearing 100 acres of scrub to be ready for burning in February. When that was finished they worked together to excavate a tank with a pick and shovel. It was 10 feet deep and 25 feet in diameter. Next a large pile of limestone was gathered, burnt and mixed with some precious Charra water to make a mortar for the tank floor. The next chore was to pick stumps, cut shoots and begin the clearing of another 100 acres.

The first 100 acres that had been cleared was cultivated with two 3-furrow ploughs. Husband and wife each took one team and walked beside the plough all day. After two seasons, they could afford a 6-furrow plough which had a seat, and this saved all the walking.

The first crop was partially ruined by frost; they reaped just enough for seed and payment for the bags. Luckily they had a little money saved from Yorke Peninsula days so they were able to carry on.

During the first two years of struggle, the basic meat for eating was kangaroo and rabbit. Johann would go out on Sundays to shoot kangaroos and the children, with their dogs, caught rabbits when they came out of their burrows at sundown every day. Eventually, when the farm began to pay, they bought sheep from Mr Dunnet at Charra or Mr Gale at Athenna.

After the first harvesting they got the land ready again for seeding. Maria drove the horse in a dray and Johann sat on the back of it broadcasting the seed by hand. It was then harrowed in. At the start of the second season they had 200 acres cleared and seeded. It turned out to be a good season for they got 530 four-bushel bags from the crop. They sold it at 1 pound per bag which enabled them to clear all their debts and to buy four more horses and harness.

Maria and her daughters cleaned all the wheat on a tarpaulin, then helped bag it for carting to Denial Bay where William McKenzie loaded it for shipment to Port Adelaide. Freight was then one shilling a bag.

The eldest daughter was 10 years old at this time and kept house while mother and father shared the outside work. Later the girls all went to school in Denial Bay, four miles away, but they continued to help out on the farm whenever they had spare time. Thus they were skilled at harnessing up teams to lead out to their father in a paddock, they raked hay with a seven foot wooden rake, which two of them had to pull, and afterwards the whole family stacked it.

Every year Johann and Maria dug a tank. Each one was a little better than the last and, eventually, they used concrete instead of stones and even began to employ outside help with the cement work. In the third year they cleared another 100 acres with axes and, of course, there was always fencing to do. They obtained wire netting from the government and worked steadily doing about 100 acres a year.

After the eighth underground tank had been built, they had still not achieved self sufficiency and water carting was still a chore in several months of the year. Therefore, in 1902, Johann decided to dig a well. While he dug the soil Maria hauled it to the surface with a windlass. At 72 feet they struck a good supply of water, but it was unfit for consumption because it was full of alum and was bitter. It was a drought year so Johann erected a 400 gallon tank, filled it with the alum water and condensed it. Maria kept the consenser going for six weeks and the children carted firewood while Johann got on with seeding a new crop. In this way they obtained sufficient water for the stock until a thunderstorm came and filled all the tanks.

Opposite page.
Above. The construction of an underground tank on the Paech farm in 1935.
Below. The Laura Bay government tank constructed in 1914. Looking down a cement channel which feeds run off into the tank.





The boats came only once in three weeks or a month in the early days . . . fresh meat was out of the question . . . tinned meats were all that we could get so our menu never varied except on a blazing hot day when the tinned meat melted — then we called it stew.

MRS HERB WATSON

At the end of the third year the Meiers were reasonably established. Thereafter, they engaged scrubcutters and, altogether, 1000 acres were cleared and cut into six paddocks. They continued improving the land, switched over to superphosphate, bought a drill and, in 1909, started with sheep.

In 1910 they sold the farm on a walk-in walk-out basis and retired to Adelaide. But, the new owner paid no principal or interest and the Meiers had to repossess. Their son-in-law worked the farm for a couple of years but, in 1915, the Meiers had to return and to work as hard as ever. In 1916–17 they harvested 1300 bags and they were doing well, but it all came to an abrupt end in 1920 when Johann died.

Maria Meier's story was a common one for the Far West coast. The pioneer women worked against incredible odds and, in the two case studies presented, the comparative success of the Meiers versus the failure of the Drevers was no doubt influenced greatly by the fact that Johann Meier had a strong woman working along with him in the pioneer years, while James Drever was deprived of similar support by the untimely death of his wife before he took up his allotment.

Beyond the general story of early settlement, which has now been illustrated by two case studies, there were many problems which sometimes affected only individuals or a few people in a special area.

Lack of water was a universal problem, but those near the sea developed an expertise for condensing salt water taken from the bays. Many set up on the shore and carted mallee stumps for the fires that were put under 200 or 400 gallon square iron tanks, most of which were made in Millwall, England. Others carted the sea water to their properties and did their condensing there. Will Tainsh was one of these. He had a 200 gallon tank and a farm about seven miles out from Denial Bay. With the tank on a dray he used to cart sea water nearly every day after he first arrived. His wife kept the condenser fire burning with scrub that was being cut from the property. E W Cottrell, when writing to Eleanor Barbour in the *Chronicle*, said that he worked for T. Hunt in the late 1890s. One of his jobs was to take the first watch at night on the condenser, which was set up near the stables. He had to keep the fire and water going until Mr Hunt could take over near morning. On a good night they would condense 15 to 20 gallons per hour.



Albert Blumson's plant for condensing sea water at Laura Bay in 1914. 200 gallon tanks are being heated.



Dynamite Cottage, a scrub cutters camp c. 1906. Group includes Joe Blumson (lying down), three Barlow brothers, Charlie Thomas and Albert Blumson.

There were always problems of bringing materials into the district by ship, particularly before jetties were built. The sailing ships were never on time, and when steamers like the *Grace Darling*, and the *Wookata* were operating, they were sometimes no better. Freight was frequently lost or damaged and expensive items sometimes proved worthless in the pioneering district. Thus, when Edward A Watson had the first harvester brought to Murat Bay, it had to be lowered into the sea from the boat and towed ashore. That manoeuvre proved very costly because all the working parts in the harvester began to rust in no time at all, and it was soon completely useless.

Dingoes were a problem in the early years because they were so plentiful. H A Watson found nine of them drowned in one of his tanks one night. Gradually, they were brought under control with the dog proof fences which were erected in declared vermin-proof districts. The one for Fowlers Bay was completed in 1906; three years later Penong district had its fence completed and Petina and Murat Bay districts followed soon afterwards. Once the fences were up, it took several years to get rid of the dogs but, thereafter, only an occasional stray was sighted.

Mice plagues were common. E E E Lutz reported that 1916–17 was the worst year when the Denial Bay wheat stack was almost completely ruined by a combination of mice and weevils. He also recalled that during the worst plagues it was nothing to have several mice run up your trouser legs while you were sitting at a meal table. As he said 'You'd just crush them and later pick out your haul.'[2]

J W (Joe) Blumson came to work for James Williams at Smoky Bay in October 1905. He sailed on the *Argyle* via Elliston, Streaky Bay, Murat Bay and then back to Smoky Bay, where he was rowed ashore in a small boat. He found Smoky Bay 'a bit of a shock' consisting only of an open shed about fifty feet long and 'a small tin shanty kept by an Afghan'.

A bullock belonging to D F Dunnet died suddenly. He poisoned it with strychnine. Result — 70 dead dingoes.

WCR 16/6/06

My mail did not turn up last mail day and as I had not seen anyone for 23 days I started out to see if there was anyone left in the world.

JOE BLUMSON Sept. 1907

The son of a bootmaker in Brompton, Joe Blumson was a dutiful and caring son who sent regular newsy letters to his parents written in a very clear hand. Later, brother Albert also contributed to the correspondence, and the 'Blumson' letters, which are still in existence, are a fascinating collection of documents about family and farming life in the years 1905–1910. Copies of the originals have been made several times and are now kept by family descendants.

Joe worked for James Williams from October 1905 to mid 1906. Then he returned to Adelaide, collected his brother Albert, and together they came back to farm block 29 at Laura Bay. Albert did not settle to farming but earnt a good living in the district as a photographer, blacksmith, builder, farm labourer and eventually as a tinsmith in Ceduna.

Joe's letters give precise details of his struggle to make a living on the farm and describe how hard he had to work to succeed. From the letters a few of his home spun philosophies and some pithy comments are quoted to illustrate aspects of his lonely bachelor life as he struggled on the edge of uncertainty to establish a profitable farm:

> We are cutting scrub, mallee and ti tree, and of course it has come rather hard on me and I have a splendid assortment of blisters on my hands, red, white and blue. (October 1905)

> The flies have treated us badly during the past week. I have had one bung eye and four bung lips during a week and it has not been pleasant. (February 1906)

> Mr Hirte was married a few weeks ago. They are carting 1000 bags of wheat on camels to Laura Bay for him. (19 January 1908)

> The birds felt the hot weather and I caught one in my hands and have him in the pot stewing. (19 January 1908)



Albert and Joseph Blumson's house built on their Laura Bay section in 1906. Uprights were tea-tree posts and the roof was galvanised iron.

I feel so miserable at times. The present is so dreary and the future does not seem to provide anything but continuous exile. (1 March 1908)

(Albert) talks of getting married and bringing Olive here but if he does it would be a very risky business if she was ill (again) and I reckon it would cost about £15 for a doctor's visit here . . . a long illness would ruin one. (1 March 1908)

I wonder how a fellow can keep up so well on bread and meat and porridge three times a day. (mid 1908)

I have not seen a woman for two months. (27 December 1908)

The Sedgleys have left their place and are at Hirtes living in tents. There is no water on their place. (12 January 1909)

I went to a party last Friday but it always makes me discontented to go amongst people and then return to this loneliness. (21 May 1909)

The farmers life is not all honey even under present conditions and there is much to trouble about if one is inclined to worry. There is but one pay day a year and if that fails it means a big loss. (11 July 1909)



Sheds at Koonibba Mission which were typical of many others in the Far West, built to collect precious rainwater for drinking purposes.

The pioneer population was not exclusively landholders. Many young men came to the district and worked on shares to gain experience at farming. Thus, Hugo Luestner began on shares for C J Schwarz. John and Susan Smith worked for William McKenzie on shares until they could get their own farm. Herb Chandler began by sharefarming Thomas Hunt's farm 'Bayview' which later became his own, and Harry Kuhlmann started in the Mudamuckla area as a share farmer for Poynton and Claxton.

Many other young men earned a good living scrub cutting. The price was 5/- to 10/- per acre depending upon the type of timber. Strong, adventurous types frequently claimed in the pubs at weekends that they were 'an acre a day men'; and so they were, but not on Mondays when the hangovers were wearing off. By then they had slipped to ½ an acre, and some even stopped home to sharpen their axes. But, there were many of them working anywhere between Fowlers Bay and Smoky Bay — men like William George Trelligan, Martin and Bill Mahar, Ted Burford, Ted Douglas, Ted Toohey, Harry Devereux, Bill Stewart, Jim Hamilton, Jack Backshall and Even Wold.

Others offered themselves as farm labourers. Bill Watson, Bill Banks and Henry Will worked many farms at harvest time and got good wages. Joseph Edwards began on the coast in 1903 as a farm boy for Richard Davey at Penong. He travelled over by ship and his 'luggage' consisted of his working clothes, his Sunday suit, his Bible and an axe. Some young men brought good references with them. Consider for example the following which is still in existence.

Mallee Park
Oct. 3, 94

George Tonkin

Is a Respectable Well Conducted young man and a carefull good shearer.

Thomas Rickaby
Mallee Park
Yorkes Peninsula

The South Australian Coasters Association Shipping Note

Shipped in good order and condition by J Lowe and Sons on the vessel Wollamai *for Port Adelaide 87 bags of wheat. W Tulloch Jnr, 8 July 1893*

J E Lowe Papers

Several farmers could also turn their hand to building and a few established reputations in the district for their craftsmanship. Thus, James (later 'Puppa') Stiggants built the Penong Hall in 1901, the Methodist Manse, the Bagster



The old Charra homestead built by James Dunnet. Now demolished.

School and many other smaller buildings in the Penong district. At 70 years of age he was still at it for he built a fine stone home for his son Jasper near Kyancutta.

Frank Edson was another farmer-cum-builder. His list of achievements included homes for Joel Lowe, W Hirte, Watsons, Linkes, J Bawden and M R Edson. W Stasinowsky built the 18 tank school and Glacken's house; and William McKenzie constructed many buildings around Denial Bay.

A residue of Yalata station was two large farms in the 1890s one at Yalata and one at Penong. Members of the Murray family were still the owners and still employed many people in the district. Thus, Robert Nicol was a book keeper at Yalata, but later branched out to be an auctioneer and land agent. John Daniel Green was a teamster for the Murrays, but later took up farming and Charles Beck, an overseer for the Murrays, later went into farming and storekeeping. Mick Allen, a colourful character of Fowlers Bay who wrote poetry, arrived in the district during the great shearer's strike and worked for the Murrays as scab labour. Later he became a farmer in the Hundred of Wookata.

Albert John Blumson came to Smoky Bay in 1906 and picked up a lot of work in the area because he was a tinsmith and photographer. And, Frank Gregor in the same area not only farmed but acted as a shipping agent for John Darling and Son. The ports attracted such jobs. D J Whyborn had the Harbor Master's job at Denial Bay for a time while W J Symonds did the same work at Murat Bay.

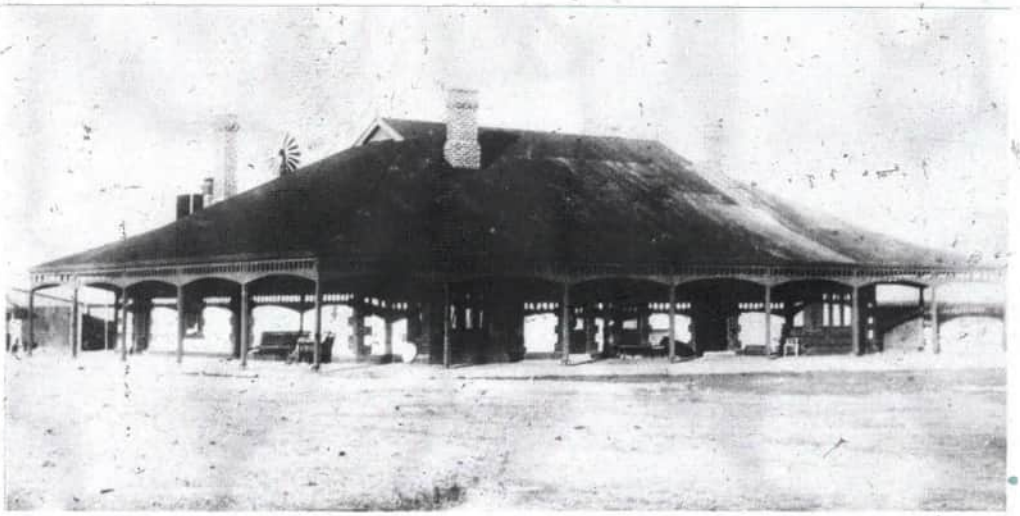
Also, in the district there were men who worked on the vermin proof fences, J H Drever being one example, and men who did maintenance work on the telegraph line; John Feltus Burke was one. He later became the proprietor of the Federal Hotel at Denial Bay.

Out on the dusty road there was always a mail driver, Ted Attick and Alby Campbell being two, and the travelling salesmen who worked for firms such as J Fitch and Broadbents. Apart from them, there were also Indian hawkers who were independent salesmen with a vast range of goods and chattels likely to be popular with farmers and their wives.

In the memories of the pioneers, and in the old newspaper references, several early settlers stand out as 'folk heroes'— people who served the district in many capacities, people who were very well known and were well respected. Of these, five can be mentioned as virtually 'regional folk heroes' viz G W Murray of Yalata and Fowlers Bay, Mrs A B C Murray of Penong, James Dunnet of Charra, W McKenzie of Denial Bay and Fred Lloyd of Smoky Bay.

Yalata Station, the property of Mr Geo W Murray has been sold to Mr Tom L Browne of Adelaide through Messrs Poynton and Claxton. The price paid is reported to be in the vicinity of 35,000 pounds.

WCS 8/7/22



George Murray's Yalata Homestead built 1913, demolished 1950s after being abandoned for more than 20 years.

G W Murray has already received attention in Chapter 3 because of his pastoral interests, but he lived on in the district when it was subdivided, and only in old age did he retire from his Yalata homestead and move to live at 39 Godfrey Terrace, Leabrook, Adelaide.

George Wright Murray was born in 1851 and was the second son of William Murray of Glen Osmond.[3] At the early age of 12 he went to Fowlers Bay and worked with his cousin James Armstrong, who managed the Fowlers Bay Run for W R Swan. Later he went to New Zealand with Armstrong, and has already been mentioned, he was present when his cousin died trying to swim cattle across a flooding river. George Murray married while in New Zealand and eventually had a family of seven. Unfortunately his five sons all died but his two daughters survived.

Murray returned to Fowlers Bay to take over management of the run and lived in the Yalata homestead, which he eventually owned, and kept, as part of his farming land after the 1892 allotments.

In its obituary to Murray the *West Coast Sentinel* eulogized about him excessively. It called him 'The Great White Chief of the Far West Coast'. He was 'a wonderful friend to his neighbours'; the blacks 'scores of whom were always on the Yalata property held him in something approaching veneration'. He was 'big hearted, generous, respected and esteemed by all'. He 'made friends everywhere and it is said that he never had an enemy in the world'.

George Murray died in November 1933 aged 82 and is buried in the Mitcham Cemetery in Adelaide.

Mrs A B C Murray was Marion Whigham Murray nee Crawford. She was born at Wigtown, Scotland and was brought by her parents to South Australia where they first settled at Milang.[4] Her family later had extensive pastoral runs centred around present day Karcultaby and, with this connection, she met Alexander Borthwick Cowan Murray when he was the manager of Chandada Station. They were married at Glen Osmond in 1881 and, ten years later, they moved to Penong, where they took up part of the former Penong outstation, which was converted into an extensive farm allotted to the Murrays in 1891. The couple had 7 children, two of whom died young, and Marion Murray was widowed in 1908 when A B C Murray died at Penong.

With the aid of her sons, Marion carried on farming in the district. She lived at Penong for another thirty years and became the most widely respected lady in the Far West.

Marion Murray lived to be 93 and it was only in the last few years of her life that she left the family farm at Penong to settle in Adelaide. Even then it was

William Harkness Murray, eldest son of Mr A B C Murray, was galloping on horseback, when his mount collided with another horse he was following. Mr Murray was thrown to the ground . . . after remaining unconscious for 15 hours he expired.

ADELAIDE CHRONICLE
12/9/03

reported that she was very 'air-minded' and frequently flew between Adelaide and Penong. She died on 26 June 1946 and was buried at Penong.

When he gave evidence to the Eyre Peninsula Railways Commission, James Dunnet, the largest landholder in the Charra and Denial Bay districts, said that he had previously been farming near Ballarat and in the Wimmera. Beginning as a sheep farmer he established a fine home, turned to crop raising later, and eventually became something akin to the 'Squire of Charra' when he let out as many as seven farms on shares.

James Dunnet lived to be 71 years of age and was killed on 3 December 1923. The *West Coast Sentinel* reported that he left his home at Charra in a masher cart to poison rabbits. At 8.30 pm the horse and cart returned to the house without him and a search was started immediately. Two black trackers worked all night but could not pick up any tracks until daylight; then Mr Dunnet's body was soon found and it was surmised that he had fallen out of the cart landing on his head and breaking his neck.[5]

The Dunnet funeral was one of the largest the Far West had seen, with people coming from as far away as Bookabie and Streaky Bay. There were 40 cars and about 250 people. The pall bearers were farming friends T Freeman, W Wright, R Tudor, W Denton, A E Payne and S Osborne. A widow, three sons and four grandchildren mourned his passing and a daughter (Mrs S W Freeman) predeceased him by two years.

In a tribute to James Dunnet a Charra correspondent for the *West Coast Sentinel* said he was 'a friend to the rich and poor'; 'he was an able man in legal affairs and his assistance was sought by many'; 'he was of a very generous nature'; 'he followed very closely all political matters and was approached to accept (parliamentary) nomination at different times but he had no desire for the life of a politician'. The correspondent concluded with the thought that 'the death of Mr Dunnet has taken from us a great friend and an able worker in things for the advancement of this end of the Coast'.

William McKenzie was born at Macclesfield in the Adelaide Hills and went farming at Wauraltee, Yorke Peninsula when he reached adulthood. In 1889 he was allotted block 1 of 17,800 acres in the Hundred of Moule and he built a homestead two miles west of the present township of Denial Bay. This proved to be an excellent location for it was near enough to the landing at Denial Bay, subsequently called McKenzie's landing, for him to act as a kind of unofficial host, friend and guide to dozens of settlers when they first arrived in the district. For many years he acted as their haulage contractor with a five horse team that brought goods ashore at low tide. At his homestead he established a small village in the 1890s. It included a large blacksmiths shop, a post office, a saddlery, slaughter yards, several cottages and a large home with a dining room that accommodated 50 people.[6] 'Mac's Town', as it was called, was the social hub of the district for ten years. There was a police station across the road for a short period and Mac, himself, was the local Justice of the Peace. He had a sizeable workforce at his 'town' and many early settlers first got their start in the district by working for 'Mac' until they obtained their own farm.

A new landing stage (was) built at Denial Bay 'to enable vessels to discharge goods from boats at high water and for drays to go along and remove the same at low water.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT, SAPP, 1892–93

Mac's Town eventually suffered from competition with the town of Denial Bay. The influence of Mac however pervaded all things in the vicinity and, when the government town of Denial Bay was first laid out, the suggested name that appeared on the original plan was McKenzie. It would have been a fitting tribute to a man who helped so many pioneers of the district. He died from diabetes, aged 63, in Adelaide in 1906.[7]

A memorial to William McKenzie was erected on the site of Mac's Town by Wally Moreland in the 1970s at the request of relatives.

If William McKenzie was 'mine host' for Denial Bay, then Fred Lloyd had a similar role at Smoky Bay. He was born at Strathalbyn in 1868, but grew up as a lad on Yorke Peninsula and married Annie Hewton from Honiton.[8] In November of 1893 he was allotted block 3, Hundred of Guthrie, 2802 acres on a right to purchase lease. His brother-in-law Edward Hewton took up block 25, Hundred of Wallanippie, 1686 acres, in September 1894. Later, Fred Lloyd took over this block and added several others gaining, according to one source, 17,000 acres in total.[9] He became the biggest employer in the district and built a large home about three miles from the Smoky Bay landing.

The Lloyd home was the best known around Smoky Bay and was a favourite calling spot for travelling salesmen who came to the West Coast to sell farm machinery, clothing and general supplies. Even the itinerant dentist for the district used Lloyds as a temporary surgery where he did extractions or made impressions for false teeth which were then constructed in Adelaide.

In 1914 the Lloyd farm land was put out on shares, and Fred and Annie moved into the embryonic town of Smoky Bay. Here they set up a general store and post office. Fred acted as harbor-master, and agent for several Adelaide commercial firms.

When his father died Fred and Annie, who had no children, moved to Adelaide for a time to live with Fred's mother, but he made regular trips to keep in touch with his Smoky Bay share farms. It was on one of these trips on 24 March 1918, when only 49 years of age, that he died. He was buried in the Carawa cemetery and the *West Coast Sentinel*, in a lengthy tribute to the man, stressed 'his genial personality and upright character that endeared him to all'.



The cairn erected to the memory of W McKenzie, 'mine host' of early Denial Bay until his death in 1906.

The coming of the railway was a God send. Instead of carting three loads of wheat a week we could cart three a day.

CYRIL FREEMAN, Bagster

The farming population in the Far West had many problems, not the least of which was transportion. Separated from its major market centre (Adelaide) by 500 miles of land or 400 miles of sea, there were seemingly insuperable difficulties in getting wheat to its point of sale cheaply. The governments of South Australia in the early 1900s were generally sympathetic to the problems of transportation and their policy was to build a network of railways throughout the state which would place every wheat farmer within a manageable carting distance of a railway siding. The policy was implemented after detailed investigations, which on Eyre Peninsula took the form of the Eyre Peninsula Railways Commission.

The Commission was appointed on 13 January 1909 and, in its third report in 1911, it recommended a railway from Minnipa to Decres Bay.[10] Subsequently, this became Minnipa to Thevenard and this change is discussed in Chapter 14.

In August of 1911 the Commissioners L O'Loughlin (Chairman), C Vaughan, T Pascoe, P Allen, H Chesson, C Goode and W Miller inspected the country between Minnipa and Fowlers Bay to investigate the possibility of an extension of the railway as far west as Fowlers Bay. They conducted meetings at Murat Bay, Penong, Bookabie, Coorabie, Koonibba, Denial Bay and Petina between 23 August and 29 August. Their minutes of evidence, published in the Parliamentary Papers, provide interesting details about farming and the prominent farmers at each of these locations some 20 years after the first agricultural blocks were taken up.

At Murat Bay on 23 August, James Dunnet, farmer and grazier was the first witness called. He said that he lived at Charra 15 miles from Denial Bay which was his shipping port. He wished to support the railway extension at least as far as Penong and stated that he had nearly 30,000 acres of land with seven men cultivating between 4000 and 5000 acres in shares. At first he had been a sheepfarmer only, but in the last 17 years he had been interested in cropping, and in 10 or so of those years the crops had been reasonable. He had been using phosphates for eight years and, as a result, yields had increased by about 50 percent.

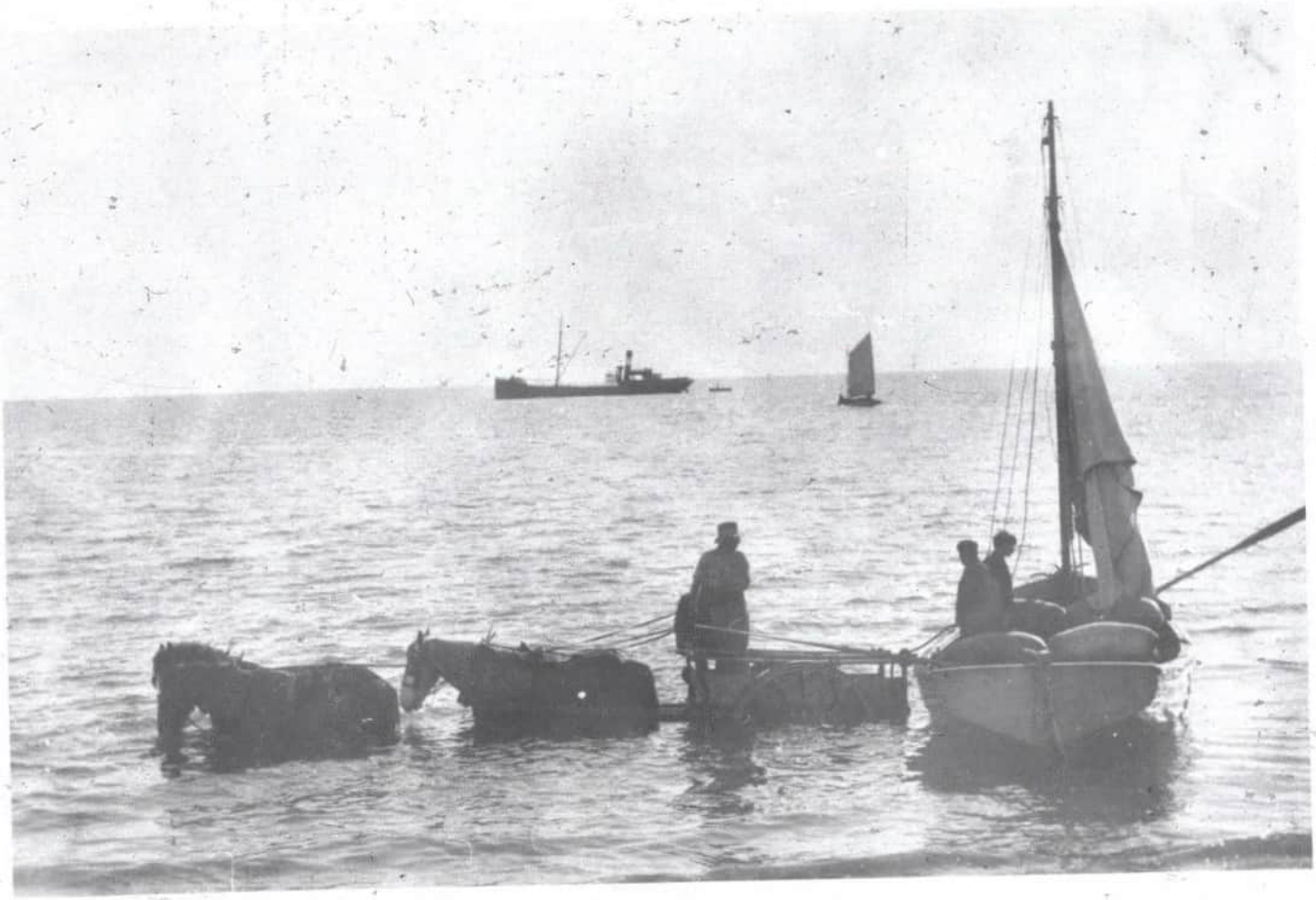
Dunnet said that when he began at Charra he had 3500 sheep but that in seven years 'owing to dogs and drought' they dwindled to 140. He then put a dog proof fence around 12,000 acres and from that time onwards 'he had done fairly well'.

George Tonkin, farmer, was the next witness. He said he had been in the district since 1894 and had been 'fairly successful'. He cultivated between 600 and 700 acres per year and the average for his crops in the last 16 years had been 8½ bushels per acre.

Cornelius McInherney had been in the district 17 years and his experience was similar to Mr Tonkin's. With phosphates his best crop had been 15 bushels; before that he had been down to 4 bushels and sometimes much lower. Frederick Croser had been farming for 17 years. His average was 7 bushels and he had now given up using phosphates because they did not seem to be improving his yield.

Alfred Tainsh, master mariner, gave evidence that he was no longer a master mariner but now kept sheep on St Peters Island. He thought that Decres Bay was 'undoubtedly the best harbour on the West Coast this side of Port Lincoln'. Besides keeping his sheep, he was 'superintending a farm' in the Hundred of Goode for his brother and had got 15 bushels to the acre there in 1910 without manures. Richard Davey, farmer from Merghiny, had carted his 1500 bags of wheat from the last harvest a distance of 23 miles and, because of the time spent in carting, he was unable to thoroughly cultivate his land. A

Opposite page.
Above. The method for shipping wheat in the days before jetties. The Barlow brothers transferring their bags from a dray to a dinghy to a ship in Smoky Bay in 1909.
Below. The wheatstack at Laura Bay about 1910 with the *Wookata* standing offshore and being loaded by lighters.







The ruins of a Miller family farmhouse between Penong and Bookabie.

railway was 'absolutely needed in (the) district'. This year he and his brother were ploughing three days a week and spent the rest of their time carting water and feed.

At Penong on 25 August the first witness called was William Saunders, farmer, Hundred of Burgoyne. He had been engaged in farming two miles from Penong for 20 years. Port Le Hunte was his shipping port, 10 miles from his block, and he got 5 pence a bushel under the Port Adelaide price. Since using drills his yields had increased dramatically and he was now getting 8 to 20 bushels — the 20 bushels being from fallowed land.

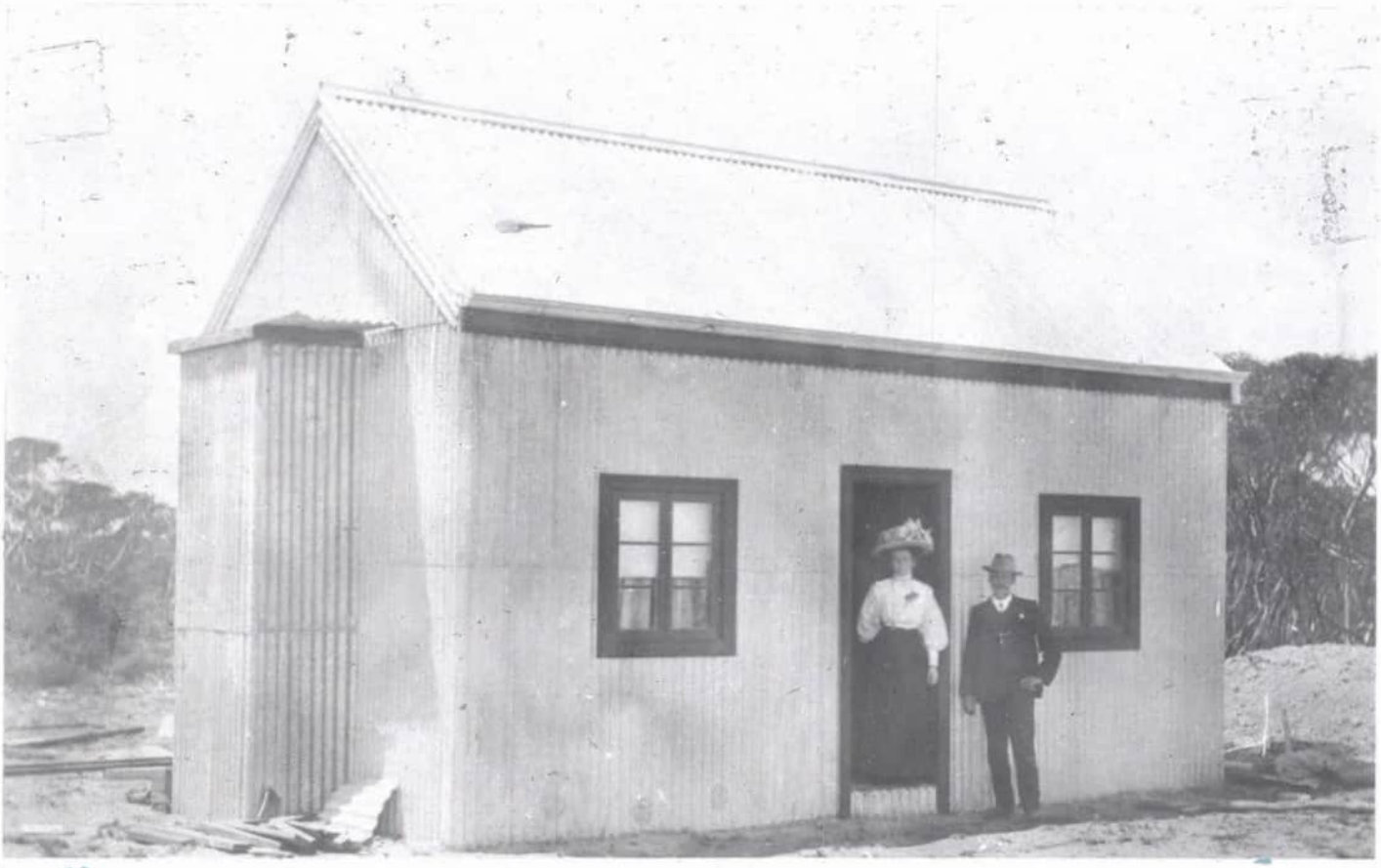
Paul Smith, farmer of Penong, had been in the district for 21 years. He held 1600 acres and could make farming pay with 6 bushels per acre. Originally he had 8000 acres, but he had surrendered most of it and now there were four farms where originally there had been one. He had no wells only underground tanks. He had once sunk a well 180 feet and got nothing. Carting to Port Le Hunte was a problem. It was 20 miles for him via Penong, but some people carted 28 miles, a two day trip, to reach the port. Most farmers could only carry half a load of wheat with half a load of horsefeed; some farmers had 8, 11 and 14 horse teams.

Jeffery John Miller farmed at the north end of the Hundred of Bagster and carted 22 miles to Port Le Hunte. He had been in the country 30 years and had been farming for 20 years.

Carl Julius Leopold lived in the town of Penong but farmed block 6, Hundred of Burgoyne. He thought that there should be a railway from Denial Bay to Fowlers Bay.

James Stiggants told the Commission that he had been farming in the Hundred of Bagster for 16½ years. He averaged about 8 bushels, but on fallow land he got between 12 and 20 bushels. His farm was under 3000 acres, he did not keep sheep and he depended upon surface water and tanks.

Albert and Adeline Blumson's first home near Smoky Bay in 1910.



Ernest Gravestocks, from the Hundred of Bagster, thought that a good living could be made from 3000 acres in his area. He used 35 to 60 pounds of manure per acre and, in 1910, he had 680 acres with a 7 bushel yield. He carted to Port Le Hunte and, 'anything like 3 shillings and 6 pence a bushel . . . will pay us'.

Arthur Shepard (sic), farmer of Penong, had a farm a mile from the township. He had been there for 20 years and had only one failure.

Joseph Oats said his farm was block 3, Hundred of Cohen, and he had been there for 12 years with six years at Fowlers Bay before that. He did not think the railway would benefit him at all and thought that it was 'understood' that from Penong to Fowlers Bay anything north of the 10 chain road was too dry for cultivation.

Stanley Freeman said that his father had been farming at Penong for about 20 years and he had been there 'off and on for about 20 years'. That year they had 1200 acres in with between 300 and 400 acres on fallow land. The year before they had averaged 12 bushels on fallow land. He thought that, if the time spent on carting could be spent on the land, the yields would improve from 6–7 bushels to 12–14 bushels.

On Friday 25 August the Commission sat at Bookabie, and Aubrey Leighton Carlisle Gale, farmer and grazier, presented a long statement based on 'a general meeting held here a week ago'. Everybody was in favour of a railway being constructed and thought that in a few years it would be paying good revenue to the State. At Bookabie they had no outlet for their produce without travelling 30 miles over bad roads and then they had to take 5 pence a bushel under Port Adelaide price for their wheat. For the past four years the average yield of the country nearby had been 6½ bushels per acre. He had about 8000 acres and ran from 1200 to 2500 sheep.

At Coorabie on Saturday 26 August Harry William Darby gave evidence representing the feelings of a meeting held a fortnight before. The railway was needed and should extend beyond Fowlers Bay through the Hundreds of Wookata and Russell. Angelo William Hardy, sheepfarmer of Yalata, reported that he had been 18 years in the Hundred of Miller, farming and grazing. He thought that there was plenty of good agricultural country further out that a railway could tap. He had temporarily given up cropping because it was too far for him to cart to Fowlers Bay and, in response to a question from Commissioner Allen, he thought that average yields were 10 or 11 bushels when manures were used.

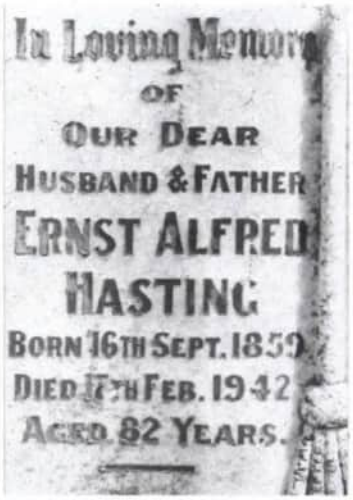
On Monday 28 August the Commission's first witness at Koonibba was Ernest Hasting, farmer of Denial Bay. He had been farming for 15 years and the last nine years had been 'pretty good'. His crop averaged 8 bushels, but with phosphates he had achieved 16 bushels. He had fallow land for one year but did not find it an advantage. The average holding in the area was about 3000 acres and they could not get water by sinking. The land was also no good for earth dams, everything had to be cemented. He had eight tanks on about 4000 acres varying in size from 10,000 gallons to 60,000 gallons.

Edwin Payne, farmer of Charra, had been in the area for 20 years. He started at Bagster with his father, but now was farming for himself in the Hundred of Catt. He averaged 6 to 7 bushels per acre, had to rely on tanks for his water and carried only 33 stock, all horses.

William Wright of Charra had been farming on 'halves' for 14 years and the results had encouraged him to take up land for himself. The average for the last four years had been 10 bushels. He had to cart 22 miles and could only manage three trips a week.

Some farmers are delaying wheat carting until the cutting is complete down the cliff at Point Sinclair where Mr R Irvine has sixty men at work.

REGISTER 1/2/93



Mr W Denton from Charra carted the largest waggon load of wheat to Denial Bay, 126 bags.

WCR 10/2/09

In answer to a question put by Commissioner Allen, William Wright said that it cost from 10 shillings to 12 shillings per acre to clear the land ready for the plough. The scrub was rolled, but in many places that was not possible and it had to be cut. To the Chairman of the Commission he described the condition of farming on shares as, 'I have to find half of everything except the land. (The farmer) finds the horses and implements and I find the labour and half the seed and half the manure, and I cart the farmer's wheat to the Bay'.

William Skinner, farmer at Charra, was called and examined at Denial Bay on Monday 28 August. He had been farming in the district for 17 years and carted to Denial Bay, a distance of about 15 miles. He used superphosphates 'on every acre' and told the Commissioner 'you cannot settle farmers further back than 25 miles from the coast. Beyond that you get into the desert'.

David Whyborn was called next. He described himself as a farmer and the harbormaster for Denial Bay. When questioned he stated that there was no difficulty in getting ships to come to the Denial Bay jetty. There was a weekly service of steamers and, 'when the rush of wheat is on', it was more frequent, and it was supplemented by sailing craft. There was 10 feet of water at the jetty at low water and he thought it was one of the safest ports on the coast. August Henry Hoffrichter, William August Ernest Lutz and George Starling also gave evidence briefly at Denial Bay. Each was in favour of the railway.

Also on Monday 28 August the Commission paid a second visit to Murat Bay. Here the following gave evidence, Walter Henry Sedgley of Waranda Well, Frederick William Lymn of Goode, Ernest William Watson of Murat Bay, John William Hirte of Laura Bay and Alexander Mitford of Waranda Well. Ernest Watson described how he built concrete surface tanks to get water. He mixed a mortar first and then cracked limestone to add to it. This was put on the side of the tank about 6 inches thick and rammed as it dried. Then he cemented it and tarred it making it, as he said, 'a good well'.

The last meeting of the Commission in the district was held at Petina on Tuesday 29 August. Here the Reverend Canon Howard from Streaky Bay was interviewed and so also was Alexander Thompson of Petina and Osmond Howard of Petina. Each was interested in the railway from Minnipa to Decres Bay and favoured it strongly, suggesting a route through Pimbaacla.

John Edwin Lowe's house at Kongwirra Hill in 1909. Group includes Alice Lowe at left, Cyril Lowe (on his little bike), A Weise (the builder), E Lowe, Mrs E Lowe and J E Lowe.



As the farmers struggled to develop their land, innovations which were new to the countryside gradually came to their aid. The first of these were jetties which slowly replaced the cumbersome landings where, originally, all goods had to be transferred from sailing ships to the beach and vice versa.

A jetty at Fowlers Bay was suggested as early as the 1860s but it was not built until 1896. It is included in the S A Public Works Report for 1905–6 as a jetty 999 feet long with 10 feet of water at low tide.[11] In the same report the Murat Bay jetty was listed (built in 1903) as 1210 feet long with 10 feet 6 inches of water at low tide. At the same time there were landings at Clare Bay, Denial Bay (McKenzies) and Port Le Hunte.

In the next few years there was a spate of jetty building and the Public Works Report for 1911 indicated additional jetties at Denial Bay, 1750 feet and 11 feet 4 inches at low water, Laura Bay (a short jetty 47 feet long jutting from low cliffs), Port Le Hunte (972 feet long with 14 feet at low water) and a jetty at Smoky Bay was under construction. Additionally, landings were still being used at Clare Bay and Denial Bay.[12]

The railway, so much discussed in 1911, was constructed from Minnipa to Thevenard in 1915. A branch line went as far as Penong in 1924 and has never been extended further. With the railway came a string of sidings, and the days of long haul cartage for farmers was over.

When the farmers first came to the Far West, they inherited a legacy of wells dug by the pastoralists, some of which are mentioned in Chapter 3. Even Harry Bartlett would have admitted that this was one service 'the squatter' provided for the country at little cost to the taxpayer.

However, only a few of these wells could supply large numbers of animals, so, as has already been indicated, the pioneer farmers had to build their own tanks or condense fresh water from the sea. Gradually though the government, through its Water Conservation Branch, gave aid by constructing tanks for public use. They began in 1884, while the pastoralists were still on the land, with two tank and shed projects at Murat Bay, and at a location near what became section 39 in the Hundred of Goode. Tanks and a shed were also constructed at McKenzie's Landing, Denial Bay, in 1892, and in 1893, a government party worked all the year building tanks in the newly opened Hundreds east of Murat Bay.

The government also started assisting settlers with road construction soon after the Hundreds were proclaimed. It was a slow and costly business which, often, only supplemented what settlers did themselves, but fragmentary reports in the annual Public Works Report to parliament give some indication of progress. Thus, in 1893 'roads and approaches to the coast between Fowlers Bay and McKenzies Landing (were) opened up' to give settlers 'better facilities for carrying produce to the seaboard'. In particular, approaches down cliffs were cut at Clare Bay and Point Irvine (Sinclair). In the same year two of the largest items in road expenditure for the whole state were the Streaky Bay to Fowlers Bay road (867 pounds) and Penong to Point Sinclair (947 pounds).

Similar piecemeal bits of road work were reported every year up until 1925. Occasionally there were indications of 'new roads cleared' as for example Murat Bay to Chinta (1906), Murat Bay to Merghiny (1906) and Murat Bay to Goode Tank (1910). After 1925 the District Council of Murat Bay took control of the road making for most of the district.

Many farmers turned to Agricultural Bureaux for self improvement and social contacts with fellow farmers of the district. The benefits that could be derived from an Agricultural Bureau was the subject of a paper given by H Denton at Smoky Bay in 1926, and his words were appropriate for the period of farming being discussed in this chapter. Denton stated: 'The Agricultural



Water carting as done by Foggos and dozens of other farming families c 1900.

Water was brought by rail from Pt Lincoln but in many cases the tanks which were mounted on special trucks leaked and were only half full, or even empty, on arrival.

VIC SCHWARZ



Relaxing on a wheat stack at Smoky Bay about 1905. Group contains: Frank Gregor, Jack Gregor, Horace Salmon, Charlie Thomas, Oscar Caddy, F Lloyd, Harry Dodd, Harry Hunt, Roy Hunt, Bert Tremaine, A E Gregor Arthur Thomas, Mrs A Thomas, Mrs Lloyd, Mr & Mrs Lovelock, Mr and Mrs Hammat, Harold, Herb, Jack and George Crocker.

Bureau is largely responsible for the adoption of many up-to-date and scientific methods of farming'. He urged members to 'attend regularly and take a lively interest in the work' because, 'they will probably find that some of the other members have mastered problems that they have been trying to overcome'. The knowledge of experts from the Department of Agriculture was always available to Bureau members and, for the younger men, the Bureau 'also stands as an education for public speaking'.

Numerous branches of the Agricultural Bureau were established in the Far West. Their usual meeting format was a paper on a common farming problem followed by a discussion. Frequently, the meeting was reported in the *South Australian Journal of Agriculture*, and the details can still be read today. A survey of these meetings provides interesting information about farming practices and how they changed over the years.

The first local Bureau report in the *Journal of Agriculture* was for Denial Bay on 26 September 1903. It gave details of the inaugural meeting when J H Smith was elected Chairman, W McKenzie, Vice-Chairman and W O Gale, Hon. Secretary. Afterwards, there was a discussion on Red Rust. Those present included Messrs. Starling, Croker, Hoffrichter, Weisselman, Meier and Lowe.

In 1905 the Bagster Bureau had its inaugural meeting. Thomas Freeman was appointed Chairman and E A Gravestocks Hon. Secretary. The members decided to have future meetings on the Saturday 'nearest the full moon'. The Penong Bureau also began sending reports to the *Journal of Agriculture* in 1905. Its Chairman was J Oats and Mr Wiseman was Hon. Secretary.

In 1907 a Smoky Bay branch began reporting. It was to have a short life but was revived as a vigorous new branch in 1919. In 1907 its Chairman was Mr Crocker and Mr Harrison was Hon. Secretary. Fowlers Bay branch also appeared in 1907 with R Nicol as Chairman and Mr Smart Hon. Secretary.



The Beautiful Valley (Maltee) government tank constructed in 1893.

Smoky Bay made the first mention of lucerne in the district. At a meeting on 20 July 1907 Mr Lovelock tabled a sample of Hunter River lucerne of seven week's growth. He recommended members to give it a trial as he was satisfied that they would get profitable results.

Mr Gurney of Fowlers Bay was concerned with suitable working horses for the district. He recommended Clydesdales as having the strength and activity required for farm work and carting. His advice was that each farmer should purchase a good Clydesdale stallion.

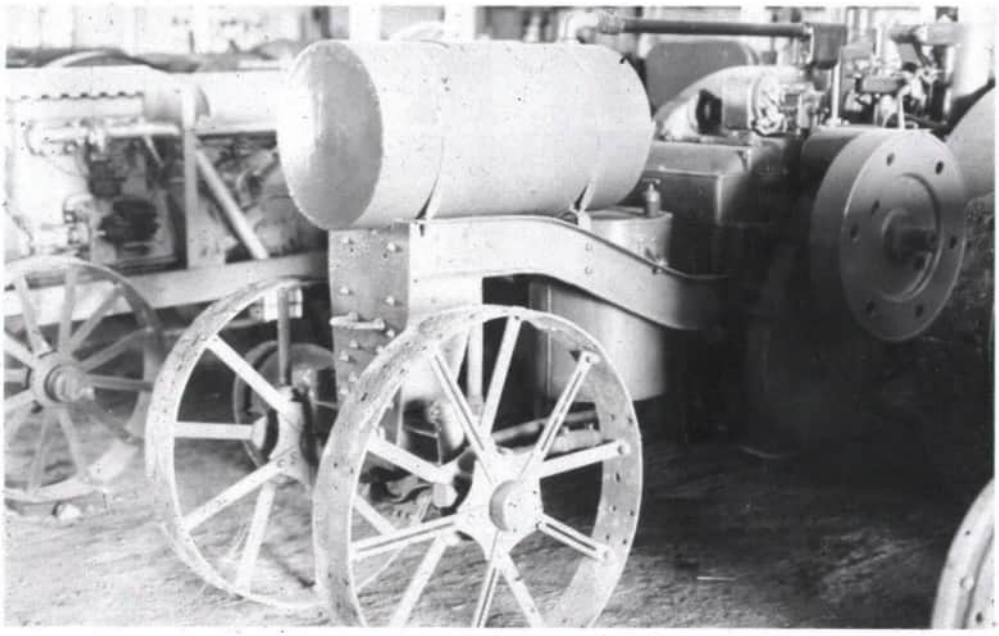
Homestead meetings were favoured by some Bureaux. A typical report was from Penong, 8 August 1908 where the meeting had been held at the homestead of J M Edwards. The members inspected the garden and crops and 'found everything in flourishing condition'. They then had afternoon tea and 'a vote of thanks was accorded the host and hostess'.

The first report from Goode Bureau came on 24 April 1909 when Mr Tonkin was Chairman and Mr Lym, Hon. Secretary. Their discussion on the best wheat for their district was held in the next month and the majority of members favoured King's Early and Gluyas.

On 3 March 1910 the first report appeared for Merghiny branch. Mr Talbot was Chairman and Mr Symonds, Hon. Secretary. Their discussion was on Seeding; Mr Bubner preferred to plough in February and start seeding in March but Mr Talbot waited until April as he thought there was more likelihood of getting enough rain to ensure a good germination.

Coorabie notes first appeared in the *Journal of Agriculture* on 9 December 1912. Mr Giles was Chairman and Mr Atkin was Hon. Secretary. Mr Wheadon gave a paper on 'Preparing the Land for Seeding' and the next month A Hardy spoke about 'Implements and Machinery on the Farm'.

Coorabie branch had a very active Secretary, H V Hobbs, who sent in regular and lengthy reports in 1912 and 1913. One was entitled 'Engine Power on the Farm', a paper given by C Iles to a good attendance of 24 people. Mr Iles sounded a note for the future when he began by saying: 'Without doubt the small farm engine . . . is one of the most useful machines a farmer can invest in'. He explained how it could be taken into the paddock to drive the winnower, to the woodheap to use with a circular saw, and to the shed to operate the chaffcutter. There was a good discussion afterwards and a large majority declared in favour of oil engines rather than petrol engines.



The Titan tractor owned by Thomas Freeman. Believed to be the first in the Far West and now an exhibit at the Booleroo Centre Tractor Museum.

This meeting was followed the next month by an even more popular night when 32 people came along to hear V S Kingsley's paper 'Harvester v Stripper and Winnower'. Once again there was a lively discussion and the majority view indicated that harvesters were not yet popular; most preferred the stripper.

The Goode branch was also enjoying a wave of popularity at this time. One outing was a homestead meeting at the farm of the Wills Brothers, which was described as 'one of the best laid out farms in the district.'

In 1918 an O'Loughlin branch commenced sending in reports. Its secretary was E O Dahl who had formerly been secretary of the Koonibba branch.

All the branches were now short of members, no doubt due to many men away at the war. Most meetings attracted only seven or eight people. However, homestead meetings when ladies attended as visitors continued to be popular, as for example the day on the Gersch farm, 20 July 1918 when seven Koonibba members were accompanied by 14 visitors.

In January 1919 the Smoky Bay branch was revived with J W Blumson as Hon. Secretary. His obvious interest in ironwork became immediately evident with a paper on 'Galvanised Iron and Water Cachment', followed later in the year with another entitled 'Brush or Iron Sheds on the Farm'. Fourteen was the regular attendance for Smoky Bay and, although J W Blumson gave most of the papers, H W Tremaine had an evening when 17 members and seven visitors came to hear him speak on the subject 'Clearing a Scrub Farm'.

The inaugural meeting of the Maltee Branch was held on 13 January 1922 and Mr J Shorne was elected Chairman. He spoke on 'The Advantages of the Agricultural Bureau'. Members who made contributions later in the year were I. Martin, R Edson, J Talbot, E W Wheaton, E D Barnett and C G Schwarz. Mr Shorne, on 31 August, gave a thought provoking paper 'Obsolete Machinery' in which he referred to the difficulties farmers had in disposing of their worn out implements.



A committee of the Laura Bay Agricultural Bureau. From left Charlie Collins, Ted Barnett, Joe Blumson, Frank Edson, Wally Edson and Andrew Bowell.

May 17 1924 was the first mention of 'Farm Tractors' at a Bureau meeting. It was at Smoky Bay and was part of a discussion evening which also included 'Experimental Plots' and 'Water Reticulation'.

Reports started appearing for a Charra branch in 1924, and the first was from the ubiquitous E O Dahl of Koonibba and O'Loughlin connections. His paper was on 'Marketing Wheat'. This was followed by a paper from the Secretary E A Denton on 'Water Conservation' and one from A Haseldine on 'Harvesting'; he favoured an 8 ft. stripper and 'an up to date threshing cleaner'.

At Goode, in February 1925, it was announced that E Nicholls had won the trophy presented by Mr H B Smith for the best 100 acres of crop sown on fallow land. And, later in the year, at the August meeting two very relevant papers were given about human problems in the area. The Secretary, E R Pfieffer, spoke on 'The Drift of the Rural Population to the Cities' and B O Klau talked on the theme 'Why Boys leave the Farm'.

Mr Pfieffer's paper was published in full in the *Journal of Agriculture* of 16 November 1925 and it signalled the end of the period which has been the concern of this chapter. As he noted, conditions had changed and boys 'were living in a mechanical and scientific age, an age when everything was done to save time, to reduce expensive and irksome labour, to make life easier and conditions more enjoyable'. And, this was a far cry from the turn of the century, when farming was largely a matter of 'man and animal power persistently toiling hour after hour'.

For reference in case of further trouble:

On March 3rd, 1921 our Bull was enticed through the division fence by Symonds cows into their paddock; they had use of him and next day members of our family fetched him out . . .

Bull never injured fence, got through gently.

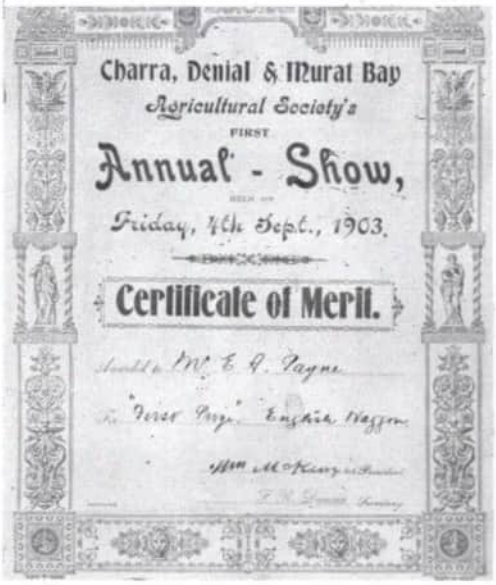
J E Lowe

A group of farmers established an annual agricultural and horticultural show in 1903. It was called the Charra, Denial Bay and Murat Bay Show and a rough but adequate showground area was put on ten acres on the outskirts of Denial Bay.[13] J Smith was the first show Chairman and then followed J Dunnet, G Starling, G Hare, A H Hoffrichter, E A Hasting and C J W Bergmann.

The tenth Charra Denial and Murat Bay Agricultural Society Show received good publicity in the first year the *West Coast Sentinel* was published.[14] It was held on 26 September and the editor of the Sentinel 'after seeing some of the best country shows on the other side year after year' was agreeably surprised with what he saw. He noted the keen desire farmers had to inspect 'on the spot' machinery and wares that Adelaide merchants had to offer. There was then a lengthy summary of the quality of the materials on show and a 'well done' for Secretary Jack Brewster and Assistant Secretary F Betts (who had been Secretary for the previous four years).

Some of the prominent prize winners were E W Watson for his 2 year old draught stallion, E A Jolly for a draught brood mare, R Tudor for a draught 2 year old gelding, C and G Jolly for a team of five draughts and waggon in action, E A Hasting for a drill team (3 horses), A Shipard for a roadster brood mare, F Handtke for a blood stallion, W Thiselton for a dairy cow, W Skinner for a reaping machine (Shearer), J Dunnet for a hooded buggy, F Geue for a sulky, S W Symonds for a pair of muscovy ducks, E A Payne for a pair of turkeys, Doris Lutz for 12 duck eggs, J A Handtke for a collection of vegetables, and Mrs O Leopold for a collection of flowers.

The show in 1918 was a rather dismal affair.[15] The *West Coast Sentinel* reported that it was an exceptionally hot day with 'an everlasting supply of dust' and 'very few farmers were seen to smile'. A small attendance 'was naturally the result'. Nevertheless, they made a good day of it with plenty of good exhibits in the hall, a 'satisfactory' collection of ring events and, in the evening, pictures were screened followed by dancing until the early hours of the

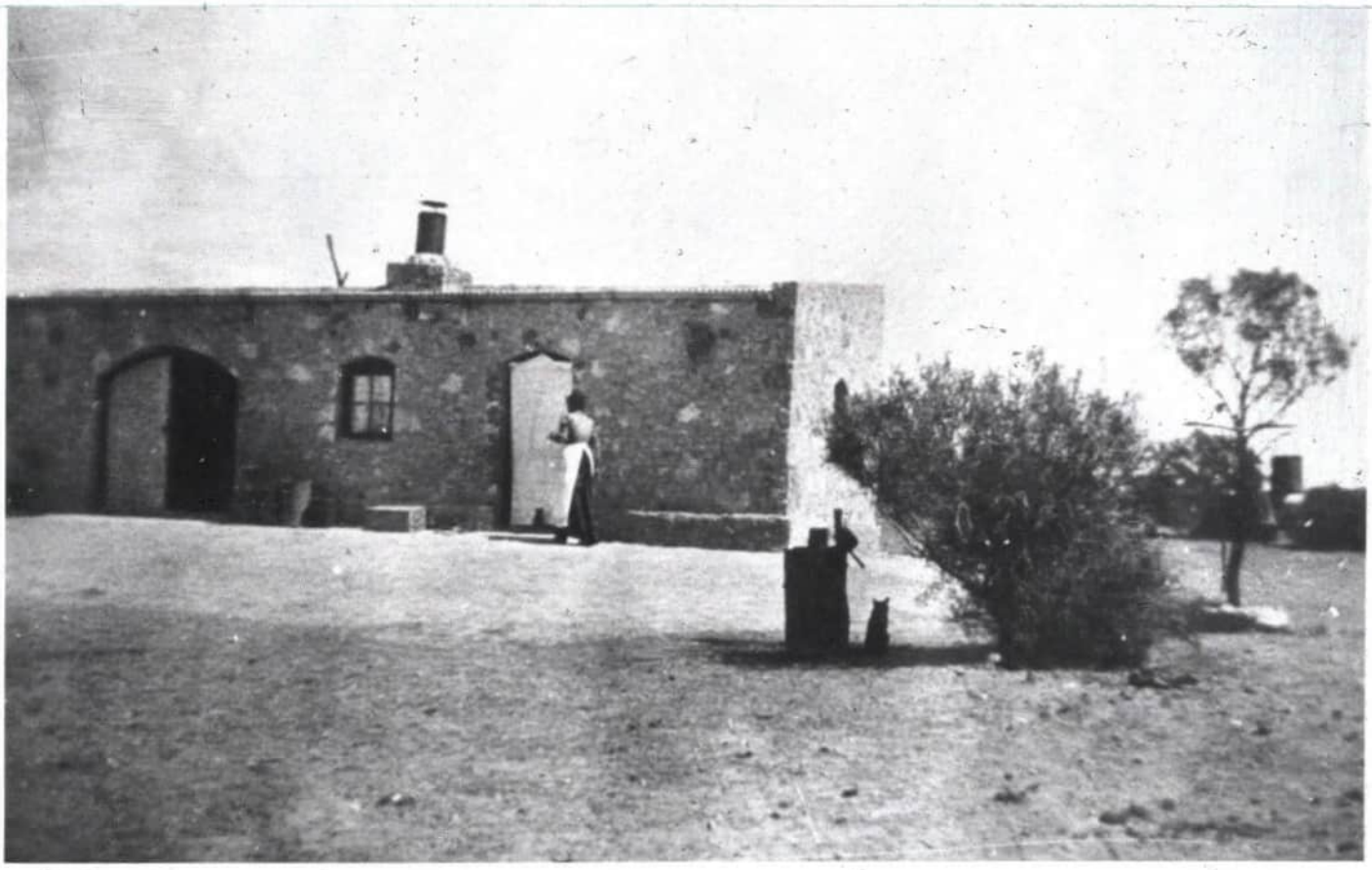


morning. W D Thiselton received a special mention for his good work as Secretary.

There was a good display of schoolwork that year and prizes for penmanship went to Denial Bay School (grade 3), Goode (grade 4), Denial Bay (grade 5), Streaky Bay (grade 6) and Wandana (grade 7). An essay competition on 'The British Empire' was won by a pupil from Wandana school.

In 1924 the show attracted a record attendance and the quality of exhibits was 'the finest ever displayed'[16] The *West Coast Sentinel's* headline for the event was 'A Magnificent Vegetable Display'. President for the year was E A Hasting J P, the Secretary was Jake Norman and the Assistant Secretary

The first house of Lou and Carl Will, Hundred of Goode, 1898.





Early settlers at Smoky Bay.
Back: Bert Bartlett, Lucie Howie and Jack Blood.
Front: Fred and Annie Lloyd.

was F W Betts. Winners in the vegetable classes were C H Hoffrichter, H Kloeden, C H Tonkin, E E Lutz, L J Hoffrichter, M Smith, E H Hasting, R and B Linke, C A Tonkin and Pastor Hoff.

At the end of this period of farming, its originator, Harry Bartlett, was all but forgotten (he died in 1915). His boundless optimism had been proven to be unfounded and his 'California of South Australia' was a joke. But, there was a population of farmers who had developed a special West Coast camaraderie; none of them was rich as a result of up to 37 years of farming; rather they struggled along year by year making small gains in the good seasons and holding on during the droughts. The land had been tamed to a certain extent, superphosphates had increased the yields and machinery was gradually coming to their assistance. The loneliness and isolation of the 1890s had been greatly reduced but water supplies and marketing were still constant problems. The early 1920s were comfortable for those with established farms but the late 1920s and the early 1930s were to be a series of difficult years which only the most tenacious survived.

To the farmers living in the districts the railway sidings were a life line.

These little sidings are gone now and no record of them in the district remains.

LORNA SCHWARZ

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6. Droughts, Depressions and Reconstructions 1926–1987

In the flow of years between 1927 and 1987, farming in the Far West was a continuing struggle with occasional good years that sometimes compensated for many bad years; few, if any, grew wealthy from their years of toil and dozens gave up and moved to other areas where farming was easier or other jobs were available.

Some of the story can be told in statistics. Counties Way and Kintore are representative of the total area and their agricultural statistics can be gleaned from the annual South Australian Statistical Registers.[1] Thus, in 1929, the number of farm holdings in these two counties was 307 in Way (essentially the Smoky Bay-Ceduna-Charra areas) and 131 in Kintore (Penong-Bookabie areas). By 1959 the corresponding number in Way was 123 and in Kintore it was 39. Thus, the total number of farms in the two counties declined from 438 in 1929 to 162 thirty years later. This of course reflects the 'get big or get out' philosophy of much of South Australian farming this century and other statistics support this: in 1929 the average size of a farm holding in County Way was 2700 acres; in 1959 it was 7400 acres. For Kintore in 1929 it was 4800 acres and in 1959 it was 27,500 acres.

Since 1959 this trend to bigger farm holdings has continued, but at a less spectacular rate. The 162 holdings mentioned for that year were reduced to 151 in 1985.

Growing wheat has been the predominant occupation in both counties and the acreages grown have fluctuated greatly according to the seasons. However, in Way, the total acreage sown has always been greater than in Kintore, and it reached a peak of 147,868 acres in 1968. That was also a peak year for Kintore with 35,751 acres sown.

In 1927 sheep numbers in each county were approximately the same around 34,000; but, after Way gained the advantage of Tod water for many of its farms, its sheep numbers soared to as many as 137,000 in 1970 while Kintore had only a modest increase to about 50,000 in the same time.

These statistics show only a few facets of the enormous changes in farming since 1927. They were, of course, State wide and included changes in transportation and a massive growth of farm machinery. The 'Boss of the Road' friendly competitions in transportation during the late 1930s are no longer relevant in the Far West because of these changes. Thus, in 1940, C G Freeman tried to claim the coveted brass plate and title for carting 165 bags of wheat to Watraba with an eleven horse team. He was beaten by George Brooks

One of the primary causes of failure of settlers was the fact that the areas of holdings were too small to enable sheep to be carried and necessitated the continuance of wheat growing on the same land too frequently.

MARGINAL LANDS COMMITTEE 1939

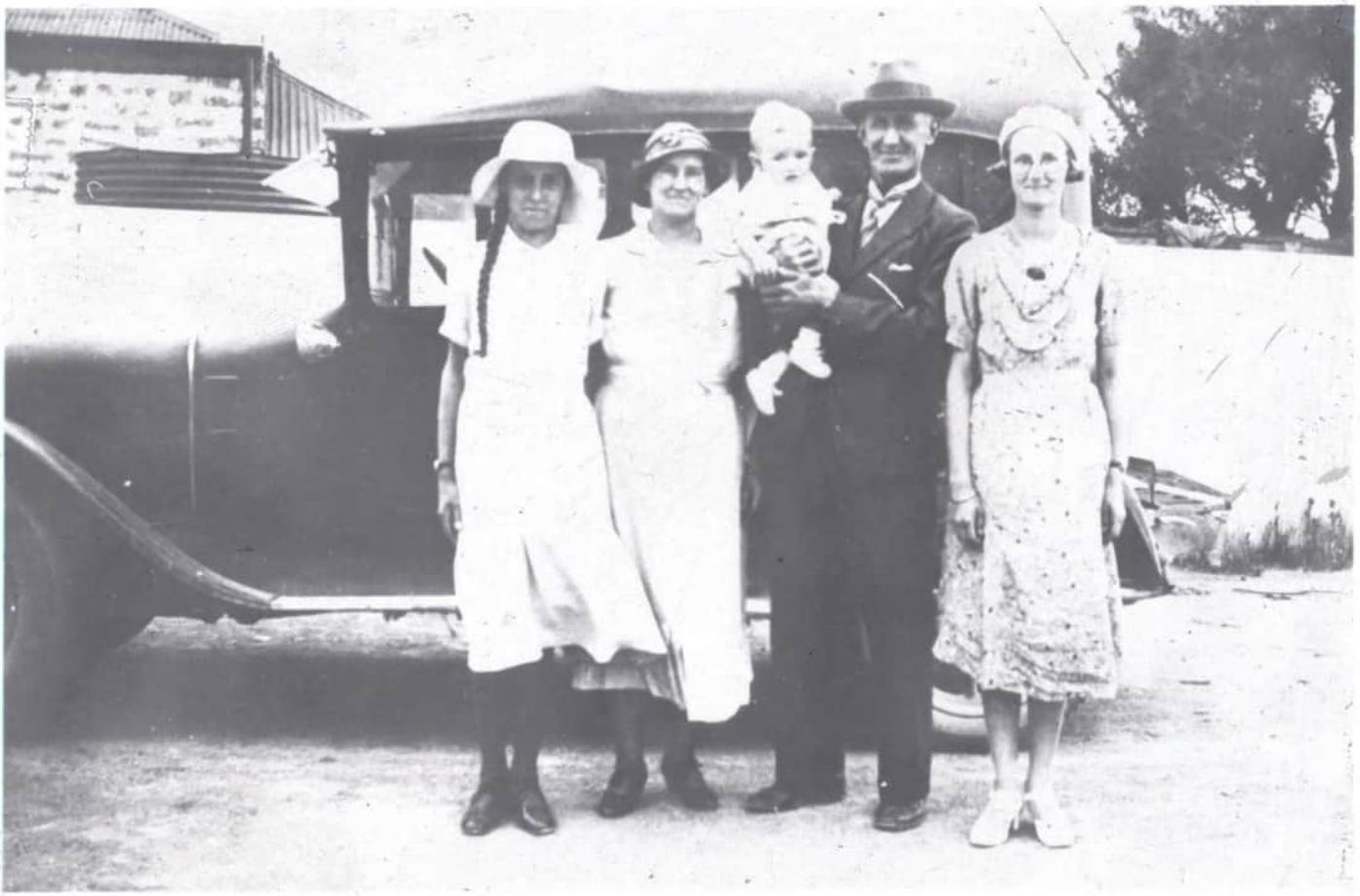
of Point Bell with 176 bags, also drawn by an eleven horse team. Such feats are miniscule by todays standards with bulk handling and road trains. Similarly, the purchase of a farmer's first tractor for a few hundred pounds in the 1920s or 1930s, cannot be compared with the purchases made by farmers today of four wheel drive, air conditioned, tractors at prices around $150–250,000.

Many retired farmers, now in their seventies, look back and wonder how they survived the big drought period 1928, 1929 and 1930. In County Way for those three years the average yields were 1.17, 1.16 and 1.43 bushels per acre. In Kintore the figures were 0.95, 0.48 and 0.10.[2] Scores of farmers, right throughout the Far West, had no crops at all for three years and only survived on charity and government rations.

C Hawkins, a commercial traveller, wrote to the *Western Mail* about the plight of the farmers in November 1930.[3] He had cycled all round the Far West and had been 'shocked with sorrow to see the country so awfully barren for hundreds of miles'. He had been told that sheep and horses had been shifted to the Nullarbor Plains and Eucla in search of feed and many settlers had suffered great hardships while moving their stock. 'They had no money to buy petrol . . . no crops for three or four years, consequently no wheat to sell'. Many were 'worn out with the struggle' to keep a home for their poor wives and families.

One old pioneer told Mr Hawkins that he had no money to buy petrol but wanted to get to the Nullarbor to attend his stock; he decided the only way he was going to get there was on his boy's bicycle and he hoped it would take him three days.

Another settler quoted an instance where he purchased a motor car for 375 pounds six years before. Three years later he owed a balance of 75 pounds and, because of the bad seasons, he was unable to meet the payments so 'the big Adelaide firm took the car from him.'



Vera and Cyril Freeman of Bagster in 1936 with their family Iris, Ruby and baby Keith.



The Leopold family of Penong. Back row: Emma, Albert, Clara, Oliver, Zell, Elsie, Percival, Minna and Vanda. Front row: Emily, Johann Carl Julius, Ivy, Agnes, Harold, Annie.

Mr Hawkins was greatly moved by the effects of the prolonged drought and suggested in his conclusion that, if the government did not soon offer some help, all the farmers would have to abandon the land.

Roma Trowbridge (nee Payne) who was born at Charra in 1914, wrote in her reminiscences of the hard times of the big drought followed by the Depression years in the 1930s.[4] Like many other families the Paynes survived by diversifying as much as possible. Thus, Mrs Payne milked cows and churned the cream into butter which was sold at the local stores in Denial Bay and Ceduna. They got one shilling per pound for butter and threepence halfpenny a dozen for the eggs. Their poultry sold for four or five shillings and a large goose sometimes fetched ten shillings. The prices were not much, but every little bit helped with the continual problem of feeding the family. Roma's father made his own flour and porridge and her mother always made her own bread. For years the children ate dripping on their bread, with occasionally a little pepper and salt sprinkled on it. A special treat was a pudding made out of milk and plain flour with melted butter and sugar or, very occasionally, honey or golden syrup. The family grew vegetables and in the drought years even this was a struggle. Roma remembered dust storms when for days they could not see their verandah posts and the lights had to be kept on inside all day. After such storms a horse and dray was needed to cart away all the sand which had piled up against the house.

Cyril and Cliff Freeman, sons of the original Bagster pioneer Tom Freeman, took over from their father in the 1920s and had to endure the droughts and the depression. Their vegetable gardens were overwhelmed by dust and their underground tanks filled with sand rather than water in the dry years 1928–1930. Like the Paynes they survived because of their cows, fowls and also pigs. The meagre profits they obtained bought essential groceries from local stores.

The Drought

The Spear-grass plains are bare and parched
Not a rain cloud in the sky
The nags are poor, the sheep been shorn
And the death rate will be high,
The old furrow ploughs are idle now
The drills back in the shed
The paddock we dreamed would be dark green
Today is drifting red.

The Storekeeper's looks are getting black
As our monthly accounts runs high
And it all depends on the price of wool
Whether we float or die

The Dingo sings his song at night
The Fox he hunts his prey
And the little lamb's life is short
For some tis but a day.

The black crow cries above our heads
The Eagle-hawk waits near
And its this that breaks the Stockman's heart
When he knows the drought is here.

GEO PRICE, Tallala

Many farmers spent hours balancing their books to see where their next penny might come from. Invariably, nothing would appear from the mass of figures, and it meant a trip to see the Bank Manager for a loan or an appeal to the government for drought relief assistance. A statement of income and expenditure for A W Hardy, who was farming near Wookata, gives some idea of the finances of farming in 1932–33 which was a good year, after the big drought but right in the middle of the Depression.[5]

INCOME 1.7.32 TO 30.6.33				EXPENDITURE 1.7.32 TO 30.6.33			
3rd Advance 1932 (Wheat Pool)	57	7	8	Stores and Goods	41	8	2
Final Advance	33	9	6	Rents	146	8	1
Sheep Sold	25	0	0	Interest	424	14	9
Horses Sold	30	0	0	Vermin Rates	21	1	0
Wool Sold	366	10	5	Wool Packs	10	0	0
Wheat Sold (1760 bushels)	181	10	8	Shearing Expenses	30	10	0
Sheep for Rations	25	0	0	Wages	96	0	0
Other Sales	10	0	0	Super	43	3	5
Dr. Balance	654	4	6	Rams Purchased	16	12	0
				Corn Sacks	44	0	0
				New Parts Replaced	10	0	0
				Saddle	6	0	0
				Blacksmith	18	0	0
				Lights	5	0	0
				Postage and Telegrams	5	0	0
				Poison	10	0	0
				Advance L E Hardy	125	0	0
				Advance L E Hardy	42	9	6
				Advance L E Hardy	110	0	0
				Advance A W Hardy	70	0	0
				Advance A W Hardy	60	18	10
	1383	2	9		1383	2	9

Interest payments of over 424 pounds and a debtor balance of 654 pounds were typical of the financial liabilities for farmers in this period.

Another perspective on these dreadful years is provided by the paper 'My Luck in Australia' written by Bill Marks.[6] He emigrated from England with his wife Flo and joined his brother Bert at Penong in 1928. Bill's experience was that of a farm labourer and share farmer. He worked with his brother, and then share farmed for Jim Turner on Cundilippy. As a result of that he ended up in debt, so with a wife and three children (including twins) he went to work for Fred Page for 'tucker only'. As he said, he 'could not do anything else . . . it was a home for my family'. He cut timber, fenced, and carted water, until George Spinks, who had the hotel in Penong, asked him to take shares on his farm. This was another disaster and Bill ended up with an impossible debt of 30 pounds, part payment for which was made by selling his furniture. More work for Pages for tucker followed and, as he put it, 'he moved into a shack at the side of the Penong School' where his fourth child was born. Next he did farm work for Mrs Nieass for one pound a week but developed medical troubles with a hernia and later mastoids. This allowed him to go on government rations which was 'the best deal he had received since he left England'.

'One wonders how we got through at all', Bill said. In reality they didn't in the Far West for, with Harry Gravestock and Stan Page, Bill went seeking work in Whyalla. There he was given a pick and shovel job with the princely wage of 3 guineas a week. Some time later he sent for Flo and the children and thereafterwards 'he never looked back'.



A Bergmann family gathering. Adults left to right (standing): Albert Handtke, Cora Hoffrichter, Charlie Kloeden, Alma Post, August Kloeden, Mrs C Bergmann, C Bergmann, Zelma Bergmann, Bill Post, Clara Hasting, E A Hasting, Olga Hasting, Charlie Bergmann. Seated: Mrs Max Kloeden, Mrs August Kloeden, Mrs Bill Post, Mrs Elsa Lutz.

Every farmer in the Far West was affected by the drought years, but a few did manage to survive without getting into crippling debt. Thus Ern Hoffrichter of Denial Bay, when he was interviewed by the *Adelaide Chronicle* in 1933, said that during 1928, 1929 and 1930 he had managed to grow sufficient seed and feed to keep his farm going.[7] After the drought broke in 1931 he was able to upgrade his 3500 acre farm and, in 1933, he had 900 acres in crop and was keeping 900 sheep, the largest number he had ever had. He also kept 17 working horses and had no desire to switch over to a tractor.

The State Government tried to assist its thousands of needy farmers with a Debt Adjustment Act in 1929 and a Farmers' Relief Act in 1931. These pieces of legislation were administered by the State Bank Board and later by a Farmers' Assistance Board which, though well intentioned, were regarded as meddlesome and inefficient by farmers who desired 'freedom' and the right to run their farms in their own way. Nevertheless, if they wanted assistance they had to fill in forms which were checked by 'accountants in Adelaide' and their farm was taken over by the 'Dictator of the Wheat Industry'.[8]

Under the Farmers' Relief Act of 1931 the State Bank Board advanced money to keep a farmer at work on the land. In return, the farmer assigned all his crop proceeds to the Board, which then distributed them amongst his creditors.[9]

'To the farmers, the Board's first action was an outrage. On the first day of September 1931 the Board published an alphabetical list of over 3000 applicants for relief on the second news page of the *Advertiser*'.[10] The list was an embarassment, but more importantly it was viewed by creditors as a file of potential bankrupts, and consequently farmers on the list, who had applied for relief for a variety of reasons, were refused further credit. Thus in 'one insensitive and unnecessary move the Board had antagonised the farmers before its work had begun'.[11] The infamous list contained dozens of Far West



Four generations of the Law family of Bookabie
Edith Edwards (nee Law), Robert Law Snr., Florence Edwards and son Garry.

names including well known and reasonably successful farming families such as Bassham, Bastian, Bawden, Bergmann, Davey, Dolling, Edwards, Trowbridge, Young, Gregor, Hoffrichter, Kloeden, Wheadon, Leopold, Lutz, Murray, Nielsen, Oats, Reincke, Schwarz, Shipard, Sleep, Spry, Stott and Zippel.

In 1933 the Farmers' Assistance Board (FAB) was created. It undertook to assist approved farmers, and in return, took all the proceeds from the farm and distributed it to creditors. Any farmer working with the Board lost all control of his livelihood; he was told what to crop and when, what machinery he could, or rather could not, buy, and he was totally dependent upon the Board's sustenance grant for his food and clothing.

Farmers who wanted the help of the FAB were required to fill in a ten foolscap page application form. It demanded information about everything from the ages of children to the ages of horses, from the exact owner of every piece of equipment, to the farmers' wives' incomes.[12] To many farmers, who had left school at 14, the form was a nightmare but, since it was the only way to get assistance, they grudgingly made honest attempts to fill it in. The sort of inquisition style invasion into the family life that the form typified made the whole FAB most unpopular; its Director Judge Paine was widely hated and so also were the Board's regional supervisors, whose job it was to check the honesty and the progress of each farmer receiving the Board's assistance.

E A Pearce was an FAB Supervisor for the Far West in 1934 and it is interesting to read his impressions of farming conditions.[13] After observations throughout the 1934–35 season, he expressed a strong opinion that it was impracticable to grow wheat under the existing conditions. He recommended that all holdings needed to be increased to at least 4000 to 5000 acres; that wheat should only be grown as secondary to grazing; that it should not be grown more often than one year in four on the same ground.

Supervisor Pearce maintained 'that the present holdings of many of the settlers (were) too small, and further that too small an area (had) been cleared in many cases, and the cleared land (had) been hopelessly overcropped'. He indicated that, at that time, March 1935, the FAB had approved assistance to 5 applicants in County Hopetoun, to 11 applicants in County Kintore and to 44 applicants in County Way. Of the 44 in Way, 15 held areas of less than 2000 acres and 19 held areas between 2000 and 3000 acres.

I am afraid that the edicts of the Farmers Assistance Board are like the laws of the Medes and Persians and our Government is apparently afraid to act contrary to the desires of the Board or Judge Paine.

A W CHRISTIAN, SAPD, 7/8/1935

The Board did not automatically give assistance to all that asked. Supervisors assessed the viability of the farm in the light of the farmers' current debt and often reported to the Board that the situation was hopeless. The Board then wrote to the farmer refusing assistance. Some Coasters like to point out just how wrong these assessments were, and Allan Stott of Nundroo is an example. His father, George, received one of the depressing FAB letters that told him 'the expenses of bringing (his) property to efficiency as a grazing proposition was, in the Board's opinion, too great to warrant advances'.[14] However, George Stott hung on without help and Allan recalled the tough years when the family even had to resort to taking money out of the children's bank accounts to buy super. He also recalled similar experiences as Roma Trowbridge with the dust. Their kitchen did not have a ceiling so the dust filtered in all over the food. Mrs Stott kept the table covered with a cloth and, on bad days, the family had to pull their food out quickly and eat it with unseemly haste before it was spoilt by the dust.

The Stotts came good in 1946 when, as Allan Stott said, 'all his father had left was his land'. That year, for the first time, George Stott sold over 1000 bags of grain and, although it hasn't always been easy since then, the Nundroo farm is now a far cry from the depressed state it was in during the 1930s. It has 240 volt power, television as clear as the city via a satellite dish, twice weekly mail deliveries — 'luxuries that Allan Stott's father would not have believed possible'.[15]

In many cases the FAB was undoubtedly right in its assessment of some farms and often they delayed the fateful decision for many years. Thus there is the example of W E Stone of Petina, a fine old farmer whose debt record was documented thus:[16]

> Assisted under Drought Relief Acts 1928 and 1929 and owes 346 pound one shilling on that account.
>
> Assisted for two years (1931 and 1932) under Farmers' Relief Acts and owes 416 pounds 7 shillings and 4 pence on that account.
>
> Assisted for four years under the Farmers' Assistance Act and owes 503 pounds 5 shillings and 3 pence on that account.
>
> On 2nd February 1938 Mr Stone was refused further assistance on the grounds that he had no reasonable prospect of rehabilitation'.

Allan Claude Wright was a young man who tried to farm through the drought, the State Bank Board and the FAB years.[17] In 1927, 1928, 1929 and 1930 he received nothing from his crops and, in 1931, 1932 and 1933, his reasonably good crops were all ruined by rust. Hopelessly in debt, he applied to the FAB and received the sustenance allowance of one pound per week for a married couple, five shillings a week for his children under two years and two shillings and sixpence per week for his children aged between two and fourteen.

About the only valuable thing the FAB did for Allan was to, eventually, supply him with rust resistant wheat, but before he could profit from it he died of pneumonia aged only 35. His farm was sold up and the outstanding debt of 43 pounds was worked off by Laurel Wright doing washing and other chores for the Penong hospital and the Penong hotel. The poverty stricken family were helped by friends and neighbours and, in a fine act of community assistance, the Masonic Lodge built them a home in Penong.

If the farmers had worries with the drought, the Depression and the FAB, they also had problems with rabbits, foxes and surprisingly, in 1932, a plague of shell parrots.[18] Thousands upon thousands of them died at the watering places and polluted the water to such an extent that sheep refused to drink. Farmers and their families, in the hot months of January and February, had to

The farmer is getting further and further into debt every year and if the Government does not make some better provision many of us will be forced off the land altogether. The goose that laid the golden eggs for the rest of the people of the State is just about dead and grass will be growing in the streets of some country towns if something is not done quickly for the agriculturalist. The unionists talk about strikes but what about a strike of farmers?

FRANK GREGOR
WCS 19/5/33

laboriously scoop dead birds out of troughs and wells to keep their animals alive.

All the worries frequently came to a head at farmers' meetings. Thus 70 attended at Goode Hall in January 1931 and F Edson was elected to the Chair.[19] The meeting decided to form a branch of the South Australian Wheatgrowers Association and passed some radical resolutions in an attempt to solve the economic problems of the day. They wanted to abolish all taxes on cars in drought stricken areas, they wanted to reduce the salaries of parliamentarians by 50 per cent, all Governors were to be dispensed with save for one in Canberra and all rates and taxes were to be suspended for 12 months in the drought stricken areas.

Two months later at Mudamuckla another largely attended meeting formed a further branch of the SA Wheatgrowers and elected E Barnett President, F Gregor Vice President and W Barnett Secretary.[20] Their resolutions were more moderate than those from Goode but, nevertheless, they wanted a 50 per cent reduction in motor taxes, a 50 per cent reduction in land taxes and they agreed 'to do their utmost to deter a forced sale of farmer's goods.'

Meetings such as these eventually brought some action from the government and, in June of 1932, a special ministerial visit was arranged to hear the grievances of the Far West farmers.[21] Those who attended at the Council Chambers in Ceduna were R S Richards, Commissioner of Crown Lands, E J Craigie M P, E J Field, Director of Lands, and S J Hudson, Divisional Superintendent of the Eyre Peninsula Railways. Mr Richards began by asking the large audience to be frank with him. They were! L B Hughes, representative of the S A Wheat-growers, wanted revaluation of the blocks; Mr McPherson complained of excessive fees for the upkeep of the dog fences; B O Klau stressed that he had been waiting 8 years for water to reach his farm; Mr Bowell wanted assistance with water pipes to Laura Bay; Carl Will complained about the burden of taxes which 'would eventually beat him'; Mr Sedgley protested against compulsory insurance and C H Kuhlmann suggested a scheme for giving unemployed men work scrub cutting. J B Talbot, who was the Chairperson, diplomatically summed up by saying, 'we wanted reductions and though we would have been pleased had they been granted we cannot but admire the gracious way they were refused.'[22]

Protests about conditions generally and the FAB in particular were sometimes sent to parliament. Here A W Christian often spoke for his electorate and criticised the Board 'for running thousands of farms from Pirie Street', and, for 'taking all financial responsibility out of the farmers' hands'. This meant, he said in the House of Assembly in 1938, 'that they could not buy food or clothes, incur medical, maternity or matrimonial expenses, engage or exchange labour, keep or not keep cows, pigs or sheep . . . without the scrutiny and approval of the Board'.[23]

If the two Doctors Gibson at Ceduna heard about this speech they would have nodded their heads with approval, for there are several examples of correspondence in the FAB records where the Doctors were trying to recover medical costs for treatment given to families of farmers working with the FAB. In all cases the Board adopted a parsimonious attitude and paid only a fraction of the costs actually incurred.

By far the most unpopular action taken by the FAB was the forced sale of a farm when it decreed that the farmer and his family were beyond help and virtually bankrupt. Such sales were either boycotted by the farmers in the district or contrived bids were organised to purchase goods as cheaply as possible so that they could be handed back to their unfortunate owners after

the sale. The animosity surrounding such practices was the subject of one of many anonymous letters to the FAB.[24] It had the following local newspaper advertisement pinned to it.

> WANTED — Couple bruisers deal with scabs at unfortunate farmers forced sale. Direct Actionists this office.

The letter, from 'Denial Bay, West Coast, May 2nd, 1936' was a request to the FAB to do something about the sale of H J Bennie, for 'there are about a 100 or more farmers about Ceduna and surrounding districts that have received their bountys and are prepared to buy several things . . . and we are given to understand that Mr Bennie as (sic) got a few relations that are going to buy the things back for practically nothing and *anybody else bidding will get into serious trouble*, which is not fair.'

Although it was mostly gloom and doom from 1927 onwards there were signs in 1934 that the worst was over. Thus, the *West Coast Sentinel* wrote an encouraging piece in August of that year congratulating farmers on their optimism and enterprise.[25] They noted that Mr Borlase and sons were 'plying the axe and bringing new tracts of country into use'. Mr E Mewett was also bringing new land into use in the vicinity of Mungala Rockhole, Mr P Schultz was completing his second tank for the year, Haseldine and Sons had completed 500 acres of fallow and Mr J Saunders was well on the way with his 400 acres of fallow. Mr E A Payne had finished shearing and carted the first wool from the district and soon the roar of Mr Dunnet's shearing plant would be heard.

Another good sign was that, after a lapse of five years, the annual County Way Crop Competitions sponsored by the South Australian Agricultural Bureau were started again in 1935. The winners for that year were Gaden and Linke from Koonibba followed by L Martin of Maltee and P Lange of Chinta.[26]



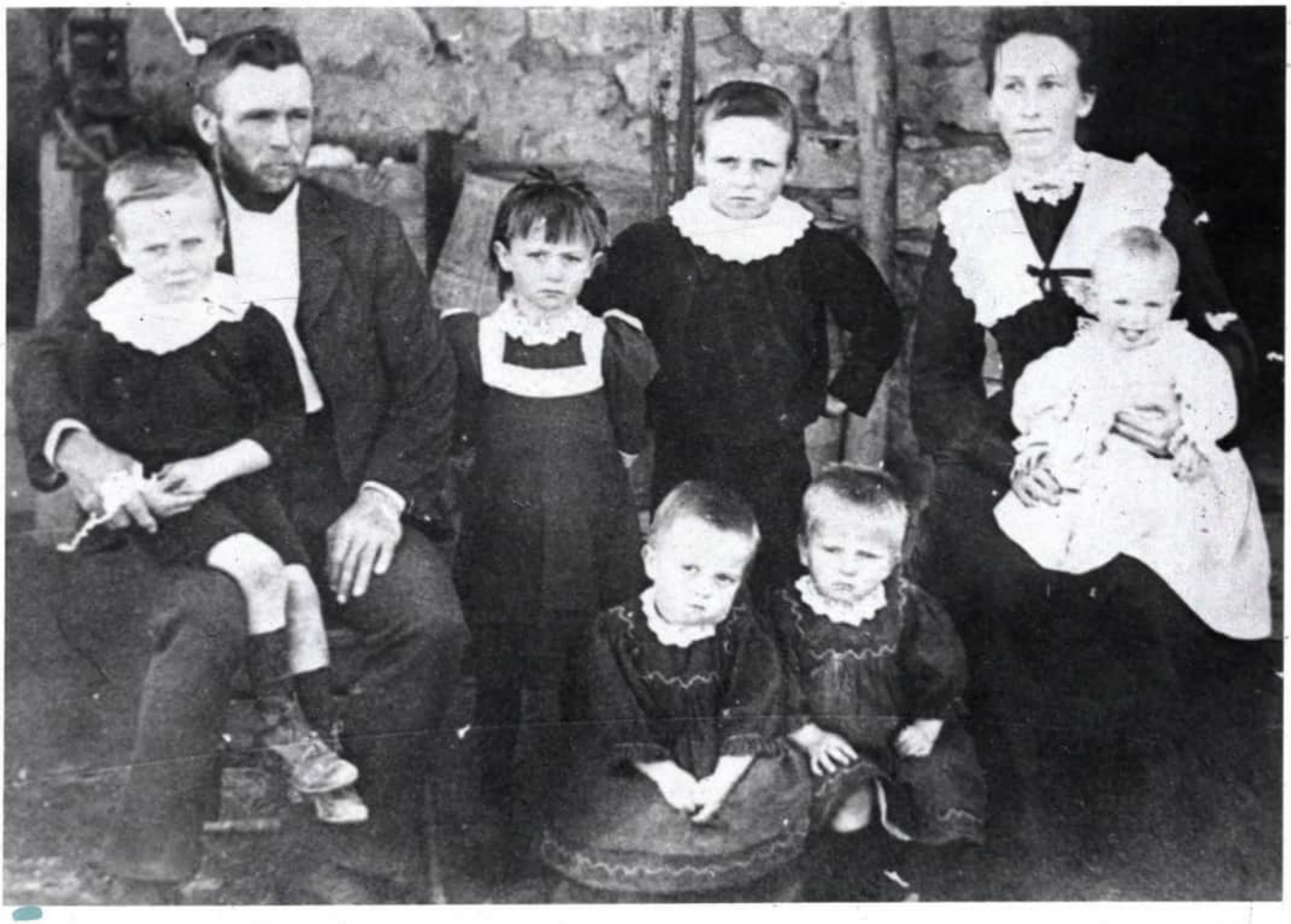
The gathering for the Golden Wedding of Mr and Mrs E A Hasting.

Despite these indications of optimism, the world wide Depression, the unimpressive yields, and the farmers' inability to recover from the extended drought years, led to a general reappraisal of much of the State's farming land and the term marginal lands was introduced to describe areas of difficulty such as the Far West. The problem was articulated by A W Christian in the House of Assembly in 1938 when he noted, that 'the problem with which we have been confronted for a considerable time is the settlement of our marginal lands'.[27] He indicated that, 'we have gone too far in attempting to turn grazing country into agricultural land and we now have to retrace our steps to some extent.'

The problem was given to, initially, a Marginal Lands Committee in 1938, which tabled a report in Parliament in 1939. From that a Pastoral and Marginal Agricultural Areas Inquiry Committee evolved which collected evidence and produced a long report in 1946.[28] It subdivided the State into regions and one called Nuyts included Counties Way and Kintore as well as the Hundreds of Caldwell, Sturdee and Wookata in County Hopetoun.

The committee calculated that, for Nuyts in the period 1921 to 1945, the gross earnings for farm holdings averaged 569 pounds per year, the best year being 1942–43 (912 pounds) and the worst year 1930–31 (152 pounds). Such figures led the committee to say: 'many settlers have been working on completely impossible systems of land use, and in an endeavour to work out their own solution have finished in wrecking not only themselves but much of the country as well.'[29]

Both the 1939 committee report and the 1946 report stressed the need for readjustments; units of sufficient size had to be created to ensure a reasonable cash income and, unless this was done, 'the whole position (would) remain



Will and Emma Sleep with the first 6 of their 11 children. Photo taken 1907. Children are William, Elizabeth, Nelson, George and Samuel (twins), Emma.

hopeless and efforts to bolster up the settlers with drought relief, debt adjustment, bounties, and financial assistance for soil conservation will get no further than they (had) in the past'.[30]

To create 'the units of sufficient size' the South Australian Land Board was empowered to acquire properties from settlers willing to sell: they were then re-allotted to approved settlers remaining in the area. Thus, Far West farmers acquired additional sections under this scheme and their holdings became larger and hence more viable. This was particularly so when they followed recommendations that the additional land should be used to engage in mixed wheat-sheep farming rather than a previous almost total dependence upon wheat farming.

Some examples of the Marginal Lands legislation operating in the Far West were: in the Hundred of Goode section 11 was purchased from A B Geue and allotted to F Handtke; in Guthrie section 19 went from the estate of E Kreusler to O E Zippel; in Moule section 12 went from S W J Symonds to L Hoffrichter; in Wookata section 32 went from R Muegge to W G Bastian and in Bagster, section 30 went from the Farrelly Estate to R B Payne.

Often the purchase of a farm under Marginal Lands legislation did little more than pay off debts. Thus, when section 13, Hundred of Bartlett, was purchased from the estate of R Tudor and allotted to K C Hoffrichter, the valuation at which the 2550 acres was acquired was 1083 pounds, 15 shillings. From this the following debts were extracted: State Bank Mortgage 646 pounds 3 shillings and 3 pence; FAB Balance 243 pounds 12 shillings and 6 pence; Land Tax 47 pounds 14 shillings and 6 pence; District Council Rates 7 pounds and 4 pence; Rent and Vermin Rates 30 pounds 5 shillings

... the total income from recognized sidelines is decidedly small particularly in Regions Eyre and Nuyts.

MARGINAL AREAS INQUIRY 1946



The Tremaine family of Kara-Pine via Smoky Bay.
Back: Mary (nee Blumson), Lila, Thelma, Jack. Front: Jim, Herbert (seated).

... marginal lands are more sensitive and respond more violently to fluctuations in policy.

MARGINAL AREAS INQUIRY 1946

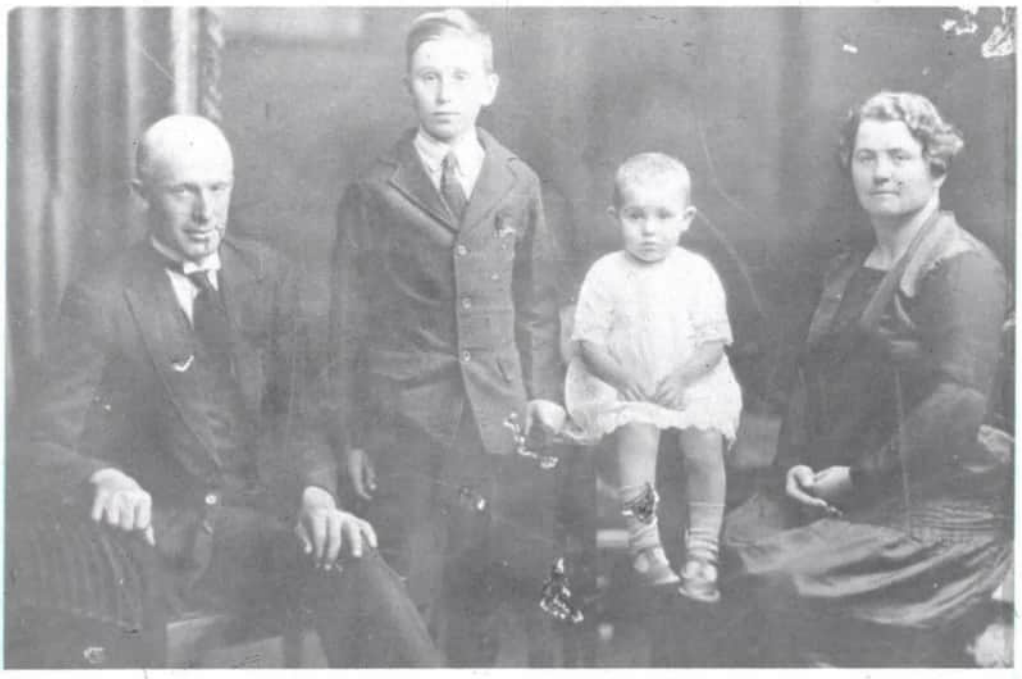
and 3 pence. Settlement occurred on 16 February 1943 and the amount actually paid to the estate of R Tudor was 104 pounds 8 shillings and 3 pence.[31]

On some occasions the vendor gave up his farm eagerly because he wanted to retire, or he had desires to go into other work. It was the former case with J E (Ted) Talbot who relinquished sections 12 and 36 in the Hundred of Bonython. They were allotted to H B Smith. Ted Talbot was in his 70s at the time and he retired to Adelaide where he married for the first time when he was 82.[32] His farm had a house, a stable, a chaff house, a shed, a man's room, a smithy, a fowl house, four underground tanks, Tod River water and was fenced and substantially cleared. When he offered it to the Marginal Lands, Ted valued the farm he had developed since 1906 at 937 pounds. He probably never discovered that the Lands Department valued it at 1581 pounds, for Ted was paid *his* valuation and even picked up a small bonus, 7 pounds 3 shillings and one penny as credit for rates and taxes paid.[33] There were no debts to pay so Ted Talbot got the lot, even if it was far less than what the government would have been prepared to pay.

E A Pearce, in 1934, advocated larger farm units and the Marginal Lands Committee, in 1939, had a similar view. Thus, it is not surprising that the farmers who survived through the 1930s and 1940s were those who collected extra sections under the Marginal Lands legislation, or by other processes of re-allotment or purchase, when neighbours gave up and left the district. A few examples have been written about by their owners and some extracts from these personal farm histories follow.

The Tremaine family farm, Kara-Pine in the Hundred of Blacker, survived through the 1930s, but it was not until 1946 that the debts of those years could be paid off.[34] The writer of the farm's history recorded that they were not alone with their financial problems. By 1938 only the most stable farms remained in their area and, in almost every case, it was because of a large overdraft at the bank. The families that could not survive walked off their land penniless — 'some after 30 years of pioneering effort'. Their land reverted to the Crown and later was re-allotted. Jack Tremaine, for example, gained section 21, Hundred of Blacker, and its 1200 acres added to Kara-Pine's, 1854 acres, created a viable farm of 3054 acres for the 1940s. Even then the profits were not spectacular and, during the war years, it was only an income supplement from charcoal gas

The Kloeden family. August, Ellie, Arnold and Una c 1925.



that allowed James Tremaine to buy the farm's first tractor in 1943. The charcoal gas was a saleable commodity because of petrol rationing; it was obtained by burning mallee stumps which had been accumulated on the property over many years.

It was a little easier to survive through the 1930s if you were a bachelor. Certainly this was the case with Eddie Schwarz who began sharefarming 1629 acres of section 42, Hundred of Wandana in 1933.[35] The land was originally taken up in 1905 by Ron Pengilly who built a four roomed house of pug and stone. The farm was purchased by C T Schwarz in 1919 who then put it out on shares, first to Hugo Luestner, then to Hans Gaden and finally to his eldest son Eddie, who eventually purchased it in 1945. Eddie held on during the lean years working mostly on his own, and when his battle was over he married Thelma Tremaine in 1941, picked up an extra section, (previously owned by Bill Dupree) and got Bert Klau to build him and his wife a four-roomed timber framed house for a total cost of 420 pounds. With the increased acreage, plus the availability of Tod water, sheep raising was possible and a shearing shed was made out of an old stable. The former one section farm, run on shares by a bachelor, thus became a viable family mixed farm which Eddie and Thelma passed on to their son in 1968.

E E E Lutz was fond of talking and writing about his farming days in the Hundred of O'Loughlin. Between 1925 and 1930 he did not sell a grain of wheat because he needed it all for stock and seed, and in 1928 he had to buy extra seed to keep going.[36] As he said, 'we were on the rocks . . . but worse was to come for many years'. He managed to avoid the FAB and with the help of his wife he held on, dependent almost entirely upon cows, fowls and sheep. On one occasion he bought 100 sheep from Bill Roberts at Penong at 12 shillings each, and it took him three years to pay for them.

Mrs Lutz milked 8 to 11 cows by hand and the milk was separated for cream. They sent it to Port Lincoln at first and later to Ceduna but only realised an average of 3 pounds 18 shillings a month for their labour; so they got out a 52 year old churn and made butter which they sold at the Koonibba store for one shilling a pound. It was much more profitable than the cream, even though they were sure the storekeeper didn't manage to resell all they gave him. Still, as he so aptly wrote, 'some storekeepers did strange and wonderful things during the Depression years. They kept a lot of us farmers going.'

Like the Tremaines and Eddie Schwarz, E E E Lutz obtained extra land, and in the 1940s he had 3600 acres, 11 cows, 150 fowls and up to 620 sheep. At last he had the big farm he always knew he needed and his income began to rise, but then it was late in his life and he 'did not have the youth and strength . . . to make the most of the times and (he) had no children to carry on the farm.' In 1947 he sold out to a young returned soldier and retired to join the 'Seventy and Over Brigade' in Ceduna.

The history of farming in the Maltee district was part of an excellent local publishing project undertaken by the Maltee Women's Agricultural Bureau in the 1960s.[37] Contributors included Flo Watson, Beryl Skinner, Ora Schwarz, Win Miller, Joy Salmon and Barbara Elsley. They wrote about their area as they knew it, and many interesting facts were put into print. Thus, in 1938, a crop of oats at Mudamuckla was almost as high as the backs of horses and cut over two tons to the acre; in 1956 a record yield of wheat went 41 bushels to the acre; beef cattle were introduced in the area with Herefords in the late 1950s and Aberdeen Angus in 1960; the carrying capacity for sheep improved enormously because of increases in soil fertility 'brought about by better management and increased use of superphosphate, and . . . the introduction of legumes'.

The Marginal Lands Scheme was the turn in the West Coast farming that opened out bigger holdings. I like to think of this as the beginning of the great leap forward.

E E E Lutz





Above. The Chandler family in 1952. Back: Neil, Mary, Margaret, Owen. Front: Ivan, Herbert, Mabel, Glen.
Above right. The Kuhlmann family at their new farmhouse in 1939. Back: Harry, Frank, Lydia. Front: Margaret, John, Barbara.

In the process of getting bigger to survive, some farmers had to purchase whatever land was available, and often this meant collecting widely spaced sections which created a fragmented farm. The case of the Nielsen family farm at Penong is a good example.[38] It began in the Cundilippy area with father and son Olaf and Anker Nielsen, emigrants from Norway by way of the grain ships which Olaf captained (see Chapter 14). When Anker married in the 1920s, he took up sections 22 and 21 in the Hundred of Cohen, a small farm which is today the 'old place' amongst the Nielsen holdings. Anker farmed there for 30 years and survived the drought, the Depression and the interference of the Farmers' Assistance Board. Then, when he regained some financial stability in the 1940s and wanted to enlarge his property for the benefit of his sons Ralph and Walter, he bought on a walk-in walk-out basis the Richardson farm sections 10 and 80 in the Hundred of Burgoyne, section 13 in the Hundred of Bagster and section 25 in the Hundred of Keith. The farm was then worked by Anker, Ralph and Walter for a number of years and Ralph obtained adjoining sections 9 and 31 in the Hundred of Bagster from Vaughn Dunn.

Today the Nielsen family farm is worked by Ralph and his two sons Peter and John. It is approximately 16,000 acres of which about 4000 acres are cropped each year and 1800 to 2000 sheep are kept on the remainder. The farm is on three fragmented bits and contains six farmhouses. Ralph and Iris Nielsen live in one, Peter and Pauline Nielsen live in another, the 'old place' is occupied by an enterprising surf board manufacturer from Penong, and the three others are ruins in various stages of demolition. In the 1920s, six families lived and farmed the land the Nielsens now have. In the 1980s, if the years are good, the same land gives an adequate living for two families.

By contrast with the fragmented Nielsen farm, Walter and Kath Dunn's farm, Yanaba, is a consolidated large area that includes many of the suburban blocks of the now non-existent town of Bookabie.[39] Yanaba is approximately 48,000 acres in the Hundreds of Magarey and Nash, plus section 79, a large block which is 'out of the Hundreds'. All sections are on either Perpetual or Miscellaneous Leases and paddock names such as 'Dangerfields' and 'Marshalls' indicate the original owners dating from the 1890s.

In the days of the 1930s to the 1960s Leonard John (Jack) Dunn ran the farm as a grazing enterprise, but these days Walter Dunn crops about 1500 acres in addition to running up to 3000 sheep — a low number for the size of the farm because of the lack of water. This problem has been partially overcome in recent years by the introduction of polythene pipes which carry water from one good well across 10½ miles of the farm country.

The Dunns make an adequate living from their vast semi-arid property, but have been assisted by sidelines on many occasions. In the past it was pigs, but rising freight costs for sending porkers to market from such an isolated area eventually made that unprofitable. These days Walter has the novel and enjoyable sideline of fishing. He holds a B class licence, owns a cabin cruiser and fishes for snook and schnapper at Fowlers Bay at weekends and during slack periods on the farm. He sells direct to Safcol in Adelaide and sends his catch via Stateliner on overnight coaches from Ceduna.



Perc Tonkin carting wool in the early days of the motor truck.



Carting wool during the war years of petrol rationing. Percy Lange's Chevrolet truck and an Electrolux gas producer.

In 1965 an evaluation of agriculture in Upper Eyre Peninsula was published by W A Michelmore in the *South Australia Journal of Agriculture*.[40] In it he referred to the development of the 'pasture era' with barrel medic pastures and increased use of superphosphates which together were 'building soil fertility and making more frequent cropping safer'. For the years 1953–62, 12 bushels per acre was an average crop, and those 'growing adequate medics' were getting better yields.

Fallowing was far less popular by 1965 and the majority of the wheat was grown on grassland which was 'worked' dry during the early autumn.

Scrub was still being cleared in the 1950s and Michelmore cited the most common method as having it 'pulled with an anchor chain and two tractors, burning after one or two seasons, then cropping it to get further burns to control regrowth'.

For the Far West as a whole, wheat was still the principal crop, but significant amounts of barley and oats were being grown. Sheep numbers throughout the area had been constant for many years, 'but the cut per head had increased slightly'. Cattle numbers had not changed much, but there had been a marked shift away from dairying and into beef cattle. Additionally, a few farmers kept pigs as a profitable sideline.

Michelmore thought that the main problems of the Far West were being overcome by better roads and air services which were reducing isolation. Soil fertility was increasing because of the medics and diseases such as takeall and eelworm, although still present, were not as severe as in the earlier years of farming. The district was relatively free of most weeds, 'but saffron thistle, Ward's weed and horehound (made) up for the lack of numbers'.[41] Despite these problems Michelmore thought there was potential for greatly increased production in the district linked with the expanding medic pastures — and time has proved him to be substantially correct.

The problems of vermin are still prevalent in the Far West and Dog Fence Boards still have oversight of the vermin proof fences which were erected decades ago. In the 'top end' the Fowlers Bay Dog Fence Board has wrestled for years with the problem of wombats rather than dingoes. The wombats are numerous, they damage crops and they eat out grazing areas in the same way that kangaroos will. But, worse than that, they burrow under the dog proof fences and provide wide, clear tunnels for dingoes to enter the sheep country. A single dingo inside the fence can create havoc on a sheep farm and top end people have therefore long wanted a foolproof scheme for keeping wombats away from the fence. They have tried shooting, which is allowable under a



Members of the Fowlers Bay Dog Fence Board at one of their technological landmarks a solar panel, energizer and battery which creates electrical power for a wombat fence in front of the dog fence. From left Jack Miller, Walter Dunn, Barbara Johns, Brian Johns.

strict licence system, and ploughing-in the burrows, which is expensive and only a temporary measure. Finally, with a great deal of ingenuity and some financial assistance from the National Parks and Wildlife people, they have introduced 'wombat high' electric fences placed in front of the dog proof fence. The electrical charge is generated through a 12 volt battery by solar panels, and the whole system is cheap and efficient. Wombats quickly learnt to back off from the fences and, where they have been erected, the problem of burrows under the dog proof fence has disappeared.

The modern technology of solar panels has also been a boon to farmers at the top end with their telephones. The old Bookabie exchange for example no longer exists and, in its place, the local farmers have solar powered radio telephones linked to the national system of micro-wave towers.

Despite the advances of modern technology the Far West still has many farming problems; thus it is caught up in the nation wide 'rural crisis' brought about by low commodity prices and high interest payments on farm machinery. This crisis brought the Prime Minister's Country Task Force to Ceduna in March of 1987.[42] A farmers meeting, typical of dozens held before in times of crisis, told the Task Force that 85 per cent of the farmers in the Coorabie-Nundroo district would have to leave the area if problems persisted; that Government departments were subjecting farmers crippled by debts to 'inhumane treatment'; that a moratorium was needed on farm machinery repayments and high interest loans. The meeting also called for the abolition of escalating sales taxes, fringe benefit taxes, capital gains taxes and fuel excise. Frank Kuhlmann from Mudamuckla told the 150 people present that the average Eyre Peninsula farmer was $180,000 in debt.

Mr George Law has been given permission to shoot 250 hairy-nosed wombats. He complained to the Dept. of Fisheries and Fauna Conservation that the wombats were doing extensive damage to his crop.

WCS 7/7/71

For the Far West the 'rural crisis' is simply another chapter in the continuing struggle to farm the land. To many it is an example of history repeating itself; in place of the FAB there is now Rural Assistance (RA) and Household Support, and in place of the prophets of doom in the 1930s there are still the advocates who suggest that some farmers should give up. Barry Cunningham, the Prime Ministers' Task Force Chairman, put it bluntly thus: 'Farmers with big debts and who have exhausted all the equity in their properties had probably stayed on their farms too long.'[43] Against this it seems appropriate to quote two battlers already mentioned, Allan Stott who said in 1987 'Stick it out and hang on', and Bill Marks whose advice was: 'If you don't give up, you must succeed'.

I run more wombats than sheep.

WALTER DUNN, Bookabie 1987

The Reinckes are a family who, in material terms, did succeed. After 60 years of farming in the Mudamuckla area they decided to sell their 11,567 acres in November of 1984 because the two remaining sons in the family both had back ailments and could not continue farming. The property had been

developed by three generations into two farms stretching along the Eyre Highway between 20 and 33 kilometres east of Ceduna. Acording to the *West Coast Sentinel's* report on the sale there were 'two fine, up to date homesteads' and 'well maintained sheds'. The property had been 'well supervised' and established to Harbinger, 173 and Barrell medics. Cropping was on a two year rotation, principally wheat with some barley and oats. Additionally 1000 Merino ewes were being run.[44]

Old timers who battled through the 1930s and the 1940s with what they often considered was worthless land must have been stunned by the Reincke sale. The 11,567 acres fetched a record price of $980,000. Then, two months later, the clearing sale on the property attracted a crowd of 700 people and brought in an additional $300,000. Finally, Rex and Betty Reincke sold their seafront home in Ceduna for $129,000 and left the area to retire in Adelaide. What the *West Coast Sentinel* called their 'record-breaking selling spree' was undoubtedly beneficial for them, but it also gave great heart to the whole farming population of the Far West.

A local philosophy which has kept many families farming in the Far West, despite often overwhelming problems, is that, given ideal conditions, one good year with plenty of hard work will return handsome profits — enough maybe to wipe out the debts accumulated in a decade of average to below average years. This has been proven many times, and the case of Leon and Chris Stott and their family in 1986 is an excellent example. Their 1985 crop at Charra was 'a total flop' from which they got seed only, to plant for 1986.[45] Already hopelessly in debt they decided to give 1986 'their best shot' and to crop as much land as possible to try to balance their books.



Farm machinery of the 1980s as seen on Garth Murray's property at Penong.



The view across Murat Bay from Ceduna to Thevenard since 1961 has been dominated by the CBH Silos, symbols of the greatest change in farming this century, the move to bulk handling.

The story of the Stott's critical year is not only one of success against the odds but it also illustrates the capabilities of farming on the large acreages of the Far West when the season is good and modern machinery is available. To compare what the Stotts did in 1986 with what farmers tried to do in 1936 or 1926 is an exercise which graphically illustrates the magnitude of farming changes in the last fifty or sixty years.

With help from their sharefarmer, Ted Sleep, the Stotts seeded 13,500 acres of wheat on their own land and a neighbouring farm they leased. They used a four wheel drive tractor and a 40 ft. cut airseeder on a non-stop basis for two 12 hour shifts and averaged 720 acres a day. At harvest time they used a 24 ft. SP header plus the assistance of brother-in-law Leon Veerhius to bring in a crop which averaged 20 bushels. When they began their year they were facing almost half a million dollars in debt : after the harvest the debt was virtually wiped out and the imminent danger of losing their farm was gone. The *West Coast Sentinel* quoted Leon Stott as saying 'I was lucky'; it also pointed out that others would say he was well organised and rewarded for hard work.

The most remarkable change in the farming scene in the last thirty years has been the move to bulkhandling; the wheatstacks, the bags, the wheat lumpers and the bag sewers have gone and in their place the modern Far West farmer deals with bulk bins, field bins, truck bins, augers, moisture meters and the Thevenard division of the South Australian Cooperative Bulk Handling group (CBH). The most visible signs of the latter are the huge concrete silos at Thevenard and at other locations throughout the division.





As it was . . .
The wheat stack at Thevenard and the wheat trucks on the railway line which took the bags to the waiting ships. Lumpers could then load 20 tonnes per hour.
As it is . . .
The grain silos and conveyor belt system which can feed wheat, barley or oats into a ship's hold at 500 tonnes per hour. Adjacent (top left) is the stock pile of gypsum which uses the same conveyor belt system.

The silos have evolved in the area since 1959 when the first was built at Poochera adjacent to the railway line. It initially held grain for dispatching to Port Lincoln.

Thevenard was not originally considered as a terminal point for bulk handling, although bagged wheat had been shipped from there ever since the concrete jetty was built.[46] It was thought in the early 1950s that the tonnages of grain likely to be sent through the port did not warrant the construction of silos. However, Waratah Gypsum asked the South Australian Harbors Board to construct bulk handling facilities at Thevenard, and the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, which also had interests in gypsum mining at that time, was prepared to consider building its own jetty and bulk handling equipment.

The Harbors Board decided that the situation would be best met by a single bulk handling plant.[47] An approach was made to the State Government and after 2½ years of enquiry by a Parliamentary Standing Committee it was recommended, in 1957, that a bulk loading plant should be constructed at Thevenard for the purpose of transferring from shore to ship, gypsum and other suitable commodities. The plant was completed in 1961.

In 1960 a Public Works Standing Committee approved a proposal from CBH to erect at Thevenard a conventional concrete vertical silo of 10 main and 4 interspace cells with a total capacity of 22,000 tonnes. The silos were to be linked to the conveyor belt almost completed by the South Australian Harbors Board. Specifications required for the system were that it could receive, store and ship wheat, oats and barley in bulk; receive one type of grain and at the same time ship another type of grain; turn grain from cell to cell; effectively fumigate and treat grain; instal dust extraction plants with a system of sweep ups.[48]

The construction of what is now known as Block 1 at the Thevenard silos was completed in time for the 1961–62 harvest. It was an immediate success and additional facilities, including vertical steel bins, and horizontal sheds, were added in 1964, 1968, 1970, 1971, 1975, and 1979. From the original 22,000 tonnes in 1961 the capacity increased to 208,000 tonnes and the shiploading rate rose to 500 tonnes per hour, which is a far cry from the days of bagged wheat when manual labourers loaded at the rate of 20 tonnes per hour.[49]

Although these figures are impressive a major drawback for Thevenard is the lack of deep water. The depth of water at the landing berth is only 9.75 metres (low water) and 8.2 metres (low water) in the approach channel. Ships these days therefore arrive empty at Thevenard, load a limited quantity and then sail to the deeper water of Port Lincoln where they are topped up. The situation is unsatisfactory and, despite intensive lobbying in recent years, there is a reluctance on the part of governments to find sufficient money to dredge the channel to a depth where modern ships can depart fully loaded.

The largest and most obvious point about our small town is the silos. Huge silos stand at the siding, a silent monument to the work and pain of the pioneers of Nunjikompita — the forgotten few.

ALLAN SMITH 1978



The silos of Nunjikompita rising like multi-story skyscrapers above the surrounding farmland and mallee scrub. The first was built in 1964.

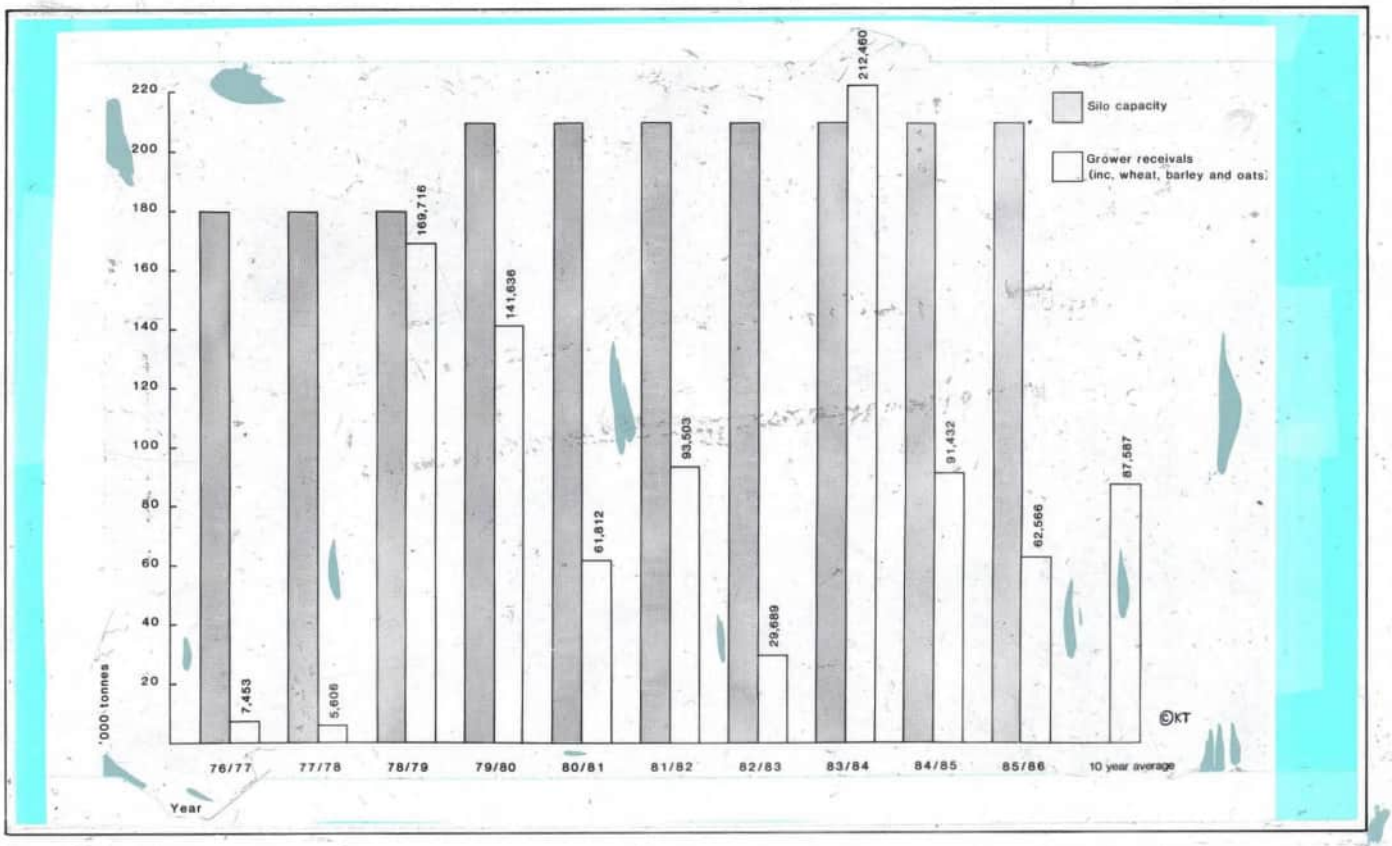
In the original Bulk Handling of Grain Act in 1955, silos were to be constructed at railway stations, sidings or depots where average annual wheat receivals were about 30,000 bushels (820 tonnes). In the Thevenard division this led to silos at the following locations Yaninee (1966), Minnipa (1962), Poochera (1959), Cungena (1966), Wirrulla (1962), Nunjikompita (1964) and Penong (1964). In addition, silos serviced entirely by road transport were put in at Streaky Bay (1964), Witera (1965) and Pintumba (1968). In all cases the dates given are for the initial silo constructions and other storages of various types have been added since. At Penong the original (1964) two cells were demolished in 1985 because of deterioration in the concrete. The cells were replaced with a single vertical steel bin in 1986.[50]



The silos at Pintumba, the last western outpost of bulk handling.

Thevenard is now the receival point from 10 outlying storage areas. Of course it also takes grain direct from the farm and modern contractors often bypass local storages once they are fully laden and travelling on the bitumen highways direct to Thevenard.

The establishment of the Thevenard bulk handling network has been a major part of the working life of Barry Kelly, born and bred in Ceduna and now Manager of Operations for CBH in Adelaide. Barry was the first manager of the CBH terminal in Thevenard and remained in that position for 19 years. At the same time he was an active townsman with interests in the Racing Club, the Bowling Club, the Sailing Club, the Pistol Club, the Thevenard Football Club, the Hotel Board and the St John Ambulance Brigade.[51] He was promoted within CBH in 1980 but, as he said, he left Ceduna 'with mixed feelings'. Assistant Manager Ken Lee replaced Barry Kelly as Terminal Manager in 1980 and Ken Keeler, a former wheat lumper turned general hand for CBH, has a long service history at Thevenard that goes back more than 25 years. At the same time there are several carriers who have worked through from the bagged wheat days right up to the present and A K Neave, W H Jolly and M M Jolly, and K H and G D Meier, are some well known examples.



Receivals and silo capacity at Thevenard 1976–1986 based on data from Cooperative Bulk Handling Ltd.

Throughout their troubled times the Far West farmers never lacked support groups. In the early 1930s, it was the South Australian Wheatgrowers Association which sprang up and, in addition to the local Agricultural Bureaux, became a forum for farmers' ideas. With energetic leadership it put out the *South Australian Wheatgrower* a weekly paper that lasted from 1932 to 1966. The paper was an effective instrument for attacks on successive governments and, the Far West's most regular correspondent was W Barnett, who wrote reports for the Ceduna district. Other farmers prominent in the affairs of the association during the Depression years were the delegates from Penong, Messrs Edwards and Place, from Goode, Messrs McPherson and Packer, from Charra, Messrs Borlase and Schultz, from O'Loughlin, Messrs Kloeden and Bergmann and from Mudamuckla, Mr E D Barnett.

The Wheatgrowers Association has been involved in a series of mergers since its halcyon days of the 1930s but its aims, and indeed some of its early members, are part of todays United Farmers and Stockowners Association (UFS). In the Far West the UFS is well supported and has regular meetings. There are active branches for Ceduna-Goode, Charra and Mudamuckla; in the recent past Coorabie-Bookabie and Penong branches have also been active. Many prominent local farmers have been office holders in the UFS and have taken their turn to lobby for farmers' interests. Above all, Frank Kuhlmann has made it a lifetime interest, and is widely respected for his knowledge and support of the Association.

Agricultural Bureau meetings continue to be occasions when farmers gather together for educational and social evenings. From reports to the *Journal of Agriculture* it is obvious that the most active branches through the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s were all in the eastern half of the Far West. Thus, there were regular reports from Maltee, O'Loughlin, Mudamuckla, Smoky Bay, Nunjikompita, Goode and Laura Bay; spasmodic reports came from Koonibba and Charra.

The old world seems to have left us
We're in a new one full of pace
And the good horse is no longer needed
For the tractor has taken his place.

From 'CAST OUT'
GEO PRICE, Tallala

Bureau meetings were the usual forum for practical discussions on topics such as 'The Working Costs of a Tractor', 'Scrub Clearing', 'Sidelines on the Farm', 'Smut Control' and so on. But, occasionally, there were innovative variations, one of which was a debate at the Goode branch on 13 March 1931. The subject was Tractors versus Horses — a very topical matter. C Will and R Linke advocated tractors while H Jones and B Linke defended horses. After considerable discussion the latter two were adjudged the winners.

Another refreshingly different topic was 'Rabbit Destruction' at Laura Bay branch on 10 January 1933. All 12 members that attended conceded that rabbits were extremely numerous and concerted action was needed to keep them under control. E Barnett advocated digging in the burrows, F Edson spoke of his success with a blacksmith's blower forcing fumes into burrows, and he also mentioned his good results with apples and jam mixed with strychnine.

From 1930 onwards Women's Agricultural Bureau reports began appearing in the *Journal of Agriculture*, the first being from Goode dated 13 March. It indicated that the meeting had dealt with a paper given by Mrs Watson called 'The Responsibilities of a Mother'.

The minute book of the Goode WAB begins on 24 July 1929 and states that it was the first organisation of its kind to be formed on Eyre Peninsula. Miss Hazel Paech was elected 'Lady Chairman' and Miss Dora Klau, Secretary. Others present were Mrs Dick McPherson, Mrs Bert Watson, Mrs C P Linke, Mrs W Pfeiffer, Mrs H Jones, Mrs H B Linke, Miss L Hemmerich and Mrs Paech.[52]

Later in the 1930s, women's reports began appearing from Laura Bay (1933), O'Loughlin (1934), Maltee (1936), Charra (1938) and Murraminga (1938). The topics discussed at these meetings were very different from those at the men's meetings although joint meetings of 'a social nature' were also reported. Women, however, met to discuss 'Sponge Cakes', 'Common Ailments of Children', 'Health and Figure Culture', 'Scone Making' and 'Household Hints'.

Regular conferences between the branches were also reported in the *Journal of Agriculture*. Thus, in 1938, the Upper Eyre Peninsula Conference was held at Ceduna and was sponsored by the Laura Bay branch. Mr E D Barnett presided, the Hon A L McEwen MLC opened it, and present were the Director of Agriculture, W J Spafford, and many of his staff.

Women also introduced conferences, and a typical example was the 1940 Annual Conference and Exhibition of Western Eyre Peninsula Women's Branches held at Ceduna 26 June 1940 under the auspices of the Charra branch. It was opened by the 'Chairman' of the Board (Mrs E M Borlase) and the 523 entries in the Exhibition 'surpassed all records'. The seven sections indicated the main interests of the branches; they were Cooking; Pickles, James and Sauces; Fancy Work and Needle Work; Handicrafts; Knitted and Crochet Work; Produce; Flowers and Vegetables.

In the late 1940s the *Journal of Agriculture* began publishing some of the papers given at the conferences of the branches. A few examples were 'Farm Meat Supply', Mrs W Bowell, Laura Bay; 'Stubble Farming', S B Lang, Nunjikompita; 'Laundering the Curtains' Mrs G Sleep, Charra; 'I've been thinking ...' E T Schwarz, Maltee; 'Points for Show Exhibitors', Mrs H E Lutz, O'Loughlin; 'District Nursing' Mrs Cordula Brown, Charra; 'Norway ... Natures Wonderland', Mrs Olive Nielsen, Charra.

In 1985 the Maltee Branch Women's Agricultural Bureau celebrated its 50th birthday.[53] The President, Win Miller, gave a special welcome to Mrs Lilian Ferguson of Mt Barker who was present and who had been the first

Opposite page.
Above. Well known members of the Women's Agricultural Bureau at a conference in a year soon after the Second World War.
From left: Dulcie Blumson, Roma Trowbridge, Ruby Freeman, Ivy Gray, Lillian Nieass.
Below. Prominent people in the Ceduna WAB. Margaret Borlase (Regional Councillor) is presenting Cordie Brown with a United Nations Award for achievement during the Decade of Women. Dora Martin, also in the picture, received a United Nations commendation.





secretary of the Branch. Ella Schwarz was presented with a 40 year membership badge and was asked to read the minutes of the first meeting held in 1935. The history of the Branch was then presented in sections by members Rhonda Lorimer, Margaret Blumson, Win Miller and Dawn Webb.

With more and more women with a farming background choosing to live in Ceduna, a branch of the WAB was formed there in 1953. Mrs Elsa Lutz was the first President and other executive members were Mrs E Kloeden (Vice-President), Mrs Mabel Brown (Secretary) and Mrs Jean Thiele (Assistant Secretary).[54] Miss Dorothy Marshall was then Organizer of WABs, a position she kept until 1961. In 1955 she presented Ida Hasting and Mesdames E and A Bowell with life membership certificates at a Ceduna meeting, and others who have been honoured with certificates include Mrs E E Lange and Mrs Vera Schwarz (1975); and Mrs F Blumson (1976). These and many other details have been compiled by Dora Martin who has had a long association with both the Maltee and Ceduna WAB branches.

One other area where farmers have got together for mutual benefit has been the annual Agricultural and Horticultural Shows. Some of the early history of these events has been mentioned in Chapter 5. In recent years two Shows have been dominant, one at Ceduna, the other at Penong, but together they form part of a Western Eyre Peninsula network of Shows that begin each year in September and include the towns of Wudinna, Streaky Bay, Ceduna, Penong, Elliston and Wirrulla. The network was in place in 1951 when the participants were Ceduna, Penong, Streaky Bay, Wudinna, Wirrulla, Poochera, Chandada and Colton. Each location sent (and still sends) delegates to a Western Eyre Peninsula Shows Association Annual Meeting; for Ceduna in 1951 they were F Tonkin and N L Dutschke, and for Penong it was C G Freeman and M Chambers.

In the late 1920s and through the 1930s the principal Far West show continued to be held at Denial Bay, but only in the good years. Thus it is



Ceduna Agricultural and Horticultural Show Committee 1946
Standing: J M Jackomas, M W Madigan, G Denton, A F Kloeden, J Saunders, C V Tonkin, C W Schwarz, H Gaden, H A Betts, S D Alexander, B A Smith, F O Skinner, F Handtke, C P Will, H Geue, V S Irwin, W Simons.
Kneeling: W H Sedgley, A E Watson, C H Collins, F Geue, F A Tonkin, C J W Bergmann (President), R J Betts, T A Hiskey (Secretary), Clem Collins, E E E Lutz, W D McBeath, R Simons.

recorded that in 1929 'the show was abandoned for the year because of prevailing conditions'.[55] This happened in several other years, but the Charra, Denial Bay and Murat Bay Agricultural and Horticultural Society kept on having annual meetings, even if sometimes one was convened merely to confirm that a show could not be held. C J W Bergmann was President for most of these years and E E E Lutz was Secretary.

Our only outing for the year was the Denial Bay Show Day. Now the children want to go to everything.

IDA HASTING

In November 1943, because of the declining importance of Denial Bay as a town, it was decided to transfer shows to the comparatively flourishing Ceduna. The committee of the Society remained the same but it took on a new name, the Ceduna Agricultural and Horticultural Society. E E E Lutz and H A Betts, then Acting Clerk of the District Council of Murat Bay, chose grounds north of the town, which today, with many improvements, are still used for annual Shows.

The first Show on the new grounds was held on 25 September 1944. Ed Borlase, Chairman of Council, declared it open and Secretary T A Hiskey, a teacher rather than the usual farmer, was congratulated on an excellent organising job. C J W Bergmann was still President and he continued for another five years. Subsequent Presidents have included F A Tonkin, N Dutschke, C J Handtke, N H Chandler, N F Hurrell, P M Campbell, K A Wright, R A Skinner, T G Trenowden, B C Bergmann and H G Stott.

An example of the successful nature of the Ceduna Shows can be illustrated for the year 1985. There were 2700 entries, an increase of 500 from the previous year, and more then $4000 was taken at the gate. The trade displays were all booked out very early and the most outstanding overall exhibit went to Carol Suter for a picturesque colour photograph. The president of the Agricultural Shows Association Council of South Australia, Fred Kelly, was given the honour of opening the day.

In 1986 the 43rd annual show was held and the 96 page official programme acknowledged the following life members, A T Tonkin, W H Jolly, N F Hurrell, Mrs E G Betts, N H Chandler, Mrs E L Jolly and C J Handtke.

At Penong the annual show has had a more consistent history than at either Denial Bay or Ceduna. Thus, in 1986, the town celebrated its 60th Annual, and it was fitting that, in that year, a local girl, Carmen Trowbridge, had the distinction of being Miss Western Eyre Peninsula Show Girl. The list of names for current officials, and for distinguished past supporters of the show, reads like a Who's Who for farming in the Penong district over many decades. They [illegible] President, K G Freeman; Vice Presidents, W E Oats, G O Michell, Ken [illegible]ington; Secretary, Mrs W J Dunn; Treasurer, K J Dunn; Patrons, Mrs [illegible]ray, Mrs Joy Shipard, Guilf and Mrs Jean Edwards; Life Members, Mrs [illegible]rooks, R B Payne, Mrs R B Payne and R Farrelly.

Finally a general tribute needs to be paid to the Far West farmers. As has been indicated many times, they have battled, often against tremendous difficulties, but with dogged determination and a combination of neighbourly assistance and tenacious self-help, a farming population has survived. Many individuals, after a lifetime on the land, have retired to live in Adelaide, but many also have retired to live in Ceduna, or, in a few cases, in Smoky Bay. These members of the 'Over-seventy Brigade' largely made the Far West landscape we see today. And, so often it was done with generous donations of their time and money in the form of 'crop ventures', acres sown and reaped for the benefit of the community. Without such generosity, edifices such as the Smoky Bay Club, the Ceduna Memorial Hall, the Murat Bay District Hospital, the Ceduna National Trust Museum, t[illegible]d Hall, numerous churches and many schools, would not have b[illegible] as readily as they were.

To cope in this district you have to want to survive.

IVAN CHANDLER, Goode



A politician, Harry Bartlett, sent the farmers to the Far West in 1889 and, in many respects, politicans have kept them there ever since with Drought Relief Schemes, a Farmers Assistance Board, the Marginal Lands Act, Rural Reconstruction programmes and so on. Clearly they have believed the sentiment expressed by one of their kind, J G Moseley, when he said in 1932: 'Our best investment is to help our farmers'.[56] At the same time good farmers, who have improved their soils with pastures in the modern era and managed their properties with good business acumen, have achieved notable successes without any government assistance. Fifty years ago nobody thought that 30 bushel crops were achievable in the Far West but now they are common in the good years. And fifty years ago nobody dreamed that stud sheep and cattle enterprises would survive in such a marginal area yet, in the last decade, Leon and Marilyn Mudge have made an outstanding success of breeding Hereford cattle at their Maildaburra property, Mark and Monica Dodd did well with merino sheep at Marly Rise and Keith and Melva Freeman have also succeeded with merino sheep at Model Farm, Bagster.

Big acreages and cheap leasehold land were the early bonuses of the Far West. Lack of rainfall, lack of good underground water, and indifferent soils were the liabilities that were soon discovered. Through three, sometimes four generations of farming, it has been a persistent struggle between the bonuses and the liabilities; even now it is hard to say that one outweighs the other. As indicated in Chapter 3, Messrs Earle, Anderson and Mayers in 1887 said 'the country is well suited for subdivision into small agricultural holdings', but George Murray said 'I do not agree . . . but this of course is a matter of opinion'. This book was written 100 years after these conflicting opinions were given and the evidence of history does not tell us who was right and who was wrong. Would it have been better to leave the country as a pastoral domain or has it been satisfactory to subdivide it, farm it and reconstruct it?

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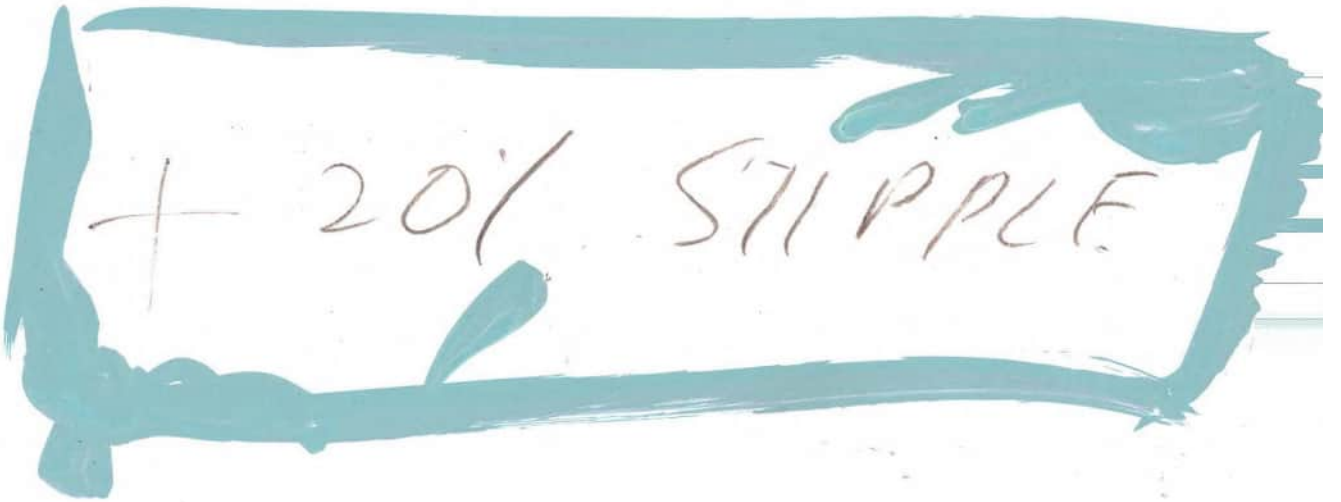
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Book Three

Frontier Communities



◀
The last western outpost, Fowlers Bay c. 1898.

7. The Hopeful Years

The thinly populated pastoral occupance from 1858 until 1889 left a legacy of place names which were adopted by the first farming settlers. Thus, they took up land at places which were already called Charra or Athenna or Tallala or Mudamuckla. Gradually, communities evolved around these places and a few more such as Bagster and Goode, which were creations of the government surveyors. The communities were transplanted groups looking for a new start in life. Many of them came to raise children in the area so they wanted vital facilities such as schools and hospitals. In addition, they wanted recreation facilities, shopping facilities and churches for their religion. They all had dreams ; dreams of flourishing farmlands and prosperous townships; and to begin with all they had was hope.

As the years passed, a combination of government assistance, local initiatives and community co-operation made some progress with the dreams, and a network of communities evolved; some prospered and still exist, but many eventually withered and are now barely traceable in the landscape.

The communities varied in their size and status. At the lowest level was a cluster of farmers who lived around a well or some other prominent local feature. Point Bell community was an example. A step up was a postal community where the post office was the 'address' for people in the neighbourhood. Athenna was an example. Beyond this were the surveyed townships such as Penong, Bookabie, Coorabie, Fowlers Bay, Denial Bay, Mudamuckla, Smoky Bay and others.

The first community in the Far West and one of the first of the surveyed townships was Fowlers Bay, the outlet for the pastoral leases taken up in 1860. It was the nearest landing spot to the original leases and the first buildings of Yalata Station were on the beach at Port Eyre. As the station prospered, it employed many people and a postal facility was established in 1866 to serve them. E N B Catchlove was the first postmaster and he and his two successors, Thos. Waugh and T P Richards, were policemen. Then in 1877 Fowlers Bay became a repeater station on the East-West telegraph line and a building constructed for this purpose became a post office. The postal officers from then until the end of the nineteenth century were T Dyke 1877, Fred Gaskell 1882, O A Michael 1886, H S Rumball 1891 and T Clark 1893.[1]

Mounted Constable P Le Messurier joined Corporal T P Richards to make a two man police force in 1882, and others that followed were J P Dowling 1884, F Gardner 1889, F E S McEwen 1889, M Donegan 1893, G A Woods 1894, F H Wells 1895, W Jackson 1897, E N B Catchlove 1898, E F Riebe 1899

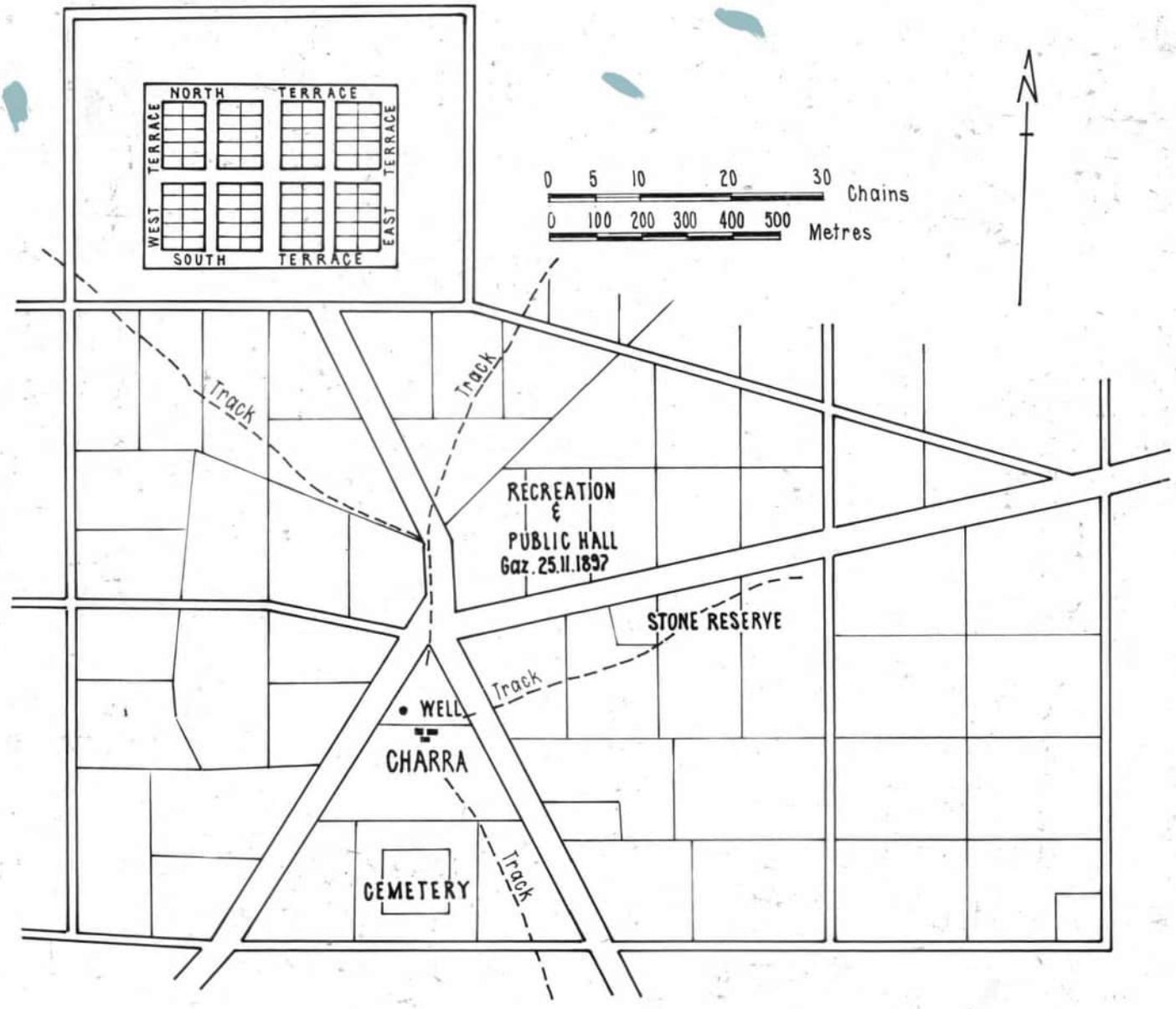
and W H Bertram 1900.[2] E N B Catchlove, who served twice at Fowlers Bay, rejoiced in the full name of Edward Napoleon Bonaparte Catchlove.

The old Yalata station building, the police station and the post and telegraph buildings, were all included in the survey of the town in 1890. Norman Pethick was the government surveyor given the task; he called the town Yalata, although most of the community called it Fowlers Bay, a name which was officially adopted in 1940. Up until then, there was always confusion between Yalata (the town) and Yalata the head station, when it was built several miles away as a community in its own right.

Norman Pethick surveyed 42 allotments in 1890 and a further 21 allotments were added by surveyor A E Poyntz in 1910.

The first purchasers of Fowlers Bay allotments in 1890 were James H Crowe, an agent of Elliston, who bought 25 lots for 315 pounds 15 shillings, Thos. Clark, a telegraph operator of Streaky Bay, William F Andrews, telegraph operator of Fowlers Bay, Joseph H Pugh, labourer of Fowlers Bay, Charles D Perkins, agent of Adelaide, (6 lots), John Roberts, blacksmith of Nullarbor Station, James B Riddle, contractor of Fowlers Bay, and William H Betts, storekeeper of Streaky Bay (2 lots).

The town plan for Charra in 1889 which was never utilised. Also shown are some of the features of the Charra community which evolved nearby. Source: Survey Books, Dept. of Lands.



The surveyors who worked on the first Hundreds in the Far West had instructions to plan towns at appropriate locations, and their response to this was Charra in the Hundred of Horn, surveyed in 1889, Penong in the Hundred of Burgoyne, surveyed in 1890, and Bookabie, originally called Pokerby, in the Hundred of Magarey in 1890. Each of these planned towns was located near a good well.

Charra was surveyed by E R Jones and offered for sale as a town of 80 allotments on 14 November 1889 — the first in the Far West. The upset price was 2 pounds ten shillings per lot, the sale was conducted in Adelaide and there were no buyers![3] Obviously, it was too early for townships; the first farmers were just receiving their blocks and nobody had yet thought of starting a town. Furthermore, Charra was inland and a site with a sea access such as Denial Bay was likely to be more attractive for a town when one was needed.

Charra town never did develop. The allotments were leased for farming purposes and, in May of 1929, the symmetrical town layout surrounded by parklands disappeared from plans forever.[4] So also did its planned North, South, East and West Terraces and its Main Street. But, Charra as a community survived in other forms as will be seen later.

Penong was the name of one of the outstations on the Fowlers Bay Run and a township of that name was surveyed by N Pethick in 1890 about one mile from the station homestead and its woolshed. The latter building had been much used by the district as a meeting place for social functions, so a nucleus of a Penong community existed well before the town was laid out. Pethick's plan was the stereotype grid pattern surrounded by parklands and the usual unimaginative street names North, South, West and East Terraces, Main Street, First and Second Street.

Penong was announced in the Government Gazette in April of 1892 and the first sales of allotments took place later that year.[5] There were no freehold sales at this time but gradually between 1895 and 1910 the following people bought blocks in the town, Carl Williams and William Wiseman, blacksmiths, Marion Whigham Murray, married woman, (5 lots), Florence Sommerville, married woman, George Hancock, farmer; Lashman Singh, hawker and storekeeper, A B C Murray, sheepfarmer, (3 lots), Walter Standley of Owen (2 lots), Andrew Dignum saddler and harness maker, Alice Williams, married woman, William B Prider, storekeeper (5 lots), John Darling, Merchant of Adelaide, Joseph Oats, farmer, Blackiston Shipard, farmer (3 lots), Arthur Shipard, farmer (2 lots), and Morris Lashman, storekeeper (2 lots).

Bookabie was surveyed by N MacKintosh in July 1890 and was proclaimed in the Government Gazette in September of 1891.[6] Its 54 allotments were surrounded by the usual North, South, East and West Terraces, there was a Main Street, a Murray Street and an Armstrong Street. The latter two streets honoured managers of the Fowlers Bay Run. Portion of the town was offered for sale at a public auction in Adelaide on 24 December 1891. Purchasers were: A E and F O Tolley, merchants of Adelaide, J Riddle of Fowlers Bay, L E Woodman, commercial traveller of Adelaide, D P McGregor, sheep farmer of Bookabie, and J T Miller, sheepfarmer of Bookabie. Many lots were not sold, and it wasn't until 1912 that further sales were made. At that time A M Dunn, farmer of Bookabie, became the principal landowner in the town when he bought three lots for a total of eight pounds five shillings.

The next town officially surveyed was Ceduna on the shores of Murat Bay and since that grew to be the most dominating community in the Far West it is dealt with in other chapters.

On the western side of Murat Bay there was the small community 'Mac's Town' throughout most of the 1890s as discussed in Chapter 5. This was never

Mr Carl Williams' blacksmith's shop, together with stock and implements was burnt to the ground last Monday night. How the fire originated is not known.

DBS 1/5/09

We pulled up outside a collection of low cream-coloured buildings at Denial Bay. The architecture probably as primitive as anything in South Australia.

E W PARISH, 1906

an official town and appendages of it sprawled from William McKenzie's farm house and concentrated at McKenzie's Landing on Murat Bay. When a jetty was under construction in 1909, the local correspondent to the *West Coast Recorder* asked what must have been, by then, an obvious question, 'Why all these years and no township'?[7]

The correspondent probably received no official answer to his question, but a few months later surveyor A E Poyntz appeared on the scene and by December of 1909 a town had been laid out adjacent to the nearly completed jetty. It was gazetted as McKenzie in 1910.[8] However, Denial Bay was the name in common use in the established community and this eventually became the town's official name in 1940.

Resident of McKenzies Landing up and doing, show the country what stuff you are made of and work to create a town!

DBS 11/12/1909

The original plan for the town was the standard government grid design, the eastern side of which ran along the shoreline. There were six streets, Pascoe Terrace, Butler Terrace, Peake Terrace, Main Street, Poyntz Street and Murat Terrace. The names were undoubtedly chosen in Adelaide where Pascoe, Peake and Butler were well known politicians. An excellent chance to honour settlers who had already been in the area for up to twenty years was therefore passed over.

The first sales of allotments in the town were made in August 1911. Local people, Messrs J MacKenzie, Lindsay, Burke, Whyborn, McLaren and Lutz each bought lots and other purchasers included G Wilson from Yardea, Mr Malone from Parilla (5 lots), Mr Simons, a saddler from Balaklava, and Mr Wiese, a mason from Gawler. The Bank of Adelaide bought one lot and the partnership of W H Betts and H Darby bought two lots.

Gradually, the settlement at MacKenzie's Landing was replaced by the surveyed town at the jetty. One sign of confidence was 'an attractive dwelling house built on a new township site' in 1912. The builder was S Lindsay and he used the popular but questionable technique of making his bricks from sand and cement mixed with seawater.[9]

The town known as Smoky Bay was surveyed by W E Harcus in 1913. The area was already settled and had a school, a hall and a post office. When a jetty was built in 1912 the government heeded suggestions that a town was needed.

The original survey was a park-land style town with a North Terrace, South Terrace, East Terrace and a Beach Esplanade. The town was called Wallanippie, but the preferred local name, Smoky Bay, was adopted officially in 1940. The street names were also changed and due recognition was given to early settlers with Hunt Terrace, Denton Street, Williams Street and Tremaine Street. Only South Terrace and Beach Esplanade remained from the original names.

The first sales for the town were made on 22 January 1914 and, at that time, the purchasers were James Ladleir, bank officer of Loxton, and Edgar Limbert, solicitor of Adelaide. On 19 August 1915 Fred Lloyd, farmer of West Mitcham, bought one lot and thereafter there were no further freehold sales until 1947 when there was a keen demand and 18 lots changed hands.

The town of Coorabie grew from an established community of farmers who had already successfully obtained a school and a hall. In 1913 the local branch of the Agricultural Bureau submitted the following petition for a town to the Commissioner of Crown Lands.[10]

'Miss Meier, a popular young Belle of Denial Bay and the longest resident was chosen by the government superintendent of the new jetty . . . to drive the first pile.

DBS 13/3/09

'Sir, At a largely attended meeting of the above held at Coorabie . . . the need of a township at Coorabie was the subject of discussion and a resolution was passed by a large majority that a township is required at Coorabie.

I am directed to ask on behalf of the Branch that you will have a township surveyed and the lots offered for sale at Coorabie . . . adjacent to the school reserve

and public hall . . . and near the junction of the four main roads. This situation is decided on as being the most convenient centre and is surrounded for miles by settled agricultural holdings.

Signed Harold V Hobbs
Hon. Secretary'

The petition contained 41 names and there was a counter-petition containing 31 names protesting against any new town being surveyed in the area.

The Commissioner of Crown Lands approved the laying out of the town and the task was given to surveyor A D Smith in December 1914. Before that, John Daniel Green was given notice of the resumption of 50 acres of his perpetual lease for the site of a town. He was paid 50 pounds compensation.

Coorabie was gazetted in February 1915 and the first allotments were auctioned in Adelaide on 29 April 1915. Only four lots were purchased, one each to Harry Hobbs, farmer of Yalata, David Riddle, farmer of Yalata, Kathleen Moody spinster of Clarence Park, and Mary May, married woman of Nundroo. At later sales in 1915 and 1919 purchasers were Reynold Muegge, farmer of Nallanippi, Robert Nicol, auctioneer of Yalata, Charles Fox, farmer of Kooringabbie, and Alfred Tresize, labourer of Yalata.

By 1914 the network of surveyed towns reflected the importance of ports (Fowlers Bay, Denial Bay, Smoky Bay and Ceduna) and also the need for service centres amongst the inland farms (Coorabie, Bookabie and Penong). After 1915 a new dimension was the railway, first to Ceduna and Thevenard and later to Penong. Here the government put in a series of sidings to aid the wheat farmers and, in some cases, the sidings had planned townships.

The siding which was placed at the locality known as Beautiful Valley was called Maltee by the government — a name greeted without much enthusiasm by the local farmers. They petitioned the Commissioner of Crown Lands for a town to be laid out, hoping that it would be called Beautiful Valley, but received a reply which, on the one hand granted their request, but, on the other hand indicated that the town would be called Maltee.

It was surveyed by W G Evans in February of 1916 as 34 allotments alongside the railway line, backed by 26½ acres of parkland with an area set aside for a cemetery.

The five streets of Maltee were called Davidson Tce, Boucher Tce, Butler Tce, Foster Tce and Croud Street. Only two allotments were ever built on, one for a hall and another for a school, which was later shifted to Flagstaff near Haslam.



Also in February 1916, W G Evans surveyed a railway town at Mudamuckla siding. Here he laid out 60 allotments, 17½ acres of parkland and a cemetery. The first freehold purchasers were the Synod of the Church of England in the Diocese of Adelaide, in 1922, and Betty M Kreusler married woman in 1923. Street names for the town were Taylor Tce, Smiley Tce, Frampton Tce, Seaman Tce, Wilson Tce and Timbrall Street.

Nunjikompita required the services of surveyor R W Paynter to lay out 17 allotments adjacent to its railway siding in 1939. This gave it something of a surveyed township appearance, but it had existed as an unplanned community for several decades before that. The town lots did not sell rapidly, Harold Beattie, an agent, leased one in 1942, Sarah Beattie, post mistress, purchased one in 1959, Noel Gaden, storekeeper, purchased one in 1962, and farmers Perc May, Clarence Gum and Stanley Dunn purchased three in 1962.

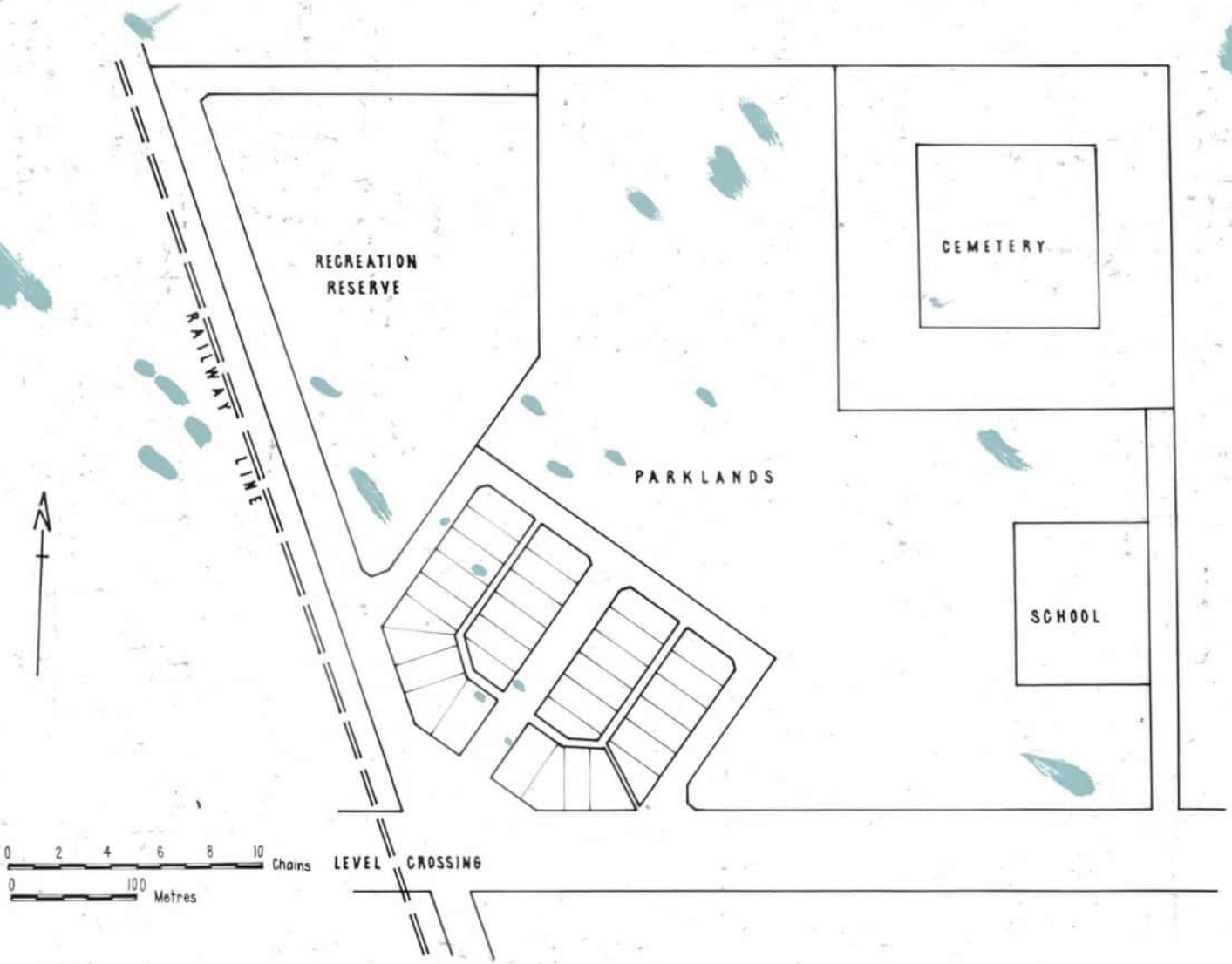
In 1924 the Wandana to Penong railway extension was completed and this added a further collection of sidings where farmers could have their wheat

collected. In a wave of mistaken optimism the Commissioner of Crown Lands sent Charles Melville to the Far West to survey towns at many of the sidings.

Melville produced astonishing results. Stirred up no doubt by having to work in the heat of summer, he rattled off plans for six towns between 10 January and 27 January in 1928. In 17 days the towns of Wandana, Uworra, Watraba, Wiabuna, Kalanbi and Koonibba were laid out at their respective sidings. Each had about 30 allotments, a large school reserve and a very large recreation reserve. They were neat plans ideal for small country towns, but none of them blossomed. They remain today as allotments on old plans in the Land Titles Office, Adelaide, and, with a few minor exceptions such as the Uworra School, nothing substantial on the ground.

The plan for Wandana, the first produced in the Melville charge, was an imaginative layout with curved streets and pleasing shapes for parklands and other recreation areas. As a town plan it is matched only by Thevenard in the Far West (see Chapter 8) and was many years before its time in a creative sense. Unfortunately, after this good beginning, Melville's five other plans were stereotype grid patterns, neat but uninspiring.

The imaginative town plan for Wandana laid out by Charles Melville in 1928. Source: Survey Books, Dept. of Lands.



All of the surveyed towns expected to have post offices and those that became more than towns on paper generally achieved this. But, other communities also had post offices, sometimes in a local farmhouse. Here a part time official collected and distributed mail for the surrounding farmers when they called in about once a week. The South Australian Directories recorded the names of many of the postal officers and usually postmistresses outnumbered postmasters, particularly when it was a part time job that could be handled by a farmer's wife.

Records show that Mrs W Irvine was Athenna's postmistress in 1910 and that she still held the position thirty years later. At Bookabie A L C Gale was postmaster in 1905 and he was followed by Miss T M Miller, then Mrs J Miller. Soon after this, G P Mahar started duties and the Mahar family ran the post office from their home from 1925 until 1963.[11]

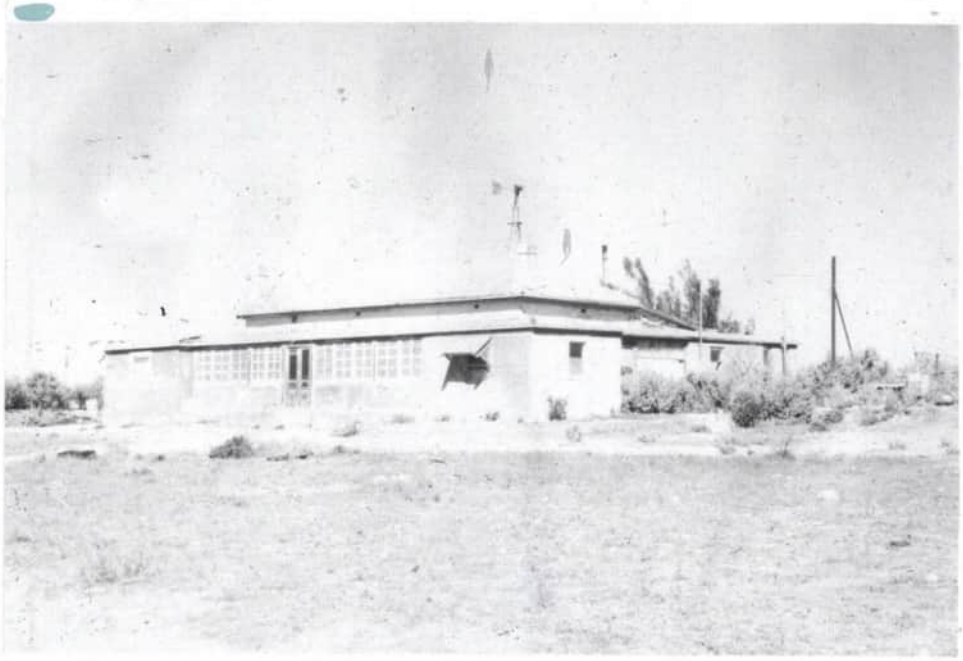
Carawa's postmaster was R K Barclay in 1915 and he continued in the role for many years. Similarly, at Charra, James Dunnet was the postmaster for many years. After his death in 1923 Leslie Dunnet took over the role and continued with it into the 1940s.

Coorabie's post office was originally at Yalata station where George Murray did the postmaster's duties in addition to managing the station. By 1925 an office was established in the town of Coorabie and Robert Nicol was the postmaster; he kept this position, and many others, until the 1940s.

William McKenzie was a postmaster at Mac's Town in the 1890s, but the first offical post officer in the nearby town of Denial Bay was Miss Freda Meier in 1910. When she left to marry, Mrs J M Skinner took her place and stayed until the 1920s. She was then followed by Fred Read, Victor Williams, S V G Thiselton and others.

Fowlers Bay postmasters until 1900 have already been mentioned. Those that held the position after T Clark left in 1910 included A W Flavel, S A Townshead, J A Davies, Mrs E Heinceslater, F J Smart, J Bastian (1936–1953) and Mrs C Beattie, who closed the office in 1967.

The small community of Glen Boree had Mrs Agnes Young as postmistress in 1905 and she retained the position until the office closed in the late 1920s. J B Talbot filled the role for Maltee for many years and at Merghiny it was R P Symonds followed by Walter Slater and Andrew Doecke.



Boher Rua, George and Bibiana Mahar's home and the Bookabie post office for 38 years.

The Goode Post Office was opened at our home during 1903 which I used to look after and I was glad of the extra company as I was very lonely.

MRS HERB WATSON

The shop at Mudamuckla was also the post office and Mrs B M Kreusler was postmistress. In 1935 it was E E Higgins and he continued into the 1940s. At Nunjikompita Rose Chester was postmistress in 1925 and she continued into the 1940s.

Penong was one of the few communities with a separate building for its post office. Miss Elsie Murray was the postmistress in 1905 and, in 1915, it was Mrs Lizzie Pearson. In 1925 it was C H Pearson and he was followed by C M Harris who held the position throughout the 1930s.

Smoky Bay had a postal facility as early as 1863. It was managed by Mr C T Heath, but it closed in 1868 and did not re-open until 1897. Then it was run by the area's best remembered postmaster Fred Lloyd. He gave up the role in 1915 and H Woodards was listed as postmaster. He was followed by P J Squire, V A Schrader, Gertrude Denton, Ethel Denton and Ethel Harrison.

Some other communities such as Goode and Koonibba Mission had postal facilities but their postal officers were not consistently listed in the South Australian Directories. Eventually, all of the small post offices disappeared when the widespread use of motor cars made it possible for farmers to reach the offices in towns such as Penong and Ceduna, offices which were upgraded to cater for their increased patronage.

Another government facility the Far West needed was police stations. Here the chosen localities were, originally, Fowlers Bay, Penong and Denial Bay. The Fowlers Bay station was built in the 1860s, there was one at Mac's town about 1900, which later shifted into Murat Bay, and a station was under construction in Penong in 1912 where M C McLeod was the first officer.[11]

The life of a police officer in the early years of the Far West was occasionally exciting, even dangerous, but most of the time it was mundane, routine work. The officers stationed at Fowlers Bay were usually Mounted Constables and had a team of horses which required time consuming attention.[12] The horses were used for regular patrols over a wide area and the following is a typical example:

15th September 1891	Patrol Report
Police Horses:	Weijong and Pippin
10th September	Fowlers Bay to Bookabie via Coorona 30 miles
11th September	Bookabie to Point Bell and Watraba 45 miles
12th September	Watraba to Charra and vicinity 30 miles
13th September	Charra patrolling Hundreds of Catt and Horn and returning to Watraba 32 miles
14th September	Watraba to Bookabie 33 miles
15th September	Bookabie to Fowlers Bay 27 miles

Total distance 197 miles

On such patrols the mounted constable usually had a multitude of minor tasks. He had to check on the extent of pests such as rabbits, star thistles and Bathurst Burr. He circulated memos from the Surveyor General to settlers. He checked fencing, particularly around government wells. He delivered summonses and he checked that farmland was being occupied and had not been abandoned.

After a patrol there was always a mountain of paper work making reports, writing letters, keeping the station journal up to date and so on. He was required also to write an annual report on crime in the area; a typical example suggests that it was not excessive:

Fowler Bay P S
1 July 1895

Sir,

I have the honor to forward this my report on Crime in this district for the year ended 30th June 95. During the year the district has been pretty free from Crime. There has been an increase of 7 in Breaches of the Dog Act and one in Disorderly Conduct. There has been an increase of 6 in drunkeness, 2 in lunacy and 2 in unlawful possession.

During the year there has been one case of felony reported and the offender was arrested and convicted and the property stolen returned to the owner, showing that no case of undetected crime has been committed in the District during the year.

I have the honor etc.

M Donegan M C

There was, of course, the occasional thrilling chase in the pursuit of justice. Thus, in October of 1891, M C Gardner, who was on patrol at Penong, received information at 5.30 am that a six year old child had been criminally assaulted on the previous afternoon by a well known young man of the district. M C Gardner left at once with two borrowed horses in a private trap for Charra where the child's father was working. He collected the father, borrowed two fresh horses and returned to Penong. Here the father talked with his wife and examined the child. M C Gardner again got fresh horses and started in pursuit of the offender. At midnight he made an arrest in the Watraba scrub near Charra and returned to Penong at 5 am. In the proceeding 24 hours he had travelled 115 miles.

The offender was sent to Adelaide where the Supreme Court found him guilty. He was sentenced to 10 years hard labour and 'one whipping of twenty lashes'.

Besides the routine patrols, paperwork and the pursuit of criminals, the local policeman was also 'on call' whenever emergencies arose. In January 1892 A M Garry, an Aborigine, ran into Fowlers Bay to tell the Mounted Constable that Mingilta, another Aborigine, had blown his hand off 'whilst shooting fish with dynamite at Scotts Bay'. The constable immediately sent two black boys to search for Dr Joyce who was known to be travelling in the district. At the same time he gathered a few medical supplies, mounted a horse and galloped to Scotts Bay. Here he found the wounded native being supported by two others, 'his hand being blown completely away at the wrist and pieces of bone and sinews hanging.'

The constable bound up the stump and stopped the bleeding. He also put carbolic oil on several cuts about the back and face caused by the explosion. He then administered a little weak brandy.

The Aborigine was taken to the police station, and later that day Dr Joyce performed an amputation. All of the above was routinely recorded in the Fowlers Bay station journal in very matter of fact language. Alongside were pages listing the crimes which were investigated as part of normal duties. They were not frequent, but those most commonly cited were assaulting natives, common assault, breaches of the Dog Act, family maintenance orders, supplying liquor to Aborigines, insulting words, breaches of the Licensed Victuallers Act, breaches of the Masters and Servants Act, larcency and breaches of the Bush Fires Act.

Up until 1900 the Fowlers Bay station was the only one in the Far West. Its officers were in charge of an enormous area and, therefore, were often far away when crimes occurred. A glaring example was the Sunda Singh murder in



An Indian hawker's van, a common sight on the roads during the early days of settlement in the Far West.

1899. The mounted constable from Fowlers Bay was many miles away when the episode occurred. Its impact, however, probably hastened the establishment of the Denial Bay police station in 1900.

Sunda Singh was an Indian hawker, one of several who operated in the Far West. One of their bases for supplies was Kaiser and Poken Singh's store at Denial Bay and it was outside this store that the murder took place. Sunda was slain with an 'American axe' and the blood stained weapon was left alongside the body. Lothar Kaiser Singh was taken into custody by William McKenzie JP and a jury was hastily convened to hold an inquest. The jury returned a verdict of murder and Lothar was committed for trial in Adelaide. After all this occurred a mounted constable arrived and took the prisoner off to the Fowlers Bay gaol. From there he was transferred to Adelaide where his trial was reported in full in the local press. At its end, 'Lothar Kaiser Singh, native of Lahore, resident in Australia 12 years pursuing the calling of a hawker', was found guilty and hanged in the Adelaide gaol on 17 January 1900.[13]

When the Denial Bay/Ceduna and Penong police stations became fully operational the days of long patrols with hard working horses were over. Gradually the list of crimes began to reflect the problems of the more modern era and, towards the end of the hopeful years for the frontier communities, 'supplying liquor to Aborigines' and 'breaches of the Motor Vehicles Act' were two of the most frequent offences police officers had to deal with.

Momby the Aboriginal housebreaker is still practising his profession much to the disgust of every settler on the Coast.

WCR 30/5/06

If the government could be persuaded to supply surveyed townships, post offices and police stations, it was a great help to any community. But, when such assets were not forthcoming, it fell to the individual initiatives of the local people to provide community needs. The first of these was a local hall, which could be used for meetings, entertainment, and, if need be, for a school and a church.

In most cases the resources of the Far West could provide only the most basic halls. One option was to build with the aid of local stone in a style used by many farmers for their own dwellings. The Maltee hall is one such example, solid, workmanlike and functional, but with no architectural flourishes. Another option was to import prefabricated materials from Adelaide. Thus, in July 1912, the steamer *Rupara* landed at Murat Bay a quantity of iron and timber to be used for the erection of a school (and hall) at Wandana about 6 miles out from the bay on C A Tonkin's property. The *West Coast Sentinel* noted that it was pleasing to see families living in close proximity 'pulling together' for the mutual benefit of the community.[14]

A third option was to make other buildings serve as a community hall. At Fowlers Bay the spacious shed owned by W H Betts was used for the New Years Day dance in 1909 and, in 1919, dances were held fortnightly 'in the old store at the back of the hotel'.[15] And, at Carawa, the locals journeyed to the government goods shed at Carawa Landing (later Haslam) for their entertainment in 1912 where a special feature was the 'Rag-tag and Water Rat Band'.[16]

Charra had a public hall constructed in 1897 not far from the Charra well. It was used by the Athenna Sunday School for a 'service of songs' in January 1905 and 'the seats were fully occupied'.[17] In 1907, the Christmas day concert was held in the hall; but in 1910, on 4 February, a new hall was opened at James Dunnet's woolshed.[18] It was to serve as a church and Sunday School, as well as a public hall; the inaugural celebrations for the opening included a fancy dress football match followed by a concert. G H Bassham was President of the hall committee and J Dunnet J P was its Secretary.

The Woolshed Hall, as it was called, became a favourite meeting place for the diverse community of Charra. Situated about 6 miles from the original hall it catered for a wide area and attracted good crowds for many functions, for example, the all night dance given by the bachelors of Charra district in July of 1912.[19]

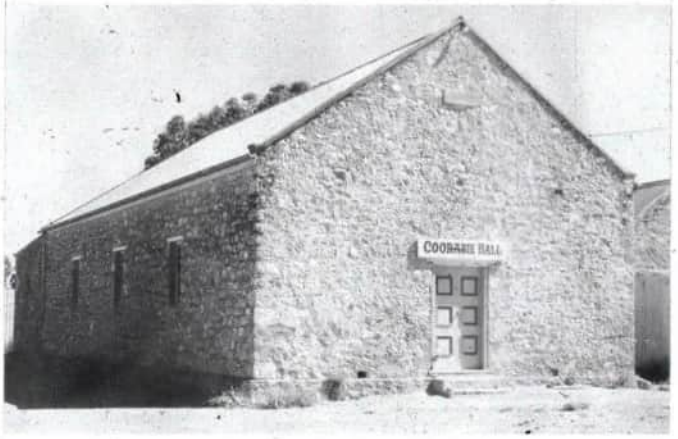
The hall's committee was energetic and constantly sought to improve their facility. A notable advance came via a piano subcommittee made up of Miss K Tudor, Miss P Denton, Messrs F and T Haseldine, L Dunnet, G W Denton and E F Mewett. After fund raising activities for several months, they purchased a new Cable piano for 150 pounds and celebrated its arrival in the hall with a concert and dance in October 1922.[20]

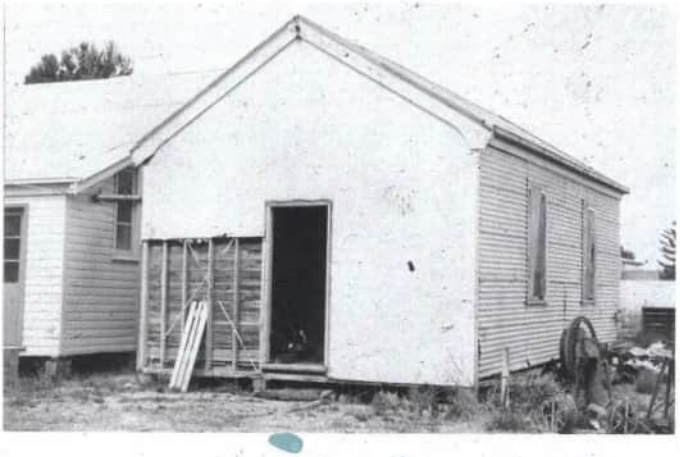
Athenna opened its hall on 11 November 1905 with a public meeting where W O Gale presided. The building was planned to be used as a school and as a church, but it also became a mini-cultural centre for a rather intellectual group that was part of the Athenna Community. Their penchant for intellectual



The Wandana hall and school erected 1912.

Below left. The second Coorabie Hall built of local limestone in 1909.
Below. The Far Wests most transported community building: Wandana School and Hall 1912, Laura Bay Church of England Hall 1934, St Michaels and All Angels Church of England Hall in Ceduna 1945, National Trust exhibit in Ceduna 1980s.





The Government just now seems to be turning us the cold shoulder. Pinnaroo their 'new pet' seems to be claiming most of their attention at the present time.

ATHENNA CORRESPONDENT
WCR 30/9/04

activities was well illustrated by the un-named Athenna correspondent for the *West Coast Sentinel*. He was more verbose than correspondents from other communities and he was opinionated on a range of matters that extended to politics, the needs of the Far West Coast and the quality of the cultural activities at Athenna. No doubt he was a leading light in the Athenna Literary Society which had fortnightly meetings in the hall. In 1912 and 1913 they specialised in debates with topics such as 'Does marriage improve a man's or a woman's character' and 'The White Australia Policy'. For the latter, which was held in September 1913, Athenna's debating team of A Christian, F Christian and F Tucker vied with a team from Denial Bay made up of S Lindsay, B Whyborn and H Lindsay.[21]

Bookabie had what was described as an 'old shanty hall' in 1912 and in 1913 two township blocks were bought for a new hall. However, little progress was made because of what was described as 'disagreeable meetings'.[22]

The disagreements must have been overcome because, by 1919, there was a substantial hall (believed to be the old one renovated) in which Driver A H Miller was welcomed home from four years at the war. The hall was crowded when Driver Miller walked in to the strains of 'Home Sweet Home' followed by 'For he's a Jolly Good Fellow'. Items were then given thus: duet Misses Gray, song Miss S Law, recitation Miss M Law, song Master L Gray, song Mr F Gray, recitation Miss Law, duet Misses Law and song Mr McLeod.

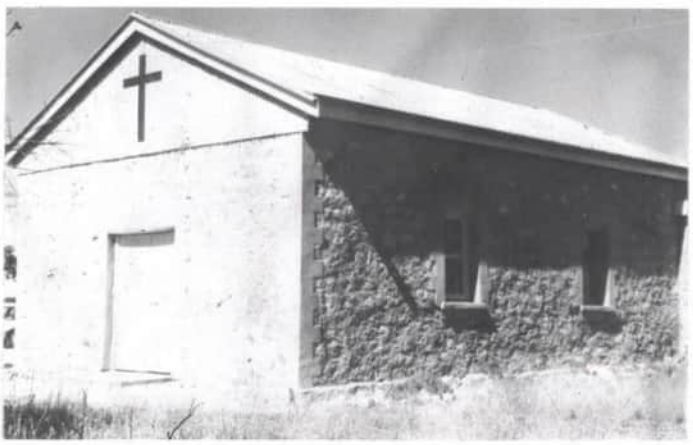
A school building and hall was built at Coorabie in 1901. Then, in 1909, a much larger separate hall was built under the supervision of George Cabot. Concerts, socials, Bureau meetings and general public meetings all used the hall. Thus, on 12 April 1918, what was described as a successful concert held in the hall was organised by Mr Tomney and Miss Hombsch. And, in a novel Leap Year twist, a dance on 29 February 1924 had Miss Mary Hardy as the MC and the local bachelors in charge of the supper.

The Penong hall, like so many others, was built by voluntary labour under the supervision of a local farmer who had some knowledge of building construction. In this case it was J Stiggants from nearby Bagster. The work was done in 1901; A B C Murray assisted by donating the flooring and roofing while a group of volunteers quarried and carted stone from a site 3 miles south of the town.[23] Work was completed in time for an opening on 14 March 1902.[24]

Appropriate furnishings for a hall always required additional fund raising and often this continued for many years before there was enought money for seats, crockery, curtains and so on. In the case of the Penong hall the committee organised a novel 'Industrial Exhibition and Promenade Concert' in October 1904 to raise money for the seats.[25] In 1905 there were Quadrille Classes in the hall, and in 1912, the floor was used as a skating rink. Mr and

Below. The first Penong Hall built in 1901.
Below right. Kooringabbie Hall built 1913.





Mrs Paul Smith took advantage of the fact that this was popular and gave a skating evening in the hall for their daughter's birthday.[26]

After a few years when social functions were held in Frank Gregor's barn, the Smoky Bay community decided to build a hall in 1912. Fred Lloyd donated the land and an elaborate cement brick structure with an iron roof was built with dimensions of 60 feet by 30 feet. The cement bricks were made on the beach, and an excellent floor was installed for dancing.[27] Soon after it was opened a Quadrille class began and the 'Telegraph Bachelors' held a dance patronised by more than 100 people. In 1921 Fred Lloyd was remembered with a special meeting in the hall when 'a handsome oil painting of the deceased gentleman' was unveiled.[28]

Reports in the *West Coast Sentinel* indicate that a hall was being constructed at Kooringabbie in 1913, that there was a hall at Goode and also one at Waranda Well. At the latter a novel fund raiser in 1917 was a cribbage tournament followed by supper and a dance.[29]

At the Goode Hall there was a very successful Masquerade Ball on 20 August 1913 and it is recorded that prizes were won by Miss M Tainsh as a fairy and Mr A B Geue as an Admiral.[30]

The Goode Hall met with disaster on 30 November 1924 when it burnt to the ground.[31] A moving picture show was in progress, one of many put on by travelling companies over the years. A length of film caught fire and the flames spread to nearby curtains. The hall was cleared quickly and no personal injuries were sustained, but in 20 minutes the wood and iron structure was gutted. An additional loss was all materials stored and used in the building for the Goode school. The hall was only partly insured; nevertheless, in a great show of community endeavour, a new hall was built in the next twelve months. It was opened by C M Adey the first Town Clerk for the District Council of Murat Bay on 14 January 1926.[32]

Petina Hall was opened by Mrs Penna in October 1912 and, thereafter it had a history of social functions similar to other halls, except in two areas. The

The residents built a hall at Goode so that we could have our own amusements instead of having to always go to Ceduna. My husband purchased sixty pairs of roller skates and ran a Skating Rink and the fun the young people got out of it compensated for their bruises.

MRS HERB WATSON



The Maltee Hall built in 1919. This occasion was the 50th anniversary of the Merghiny Lutheran Congregation held in the hall 14 February 1960.

first was an Annual Catholic Social, not common elsewhere at that time, and the second was a preponderance of RSA (Returned Soldiers Association) functions after the first world war. Thus, there was a memorial service on 12 March 1922 when a machine gun presented to the district was unveiled and at the same time enlarged photographs of deceased soldiers were unveiled. Then, on 9 May 1925, a lengthy report to the *West Coast Sentinel* described the Anzac service in the Petina hall as attracting 'a large throng of people' due to the influence of the local branches of the RSA which 'were the powerhouse and nerves of the movement'.[33]



Petina Hall opened in 1912 and later sold to the Catholic Church.

A further report on the activities at Petina hall in August 1925 highlighted the arrival of an entertainment in the Far West which was to be popular for several decades — the Children's Frolic.[34]

On 14 February 1919, what was described as a large crowd gathered to celebrate the opening of the Maltee Hall. The ceremony was performed by Mr Talbot and the *West Coast Sentinel* correspondent described the building as 'a nice stone room costing nearly 100 pounds'. Locally it was called the 'Hall that Jack' built in recognition of the main workers on its construction, Jack Schwarz, Jack Will and Jack Backshall. Others in the district contributed, but the preponderance of 'Jacks' was well remembered.

The first function in the hall was in the evening of its opening when a concert and dance was held. Performers at the concert were Miss Collins, Messrs Alden, McKenzie and Betts, Miss Warren, Miss Cuming, Mrs Shilton, Messrs Wanke, Paddick, Allen and McMillen.[35]

At Mudamuckla a hall was literally imported when the Waranda Anglican Hall, originally erected in 1912, was towed into Mudamuckla on a waggon drawn by a horse team. It arrived in good time for the visiting Bishop of Willochra, Bishop White, to conduct a confirmation service on 8 March 1925. The hall was known as St Andrew's Church Hall, and originally it was used for social as well as religious functions.

In 1927/28 what became popularly known as the 'big hall' was built in Mudamuckla. The contractor, Mr Bullock, was blown off the roof during its construction and broke his leg, but he managed to get back to work in time for the building to be opened on 25 May 1928. The opening ceremony was a fancy dress ball and many other functions followed afterwards. Thus, in July of 1928, a euchre tournament and dance was reported by the Mudamuckla correspondent to the *West Coast Sentinel*.[36] Prizewinners in the tournament were Mrs D Barker and Mr G Noske. Booby prizes went to Miss Burner and Mr P Will. Messrs P Flaherty and E Zippel acted as MC's for the dance and the music was supplied by Mrs Lynn and Mr Erdmann.

The wants of Denial Bay for a hall were supplied in 1892 by what was called McKenzie Hall about half a mile from William McKenzie's homestead.[37] It was used for church services, Sunday School, day school and later silent picture shows. Then, in 1903, an Agricultural Hall was built near McKenzies Landing and this was used as a local hall and school until 1912 when, with the town of Denial Bay laid out, serious thought was given to the erection of a substantial new building.

> *. . . we must have our Institute, an Institute to be proud of, one that we can point at and say 'That's our Institute, see what we can do.'.*
>
> DBS 14/11/1908

The local community, by now more then twenty years established, lifted its sights and aimed for an Institute, rather than a hall. This was a legacy from the Mechanic's Institute idea of providing education in accessible public buildings. By the end of the nineteenth century in Australia the concept had changed to the promotion of 'a public building, often housing a library, and providing rooms for meetings'.[38] Such a concept necessarily required something more substantial than a local hall with a good dance floor.

The project was undertaken by Messrs Christian Bros and, in July 1912, the steamer *Grace Darling* landed materials for the new building. The work was completed for an opening on 31 October 1912 performed by Dr Abbott. Celebrations on the day included a fancy dress football match, a concert, a Ball and an elaborate supper. The local correspondent for the *West Coast Sentinel* reported it in detail and boasted that the Institute Hall, at 60 feet by 28 feet, was the largest of its kind on the West Coast. 'Wunderlich' of rock face pattern covered the outside walls and the inside was lined with 'an ornate diaper pattern'. The hall, which had 'a lofty, stately and handsome appearance', cost approximately 450 pounds.[39]

At Fowlers Bay a variety of buildings were used as makeshift halls for many years. The town's ambience was more light hearted than towns further east; it was the last outpost of the Far West and it had a raw frontier style which was projected for many years by a cynical and witty correspondent to the *West Coast Recorder*. A typical report in November 1906 was:[40]

FOWLERS BAY, NOV. 5

Statistics for the year — births three, deaths one, marriages two, engagements thirteen, presentations three.
Imports — manufactures, packs, bags etc.
Exports — wheat, wool, eggs and skins
Population — at a standstill
Harvest prospects — good
Land Transactions — shady
Development of country — nil
Road repairs — nil.

Eventually, in 1919, a committee was formed to collect funds to build an Institute. Good progress was made, and G W Murray laid a foundation stone on 28 July 1922. Tom Giles and Alf May were two of the builders and, in January 1923, F J Smart formally opened the building. A dance followed when S Young was the M C and the waltzing competition was won by Miss Ivy Price and Mr E Attick. Other dances and entertainments followed regularly thereafter. The Rifle Club's annual dance shifted to the new venue and, in 1924, it was recorded that the club's captain F J Smart was not present for the first time in 17 years because of influenza.[41]

The Institute idea was also developed at Carawa at about this time and a small delapidated hall was replaced by the Carawa Institute in August 1924. A J Dunn, one of the earliest settlers in the district, was asked to perform the opening ceremony, and a Fancy Dress Ball followed.[42]



The Fowlers Bay Institute Hall opened in 1923.

In general terms, the first religious services were held in homes of the settlers and then moved into the community halls. Later, when the first farms were well established, the followers of different religious groups made strenuous efforts to erect churches in the frontier communities.

The first and the most enduring of these churches was the Bethlehem Lutheran Church 6 miles from the Denial Bay landing. Its strong congregation has published detailed accounts of its history which are here briefly summarised.[43]

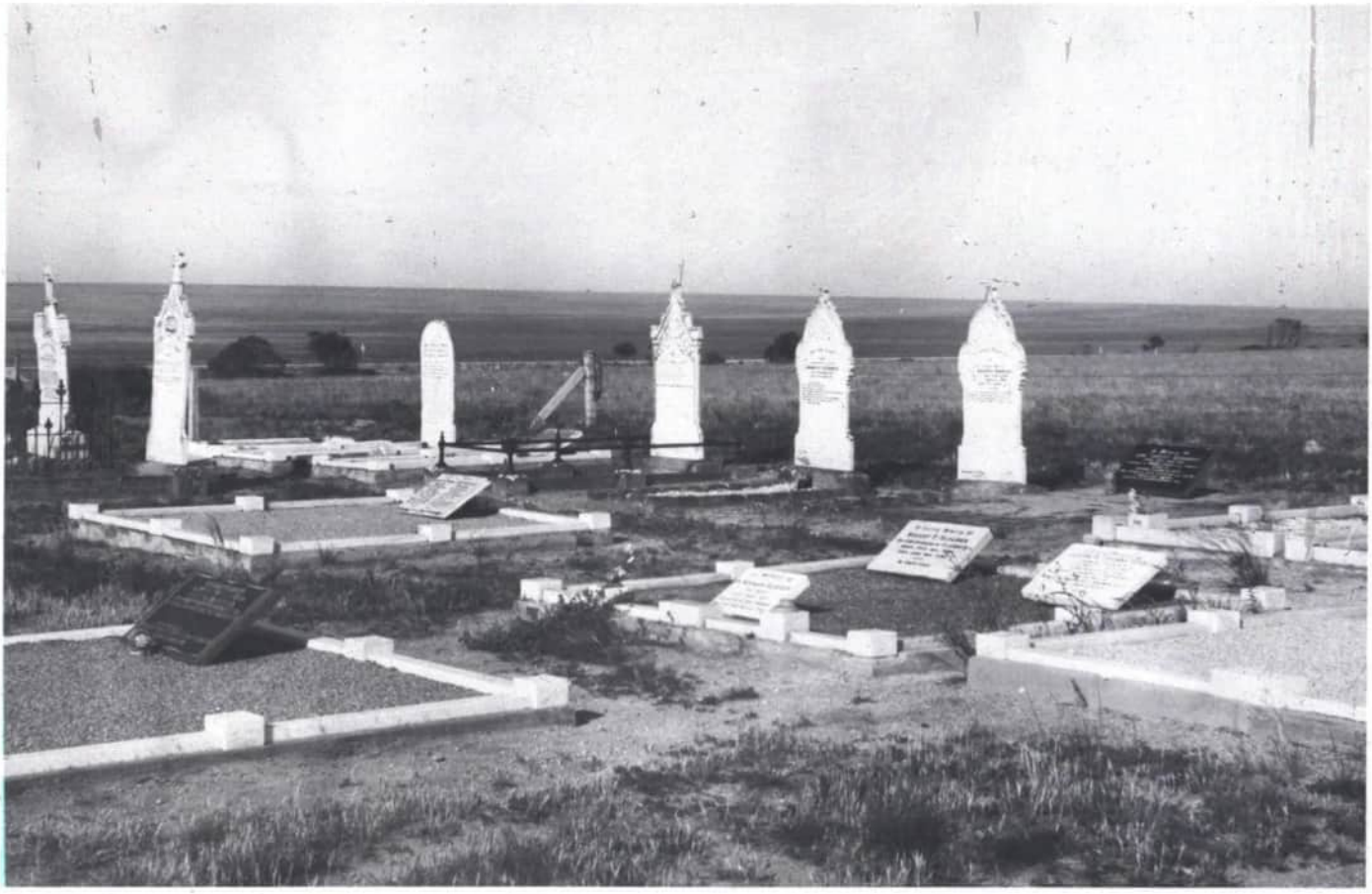
The land for the church and a Lutheran school was given by G Handtke and the building was dedicated on 30 August 1897 by Pastor Kempe from Adelaide. Mr Schubert was installed as teacher and, when Pastor Kempe returned to Adelaide, F H Kloeden and A Hoffrichter acted as lay-readers at regular Sunday services.

When Pastor Wiebusch was appointed to the Koonibba Mission Station in 1901 (see Chapter 13), he also served the Bethlehem Lutheran Church. This continued until 1908 when Pastor Ben Schwarz was installed as the first resident pastor for the church. School teachers in the period were Mr J Hansen, Mr Leske, Mr E Hansen, Miss Storch and Mr S Rudolph; but the school closed during the 1914–18 war.

In 1910 Pastor Schwarz had a residence alongside the church, taught in the school four days a week and had additional preaching places at Goode, Merghiny, Catt, Petina and Streaky Bay.

In 1920 the congregation built a new stone church which, with extensions, still stands today on the crest of a low hill with its cemetery alongside. Pastors continued to be supplied; but, in 1927, when St Pauls Lutheran Church opened in Ceduna, a parsonage was bought in that town and the district's Lutheran pastor took up residence there.

The last resting place of many of the German pioneers of the Far West, the Denial Bay Lutheran Church Cemetery.







Above left. Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Denial Bay.
Above. The Penong Methodist (now Uniting) Church built in 1911–12.

The Lutheran pastor's responsibility extended to Merghiny and Goode as well as Denial Bay. At Merghiny a congregation was started in 1910 by Messrs Hirte, Moody, Lutze and Bubner. It met in the Merghiny Hall after it was built in 1911 and there were some notable long serving members namely W J Bubner secretary and treasurer for 10 years and A Doecke treasurer for nearly 30 years and organist for 42 years.

The history of the Methodist church in the Far West is told by Reverend D T Cope in a chapter of the book *Faith on the Western Front*. He quotes from a Circuit Plan for 1900 to show that preaching places existed at that time at Penong, Bagster, Bookabie, Glen Boree, Murat Bay, Denial Bay, Charra, Kooringabbie, Coorabie and Fowlers Bay. In 1902 Smoky Bay, Chinta, Merghiny and Tallala were added.

The first Methodist building in the Far West was called the Penong Methodist Mission House. It was opened on 14 June 1902 by W McKenzie JP from Denial Bay and Rev F Davis was the first missioner to use it.[44] Later a Methodist Church was built, which was a long and difficult task begun with the laying of the foundation stone by Rev. V Roberts, President of the Methodist Conference in 1911. Joseph Oats assisted with a donation of land and the Reverend W O Harris worked extremely hard organising the building with the help of voluntary labour.

By November 1912 the task was complete and a final fund raiser, a Strawberry Fete, Bazaar and Promenade Concert, on Wednesday 13 November raised 60 pounds for the building fund. Mrs Marion Murray opened the bazaar and the concert featured Mrs S Freeman, Miss Roberts, Mrs Prider, Miss Murray, Messrs Blight, Dunnet, Bairnsfather and B and C Brooks.

On Sunday 17 November the official opening of the church was performed by Joseph Oats, 'one of the main workers for Methodism' in the area for 12–14 years. Rev C Doley from Adelaide preached the first sermon to a packed house.[45]

Bagster was a strong Methodist district that used a small school building constructed by local labour in 1897. The school closed in 1909 and, when the west wall of the building collapsed after a big rain in 1913, the local Methodists restored the structure and made it a church hall with a minister supplied from Penong.

At Merghiny a Methodist Church was built in 1911 and it also served as a local hall. Before this, services were held in the Bowell family home and Mrs Bowell gave one and a half acres of land for the church. The trustees for the building were W Bowell, J O Shorne, J W Bassham, T A Barnett, R P Symonds and Rev H H Fennell. Timber and iron was supplied by the Globe Timber

Mills Company in Adelaide and the erection of a building 25 feet by 15 feet began on April 20, 'thirteen chains from the Merghiny Well and facing the stock road'.

Mrs Bowell opened the new church on Saturday 10 June 1911 and celebrations for the day included a football match between Murat and Merghiny, tea in the new hall for 150 people, and choir singing in the evening under the baton of Mrs Stevens.[46]

Maltee people joined the Merghiny congregation until 1919. In that year their local hall was built and thereafter services were held at that location.

Before the town of Smoky Bay was laid out the Methodists in the area built a small church. It was timber framed and clad with small fluted iron on the outside and matchboard on the inside. Lay preachers and home missionaries held services at irregular intervals and, occasionally, an ordained minister from either Streaky Bay, Penong or Ceduna provided a special service.

The Anglican church relied heavily upon visiting ministers to the Far West, the first of whom appeared as early as 1869.[47] A church was built in the growing town of Ceduna and, in the early years, two were established in the small communities, one at Penong and one at Waranda Well (later sent to Mudamuckla). At Penong, the church was erected in 1909. It was a prefabricated building transported to the Far West by steamer in kit form. The wood and iron jig saw puzzle was easily assembled by local volunteers and, beneath the finished belfry on 21 September 1909, the building was dedicated as St Alpheges.

The Bishop of Willochra had oversight of St Alpheges and each Bishop usually managed to make at least one visit to what was the most remote western outpost of the Church of England in South Australia. Thus, the *West Coast Sentinel* recorded that Bishop White arrived by motor mail in August 1916 and was met by the church warden A Shipard. And, when Reverend H Woolnough had served his time at Penong, the Lord Bishop of Adelaide made a visit to lead a special farewell service in February 1914.[48]

The Reverend Welsh, who preceded Reverend Woolnough, received a more typical Far West send off when the members of his congregation entertained him and his family at a picnic at Point Sinclair in May 1913.[42] The Reverend Welsh was evidently a jolly fellow whereas the Reverend Woolnough, who left to return to England, had the temerity to preach his last sermon about the evils of drinking and gambling in Penong, which produced quite a stir in the town.

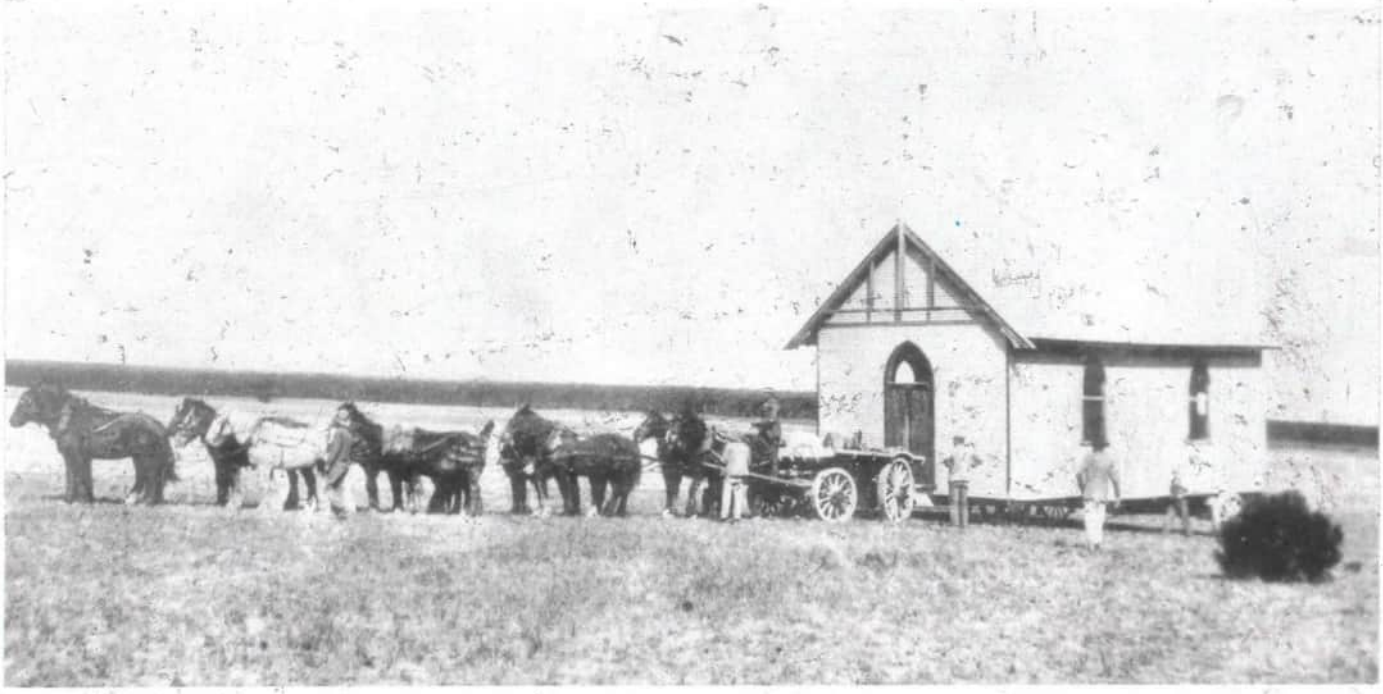


Mudamuckla Uniting Church in 1986, formerly the St Andrews Church of England.

At Waranda Well, W H Sedgley donated a piece of ground for a Church of England Hall. A committee was formed consisting of Messrs Sedgley, J A Milford and J McArthur (Secretary). The building was designed by Mr Sedgley jnr, an architect in Adelaide, and it was formally opened in January 1912 as the St Andrews Church Hall. There was a Saturday tea and concert for the opening presided over by Rev Canon Howard of Streaky Bay, who also took the first service on the Sunday.

As has already been mentioned, the St Andrews Hall was transferred to Mudamuckla in the 1920s.[49]

Followers of the Catholic religion were not sufficiently numerous to consider building churches in the small towns. They were supplied by travelling priests who conducted masses in farmhouses. Of these 'Boher Rua', the Mahar family home at Bookabie, was a favourite stopping place and Father Jorgensen celebrated the first mass there on one of his trips from Pt Lincoln in 1895. Later Father Kelly from Port Lincoln and Father Jim Dunne from Streaky Bay were visitors and, like Father Jorgensen, extended their pastoral care as far west as Fowlers Bay until a Catholic priest took up residence in Ceduna.



St Andrews, the Waranda Well Church of England Hall, being transported to Mudamuckla in 1925.

Because of the limited resources of many congregations, sharing arrangements were often made. This applied particularly to services held in a hall, as any denomination was free to hire and use it for a service. But, purpose built churches even shared; thus the Methodist Church at Merghiny was also used by the Lutherans; St Andrews Church of England at Mudamuckla was used by the Methodists, and the Methodist Church in Smoky Bay was used by the Church of England.

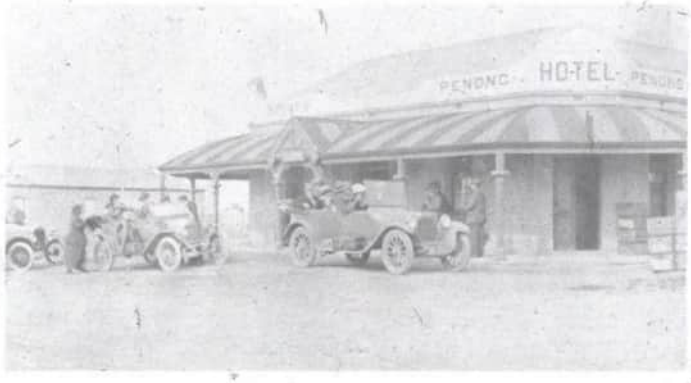
From the time the first communities began to develop there were opportunities for business entrepreneurs. Each town of reasonable size needed a general store or, more particularly, a business person who could arrange to supply foodstuffs, clothing and household goods to a farming population. If he or she could, at the same time, offer a range of agencies with Adelaide business houses so much the better. Supply and demand in the Far West was no different than elsewhere except that, sometimes, the supply was dependent upon the vagaries of a small coastal steamer reaching its port on time. A man at the forefront of this business challenge was William H Betts, native of Suffolk, England, gold miner in Queensland, timber cutter on the Murray River, dam sinker out of Wentworth, bridge builders' assistant at Port Augusta, storeman and manager at Port Adelaide. In 1883 he settled in Streaky Bay, began as a hotel keeper and then opened what was to become the first of a large chain of general stores.[50]

Betts, in partnership with H W Darby, opened a store in Fowlers Bay as soon as the township was laid out. The South Australian Directory information for Fowlers Bay from 1900 to 1925 indicates that H W Darby or W H Betts, at different times, were involved in the following business operations; the store; the Globe Hotel; the South Australian Savings and State Bank agencies; W H Betts Ltd, merchants; Betts and Co hotelkeepers; W H Betts Ltd storekeepers.

H W Darby and his family left Fowlers Bay in 1906, 'beloved and respected by all'[51]. But he retained his interest in the Betts family company and returned to the town in the 1920s.

Penong is now drawn into the charmed circle for the business of Lashman and Co which was sold by its creditors a short time ago has been purchased by the firm of Betts and Co.

DBS 15/5/09





The Penong Hotel during the period George Spinks had it 1917–1944 and as it was in 1986.

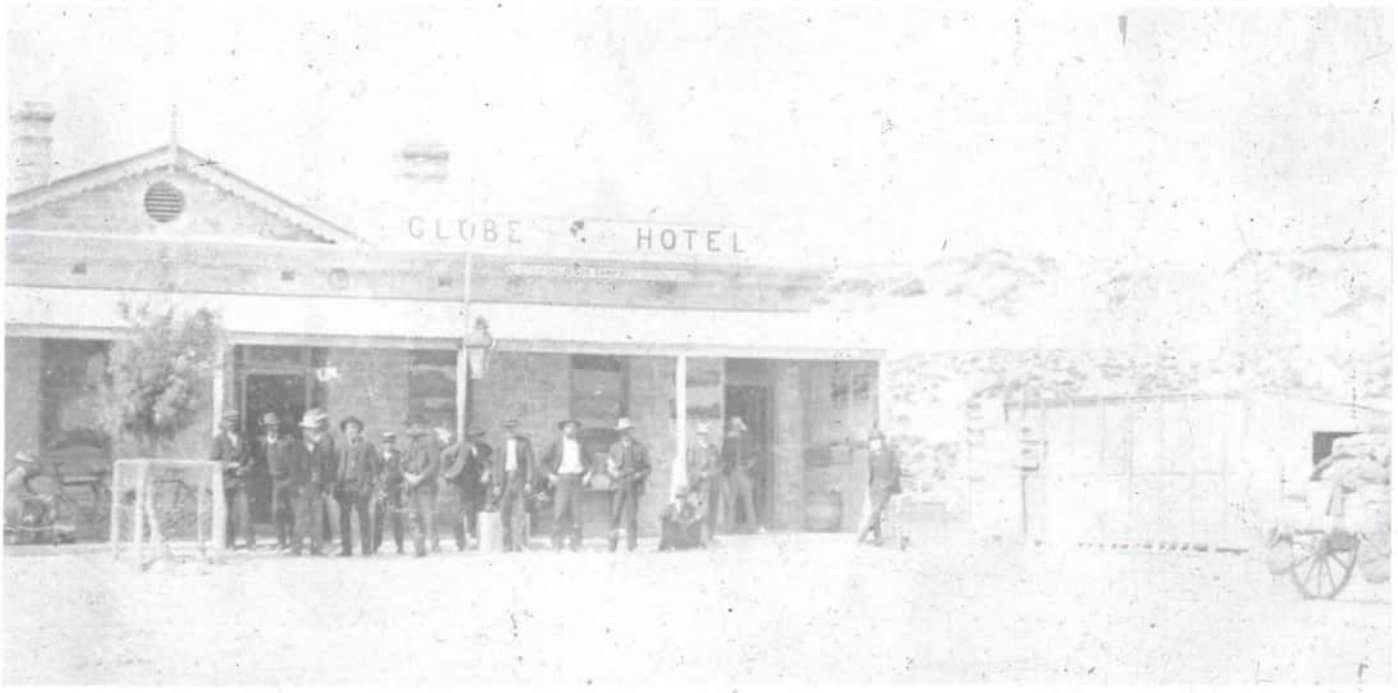
W H Betts' store at Murat Bay is discussed in Chapter 8. It grew to be the largest in the Far West, and others operated at Denial Bay and at Penong. At Denial, the store was run by capable managers such as Henry Brown and Roy Humphreys, and agencies were held for the Bank of Adelaide, the State and Savings Banks, and the West Coast Shipping Company.

The Betts' store in Penong was a late arrival. It replaced one started by Lashman Singh and was operating by 1915. As at other localities, the store secured the important agencies of the State and Savings Banks.

It was only at Fowlers Bay that Betts seemed to have enjoyed a monopoly, although for a short time in the 1890s C. Beck had a rival store. At Denial Bay he had competition from the firm of John Darling and Son which, in addition to being wheat buyers, used their own ships the *Jessie Darling* and *Grace Darling* to carry general goods for their store. In 1915, which was about the peak year for Denial Bay's development, the business competition must have been fierce. Besides Betts and John Darling, separate agencies existed for Adelaide Steamship Company, (H. Brown), S A Farmer's Co-op. Union Ltd. (W A Thiselton) and Jas. Wardle and Co., wheat buyers (S. Lindsay).

During its hopeful years Denial Bay had the Federal Hotel and John Feltus Burke was the first licensee. When he married Hilda Haseldine of Athenna in February of 1908 he was in the fortunate position of being able to hold his wedding reception in his own establishment.[52]

The Globe Hotel at Fowlers Bay when E H Campbell was the licensee in 1910.



At Penong the first store was started in 1904 by A B C Murray who appointed a capable manager, W B Prider, and constructed buildings which today are part of the Penong Hotel. When A B C Murray died in 1908, Mr Prider, who, by then was a much respected local citizen, built a general store of his own. The Murray store merged into the hotel when it was built in 1910. Tom Burke from Denial Bay came to be the first proprietor and J Dorward, from Streaky Bay was the builder.

In an unfortunate postscript to the opening of the hotel in November 1910, Mr Dorward, while waiting to catch the steamer back to Streaky Bay, fell off the Fowlers Bay jetty, hit his head on some of the woodwork and died instantly.[53]

The hopeful years for Penong lasted much longer than for Denial Bay, which had to contend with the rise of Ceduna 10 miles away. Penong had no similar opposition and was therefore seen to be a more stable business community. Hence it attracted a variety of entrepreneurs such as Carl Williams and W G Wiseman blacksmiths, W G Kelly carpenter, Kelly Bros. blacksmiths, and J F Schollerman, wheelwright.

In the smaller localities most of the business activity emanated from a general store which sometimes included the post office. At Bookabie A L C Gale had a general store but he also had an extensive sheep grazing property. Mrs B M Kreusler had a general store with her post office at Mudamuckla and Fred Lloyd had a similar establishment at Smoky Bay.

At Coorabie Mrs A M Cabot was listed as a storekeeper by the South Australian Directory in 1920, Robert Nicol was an auctioneer and agent and J C Simmons was a blacksmith. By 1925 Robert Nicol J P was advertising in bold print that he was an Agent, Storekeeper, Auctioneer etc.

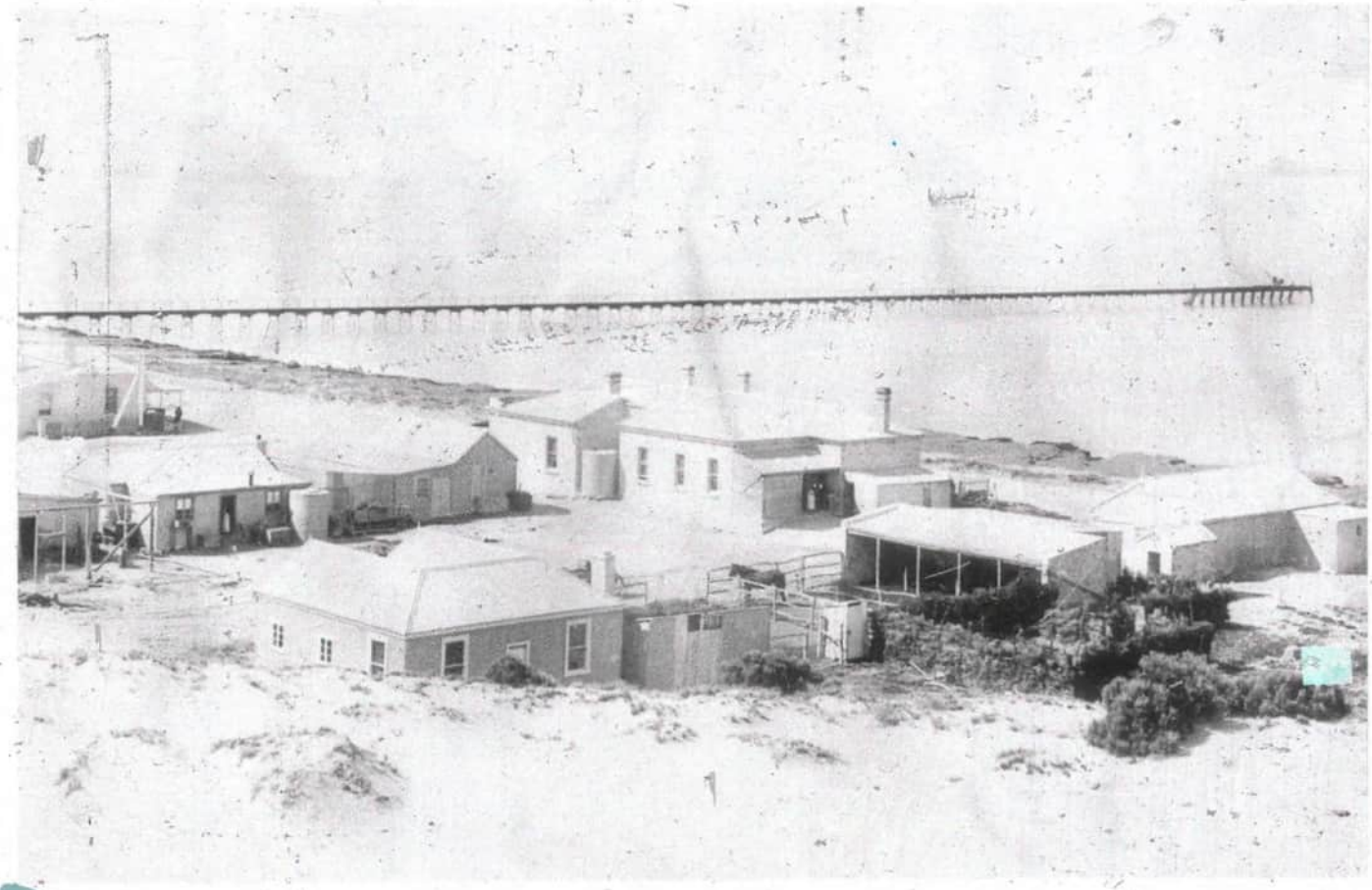
Fowlers Bay also attracted a sprinkling of minor business identities. F J Smart was the most enduring. He was a Wheat and General Commission agent plus (later) a storekeeper and accountant. A O Dignum was a saddler and William Beattie was an upholsterer. But, the focal point of much of the activity in the town was the Globe Hotel opened in 1892 with James Riddle as the first licensee. Subsequent operators were, H W Darby, E H Campbell, L Laurenti and then H W Darby again in the 1920s.



Federal Hotel, Denial Bay (now demolished).



The 'Oster' photograph of Penong 1913 which is in the Mortlock Library. Anjutabie Flat is flooded and the numbers refer to buildings as follows: 1 Store (Betts?), 2 Store (Prider's?), 3 Methodist Church, 4 Anjutabie Flat, 5 Hotel, 6 Hall, 7 House of Methodist Parson, 8 Police Station. This information is written in German on the back of the photo.



Portion of Fowlers Bay 1909. The Globe Hotel is central. All the buildings surrounding it except to the extreme left (which is the telegraph station) no longer exist — the area is covered by encroaching sand dunes.

In addition to social contacts via entertainments in the local halls and activities at the local churches, a great deal of interaction between the people in the small communities was achieved through sport. Here the earliest experiences were cricket matches on dirt pitches, but, later, most of the community were at some time or other involved in football, tennis, rifle shooting, athletic sports and horse racing.

It was natural for farmers, proud of their horses, to be interested in racing contests, and a host of annual meetings sprang up to satisfy this interest. The first of these were regular meetings at Yalata Station. These and many others were picnic race meetings which combined athletic sports. For example, at Penong on 3 March 1905, 200 people were present for a day of horse racing and general sports.[54] But, later, race meetings were more formalised as seven or eight event programmes, even though the number of good horses was small and many of them ran in two or three races. The Denial Bay Jockey Club's race meetings around 1910 were popular days of this sort even though the 'course' was often a dusty paddock lent by a local farmer. In 1913 the *West Coast Sentinel* noted that the event took place on A Hoffrichter's course, and this was used for several years.

The picnic nature of many of the days, the unplanned courses and the poorly trained horses, were sometimes a recipe for disaster, and this was the case at Chinta in 1918. Harry Kreusler, a well known Ceduna photographer and capable local rider, lost control of his young horse during an event and was knocked to the ground when the animal veered off the narrow track and careered through the adjoining scrub. Kreusler was killed in this accident — an episode that was greatly regretted all along the West Coast.[55]

But, the popularity of horse racing did not diminish. There were always potential local champions wanting to be tried and 'outside' horses from as far

afield as Streaky Bay and Elliston occasionally made visits in the hopes of winning some prizemoney. At such times the contests were keen and on-course totalizators, sponsored by the organising clubs, usually did good business. A sample of the popularity for race meetings can be given for 1921 when the following were held: Charra Picnic Race Meeting, Murat Bay Race Meeting, Wandana North Picnic Races, Denial Bay Picnic Races and Hopetoun (Fowlers Bay) Picnic Race meeting.

Athletic sports at picnic meetings were always popular events for New Years Day or other public holidays. The first Athenna Annual Sports were held on New Years Day 1906 on the recreation ground adjoining the public hall.[56] The Smoky Bay Athletics Club ran meetings for a few years beginning in 1910; its third annual meeting on 4 July 1913 was concluded with a dinner in the community's new hall.[57]

At Fowlers Bay the New Years Day Sports were held at Kent Town. By 1913 the day was a well organised event with a very active committee comprising Patron G Murray, President F R Brown, Secretary-Treasurer J Dick and committee D Riddle, W Wheadon, F Smart, C Dolling and J Hanson.[58]

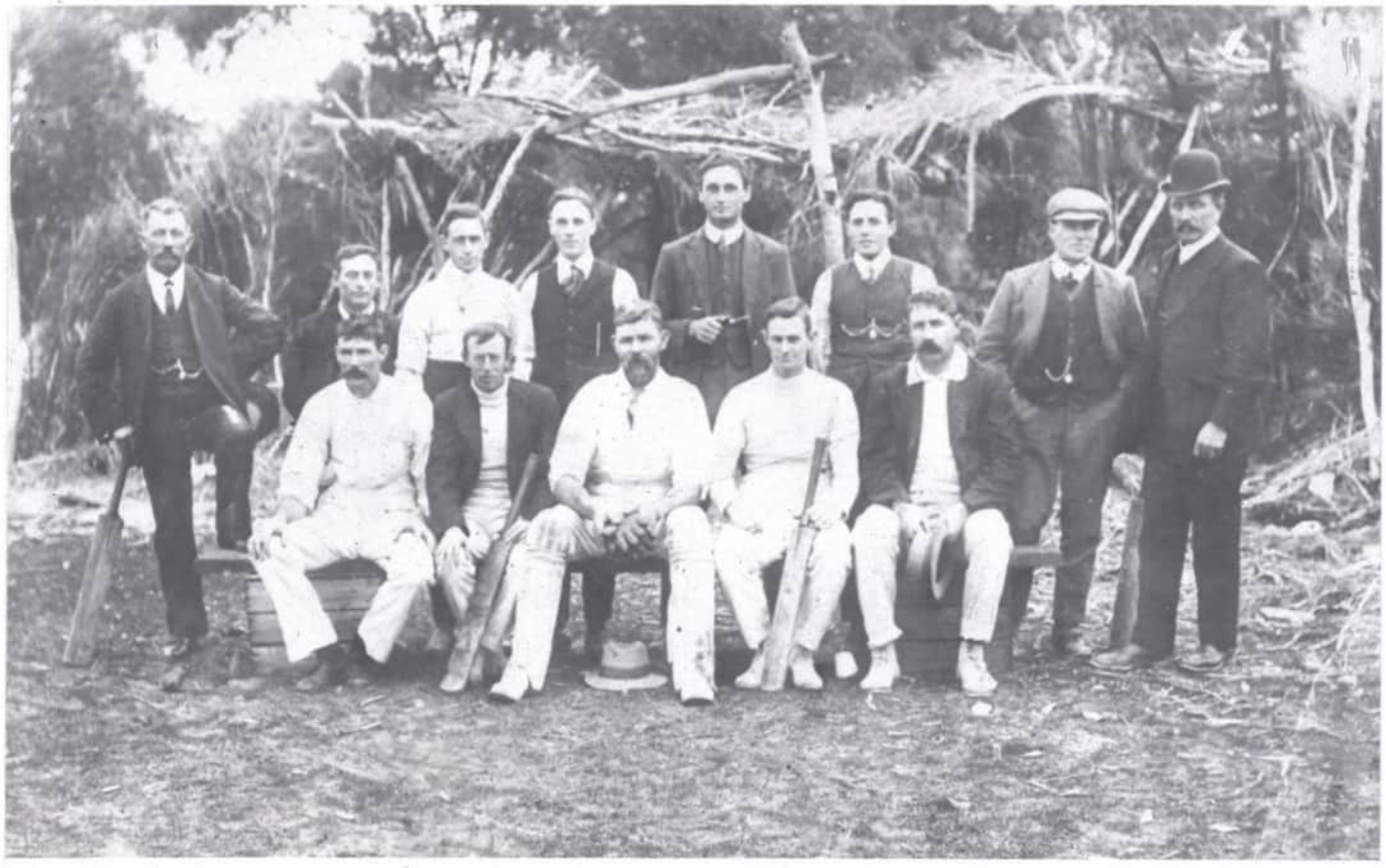
Laura Bay was another locality that enjoyed well organised New Years Day sports. It was a favourite picnic day for dozens of farming families that travelled to the sports, and to the seaside, in their horse-drawn buggies. Laura Bay's Athletic Club meetings began in 1911 and in its tenth year, 1921, it was one of at least six meetings for that year. The others were the Charra Athletic Sports at Woolshed held in February, the Petina Sports in August, the O'Loughlin Sports held near Marbra Tank in September, the Penong Sports and the Murat Bay Sports.

Charles Brooks, a boy from 'Seaview Farm' Charra, made his name as an athlete at Far West sports meetings. In 1925 he completed his schooling at

Why cannot the people of Denial Bay band together to make a suitable place for bathing? Why cannot they erect dressing rooms whence people might step becoming clothed, and enter the water promiscuously?

DBS 6 Nov. 1909

An early Far West cricket team. It competed with Streaky Bay. F W Betts second from left at back.



Adelaide High School, won the State championships for high jump and hurdles and, later, went on to have a distinguished career in the teaching of Physical Education in South Australia.

The traditional sporting seasons in the early days of farming were subordinate to the farming seasons. There was virtually no organised sport during harvesting or seeding and in the 'quiet' periods of the farmer's year cricket, football and tennis were often all played at the same time in the winter months.

Cricket was, at first, a friendly match between two scratch sides, but sometimes opportunities were seized for a more serious match against, in some cases, very unlikely opponents. In September of 1905 a Penong team was challenged by a team made up of A B C Murray's shearers — and the shearers won.[59] A month before, the Vermin Proof Fencers had challenged Bookabie to a game but lost. A notable feature of the game, however, was that A Nicholls took a hat trick.[60]

Bagster, Woolshed and Penong had many friendly matches in the years before 1910. Mr Stiggants was Captain of Bagster and played with a bright red sash around his waist. His team included George Bassham, Jim Gravestock, Will and Charlie Roberts and Charlie Brown. Penong's players included representatives from well known families such as the Richardsons, Edwards, Shipards and Oats. And, from Woolshed, there were the Dentons, Shipways, Wrights, Haseldines and Bennetts.

The occasional scratch matches and inter-town matches were sometimes reported in the *West Coast Sentinel*, and it is noticeable that very few batsmen scored many runs. Undoubtedly, the makeshift pitches used by the teams were no help for scoring centuries, so it was particularly noteworthy when G Lovelock made 101 for Smoky Bay. But, this was in 1923 and by then a Western Flinders Cricket Association had been formed. Teams that were represented were Wirrulla, Nunjikompita, Smoky Bay and Wanderers (later Perlubie).

Tennis seems to have been the most popular of the ball handling sports in the early years of farming. It required a community to prepare a single dirt court and, thereafter, it was an activity which both husbands and wives could enjoy in a picnic style tennis day when a neighbouring team came along for a contest. Bookabie formed a tennis club in July of 1903. James Dunn was President, A Gale was Captain and Miss Drever was Secretary-Treasurer.[61] Charra had its first meeting for a tennis club at J Dunnet's home in August 1906. Twelve people attended and the club was off to a good start. This probably explained a comment in the same issue of the *West Coast Recorder* which was, 'the cricket club here (Charra) went bust last year and has not been resurrected.'[62]

Petina had a tennis court laid and a club formed in 1908. It went in to recess for a while but was revived in 1920 when H Howard was Captain and W Stone was Secretary.[63] Carawa's club began in 1912 with Captain Mr Dawe, Secretary, Mrs E P Dunn, vice captain Mrs B Potter, President Mr A Dunn, Vice President Mr G Barclay and Patron Mr J Salmon. The report of the inaugural meeting specified that the club's colours would be blue and white.[64]

A Penong club was formed in July 1914 with G B McLeod, President and Mrs Pearson, Secretary. This step was no doubt taken because further west a full association had been formed in 1913. Penong must have felt left out of things when Wookata, Coorabie, Kooringabbie, Tallala and Fowlers Bay were all enjoying regular competition. Indeed, Coorabie became something of the tennis capital of the Far West when it held a tournament every year. In 1915 gold medals were presented to the winners A H Talbot and Edith Townsend.

Opposite page.
Above. Tennis players at Smoky Bay c 1912. Group includes Harry Dodd, Jack Gregor, Bert Bartlett, Frank Gregor, Joe Blumson, Harold Thomas, Mary Blumson, Mrs J Blumson, Lindsay Gregor, Mrs J Gregor, Mrs F Gregor. Children Gladys Gregor, Jean Ettridge.
Below. O'Loughlin Tennis Team 1915. Standing: J Schultz, W Post, Elsa Bergmann, Herman Kloeden, E E E Lutz. Sitting: Elva Schultz, Linda Kloeden, Ida Hasting, Pearl Hoffrichter, Selma Bergmann, Olga Hasting, Charlie Bergmann, Max Kloeden.





Minutes of the Merghiny Tennis Club 29/7/30

Proposed H Hoobin, Sec. K Lowe

That players be requested to play in heel-less shoes.

Carried
J E LOWE PAPERS

Athenna's tennis club was started in July 1916. E Gersch was President, S W Symonds Vice President, Miss L Ramall Secretary, E Stanway Captain and F Skinner Vice Captain. And, at Smoky Bay, G Lovelock eventually pushed things along in 1923 when he called a public meeting to form a club. A E Gregor became Patron, G Lovelock President, N Hunt Captain and Mr Milne Secretary.[65]

The *West Coast Recorder* informed its readers that 'the first football match ever played at Charra in history' was on 15 June 1908 when Charra defeated Denial Bay 3–7 to 2–2. There were undoubtedly other matches about this time and a year later a County of Way Association was formed. It had six clubs, Penong, Charra, Koonibba Mission, Denial Bay, Murat Bay and Goode. Thomas Freeman of Bagster was the first President, and H Brown of Betts' store, Denial Bay, was Secretary.[66] Merghiny also had a team in 1909 and a note in the *West Coast Sentinel* indicated that, at its fourth annual meeting (1913) the elected officals were J McArthur JP, Patron, J B Talbot JP, President, E W Wheaton Capt, W J Mulroney Secretary — Treasurer.

If the farmer's skill with horses had a spin off in the popularity of race meetings then skill with a rifle (much needed in the early years of dingo, kangaroo and rabbit troubles) had a spin off in the popularity of rifle clubs. Here two clubs were outstanding and each was dominated by an organiser well known in the area. At Fowlers Bay it was F J Smart, the acknowledged crackshot of the district. His club, which endured for more than twenty years, was supported in 1912 by D Riddle, J Darby, R Scott, R Winter, F Underwood, J Hansen and B Schmidt.[67] Others who were active in the club ten years later were J H Murray, C T Giles, E J Oats, C F Dolling, H V Hobbs, J H Litster and A B Coad.

Penong has started a Jockey Club with over 30 members.

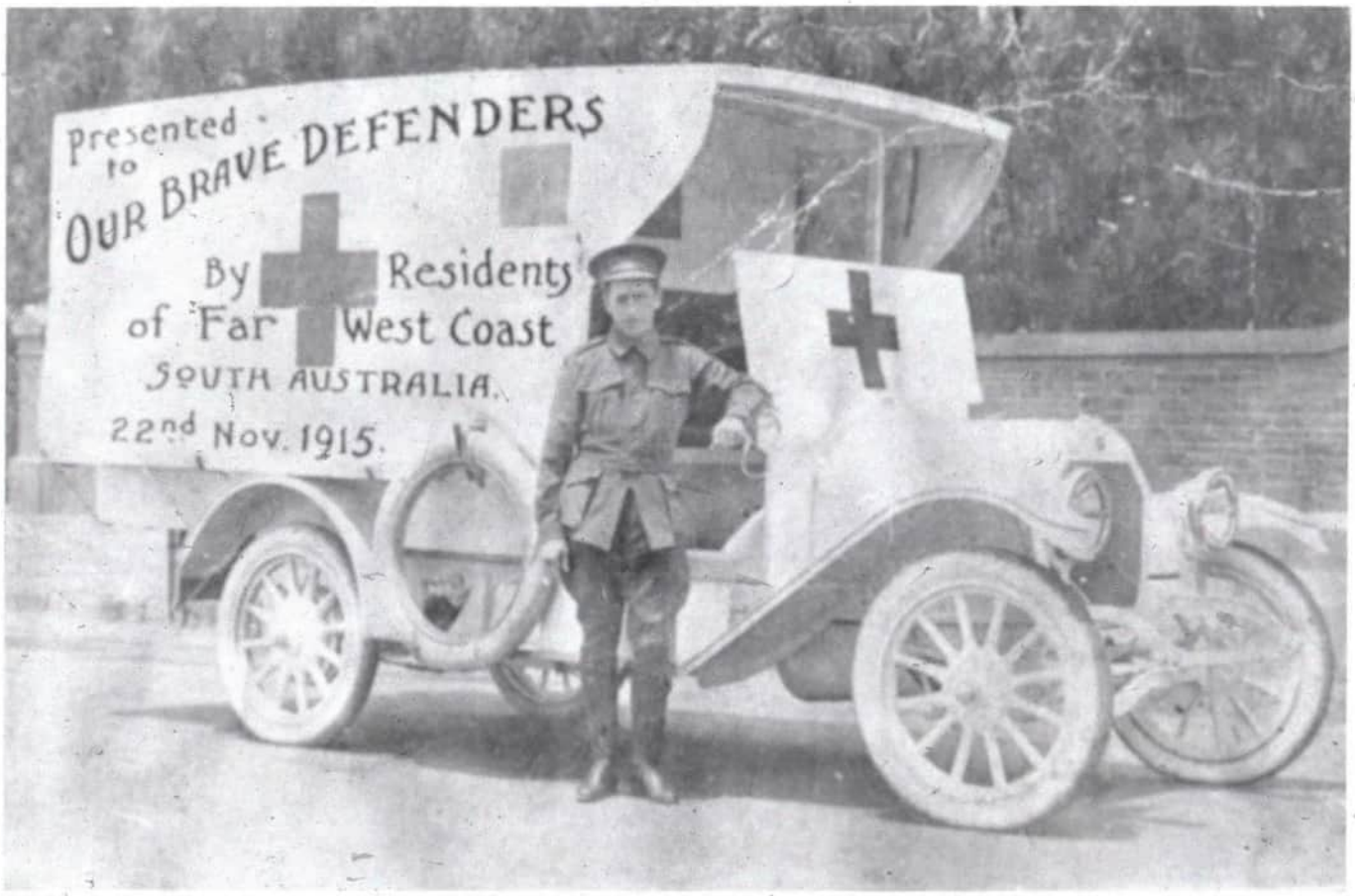
DBS 13 Nov. 1909

There were rifle clubs in Murat Bay and Penong, but the second strong club in the small communities was at Carawa. Here the driving force was W G Lewis, Captain of the Club. He was a consistently good scorer and so was his Secretary F O Lewis and his Treasurer R Barclay.

During the years of the first World War organised sport was largely abandoned because many of the young people went off to fight overseas. In place of parochial pride for sporting prowess the *West Coast Sentinel* switched to patriotic fervour. It regularly reported news of departures to the front, obituaries for those who paid the supreme sacrifice, and welcome home activities for those who returned. At the same time, it published a list of those who were killed or missing on active service and continually updated it. The list below comes from a December 1917 edition of the paper.[68]

THE EXPEDITIONARY FORCES

Killed: Perry M Young, Boree; Horace Coppins, Ronald Knight, Denial Bay; Ivan Hunt, Clarence C Hunt; William P Stevens, R E Will, W Sandercock, W Collins, Murat Bay; R L Winter, Nundroo; Percy Price, Penong; Charles H Lane, Charles Meffert, Petina; Frank N Drew, Fowlers Bay; W O Kloeden, Denial Bay; Benjamin Whyborn, Denial Bay; C H Page, Smoky Bay; C Fisk, Coorabie; F K Martin, Athenna; C H Stevens, Coorabie; R A Wheaton, Waranda Well; A Woods, Merghiny; J Rose, J W Turner, Petina; E J Richardson, Penong; Arthur Penna, Petina; Colin McArthur, Bert Place, Murat Bay; J Tucker, Charra; R R Symonds, Maltee; L G Cardy, Petina.



The ambulance bought for the first World War from funds raised in the Far West.

Prisoners in Germany: P W Symonds, Merghiny; B Lynn, Waranda Well.

Missing: E C Baker, Petina; J Watson, Waranda Well.

There were many examples of local heroes being killed in the war and sincere sympathy was always extended to the grieving relatives. The case of the two sons of Mr and Mrs Thomas Hunt from near Murat Bay was possibly the saddest. The boys were killed in action within a few weeks of each other and the *West Coast Sentinel* spoke for the district when it said: 'Our hearts go out in deepest sympathy'.[69]

Amongst the many fund raising projects for the war, the one which attracted the most attention was the ambulance appeal. Most of the small communities had dances and concerts for this and Charra, for example, contributed 10 guineas after a dance at the Woolshed Hall in November 1915. Penong, at about the same time, had accumulated 92 pounds for the fund. All the money was pooled, and on 27 November 1915, a fully equipped ambulance was handed to the army in Adelaide by J G Moseley M P on behalf of the people from the Far West Coast, a fact which was recorded on an inscription plate attached to the vehicle. The total cost, 325 pounds, was over-subscribed.

After the war, memorials in the form of rolls of honour were erected in many of the local halls. Merghiny led the way in August 1917 when Mesdames R P Symonds and Zippel unveiled the Merghiny, Maltee and Waranda Well Honour Roll in the Merghiny hall. At Penong, Mrs C J Leopold, who had two sons at the war, performed the unveiling in the hall in June of 1918. At Charra Woolshed hall, Mrs R Tudor performed the ceremony in March of 1920, and in April of 1921 Mrs G W Murray in the Coorabie hall unveiled the roll which had been donated by her husband for the Coorabie and Fowlers Bay districts.[70]

Hundreds of small human dramas were played out in the hopeful years of the small communities. On the sad side there were deaths and farewells while the joyous occasions of births and marriages were the counterbalance. A few settlers found their life on the edge of poverty and despair too much to stand, so they left the district and, in one or two extreme cases, they worried themselves into mental breakdowns or took the ultimate step and committed suicide. Thus, James Aldridge was found to be of unsound mind in 1913 and was committed to the Parkside Lunatic Asylum, and Henry Horn, a lonely settler in the backblocks, shot himself in his makeshift hut. The body was not found for several weeks and in, a gruesome description given by the *West Coast Sentinel*, neighbours had great difficulty placing the decomposed remains in a coffin before burying it near the hut.

Farewells to respected 'Coasters' were part of the social life of the district. Everybody who left was given some sort of a send off, but the old pioneers who left were usually given lavish turnouts. Thus, in 1905, when Mr & Mrs W O Gale left Denial Bay there was a public meeting at which W McKenzie, J Dunnet and J H Smith 'spoke of the sterling qualities' of both Mr and Mrs.[71] In 1910 Mr and Mrs Clark were given a farewell at the Globe Hotel, Fowlers Bay, and 60 residents attended to say goodbye to their postmaster of 17 years. He received a gold watch as a token of regard and esteem.[72] Mr and Mrs J Oats had a farewell when they left Penong in 1917. They were much loved in the district and many people were saddened because Mr Oats, who had been in ill health for some time, found it necessary to leave and live in Adelaide. Also, in Penong there was a big farewell to Mr W Saunders in March of 1919. He had been a resident for thirty years and 'connected with every movement for the welfare of Penong'.[73] And, at Mudamuckla in March of 1925, Mr Noske was farewelled after a stay of 12 years. He was going to Victoria to continue farming.[74]

A very touching 'farewell' was given to J H Smith in March of 1911. After many months of treatment in Adelaide, a terminally ill Mr Smith came home to Nadia via Denial Bay to die. His friends and neighbours, mindful of his great community service, (he was the first Secretary of the Denial Bay Medical Board) presented him with a gold watch and chain. Mr Smith shook hands with every person present and made a fine speech. He died on 27 September 1911.[75]

Amongst the joyous occasions there was no greater celebration than the Murray-Mudge wedding on 19 April 1921.[76] Jessie Hillam, youngest daughter of Mr and Mrs George Murray of Yalata station, married John Alwyn, eldest son of Mr and Mrs T Mudge of Streaky Bay. As the *West Coast Sentinel* noted, 'the happy couple were members of two of the oldest and best known families on the Coast'. The ceremony was conducted by the Rev J D Drabble of Murat Bay in a temporary church erected on the western frontage of the Yalata homestead. The bridesmaids were Misses Maggie Murray and Ethel Mudge sisters of the bride and groom respectively. Mr Tom Kean and Mr Doug Warmington, friends of the groom from his A I F days, were the male attendants. Three hundred guests sat down to a sumptuous wedding breakfast and Mr R Nicol acted as toastmaster. After the breakfast there was dancing in portion of the homestead that had been converted into a ballroom. The house and verandahs were beautifully decorated featuring the 'celebrated Yalata maiden-hair fern', and a specially pleasing feature of the function was a corroborree by the natives living in and around Yalata.

By the mid 1920s many of the small communities were getting to the end of their hopeful years. Up to 30 years of farming had not brought general prosperity and, instead of the population growing, it was declining as more and more families left the land to go to Adelaide or other parts of the state. Also,

more and more were moving to the growing centre of Ceduna — Thevenard. The many small towns from Coorabie to Carawa gained no new buildings. At best they were at a standstill, and in most cases they had begun their decline.

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65 WCS 25/7/16; 2/6/23
66 WCR 7/7/09
67 WCS 26/10/12
68 WCS 1/12/17
69 WCS 26/8/16
70 WCS 25/8/17; 26/6/18; 28/3/20; 9/4/21
71 WCR 10/1/05
72 WCR 24/12/10
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8. Ceduna — The Favoured One 1892–1925

From the perspective of 1987, it is an interesting phenomenon of the Far West's history that, on the shores of Murat Bay, two towns were established within ten miles of each other; the first Denial Bay, faded into obscurity after a promising start, while the second, Ceduna, grew to be the dominating town of the region.

Denial Bay was the first town because of the placement of the first farming Hundreds in 1889 — they were all west of a landing place which W McKenzie developed to assist new farmers coming to the area. It was logical for a settlement to grow up at that landing place, and although there was no planned government town there until 1910, it was nevertheless the convenient shipping and shopping place for all the wheat farmers in the Hundreds of Moule, Bartlett, Catt and Horn.

On the other side of Murat Bay there was another landing place used by the telegraph line builders in the late 1870s and the Wilgena and Gawler Ranges wool exporters in the 1880s and 1890s. But, this landing place was not utilised by wheat farmers until the Hundreds of Bonython, Goode and Wandana were surveyed in 1893, some four years after Denial Bay had started.

Denial Bay thus had an initial advantage of four years development, but it failed to sustain its advantage because Ceduna, the town built at the other landing, obtained several significant bonuses as the years went by. First, it had slightly deeper water offshore than at Denial Bay and this, plus the fact that Denial Bay had built an offshore landing, made it easier for Ceduna to qualify for a jetty, which it got in 1903. Later, the deep sea port was placed at Thevenard, an obvious bonus for Ceduna, the railway came through Ceduna to the deep sea port and the Tod River water pipeline came to Ceduna-Thevenard and went no further. Thus, the good fortunes of history made Ceduna 'the favoured one', and it went ahead to prosperity while Denial Bay languished in its shadow.

The first government survey for a town on the shores of Murat Bay was done for the Hundred of Bonython by N W Pethick in June 1892.[1] It was placed on the northern side of the bay between Low and Round Points about mid way between Denial Bay and the Ceduna of today. It was a town of 30 allotments sandwiched between low, coastal cliffs and a samphire swamp; a note on the surveyor's plan reads 'better site four miles east to be borne in mind'.

'As usual Denial plays second fiddle to Murat. How long will Denial stand that kind of thing.'

DBS 22/1/1910

This small town never developed. Eventually it was cancelled and, many years later, the land became an Aboriginal Reserve known first as Duck Ponds and now as Half Way Camp.

By February 1896, farmers were making good use of the landing place on the eastern side of Murat Bay to export their wheat, and it was during such an operation that they gathered together to send the following petition to the Surveyor General's Office.[2]

PETITION

We the undersigned resident farmers in and around Murat Bay Landing respectfully request that the Government grant the surveying of a Township and erection of a Telegraph Office at aforesaid landing. The place is about central between Streaky and Fowlers Bays.

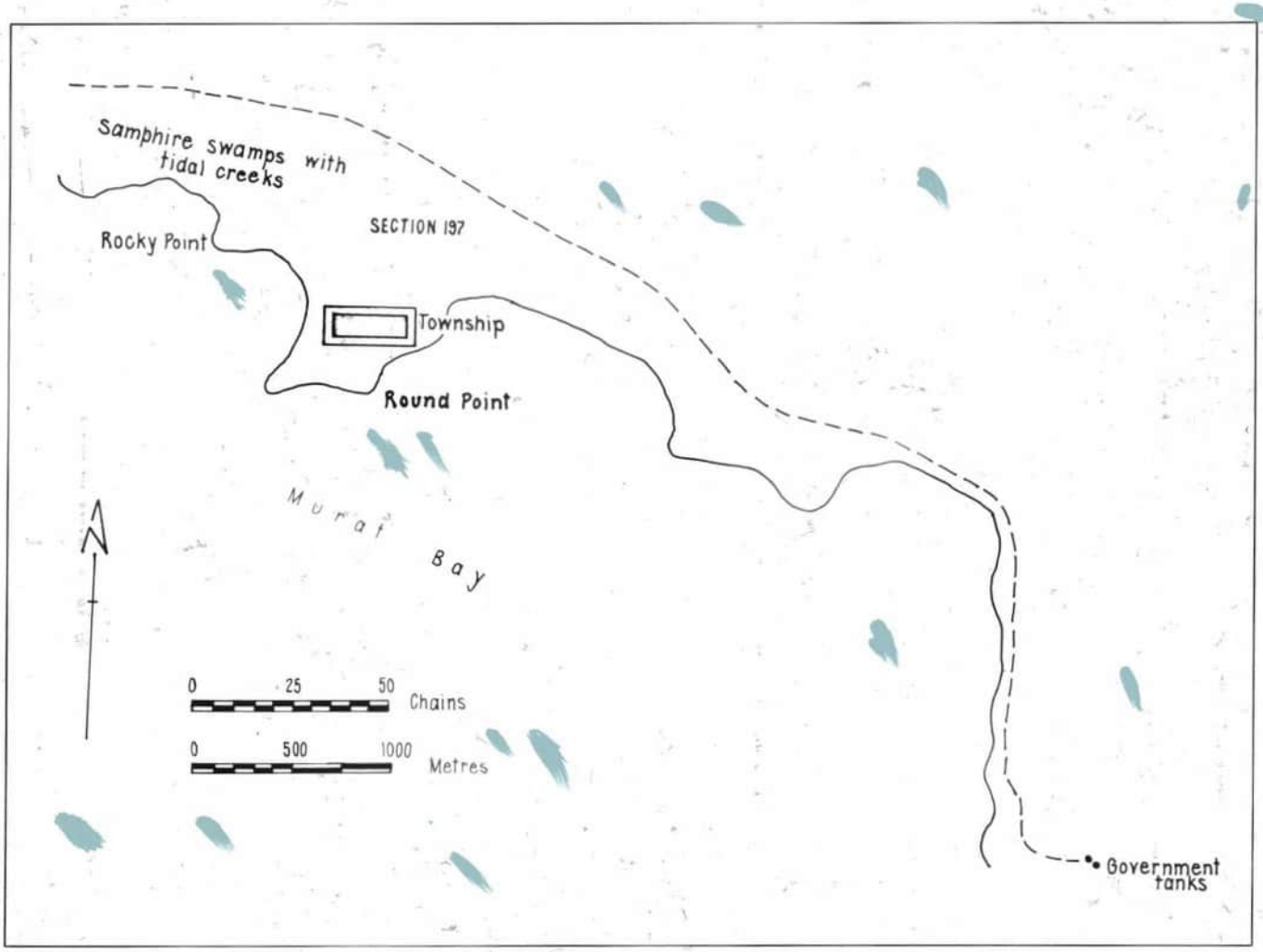
We are at present at a great disadvantage without any means of communications by wire other than weekly.

Wheat-market fluctuating as it does invariably during the middle of the week does not give us any opportunity of disposing of our produce to best possible advantage — by this we mean that prices are up and down again before we are cognisant of it.

We expect to ship about 8000 bags of wheat here next season, quantity increasing in proportion every year as land is cleared.

Trusting you will at once give the latter request very earnest consideration also that of Surveying Township in which case as in duty bound your petitioners will every pray.

The first survey for a town on the shores of Murat Bay in 1892. It was not taken up; a note on the plan said 'better site four miles east to be borne in mind'. Source: Survey Books, Dept. of Lands.



G Eastwood, farmer
G A Tonkin, farmer
C McInerheny, farmer
T Collins, farmer
Joel Lowe, farmer
William Symonds, farmer
H D Male, farmer
J Eastwood, farmer
E A Watson, farmer
J E Lowe, farmer
Thos F S Lloyd, farmer
T McInerheny, farmer
? Kelsh
E W Watson, farmer
W J Crocker, farmer
A Collins, farmer
William Tulloch, master mariner
Jas. Tomney, farmer
(unclear), farmer
J Fletcher, farmer
J Pitt ?, blacksmith
S Fletcher, farmer
J W Hirte, farmer
C Collins, farmer
W J Byrne, farmer
R Hatcher, farmer
A Dunn, farmer
R Barclay, grazier
J T Potter, farmer

The petition was not successful, so the farmers tried again, this time in October 1899 with a slightly different strategy viz.[3]

Murat Bay October 15th, 1899

To the Hon. the Commissioner of Crown Lands, Adelaide.

Sir,

We the undersigned residents in and around this district do respectfully request that you may cause a township to be Surveyed at Murat Bay landing it being the most central place in a large wheat producing district. At present there is (sic) no sites for Business places and there are people at present waiting to erect places to start Business but cannot obtain sites.

And your petitions will ever pray.

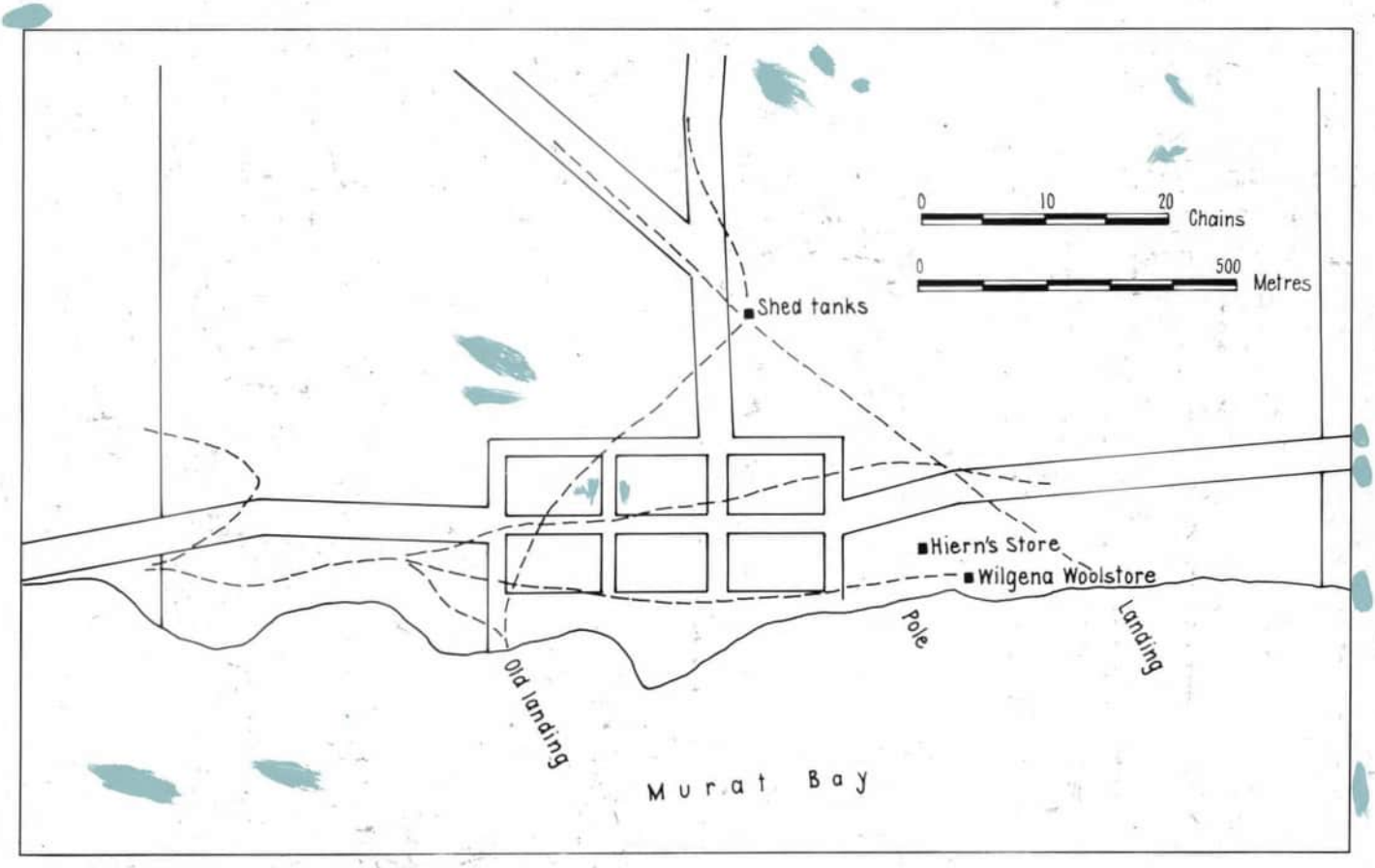
Salam Peters, Hawker
Place, John, Blacksmith, Murat Bay
Lowe, J E, Farmer, Hd Wandana
Hiern Jas, Storekeeper, Murat Bay
Spry, J B , labourer, Murat Bay
Beer, J C R, Farmer
Stasinowsky, W A Farmer, Hd Goode
Benjamin Hatcher, Farmer, Murat Bay
Richard Hatcher Farmer, Murat Bay
J Glacken, Farmer, Murat Bay
F W Lutze, Farmer, Murat Bay
C M McInerheny, Farmer, Murat Bay
Will. J Symonds, Farmer, Murat Bay
H D Male, Farmer, Murat Bay
T Collins, Farmer, Murat Bay
J McKenzie, Farmer, Murat Bay
R E Talbot, labourer, Laura Bay
J E Talbot, Farmer, Murat Bay
T M McInerheney, Farmer, Murat Bay
? Stasinowsky, labourer, Murat Bay
W Harrison, prospecter, Murat Bay
F W Croser, Farmer, Murat Bay
— unclear
— unclear
C A Tonkin, Farmer, Murat Bay
J Lowe, Farmer, Murat Bay
R H Hickman, Farmer, Murat Bay
R Elford?, Farmer, Murat Bay

Thos. F S Lloyd, Sheep Farmer, St Francis Island
Thos. Doyle, ? , Hd Goode
E W Watson, Farmer, Murat Bay
A Washington, Farmer, Murat Bay
E A Watson, Farmer, Murat Bay
M R Edson, Farmer, Murat Bay
W W Bowell, Farmer, Merghiny Well
J Bawden, Farmer, Murat Bay

The second petition was successful and, in May of 1900, N Pethick surveyed a town with 96 allotments near what was locally known as the 'Old Landing'.[4] The plan was not used, but it is an interesting document, reproduced here because it shows the location of three features which influenced the choice of the site. They were the Wilgena Woolstore, Hiern's Store, and the government Shed Tanks. The first tracks in the area are also shown on the plan.

For unknown reasons Pethick's survey was not accepted and W G Evans produced another, this time in May of 1901.[5] It had 88 allotments and was proclaimed and named the town of Ceduna in the Government Gazette of 20 June 1901. Evans' survey was slightly south of the one done by Pethick; it included the Woolstore and Hiern's store, and it appears to have been located to be adjacent to a site for a proposed jetty.

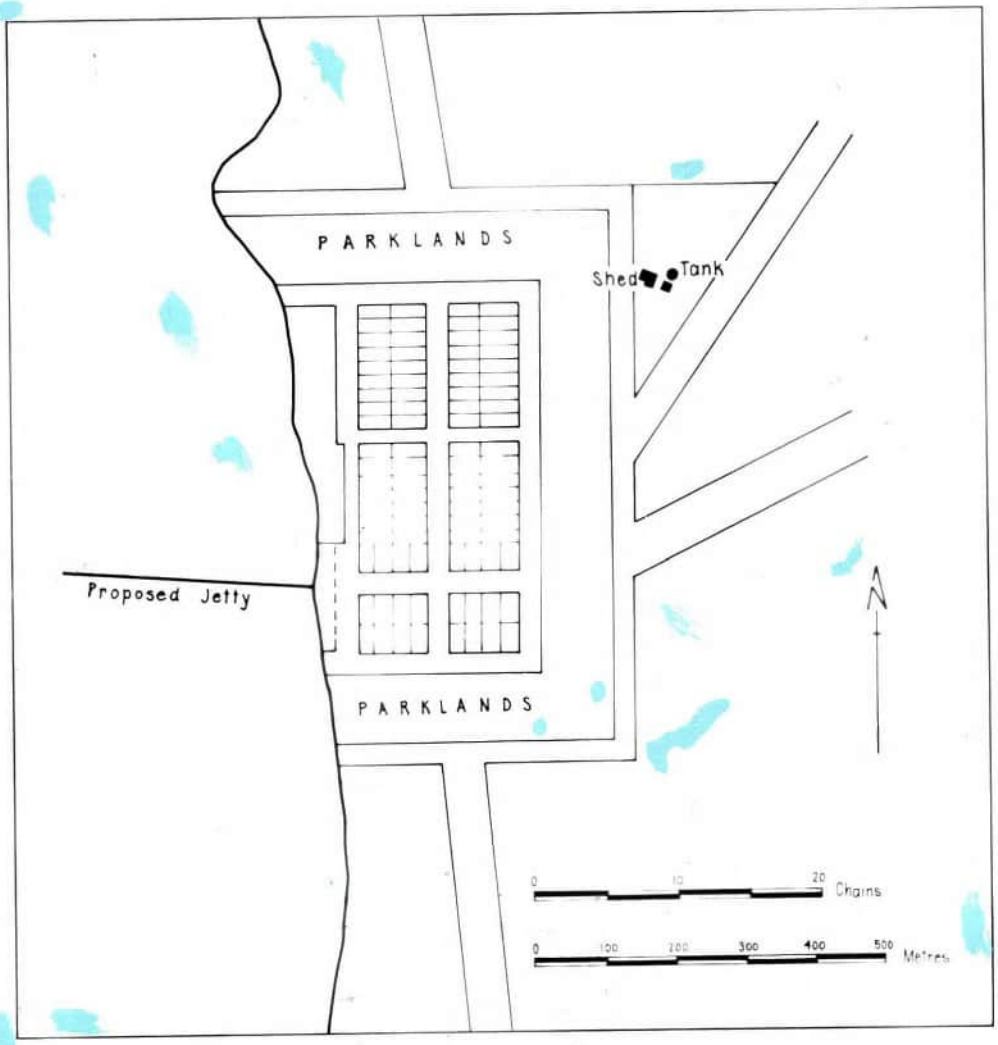
Prior to the proclamation of the town a list of possible names was submitted to the Governor on 12 June 1900. Included in the list was the name Ceduna, which had previously been proposed as the name for what became the Hundred of Bonython. In fact the name was well known in the area, although it referred to a location some 16 miles from the Murat Bay landing. This was the Ceduna Plain on which were the Ceduna Well and Ceduna Hut, parts of the Athenna sheep run. The pastoral survey of A and E A Delisser showed these



N Pethick's survey for a town at Ceduna in May of 1900. It was not taken up. Source: Survey Books, Dept. of Lands.



Two camel teams loaded for Wilgena station and ready to leave from the front of Betts' Store, O'Loughlin Terrace, Ceduna.



The Survey of the town of Ceduna done by W G Evans in May 1901. Source: Survey Books, Dept. of Lands.



A Sports Day in Ceduna in 1913 held on what is now the Foreshore Caravan Park. View along O'Loughlin Terrace past the hotel towards Betts' store.

features in 1867, and a map in an Australian Atlas in 1886 showed that Ceduna Well was on the mail track from Streaky Bay to Fowlers Bay. It was also on the telegraph line between the same two localities. Another interesting fact is that Constable Hansberry, when stationed at Denial Bay, had a horse called Ceduna.

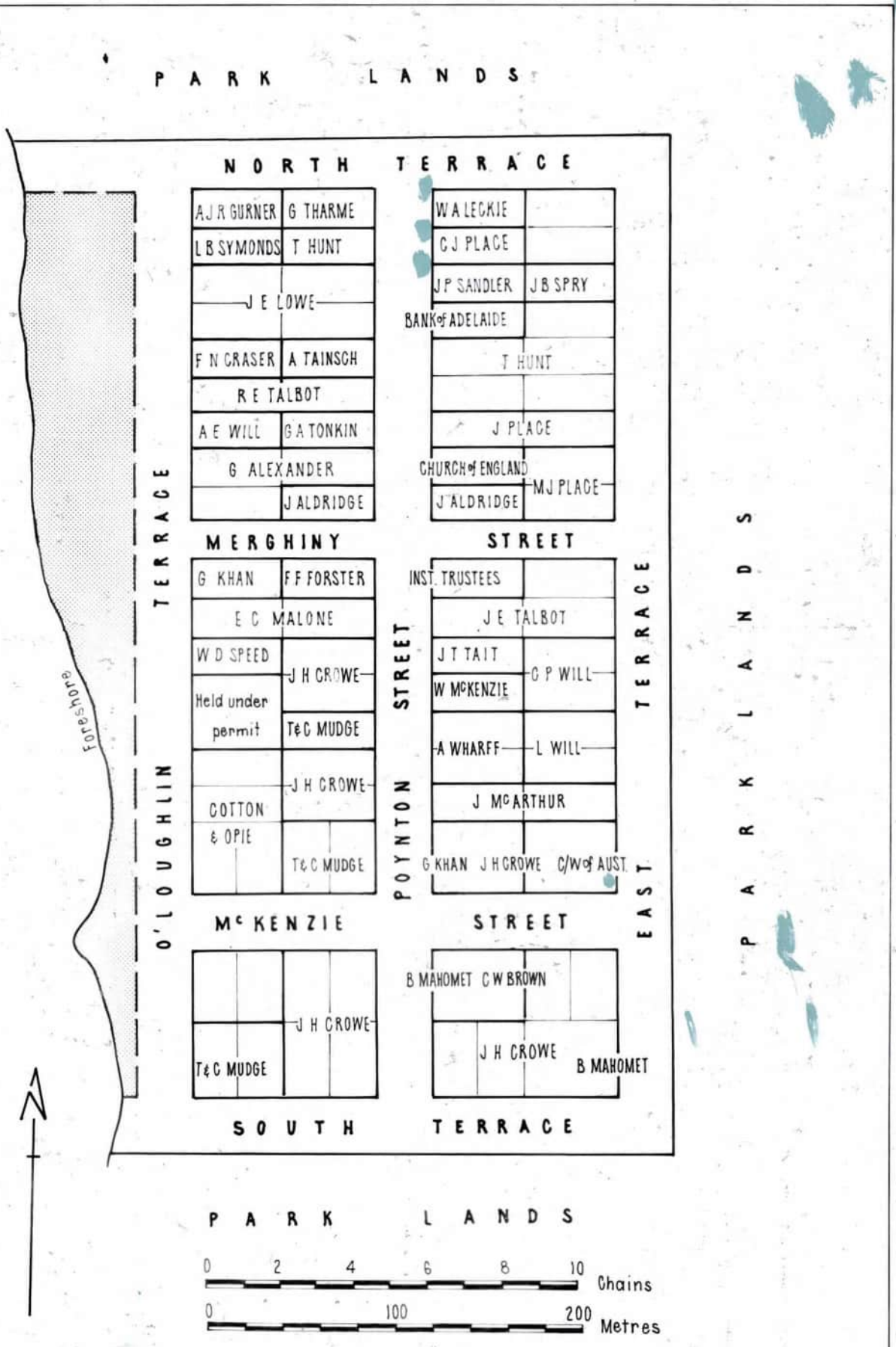
The governor's choice for the new town was Ceduna, but for many years the locals called it Murat Bay. It wasn't until the railway came that some definite local decision was made on the subject for the siding, built in 1915, clearly said Ceduna. The Post Office however stayed Murat Bay and did not change its name to Ceduna until 1921.[6]

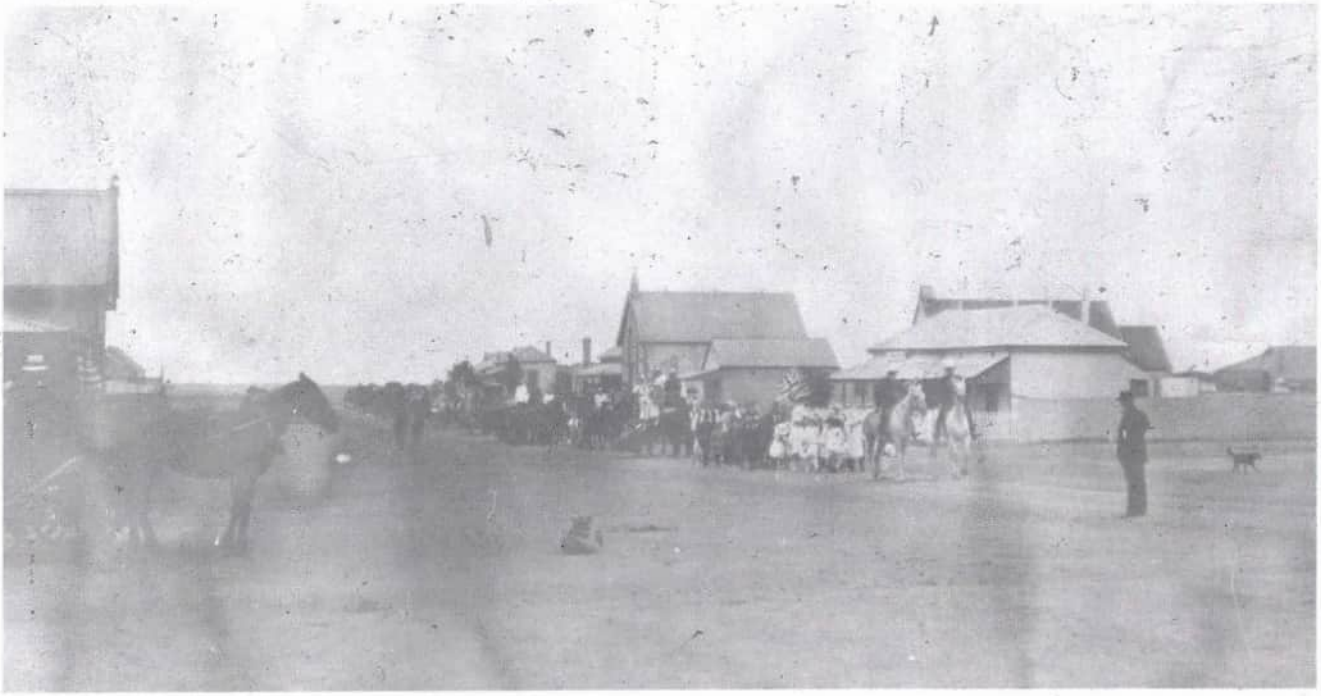
There has been no clear evidence on the origins of the name. N Tindale, the former Curator of Anthropology at the South Australian Museum, stated that, in its present form, the name does not appear to be of Aboriginal origin.[7] However, it is popularly believed that the name is a contraction of 'Cheedoona' which is Aboriginal, meaning 'a place to sit down and rest'.

Evans' plan for Ceduna was the typical parkland layout with a North, South and East Terrace. Also, typically, politicians were given honours in the naming of the streets. Thus, O'Loughlin Terrace, which was chosen in preference to West Terrace, commemorates the Hon Laurence O'Loughlin MP who was the Commissioner of Crown Lands when the town was surveyed. Poynton Street was named after the Hon Alexander Poynton OBE, member for Flinders from 1893 to 1901, and McKenzie Street was named after the Franklin Harbour farmer David McKenzie, who was member for Flinders from 1899 to 1905.

The only other street in the initial town plan was called Merghiny Street after the Merghiny Well about 12 miles east of the town. The plan also showed the positions of Hiern's Store, shed and yards (lots 27 and 28), a shed on lot 80, and the old Wilgena woolstore which had become W H Betts' store on the seaward side of O'Loughlin Terrace. A note on the plan said that Betts' store was 'to be removed'.[8] However, it remained intact until it was destroyed by fire and a new store was built on lot 25 in 1910. There has been a store of one sort or another there ever since.

Opposite page.
The purchasers of the first allotments in the town of Ceduna 1901 to 1908.


PARK LANDS
NORTH TERRACE
A J R GURNER
G THARME
L B SYMONDS
T HUNT
J E LOWE
F N CRASER
A TAINSCH
R E TALBOT
A E WILL
G A TONKIN
G ALEXANDER
J ALDRIDGE
W A LECKIE
C J PLACE
J P SANDLER
J B SPRY
BANK of ADELAIDE
T HUNT
J PLACE
CHURCH of ENGLAND
M J PLACE
J ALDRIDGE
MERGHINY STREET
G KHAN
F F FORSTER
E C MALONE
W D SPEED
J H CROWE
Held under permit
T & C MUDGE
J H CROWE
COTTON & OPIE
T & C MUDGE
INST. TRUSTEES
J E TALBOT
J T TAIT
C P WILL
W McKENZIE
A WHARFF
L WILL
J McARTHUR
G KHAN
J H CROWE
C/W of AUST.
McKENZIE STREET
J H CROWE
T & C MUDGE
B MAHOMET
C W BROWN
J H CROWE
B MAHOMET
SOUTH TERRACE
O'LOUGHLIN TERRACE
POYNTON STREET
EAST TERRACE
Foreshore
PARK LANDS
PARK LANDS
0 2 4 6 8 10 Chains
0 100 200 Metres



Poynton Street Ceduna during a Labor Day parade in 1917. Buildings at right which can be clearly seen are the old Bank of Adelaide, the old St Michaels and All Angels Church and the Methodist Church which is currently the Uniting Church.



The railway station as built in 1915.

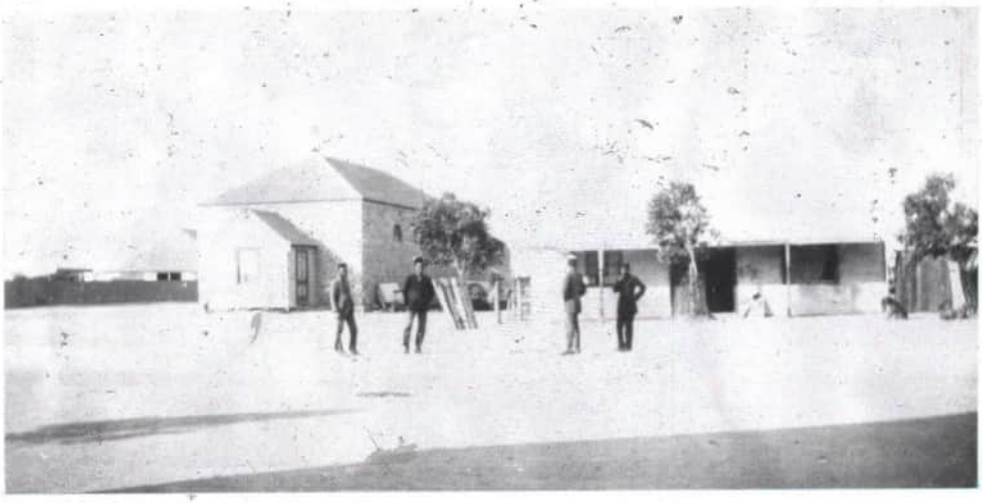
Another feature of the plan was that the allotments fronting McKenzie Street were made larger than other allotments in expectation, no doubt, that, because it was aligned with the proposed jetty, it would become the main business street in the town. Time has proved this to be substantially correct and, in particular, the McKenzie Street-Poynton Street intersection has become the focal point of the town's commerce.

The first allotments, numbered 1–56 for the town of Ceduna, were auctioned in Adelaide on 25 July 1901.[9] The upset price for each lot was 5 pounds. Subsequent sales were made in 1902, 1903, 1906, 1908 and 1909. Most of the lots sold for about 5 pounds 5 shillings, but a few did much better namely, lot 24, 101 pounds 10 shillings; lot 25, 87 pounds; lot 23, 63 pounds 5 shillings, and lot 26, 31 pounds. This bracket of adjoining allotments on the McKenzie Street, O'Loughlin Terrace Corner were all bought by Adelaide land agents G S Cotton and E A D Opie. The only other high priced lot was number 8 the hotel site which went for 24 pounds 5 shillings to the Mudge brothers of Streaky Bay.

The purchasers at each of the above mentioned sales were:[10]

1901
Lots 2,3,4,5,6,11,12,15,16,19,52,53,55,56 J H Crowe, Elliston, Auctioneer
Lot 50 T F F Lloyd, St Francis Island, sheep farmer
Lots 1,13 Boz Mahomet, Murat Bay, camel proprietor
Lots 7,8,21,22,54 T and C Mudge, Streaky Bay, sheep farmers
Lot 14 C W Brown, Prospect, Customs Agent
Lot 20,31 Gunny Khan, Adelaide, camel proprietor
Lot 23,24,25,26 G.S Cotton and E A D Opie, Adelaide, land agents
Lot 29 W D Speed
Lots 30,51 E C Malone, Pt Pirie, labourer

1902
Lot 63 Institute Trustees
Lot 57 H Morris, Murat Bay, lumper
Lots 80,81 M J Place, Murat Bay, married woman
Lots 58,59 Alfred Wharff, Murat Bay, saddler



Poynton Street Ceduna c 1925. The old Institute Hall at left (now demolished and replaced by the Gateway Tourist Centre) and Nicholl's fruit and vegetable shop at right.

1903
Lot 60 W McKenzie, Denial Bay, farmer
Lot 61 J T Tait, Adelaide, contractor

1906
Lot 62 J E Talbot, Murat Bay, farmer
Lots 64,49 J Aldridge, Murat Bay, blacksmith
Lots 32,33 George Alexander, Murat Bay, Practical Engineer

1907
Lot 41 G Tharne, Denial Bay, Cook
Lot 48 George Alexander, Murat Bay, Engineer
Lot 72 W A Leckie, Denial Bay, foreman

Construction work on the Ceduna jetty in 1902.





Betts' store O'Loughlin Terrace in the early 1920s when a front verandah had been added to the original galvanised iron building.



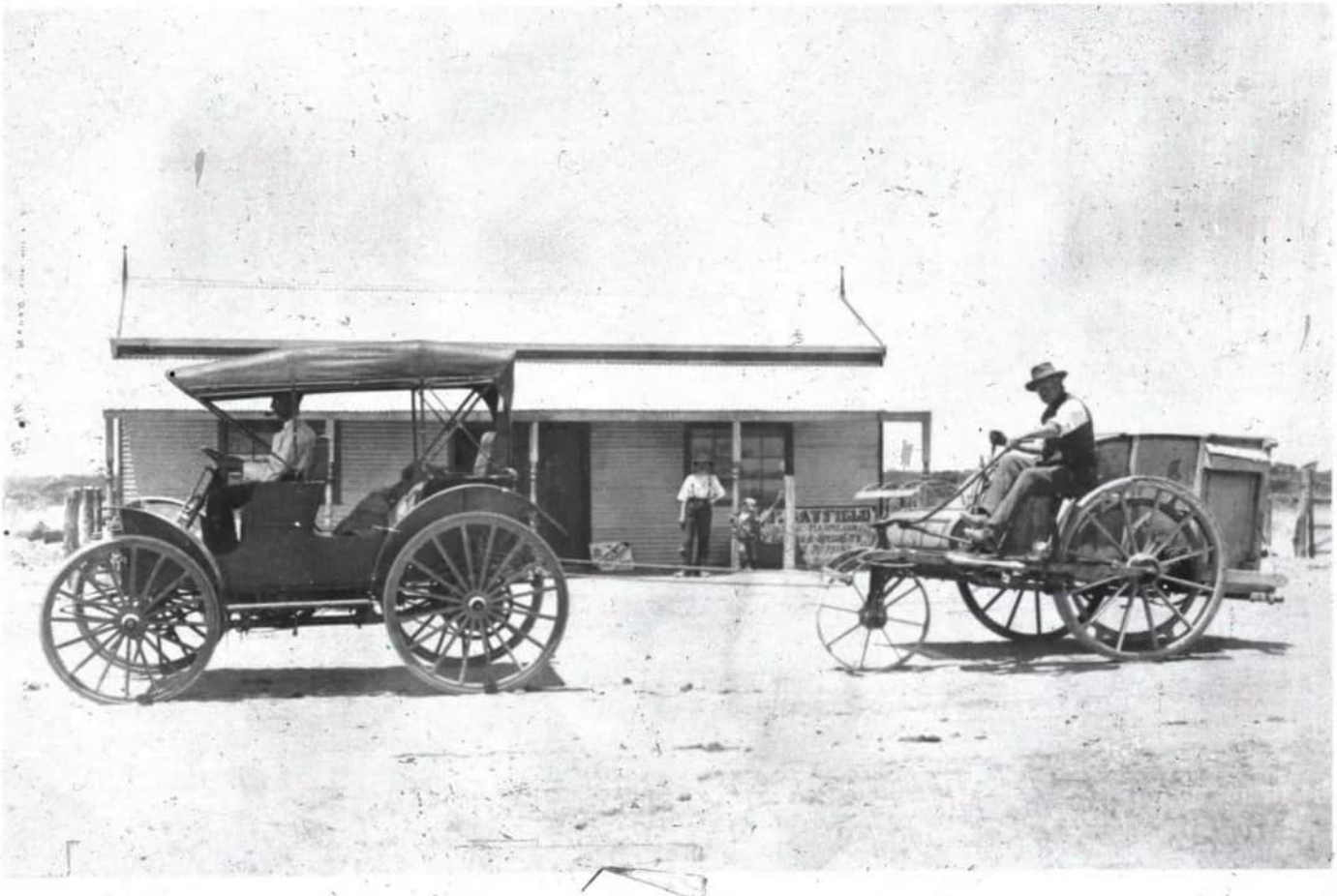
The first St Michaels and All Angels Church built on the eastern side of Poynton Street in 1909 (now demolished).

1908
Lots 35,46 R E Talbot, Murat Bay, labourer
Lot 40 A J R Gurner, Norwood, storekeeper
Lot 82,83 J E Talbot, Murat Bay, farmer
Lot 88 J McArthur, Ceduna, agent
Lots 37,38,43,44 J E Lowe, Murat Bay, farmer
Lot 75 J B Spry, Yorketown, farmer
Lot 65 The Synod of the Church of England
Lot 34 A E Will, Hd of Goode, farm labourer
Lot 36 F W Croser, Murat Bay, married woman
Lots 42,67,68 T Hunt, Murat Bay, farmer
Lot 45 A Tainsh, Denial Bay, farmer
Lot 47 G A Tonkin, Murat Bay, farmer
Lot 66,79 J Place, Murat Bay, blacksmith
Lot 71 C J Place, Denial Bay, farmer
Lot 84,85 C P Will, Hd Goode, farmer
Lot 86,87 L Will, Hd Goode, farmer
Lot 69 Bank of Adelaide
Lot 70 J P Sadleir, Loxton, Bank Manager

1909
Lots 76,77,78 T Hunt, Murat Bay, farmer
Lot 17 Commonwealth of Australia

A report in the *West Coast Recorder* in 1909 indicated that all the township blocks in Ceduna were then sold and more were needed.[11] However, nothing was done until 1915 when, under the combined impact of the proposed development of Thevenard and the coming of the railway, more subdivisions were made.

'Redbreast' Alexander (because he always wore a red waistcoat) towing with his motor buggy George Alexander on a stripper. It is in Poynton Street in 1912.



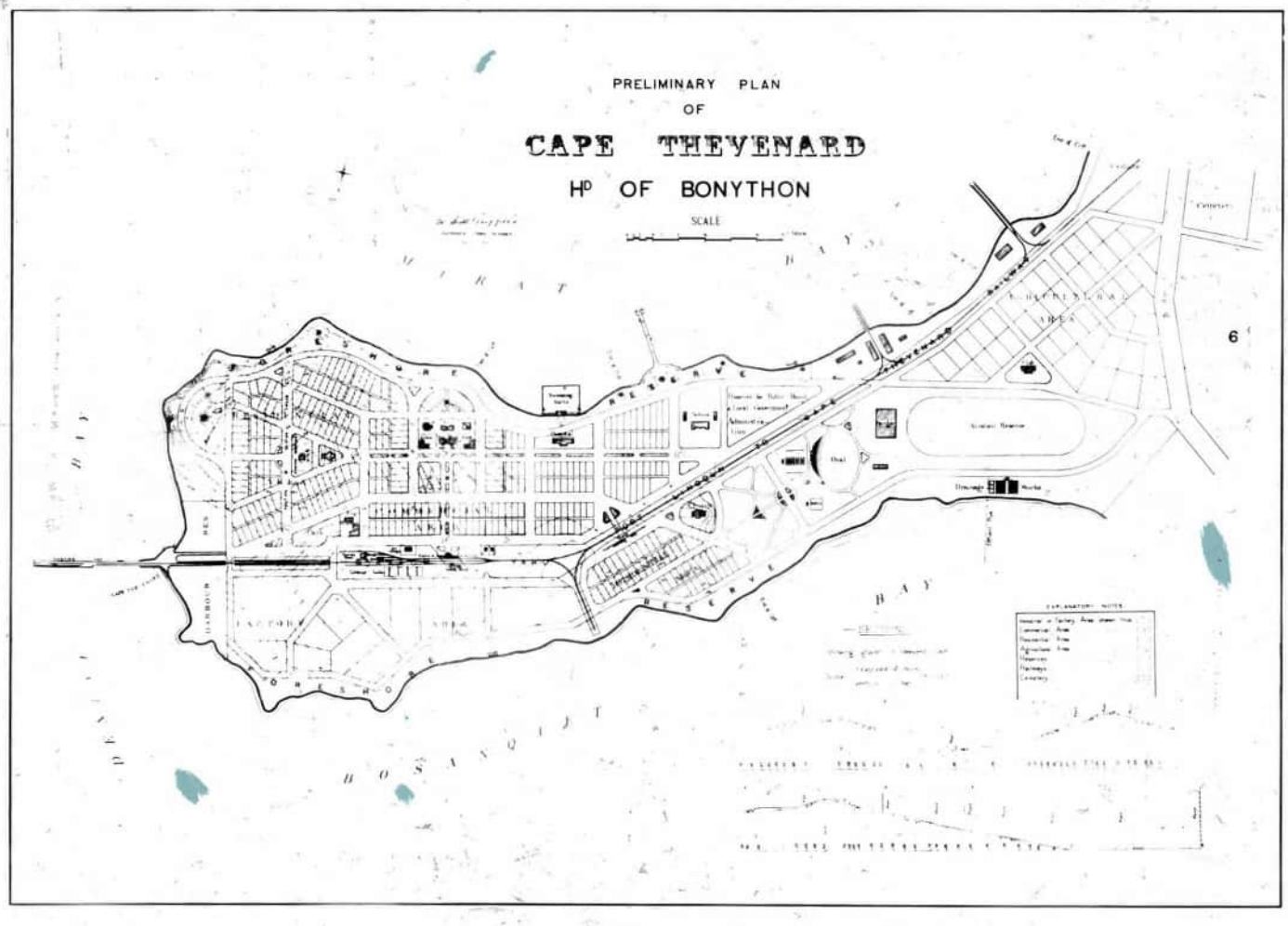
Government surveyor R B Poyntz surveyed a town for Thevenard dated 28 February 1915. This was then cancelled and another survey was not done until 23 August 1923 by A H H Davidson and Charles P Melville from a plan devised by Walter Scott Griffiths, the Government Town Planner.[12]

The Thevenard plan was done at a time when town planning, world wide, was enjoying great popularity. Instead of the stereotype parkland towns, South Australian surveyors were being encouraged to produce imaginative, functional plans incorporating parks, gardens, median strips, curved streets and defined areas for the concentration of public utilities. The Thevenard plan by Griffiths had all of these elements, and most of them were faithfully reproduced by the surveyors. Thevenard could have been a show piece with its designated areas for a school, a hospital, an 'aviation reserve', a civic centre, foreshore reserves with swimming baths, a harbour reserve and factory area. However, right from the outset it became primarily an industrial appendage to Ceduna and has never grown to realise its full potential.

When Poyntz made his survey in 1915 Thevenard barely existed. What was there was described as a 'calico town'.[13] But, in 1924, when land was available after the new survey, sales were brisk. S V G Thiselton, a motor driver, paid 27 pounds 5 shillings for lot 4, E C Skinner, a stevedore, paid 25 pounds 5 shillings for lot 5, Sedgley and Son, butchers, paid 66 pounds for lots 10 and 11, and other early purchasers were H G and N Darling grain merchants, Joel Lowe, farmer, Petrus van der Lee a labourer, F A T Edson, C Geue, G Nieass, R E Talbot, W W Barnett, V S Irwin, J E Talbot, T G Irwin, C A Tonkin, G D Klau, W H Post, W H Betts Ltd, E A Hoffrichter, A J Blumson, W J Tucker, and S A Farmers' Union.[14]



The opening of the Methodist Church, Ceduna, 1910.



The proposed town plan for Thevenard which incorporated many of the Town Planning ideas popular in the 1920s. Source: Hutchings and Bunker p.80.

For the first time in South Australia (at Thevenard) a clear indication of functional areas was made, that is commercial, residential, factory and agricultural areas being nominated on both plan and legend.

HUTCHINGS AND BUNKER p.80

Poyntz had more success with his town of Ceduna South in 1915. It was surveyed as a southern extension of the main town to accommodate the railway line en route to Thevenard. Forty eight allotments were laid out beyond the southern parklands of Ceduna, and the railway line, with its designated siding, sliced diagonally through the subdivision. The allotments sold well and, particularly those along the extension of Poynton Street, are today indistinguishable from the original portion of Ceduna.

Also, in 1915, a town called Baudin was surveyed '50 chains north from Wittelbee Point (Decres Bay).'[15] This town would have serviced the deep sea port had it been placed at Decres Bay, as was originally intended (see Chapter 14). When the decision was made to put the port at Thevenard the town lands were resumed and are now part of the Wittelbee National Park.[16]

Despite the coup the Murat Bay farmers obtained by getting their town established in 1901, the first five or six years of its development gave no indication that it was likely to overwhelm the nearby settlement of Denial Bay. Even after John Tait, the contractor, finished the jetty for the town in 1903, there was no sudden growth spurt.[17] Indeed, in 1905, the South Australian Directory indicates that the town's population was a mere 37 and that the commercial buildings which existed were the hotel, owned by the Mudge brothers, but run by W M Montgomerie and his wife, a general store and post office managed by Francis W Betts, and John Place's blacksmith shop. Additionally, the *West Coast Recorder* mentioned 'half-a-dozen dwelling houses', a public hall, John Darling and Son's general store and the police station.[18]

It was in the next ten years that Ceduna grew to be a town of significance, and the stimulus for the growth was the promised railway line, which was slowly making its way up from Port Lincoln. With that prospect in sight and the first hints of a possible deep sea port about 1911, the town began to grow in many ways.



George Alexander's blacksmith shop in Poynton Street, Ceduna, south of the present Anglican Church.





Some of the first indications of development were in the area of religion. Travelling ministers of the Anglican and Methodist Churches visited the settlement from as early as 1901 and conducted services in the old Wilgena woolstore and in private homes. The Anglicans moved to build a place of worship with the purchase of lot 65 in 1908, and erected on it St Michael's and All Angels, a timber and iron construction which was dedicated on 18 September 1909 by Rev J Walsh.[19]

The Methodists were also active. In 1909 they formed a building trust made up of Messrs J Place, A G Wanke, F W Bayfield, T Hunt, G R Spry, M R Edson and G A Tonkin. They were guided by the Reverend Fred Rogers, 'a raw youth from Moonta, only 20 years of age but full of zeal for his Lord'. He arrived at Murat Bay in 1909 on board the *Grace Darling* and quickly set about raising funds for a church. Thomas Hunt donated lot 67 for the purpose and Mrs Hunt laid the foundation stone for the building. Mr Weise was given the contract for 249 pounds but, when he had nearly finished, a halt was called

Above left. The second official post office at Ceduna on the north west corner of McKenzie Street and East Terrace. The first post office was the small iron building here attached to the front of the stone building. It was transported from a site next to the hotel.

Above. Ceduna's second police station built in McKenzie Street in 1922. The prisoner's cell seen at left was originally at Denial Bay and is now at the National Trust Museum, Ceduna.

Below. A Ceduna cricket team in 1906. Group includes D Spry, C Will, H Chandler, F Betts, G Tonkin, C McInerheny, P Tonkin, C Collins.





A group of Streaky Bay visitors outside the Ceduna Hotel c 1920.

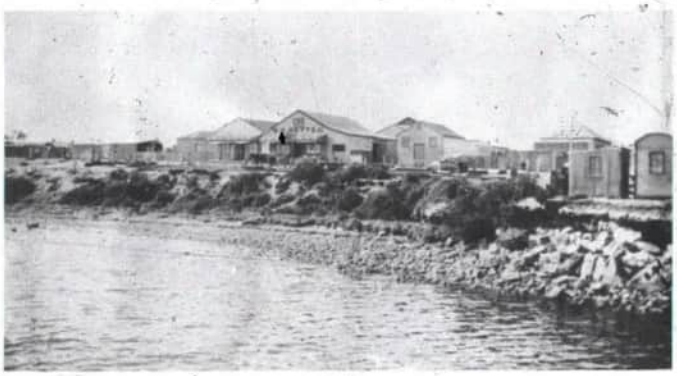
because there was no fresh water available from any 'Methodist' tanks. However, Con McInerheny, a Roman Catholic, offered all the water necessary to complete the task and the church was opened for worship in 1910 by the Reverend C B Holmes, who came from Streaky Bay for the occasion.[20]

Before their church was constructed, the Methodists held monthly services in the Institute Hall which was built on lot 63 in Poynton Street in 1903.[21] The hall trustees were Cornelius McInerheny, James Talbot, Charles Hugh Collins, George Alfred Tonkin, Charles Arthur Tonkin, Thomas Collins and William A Mudge. It was a large hall for the times and, as a point of local pride, it was much bigger and better than the Denial Bay Agricultural Hall. Later, it added a small room which was used as the first library in the town. The library committee in 1909 was C McInerheny, Chairman, W J Parker, Secretary, G A Tonkin, Treasurer, W J Simmonds, L Will, C Collins, W Tench and W Leckie.[22]

Opposite the Institute Hall, the first police station was built on the corner of Poynton and Merghiny Streets. In the government expenditure statements for 1903–4, 7 pounds 14 shillings was mentioned for carting (presumably from Denial Bay) and erecting a cell at Murat Bay Police Station. Constable Hansberry, sen. was the first policeman.[23] He was followed by Trooper Webb



The Soldiers Memorial Hall, Ceduna, built in 1923–24.





Above left. O'Loughlin Terrace view looking north from the jetty between 1924 and 1929. W H Betts' store is clearly visible and behind it is the Memorial Hall built in 1924. The Council Chambers (1929) had not been built.
Above. O'Loughlin Terrace as seen from the same spot in 1986.

and then Constable Litchfield. A court was opened in December 1908 and Constable Litchfield was Clerk of the Court. The district welcomed the new facility 'because judgements (could) now be obtained without going to Streaky Bay or Fowlers Bay as before.'[24] Constable Litchfield remained until 1918 and was given a big farewell when he left to take charge of the police station at Orroroo. The *West Coast Sentinel* indicated that he had 'identified himself with every movement for the benefit of the town and the district.'[25] Four years later, the old police station shifted to McKenzie Street where new police cells, stables and a residence were built during 1922.[26]

A post office in its own right was first built in what was called the Harbor's Board yard on lots 9 and 10 next to the hotel. It was a tiny wood and iron building that W J Symonds the harbormaster first attended, but he was later assisted by 'Mrs Coote from the hotel.'[27] The building was moved by horse and jinker to lot 17 in McKenzie Street in 1910 where it stood alone for two years until a stone Post Office and residence was built. Even then, the little iron building was still used — 'it was at the front of the stone room and people collected their letters from it.'[28]

By 1915, Ceduna had recovered from its slow beginnings and was clearly outstripping Denial Bay. It had a population of about 160 people and a small building boom handled by masons H J Jones and R S Sweet plus carpenter G Cranna. There were three blacksmiths in the town, John Place, George Alexander and Edgar Phillips; a hair dresser, W Audoss; a Bank of Adelaide, opened in 1909; two resident ministers of religion (Methodist and Anglican); John Seamark's bakery; Betts' store and J Darling's store managed by A G Wanke. People who held responsible positions included C R Doudy, an energetic and outspoken solicitor, W Litchfield the policeman, Dr G O'Day, Sister F Seamark, teachers B P Bowering and Miss M Riley, a teacher of singing, painting and pianoforte Miss E Roberts, the harbormaster and local wheat agent T G Irwin, an overseer of government roads J W Coventry, and Justices of the Peace, Con McInerheny, G A Tonkin and A Tainsh. The hotel was still owned by the Mudge family but was managed by Mr and Mrs Albert Coote.[29]



Betts' store at Thevenard in 1925.

In the realm of social activities the town developed the typical Far West characteristic of involvement in many sports and pastimes. The first was horse racing begun in September 1902, a fact which is indicated by what was called the fourth annual meeting of the Murat Bay Racing Club in September of 1905.[30] By 1917 the popularity of the annual meeting was such that the officials in the club included virtually every notable male citizen of the district. They were Patron G A Tonkin, President C McInerheny, Vice-Presidents C R Doudy, E W Watson, Committee, T Collins, F Handtke, Jas McKenzie, C H Collins, A H Coote, E A Watson, C A Tonkin, J McArthur, J Place, F W Croser, F Hurrell, W Schwarz, P W Hunt, S W Symonds, E R Pengilly,

A Tainsh, I T Kenny, T G Irwin, J Somerville, A G Wanke, E A Hoffrichter, Chas Mudge, J Seamark and F W Betts.[31]

Other areas of sporting interest included football, cricket and tennis, plus a bicycle club, a rifle club, homing pigeons and athletic and aquatic sports.

The Murat Bay Cycle Club was formed in May 1913. W A Leckie was President and F J West was Secretary. It held its first road event in June 1913 when ten competitors raced over an 8½ mile course. Those placed were B Thiele 1, B Johnson 2, and D Spry 3.



This registered letter receipt is post marked Murat Bay 1901 and signed W Mudge postmaster. Mudge was the manager of W H Betts' store when a postal facility was operating before the town of Ceduna was laid out.
(J E Lowe Papers)

Captain R E Talbot was the main driving force in the rifle club and he was warmly congratulated in the *West Coast Recorder* for his work in establishing a rifle range in 1908.[32] He was succeeded by William Leckie, a well known community supporter, who, tragically, killed himself with a gun accident inside the club's ammunition shed on 30 May 1914.[33]

C R Doudy started the Homing Pigeon Club in 1919 and, as was typical with anything he undertook, it was most efficiently run. Birds were sent down the railway each week to be released at sidings 50, 100 or 150 miles away. They were even sent as far as Rainbow in Victoria in September of 1922. For that event, a flight of over 600 miles, the winning bird was owned by J Ryan and second and third placegetters were owned by J Place and V Irwin respectively.

Athletic and Aquatic Sports were regular annual activities. Amongst the many lists of results, one of contemporary interest was that Wally Moreland ran second in the boys under 14 race on 26 January 1913.[34] This was the annual 'Foundation Day' Sports. By 1922, the same sports were being held but with some 'modern' innovations. Thus, H E Gersch won first prize for 'Fancy motor car driving', and H G Watson was second. Dr Von Roenne won the motor car race over two miles with a time of 3 minutes 30.5 seconds and C H Kuhlmann won the event for 'tilting' in motor cars. He apparently had the good sense not to use his own car for he is recorded as driving C A Tonkin's car. The best decorated car prize went to E W Keeley and the best decorated vehicle of any type was won by F Betts. What seemed to have been a most successful day, was concluded with an evening of dancing with music supplied by the Murat Bay Orchestra (Messrs Wanke, Bird, Vincent and Benda).[35]

A few other notable 'firsts' for the town were that a Farmers and Settlers Association was formed in November 1917; the Rev W H Miller formed a Boy Scouts Association in December 1917 (A G Wanke, Scoutmaster); a billiard saloon was erected in May of 1915 (W Audoss, Manager); a Ceduna Literary Society was formed in 1923; a Masonic Lodge was consecrated in January 1922, and a Returned Sailors and Soldiers of the Imperial league formed a sub-branch in January 1923.[36]

Although the town developed in a steady way, it often had spurts helped along by determined efforts from Progress Associations, sometimes called Vigilance Committees. In 1919 the prevailing association was called the Murat Bay and District Progress Association. C McInerheny was Chairman, F W Betts Secretary and committee members were Dr Von Roenne, W F Hirte ,H C Paddick, A G Wanke, J Ryan, V Irwin and C R Doudy. One of its projects was to buy 150 tuart gums from an Adelaide seedsman to plant in the town's main streets. This it accomplished, but like so many associations it faded a little and had to be 'revived' in 1922 when G A Tonkin took over as Chairman.[37]

Near the end of the period under consideration there were two major developments for the town. The first was the beginnings of Thevenard and the second was the building of the Soldiers Memorial Hall.

Thevenard probably came of age on 3 May 1924 because on that date the new town entertained the Governor, Sir Tom Bridges, and the Commissioner

of Railways, W A Webb, at a 'Grand Reception Ball' in the Australian Gypsum Company's 'fine new hall'. Before a large crowd, music for dancing was provided by A G Wanke (piano), Dr Stevenson (violin), H Notting (mandolin) and Mr Wood (clarinette). Mr W Murphy was the master of ceremonies who welcomed the Governor, the second only to visit the Far West in 25 years.[38]

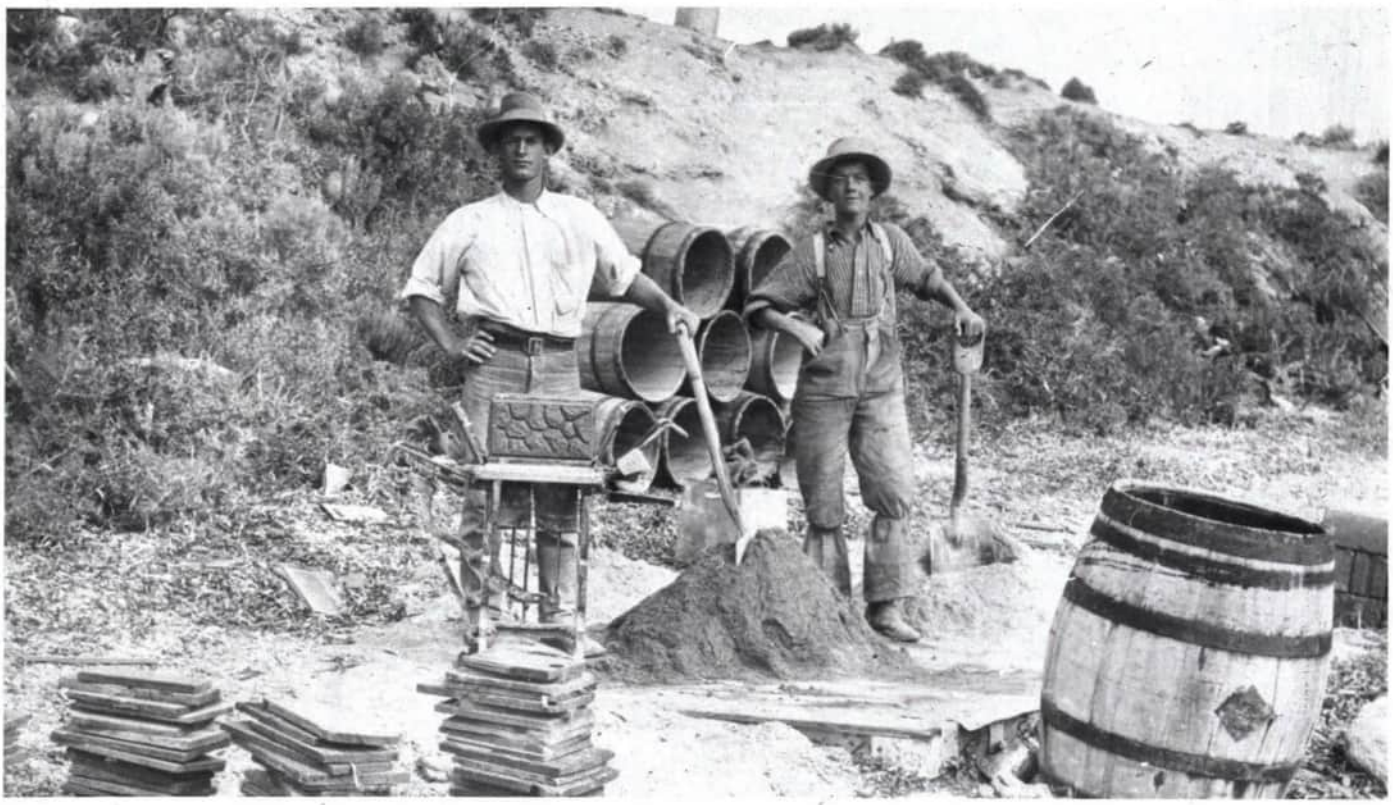
In the following year two gypsum companies had large factories operating in Thevenard and employed between them over 90 men. Super steam driven plant was used, and the works were fitted with electric light throughout. There was a housing boom in the town and many asbestos, wood and iron buildings were constructed using interior linings of plaster sheets made in the factories.

W H Betts Ltd opened a new store in Thevenard in 1924 and two prominent Ceduna townsmen, A G Wanke and T G Irwin moved to live in the growing town. Mr Wanke went as manager of J Darling and Son and Mr Irwin went as the harbormaster. Then, in January of 1925, a poll was conducted under the Licensed Victuallers Act and 53 people voted for a hotel and 37 voted against it. With that formality over, a publican's licence was taken from the defunct Sportsman's Arms Hotel at Little Swamp near Port Lincoln and transferred to Thevenard.[39]

The idea for a Soldiers Memorial Hall in Ceduna developed soon after World War I. It was discussed by the Progress Association of 1919 and, by 1921, a proposed design for such a hall was freely available for public comment.[40] Fund raising began and, by the time the 1922 Foundation Day Sports were over, more than 1100 pounds had been collected.

The project was assisted greatly in March of 1923 when Mr Thos Mudge donated lot 54 in Poynton Street for the site of the hall. Two months later tenders were called for the erection of a building designed by architects Garlick and Jackman from Adelaide, and four months after that it was announced that T W Vetter was the successful contractor.[41]

The hall was completed and opened on what was described as 'a gala day' in October 1924. Great credit was given to Dr P Von Roenne, 'the energetic



Barrels of cement, beach sand and sea water. A recipe for brick making by Len Coulter and friend on Alexander's Beach, Ceduna.

secretary' for the project. He worked on behalf of a committee made up of Messrs A Tainsh (Chairman), G A Tonkin, C A Tonkin, T G Irwin and C McInerheny. The trustees of the building were G A Tonkin, C A Tonkin, A Tainsh, T G Irwin, C Collins and T Collins.

The hall was built of limestone and sandstone from the district and finished with plaster from the Australian Gypsum Company's factory at Thevenard.

The gala day began with a football match between a Koonibba team and 'the Murat Bay lads' in which the Aboriginal team was vastly superior winning 19 goals 7 behinds to 2 goals 9 behinds. Tea was then served at the Institute building, and the Memorial Hall was declared open by J O'Connor MP before a crowd of 600 to 700 people. Mr O'Connor said it was the largest audience he had ever addressed. In 'a few well-chosen remarks' he declared the hall open for the use of the people of the district and for the returned soldiers in particular.

Dr Von Roenne then gave a summary of the project. He said that the committee had many difficulties because the original contractor 'had failed and thrown up the contract'. The whole responsibility of completing the building had then been placed upon the shoulders of the building committee, who had let various contracts to local tradesmen to get the job finished.

A short concert followed, then supper and a dance, during which the results of the best fund raiser, a Queen competition, was announced. The contestants were Ceduna, Miss D Fielding; Thevenard, Miss C Shoemaker; Wandana, Miss Grace Tonkin; Maltee, Miss J Talbot, and Goode, Miss Gladys Nicholls. Miss Fielding was declared the winner and was duly crowned by Mr J Gardiner from Streaky Bay.[42]

At the end of 25 years from the first land sales in the town, the population was about 400 and its rival Denial Bay had been left far behind with less than 180. Ceduna-Thevenard also led with numerous stores and agencies viz T and C McInerheny (Australasian Implement Co.); W H Betts Ltd (merchants and agents for International Harvester); D J Barker (draper); A G Wanke (manager — John Darling and Son); W E Follett (agent for L Dreyfus and Co.); T G Irwin (agent for Farmers' Union); F Hurrell (farm auctioneer and agent for Clutterbuck Bros.); V S Irwin (general storekeeper); A B Nicholl (greengrocer); G Vincent (newsagent and billiard saloon); A E Becker (saddler); A Blumson (farmer and tinsmith); M I Hoobin (boarding housekeeper) and H G Watson (motor mechanic and billiard saloon). The hotel was being run by John L Madigan who employed two barmen N Bedson and C Morgan; John Ryan was the postmaster; A E McBride was the stationmaster; Alfred Kite was the policeman and Clerk of the Court; Captain McIntosh was the harbormaster, and the following were Justices of the Peace, F Edson, A Tainsh, F McFarlan, Dr R J Stevenson, Dr P Von Roenne and A G Wanke.[43]



Doing the washing at Thevenard, 1925.

Another view of the growth of Ceduna can be seen in the receipts and dockets kept by John Edwin Lowe of Kongwirra Hill farm. They have been preserved in the Lowe family and are now the property of Geoff Lowe in Ceduna who has spent many hours organising and indexing thousands of documents passed down from John Edwin to son Cyril and then to grandson Geoff. The details of business transactions date from the early 1890s and continue for sixty years.

In the 1890s some of the first purchases were made from J Dunnet, (1 water bag, one shilling and sixpence) and W McKenzie (shirts, meat, sugar, tobacco and candles), but the bulk of J E Lowe's purchases had to be made in Adelaide from firms such as Crooks and Brooker, Ironmongers of Port Adelaide (galvanised iron); Charlick Bros of East End Market (foodstuffs); John Dunn and Company (cornsacks); Hoopers of Hindley Street (furniture and

crockery); Stevenson Bros, Watch Clock and Chronometer Makers, where he purchased his wife's 18 ct Wedding Ring by mail order for one guinea; E and W Hackett, seedsmen of Rundle Street; Hall and Savage, drapers and tailors of Rundle Street; J T Fitch, drapery and boots, corner of Rundle and Pulteney Streets; James Marshall and Company drapery, furniture and crockery; Henderson Bros, East End Market, fruit and groceries.

When it came to buying farm machinery J E Lowe, in his early years, went back to his roots, which were in the Mid North of South Australia, and his purchases were from foundries at Kadina, Snowtown, Gladstone and Wilmington.

The first Lowe docket for a purchase in Murat Bay was from J Hiern's store in July 1899 and on 4 March 1900 he sent a registered letter from W H Betts' store where W A Mudge was the manager. Mudge signed the docket as postmaster for Murat Bay. Subsequent selected documents reveal the evolution of some of the business activities in Ceduna viz:

28 February 1902	A Wharff, saddler
4 November, 1902	John Place, blacksmith
1905	Dr J J Schmid
17 August 1908	E Coote, Postmistress
1908	John Darling and Son, General Storekeepers
8 May 1909	F Bayfield, Saddler
9 October 1909	W F Wiese, builder and contractor
20 October 1910	F Rolland, music teacher
28 February 1911	F Stewart, Postmistress
1 May 1911	Murat Bay Medical Society
19 June 1913	B F Hoobin, butcher
20 April 1914	J Seamark, baker
11 September 1915	Mrs J Warren, dressmaker, Merghiny Drapery Store
16 November 1916	A E Becker, saddle and harness maker
31 October 1916	G Alexander, blacksmith, wheelwright and machinist
7 October 1916	T G Irwin, Commission agent
27 August 1918	W A Hirtes, builder and contractor
15 November 1918	Est. of James Henry Kreusler, photographer
27 March 1919	F Hurrell, family butcher, auctioneer, Commission agent
7 January 1920	H G Watson, motor engineer, photographer, picture framer etc; tobacco, cigars, cigarettes etc, cool drinks
3 December 1920	A Blumson, tank maker
15 June 1923	C Williams, haulier and butcher
29 September 1925	M M Hamden, draper, boots, shoes
21 December 1925	Lovell and Jennings, bakers and pastry cooks
12 February 1926	F W Vonow Prop., Ceduna Motor Garage

It needs to be recognised that this chapter deals with the formative years of a South Australian frontier town. At the end of the period, although it had 400 people, it was still a town of dusty unpaved streets, no electric lights and no assured water supply. And, it was very much a man's town. Indeed, the personalities of the first twenty five years were the physically powerful blacksmiths George Alexander and John Place, the polished professionals C R Doudy and Dr Von Roenne, the ubiquitous townsmen William Leckie, Albion Wanke and Frank Betts, and the leading farmers C A Tonkin and Con McInerheny. These men, and others like them, dominated all the activities related to the growth of the town; women were hardly ever mentioned; they were never appointed to committees and they were never given leadership roles. It was a man's world in Ceduna-Thevenard 1892–1925, and it was not until the 1930s that women began pushing to the forefront, initially in groups such as the CWA, the Red Cross and the Women's Agricultural Bureau.

July 1899 J E Lowe
Dr. to J Hiern

1 bottle whisky	*6.6*
2 tins fruit	*2.3*
1 stick tobacco	*5½*
15 clay pipes	*1.0*
	10.2½

Paid 19 Aug./99

Destitute Asylum
Jan. 25, 1915

To J Lowe Esq and family

My dear friend.

I feel ashamed, but I (am) going to beg, would you and some of your friends make me a gift of five shillings . . . I do not suppose I will ever be able to give you more than my best wishes and thanks . . .

Yours truly

James Hiern

Finally, it must be remembered that Ceduna in 1925 was still far from well developed. One reason why women were not conspicuous in public life was that they were at home battling with wood stoves, pumping water from underground tanks and washing the family clothes with 'coppers, tubs, and scrubbing boards'. Their material comforts were few and, indeed, it was only at the end of the period that the wireless first began to appear in the town. The *West Coast Sentinel* reported in its first issue of 1926 that 'the wireless was becoming very popular'. 'Many radio sets have been installed . . . the latest — an up to date set — is being installed by Mr Madigan at the Ceduna Hotel'.[44]

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22 WCR 30/6/09. W J Simmonds was probably W J Symonds.
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24 DBS 5/12/08
25 WCS 20/7/18
26 WCS 16/9/22
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28 Ibid
29 South Australian Directory, 1915
30 WCR 20/9/05 also *Chronicle* 20/9/02.
31 WCS 12/1/17
32 WCR 7/10/08
33 WCS 12/6/14
34 WCS 28/1/13
35 WCS 28/1/2
36 WCS 24/11/17; 8/12/17; 1/5/15; 30/6/23; 28/1/22; 20/1/23.
37 WCS 15/2/19; 11/12/22
38 WCS 3/5/24
39 WCS 10/5/24; 25/1/25
40 WCS 3/12/21
41 WCS 24/3/23; 26/5/23; 29/9/23
42 WCS 31/10/24
43 South Australian Directory, 1925.
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9. The Adjusting Years 1925–1950

The introduction of a district council was the most significant development in the Far West in the period 1925–1950. Previously, council matters in the area were a fringe responsibility for the District Council of Streaky Bay which was formed in 1888, but from time to time suggestions were made that Ceduna, in particular, needed a district council to give some guidance to the overall development of its hinterland.

Eventually, the government on the mainland sent W T Ayling to the Far West with a brief to organise a district council. A public meeting was held in Ceduna and a near unanimous resolution was passed indicating that a council should be formed. There was, however, some dissent and some of this was mentioned by the Denial Bay correspondent to the *Register*.[1] He claimed that the 'Government emissary' had aroused much hostility amongst many settlers, had refused to appear at a protest meeting and had 'declined to answer questions or supply information.'

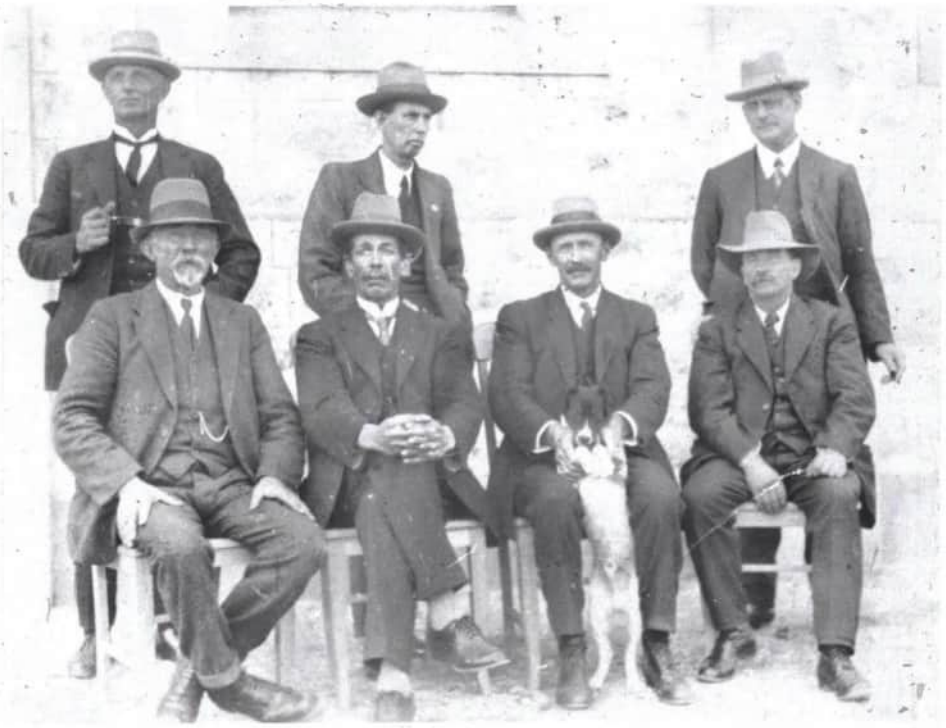
What were described as 'responsible officers' from the Local Government Department defended W T Ayling. Their story was that Mr Ayling, who was still on Eyre Peninsula, had been sent to attend meetings at Thevenard and Ceduna arranged by the vigilance committees of these districts for the purpose of forming a district council. Such a body had already been formed at Kimba. They had expected some opposition 'from outsiders' but believed that the residents of Ceduna wanted a council.

Some idea of the extent of the opposition from 'outsiders' is evident from a report of a meeting at Carawa a month later.[2] F J Howie of Nunjikompita gave the report of the meeting which 70 people attended in the Carawa Institute. They were residents who came from a radius of 50 miles to discuss the likelihood of their area being 'annexed' by either the District Council of Streaky Bay or the District Council of Murat Bay. A Dunn, Carawa, F Gregor, Smoky Bay and E J Dodd, Pimbaacla, convened the meeting and W G Lewis, Carawa, was unanimously elected to the Chair.

After a lively discussion A E Gregor moved:

> 'That the residents of the Hundreds within the Petina Vermin Area and the Hundreds of Yantanaby, Walalla, Walpuppie and Kolarra strongly object to being included in the Streaky Bay and proposed Murat Bay District Councils.'

The proposition was carried by 42 votes to 4. A petition of protest was proposed and F J Howie in his report suggested that the petition might show how determined people were on the matter. He thought that those 'who had



The first councillors for the Murat Bay District Council.
Back: C H Kuhlmann, H A Betts, C Adey (clerk).
Front: E Hasting, C A Tonkin, I. B Hughes, J W Blumson.
Absent: J Mason.

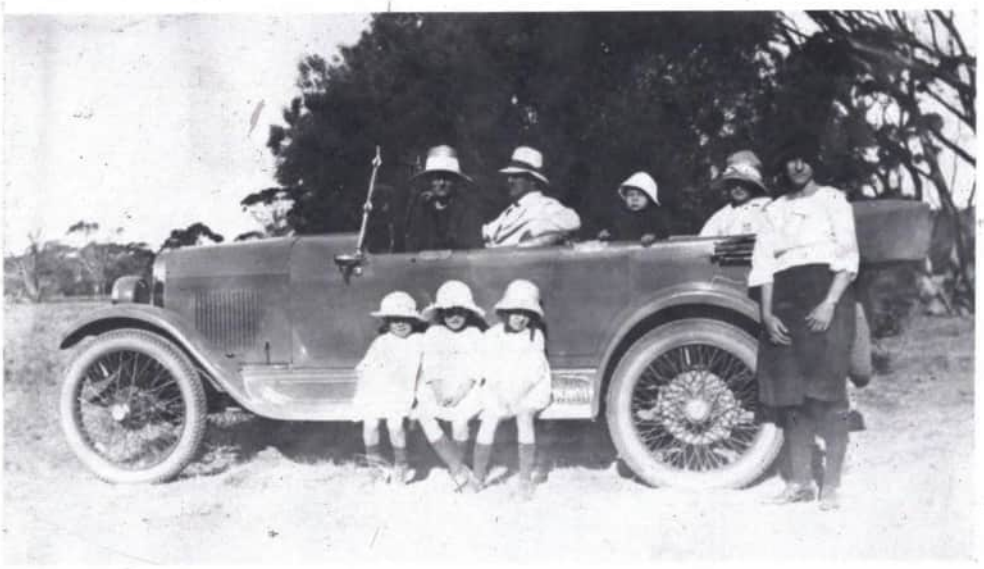
visions of better streets and footpaths, electric lights and numerous other conveniences for the town dweller' needed to know that these would not be installed at the expense of the persons, 'who in all probability will get not even thanks in exchange.'

The petition and the protests were all unsuccessful, but contained within them was the germ of the division between the 'townies' and the 'farmers', a division which has persisted ever since and has often been a source of difficulties in the District Council of Murat Bay.

The area of Penong and beyond was not included in the consideration for a council area and, thus, a separate identity for that part of the Far West was confirmed. It is not known whether the term 'Top End' was in common use at that time; if it wasn't, it quickly came into use because it was an appropriate identifying label for the country 'at the top' and outside the Council area.

The first councillors for Murat Bay were appointed by government proclamation to act for an interim period until elections could take place. They were E A Hasting, Denial Bay; I. B Hughes, Hd. of Goode; C H Kuhlmann, Puntabie; J W Blumson, Laura Bay; J T Mason, Thevenard; H A Betts, Ceduna; and C A Tonkin, Wandana, who was elected chairman. The first meeting of this group took place in the Committee Room of the Ceduna Memorial Hall on 20 June 1925. H A Betts was appointed temporary clerk of the council until a permanent clerk could be appointed. Lots 27 and 28 in O'Loughlin Terrace in the town of Ceduna were received from the Minister of Public Works for Council purposes and 20 pounds compensation was paid for improvements on lot 28 which was a building that had been the residence of the late James Hiern.

The first official monthly meeting of the District Council of Murat Bay was held in the Ceduna Memorial Hall on 21 July 1925.[3] The items of business were a sample of matters that Council had to deal with thereafter. They included such things as the purchase of maps and plans, the purchase of a roadroller, the problem of storm waters lying in front of the Ceduna Hotel, applications for wire and netting under the Vermin Act, the metalling of certain roads, the



The new family conveyance in the 1920s — the Paech family with their new car.

grubbing of certain roads, the registration of dogs, the acquisition of cemetery land, and local health matters.

Charles D Adey of Mount Barker was appointed District Clerk and Overseer of Works. He attended his first meeting on 13 October 1925. His previous appointments included Local Government positions at Mount Barker and Renmark.

After one year the appointed council arranged for a general election on 3 July 1926. J W Blumson and E A Hasting did not offer themselves for election and, of the five Councillors that did, only two were voted in. The results were as follows. Elected, A E Gregor 256 votes, E A Hoffrichter 247, E A Payne 243,

A picnic in the bush was a favourite pastime in the 1920s. This group contains Dorrie Watson, Joyce Cuming (later Backshall), Gwyn Watson, Ern Watson and other friends.



J B Talbot 212, E E Lang 213, L B Hughes 197, C A Tonkin 194. Not elected W H Sedgley 124, J T Mason 112, H A Betts 97, C H Kuhlmann 94. Clearly, this was a resounding victory for the 'country' with seven farmers topping the poll whereas the three 'town' candidates, Sedgley, Mason and Betts failed to get elected.

There must have been doubts about the fairness of this form of 'open' election because shortly afterwards a system of Council wards was adopted. The seven wards were:

Charra: Hundreds of Catt, Bartlett and Horn
Denial Bay: Hundreds of Moule and O'Loughlin
Chinta: Hundreds of Goode and Hundred of Bonython, east of the telephone line.
Murat: Towns of Ceduna and Thevenard and Hundred of Bonython west of the telephone line.
Merghiny: Hundreds of Wandana, Chillundie, Guthrie and Pureba.
Murraminga: Hundreds of Blacker and Wallanippie
Carawa: Hundreds of Carawa, Petina, Hague and Nunnyah



C A (Pat) Tonkin, Chairman DC of Murat Bay, 1925–1930.



J B Talbot, Chairman DC of Murat Bay, 1930–1932.

An election on the wards system was held on 2 July 1927. Five of the seven councillors were unopposed; only C A Tonkin and L B Hughes had to face the voters. Both were re-elected but Councillor Tonkin had to beat off a determined 'town' lobby in Murat Ward with candidates W H Sedgley, J T Mason and H A Betts against him.

Charles Adey, after much good work laying the foundations of the District Clerk's position, died suddenly of a heart attack in November 1927.[4] He was 55 years old and left a wife, three sons and two daughters. One of the members of the family, L Adey, carried on the Clerk's duties in a temporary capacity until a replacement, W M O'Dea, was found in January 1928.

C A (Charles Arthur) Tonkin remained Council Chairman until 1930. After five years of meritorious service, which saw the Council become an integral part of the Far West's development, he did not seek re-election in 1930. One of his persistent town opponents J Mason then became the Councillor for Murat Ward and J B Talbot from Merghiny Ward became Council Chairman.

C A Tonkin was popularly known as Pat. In the words of the *West Coast Sentinel* 'he was a much esteemed early pioneer of the Ceduna district . . . a man of high integrity and an ardent supporter for anything he believed would benefit the West Coast.'[5] He farmed at Wandana from 1894 until 1937 when his wife Olive, nee Collins, died. After that, Pat retired to Glenelg where he enjoyed remarkably good health. He lived to be 91 years and 9 months and died 13 February 1964.

The Council had two District Clerks in quick succession between 1928 and 1930. W M O'Dea stayed for a little over a year and he was replaced by A E White in March of 1929. Mr White found it difficult to live in the Far West and left in 1930. He claimed publicly that, for both he and his wife, there was very little friendliness in Ceduna. It was not an uncommon problem for new people in the district though Mr White said he had job satisfaction and representatives of the Council praised his efficiency. Special qualities are needed to live successfully and happily in the Far West and the next District Clerk, R J Fairbrother, had these qualities 'par excellence'. He had served a successful apprenticeship as Assistant Clerk for the Streaky Bay Council so, when he won the Murat Bay position from a field of 70 applicants, he was well aware of any likely difficulties in the job.

R J Fairbrother, was gregarious, hard working and, above all, involved. He appeared at all public meetings, accepted onerous executive duties for community clubs, and worked with great zeal. Additionally, he was a Justice of



The old Council Chambers which stood on O'Loughlin Terrace from 1929 to 1970.

the Peace who did his share of work in the courts. Thus, he became one of Ceduna's leading citizens during his seven years as District Clerk. His departure in 1937, to accept a promotion, was a matter of widespread regret and he was tendered several public farewells. At one of these, H A Betts summed up the qualities of the man as, 'a veritable live wire . . . impossible to curb his indefatigable propensities for keeping things well up-to-date and also, in very truth, placing the district on the map.'

R J Fairbrother moved to be the District Clerk at Bordertown and later he held the same position at Naracoorte.

L A Mudge replaced Fairbrother and his stay was until the end of 1938 when he too moved to accept a promotion, this time in Port Lincoln. Later he entered business in Adelaide and served for a time as an Adelaide City Councillor.

A Messner was appointed District Clerk in January of 1939 but left to join the armed services in August of 1940. Then followed a series of temporary clerks until A Messner returned in 1946. The first of these was Miss Dorothy Webber, who came highly recommended from R J Fairbrother at Bordertown. Miss Webber gave an impressive performance and captured the affections of Councillor P S Morrison, who was a widower. They were married in 1942 and, as was the custom of the time, the married woman stepped aside and a male 'bread-winner' was invited to be Temporary Clerk. This was G Wilson from Kangaroo Island, but his stay was only six months and Miss Webber, renamed Mrs P S Morrison, was Temporary Clerk again for a period of two months. Then the well known local citizen H A Betts offered himself as clerk, and gave three years of devoted service until A Messner returned.

Mr Messner was welcomed home enthusiastically but left after six months to pursue a business career. At a luncheon at the Ceduna Hotel on 13 November 1946 Mr and Mrs Messner were farewelled by the Council and good wishes were given for their future in Adelaide. At the same time Capt. G F Pedder, the new District Clerk, and Mrs Pedder, were welcomed to the town. Capt. Pedder had just been discharged from the A I F; before the war he had been involved in local government at Wallaroo.

James B Talbot was Chairman of the Council in 1930 and 1931, but after the elections of 1932 he declined to accept a further nomination as Chairman. He explained that he lived too far away from Ceduna, he was not on the telephone and he could no longer afford the time driving continually in and out of town. Instead, he suggested Councillor Lovelock and spoke eulogistically about his qualities. Councillors expressed regret at Mr Talbot's decision, but supported his motion that Mr Lovelock should be the new Chairman.



G O Lovelock, Chairman DC of Murat Bay, 1932–1941.



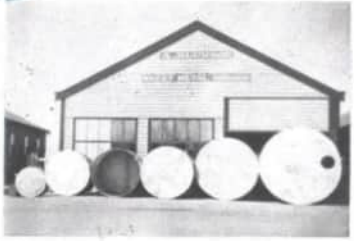
D E Moloney, Chairman DC of Murat Bay, 1941–1943.



E M Borlase, Chairman DC of Murat Bay, 1943–1946.



P S (Sid) Morrison, Chairman DC of Murat Bay, 1946–1959.



Albert Blumson's sheet metal work shop in Poynton Street. Now the Uniting Church Opportunity Shop.

G O Lovelock had replaced Councillor Gregor in the Murraminga Ward after that gentleman had resigned in January 1930. He was the eldest son of the pioneer Smoky Bay farmer Ernest Lovelock and he continued as Chairman of Council until 1941.

Councillor Dennis E Moloney from Chinta Ward became Chairman of Council in July 1941. He held office until July 1943 when Councillor Edward M Borlase from Charra Ward was elected. Because Councillor Borlase lived so far from Ceduna, it was argued that it was advisable to have a Deputy Chairman and Mr Moloney accepted that position.

Councillor Borlase began his working life as a pattern maker in the mining industry of Cornwall. Later, he moved to South Africa working in the mining areas then back to Cornwall where he took up farming. In 1926, with his family, he emigrated to South Australia and, in 1927, he began share farming at Charra. Within a few years, he took up his own scrub block and the Borlase family has been well represented in the Far West ever since. As Chairman of Council Ed Borlase served in 1943, 1944, 1945 and 1946. When elections drew near in July 1946 he announced that, because of ill health, he would not continue. In September of the same year he died in hospital in Adelaide and was greatly mourned. His place as Chairman of Council was taken by Peter Sides (Sid) Morrison of Merghiny Ward whose energetic leadership was to last until 1959. Throughout most of these years E O Dahl was a very capable deputy Chairman.

Sid Morrison was born in Boulder, Western Australia, in 1899. He came to the Far West in 1929 and spent his first years running St Peter Island for his brother-in-law, W H Clarke. He farmed for a while at Merghiny but then went into business in Ceduna where, at different times, he had a cafe, a butcher shop, a grocery store (formerly Irwins) and a Ford motor garage. From 1937 to 1967 he ran the picture shows in the town and was actively involved in many community projects.

The establishment of the District Council was yet another growth generator for Ceduna. Added to the advantages of the railway link with Port Lincoln and the deep sea port at Thevenard, the late starter in the Far West was far and away the front runner of the towns by 1925. It had a steady, consistent growth in the next 25 years whereas the other towns in the district remained static or declined.

One aspect of this growth was the increase in the number of new commercial buildings in the town. They averaged at least one per year, with the exception of the war years when all non-essential building was halted. In 1925, it was reported that 'a commodious store' was being erected by Messrs Irwin and Murphy.[6] This soon became Irwin Brothers storekeepers and commission agents. At the same time, Gus Klau had a block in Poynton Street and was busy building a bakery. This proved to be very successful, so a few years later he brought an adjoining block and started building a 36 seat cafe and shop. He called it the Ceduna Cafe and Bakery and it opened in 1934.

Thevenard gained its hotel in 1926. It was a popular addition to the township, particularly when mine host provided free drinks on the opening day.[7]

In 1929, the *West Coast Sentinel* provided a summary of the business houses operating in Ceduna in the Christmas period.[8] They began with a description of goods available from W H Betts Ltd., a large department store that had a Christmas tree and special decorations for the festive season. Next they mentioned Hamden's store which unfortunately was then a blackened



Gus Klau's Ceduna Cafe and Bakery in the 1930s.

ruin from a disastrous fire. Other businesses that were given free publicity were Mr C Morgan's men's clothes, tobacconist and billiard saloon; the Quick Service Garage; Irwin Bros — dainty wares, dishes, ladies clothes, toys and sweets; Mrs Smith's lingerie and millinery; H C Sherman chemist, toiletries, jewellery, beauty aids; Mrs Hoobin's cafe; V L Jennings Fruiterer and Confectioner; A B Nicholls Fruiterer and Confectioner; Ceduna Meat Store (Laidlaw Bros); Sedgley and Son, butchers; G C Cranna, carpenter and builder; C H Rule, painter and decorator.

In 1931, a variation upon the theme of Betts the Far West providers appeared when F W and R Betts opened a new business in Poynton Street. The opening was performed by the old pioneer Con McInerheny and the business, which later traded as Betts and Sons, advertised itself as storekeepers, auctioneers and general commission agents.[9]

The saga of the Betts' family businesses in Ceduna is complex. W H Betts Ltd, the original store from way back in 1900 fell upon troubled times. It went into receivership in 1931 and for many years none of the members of the Betts family were financially involved with it.



The Thevenard Hotel built in the 1920s.

At the time of the receivership there were seven branch stores Ceduna, Streaky Bay, Penong, Poochera, Warramboo, Yaninee and Thevenard. By 1948 only Streaky Bay, Ceduna and Penong comprised the company. In that year, after 17 years of receivership, its creditors were given a satisfactory settlement and it became a free, unencumbered company once again.[10]

In 1949 the company, still trading as W H Betts Ltd, purchased Betts and Sons, hardware and men's wear of Poynton Street, Ceduna. H A and Reg Betts were partners in that shop and with the 'takeover' H A Betts retired. Reg Betts moved to be manager of W H Betts Ltd and H G Betts, son of H A Betts, also took up a position in the company. The *West Coast Sentinel* reflected that, after many years of non involvement from the family, two grandsons of the founder (Reg and H G) were back with the firm.[11]



Betts' Store, Penong, 1927.



W H Clarke's Aerated Water and Cordial Factory plus the ill fated butter factory. Corner of Merghiny Street and East Terrace.



The opening of the new Ceduna post office 'worthy of the district' in August of 1938.

In February of 1934, in the midst of a slightly improving rural outlook, W H Clarke opened a butter factory in Ceduna. He did so in the face of much scepticism, but he did have the backing of several strong supporters. R J Fairbrother, for example, made a calculation of the number of farmers in the district who kept milk cows and suprised everybody with just how many there were. At the opening ceremony, C A Tonkin, G O Lovelock and E A Hasting, all experienced farmers, spoke highly of Mr Clarke's hard work and wished him every success.[12]

Mr Clarke tried hard. He advertised regularly in the *West Coast Sentinel* and frequently appealed for local support for his enterprise. Some was forthcoming, but not enough, and after three shaky years Mr Clarke stepped aside and Amscol took over. They were no more successful and the skeptics of 1934 were eventually proved right — Ceduna's farmlands could not sustain a butter factory.

In August of 1938, there was a gala day when Ceduna got a new Post Office 'worthy of the district'.[13] In the presence of a host of citizens, and the Ceduna Higher Primary School drum and fife band, a bevy of distinguished guests listened intently while the Post Master General, Senator McLachlan, officially opened the new building with a message sent by radio. Afterwards, Mr Dix, Acting Director of Posts and Telegraph, who appeared in the flesh, endorsed the Post Master General's remarks and other speeches were made by the Chairman of the Murat Bay Council, G O Lovelock, and the local Postmaster, Mr Laidler. When the speechmaking concluded it was 'open house' and dozens of citizens filed through to see the new premises.

A month before the Post Office day, A H Klau completed the building of an 'up to date garage' in Poynton Street.[14] This became headquarters for the versatile engineer H G Watson who, amongst other things, was the eternal provider of amplification equipment at show days, racing meetings, picnics and public meetings. Outside the garage were two 'Shell' pumps to cater for the district's rapidly increasing number of motor cars which H G Watson hoped to refuel, repair and maintain.

The building lull in the war years took some time to pick up after 1945 but, by 1948, the *West Coast Sentinel* was reporting a record building year for the town.[15] It cited new homes for T R Burke, T Sleep, L White, P S Morrison, Murray Smith, Roy Chandler and J Jackamos. Additionally, homes were



Poynton and McKenzie Street corner looking north in the late 1930s. Sherman's Chemist shop is on the corner next to Irwin's store. The site is now Phin's Supermarket.

The day they closed the pub (at Fowlers Bay) there was free grog for everybody so it was a wild occasion. Ellis Cabot was swinging from the gaslights like the Man on the Flying Trapeze. At the height of it all Reg Betts auctioned all the stock and furniture.

PAT HARDY

under construction for C Spry, R Maxfield, J L Shannon, C P Linke, A Lucas and E Thiele. The Council was undertaking extensive foreshore improvements, a Caravan Park was under construction, a new science room and a library were being added to the school. Things were happening at Thevenard also, not the least of which was the announcement that a large plaster works would be built plus an extensive conveyor belt system for the jetty.

In this heady period of growth that extended into 1949, the town pulled off what was probably its greatest achievement. The instrument for success was P S Morrison who learnt from the owner of the Ceduna Hotel, J L Madigan, that he was willing to sell the freehold for 25,000 pounds. Morrison promptly secured an option on the purchase and proceeded to inform the residents that this was their opportunity to establish a Community Hotel. He called a public meeting in July 1949, 170 people attended, and only Reverend Hounslow objected to the idea.[16] Against this, C H Kuhlmann said he thought it was a golden opportunity, Mr Mewett said he admired Mr Morrison's attitude and so did Mr Skinner. H A Betts went further: 'he always thought that Daniel in the Lion's Den was a brave man but now felt that Daniel had nothing on the Chairman' (Mr Morrison).

E O Dahl rose to second a motion of support put by Mr Kuhlmann and said that it was an opportunity that the townspeople should snap up. The motion was carried with overwhelming support and a committee of seven was elected to complete the business arrangements. The members were P S Morrison, C A Kuhlmann, H A Betts, G F Pedder, H G Watson, F A Tonkin and J Mastrosavas.

After the public meeting things moved very rapidly, chiefly in the hands of P S Morrison and F A Tonkin, who made a trip to Adelaide to tidy up legal and financial matters. The necessary 25,000 pounds was raised in debentures and in August the following were appointed as the first Directors of the Ceduna Community Hotel, C J W Bergmann, W S Irwin, C H Kuhlmann, P S Morrison, G F Pedder, F A Tonkin, and H G Watson. In September, Mr and Mrs Vince Kenny from the Grand Hotel in Port Lincoln were chosen from 25 applicants for the position of managers. And, in November, the Hotel was opened as a community enterprise.

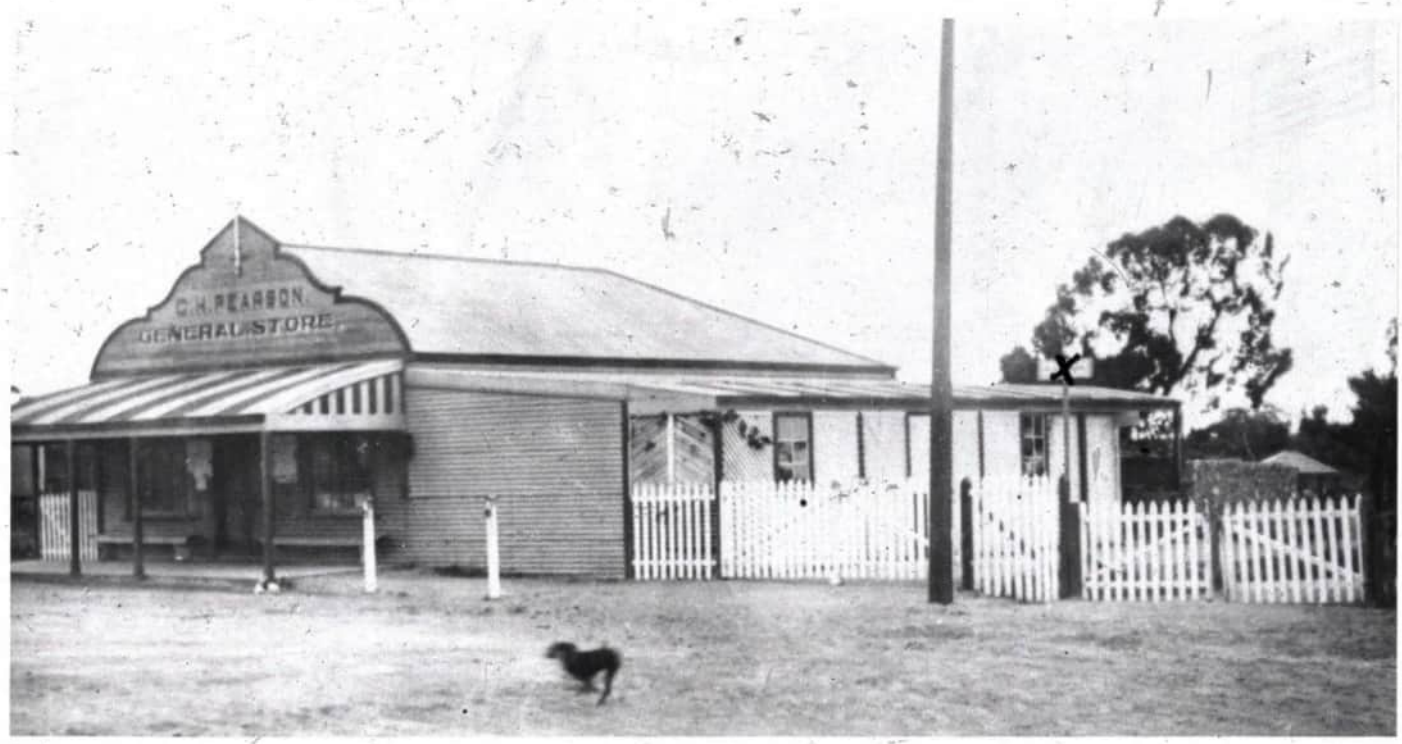
At the opening ceremony P S Morrison, speaking on behalf of the Directors, said he was pleased that former licensees Mrs Coote Sen. and Mr Con McInerheny were in the audience.[17] He then gave a brief resume of the hotel's history. The licence was first granted to Charles Mudge in 1901, but the building was not completed until December 1902. It was licensed to W M Montgomerie in 1904, A H Coote in 1907, Con McInerheny in 1916 and Michael Hamden in 1922. John L Madigan then bought the freehold in 1923. He conducted it until he leased it to L W Bedson in 1932. Then, in 1945, Terry Madigan took over the lease. Mr Morrison welcomed the new managers Mr and Mrs Kenny and, as a finale to the ceremony, Con McInerheny was invited to officially open the hotel as a community venture.

While the steady growth of Ceduna's business houses was notable between 1925–1950, there was nothing comparable in any of the other towns of the Far West. Penong fared the best, helped along by its location at the terminus of the railway and by its nearness to the gypsum fields which, at times, had a sizeable workforce. C H Pearson, for a while the postmaster, tried to go into business on the grand scale and advertised in bold print in the South Australian Directory of 1930 that he was an Agent, Picture Framer, Photographer, Authorised Kodak Dealer, Agent for H V McKay Ltd, Sunshine Machinery, Dalgety and Co. and Queensland Insurance. He also sold sweets, cool drink

Opposite page.
Above. Ceduna from the south in 1937. Clearly seen is the hotel with its tennis court and the Memorial Hall.
Below. Ceduna viewed from the north in 1937. St Paul's Lutheran Church in the foreground and the fishing fleet moored near the jetty in the days before the Thevenard boat haven.







C H Pearson's store at Penong 1930.

and tobacco. Despite this impressive array, his business did not succeed and was not mentioned in the Directory five years later. Others, however, were mentioned, and the most durable were Kelly Bros the blacksmiths. Betts Ltd storekeepers, S H Lovell baker and storekeeper, G Nieass storekeeper, J F Sonderman, wheelwright and motor car proprietor and C C Murray farmer and hotel proprietor. The well established Penong Hotel was exchanged throughout the period except for the licensees who were George Spinks 1917–1944, Herbert Simpson and George Baillie.

One notable new enterprise was the formation of a Penong Cooperative Store in 1949. Some 53 people attended a public meeting to discuss the purchase of the shop of Mrs L G Nieass. The idea was approved, debentures were offered to the public (at 3½ per cent interest). Malcolm Beck was appointed Chairman of Directors and his fellow Directors were C Harris, C G Freeman, C T T Freeman, R P Dunn, G Nugent and L Lorenzo. By May of 1950, the purchase had been made and a large crowd gathered in the presence of A Christian MP, who invited A Shipard and W Kelly to jointly open the town's cooperative store.

Lillian Dora Nieass kept a general store drapery and grocery shop all in one at Penong. She had to sell everything because you couldn't go anywhere else to buy anything.

LOCAL COMMENT

At Fowlers Bay business development was the inverse of Ceduna; instead of steady growth there was steady decline. In 1925 the town boasted Betts and Co. hotelkeepers (The Globe), W H Betts Ltd. storekeepers, A Dignum saddler, Mrs C T Giles, boarding house, F Smart, Wheat and General Commission Agent and M G Woodforde, Storekeeper. By 1940, the only one of those business houses that still existed was the boarding house of Mrs Giles. Along with the Post Office and the school, it was the only building with any sustained activity. The town was not quite dead but it was slipping away very rapidly. When it failed to get a railway extension from Penong the town wilted, but the final punishing blow came when the East-West highway, built during the war years, by-passed the town completely. The send off for the Globe Hotel, with all its colourful memories of pastoralists, explorers, kangaroo hunters and trans-continental travellers was a sad event. It closed its doors in 1936 after an uproarious day of free drinks and a clearing sale auction conducted by Reg Betts.

Opposite page.
Above. As it was . . .
The township of Denial Bay about 1915 with the Federal Hotel prominent at centre left and Darlings, later Skinners store central. Behind this was Betts store.
Below. As it is . . .
All that remains today is a fragment of Betts' store.







The Catholic Church, Ceduna. The foundation stone was laid in September 1929.

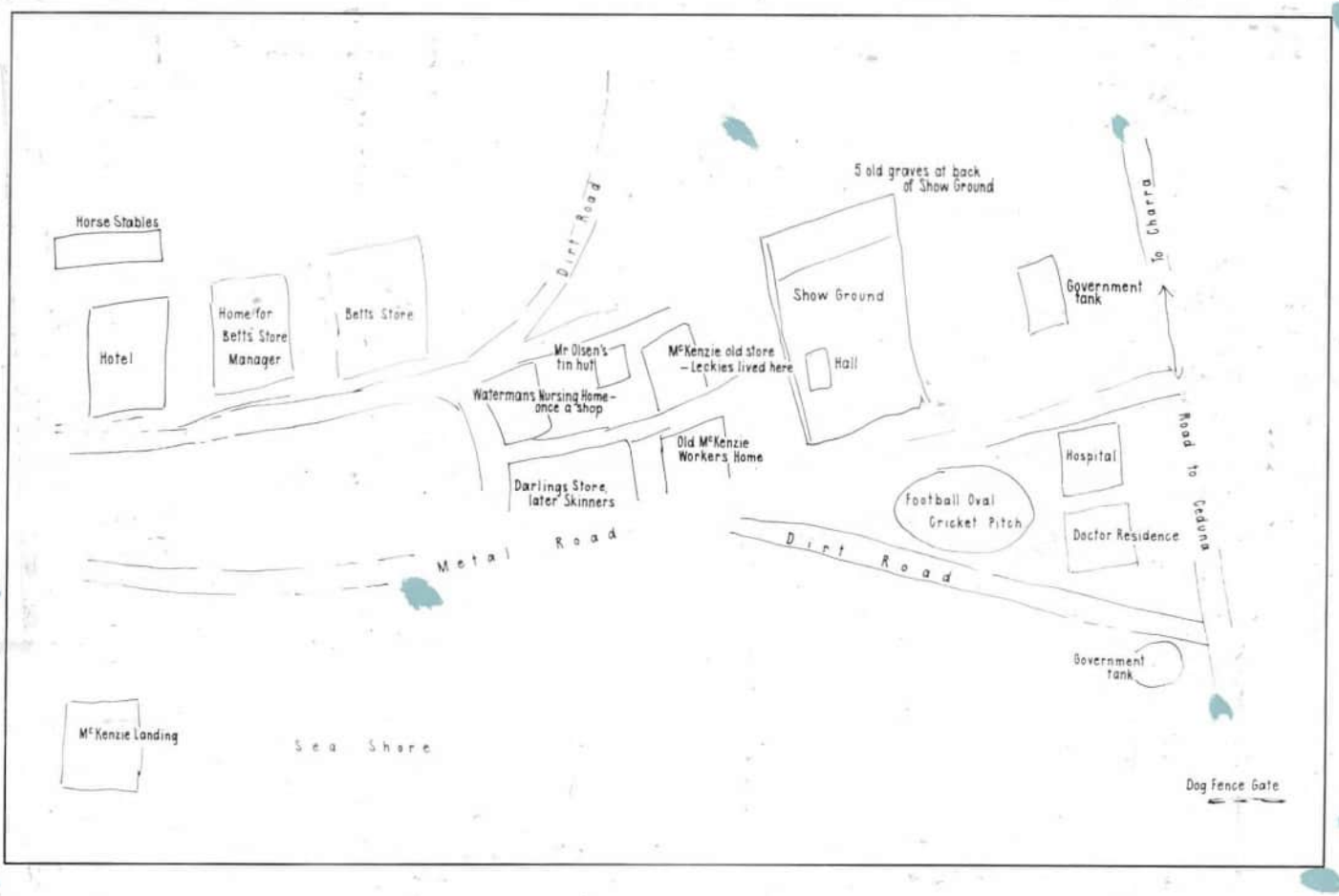
Elsewhere, business houses in the small towns fared little better than those at Fowlers Bay. Bookabie lost its store in the 1930s but Mudamuckla clung to its when E E Higgins took over the postal and storekeeping duties from Mrs Kreusler. And, at Coorabie, Mr and Mrs R J Nicol kept a post office and store operating throughout most of this period.

At Denial Bay a semblance of prosperity persisted until after the war years. In the thirties there were a few losses, notably the W H Betts Ltd. store, but the jetty and an active farming hinterland kept agencies like South Australian Farmers Union and West Coast Shipping Co. Ltd. viable. Additionally the Federal Hotel — held on under licensees W J Matz, C M Mudge and R H Wheaton — and the Skinner family store, persevered in the face of much economic uncertainty.

The eventual collapse of Denial Bay, because of the overwhelming competition from Ceduna across the bay, can be pin-pointed by two events, one in 1945, the other in 1946. The first was the removal of the 14 children from Denial Bay School and their transfer to the Ceduna school. This occurred in July 1945 and S G Denton 'converted his sedan car into a comfortable bus' to drive the children into Ceduna every day.[18] The second was the demise of the Charra, Denial Bay and Murat Bay Agricultural Society. It became the Ceduna Agricultural and Horticultural Society and the Denial Bay show hall was transferred to the Ceduna showgrounds in 1946. With two focal points, the school and the show hall gone, the rest of the town began to fade away.

Smoky Bay went against the trend. Although the old town was decimated in the storm of 1947 when the hall and church were flattened, the new town on the foreshore attracted considerable attention after the war. It became fashionable to have a weekend shack at Smoky Bay and there were applicants for shack licences from both Ceduna and Streaky Bay. The attractions of this

A sketch of old Denial Bay about 1925 from the memories of old inhabitants.





Returned soldiers who formed a guard of honour for the Governor General Lord Gowrie when he visited Ceduna. Standing: Gibb, Spry, Sedgley, Rogers, Goldfinch, Foragghty, Coulter, Jenkins, Giles. Below: Morrison, Moody, Audoss, Monaghan, Rule.

seaside spot, midway between the two large towns, were excellent fishing and a good swimming beach with clear white sand.

The Smoky Bay 'shacks' started a trend in the Far West. The idea of a beach house for holidays or weekend fishing expeditions gradually caught on and led to a partial revival in spots like Denial Bay and Fowlers Bay. Here, however, 'holiday houses' rather than 'shacks' have been built on the town allotments.

In the provision of buildings for social, religious and cultural activities, Ceduna and Thevenard far outstripped all the other communities combined. What was described as a 'fine new Masonic Temple' was built in Poynton Street in 1926.[19] Con McInerheny was the contractor and the *West Coast Sentinel* stated that being built of concrete it was an 'imposing contrast to the many iron buildings in the main street'.[20]

In September 1927, at a special Sunday service, Pastor Zweck laid the foundation stone for a Lutheran Church designed to seat 200. The contractor was again Con McInerheny. Nearly 20 years later, in October 1946, Rev R Traeger of Koonibba conducted another opening of the Lutheran Church. This time, St Paul's had been extensively renovated and a baptismal font made by R Linke was dedicated during the service.[21]

The local Catholics decided to build a church in 1927 after they were given a block of land by J Mason. Fund raising began straight away and, in September 1929, a foundation stone was laid by the Bishop of Port Augusta (Right Rev. Killian). The contractor for the Church was D Mundy from Adelaide and the successful tenderer for the supply of local limestone was A Coote.[22]

A Methodist Hall was opened in August of 1930. Rev. S Harper spoke to an assembled crowd and he was supported by the Anglican priest, Rev. S G Stewart. Then F Edson, a long time supporter of the church, was invited to open the hall and 'a program of songs, recitations, games, roller skating and competitions followed.'[23]



The old Wandana School hall being towed by W Bubner's tractor to its new site, one acre of land donated by J Bawden at the south end of section 4, Hundred of Wandana. There, in 1934, it became the Laura Bay Church of England Hall.

A good illustration of the drawing power of Ceduna at this time is the example of what became, in August 1945, St Michael's Church Hall. It was first mentioned in Chapter 7 when it was imported to the Far West and set up as a school on the property of C A Tonkin. Then it was purchased by the Church of England and taken to be a Church hall at Laura Bay. After that, it was hauled into Ceduna and placed alongside St Michael's Church. Mrs H Snashale was given the honour of opening it. She was a daughter of the late Canon Howard, who, although based at Streaky Bay, had given much time to the early development of the Anglican cause in the Murat Bay district.[24]

A Greek population in Thevenard grew steadily in the 1930s. It was primarily interested in fishing, but J Mastrosavas went into business with a brother and established a profitable general store with fruit and vegetables. He was also the Treasurer of the Greek Hall and this was opened on 8 November 1946 before 300 invited guests. J M Jackomas welcomed everybody with a 'stirring speech' given in English. On stage were T Raptis (President of the Hall Committee), G Angelakis (Secretary) and J Mastrosavas. P S Morrison, Chairman of the Murat Bay District Council, responded to Mr Jackomas's remarks and a dance followed.[25]

In the late 1940s the Returned Soldiers League (RSL), which had become very active after the war, established its own clubrooms in the old Ceduna Hall, Poynton Street. The hall was then 45 years old and needing renovation. The RSL attended to this and also put in a jarrah floor. Additionally, the old supper room at the back was turned into a billiard room. P S Morrison, the League's President, officially opened the renovated building on 10 December 1947.

Outside the boundaries of Ceduna and Thevenard activities with social, religious and cultural buildings were almost at a standstill. The little halls at Bookabie, Coorabie, Fowlers Bay, Mudamuckla, Smoky Bay and so on, were still used on a regular basis and the Woolshed Hall at Charra continued as a

popular meeting place, but there was no money in the rural areas for new buildings or extensive renovations. Indeed, some of the small buildings crumbled away, were demolished or changed their function. Thus, the old Charra Hall, which had fallen into disuse after the building of the Woolshed Hall, was sold in August 1934 at an auction. It brought only 18 pounds, and the organ inside, which had been wrecked by vandals and mice, was sold for 5 shillings.[26] The purchaser who paid the 18 pounds demolished the building and salvaged its stone, timber and iron.

The Petina hall, after being a social centre for 28 years, was sold to the Catholic Church in September of 1940 and changed its function significantly.[27]

This functional change was an indicator that religion in the Far West refused to be centralised. Certainly, it was sound economics to build new churches in the growing Ceduna-Thevenard area but preaching places in halls, houses, and scattered small churches remained decentralised. The preachers went to their congregations and nowhere was this better shown that in the case of the Thevenard Greeks. For them, Archimandrite Helios made annual visits from Adelaide and conducted services, marriages and baptisms whenever he came. On some occasions a pulpit was provided for him by the Anglican Church in Ceduna; at other times he used the Waterside Workers Hall in Thevenard, which was built in 1929.[28] The site for baptisms were no problem because Greek tradition required that they should be done in the homes of the parents.

Not only was religion decentralised but it was also, of course, regularly organised. The *West Coast Sentinel* published preaching plans every week and year by year they changed very little. Methodists had a fortnightly plan that included Merghiny, Denial Bay, New Way, Bagster, Murraminga, Penong, Maltee, Ceduna, Carawa, Mudamuckla, Fowlers Bay and Woolshed.[29] The Anglicans spread themselves across their Far West Mission to the following localities Ceduna, Smoky Bay, Laura Bay, Penong, Tallala, Kooringabbie, Bagster, New Way, Woolshed, O'Loughlin, Carawa, Wookata and Glen Boree. For the Lutherans it was Goode, Merghiny, Denial Bay and Ceduna. And, for the Catholics, their services were at Ceduna and Petina.

For most of these localities it was usually a small meeting with a familiar, regular minister. But, occasionally, there were variations when special religious milestones were achieved and, mostly, these occurred in Ceduna. Thus, in September of 1937, the Archbishop of Sydney Dr Mowll preached at St Michael's Church. His Grace was President of the Bush Church Aid Society and was in the area primarily to open a hospital at Cook. However, Ceduna Anglicans prevailed upon him to lead their Sunday service.[30]

Public spirited citizens in the Far West between 1925 and 1950 supported a variety of charitable and service clubs. This was particularly so during the war years, which will be dealt with separately, but well before the 1939-45 hostilities a branch of the Red Cross Society was formed (see Chapter 11) and so also were two branches of the Country Womens' Association.

In 1933 members of the South Australian executive of the Country Womens Association visited the Far West with the object of forming a branch. At a public meeting in August of the same year Mrs L. Dunnet was elected President of a Ceduna Branch and Mrs Harvey accepted the position of Secretary.[31] Regular meetings have been held ever since and Miss I Hasting took over as President in the mid 1930s. She relinquished the position to Mrs J Saunders in 1939, who then kept the Association viable and interested in women's activities for more than ten years. A branch of the CWA was also formed at Nunjikompita in the pre-war years and Mrs E E Lang was elected President in March of 1938.[32]

Dick Wiese left his mark around the Ceduna district as a stonemason and house builder.

WALLY MORELAND

Jim Richardson, a local lay preacher, used to ride his push bike from Penong to Kooringabbie in one day to take a service.

Fair sort of bike riders in those days.

C FREEMAN, Audio Tape, NTMC

The CWA took a great interest in the pioneers of the district and, on 28 April 1948, it conducted a Pioneers Day. The event was prompted by the donation of a memorial plaque to the memory of Captain Matthew Flinders. It came from the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia (SA Branch) in Adelaide, and was placed on the Memorial Hall wall. Mrs E C Lowe, one of the earliest pioneer women in the district, was invited to unveil it. Mrs Saunders, in her capacity as President of the CWA, then welcomed a large crowd of pioneers who were, for the purposes of the day, defined as having lived in the district 45 years or more.

Another plaque to the memory of Captain Matthew Flinders was unveiled in 1948, this time at Fowlers Bay. An address was given at the unveiling by Mr Francis and Mrs C T Giles, a pioneer resident, did the unveiling. At Penong there was no plaque to unveil but their Pioneers Day in 1949 was devoted to the opening of the school playground erected by the sons and daughters of the late Mr and Mrs C B Beck, old pioneers of the town. A Shipard, also an old pioneer, spoke to the children and performed the opening ceremony.[33]

From time to time bursts of enthusiasm for the development of the towns and district led to the formation of Progress Associations. They usually had several specific projects in mind and, invariably, once they had been achieved the Association declined because of lack of interest. In 1925, a Ceduna Progress Association had H A Betts President, Pastor C A Zweck Vice President, and D Roberts Secretary-Treasurer. It was re-born in 1943 and this time the officials were President Rev H Broadley, Vice President R Rees and Secretary Rev R Schumacher.

The all embracing Progress Associations sometimes gave way to more specialised 'progress' groups such as the Voluntary Fire Brigade formed in Ceduna in 1932 by G O Kean and R J Fairbrother.[34] All such associations, clubs or special interest groups, usually required funds and ingenious fund raising activities for good causes have always been a feature of the social life of the Far West. Here Ceduna and Thevenard did not have a monopoly on having 'a good time' and activities at Penong, Denial Bay, Mudamuckla, Smoky Bay and so on were often equally as popular and sometimes better patronised than in the large towns.

Dancing was the great medium for social interaction in the period and '1000 ways to dress up a dancing occasion' would be an appropriate theme for much of the entertainment that was organised between 1925 and 1950. Dances were organised by such diverse groups as the Lotus Ladies, officers and men of overseas ships, the School Mothers' Clubs, the Freemasons, the sporting clubs, the CWA, the maids of Denial Bay, the service clubs and even by individual families, chiefly in the form of coming of age parties for their children. A catchy new title for a dance was always a challenge to an organiser and over the years enterprising people came up with, A Long Night Dance, A Flannel Dance, Empire Dance, Back to the Barn Dance, Topsy-Turvy Dance, and then amongst the Balls — the grand occasions — there were Masonic Balls, Businessmen's Balls, CWA Balls, Madhatters Balls, Golf Club Balls, Hospital Balls and many more.

In 1929 'the ever energetic and original maids of Denial Bay' organised a Maids Drought Ball. They decorated the local hall with the bones of dead animals, garlands of dead saltbush and dressed for the occasion in the poorest dresses, many made from hessian. On stage was the carcass of a beast labelled 'Died owing to no chaff being supplied by the Drought Relief Authorities'. The Ball was an outstanding success. The Thevenard Jazz Band provided the music and Freda Thiselton and Madge King were the organisers.[35]

In 1922 I went to dancing lessons at Goode Hall every second Friday. I couldn't waltz so I was told to get a light chair and hold it out in front of me as a partner every night and that is how I learned to waltz. If you can waltz you can do any dance.

PERCY LANGE



The Smoky Bay Brass Band Group includes: George Lovelock, Keith Harrison, Norman Hunt, Jack Blood, Fred Gregor, Cyril Crocker, Keith Roberts, Herb Denton, Donald Lovelock, Bert Tremaine, Sam Denton, Sam Osborne, Charles Harrison.

Denial Bay also led the way in 1931 with a Children's Fancy Dress Ball. Here it was recorded that the following received prizes, Bessie Bowen (Old English Lavender), John Dahl (Clown), Connie Thiselton (Silly Tommy), Len Post (Scarecrow), Connie Wedding (Fairy), Eugene Dunnet (Matador), Vernon Saunders (Scotsman), Jim Saunders (1930 Drought), Jeffrey Bergmann (Father Christmas), Shirley Irvine (Eastern Prince), Olive Haseldine (Hawaian Girl) and Beryl Skinner (Pink Rose).[36]

Adults had a chance to show their creative dressing up skills at the Snake Gully Ball in Ceduna in 1939 and prizes were awarded to Mr and Mrs L F Harris as Dad and Mum, Gladys Lowe and Miss D Blumson as Dave and Mabel, Dulcie Burke and F Blumson as Annie and Alf, and Joan Dahl as Uncle Clarence.[37]

At Mudamuckla in 1931 they attempted a Wireless Dance. With a radio supplied and operated gratis by Mr Herbert of the Chillundie railway party, 3LO from Melbourne was 'tuned' in. Unfortunately, the reception was not good, but everybody made a brave attempt to get into the swing of things. After 11 pm when 3LO faded altogether, dancing continued with music supplied by Messrs Harrison, Osborne, Roberts and others.[38] Mr A Dupree acted as M C, as he did on many other occasions because Mudamuckla, with its good hall, had an active entertainment committee that put on dances at regular intervals.

Soon after the war debutante balls became popular. An example described as one of Ceduna's 'most brilliant functions' was the CWA Presentation Ball in July of 1950.[39] Mrs C E Dolling, Deputy State President of the CWA, received the debutantes. C J Paddick was MC, Dawn Fagan provided incidental music and the Fowlers Bay Band assisted by C Keitel provided the dance music. The

Belle of the Ball was Miss Betty McGuiness and the 'most popular matron' was Mrs A Comas. The debutantes and their partners were: Dulcie Skinner (Ken Wright), Betty McGuiness (Murray Henningsen), Muriel McGuiness (Rex Trewartha), Joyce Handtke (Carl Handtke), Cletus Payne (Horrie Wood), Valmai Dunkley (Frank Edson), Kath Marchant (Doug Marchant), Margaret Kelly (Eric Whitehead), Ronda Kaehne (Richard Roberts), Ruth Brown (George Nieass), Celia Saunders (Kevin McMahon), Betty Schultz (Colin Kloeden), Mary Brook (Colin Halliday), Beverly Bratten (T Bratten), Ellen Beattie (Alwyn Irvine), Ruth Williams (Colin Place) and Gavina Fox (Ray Giles).

Apart from the frequent dances there were other forms of entertainment; the 'talkies' were popular and were widely publicised; so also were concerts, gala days and fund raising competitions of various types.

Harold Raymond, the blind violinist, was an annual visitor with a concert party that raised funds for the South Australian Blind, Deaf and Dumb Children's Home at Brighton. A courteous man, he always expressed his thanks for audience contributions and from time to time he gave reports of his tours in the *West Coast Sentinel*. In 1939, he thanked Charra for 16 pounds in door takings, Penong for 17 pounds and Ceduna for 17 pounds.[40] By 1950, it was a measure of inflation rather than better attendances when he thanked Penong for 42 pounds and Ceduna for 57 pounds.

Fund raising for the hospitals in Ceduna and Penong was given an annual boost by a Hospital Day in each town. For 1938 in Ceduna, it was held on 6 April and was made special by the arrival of four RAF flying boats which landed 'one by one like graceful birds on the smooth waters of the Bay'. Officers from each were taken to the jetty and were received by the Chairman of Council, G O Lovelock and the District Clerk, I. E Mudge.[41]

On the same day there was the handing over of an aeroplane to inaugurate the Flying Medical Service (see Chapter 11) and the rather more typical



Mr and Mrs Frank Betts and family Reg, Francis, James and Pat. Lady at the back is Freda Stewart.

features of Hospital Day included swimming races at the jetty, a bicycle race, morning and afternoon tea provided by the CWA and a Ball in the evening.

At Penong the Hospital Day in 1940 raised 66 pounds 18 shillings. The usual Aunt Sally for that year was disguised as Adolph Hitler and William Carbine won the long kicking competition with 'a tape measured' 65 yards.[42] Another feature was a Queen competition. Such ventures were popular, and over the years, quite numerous. They were always good fund raisers. At Penong, in 1940, Queen of the Army, Miss E Brown, won from Queen of the Air Force, Miss D Muegge and Queen of the Navy, Miss E Miller.

A variation on the Queen's competition theme was an Ambassadress Competition in 1939. The money raised was shared between the Ceduna Memorial Hall, the Murat Bay Hospital and the CWA fund raising, for a Rest Room. Participants were Gwen Coote, Dulcie Burke and Mrs Stan Thiselton who each had a round of fund raisers such as dances, games evenings and community singalongs. The eventual winner, Gwen Coote, was sent as Murat Bay's ambassadress to the Port Lincoln Centenary Celebrations.[43]

Uworra took a different view of entertainment when it formed a Literary and Entertainment Society in 1933. Miss D Sandford was the President and Mr Maguire was Secretary. Their base for operations was the Woolshed Hall and here they had readings, plays and debates, usually with Penong. One debate examined the topic 'That Disarmament is Necessary for World Peace'. Uworra's team was E T Mewett, F Manning and J Maguire. Penong, which won, was represented by Rev G Bottrill, V Barry and Rev A Edwards.[44]

After the war, with the return of the boys from overseas and a strong membership in the RSL, entertainment was more diversified. Amateur Hours were popular in 1945 and 1946 and the RSL staged a Quiz and Variety Show in Ceduna in December of 1946. The quiz champion was T Laidler, but the men's ballet was the highlight of the evening. They performed in pale blue ballet skirts, white underpants and brassiers of shining saucepan lids. Members were C Paddick, J Hayward, J Giles and Bob Blumson. R J Betts was the quizmaster, H Klau was the pianist, Mrs H Klau acted as ballet mistress, C Paddick was the producer and R Gore was the compere.[45]

The RSL also staged 'Luna Park Fairs' in the late 1940s with cheap jack stalls, knock 'em down stalls, slippery dips, lucky dips, fishing ponds, jumble stalls, treasure hunts and a 'Grand Ball' in the evening. Organisation was in the hands of the President, P S Morrison, the Secretary, F G Paltridge, and the Treasurer, T Hiskey.

There was a Far Western sub branch of the RSL operating in the Top End in the late 1940s and they were responsible for sports and a dance on 26 August 1950 at Bookabie. The main novelty events were won by C Murray and C Halliday. R M Dunn's horses won several races and, at the topsy-turvy Ball that night, the prizewinners were Miss J Giles, Don Gurney, Miss N Giles and F Lorenzo.

The CWA, the Freemasons, the Buffalo lodge, the sporting clubs and the religious groups all held fund-raising entertainments in competition with the RSL. One notable success was a concert organised by the Luther Societies of the Lutheran Church in 1947. More than 400 people attended, much to the satisfaction of the hard working committee made up of Lois Bergmann, Valda Payne, Thelma Lutz, P Kloeden, H Klau and Geoff Berryman.

For the bulk of the population of the Far West, sport continued through 1925–1950 as a major form of entertainment. Nobody had to travel far or try too hard to join a team, and newcomers to the district often found that the first questions from the locals were 'Do you play football? — or tennis? — or cricket?' The foundations for these sports in the Far West were laid well before

When football season comes we have no friends. After the football season we are all friends.

LOCAL COMMENT attributed to BIBIANA MAHAR



Some of the first Ceduna golf club members. From left: F L McFarlan, M Fitzgerald, E F Kelly, V S Irwin, E E Baseby, L G Irwin, H G Sherman, P Connell, L N Bedson.

1925 and so were the foundations for rifle shooting, horse racing and cycling. From 1925 to 1939 it was simply 'more of the same' but the war years brought a halt to most organized sport. After 1945 things got back to normal, the clubs reformed and, with transportation becoming easier as each year went by, sporting exchanges became more frequent and more diversified.

A new major sport, golf, was introduced during the period. H A Betts, as in so many other things, was a prime mover and he was elected the first President in 1927.[46]

Other active workers in the early years were J T Lang (Secretary), Miss K Adey, Mrs S Hallett, F L McFarlan, M Fitzgerald, J R Porter, I Allport, F Ashton, W Baseby, N Bedson, W Gibb, Dr C V Hallett, W Hill, V Irwin, W Jelley, F Kelly, A Olsson, R Parker, J Petney, J Pitman, H Sherman and P Connell. A Golf Club Ball was held on 27 May 1927 and funds were used for the first 9 hole course.

In June 1935 a club house was opened. H A Betts, the President, was unavoidably absent but Mr C Halahan, the Vice President, took charge of the proceedings and asked Mrs W Hill, wife of the Club Captain, to cut a purple ribbon to open the building. A long drive competition and an approach and putt event were features of the day. The winners were Miss Adey, Gwen Coote, L E Betts, W A Hill, W G Gibb and H G Watson. Gordon Cranna was thanked for his building work and J W Smith, the club Secretary, received compliments for his organizing ability.[47]

At Penong a meeting was held in Lovell's Tea Rooms to form a golf club in July of 1931. G C Spinks agreed to be the club's Patron, Dr J H Davis was elected President, W G Dawson, Secretary, and P B Judd, Treasurer. L F Hicks and Miss L Shipard were made committee members.

Swimming races were introduced at Ceduna in 1926 and continued for many years thereafter. An indication of just who dominated this sport, both from the organising and winning points of view, can be seen from the places in the first championship event; they were P Alexander 1, J Alexander 2, C Alexander 3.[48]



Penong Basketball team mid 1930s. Phyl Warmington, Vennis Brook, Dorothy Shipard, Doreen Shipard, Joan Oats, Bev Bratten, Betty Edwards.

Women's basketball (now netball) was also introduced in this period. At a meeting in Muriel Hoobin's Cafe in July of 1933 a club was formed with Miss M Penery, President, Miss E Kuhl, Secretary, and Committee members Claire Tonkin and G Dawe. A similar club was formed at Penong in 1934 when Miss I Norton was elected Captain, I Skinner, Vice Captain and Mrs E Fox, secretary.

In broad terms netball has been a viable sporting activity ever since the inaugural meetings but the same is not true for croquet. An attempt was made to launch it as sport in 1938, but despite hard work from Mrs S Forth, the President, and Mrs T Laidler the Secretary nothing satisfactory was achieved.

Football, tennis and cricket continued to be the major sporting attractions, the first having the greatest number of followers but the second having the greatest number of participants. Football in the area has been exhaustively analysed by John Gascoyne in his book *Far West Football* (1986) where mention is made of the performances of the following clubs Bonython, Carawa, Smoky Bay, Ceduna, Charra, Western United, Penong, Denial Bay, Goode, Koonibba, Maltee, Merghiny, Rovers, Thevenard, United and Yalata.

Charra Basketball Team mid 1930s
Back: Joyce Haseldine, Ruby Freeman, Edna Sleep, June Gurney.
Front: Dulcie Skinner, Marj Saunders, Lexie Irvine.



Mr Cooper hit the first tennis ball over the net to open the Watraba tennis courts. He wasn't much of a player — he missed the first time.

LOCAL COMMENT



Mr G Cooper hitting the first ball over the net to open the Watraba tennis courts in 1938.

Champions (?) of the past at a veterans football match. Standing l to r: L Bowen, M Bratten, J Sleep, W Saunders, W Sedgley, E Schwarz, T Zippel, W Jolly, A Hoffrichter, S Thiselton, W Nicholls, G Zippel, F Tonkin, C Foster, C Spry. Front: D McBeath, J Betts, M Smith, A Marchant, F Blumson, C Denton, J Bergmann, R Burner.

Tennis Associations were formed, re-formed, amalgamated or disbanded with bewildering frequency in the 1930s. There were always plenty of teams; it was a matter of finding the most convenient groupings. Thus, in 1931, there were teams from Maltee, Carawa, Mudamuckla, Thevenard, Ceduna and Denial Bay, but no organised association. In 1933 Denial Bay formed an association with teams from Denial Bay, O'Loughlin, Ceduna and Thevenard. At the same time there was a Beautiful Valley District Tennis Association supported by Mudamuckla, Chinta, Maltee and Goode, and a Far Western Association made up of Charra, Watraba, Penong and Bookabie.

Tournaments were popular. The one at Denial Bay over the long weekend in January 1931 was 'an unqualified success'. The committee was W Parsons, R Westrup and Freda Thiselton and the various winners were Men's Singles, S Lovell, Men's Doubles, R Betts and E Hoobin, Mixed Doubles, R Betts and Gwen Coote, Ladies Singles, Mrs Woods and Ladies Doubles, Misses J and C Tonkin.[49]

Easter tennis tournaments were regular features in Ceduna. In 1937 F Hertzmann won the men's singles and Dr Freda Gibson found enough time to get away from her medical duties to win the women's singles. After a lapse during the war years tournaments were organised again, beginning in 1945 when Tom Hiskey and Mrs F A Blumson were the champions. Then, for a few years, it was the reign of Hartley Klau as Ceduna's top player but, in 1949, what might have been seen as the Championship of the West Coast was played when Klau met Kevin McMahon in the men's final of the Easter Tournament. McMahon had previously won the Streaky Bay singles four times in succession while schoolteaching near that town. In 1949 he was teaching at Uworra and, in an epic battle watched by a large crowd, he defeated Klau 4–6, 6–5, 6–3.

Cricket continued to have a good following throughout the period with basically two associations, the Murat Bay and District, and the Far West. In the former were Ceduna, Thevenard, Mudamuckla, United and Denial Bay. In the latter were Charra, Watraba, Penong and Wanderers. Good bowling performances on uneven wickets usually outranked batting performances but, in a display of versatility from a remarkable all rounder, Reg Betts of football and tennis fame made 102 retired for Ceduna against Denial Bay on 17 January 1936.





The Murat Bay Races, 1929.

Cricket, as always, was conducive to picnic style matches and there were some memorable examples in the 1930s. In January of 1934 a team composed entirely of the descendants of W H Betts played a Ceduna Hotel eleven led by N Bedson. The day's hero was Dr L O Betts who made 41 retired. And, at Denial Bay in February of 1933, 'mixed' cricket was played with the ladies scoring 39 and 82 to the men's 57 and 114. Underarm bowling was used and, according to the *West Coast Sentinel* reporter at the match, 'the ladies quite surprised their sterner opponents'.[50]

Horse racing continued with unabated popularity in the period and the *West Coast Sentinel*, at different times, gave four owner-trainers special commendations. The first of these was Fred Geue who originally came to the Far West with the surveying parties in 1891. He came back in 1893 to farm, and from then onwards bred and raced horses, winning numerous country races not only in the Far West but right throughout the State. His son Stan Geue also had great success with horses, and father and son sometimes combined, as for example when they took their horse 'Lady Mancilla' to Adelaide for the Port Adelaide Cup in 1939.

Fritz Handke made a start with racehorses in 1905 and was still training and racing them 35 years later. In that time he had winners all over the state including the metropolitan area with horses like 'Bonny Gift', 'Wiabuna', 'Best Girl', 'Seal Princess', 'Home Maid', 'Gold Lad' and 'Herdsman'.[51] In 1914, his 'Bagonie' won the Port Adelaide Cup.

R Dunn's horses were reared mostly in the Penong area where he frequently landed two, three and even, on one occasion, in 1949, four winners in an afternoon. But like the Geue's and F Handtke he also took his horses to other parts of South Australia and enjoyed many successes.

As in all of the sports there was a lull in racing during the war years and a rebirth after 1945. By 1950 it was on a strong footing once again at many Far West centres and, in that year, the Murat Bay Jockey Club introduced as two of its prestige events the F Handtke Memorial Handicap and the F Geue Memorial Welter. It was also the year the Club chose to honour its President of eleven years with life membership. The President was the ubiquitous Reg Betts.[52]

Amongst all the sports the one that was given the most consistent press coverage from 1925–1950 was rifle shooting. This might have been because all it usually required was a simple listing of the results. Whatever the reason, some results appeared in the *West Coast Sentinel* week after week. The most regular contributions were from Murat Bay Club and Fowlers Bay Club but

The Penong Meeting is over.
The racing year laid aside
But we will join in again next year
That's if we are still alive.

From 'THE LAST MEETING', GEO PRICE, Tallala

reports also came in from Penong and Nunjikompita. In 1938 the sport was so popular that a Far Western District Rifle Club Union was formed with teams from Murat Bay, Streaky Bay (2), Wirrulla, Penong, Nunjikompita, Fowlers Bay, Collie and Smoky Bay. There were many competitions and the local boys in the 1930s who seemed to perform best included A J Marchant, J H Will, E O Dahl, L F Harris, S Thiselton, A J Bowell, T Laidler, S Young, A Nicol, H Phillips, V Cabot, E Cabot, K Dolling, R Papps and P Hardy. After the war years, a new group of marksmen appeared and prominent names were H McCallum, W G Berryman, K Puckridge, D J Marchant, L K Hoffrichter, H Burniston, L J Dunn, S G Oats, H J Copley, R N Giles, P Giles and J H Murray.

Amongst the minor sports three can be mentioned. The Ceduna Amateur Cycling Club was activated in 1939 and Don Nicholls, Bob Giles, T Rogers, Tom Yendall, N Dahl, Clem Brooke, D Morrison, D Hiller, L Coote and N Bedson were the best performers. A Girls' Physical Culture Club operated in Penong in the late 1930s because of the skilful teaching of Mrs McTier. In 1939 they gave displays in the Penong, Coorabie and Woolshed Halls. And, in 1949, table tennis was all the rage at Charra where tournaments were organised with the help of tables lent by C Freeman, H Klau and L K Hoffrichter. K McMahon and Miss D Shipard proved to be the most skilful players.

The steady flow of life and living in the Far West suffered, like everywhere else in Australia, the traumatic disruptions of the Second World War, 1939–1945. Nothing was quite the same in Ceduna, or Thevenard or Smoky Bay or Bookabie or anywhere else in these years. Yet, there was a common war effort which created a special phase in the history of the area.

After the outbreak of hostilities, in September 1939, many things happened quickly: a Ceduna-Thevenard Emergency Civil Defence Committee was set up on September 15 and soon afterwards a Comforts Fund for the Fighting Forces was created.

Penong also established a branch of the Comforts Fund. Mrs Cyril Murray was President, Shiela Roberts was secretary jointly with Beryl Place and the Committee included Mesdames E Oats, M Beck and Messrs. W Place and G Nugent.

The Red Cross members in all localities went to work making garments, and the first parcel of knitted goods was sent away on 2 February 1940.

Farewells to men called up for active service became common occurrences. The first was for Dudley Beinke at Thevenard on February 12 1940. Later, as Sgt. Beinke, RAAF, he was to lose his life over the North Sea.

On Friday, 30 August 1940, every available seat was taken in the Memorial Hall at Ceduna for a 'Win the War Rally'. The chief speakers were A P Blesing MLC and A W Christian MP. Explanations were given about War Saving Certificates and there was an enthusiastic round of community singing with popular choruses such as 'Roll Out the Barrel', 'There'll always be an England', 'Wings over the Navy' and 'Kiss me Goodnight Sergeant Major'.

After this, fund raising was lifted to an all time high; a popular baby competition in the Uworra-O'Loughlin areas raised 91 pounds. Barry Trowbridge (Uworra) led the field followed by Delores Hoffrichter (Athenna), Joylene Trewartha (O'Loughlin) and Vivian Brooks (Watraba). A Ceduna Flower Show raised 33 pounds, and two other successful ventures were a Queen competition won by Z Mastrosavas (Queen of the Navy) and a hilarious Ugly Man Competition wherein 'Basher' Betts, defeated 'Slasher' Hill and 'Baldy' Bedson.

News of the first war casualties came in mid 1941. Private E G Boxer from Penong lost a leg below the knee; worse news came in August when it was

announced that Norman Kloeden of Koonibba, Mervyn Denton of Charra and Owen Yendall of Denial Bay had all been killed.

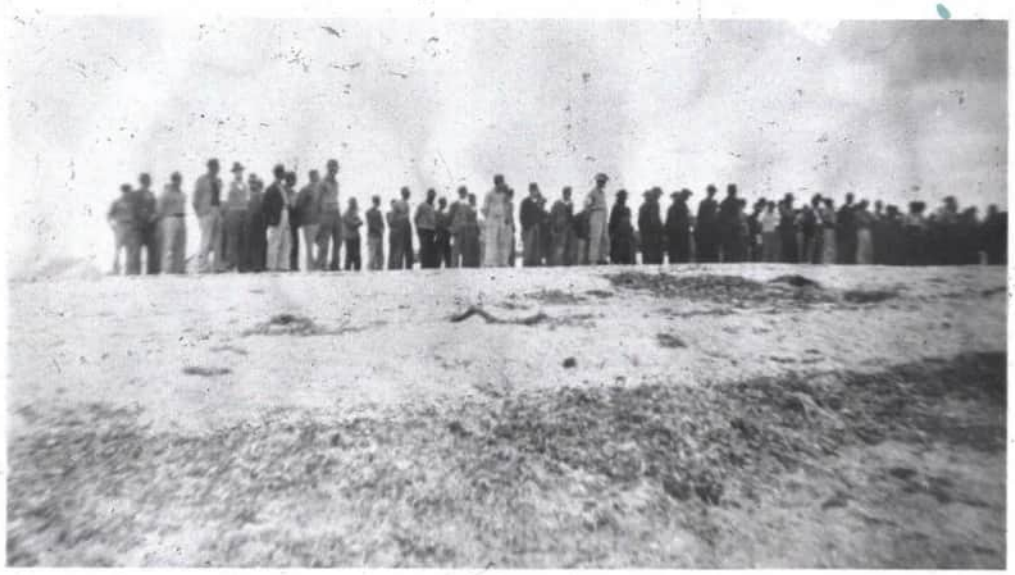
Everybody tried to make some input for the war effort. A Voluntary Defence Corps (VDC) was formed under the guidance of T Laidler, W Gibb, E Skinner, D E Moloney and A Marchant. P S Morrison assumed his World War I rank of Squadron Leader and took charge of over 100 men who assembled in the Ceduna police station yard for the first parade. They were divided into units, drilled regularly once per fortnight and then taken off to camp at Smoky Bay in the Easter of 1942. Here they linked up with another 100 men from Streaky Bay, Penong, Wirrulla, Poochera and Wudinna. The Penong group had been formed in June 1941 with 46 men appearing at the first parade.[53]

The Smoky Bay camp was serious business; Mr Gibb's unit showed the right and wrong ways to mop up a street, the correct procedures for guard duty, and gave a demonstration of methods used for stopping a tank. The *West Coast Sentinel*, which was hampered by war time restrictions on reporting anything to do with defence matters, nevertheless felt that it could say: 'These displays were carried out in a most realistic manner and loud applause greeted the closing of each incident.'[54]

The defence restrictions did not stop the paper from printing banner headlines about a plane crash at 'a nearby country town' in January 1942.[55] It gave details of six people dead, four of whom were buried in the un-named town's cemetery on a day when hundreds of people turned out to mourn them. What the paper could not say soon became common knowledge to the locals — the plane was a Hudson bomber which crashed on take-off at the Ceduna aerodrome and all six crew members were killed.



Penong Girl Guides 1932.
Back: Dorothy Muegge, Doris Richardson, Ruth Harris, Vera Nielsen, Agnes Wold, Doris Oats, Isobel Beck.
Front: Shiela Roberts, Jean Roberts, Millie Sleep, Florence Mewett, Avis Shillabeer, Marjory Williams.



The Voluntary Defence Corps on parade at the Smoky Bay camp Easter, 1942.

Schoolchildren contributed to the war effort through the School's Patriotic Fund (SPF); Olive Haseldine from Denial Bay School showed just how much could be done. She collected 5760 lbs of bones, 594 lbs of paper, 8½ lbs of metal, 25 lbs of rags, 4 knitted balaclava caps, a pair of mittens, a beret and a pullover. The waste materials were collected in a small trailer towed behind her bicycle. For her efforts she was awarded an SPF Service Badge, 6 bars, 23 wings and 4 aeroplanes.[56]

When the invasion of Australia appeared imminent and Darwin was being bombed repeatedly Ceduna, with its aerodrome, felt vulnerable. The VDC stepped up its training programmes, an Air Raid drill was adopted, and First Aid Officers plus Ambulance Officers were made ready for any emergency. At the same time, the town was criss-crossed with trenches dug by willing volunteers using picks and shovels.

Yet another war related tragedy was the death of Edwin Fear, a VDC officer, in April of 1942. He was making a routine check of a machine gun on one of the wheat boats at Thevenard when the gun went off accidentally and two bullets passed through his left side. He died several hours later and left a wife and 4 young children.[57]

Gradually the war effort settled down to a steady continuous push rather than episodic spurts. People adjusted to rationing, to gas producers on motor cars and to patriotic propaganda on their radios and in their local paper. The tide began to turn slowly late in 1943 when the first batch of enlisted men was sent home, and the population was glad to switch from Farewell Socials to Welcome Home Socials. These continued through 1944 into 1945 and everybody followed the progress of the war as final victory seemed to be getting closer each day.

The glorious VP day came on 14 August 1945. In Ceduna and Thevenard church bells rang, car horns sounded, the air raid siren sounded, shops and offices were closed and people flocked into the streets. Thanksgiving services were held in all the churches. The children of the Ceduna Higher Primary School marched into the town led by the school band with flags flying and every second child beating out sounds on boxes and tins. An effigy of Tojo made by David Howlett was carried at the head of the procession and was later ceremoniously burnt in a huge bonfire.

Thevenard and Penong had similar celebrations and the next day, a public holiday, was devoted to picnic sports, more celebrations in the streets and dancing at night. For the Penong people the picnic was held at Port Sinclair.

In terms of war casualties the Far West suffered far less than it did in World War I and this can be checked on the new crop of Honour Rolls erected alongside the World War I rolls starting with the one that went up at Mudamuckla in December of 1946.[58] Here one person was recorded as having paid the supreme sacrifice, Driver Roy Lindquist who died in a prisoner of war camp in Borneo. The roll was unveiled by Mrs E O Zippel on behalf of Mrs Bassham who had three children in the services, but was unable to attend the ceremony.

At Coorabie an Honour Roll was unveiled on 17 July 1947. R Nicol gave an inspiring address and Mrs E J Riddle, 81 years of age, was invited to perform the unveiling. She was the mother of three ex-servicemen, one a winner of the Military Medal. The ceremony was arranged by district representatives Mesdames Bastian, M E Fox and Messrs J M Murray, S M Young and A Hardy. The roll had 45 names on it with three stars for those that paid the supreme sacrifice, Private Bill Giles and Private Jeff Hobbs killed in action and Sergeant Frank Reid who died a prisoner of war.[59]

Nunjikompita unveiled its roll at a service conducted by Reverend Pengilly in April of 1949. The ceremony was performed by Mrs J C May whose son Warrant Officer Don May was the only one in the district who was killed in action.[60]

Penong's Honour Roll was unveiled by Mrs W J Sleep and Mrs C C Murray at the local hall in August of 1947. Reverends Connell and Pengilly conducted a short service and afterwards a dance was held.[61]

In Ceduna an Honour Roll with 186 names was unveiled in the Memorial Hall in September 1952 by Mrs H B Smith who had 5 sons in active service. The Reverends T Hayman and D Gibson conducted a memorial service and A Chadwick played the organ.[62]

Like any community the Far West had its episodes of lawlessness and tragedy, which, thankfully, were not frequent. One of the best remembered incidents was the 'great chase' in the Penong district to apprehend two desperate criminals. It began in Ceduna in November 1929 when W H Betts Ltd was burgled on a Tuesday night. Clothes, food, shoes and jewelry were stolen. The first clue as to where the robbers went came when a new men's suit was found on the Kalanbi road about 5 miles out of Ceduna. Constable Gethings, F W Betts and J Parrott (a local mechanic) set out in search of further clues on the Wednesday and, overnight, found an abandoned car some miles out of Penong on the Fowlers Bay road.

On the way back into Penong the search group was nearly run down by a speeding car. Constable Gethings fired two shots as the vehicle disappeared into the night heading westwards. In Penong they discovered that the thieves had stolen S H Lovell's Chrysler six and twelve cans of petrol from the store of L D Nieass.

A new, strongly armed, search party was organised at dawn on the Thursday. They found the second car abandoned and evidence that the thieves had taken to the scrub. The party broke into groups and S Lovell and M Beck found the tracks of two men which they then followed for about 2½ miles through scrub and across open country. Eventually they caught up with them and had 'a bold chase' for about 1½ miles before the exhausted criminals surrendered. Mr Beck then 'kept them covered' with his rifle and Mr Lovell went for help, which thankfully was not far away. Constable Gethings took charge and the two men were packed off to the Penong gaol. They were subsequently charged and found guilty of thefts not only in Ceduna and Penong but in a whole string of towns between Jamestown and the Far West.[63]

Messrs Lovell and Beck were, of course, local heroes whose health was drunk repeatedly in the Penong Hotel. They responded with appropriate modesty and Mr Lovell was greatly relieved because he retrieved his precious Chrysler six.

In the seemingly less complicated era of the 1930s the problems of vandalism and violence common to modern society were not completely unknown. Thus, in 1934, in the Ceduna local court before Messrs Sedgley and Fairbrother JPs two young men were charged with behaviour calculated to annoy others in the audience at the Ceduna picture show. They pleaded guilty and were fined 1 pound and 5 shillings costs each. And, about the same time, at a football match at Penong, a local farmer renowned for his aggressive barracking, made himself so offensive to one of the leading players in the opposing team that the said player remonstrated with the barracker and then settled the issue with a well planted fist that broke the vocal gentleman's jaw in three places, 'entirely incapacitating him from any further barrack for many a long day.'

Near the end of the period under consideration, in August of 1950, the Far West's worst road tragedy occurred. A party of 22 schoolboys travelling from Ceduna to Minnipa for a football match were involved in a vehicle crash. The driver was a local schoolteacher who had a fellow schoolteacher alongside him in the driver's cabin and both escaped injury. But, back in the body of the vehicle Colin Cooper, 14, and John Dodd, 15, died of head injuries. Adrian Miller was taken to Adelaide in the BCA flying ambulance in a serious condition and he eventually recovered.[64] The tragedy was a severe shock for the district and the Ceduna Football Club, under the chairmanship of Reg Betts, immediately launched a public appeal for funds to assist the grieving families. It was generously supported; the money went to the Ceduna School Committee to decide upon its most appropriate distribution.

With the growing strength of Ceduna, Thevenard, and to a lesser degree Penong, a well defined dichotomy developed in the general population namely



The Poynton Street, Merghiny Street corner looking north in the late 1940s. Buildings shown are the Bank of Adelaide, St Michael's and All Angels Church, Albert Blumson's house, his sheet metal workshop and the Methodist Church.

the permanents and the transients. The permanents, as the name suggested, had always been in the Far West and intended to stay there all their lives. The transients on the other hand came for a few years as a condition of their employment. They were schoolteachers, ministers of religion, bank officers, railway officers, postal officers, police personnel and so on. Many of these served their time in the Far West under sufferance and went quickly away to other pastures; but many involved themselves deeply with the development of the area and deserve to be well remembered for their efforts. Their names crop up in this and other chapters and the most worthy were usually given elaborate farewells which were reported in the *West Coast Sentinel*.

The departures of the transients were matched in a different sense by the departures of many of the old pioneers of the district in the years 1925–1950. They either died in their homes or moved to Adelaide to 'retire'. If they did the latter they sometimes joined with some of the old transients at the West Coast Social Club. This was formed in Adelaide in 1946 and G O Lovelock, the former Chairman of the Murat Bay District Council, was chosen as its first President. E T Leckie, also originally from the Murat Bay area, was the first secretary and on the committee were Mrs Riddle (Fowlers Bay) and Cyril Dunn (Carawa).

The twenty five years this chapter has dealt with really tested the spirit of the Coasters. Despite the effects of the great drought, the Depression and the second World War, there was a core of settlers, replenished regularly by new chums from the mainland, who together pushed forward, albeit slowly, to stabilise a network of Far West communities. Within the network some embryonic towns withered away to nothing, others carried on unchanged, and a third group, Ceduna, Thevenard and Smoky Bay, hovered on the edge of prosperity. The twenty five years showed that 'life on the edge' could produce many losers, but enough winners to maintain a regional occupance of several thousand people — people who could adjust to the special conditions of the Far West environment.



The Poynton Street, Merghiny Street corner looking south in the late 1940s. Old Police Station on the corner.

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42 WCS 9/8/40
43 WCS 15/9/39
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45 WCS 4/12/46
46 WCS 3/6/27
47 WCS 14/6/35
48 WCS 10/4/26
49 WCS 31/1/31
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10. The Centralising Years, 1950–1987

The history of the communities in the Far West since 1950 has been one of continued centralisation of the population into Ceduna-Thevenard which has outstripped Streaky Bay in size and now truly is the principal town of the West Coast of South Australia. The trend towards centralisation, and other interesting trends, can be illustrated from census details, particularly for the census years 1961, 1966, 1971, 1976 and 1981. Figures are available for the area of the District Council of Murat Bay, and although this is not the entire area examined in this book, it is nevertheless a major part of the Far West and does reflect the trends of the total area.[1]

Sometime in the 1950s the population of the Council area passed 2000 people and the population in Ceduna passed 1000 people. In 1966 accurate figures show that the Council area had 2274 people and Ceduna-Thevenard had 1406 or 62% of the total population. In 1981 the Council's population was 3810, and 2794, 73%, lived in Ceduna-Thevenard. This centralising trend continued in the next five years and, although the population in the Council area was virtually unchanged in 1986, at 3832, more people than ever lived in the Ceduna-Thevenard town area.

The evidence for growth and its accompanying centralising process can also be illustrated by the number of occupied private dwellings in the Council area. In 1961 there were 482 and in 1981 there were 1028 (1129 in 1986). In 1961 about 60% of the dwellings were in Ceduna-Thevenard but by 1981 the figure was almost 80%.

Growth as shown by the statistics was not universal. The number of people engaged in primary production hovered between 300 and 400 during the period 1961–1981 and the number of licensed fishermen actually dropped from around 70 in the late 1950s to around 45 in the mid 1980s. The number of people engaged in transport industries varied slightly from about 100 to about 130 and building and construction workers in normal times stayed in the 90s. In abnormal times, like the dredging and renovation of the port of Thevenard, the construction workers rose to as many as 240.

The total workforce between 1961 and 1981 grew from 734 to 1732. Here the growth areas were in Wholesaling and Retailing (75 in 1961 to 239 in 1981) and in government workers (less than 100 in 1961 to 455 in 1981). One significant comparison in the latter group was for people working in Education; 31 in 1961 and 115 in 1981. Another comparison, which says something about the nature of the Far West community today, is that the

Ceduna — remote Nullarbor Town

DIMBOOLA BANNER 24/2/67

number of self employed people rose from 211 to 297 between 1961 and 1981, while the number of people who were employees rose from 445 to 1167. Contained within the last figure were 455 government workers made up of 144 Federal employees, 262 State employees and 49 Local Government employees. Interestingly, the State government was the ideal equal opportunity employer with 131 males and 131 females, whereas the Federal government showed up badly with 128 males and 16 females.

Another characteristic of the population in the Far West shown in the 1981 Census was that the Lutheran Church had the greatest number of supporters (795), followed by the Church of England (742), Uniting (including Methodists and Presbyterian) (676), Catholic (312) and Orthodox (131). These figures did not change significantly in the 1986 Census. Here, the preliminary figures which were available at the time of writing, showed an Aboriginal population in the Council area of 526 or 13.7 per cent of the total population.

There are certain dominating buildings in the Far West landscape today which are a testimony to growth in the years since 1950. Some of them are discussed in other chapters as, for example, the silos at Thevenard, the new Ceduna Area School, the four Motels in Ceduna and the OTC station. But, relevant here are some notable modern achievements, the first of which is the Senior Citizens Village.



The main building of the Senior Citizens Village in Ceduna. Erected in 1972.

The story began when three ladies Mesdames W Nicholls, L McKenzie and R Borlase, concerned about the aging population of the area and their lack of special facilities, called a public meeting to discuss the matter on 10 April 1968. More than forty people attended from localities as far apart as Penong and Nunjikompita.

An investigating Committee was formed to study the feasibility of a Senior Citizens home; Reg Borlase was chairman. They canvassed many options, looked at similar schemes in other parts of the state and examined ways and means of attracting government assistance for a scheme.[2]

After four months work the investigators presented several alternatives to a public meeting on 26 August 1968. The meeting decided to proceed with the idea of a village consisting of a combination of single rooms and motel-type suites for married couples. The investigating committee was disbanded and a new committee was formed of six people with Reg Borlase again chairman. At the same time, a constitution was approved based upon one used for a senior citizens home at Stansbury. Two pertinent points in the constitution were: (1) that the home would be for people on Upper Eyre Peninsula and the Far West and (2) admission would be irrespective of creed or denomination.

The modernisation of Ceduna is shown in the two photos. At left is the south-west McKenzie-Poynton Street Corner in 1956 and at right is the same location in 1987.







Senior citizens outside the Uniting Church in Ceduna. Front: Alice Bowell, Mary Sleep, Lou Kaehne, Ray Farrelly, Mabel Chandler, Vera Schwarz, Olive Tonkin, Jean Edwards, Jean Tonkin, Ella Borlase, Reg Borlase, Rita Stott, Cliff Stott. Back: Jean Ferguson, Ellen Trelligan, Madge Brierley, Jess Gray, Lydia Kuhlmann, Allan Tonkin.

After this effective groundwork, the big push was for fund raising and here it became truly a Far West community project. In the forefront were the RSL Ladies Auxiliary, the Uworra Church Ladies Guild, the Fathers Association, the CWA and, over a period of four years, dozens of other local organisations.

In his annual report for the Far West Senior Citizen's Village Incorporated in 1970, Reg Borlase noted that negotiations were proceeding for the purchase of section 185, Hundred of Bonython, which was an ideal site for the village, close to the hospital, close to the shopping centre and with a wide view of Murat Bay.

The drive for funds continued and sufficient progress was made to advance towards the planning of the buildings. This was placed in the hands of architects W Lance Brune Pty Ltd, and on 9 December 1971 a building contract was signed with T T Sheldrick Pty Ltd whose price was $120,205. The Commonwealth government contributed $75,600 in this total and the rest was raised by the Community.

On 3 August 1972 Stage 1 of the village was officially opened by Dr A J Forbes MHR and the service of dedication was led by one of the original supporters of the concept, Rev R P Keynes. Stage 1 consisted of 12 single units and 3 self-contained cottages; the first senior citizens to move in were: Mr and Mrs Shipard from Penong, Mrs Ivy Gray, Mrs Jessie Mewett, Mrs Emma Elizabeth Hardy, Mrs Elsa Lutz, Mrs Rose Pearson, Mrs Isabel Penna, Mrs Sarah Trewartha and Mrs Rose Pascoe.

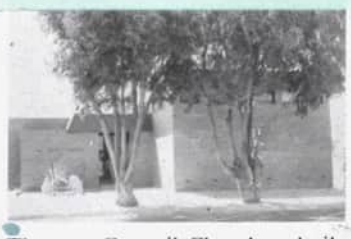
Since the opening in 1972, the village has grown to more than 22 single units and 3 cottages, and by any standard has been a great success. The early committee members were proud of the completion of their project and their names should be remembered for their community foresight and diligence. At the time of the opening of Stage 1 they were, Reg Borlase, President; F Kuhlmann, Vice President; C Keitel, Secretary; J Longmire, Assistant Secretary; Roma Trowbridge, Treasurer; Ella Borlase, Lydia Kuhlmann, Daphne Collins, Eilie Nicholls, Lorna Trewartha, Edna Sleep, Rev Hoffman, Rev Grey-Smith, Rev Kriewalt, Father Head, Dr D Wright, M Puckridge, W Skinner, T Blumson and B Hiscock.



The opening of the Senior Citizen's Clubrooms, 7 January 1983. From left: Tom Rapson, Hans Moeller (builder), Lydia Kuhlmann (President SCC), Brenton Bergmann (President RSL), Monica Dodd (Deputy Mayor).

The Senior Citizens Village led to suggestions that a Senior Citizens Club could be formed, not only for members of the village but for all senior citizens of the Far West. The idea was taken up by the Ministers Fraternal, who were represented on the Village Committee. They called a public meeting on 12 July 1971 in the Methodist Church Hall in Ceduna and elected a Committee, which then successfully negotiated with the RSL for the use of their hall for meetings.

Twelve years later Mrs Lydia Kuhlmann reflected on the early days of the Senior Citizens Club when she took part in the opening of the club's new building jointly owned with the RSL in the Soldiers Memorial Park. She recalled some of the highlights of the club namely, their Rally in 1974, Choir singing in the Festival Theatre in 1980 and in the Adelaide Town Hall in 1981, two successful fetes, and concerts in 1973, 1974 and 1982. Additionally, she mentioned with pride, awards in 1975 and 1982 for being the best Senior Citizens Club in the State. Lastly, she stressed the club's finest achievement, the building which she had a few minutes earlier officially declared open.



The new Council Chambers built in 1970 on O'Loughlin Terrace in Ceduna.

On O'Loughlin Terrace in Ceduna is the modern home of the District Council of Murat Bay. Its red brick structure contrasts with the former stone council office, which was demolished, and with the homes along O'Loughlin Terrace, most of which are more than fifty years old. A facetious comment by an unnamed ratepayer was that the vivid red bricks appropriately matched the endless red tape the building was designed to deal with. Despite this, the building is a clear indication of the growth of the Council's activities brought about by the increasing population and increasing community responsibilities, particularly in the large Ceduna-Thevenard town complex.

The old Council Office stood from 1926 to 1970; its replacement was designed by Ian Hannaford and Partners and built by McShane Construction



The combined Senior Citizens Club and RSL Clubrooms at Ceduna. Erected in 1983.

Pty Ltd for a contract price of $45,000. It was opened by H J Freeman, the Mayor of the Corporation of Port Lincoln, late in November 1970, and the building has been extended twice since.

Clive Keitel was the Chairman of the District Council in the lead-up years to the new building. He took over from Sid Morrison in 1959 after an in-house election. Morrison was nominated for a fourteenth year as Chairman, accepted the nomination, but then suggested that councillors really should look at the possibility of having a change. To further that point he nominated Clive Keitel. An election was then held, and Keitel became the seventh Chairman of the District Council of Murat Bay.

Clive Keitel was elected to represent Chinta Ward in 1955. He served as Chairman until 1969 and, in that time, retired from farming in the Hundred of Goode and lived in Ceduna where he transferred to representing the Murat Bay Ward. He was a Justice of the Peace, the Coroner for Ceduna and, for a time, President of the Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association.[3] He died in Adelaide in 1986 aged 72 years.

In 1968 Clive Keitel resigned from Council to make his transfer from Chinta to Murat Bay Ward. It was a brief interruption of a couple of months made necessary by the forthcoming elections in the Murat Bay Ward. During this period, Geoff Gregor from Murraminga Ward was elected Chairman of the Council; he served from May 1968 until July 1968 when Clive Keitel returned to Council and to the position of Chairman.

When Keitel gave up Chinta Ward his place was taken by Jeffery Charles Bergmann, a farmer, since retired, who later replaced Clive Keitel as Chairman of the Council in 1970. Jeff Bergmann remained active in Council affairs until 1987, except for a two year period between 1981 and 1983. For his services to Local Government, and to the community generally, he received an Order of Australia Medal in 1982.



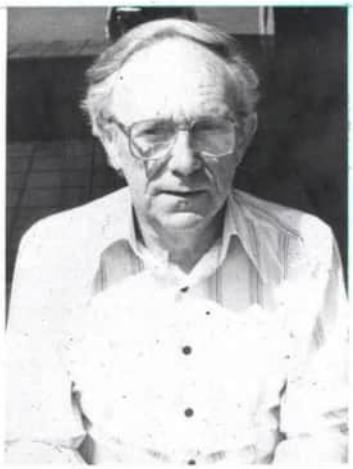
Clive Keitel, Chairman, DC of Murat Bay, 1959–1968, 1968–1970.



Geoff Gregor, Chairman, DC of Murat Bay, May-June 1968.



Jeff Bergmann AM, Chairman, DC of Murat Bay, 1970–1979, Mayor, 1979–1981; 1983–1987.



Des Whitmarsh, Mayor, DC of Murat Bay, 1981–1983.

In 1977 a move was made by the Council to establish a Mayor's position and a petition was prepared for the Minister for Local Government. There was widespread support for the idea, but also some opposition which led to a counter petition. The opposition signatories argued that a Mayor's position would lead to increased costs for Council, but this was denied in a lengthy statement made by the District Clerk, Graham Pfitzner to the *West Coast Sentinel*.

A proclamation in the Government Gazette on 20 July 1978 approved the election of a Mayor for Murat Bay; nominations were called and Jeffery Bergmann was elected unopposed in 1979. In his own words he was 'humbly honored to be the first Mayor of the District Council of Murat Bay'. Graham Gunn MP, donated a medallion for the chain of office for the Mayor, and the robes of office were given to Council by Des Whitmarsh, his wife and family. Then, two years later, Des Whitmarsh accepted the robes himself when he became the second Mayor of the Council.

A Ceduna businessman Des Whitmarsh was elected to Council in 1970 and served until 1977. In addition to this service, he has a long list of community credits as a Justice of the Peace, Secretary of the Murat Bay Dog Fence Board, Chairman of the Ceduna Memorial Hall, Deputy Chairman of the Senior Citizens Village, Secretary of the Ceduna Masonic Lodge, and many other involvements that continue as this book is being written. In 1983, during his second year as Mayor, he suffered a heart attack and temporarily retired from public life. Councillor Monica Dodd, the Deputy Mayor, led Council for the rest of the term in 1983 and, after that, Jeff Bergmann was prevailed upon to accept the office of Mayor once again.

Des Whitmarsh recovered from his heart attack and made a return to Council representing the Ceduna Ward from 1984 until 1987.

When the Mayor's position was created it was decided that a Deputy Mayor should be elected from the Council members. Those that have held this position have been Frank Kuhlmann, Phillip Trowbridge, Monica Dodd, Malcolm Puckridge and David Gillies.

In 1987 Malcolm Puckridge became the third Mayor of the district. His community service is equally as impressive as his two predecessors and, like them, he is dedicated to achieving growth and prosperity for the Far West.

A full list of councillors for Murat Bay is given in Appendix B. Amongst the names are some notable personalities namely, Bill Miller, the first Aboriginal councillor (1979–1982), Mrs Valerie Spry, the first woman councillor (1977–1979) and Tracy Zippel the youngest councillor, aged 21, (1985-).

The old title of District Clerk for the Council has now been changed to Chief Executive Officer. Under one title or the other those appointed since 1950 have been V G Evans, T G Hough, J W May, C V Hennessy, E D Spencer, G J Pfitzner, R S Dobrzynski and C S Wilson. Of these John May died suddenly in 1960 and C V Hennessy was a temporary replacement. T G Hough served for six years and was promoted to Town Clerk of Murray Bridge; Edwin Spencer, served for nine years and resigned to go into business; Graham Pfitzner began as assistant town clerk in 1967 and took over from Edwin Spencer in 1970. He then served for 10 years and left in 1981 to accept promotions to Berri and later, Mt Gambier. Robert Dobrzynski served from 1981 to 1984 and, like so many others, left to accept a promotion, this time to Mildura in Victoria.

Craig Wilson came to the Chief Executive's position in 1984 after Local Government work at Elliston, Pt Pirie and Barmera. In 1985 his talents were recognised when he received a Federal government scholarship for eight weeks senior management training in Canberra.

There have been many outstanding achievements and lots of interesting episodes associated with Council since 1950. Unfortunately, only a few of them can be mentioned here. There was the 50th birthday in 1975, celebrated with a dinner, the planting of 400 trees throughout the town and an essay competition won by John Trewartha and Noel Schwarz. In 1969 the policy of naming streets after pioneers was introduced and Nell Chandler was asked for recommendations. She suggested Hunt, Watson, Symonds, McInerheny, Will, Tonkin, Croser, Lowe, Bowell, Edson, Bawden, Smith and Moody. At the same time, Council affirmed its strong objection to proposals for South Australia to adopt Eastern Standard Time (and reaffirmed the objection in 1986).

In 1983, when Jeff Bergmann became Mayor for the second time, electors were asked to vote on a council name change. It was argued that 'on the mainland' Ceduna was at least recognised as a locality in South Australia but the name District Council of Murat Bay confused most people. The suggestion that it should become the District Council of Ceduna received 261 votes, but 238 people voted to keep the name Murat Bay. Council therefore deemed that the vote was not sufficiently conclusive to warrant the big step of making a change.

The system of wards for the Council has undergone a few changes in the years since 1950 and these may be noted in Appendix B. But, increasingly, the rural wards found it difficult to get representatives, so in a change which amounted to a return to a 1925 situation Council decided to abolish the wards system and 'open' elections were conducted in 1987.

When the District Council of Murat Bay began it had its councillors and a staff of one, the clerk, who was typist, overseer, and often the mechanic and driver of council's machinery. This did not change much for many years, but growth did come; in 1950 the 'staff' consisted of eight and the Council's annual budget was 5630 pounds. By 1986, the staff was Craig Wilson, Chief Executive Officer; Barry Hurst, Deputy Executive Officer; Peter Bond, Overseer, Tom Byerley, Building/Health Officer; T D Trenowden, General Inspector; E E Paues, Electrical Supervisor; Peter Muller, Works Foreman; 5 clerical officers and 20 works staff. The annual budget was $2,365,917.



Monica Dodd, Deputy Mayor, DC of Murat Bay, 1983.

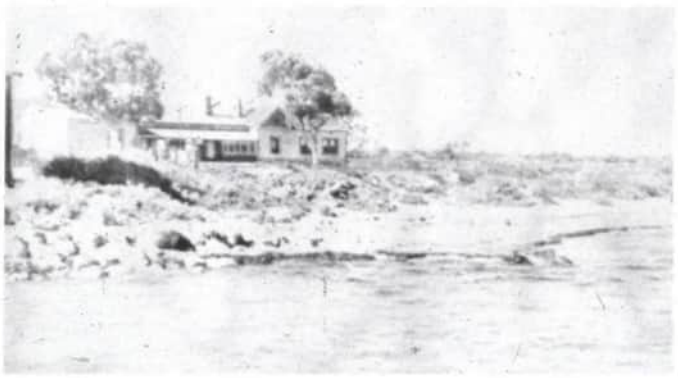


Malcolm Puckridge, Mayor, DC of Murat Bay, 1987

When Ceduna acquired its community hotel in the manner described in Chapter 9, 30,000 pounds was raised for the purchase in 25 pound debentures.[4] The largest subscribers (more than 400 pounds each) were L R Atkins, H A F Betts, E V Brown, R J Betts, J F Backshall, C A Collins, E E Dunn, G W Foggo, Dr F Gibson, L C Hardy, C H Kuhlmann, Anne J L Kuhlmann, C E Kelly, P A and M E Lange, P S Morrison, J G E Paech and S Trewartha. Overall, 180 people bought debentures.

With this base of solid support, the hotel has grown to be one of the most prominent features of the Far West wherein profits have been made every year except 1985 86 when a small loss of $13,469 was recorded. The original building expanded as the town grew and many additions have been made in a tasteful and effective manner. With its prominent position on the foreshore, opposite the town's jetty, the hotel is a major asset for the community. This was appreciated in 1986 when a public meeting was called to discuss the possible sale of the hotel; the suggestion was rejected.

Thirty four local citizens have been Directors of the hotel and those that have served for periods of over ten years include Sid Morrison, F A Tonkin, E F Kelly, C E Kelly, R J Betts, J C Bergmann, W C Bubner, N H Chandler, H G Klau, B A Kelly, R J Searle and B A Coote.





Above. The Ceduna Hotel as seen from the jetty in the 1920s. **Above right.** The Ceduna Community Hotel-Motel as seen from the same spot in the 1980s.

H A F Betts was the secretary for the hotel from 1940 to 1955 and he was followed by T G Hough, J W May, F J Barratt, J K Atherton (4 years), G Jukes (7 years), R C Ottewill, J F Myers, B J A Huckle (5 years), G J Fitzpatrick and Graeme Holness, who has held the position since 1981.

Profits from the hotel rose to over $100,000 before tax in 1976/77, 1977/78, 1983/84 and 1984/85; in these years, and indeed all other years, money from the profits has been given to the community for special projects. Since 1976 profits on the sale of beer tickets have been distributed through a Benevolent Society, and even in the hotel's single bad year 1985/86 profits to the value of $7,426 were still distributed from this source. Recipients were the Ceduna CFS, the Show Society, Koonibba Football Club, Ceduna J150 Committee and the Far West Netball Association.

In addition to these benefits the hotel has consistently made other community 'gifts'. Thus, its conference room is available free of charge to all local clubs for meetings, and charitable groups have often been given free rooms for fund raising ventures. Free accommodation has also been given to special guests of the district such as the various Miss Australia winners.

Ceduna's growth since 1950 is most evident in its business district, the intersecting Poynton and McKenzie Streets. The point of intersection is marked by the town's best known landmark, the multifaced 'silent cop' that has sprouted fingerposts to tell travellers it is 781 kilometres to Adelaide, 72 kilometres to Penong and further accurate distances to localities such as Eucla, Port Lincoln, Pt Augusta, Decres Bay and Laura Bay.

The importance of the two intersecting streets was officially recognised by the Commissioner of Highways in 1958 when he advised the District Council of Murat Bay that funds would be made available to put in two sealed lanes in the shopping areas.[5] This led the council to put in grassed median strips and trees that have greatly enhanced the appearance of both streets. Then, in 1965, a memorial to pioneers of the district was placed in the median strip of Poynton Street. The memorial was suggested by the CWA and was built of granite from Decres Bay by George Lambeff.[7] Mrs M A Collins, in her 90th year, performed the unveiling ceremony, F W Betts was a guest speaker and prominent pioneers present included C Lutz, B Hasting, H Hasting, T Saunders, J Saunders, D Spry, E E E Lutz, E H Nicholls, A J Bowell, H G Watson and Mesdames E Mewett, A J Bowell and Miss I Hasting.

The shopping facilities in and near both streets have changed dramatically as the town has grown and catered for more and more tourists passing through along the sealed Eyre Highway. All the changes cannot be documented minutely, but those that attracted the most publicity in the *West Coast Sentinel* were:



The silent cop with its informative fingerposts at the junction of Poynton and McKenzie Streets, Ceduna.

February 1958, W H Betts Ltd, O'Loughlin Terrace, closed.

April 1953, Irwin Bros, storekeepers since the 1920s sold to P S Morrison who installed W D McBeath as his manager (now Phin's Supermarket).

February 1957, P S Morrison opened new Ford showrooms in Poynton Street (now Audrey's Frock Salon).

July 1957, J D Spry opened new business premises in Poynton Street in a 'spacious modern building, a splendid addition to the town — built of cement brick 80 feet by 50 feet and the culmination of 26 years business in the town.'

July 1961, The 100th branch of the Savings Bank of South Australia was opened on the corner of McKenzie and Poynton Street by the Premier, Sir Thomas Playford.

August 1961, The new Quick Service Garage was opened by the Chairman of the Council (Clive Keitel).

November 1964, The first self service cash store on Upper Eyre Peninsula was opened in Poynton Street by 4 Square grocers Ferguson and Wright.

April 1976, Elders GM moved into new premises on the corner of McKenzie Street and O'Loughlin Terrace.

September 1976, Whitmarsh and Son opened their new drapery store in McKenzie Street replacing an earlier store further down the street.

September 1980, Geddes Building Supply Centre in O'Loughlin Terrace opened by Jeff Bergmann (now Cowells).

December 1981, Spry's of Ceduna celebrated their 50th anniversary. The business was started by J D Spry in a tiny shop in Poynton Street selling farming goods, music, musical instruments and newspapers. Since then it had grown to be the major retailing business in Ceduna.

July 1983, Bill's Chicken and Take Away Foods opened in Poynton Street.

October 1984, The successor to Ferguson and Wright's store, Malcolm and Val Puckridge's Supermarket (1971 1984) was sold to Murray and Joyleen Trewartha.

June 1985, A new ANZ bank was constructed on the corner of McKenzie and Poynton Streets.

November 1985, Westpac opened a bank in McKenzie Street.

November 1985, Eyre Furniture owned by Gary White and Mike Lowe was opened.



At the opening of the new ANZ bank on the corner of Poynton and McKenzie Streets in April 1986. Two of the banks oldest customers (dating back to when it was the Bank of Adelaide) were honoured by the manager Mike Miller. They were Mrs Watson (left) and Ida Hasting (right).

It is a further indication of the centralising process that, beyond McKenzie and Poynton Streets, where retailing has boomed, there have been very few shopping developments in the rest of the Far West. One of the few was the rebuilding of the licensed general store at Smoky Bay owned by Bill and Joan Beattie. An opening ceremony for the store was conducted by the Mayor of the District Council, Des Whitmarsh, in December 1982.[8]

Thevenard's retailing establishments have always suffered from the competition of Ceduna, but those that have traded with some success since 1950 have been the Mastrosavas Saveway Store, Jim Agrios' Supermarket, V N Bowman's Hardware and the Thevenard Drapery.

At Penong, the sealing of the Eyre Highway gave the town a much needed boost and kept it hanging on as a viable community. It suffered a blow in 1957 when Kelly Bros Garage was gutted by fire, but the indomitable spirit of the locals was evident when a new utility with one wheel off was carried out of the blazing garage by townsmen. Additionally, Fred Kelly's Wackett aeroplane was pushed out of reach of the flames.[9]. The garage was rebuilt after the fire and today is a well patronised roadhouse on the Eyre Highway.

The Penong Cooperative Store, after a promising beginning, was sold to R P Dunn and Sons in 1956. The former managers, Mr & Mrs Gordon Whitmarsh, purchased the Penong Tea Rooms.[10] They operated it for four years but then sold it to R P Dunn and Sons.

Below. The Ceduna Sailing Club's steel framed shed in the late 1960s.
Below right. The Ceduna Sailing Club's multipurpose building in 1986.







The roadhouse at Penong, formerly Kelly's garage which was gutted by fire in 1957.

A special feature in the changing landscape of the Far West since 1950 has been the tendency to construct large, multipurpose entertainment halls or clubs. The tendency might reach its ultimate point about 1990 if the proposed Ceduna Civic Centre goes ahead; one of the features of the process, the demolition of the old, will then see the loss of the Ceduna Memorial Hall.

Most of the new clubs have bars, luxurious furnishings and room for entertainment, sometimes on a large scale. The Thevenard Footballers Club is one of the best examples. When it was opened on 21 July 1973 it was described as 'one of Eyre Peninsula's most outstanding sport and recreational facilities'.[11] It was built at a cost of $40,000, which took five years of planning and fundraising by the club. Furniture and fittings required a further $10,000 and the final result was cited by the *West Coast Sentinel* as 'a true asset to the district'. It was licensed for 200 members.

The Ceduna Football Club developed similar facilities to those at Thevenard and, after protracted negotiations lasting three years, it was granted a full liquor licence in 1979.[12] In 1987 it adopted the name, Ceduna Sports Club — a recreational facility for netball and cricket as well as football.

The Ceduna Sailing Clubrooms have also developed as a multipurpose building which now offers bar facilities, squash courts and an entertainment area for its members. The club was formed in 1963 and the first moves towards a building were in 1966 when a steel framed shed was erected for boat storage. This was added to several times but, beginning in 1979, the present solid construction was erected in several stages. The work was done on a voluntary basis by club members and took two and a half years to complete. In 1981 sections of the building were officially opened. Karl Meier, who along with Malcolm Puckridge donated all of the bricks for the bar, opened the ultra modern drinking area and Val Puckridge dedicated the toilet area 'to all who will use it'.[13] The clubrooms have been one of the success stories in the Far West. They have catered for over 350 sailing people and have been the venue for several national titles. In 1982, when stage two of the building programme

was completed, it was opened on 1 November by Sir Donald Dunstan, Governor of South Australia.

On a slightly less grand scale, the Murat Bay Bowling Clubhouse has grown to serve its members in a comfortable way. It was officially opened as a small building in April 1956 after a large amount of voluntary labour had gone into the project. R J Betts performed the opening ceremony and paid tribute to the untiring efforts of the Secretary, Colin McKechnie, in getting the building established. In 1968 extensions were made which doubled the size of the clubrooms and improvements have been made at a steady rate ever since.[14]

The small Ceduna golf clubhouse of 1935 was gradually extended and given a completely new look for the 1980 club championships. Then, over a successful long weekend in October, more than 90 competitors were on hand when Bill Holmesby, Western Group Delegate to the SAGA, officially opened the extended building.[15]

International rules basketball, now simply called basketball, was a late comer to the Far West, but in the 1970s it was proving very popular with 10 men's teams and 6 women's teams playing on outdoor courts. In 1975, with more teams being formed, the sport's administrators were looking frantically for an indoor stadium. They found what appeared to be a bargain, the range store at Maralinga, a steel framed monstrosity 180 feet by 120 feet. Barry Piltz, representing the Far West International Rules Basketball Association (FWIRBA) flew to Maralinga with several officers of the Public Buildings Department to inspect the building and, in September 1975, FWIRBA bought it.

Like many bargains there were problems. It had to be dismantled, transported to Ceduna and re-erected — no simple job. Some government assistance was given, but the basketball enthusiasts of the Far West had to dig deep into their pockets on many occasions before the huge building was finally



The old Maralinga Range store which is now the Far West's Basketball Stadium.

erected on its site behind the Area School where, because of its high saw-tooth roof structure, a local wit dubbed it Ceduna's Opera House.

Although most of the new style entertainment clubs have been built in the Ceduna-Thevenard townships, the rest of the district has not missed out. Apart from small ventures like the opening of the Carawa Football Clubrooms in 1969, there have been two large projects, one at Smoky Bay and the other at Penong.

The Smoky Bay Community Club now figures prominently in the social life of the southern end of the Far West. It is a meeting place for people from Mudamuckla, Nunjikompita, Petina, Carawa and Haslam, as well as being an impressive focal point for the town of Smoky Bay. The club has replaced the old Smoky Bay hall which was destroyed in the storm of 1947. After that, the town 'hall' was the goods shed at the jetty and many enjoyable evenings were spent there; but before long a rebuilding fund was organised and crop ventures by local farmers raised substantial amounts of money. A new site was chosen and on 2 September 1967 a large crowd attended the opening of a new hall built at a cost of $16,000. The ceremony was performed by Herb Denton, who was then living at Glenelg, but he had been secretary of the old hall for 23 years. G J Gregor opened the proceedings and Ralph Denton gave an historical summary of the project.[16]

In 1977 work started on enlarging the hall to double its floor space. A State Unemployment Relief Grant provided funds to employ 10 men on the job for twenty weeks and the hall was transformed into the Smoky Bay Community Club, which was licensed and opened by the Minister of Youth, Sport and Recreation, Mr Tom Casey.[17] Then, in 1983, further extensions, including additional toilets, new bar facilities and an upgraded kitchen, were opened by the radio personality from Port Pirie, Ian Doyle. At the time, it was mentioned that the whole complex was valued at over $250,000 and thanks were extended



The Smoky Bay and Districts Community Club built in stages from 1967 to 1983.

to hard working club members such as Reg Williams, Don Zippel, Kel Holmes, Rod Thomas, Lyn Kelsh, Colin Williams, George Baldwin, Joan Anson, Bill Beattie, Bill Treleggan and Ralph Denton. In particular, Reg Williams was thanked for 20 years valuable service and was made a Life Member of the Club.[18]

At Penong a sporting complex and clubrooms shared by football, tennis, netball, the show society and the general community was built in the 1970s. It was organised by a Recreation Ground Committee with Jim Watson, Chairman, and $17,000 from the proceeds of the sale of the Penong Hospital was put into the project. Further funds were raised by cropping ventures and entertainments in the town; sufficient was in hand by 1977 for the purchase of a transportable building, the construction of new tennis courts and the grassing of the oval. The complex was opened by Guilf Edwards on 26 July 1978. He was introduced by Jim Watson, and Ross Borlase also spoke as President of the Western United Football Club, the biggest user of the complex.[19]

Although the licensed clubs have largely replaced the old halls of the district, the halls have not totally disappeared from the scene. In fact four new ones have been created since the 1950s and are still frequently used. Bookabie obtained a new hall as an aftermath of the war when it took possession of the Army Mess Hut that had stood at Wigena on the Nullarbor. It was re-erected at Bookabie during 1947 and an early function in the hall was the wedding of Catherine Mahar in 1949. Then, in 1984, an addition to the hall was obtained when the transportable library from Mt Gunson was bought by the Outback Areas Trust and the Bookabie people paid for it to be transported to, and erected alongside, their Wigena hall.

Nunjikompita's new hall was a prefabricated frame structure which cost 4000 pounds. Kel Marshall was the builder and cropping ventures over five years provided the funds. Mrs E E Lang opened the hall in February 1960 and thanked members of the hall committee for their hard work, notably S Dunn, the Chairman, and K Ross and E Lang, the Secretaries.[20]

The imported Halls of Bookabie brought from Wigena and Mt Gunson.



In 1966 Penong opened a new public hall adjacent to the first hall in the main street of the town. Malcolm Beck of Bordertown, 'a former esteemed resident of the district', was invited back to the town to perform the opening ceremony and the *West Coast Sentinel* noted that Len Warmington, President of the Hall Committee, had been largely responsible for the successful conduct of the project. Les Ellard from Streaky Bay built the hall using Besser bricks and the total cost was approximately 8000 pounds.[21]

Also in 1966, a new Woolshed Hall appeared at Charra. It was erected by voluntary labour with the assistance of professional builders. Gordon Wright, whose father Bill Wright helped build the original hall in 1909, unlocked the front door and declared the building open. The President of the hall committee, Reg Borlase, extended a special welcome to children of original hall trustees namely Mrs Roma Trowbridge (nee Payne), Mrs Dulcie Gillings (nee Denton) and Harold Denton. The decision to build a new hall had been taken in 1957 and thereafter active workers in fundraising included the Trowbridge, Borlase, Nielsen, Chandler, Trewartha and Hoffrichter families. Those who gathered for the opening ceremony indulged in nostalgia about the old hall and spoke of its many great dances, its Harold Raymond Concerts, its stormy meetings at different times, and even its utilitarian aspects such as the base for handing out ration cards during the war. A list of long serving hall secretaries was also recalled namely James Dunnet, G Bassham, E T Mewett, A H Brown, D Chandler and P Trowbridge.[22]



The Woolshed Hall at Charra first built 1909, rebuilt 1966.



The 'big' hall at Mudamuckla built in the 1920s and demolished in 1985.

At Mudamuckla the 'big' hall, which had been a popular centre for entertainment for over 50 years, was damaged in a severe storm in April 1985. An inspection revealed extensive white ant problems in the timbers so, reluctantly, a decision was made to demolish the old landmark. The *West Coast Sentinel* gave it a good send off and noted that 'throughout its history the hall had been served by a dedicated committee and trustees with names like Kuhlmann, Reincke, Blumson, Martin and Zippel'.[23]

In the realm of entertainment many of the activities of previous years continued unabated but, increasingly, the older generation of permanent settlers began to get nostalgic about their pioneering days, their departed friends and the 'good old days' generally. This led to a spate of 'Back to' celebrations when hundreds of Coasters relived the early days of their townships.

'Back to Ceduna' was held in 1970 and, appropriately, it was conducted to raise frunds for the Senior Citizens' Village.[24] Clive Keitel was the Secretary and chief organiser of the events. They began on Saturday 29 August with a pageant that departed from the Ceduna Railway Siding. Then, in front of the Memorial Hall, K L McKenzie declared the 'Back to' open. At 8 pm that evening there was a concert in the hall and the next morning there was a combined church service followed by a pony club gymkana at the oval. On Monday 31 August there were sheep dog trials at the oval, displays of model boats in the oval pavilion, a floral display in the Methodist Hall and, at night, an old style dance in the Memorial Hall.

On the Tuesday evening there were slides on the history of the district in the Lutheran Hall and on Wednesday there was a 'Back to School' celebration. Thursday had a bus tour to places of local interest, and Friday had a Grand Ball in the Memorial Hall when Ida Hasting crowned the winner of a Queen competition.

'Back to Ceduna' was actually preceded by 'Back to Coorabie' in October 1969, which was described by the *West Coast Sentinel* as 'the greatest

It is sad to see the little towns disappearing.

LYDIA KUHLMANN

celebration ever to hit the Coorabie district'.[25] It began with a parade of old farm machinery, which was then closely followed by some of their modern counterparts recently acquired in the district. There was also a parade of floats and those that featured well were the Hawaiian Laundry, the Apollo Rocket and the Hopetoun Cup. A competition between a blade shearer (F Gray) and a machine shearer (L Hardy) was won narrowly by F Gray and local Aborigines displayed their skill with boomerang throwing. The chairman of the organising committee, B Hardy, was well satisfied with the first days attendance of over 500 on the Coorabie Sports Ground.

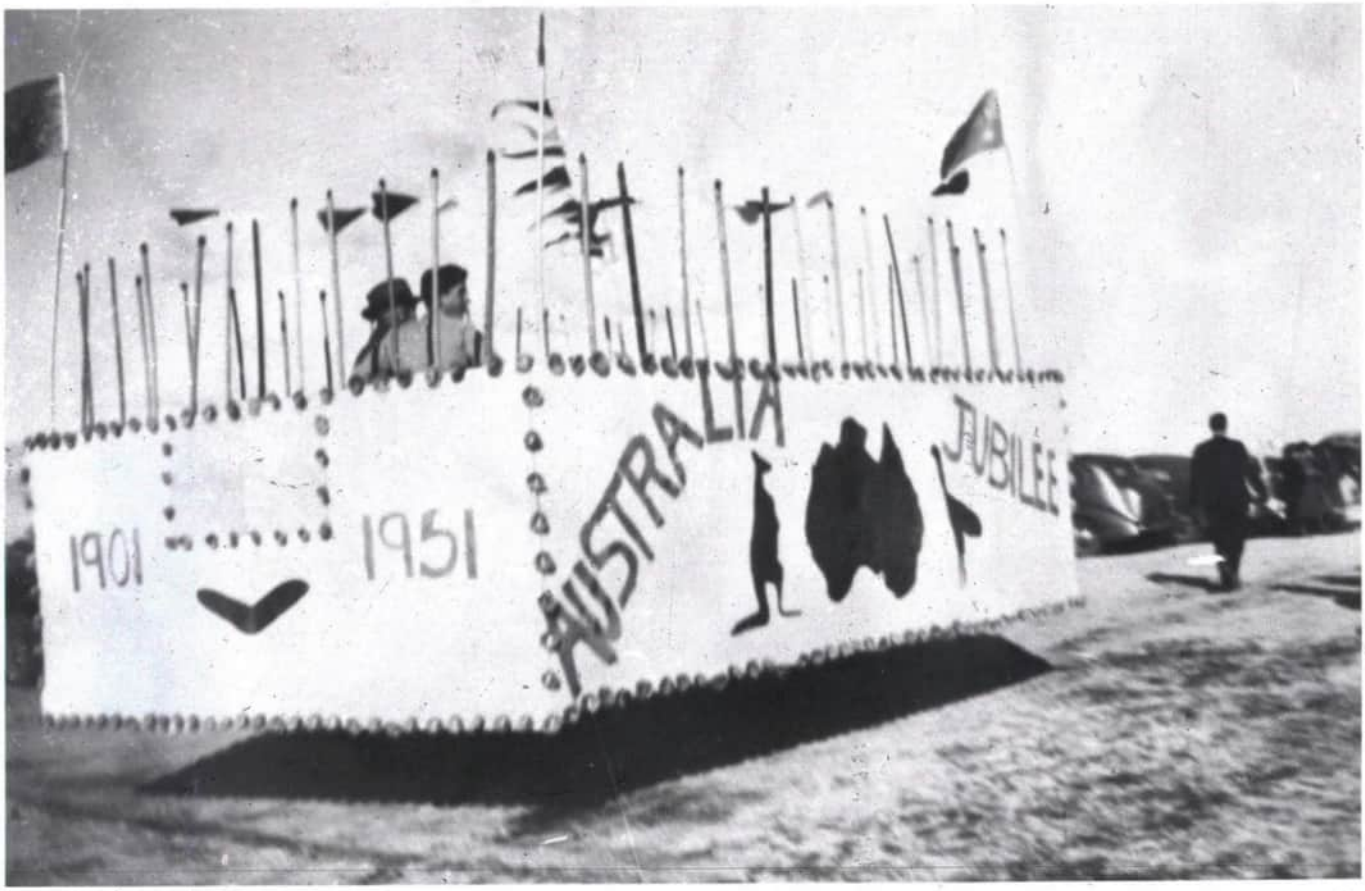
But there was more. On the Saturday night the Coorabie hall was filled to capacity for a ball at which Hartley Klau's Band performed. And, on the following Sunday morning, there was a well attended church service in the hall led by Rev R Keynes and Rev D Morris. Then, Sunday afternoon was devoted to a huge barbeque picnic at a locality known as 'Limpets Inn' near the historic Hopetoun Racecourse. After the feasting an open air concert was held at which some of the poems of George Price were played on a tape recorder. Renditions of 'The Occult Cup' and 'Fowlers Bay Pioneers' were warmly received.

'Back to Bookabie' in 1973 was inspired by the closure of the school after 81 years.[26] The celebrations began in the old school, moved to the new school and, in the evening, continued in the Bookabie Hall where 250 guests sat down for a buffet tea. The oldest former pupil of the school was Mrs Sarah Trewartha who attended in 1901; and the oldest former teacher present was Mrs Joyce Backshall from 1919. Besides Mrs Backshall, other former teachers present were Ben Pedler, Ed Ramon and Mrs Win Morgan. The day's celebrations were suggested by Jenny Telfer, the last teacher of the school, and she helped entertain during the evening by playing the guitar and leading her schoolchildren in several songs. A dance completed the day's festivities; the music was provided by well known locals Martin and Anthony Mahar.

The 'Back to Smoky Bay' celebrations in October 1982 were planned by a committee consisting of Reg Williams, President; Kaye Gregor, Secretary; Doreen Denton, Ann Mead, Rodney Thomas, Coral Willcox, Jim Tremaine, Lyn Kelsh and Tony Dodd.[27]

The celebrations began with an Old Style Dance in the hall on Saturday 9 October. This was followed the next day by a Combined Church Service, also in the hall, led by Reverends Ken Rogers and Murray Earl. At 2 pm there was a display of historical items and the launching of A Harrison's book the *Early History of Smoky Bay*. Wednesday was set aside for a bus tour of the district and 61 people turned up. This was more than the bus could carry so 20 people had to follow in their cars. The tour visited Lloyd's homestead, Point Brown, Wallanippie Wells, Eyre's Water Hole, Acraman Creek, Barker's Cemetery, Carawa Cemetery and Carawa Woolshed. Monday was a 'Back to School' at the original school site and, on Saturday 15 October, there was the annual Smoky Bay Wool Show, with a wine and cheese tasting plus an Old Time Music Hall with lots of local artists showing their talent. The *West Coast Sentinel* summarised the week's activities by calling it 'a triumph' and suggested that the organisers deserved the highest praise for 'a success beyond expectations'.

In recent years there have been other reunion celebrations. Miller Bratten has organised an annual get together of old Coasters in the Adelaide Botanic Gardens. They meet to have afternoon tea and to swap stories about their days in the Far West. The Charra Football and Basketball Clubs held a reunion over the October long weekend in 1986. Ross Borlase and Ruby Freeman were the chief organisers, Jon Hoffrichter interviewed coaches from the past and Roma Trowbridge unveiled a plaque recognising the donation of land for the Charra



A birthday cake float for the Jubilee pageant in 1951.

Recreation Centre made by the Trowbridge family.[28] On the same weekend the 'Little Schools of the West' reunion was held; it is discussed in Chapter 12.

There have been other large organised occasions extending over several days when hundreds of Coasters have banded together to celebrate special events. The 1951 Australian Jubilee weekend was an example; it was also another example of the indefatigable organising ability of P S Morrison who, this time, was President of the Jubilee Celebrations. More than 2000 people witnessed the Jubilee Pageant at Ceduna on Saturday 16 June. The *West Coast Sentinel* went into superlatives — 'the largest and most spectacular (event) of its kind seen in Ceduna'[29]. More than 30 floats passed through the town, which was colourfully decorated with flags, and bunting, and crammed with spectators. Prize winners in the float competition were the Charra District, the Ceduna school and the Sea View Guest House. Charra's, 'Red 'ill to Charra' depicted a German waggon leading a cow and an old fashioned grain seeder — a tribute to the pioneers of 1889.

After the pageant there was a Burlesque Football match and some athletic contests. C Halliday won the premier event of the day, the Sheffield Handicap, and K Wright was placed second. Mrs D Wright atoned for her husband's defeat by winning the ladies race.

The Jubilee celebrations continued over the long weekend. There was a concert in the RSL Hall organised by A E Howlett, Mrs S Thiselton and Mrs G Klau; a Pioneers Dinner where the guests were announced by August Kloeden; and a Grand Old Style Ball where Stan Thiselton and Percy Lange were the MC's.

Fowlers Bay had a special day for its Jubilee Celebrations when the schools from Bookabie, Coorabie and Fowlers Bay combined for a sports day and picnic. The Chairman of the Jubilee Committee, D Hassold, opened the

C.W.A.
ROYAL LEAP YEAR BALL
COORABIE HALL
Saturday, October 14
Commencing 8 p.m.
SUPPER PROVIDED
Western Rhythm Band
Gloria Miller, secretary.
e

CEDUNA OLD STYLE DANCE CLUB'S
NEXT DANCE
Saturday, May 31
8 p.m. in Supperroom
If you enjoy dancing and would like these dances to continue, come, bring your family and a friends.
Admission 60c, Cool Drinks available
HARTLEY'S 3 PCE BAND
e

Far West Theatre Club
presents
"As Long As They're Happy"
Comedy Farce in 3 Acts by Vernon Sylvaine
CEDUNA MEMORIAL HALL
Friday and Saturday, June 27 and 28, Saturday, July 5
ej4(2)

ceremony and Mr Copley spoke on behalf of the RSL. Secretary, Ben Pedler, read a letter from the Prime Minister and in the evening there was a short play about Matthew Flinders in which D Hasshold, A Stott and C Kloock starred.

For most of the years since 1950 dancing has continued as a favourite evening entertainment although, slowly, formal ballroom dancing, now called Old Style Dancing, has given way to disco and cabaret style dancing. Nevertheless, formal Balls are still held in the Far West though not as frequently as in the past.

Penong raised 1200 pounds in a Queen Competition in 1952 and concluded it with a successful Ball. The contestants were Beverly Bratten (Penong), Joan Gray (Bookabie), Pat Allen (Coorabie) and Beth Oats (Charra). The funds raised went to support the Dr Gibson Memorial Fund at the Penong Hospital where two additional rooms were under construction. Mrs Spencer Young, 'a tireless worker for the Penong hospital for many years', performed the crowning ceremony and the dance music was supplied by George Nieass and the Mahar Family.[30]

The 1157 pounds raised for the Ceduna Memorial Hall in a Handsome Bachelor Competition in 1955, made the building free of debt for the first time.[31] At the Ball to mark the end of the competition, Owen Chandler (Goode) won first prize from Barry Hoffrichter (Charra) and Jim Burner (Ceduna).

RSL Debutante Balls, CWA Debutante Balls, Miniature Debutante Balls and Miss Australia Balls were held regularly in the 1950s, 60s, 70s and less regularly in the 1980s. They have all been memorable, particularly for the participants, but some of the best remembered by everybody have been the 'mock' Balls. Thus, in September 1958, an enormous crowd attended the mock debutante ball arranged by the Ceduna Football Club in the Memorial Hall.[32] Nine 'lovelies' were presented to King Lumbago (Mrs Ken Wright) and Queen Sciatica (Mr Wright). The lovelies were 'Anita Ekberg' (Adrian Lowe), 'Mae West' (Hartley Klau), 'Joan Collins' (Bill Tonkin), 'Diana Dors' (Barry Cook), 'Alice Fay' (Ernest Poupe), 'Brigitte Bardot' (Leon Bubner), 'Rita Hayworth' (Ern Brooks), 'Miss X' (Ivor Reynolds) and 'Ava Gardner' (Jim Burner).

Penong's mock debutante Ball in July 1971 was hilarious.[33] Ten 'debs' were presented to Mr Herbert and Lady Jane Wopkins (Margaret and Barry Watkins). Shirley Anderson was the compere and each 'deb' descended from behind the stage curtains into a packed hall via a slippery dip. Those that stunned the crowd were Mandy (Mayne) Brook, Merrylyn (Sandy) Warmington, Rowena (Ron) Anderson, Loretta (Laurie) Bailey, Vashti (Vaughn) Dunn, Simone (Stan) Oats, Melissa (Merv) Oats, Jody (Jon) Shipard, Delilah (Snook) Shipard and Polyanna (Pat) White.

Apart from dancing, the next best thing for many years was picture going, and all the local halls showed movies from 1929 onwards. The Memorial Hall in Ceduna had the most regular and varied programmes, but Terry Moschos at Thevenard set up in competition when he built his picture theatre in 1966. For a time Ceduna had two picture shows per week and Thevenard one. At Ceduna they were managed by P S Morrison, who is fondly remembered by a whole generation for his large torch and his disciplinary growls after lights out when he patrolled the stalls keeping control amongst the young and the amorous. Verdun Brown and Graham Rogers were later projectionists and managers in Ceduna but, eventually, nobody could save the weekly movies after 1973 when television and later video cassette recorders came to the Far West.

Like so many other things, Tod water and the railway for example, television did not quite make it to the far Far West. Coorabie, in particular, languished without it until 1985 when, in a well publicised gesture, the Federal Government chose the Gurney family to receive Aussat television as

representatives of all the remote areas people who were to benefit from the new system.

Following several years of very successful Youth Concerts the Far West Theatre Club was formed in Ceduna in May of 1965.[34] Its Patron was Mrs H G Watson; President, Trevor Marks; Secretary, Robyn Betts; Treasurer, John Fear; Publicity Officer, Tony Findlay and Committee members Mrs C Zweck and John Penberthy. They launched their first production 'Sailor Beware' in July 1965. It was successful and so have been many others such as 'A Letter from the General'(1967), 'Tons of Money'(1971) and 'HMS Pinafore' (1973).

In 1971 the Ceduna Arts Council was formed with President, Bill Carter; Vice President, Jim Cooper; Secretary, Max Walsh and Treasurer, June Gaden. Committee member Ian Webber, Headmaster at the Area School, moved to get effective liaison with the Arts Council of South Australia and this has continued ever since. It has led to many artists of national and even international standing performing in the town. Some that can be recalled are Leonard Teale as Henry Lawson in 1979, Lorna Orr in 1981, the Tschaika Cossacks in 1975, Colleen Hewett in 1982 and Thomas Edmonds in 1984. Other well-known personalities who have appeared in plays sponsored by the Arts Council have included Noni Hazelhurst and Helen Morse.

With the preponderance of licensed clubs in the 1980s, live bands and entertainers from Adelaide and further afield, are no longer a novelty. They come regularly to Ceduna as part of a circuit which includes the large towns of Eyre Peninsula. In any one week it is now possible to have several imported entertainers appearing at the Ceduna Hotel, the Sailing Club, the Smoky Bay Club or at one of the football clubs. Additionally, the Far West now has a Community Arts officer, Jan Hooker, who promotes and coordinates many forms of entertainment for the district.

Outdoor entertainments, usually in the warmer months of the year, have continued to be a feature of the Far West, and hopefully always will be. The New Year Day Sports at Denial Bay are still a regular event and sports days are still held on the beaches at Fowlers Bay and Point Sinclair.

'Sports and Fun Fairs'are usually good fund raisers. Carawa organised one in 1969 to raise money for the Far West Senior Citizens Village.[35] The day included a lightning cricket carnival (won by Nunjikompita), pony rides for the children, a rolling pin throwing competition (won by Eva Dupree), jumble stalls, sweet stalls and a range of competitions with poultry, donated by local farmers, as the prizes.

Aquatic Sports Carnivals at Ceduna were popular in the 1970s. Consider, for example, the year of 1975 when Russell Jolly was Secretary of the organising committee. More than 700 spectators attended and over $1100 was raised with the profits going to the Murat Bay Hospital. Some of the features of the day were a raft race won by a Department of Marine and Harbors team, skippered by Barry Thompson of Thevenard, a Miss Aquatic competition won by Leonie Brown, a yacht race won by Kim Nesbit, women's rowing won by Glenys Klau and Marilyn Crisp, swimming races, and sandcastle competitions for children.

In more recent years outdoor activities for Australia Day (26 January) have been common, as for example in 1982, when proceedings began with a flag raising ceremony at 11 am in Poynton Street followed by an address from the Mayor, Des Whitmarsh. Later, led by the South Australian Police Department band, a large crowd marched or walked to the foreshore lawns near the Sailing Club. The band played a series of numbers, the Senior Citizens Choir sang several songs including 'I still call Australia Home', and a statement



New Years Day at Fowlers Bay

They motored to the The Fowler's Beach
Some came from far and near
The main object, "To grip each others hand"
And greet, "The young New Year"

A fierce wind blew from the sea
And things were not so grand
But some laughed, some smoked, and others talked
And brushed away the Sand.

The swimming went to Walter Johns
A youth from Fowler's Bay
And like a seal going through the sea
He led them all the way.

Then they called for men to toss the shear
No weak man could win his bout,
Our Police-man with an extra heave
Tossed it furthest out.

We noticed many friends were with us
Who had drifted from far away
But with memories of the old place
Had come back to spend the day.

So with the Sporting Programme over
And The Publican closing down
The people started drifting
To somewhere in the town.

GEO PRICE, Tallala



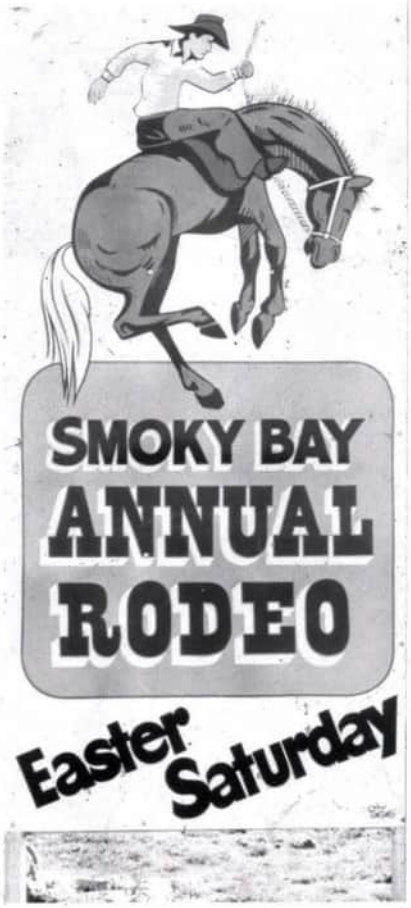
The Senior Citizens Choir performing for a Jubilee 150 combined church service in the Ceduna Memorial Hall on Sunday, 14 September, 1986.

prepared by the heads of all the churches in South Australia was read by Rev Murray Earl. Tributes were paid to the organiser of the day, Colin Meathrel, and Sergeant Alderslade of the Police Band thanked Ceduna for overwhelming his members with 'embarrassing hospitality'.

In keeping with the sense of difference which characterises Smoky Bay's history as a Far West community, it produced a novel outdoor entertainment at Philip and Esme Lawries farm in 1970, namely a rodeo. From what was a small beginning, the Smoky Bay Rodeo moved into the town, and became what the *West Coast Sentinel* called 'one of the most spectacular annual events on the West Coast'.[36] In 1971 it attracted a crowd of over 800, in 1976 there were 1200 people present (and 41 riders) and in the 1980s the spectators consistently numbered more than 2000. Always an Easter feature, the rodeo has been described as 'the best in the country' and is now on the regular Australian circuit with points awarded to riders for the Australian Championship competitions.

Another unique Smoky Bay form of entertainment that has already been mentioned is the Annual Wool Show, held in the Community Club. Fleeces donated by local farmers are judged and sold, with the proceeds going towards a local project, — the shark proof swimming enclosure in recent years. The evening also features musical and humorous items, and is always well supported by upwards of 300 people.

The shark proof swimming enclosure is a local success story. First proposed in 1979 it was organised by a Committee with Tom Blumson, President, and Joan Watkinson, Secretary. More than $42,000 was raised for the project, and not all of it was needed because most of the enclosure was built using voluntary labour which was a great saving. It was completed in 1985 and opened by Maureen Tremaine on 11 January 1986.





Fun (?) at the Smoky Bay Rodeo, 1983.

The isolation of the Far West and the perceived indifference of 'the mainland' breeds a special form of cooperation amongst the Coasters. They have a long history of togetherness as a community which has always been reflected in a diversity of clubs and societies. Thus for those who want to be involved, and everybody is encouraged to be, there is an enormous range of activities ranging from clubs for hobbies (stamps, photography, crafts etc), for community service (Apex, Lions etc) and for combinations of both the above plus general social interaction (CWA, National Trust etc). The big growth in population in the last thirty years has meant an increasing diversity of interests, and with this, a big increase in the number of clubs or societies.

Many clubs have been intermittent, ad hoc affairs, depending upon the enthusiasm of a few and fading into obscurity when key organisers have left the district. But, others have been enduring clubs and some have registered more than fifty years of continuous activity.

In the latter group is the Ceduna Branch of the Country Women's Association which had its fiftieth anniversary in 1983. Dora Martin has compiled a detailed history of the association and, therefore, only brief references to its activities will be made here.

The list of office bearers since 1950 indicate many years of service from Mesdames G McGuiness, H E Lutz, J Saunders, S Thiselton, T Collins, F Watson, B Will, M Martin, J Gray, D Martin, M Fox, H Sedgley, J Chandler, E Schwarz, T Sleep, K Young, N Chandler, E Nicholls, L Dupree and J Hughes. Dora Martin also cites Mesdames Shipard, Janicki, L Kaehne, M Trewartha, R Irvine, F Marshall and D Collins as outstanding workers for the Branch. Life Memberships have been conferred upon Mesdames Thiselton, McGuiness, Saunders, Helen Chandler, Eilie Ross and Isobel Lang, while foundation member, Ida Hasting declined to accept life membership, but

Thank you Ceduna for epitomizing the hospitality of the West Coast.

Pinned on the Council Notice Board after the REDEX TRIAL STOPOVER in 1954

asked that its monetary value be put into purchasing a wall clock for the Branch.

Some of the notable events for the Branch have been:

1950s A prize for a float in the Jubilee pageant.
Catered for the Redex Trial around Australia.
Purchased property of J Jackomas on Streaky Bay Road for Clubrooms.

1960s New piano purchased.
Billetted 66 persons going to the Empire Games in Perth.
Concert raised $300 for the Senior Citizens Village.

1970s Catered for OTC opening.
The clubrooms let permanently as a house.
Special developments in the area of handicraft displays.

1983 Fiftieth birthday celebrations.

A new branch of the CWA was formed at the top end of the district in 1967. It was designed to cater for women from Coorabie, Bookabie, Penong and Nundroo and, appropriately, it was called the Coorabook Branch. The first meeting was held in the home of Deidre Ashby at Nundroo when Mrs Ashby Senior, from Clare, gave a talk on the aims and works of a CWA Branch. The ladies present then decided to form their own Branch and the following were elected to executive positions Deidre Ashby, President; Shirley Mahar, Secretary; Kath Dunn, Treasurer.

Meetings of the Coorabook Branch have continued regularly ever since 1967 and long serving supporters, in addition to the foundation executive, have been Mary Fox, Jess Gray, Joy Stott, Mona Johns, Helen Mahar, Greta Whitelaw, Elaine Kloock and Ruth Hardy.

Youth clubs have been a feature of the years since 1950 except that many of then have flowered during the youth of a few individuals and then withered as the youth has aged. Andrew McLay, a popular Headmaster of Ceduna Higher



Murat Bay Scout Troop mid 1950s.
Back: Russell Jolly, Viv Brooks, Graham Borlase, Bill Skinner, Des Atkins (Scoutmaster), Colin Duffy, Ross Sawley, Eric Spry.
Front: Leonard, John and Graham Hoffrichter.



One of Ceduna's tributes to ex-servicemen.

Primary School, organised a Rural Youth Club for Ceduna in 1955, there was a Charra Youth Club in 1957 (Dudley Wright, President; Ruby Freeman, Vice President) and a Kooringabbie Youth Club must have been active in 1967 because it organised a walk to the site of old Kent Town marked by a chimney in the Fowlers Bay sandhills.[37] In 1969 what was called the Far West Rural Youth Club boasted 25 plus members and was led by President Howard Bergmann.[38]

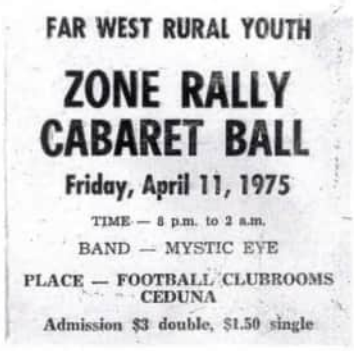
In 1985 a West Coast Rural Youth Rally was hosted by the Smoky Bay Rural Youth Club, which began in 1980 and has been well supported ever since. For the 1985 rally members came from 11 localities on Eyre Peninsula and engaged in competitions including debating, shearing, haystacking, general knowledge, photography, cooking, dressmaking and welding. The weekend went off very well with the Smoky Bay members cooking and supplying all meals and running a well supported Cabaret on the Saturday night.



The Scouts and Guides Hall in Ceduna.

Scouts and Guides have continued to be active, chiefly in the Ceduna-Thevenard area, and their most memorable event occurred in 1956 when members and friends erected a Scout Hall. The materials for its construction were obtained by dismantling the old dining room and kitchen of Humes Steelworks, Thevenard. The building was taken down in sections and re-erected on a site near the cemetery. Then, in October of 1956, the District Field Commissioner of Scouts (Mr Muegge) made a special visit from Adelaide to open the new hall. The trooping of the colours on the day was in the hands of Ross Sawley, Barrie Coote and Adrian Brooks. Rev Edwards dedicated the building for the Boy Scouts Association and the senior scout master, M Hunkin, welcomed a good crowd which included Des Atkins, scoutmaster, Sister Butler, guide captain, Graham Elsley, cubmaster and Dr Mueller and Sister Tierney, brownie leaders.

The Far Western sub branch of the Sailors, Soldiers and Airmans Fathers Association was one of the organisations which, unfortunately, disappeared from the scene. But, it did enjoy a tenth anniversary in 1955, and continued for many years after that. At the anniversary H A Betts gave a resume of the association's achievements and mentioned as foremost of these the donations of frozen fish fillets made to Daws Road and Kapara Repatriation Hospitals for 8 years. H A Betts was made a life member of the association — an honour given only 'in cases of extreme merit'[39]. Later, the Fathers Association was led by E O Dahl and H B Smith for many years and it gradually got into bottle collecting as its main source of fundraising. In this Pat Gray excelled and, for his contribution in collecting thousands of bottles, he was made a life member of the Association in 1968.[40]


FAR WEST RURAL YOUTH

ZONE RALLY
CABARET BALL

Friday, April 11, 1975

TIME — 8 p.m. to 2 a.m.

BAND — MYSTIC EYE

PLACE — FOOTBALL CLUBROOMS CEDUNA

Admission $3 double, $1.50 single



TO THE PUBLIC OF CEDUNA AND DISTRICT

THE following persons are those who collect bottles on behalf of the Senior Citizens' or the Fathers' Association of Ceduna. Please retain your bottles until they call.

STAN DUNN JACK BACKSHALL
ALBERT OATS JACK SAUNDERS
STOFE HOFFRICHTER
Mrs. R. TROWBRIDGE
Mrs. ETTRIDGE (Smoky Bay)
R. STOTT (Bookabie). e

Bottle collectors for the Fathers Association in Ceduna. From left: Albert Oats, Harry Smith and Pat Gray.

The Apex Club was the first of the large popular service clubs to set up in the Far West. In 1963 Ken Wright was elected Service Director and Bill Christie Social Director.[41] Then, in March of 1964, 126 people attended an inaugural dinner for the club in Ceduna's Memorial Hall. Twelve members from the sponsoring club, Cleve, attended and other representatives came from Adelaide, Whyalla, Port Lincoln, Port Pirie and Hamley Bridge. Later, in 1964, the Club sponsored, as an innovative fund raiser, a drive-in movie theatre at the showgrounds and attracted large crowds. Funds from the venture went to the Murat Bay Hospital.[42]

After this promising beginning, interest in the club waned but was revived in 1976 with the help of the Streaky Bay Club. In March of 1977 the club was officially chartered as No. 469 and it has enjoyed an active life since with a steady membership of around 20 to 25. Some of its notable service projects have been Apex Park in George Street, Ceduna, lawn planting and cutting for the Senior Citizens Village, a road safety track (with Lions), cyclethons for the National Heart Fund, and re-roofing the Memorial Hall (by tender). Doug Betts, Jim Kloeden and Tim Schwarz are foundation members who are still active in the club and Doug Betts has been made a Life Member.

The Lions Club of Ceduna and Districts was chartered in June 1977 with Streaky Bay being the mother club and Tom Watson the Charter President. There are about 30 members of whom one, Michael Ross, is the only remaining charter member. Lions has an annual service day in October when it provides a dinner for Senior Citizens. This is an enormously popular occasion which has been held every year since 1979. In 1986, 109 guests enjoyed the meal. Other annual projects are a Lions Auction, and Show Day contributions with the sale of donuts, and showbags.

Lions shared with Apex in the construction of the road safety school and have run two 'Miss Personality' contests raising funds for 'Save Sight'. In one of these, Ceduna girl Alison Mundy was the overall South Australian winner. Additionally, Lions fund raising has included cropping ventures, a weekly meat raffle and Lions Mints and Christmas Cakes. Profits have gone to a wide range of community groups and projects. There is a much admired Lions Mobile Kitchen, which is used for catering purposes, and a large portable barbeque which is available for hire.

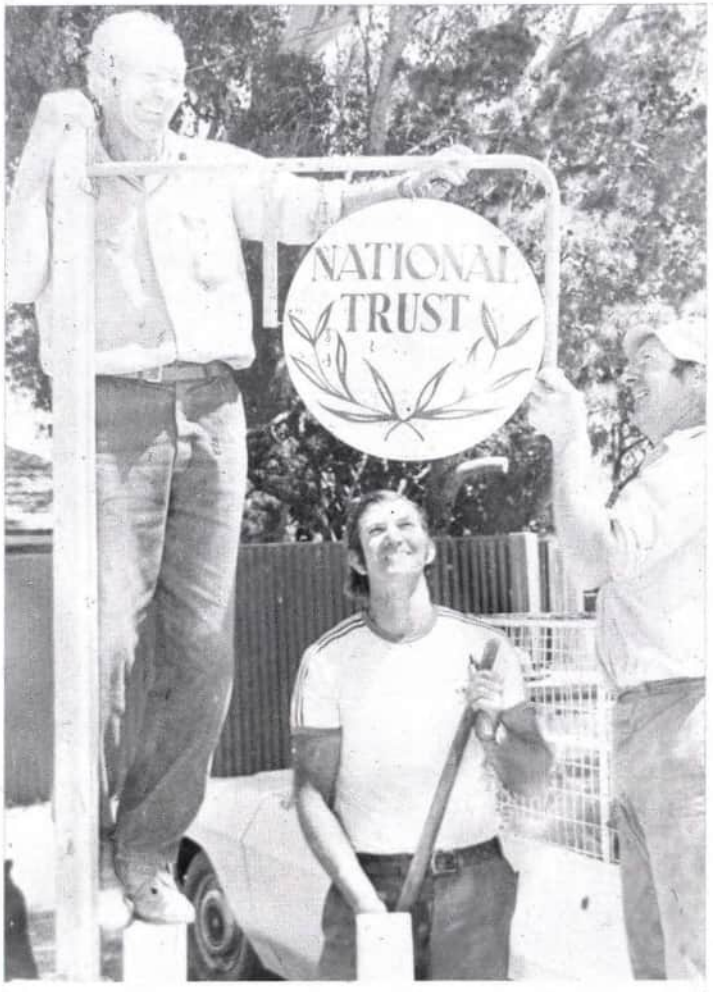
The Lioness Club of Ceduna and Districts was chartered with 20 members in November 1981. Of these members 8 are still active namely, June Bunker,

Jan Ettridge, Sigrid Foley, Elaine Keitel, Dot Riddell, Margaret Ross, Greta Whitelaw and Marion Karagiannis. In many of their activities they assist the Lions but in their first year they ran, as their own project, a successful Debutante Ball. Other activities which have been exclusive to Lionesses are street collections for Guide Dogs for the Blind, and the replacement of mattresses at the Murat Bay Hospital. Their fund raising has been used for the mattresses but also for the purchase of a Foetal Heart Detector at the Hospital.

A Rotary Club had a brief history in Ceduna from 1971–1980 and one of its best achievements was to encourage a group of citizens to form a National Trust Branch in the town. Reverend Ken Rogers, Ken Wright, Mrs N Fuss, A J. Oats, A H Brown, D Cooper, W Moreland, J Reid and J Petersen were the early enthusiasts. They were supported in the Murat Bay Council by Des Whitmarsh who moved that the Public Buildings Department of South Australia should be asked to make the old Ceduna school building on Park Terrace available to the Trust.[43]

This started a battle which lasted four years during which time the building was constantly under a demolition threat as being surplus to requirements and incapable of restoration. The community reacted strongly to such suggestions and Tomo Andrasic collected 365 signatures in a single day for a petition to parliament to stop any demolition.[44] After this, the government seemed pleased to announce that the old school and its surrounding land was to be made available to the Trust for a museum.

After a lot of hard work, the museum was opened on 24 October 1981 by Albert Oats, the oldest foundation member of the Ceduna Branch of the Trust.



The erection of the National Trust sign soon after the opening of the museum on Park Terrace, Ceduna. Pictured are: from left, Albert Brown, Allan Lowe and Charlie Lorimer.

He was 85. Des Whitmarsh, then Mayor of Ceduna, spoke at the gathering and pronounced that it was 'the first truly historical event . . . in Ceduna'.[45] Ken Wright, the Branch President, welcomed visitors and thanked many people for donations. He noted those present who had once been pupils of the school — Gwen Betts, Flo Watson, Mabel Chandler, Norm Hurrell and Percy Lange.

Since the opening the museum has grown quickly and has been well organised into several sections. There is the Maralinga Room, tracing the history and work of the Atomic Weapons Testing area. Ken Wright, Ken Rogers and Fred Blumson took a truck to Maralinga in 1979 to obtain several tonnes of memorabilia to be used for this room.

The Medical History room in the building has a fine range of exhibits relating to the early hospitals, the Flying Medical Service and the Bush Church Aid Society. The Albert J Oats room has a large collection of photographs, documents and artefacts; and other rooms show a range of pioneer and Aboriginal items. There is a large outdoor shed filled with agricultural machinery, and sundry other buildings including the old Denial Bay gaol and the old Hundred of O'Loughlin School.

The Trust conducts regular meetings, and has held several successful field days when its restored farming machinery has been put on display on local properties. The museum is operated entirely by volunteers and, as the current President Allan Lowe points out in the Branch's publicity pamphlet, members have made it a labour of love and are very proud of their museum.

The need for effective fire fighting units was evident in the 1950s and Thevenard created a Fire Brigade in 1955 with a group of enthusiastic volunteers, one of whom was rostered to be on duty at all picture shows. Ceduna had its Voluntary Fire Brigade, and its Chief Officer, A E Howlett, with his Secretary, F Burner, took steps to affiliate with the South Australian Emergency Fire Services. This move led to an amalgamation of the Thevenard and Ceduna units into one strong Country Fire Service branch with headquarters at the southern end of Poynton Street.



Awards for service were handed out to members of the Ceduna-Thevenard CFS in July 1985. Pictured are some of the recipients. Back L to R: Phillip Ellard, Bevan Mastrosavas (24 years), Bruce Anderson, Kevin May, Erin O'Doherty, Brian Pope, Kevin Rendell.
Front L to R: Roy Hunt, Grant Nisbet, Bill Kavanagh (28 years), Murray Mead. Missing from the picture were Tosh Shannon and Tony Flavel (26 years).

Besides the large and centralised CFS unit there are also fire fighting units at Nunjikompita, Smoky Bay, Penong and Coorabie, which serve the needs of their surrounding areas.

The increasing number of road accidents on remote parts of the Eyre Highway led to the formation of a unit of the State Emergency Service in Ceduna in the early 1970s. By 1977 the Controller of the unit, Des Whitmarsh, was proud to suggest that it was one of the best equipped in the state with a new Toyota Land Cruiser, first aid gear, resuscitation gear, a portable generator, megaphones and floodlights. At that time it was sharing the CFS headquarters in Poynton Street, but since then it has moved into its own building in a corner of the showgrounds land at Ceduna. The unit has been kept busy during its sixteen or so years of operation; it has attended dozens of road accidents, organised searches for missing people and been on duty several times when disasters have seemed imminent at the aerodrome. Apart from Des Whitmarsh others who have devoted many hours to the service have been Eddie and Ellen Paues, Shan Oestmann, Gary Oestmann, Warren Charlton and Bev Oakley.

The tendency to serve a community through a Progress Association is still a characteristic of the area, although nowadays the District Council has become a substitute in many of the roles formerly undertaken by an Association. Smoky Bay still works with a Progress Association and its Community Club is a tangible example of what it can achieve. There is also a Women's Progress Association at Smoky Bay which was an outgrowth of a women's committee that helped the school. When the school closed the ladies continued to meet and turned their attention to helping the town and district.

Penong, Bookabie and Coorabie have Progress Associations linked with the Outback Areas Community Development Trust, which was established by the State Government in 1978. The Trust carries out policies of development in the outback area in conjunction with some 29 community organisations, three of which are the Penong and Districts Progress Association, the Coorabie and Districts Progress Association and the Bookabie Progress Association. There are five trust members plus a full time secretary who is a public servant. Michael Balharry, past President of the Penong and Districts Progress Association, is one of the Trust members.

Some projects which the Outback Areas Community Trust has funded on a subsidy basis are the supply of electrical power (see Chapt. 15) the fencing of the Coorabie cemetery, the fencing of the Fowlers Bay Caravan Park (run by Coorabie Progress Association), the maintenance of local halls, the building of public conveniences at the Penong Sports ground and Bookabie sports ground, and the purchase of a video camera and recorder for the Penong Western United Tigers Football Club.

The latest available financial statement for the Trust (to 30 June 1986) shows that the following amounts have been spent in subsidies for the communities, Bookabie $12,513, Coorabie $21,690 and Penong $58,201. Each Progress Association has further development projects in the pipeline and regular meetings are held to discuss community needs.

The analysis of clubs, societies, lobby groups, and associations since 1950 could continue indefinitely. There have been all the hall committees concerned about fund raising, maintenance, renovations, hirings and cleanings. In 1951 there was a Thevenard Boys Gymnasium Club led by Rod Nettlebeck and George Burnett. In 1961 a Ceduna Choral Society was active with conductor David Maskell and pianist Mrs A E Chadwick. A year later F A T Edson agreed to be President of a group that would compile the History of the

Far West, and he had a large committee of supporters. A Murat Bay and District Spastic Council was formed in 1963 (President P S Morrison), an Old Time Dance Club started up in 1972 (President Melville Dawes), a Beefsteak and Burgundy Club in 1981 (President Phil Weatherald) a Shiraz Club in 1971 (President Marion Woods), a Ceduna Chamber of Commerce in 1968 (President Keith Jennings), a Ceduna Flying Club in 1969 (President Allan Chadwick), a Ceduna Pistol Club in 1959 (President J May and Roger Cardwell, Captain), a Smoky Bay Table Tennis Club in 1967 (President R Denton), a Ceduna and Districts Youth Club in 1959 (Director Graham Elsley), a Far West Branch of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association in the 1980s (President Shirley Mahar), a Jubilee 150 Committee in 1984 (President Des Whitmarsh) and many, many, more.

Religion in the Far West has kept its place in the community and has somewhat gone against the centralising trend by maintaining its dispersed preaching places, and even, in some cases adding to them. At the same time, it has consolidated its position in Ceduna-Thevenard and indeed, all the practising ministers of religion now live in Ceduna.

The Smoky Bay church destroyed in the storm of 1947 was rebuilt and opened as a District Community Church on 17 August 1952. Reverends D Gibson and T Hayman led the service and congratulated the people of the district on their many fine working bees to construct the building. Since then the original has been extended with a porch and a backroom, and new cladding has been added to the outer walls.

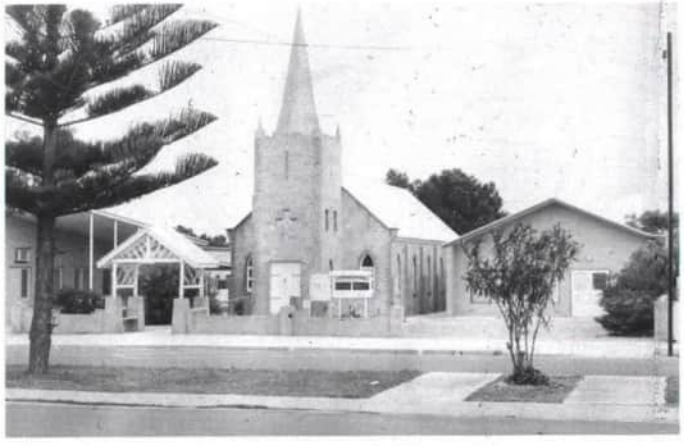
The little Methodist Church at Merghiny was transferred to Thevenard in 1953 and is still standing there today. At a service of dedication in November 1953, Reverend Gibson presided and Mrs Bowell senior, the lifelong Merghiny supporter, played the organ.[46]

The last service in the original St Michael's and All Angels Anglican Church was conducted in March of 1954. At the time, the new church was under construction across Poynton Street at its present location, where Archbishop Mowll from Sydney laid a foundation stone in 1953. Reverend T J Hayman, made herculean efforts as a brick-layer cum builder to have his dream church created. With the help of many volunteers, 28,000 cement bricks were made and laid for a building 68 feet by 30 feet designed to accommodate 150 people.[47]

The Bishop of Willochra (Dr Richard Thomas) dedicated the new St Michael and All Angels in the presence of more than 500 people on 11 May 1955. He was assisted by a very proud and very relieved Reverend T Hayman

Below. St Alphege's Anglican Church, Penong, first built as a prefabricated building in 1909 and rebuilt as this modern building in 1961.
Below right. St Michaels and All Angels Church and Hall, Ceduna. Church built 1953–55, hall in 1981.





who was quick to point out to his congregation that the porch was dedicated to the Bush Church Aid Sisters, Doctors and Flying Medical Service; the spire was partly donated by Mrs E J McKenzie in memory of her husband, son and father-in-law; the communion table was given by the staff of the hospital in memory of Dr R W Gibson and the pews, windows, carpet, electrical wiring, communion rails and offertory plate had all been given by parishioners.[48]

On Sunday 31 July 1955, the Lutheran Parish Hall was opened in Ceduna. It was dedicated by Rev H Rosenblatt of Koonibba Mission and a memorial plaque in honour of the pioneer members of the parish was unveiled by Mrs Ben Linke Sen. The treasurer of the parish E E E Lutz was singled out for special praise in collecting funds for the building.[49]

From 1957 to 1966 was very much a growth period for the Methodists. It began with the opening of the Penong Memorial Sunday School Hall in May 1957. Rev. Malcolm Wilson, a former minister in the Penong parish, performed the opening and Rev. Edwards led the service of dedication.

Then, in 1960, it was the Golden Jubilee of the Ceduna Church. It was celebrated by the addition of a new porch opened by Mrs E A Bowell, whose mother, Mrs T Hunt, laid the foundation stone for the church 50 years before. At the special service of celebration, Fred Blumson, one of the congregation's best known laymen, gave a report on the history of the previous fifty years.

Two years later, in May of 1962, there was a splendid new building for Methodists at Uworra, a fitting tribute to 73 years of religious devotion in the Charra district. The modern style building cost 5000 pounds to erect and the Ladies Guild of the district raised more than 1000 pounds in steady efforts over a period of 15 years. Mrs R Pengilly, the first President of the Guild, was given the honour of opening the building.

At the end of this special Methodist era, Fred Blumson retired after 42 years of service to the Sunday School and Mrs M A Collins at 90 years of age was asked to open the new Ceduna Methodist Church Hall.[50]

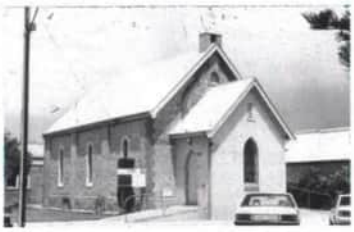
As the Methodists were enjoying their new hall the Lutherans were meeting to consider their Ceduna Church's poor state of repair. Hartley Klau recommended that a new church should be erected and he was authorized to purchase a block opposite the existing church in the name of the Ceduna congregation. Then, in 1970, a building committee consisting of H Klau, G Elsley, B Beattie, A Brown, P Hoffrichter, A van Wageningen and Dr M Mueller, decided that the new church should be built on the site of the existing church and the block across the road was sold to augment funds.

On Sunday 18 July 1971, Pastor M N Kriewaldt preached the last service in the old church and the next day 10 willing members of the congregation commenced its demolition — and completed it within a week. Shearerbuilt Construction from Adelaide then began the new church with the help of much voluntary assistance. Notable here was the construction of all the pews by Graham Elsley (a saving of $2,650) and the boarding and feeding of the builders by members of the parish (a saving of $800).[51]

During the period the congregation was without a church a kind offer from the Anglicans was accepted and Lutheran services were conducted in St Michael and All Angels.

On 7 November 1971 the new St Pauls Lutheran Church was officially opened before a crowd of 500 people by Pastor H Proeve, general secretary of the Lutheran Church of Australia. The total cost of the building including furnishings and extra fittings was $36,800.

A Lutheran preaching place operated in 1928 in the old Nunjikompita hall. The original members were the Ross brothers and their parents, the Luestner brothers and their parents and the Beer family. When the present Nunji Hall



The Uniting, formerly Methodist Church in Poynton Street, Ceduna. Built in 1909. Porch added in 1959.





Above. The Nunjikompita Lutheran Church. The building was brought from Maralinga in 1976.
Above right. The present St Paul's Lutheran Church built in 1971.



The Greek church at Thevenard opened in 1972.

District Council of Murat Bay

AUSTRALIAN CITIZENSHIP

NOTICE is hereby given that an Australian Citizenship Ceremony will be held on MONDAY, JANUARY 27, 1975 (Australia Day), at 7.30 p.m. at the Greek Hall, Thevenard.

The following candidates are to become Australian citizens —

GINIS, DIMITRIA
KAPSIS, PAGONA
POURGIEZIS, ANNA
POURGIEZIS, STAMATIOS
RALLIS, ANGELIKI
RALLIS, NIKOLAS

Everybody welcome. Ladies are asked to please bring a plate.

(Sgd.) G. J. PFITZNER, District Clerk

was opened in 1960 services shifted there and, in 1973, plans were made to start a church building fund. Fortunately, the complicated task of erecting a suitable building was not necessary because Pastor Clarrie Schefe helped negotiate the purchase of the interdenominational chapel at Maralinga; it was transferred to Nunjikompita in March of 1976.

It was the late Fred Ross' life wish to see a church at Nunjikompita and he died the day it arrived.

The Greek community conducted their first church services in the Greek Hall, but in 1971 they began constructing their own church which was opened in Thevenard on 10 February 1972.

The Catholic parish of Ceduna built a new hall in 1977 and, in 1979, it celebrated the Golden Jubilee of the building of their church, Our Lady of the Star of the Sea. Those who helped to sustain the church through its fifty years were remembered during the celebrations. They included Reg Betts, Bart Hoobin, Tom Irwin, Vin Irwin, Jack Madigan, T Horrigan, Mr Juniper, Jim and Tom McInerheney and Jack Backshall.

Ceduna was made a separate Catholic parish in 1973 with Father M McCurtin the first priest and Father Sebastian Camileri was the priest-in-charge during the Jubilee year. He led a special mass and an inter-denominational choir sang during the service. Mrs Doris Chadwick from St Michael and All Angels played the organ. In honour of the anniversary Mrs May Stenning from Smoky Bay made a large cake and Bibiana Mahar, aged 88, was given the honour of cutting it.[52]

The Jehovah's Witnesses opened their Kingdom Hall on Seaview Terrace, Thevenard in January of 1979. The building was erected after four months of hard work by church volunteers. When it was completed it was fully carpeted, wood panelled inside and contained a flat for visiting circuit overseers.[53]

The Anglicans in Ceduna opened a new hall in August 1981. Canon Philip Connell performed the ceremony and was presented with the key by the President of the Women's Guild, Joy Salmon. Mayor Jeff Bergmann spoke and commended the Rector at Ceduna, Rev. Ken Rogers, and his willing helpers, for getting the building erected. He also extended good wishes from the Ceduna Lutheran Parish and the Reverend Murray Earl gave greetings from the Far West Uniting Parish.

Several mainstream church groups such as the Church of Christ and the Baptists are not represented in the Far West and, apart from the Jehovah's Witnesses sect, no other minor church groupings have established a base. One recent development, however, has been a Ceduna Christian Fellowship, which has started in an old motor transport shed less than a kilometre from the centre of Ceduna.



Celebrating 50 years of football in Ceduna. L to R. Jack Nicholls, Jack Haseldine, Dick Laidler, Bill Saunders, Clive Denton, Alan Lucas, Reg Betts.

The history of sport in the Far West since 1950 could be, and one day may be, a book in itself, so large is the topic. Here there is only space for a brief look at some of the outstanding features and some words about the introduction of new sports into the area.

Football, cricket, tennis, netball, golf and horse racing have continued to develop from the time they picked up after the shut downs during World War II. There are no shortages of teams or competitors and playing facilities have improved immensely with turfed ovals, well maintained tennis courts and good cricket pitches. In these sports the Far West can salute many people as outstanding achievers, as for example the multiple Mail Medal winners in football, Bruce Tonkin, Bill Tonkin, Reg Betts, Don Tschuna, Alwyn Davey, Ken Wright, Tony Findlay and Shane Baker. Their details and other information about football is included in John Gascoyne's book *Far West Football, 1906–1986*.

Cricket in recent years has been played at two levels, A and B grade, with some of the star performers being C M Miller, C M Beattie, John Ettridge, Rick Kavanagh, K Taheny, Brett Willcox, I Sullivan and Max Gum.

Headquarters for tennis in Ceduna have transferred from the courts on East Terrace to the Area School. Other courts used regularly are at Thevenard, Penong, Smoky Bay, Bookabie, Coorabie, and Miltaburra. Teams compete in regular competitions throughout the summer months and local tournaments are still popular. The annual Easter tournament has been replaced by an Australia Day weekend tournament sponsored by the Ceduna Hotel-Motel. Local players who have been successful in recent years include Darryl Borlase, Alison Pearson, Lyn Beattie, Amy Kelly, Craig Wilson, Nigel Rogers and Darren Mead.

Ladies Netball is played enthusiastically and has gradually built up a strong Far West Association. Three of its hardest workers have been awarded life membership of the Association namely Isobel Bergmann (1970), Betty Schwarz (1975) and Beverly Oats (1984).



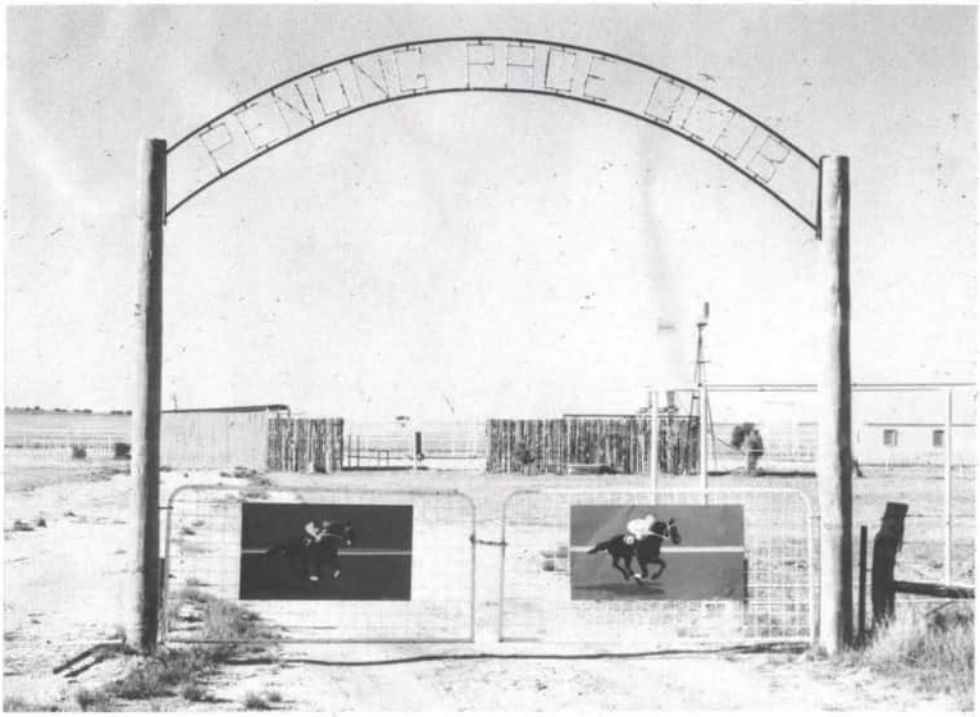
Ceduna Golf Club mid 1950s.
Standing: Mrs D Marchant, K Hunter, ?, ?, D McLay, K Atherton, J Cooper, W C Bubner, P Harkness, B McGuinness, E G Betts, E J Ellis, Dr F Gibson, J Whelan, Cora Bubner, Don Marchant.
Front: Andrew McLay, J McNeil, H Whelan, B Kleeman, H G Betts, P Kleeman, R J Maxfield.

The golf club of Ceduna has maintained its popularity and life members are H A Betts, A S Nicholls, T L Collins, R J Searle, W L Thiselton, D G Coote, B A Kelly, J W Gray and A J Comas. In competition play the outstanding performers have been Meredith Bahr, Des Coote and Phil Bryant, all of whom have won the club championships many times. The performance of Meredith Bahr is nothing short of remarkable. She has won the ladies championship every year from 1972 to 1987 with the exception of 1979. In that year she played with new clubs she had won in a raffle four days before — and lost on the eighteenth hole!

The Murat Bay Racing Club continued to be popular in the years after 1950 and, in recent times, it has had spectacular growth. The number of meetings has increased from one per year to 4 or 5 per year, the name has been changed to the Ceduna Racing Club Inc. and on 1 November 1986 a new race track was opened on a block south of the town designated by the Murat Bay Council as a Racecourse Reserve. The new racecourse, reputed to be the first in South Australia in 40 years, was a marvellous community effort by the racing fraternity with just one example being the building of the judges and stewards stand by local farming brothers Kym and Kevin Trewartha.[54]

Some of the personalities of the club since 1950 have been S L Geue (President for 10 years), Clem Foster (President for 6 years), T Trenowden (President for 7 years) and long serving officials such as P S Morrison, W H Brown, J F Backshall, C Keitel, D A Coote, H G Betts, S A Trewartha, B A Kelly, P J O'Reilly, D J Uzzell, J C Eckersley, N W Trowbridge, G P Trenowden, P Weatherald, R E Bruggemann, D Zippel, N Chandler, D W Goode, J A Goode, P A Jenner, J Kloeden, T Collins and L Beattie.

Bucks' Party
for
LEON MUDGE
CARAWA CLUBROOMS,
4 p.m.,
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, e



The entrance gates to the Penong racecourse.

Amongst the successful owners and trainers there has been Stan Geue with his remarkable 'Cellar' horses, 'Empty Cellar', 'Cellar Star', 'Cellar Damp' and 'Blue Cellar'; Clem Foster with 'Cop the Lot'; Fred McGuinness with 'Apache Royale' and 'Safety Cloud'; 'Kingy' Dunn with 'Clydes Mate'; Don Zippel with 'Just Black'; and Herb Oats with several horses bred at his own stud.

The major new sports in the Far West since 1950 have been sailing, bowls, basketball and squash, each of which has established clubrooms and buildings that have already been mentioned.

The Ceduna Sailing Club was formed in 1963 as an offshoot of the then active Murat Bay Aquatic Sports Club formed in 1960 with Norm Hurrell as President and E V Brown, Secretary. The club was first called the Far Western Sailing Club, but this was changed to the present name in 1978 because it was argued that Ceduna was a better recognised name for people throughout Australia.

The first Commodore was E (Ted) Hughes who, when he transferred out of the district in 1965, was given honorary life membership 'in recognition of his outstanding service in founding and organising the club'.[55] At that time there were 14 registered boats.

Other life memberships have been granted to Ian Blackham and Gordon Whitmarsh. Ian was the foundation Secretary of the club and has been club Commodore on four occasions and Gordon has been club Commodore on three occasions.

The club now has 28 registered boats in 3 classes Sharpies, Herons and Holdfast Trainers. It proudly conducted the Australian Titles for Skates and Kitty Cats in 1982–83, for Gwen 12's in 1986–87 and has bookings for Herons in 1987–88 and Sharpies in 1988–89. Thus, it has well and truly established itself as a front line national sailing club. The club honour roll of Commodores, Secretaries and Treasurers highlights the long service of not only those already mentioned but also Peter Betts, Norm Bennett, Geoff Mitchell and Leon Schwarz.

R J Betts, K Hunter and C H McKechnie convened a meeting in March of 1954 to create a Murat Bay and District Bowling Club. More than 20 people

PENONG RACING CLUB INC.

FIVE RACE PROGRAM AT PENONG

Saturday February 9
AT PENONG

Featuring
$600 BRUCE HARDY MEMORIAL SPRINT
$500 PENONG HOTEL HANDICAP
Luncheon stall and booth on course.

CABARET AT NIGHT
PENONG HALL
9 p.m. — 2 a.m.
Near dress essential
"DECK CHAIR" Band
Pre-race social in Charra Football Shed
Friday February 8 at 9 p.m.

WEST COAST SENTINEL, Wed., Feb. 6, 1980 Page 9

PENONG SHEEP DOG TRIALS

on property of JIM WATSON, 4 miles east of Penong,

OCTOBER 16, 1971
Commencing 9 a.m.

JUNIOR FARM TRIAL.
SENIOR FARM TRIAL.
OPEN CLASS (E. H. Johns Meorial).

Morning Tea — Barbecue
Midday — Afternoon Tea.

S. M. BROOK,
eo13 Secretary.

attended and one, P S Morrison, advised that land was available in the Ceduna parklands and that the District Council would assist with the preparation of the land for bowling rinks.[56] A provisional committee was elected namely, R Betts, President; C McKechnie, Secretary; H Kuhlmann, K Hunter, W Bubner, K Hoffrichter and P S Morrison. A decision of the meeting was that a bowling green would be made rather than some form of artificial surface.

The creation of the green was a strong community effort. P S Morrison paid for the hire of a council grader, 40 tons of gypsum from Kowulka was delivered to the site in 17 trucks owned and driven by farmers and townsmen, 6 tons of timber for edges of the green was brought from Adelaide by Tom Haseldine freight free, and Reg and Harold Betts donated the posts. Later the laborious work of preparing the green was supervised by C Kunst, W Bubner and Bill Jolly.[57]

From this small beginning, the Bowling Club has grown to be a very strong organisation. Its honour boards in the clubhouse show a large number of well known local names who have won championship competitions. And, one special board records that the following have been made life members of the club, W D McBeath, P S Morrison, C J Webster, C Keitel, W E Nicholls, W H Jolly, J F Betts and E G Betts.

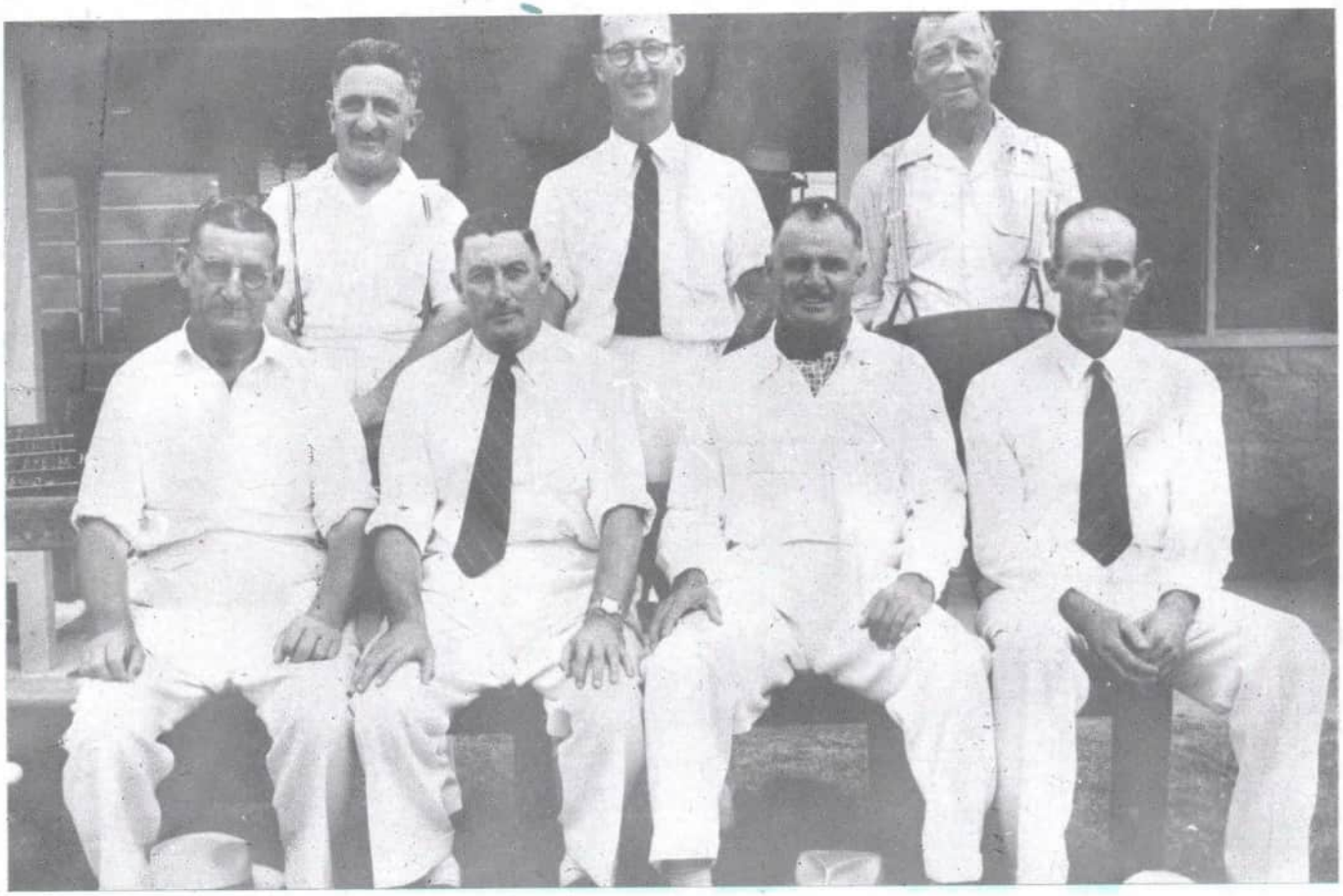
The struggle for basketball to become established in its stadium has already been mentioned. It is now a very popular sport enjoyed by a large number of people in the district, ranging from children to 'veterans' in their forties. There is a regular competition and inter association matches with Streaky Bay. Additionally, visiting performers from Adelaide have shown their skills in matches against local stars.

Squash is also now well established after beginning in 1976 when courts were built at the Sailing Club. A tournament conducted in 1977 was won by J Pearson for the men and J Mahoney for the women. Thereafter team events were organised, and now there are 21 teams (including 4 junior teams) in regular competition.

A host of minor sports have appeared, and sometimes disappeared, in the district since the 1950s. Rifle shooting maintained its popularity until the 1960s and since then has been replaced by pistol and shot gun clubs. Pony clubs have been active and, one notable occasion, was in 1979, when members of the South Australian Mounted Police conducted a special riding school for the Far West Pony Club.[58] Motor cycle clubs have also been active with scrambles at Andoc Park located between Ceduna and Denial Bay. At regular meetings in the 1970s Kevin Trewartha was the outstanding local rider. The Far West Little Athletics Club has been very popular since the 1970s and so has the Far West Eight Ball Association which began in 1975.

At the 'top end' in the last twenty years, with fewer people, sports have not been as intense as they were in the better populated decades of the 1920s and 1930s. Nevertheless, football, tennis, cricket and netball are all played, though many competitors drive into Ceduna for most of their matches. A Penong Dart Association has flourished from time to time and was partricularly strong in 1960 when it defeated Ceduna and District 15 sets to 12. At Coorabie the RSL Far West Branch sponsored Sheep Dog Trials, particularly on Anzac Day, in the 1960s. The Johns family were always successful competitors, and others involved as competitors or as officials, included G Nieass, V Cabot and L Warmington. A typical successful trial was in October 1969. There were 28 entries from as far away as Nundroo, Cowell and Tumby Bay. The main event was the E H Johns Memorial Trophy which was won by 'Tallala Wally', a dog originally owned by E H Johns but then trained by his son Brian.

Opposite page.
Above. Early office holders for the Murat Bay Bowling Club.
Back: D McBeath, H G Betts, C Kunst.
Front: P S Morrison, R J Betts, W C Bubner, W E Nicholls.
Below. Office bearers in the Murat Bay Ladies Bowling Club 1958.
Back: E M Ellis, A Menz, D Nicholls.
Front: D Morrison, E M Watson, G Betts, C M Bubner.



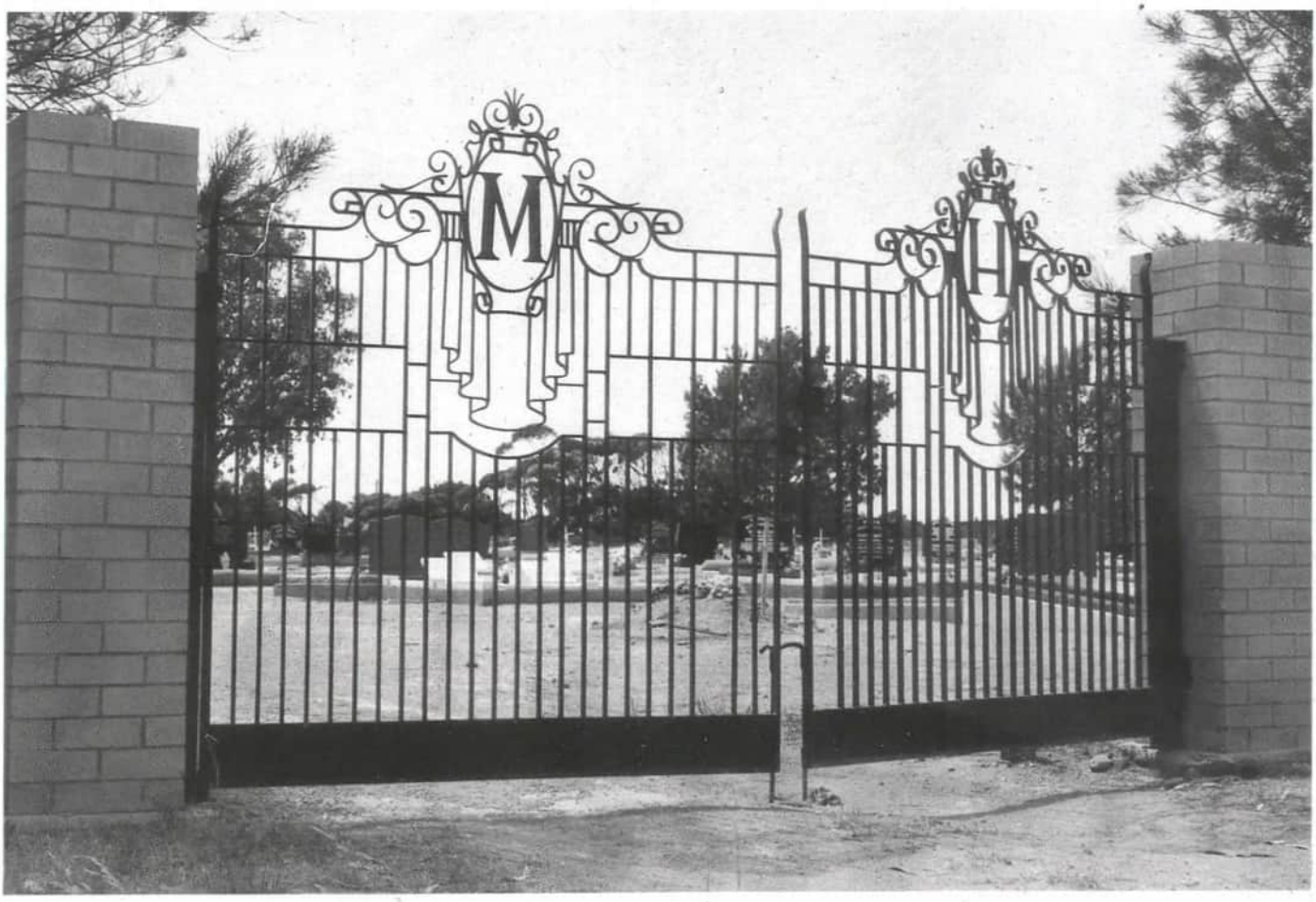


Millions of people throughout the world remember what they were doing on 22 November 1963 the day that John F Kennedy was assassinated. On a smaller scale, but in a similar way, hundreds of people in the Far West remember what they were doing on 20 December 1958 the day that Mary Olive Hattam was murdered in what the *West Coast Sentinel* described as 'one of the most shocking crimes in the history of the State'.[59] The nine year old girl went to play on the beach not far from her home between Thevenard and Ceduna. When she did not return home, and darkness came, a widespread search was started for her. It continued late into the night before her mutilated body was found on the edge of the beach near Thevenard.

After some preliminary enquiries in the town, Sergeant H L Walker arrested a 27 year old Aborigine, Rupert Max Stuart, who it was then alleged made a full confession concerning the crime.

The subsequent developments in the Stuart case are not of direct concern here. They consisted of a preliminary hearing in Ceduna, a trial in Adelaide where Stuart was found guilty and his sentencing to hang. His date of execution was deferred twice, a Royal Commission was set up, the hanging was commuted to life imprisonment and, in recent years, Stuart has been set free on parole.

What is relevant in this book is the Far West's involvement in the proceedings. Probably never before did so many people feel so alienated by 'the mainland' because it conducted the affairs of the Far West with almost no consideration of its public feelings. It is important to realise that Stuart was not a Far West Aborigine. He came from Alice Springs via a travelling roadshow from which he was sacked the day after the murder. The local Aborigines disowned him and were equally as infuriated about his crime as the white



A memorial from a compassionate community: the Mary Hattam Gates.

population. Sonny Jim, a Penong Aborigine who gave evidence at the hearing in Ceduna, volunteered the information that 'the preliminary hearing was a waste of time and that the defendant should be hanged straight away.'

When Stuart's execution was deferred, a petition signed by 334 residents of the Far West requested that the hanging should take place as soon as possible. This was one side of the area's attitude — anger. The other side was compassion for the family of Mary Olive Hattam. The little girl's funeral was conducted in the Ceduna cemetery and all the business houses of Ceduna and Thevenard closed as a mark of respect.

The District Council of Murat Bay opened a fund for the Hattam family to cover the funeral expenses and the purchase of a suitable headstone. The fund was generously oversubscribed. Wally Moreland prepared the headstone and grave surrounds at no charge and the surplus money in the fund was used to erect a set of Hattam memorial gates at the entrance to the cemetery.

The murder of Mary Olive Hattam was one of the greatest tragedies of the Far West. Its memory was perpetuated by the sensational legal proceedings that occurred in Adelaide and, even today, nearly thirty years later, the bitterness associated with those memories has not subsided.

One of the most difficult tasks in any local history is to mention the right people — those who have worked hard for the community, those who deserve to have their good deeds recognised. It tends to be a hit and miss affair based upon hearsay evidence and the published details of the activities of the area. Sometimes, it is made easier by independent judgements that produce awards such as the MBE for Alan Chadwick and the OBE for Dr Merna Mueller, both of which are discussed in Chapter 11. Similarly, the AM given to Jeff Bergmann was an independent tribute to his community service.

In 1980, another dimension in independent judgements came when the District Council of Murat Bay decided to introduce Citizen of the Year Awards for which all citizens were eligible and for which the criteria for selection was community service. The eight senior recipients to date, are all fine examples of genuine Coasters who have contributed enormously to the development and welfare of the Far West.

Frank Kuhlmann received the first citizenship award from Mayor Jeff Bergmann on Australia Day 1981. His list of community credits at that time included membership of the Hotel Board, the Hospital Board, a Councillor, past Chairman of the Senior Citizens Village, and, in his farming vocation, a member of the Wheat Quality Research Commission.

The award on Australia Day 1982 went to E Gwen Betts, who originally as Gwen Coote and then as the wife and later widow of Reg Betts, has been mentioned many times in this book already. Mayor Des Whitmarsh made the presentation and thanked Gwen for working 'tirelessly for the community for 50 years.'

In 1983 Reg Borlase received the award, and Mayor Whitmarsh read out a long list of community organisations he had been involved with. They included the Charra Hall Committee, the Charra Agricultural Bureau, the District Council of Murat Bay, the Murat Bay Hospital Board and the Senior Citizens Village.

For 1984 Ken Wright was recognised for services too numerous to mention. They cover a vast range of community clubs, sporting clubs and religious support groups. Like Gwen Betts his name has appeared in this book many times already. Additionally, his award undoubtedly included some recognition for his exceptional sporting talents in football, tennis, athletics and basketball.

No man on Eyre Peninsula was more widely known. A man of stature in the best sense and of many brilliant facets. Reg Betts was a personality in any company.

FUNERAL EULOGY, January 1965



Ceduna and Thevenard in the 1980s. Easily distinguished landmarks are the aerodrome, the new racecourse and three turfed ovals, Ceduna, the Area School and Thevenard.
S.A. Department of Lands, Photography.

Don Zippel from Mudamuckla was the 1985 winner for services to such groups as the Smoky Bay and District Community Club, the Mudamuckla, Carawa and Smoky Bay Football Clubs, the Smoky Bay Progress Association, the Smoky Bay Rodeo and the Ceduna Racing Club.

Cliff Stott won in 1986. His award was for outstanding voluntary service to St John Ambulance, which he joined in 1971 because he wanted to learn how to treat footballers in his capacity as trainer for the Charra Football Club. Cliff maintained his interest in the Ambulance organisation and worked his way up to become Superintendent in 1979 and still continues in that position.

Roma Trowbridge was Citizen of the Year in 1987. She also has been mentioned many times in this book already. With her husband, she farmed in



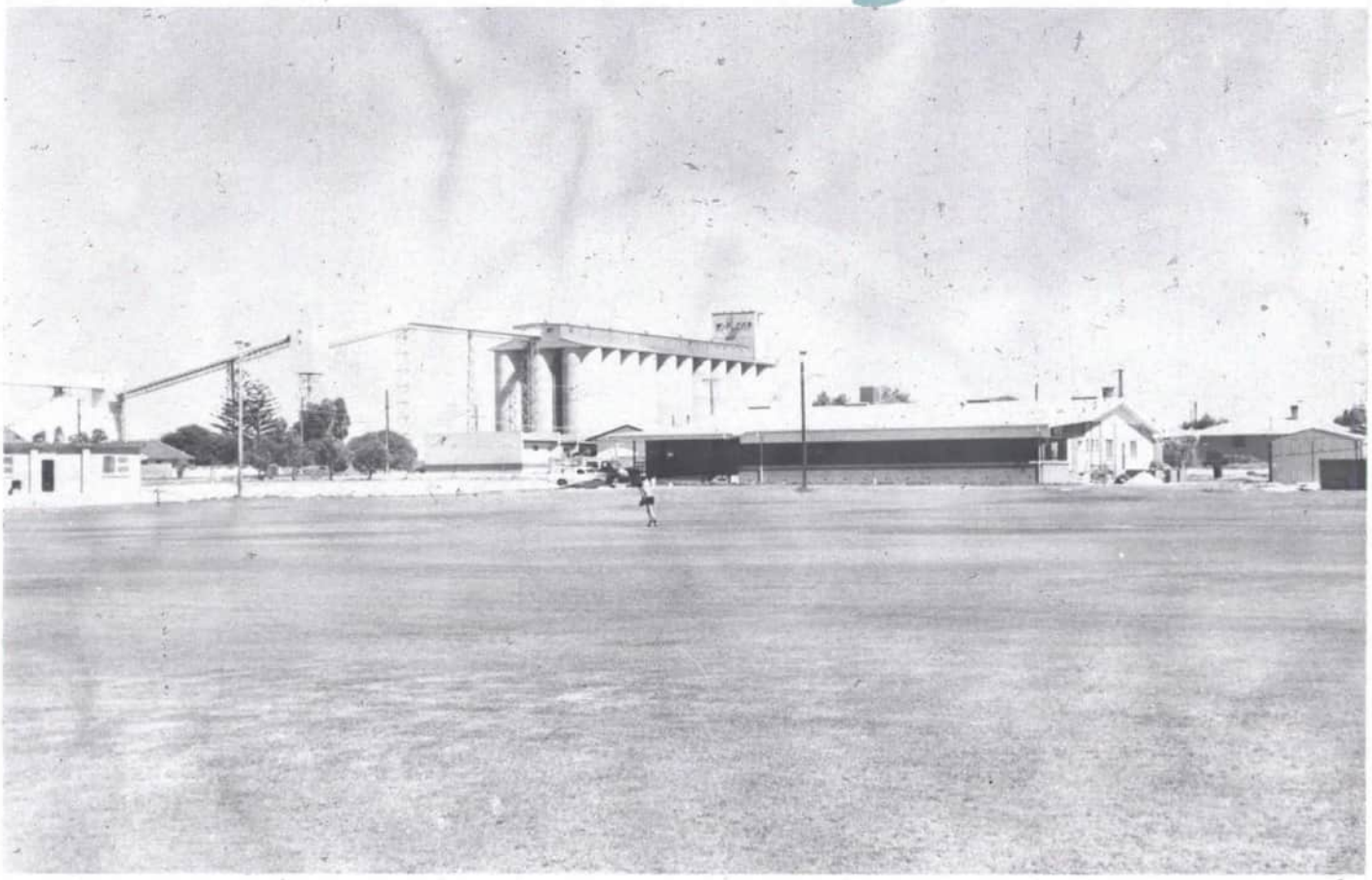
The Murat Bay District Council members 1987. From left: Barry Beattie, Neil Chandler, Tracy Zippel, James Furnell, Mayor Malcolm Puckridge, Eric Watkinson, Colin Meathrel, David Gillies, Howard Bergmann.

the Charra area, and since her retirement has been involved in Ceduna affairs as well as maintaining her links with Charra. A sprightly senior citizen, she has been active in dozens of community ventures throughout her life and over the years has boarded more than 100 young, single people in her home. Many of her family of 3 sons and 5 daughters are also genuine Coasters playing an active role in the development of the Far West.

There have been other forms of community awards in recent years which have recognised outstanding citizens. Thus, Helen Maude Chandler, 83, was chosen as South Australian Senior Citizen of the Year in 1978. Unfortunately 'Nell', as she was known to everybody, had a heart attack two days before she was due to collect her award in Adelaide and was confined to the Murat Bay District Hospital where she recovered and lived on until 1980.

In July 1985 a Telecom Advance Australia Award for community service in the Far West was given to Arie Van Wageningen. In December 1985, Joy Reed, Joy Prosser, Yvette Dupree and Bill Jolly were similarly honoured and, in 1986, awards were made to Roma Trowbridge, Pastor Robert Winderlich and Win Oats.

The centralising trend, which has been the main theme of the chapter, has brought with it prosperity and growth for Ceduna-Thevenard. But, it has taken away many small communal interests that for so long made the Far West a special, 'different' locality. The complexities of the big town now dominate the news in the *West Coast Sentinel*, not the simplicities of the family-style community life. Yet, some of these elements linger on in Penong and Coorabie where a whole community might still turn out to say farewell to a policeman or a schoolteacher. And, invariably, they will all gather in the little hall and somebody will start the night's proceedings by leading into the first dance — the Polonaise. The ambience of these two communities, plus the relict features of Fowlers Bay and Bookabie, have something of the true spirit of the early Far



The Thevenard oval, football clubrooms and the silos beyond.

West. In Ceduna-Thevenard the spirit is harder to find. But, in the houses along O'Loughlin Terrace, Poynton Street and East Terrace there is a core of Coasters who can remember the early days and still live by many of their social norms. Here, and in the adjacent Senior Citizens Village, are many of the sons and daughters of the intrepid pioneers who came to the Far West, found that it wasn't the California of South Australia, but, nevertheless, battled on to create much of what can be seen and enjoyed today.

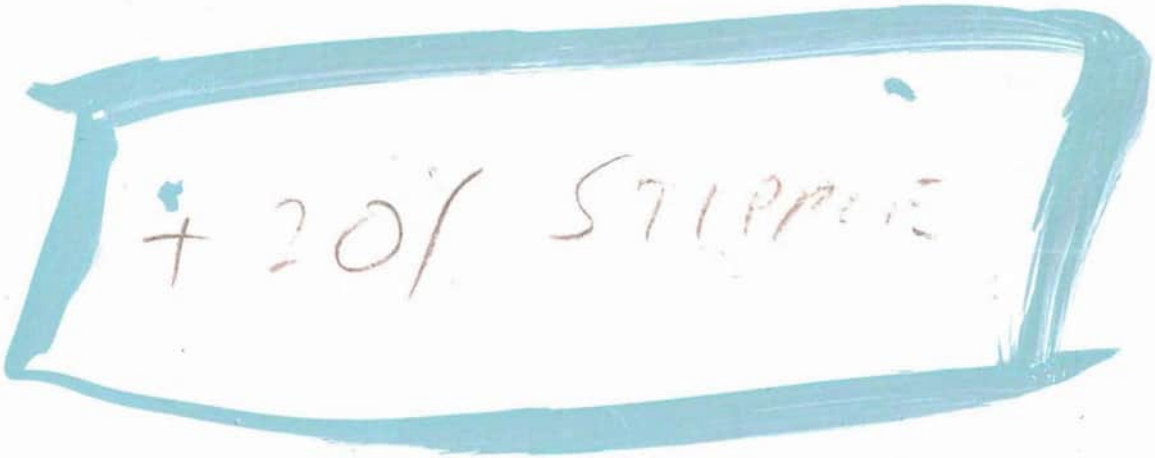
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Book Four
Services and Resources



◀ The Resources Complex at Thevenard jetty. The grain silos are central, the gypsum stock pile at left and the salt stock pile right of the silos.

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11. From Medical Societies to Medicare

On 28 August 1883 Durward, the shearer's cook at Penong outstation, died. The day before he had complained of stomach pains and in the afternoon he was found on the track to Fowlers Bay in a semi-conscious and delirious condition. He was taken back to the Penong homestead where mustard plasters were applied to his stomach and two men sat up with him all night. Durward alternately raved in a delirious manner or screamed with pain. At 8 am he died.[1]

Several shearing mates made a coffin out of some old thick wood and covered it with a wool bale. Some others dug his grave on the hill behind the station buildings. Trooper Richards, who was staying at the station at the time, rode off in haste to report the death to Mr Lloyd at Wookata Station and the body could not be buried until he returned.

Late on 29 August the body was in its open grave and hundreds of blow flies were swarming around the coffin. Richards returned with a death certificate and a report that an inquest was not necessary.

Durward's grave was filled in at 5 pm. Thirty shearers stood by, some of them in tears, and wreaths of everlasting flowers, painstakingly collected all day, were laid on the mound of dirt. Nobody knew the cause of death.

This graphic story highlights one of the great dangers of living in the Far West for the first 50 or so years of its settlement, namely the absence of medical attention for the sick and disabled. For Durward there was no doctor within 100 miles.

How did the settlers cope? The answer is not very well. Men such as George Murray or Charles Godlee were skilled at sewing up wounds, setting broken bones or pulling teeth, all without anaesthetic, and women such as Mrs Murray or Mrs Richards, wife of the police trooper, turned their hand to elementary first aid when it was required. It was Mrs Richards who recommended mustard plasters for poor Durward. Her other medical recommendations at different times included carbolic oil for infected cuts and Gregory's powder for ulcerated throats. If need be, she could act as a midwife, although many of the local lubras were far more experienced in that area.

With the Aborigines, many of whom died at an alarming rate, the white settlers had little to offer except ineffective patent medicines with tea and sympathy. Thus, Mrs Richards recorded that 'poor Billy', who had been suffering for years from consumption and was near death, could only ask for some calico to tie up his stomach because 'he says it is coming out'.

If your tooth ached when I was a boy you waited for the dentist to visit or you got someone to take it out with a pair of pliers.

WALLY MORELAND

Our old friend Mrs J D Meier, who came at the same time as we did and who had been a nurse, became the night stork and was called out in all sorts of weather. But not a murmur from her.

E E E Lutz

One of the tasks Trooper Richards and his wife had in the 1880s was to vaccinate all the children in the district from Merghiny to Colona. They did an annual round and Mrs Richards recorded in her diary that she often had to return to the same patients several times to treat them for rashes or infections associated with the vaccination scars. At such times, she often slept in the same beds as the children and, since they were invariably infested by fleas, it is remarkable that any children survived at all in the early days of the Far West.

After 1889 when the farmers and their families came, the population in the Far West multiplied thirty times and, clearly, it was essential that medical assistance had to be obtained. At first it was supplied by midwives and women who had been trained nurses before coming to the area. Mrs Margaret Dunnet and Mrs J D Meier were two such examples and their assistance was often badly needed throughout the 1890s. But, even so, there was little they could do about serious injuries. Thus, when Fred Clothier climbed through a fence with a loaded gun and shot himself below the knee he eventually had to be taken to Port Lincoln to find a doctor who could perform an amputation.

Doctors were badly needed in the Far West and the only way to attract them was with guaranteed salaries subscribed through a Medical Society. One or two community minded people organised such a society and gathered subscriptions from all over the district. A doctor was then appointed by the Society's Board and he gave free medical attention to the subscribers. Denial Bay was the first to initiate this system in the Far West.

A Denial Bay Farmers' Medical Board was founded by W McKenzie and H Smith but, after McKenzie died in 1906, a public meeting was organised in April of 1907 and a new Board was elected consisting of T Freeman, President, E A Hasting Vice President, D J Whyborn Secretary-Treasurer and Messrs Lutz, Hunt, Stiggants and Dunnet[2].

Some indication of its organisation is taken from the *Denial Bay Starter* in 1908 and given below:

DENIAL BAY MEDICAL BOARD

A general Public meeting will be held in the Agricultural Hall, Denial Bay on Saturday, January 23rd, 1909.

Business — to adopt Balance Sheet for 1909, receive subscriptions etc.

The subscribers and the public generally are also notified that all subscriptions for the year 1909 are now due and payable at the office of the Secretary, Denial Bay not later than February 28th, 1909.

Subscriptions are as follows:

Married landholders	3 pounds
Single landholders	2 pounds
Labourers	1 pound

Per year giving medical attendance free.

E E E Lutz remembered a Dr D Bruhl as the first medical man to work under the Medical Society system.[4] He did not stay long and was replaced by Dr Boyd who was practising in 1907 and 1908 when he was the centre of a controversy and a victim of an autocratic Board.[5] He received a call to attend a patient at Glen Boree and wired that he would not go until the next day. Since he did not attend when called, the Subscribers Committee sent him six weeks notice of dismissal. A subsequent investigation revealed that Dr Boyd had

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made a prior arrangement to attend a patient in Murat Bay, so the Subscribers Committee withdrew the notice of dismissal. However, Dr Boyd 'had been hurt by the want of confidence'. He quit! The *West Coast Recorder* noted that the doctor had resided at Denial Bay for 18 months and was, in their opinion 'one of nature's gentlemen'.[6]

The incident with Dr Boyd was the first in a long line of troubles for the Denial Bay Farmers' Medical Society. The root of the trouble was the difficulty in obtaining well qualified medical people to come to such an isolated outpost. The sad facts were that those who came were invariably poorly qualified, inexperienced, or doctors who had not been successful elsewhere.

Dr Boyd's replacement was Dr Charles Abbott who arrived in May 1908. He was in many ways a very capable man; he started a local newspaper, the *Denial Bay Starter*, and he was made a Justice of the Peace. But, he was not a registered doctor in South Australia! His qualifications were recognised in New South Wales and Victoria but, because he had only three years instead of the usual four years medical training, he was not acceptable in South Australia. This had some unfortunate repercussions whenever the Denial Bay people asked for government assistance for their medical services; it was often refused because they were employing an unregistered doctor.

Subscribers for Dr Abbott's services were recruited from all over the Far West and, in September 1909, a special public meeting of the Denial Bay Farmers' Medical Society was convened to answer a challenge that the doctor would be better based at Penong than at Denial Bay.[7] There was much discussion on the matter and, after concessions were made, it was decided that the doctor would continue to reside in Denial Bay. The concessions were that the Board would buy a doctor's residence instead of renting one and the Board would also investigate the purchase of a car for the doctor's use.

The motor car, a Ford, eventually came and brought with it endless problems associated with how much subscribers would pay if the doctor came to them in the car. Some refused to pay a mileage rate and Dr and Mrs Abbott were often in trouble over 'private use' of the car.

Dr Abbott resigned early in 1910 to accept a post in the Northern Territory and for the next 18 months there was chaos for the Medical Society. Dr Weidenbach came for a few weeks as locum tenums. He was replaced by Dr Hennessy on a month's trial, but at the end of that time negotiations about a permanent position broke down and he left. Dr Redmond came and immediately expressed dissatisfaction with his accommodation, and for the fact that there was too much work for too little pay. He resigned, but stayed on when his salary was re-negotiated. Unfortunately he then took ill, left for treatment at Streaky Bay and died a few weeks later.

The Medical Society had exhausted all its possibilities and was saved by an offer from Dr Abbott who wrote from Pine Creek to say that he was willing to return in November 1911. Two locum tenum doctors were then obtained from Adelaide, a Doctor McLennan followed by a Dr Kerr and they filled in most of the time until Dr Abbott reappeared.

Problems over the motor car immediately surfaced. Dr Abbott was evidently a dangerous driver but would not entertain the idea that somebody should be his chauffeur. He did, however, consider it was the duty of the Medical Society to maintain the car and keep it clean. Mrs Abbott, who had been the Matron at Wagga Wagga Hospital before her marriage, was not one to mince words. She had many clashes with members of the Medical Society Board and there is a fiery exchange in the *West Coast Sentinel* in 1913 under a general heading 'Squabble about the Car'. Eventually, so much heat was generated that the editor was moved to write:

When our little son, not quite two years old, met with a serious accident we had to travel a hundred miles to Streaky Bay in a buggy — a nightmare journey. Later we got a doctor at Denial Bay.

MRS HERB WATSON

> We have received further letters from the medical board and Mrs Abbott . . . but they are withheld from publication as each is a repetition of previous remarks, a denial of each others statements and an encroachment on personalities. The controversy is now closed.[8]

Dr Abbott managed to get registration in 1913 and from then onwards he was quite arrogant with the Board. At the annual negotiations over salary and conditions in January 1914, he demanded a salary of 450 pounds, a free house and a car. The negotiating committee for the Board offered 400 pounds, the house but no car. The matter then went to a public meeting of subscribers where L J Hoffrichter proposed, and W Parsons seconded, that the Doctor be offered 450 pounds and the house but the car be sold. This was carried by a substantial majority whereupon Dr Abbott gave verbal notice of two months of termination of his agreement with the Board. He left Denial Bay on 19 March 1914.

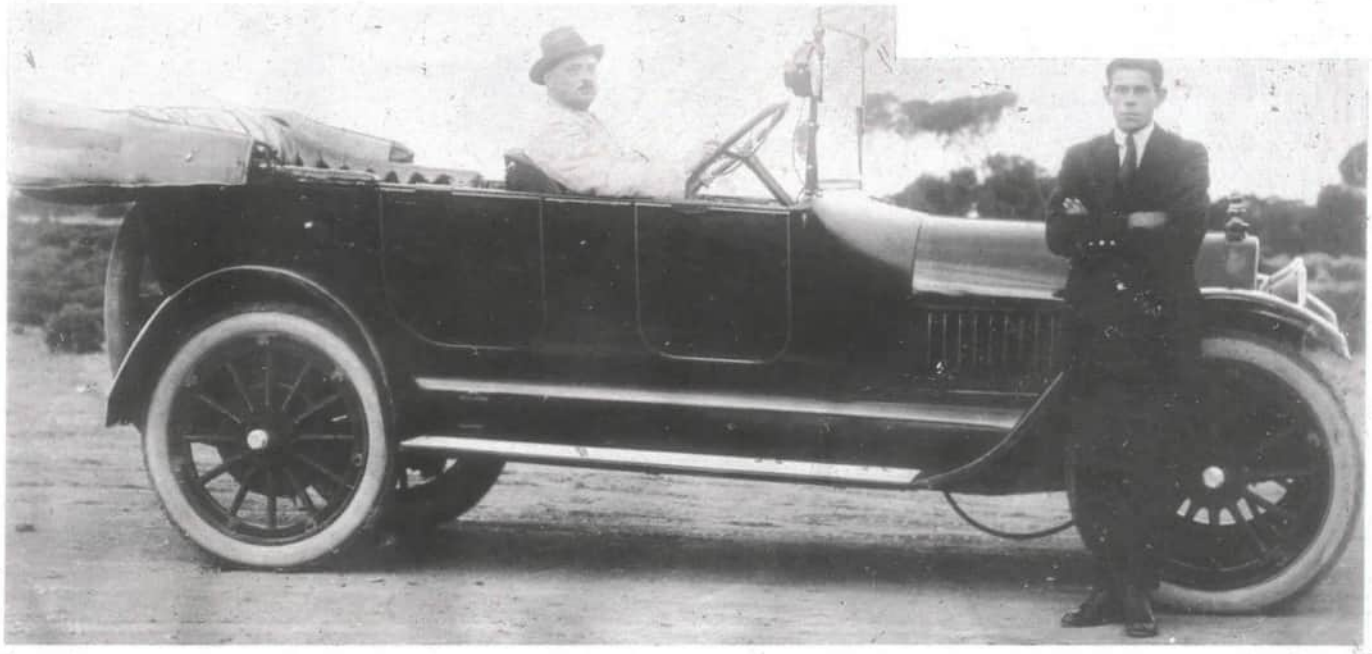
Dr Tait arrived the day Dr Abbott left and he was most unsuitable. The minutes of the meetings of the Medical Board indicate that he was very ill, although the type of illness was not mentioned. Within six weeks the minutes stated that 'he (Dr Tait) had developed such symptoms as to render it unsafe for him to act as Medical Officer to the society'. His services were therefore dispensed with on 5 May 1914.

Dr Frost came as locum tenums. He was evidently well liked but the Board could not convince him to stay and he left on 4 December 1914.

Dr Walker came on 18 December 1914 but died six days later. He was buried on Christmas Day.

Early in 1915 Dr Von Roenne came. He had the one characteristic which guaranteed some degree of permanency — he was not registered in South Australia! But, even so, his beginnings were not propitious because in March he caught diptheria and left for Streaky Bay. He did, however, return in May but then he broke his leg and could not practice for several weeks. Thankfully, that was his last setback and thereafter he settled in well, bought his own car and stayed at Denial Bay for five years.

Dr Von Roenne made good use of his car. He introduced regular visits to Penong and Fowlers Bay, and he was always available to patients in Ceduna.



Dr P von Roenne, Denial Bay 1915–1919, Ceduna 1920–1926. At the front wheel is a chauffeur Robert Milne.

As the years went by his popularity increased at the latter place and finally, in 1920, the Murat Bay Medical Society wooed him into practice in their area and Denial Bay had to search again for a resident doctor.

This time a person who was prepared to come was Dr Harden, an energetic middle aged man who immediately urged the Medical Society to build a hospital. The idea was not new; it had been first proposed in 1910 when the following people had been appointed trustees, James Dunnet, E A Hasting, W A E Lutz, A H Hoffrichter and E A Payne.

At Dr Harden's insistence a public meeting was called in October 1920 and the following people agreed to be a fund raising committee, A Kloeden, J Dunnet, E A Payne, Chas. Bergmann, Pastor Juers, W Thiselton, E A Hasting, W Parsons, A H Hoffrichter, F Reusch and R J Humphreys. The Society's fees were restructured to be 4 pounds for a family, 2 pounds for single lease holders, 1 pound for single working men, 1 pound for a widow and family and 15 shillings for a single woman.

Sufficient funds were in hand by May 1921 for W D Thiselton to begin building what was to be known as the Coast Memorial Hospital. The foundation stone was laid in June by James Dunnet as proxy for J Moseley MP and the building was to be in memory of those killed in the 1914–18 war.[9]

The hospital was completed in October of 1921 and 400 people from a radius of 40 miles around Denial Bay gathered on 28 October to attend the opening ceremonies. The local ladies prepared a luncheon at the Agricultural Hall which was followed by sporting contests, after which 'the assemblage adjourned to the hospital'.[10]

Mr Hasting J P, the Chairman of the Denial Bay Medical Society, gave an address of welcome and then called upon Dr Harden, 'as founder of the hospital', to say a few words. Dr Harden spoke feelingly on the individual effort and self denial needed to raise funds for so fine a building. 'He referred to the unique fact that an isolated community working under the greatest physical and economic difficulties had built a most creditable small hospital on the outer edge of the State without any assistance from the Treasury.'[11]

Mr James Dunnet then officially opened the building and thanked Mr Thiselton and his assistants for a job well done. Dr Harden's cottage was thrown open for a reception, which included members of the crew of the



The Coast Memorial Hospital and the Doctor's residence at Denial Bay, 1923.

overseas steamer *St Stephen*, then loading wheat at Thevenard. The crew entertained the guests with several musical items and Mr Frank Betts also entertained with several comic songs. Dancing began at midnight and 'was maintained until the wee small hours'. As the *West Coast Recorder* correspondent put it: 'A tired, happy, exhausted and delighted community dispersed as the stars waxed faint.'[12]

The day was a great success, possibly the greatest in the history of the township of Denial Bay, but nothing remains today of the two fine buildings which were constructed in 1921 as the first purpose-built hospital in the Far West.

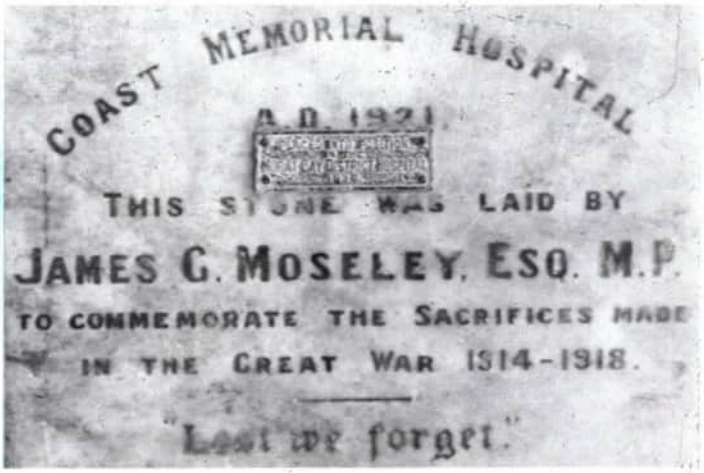
Dr Harden settled into the new hospital and obtained the services of a Nurse Bowles. The Medical Society was better served than it ever had been before, but all this changed abruptly in what became known as the 'Denial Bay shooting case' in 1923.

Dr Francis L Harden of Denial Bay was charged in Adelaide with wounding with intent to murder an Aborigine named Dick Wombat. The offence took place at Dr Harden's residence on 8 July after Harden had been approached by Annie Wombat who claimed that her husband Dick had threatened to kill her and her baby Gracie. Harden went into his backyard and fired six shots at Dick Wombat, two of which wounded him superficially. The Koonibba Lutheran Mission became involved in the case because that was where the Wombats lived. Pastor Hoff gave evidence in Adelaide and so also did Pastor Weibusch. Several other witnesses were called notably Dr Von Roenne from Ceduna, who dressed Dick Wombat's wounds, and Nurse Bowles.

The Adelaide newspaper reports of the trial indicated that Dr Harden gave evidence with great skill and that this contributed to his light sentence.[13] He was found guilty of common assault and placed on a bond.



In front of the Coast Memorial Hospital c. 1922. Seated: Dr Harden and Nurse Bowles.



The foundation stone for the Coast Memorial Hospital, Denial Bay, which is now in the wall of the Murat Bay District Hospital.

The judge in his summation noted that Dr Harden had generous impulses but also strong prejudices. This was revealed when Harden, after sentencing, pointed to the two pastors in the court and declared: 'The German Church. There is the enemy'.

After the court case the members of the Medical Board, who were mainly Lutherans, refused to deal with Dr Harden and Nurse Bowles. A 'New' Denial Bay Farmers' Medical Society was elected consisting of G Denton, W Brandfod, O Leopold, M Smith, S Osborne and J Wilson. They 'sacked' the old trustees of the hospital and tried to raise subscriptions in the normal way to keep the doctor employed. The old trustees, and many supporters, then formed an alternative, or 'Old' Denial Bay Farmers' Medical Society, instituted legal proceedings against the 'New' Society and tried to raise subscriptions for their doctor who was Dr Von Roenne in Ceduna.

It was a nasty period at Denial Bay and it was only partially alleviated when the New Board, because of lack of funds, dispensed with the services of Dr Harden and Nurse Bowles in January 1925. At the same time they closed the hospital.

In 1926 the New Board had sufficient funds to try again and employed a Dr Howley. He tried to work with Dr Naylor at Penong in a joint enterprise using the Coast Memorial Hospital. It was not successful and Dr Howley, in the middle of the 'New' and 'Old' warring factions, had to advertise his services widely before he could get any patients. Thus in the *West Coast Sentinel* he explained that he was available to all patients in the district and 'just a telephone on NUMBER ONE would bring him to their side day or night'.

In the next few years Dr Howley gave up, the Bush Church Aid hospitals at Ceduna and Penong became popular and both Denial Bay Medical Societies faded into oblivion. The 'New' Society ended thus:

> I the President of the Farmers Medical Society, Denial Bay, declare same dissolved from this day forward.
>
> G W Denton
> 21/9/29

At the final meeting it was proposed that the minute book of the Society should be given to Mr W Parsons 'for safe keeping for all time'. In 1987, as an interesting historical document, it was given to the Ceduna National Trust Museum by Betty and Baden Florance of Alice Springs. They had found it amongst the possessions of W Parsons, deceased.

Amongst Penong people there was undoubtedly some jealousy about the building of the Coast Memorial Hospital and so plans were made to build one

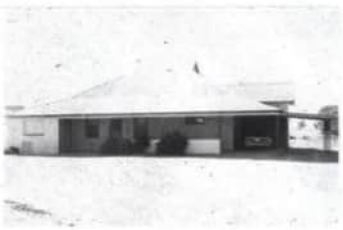


Mrs A B C Murray at the ceremony when she laid the foundation stone for the doctor's residence in Penong

of their own. In the early years of the town they were briefly served by Dr Sommerville and for a time in the 1920s Dr McKecknie lived in the hotel and consulted in private homes. But, these were makeshift arrangements, and Dr McKecknie did not stay long, so a hospital fund raising committee was formed. At the same time, Dr Rupert Naylor was induced to start a practice in the town. He had just completed his medical training so a group of six farmers donated 50 pounds each for him to buy a car, drugs and medical instruments. He was also guaranteed 600 pounds a year from Medical Society contributions.[14]

With a new and active medical man in their midst, the town's hospital committee launched into their first project, a doctor's residence. Mrs A B C Murray laid the foundation stone and it was completed and opened by B Edwards on 12 September 1925. The *West Coast Sentinel* described it as an 'up to date house', a double fronted bungalow of five rooms, cellar and three enclosures namely bathroom, washroom and pantry. Water was laid on from an overhead tank and around the town there were 'many comments of admiration about the conveniences provided'.[15]

In 1926 fund raising switched to the next project, the hospital. The Committee at that time was Mrs A Shipard President, Mrs Naylor Secretary, Messrs Naylor, L Nieass, G Pearson, Misses Amy Shipard and Joy Miller. Mr Weise was engaged to do the building and the task was completed in 1928. It was opened by the old pioneer W Sleep. Others involved in Committee work and fund raising for the project over several years were J T Miller, A Nielsen, B Edwards, C G Freeman, C C Murray, R P Simpson, P A Brooks, J Stiggants and S Jenkins. Credit was also given to the original Red Cross Society in the town which initiated the idea of a hospital. The members were F J Williams, A Shipard, C J Leopold, B Shipard, J J Miller and J T Davoren.



The doctor's residence built in Penong in 1925.

The completed building was a fine piece of architecture but its spacious rooms needed beds and equipment. Once again the community rallied around



The hospital at Penong built in 1928 and now a private residence.

and an impressive number of donations were made. Thus, the operating table was given by Mesdames Collins and C C Murray in memory of their brothers killed in the war. Beds were given by Mr and Mrs A Shipard and other families; Mrs A Dunn gave the anaesthetic table and Mr and Mrs Cliff Freeman the instrument table.[16]

After much good work for the cause C C Murray was one of the first to benefit from it. He was being lowered down a well when the windlass broke; he fell 15 feet and broke several bones in his leg.

C C Murray recalled this and also that Cyril Freeman interviewed Dr Chambers of the Bush Church Aid in Rundle Street, Adelaide, with regard to his coming to Penong.[17] Dr Naylor had left to set up a practice in Wudinna, so Dr Chambers was happy to take his place and moved into the doctor's residence in 1928.

At the hospital the staff also came from Bush Church Aid and Sister Bazeley was the first in charge. She began working in the doctor's residence and in private homes, but took over in the hospital as soon as it was built. Francis Williams and Joy Miller were her first two assistants and the first baby born in the hospital was named Bazeley Haseldine in her honour.

Dr Davis came after Dr Chambers but in his time he had great difficulty in making a living during the Depression years. Eventually, he was forced to leave and the Penong Hospital Board came to an arrangement, with Dr Roy Gibson to visit Penong every week and Fowlers Bay once a fortnight. This was a costly arrangement but the Board was unable to find any Doctor willing to set up a practice in Penong. Dr Gibson fulfilled his obligations dutifully for many years and was ably assisted by his wife Dr Freda Gibson at times of special need. The hospital continued to function and, after Sister Bazeley left, Sisters Anderson, Selby, Hitchcock, Meades and Loane were five of many who looked after the sick through the 1930s until the 1960s. In 1965 it became impossible to retain



qualified staff and the hospital functions ceased, despite the best efforts of Guilf Edwards and Cyril Freeman who both served more than 20 years on the Hospital Board. The building was then used as consulting rooms for visiting doctors until 1974 when Merv Oats purchased it as a family residence.

In the early days of Ceduna the people in the town were patients of the doctors in Denial Bay, but a Dr Schmid and a Dr Stuart were in practice briefly before 1910. In June of 1911 the Ceduna correspondent of the *West Coast Recorder* announced: 'Our lady doctor Miss L Ware arrived by the *SS Wookata* and has been kept busy ever since'.[18] Miss Ware was in fact Dr Laura Weir, who must have been a fearless young lady to venture to the Far West where there was, at that time, no hospital and only the most primitive medical facilities in private nursing homes. It is not surprising therefore that she did not stay long. In January 1912 she left and Dr Gerald O'Day arrived.[19]

In August of 1912 a motor bike arrived for Dr O'Day and the *West Coast Sentinel* commented that all you could see of the doctor was a cloud of dust as he sped about on his rounds.[20] Unfortunately, the motor bike brought disaster some two years later when Dr O'Day was thrown off it near the Woolshed, at Charra.[21] He was taken to the home of Mr E Brown where he lay unconscious for two weeks. Later, he was taken to Ceduna and, after a slight improvement he was sent to Adelaide on the SS *Rupara*. His injuries were so serious that he had to give up his practice and Ceduna was without a doctor.

Before the opening of the Coast Memorial Hospital at Denial Bay in 1921, and even after, Ceduna offered a variety of private nursing homes for the treatment of the sick. Thus, in 1914, Nurse Seamark offered maternity and obstetric care in a house in Poynton Street. Nurse Pearson was assisting at the same location in 1915 and so also was a Nurse Place. Then, in 1919, Mrs W A Hirtes (formerly Nurse Pearson) advised the public that she intended re-opening the private hospital she had conducted some time ago. All care and attention to patients was guaranteed.[22] Nurse Rowe was at the private hospital in Poynton Street in 1921 and Nurse Seamark advertised herself as 'a professional nurse' with distance no object. Sisters Campbell and Mildred advertised their services in the years 1922 and 1923 and Sisters Francis and Kenny had private hospitals in 1924.[22]

The Ceduna medical practice was taken over by Dr Von Roenne in 1920. He remained for six years and became involved in many community projects. Thus he was one of the secretaries concerned with organising the erection of the Memorial Hall in Ceduna in 1923. When he left the district, in 1926, he was given a sumptuous farewell banquet at which many of the local dignatories praised his long and valuable service to the Far West.

When Thevenard began to grow in the mid 1920s a Dr Stevenson was the town's medical officer. He also took an active interest in community affairs and, with Dr Von Roenne, was a Justice of the Peace.



Ceduna's first BCA hospital 1925. The building still stands in the Airport Caravan Park on Eyre Highway.

While Ceduna, Denial Bay, Penong and Fowlers Bay struggled with their medical problems in the years before 1920, the Anglical Church of Australia received numerous reports from their missionaries about medical difficulties at the edge of outback settlement. Accordingly, in 1919 the church, in Sydney, formed a Bush Church Aid Society (BCA) to bring 'the news of God's love, minister the sacraments and provide medical help when it was unavailable.'[23] In the Far West some two years later the Rev. Neville Haviland, based at Penong, drew the attention of BCA to the needs of his area and, in particular, to the urgent requirement for hospitals. One result of this we have already seen, the appointment of Sister Bazeley to work in of the Penong hospital. But, before this, BCA had an even greater influence in Ceduna, for in 1925 it sent Sister Doris Percival from Sydney to open a small cottage hospital in a galvanised iron house a mile and a half from the centre of the town. The house was formerly owned by Gottlieb Handtke and it is still standing today on the Eyre Highway in a Caravan Park close to the aerodrome.

The hospital was originally called the Ceduna-Thevenard Hospital because one of its purposes was to cater for the increased population in Thevenard associated with the export of Lake McDonnell's gypsum. Sister Percival stayed for two years and was joined by Sister Quine, also from Sydney. They were registered as running a 10 bed hospital but, apart from the beds, their early furniture consisted of boxes for cupboards and baskets for bassinets. Beyond that, they had to perform operations by lamplight and dispense gallons of cough mixture to Aboriginal outpatients who suffered badly from head colds. They also maintained a large aquarium in which some local fishermen kept their catches until the fortnightly ship arrived. The fish were welcome but snakes were not. On one occasion when the Reverend Haviland paid a visit he found Sister Percival in the kitchen attacking a five foot black snake with an axe.[24]

I remember a farmer who had a compound fracture of the leg. He was brought 90 miles strapped to a barn door over the back of a motor car.

MRS F H B DILLON
(formerly Sister Doris Percival)

Despite the advent of the BCA hospital it was a long way out of town and nursing homes in the town were still able to exist. Thus, in 1926, it was reported that 'the house lately occupied by Dr Roenne on East Terrace (was) shortly to be opened as a private hospital for the Murat Bay Medical Society'.[25] This was the intention in February 1926, but a few weeks later the Medical Society had a better offer and the house was sold to G A Tonkin as a private home. A little further along East Terrace a hospital was established; but it was not until 1931 that it replaced BCA's out of town location and, on a hot day in January, everything was moved by cart, trucks or just simply carried in the arms of volunteers. No sooner had the medical staff caught their breath and settled in the new premises than an emergency appendectomy had to be performed. Fortunately, despite the jumbled mess of the house, they had plenty of room because their new home was large enough for three wards plus a sterilising room, a dining room and a kitchen. A small shed in the grounds was set up as the operating theatre and there was even a spare bedroom that doubled as a morgue! The staff lived in weatherboard rooms called 'The Barracks' and matron's office was a lean-to at the side of the house.[26]

Florence Dowling began her term as matron in the second BCA hospital. Another recruit from Sydney, she was to remain in the hospitals at Ceduna for more than 30 years and 'made it a total commitment of her life'.[27] Yet, when Helen Caterer interviewed her at her retirement home in Sydney, for a book on BCA, Florence Dowling modestly dismissed her enormous contribution as 'all in a day's work'. Council members for Murat Bay thought it was much more than that, and named one of Ceduna's most attractive foreshore streets Dowling Crescent in her honour.

Dr C V Hallett came in December 1925 to replace Dr Von Roenne. He found that it was an awesome task because he was also the local health officer, the local Protector of the Aborigines, the quarantine officer and the dispenser,



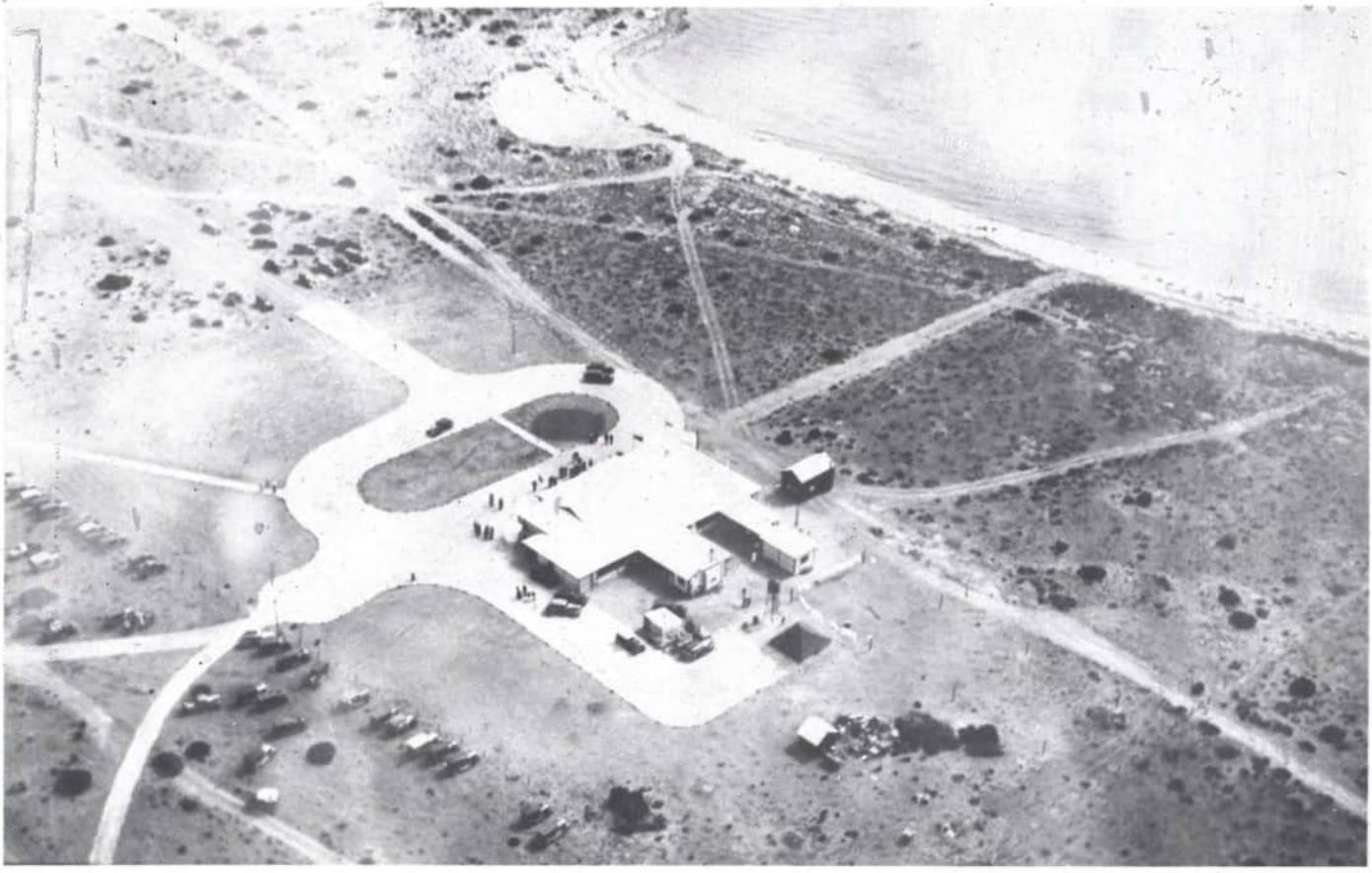
Outside the Ceduna hospital on East Terrace in the mid 1930s. L. to R.: Gladys Moody, Sister Hitchcock, Sister Dowling, Sister Bossley, Rhonda Laws, I Andrews (cook).

↑ TOUCH UP SPOT

for there was no pharmacy or pharmacist. Mrs Hallett had the job of bottling and labelling all the medicines. More than 40 years later she recalled the anxious times she and her husband often had. If the boat was late they were in danger of running out of medical supplies and the responsibility Dr Hallett carried was enormous. Thus she said '(He) had to be a good diagnostician and a good surgeon in those days. There was nobody to turn to for help.'[28] The couple began their married life in Ceduna in a four room tin building, but later they were able to design and supervise the building of a new house which was the first built for a doctor and his family in the town. The house in Poynton Street is now the home of Mr and Mrs J Cooper.

Dr and Mrs Hallett departed in 1934 and the great working team of Dr Roy and Dr Freda Gibson set up practice in Ceduna. They soon found that the hospital on East Terrace was too small for their needs and lobbied for the construction of an entirely new building to serve the district. Evidence they gave in support of this need was in statistics (32 medical cases, 156 surgical cases, 104 outpatients and 40 obstetric cases in 1934) and in stories that nurses often slept on the floor or in chairs because they had given their beds to patients.

The Country Women's Association also agitated for a new hospital and, after a public meeting to discuss it, so also did the District Council of Murat Bay. Yet there were some detractors — somebody pointed out, for example, that the community was still in debt for the Memorial Hall so why should they take on further financial liabilities? R J Fairbrother, with the Council's blessing, ignored the protests and in his indefatigable manner began organising. A loan of 4000 pounds was arranged, hospital days were programmed to raise funds, H W R Wiese was given the building contract and he was authorised to subcontract the plastering to Mr Greenfield, the electrical wiring to Mr Wells and the plumbing to Mr Edwards.



Murat Bay District Hospital, 1 February 1937.



Work began in 1936 with limestone and brick walls and an ambitious plan for a men's ward, a women's ward and a maternity section. Later, there was to be a nurses' station, a theatre, a sterilising room and an X-ray room. Nothing was spared to make it the most up to date hospital possible with hot and cold running water, electric fans and a communication system for each patient.

A time capsule was inserted into the hospital wall in 1936 behind the foundation stone, which was laid by the State President of the CWA, Mrs I Warner. It was uncovered in 1977 during building alterations and information inside the capsule gave details and costs of the original building — a total of 4252 pounds of which only 525 pounds was given as a grant by the Inspector General of Hospitals. The metal capsule was made by Albert Blumson and it was large enough to contain coins from the Bank of Adelaide, copies of the *West Coast Sentinel*, a copy of the *Advertiser* and a 1905 bottle of Yalumba port.

It was a great day for Ceduna on 1 February 1937 when the new hospital was opened. Dignitaries came from all over Eyre Peninsula and Sir George Ritchie, Chief Secretary and Minister of Health, performed the official ceremony before an estimated crowd of 750 people. A guard of honour of Girl Guides and Boy Scouts flanked the entrance to the hospital which was prettily decked with bunting. G O Lovelock, Chairman of the District Council, welcomed the visitors to Ceduna and asked the contractor, H W R Weise to hand Sir George Ritchie a gold key. Sir George then spoke and paid a great tribute to BCA nurses for their wonderful work over many years. He also congratulated all concerned with the planning and construction of the building; then with a flourish he inserted the golden key into the main door, turned the lock and declared the Murat Bay District Hospital open.

On 'Hospital Day' in 1938 BCA's Flying Medical Service was declared open. A De Haviland Fox Moth single engine biplane from Sydney was put into operation with Dr Roy Gibson as the Flying Doctor and Alan Chadwick the pilot. 'Chaddy', as he affectionately became to thousands of people in the Far West, flew the plane from Sydney using inadequate maps and no weather reports. It was an introductory ordeal for a man who was to spend the next 26 years flying for BCA and watching the medical network grow to include 40 landing strips within a 225 mile radius of Ceduna. His regular flights included Penong weekly, Coorabie fortnightly and Cook monthly. But, it was his irregular flights which were the most difficult, for he often landed his planes in paddocks where airstrips were never intended. Then, with the extra weight of a patient on-board, he sometimes had to wait until a longer take-off run could be cleared so that the heavier plane could get into the air.

We can't bring any of the Aborigines to Ceduna Hospital for treatment as the white patients would object — its not a Government hospital — so I have to tear up (to Koonibba) and operate just on a table with no ready way of sterilising anything on the spot.

DR FREDA GIBSON, quoted in the Australian Woman's Mirror, 1938



Drs Roy and Freda Gibson operating outside at the East Terrace hospital. The patient was having a tooth removed.

The Flying Medical Service at Penong in 1938. Left to right: Matron Dowling, Alan Chadwick, Dr Roy Gibson, Rev. T Jones.





The Bush Church Aid's Radio station being used as a School of the Air with George Cameron in the background and Beryl Jones in front at the microphone.

The Fox Moth was given the registration number VH AAA. It flew hundreds of hours in the Far West, but over the years it was necessary to buy further aircraft. A PH84 Dragon was obtained in 1947 and this was followed by a Percival Proctor flying ambulance. In 1967 there were three aircraft available and each was flying 50,000 miles a year.[29] One of these, a Cessna, was purchased in 1962 and named after the Reverend Tom Jones, Bishop of Willochra, who was the Organising Missioner responsible for the purchase of the original Fox Moth.[30]

For the first 15 years the BCA flying ambulances operated with no communication network other than telephones. Then, in 1953, a radio control base was established at Ceduna by a brilliant radio engineer George Cameron, who served for 10 years and was responsible for assembling most of the equipment at the base. Much of the money for the equipment came from a bequest and hence the project was called the 'Anna Jones Memorial Base'.



The Percival Proctor flying ambulance 1956.

'The Base was officially opened by the Anglican Primate, Archbishop Howard Mowll on 22 May 1954. By then the radio network had developed to 20 outposts and five hospitals.'[31] Portable radio receivers, designed by George Cameron, made it possible for outback stations to keep in touch with Ceduna and, in 1956, BCA offered the use of its service to the South Australian Education department. Children all over outback Eyre Peninsula, and out on the Nullarbor, enrolled as Correspondence School students and were linked to teachers in Ceduna via radio. Fishermen also used their radios to link up with the Ceduna Base and they then had direct contact with George Cameron, which was valuable in times of emergencies, or for when they needed weather reports.

Helen Caterer reported that 1962 was a peak year for the Flying Medical Service. The planes flew 52,490 miles; there were 79 emergency flights; doctors saw 2117 patients at 10 outstation consultation centres; 7000 radio telegrams were handled; 1400 in-the-air medical consultations were made from 140 outposts, and all radio equipped fishing boats in South Australia were licensed to use the network.[32]

Alan Chadwick remained chief pilot for BCA from 1938 to 1965 and then, for a further three years, he was on stand by for emergencies while he operated the radio base. When additional planes were obtained, a second pilot was



A BCA service in the hangar at Ceduna to dedicate a new plane, the Cessna named Tom Jones, 30 June 1962. Group includes Organising Missioner Rev J Greenwood, Pilot A E Chadwick, Bishop of Willochra Tom Jones, Rev Theo Hayman and the Bishop of Adelaide Rt. Rev T T Reed.

employed, Mac Job at first and later John Lindridge, but 'Chaddy' was the acknowledged expert with all the planes and, in 1959, he was awarded the Oswald Watt Gold Medal from the Aero Club of Australia. The medal is given for 'the most brilliant performance in the air or the most notable contribution to aviation.'

In 1968, the Flying Medical Service surrendered its mantle of safety for the Far West to the better equipped and better financed Royal Flying Doctor service at Port Augusta, which by then had the facility to cover the area supervised by Ceduna. Alan Chadwick, who performed some of the first acts for BCA's flying service, also performed some of its last acts. On 15 February 1968, he conducted the last radio medical session and signed off. He then ferried the service's last aircraft, a Beech Baron, to Adelaide to be handed over to its new owners. For part of the journey he flew over, at 220 mph, some of the same landscape he flew over in 1938 in the Fox Moth at 86 mph. Chaddy was awarded an MBE in the New Years Honours List of 1970. Two years later he died after a brave struggle with cancer. In all, his work for the Flying Medical Service involved 3043 flights and 6754 hours in the air. He flew 743,432 miles or the equivalent of 34 times around the Equator.[33]

With the growing interest in medical matters in Ceduna it was decided to form a branch of the Red Cross Society in 1935 and Dr Freda Gibson was the inaugural president. The energetic R J Fairbrother was both Vice President and Treasurer and Mrs Lathlean was Secretary. There was a large committee made up of Mesdames L N Bedson, R T Harvey, A N G Olsson, H T Sedgley, M L Kelly, R C Schumacher, W G Gibb, G C Cranna, Miss H Milde, Messrs C Halahan, V S Irwin, J B Lathlean, G O Lovelock, W H Watson and L W Bedson. They were a truly representative group that included a medical practitioner, the District Clerk, the Council Chairman (Lovelock), a bank manager (Halahan), the post master (Olsson), the Hotel manager (Bedson), the

To the glory of God, in grateful remembrance of Alan Edward Chadwick, MBE, Oswald Watt Gold Medallist for Pilots, 1959, who served for 30 years of the Flying Medical Service of the Bush Church Aid Society of Australia. Faithful warden and organist. 29th June, 1972.

PLAQUE, St Michaels Church, Ceduna

wife of a butcher (Sedgley), the wife of a solicitor (Kelly), the wife of the Lutheran pastor (Schumacher), the wife of the Inspector of Lands (Gibb), the wife of a carpenter (Cranna) and a teacher (Milde).

In the pre-war years the branch was active with hospital and general health matters. After 1939 it was a major force in the Far West's war effort.

The Branch is now one of the district's groups which is more than 50 years old. Some of its long serving members in recent years have been Ida Hasting, Joyce Jukes, H M Chandler, Dulcie Wright, Roma Trowbridge, Gwen Betts, Betty Stiggants, Vera Schwarz and Doris Duffy. Gwen Betts, who joined in 1939, has a long service medal with a 30 year and 40 year bar. She was one of a group given long service awards by Lady Harrison in the Adelaide Town Hall in 1969. Other locals who were similarly honoured were H M Chandler, Doris Duffy, Joyce Jukes, F Ross, M Stenning, Vera Schwarz, Ida Hasting and Mrs H G Watson.[34]

The Doctors Gibson, and later Doctor Mueller, earned widespread admiration for their work for BCA particularly with the Flying Medical Service. Roy Gibson was the pioneer, flying to Penong, to Coorabie, to Cook and to all other localities within Ceduna's range to tend the sick and the injured. When he died suddenly in 1948 at the age of 41 it was an enormous shock in the Far West. Memorials to him were erected at both the Penong and Ceduna hospitals. In the case of the former it was the Gibson Memorial Rooms added to the hospital and opened by Archbishop Mowll in 1953.[35] The rooms were 'a maternity addition to the theatre and a private patient's ward' which the Archbishop, in his clerical regalia, inspected with the Chairman of the Hospital Committee, Guilf Edwards, the Secretary, C Freeman, and an official party made up of Dr Freda Gibson, Mrs Mowll, and Sisters F Dowling, L Loane and L Langtree.



Bush Church Aid's pharmacy in the mid 1950s. In the 1930s it was H Sherman's chemist shop. Today, it and Morrison's next door (formerly Irwins) is part of Phin's Supermarket on the corner of Poynton and McKenzie Streets.

At Ceduna Dr Roy's memorial was terrazzo floors put in the operating theatre, the sterilising room and the obstetrics theatre. The Chairman of Council, P S Morrison, said in a short address that the memorial was something Dr Roy had always wanted when he was alive and since his death the costs had been met by public subscriptions. Councillor Drever unveiled a brass plate set in the floor and paid tribute to a man he said 'always considered others before himself.'[36]

Dr Freda Gibson took charge of the 90,000 square mile practice after her husband died. It was not new to her because she had done it during the war years when Dr Roy had been in the armed services. For her work in those years as the woman flying doctor she was awarded an OBE.

The Far West medical practice rapidly became too large for one person and Dr Freda Gibson was fortunate in 1950 to be joined by Dr Merna Mueller, a daughter of a former Koonibba Mission Superintendent. Together these two fine medical practitioners were dubbed the 'Flying Angels of the Outback' in an article in *Woman* magazine in 1954.[37] The writer, J W Morris stated that every year the two women 'averaged more than 100 trips to treat 1250 patients'. They were attending hospitals at Koonibba, Penong, Cook and Tarcoola in 1953 and any patients with special needs were transferred to Ceduna Hospital.

Soon after this article was written Dr Freda left Ceduna to be with her children in Adelaide, one of whom was studying at the Adelaide University. She was given a great round of farewell parties throughout the Far West and hundreds of her former patients plied her with gifts and good wishes.

Merna Mueller thus became the only doctor in the Far West. Her work load steadily increased and, in the mid 1960s, there was genuine alarm from the District Council as to whether it was possible for her to survive, continuously on call as she was from an area that extended to the Western Australian border

Many a stockmen or railway worker injured in isolated backblocks has been surprised to see a neatly dressed woman step out of a plane and deftly dress his injuries or set a broken leg.

LOCAL COMMENT



BCA Staff at Ceduna in 1955.
Back L to R: Bishop Tom Jones, Sister Mavis Bell (now Skinner), Sister Pat Bradbrook (now Richards), Brian Richards (pharmacist).
Seated: Sister Grace Hitchcock, Matron Florence Dowling, Dr Merna Mueller, Sister Jean Miller (now Harris).

Salaries paid to BCA staff don't compare with those paid to professional staffs in other organisations.

S E HUMMERTON 1967

and as far north as Coober Pedy. There was no other doctor between Streaky Bay and Norseman in Western Australia.

Mr S E Hummerston, executive office of the BCA in Ceduna, was interviewed by the *Sunday Mail* in July 1966 and pointed out that Dr Mueller's practice included centres like Coober Pedy, where the population sometimes reached 1000, and many transcontinental railway towns each with about 100 people. In addition she made regular flights to Yalata Lutheran Mission and to several station properties. At that time Mr Hummerston was trying to find a locum for four weeks so that Dr Mueller could have a holiday.

In the New Year Honors List of 1965 Merna Mueller was awarded an OBE for 'valuable medical services in remote communities', and, in 1968, when the Flying Medical Service disbanded she was warmly welcomed into private practice at Ceduna. She stayed until 1974 and then left to go into a medical partnership on the southern fringe of Adelaide. One of her many farewell presents, a silver plate from the Distict Council, was inscribed: 'Presented to Dr M A Mueller in recognition of her outstanding and devoted service to the people of the Far West Coast, 1974. From the citizens of the Distict Council of Murat Bay'.

BCA and the Flying Medical Service had a profound influence upon medicine in the Far West between 1938 and 1968 and nowhere is this better illustrated than in the quality of the doctors it provided. There were only three persistent ones in thirty years, Dr Roy Gibson, Dr Freda Gibson and Dr Merna Mueller. They were dedicated Christian people who suffered the hardships of the remote area as part of their mission in life. Material rewards were always a secondary consideration. After Dr Mueller left, medicine in the Far West went back into the real, less altruistic world and more than 12 doctors came and went between 1974 and 1987.



At an inspection of the new nurses quarters at the Murat Bay District Hospital in 1953. Left to right: Sister Bell, Dr Freda Gibson, Sister Dowling, Sir Robert George, Governor of South Australia, Ida Hasting, Lady George, ?, ?, ?, Gwen Betts, Sid Morrison, Dorothy Morrison, Reg Betts.



Ceduna Community Health and Welfare Centre opened in the hospital grounds in 1975.

Ken McCarthy, Chairman of the Hospital Board of Management in 1984, had to reflect 'on the continuing problem of attracting doctors in an isolated community' — a problem which at that moment was very pressing because all four medical officers serving the hospital had indicated that they were leaving Ceduna in the near future.[38]

Sister Grace Hitchcock, affectionately known as 'Hitch', was another of the dedicated BCA people. She arrived in Ceduna in 1933, worked with Sister Dowling for three years and then volunteered to work at the Penong Hospital. In 1938 she volunteered again, this time to staff a hospital built at Koonibba. Here she cared for the Aborigines through epidemics, measles outbreaks, eye troubles and numerous other ailments, with only the Flying Doctor visits and an assortment of Aboriginal aides to assist her. After more than six years, it drove her to a breakdown and nine months sick leave. Then she felt she could not return to nursing, so in a move which was in every way admirable, she returned to Ceduna as cook at the hospital — a position she held for 19 years.[39]

Accommodation for nurses in the new hospital of 1937 was very spartan — a separate 'temporary' building made from old weatherboard; it wasn't until 1952 that up to date 'permanent' quarters were started. Appropriately, Sister Dowling laid the foundation stone. The quarters were built of limestone and brick and consisted of six bedrooms, a large sitting room plus the necessary toilets and bathrooms.[40] They were opened on 26 January 1953. Boy Scouts under D Atkins, Guides under Miss E Page and Brownies under Sister Tierney formed a guard of honour for the official visitors Hon. H L McEwin (Chief Secretary), A W Christian MP, H Edmonds MLC and P S Morrison, Chairman of Council. Lyell McEwin turned a key to declare the building open and the CWA ladies were warmly thanked for providing the furnishings for the rooms.[41]

The next milestone in the evolving story of bigger and better medical facilities was the opening of the BCA building in Poynton Street in June 1960. The Bishop of Willochra, Right Rev T Jones, performed the ceremony and conducted an inspection of the consulting rooms, a pharmacy, a dentist's surgery and an office for a clerical worker. This building with its shop front entrance still stands in Poynton Street.

BCA's professional rooms were largely superseded in 1975 when the Ceduna Community Health and Welfare Centre was opened jointly by the

This amazing woman (Grace Hitchcock) did the work of doctor, nursing sister, dietician and nursing aid for the Aboriginal community.

HELEN CATERER 1981

Your goegraphical isolation is no reason for denying the important health and welfare services to be based in this health centre.

DR D EVERINGHAM, 1975

State Member for Health, Mr Banfield, and the Australian Health Minister, Dr Everingham. This large complex was funded by the Australian and State Governments as a multi-purpose community facility for doctors, dentists, physiotherapists, the Department of Community Welfare, the Health Department, the St John Ambulance and the Mothers and Babies Health Association (now CAFHS). The design of the building was the responsibility of the Public Buildings Department and construction was in the hands of ATCO Structures Pty Ltd. Jeff Bergmann, the Chairman of Council, said in the *West Coast Sentinel* 'the centre is ideally situated being only a matter of metres from the hospital and a short distance from the Senior Citizens Village'.[42]

At the opening ceremony, Mr Banfield stated that the project was the second largest of its kind in South Australia and was part of the multi-million dollar Community Health Services Programme financed mainly by the Australian Government. He paid tribute to Graham Pfitzner, clerk of the District Council, for 'a wonderful job in the initial establishment' of the project. Mr Banfield then conceded that the adjacent hospital was in need of upgrading and extension. He therefore announced that approval had been given for the preparation of sketch plans for a new operating theatre and casualty complex plus some improvements and extensions of the hospital's accommodation.

Work began on the hospital extensions in 1976 and, for the next four years, there was almost constant building work in the hospital grounds. The results, by 1980, included a new operating theatre and casualty wing, extra beds in the north-east wing, a new maternity section, a private office for the Director of Nursing, upgrading of nurses accommodation and a new kitchen and laundry complex. The various contracts were handled by a variety of builders but local man Adolph Hofer had a major share of the big project. Mr D Banfield opened the new theatre wing, A T Crouch, Chairman of the Hospital Board, opened the new maternity wing and Mrs Jennifer Adamson, Minister of Health, opened the kitchen and laundry wings.

During this energetic period of reconstruction the Hospital Board, in the words of Mrs Adamson, 'worked tirelessly in their efforts to make (Murat Bay District Hospital) a place of high professional standard'.[43] The Board was established in 1968 and from that time it was led by Clive Keitel, Geoff Gregor, A T Crouch, Malcolm Puckridge, P D Spry, Ken McCarthy, Trevor Trenowden, Monica Dodd and Don Urquhart.[44]

Some idea of the expansion in medical care the Hospital Board had to grapple with can be appreciated from the following statistics.[45]

	1940	**1986**
In-patients	410	1876
Out-patients	230	3635
X-Rays	56	2184
Operations	149	498
Births	55	79
Deaths	8	10

When it became obvious in the 1960s that the Flying Medical Service was to close in the near future, a public meeting discussed the formation of an ambulance service in June of 1967.[46] From this a Far West District Ambulance Service (Ceduna) Inc. was formed with Ern Skinner, Chairman and Captain Otto Schmidt, Secretary. Thirty three people offered to be volunteers for the Service and, in a short time, first aid courses were arranged. In October 1967, 25 people passed the first set of examinations.

The BCA Kombi van, which had transported patients from the aerodrome to the hospital, was purchased, and with suitable alterations it was Ceduna's ambulance for two years. Then, in April 1969, a Holden Ambulance was purchased for $1300 with the help of money from the St John Ambulance subsidy scheme. In 1975 it was replaced by a new Holden V8 Automatic Ambulance.

In July of 1971 the Far West District Ambulance Service (Ceduna) Inc. was handed over to the St John Ambulance Organization and this began a service which has continued in the Far West ever since. Some of its achievements have been a Cadet Division originally organised by Mrs Schmidt; an Emergency Trailer, designed by Julia Flavel, which is equipped to handle as many as 50 patients at an accident scene; a second ambulance based at Nundroo; first aid classes conducted throughout the Far West; and the establishment of a permanent centre which was opened on 2 March 1980 by A Whyte, President of the Legislative Council.

The St John Ambulance supporters in the Far West now give thousands of hours of assistance every year. Those who have been recognised for special long service awards have been Julia Flavel, Fay Ronan, Ron Provis, Cliff Stott, Edna Klau, and Melva Blumson.

The Murat Bay District Hospital has always been well supported by the community in the form of donations and auxiliary work. Thus, in a corridor of the new extensions, a display board was created to show the small plaques which were originally attached to equipment donated for the wards. The board is large and includes plaques from both the Murat Bay and Penong Hospitals, some examples being the brass plate which was originally in the terrazzo floor in memory of Doctor Roy Gibson, memorial plaques for Bishop S J Kirkby, Margaret Boyd, R J Betts, Mr L Hunt, Florence Betts, Elizabeth Betts, Pt. E J Richardson, Lance Corporal H H Richardson MM, Pte H J Ellis,



The landscaped grounds of the Murat Bay District Hospital.



A graduating ceremony for Enrolled Nurses from the Murat Bay District Hospital 1986. From left: Jeff Bergmann (Mayor, DC of Murat Bay), Glenys Dawes, Maureen Kostalas, Henry Perry (Hospital Board), Jennifer Perry, Anne Sale, Beverley Ettridge, Melinda Jones, Colleen Montgomerie, Merridee Markey and Julia Flavel, Director of Nursing.

Pt. F B Ellis, Pt H P Ellis, B Giles AIF, J R Hobbs AIF, F C A Reid AIF, K Reese AIF, B L Shillabeer AIF, W Jensen RAN and Merv Denton AIF. The plaques for donated equipment record the generosity of G J and S D Gregor, S G and D A Dunn, K B and I N Nielsen, D J and S E Wright, Mrs S M Trewartha, B H W and E J Mudge, A T and D J Tonkin, D T and W Trewartha, Ceduna CWA, Nunjikompita CWA, Mr J Miller Sen., Mr & Mrs W A Roberts, Mr & Mrs W J Sleep, Mr & Mrs W H Watson, Mr & Mrs B Edwards and family, T G and B S Irwin.

These donations are only a small sample of hundreds made to the hospital, and some idea of the extent of the giving is seen in the Annual Report for the hospital in 1985–86 when 44 separate donors were listed.

An auxiliary for the hospital has been in existence ever since the first cottage hospital was established on the Eyre Highway. Today it is the Murat Bay District Hospital and Senior Citizens Village Auxiliary and, as an example of the assistance it gives, Una Trewartha, the President, reported in 1985/86 on fund raising to the extent of $2,580. This came from trading tables, raffles and donations : it was then given as contributions towards the Ambulift, a Coloured Television set, an electric BBQ plate, 2 children's mattresses, 4 dozen children's singlets, 12 metres of material for nightdresses and small items for the kitchen.[47]

The history of medicine in the Far West has had many ups and downs, but today there is an attractively landscaped, multipurpose facility on the edge of Ceduna township, and it provides the same modern facilities found in any suburban hospital in Adelaide. The hospital has 35 beds in 5 single rooms, 2 double rooms, 6 wards and a 2 bed verandah room. There is a large theatre wing comprising two operating theatres, 4 casualty beds, an X-ray room and 2

recovery beds. For the district there are three medical practitioners, a physiotherapist, two dentists and the following specialists that visit from Adelaide; an orthopaedic surgeon (every 6 weeks), an otorhinolaryngologist (6 weeks), an obstetrician and gynaecologist (6 weeks), a general surgeon (monthly), an oral surgeon (6 monthly), an anaesthetic specialist (6 monthly), an opthalmic surgeon (6 weeks) and a consulting physician (monthly).[48]

The Nursing Staff throughout 1985/86 numbered 31 with 10 Registered Nurses, 16 Enrolled Nurses, 3 Trainee Nurses, a Senior Nurse and a Director of Nursing. The latter person, Julia Flavel, came to Ceduna as BCA nurse Julia Zillman in 1958 and, apart from a brief appointment at Wudinna, has served in the hospital ever since. Her length of service and her great competence has earnt her respect in the district equivalent to that reserved for the great BCA nurses of the past.

Beyond the routine hospital care that extended to 1876 in-patients and 3635 out-patients in 1985/86, the hospital also offered services for Weight Watchers, Meals on Wheels, Alcoholics Anonymous, Glaucoma and hypertension screenings in association with Lions, a Diabetic Support Group and a Cancer Support Group.

The Hospital Board also has oversight of the Ceduna Community Health and Welfare Centre with its doctors', physiotherapists' and dentists' consulting rooms, its Aboriginal Health Organisation and its Aged Day Care.

It also conducts courses for Enrolled Nurses. These began in 1980 with two girls Colleen Nesbit and Beverly Holmes, both of whom passed at the end of the year and were employed by the hospital.[49] The course, which has been very successful, has continued ever since.

In the medical sphere there is very little which is not now available to the people of the Far West and this is a far cry from only thirty years ago when there was one doctor, an aeroplane and an occasional appearance from a travelling dentist to satisfy the medical needs of the population.

In years further back expectant mothers, feeble geriatrics, the disabled and the chronically ill, all looked to Adelaide for their medical help and often that meant leaving the district permanently. Today that is not the case. Medical care is available in Ceduna for all : even the victims of the modern horror, the Eyre Highway road smashes.

If poor Durward at Penong in 1883 had his stomach pains today he would be in hospital within an hour, diagnosed and treated within the next hour. Furthermore he would not have to be in a Medical Society — but he would have to produce his Medicare card!

References

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12. Schools: Huts, Halls, Transportables and Demacs

The history of the schools in the Far West parallels, in many ways, the general history of the area after farming settlement. It began with the hopeful years when farms were being established in a new environment and young married couples were raising their families. During this period of hope, which lasted until the disastrous economic times of the big drought (1928–30) and the Depression, more than 40 little schools were opened in the Far West.

In most cases they were community sponsored schools. As with so many aspects of the Far West's development, there was very little initial interest from the government on the mainland and the Coasters quickly learnt, that if they wanted a school and a teacher, then the only way to achieve it in any sort of reasonable time was to construct a building themselves and then petition for a teacher. To try it the other way, petition for a school to be built by the Education Department and then expect a teacher to appear, was to invite delays of three to five years and endless red tape.

The school at Tallala illustrates the point. It was built by three local farmers Messrs Tomney, Johns and Price in 1901 and opened in February 1902 when the Education Department supplied a teacher, Miss A Hunt.[1] Really it was a humble little stone building no bigger than a standard family bedroom today, but it was the best the farmers could manage. There was one window, a big fireplace, a shelter shed (later) and one small water tank.[2] For years the community had to scrounge for furniture for their schoolroom and the arrival of each boat was eagerly awaited for desks, or chairs, or books, or chalk or anything!

The same story was repeated many times. For example, in 1933, the *West Coast Sentinel* reported: 'Having waited in vain for 35 years for the Education Department to supply them with a school the citizens of Penong West recently decided to erect a building of their own'.[3] This became the Cohen School or, in official Education Department parlance, the Hundred of Cohen School. Local families contributed 20 pounds each to a building fund (a big sum of money in the Depression) and Alf May was asked to be the supervising builder. He had the assistance of all the fathers of school age children in the district, the land was donated by Mr Grace, who then owned Cundilippy Station, and community members donated galvanised iron, timber, cement and a 600 gallon water tank.[4] The building had a short life (1932–1939) and is now demolished, but the local community was very proud of their 12 foot by 12 foot stone room with its cement floor, two windows and large open fire place. There was a

The Tallala School was a very small building — room for three desks and a form.

ALBERT OATS,
Audio Tape, NTMC

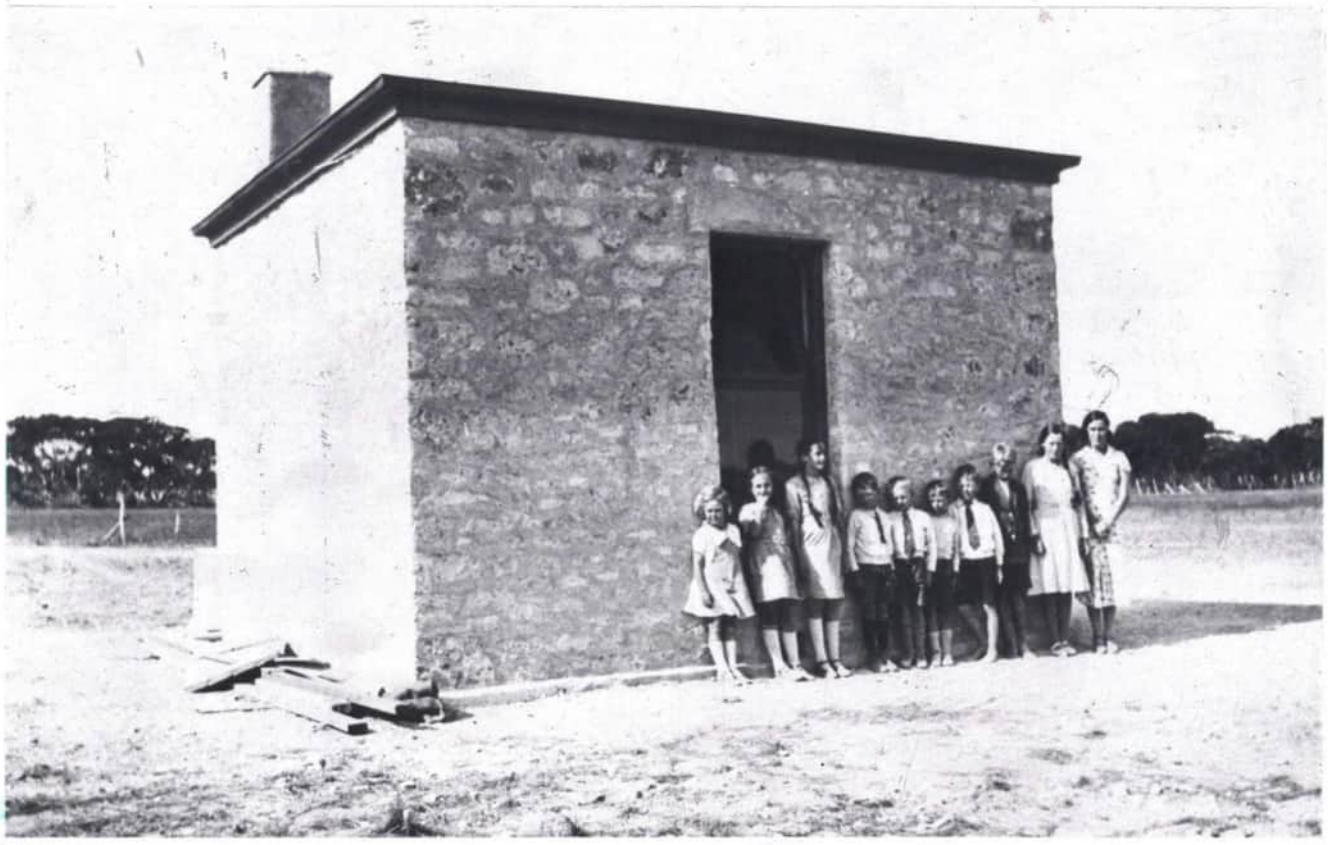
The first teacher (at the 18 tank school) was Miss F E Allport who came from Tasmania. She was a fine, plucky woman and lived in a small corner of the school room, alone. She preferred it that way.

HURRELL FAMILY REMINISCENCES

struggle to get enough children to 'qualify' for a teacher, (a minimum of eight was required) so Beryl Place, who had already left school, was persuaded to return for another year to make up the number. Miss Ivy Norton came as the first teacher and the Education Department supplied eight desks, a table and a chair.

There were many other little stone edifices built for schoolchildren out of the local limestone rubble. They were the work of semi-skilled masons cum farmers and, many of them, such as the 18 Tank school at Ceduna, the New Way school in the Hundred of Keith, the Glen Boree school, and the Carawa school, have not stood the test of time. But, being built of stone, their ruins can still be found in the landscape and they are often the sites of little pilgrimages made by old scholars who return to the scene of their childhood and reminisce about the days when discipline was different, the cane was administered freely and getting to school was a daily walking or riding trip of seemingly epic proportions.

The same is not quite the case for several timber and iron schools built by communities such as Burgoyne, Kowulka and Wandana. Here the materials could be used again after the building had outlived its usefulness, and so today there is no trace of the old school on its original site. The Burgoyne school was typical. Its active life was 1926–1940 and it was built on land donated by the Richardson family. A carpenter was employed to supervise the construction but there was much volunteer assistance in erecting the corrugated iron building which was lined with plaster sheets obtained from the gypsum works in Thevenard. It was an ugly building, and it must have been a sweat box in summer, but the necessary eight children were enrolled, (Bob Brock was taken under age to make the number) and Miss Grace Milne opened the school in January 1926.[5] Today nothing remains of the School, but there is a clear patch in the scrub where the building once stood. It closed on 11 May 1940 with only



Hundred of Cohen School, 1933–1939.
R. to L.: Ivy Norton (teacher), Beryl Place, Melville Shillabeer, Les Place, Keith Brook, Colin Place, Merv Oats, Florrie Edwards, Ruby Edwards, Nita Oats.



The Wookata School used this old shepherd's hut 1919–1939.

six pupils and, some time later, Fred Richardson and Joseph Oats bought the shares of the other families that contributed to the original construction. The two men then demolished the building and went halves in the materials.

Because these buildings were all owned and constructed by community members, they were often used for social events as well as for school purposes. In fact many of them were multi-purpose halls, and their role in the activities of 'the hopeful years' has been mentioned in Chapter 7.

To a certain extent the reluctance on the part of the Education Department to build schools in many of the marginal areas was understandable. It was clear that any school that was opened would only have a short life at locations such as Cohen, Glen Boree, Burgoyne, New Way, Wandana, Maltee, and so on, so it was argued that the general taxpayer's money should not be used for permanent schools in these areas. Nevertheless, there was always some obligation to provide a school where children needed it, and eventually this obligation was met, all over South Australia, and particularly in the Far West, by transportable schools. Here the O'Loughlin school, one of the first, is an excellent example, especially as it has been preserved as a museum exhibit.

Portable School Buildings: I saw several of these on the West Coast this year. They are neat and attractive in design . . . They are admirably suited to the needs of new districts.

ASSISTANT SCHOOL INSPECTOR POLSON, 1919

Wooden transportable schools of a standard design are now a familiar sight in South Australia. The one for O'Loughlin arrived in 1919 and the school was opened by Miss Constance Lear in June of that year. It was closed briefly in 1923 but opened again in 1924 and continued operating until 1946. Its versatility was then proven by being 'transported' to Uworra school where it acted as a library until that school closed. Then, the building was purchased by local farmer Albert Brown. In 1986 it was donated to the Ceduna National Trust Museum where it 'now stands proudly, painted and renovated, and filled with desks, photos and memorabilia of the old days'.[4]



The transportable Hundred of O'Loughlin School now an exhibit at the National Trust Museum, Ceduna.

The transporting of the transportables is an interesting sub-story in the history of the Far West schools. They appeared and have since disappeared from Watraba, Pimbaacla, Maltee, Carawa East, Bonython, Goode West, Charra Plains and Bookabie (the 'new' school). They appeared and have remained, although now closed, at Nunjikompita, Mudamuckla and Smoky Bay. And, they have appeared and then been transported to areas of greater need thus: Bookabie to Coorabie, Nunjikompita to Carawa East, Nurka to Nunjikompita, Maltee to Flagstaff Landing and Haslam to the Road Safety School in Ceduna.



Burgoyne School, 1927.

The (Bookabie School) room should be plastered at once and skirting put round to keep the snakes from comming (sic) in the school as their (sic) has been several this summer which is not very nice.

ENOCH GALE, 7/3/1892, PRO GRG 18/297

Of all the little schools the first was Bookabie. It was opened in 1892, the teacher was Rose M Gale, the average attendance for the year was 15.8 pupils and Miss Gale's salary was 66 pounds a year.[7]

Many of the official school documents for Bookabie are still in existence, which is a testimony to the careful documentation by many teachers and to sensible preservation by the local community. The earliest school register, for example, indicates that Martin Mahar was enrolled on 15/2/1892, and the final register records that the last enrolee for the school was Martin's great nephew John Mahar who started school on 26/6/73.[8] The first report from an Inspector of Schools was in August, 1893. He rated the stone building as 'suitable and satisfactory, but the seats in the outhouse needed washing.'

The building for the school was a renovated stone hut used by the Miller family during the days of the Fowlers Bay Run. It was located near one of the wells for the Run and was on the track between Penong and Fowlers Bay. A later Inspector of Schools made the apt but probably irrelevant comment 'that the situation of the building on a stony rise made gardening impossible'. Another report, this time in 1935, suggested that the building was 'ill lit and draughty'. Eventually, in 1957, a 'new' school arrived on a low loader and was placed slightly higher on the hill. It was opened by Mrs V H Brooks who was welcomed by L J Dunn, Chairman of the School Committee. A special welcome was also given to G P Mahar who had been a pupil at the school 62 years before.

The new Bookabie school remained until 1973, when after a 'Back to Bookabie' celebration, (see Chapter 10) the school closed and the transportable building went off to Coorabie to become a library.

The next schools to open in the Far West were Fowlers Bay and Penong in 1893. The first teacher at Fowlers Bay was James Williams but he did not stay long; the school closed in 1894 and did not reopen until 1897.[9]



The unveiling of a plaque on the site of the Hundred of O'Loughlin School in August 1986. From left: Jack Reed (past teacher), Grace Hage (teacher), Una Trewartha, Merv Schultz (teacher), Elma Trademan, Harold Post, Doris Baker, Linda Middleton.



Bookabie School (the first) when operating.



Bookabie School on the nostalgia day for 'Little Schools of the West', 1986.

The Fowlers Bay school building was the first built by the Education Department in the Far West. It was requested in a letter from H W Darby, dated 18 January 1891, who thought that a limestone building could be put on the government's lot 14 in the town.[10] In fact, an iron building was constructed in 1892–3 with accommodation for 24 children and a room for a teacher. The cost of the building was 221 pounds 18 shillings.[11]

The Penong school began in 1893. Some idea of one of the prevailing difficulties can be seen from a question asked by Mr Horn in the House of Assembly in 1892. Had the government come to a decision in regard to a school at Penong? The answer was that one would be opened as soon as a teacher was willing to go there.[12] Selma Vera Menzel volunteered. She came from a school in the mid north of the state. Was she pursuing a young man who had gone west? If she was it didn't work out because, after one year, she left and Randolph F Trotter was transferred from Colton to take her place. Miss Menzel, Mr Trotter and several other teachers taught in the Penong Woolshed until 1899, when the Education Department's first stone school was built in the



Fowlers Bay school with the Institute Hall in the background.

Far West. It still stands today as the main building of the Penong school and it is hard to realise that the small area was originally designed as both a school and a teacher's house.[13]

In 1895 the records of the Education Department indicate that in the Far West there were three provisional schools operating, Bookabie where Bertha Gale had an average attendance of 12.5, Penong where Clementina Will had 19.3 and Kooringabbie, opened that year in a private house, with Jessie Caldwell in charge of an average attendance of 10.7.[14]



The first hall and second school at Coorabie built in 1901.

By 1897 Bagster, Charra, Coorabie and Denial Bay were also operating. But here, in the case of the first two, the Education Department introduced the expediency of half-time schools. This spread teachers between two schools on a weekly basis. Thus, Elizabeth Smith was the first teacher at both schools; she spent one week teaching at Bagster (8 children when it first opened in a stone building erected on land donated by T Freeman of Model Farm) and the next week at Charra, presumably in the public hall constructed in 1897 (see Chapter 6).[15] Bookabie and Glen Boree went 'half time' for a while, and so did Glen Boree and Fowlers Bay, Tallala and Kooringabbie, Denial Bay and Charra Woolshed; but, thankfully, the system had too many problems for both teachers and students and it was not maintained for very long.

The Coorabie school was an excellent example of local initiative. A petition was sent, the Education Department's school Inspector (a Mr Gamble) was lobbied when he was in the district, and the following letter was sent as a follow up.[16]

Yalata
30 April, 1897

To the Hon the Minister of Education

Sir,

The Parents in this District is (sic) desirous of getting a School here, as our children is (sic) growing up without Education. there (sic) is a hut on a Government Reserve here which would do for the purpose and therefore there would be no rent to pay.

Suitable board and lodging will be provided by one of us but we would like to know if you would grant the school before we go to any expence (sic) to provide for teacher or out office.

I send herewith form with names of children who would attend school.

If you can grant us said School we as parents will be thankful.

I am,

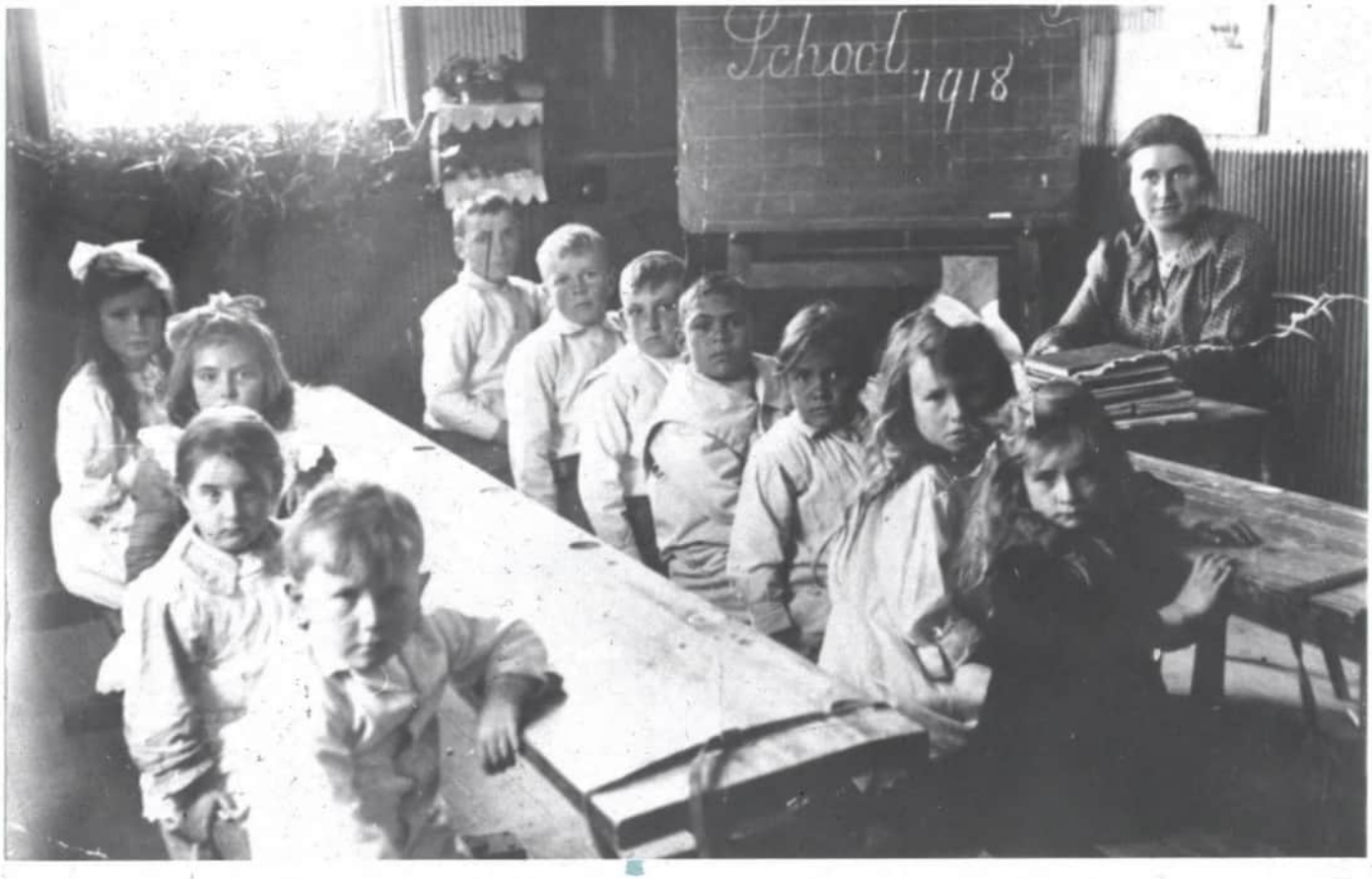
yours humbly,

John Young

Below. Penong School 1930. **Below right.** Penong School 1987.







Fowlers Bay School 1918. Teacher Joyce Cuming (now Mrs J Backshall). Left from the back: Alison Coventry, Thelma Hanson, Marjorie Hanson, Jackie Burford. Right from the back: Harry Smith, Jack Smith, Jack Hanson, Willie Larking, Mary Boxer, Glad Coventry, Jean Giles.

On the form mentioned in the letter were particulars of the hut. It was built of stone with length 21 feet, breadth 10 feet, height 7 feet, an iron roof and a stone tank. In another note a few weeks later there was an indication that J Green was living in the hut. And then, in September 1897, after approval had obviously been given, John Young gave the following undertaking:

> 'I John Young will provide Board and Lodging for the teacher at 8 shillings per week. I have made it as low as possible in hope to get a Teacher for our children'.

The names of the children for the school were Elsie Mabel Riddle, Ethel Gertrude Riddle, Henry Hudson Gurney, Eliza Lamb Gurney, Luisa Florence Gurney, Thomas Frederick Gurney, Charles Clifford Cabot, Jessie Agnes Cabot, John Oliver Young, Eva Salome Young, Spencer Murray Young, Elizabeth Stott and Mary Green.[17]

Clara McIntyre came to open the school, which was conducted in the hut until the first Coorabie Hall was built in 1901. This was then the school building for more than 50 years and for a time it was even a teacher's residence. In 1954 a new teacher was pretty disgusted with it. She recorded in her journal, 'this room has insufficient light . . . the blackboards are too far back from the windows and the floor is unsafe . . . the rain beats in at the door . . . it is quite time the two old desks at the back were put on the rubbish heap.'[18] By then teachers had few qualms about offering such criticisms; they had a strong Teachers' Union to support them; still little was done to improve the situation until 1959 when, after the Fowlers Bay school closed, Coorabie started to get new buildings.

The school at Denial Bay came as a result of a petition signed in 1896 by J H Smith, W A E Lutz, A H Hoffrichter, J D E Meier, E Dodd, G Starling, I Macklin, F H Kloeden and G Handtke. August Hoffrichter added weight to the petition by declaring that the government could have 5 acres of land at the

New Way School is an isolated building on a hill in the scrub.

INSPECTOR'S REPORT

south west corner of his Block 7, Hundred of Moule, provided they erected a school on it.

In the Public Record Office in Adelaide the petition and application for a school is endorsed by the Inspector General of Schools, John Hartley, who wrote 'this is not a case to justify the *erection* of a school by the government.[19]

Nevertheless, Denial Bay got a school in 1897 and Doris Domeyer was the first teacher. Apparently, she taught in 'McKenzie's Hall' which was the local meeting place on W McKenzie's farm. The school stayed there until 1903 and then shifted to the Denial Bay Agricultural Show Hall.

The full Education system for the Far West in 1897 was therefore:

Bagster (½)	Elizabeth G Smith
Charra (½)	Elizabeth G Smith
Fowlers Bay	Clementine Will (transferred from Penong)
Coorabie	Clara B McIntyre
Denial Bay	Doris Domeyer
Kooringabbie	Jessie Caldwell
Penong	Fred Mullett

In this year Penong became the first 'Official' Education Department school in the Far West. All the rest were 'Provisional' schools. Penong was also the largest school and Mr Mullett must have been under some strain because his average attendance was 25.1.

Before the end of the nineteenth century one other school opened [illegible] Bay, in 1899. This has been popularly designated the 18 Tank school because it was near a government tank, but, actually, it was a corner piece of land donated by E J Symonds who had a vested interest because he had several children of school age.[20] Mr Stasinowsky built a small stone room for the school and Frances Allport was the first teacher. Her average attendance in the first year was 13.4.[21]



New Way School. Teacher Miss Vera Bratten. Picture shows the teaching aids collected during her period as teacher-in-charge, 1917–1919.

The little schools of the Far West are listed below:[22]

YEAR	SCHOOL	FIRST TEACHER	COMMENTS
1892	Bookabie	Rose Gale	Old stone shepherd's hut
1893	Fowlers Bay	James Williams	Closed 1894, reopened 1897
1893	Penong	Selma Menzel	Penong Woolshed
1895	Kooringabbie	Jessie Caldwell	Held in private home
1897	Charra	Elizabeth Smith	Old Charra Hall (½ time)
1897	Bagster	Elizabeth Smith	Stone building, Model Farm (½ time)
1897	Coorabie	Clara McIntyre	Stone hut
1897	Denial Bay	Doris Domeyer	McKenzie's Hall
1899	Murat Bay	Frances Allport	18 Tank Location
1900	Glen Boree	Emily Cameron	Stone building
1902	Tallala	Annie Hunt	Tomney, Johns, Price construction
1904	Charra Woolshed	Johann Hartmann	Stone building
1906	Athenna	Johann Hartmann	Stone hall, built 1905
1909	Smoky Bay	Gladys Turner	Stone building, later wooden transportable[23]
1911	Goode	Olive Howie	Timber and iron hall
1911	Merghiny	Mary McMellon	Methodist Church hall
1912	Chinminna	Margaret Wheaton	
1913	Wandana	Mary Riley	Timber and iron hall
1914	Carawa	Linda Maschmedt	Stone hall
1917	New Way	Vera Bratten	Brown, Wright and Brooks stone construction[24]
1918	Chinta	Harriet Shires	
1919	Wookata	Alice Collins	Old Shepherd's Hut
1919	O'Loughlin	Constance Lear	Transportable wooden building
1919	Maltee	Sarah Barrowcliff	Transportable wooden building
1919	Goode West	Kathleen McIntyre	Transportable wooden building
1921	Maildaburra	Lucy Smith	Transportable wooden building
1924	Nunjikompita	Annie Dodd	Transportable wooden building[25]
1925	Thevenard	Ludwig Klaffer	
1926	Bonython	Violet Anderson	Transportable wooden building
1926	Burgoyne	Grace Milne	Timber and iron building
1926	Mudamuckla	Lydia Stevens	Anglican Church hall[26]
1927	Laura Bay	Martin McAvenna	Transportable wooden building
1928	Carawa East	Gerald Clements	Transportable wooden building[27]
1928	Kowulka	Una Ford	Timber and iron building
1928	Murraminga	Wilga Marcus	
1929	Chinbingina	Perc Jaensch	Transportable wooden building
1931	Watraba	Margaret Milway	Transportable wooden building
1931	Uworra	John Maguire	Red brick building
1933	Cohen	Ivy Norton	Alf May stone construction[29]
1933	Nurka	Jack Golding	Transportable wooden building
1933	Charra Plains	Alick Perren	Transportable wooden building
1936	Pimbaacla	Phyllis Golding	Transportable wooden building
1937	Puntabie	Milton Hunkin	Transportable wooden building



Murat Bay (18 tank) School 1905.



The Uworra school, unique amongst the Far West's small schools because of its red brick construction. Behind is the old Hundred of O'Loughlin transportable school used as a library.



Watraba School in the 1930s.



Nunjikompita School, closed in 1983.

Much has been made of the pioneering farmers who settled the Far West and, second only to them, much should also be made of the pioneering teachers of the Far West. They lived with the farmers, shared their troubles and in many instances shared their poverty. Invariably, the farmers were so glad to have them that, as we have already seen with Mr Young at Coorabie, they boarded them at cheap rates, fed them better than they did themselves, gave them the best room in the house and did all they could to make them one of the family.



Uworra School, Teacher Kevin McMahon.
Back row: Malcolm Borlase, Daphne Ettridge, Joy Trewartha, Graham Borlase, Peter Gaden, Darryl Sleep, Barry Trowbridge, Delores Hoffrichter, Glenis Sleep, John Hoffrichter.
Second row: Faith Gaden, Willetta Irvine, Margaret Trowbridge, Claire Borlase, Hope Gaden, Yvonne Hoffrichter, Valerie Eckermann, Maureen Sleep.
Third row: Graham Hoffrichter, Neil Trowbridge, Glenys Hoffrichter, Lynette Saunders, Norma Eckermann, Beth Brown, Ross Borlase, Garry Ettridge.
Front row: Trevor Trewartha, Howard Sleep.

The list of little schools above is distinctive in two ways, they were all one teacher schools and, the overwhelming majority of the teachers were single women. What a massive culture shock it must have been for many of these young girls, some from wealthy Adelaide families, when they came to teach in the Far West. For many of them it involved their first sea voyage on a sailing boat in the earliest years, the *Wookata* and *Yandra* later on. When they landed they were met by their hosts, taken to their humble home and then, in time, to their even more humble school. One can sympathise with the few who just couldn't adjust — the girl for example who refused to get off the boat so terrified was she of the strange new world she had come to. She stayed in her cabin and went back to Adelaide on the return voyage. And, one can only admire those who came, adapted themselves to the new life and made a contribution to the community and to the lives of the children they taught.

Many of the women teachers made a lifelong commitment to the Far West because they married local men and stayed in the area permanently. From the list of 'first' teachers for example Gladys Turner married Frank Gregor, Vera Bratten married Cyril Freeman, Lydia Stevens married Harry Kuhlmann and Sarah Barrowcliff married Jack Will. Some others (of many) who married well known men in the district were Joyce Cuming who married Jack Backshall, Dulcie Penglase — Stan Dunn, Margaret Radford — Stan Geue, Ethel McNichol — Herb Denton, Emma Hansen — Even Wold, Mabel Place — George Stott, Mary Tucker — Perc Lange and Lina Spackman — Jack Hunt.

The experiences of these women teachers would make an enthralling book on its own, but here we have room for only a few samples.

Lydia Kuhlmann (nee Stevens) has written about her first experiences at Mudamuckla in 1926.[30] She was 18 years old when she caught the boat to Port Lincoln and travelled up on the train to her first school. She knew that her salary for teaching 7 grades, cleaning the school and doing all the paper work was going to be 190 pounds, but she was fearful of making mistakes with the paper work because in those days simple mistakes brought a fine of five shillings. She inspected her school and found little to be joyful about. It was in

The school which has hitherto been called Charra Woolshed will in future be called Uworra.

EDUCATION GAZETTE
15/8/31

the wood and iron Anglican Church which meant that all school materials had to be packed up and put away last thing on Fridays so that the room was not cluttered for Sunday services. The room had one table with a leg split and 'bandaged' with wire. In front of it were three long backless desks and behind it was a blackboard and easel plus a woodburning heater. There were two bush toilets, a shelter shed, a rainwater tank, no playground and not a tree in sight.

When Mudamuckla's first 12 children arrived for school six of them had never been to school before, some had been boarded out to attend other Far West schools and a couple had done some lessons by correspondence. After the formal introductions, Lydia got down to her work and on that first day she was an object of great curiosity, not only from the children, but from all the parents who gathered around to see the new teacher.

Phyllis Golding opened Pimbaacla in 1936, 'a wooden transportable on a sand hill'. Later in life she became Vice Principal of Wattle Park Teachers College and gave many encouraging words to young teachers about to embark upon their careers on the West Coast. At Pimbaacla she remembered that her new school was fitted out with students' desks and a blackboard, but there was no teacher's table or chair. These had to be provided by the local community until such time as the necessary requisitions could be dispatched to Adelaide and a table and chair could be sent from 'head office'. Phyl boarded with lovely people and, although times were tough, she lived well and enjoyed the social life of the Far West. She also enjoyed the benefit that all Far West teachers had at that time, one weeks extra leave at Christmas time as compensation for their service in such an isolated community.[31]



Mudamuckla School 1968.
Teacher: Robin Harris.
Back: Ann Blumson, Marie Zippel, Bev Holmes, Nick Mozol, Eric Mozol, Peter Kuhlmann.
Next row: Robyn Kuhlmann, Garry Zippel, Jeff Holmes, Des Mozol, Jenny Blumson, Leonie Blumson.
Next row: Maryanne Hall, Eddie Benbolt, Tim Mozol, Nola Zippel, Michelle Lee, Vicki Hunt, Grant Zippel.
Front: Paul Holmes, Milton Benbolt, Ashley Zippel, Peter Holmes.

Margaret Milway, later Mrs Durdin, opened the school at Watraba with 19 children present on the first day. She was disappointed about the 'town' of Watraba for there was only a railway siding and nothing but surveyor's pegs where streets, houses and shops were meant to be. But, unlike Lydia Stevens at Mudamuckla, she did have a few trees, and one large sandalwood that stood in the school ground was sometimes used in the winter fires. As she put it, 'we used to burn a few sandalwood sticks to get the aroma from them and say we were Chinese'.[32]

Margaret boarded with Mr and Mrs Cyril Freeman at Model Farm, Bagster, and drove a buggy to school each day with their two girls Iris and Ruby. It was 1931, the year the drought broke, and she remembered standing on the verandah with Mrs Freeman watching the soaking rains with tears of joy running down their cheeks.

The highlight of Watraba's first year was a Combined Schools' Sports; it was a highlight for the teachers also because they were able to get together to swap experiences and to share problems. Margaret Milway remembered that it was a great day she spent with Cecily Aldersey from Kowulka, Lance Hicks from Penong, Rex Wilson from Charra, Harry Witmitz from Burgoyne and Mary Moyle from New Way.[33]

In the first 50 years or so of the little schools, teachers were always boarded with people in the district. Here the community usually shared the responsibility amongst its members and there were instances when the teacher was shared amongst two or three homes in a year. But, there were other instances where certain families liked to board the teacher and even had a 'teacher's room' permanently available. The Freemans at Bagster boarded many teachers, so did the Oats family at Penong, the Johns families at Coorabie and the Schwarz family at Maltee; but something of a Far West record was set by Frank and Jess Gray who boarded the teachers at Bookabie for 26 years.



Goode School 1912.
Back row: Laurie Geue, Hilda Stasinowsky, Win Nicholls, Hilda Parsons, Glad Nicholls, Thelma Parsons, Engrid Folland, Bert Skinner.
Second row: Len Nicholls, Billy Geue, Eric Skinner, Margaret Smith, Enid Folland, Vic Stasinowsky, Minda Coulter, Bill Nicholls.
Third row: Tom Morcombe, Art Nicholls, Mary Morcombe, Millie Stasinowsky, Jesse Smith, Ross Folland.

The community was also required to become actively involved in its School Committee and this, too, was a responsibility shared around amongst the many different families. Some gave outstanding service in supporting their school in this way, and one instance that can be quoted is Mayne and Nita Brook, who were presented with silver goblets in 1979 for '20 years of willing service to the Penong school'.[34]

One task for a Chairman of a School Committee was to arrange board and generally introduce a new teacher to the community. Jens Sandstrom, who taught at Bookabie for three years, 1962–64, still has his original letter from the Chairman at Bookabie. It is a good sample of things a new teacher needed to know before venturing to the Far West in the 1960s.

The lot of the teacher on the West Coast is, as a rule, a happy one, for though far distant from the capital, the hospitality and the kindness of the people more than compensate for the disadvantage of distance.

SCHOOL INSPECTOR NICHOLLE, 1911

Bookabie
West Coast
15th Jan, 1962

Mr Jens Sandstrom,

Dear Mr Sandstrom,

Just a short note to let you know something about your new school appointment.

Your board has been arranged approx. ¾ mile distance from the school at Mr and Mrs Frank Grey's (sic) residence. Mr and Mrs Grey live on their own and are a very nice couple. Their 3 children are all married and living away.

The school is a practically new building of one room, a porch and a shelter shed. There are 8 children attending at present, 3 of them being half-caste Aboriginal children. There will be 2 more starters some time during the year.

At the present we are having a very dry time of it with feed very scarce and plenty of dust around. It is next door to a big drought. There is not much farming done in this district and is mainly sheep and of course at present there is quite a bit of water carting going on.

Wandana School 1918.
Back row: W Edson, J Tonkin, O Lowe, C Lowe, G Lowe, A Collins, Miss E Lee (standing).
Next row: P Tonkin, F Kelly, F Tonkin, K Lowe, H Tonkin, B McKenzie.
Next row: D Kelly, D Edson, O McKenzie, C Lloyd, R Lowe, A Tonkin, C Collins.
Front: D Collins, C Tonkin, M Tonkin, M Collins, M Lowe, B Hoffrichter.



Regards transport I do not know wether (sic) you have a car or motor bike but it would actually be better if you did have something even a push bike as there is no transport from home to school unless you walk.

I am hoping that I will get a letter from you before school starts.

Yours truly

Mr W B Murray
Chairman, Bookabie School Committee

Board for teachers was not always arranged as simply as W B Murray's letter indicated. Time has gradually altered the situation and teachers today usually find their own accommodation in Education Department supplied houses and flats. One of the first to move for this independence in accommodation was the colourful Mary Molloy, who taught at Fowlers Bay for three years in the early 1950s. She established herself in what she called her 'castle', the old tumble down Globe Hotel that had closed fifteen years before, and lived there amongst crumbling limestone walls and beneath a precariously unstable galvanised iron roof. The District Inspector for schools, Mr Albert Jones, was appalled and wanted to take the Fowlers Bay community to task for not providing better accommodation. But, Miss Molloy revelled in things out of the ordinary and there was no way she wanted to give up her 'castle'. Mr Jones went away muttering about troubles with the Teachers Union and slept the night, as he always did, with Mr and Mrs Bastian in the old Fowlers Bay telegraph station where Mr Bastian was the unofficial post-master and the unofficial sly-grog merchant for the district. Mrs Bastian was the town's unofficial hostess who provided excellent meals and crisp, starched sheets for visitors like Mr Jones who stayed overnight.[35]

All the little schools were one-teacher schools; the first to gain an assistant teacher was Murat Bay which will be treated separately later. Other than that,



Mudamuckla School. Teacher Beryl Jones. Standing L. to R.: ? Thomas, Beryl Martin, Barbara Ellis, Janice Watkinson, Fay Kuhlmann, Melva Miller, Barry Salmon. Centre Sitting: Cliff Miller, ? Thomas, Pauline Martin, Barry Watkinson. Front: ? Thomas, Bev Martin, ? Thomas.

no 'assistant teachers' appeared in the Far West until 1951 when Colin Halliday at Penong had Alexander Baird as his assistant because average enrolment figures exceeded 45.

In the one teacher school there were usually teaching compensations because of small enrolments. But, there were many complications because of multiple grades and endless administration involving liaison between the school and the community and the school and the Education Department. This was, of course, before the introduction of school clerical assistants and many young inexperienced teachers in their first schools felt overwhelmed by the paper work, and frustrated by the isolation factor, which made it so difficult to do things quickly and efficiently. Some of the frustrations appear in the Journals the teachers kept, of which, unfortunately, only a few still remain. At Uworra in 1952 the teacher recordered 'school cupboard and table arrived today . . . ordered 3 years ago!'[36] And, at Coorabie in 1957, three weeks after school had started: 'Our books arrived today per *Yandra* and were distributed. We can now begin our work in ernest (sic)'.[37]

The Journals also reveal difficulties under which some of the teaching was done. For example, in February 1951 the teacher at Coorabie recorded: 'Temperature has been 111° today . . . This weather is very trying for some of the smaller youngsters who ride a few miles to school on their midget biycles.'[38] At Nunjikompita in 1943 it was a different problem: 'A large 4'8" yellow snake was killed at school today. The snake was found curled up under the seat of the girls lavatory.'[39] But, despite the difficulties, there were many teachers who made the best of them, sometimes in very enterprising ways. Thus, at Nunjikompita in 1943, 'there was great jubilation in the school yard at dinner time. A terrific dust storm bringing a cool change and later rain.' The teacher then went on to say how a series of lessons were developed spontaneously, dealing with wind erosion and later water erosion.[40]

A gala day was held at Wandana school on July 5 (1918) when many friends and relatives of the scholars assembled to witness the celebration of arbor day. The children rendered songs and recitations under the direction of their teacher (Miss Lee). The annual report was read by Miss Lee which showed that the scholars have made extraordinary progress this year.

The most successful arbor day ever held at Wandana School.

WCS 13/7/18

(Miss Lee became Mrs Hawke, the mother of Prime Minister Robert James Lee Hawke)



Bonython School 1931.
Back row: Gladys Moody, David Yates (teacher), Benita Symonds.
Middle row: Ken Moody, Vera Moody, Constance Moody.
Front row: Mavis Moody, Nola Klau, Shirley Symonds, Lloyd Klau, Mary Chandler.



F Shipard's school 'bus' with his passengers for Penong school. Back: B Bratten, D Miller. Front: V Brook, A Shipard, P Dunn, Teddy Miller.

Hundreds of young teachers came to the Far West and taught in the little schools. Their average stay was about two years and, in that time, they usually made an impact on the community either good or bad. Dozens are remembered for their sporting prowess, because they played for local teams, and dozens established life-long friendships. Some stayed much longer than others and anybody who exceeded four years became an unofficial 'Coaster' completely accepted as part of the community. They were rare people and some examples were Emma Hansen, Penong, 1913–17; Lance Hicks, Penong, 1929–32; Alex Baird, Penong, 1951–55; Graham Wasley, Penong, 1961–64; Tony Guster, Penong, 1978–81; Karen Murray, Penong, 1981– ; Clara McIntyre, Coorabie 1897–1900; Elizabeth Turner, Coorabie, 1901–04; Jessie Hardy, Coorabie 1907–10; Irvine Pengilly, Coorabie, 1930–34; Rose Gale,

The school on Park Terrace, Ceduna opened in 1914. Now the National Trust Museum.

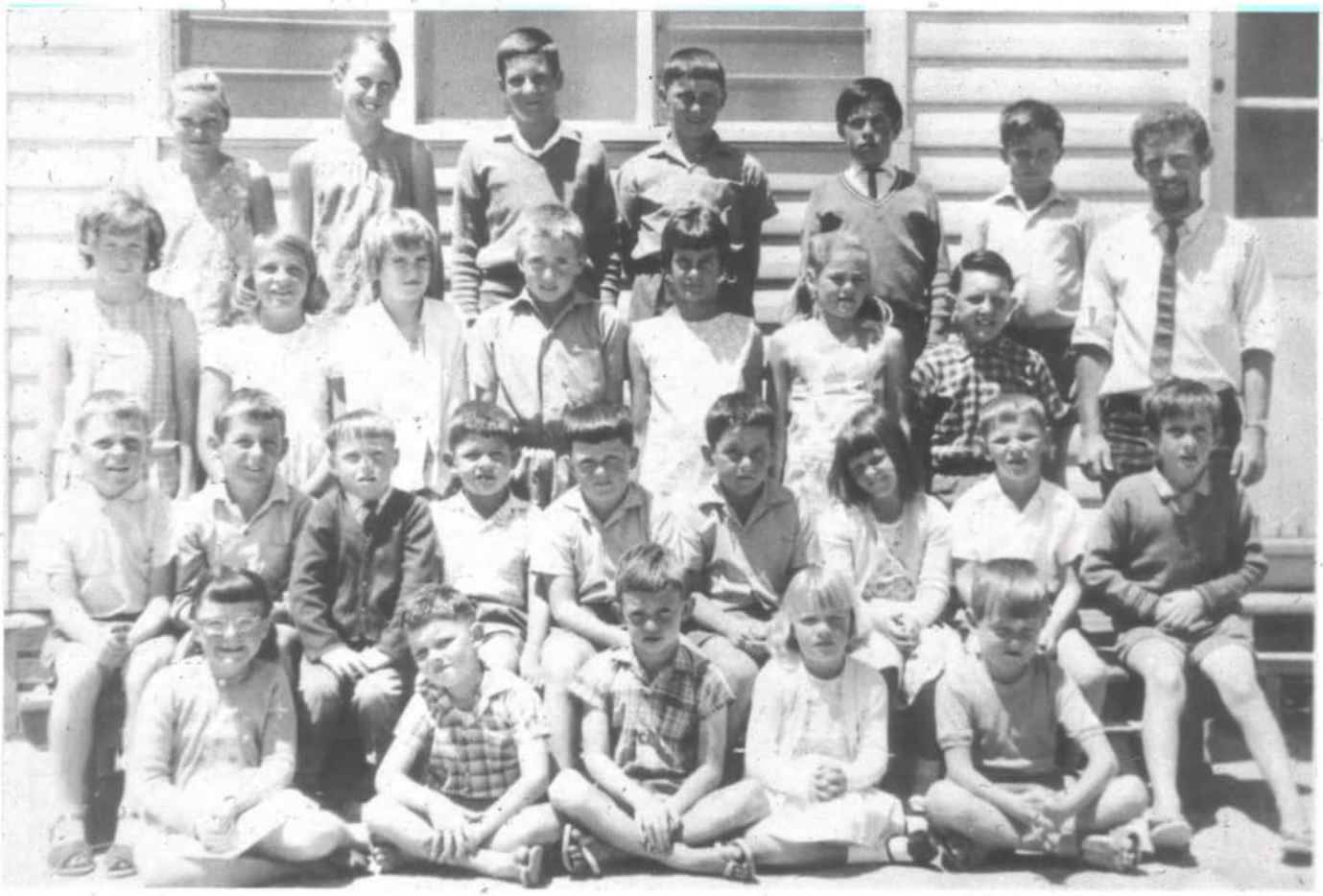


Bookabie 1892–95; Bertha Gale, Bookabie, 1896–1900; Bessie Young, Bookabie, 1910–13; Myrtle Lahiff, Bookabie, 1920–23; William Tucker, Bookabie, 1932–35; Aaron Francis, Bookabie, 1946–50; Harry Witmitz, Burgoyne 1930–34; Cecily Aldersy, Kowulka 1930–33; Gladys Crossman, Watraba, 1932–1936; Florrie Kuhl, Smoky Bay, 1932–36; Linda Helberg, Smoky Bay, 1938–41; Robert Britton, Smoky Bay, 1955–58; David Maskell, Uworra, 1958–62; Kathleen McIntyre, Goode West, 1919–24.

The pattern of schools for the hopeful years changed in the same way as the pattern of towns did because of the centralising years. Where there were once more than 40 little schools, today there are five Education Department schools, Ceduna Area School, Miltaburra Area School, Penong Rural School, Coorabie Rural School and Koonibba Aboriginal School. There is also a Lutheran school in Ceduna.

The centralising tendency is evident today in the appearance of Coorabie and Penong schools. No longer are they single building schools, their 'campus' has been extended by the addition of wooden portable buildings brought, in most cases, from Far West localities where schools have closed. The declining rural population contributed to this centralising trend, but so also did the building of better roads, particularly the Eyre Highway, which made bus travel an integral part of the schooling experience of hundreds of Far West children.

Initially, the Coorabie and Penong schools were swollen by the trend; Coorabie had about 40 children and two full time teachers in 1964; Penong had about 70 children and three teachers in the same year. But the continued decline in the Top End population has brought steady drops in enrolments to the point where Penong, had less than 15 students in 1987, and a full time teacher had to be transferred to Ceduna. This does not mean that Penong has



Smoky Bay School 1968.
Back: Raelene Dempsey, Maureen Tremaine, Michael Dodd, John Williams, Colin Ettridge, Ronnie Lawrie, Chris Adams (teacher).
Third Row: Pauline Denton, Clare Ettridge, Anne Skinner, Greg Willcox, Suzanne Dodd, Lois Dempsey, Milton Tremaine.
Second Row: Trevor Williams, Terry Dodd, Geoff Denton, Stephen Williams, Gary Lawrie, Bryan Dodd, Bronwyn Tremaine, Gavin Williams, Vaughan Waye.
Front Row: Sharon Lawrie, Lyn Gregor, Brett Willcox, Debbie Ettridge, Ashley Smith.

retreated to a one teacher school as it was in the 1890s because it retains the relatively modern innovation of School Assistants, support people for the teaching staff. In all the schools of the Far West there are now some of these people; a large number work part time and a large number are farmers' wives who earn a supplementary income which is much appreciated during difficult farming years. Added to this, there are numerous local people who drive buses for the schools and their income also assists the Far West's economy.

History has shown that the centralising trend has made Ceduna the dominating town; it has also made it the dominating school with bus lines that spread like tentacles and embrace the catchment areas of the former little schools.



Ceduna's new school opened in May 1927 between Ceduna and Thevenard.

The rise of Ceduna Area school, which today is in many ways a complex monster, began with the 18 Tank school aready mentioned. That remained the town's only school for many years and there was the ludicrous situation of children walking 2 miles out of the town into the farming blocks for their daily lessons. Sanity came in 1914 when the school, which is the present National Trust Museum, was built on Park Terrace in the town. By then the daily enrolment was consistently over 30. The school was opened by Benjamin Bowering, who then stayed until June 1918, during which time the average enrolments increased to over 40 children.

In 1923 Leslie J Dennis was appointed Headmaster; he remained until 1929 and saw big changes. The average enrolment climbed to 71 in 1924 and then dropped back to 49 in 1925 when a school was opened in Thevenard. This, however, was a temporary expediency because a substantial new school was built between Ceduna and Thevenard in 1926. It opened in May of 1927, the Thevenard school closed and Mr Dennis found his new school had an average enrolment of 100.5. By then he had managed to get the services of an assistant, Marjorie E G Coote.

The new school opened without any fanfare; in fact it was given more publicity in the Adelaide *Chronicle* than the *West Coast Sentinel*, which at that time was dominated by Streaky Bay news. The correspondent to the Adelaide *Chronicle* called it the Murat Bay Public School and said that it was 'provided with two large classrooms, a domestic arts room, woodworking room and teachers' retiring room'. He then got his geography a little wrong when he said, 'it stands on 4 acres of land, overlooking Murat Bay on the west, Bosanquet Bay on the east and the Pacific Ocean to the south'.[41]



Ceduna Higher Primary School Drum and Fife Band, 1932.

When Lance Trebilcock came to be Headmaster in 1930 it was to the Ceduna Higher Primary School. This was the Education Department's attempt to meet the growing need for secondary education for children in remote areas. Up until that time, promising students, who wanted to further their education, were either sent to board at Port Lincoln or to the boarding colleges in Adelaide. It was a case of much financial sacrifice for many families who wanted to give their children a good secondary education. The Mahars of Bookabie were a good example; all the children of George and Bibiana Mahar had their secondary education at colleges in Adelaide, Sacred Heart for the boys and Cabra for the girls. Many Lutheran families sent their children to Concordia College while others boarded with friends and relations and went to prominent city high schools like Unley and Woodville.

The higher primary status for Ceduna did not immediately solve the secondary schooling problem. It was of little use to children living on farms 10 miles and more from the town because transport facilities were not adequate to take children to the secondary classes on a daily basis. An alternative was to find board in Ceduna and many children did this. Additionally, the higher primary classes never extended to the full range of secondary schooling. Years 8, 9 and 10 were offered, but bright children needed to go to Port Lincoln, or Adelaide for their years 11 and 12, or Leaving and Leaving Honours as they were in those days. Thus, as has already been mentioned, Charlie Brooks the brilliant athlete went off to Adelaide for his final school years and so also did outstanding students Diana Howlett and Eric Spry. Each has subsequently



Ceduna Higher Primary School Staff 1956.
Back row: D L Young, Graham Elsley, P J O'Connor, B Griffin, D Chesney, B Butler.
Front row: Kath McBeath, Gladys Brook, U Coote, Milton Hunkin (Headmaster), Esme Job, Kath Eyers.

made their mark in their chosen career, Eric in the diplomatic corps, where he was at one time Australian Consul for Thailand, and Diana in University teaching where she is now a Professor of Geography.

In 1930 the higher primary concept was exciting and, in Lance Trebilcock, it had an energetic and capable administrator who stayed at the head of the school for seven years. He is remembered for many services to the community, but one of his greatest achievements was the organisation and promotion of the Far West Coast Schools Sports Carnivals, when all the little schools were bussed, or brought in by private transport, for a day of sporting events with the Ceduna school children. In 1933 the carnival was at its height and that year the schools present were Kowulka, Denial Bay, Chinta, Goode, New Way, Penong, Uworra, Mudamuckla, O'Loughlin, Ceduna, Goode West, Chinbingina, Watraba, Laura Bay, Murraminga, Bonython, Smoky Bay, Charra, Charra Plains, Athenna, Maltee, Carawa, Carawa East and Kooringabbie.[42]

At the official opening for the day F W Betts, President of the Far West Schools Association, introduced Mr W J Adey, Director of Education, who gave great praise to Lance Trebilcock and his helpers for organising such a splendid day. There was an exhibition of school work from all the schools and, in the sporting events, the results showed that the little schools gave a good account of themselves and were not overwhelmed by the large Ceduna school. Harold Saunders from Charra Plains won the 100 yards boys championship and Beatrice Todd from Denial Bay won the girls event. Goode won the Flag Race, Maltee won the girls Overhead Ball and Ceduna won the Tunnel Ball.

The Higher Primary school operated from 1928 to the end of 1960 and in that time enrolments increased from 100 to 317. It was the era of Headmasters Len Trebilcock, Albert Norman, Stuart Alexander, Ned Golding, Ken Rudd, Andrew McLay and Milton Hunkin. It was also the era of rapid improvements in transport so, one by one, as the little schools lost their enrolments, they closed and their children were bussed into Ceduna. Some of the original buses were privately owned trucks, utilities or large cars, and children were packed



Ceduna, Higher Primary School, 1956.
Back row: Malcolm Puckridge, John Nicholls, Russell Jolly, Dimos Kargas, Alan Crisp, Peter Foster, Bill Tonkin, Graham Borlase, Graham Thomas.
2nd row: Glen Chandler, Desrae Klau, Clive Cogan, Yvonne Payne, Beatrix Poupe, Joan Howlett, Margaret Hughes, Eva Lowe, Melva Miller, Faith Gaden, Claire Borlase, Kath Duffy.
3rd row: Barry Salmon, Frances Jukes, Brenda Kelly, Kay Blumson, Lesley Hunkin, Raylene Talbot, Christine Jones, Irene Kontoupis, Glen Partridge.
4th row: Gary Kloeden, Terry Geue, Graham Hoffrichter, Murray Ukena, Graham Haseldine, Glenn Skinner, Bevan Mastrosavas, Phillip Spry, Ross Borlase, Allan Lowe, Allan Schwarz.



Ceduna Area School Staff 1968.
Back: P Howe, J Johnson, J Schiller, J Pike, L Fahy, P Hughes. Centre: S Betts, I. Schutz, J Sharpe, B Schupelius, J Walton, M Milkovich. Front: W Schiller, G Goodman, G Inglis, Ian Webber (Headmaster), B Goodman, U Pobke, D Johnson.
Absent: P Beer.

into them in a fashion which today would contravene a host of road safety laws.

The growing bus network brought a new role for the big school in Ceduna; it changed its name from Ceduna Higher Primary School to Ceduna Area School and Vic Edwards, in 1961, was in charge of a complex which consisted of the stone rooms built in 1926/27, a new library and laboratory erected in 1948, and several portable buildings brought in from the closed schools of the area. There was an average annual enrolment of 317 the year the Area school began and there were 14 teachers.

Enrolments kept increasing, so in March of 1964 the School Council decided to ask the Education Department for a new solid construction, two storey school. It was a realistic request; numerous two storey buildings were then in the process of being built for schools throughout the State and, with Ceduna well on the way to becoming the largest Area School, a substantial, solid construction building was clearly necessary.

Never before in the history of the Far West have the frustrations of dealing with a bureaucracy on the mainland been so glaringly obvious as in the saga of the 'replacement' school for Ceduna. The School Council, led by dedicated townsmen like Clive Keitel, Ken Wright, Des Whitmarsh and, Bill Tonkin lobbied and agitated in every way possible, and were rewarded with a string of delays, broken promises and ad hoc decisions that gave them no solid construction school, but a series of Demac (demountable accommodation) buildings, many of them filched from localities in the state such as Berri and Leigh Creek where they were no longer needed. At the same time, and this was a bitter pill, Streaky Bay acquired a beautiful, red brick building for its 'replacement' Area School.

As indicated, it began in 1964. It continued during the Headmasterships of Allan Tregenza, John Smith, Ian Webber, Geoff Goodman, Craig Cameron, Tom Lambert and John Halsey, over a period of 19 years.

In 1966 the Minister of Education, on a visit to the area, appeared to be genuinely sympathetic, but nothing happened. In 1969 the Headmaster's report to Council sounded notes of urgency; enrolments had increased from 383 in 1963 to 548 in 1969. The Council renewed its agitation and, in 1970, the Director of Primary Education recommended 'a replacement school for Ceduna, and that the school be included in a programme so that it may be available in February 1974.'

Nothing happened.

In 1973 the Minister of Education, Mr Hudson, visited Ceduna and met with representatives of the School Council and members of the community. The *West Coast Sentinel* quoted him as saying in parliament: 'the conditions at the Ceduna Area School are such as to necessitate rebuilding of the school'[43] Later he said, 'the school would be built; and it is a large project . . . unlikely to be completed in 3 years, it may take longer than that, but certainly it is regarded as urgent'.

In 1974 the Education Department's advice to the School Council was that the school would be rebuilt with a target date of June 1977. The existing school was 'in poor condition', the rebuilding was a 'very urgent project' and should receive 'top priority'.

In 1975 a new Minister for Education, Dr Hopgood, replied to the local member Graham Gunn, who had joined forces with the School Council; he said no definite date could be given for the erection of replacement facilities. 'There is no doubting the school is overdue for replacement and it has been given a relatively high priority in the design list.'[44]

By 1976 the whole Far West community was upset and beginning to get involved. The staff at the school went public on the issue. They all signed a petition calling for a new school and described some of their conditions; a year 2/3 class had the Deputy Principal's office as a classroom, two Senior secondary subject teachers shared a cleaners room as an office, the sewerage system was constantly breaking down, etc. etc.

Some of the Demac buildings used to create the Ceduna Area School 1978–1982.



Craig Cameron, the leader of the school, with the relatively new title of Principal, told a public meeting that Ceduna was an 'educational backwater'. His school was the most poorly equipped Area School in the state and he urged the community to work even harder for better conditions.[45] The meeting discussed the situation at length and supported proposals for the concept of a 'community school' namely, a Community School Library, the construction of a swimming pool for the school and the community, the construction of 6 tennis courts for the school and the community and the construction of a hall that could be used as a basketball stadium.

These 'community' projects proceeded independently and have all been achieved, but the full government project, a new school, floundered on with no real improvement. A 'temporary' solution to the overcrowding was three wooden portables brought from Streaky Bay where their new school had no use for them.[46]



The interior of the multipurpose hall at Ceduna Area School, 1987.

The School Council sent a delegation to meet the Deputy Premier Mr D Corcoran in 1976, but nothing much happened after that so, in 1977, the students got into the act with a letter published in the *Advertiser*.[47] The 1977 Matriculation class 'of the largest Area School in the State (770 students and 55 staff)' wanted it known that their school had one small lunch shed, its rooms had broken walls and floorboards, and their class of seven senior students shared an enclosed porch'. They concluded by saying that the 'removal of the physical disadvantages of working in such primitive conditions by the early erection of the planned new school would be greatly appreciated by all the children in the area'. It was signed by Janine McCarthy, D Beattie, R Pearson, Ruth Perry, A Phin, Jenny Roberts and Alan Crouch.

The *News* in Adelaide tackled Dr Hopgood on the letter the day it appeared. His response was: 'Construction of a $1 million-plus new school at Ceduna would start in February next year'. But later in his response the dreams of a 2 storey solid construction disappeared with the words 'the planned new school would be made up of demountable buildings which would be airconditioned and architecturally designed to look attractive.'[48]

February 1978 came and went with no new buildings, but the District Council of Murat Bay did receive permission to close Keitel Street and part of Kelly Street to create room for the proposed new school complex. Then, in August 1978, four Demac classrooms appeared on low loaders and were manoeuvred onto the site. The staff at the time stood about with expressions of great disbelief — something was actually happening!

The story was by no means over, for the Demacs stopped coming. Overcrowding was bad again in 1980 and a thoroughly disgusted staff banned the intake of children under the age of 6 (the normal age of compulsion). Two Demacs then appeared from Berri and, in February 1982, after Leigh Creek no longer needed them, a final compliment of Demacs were put into place and plans were made for an 'opening' of the 'new' school. Trevor Griffin, the Attorney General performed this in October 1982 and apologised for the absence of David Tonkin the Premier who was unable to be present. By then John Halsey was Principal of the school, Barry Beattie was Chairman of the School Council and Tom Lambert, the school's Principal during many of the 'replacement' traumas, was a special guest.

In 1987 the Ceduna Area School is still a collection of Demacs, but they are carpeted and air conditioned. Additionally, the previously barren schoolground, on which the Demacs were dumped, has been landscaped magnificently with pine logs, brick paving and perennial plants. What is really a collection of little grey cubes has been beautifully camouflaged into a garden

The unsanitary situation caused the closure of Ceduna Area School last Thursday afternoon. Students were asked not to report for school on Friday after local health authorities found a sewerage pipe leaking into the schoolyard.

WCS 2/8/79



The Far West's Community Librarian Pauline Jolly at work in the Area School's Library complex.

Opposite page.
Ceduna Area School staff 1987.
Front: Tony Irvine, Dennis Crook, Sam Konnis, Sue Armfield, Karen Berkfield, Lorna Wilkins, Wendy Tonkin, Stephanie Hussey.
2nd Jenny Bryson, John Gascoyne, Lorna Hall, Karen Bond, Anne Horne, Kelli Lewis, Jane Whitelock, Tricia Wadmore, Dianne Vogiatzis.
3rd Jeanette Paech, Chris Warren, Patti Cibich, Pam Sobels, Leanne Kumnick, Julie Hurst, Merilyn Stevens, Laura Burgess, Sally Fieldhouse, Pauline Jolly, Lyn Dayman.
4th Gary Fieldhouse, Mark Flynn, Brian Palmer, Annette Ettridge, Ailsa Home, Angela Walker, Marion Blackham, Trevor Brooks, Lance McWaters, Norm Saunders, Susan Jones.
5th Mark Foster, Pam Johnston, Richard Nelson, Peter Whittington, Elspeth Murchland, Stephanie Armstrong, Simon Frances, Terry O'Reilly, Stephen Cibich, Jeff Dunn, Phil Weatherald.
6th Sue Williams, David Brown, Leon Pliskow, Donna Vigar, Kate Eatts, Andy Pascoe, Kerry Dohring, Paula Salmon, Marie Kelly (Voluntary worker) Sandra Tonkin.

setting that is a pleasant working environment — and local groundsmen deserve great credit for this.

The separate community projects are integrated with the school and are much used by the local population. The tennis courts for example are the headquarters for tennis in the town and the old courts on East Terrace are no longer used. The swimming pool is a great asset, particularly during Learn to Swim campaigns in January each year, and the multi-purpose Hall is a fine building with many uses both for the school and for the townspeople. But, the facility which is most used by the community is the library. Originally at the Memorial Hall, where Joyce Backshall looked after it for 20 years and then Dulcie Blumson took over, it was transferred and amalgamated into the school's library with Pauline Jolly appointed Community School Librarian. The maintenance of the facility is now jointly funded by the Education Department, the District Council of Murat Bay and the Public Libraries Branch of South Australia. It was officially opened on 1 July 1982 by an 84 year old Joyce Backshall at a ceremony attended by the Mayor, Des Whitmarsh, and the local member of parliament Graham Gunn.

The size and complexity of Ceduna Area school has demanded well qualified members of the teaching profession to lead it and, in 1979, Tom Lambert, who had already been there for two years, was promoted with the school to the rank of Class A, one of a select few in the State chosen by several criteria including size and the complexity of its programmes. Since Tom Lambert, John Halsey and Kerry Dohring have been Class A Principals and, although the pressure of large enrolments has been eased a little by the opening of a Lutheran School in the town, there are still many complexities in the school. These stem from the desire to offer the widest possible range of subjects for children in an isolated environment and from the school's special programmes for a large number of Aboriginal children.

One noticeable feature of staffing at the Area School nowadays, is the length of time many teachers spend at the school. It is very different from staffing in the little schools and the early Ceduna schools because there are now so many attractions in the Far West that some teachers are prepared to make it their permanent home. Good examples are the current Deputy Principals of the school, Guy Bayley and Phil Weatherald, and the physical education teacher John Pearson. Together they have spent 33 years in Ceduna enjoying the good life in things such as sailing, horse racing, squash, football, fishing, tennis, music and drama.

One other Area School has been created within the boundaries of the District Council of Murat Bay, namely Miltaburra. It too had a rather long drawn out history before its buildings were established, but after a long process of consultation and much heart-burn about the closing of four small schools, Mudamuckla, Nunjikompita, Wirrulla and Haslam, the school was created and opened in 1984.[49] Minister of Education, Lynn Arnold, performed the opening ceremony and Mrs Lucy Campbell (nee Smith) the first teacher at the Maildaburra school in 1921 was in attendance. The new Principal, John Hannath, formerly from Haslam School, welcomed a crowd of 300 people and praised the Chairman of the School Council, Noel Gaden, for his work in getting the school established. On the same day, in another ceremony, Mrs Doug Anderson, unveiled a wall plaque in memory of her husband who died while working as a bricklayer on the school's construction.

There has been a strong Lutheran involvement with Education, particularly in the Denial Bay hinterland, ever since farming began in 1889. Originally it was linked with the Denial Bay Lutheran Parish and a school was established with the church of that parish in 1897 (See Chapter 7). Because it







Part of the beautifully landscaped grounds of the Ceduna Area School.

Miltaburra — a quiet little school in the middle of a dusty paddock.

A PUPIL, 1984

Miltaburra Area School created from the closures of Nunjikompita, Mudamuckla, Wirrulla and Haslam schools.

was a 'German' school it was closed by the government during the 1914–18 war along with all other such 'enemy' schools throughout the State. The school on the Koonibba mission, which was also run by 'Germans' was not closed, no doubt because it was seen as an Aboriginal school first and 'German' school second.

The Koonibba Aboriginal school was started by the Mission Board in 1902.[50] Pastor Wiebusch was the first instructor, but in 1905 Lutheran teachers were employed, the first being A Schwarz. M Linke taught from 1909 to 1915 and Alex Bode taught for 20 years, 1916 to 1935. A new school was built in the 1940s and, at that time, the enrolments varied from 70 to 90 pupils.[51] Other notable teachers were Vida Mibus in the 1940s and 1950s, A H Bruggemann, all 6'8" of him, in the 1940s and E A Rathjen in the 1950s. When the Mission was taken over by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs in 1963, (see Chapter 13) the school was transferred to the Education Department, but for a time was still staffed by Lutheran teachers. This changed in time and so did the nature of the school. The upper primary children were bussed to Ceduna Area school and what remains today at Koonibba is an Aboriginal school with junior primary pupils and Education Department teachers supported by Aboriginal school assistants.

In 1981 the Lutheran people in the Far West discussed the possibility of building a Christian based school in Ceduna. They set up an investigating committee chaired by Murray Thomas, the Parish lay worker, and looked at matters such as a site for the school, the likely school population, the funding for the project and the fees which would have to be charged. In May of 1981, at a public meeting to discuss the whole concept, Bill Oster, the Lutheran Schools Adviser, and a former Koonibba teacher, spoke about the spiritual bonuses of a Lutheran education. He also answered questions on more practical matters namely, he thought the buildings would cost about $220,000 and a government grant would be necessary, all the teachers would be qualified by the Education



Children displaying their work at the opening day of the Ceduna Lutheran School, June 1983.

Department and in most cases would have additional training through a Lutheran institution, Lutheran children would be given first preference for places at the school because the local parish would be contributing a substantial amount of money towards the construction and running of the school.[52]

After the public meeting, Lutherans met in a parish meeting to receive a full report from their investigating committee. A 20 page dossier was presented to the meeting and a motion to establish the school was accepted by 68 votes to 23.[53] Some other recommendations adopted were that the building should be opened in 1983, that the parish should contribute through cropping projects, grain donations and cash donations, and that planning should allow for growth to approximately 220 students.

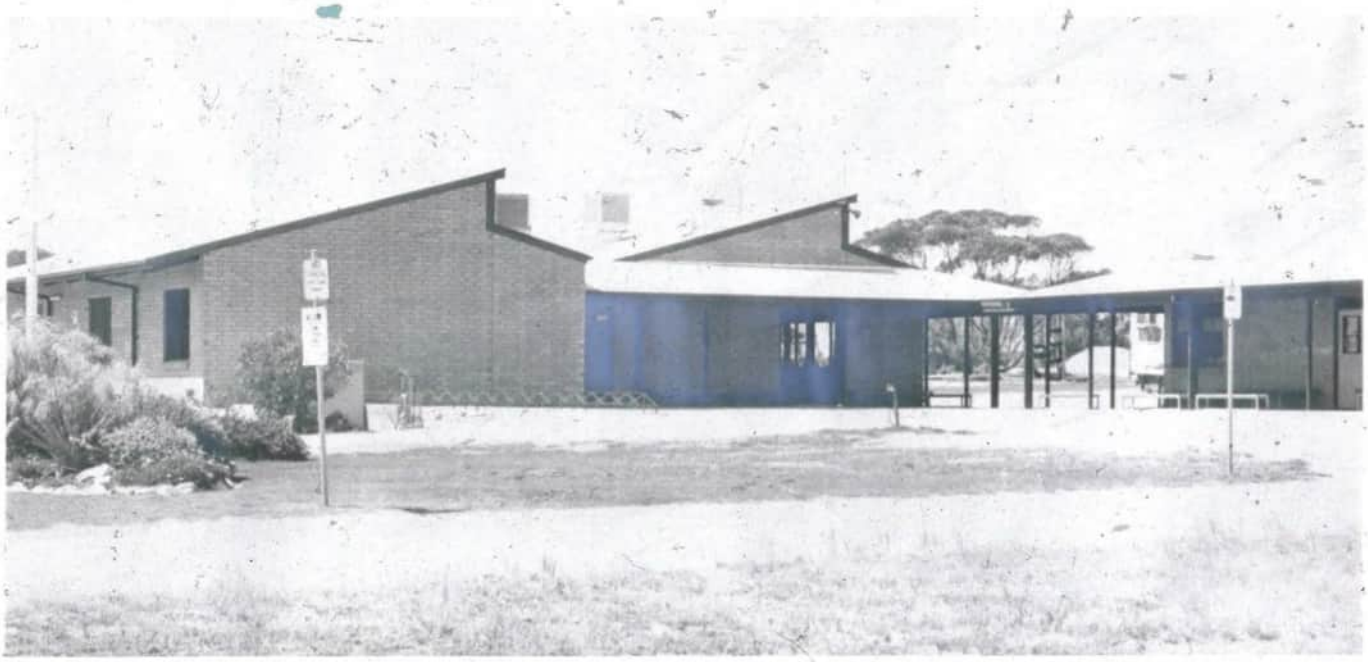
In stark contrast to the cumbersome establishment of the new Ceduna Area School, the Ceduna Lutheran School was created from a zero bank balance and a bare paddock in mid 1981 to a functioning school in eighteen months. The Area School Council agreed to the release of some of the land zoned for educational use, which the Lutheran Parish then bought from the Lands Department. The Area School Council also supported the Lutheran's submission for funding for their school — a submission which was favourably received when Murray Thomas, Graham Hoffrichter, Michael Ross, Garth Hoffrichter and Mrs Claire Hoffrichter presented it to the Schools Commission in Adelaide.

On 9 August 1982 Adolf Hofer, the Ceduna builder, began work on the site in accordance with plans drawn by architects Russell and Yelland in Adelaide. The first Principal appointed was Joe Dickerson and he was on hand to welcome over 100 students on a hot February day in 1983 when the school was open for teaching. An official opening was not conducted until 5 June and then, before a crowd of 400 people, Lloyd O'Neill, the federal member for Grey performed the ceremony. The special preacher for the day was Dr E Wiebusch, Chairman of the Lutheran Church of Australia's Public Relations Committee, the School was dedicated by the local Pastor, Robert Winderlich, and other important guests were the Parish Chairman, L Zippel, the Chairman of the School Council, V Liebelt, and a representative from Aboriginal organisations, Mrs A Kinnear, a former pupil of Koonibba School.

In very quick time Ceduna gained a new school. It is now an attractive brick building with modern facilities, four classrooms, a spacious library and a staff of a Principal plus four teachers and three part-time school assistants. Almost 50 per cent of the children are Aboriginal, so is one teacher and two of the school assistants. The whole project benefited from thousands of hours of voluntary labour and, in addition to Government funding and Parish funding, generous amounts were given by the Board of Aboriginal Missions and Lutheran Congregations throughout Australia.

Ceduna has seen several other significant developments in the area of Education in recent years. Its Radio School conducted through the Bush Church Aid radio network has already been mentioned briefly in Chapter 11. It was opened in 1956 by Miss K Miller and Beryl Jones (nee Watson) who had been the teacher at Mudamuckla before marrying local butcher Ken Jones. The school grew to have as many as 40 pupils in an area that extended to Coober Pedy, Neptune Island, Althorpe Island, Troubridge Shoal, Warooka and Cape Borda.[54] David Ashton, John Penberthy and Eileen Burns operated the school at different times and were regarded as staff members of the South Australian Correspondence School rather than the Ceduna Area School.

Beryl Jones was also involved with the early kindergarten movement in the Far West. The original kindergarten was held in the Thevenard Waterside



The Ceduna Lutheran School, opened 1983.

Workers hall but, in 1969, a new building was opened near the Area School. There were 34 children enrolled and Beryl Jones was Director, a position she held for 14 years.[55] In recent years a pre-Kindergarten class for Aboriginal children has operated and has been a very successful bridging group for children who can then 'graduate' to the 'big' kindergarten with very little difficulty.

At the other end of schooling, post secondary and Adult Education classes have been available in Ceduna since the 1960s. In 1969, for example, as part of the Eyre Peninsula Adult Education programme, courses were available in Art (P Sinclair), General Craft (B Jacobi) and Typewriting (V Pobke). Today there is a Technical and Further Education (TAFE) branch in the town, and over the years, it has offered a host of courses, many of them aimed specifically at Aborigines. In this area, its successful organic gardening course carried out at Poverty Flat (see Chapter 13) has been given national publicity. In 1985 the TAFE courses included Native Plant Identification, Seaside Home Gardening, Pottery, Microwave Cookery, Ceramics, Photography, Cake Decorating, Dressmaking, Woodwork, Welding, Yeast Cooking and Smocking.

In the 1980s, the educational opportunities in the Far West are a far cry from the days of the little one teacher schools and endless complications for children who wanted even a basic secondary education. The Ceduna Area School has now had Matriculation Classes since 1976. It offers all the opportunities available in a country high school and it gives a range of experiences in areas like technical studies, Aboriginal studies, drama and sport, which are second to none. Additionally, it sponsors a Far West Resources Unit and a 'School on Wheels', which takes resources to the remote schools of the district, Koonibba, Penong, Coorabie and Yalata. The children of the school have performed in some spectacular drama productions such as Jesus Christ Superstar, Territory West, Oliver, and Joseph and his Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat; they have qualified for opportunities to participate in sporting competitions against other children from all over the State, and they have been offered educational tours to Adelaide (frequently), Whyalla, Fowlers Bay and even as far afield as Sydney.

Even the children in the more isolated schools, Penong and Coorabie have opportunities today that their parents would have thought impossible in their

days. School buses are functional necessities in these schools, but they are also great assets for taking children on field trips, on visits to Ceduna, or to other schools for sporting contests and social contacts. There is however, still the problem of secondary schooling for the children who attend these schools, but the Isolated Childrens' Parents Association is a national lobby group which assists with the problem, and local women Anne Watson, Lorrayne Balharry and Shirley Mahar have been prominent members of the association.

Despite the obvious advantages of modern educational facilities, there is still a great nostalgia for the days of the little schools. It was evident in a Jubilee 150 project, appropriately called 'Little Schools of the West', which was held over a long weekend in October 1986. Brilliantly organised by Pauline Nielsen and other members of the Penong school staff and community, it invited hundreds of old scholars back to the district to relive their schooldays and to witness the unveiling of ceremonial plaques on the sites of their old schools. On a beautiful spring day, a large convoy of cars assembled at Bookabie early in the morning and then progressed to the sites of nine schools. At each one an old scholar or an old teacher addressed the crowd and evoked humorous and tender memories of schooldays up to seventy years ago. Thus Walter Williams told the crowd at Penong how he had been ridiculed with the chant 'Walter Williams doesn't know his ABC' in 1914, and Bill Tucker at Bookabie recounted how once he had to conduct the school in a car shed while the main building was renovated. It was a marvellous day and hundreds of Coasters mingled with the friends of their childhood who had travelled back for the occasion. Only 9 of the more than 40 little schools were covered in this project, but it was such a success that plans are in hand to have similar days in other localities and, hopefully, hundreds more of the old scholars of the Far West will be attracted back to the scenes of their childhood.



Old students and teachers at the unveiling of the plaque for the first Bookabie School 1892–1967, 'Little Schools of the West' day, October 1986.

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13. Aborigines — Natives to Nungas

In Chapter 1 reference was made to the early Aborigines of the Far West. To the explorer Eyre they were 'exceedingly polite and orderly' natives; to Corporal Provis of Streaky Bay they were a tribe with 'no government' who lived by the rule 'might is right'; to the anthropologist R Berndt they were probably only a few hundred in number.

The descendants of these early Aborigines have now passed through several generations and, in the broad span of 130 years since 1858, their history after European settlement has fallen into three major phases, exploitation during the pastoralists era, Christian oversight during the missionary era, and Government guidance towards integration in the modern era. Each phase has attempted to ease black people into a white persons' world and complete success has never been achieved. For the black people it has been, very much, a saga of 'Life on the Edge'.

Evidence of Aboriginal life in the Far West between 1858 and the 1890s suggests that they rapidly abandoned their primitive hunting and gathering existence and accepted a lifestyle where they were chattels of the pastoralists or dependents of the Government ration depot established at Fowlers Bay. In the latter case, they were issued foodstuffs and clothing by police officers who were obliged to write quarterly reports for the South Australian Protector of Aborigines. Some of these reports are still in existence: they are brief and usually indicate a trouble free co-existence with docile, friendly groups that camped near the Fowlers Bay sandhills. M C Dowling reported in 1887 that, 'as a body', the Aborigines 'were very honest taking into consideration the privations they sometimes must endure'. He also commented that, 'they (were) very lazy in their habits and also I may say very dirty'.[1] On another occasion in the same year, he commented on the health problems of the camp Aborigines thus: 'For the most part they suffer from lung diseases or some affliction of the chest and (the young men and women especially) seem to just waste away and die'.[2] This propensity to what was probably pneumonia was mentioned many times and one or two deaths per quarter 'at the camps' were usually recorded.

Henry Holroyd, a police trooper at Port Lincoln, claimed in his reminiscences that he established the peaceful co-existence of the Aborigines and the settlers at Fowlers Bay.[3] In 1858, with the government schooner *Yatala* at his disposal, and with a party of three, he was sent to Fowlers Bay to arrest an Aborigine who had wounded, with a spear, a member of the first well sinking party sent to the area by Messrs Barr Smith and Swan. The well sinkers

had retreated hastily to their ship after the skirmish and had called for police protection. Constable Holroyd and his men tracked down two culprits, one of them being condemned by the fact that he wore the shirt of the wounded man. They were arrested with a great show of police efficiency and sent to Adelaide for trial. Holroyd suggested that this showing of police strength had a beneficial effect on all the natives in the area and that, thereafter, they gave no trouble to the settlers.

Holroyd was wrong because, soon after his visit, a shepherd by the name of Bergeest, working for W R Swan, was killed. Two Aborigines named Nilgerie and Tilcherie were arrested by Port Lincoln police, taken to Adelaide for trial, and found guilty. Thereafter, an elaborate and macabre execution was arranged. The two natives were taken back to Fowlers Bay on the government schooner *Yatala* and were marched to the precise spot of the killing. There, before an assembled group of some 25 Aborigines, a gallows was erected and the two men were hanged. The report of the execution, which appeared in the *Chronicle* on 21 September 1861, stated that Mr Swan was a witness with Captain Carson of the *Yatala*, several shepherds, the overseer, and members of the *Yatala's* crew. 'Considerable impression was ... produced upon the Aboriginal spectators' who (it was said) were 'amongst the most uncivilized of Australian savages and utterly without clothing'. The bodies were buried at the place of execution so that 'the murderers now rest beneath the spot where they speared the shepherd'.

Despite these events, the diary of Mrs Thomas Richards, wife of Police Corporal Richards at Fowlers Bay, written 20 years later (1881–84), supports the notion of a mostly trouble-free existence with the Aborigines of the area.[4] A woman who spent much time without any close white male protection, she records only one occasion of uneasiness with the blacks. This was in November 1883 when, on an overland journey from Fowlers Bay to Streaky Bay with another woman and some Aboriginal guides, she met a travelling mob dressed



Camp Aborigines at Yalata station in the 1890s.

ready for war. Their 'bodies were painted black and shining like Satan, heads feathered, some with fine white shavings of wool; each carried three spears and a woomera to throw them from. Most of them were naked only for a waist cloth . . . They were from the Gawler Ranges, a few from Venus and Streaky Bays going to Penong to get back a stolen lubra.' The 'mob' stopped to talk to Mrs Richards' party but then moved on without harming them.[5]

At other times she recorded acts of friendliness and compassion. In May of 1883 she wrote that 'a mob of blacks came in (to Fowlers Bay) this morning and brought me a wombat; we are going to try him as fresh pork'. Two days later it was: 'we had wombat chops with fried onions for breakfast'.[6] And, in July of 1881, she wrote about her visit to the blacks' camp to see 'poor Nellie', a lubra who had been ill for a long time and had lost the use of her lower limbs. She took her some lollies and cake.[7]

M C Frederick Gardner was requested in November 1890 to report about suggestions of bad treatment of Aboriginal women and girls in the district, as stated by Mr Brown of Nullarbor Station 'before the Civil Services Commission'.[8] Gardner wrote that there were about 10 parties employing natives for the purpose of kangaroo hunting between Laura Bay and Eucla and also a few natives were employed on the Fowlers Bay and Wookata stations. He thought that their employers treated them well simply because, if they didn't, the blacks quickly left them and found employment elsewhere.

His letter said that, 'the whole of the able-bodied Natives are . . . enabled to earn a comparatively easy living' and he thought this was excellent because it was a saving for the Government in not having to supply them with rations from the Fowlers Bay depot, besides, he added, 'all (the natives) prefer kangaroo hunting to any other kind of occupation'.

Gardner went on to say that he had frequently questioned the natives about any alleged ill treatment by the white hunters 'and not one of them had any complaint to make'. Yet, he had no doubt whatever 'that considerable immorality is carried on amongst the native women, some of the hunters being reputed to keep lubras for the purpose of cohabiting with them'. In this he stated that, 'in every instance', the lubras were 'consenting parties' and that they showed 'a decided preference' to white men probably, he thought, because of the practice 'prevalent amongst the West Coast Natives of mutilating the persons of all the males'.[9]

Despite the 'good behaviour' letter of M C Gardner there are two contrary pieces of evidence provided by well known characters of the Far West, Mick Allen and James Hiern. Mick Allen's statement, which appears in his reminiscences, reads rather like a story that he dined out on a few times at the Globe Hotel in Fowlers Bay. He recalled a particular hunter who discovered one morning that his donkeys had broken their hobbles and could not be found. He wanted to shift camp at once so 'he hooked up 20 blacks and their gins to the waggonette, got on the load with his whip and drove them over very rough country in record time'.[10]

In James Hiern's, *Personal History* published in the *Denial Bay Starter* he wrote of the treatment handed out by one of his bosses to the natives.[11] The boss chained them to a gum tree overnight and next morning 'would give them a good hiding with a whip or stick and then let them go'. According to Hiern, it was the bosses way of 'making good servants of them afterwards'.

There is no doubt that there were instances when the Aborigines were badly treated by bosses and exploited by the kangaroo hunters, who were in the employ of the pastoralists. However, the record of G W Murray is without blemish in this respect, and he appears to have had excellent rapport with the natives of his area. He employed them as shepherds, some examples being

We had them working at very cheap rates . . . in the finish we would give them a full suit of clothes, a good blanket, bag of flour, bit of sugar, tea and tobacco — that was their pay.

LOCAL COMMENT

Chiltna Jack, Yarrigan, Dick Dorey and Sambo; and his two daughters Jessie and Maggie were raised amongst dozens of them who lived in a semi-permanent way close to the Yalata head station. They performed a special corroborree for Jessie's wedding and, when G W left the district in 1922, the Aborigines in his employ figured prominently in an illuminated address which was presented to him. It read as follows:

Yalata, October 1922

George W Murray Esq., Yalata.

We your employees at Yalata and White Well Stations feel that we cannot allow you to take your departure from amongst us without expressing our keen regret at the severance of the ties that have bound us to you for so many years.

By your just and generous treatment you have built up a spirit of comradeship that has been a constant source of pleasure and inspiration, you carry away with you the affection and loyalty of your whole staff and we wish to express our deep admiration of your character and our sense of obligation to you for your kindnesses.

You have in every emergency, proved yourself a true man, and those who have been associated with you most closely, acknowledge this most readily.

Please accept the expression of our admiration, goodwill, and esteem which we present with very sincere wishes for your future comfort and happiness.

We are — Thomas Butler, James C Simmons, Jacob Basham, William Scott, Arthur Stretton, Jock Lambert, Stuttering Yarry, Lucy Ware, George Denning, Robert Nicol, George Kinghma, Richard Dorey, Herbert Ware, Frank Kinghma, Colona Tom, Billy Munjenah, Jimmy Beema, Yarry Chuna, Willy Chuna, Martha, Myrtle and Lexie Ware, Cheeky Billy, Ben, Ernie, Roy and Mick, Jon. Evans, Alf May, Helen Lambert, Florrie Ware.

Daisy Bates also acknowledged the special relationship Aborigines had with the Murray family. She stayed at Yalata for several weeks in 1914 and wrote in her celebrated book *The Passing of the Aborigines* that all Aborigines



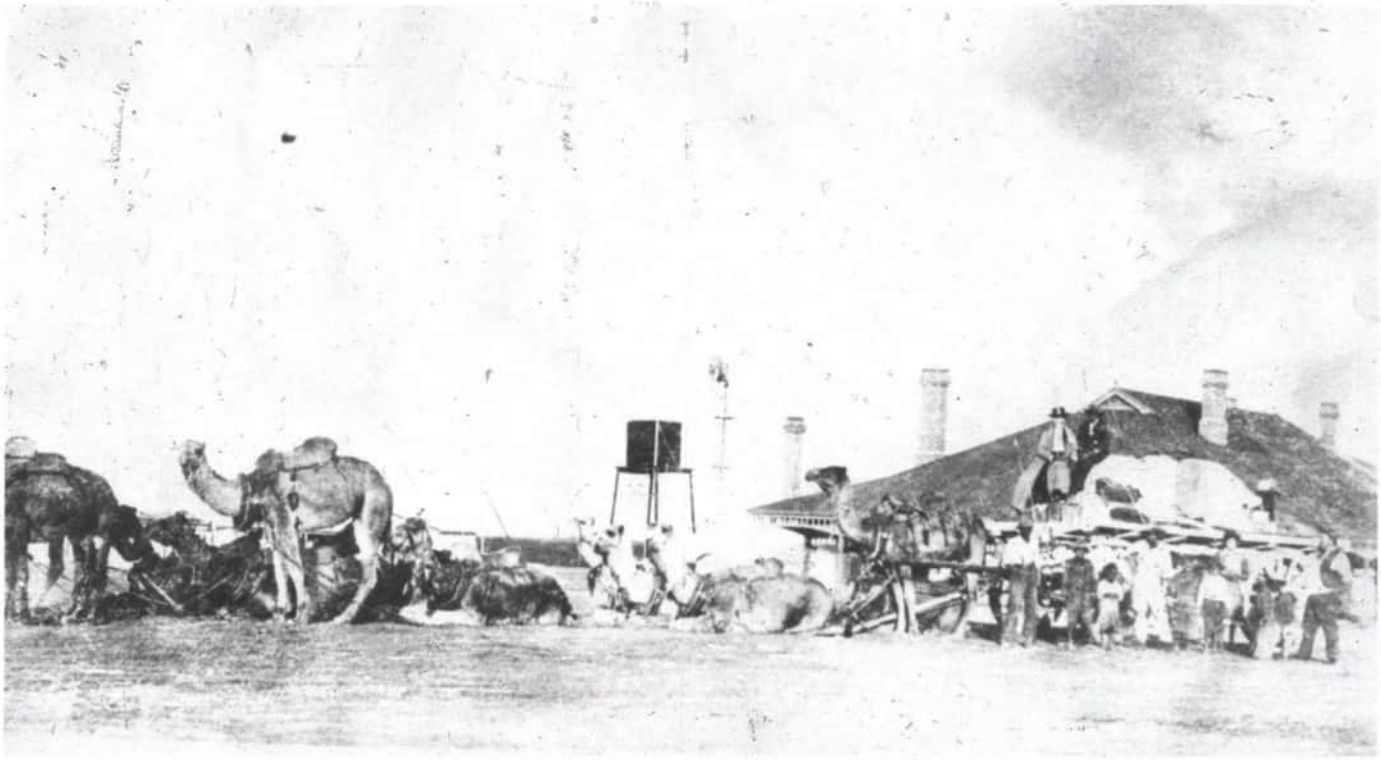
Jessie Murray, Aboriginal workers and a touring concert party at Yalata Station c 1918.

'found sanctuary there'. Old Aborigines and young alike 'sat behind the woolshed or round the wood-heap off and on for years, mostly gossiping and loafing, always sure of a sympathetic understanding with plenty of good food and kind treatment from Boonari, as the Big White Boss was called'.[12]

During the pastoralists era, the Aborigines were free to maintain a semi-nomadic existence. While they did set up camps with the kangaroo hunters and at the local station buildings, they were still free to roam the vast unfenced lands, moving as they had done for centuries from waterhole to waterhole. When, after 1889, the runs were subdivided and fencing became commonplace, Aboriginal walkabouts became a complicated matter involving many territorial disputes. In the 1890s and the early 1900s there were dozens of minor clashes between the new settlers and the blacks; this is recorded by Margaret Jenkins, who referred to the frightening 'nickety ones' who sometimes came down from the north. In their semi-naked state they appeared in mobs and terrified both the white settlers and the normally placid coast natives who had been mixing with Europeans for decades.[13]

M C Donegan spent eight years at the Fowlers Bay police station during the difficult transition years from a pastoral to a farming community. Eventually, he returned to live in his native Ireland, but before he departed he was interviewed in 1904 by a zealous reporter for the *Register*, who treated him as an expert witness on Aboriginal affairs in the Far West.[14]

Donegan had just arrested Yendinna Jack for the murder of Sambo a shepherd on the Yalata Run. Two other Aboriginal suspects, Steve Hart and Yarrie, were still at large. All three were part of the northern tribes who Donegan described as bloodthirsty and intent upon wiping out the coastal natives because they were too friendly with the whites. The killing of Sambo was part of their plan. According to Donegan the northern natives, who had 'the girdle as the beginning and end of their wardrobe', were part of the Nalyea tribe and practised cannibalism. In the last six months they had broken into seven shepherds' huts near Fowlers Bay and many of them were armed with rifles.



Daisy Bates with her camel teams and Aboriginal followers during a visit to Yalata Station in 1917.



In the 130 years since 1858 the Far West Aborigines have moved from wurlies, to humpies and bag huts, to 'half way' houses, to modern European style housing. The photo above shows stage two, a humpy on the edge of town which is no longer a common sight.

By 1905 relationships with the Aborigines were very bad around Penong. 'Wild and uncivilized natives' were 'coming in from the north', robbing the settlers of everything and keeping them constantly in fear.[15] In one instance Mompie, the acknowledged chief lawbreaker of the district, was arrested with Tambo for larcency of clothing and goods from Mr Weber's tent, tobacco from Mr Osborn, two fowls from Mr Saunders and also the wilful burning of the flooring in an unoccupied dwelling belonging to C B Beck.

The *Register* reported that when Mr Weber was asked whether he would prosecute Mompie (who had already been in gaol for a short spell) he replied: 'No. I am not going to lose my time going to Fowlers Bay to prosecute because if he is sent to gaol the Government will not keep him there. No, I am going to buy a rifle'. The *Register* indicated that Mr Weber's sentiments 'fully express the feelings of the settlers in this district at present'.

In another instance mentioned in *The Early Years* by Margaret Jenkins, the equivalent of a wild west 'posse' was formed by the men of Penong to hunt down several house breakers. Paul Smith's home was burgled, his best suit was stolen, all his fowls were shot, and his furniture, crockery and food stuffs were vandalised. He immediately sent a telegram to the Fowlers Bay police about the incident but, since he had to wait a day or two for a trooper to come to investigate, and there was evidence that Aborigines were breaking into other farmhouses east of Penong, he set off with a party of men on horseback to hunt them down. About a week later the posse, the police trooper from Fowlers Bay and the natives all met up near Koonibba. History does not record the exact details of the confrontation but it is known that the offending Aborigines each spent three months in the Port Lincoln gaol.

These potentially explosive situations, and several others like them in the Far West, were defused by the origins and growing strength of the mission movement fostered by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Australia and based at Koonibba.



Many Aboriginal women have worked as domestic helpers at the Ceduna Hotel since it first opened. This group contains, from left: Annie Clare, Queen Mary, Elizabeth Hanna Coote (wife of the manager), Bertha, and Ruby Bartlett.

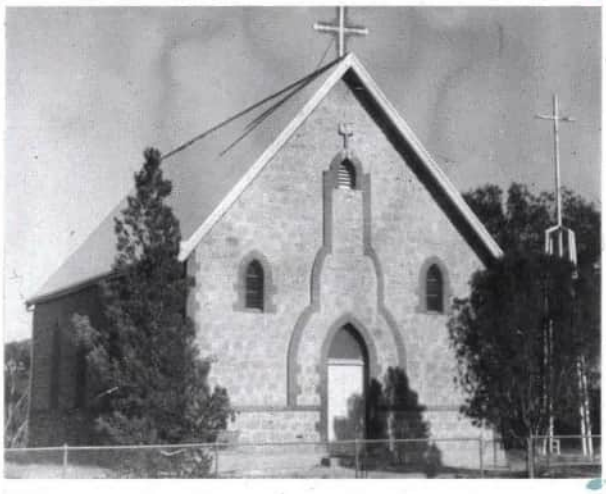
The history of the Koonibba Mission has been told in three publications viz. Koonibba Jubilee Booklet 1901–1926; Second Koonibba Jubilee Booklet 1901–1951; and A Piece of God's History, Koonibba 1901–1976. What follows for the next few pages is partly taken from these booklets and from other sources, notably Parliamentary Papers and the Royal Commission on Aborigines printed in 1916.

The establishment of a strong Lutheran Church community in the Denial Bay area has already been mentioned several times. Pastor H Kempe visited this community in 1897 and, acting on instructions from the synod of the church, selected a site of 16,000 acres in the Hundred of Catt for the establishment of a mission. J Pannach was appointed farm manager in 1898 and started to clear and cultivate the land. He obtained the support of several Aborigines and they worked at scrub clearing for their food and clothing.

The mission was called Koonibba, meaning rock waterhole, and was managed by a Board consisting of Pastors and Brethren who mostly lived in the more settled parts of the state. They tried several times to find an appropriate Pastor to lead the mission and they were not successful until 1901 when C A Wiebusch, who had just completed his studies in America, accepted a call to be the first Superintendent of the Mission.

Pastor Wiebusch has written, in the first person, a moving account of his experiences in the first years of Koonibba. With his wife he was met by the farm manager and about 30 Aborigines, after what he described as a 'very tedious' boat trip to Denial Bay, followed by an eight horse waggon trip with 'a hot north wind . . . blowing and the thermometer (soaring) up most uncomfortably to about 116 degrees'.[16] They slept their first night on bags of wheat and next day began preparing 'a primitive home'.

Pastor Wiebusch stayed until 1916 and highlights of his heroic contribution to the missionary cause were the building of a Koonibba Church in 1903, the establishment of a school, and the building of a fourteen room Children's Home in 1913.



The Koonibba Lutheran Church dedicated 1910.

On 25 March 1913, Pastor Wiebusch gave evidence in Adelaide to the South Australian Royal Commission on Aborigines.[17] At that time he had been Superintendent for 11½ years, and he described the area of Koonibba as 12,700 acres under right to purchase lease plus 4600 acres at Davenport Creek which was on perpetual lease. There was an average of 100 Aborigines at the mission of whom two thirds were full bloods and the others half-castes and quadroons.

The Koonibba farm had, according to Pastor Wiebusch, 40 horses, 65 head of cattle, no sheep and 2000 acres under crop. In answer to a question 'Is the work done by natives?' the Pastor said 'Yes; by the natives and the manager and two or three white assistants whom we call foremen'.

Other details supplied for the Commission were that the Aboriginal workmen received a wage varying from 7/6 to 30 shillings a week, that girls were taught cooking, washing, mending and milking, that the boys were encouraged to play football and that the health of the natives on the mission had been good.

On 4 April 1914, the Royal Commission sat at Koonibba and interviewed J W Rudolph the farm manager, F M Linke the schoolteacher, Esther Noack the person in charge of the domestic department, Joe Miller, Alex Kent, Dick Davey and Ted Thompson, all Aboriginal workers.[18] At the time there were 183 Aborigines at the mission — 146 full bloods (83 males, 63 females); 35 half castes (21 males, 14 females) and two quadroons. Of the total, 114 were adults and 69 were children.

In response to the question: Do you like to work here?, Joe Miller said, 'Yes. This place is home to me. I am a married man. We have not got rooms here yet but are living at the camp. I would like to have a house.'

The Royal Commission published its findings in Parliamentary Paper 21 of 1916. It noted that at Koonibba births of Aborigines were in excess of deaths and that it was the only place in South Australia where it found that to be the case. It also recorded that the Commissioners had been favourably impressed with the manner in which the place was managed and the conditions under which the natives lived. Yet, the Commission considered that the care of Aborigines was a national matter and that it was the duty of the Government to acquire possession of properties and assume direct responsibility for the well being of the blacks. This had already been done at Point McLeay and Point Pearce and hence the Commission recommended that Koonibba should be similarly acquired.

A Koonibba Aboriginal Mission Station Acquisition Bill was introduced into the South Australian parliament on 1 November 1916. It passed the first reading and there was a brief debate during the second reading wherein the

running of the Mission Station was given praise. There was then a prorogation of the Parliament and the bill was not reintroduced. Koonibba Mission thus remained independent of Government control for another 47 years.

The publications of the mission give adequate praise to many dedicated workers at Koonibba; in summary they should also be mentioned here because their contributions are a part of the total history of the Far West. The Missionary Superintendents were C A Wiebusch 1901–1916, E Appelt 1916–1920, C Hoff 1920–1930, A Mueller 1930–1936, R H Traeger 1936–1946, C Eckermann 1946–1953, H Rosenblatt 1953–1957, C A Temme 1957–60, C Eckermann 1960–64.

Farm managers were J Pannach, G Schultz, J W Rudolph, H J A Schmidt, F H Braunack, and A Schmidt. In 1934 share farmers replaced the farm managers and H Gaden and R Linke were the operators until 1945 when H Gaden continued alone in a slightly revised role as station manager. F M Linke 1909–15, and A Bode 1916–35, were the two longest serving teachers at the Koonibba School, Miss A von Einem 1913–16, and 1922–23, was the first Matron of the Children's Home, and Nurse H E Semmler served from 1924–31. Sister G Hitchcock 1938–44, was the first Sister in charge of the Koonibba Hospital. The Koonibba Jubilee Booklet 1901–1951, also cites the following as worthy of special mention; Pastor W Juers, Miss A Gramp, Misses I Hasting, B Rurade, M Ruwoldt and A Tepper.

For the Aborigines of the Far West, Koonibba, at first, had a curiosity value. They drifted in to it as part of their regular cycle of travel through Ooldea, Coorabie, Yalata, Pintumba, Bookabie, Penong, Euria Rocks, Inla Rocks, Murjela Plains, Denial Bay, Streaky Bay and the Gawler Ranges.

In 1902, when 'the mob' moved on from Koonibba, five people stayed behind, Jimmy Richards, George Saunders, Herman Willoughby, Arthur and Ada Richards and Joe Miller. They were a nucleus which gradually attracted



Back L to R: Sarah Samuel (Mrs George Guerkin), Tony Mundy, (Mrs Joe Eden), W T Coleman, Liza Coleman (Mrs Gray).
Front: Lottie Bilney, Pastor Wiebusch, Mrs Ada Richards (later Mrs McNamara).

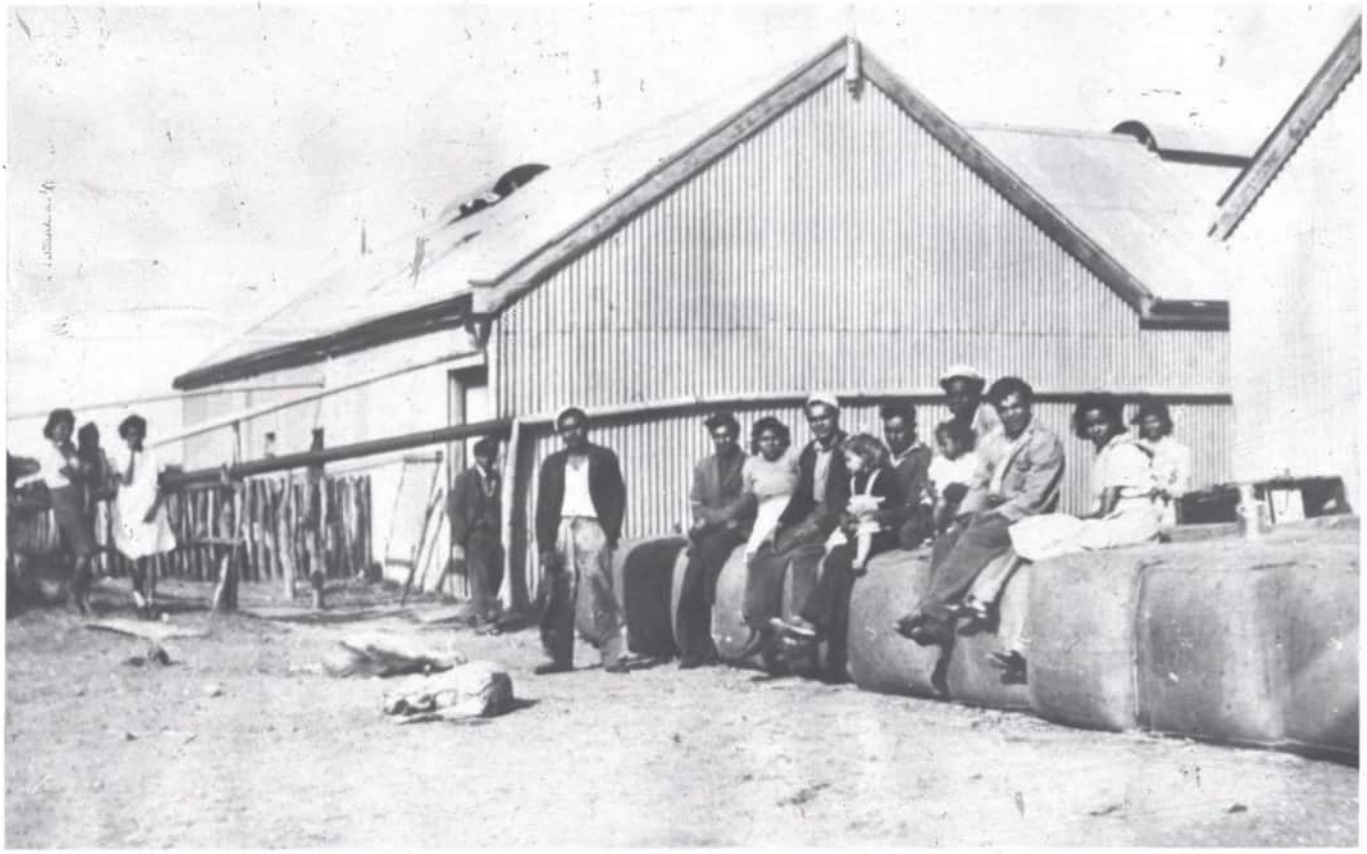
more and more people, many of whom grew to treat it as 'home base' between jobs. In so doing they steadily built up ties with the school and the church, which then strengthened the feeling of home — a home to come to in times of sickness, unemployment or in old age.

From amongst the early people who sat down for long periods at Koonibba the stories of a few can be told.

Dick Dorey has already been mentioned as one of the Aborigines employed on the Fowlers Bay pastoral run. He came from Shark Bay, Western Australia, and worked on the Colona out-station where he was remembered by a Dick Dorey's Hut. When he retired from Colona, he moved to Koonibba where his expertise with sheep was greatly valued until he died at the mission in 1947.

Jack Jacobs retired to Koonibba as a very old man after a useful lifetime all over Eyre Peninsula. Originally from Franklin Harbour, he went on many walkabouts with his parents and visited Fowlers Bay, Ooldea and the Warburton Ranges. He grew to be a huge, strong man who was a good blade shearer, an efficient scrub cutter and a fine musician on a button accordion. Most of his working life was spent around Yantanabie, but in his early adult years he worked on the telegraph line carting poles from Fowlers Bay to Eucla. In his retirement he was a great story teller for the children at Koonibba. One of his best was a true account of when he was sent out with three day's rations to cut 700 tea-tree posts. He came back after one day and wanted to know what he should do with the rest of the tucker because the job was finished!

Micky Free or William Michael Lawrie was born near Eucla. In the 1890s he worked in the Denial Bay district for the pioneer settlers, usually as the foreman of an Aboriginal scrub clearing gang. At this time it is believed that, along with his friend Tom Richards, he assisted Pastor Kempe in the selection of the Koonibba site. Soon afterwards he worked at Wookata, kangaroo shooting, and also went north to Ooldea; but when Koonibba became



Part of the workforce with their families at the Koonibba woolshed in 1948.



Koonibba Farm Workers. Group includes: Auville Gray, Frank Gray, Leslie Mundy, Reg Dunnet, Wilfred Coleman, Oscar Richards, Frank Carbine. Norm and Allan Wombat on the tractor.

established as a mission he made it his home. As a young man he was an outstanding athlete and competed in interstate competitions in Adelaide as a pole vaulter. He assisted several private exploring parties and claimed to have discovered some of the well known Nullarbor caves.

At Koonibba, Micky Free was a leader, an elder of the Church, a good worker for the farm and a loyal supporter of the mission staff. He was married twice and, when he died in April 1947, aged about 85, he left 10 daughters, 2 sons, 51 grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren — the basis of the well known Lawrie clan of the Far West.[19]

Thomas Richards, sometimes known as Jimmy Richards, had a reputation as a good worker in the Denial Bay-Koonibba area and was often the foreman in charge of an Aboriginal team for scrub clearing, stump picking, wheat lumping and on building projects. In the last capacity he had a hand in the building of the Koonibba School, the Koonibba Church, the Children's Home and the Denial Bay Hospital. He was a leader in the Koonibba community and was an elder in its church; but in his old age he moved to Point Pearce and died there in 1955.

John Highfold, whose forbears came from Ooldea, is remembered as one of the leaders of the Koonibba community from 1905 to 1912 when he died of consumption. He had a very high moral standard which he imposed upon many of his associates. One story passed down about him was that he always objected to bad language and was even known to complain about it on the football field, to the extent that he would threaten to stop playing unless the language improved.

Lucy Pimma, was originally Lucy Washington the daughter of a shepherd at the Top End. She was a Wirangu speaker, born in 1872, who married a Russian sailor, Robert Ware, in approximately 1890. They had 9 children and founded the large Ware clan which still exists in the Far West. Lucy was a tall, strong woman who worked as hard as any man; she yoked camels, cut wood, used a stockwhip and was a crack shot with a rifle. All these things she did while smoking a clay pipe. After Robert Ware died, she married Jimmy Pimma, who was a teamster for many years. Lucy died in 1951 at Koonibba and was fondly remembered by everybody, especially her many grandchildren.

In 1903 Koonibba was well and truly established with as many as 200 Aborigines coming and going throughout the year. School lessons, at first in Pastor Wiebusch's house, were later transferred to a new school built by Thomas Richards. This became a big attraction and more members of the

Vale Annie

Full-blood Aborigine Annie Wombat, 62, who died suddenly at Ceduna recently has been one of the West Coast's outstanding identities . . .

She was buried at the Koonibba Mission Station, Pastor Eckermann officiating.

WCS 18/3/64

nomadic 'mob' left their children permanently at Koonibba so that they could attend school.

In 1913 the Children's Home, 'a splendid structure of fourteen rooms' was built to cater for, initially, 31 children but the number soon rose and was 76 in 1922. People who lived in this home remember it with pleasant nostalgia; 'the staff were firm but fair'; 'we laughed and laughed', 'it was home'.

Strong ties were forged between children who came from a variety of localities such as Yalata, the Nullarbor, Port Augusta, Kimba and the Gawler Ranges. There were times each day when parents could visit and Sundays were special days when families working in the district came to Koonibba to go to church and to spend the day with their children.

In 1924 the Government Welfare Department introduced a policy of placing neglected and unwanted half caste children in foster homes or government institutions. The presence of the Children's Home at Koonibba meant that many children, who would otherwise have been sent out of the district, were able to stay at the Home and remain near their families and relations. This has had a lasting value; the extended families of the Far West have not been broken up and close ties still exist amongst all the people who have links with Koonibba.

The Koonibba farm was an important part of Aboriginal life for the whole West Coast. It existed to support the mission, to provide income, some food, and to provide training and employment for members of the community. Originally, all willing and able Aborigines were employed and many men became skilful ploughmen, teamsters and machinery operators on the farm. Like all other farms in the Far West, it suffered from fluctuating seasons and, on several occasions, the Davenport Creek lease had to be used for watering cattle because the Koonibba site was too dry. In 1923 conditions were so bad that the whole community had to camp at Davenport Creek for several weeks until rains came to fill the tanks at Koonibba.

The marginal conditions of the farm eventually forced a policy change. Under wheat and cattle it was possible to employ almost every Aborigine who applied, but it also meant that the farm made no profit; in fact it regularly returned a loss and had to be supported by Lutheran Church donations. Therefore, in 1922, reluctantly, the farm switched over to sheep and wheat, a potentially more profitable combination but one which offered only a fraction of the usual work opportunities. This was to have a far reaching influence on the whole community.

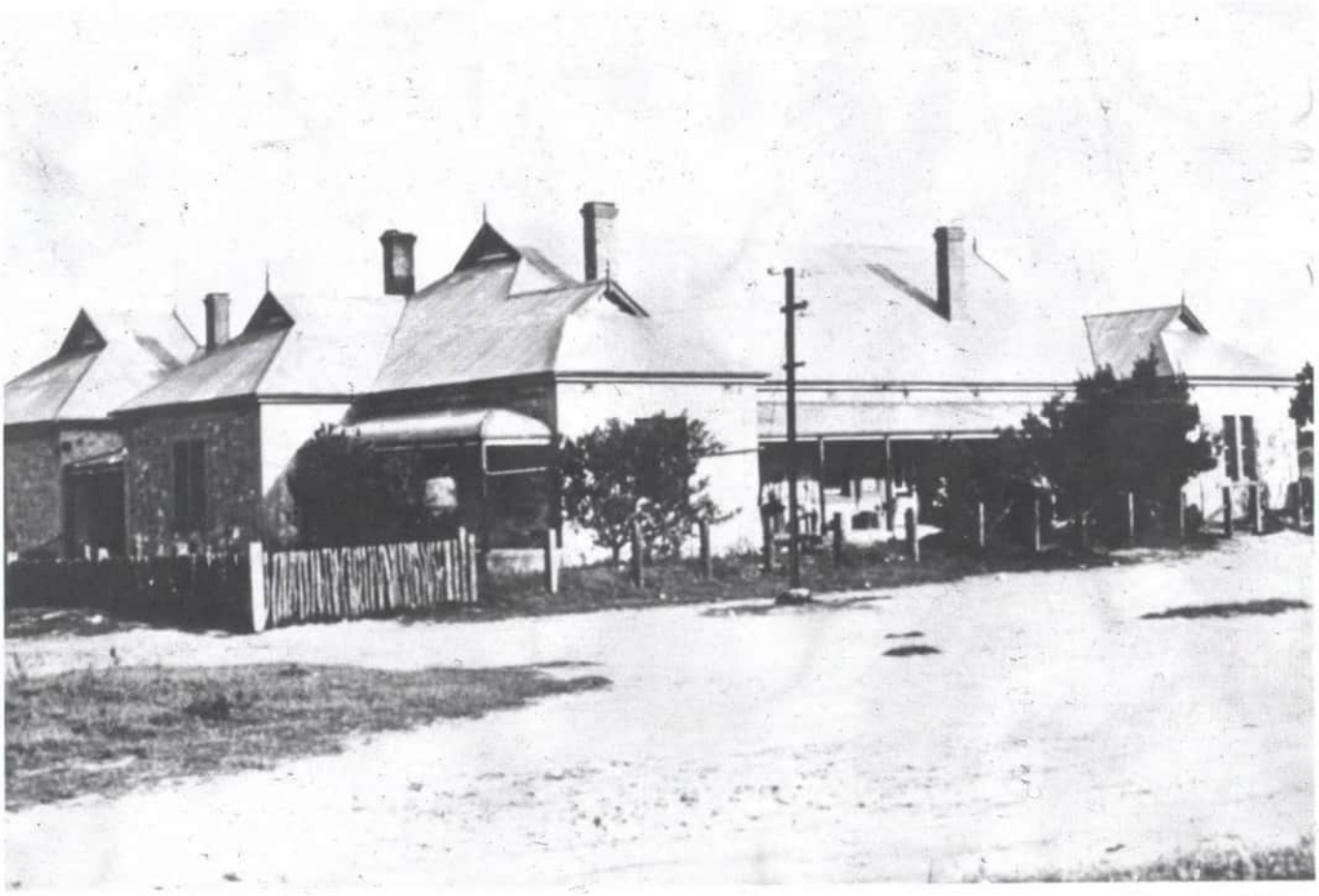
There were efforts to provide other avenues of employment. A saddlery course was introduced in 1923 and cottage industries such as knitting and basket making were initiated. These were only marginally successful and couldn't alter the basic reality that many Aborigines had to move off the mission to seek employment.

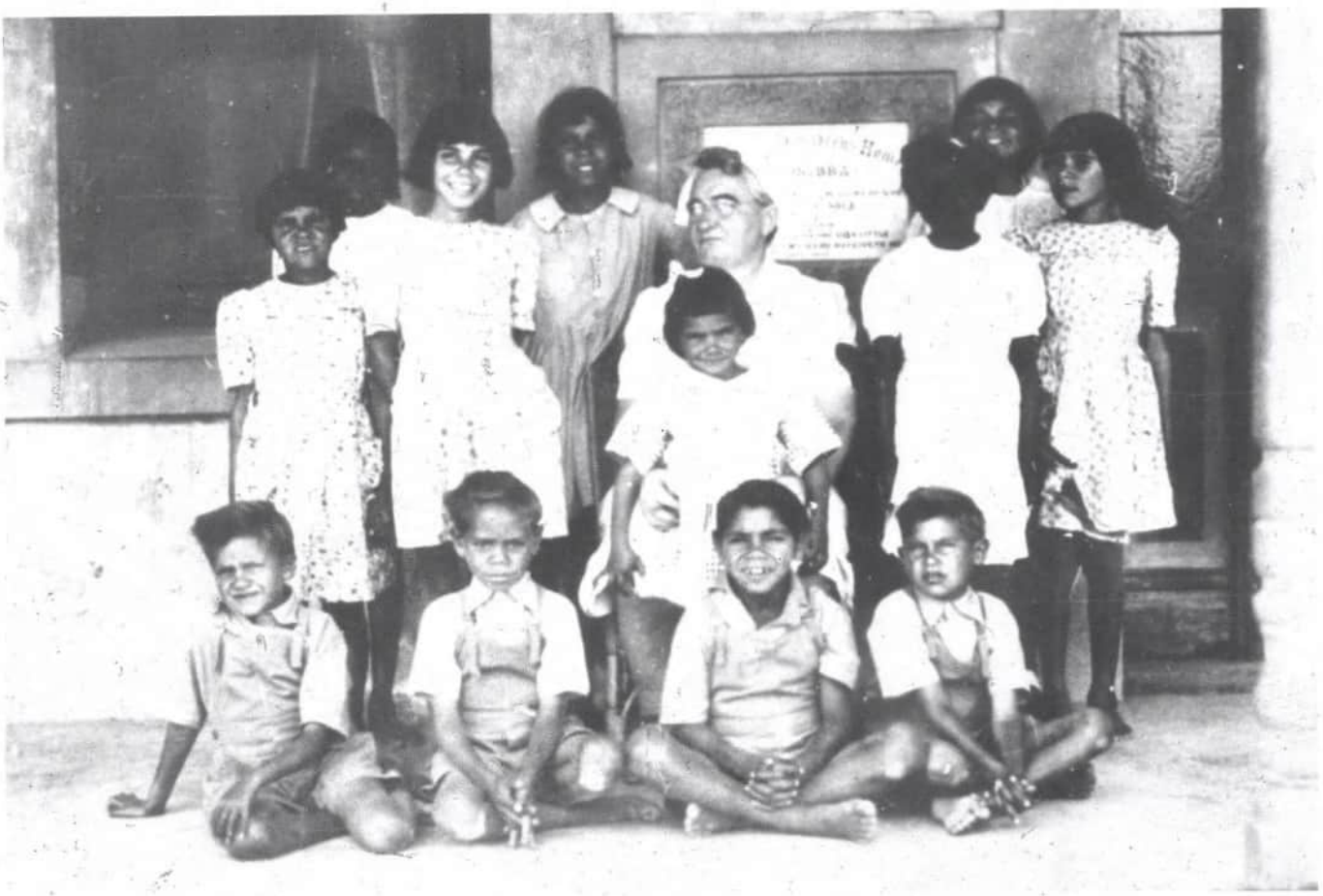
It is remembered that a group of people went to the Gawler Ranges to take up station work. They included the families of Ern Wilson, Bill Smith, Willy Coleman and Harry Peel. They spent time at localities like Yardea and Hiltaba but most of them returned to Koonibba to sit down and ponder where else they might get work.

Groups of young men travelled far and wide doing seasonal work such as wheat lumping, bag sewing, shearing, stump picking etc. There was, for example, for many years, a Smoky Bay mob that attended regularly to help with clearing, burning and stump-picking each year. Some of those who are remembered as part of the seasonal labour gangs were Dick Davey, George Burgoyne, Clarrie Highfold, Yari and Bill Miller, Robert Betts, Edward and Charlie Bilney, Dick Ware and Albert Binell.



Opposite page.
Above. The Koonibba Childrens Home, now demolished.
Below. Some of the occupants assembled on the front verandah of the Koonibba Children's Home. The group contains Matron Hoffrichter, Nora Walker, Belita Queema, Audrey Cobby, Joan Birrell, Colleen Tschuna, Arthur Johnson, Leon Carbine, Eric Birrell, Richard Le Bois.







A group of Koonibba people c. 1940.
Back row: Ella Hart, Irene Kelly, Gene Kelly, Shirley Miller, Lana Edwards, Grace Miller, Kathlene (Goondoo) Betts.
Middle row: Bruce (Djudda) Coleman, Edmond Pompey, Gorden Miller, Eric Richards, W J Miller, Cyril Argent, Wilfred Coleman.
Front row: Conrad Bilney, Esther Pompey, ?, Robert Betts, Ella Murray, Tracy Benbolt, Violet Richards.

In 1923 the railway line was completed to within 6 miles of Koonibba and, in November of that year, the first telephone was installed at the mission. Electric light came in 1926 and this was two years after the deep sea port had opened at Thevenard — a significant event because it provided a source of employment for many Aboriginal men who could still stay in touch with Koonibba.

Although Pastor Wiebusch was able to tell the Royal Commission confidently that the health of Aborigines at Koonibba was very good, it did not always remain that way. A Spanish flu epidemic swept through the community in 1919 and many were killed. At one stage neighbouring farmers such as the Foggos helped to dig graves in the evenings because there were insufficient able bodied Aborigines left to do it all themselves. Mrs Foggo made up big cauldrons of medicine, bottled it, and left it at the cemetery gate to be collected, as the mission was quarantined and she was not allowed in.

Various strains of influenza came again in epidemic proportions in 1930, 1933 and 1939; mumps were bad in 1932 and whooping cough was severe in 1935 and 1941. At other times there were scares with dengue fever and meningitis. The Church authorities struggled as best they could with these crisis situations and appointed a full time nurse in 1924. Later, in 1938, they built a hospital and linked it with the BCA Flying Medical Service from Ceduna.

The change in farming methods in 1922 brought some financial relief but, along with all other farms, Koonibba was not viable in the 1928, 1929 and 1930 drought years. This led into the Depression and the farm ledger kept accumulating red ink until, in 1933, another major change was made and sharefarmers were introduced. Once again there were fewer employment opportunities for the Aborigines, and there was an exodus of groups to Wirrulla, Bookabie, Fowlers Bay and the Gawler Ranges.

If unemployment was a problem in Koonibba it was not much better anywhere else and didn't improve until the years of the second World War. Then, many opportunities opened up, the first of which was enlistment in the

All farmers in the Far West knew Pastor Mueller well because he visited them often looking for work for his Aborigines.

LOCAL COMMENT

Army. Some 42 Aboriginal men joined up and served in units such as the 25th Australian Works Company, and the 10th Australian Employment Company. They were men with well known family names, Miller, Saunders, Coleman, Carbine, Ware, Argent, Lawrie, Burgoyne, Gray, Mundy, Moore, Richards, Davey, Smith, Wilson, Clothier, Peel, Edwards and Kent. Gordon Ware distinguished himself by making Sergeant in the 9th Infantry Brigade and Harry Scott and Godwin Wilson were both made Lance Corporals in the 25th Australian Works Company.

Because there was a widespread shortage of manpower, many Aborigines, with the help of the Church, found jobs in previously untapped areas such as the railways and the Engineering and Water Supply Department laying Tod water mains.

Jack Boxer was the first to work for the railways. He started in 1942 and was followed by Bill Miller in 1943. Others that followed were Will Larking at Wudinna and Will Lawrie at Nunjikompita. Bill Miller served 42 years for the railways at Maltee, Cummins, relieving throughout Eyre Peninsula and then in Adelaide. His example led to many others taking railway jobs though none could match his years of service. They included George Guerkin, Wilfred Coleman, Des Wilson, Auville Gray, Ernie Jebydah, Bruce and Raymond Coleman, Frank Carbine, Herbert and Gordon Miller, Bert Benbolt, B Saunders (Senior), Don Tschuna, Trevor Scott and Maurie Scott.

With the Tod water pipeline rebuilding schemes, many Aborigines joined the camp life and moved from station to station in tent cities. They mixed with a wide range of people including post war migrants and even a sprinkling of Chinese. It was a multi-cultural environment where the local Aborigines were very much at home and there are many who remember life in these days as happy, well paid years in a pleasant friendly atmosphere. Those who shared these experiences included Bill Smith and his sons Roy and Ray; Harry Peel and sons Spencer, Alf and Murray; Clarrie Highfold, Dick Ware and Edmund Bilney. Gilbert and Ivy Saunders were also employed as caterers at the camps.

Koonibba Basketball Team, Ceduna Carnival, 1960. Maryanne Chester, Ruth Schilg, Pam Coleman, Edna Saunders, Beverly Queama, Rita Kugena, Coral Warrior.



A third place of employment has already been mentioned namely the port of Thevenard. Here many Aborigines took up seasonal work, wheat lumping and loading gypsum. Their opportunities were greatest in the 1940s and 1950s, but since then, because of increased mechanisation and bulk handling, the number of jobs available has rapidly declined. Nevertheless, there were many who worked at Thevenard and some who can be remembered are Billy Edwards, Normie Wombat (Senior), George Burgoyne, Dick Davey, Jimmy Coleman, Jim Peel, Jack Boxer, Ted Boxer, Frank Carbine; Yari, Herbert and Gordon Miller; Bobby Betts and sons Reg, Eddie and Cecil; Furnie Ware, Cyril McCarty, Cyril Coaby, Reg Dunnet, Ernie Queema and some of the Bilney, Jebydah, Weetra, Highfold, Willoughby and Benbolt families.

To most of these workers Koonibba was still basically home, very few of them moved out permanently. They went back on weekends for football and sometimes for tennis, cricket and, in more recent years, basketball.

From the earliest days, singing was an integral part of Koonibba for Pastor Wiebusch found it to be an effective channel of communication with the Aborigines. It was taken up in the school, in the church, in the Children's Home and while walking and travelling around the district. Around a campfire at night it was always popular and many school bus drivers have used it in recent years with restless schoolchildren being transported between Koonibba and Ceduna Area School.

Most of the singing is unaccompanied but some people developed a talent at playing an instrument; Jack Jacobs' button accordion has already been mentioned and Clarence Highfold, Robert Highfold and Robert Betts all played the organ or a piano.

Koonibba people had a common 'home', but they often came from widely different parts of Eyre Peninsula. Thus there were 'Top End men' from Penong and Fowlers Bay, a Kimba and Iron Knob group and, in the late 1950s, many Ooldea people came down when they were shifted to Yalata from the Maralinga Lands.

Nowadays, the old Koonibba system has changed, but those who were brought up with it remember it fondly and talk about its heroes both black and white. Many of these have already been mentioned but nostalgic tales can be told of many others. There was Herbert George Mundy, a Sturt footballer of the 1920s, described as a model young man, a devout Church goer, a fine singer



Bill Oster who taught at the Koonibba School from 1932 to 1939 with some of his former pupils Gordon Davey and Bob Miller at back. Grace Miller and Auville Gray on the front.

and interested in chess, reading and music. Percy Cox was a product of the saddlery department. Trained by its manager Mr L Ey, he became most proficient and was much in demand as a leatherworker and harness maker for West Coast farmers for the rest of his life. He was also an excellent shearer and led gangs which did contract work for the Bookabie farmers, the Dunns, Grays, Mahars and Millers.

Amongst the women, Ruby Ware, Louisa Guerkin and Martha Roderick are fondly remembered. Ruby Ware was originally a Miller and then a Cox because she married Percy Cox. When he died in 1944 she married Edmund Ware. She came originally from Pennalumba, went to school at Koonibba and lived on at the mission where she was widely recognised as a good housekeeper who was very skilled at art and craft. Additionally, she assisted at the Children's Home and, occasionally, took over as Supervisor if the matron was ill or called away from the area.

Louisa Guerkin was the daughter of well known Kukata people Sam and Amy Billely. Her first husband, Charlie Kelly, was a great Koonibba worker who died young and Louisa later married George Guerkin, a sincere, steady Aborigine who was then working for the railways. Louisa lived at Koonibba for a long time and also at Koonibba siding where she and George kept an excellent garden.

Martha Roderick, nee Ware, worked as a domestic for W H Clark on St Peter Island. Later she was a cook at E&WS camps on the Tod pipeline and this is where she met her husband Stan Roderick. They became a well known couple in the Far West and Martha was widely respected as a faithful employee, pleasant and capable in all that she did.

In the 1950s a new dimension was added to the mission work of Lutherans in the Far West when they were asked to care for the displaced Aborigines from Ooldea. Although this is an area outside the boundaries of the district examined in this book, the impact of settling 300 Aborigines at Yalata Mission has been felt all over the West Coast, and, particularly in recent years, in Ceduna.



The Koonibba School with teachers Mr A Bruggerman and Miss V Mibus.

KOONIBBA FOOTBALL CLUB

Will field three teams this season

A GRADE, B GRADE, COLTS

COACH — BOB MILLER

Training Tuesday and Thursday

First Match — Koonibba v Carawa on April 12 at Koonibba

REFRESHMENTS AT ALL HOME MATCHES

The history of the Yalata Lutheran Mission, 1952–1977, has been well documented by Pastor N Hampel and he wrote of the early involvement of Koonibba in the resettling process.[20] Ooldea Mission closed in 1952 because of a combination of several factors namely, the Ooldea Soak was slowly being overwhelmed by moving sand dunes, there were disagreements between the United Aborigines Missionaries at Ooldea and the Federal Government, and the Government desired to remove all Aborigines from near a proposed Atomic Bomb testing area (Maralinga). Pastor C V Eckermann, Hans Gaden and Deaconess Vida Mibus, after requests from the Protector of Aborigines, Mr Penhall, 'set out from Koonibba to Ooldea Soak' on June 23 1952.[21]

The Aborigines who wished to be relocated at Yalata were brought down by trucks and camel buggies originally to Ooldea Tank (twenty miles north of Colona). Here on Sunday 6 July 1952, Paster Eckermann conducted the first Lutheran service for their new charges and, appropriately, he told his audience 'the story of the exodus of the children of Israel from the land of Egypt'.[22]



Koonibba Football Team, Church Jubilee Carnival Winners, 1960.
Back: G Benbolt, D O'Loughlin, B Edwards, M Jebydah, A Gray, S Weetra, D Heyne, P Baker, M Peel, R Dunnett, E Benbolt.
Centre: R Betts, M Coleman, A Betts, B Mundy, K Carbine, W Newchurch, T Kugena.
Front: R Miller, E Binnell, L Beattie, N Jebydah, O Bilney, J Peel, P Lawrie.



Young tennis enthusiasts at the Koonibba Childrens Home. From left: L. Edwards, Ruby Kent, Hilda Yabnia, Emma Richards, Belinda Jebedah, Florence Jebedah.

Eventually, the Aborigines were permanently located at Tallawon Tank and here, over several years, the present Yalata settlement was built up. In the early period it was a heroic struggle for which missionaries A B C Hoff and T F Strelan should receive special mention. At the same time, they may not have survived if it had not been for the regular supply truck brought up from Koonibba each week by Hans and Noel Gaden.

Further details in the interesting story of the Yalata aborigines can be obtained from Pastor Hampel's booklet.

For Koonibba the greatest impact was the transfer of the children from the Ooldea Boys and Girls homes to the Koonibba Childrens Home. About thirty of them came and, with their Pitjantjatjara language and virtually no English, they presented a real challenge to the people of the Home and to the teachers at the Koonibba school. A challenge of a different kind for the district was that many parents of the children, plus various relatives, moved from time to time to camp on the outskirts of Koonibba or Ceduna. Gradually, the Far West discovered that it had to absorb a new group of Aborigines, most of whom were not far removed from tribal conditions and did not have the benefit of a close interest that Koonibba Aborigines have experienced for sixty years.

Any evaluation of the contribution Koonibba has made to the Aboriginal history of the Far West must come down with far more plusses than minuses. It developed at a time when racial tensions were building up with the pioneer white farmers and it is certain that it relieved many of these tensions then, and for decades afterwards. Yet, its basic aim was Christian conversion and the missionary superintendents were generally more interested in their baptismal counts (for Pastor Wiebusch it was 113) than their employment counts. And, it was on the latter statistic that it foundered. Non-missionary supporters of Aborigines argued that they needed to be taken 'outside' beyond the Christian paternalism (Koonibba missionaries would prefer the word brotherhood) and made to earn their living in an assimilated or integrated black and white society.

Apart from the altruistic people, either missionary or non-missionary, there were always a few people at the other end of the scale of human values who were prepared to make life difficult for Aborigines generally. Pastor Hoff referred to them thus: 'not all white people are 'white' at heart . . . some of our greatest troubles are caused by unscrupulous white men who supply inferior liquor (pinky) to these people and by promiscuous living contaminate them with venereal diseases'.[23]

Pastor Hoff also referred obliquely to some on the West Coast who wanted 'to wreck our mission'. They were 'a noisy minority', and here one he might have had in mind was the outspoken Dr Harden of Denial Bay. He was very anti-German and became involved with the mission in the sensation legal case which is discussed in Chapter 6.

Incidents such as the Harden case were isolated rumbles that were consistently overwhelmed by a mantle of support for Koonibba, which came from the large Lutheran Church congregations both at Denial Bay and in Ceduna. And, for the non-Lutheran residents of the Far West, the Koonibba 'image' was projected favourably by a skilful football team with decades of tradition and a long list of star players such as Reg Betts, Don Tschuna, Maurice Miller, Normie Wombat and Eddie Betts.[24]

The determination of some people to bring all mission stations under the control of the Government did not disappear completely when the Koonibba Acquisition Bill lapsed in 1916. In the 1960s it reappeared under the umbrella of the Aboriginal Affairs Act of 1962 wherein provisions for Government Aboriginal Reserves were clearly indicated.[25]

Before the Act was proclaimed the Lutheran Church, worried by an increasing debt at Koonibba, began negotiations with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs regarding the mission's future. The story of these negotiations is told by Pastor C V Eckermann in, *A Piece of Gods History, Koonibba, 1901–1976*. The final outcome was 'the uncouth shock of May 1962', which was the announcement of a government takeover of Koonibba.[26] Despite counter proposals and further negotiations 'the takeover followed as from July 1, 1963'.[27]

A new era had arrived in the history of the Aborigines in the Far West. Pastor Eckermann wrote of it thus: 'In accord with the national assimilation policy, which was current, its stated objectives were the dispersal of the Koonibba people into the general community'.[28]



Koonibba Marching girls on parade in early 1960s.

Mr Len King, then South Australian Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, articulated a 'New Aboriginal Policy' which has been the guiding light of the modern era. In it 'assimilation' has given way to 'integration'. Thus he said in a prepared statement: 'The Government (in 1967) . . . set itself an objective which is usually described as integration. This recognises the right of the Aboriginal people to live in our community on fully equal terms, but retaining, if they so desire, a separate and indentifiable Aboriginal heritage and culture.'[29]

Whether it be 'assimilation', 'integration', or the more modern 'self determination' the nett result in the Far West has been greatly increased involvement by government appointed officers in the welfare of Aborigines. It began in 1958 in response to publicity in the *West Coast Sentinel* which suggested that the Murat Bay Council was 'seriously concerned over the native problem which had reached alarming proportions'. In particular, the paper attacked conditions 'at the reserve at 18 Tank' which it described 'as deplorable and a disgrace to the Far West'. At the reserve approximately 200 natives were 'living in bag humpies in most squalid and depressing conditions' and 'sanitation was non existent'.[30]

Part of the above publicity stressed that strong representation had been made for the State Government to appoint a permanent officer of the Aborigines Department to Ceduna, 'to look after the welfare of the natives in the area'. This resulted in the appointment of Pat Kleinig who must have worked wonders because, in December of the same year (1958), the *West Coast Sentinel* was saying, 'the welfare of the local natives has never been better — the appointment of a welfare officer by the Aborigines Department has been a big factor in achieving this satisfactory state of affairs.'[31]

After the demise of the mission era in 1963, the most outstanding aspects of the 'New Aboriginal Policy' in the Far west were the changes at Koonibba and the formation of what today is known simply as FWAPA.

In the 25 years since Koonibba changed hands and became a government responsibility rather than a Lutheran Church responsibility, the 'New Aboriginal Policy' has brought more revolutionary changes to Far West



Pastor Eckermann and a Confirmation Class in 1963.

Aborigines than in the previous 100 years. Many of these changes have come from policies supported and financed by Labor governments in Canberra and Adelaide, the fundamental thrusts of which are integration and self determination.

In the name of integration, or its predecessor assimilation, the government appointed Superintendents at Koonibba strove to put Aborigines into full employment, either by creating jobs for them at Koonibba or by sending them out into the workforce. Here they sometimes had success in placing men with the Railways, with local farmers, with the District Council of Murat Bay or with the port authorities at Thevenard.

In the years of the late 1960s and early 1970s Supervisors such as Dudley Brown, Bob Kean (who died tragically while on holidays in Victoria), Barry Marshall, Malcolm Buik and Rex Orr had oversight of mechanical and carpentry shops built at Koonibba and tried to get from the Aborigines a 'radical departure from (their) indolent way of life'.[32] They had to admit that, 'it caused considerable heartburning in some quarters at first' and sometimes in their eagerness to 'smarten up' the men to make them potentially employable outside Koonibba they went too far. Milton Dunnett can remember that, for a time, nobody was allowed to come to work at Koonibba unless he was clean shaven. Another piece of bureaucracy that rankled was the 'permit system'. People sent off the Reserve to find jobs in Ceduna or Thevenard had to apply for a Permit before they were allowed back, even if it was only to see their relatives. The system was used on all Aboriginal Reserves in South Australia; it was aimed at stopping undesireable white people from mixing with the Aborigines, but for those who had traditionally thought of Koonibba as 'home' it was very difficult to understand why they needed permission to be there.

In contrast to the skeleton staff of administrators maintained by the Lutheran Church, the Aboriginal Affairs Board and, later, the Department of Community Welfare, employed a much larger number of European personnel to assist with their policies. In 1968 the staff were Superintendent Bob Kean; Assistant Superintendent Barry Marshall; Mechanical Overseer, Ken Buckingham; Bookkeeper, Ted Tarleton; Foreman, Charles Roullier; Nursing Sister, Eva Volavola, and Welfare Officer, Jane Garlick. Also on the Reserve were teachers Eric Jericho and Anne Hermann plus Pastor Vic Schubert.[33]

The commendable policy of integrating Aborigines into the workforce has, of course, fallen foul of the widespread general unemployment of the 1970s and 1980s. Nevertheless, much government finance has been poured into the Far West to support the policy and, even though many Aborigines have not made good use of their opportunities, the money has been spent, and the wider community has gained benefits from it. There are many examples and they continue to appear. In 1972, the State Grant (Aboriginal Advancement) gave Murat Bay Council enough money to employ 10 Aborigines on roadworks and foreshore improvements at Ceduna.[34] And, in 1974, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs in Canberra made a grant of $45,000 for employment. The District Council indicated that it was enough to give 6 to 8 Aborigines work for twelve months.[35]

The policy of self determination aims to give Aborigines greater control of their own affairs. At Koonibba it began with the formation of a Koonibba Aboriginal Council in 1965. It was made up of 9 men and 9 women elected by secret ballot and was expected to advise the Superintendents on 'rules for the Management of the Reserve'. It also assumed 'responsibility for the cleanliness of the Reserve'.[36] Cyril Coaby was an early Chairman of the Council; he wrote to the *West Coast Sentinel* in 1968, on behalf of his fellow colleagues, asking for more balanced reporting about the affairs of Aborigines in the Far West.[37]



Aboriginal housing, Koonibba 1986.

Rex Orr, the Superintendent in the early 1970s, encouraged the Council to accept more and more responsibility. It had to, because in January 1976, the government landlord, who was then the Department of Community Welfare, handed over complete control of the Reserve to a restructured group, the Koonibba Aboriginal Community Council Inc. (KACC). This group of elected Aborigines has run Koonibba ever since and has done so with varying success. It has hired and fired a mixed bag of, chiefly, European administrators to assist it with its duties; it has lobbied successfully for a reticulated water scheme for the Reserve and it has battled, unsuccessfully, with the complexities of bulk bills for the Reserve's electricity, when many of its consumers have not paid their share of the cost.

But, well before the formation of the autonomous KACC, the centre for Aboriginal activities had shifted from Koonibba to Ceduna. The policy of integration into the white man's workforce took so many away from the Reserve that they lost touch with their old home and set up new homes at the Duck Ponds Reserve, on the edge of Ceduna, or in the town areas of Ceduna and Thevenard where, under the New Aboriginal Policy, it was possible to acquire Housing Trust homes. The prominent Miller family is a good example. The patriach of the family, Harry (Yari) Miller, lived as a boy in the Bookabie area but shifted to Koonibba in the 1930s. Later, with a family that grew to be 6 sons and 3 daughters, housing on the Duck Ponds Reserve was arranged by Pat Kleinig the Aboriginal Welfare Officer. Later again, they moved to a Housing Trust home at Thevenard.[38]

The mix of Aborigines and whites in Ceduna needed a group different from the Koonibba Council to promote the ideal of self determination; so in December of 1972 the Far West Committee for Aboriginal Advancement was created. It consisted of 7 Aborigines and 7 Europeans with Kit Haseldine, Chairperson and Rex Orr, Secretary. At the first meeting as a Committee in March of 1973 it agreed to work towards the following aims: (1) To aid the advancement of Aboriginal people in the Far West, (2) To foster cooperation between Aborigines and Europeans, (3) To encourage Aborigines to consult with the Committee and (4) To encourage Europeans to consult with the Committee.

The Far West Committee for Aboriginal Advancement met spasmodically for several years and was well served by people like Rex Orr, Barry Piltz, Joy Reid, Geoff Goodman, John Blundell and Milton Dunnett; but in the evolving scenario of Aboriginal self determination it gradually lost ground to the Far West Aboriginal Progress Association (FWAPA) which has emerged in the 1980s as very much the voice of the Aboriginal people.

FWAPA began in February 1974 with the first public meeting called by Aborigines. Its principal concern at that meeting was housing, and Malcolm Stansbury was elected Chairman.[39] Then, in July 1974, Milton Dunnett, Vice President of the Association, informed the *West Coast Sentinel* that FWAPA had received a $34,000 grant to establish an office in Ceduna. It had recently become an incorporated association and its aims were 'to promote the interests of Aboriginal people in the field of housing, social life (it was intended to establish a social centre), employment, education, recreation, culture and sport.'[40]

In January of 1975, FWAPA had money to appoint as manager Bob Ware, a former Koonibba boy and more recently a member of the South Australian police force. Two months later Ware and Milton Dunnett, then President, faced the media and made front page news in the *West Coast Sentinel* with their views on the needs of the Aboriginal community.[41] They spoke about housing needs and problems with employment, education and alcohol. They also talked of FWAPA's plans for the future — special Department of Further Education courses for training aborigines in work skills, a planned community centre, a hostel for secondary school students, a de-toxification centre in the old Denial Bay hospital which the Association had 'bought cheaply', and a drying out centre at Davenport Creek.

Good news about a community centre came almost immediately afterwards when it was announced that the Department of Aboriginal Affairs was prepared to make a grant of $60,000 towards the cost of the centre. Several months later Milton Dunnett, justifiably proud of FWAPA's progress in only 18 months, indicated that, in talks with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, he had been told that FWAPA was 'by far the most successful Aboriginal organisation in South Australia.'[42]

Unfortunately, it was a case of pride before a fall, because early in 1976, FWAPA ran into severe financial troubles and had to retrench its staff. When, later, competent auditors were called in from Adelaide to analyse the situation, they attached no blame to any FWAPA members but put it down to lack of experience in financial matters. FWAPA therefore began again, and for 1976 the elected committee was Bill Miller, President, Colleen Tschuna, Secretary, Milton Dunnett, Furnest Ware, Michael Haynes, Sheena D'Angelo, Joe Miller, Kit Haseldine and Don Tschuna.

Any uncertainties about the committee, or FWAPA generally, all disappeared on Saturday 9 October 1976. On that day Sheena D'Angelo, who was then Chairperson of the Committee, stood in front of the newly built FWAPA Hall and thanked the Committee members plus Barry Piltz and Geoff Mitchell for their great support with the project. She then invited Hans Gaden, long time supporter of the Far West Aborigines, to officially open the Hall, included within which was FWAPA's new headquarters.[43]

From that day onwards FWAPA has been at the forefront of all major Aboriginal activities in the Far West. It has been well served by Presidents Malcolm Stansbury, Milton Dunnett, Sheena D'Angelo, Bill Miller and Wayne Miller; while its managers or coordinators have been Bob Ware, Chris Howard, Bob Vandenbergh, Des Collins, David Blenco, Joe Haynes and Alex Geiger. It now puts out a regular newsletter called *Kukatja Wangka* and a perusal of its contents gives some insight into the numerous activities of the association.

The activities are supervised by a Management Committee which includes representatives from the Far West community who are not necessarily Aboriginal. There is a Health Committee, a Housing Committee and an Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement Representative. The employed staff has

Opposite page.
Above. A Miniature Debutante Ball in the FWAPA Hall, August 1984.
Below. NADOC WEEK in Ceduna 1986. The Mardi Gras style street march moving along South Terrace past the motel units of the Ceduna Hotel-Motel.




FAR WEST
ABORIGINAL
PROGRESS
ASSOCIATION



varied from time to time, according to the availability of funds, but in 1985 it included a Coordinator, an Administrative Officer, a Project Officer, a Receptionist/Typist, a Handyman/Gardener and a part time Cleaner.[44]

FWAPA has received money to develop Half Way Camp on the Duck Ponds Reserve, to build a major sporting complex at the site of the old rifle range on the outskirts of Thevenard, and to establish a Far West Aboriginal Health Service. Additionally, it has lobbied for, and achieved, an Aboriginal Community Arts officer; it has taken over the operation of the Yari Miller Hostel for needy people; it has supported a Women's Group Centre and it has encouraged the use of its Hall for weddings, educational seminars, dances and other forms of entertainment.

In recent years FWAPA has also given the lead with National Aborigines Day Observance Committee (NADOC) week. More and more Far West Aborigines have become involved in the week long activities now held each year and, increasingly, it has become a time of celebration for all members of the Community. Some of the activities for a typical year, 1985, were church services on the Sunday, led by the Lutheran Church, which still retains very close ties with the Aboriginal people; a flag raising ceremony in Ceduna's main street; a community barbeque; a beautiful baby contest; a ladies fashion parade; a teenage disco; and the NADOC Ball. One additional feature since 1985 has been a mardi-gras style street parade. In 1984 an Aboriginal of the Year Award was made to coincide with Nadoc Week. It went to Everard Prayta, a quadraplegic mouth artist. In 1985 the award was given to W J (Bill) Miller, long time supporter of FWAPA, and in 1986 the winner was Joy Reid, who was recognised for her community service.

FWAPA is a testimony to the success of the self determination policy for Aborigines. It is vibrant, well supported financially by various government departments, and it is successful. Its influence in Aboriginal life for the Far West is far reaching but to date it, like all other community groups, has been largely ineffective with the problem of Aborigines and alcohol.

Ceduna has 'the problem' in a very visible way, but to keep it in perspective it should be remembered that so does Alice Springs, Wilcannia, Bourke, Port Augusta and dozens of other country towns throughout Australia. The problem was minor until 1 April 1965. After that date Aborigines were given full drinking rights and the size of the problem multiplied enormously.

In the Far West the problem was first aired publicly by the Country Women's Association at a convention in Streaky Bay in 1968.[45] Complaints were made about persistent drunkeness of Aborigines on the foreshore in front of the Ceduna Hotel. The *West Coast Sentinel* followed this up with a series of 8 weekly articles about 'Aborigines and life on the West Coast', but failed to offer any solutions for the drinking problem.[46] At that time, if any spokesperson for the Aborigines could be found at all, it was at Koonibba and it was from here that representatives of the Lutheran Church made strong statements which the *West Coast Sentinel* headlined as DUNSTAN BOOZE POLICY RATED "TRAGIC"!, "STUPID"![47]

April 1, 1965 is probably just another date to most people but to the Aboriginal people and those working amongst them and for them, it will always be regarded as the dividing line between B.D. (before drink) and A.D. (after drink). Total prohibition the one day: total freedom the next.

E E Hansen 1969

The next significant bit of publicity about the problem was an article in two episodes written by Ian Webber, Headmaster of the Ceduna Area School. It was published in the *West Coast Sentinel* in two weeks of November 1972 and bluntly told the community that it had to recognise its problem and that it must try to find some solutions.[48] Both Mr Webber and the *West Coast Sentinel* called for public comments on the matter but strangely there were none — it was still the period of the head in the sand attitude hoping the problem would go away. One positive step did come however; Mr Webber sent a copy of his articles to the Minister of Education, Mr Hugh Hudson, who promised to

appoint a special teacher to assist with the care and welfare of Aboriginal children.

After 12 September 1973 the problem could no longer be ignored. On that day the *West Coast Sentinel* republished from *Nation Review* a sensational article that labelled Ceduna as a 'Hotbed of Racism'. Written by a local woman the words cut deeply into what was called the 'blatant indifference towards Aboriginal problems':

> 'The only white people who walk along the beautiful seafront at Ceduna are visitors and tourists. Everyone else knows that this is where the Aborigines hang out, opposite the pub, down by the Green Shed, getting drunk and drunker, shattering their empty port flagons on the rocks and each other, bleeding and vomiting down their ragged, filthy, rotting reffo clothes.'[49]

The Far West Committee for Aboriginal Advancement protested against the *Nation Review* article and responsible Aborigines pointed out, quite rightly, that the foreshore 'troublemakers were only a small part of the Far West Aboriginal community and that they had little support from the respectable blacks'.[50]

The article was sensational journalism and it was widely condemned by everybody in Ceduna, but it stirred some action in the town and district. It is probably no coincidence that within six months of the article being reprinted in the *West Coast Sentinel*, the first public meeting in the town called by Aborigines took place, FWAPA was formed, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs offered money for Aboriginal employment, Graham Gunn made references to the foreshore problem in the House of Assembly, and FWAPA called a meeting for all people to discuss Mr Gunn's allegations plus the general problem of foreshore drinking. The meeting was chaired by Ken Wright, Graham Gunn and, District Council Chairman, Jeff Bergmann attended plus 150 other people. The *West Coast Sentinel* proclaimed it in banner headlines as the 'Start of Better Race Relations'.[51]

Thirteen years later the problem is still there. A 'Woma' Committee investigating Aboriginal drink problems State wide, with Mercy Mastrosavas as the local representative, pointed out in 1977 that 24 men and women had died as a result of alcohol abuse in the Thevenard-Ceduna-Koonibba area in seven years. Of the 18 men who had died 17 were under the age of 30 years.[52] This information was no deterrent, and the death count for alcohol abuse continues despite commendable efforts by Woma in setting up a drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre. Further public meetings have been held, a widespread government backed investigation into Aboriginal health has been commissioned, the size of the police force in Ceduna has been increased, and, at the time of writing, 'a dry areas' legislation was being strongly pushed by the District Council of Murat Bay.

> *There they sit on the Ceduna foreshore in various stages of intoxication blotting out yet another day, while Aboriginal organisations ponder what to do and sections of the European community wish they would just disappear.*
>
> WCS Editorial
> 21/3/1984

Since the 'drinking rights' legislation, thousands of people both black and white have observed the foreshore drinking problem and wondered what can be done to solve it. In the short term, there seems to be no simple answer short of draconion measures which would require radical changes in the State's legislation. Since they are not likely to occur, and since Aboriginal self determination is now an established fact, it seems that only in the long term, through processes of education will any real improvements be made. And, it is here, in the education arena, that there are real hopes for the future.



In the 1960s the students in the top half of the Koonibba primary school were sent into Ceduna Area School. There was no discussion about the matter with the Aboriginal parents merely a directive that in future the children would be bussed into Ceduna and that some of the teachers would be the bus drivers.



A stepping stone in the self determination process. More than 150 Aborigines attended the meeting in September 1987.

It was part of 'assimilation', the children needed to mix in the big multi-racial school rather than remain sheltered in the small Aboriginal school. Initially, it was a very difficult period of adjustment for the children, but the long term benefits, which can be seen today, are considerable. Traditionally, Koonibba children had no taste for secondary education, but slowly by dint of special funding for Aboriginal Education, Koonibba-Ceduna-Thevenard Aboriginal children have been induced to stay longer at school, and to strive for higher goals.

The strong push to improve school life for Aboriginal children began with the appointment of Maurice Miller as an Aboriginal Education Worker and Colleen Tschuna as a Student Counsellor (Aboriginal) in 1975. From then, the service has expanded to form an Aboriginal Education team at the Area School made up of Student Counsellors, Aboriginal Resource Teachers and Aboriginal Education Workers. Maurice Miller is now Senior Aboriginal Education Worker after more than eleven years of continuous involvement in home-school visiting, community liaison work and the special needs of Aboriginal children. The 'Ab Ed' team has a counterpart at the Lutheran School and together they work hard to present a relevant education for more than 100 Aboriginal children integrated into the classes of both schools. They investigate any absenteeism, try to assist with any family problems and gather appropriate resources for lessons about Aboriginal life and culture. They have been rewarded in recent years with a turn around in student attitudes to learning, which is best seen in the retention rates in the senior years of the Area school. In 1984 there were 10 Aboriginal children in the senior school; in 1986 there were 27.[53]

A strong push has also been made in post secondary school education by the Department of Technical and Further Education through its college in Ceduna. It has arranged a variety of pre-employment courses for Aboriginal people such as driver training, and Small Business Management. The latter course has an enormously successful component which has grown into what is known as the Poverty Flat Market Garden.

Poverty Flat was land given to the project by FWAPA. Originally, it appeared barren but with direction from the guru of organic gardening, Peter Bennett, who was employed as a Lecturer in Further Education, the students have turned the barren soil into a garden producing an amazing variety of foodstuffs such as butternuts, giant harbards, honey dews, rock melons, capsicums, chillies, banana chillies, cucumbers, pumpkins, white squash and

zuchinis, as well as the more conventional vegetables lettuces, carrots, broccoli, beetroot, cabbages and cauliflowers. The 'gardeners' have been Brenda Carbine, Wendy Ware, Gladys Miller, Elizabeth Miller, Kathy Miller, Sue Smith, Sally Argent, Ron Miller, Elizabeth Ryan, Malcolm Taylor, Stan Lennon, Denise Scott, Lauren Peel, Terry O'Hara, Elizabeth Highfold, Sally Milera, Verna Lawrie, Hilda Doolan, Naradene Betts, Michael Fowler, Roy Dunn, Rachel Kent, Evelyn Graham and many more. It has been a most successful Aboriginal project, with productive crops, ready sales to the whole Ceduna-Thevenard community, and continued active support from the TAFE College.



Also in the general area of Further Education, several Aboriginal people have enrolled for training to be school teachers or teacher aides. Margot Walker, now a teacher at the Ceduna Lutheran School, completed a Diploma in Teaching (Early Childhood Education) at the South Australian College of Advanced Education in 1984 and was named Aboriginal Student of the Year for her success in being the first Far West Aboriginal woman to become a qualified teacher.

There are many other areas in the general education scene where Aboriginal people are becoming more and more involved. The quality of these people, and their contribution to the Far West community, is the hope of the future. Leah Rivera, a Filipino and Lecturer in Further Education at Ceduna in the late 1970s, promoted the idea of 'Towards 2000' in many novel and entertaining ways. The year 2000, she thought, would be the year when it all came together as far as racial harmony was concerned and, for this, education was going to be the vehicle to carry the Aboriginal people forward. The aim is still there and, with government support through FWAPA, through the 'Ab Ed' team, and the TAFE College it will be achievable.

Some of the material for this chapter was collected by the Far West Aboriginal Women's Group, the Aboriginal Lutheran Fellowship, Aboriginal students in Ceduna, and other interested groups, all of whom worked with Rosemary Winderlich and her husband Robert, the Lutheran Pastor in the Far West. A common discussion theme was Aboriginal hopes for the future, and Rosemary recorded the relevant points of the discussion. She had it approved as a statement at several meetings of Aboriginal groups and it appears below:

> We want unity — all people working together.
> We want a good education for our children.
> We want peace.
> Most of all we want respect.
>
> We are proud of the contribution our fathers and grandfathers made to opening up this area.
> They worked all their lives and earned respect.
>
> At Koonibba when it was the Lutheran Mission we had respect, not like now.
>
> We want young Aborigines to have respect for their own lives — self respect.
>
> We need employment for our young people so that they can see some purpose in their education.
> They need a chance to contribute to Australian society, to build up their own self respect and to earn the respect of the community.

It is clear from the above that Aborigines in the Far West think seriously about their future. The policies of self determination are working. The 'natives', so called in the nineteenth century, will no longer accept that belittling title; now they are the Nungas, a truly Aboriginal name, for a people with a special identity.

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14. Transporting and Communicating

The first form of transportation in the Far West was with horses; we have already seen that Edward John Eyre moved to Fowlers Bay with horses and even mounted a friendly Aboriginal guide on one.

Horses were vital for early settlement, but like so many other necessities there was the problem of getting them to the Far West. Many came overland with the early waggon trains in the 1890s but, before that, they were either brought up from Port Lincoln or shipped across with sheep and provisions for the pastoral runs. One can only imagine the difficulties with the latter process and there is the good story of M R Edson who spent two weeks on the *Wollamai* from Port Adelaide to Denial Bay and all that time his heavy horse stood on deck tied beside the cook's galley. Its only comfort was a warm rug at night. When it was landed and hitched into the shafts of a dray it went to sleep and couldn't be moved for several hours.[1]

Horses were frequently in short supply and therefore expensive to buy. Joe Blumson, in letters to his parents, stated that he preferred to hire horses when he needed them rather than go to the expense of purchasing them while he had many other expenses in the early years of developing his block. Later, when he was well established, he asked his parents to look around in Adelaide for good strong horses he might get, particularly any tram horses, which were up for sale.

Sometimes entrepreneurs brought in a shipload of horses and auctioned them; T Mudge did this on more than one occasion.

Other efforts to increase the number of horses in the district included brumby raids across the border into Western Australia. Ted Watson and his sons rounded up many of the animals out in the wilds of the Nullarbor and, after many hair raising adventures, drove them to Denial Bay and Goode where they were broken in and used for farmwork all along the West Coast.

There were the inevitable clashes between horses, automobiles and motor bikes when the latter two began to appear. One memorable incident occurred in 1915 when J W Moreland was passing Betts' store in Ceduna in his horse and sulky. At that moment a noisy new motor bike rounded the corner of McKenzie Street and O'Loughlin Terrace; the horse reared in the shafts and took off at a mad gallop scattering goods in all directions.[2] Similar incidents occurred many times, not only in the towns but on the country roads and on the farms.

The police in the district from the earliest days were dependent upon horses. Indeed, they were all Mounted Constables and something of their riding requirements has been mentioned in Chapter 7. Yet, it is interesting to note that, in 1884, M C Dowling requested two camels for patrol work in preference to horses. Instead of five horses, he wanted the Fowlers Bay police station stocked with three horses and two camels. His reasons for the camels were that on patrols to Eucla and Ooldea the journey was too distressing for horses because of lack of water and good feed. He was sure camels were much better suited to such long patrols.

By 1884, camels were already proven assets in the Far West. Thomas Elder imported 121 camels into South Australia in 1866 and established a camel stud at Beltana Station. His brother-in-law, Robert Barr Smith, was well acquainted with the success of Elder's camels in the Far North of the State and it was a simple matter to have some of them transferred to the Far West. The first were sent by Elder in 1875 to the explorer Ernest Giles, who was in his employ and at Fowlers Bay making ready to journey overland to Beltana via Ooldea. A bull camel, a cow and a calf, were sent in the care of an Afghan, Saleh Mahomet, who then returned to Beltana.[3] James Armstrong was then manager of Barr Smith and Swan's Fowlers Bay run, and George Murray, later to become manager, was the overseer of the outstation Colona. Armstrong and Murray both became familiar with camels, and Murray, who travelled with Giles as far as Ooldea, learnt a lot about them. Thereafter he was always happy to have them working on his properties and found them particularly useful for hauling wool from the outstations to the Fowlers Bay port. Camels became popular in the Top End and, at one stage, Fowlers Bay was able to boast the distinction of having wool hauled to its jetty by three different methods, horse teams, bullock teams and camel teams.

The next point of entry for camels was Murat Bay when pastoralists at Wilgena, 200 kilometres to the north, realised that their most economical supply point was from the Far West Coast rather than from Port Augusta. They employed Afghan camel men like Boz Mahomet and Gunny Khan, built



Camel teams at Fowlers Bay 1910.

a storage shed on the shores of Murat Bay and established a track for camel teams to ply backwards and forwards across the country north and south of the Gawler Ranges.[4] They might have been inspired by Anton Schlink who had pastoral leases in the Gawler Ranges and bought 13 camels from Thomas Elder in 1878 at 75 pounds per head.[5]

Miss Doris Domeyer, later Mrs Doris Payne of Loxton, recalled the days of the Wilgena camel trains in 1897 when she wrote about going to Denial Bay to take up a teaching position. She travelled on the *Wollamai* and on board were a group of shearers who left the boat at Murat Bay 'and headed north with a party of 30 camels and provisions'.[6] Camels continued to work this route until at least 1906 because in that year the *West Coast Recorder* noted the death of one of the drivers about 20 miles from the Wirelda rockhole.[7] And, at the Top End camels were working regularly until at least 1916 because, in September of that year, three teams brought wool into Fowlers Bay from White Well and Nullarbor.[8]

In the gold rush period to Coolgardie during the 1890s hundreds of camels passed through Fowlers Bay en route to the west carrying mining equipment, stores, foodstuffs and mining prospectors. Because so many of them lingered at the Fowlers Bay watering holes, special camel caretakers were appointed to control them and their Afghan drivers. Jum Chude was in charge in 1897, but for unknown reasons he was sacked and James C Riddle took his place.[9]

Those camels that came back from the West, and there were hundreds of them, were generally in poor condition. The camel caretakers, assisted by police officers, had to quarantine them, and dozens had to be treated with carbolic oil for mange. The police books for Fowlers Bay often recorded duties with camels as for example: '27 June 1898. Inspected 114 camels from W.A. Found many mangy camels in the mob.'

Enterprising settlers and commercial travellers often made use of good camels for transportation. Rev W O Harris, the Methodist minister at Penong, had a famous camel buggy which took him on his rounds, and dog fence supervisors like Snow Burton and Bob Beattie also used camels.



M C McLeod and Ben in their high class camel buggy at Penong in 1913.

Mr Dedman loaded up his team of 14 camels with 6 tons of supplies for Tarcoola and Glenloth. This will be maintained regularly.

DBS 15/5/09

In his memoirs, Frank Edson (born 1898) remembered the camels when he was a boy living in the Hundred of Wandana near Murat Bay.[10] Most of the camel trains were 30 or 40 beasts worked by two or three men: but Frank remembered one that had over a hundred in one string. They were mostly heavy pack camels capable of carrying eight four bushel bags of wheat or three bales of wool. They carted wool from Wilgena and Tarcoola and, on the journey back, took station goods such as timber, iron, flour and groceries. Some teams also carted wheat locally for farmers such as W W Bowell of Merghiny, W Hirte of Wandana, Milfords of Wandana and Bubners of Merghiny.

The East-West railway line which was opened in 1917 ended the Wilgena, Murat Bay camel connection, but before that, the presence of the Afghans around the bay is well remembered. Their camping places were south east of the 18 Tank in the scrub, but if two teams were in town at the same time, one would put their camels on Smith's Point which is now Thevenard. The Afghans then camped where the Area School now stands, mid-way between the two teams, which had to be kept well apart to stop them fighting.

A long term legacy of the camel population in the Far West is the number of wild camels that still exist, mainly on the fringe of the Nullarbor Plain. The Eyre Highway in this area carries unique signs warning motorists about stray camels and, in 1958, a semi-trailer load of 20 camels was rounded up on the property of C L Gurney. Carrier Bob Dick took them to Adelaide where they were to be sold as zoo and circus animals.

A few farmers had a liking for donkeys and used them in preference to either horses or camels. In her book *The Donkey Drivers*, Kath Burbridge cites examples of the Moody family of Denial Bay and Cliff Monaghan of Mudamuckla. The Moody donkeys were lent to Fred Clothier, who had a property near Penong in the 1920s, and in two years they 'cleared more than 100 acres of trees and stumps, (did) many other farm jobs, and (became) part of the pioneering family's daily life.'[11]

What was possibly the same donkey team was bought by Cliff and Doris Monaghan in the 1930s. Cliff used them to cart stumps into Ceduna and to cart wheat to the Mudamuckla siding. The team 'was a familiar sight around Ceduna for about four years until Cliff decided to have a change of occupation and took on a butchering job.'[12]



Cliff Monaghan's donkey team in Poynton Street, Ceduna. Albert Blumson's house and the first St Michaels and all Angels Church in the background.

More than most regions in South Australia, the settlement of the Far West was dependent upon shipping. It was fortunate that the wide bays of the area offered good anchorages for small boats and it was through them, in the early years, that hundreds of people and thousands of tons of supplies were sent to help with the countryside's development.

Once the pastoralists were established in the Far West there were several small sailing ships which became specialist West Coast traders. In the late 1850s and into the 1870s the *Daphne*, a 55 ton schooner, 61 feet long, had a regular run to Streaky Bay and Fowlers Bay under the command of Captain Hay. It took George Wollaston and his party of well sinkers to Fowlers Bay in August 1859 and it sometimes worked alongside the *Waitemata*, a 50 ton schooner. Each boat would call into any of the ports, Venus Bay, Smoky Bay, Denial Bay, Point Bell and Fowlers Bay. They were both passenger and general cargo carriers, as for example in October 1859 when the *Waitemata* took four well sinkers, one native, two horses and ten packages of stores from Port Adelaide to Fowlers Bay.[13]

The *Waitemata* came to a sudden end in 1860. It left Port Adelaide on 27 April, to sail to Perth. After a landfall at St Peter Island, it began to leak badly and was beached at Petrel Cove, St Francis Island. There, Captain Harris and three passengers put most of the cargo onshore and waited for three months before the government schooner *Yatala* found them and took them back to Port Adelaide. In the meantime the *Waitemata* had broken up and was a complete loss.[14]

It was rare in these early years for large ships to visit the Far West, but, in May 1860, Elder Stirling and Company (later Elder Smith and Company) chartered the ship *Violet*, 497 tons, to take sheep from Guichen Bay (Port Robe) to Fowlers Bay. On a first trip they took on board 2016 sheep and landed 1980 successfully, and on a second trip they began with 1600 and landed 1313. The *Violet* then returned to its normal sailings which were between Australia and Ceylon.[15]

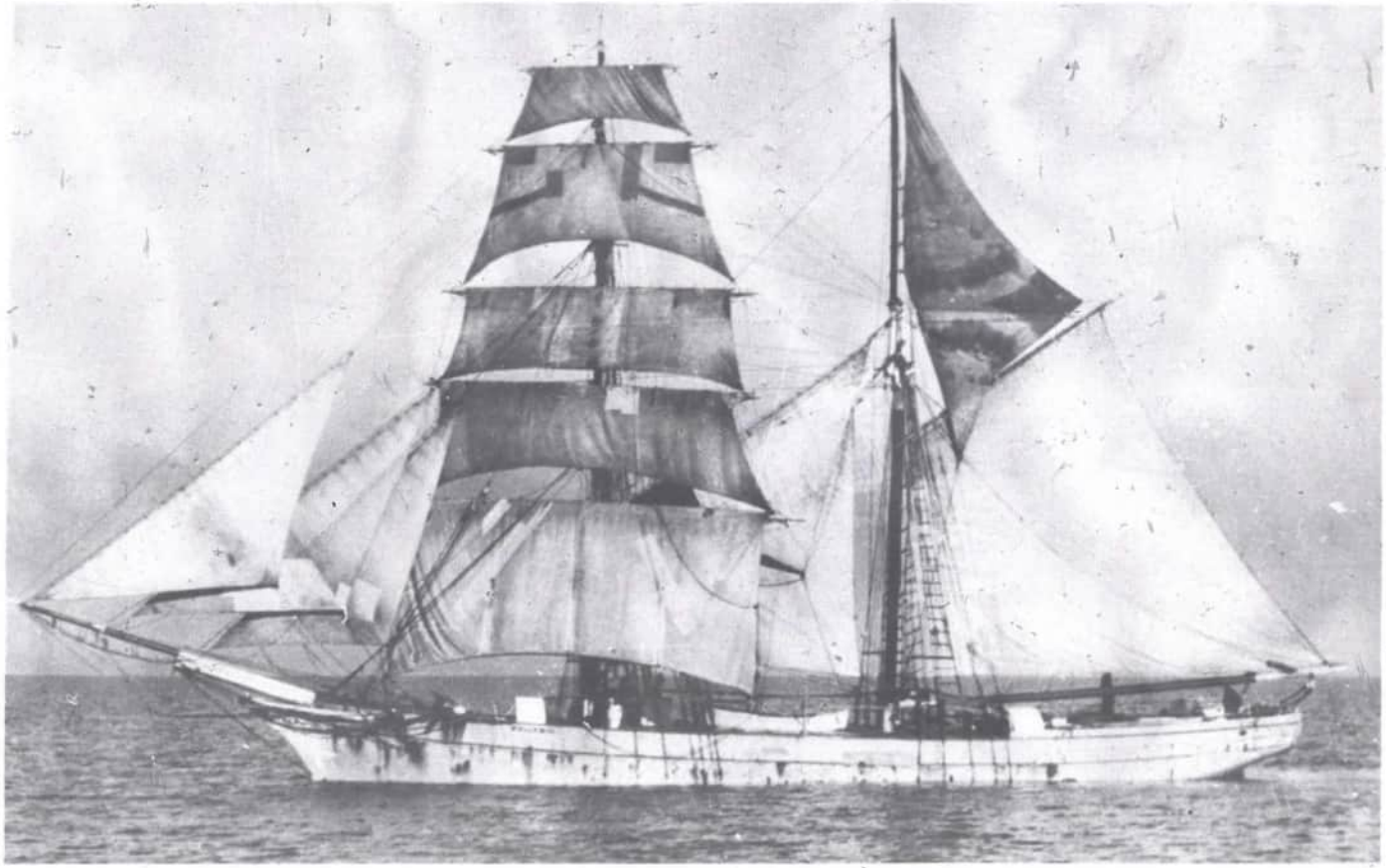
After this, the hardworking *Daphne* became a regular shipper of wool from Fowlers Bay, or Port Eyre as it was being called at the time. In October of 1860, after the first shearing in the Far West, it carried 80 bales of wool, 3 bales of skins, 1 cask of tallow and 4 shearers to Port Adelaide.[16]

The schooner *Omeo*, 40 tons, also carted wool from Port Eyre in 1860 and the *Gem* a schooner of 99 tons began working in the area in 1861. A sample of its capabilities was its cargo for Fowlers Bay in February 1862 namely, 18 packages of sundries, 11 bullocks, 2 cows and 4 horses.[17]

The *Firefly*, a cutter of 36 tons, began operating in 1862 with a cargo of 'sundries' for Fowlers Bay and, later in the year, on one of its return voyages, it carried 70 bales of wool for Elder, Stirling and Co.[18] In September of 1863 it was trading for the pastoralist Marrabel and loaded 27 bales of wool at Denial Bay.[19] With the *Daphne*, it was then sharing most of the Far West trade, but this ended when the little ship was wrecked in Anxious Bay in 1866 and was a total loss.[20]

Robert Barr Smith, through Elder Smith and Company, had a close involvement with the sailing ships trading to the West Coast. The involvement was vital for the success of his pastoral run, and it later extended to steamers such as the *Lubra*, *Royal Shepherd* and *Kangaroo*, all of which took wool from Fowlers Bay to Port Adelaide at different times.

Anton Schlink had pastoral interests south of Barr Smith, notably on Flinders Island and also inland from what became Elliston. He also made sure that he had a fleet of ships for trading along the West Coast and occasionally some of them sailed in the waters of the Far West. Schlink's ships included the



The *Wollamai* which traded to the Far West between the early 1880s and 1911. Owner and captain was William Tulloch.

sailing vessels *Alto*, *Freebridge*, *Lady Robinson* and *Waratah*, plus the steamers *Meeinderry* and *Helen Nicholl*.[21] Of these, the one most often seen in Denial and Fowlers Bays in the 1880s and 1890s was *SS Meeinderry*, 270 tons and 120 feet long. It was later sold and had an active life in Tasmania, Victoria and New South Wales waters until 1923.[22]

When the pastoral runs were subdivided for agriculture, there was plenty of work for owners and captains of small vessels ferrying supplies and farming families to the Far West. Ships like the *Wollamai* and the *Rachel Cowan*, made an indelible impression on the lives of many families with young children, for they transported them to a new life. The young children grew up in the Far West remembering the wonder of their first sailing trip, the cramped space on the deck amongst animals, ploughs and other farm goods, and the inevitable seasickness for many of the passengers.

The *Wollamai* was the premier ship in terms of its frequency of visits. It worked constantly between Yorke Peninsula ports and Denial and Fowlers Bay throughout the 1880s and into the early 1900s. The initiating force for this programme might have been a family connection because the two masted schooner was owned by Captain William Tulloch who married Esther the sister of James Armstrong, former manager at Yalata.[23]

The *Wollamai* was sold in 1911 to A Le Messurier and partners, and thereafter it traded more widely throughout south-eastern Australia. In 1923 it was carrying a cargo of palings from Burnie to Port Adelaide and was driven ashore near Apollo Bay in a strong gale. The 107 foot ship was wrecked, but the crew were brought safely ashore by rocket line.[24]



The *Rachel Cowan* 1898.

The *Rachel Cowan*, also a two masted schooner, came on the scene a little later than the *Wollamai*. It was registered in Port Adelaide in 1895 by A Le Messurier and for a time William Tulloch shared ownerhip of it with Le Messurier. It supplemented the work being done by the *Wollamai* for several

years but when the rush of settlement was over, it was sold and went far afield until being destroyed by fire at Darwin in 1924.[25]

Another independent vessel which supplemented the work of the *Wollamai* was the small wooden steamer the *Argyle*, captained in the early 1900s by its owner P Weir.

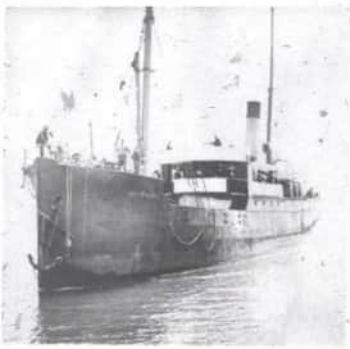
Many independent shippers eventually worked for companies, and the first of these was the Adelaide Steamship Company promoted by Robert Barr Smith. It held its first meeting in 1875 and launched into an expensive programme which looked for trade with Melbourne and the two South Australian Gulfs.[26] In so doing, it largely neglected the West Coast trade and left it to small independent ketches.

Coast Steamship Company Ltd. was also formed in 1875 and Yorke Peninsula Steamship Company Ltd. was formed in 1881. Since both these companies were primarily interested in the Adelaide, Yorke Peninsula and Kangaroo Island trade, they amalgamated as the Gulf Steamship Company in 1905. This act, plus the continuing neglect of the West Coast by large ships, prompted the formation of a West Coast Shipping Company in 1906.[27] It began with five little ketches and purchased the steamer *Argyle* from P Weir.[28] Later it purchased the *SS Australia* an old steamer built in Dundee in 1879. It began operating to the West Coast ports in 1907 but was wrecked off Wardang Island in 1912.

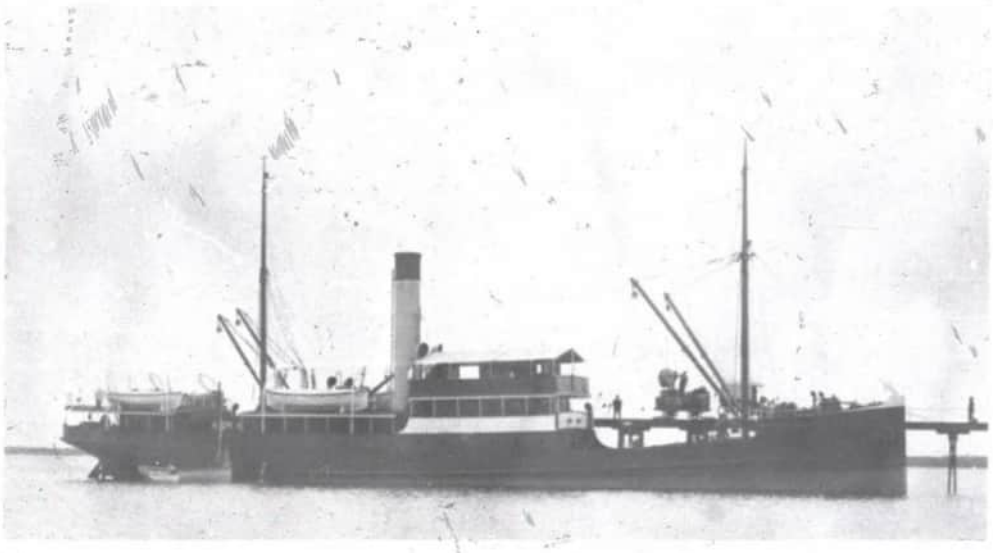
In 1909 the West Coast Shipping Company imported from the shipyards at Glasgow the *Wookata*, built specifically for the West Coast trade. It arrived at Port Adelaide in September of 1909 and the *West Coast Recorder* decribed it as roomy with graceful lines. It was 650 gross tons, 180 feet long, 29 feet across the beam and had a depth of 12 feet. There was accommodation for 62 first class passengers and 21 third class passengers with electric light throughout and an average speed of 10 knots.[29]

Soon afterwards the *Wookata* made its maiden voyage to Murat Bay where it unloaded passengers, horses and general cargo. It then steamed on to Denial Bay and Point Sinclair, where it unloaded 40 tons of timber for the new jetty at Port Le Hunte.

This was the first of what must have been about 500 trips to the Far West made by the *Wookata* between 1909 and 1928, when it was replaced by the *Yandra*. Two of its highlights were that it was the first boat to load at the Denial Bay jetty in 1910 and at the Thevenard jetty in 1916 (although it was only half completed at the time).



SS *Australian* 1905.



SS *Wookata*, the Far West's principal supply ship, 1909–1928.



West Coast Service.

S.S. WOOKATA.

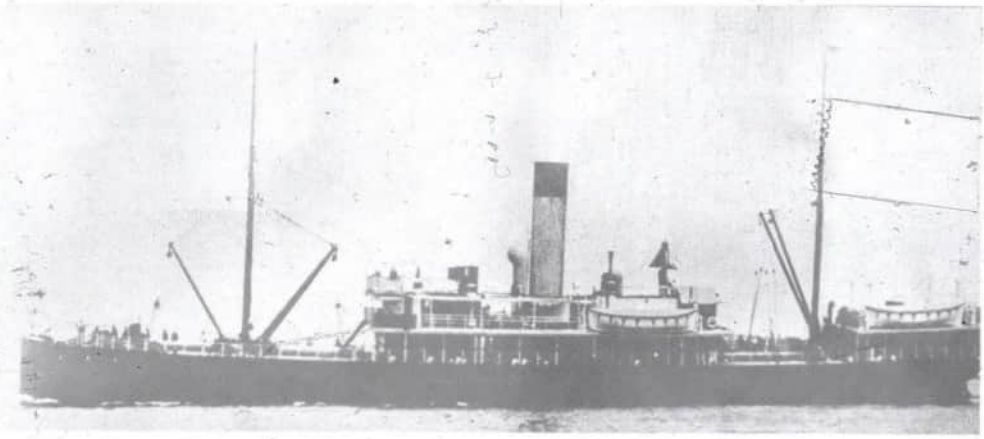
Leaves Port Adelaide (circumstances permitting) every alternate Wednesday viz., February 9th., February 23rd., and March 8th., and so on, for Elliston, Venus, Sceales, Streaky, Smoky, Murat, Denial and Fowler's Bays, Point Sinclair and Carawa. To Laura Bay every alternate trip.

Excellent Accommodation for Passengers.

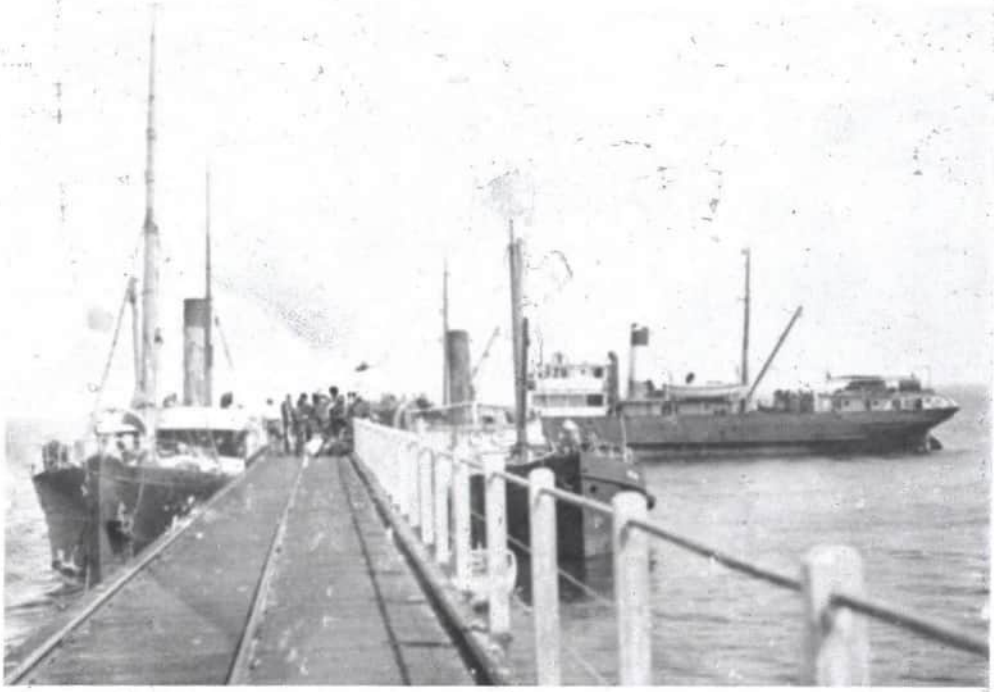
For full particulars, apply—

COAST STEAMSHIPS, LTD.,
A. LeMessurier, Secretary, Port Adelaide.

SS *Rupara*.



A busy day at the Ceduna jetty. Boats from left are the *Quorna*, *Ready* and *Grace Darling* c 1913.



In November of 1913 the West Coast Shipping Company amalgamated with Gulf Steamship Company to form Coast Steamships Ltd.[30] Gulf Steamship had been in strong competition with the Adelaide Steamship Company for many years and the new amalgamated company was viewed with some alarm by the Adelaide Company Directors. Just before the merger West Coast Shipping had imported a new Glasgow built steamer and called it the *Wandana*. After one visit to the West Coast, it was put into the lucrative Spencer Gulf trade.

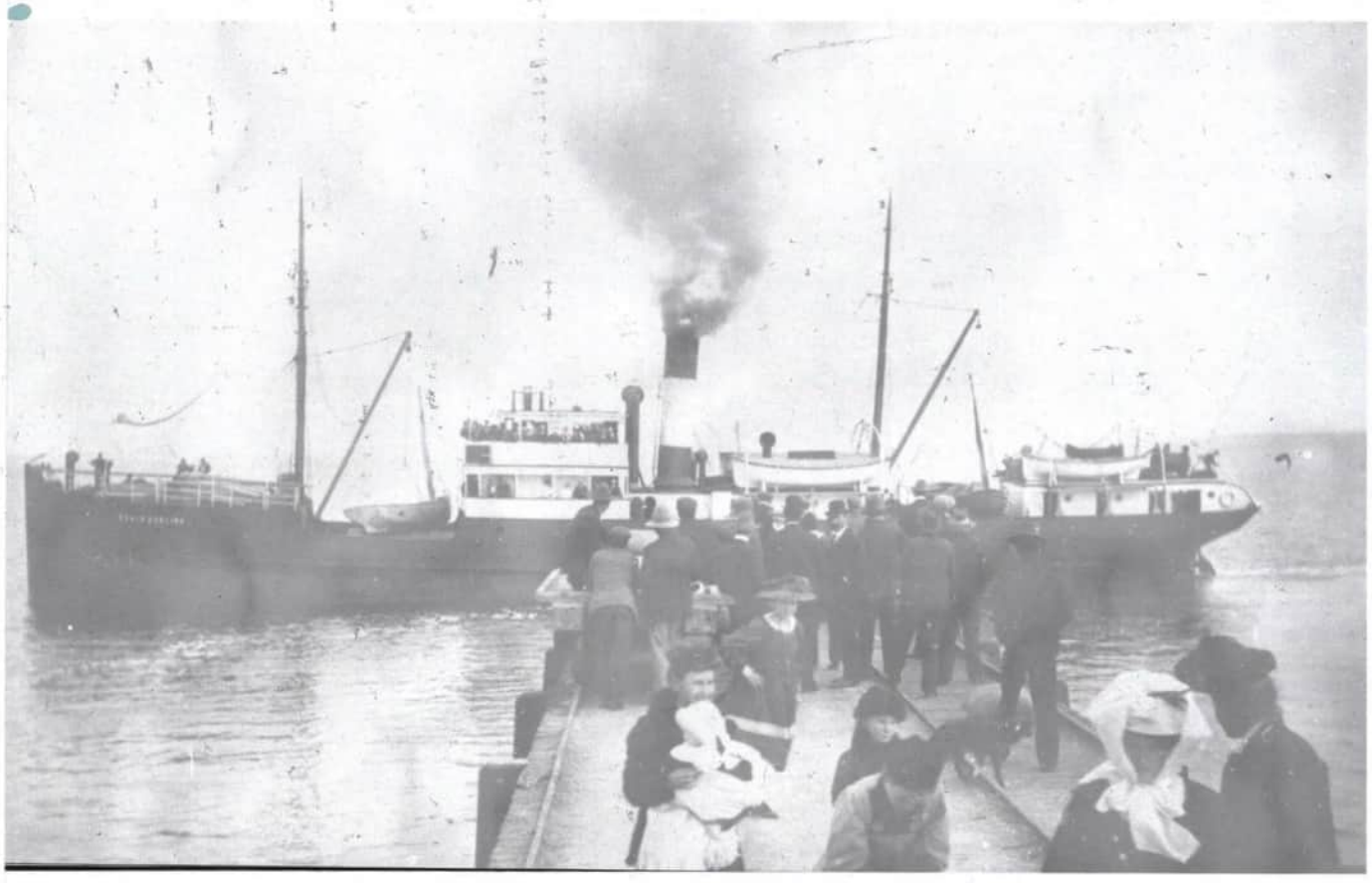
Adelaide Steamship decided to step up its interest in the West Coast to fight its new, strong competition on all fronts. Between 1913 and 1915, while the fight lasted, the Far West customers enjoyed service and cut rates like it never had before and never has since. Nosing into the bays with astonishing frequency and almost begging for cargoes were the *Wookata* for Coast Steamships, the *Rupara* for Adelaide Steamship, and also occasionally for the same company, the *Ferret*, the *Paringa*, the *Quorna* and the *Ready*. As well, there was the *Grace Darling* for John Darling and Company.

John Darling was a wheat buyer who entered the Gulf trade in the 1880s and extended to the West Coast in the 1890s. His best known ships were the *Jessie Darling* and the *Grace Darling* named after his daughters. The *Jessie Darling* was built in Glasgow in 1884 and was wrecked off Semaphore in June 1907 'through coming in contact with the sunken vessel *Norma*'[31]. The *Grace Darling*, 175 feet long and 622 gross tons, was built in Holland as a replacement.[32] By 1909 it was making fortnightly trips to the Far West ports.

The shipping situation in 1913 can be well illustrated by the events of 22 August at Denial Bay. The *Grace Darling* had not long departed, and tied up at the jetty were the *Quorna*, the *Wookata* and the *Ferret*. The *Rupara* was absent on this day, probably somewhere between Denial Bay and Port Adelaide, but it was the Adelaide Steamship Company's trump card. Built in 1906 at Newcastle

Our steamer service a short time back was the SS Wookata *and SS* Grace Darling *each one every two months alternatively, which gave us a monthly service; but since the advent of the Adelaide Steamship Company we now have the SS* Ferret *and SS* Wookata *every fortnight and SS* Grace Darling *when cargo warrants it. What price opposition? Freights are now 10/- per ton! Good!*

LAURA BAY
CORRESPONDENT
WCS 17/7/13



SS *Grace Darling* the trading vessel owned by John Darling and Son, which operated in the Far West from 1909 to 1931.

in England, it was considerably larger than the other vessels. It was 230 feet long, 1368 gross tons and could carry 114 passengers.[33]

The Utopian situation couldn't last. Too many boats were steaming around half empty — the *Rupara* even resorted to carrying cargoes of fresh water, 2000 gallons at a time, for thirsty farmers in the 1914 drought. Business interests eventually won out and, in 1915, Coast Steamships allowed itself to be taken over by the Adelaide Steamship Company; but it retained the right to operate as a subsidiary company. Adelaide Steamship no longer had competition to worry about, so it withdrew its ships from the West Coast and the faithful *Wookata* chugged on with only the *Grace Darling* as an occasional companion. Even that was spasmodic, for in 1919 the *West Coast Sentinel*, after noting that the *Wookata* had been forced to leave a large quantity of cargo at Port Adelaide, complained that it was 'a pity that the West Coast cannot warrant a boat each week instead of once a fortnight.'[34]

In 1928 the *Wookata* went into early retirement. Subsequently, it ended life as a barge in the Port River.[35] The *Wandana* was brought from the Gulf trade as a temporary replacement, but Coast Steamships contracted with Burmeister and Wain in Copenhagen, Denmark, for a new ship for the West Coast trade.[36] This was the MV *Yandra*, destined to become the best known of all the coast's trading ships. A little larger than its predecessor at 211 feet and 990 gross tons, it also had diesel motors (as opposed to steam engines previously) and a refrigerator which could hold 30 tons — said to be very welcome for the fishermen of the West Coast.[37] It began operating in November 1928.

Apart from its faithful service, the *Yandra*'s notoriety came from its war service and its tragic end. During the 1939–45 war it was requisitioned as HMAS *Yandra* and spent most of its time training 2000 operators in the use of radar. It did see some active service and picked up survivors from the disabled German raider *Kormoran* which sank HMAS *Sydney*. Its greatest feat, however, was the destruction of a Japanese midget submarine in Sydney harbor.

After the war, the *Yandra* returned to its normal West Coast duties and was given a heroes welcome at each of its little ports. On 14 August 1946, Captain Kerrison and the ship's crew were given a civic reception in Ceduna and the ship held an 'open inspection' for hundreds of admiring visitors.

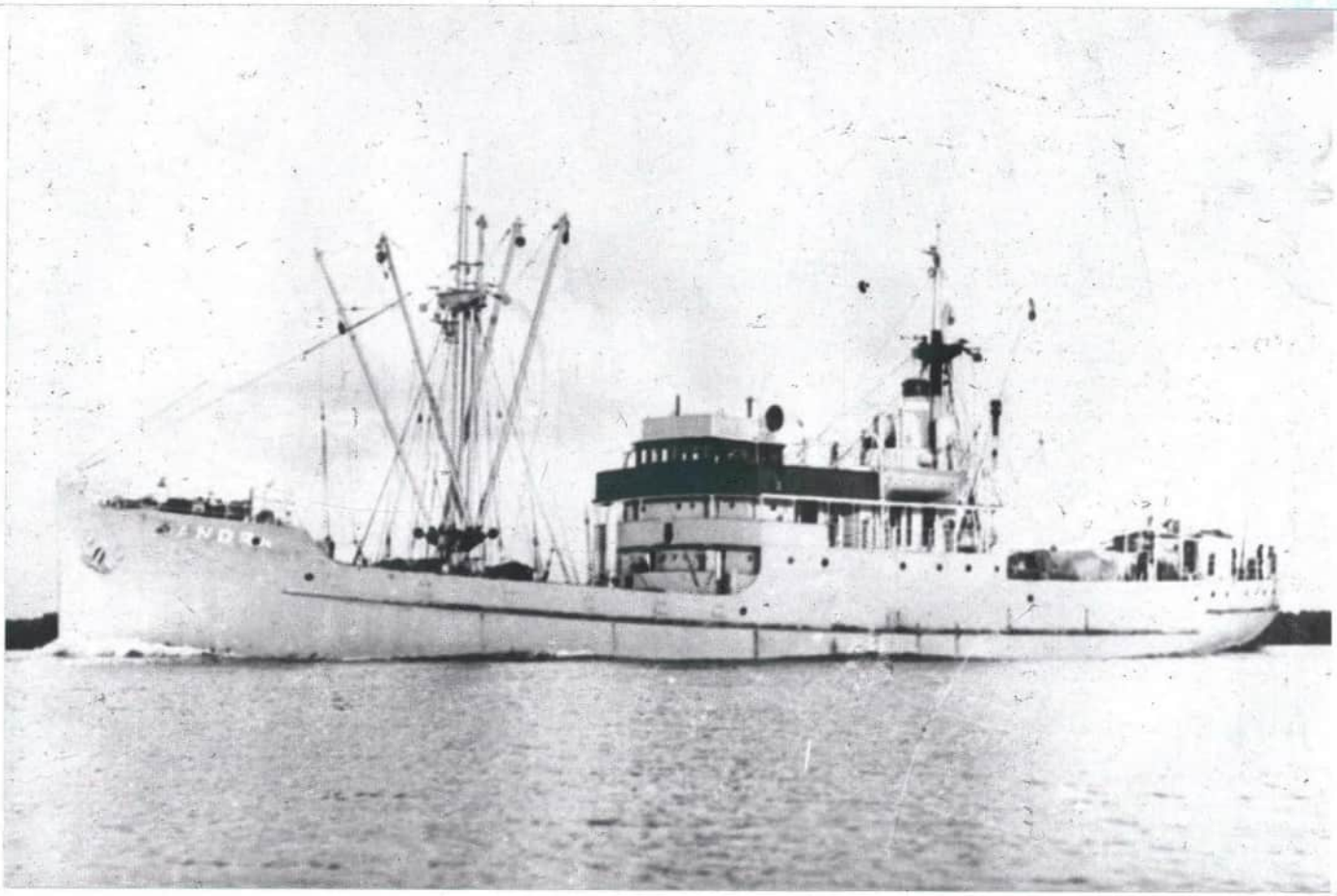
The *Yandra*'s tragic end came on 24 January 1959 when it was wrecked on a rocky island of the Neptune Group, sixty miles south of Port Lincoln. Advertiser Newspapers sent reporter Brian Taylor to view the wreck from the air the next day. He wrote: 'The vessel looked a pathetic sight, so clean and so new looking in such an isolated position . . . It was rolling from side to side and appeared to be bumping on a rocky bed'.

The 22 members of the ship's crew were all saved and Coast Steamships handed over the wreck to their underwriters. Much material was salvaged but the wreck itself was eventually sold as scrap for 500 pounds.

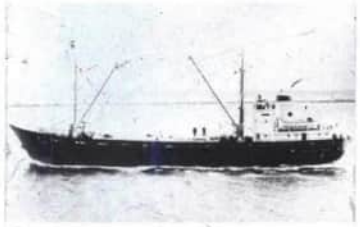
While the *Yandra* was on active service, it was replaced by the SS *Kapara* which had been built in Sunderland, England, in 1914. On 13 November 1942 it struck a reef off Flinders Island, was badly holed and had to be abandoned. It was impossible to salvage.[38] A replacement for the rest of the war was the SS *Broadway* built in Sweden in 1921.

M V *Enfield* built at Maryborough, Queensland, in 1948 was a temporary chartered replacement after the *Yandra* was wrecked. Then, in August 1959, Coast Steamships announced that it had purchased a Norwegian owned vessel for the West Coast run; it was given an appropriate Coaster name, *Yalata*. Built in Bremerhaven in 1955, it was 169 feet long, 385 gross tons and had been previously called *Judith Mary* and then *Slevik*.

Opposite page.
Above. MV *Yandra* the Far Wests principal supply ship 1928–1939, 1946–1959 Edwardes Collection, State Library.
Below. The *Yandra* wrecked on the Neptune Islands south of Port Lincoln, January 1959.







MV *Yalata* the last coastal trader to supply the Far West, 1960–1966 Edwardes Collection, State Library.

While Coast Steamships was using the *Enfield* and preparing to purchase the *Slevik*, representatives of the South Australian Transport Control Board convened a public meeting in Ceduna at the request of the local member of parliament George Bockelberg. More than sixty people were present. R P Dunn, storekeeper, farmer and grazier, from Penong presented figures to the meeting to show that his freight on fruit and vegetables was equal to more than 25 per cent of Adelaide costs. If the Transport Control Board would allow him to use his own semi-trailer to bring goods from Adelaide he would be able to sell them to the public at a greatly reduced rate.

R J Betts, storekeeper and Coast Steamships' agent for many years, stated that, if Mr Dunn's 'open road' situation existed, it would probably bring an end to the shipping service.

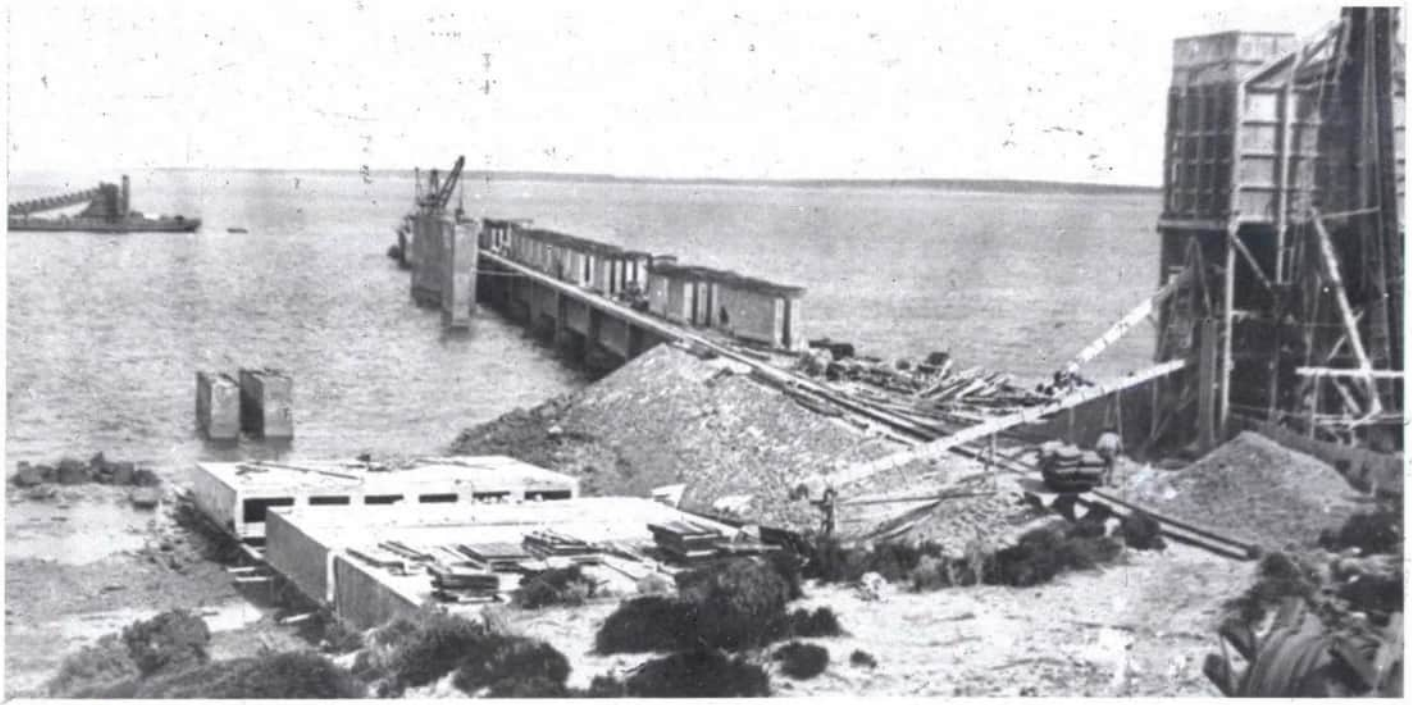
H Klau, baker, spoke for many when he said he would not like to see the ship go, but there was a need for a more economic system of transport to the area.

Other speakers made similar comments and J Soar, the Secretary of Coast Steamships Ltd., who had come from Adelaide for the meeting, pointed out that the company was having heavy losses with the *Enfield*. He said that, in his opinion, the area could not economically sustain three methods of transport, road, rail and sea.[39]

Soar's words were prophetic. The end of coastal shipping was fast approaching despite the imminent arrival of the *Yalata*. It carried on until 1966, but Coast Steamships Ltd. finally had to announce that its operations would cease because of declining freights. In the first week of April the *Yalata* tied up at Murat Bay for the last time. The jetty was decorated with flags and bunting as a farewell gesture not only to the *Yalata*, but to Coast Steamships Ltd and to hundreds of crew members of whom the current Captain Gledhill, First Mate Norm Griffin and Second Mate Nick Exindarius, were excellent examples, each having served on West Coast trading ships for twenty years.[40]

Ironically, six weeks after the *Yalata* stopped coming to the Far West, it was announced that, because of 'increased shipping and customs activity', a full time Customs Officer, Barry Ayres, was to be appointed.[41] But that is another story — the Thevenard story.

The building of the concrete jetty at Thevenard in 1916 with a dredge operating at left.



A logical idea in 1911 was that the railway to be built north from Minnipa should end at a potential deep sea port. To the captains of the coastal traders at that time the best location for such a port was Decres Bay, simply by weight of experience. It was known to have deep water, it had good holding ground for anchorages and it had been used by dozens of ships when loading wheat from the hinterland. Indeed, Captain A Tainsh, in giving evidence to the Eyre Peninsula Railways Commission in 1911, suggested that Decres Bay was 'undoubtedly the best harbor on the West Coast this side of Port Lincoln. It is equal to Port Lincoln and is one of the best harbors in South Australia.'

It was probably that statement alone, widely quoted as it was, that induced the government to pass the Hundred of Solomon and Decres Bay Railway Act of 1912.

A hint of a land scandal developed over what was called the Decres Bay Frontage (now Wittelbee National Park). The truth will probably never be known, but the questionable facts were that the land, part Block 2, Hundred of Bonython, was on lease to a West Coast storekeeper and was forfeited because of unpaid rent. The government then quietly advertised it for sale and, without anybody on the West Coast knowing about it, a man named Conlon bought the lease for 47 pounds.[42] Conlon then sold it to the land agents Poynton and Claxton for 2300 pounds who bought it for a client T R Scarfe. Somewhere about the same time a town called Baudin was planned and J C Rundle, chairman of a company called Decres Bay Hotel Limited, purchased four allotments in the town for 3500 pounds together with the sole right to apply for a hotel licence within five years.[43]

Thus, there were strong vested interests anxious to see the Decres Bay port and railway terminus established.

Denial Bay and Streaky Bay communities also wanted the deep sea port and made their feelings known to J G Moseley in the House of Assembly. He proposed: 'That a report be laid upon the table of (the) House showing the relative cost of providing shipping facilities for deep sea ships at Decres Bay, also at Denial Bay and Streaky Bay including railway facilities and cost.'[44] This was passed and the Government asked John Bagot Labatt, Assistant Engineer of Harbors and Jetties, to look into the question. His report was available for parliamentary perusal in November 1913.

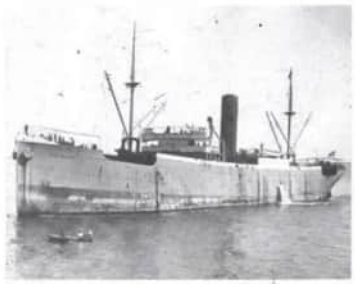
The West Coast has a Cape Labatt south of Streaky Bay. The events of 1913 and 1914 would have made it more appropriate if Smiths Point, Murat Bay had been named after Labatt. Instead it became Thevenard, yet, it was almost solely the creation of Engineer Labatt. His report to parliament rejected Decres Bay and substituted Cape Thevenard. He subsequently had to defend that decision against considerable opposition.

Labatt's report caused great confusion and lengthy debate in parliament and led to the appointment of the Cape Thevenard Select Committee, 'to consider and report upon the question as to whether it be expedient to adopt Cape Thevenard, Murat Bay as the seaport terminus of the Minnipa Hill Railway instead of Decres Bay.'

The Minutes of Evidence of the Select Committee are lengthy but absorbing reading. The six parliamentarians (H Angas Parsons, A McDonald, I MacGillivray, F J T Pflaum, G Ritchard and T H Smeaton) interviewed 11 witnesses; but in the final analysis they were required to balance the views of the marine engineer Labatt against the views of two prominent sea Captains, Patrick Weir and Francis Derry. Weir was master of the government steamer *Governor Musgrave* and before that had taken sailing vessels to the West Coast many times. Derry had been master of the coastal traders *Jessie Darling*, *Excelsior* and *Grace Darling*.

Over the past three years there have been an average of more than one million tonnes shipped from Thevenard (20% more than has been lifted from Port Lincoln's super port over a similar period).

WCS 25/3/87



SS *Walcherren* the first overseas steamer to load grain at Thevenard jetty, 1921.

The Thevenard jetty is crowded: Trefusis *is unloading steel plate for the Hume factory;* Noora *is discharging coal and taking on a full load of plaster from the Gypsum company;* Bolivia *is standing offshore waiting to load wheat — it could wait a week.*

WCS 29/7/27

Opposite page.
Above. Sail and steam adjacent at the Thevenard jetty in 1927. The sailing vessel the *Kobenhavn* was a Danish training ship which was lost at sea with all hands on its next voyage.
Below. MV *River Torrens* which at 182 metres is the longest ship to berth at Thevenard (as at March 1987).

The sea captains both favoured Decres Bay. They thought it was deep enough (Weir thought for the next fifty years) and that it had more room to manoeuvre vessels than Cape Thevenard. When dredging was required to get berths of 30 feet they argued that only about 3 feet would need to be 'skimmed off' the Waterwitch Channel which led into Decres Bay.

Labatt's arguments concentrated on the long term view. He cited evidence of the increasing size of ships in the world and said that the Yatala channel into Thevenard could be dredged to 30 feet and deeper much easier than the Waterwitch channel where his borings had encountered a hard rock bottom. This was the critical evidence: in his view the economics of the situation were that a good deep sea port could be obtained more cheaply at Thevenard than at Decres Bay. Other evidence suggested that a rail terminus could be built more effectively at Thevenard and a town was easier to create at Thevenard.

The Select Committee reviewed the evidence and pronounced in favour of Thevenard, except that a complete survey had to be made of the Yatala Channel and the survey was to be checked by an experienced engineer not in the service of the South Australian government. This was done in 1914 by George Kermode, Engineer in Charge of Ports and Harbors, Victoria, who supported Labatt's findings. Thevenard, the West Coast's deep sea port, was then formally approved and work began on its construction.

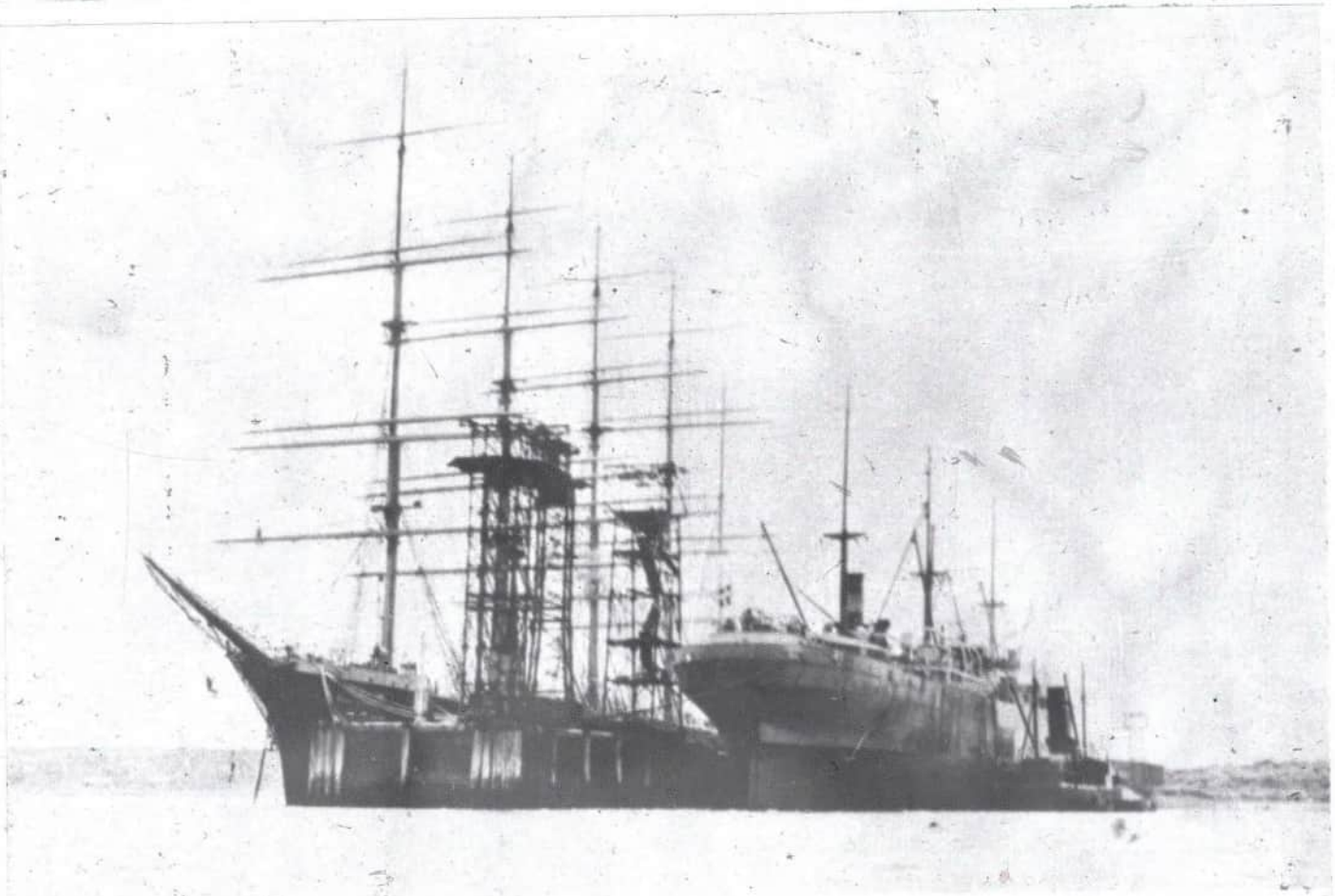
The contract for the harbor facilities was let in 1914 to Messrs Stone and Siddeley Ltd, then of Glenelg. They completed what was the first concrete jetty in South Australia in 1920, but not without many difficulties; caissons were sunk in the wrong place, a crane tipped into the sea and there was much trouble with the concrete mixing. Despite the fond hopes of getting 30 feet of water at the berths, the initial dredging brought only 24 feet at either side of the jetty. And, this remained the depth for 50 years : only in 1969 was a contract let to an American firm (Dillingham and Company) to deepen the harbour from 24 feet to 27 feet at low water.[45]

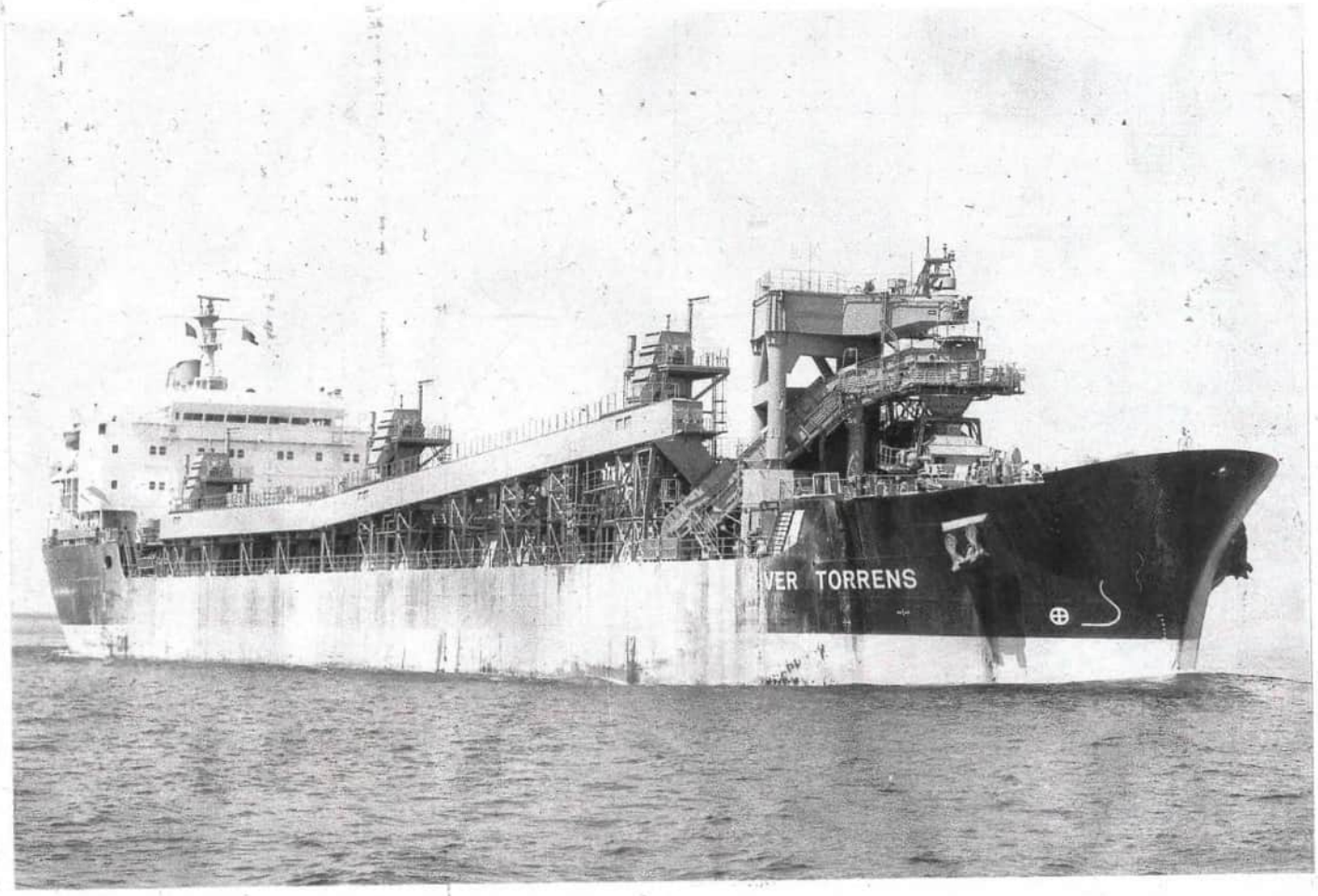
There was overseas shipping before Thevenard. Large and beautiful sailing clippers and gross, ugly steamers anchored in Decres Bay in the early 1900s waiting for the 'mosquito fleet' to descend upon them with loads of wheat. The *Erria* was there in 1909 loading for 'home ports'. Schooners, ketches, cutters, and dingies with pocket handkerchief sails, hustled backwards and forwards with bags of wheat until the hinterland's larder was emptied. Then it was up-anchor and a movement up the coast to Point Bell or Point Sinclair where another fleet of small boats rushed out to offload their wheat.

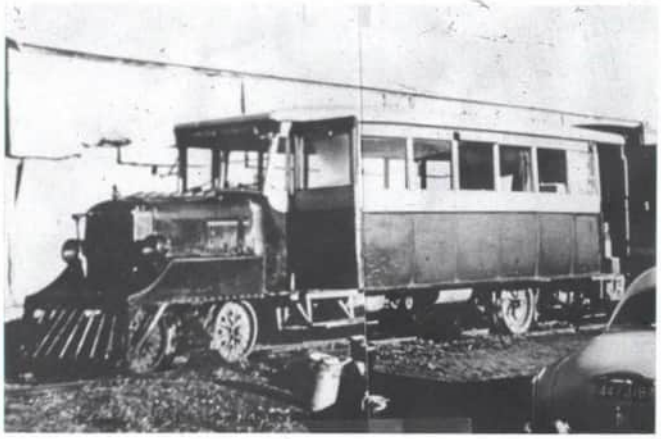
Evidence given by Cecil Doudy, the Murat Bay solicitor, to the Cape Thevenard Select Committee indicated that Decres Bay had been a popular anchorage between 1911 and 1913. He mentioned that the following ships had loaded wheat there, *Titania*, *Howard de Troop*, *Leyland Brothers*, *Alona*, *Largie Moore*, *Silford*, *Harold*, *Majorca* and *Catterina Acame*.

Even when the Thevenard jetty finally opened, the process of feeding the big ships was not greatly different. In 1921 the first three steamers to load were SS *Walcherren*, SS *Pearlmead* and SS *Grelstone*. All were guided in by pilot Captain O Nielsen assisted by the tug *Bobby Burns*; and standing by in each case were ketches laden with wheat brought from as far away as Smoky Bay and Fowlers Bay. With the *Grelstone* for example, 80,000 bags were loaded, and a good percentage of them were 'double handled' via the ketches *Yalata* (owned by Tainsh and partners), *Capella*, *Eclipse* (owned by J Tainsh and partners) and *Spinthrift*.[46]

There have been many other ketches that acted as lighters for the overseas ships at Thevenard. The most famous is probably the *Falie*, the same vessel that acted as the Jubilee 150 flagship for the State in 1986. From 1928 to 1949




VER TORRENS



A petrol driven converted bus called a Faegel car. It ran on the Port Lincoln to Thevenard railway in the early 1930s.

the *Falie* made many trips to Thevenard from places like Fowlers Bay, Streaky Bay, Elliston, Venus Bay, Sceale Bay and Haslam under Captains Gifford (1928), Bergland (1929–31), Nielsen (1938–47), B Tainsh (1948) and Buttfield (1949). It was also capable of taking wheat from Thevenard to Port Adelaide when there were no overseas ships in port and, on a few occasions, it also brought wheat to be loaded from as far afield as Yorke Peninsula.[47]

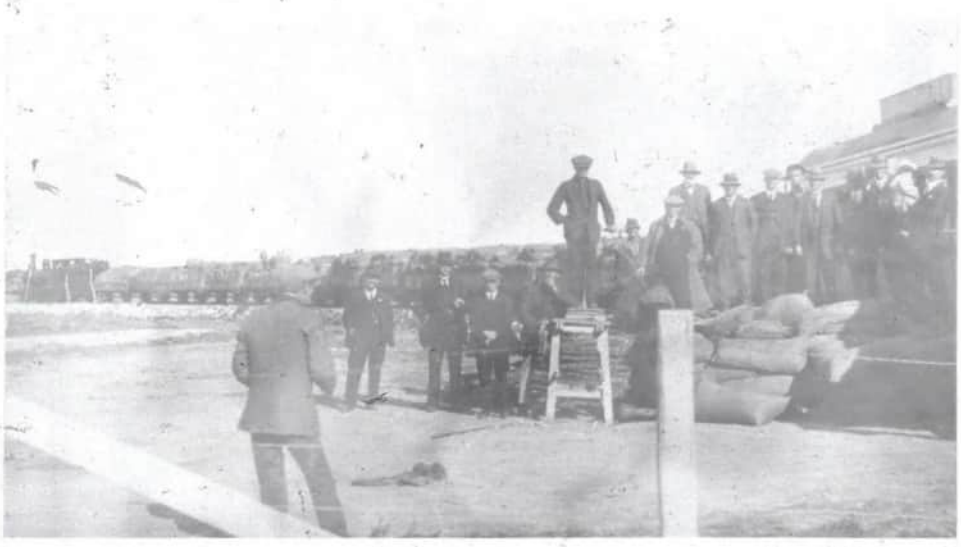
The Falie *arrived at Thevenard on Sunday last. She will pick up 3000 sacks of wheat for transhipment at Port Adeliade. Messrs L. Dreyfus Co. are the shippers.*

WCS 13/2/31

In recent years the need for ketches as lighters has largely disappeared and there has been a vast re-orientation of the feeding system to the deep sea port. In place of horse drawn teams to the outports, to wheatstacks, to ketches, to the ship, there is now motor trucks to the silos to the conveyor belt to the ship.

Nowadays the interest at Thevenard is in how many ships per year use it, 19 overseas ships in 1968–69, up to 53 overseas ships in 1983–84 and increasing. Also, there is interest in how large the ships are that tie up at the jetty. In March of 1987 the MV *River Torrens* was, at that time, the largest ship to berth, its 182 metres length being more than three times the length of the old *Wookata*.

Such goliaths of the sea come in only because of the extensive dredging and, in 1922, the *West Coast Sentinel* printed a touching farewell to the Pathfinder Dredge No 5, the *Wallaroo*, after 5 years spent in the area making the initial channel. It mourned the passing 'of the grind, whirr and bellow of her never tiring engines'.[48] Today (1987) the Far West would very much like Pathfinder Dredge No. 5, or its modern counterpart, to return, because the sad fact is, the channel is not deep enough for modern ships which must come into the port empty and go out half full to be topped up somewhere else.



The first train at the Ceduna Siding in 1915.

In 1905 the South Australian Government introduced a Bill for the construction of a railway line from Port Lincoln to Cummins. During the debate on the Bill it was argued that the railway was urgently required and that, if it was not constructed, a great many settlers would have to abandon their land.[49] The narrow gauge line was built and proved to be a great success. Since then, with varying degrees of intensity, the same argument used by farmers' representatives extended the line to Minnipa in 1912, to Thevenard in 1915 and to Penong in 1924.

The building of the railway was largely pick and shovel work and many settlers were employed in their off-seasons when they were pleased to be able to supplement their meagre incomes. A train brought sleepers and rails to the railhead each day and from there they were offloaded by hand to advance the tracks a further few hundred yards. Large gangs kept pace with the daily progress and lived in tent cities which were periodically moved 'uptrack'.



The end of the line.

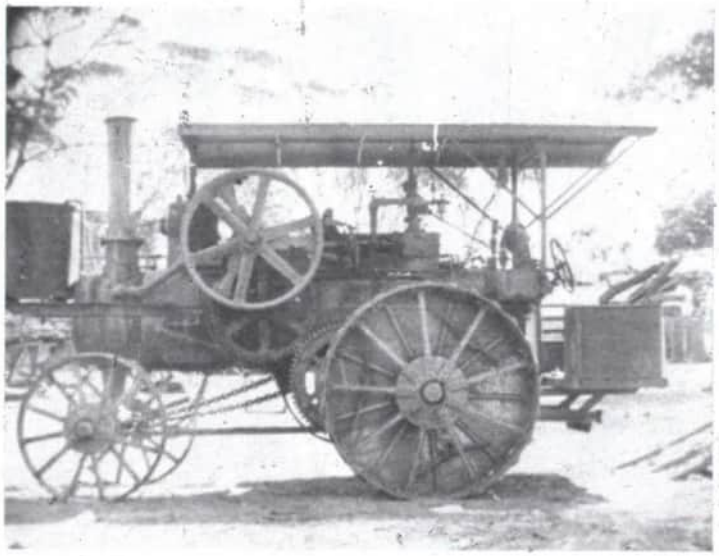
The service Port Lincoln to Thevenard, and later Penong, was originally a mixed train which took two days to travel down the peninsula from the Far West. There was an overnight stop at Minnipa and, if the timetable was maintained, a link up in Port Lincoln with a boat sailing for Adelaide.

In 1931 passenger railcars were introduced to the service, notably petrol driven Faegel cars which were converted road buses. Later, there were Centenary cars, introduced appropriately in the year of the State's centenary, 1936. By then, the two day journey had been speeded up and passengers leaving Thevenard at 4.30 am could expect to be in Port Lincoln at 2.30 pm the same day.

The steam freight trains changed over to diesel operations in 1962. Being a narrow gauge line many of the locomotives, and some of the rolling stock, came from the Port Pirie to Broken Hill line when it was changed from narrow gauge to standard gauge. Similarly later, when the narrow gauge 'Ghan' line in the north of the State was abandoned, some of its locomotive stock was transferred to the Port Lincoln division for use on Eyre Peninsula's lines.

Passenger services on the Thevenard to Port Lincoln line ceased in 1968 due to declining patronage but there was one final flutter in 1976 when the Railways Historical Society of South Australia took a special train from Port Lincoln to Penong and attracted 60 passengers.[50]

Daphne Freeman, in *South Australian Scrapbook* edited by Madeleine Brunato, wrote a colourful account of the railway to the Far West, which she called The Kangaroo Express, an expression, she said, of both affection and



C Will's Buffalo Pitt steam traction engine purchased from America in 1907.

Train Guard (Penong to Ceduna): One of these days I'll leave you boys behind.

Penong Boys: That's alright we'll catch you on the next hill — no worries!

KEN WRIGHT, Audio Tape, NTMC

frustration.[51] She dwelt on the experiences of drivers like Claude Simmons who collected shopping lists from women waiting at the little sidings — Claude often spent his off duty time in Thevenard buying needles and threads and household items to pass over to the women on his return journey.[52]

It might have been too many stops for shopping lists that caused Claude Simmons to almost run out of coal on one occasion. He remembered that he, the crew, and the passengers, had to pick up stumps and old sleepers along the track to keep the furnace going long enough for the train to reach Wandana where a relief engine had been sent out to tow him into Thevenard.[53]

Bus services and to a lesser extent air services, brought about the demise of the passenger rail service; and more efficient road haulage services have made the railway freight service largely unprofitable. But, in its day, the Kangaroo Express was a comfortable and supportive element for the people of the Far West and those west of Penong, who never got to have it, (despite promises to the contrary) know that their livelihood in the 1920s, 30s and 40s was much harder without it.

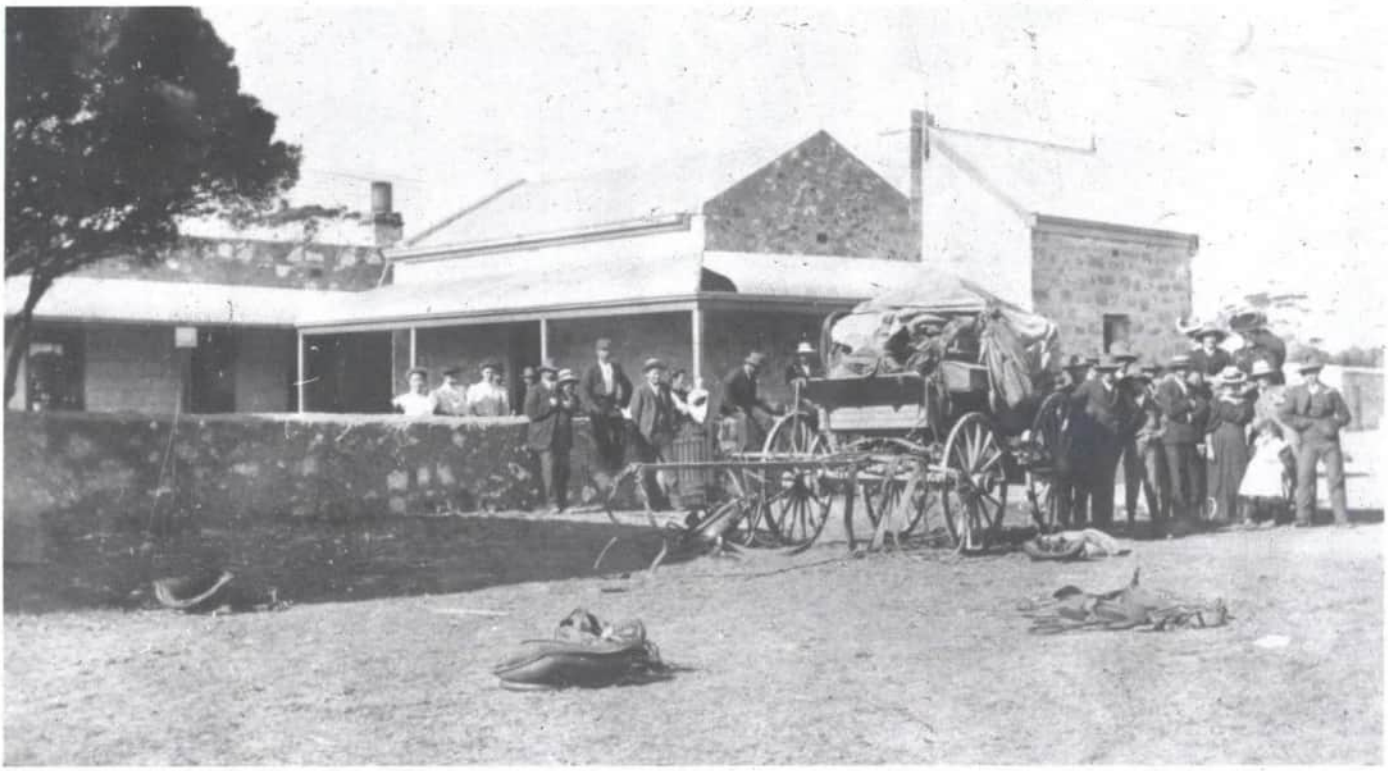
When J Soar, the Secretary of Coast Steamships, said in 1959 he did not think the West Coast could support three forms of transportation road, rail and sea, he probably did not realise how large road vehicles were going to completely take over the trade of the railways and the coastal ships. Later, he would have realised the inevitability of it when his parent company, Adelaide Steamship, gave up all hope for West Coast shipping and acquired a majority interest in the road haulage firm of Eyre Peninsula Freighters Pty Ltd.[54]

Because the Far West has come to rely so much upon motor vehicles for trade and for communication with the mainland, it is interesting to establish when and how the first vehicles came to the district.

The *West Coast Recorder* reported the first visit of a motor car to Murat Bay in 1907.[55] It was an Argyll driven from Port Lincoln to Murat Bay and



Lou (driving) and Carl Will in their International Harvester Motor Buggy in 1909.



The Fowlers Bay to Port Lincoln mail coach at Fred Lloyd's home, Smoky Bay.

return between 30 September and 8 October that year. The party, who suffered severe wind burn in their open tourer, included M Muirhead, W T Mortlock and J Haigh. The car suffered no damage, but it often had to be pushed through deep sand on the roads and hence progress was very slow. Streaky Bay to Murat Bay, for example, a distance of 70 miles, took three hours.

The second visit by a car was in September 1909, this time by a Mr Parsons and party from Port Lincoln.[56] They were less fortunate than the pioneering Argyll for their car strayed off the road and the engine was damaged by a mallee stump. They then had to suffer the ignomy of having their vehicle towed into Murat Bay by two horses.

In April 1910 His Excellency the Governor (Sir Day Hort Bosanquet), Captain Wright and Mr Britten Jones shipped two motor cars to Fowlers Bay and then drove to Port Lincoln.[57] They covered the 375 miles in 19 hours, 45 minutes at an average speed of 18.9 miles per hour. This, they claimed 'was a record not likely to be easily beaten.'

Before any Coaster moved to purchase his own motor car there was a flurry of interest in traction stream engines. In 1907 a slick commercial traveller for International Harvester Company sold two Buffalo Pitt engines one to L and C Will of Goode, and one to the Freeman family of Bagster. Evidently, the traveller told the Wills that the Freemans were definitely going to buy one and then told the Freemans that the Wills were placing an order. Neither party wanted to be outdone by the other and so two sales were made where originally none had been intended.

The two engines arrived on the SS *Australia* in September 1907.[58] When they were unloaded a large crowd stood by, watched them start up and then followed them out of town. A few days later the Will's engine drew up alongside Darling and Son wheat stack pulling two waggons with 100 bags of wheat. Once again there was an appreciative crowd at hand who hungered for details about the machine's performance. They had little satisfaction, for Mr Will said very little, except that the engine was giving him trouble because it used enormous amounts of water.

IHC motor buggies were very popular with farmers. They could stand alongside IHC farm machinery on Show Days. They first appeared in South Australia in February 1909 and, by September, 60 had been sold. Exceptionally good in sand they were popular on the West Coast.

Driven by side chains they had 2 cylinder motors, 2 forward gears and one reverse.

SPORTING CAR CLUB OF SA MOTORING HISTORY BOOK No. 8, p.20

After traction engines a few motor cycles began to appear in the Far West with S Freeman apparently having the first in 1907. Indeed, by 1909, the *West Coast Recorder* claimed they were 'plentiful' and that three had just arrived on the last ship.[59]

According to the late Percy Lange, the Will Brothers brought the first car to the district, an International Harvest Company motor buggy. It arrived in 1909.[60]

S Freeman appears to have had the second car, also an IHC buggy. He brought it to Denial Bay on the *Wookata* in May of 1910 and then drove it himself, with a party of holiday makers, from Denial Bay to Bagster.[61] Thereafter E A Payne, P Alexander and Messrs Hoffrichter Bros bought one each and had them in use in 1911.[62]

At Fowlers Bay the *West Coast Sentinel* reported that James Wheadon landed a Humber car in August 1912, that it was the third in the district and that the two others had been landed earlier in the year.[63] These were probably George Murray's Maxwell and a Humber bought by J Smith of the Penong Hotel. At the same time, at the other end of the district, L Talbot of Smoky Bay had an Overland.

James Dunnet also had a car in 1912, for it is recorded that six horses had to pull it out of the mud.[64] Then, in another little gem about early cars, the *West Coast Sentinel* printed in 1917 that 'Mr F Handtke had become the possessor of a Ford motor car and has already made an attempt on previous tree climbing records.'[65]

According to the reminiscences of Jeffrey Miller, mails in the Far West were first carried by Aborigines from localities near Fowlers Bay to Streaky Bay.[66] A young girl carried what she called 'paper yabber' from shepherd's hut to shepherd's hut. She was known throughout the pastoral empire as 'Royal Mail' and, although she never kept a regular schedule, given sufficient time she always got to her destination. Eventually, she was replaced by a packhorse mail ridden by Alf Welcome who visited the pastoral runs on a monthly schedule. This was increased to a fortnightly service and Jeffrey Miller remembered that the mailman was Harry Turner. He had one eye and one of his replacements, Bill Harrison, was deaf.

The next developments were formal mail contracts with carts and coaches rather than pack horses. Montgomerie and Sons had a contract, then Campbell and Sons, W H Betts, and T and C Mudge.

By 1909, T and C Mudge had a series of mail coaches operating from Fowlers Bay to Port Lincoln. It was 'all aboard' at Fowlers Bay at 1 pm on a Monday. First stop for the two horse team was Yalata Station 7 miles away at 2 pm; then it was on to Glen Boree and Bookabie by 6 pm when a stop was made for tea and a change of horses. A further 20 miles that day took the coach to Penong and a night's rest. On Tuesday at 5 am, with fresh horses, the coach proceeded to Charra and there the passengers and mail transferred to a larger coach drawn by four horses. Athenna was reached about 11 am and Denial Bay was a lunch stop at noon. At Murat Bay the horses were changed and, before the end of the day, Smoky Bay was reached and the party slept at Fred Lloyd's house. Wednesday was an easier day — Smoky Bay to Streaky Bay with a stop for the night. Thursday began with a fresh four in hand and the coach stopped overnight at Talia. Friday the departure time was 4 am and, in a long day, breakfast was at Elliston, Mt Hope was reached at 6 pm and Lake Wangary at midnight. The final days trip on the Saturday was a short haul of 27 miles from Lake Wangary to Port Lincoln, which was usually reached about 10 am. In



An example of the modern road transports which supply the Far West in the 1980s.

total Mudge's western mail run covered 400 miles in six days and used 52 horses.[67]

The Mudge mail drivers were legendary figures in the Far West, particularly those who worked the run for many years and got to know the settlers. Some of those that have been remembered were Bill Miller, Ted Attick, Alby Campbell, Fred and Walter Dunn, Joe Pitney, and Arthur Young. The Mudges persisted with horses and coaches until 1914. Indeed, in 1911, despite the increasing number of motor vehicles appearing on Eyre Peninsula, D Davies and Company of Port Lincoln built a new coach for the mail run. It was designed to carry 8 passengers and a ton of mail and luggage. The body was bright red, the undercarriage and wheels yellow and there was a covering of watertight canvas.[68]

When the 'motor mail' came in 1914, the Mudges used Ford delivery vans and had a greatly revised timetable. Departures from Port Lincoln were 10.30 am on Sunday mornings, Murat Bay was reached at 9 pm on Mondays and Fowlers Bay at 5 pm on Tuesdays.[69]

The Mudges eventually gave up the mail service and the firm of Owen and Le Brun from Port Lincoln had it for many years. In 1932 J A Morphett was given the contract for the Streaky Bay to Fowlers Bay leg and he used a Packard straight eight sedan, which gave a new dimension in passenger comfort.[70]

In 1922 Charles Haseldine tried an alternative to the Fowlers Bay-Port Lincoln line when he ran the first motor service through Yardea, Iron Knob and Port Augusta to Adelaide in 17 hours. His first passengers were Francis Tonkin, Harry Smith, Ivan Allport and Bill Murray. To a certain extent they worked their passage because, on many occasions, they had to push the car through sand patches on the roads in the Gawler Ranges.[71]

Charles Haseldine also ran a bus service in the Ceduna-Fowlers Bay area in the late 1920s and this was the forerunner of regular bus services that have existed ever since. For many years there was Harrison's Weekly Motor Service which took passengers from Ceduna to connect with the Adelaide train in Port Augusta. The buses departed from Klau's Cafe at 4 am and arrived at Port Augusta at 2.30 pm. Then, there were connections available to meet Birdseye's Motor Service from Streaky Bay to Adelaide; Ansett-Pioneer coaches from Ceduna to Adelaide followed and they were bought out by Streaky Bay Motor Services which had many successful years until the present Stateliner Bus Service took over.

Motor cars, motor mails and bus services need good roads and it has been a constant struggle in the Far West to achieve them. For scores of years it was a piece meal approach using the little money that was available to clear and maintain short stretches of roads essential for the community. Many farmers supplemented their incomes by stump picking or rock cracking on such roads.

Some of the time, the best that could be said about the roads was that they were adequate; for most of the time however they were appalling. Kevin Hibbert, Senior Projects Engineer for the Western District of the Highways Department for many years, summarised the problems when he said: 'Owing to the arid conditions prevailing for most of the year in this part of South Australia, constant trouble is experienced with surface corrugations, large pot-holes in winter and bulldust holes in summer.'[72]

Occasionally, the condition of the roads was brought to public notice. In March 1940, the *West Coast Sentinel* reported that the main road to Penong was in a deplorable condition; the main street of the township was inches deep

in powdered dust and the first rains of the season were anxiously awaited.[73] When such rains did arrive, the roads were transformed into quagmires. In 1951 ten vehicles were bogged on Murray's flat a mile west of Penong where for a stretch of 400 yards there was a sea of mud. The vehicles had to be hauled out by a bulldozer.[74]

Today the Far West has the compensation of the sealed Eyre Highway; but this was an asset wrestled from State and Federal governments only after sustained political pressure.

Until the Second World War there were no surveyed roads west of Penong. The original stock tracks, put in by the pastoralists before 1880, were still in use, and in many cases were very little improved. But, the possible Australian invasion by the Japanese made it imperative that there should be an East-West highway to act as an alternative to the East-West railway, particularly if the latter was damaged by enemy bombing. Therefore, a herculean effort was made and, in 1941, a graded road was pushed through in six months. All the available council men (they were mainly middle-aged) and council materials on Eyre Peninsula were put into use. In the Far West there were two major parties, the first led by H H Tyler, the District Clerk and Overseer of Le Hunte District Council. His party started work on 1 July at Capietha. The second party was a Highways Department unit led by foreman Jeff Ferguson, and their starting base was Penong, to which a special train was sent loaded with road building equipment.[75]

Construction camps were built at Bookabie and Colona Station and, in addition to Ferguson and Tyler, gang foremen included Jack O'Donell from Elliston, Joe Murray from Kimba and A W (Tod) Carr from Lipson.[77]

The road was built in the simplest way. A centreline was pegged and the natural soil was graded on both sides. No attempt was made to either raise the formation above natural surface or to drain the hollows.[77] Men worked 6 days a week and 10 hours a day for a wage of 7 pounds per week. Bulldozers and



Local schoolteachers and farmers cleaning up a wreck on the Eyre Highway in 1962.

front end loaders were unknown at that time so enormous amounts of rubble had to be lifted with shovels. The logistics of the operation were helped by the Army which provided transport, food, water, petrol and medical services. In six months, between July and December 1941, 300 miles of road was formed and consolidated.

The day the crew reached the Western Australian border it was 118° F so they did not lose much time in turning around and working their way back. One other job was necessary — a track to Cook on the East-West railway, a distance of about 60 miles. This they graded and rolled in seven days by scrub bashing northwards following signals from scouts ahead who used flashing mirrors.[78]



The interior of the Smoky Bay telegraph repeater station in 1912.

This monumental feat of road building, finished in time for the workers to get home for Christmas, would normally have been front page news, but war time security meant that no publicity was given to it.

In 1943 the road was operational between Port Augusta and Kalgoorlie and, at that time, Prime Minister Curtin was pleased to approve its proposed name, Eyre Highway.[79]

After the war the Highways Department had the continual problem of maintaining the road. Its most westerly maintenance depot was established at Coorabie and from there gangs were responsible for frequent patrol grading.[80] Working with as many as six graders, they covered up to 30 miles a day with a working schedule of ten days 'on' and four days 'off'. Drivers the Highways Department singled out for special recognition in a volume of their magazine were Don Thompson, Malcolm Scott, Trevor Gurney, Bob Virgin and Allan Crisp.[81]

The bitumen sealing of the highway became a political football in the 1960s and 1970s. 'Kickers' were the people of the Far West, the Western Australian Government, the South Australian Government and the Federal Government. Western Australia completed sealing within its state in 1969, and the section Port Augusta to Ceduna was sealed by 1967. The final link, Ceduna to the Western Australian border, was the bone of contention.

In 1967 a joint submission from the South Australian and Western Australian governments was made to the Prime Minister of Australia. Western Australia stated that it regarded the sealing of the gap as a project of 'great national importance'.[82] The submission was rejected not only then, but again in 1968 and 1969, despite intense lobbying. Don Jessup, the House of Representatives member for Grey, pleaded for Federal funds many times. He suggested that less than 30 per cent of the vehicles travelling between Ceduna and Eucla had South Australian registrations, but the Commonwealth still persisted in its belief that the road was purely a South Australian matter.[83]

In 1970 when L G Wallis was the Member for Grey, he also appealed for Federal assistance. In a letter to Ian Sinclair, Minister for Shipping and Transport, he said that the unsealed section was in a disgraceful condition 'and is in fact highly dangerous with visibility reduced to practically zero because of the dust menace.'[84]

The *West Coast Sentinel* also lobbied strongly. In January 1971 it published a photograph of a wrecked car involved in a fatal accident in the dust west of Ceduna. With it was the emotive question 'How many more will have to die on Highway 1?'[85]

At last, in 1972, the Federal Government accepted yet another submission and agreed to provide funds in conjunction with the South Australian government. The Ceduna-Penong sealing was already under way by then and the final 400 kilometres to the Western Australian border was completed and opened on 29 September 1976.

The official opening ceremony was held at Wigunda about four hours drive west of Ceduna. The Commissioner of Highways in South Australia, Mr A K Johinke spoke, and so did the Minister for Transport in South Australia, Hon. Geoff Virgo and his counterpart in Western Australia, Hon. Roy O'Connor. Of these, Mr O'Connor made the most cogent remarks when he said: 'This is a true milestone in the history of Australian transportation' and 'the completion of (the highway) is a great tourist benefit and an important defence asset'.[86]

For the Far West the most noticeable effect of the sealing of the highway was the increase in the volume of traffic passing through the area. In 1967, 28,470 vehicles drove along the highway, by 1977 it rose to 49,348 vehicles and in 1986 it was 61,623 vehicles.[87] The repercussions of this spectacular increase have been felt, most noticeably, in the tourist industry which is discussed in Chapter 15.

When the dirt highway west of Penong was being cut in 1941, the rapidly moving surveyors often used as their guide the old telegraph line erected in 1875–76.

The initiative for this line came from Western Australia which wanted to be connected to the Adelaide-Darwin, and thence overseas, link completed in 1873.[88] The South Australian government approved the construction of an East-West line in 1874 and invited tenders in February 1875. Walter Thomson, an experienced line builder, was given the contract for a line from Port Augusta to Port Lincoln and one from Port Lincoln to Fowlers Bay. The third section, Fowlers Bay to Eucla, attracted no competitive tenders so it was undertaken by the Posts and Telegraphs department itself, led by overseer R R Knuckey.

Because Eyre Peninsula had no suitable timber for poles, galvanised iron poles were used and were spaced five chains apart. Beneath the line the scrub was cleared for 20 feet on either side and this work was done with axes.

The line which passed through the Far West came up from Port Lincoln via Mount Hope, Sheringa, Bramfield, Streaky Bay, Penong and Fowlers Bay. It was completed on 26 September 1876 and set the lines of communication up



The Telegraph Reserve at Smoky Bay with the three buildings for the repeater station facilities and its personnel.

the Coast thereafter. The contractors blazed a pathway, it then became a bush track and later, in many places, it became the main road.

The Fowlers Bay to Eucla link was a long and tortuous project which Richard Knuckey began in July 1876 with thirty eight men and eighty nine horses. A large supply base was built at Fowlers Bay and all poles and provisions had to be sent along the line from either this base or one set up at Eucla. The final hook up at the Eucla telegraph station was made on 8 December 1877.

By the mid 1890s the original galvanised iron telegraph line was twenty years old and, particularly because of the gold rushes to Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie, it had carried an enormous amount of traffic. It was plagued with maintenance problems and the sections near the coast performed badly 'because of excessive leakage of electricity from the line.'[89] This led to the building of a new inland line from Port Augusta through the Gawler Ranges to link up with the existing line at Flagstaff Landing. It was a copper wire line built in 1896 and included a telegraph station at Yardea.

Thirteen years later, in another quest for better performance, a repeater station was proposed for Smoky Bay. A five acre Telegraph Reserve was purchased from the lease of John Gregor and, in 1911, three telegraph buildings were constructed on the reserve. One building was the residence of the Post and Telegraph Stationmaster and his family; another was divided into two approximately equal parts to accommodate other workers at the station.

The Smoky Bay repeater station opened in 1911 and operated until 1927. Milton Gooley recorded the names of all the workers at the station and also traced the ownership of the buildings after 1927.[90]

By 1927 telephone exchanges were rapidly making telegraph stations redundant. Smoky Bay had its exchange in 1925 and Ceduna had one in 1929. Then, further along in the district's history the original manual exchanges became automatic. It happened in Ceduna on 13 June 1979 and 14 female operators lost their jobs.[91]

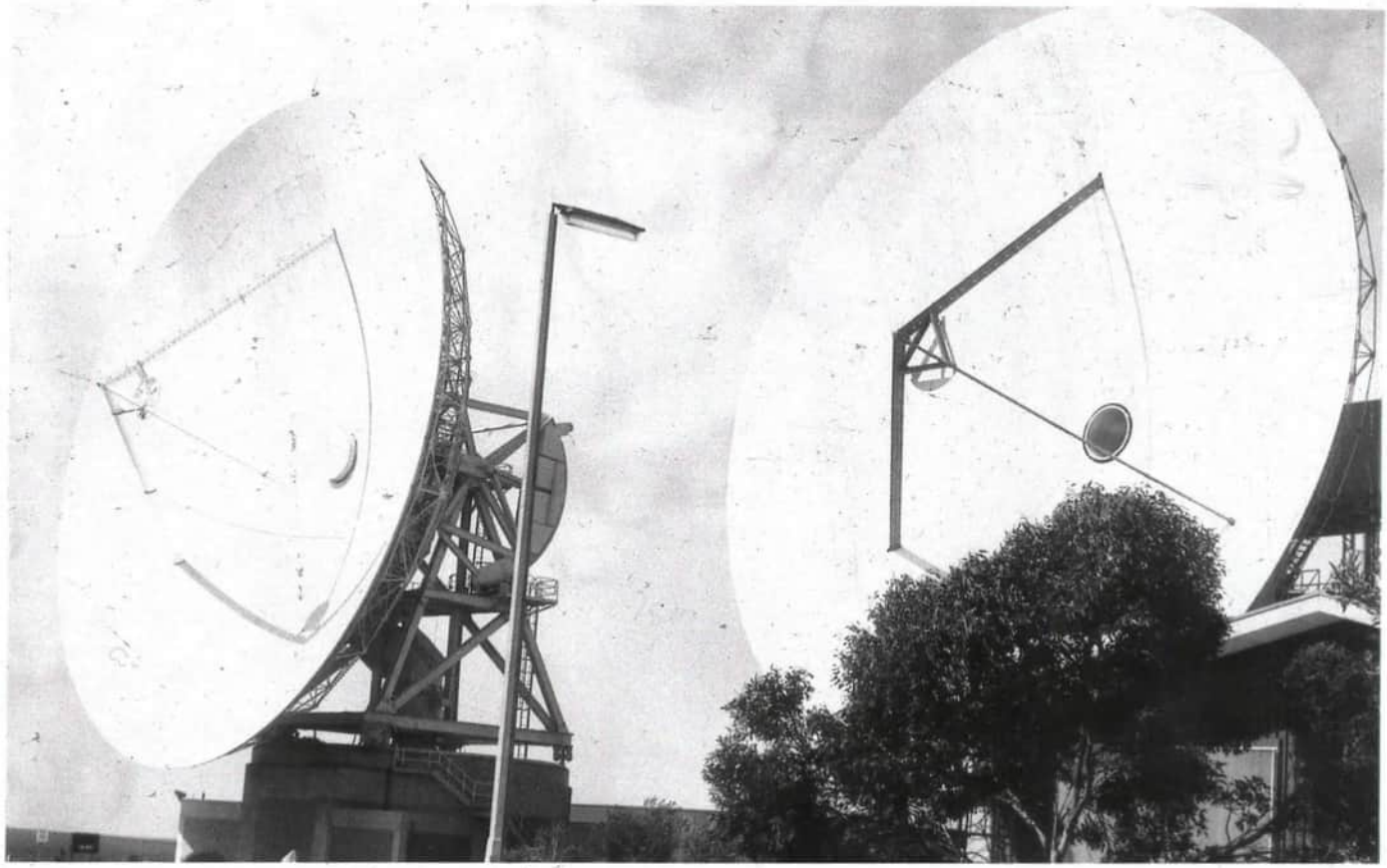
By the time automatic telephone exchanges were appearing, the Far West was already caught up in a special way with the world wide revolution in communications. Here two locations are especially significant, Kongwirra Hill, 11 kilometres east of Ceduna, and the Overseas Telecommunication Station, 35 kilometres north of Ceduna.

Kongwirra is a vital part of Telecom Australia's East-West microwave system, which is one of the world's longest, extending over 2640 kilometres. It was completed in 1970 'providing a broadband telecommunications link between the eastern states and the growing west'.[92] The Kongwirra Hill microwave tower and associated buildings incorporate a multiplexing repeater station and a maintenance base for all the towers spaced about 40 kilometres apart between Port Pirie and Bunabie (the last station before the Western Australian border). Several of the remote towers in the system are provided with airstrips and maintenance officers from Ceduna are sent by chartered planes if there is an urgent need for repairs. Nine personnel work at Kongwirra and there are about 26 other Telecom workers mostly concerned with telephone facilities for the district between Wirrulla and the Western Australian border. Telecom Australia therefore has an important regional base in Ceduna and it is one of the town's largest employers. From Kongwirra there is a link to the two giant dishes of the OTC station, one of Australia's busiest overseas telecommunication facilities and also one of the Far West's best tourist attractions.

The two dishes are labelled simply Ceduna 1 and Ceduna 2. The first was constructed in 1969 and the second, in response to an enormous increase in

When the Richardson family of Penong heard in the 1890s that one of their sons was ill at Kalgoorlie, Nat Richardson rode his bicycle across the Nullarbor to be with him. The only guide was the track made during the construction of the telegraph line. The journey took 10 days of hard slogging.

RICHARDSON FAMILY REMINISCENCES



Ceduna 1 and Ceduna 2 the Overseas Telecommunications Commission receivers built north of Ceduna in 1969 and 1980.

overseas telecommunications, was built in 1980. Ceduna 1 and 2 are linked into the INTELSAT system of satellite communications. They operate with satellites over the Indian Ocean and transmit signals between Australia, Europe, Middle East and African countries. Other OTC stations at Carnarvon in Western Australia, and Moree in New South Wales were built to communicate with the rest of the world.

The Ceduna location was chosen because it is just within the range of the Indian Ocean satellites and is as close as possible to the south-eastern part of Australia, which generates most of the telecommunications traffic.[93] The base was placed 30 kilometres north of the microwave system through Kongwirra to guard against interference between the two systems, satellite and terrestrial. Ceduna, of course, became the home town for OTC personnel brought to the area to operate the base. They were welcomed warmly and, as Mayor Jeff Bergmann said in 1980 'the Council and people . . . are proud to have Ceduna 1 and Ceduna 2 in our town.'[94]

At the time this book was being prepared 31 OTC staff worked in Ceduna, and OTC supplied houses were the envy of all other government departments.

Travel to the Far West by aeroplanes loomed as a possibility in the 1920s. Mr O J Howard of Essendon, who had lived for a time on the West Coast, wrote to the *West Coast Sentinel* in April 1923 and suggested that the Civil Controller of Aviation for Australia 'could be induced to give consideration to an air service to Murat Bay'.[95] He pointed out that tenders were being called for a service to Port Lincoln and he was sure that one could be extended to Murat Bay if the local people were sufficiently interested.

At this time, the Far West had no local government structure and no individual or group in the district made moves to follow up Mr Howard's

suggestion. This is not surprising because very few people living in the district had ever seen an aeroplane up close. Their first chance came in May of 1924 when a Fairey seaplane landed on Murat Bay to replenish its supply of petrol.[96] It taxied to near the jetty and Pilot Gable, who was on an 8500 miles flight inspecting the Australian coastline for the Defence Department, alighted and made arrangements for his fuel.

In 1925 the people of Fowlers Bay saw their first plane when an Italian seaplane flown by Major de Pinedo landed in the bay on one of its legs of a round the world trip.[97] From there it went on to Streaky Bay and Adelaide.

In 1927 and 1928 the first land planes arrived in the area and came down in open fields near Ceduna. The famous H J L (Bert) Hinkler came with his wife in April 1928 in his Avro-Avian. A few weeks earlier he had become the first man to fly solo from England to Darwin. At Ceduna Mr and Mrs Hinkler were given a banquet in the Memorial Hall on Friday, 13 April. Speeches were made by M W Shoemaker (Chairman), Dr C V Hallett, H A Betts, W J Horrigan, C C Neale, H C Sherman and J MacDonald. Bert Hinkler responded and told something of his epic flight from England.

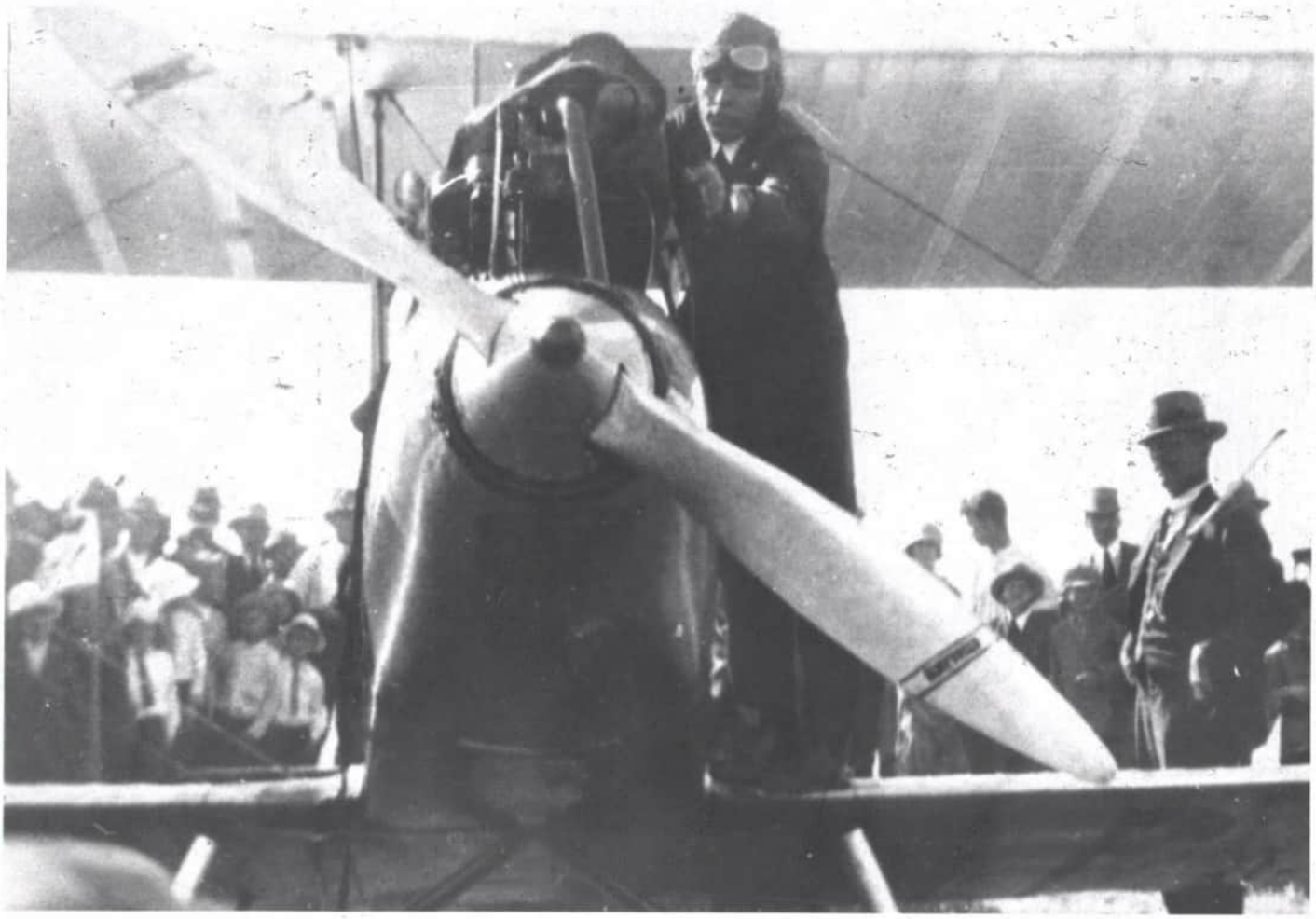


An autographed programme for the visit of the aviator Bert Hinkler to Ceduna in 1928.

Another early visitor was the 'Astor Radio' aeroplane which made promotional tours around South Australia.[98] It was at Ceduna in August of 1928 and, in December of the same year, West Australia Airways landed a De Haviland Moth plane near the town as part of its pioneering attempt to establish an air link between Perth, Adelaide and Melbourne.

This activity convinced the Department of Civil Aviation that an aerodrome was needed at Ceduna and one was constructed in 1929. Because of the availability of cheap flat land near the town it was not an expensive or

Bert Hinkler and his Avro-Avian aeroplane at Ceduna in 1928. C A Tonkin, Council Chairman, in the foreground at right.



elaborate exercise and it was topped off with what was called a 'rest house' for passengers which was 'luxuriously furnished'.[99] It still stands today, but is no longer luxuriously furnished.

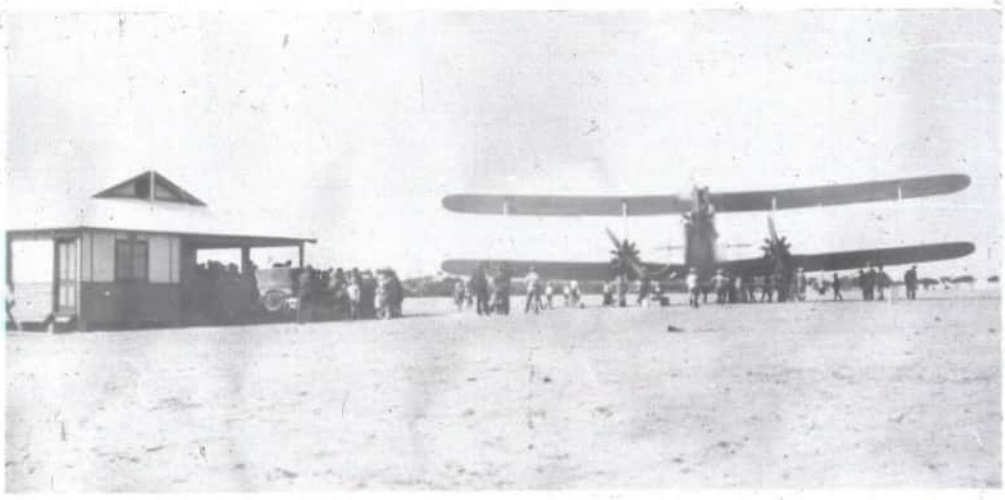
With the aerodrome established, West Australian Airways Ltd. opened a regular passenger and mail service flying Perth to Kalgoorlie to Forrest to Ceduna to Adelaide and vice versa. The passenger fare was 18 pounds single, Perth to Adelaide, or 5 pounds for any one of the stages in the flight.

The first plane to begin the service was the City of Perth, a De Haviland Hercules, three-engine 'airliner' capable of carrying 14 passengers. For its first flight in May 1929, the Ceduna aerodrome was lined with cars, and four lorry loads of children were brought from the school. After the landing, 500 people surrounded the plane while C A Tonkin and F W Betts made speeches of welcome to the pilot. He then offered joy flights at a reasonable price and 90 people took the opportunity to have their first ride in an aeroplane.

Two days after the City of Perth had come and gone, a second aircraft owned by the company, the City of Adelaide, made its first landing at Ceduna and then continued on to Forrest, Kalgoorlie and Perth.

In 1931 Viastra planes were introduced by West Australia Airways. They had two engines, carried 13 passengers and could travel at 150 mph. Multiple engines were needed for their reliability because the planes had to fly over vast areas of uninhabited country and, additionally, for safety reasons, the Department of Civil Aviation constructed emergency airstrips at many locations. One of these was at Penong on the property of the Murray family. The family was compensated by the payment of one free flight for a family member to Adelaide each year. A Viastra carrying Mrs C C Murray on one of these flights crashed on the airstrip and petrol from the wing tanks showered over a wide area. Fortunately, nobody was hurt and the damage to the plane was repairable; but it took several weeks before parts could be obtained and for that time the plane was stranded where it had come to rest.

Apart from the regular comings and goings of the West Australian Airlines, the people of Ceduna became very aeroplane conscious in October 1929 when Australia's 'Great Aerial Pageant' passed through the aerodrome. The *Western Mail* described it as 'a day of days for Ceduna which will live long in our memories'.[100] Some 1000 people visited the landing field to see 20 planes arrive and depart as part of the great East-West Air Contest of 2390 miles in 12 stages, Sydney to Perth, via Junee, Melbourne, Nhill, Adelaide, Kimba, Ceduna, Cook, Forrest, Rawlinna, Kalgoorlie and Tammin. Ceduna was an overnight stop so the town provided a social evening for the pilots and many townsfolk were present at 7.30 the next morning to wish the pilots well on their flight to



A De Haviland Hercules three engine airliner owned by West Australian Airways at the Ceduna aerodrome in 1929 with the 'rest house' at left.



One of the Viastra airliners introduced by West Australian Airways in 1931.

Cook. Standing in clouds of dust they witnessed the departure of 10 Gypsy Moths, 3 Military Wapitis, 1 De Haviland 50, 2 De Haviland 9s, 1 Sopwith, 2 Avro Avians and 1 Klemm monoplane.

After the race to Perth the planes returned at a leisurely rate and two couldn't quite make it to Ceduna. They landed in paddocks near Penong and gave some of the locals their first close up view of flying machines. This incident probably prompted the building of the Penong airstrip which has already been mentioned.

Another famous visitor was Amy Johnson who, in May of 1930, was the first woman to complete an England to Darwin flight. In her De Haviland Moth she then visited many locations in Australia and was warmly welcomed in Ceduna on 3 July 1930. A crowd of 300 watched her land at the aerodrome. Miss Johnson, described as a 'slim looking girl', by the *Western Mail* was received by Messrs C A Tonkin and A E White. She walked amongst the crowd and was presented with a wooden mascot by Aborigines.

In the 1930s defence aircraft often landed at Ceduna en route to Perth; in March of 1938, six RAAF Hawker Demons and one Anson bomber all landed on the same day creating great local interest.[101] The planes were on their way to Western Australia to take part in a special aviation demonstration programme. Then, during the war years, there was much defence activity at the aerodrome, most of which was clouded in secrecy. The tragedy of the crashed Hudson bomber, mentioned in Chapter 9, however did not go unnoticed.

In 1952 three Vampire jets were grounded at the aerodrome because of unsuitable weather. When they did take off, one dropped an auxiliary fuel tank near the house of Dudley Wright at Charra. The plane returned to Ceduna, waited for a new fuel tank and then, to complete a chapter of misadventures, set fire to stubble on the edge of the airstrip while it was warming up for take off.[102]

The Bush Church Aid aeroplanes made much use of the aerodrome between 1938 and 1968 and their contribution is mentioned in Chapter 11.

Commercially there have been many changes since West Australian Airways began passenger flights. The first was in 1936 when the WA company sold out to Adelaide Airways, which a few weeks later was absorbed into Australian National Airways (ANA).



A De Haviland Hercules passenger plane used by West Australian Airways on the Perth to Adelaide flights via Ceduna in 1929.

When planes could fly non-stop from Perth to Adelaide the special value of the Ceduna aerodrome as a stop-over was lost. Since then, there has been a prolonged battle to maintain its importance with only intra-state traffic. This has varied from Ceduna to Adelaide direct flights, to alternatives such as Ceduna-Port Lincoln-Adelaide, (Guinea Airways 1953), Ceduna-Minnipa-Cleve-Adelaide (Airlines of SA 1971) and Ceduna-Streaky Bay-Adelaide (Kendell Airlines 1986). There have been other variations and other companies, but no long term viability has yet been established despite slightly improving passenger numbers (eg 2986 in 1980–81 increasing to 3436 in 1984–85). Consequently, the Ceduna aerodrome is not highly rated for its importance by the Department of Civil Aviation, and no extensive renovations have been made to it since it was first constructed in 1929.

Throughout the evolving history of transport and communications, with vast changes such as camels to aeroplanes and telegraphs to satellite communications, there has always been the print media as a form of communication for Coasters. The early pastoralists obtained a supply of Adelaide papers with each ship and, even though they were often weeks old, the *Register*, the *Observer* and the *Chronicle* were read with great interest. By 1906 the *West Coast Recorder* was available weekly from Port Lincoln and that provided some local news until the region's premier newspaper the *West Coast Sentinel* arrived in June of 1912. It was founded by C J Wallace, with A E Acott as managing editor. He prepared the first edition in premises at Streaky Bay. W H Betts launched the newspaper and his wife switched on the press for the first printing.

In its first leading article the paper mentioned the two main thrusts it was to develop, (Liberal) conservatism and West Coast parochialism. It said:

> 'With regard to the question of politics we have no hesitation in saying that 'The Sentinel' intends to stand by the Liberal flag. It is a strip of good material that we are pleased to see floating in the breeze and we do not feel at all ashamed of it. At the same time, as the paper is here primarily to assist in the development of the

The sort of facilities that exist at the Ceduna Airport in this modern age are disgraceful.

WCS 3/12/86

West Coast and to throw the searchlight on its great resources, the question of politics will not be made a weekly 'bill-of-fare, but (like the Old Guard) will be held in reserve and launched when occasion demands.'

The paper was produced from Streaky Bay for its first 65 years and naturally material from that town and nearby district outweighed material from the districts in the Far West. There were a series of ownership changes;; J G Moseley the politician owned the paper from 1913 to 1921, then C C Neale until 1932 and W A Thompson, a pioneer pastoralist in the Chandada area, bought it in 1932. He passed it on to his son W R Thompson in 1952 who relinquished it in 1968 to the Hill family in Port Lincoln.

Although the paper was Streaky Bay based until 1978, correspondents were employed to supply news from other areas. Of these some of the best known, for the length of service and the quality of their input, were H G Selwyn, Ceduna; Mrs H G Watson, Ceduna (a total of 30 years); Mrs Gwen Betts, Ceduna; Mrs Joyce Backshall, Ceduna, J T Miller, Penong and Districts; and Mrs Anne Watson, Penong and Districts.

Over the years the paper has tried to reach its West Coast readers with a variety of columns for all members of the family. Thus 'Aunt Beatrice' wrote a Children's Column for many years and so did 'Uncle Jim'. 'Touchstone' wrote about 'Here, There and Everywhere' and Miss Mary Tallis had 'The Woman's Column'. Sport has always been well covered, occasionally by 'Guest' local writers, and since 1946 special sections have been written for farmers. In 1912 it was a 4 page paper, it gradually expanded to 16 pages in the 1920s but dropped back to 8 pages during the Depression years. Since then it has had a steady growth and reached 40 pages, for the first time, in 1986.

Because the area it supplies has grown to be more diversified and complex so has the paper. No longer is it able to devote much space to intimate local news and, historians of the future, will mourn the passing of the detailed obituaries for well known local people. In 1986, for example, Clive Keitel and Percy Lange died, and there was scarcely any mention of them in the paper — twenty years before each would have received a long obituary as a tribute to their service in the district.

The paper has consistently fought for West Coast rights and has taken Adelaide newspapers to task on several occasions when they have been unsympathetic to the area's needs. It has also been quite fearless on many occasions in tackling local issues; and sometimes blunt in the handling of some of its readers. For example, in 1931, it had this to say to 'Fed Up' of Charra. 'We cannot publish your letter. It is too much of a grouch altogether. Times are bad enough without having to read about it in such terms as you use.'

In December 1977 the paper moved from Streaky Bay to Ceduna and the bias of news from the former town has now been changed in favour of the latter. Indeed, it is now first and foremost Ceduna's paper, and news from the other towns is often meagre.

After the transfer to Ceduna, the paper moved into the new technology of printing and publishing. Although the news is gathered and written in Ceduna, the paper is now made up and printed at Port Lincoln. There is a Compugraphic MDT350 typesetting keyboard at the Sentinel office in Ceduna which sets out the advertising and editorial material. This is then transmitted by Telecom Datel line to Port Lincoln where the pages are arranged and the paper is printed.

The *West Coast Sentinel* won the Ampol Award for the State's best country newspaper with a circulation of under 5000 during the year 1984 and again in 1986. It also won the Compugraphic Award for the best published

advertisement in 1984. The judge for 1984, Gene Swinstead, editor-in-chief of Messenger Press, said the Sentinel 'excelled in layout, regional design and showed a well balanced content catering for all the community.'[103]

John Proud, the Sentinel's managing editor in 1984, accepted both awards on behalf of his staff and paid tribute to Brian Barnett who put the paper together in Port Lincoln.

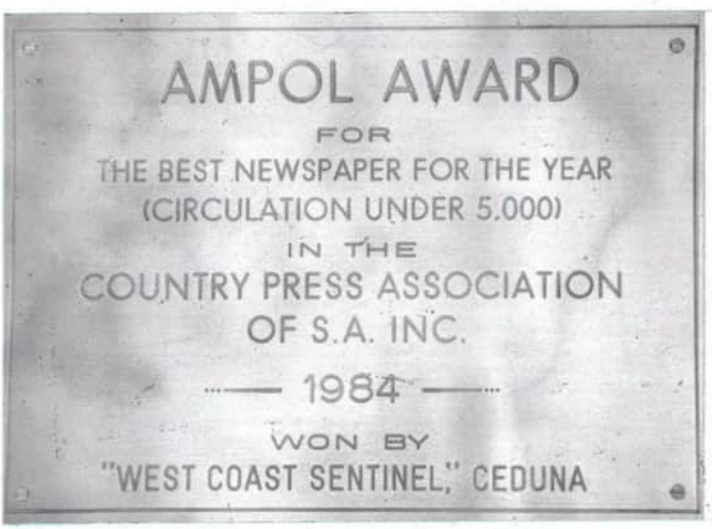
Two other newspapers have tried to establish a regular distribution in the Far West, the *Western Mail* and the *Denial Bay Starter*.

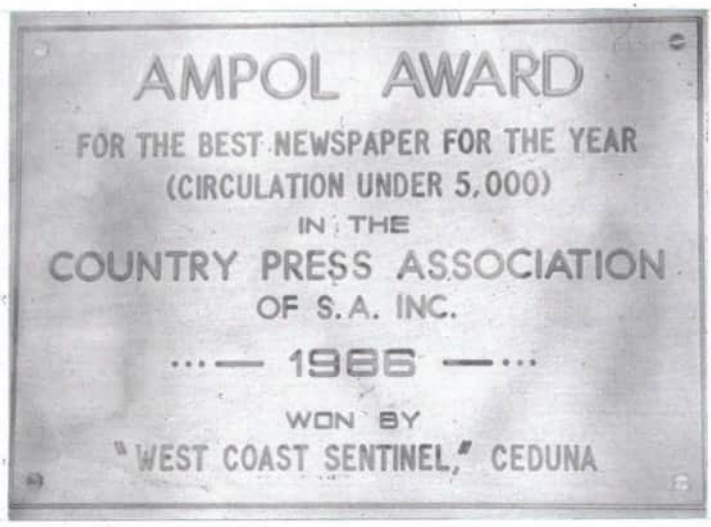
When C C Neale was owner and editor of the *West Coast Sentinel* at Streaky Bay he was a great believer in the future of the Far West. It was going to be 'the granary of South Australia' and one paper was not sufficient, another was needed for Ceduna and surrounding districts.[104] Consequently, he set up an office for what he called the *Western Mail* in the old district hall in Ceduna. He sent A C Lawrie to get the paper started and employed H G Watson as a mechanical engineer for the printing press.

In July 1928, 'quite a number of the leading business and townspeople gathered at the office of the *Western Mail*' and saw the first issues of the new paper come off the press. The first run was printed on silk and F W Betts auctioned it as a prize exhibit. The successful bidder was J Madigan at 26 pounds.[105] Dr C V Hallett made a speech wishing the *Western Mail* every success and everybody admired the paper's name plate and heading which read 'The Western Mail; Circulating throughout the Far Western Districts of the Great West Coast of South Australia. Single copies 3d. Printed and published for the Proprietor by A C Lawrie at the office of the Western Mail, Poynton Street, Ceduna.'

Naturally the *Western Mail* had a heavy concentration of Ceduna news but it also had a penchant for world sporting news, most of which it no doubt borrowed from Adelaide newspapers. Unfortunately, in the difficult years of 1928, 1929 and 1930, this combination was not enough for success and, in its final issue on Christmas Day 1930, it reported that the paper was to be incorporated with the *West Coast Sentinel*. It regretted the decision because the paper had been issued 'under happy auspices' two and a half years before 'but had not seen prosperous times'.[106]

The *Denial Bay Starter* of 1908–1910 was a tribute to the energy and literary skills of Dr Abbott. It began as a hand written document and graduated to a typed and duplicated newsletter style publication with a circulation of 100.[107] It ceased publication when Dr Abbott left the district to take up a practice in the Northern Territory (see Chapter 11).





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15. Resource Developments

The settlement of the Far West has often been hindered by a lack of economic resources. We have already seen how the marginal farming lands lacked adequate water supplies and the remoteness of the area has always made it difficult for the supply of even basic resources like electrical power. On the other hand, the Far West has excellent gypsum and salt resources and the harvest of the sea in the bays has often been bountiful. The development of these resources and the associated intangible resource, the area's scenery, is the substance of this chapter. In some cases, such as the water supply, it has been a strong and persistent push to create something out of nothing; while in other cases, such as the scenery and the gypsum, it has been a matter of assuring that the best possible use is made of something which is abundant and waiting to be utilised. In all cases, the District Council has been required to take initiatives and to give leadership but, additionally, much of the effective lobbying for the development of the resources has had to be made in the State parliament and here the contributions of local members have been important. The chapter therefore concludes with an analysis of what might be called the West Coast politicians of South Australia.

The 'Wheatgrower' will continue to expose the West Coast water scandal and, with the support of its members, will yet see that those hardy settlers get justice and water.

SA WHEATGROWER
15 2 35

The enormous problems associated with the lack of good water supplies in the Far West have already been mentioned many times. In the early days of settlement water was the resource that could make or break a farmer. Those few who were fortunate enough to have access to good wells had an inestimable bonus; the majority, with no such bonus, struggled for years with practices such as condensing sea water, building underground concrete tanks, carting water from distant wells or government tanks, purchasing it from railway trucks (at prices up to two pounds ten shillings per 1000 gallons) or purchasing it from coastal ships. The great dream was a permanent water supply, similar to that enjoyed in other parts of the state, and until it came Coasters had to go to incredible lengths to conserve what little they had. Walter Folland, farmer of Goode, told investigators for a Royal Commission (see later) that he would dearly like to have permanent water so that he 'could have a wash when he needed it, not when water was available'.[1]

Last Saturday when it was raining steadily my wife and myself went out in the rain and dragged boughs over the surface of the water runs. By this method you make the surface of the ground sloppy and set the water running. By doing this we coaxed a fortnight's supply of water into our tanks.

CEDUNA SUBSCRIBER
SA WHEATGROWER
15/4/35

In the years 1912 to 1916, and particularly during the severe drought of 1914, Eyre Peninsula's parliamentary representatives Moseley and Travers worked hard to achieve a permanent water scheme for their constituents. In 1913 Travers wanted a costing done for a proposal to bring water from Parachilna Creek in the Flinders Ranges to Minnipa Hill. He pointed out to his parliamentary colleagues that he had been 'endeavouring for some

The length of the main (Tod) trunk line to be constructed is extraordinary, and the only scheme in Australia comparable to it is the Coolgardie scheme carried out under the regime of Sir John Forrest.

COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC WORKS, SAPD, 7/11/16

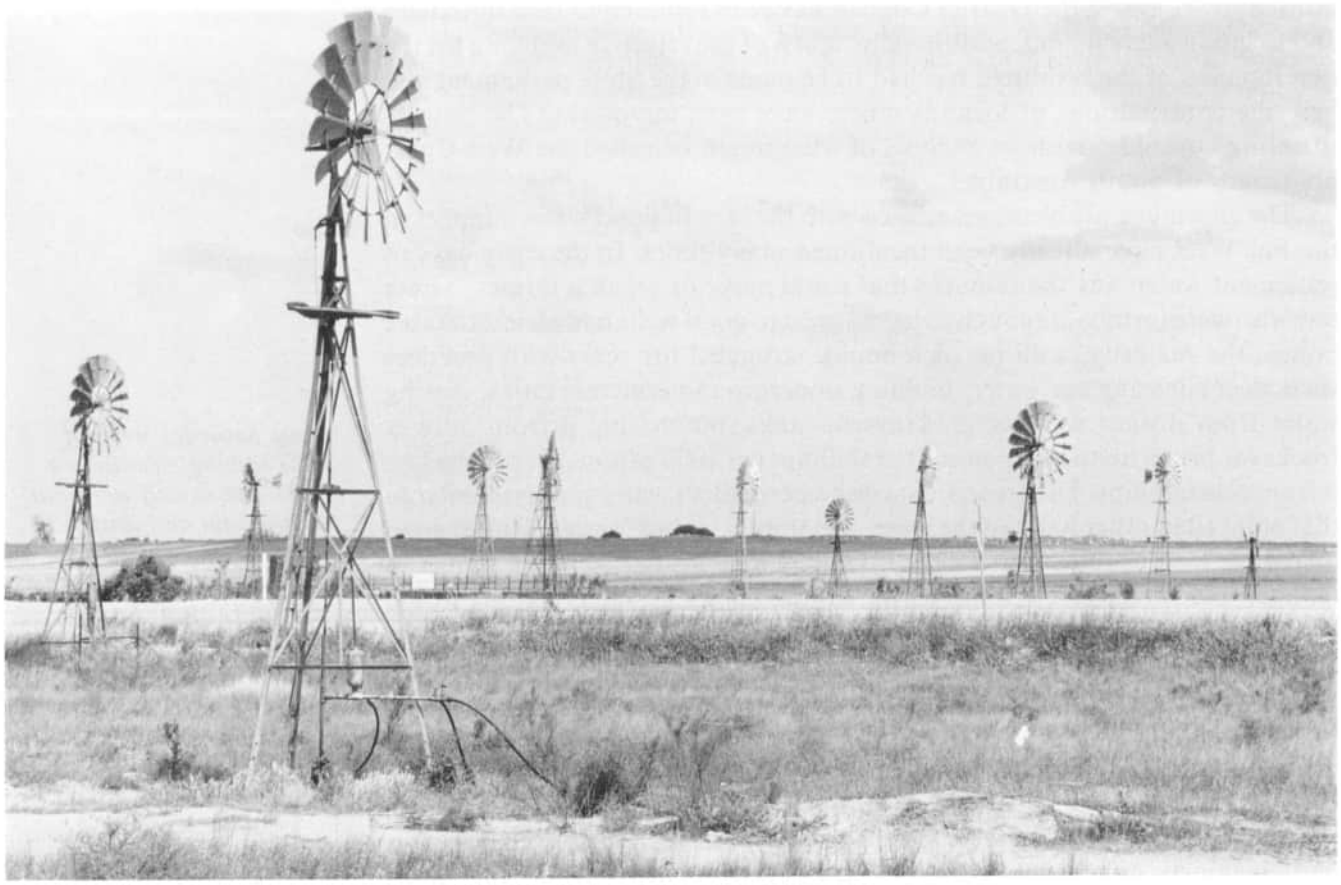
considerable time to get all possible information in regard to a scheme that would give a permanent water supply to settlers on Eyre Peninsula."[2]

The Parachilna scheme was shown to be far too expensive, but attention focused upon the Tod River scheme, as a worthwhile alternative. Moseley, in a long speech in November 1914, reminded parliament that the people at Murat Bay were currently existing on water brought by coastal steamers from Adelaide at twenty five shillings per 1000 gallons. He favoured the Tod scheme but wanted a full investigation of all possibilities for Eyre Peninsula. This was eventually taken up under the aegis of a Royal Commission on Water Supply, the first progress report of which, in 1916, dealt with Eyre Peninsula's supply.[3]

The Commissioners were J F Herbert, J C Bice, F S Wallis, D James, P Allen, I MacGillvray and T Butterfield. They made two tours of Eyre Peninsula and took evidence fom 160 witnesses. On 16 June 1916 the Commission was at Nunjikompita where T W Flynn, farmer of Carawa, and G H Hurn, G W Pascoe and H R A Armour, farmers of Nunjikompita, gave evidence. Hurn recounted the times when he received all his water by the train once a week. He was currently working for a farmer in the district because he and his family had been 'starved off' his own block.

On 17 June the Commission interviewed E A Watson, E W Watson, G A Tonkin and C A Tonkin all farmers of Murat Bay. Additionally, F W Betts, merchant of Murat Bay, gave evidence. All the farmers spoke of their difficulties in obtaining water and F W Betts made the interesting observation that, as a merchant, he could not purchase locally, butter, bacon, eggs or meat, because farmers were 'precluded from producing them through the absence of permanent water.'

At the Goode schoolhouse on 19 June the Commission interviewed Walter Folland, L Will, William Tainsh and Alfred Tainsh. All complained about the



The Windmills of Penong. Each windmill which is on Anjutabie Flat is privately owned and supplies water for domestic use.



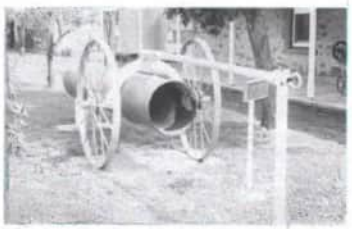
Laying the pipe for the Tod water trunk main in 1927.

lack of permanent water and, because of it, the amount of time they had to spend carting from distant wells. Alfred Tainsh summarised the situation well when he said: 'At present the majority of the people eat tinned meat from Queensland and we have to get our vegetables from Adelaide. With water we would grow our own meat and vegetables, but without water we will have to go off the land.'

The Royal Commission reported to parliament in August of 1916. It stressed Eyre Peninsula's 'supreme need' for a permanent water supply and paid tribute to the settlers of the West Coast who, considering the 'almost insuperable drawbacks', (the chief of which was 'the water difficulty') had continued in occupation of their holdings. It recommended the adoption of the Tod River scheme.

The Tod River is the only stream on Eyre Peninsula that provides a reliable flow. Works were started on a reservoir, about 16 miles north of Port Lincoln in 1918 and were completed in 1922. From the reservoir water was lifted 400 feet to a service reservoir on Knotts Hill 3 miles away and from there a distribution system was established to carry water to many parts of the peninsula. The principle concern for the Far West was the construction of what became known as the Tod Trunk Main from Knotts Hill to Cape Thevenard following the railway line.

One publication cites the Tod River Scheme as 'one of the great achievements in Australian Water Conservation' but for the Coasters at Murat Bay, who expected to see its completion every summer from 1922 to 1928, it was one long, infuriating series of delays.[4] Knotts Hill to Minnipa was started in 1923 using unlined steel pipes laid underground. By 1924, when the line was struggling to reach Minnipa and seemed likely to go no further, the *West Coast Sentinel* was moved to comment that 'the whole construction of the scheme is the standing joke of the West Coast at the present time'.[5]



A horse drawn jinker used for carrying the pipes of the Tod main Tod Reservoir Museum via Port Lincoln.

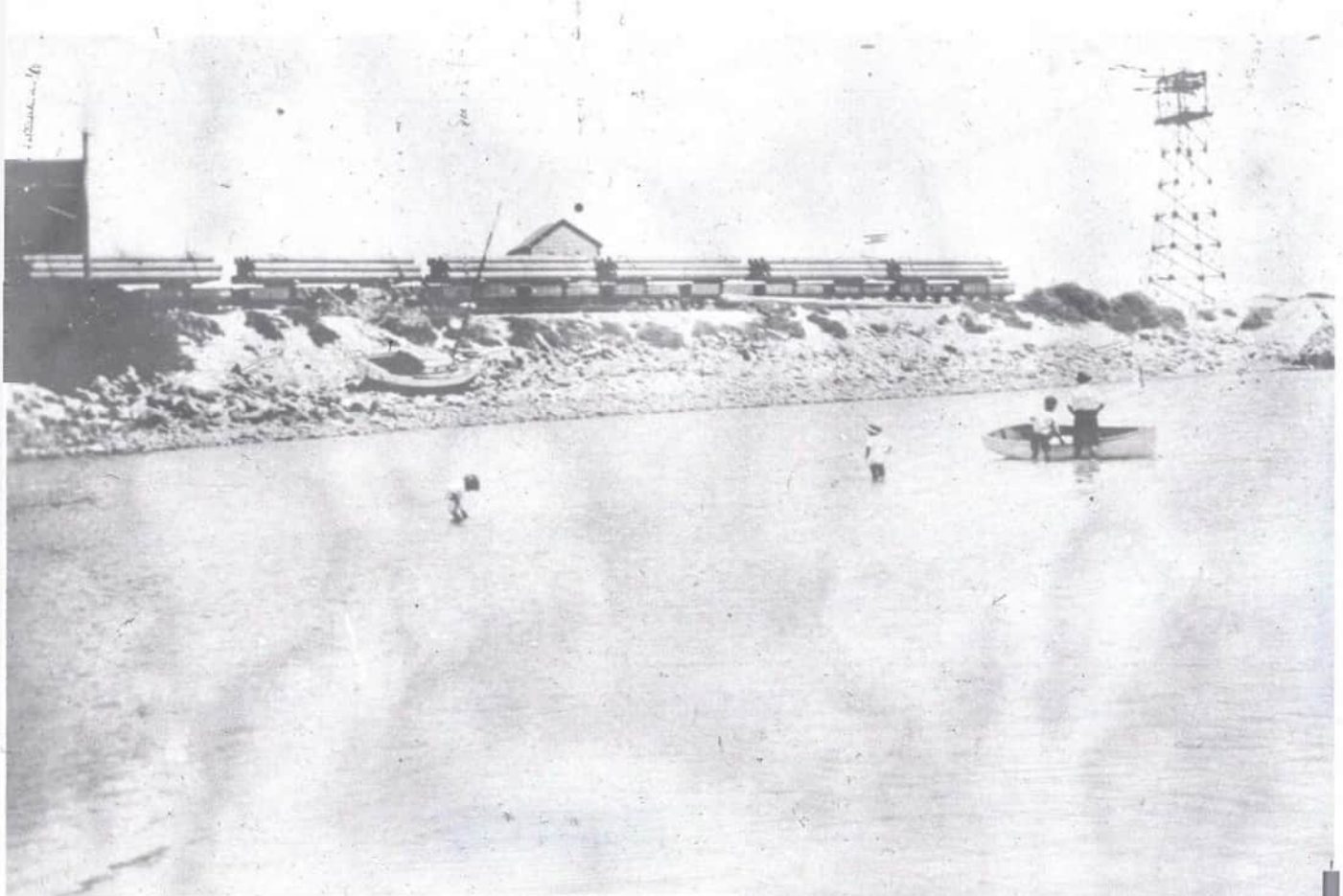
The 83,000 pounds for Tod River this year will not improve the position of the settlers one iota . . . The expenditure was caused owing to blunders resulting in the steel main becoming riddled with holes through corrosion and inadequate protection. We have been forced within 13 years to take up the main and recondition it.

A CHRISTIAN,
SAPD, 14/7/36

A deputation of farmers waited upon the Commissioner of Public Works (Hon. L. Hill) in September 1924 to ask that the 'laying of the mains be expedited'. The deputation included B O Klau (Ceduna), F Gregor (Smoky Bay), W R Klau (Koonibba Mission), H Doley (Wirrulla) and W Thompson (Streaky Bay). They presented a petition of 230 signatures. B Klau said that they had been given to understand the Tod River water would have been available years ago — in fact eight years ago they had been told Murat Bay would have it in three years.[6] The Commissioner of Public Works pleaded lack of money for the scheme but promised to try to speed things up.

The final link, Minnipa to Cape Thevenard, took four years, and in 1927 the *West Coast Sentinel* lashed out again: 'If ever a public was thoroughly fed up and disheartened by promise after promise being unfulfilled the settlers along the route of the pipe track and those at Ceduna and Thevenard have every reason to be. It is a scandal that the huge supply of water should have been stored in the reservoir for five or six years and no use made of it. The only conclusion we can arrive at is that the Hill Government is disinterested in Eyre Peninsula and the West Coast.[7]

The above extract from an editorial was part of the *West Coast Sentinel*'s anti-Labor campaign in the run up to the 1927 election. It was suitably pleased when a Liberal-Country coalition was returned at the election and, from that point onwards, the Tod Trunk Main progress greatly improved. Hume Pipe Ltd was granted a contract to manufacture the 54 miles of pipe needed for the Minnipa to Cape Thevenard link. It established a plant at Thevenard and patented a process for fabricating 16 foot cement lined steel pipes which were vastly superior to all steel pipes used from Knotts Hill to Minnipa.[8] By 1928, seventy horses and between 550 and 600 men were working on the mains, and the end was in sight.[9]



Thevenard in the mid 1920s. Pipes from the Humes factory are waiting to be sent south on the railway to the Tod main. At right is one of the flying fox towers on the jetty built for the loading of gypsum.

It was a memorable day at Thevenard when the water finally arrived and was officially switched on by the Commissioner of Public Works in the Butler Government, Hon. M McIntosh. The occasion was celebrated with a banquet in the Ceduna Memorial Hall on 21 June 1928. The wine flowed freely and official toasts were numerous: H A Betts proposed the Commissioner of Public Works; Captain MacIntosh proposed the Hydraulic Engineer for the Scheme, H A Bellamy; F W Betts proposed Parliament; J G Moseley MP proposed the Pioneers of the Far West Coast (C McInerheny responded); E Coles MP proposed the prosperity of Ceduna, Thevenard and District (F Edson responded); M W Shoemaker proposed the Visitors and L B Hughes proposed the Press. C A Tonkin was the Chairman of proceedings and the occasion concluded with the singing of God Save the King.[10]

Within a few years, there were many short extensions from the Trunk Main and hundreds of farmers gained the benefits of a permanent water supply. However, it eventually became evident that the scheme would need to be supplemented by other sources of water, and attention was turned to viable underground sources. Here the Polda Basin between Lock and Elliston was investigated and good flows of water were obtained at depths of about 4 feet.[11] In 1962 pumps were installed in the basin and water was sent via a 22 mile pipeline to a storage tank at Lock, and thence into the Trunk Main. At the same time, a programme of gradual renewal and enlargement of the pipes began, and this continued along all sections of the mains until completed in 1975.

Today the Engineering and Water Supply Department in Ceduna supplies 1170 receivers in the town and 378 receivers in the country lands of the Ceduna Water District, which extends to Smoky Bay, to Pimbaacla and to Kalanbi Tanks. From Kalanbi several private pipelines feed off to consumers, the

THE TOD RIVER WATER
OPENING DEMONSTRATION
Banquet
CEDUNA MEMORIAL HALL
THURSDAY, JUNE 21, 1928

The opening of the Tod water main at Thevenard, June 21, 1928.





Water carting in the 1980s. Still an expensive problem for people west of Ceduna. Tanker owned by Allan Schwarz.

biggest of which goes to Koonibba.[12] In addition, there are still wells, bores and government tanks used for country supplies and rain water tanks are widely used by all householders for drinking water.

It was a long drawn out battle to get permanent water as far as Thevenard and Ceduna; for the people who live further west the battle continues and there seems to be no victory in sight. Penong relies upon its 'forest' of windmills which draw water from the Anjutabie basin, adjacent to the town, and elsewhere concrete tanks, wells and bores continue to provide meagre supplies as, in many cases, they have done for over a hundred years.

The Quick Service Garage, through its proprietor Les Nicholls, first brought electricity to Ceduna in 1931. It was Direct Current (DC) power and the first street lights were lit at the intersection of Poynton and McKenzie Streets in time for Christmas. A contract was then made with the District Council for the supply of electricity to Ceduna and Thevenard.[13]

Employees of the Quick Service Garage set up a network of street poles and house connections and, in time, the ownership of the contract passed from Les Nicholls to Art Foster. However, towards the end of the 1940s, the steady expansion of the town placed great strains on what was essentially a small operating plant. Residents in Thevenard were incensed by a lack of services and held a public meeting, signed a petition, and sent Messrs Madigan and Skinner to the District Council to ask for a more efficient supply.[14] The timing was apposite for Mr Foster's contract was soon to expire and Council had to decide whether to renew it.

It was decided that Council should seek the advice of the Electricity Trust of South Australia (ETSA) about future supplies for the town and that body recommended one of their recently retired executives A L Pank as a

The street beautification plans for Ceduna since Tod Water and the sealing of the main streets is well illustrated in this photo where the median strips and the foreshore pines integrate with the commercial buildings of McKenzie Street.



1981

consultant. Mr Pank visited the town, inspected the existing supplies and wrote a report for Council. This was then read to a public meeting in February of 1949.[15] In part it said that the existing supply was of 'comparatively low standard' and that Council should take up an option to purchase the whole undertaking rather than allow the contractor to continue for a further 10 years. Council indicated its willingness to do this and also to take over supplies being generated separately by the Harbors Board and Waratah Gypsum at Thevenard. On the motion of H A Betts, seconded by H G Klau, the action of the Council was endorsed by a unanimous vote of the meeting.

The Local Government Act required Council to conduct a Poll of the district before any purchase of an electricity supply could be made. This was attended to in April of 1949, and surprisingly the right to purchase was narrowly defeated on the rule that more than ten per cent of those eligible to vote opposed it. The direct cause of the defeat was Mudamuckla, the only locality to vote against it, which it did with a thumping 42 votes to 9.[16] This brought a temporary hiccup in the process but, eventually, Council did purchase the Quick Service Garage plant and proceeded to relocate it in larger premises in Merghiny Street. At the same time, it converted the supply to AC power under the direction of Sid Morcom and Steve Branch. The generation of power from the new site began in April of 1953, and nine diesel engines were installed to cater for the ever increasing demand.

In the 1970s Council began taking power to the rural areas via an extensive network of SWER (Single Wire Earth Return) lines. Smoky Bay was connected in 1974 and lines also went to Mudamuckla, Nunjikompita, Charra and Goode. By 1975 it was the largest power network in South Australia not controlled by ETSA.

Steve Branch was king of the power station. In 1962 he bought it from the Council under an agreement which required him to sell the power at a bulk rate for distribution throughout the district. When he took over the consumption levels began to climb, and between 1963 and 1976 the average yearly increase was 26 per cent, an astonishing rate. It kept Steve Branch, and his able assistant Verdun Brown, constantly under pressure, using, on many occasions, eight of their nine engines to maintain supply during peak periods.



One of the diesel motors that generated power at Ceduna's second power station 1953–1978. It stands today as a memorial to the now redundant station in Merghiny Street.

While the diesel motors throbbed 24 hours a day, year after year, power lines constructed by ETSA from the power station at Port Augusta gradually extended across Eyre Peninsula. Eventually, they reached Ceduna, and on 1 March 1978 a new era in power supply began. The motors stopped, Steve Branch at 67 years went into a well earned retirement, and the silent flow of ETSA power was switched on at a ceremony held in front of the redundant powerhouse.[17]

The new system still involved bulk purchases by the District Council, but this too changed in June of 1987 when ETSA took complete charge of all power supplies and Ceduna, Thevenard and its near country districts became another segment in a State wide network.

For the Top End it was yet another 'left out' experience. In the same way as Tod Water did not proceed to Penong and beyond for economic reasons, then power lines did not go outside the area of the District Council of Murat Bay. For the residents of Penong, Bookabie, Coorabie, Fowlers Bay and all the surrounding farming lands, the 32 volt home 'windlite' systems were the only providers of electrical power for decades after people in Ceduna had full 240 volt systems fitted to their homes. The Gray family of Bookabie were typical examples. Auntie Jess and Uncle Frank, as they were affectionately called, lived for 42 years of their married life on their farm 'Emoh Ruo' and finally retired to Ceduna in 1976. One of their farewell presents from local friends was

an electric frypan, the first piece of 240 volt equipment the couple had ever owned.

It was the Outback Areas Community Development Trust which brought 240 volt power to Penong and to Coorabie-Nundroo. At Penong the Trust arranged a government grant and the power station was constructed in 1981. The townspeople paid for connections to their homes and the local farmers paid for SWER lines to their properties; the installation was done by Cowell Electrical Supply Company which has the contract to operate the power station. On 19 January 1982 power was switched on for the town and it was a great occasion made a little more special for one person, Roger Oats, who turned 21 on that day.



240 volt power for the 'top end'. The Nundroo Power Station built in 1985.

For Coorabie-Nundroo, two generators were built at Nundroo in 1985. Here the promotion of the scheme came chiefly from Dennis Fox and Alan Stott, two Secretaries of the Coorabie and Districts Progress Association. Michael Balharry of Penong, in his capacity as a member of the Outback Areas Community Development Trust, switched on the new plant and told the local people that they would find the new system a lot better than their old lighting plants and would sleep peacefully once they got used to the initial, unaccustomed quiet. The generators were funded by the State government but 27 residents of the district had to pay up to $23,000 each to be connected to the scheme.[18]

The wide, flat terrain of the Far West is not a field geologist's paradise. There are no exciting exposures of mineral bearing rocks and it was only in the coastal swamps and lakes that the first hints of any mineral resources were found.

Twenty kilometres south of Penong in the Hundred of Kevin is Lake MacDonnell, a large but shallow depression adjacent to the coast. For thousands of years the tides left deposits in this depression; the deposits have settled as rock gypsum up to 7 metres thick in parts, and as salt up to one metre thick in other parts. The water of the present Lake covers many of the deposits but only to a depth of a few centimetres.

From the beginnings of Penong, the local settlers were interested in the deposit at Lake McDonnell. They crossed them many times on journeys to Point Sinclair with their wool and wheat for export. A B C Murray is reported to have sent a sample of the gypsum to the School of Mines in Adelaide, only to be told that it was rubbish.[19] C Beck was another who was confident that the deposits were gypsum of good quality, but he had to wait until 1918 before a man working for Millers Lime Ltd came to the West Coast searching for limestone, salt and gypsum. Beck took him to Lake McDonnell and, for the first time, there was some realisation of how important the deposits were.

But, before this, in 1915, a mainland group had shown some interest, much to the surprise of the locals, one of whom commented in the *West Coast Sentinel* 'that a syndicate had got hold of it' (Lake MacDonnell). It was 'supposed to be teaming with wealth'; it would 'give Penong a big lift' and make it known as 'Salt Lake City — without the Mormons'.[20] A legacy of this first spark of interest, which was for salt rather than gypsum, was a camp erected south of Lake McDonnell in 1914–15. It was east of the present road across the lake and is marked, according to local information, by a remaining palm tree growing at the spot.

Australian Gypsum Ltd., which had a plaster factory in Sydney, began collecting gypsum on a small scale in 1919. The material was scraped from near the lake, put into bags and carted to Port Le Hunte (Point Sinclair) where it

When the power fails at Nundroo the greatest annoyance is that the cash registers at the hotel stop working and no drinks can be bought at the bar.

LOCAL COMMENT

was shipped to Sydney. The bagging and carting was first done by William Sleep whose farm, section 7, Hundred of Kevin, adjoined the deposits. He married Emma Saunders the daughter of another well known pioneering family and they had twelve children.[21] Sons Nelson, George, Sam, John, Arthur, Frederick and Thomas all helped with the bagging of the gypsum at different times in their lives.

Carting gypsum to Port Le Hunte continued until 1923 and others to work for Australian Gypsum in this period included Arthur Marshall, G W A Murray and Stan Page. The latter remembered he worked with a pick and shovel for 5 pounds 10 shillings a week, which was good money in those days, but 1 pound 10 shillings was deducted by the company for board.[22]

Stan Jenkins began work on the gypsum fields in 1921, the same year that he married Marjorie Smith in Penong. He loaded and carted bags by bullock waggon and draught horse teams from the excavated pits to the jetty at Port Le Hunte. Then, in 1923, he carted to the railway siding, Kowulka, on the newly built Thevenard to Penong railway.

Australian Gypsum Ltd tried to be a generous employer and one of its memorable activities was a New Years Day Gypsum Sports held at Port Le Hunte. In 1923 the prizemoney was 70 pounds and events for aquatics as well as athletics were held. What was described as a huge crowd attended with representatives from as far away as Streaky Bay and Fowlers Bay. The Australian Gypsum Sprint (135 yards) was won by C M Beck and C H Beck was placed second. Then, in the Lake McDonnell handicap sprint, C M and C H Beck ran a dead heat. In the Gypsum Port Le Hunte married ladies race the placegetters were Mrs Julie Williams, Mrs W G Kelly and Mrs D Freeman. For the single ladies it was Misses O Boxer, O Lutteral and O Shipard. The swimming race was won by J Redding and F Shipard cleared 5'2½" to win the high jump. Amongst the children, family names in the prizewinners included Richardson, Oats, Skinner, Wiese, Edwards, Denton, Smith, Kelly, Shipard, Haseldine and Beck.[23]

At night a dance was held in the Australian Gypsum shed under electric lights on a beautiful jarrah floor. W Neilsen was MC and 'Patrons' of the day were G C Spinks, W Shoemaker, Captain Allison and W Sheehan.

There was considerable enthusiasm for gypsum mining at this time and Australian Gypsum was a powerful lobby in the political arena. After it had built a crushing plant at Point Sinclair, it realised that it could export its product more economically via the Penong railway to the deep sea port at Thevenard. It therefore asked for a 5 mile rail link from the gypsum fields to meet the Penong railway at Kowulka siding.

What became known as the Kowulka Railway Bill had a successful passage through the House of Assembly in 1923 but was defeated in the Legislative Council. It was not revived, so Australian Gypsum, which was carting to the Kowulka siding in trucks and horse teams, decided to build an aerial cableway system over the 5 mile route that was to be covered by the rail link. At the same time, two companies were setting up plaster factories at Thevenard, the Commonwealth Plaster Company Ltd. and the Australian Gypsum Company, renamed Waratah Gypsum Pty. Ltd.

The aerial ropeway was erected by Bullivants Aerial Ropeways Ltd of London in 1925–26. Its active life was from 1926 to 1930 only, but many of its rusting steel towers are still visible in the landscape today. At the time of its construction it was claimed to be the longest and most expensive ropeway in Australia; its buckets could hold three quarters of a ton and the line, driven by a 2 cylinder 130 h p Fielding oil engine, took one hour to travel the 5 miles to Kowulka. Here, at the siding, the buckets were tipped into receiving bins from



A relic of the 5 miles of ropeway that carried gypsum from Lake McDonnell to Kowulka siding 1926 to 1930.

. . . There is now no outstanding difficulty in the establishment of plaster works at Thevenard, together with a very large export of gypsum from that district . . . I expect . . . the setting up of a completely new factory at Thevenard. In the meantime production will be started in the old factory to help meet the grave Australia-wide shortage of plaster.

HON. T PLAYFORD, SAPD, 6/8/1946

which railway trucks were loaded. Fourteen men were employed on the ropeway and it gave Waratah Gypsum a significant cost advantage over its competition Commonwealth Plaster Company, which was then forced to close its Thevenard factory.

With its ropeway, the rail link to Thevenard, its plaster factory at Thevenard and its ships such as the *Junee* exporting both gypsum and plaster, Waratah Gypsum had four good years 1926–1930. M W Shoemaker was their general manager, based in Thevenard, and Mrs W H Post catered for a work force of up to 40 men in a specially constructed kitchen and dining room.

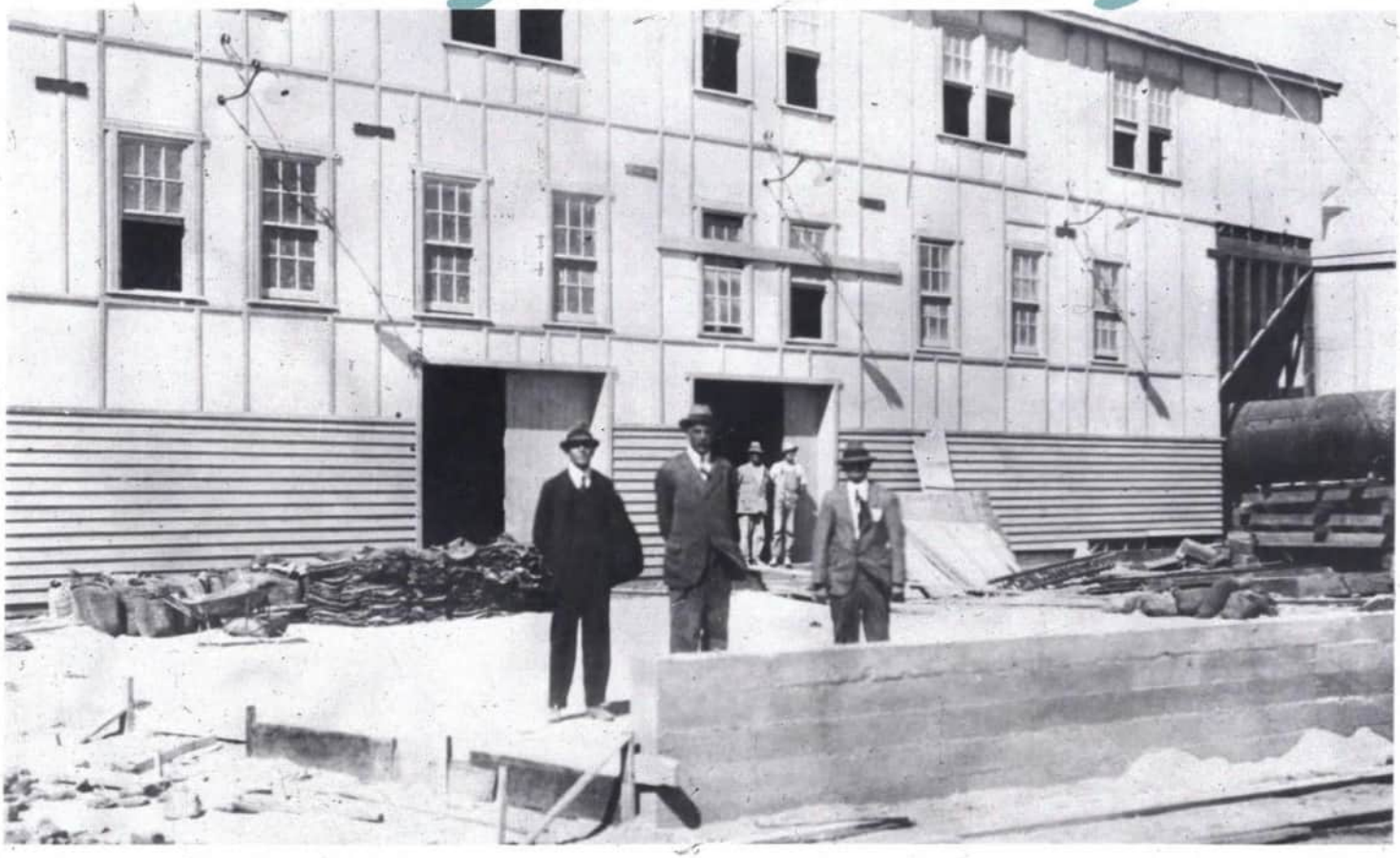
The prosperity of this period is reflected in the statistics for the production of gypsum in the Hundred of Kevin. In 1920 the output was 7203 tons, in 1925 it was 30,645 tons, it exceeded 40,000 tons in the late 1920s but fell back to 6783 tons in 1930.[24] Here, it was Waratah's turn to feel the effects of competition, this time from Peninsula Plaster Company at Stenhouse Bay, Yorke Peninsula. A merger of several companies took place in 1930 from which a parent company, Australian Plaster Industries Pty Ltd, was formed with headquarters in Sydney. The subsidiary company in South Australia retained the name Waratah Gypsum Pty Ltd, but it abandoned Lake McDonnell and concentrated its efforts at Stenhouse Bay.

Stan Jenkins was retained in a caretaker capacity for the Lake McDonnell prospect from 1930. He lived in a company house at Kowulka and, occasionally, he had to assist when small quantities were mined for use in special plasters in the Sydney factory.

The closure of the Lake McDonnell operations was a severe blow to Thevenard, especially at a time when the world wide economic depression was already making life difficult. The plaster factory was idle and an aerial ropeway erected on the jetty to deliver gypsum direct to a ship had to be dismantled.

The Lake McDonnell deposits were in mothballs from 1930 to 1946 and then, with the reserves at Stenhouse Bay declining, Premier Tom Playford

Waratah Gypsum Works, Thevenard.





The modern train which transports gypsum from Lake McDonnell to Thevenard.

took the initiative with Waratah Gypsum and pressed for the reopening of the gypsum fields and the plaster factory at Thevenard. He reached agreement with the principals of the company, and, in his usual manner, promised generous government assistance to get the project restarted. The Kowulka spur railway line, first mooted in 1923, would now be built by the Railways Department and the Harbors Board would assist with the upgrading of bulk handling facilities at Thevenard. Additionally, the Department of Mines would make a thorough survey of the quality and aerial extent of all the gypsum and salt deposits. The survey revealed more than 780 million tons of gypsum containing more than 94 per cent calcium sulphate, the essential ingredient. As such it was clearly established as the largest and best deposit in Australia.

Waratah commenced small scale operations in 1947. Using a crawler tractor with a dozer blade it heaped the gypsum into piles and then tipped it into trucks which carted it along the road past the obsolete aerial ropeway to the siding at Kowulka. There the truck was backed up a ramp and the gypsum was tipped into railway trucks.

The Kowulka Rail Bill passed both houses of parliament in 1949 and, with the branch line under construction, the Premier visited Thevenard to discuss improvements for large scale exporting of the gypsum. With him were the Director of Mines, S Dickinson, and the Directors of Waratah, H and J Innes.[25] They were met by Stan Jenkins, who by then had risen to be the works manager for Waratah.



E R Lorimer at work on the gypsum deposits with his front end loader in the 1950s.

After the completion of the branch railway line, the volume of gypsum sent to Thevenard increased significantly, yet between 1952 and 1959, only one man, E R Lorimer, was needed at Lake McDonnell. With a bulldozer he loaded all the railways trucks and kept a small stock pile handy in case it was needed. Salt was also loaded off and on during this period depending upon demand, which was never as extensive as gypsum.

In 1955 Waratah decided to abandon plaster making at Thevenard and to concentrate on shipping bulk gypsum to expanding local and overseas markets. The factory on the point, which throughout its entire life had been something of a white elephant, closed once again, this time for the last time.

The switch to complete concentration upon gypsum sales brought some necessary refinements. The long promised installations of efficient bulk handling equipment at the Thevenard jetty became a reality in June 1961 when

a 2000 foot conveyor belt underwent a successful trial and loaded 350 tons of gypsum on the freighter *Parndana*. The belt was built by Perry Engineering in Adelaide and was to be used for loading either gypsum or wheat.[26] At Lake McDonnell, about the same time, Waratah was engaged in the building of plant for screening, crushing and loading rock gypsum, which was being excavated on the field under a contract let to Roche Bros. At this time, the employees in the local gypsum industry included 5 men who lived at Penong, 10 who lived at the Lake MacDonnell site and 12 who lived in Thevenard.

In 1962 the company opened negotiations with the government for a new railway line. The original Penong to Thevenard line, which had been built with second hand rails fifty years before, was not capable of carrying large new fully laden railtrucks. The government agreed in principle to a new 36 mile narrow gauge line direct from the gypsum field to the bulk handling plant in Thevenard. But, the company had to wait four years before it became a reality.[27]

In 1967 Waratah found a market for its salt in Japan and, with markets for gypsum in New Zealand, Japan, Singapore, Phillipines, Hong Kong, Taiwan, India and New Caledonia, the new railway connection was soon fully utilised.

In the 1970s and 1980s there has been continued expansion in the export sales of gypsum and a rearrangement of the company structures. Waratah Gypsum became part of Australian Gypsum and was absorbed into the Boral company in 1978. Then, in 1983, Colonial Sugar Refinery (CSR), which had long held leases at Lake McDonnell, joined with Boral to form a new operating company GRA, Gypsum Resources Australia Pty Ltd.

GRA now supervises a gypsum mining and exporting operation which is the largest in Australia, and is a far cry from the first operation in the 1920s. For example, a single train load of gypsum passing Ceduna on its way to Thevenard any day of the week now carries more bulk gypsum than the pick and shovel workers accumulated in the full year of 1920. And, 24 hours operation of the conveyer belt loading a ship at Thevenard, shifts more material than all the bagging and carting to Port Le Hunte in any one year before the Kowulka railway siding was used.

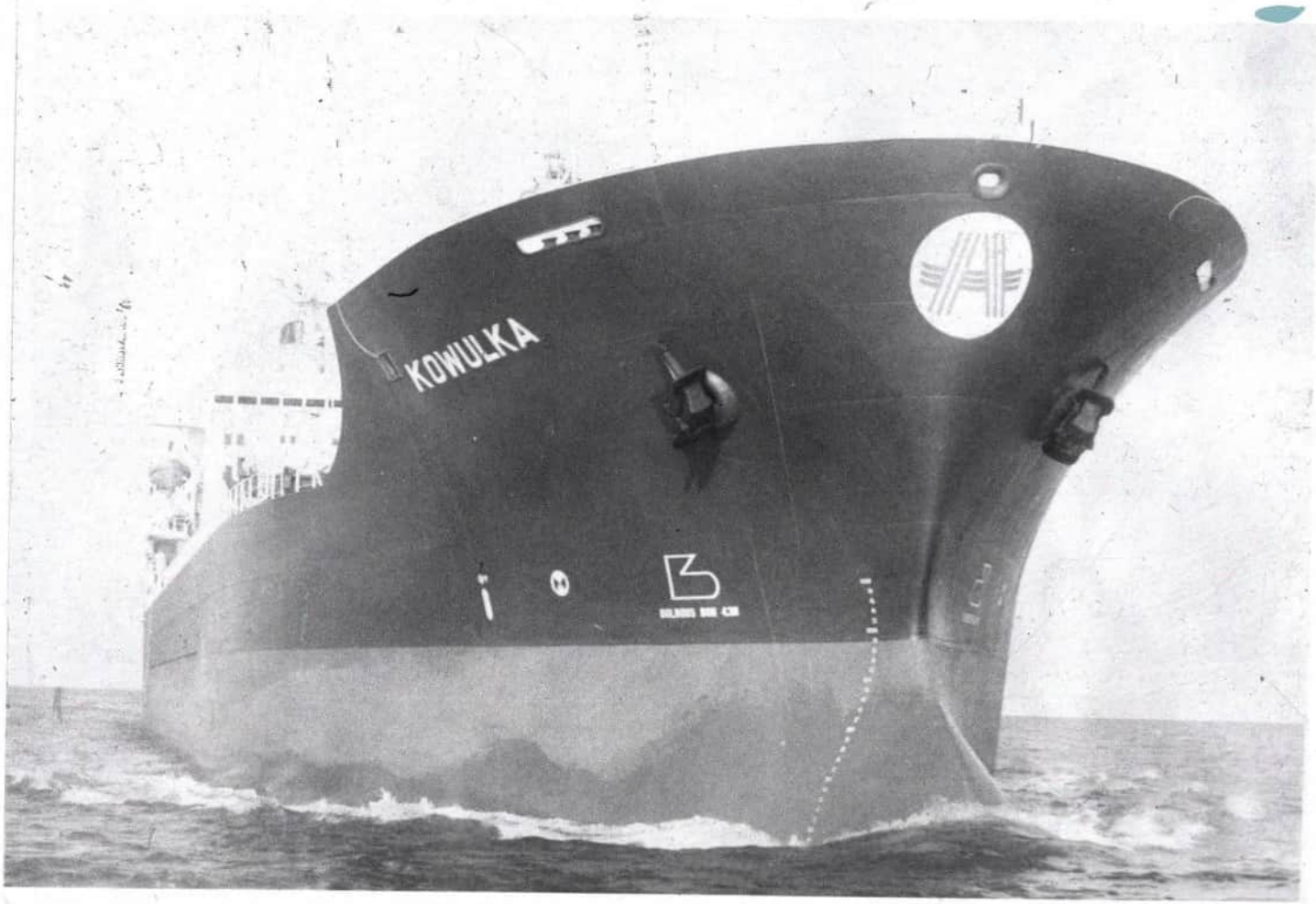
The greatest achievement in the relentless pursuit of more and more gypsum for export has been GRA's new bulk carrier, the 23,250 tonne motor vessel named *Kowulka* by Boral's manager Ted Hughes. It was built by Hyundai Heavy Industries in Korea and docked for the first time at Thevenard on 12 September 1984. When it left on 14 September it carried a port record cargo of 20,333 tonnes of gypsum.[28]

Despite what Nicholas Baudin said about a lack of fish near Denial Bay in 1803, the waters of the Far West do have an abundant fish resource. Early settlers discovered this and small boats were often one of their first building projects. A fish supplement in the diet was something many farming families enjoyed, particularly if they lived near the coast.

Unfortunately, the 'distance factor', so much a problem in all marketing exercises for the Far West, made it impossible to sell fish outside the area until some satisfactory form of icing or refrigeration was obtained. The *Wookata* provided it in a small way when it began operating in 1909, and commercial fishing in the Far West really began at that time. The *West Coast Recorder* noted in November 1909 that 'the first shipment of fish from this port (Murat Bay) took place when 35 large schnapper were sent to Adelaide by Messrs Talbot and Co'. Then a month later it noted that '200 schnapper had been caught and most had gone to Adelaide'.[29]

Opposite page.
Above. GRA's depot at the Lake McDonnell gypsum deposits 1986.
Below. GRA's modern bulk carrier for gypsum.




KOWULKA

Saturday night a number of Denial Bay residents took J Burke's net and went seining, with the result that everyone had fish for breakfast. A large tub was filled to overflowing. Flounders, whiting, bream, mullet, barracuta, garfish and others.

DBS 9/1/1909

This was all dependent upon the *Wookata*. There was no local cold storage for fish, so fishermen had to do all their fishing during the four days when the ship was tied up at one of the local jetties. In reality it meant that their working life consisted of about 10 days casual fishing per fortnight for a small local market and then 4 days non-stop intensive fishing while the *Wookata* was tied up at a jetty loading or unloading general cargo.

Some men made a living as professional fishermen under this system for, when the Cape Thevenard Select Committee took evidence at Murat Bay in 1913, two of its witnesses were William T S Hewitson, fisherman who owned a cutter, and Richard E Talbot fisherman, who also owned a cutter and indicated that he had been in the area seven years.[30]

When Thevenard was started there was renewed interest in fishing. It was reported in 1920 that the 'calico town' was 'beginning to have a reputation as a fishing resort. Every variety of fish was being caught from the jetty.'[31] And, in 1925, it was said that 'hundreds of schnapper and other fish (were) sent to market on every steamer.'[32]

In the late 1920s Thevenard was a bustling, semi-industrialised locality with two plaster factories and the Hume Pipe factory. A labour force was recruited for the factory work and it included a number of Greeks, some from Port Pirie and some from scrub cutting jobs on Eyre Peninsula. A few had fishing experience from their native Greece and, as the factories closed, one by one, many of the Greek men went into the fishing industry at Thevenard. By 1934, when a Royal Commission inquiring into the South Australian fishing industry visited Ceduna, the following Greeks attended a meeting with the Commissioners: A Costanos, J Criticos, P Vambacas, and G Spirou. Others present included Alf Edwards, E Poppell, W Puphal, C R Morcom and C Saxell. L Coulter, S Hansen and R Fuss were three other well known fishermen who evidently were not present.

When the *Wookata* was replaced by the *Yandra* as the local coastal trader in 1928, a greater cold storage area was available to fishermen, and by 1938 steady expansion had reached the point where 37,000 lbs of fish were being caught each month. Good markets had been established in Adelaide fish shops (mainly Greek) and also in shops in Melbourne. There was still the dependence upon the ship's cold storage and clearly there was a need for a local fish factory for freezing, filleting and preserving fish. This was taken up by J Hill and Son who formed the company Marine Foods Ltd. It opened its factory in 1940 with Bill Hill as manager and, one year later, the Legislative Councillor, J M Beerworth, on a tour of inspection in the area, reported to the press that he had 'inspected a modern freezing plant erected by Marine Foods at a cost of 5000 pounds and treating 3 tons of fish weekly.' He thought that 'everything possible should be done to stimulate such an industry'.[33]



Malcolm Puckridge as a boy after a successful days fishing with his grandfather, Len Coulter.

The marketing procedures were complex. There were several local buyers such as C S F Alexander, Gordon Thompson and L Nicholls. They bought for Adelaide markets, Melbourne markets and even Port Lincoln markets. Marine Foods was also a buyer and they assured local fishermen that they would be competitive and that, in particular, Mr Raphtopolos in Melbourne would be a big purchaser of their filleted fish.

Because there were often great price fluctuations, the local fishermen several times banded together in cooperatives to make collective marketing agreements. One such cooperative was led by the Greeks with President, George Angelakis, Vice President, Angelo Kotsanos, and Treasurer, Atha Raptis.

Later, the Greeks were also in the forefront when a West Coast Fisherman's Cooperative was formed in 1946. The Cooperative held a first birthday party

on 19 November 1947 and Chairman, Ken Puckridge, welcomed an impressive array of guests including Sid Morrison, Chairman of the Murat Bay Council; P Manos the General Manager of the Cooperative, who had made a special trip from Adelaide to be present, Mr Hadwin, a major buyer from Melbourne, and Mr Moorhouse, the Chief Inspector of Fisheries. Sid Morrison made a brief speech and pointed out that, in 1928 there were only 4 licensed fishermen in the area, and that the cooperative now had 62 licensed members. After the welcoming and the speech making two sheep were barbequed, smoked fish was available and there was a programme of sports followed by dancing in the evening.



Harry Paul's fish factory, originally Marine Foods Ltd. at Thevenard.

The cooperative continued to have regular birthday celebrations and, in 1951, Mrs S Ettridge was given a gift in appreciation for her services as the cooperative's fish buyer at Smoky Bay.

Later in the 1950s, the West Coast Fishermen's Cooperative Limited merged with the South Australian Fishermen's Cooperative (SAFCOL) and, in 1958, a new 8000 pound processing plant and refrigeration building was erected at Thevenard. This proved to be successful and took business away from Marine Foods Ltd which closed in 1959.[34] Ultimately, SAFCOL also closed and has been replaced in the modern era by Harry Paul Fish Processors, Bill and Son Fish Processors, Oestmann Fish Processors and, in 1987, Thevenard Fish Processing Pty Ltd.

In the lifetime of fishermen such as Gordon Thompson, Bill Hirte and Bill Jolly there have been enormous changes in the industry. During the 1930s and 1940s the standard fishing boat was a 25 to 36 foot cutter with bowsprit, gaff rigged and wet wells to put the fish in. They usually had small petrol motors for auxiliary power and many of these were converted engines from Dodge or Rugby cars. Later, they were replaced with inboard diesel motors. Modern fishermen have fibre glass speed boats, ice boxes to put the fish in, two-way radios, echo sounders and powerful outboard motors. The greatest difference all this makes is that, whereas the old cutter gracefully took three hours to get out to a fishing ground, the modern runabout will get there in twenty minutes.

Another notable fisherman who lived through changes in the industry was Harry Anson of Smoky Bay, one of the early members of the West Coast Fishermen's Cooperative. He joined SAFCOL in 1953 and was State Chairman for 17 years. As such, he was one of the State's best known fishermen and was still active in the industry when he died in 1977, aged 57.[35]

The notion of having fishermen's cooperatives has continued to be popular, but has become diversified with time. A Fishermen's Association was formed in 1963 at a public meeting held in the Greek Hall at Thevenard. H Thiselton was elected President and E C Skinner, Secretary.[36] Separately since then, there have also been associations formed for Scale Fishermen, Net Fishermen, and Cray and Prawn Fishermen. This cooperative instinct, although not always amicable, has helped with the conservation of the industry, the imposing of netting bans at different times, the building of a boat haven at Thevenard and the establishment of markets, not only in Adelaide but also in the eastern states.



Part of the fishing fleet at the Thevenard boat harbour, 1987.

Thevenard fishermen still include a sprinkling of Greeks, although some of the successful operators in the past have now moved to Adelaide to become even more successful there, Angelakis Brothers Seafoods, and A Raptis and Sons Fish Merchants being two examples.

The industry is now carefully controlled and fishermen's licenses are not easy to obtain. Three fisheries officers operate along the coast between Eucla and Port Kenny and make frequent inspections of catches. In addition to schnapper, whiting and other scale fish catches, some boats operate for prawns

The fishing at Fowlers Bay is excellent and is a great attraction to folk far and near. Even if it doesn't return to the hustle and bustle of its hey day it seems likely that it will return to life again as a holiday resort.

ANNE WATSON, 1971

and crayfish in season and, in recent years, restricted licenses have been offered for abalone, crabs and oyster farming.

Statistics for the number of licensed fishermen in the Far West reflect the controlled nature of the industry. The old B Class licenses, now Restricted Marine Scale Licenses, are being phased out and the number of licenses has dropped from 53 in 1972 to 16 in 1987. The A class licenses, now Marine Scale licenses, and the basic requirement of a professional fisherman, have declined slightly from 54 in 1972 to 42 in 1987. Additionally, in 1987, there were two Rock Lobster licenses and two Prawn licenses[37].

Apart from the licensed fishermen, the Far West has large numbers of recreational fishermen. Indeed, the modern trend to more and more recreation for working people is responsible for something of a revival in the old towns of Fowlers Bay and Denial Bay. They are visited by large numbers of holiday makers, some of whom have built new homes on the old town blocks. Their interest is fishing and their rewards are often handsome. At the same time, the quiet prosperity of Smoky Bay is very much related to its popularity as a good fishing spot.

The Far West therefore has a valuable resource in its fisheries, and though its exploitation is often a matter of controversy, it has provided a livelihood for many people for almost 80 years. Additionally, as has already been mentioned in Chapter 1, its shark fishing activities have, at various times, given it world wide publicity.

Ever since Governor McDonnell sailed with Bloomfield Douglas along the Far West Coast in 1858 and named the beautiful Davenport Creek, there have been suggestions of great tourism potential in this part of South Australia. The history of the development of this potential has been a story of many starts and stops and little real progress. However, as this book is being written, what is probably the best ever 'start' is being made, a Council and Department of Tourism sponsored Gateway Tourist Centre in Poynton Street, Ceduna, and the employment of a Tourism Officer for the district. It remains to be seen whether this will give Far West tourism the consistent and effective promotion it needs.

The *West Coast Sentinel* has boosted local tourism whenever the opportunity has arisen and it began in its first year of publication (1912) with the following perceptive comment: 'At a very early date Murat Bay should attract many tourists, especially those who are fond of yachting and fishing'.[38] Those that came to the Far West agreed with these sentiments, but there was, as in so many other things, the tyranny of distance, and very few people could be induced to travel the hundreds of miles from well populated areas to the remote Far West. Bus tours were common in many parts of the State in the 1920s and 1930s, but no operators considered offering a bus tour across the dirt roads of Eyre Peninsula so that people from the mainland could enjoy the scenic delights of Ceduna, Denial Bay, Smoky Bay or Fowlers Bay.

King George whiting catch rates average 12 kg/man day by handline fishing in far west coast waters (Ceduna, Thevenard), which represents the long term average for this fishery.

SA DEPT. OF FISHERIES, Annual Report, 1985–86

A sea cruise to the Far West was a more viable option and it was offered as an organised tourist excursion on several occasions. However, it was never really successful while there were alternatives such as the popular 'Gulf Trips' run by Adelaide Steamship Company. One exception was a trip on the *Yandra* in February 1938 when 14 prominent businessmen from Adelaide made a visit to all the West Coast ports.[39]

After the second World War, the increased use of the motor car for family holidays gradually brought the Far West more and more visitors. It began with an intrepid few who came and camped in tents along the shorelines. Gradually,

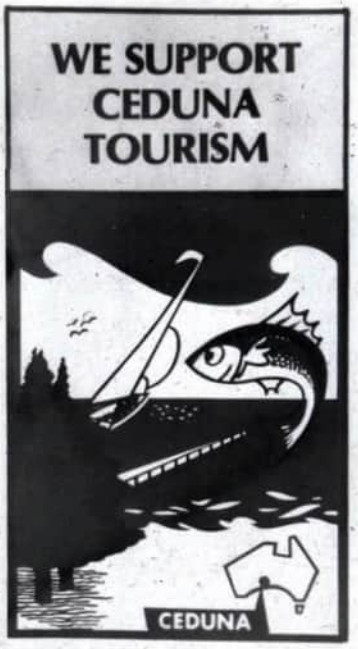
as the roads got better, it became a trickle, and a Ceduna stopover en route to Western Australia became an established fact. One response to this was the Far West's first caravan park built by the District Council of Murat Bay in 1951 in the parklands next to the Ceduna Hotel.[40] Another early response was Coopers Roadhouse described as a 'well known Ceduna landmark' by 1967 when the original owner-builder Jack Cooper sold it to Len Nicholls.[41] In that year the average daily traffic count of vehicles passing through Ceduna was 80 per day and, in December, the sealing of the Port Augusta to Ceduna stretch of the Eyre Highway was completed.[42]

It was the start of a new era of tourism for the Far West. By 1970–71 an average of 140 vehicles per day were passing through Ceduna and, after the completion of the road sealing to the Western Australian border in 1976, (see Chapter 14) there was a further great surge in the number of vehicles.

From the mid 1960s onwards, there was spectacular growth in visitor accommodation in the Far West in the form of caravan parks and motels. In October 1970, C L and C K Klau opened 'The Ceduna Caravan Centre' on one acre of land opposite the 'new ultra modern Shell Roadhouse'.[43] In November of 1971, Terry Moschos opened a Seabreeze Caravan Park in Thevenard and, in the same year, the South Australian Government Tourist Bureau agreed to subsidise the erection of a caravan park at Smoky Bay.[44]

The local Progress Association at Smoky Bay originally opposed the erection of its caravan park. The prevailing local opinion was that their idyllic sea side resort would be 'fished out' if a host of tourists came every year to stay in a caravan park : but the sentiment changed and, in 1975, work began with the support of the Royal Automobile Association (which drew the plans), the Murat Bay District Council and the South Australian Government Tourist Bureau.[45]

From the original single caravan park of 1951 the situation has expanded greatly so that, in 1986, a tourist brochure for the district cited the following for the Far West : Ceduna Airport Caravan Park, Ceduna Caravan and Tourist Centre, Ceduna Foreshore Caravan Park, Larry's Cabins and Caravan Park,





Coopers Roadhouse, the well known Ceduna landmark in the 1960s.

The townships of Ceduna and Thevenard, situated on the eastern edge of the Great Australian Bight provide facilities for every requirement, and a scope of recreational past-times to please the most active holiday maker.

CEDUNA TOURIST ASSOCIATION 1986

Nundroo Caravan Park and Smoky Bay Caravan Park. Also, not mentioned, was the caravan park at Fowlers Bay run by the Coorabie and Districts Progress Association.

As has already been discussed in Chapter 10, the Ceduna Hotel was upgraded with the tourist surge and is now a Hotel-Motel offering first class accommodation for visitors. In the 1960s the Pine Grove and the East West Motels were opened and in 1971 Highway One Motel was started. Each of the motels has a licensed restaurant and benefits greatly from the popularity of bus tours to and from Western Australia. Also, within the Far West region, the Penong Hotel has always offered accommodation for visitors and the Nundroo Hotel-Motel caters for many travellers.

There has been no shortage of people trying to promote Far West tourism but, as was indicated at the start of this section, their efforts have been spasmodic rather than consistent. E G Correll, Chief Publicity and Travel Promotions Officer for the South Australian Government Tourist Bureau, told the Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association in 1968 that the boom was coming for local tourism. He urged the improvement of caravan facilities, and the upgrading of access roads to scenic spots.[46] At about the same time a short lived Ceduna Chamber of Commerce launched a series of local bus tours 'to see the country' around Ceduna and Penong.[47] Then a local Committee, President Jim Curyer and Secretary Norm Fry, received the backing of the District Council to publish a tourist booklet. It came out in 1971 with a print run of 4000 and, in 1973, a similar project produced a 56 page 'comprehensive brochure' which had a print run of 6000.[48]

The *West Coast Sentinel* conducted a Forum on Tourism in 1973 with a theme 'The Far West could be the Surfers Paradise of South Australia'. It had encouraging participation from its readers but, as usual, there was no shortage of negative criticism, much of which centred around the 'untidiness and lack of facilities at Thevenard'.[49]

The wide expanse of clean beach sand which is one of the attractions of Smoky Bay.





A Council for Tourism in the Far West was formed in 1973 with Graham Pfitzner, Chairman, and representatives from Penong (Barry Watkins and Brian Rucioch), Minnipa, Wudinna, Elliston and Streaky Bay.[50] That encouraging initiative apparently lost momentum because, in 1977, a public meeting elected a steering committee 'to study ideas to develop and promote tourism in the Ceduna area'.[51] Those elected were Graham Pfitzner, Barrie Coote, Geoff Mitchell, Garth Wiseman, Doug Coleopy, Mrs Pat Young and Charmaine Culjak.

In 1979 there was the Ceduna and Districts Tourist Promotions Incorporated. It had a membership of 14 local businesses and four service clubs plus a subsidy from the District Council. The State Director of Tourism, Mr Joslin, was a supporter and he let it be known that it was his opinion that Ceduna had 'astonishing tourist potential' and needed a message for travellers which said 'you are tired, why don't you stay and have a rest'.[52]

Ceduna and Districts Tourist Promotions Inc. was abandoned in 1980 when only 16 people turned up at a public meeting to gauge support for the group and for the development of tourism in the area.[53]

In 1984 there was another revival, this time a Ceduna Tourist Association set up 'to promote tourism in the Murat Bay district and areas west'. Alan Suter was elected President, Ian Blackham Vice President, and Committee members were Rick Price, Warren Gibbins, Janet Reddy, Graeme Holness, Geoff Mitchell and Robyn Spry. In 1986 this body was still active with Alan Suter, President and Fay Mead, Secretary. It produced a colourful brochure for which it gave thanks to the District Council, to many businesses (listed as sponsors) and to Kevin Wright, Alf Whitford and Arie Van Wageningen for providing illustrations.

The brochure entitled 'Welcome to Ceduna and the Far West Coast' emphasises the attractions of the area namely, the King George Whiting, sailing, flora and fauna, the National Trust Museum, the OTC station, the historic jetties, the Smoky Bay Rodeo, the unique surfing spot Cactus Beach, Davenport Creek and the gypsum fields at Lake McDonnell. It also acquaints visitors with an enormous range of facilities ranging from clubs, to barbecue facilities, to safari tours available in four wheel drive vehicles.

Ceduna is blessed with a climate that is perfect for holiday makers, having an annual rainfall of around 275 mm and few summer days over 40C . . . Blue sunny skies are the norm for most of the year.

EYRE PENINSULA VISITORS GUIDE

A continuing theme throughout the book has been the remoteness of the Far West which has so often hampered communications, and the development of resources. For the politicans who have represented this part of South Australia the remoteness of their electorate has always been a severe handicap. Frequently, they have spoken to audiences in parliament who were ignorant of

the location, let alone the needs, of many of the townships in the Far West. Furthermore, in meeting their electors and canvassing for votes, Far West politicians have always had to cover enormous distances, a fact borne out by the experience of the present member for Eyre, Graham Gunn, who has needed 16 new motor cars in 17 years to maintain his travelling requirements.[54]

In summary, the State politicians for the Far West have been overwhelmingly Liberal or Conservative candidates and mostly farmers. Only Alexander Poynton (1893–1901), J V O'Loghlin (1910–1912) and J O'Connor (1924–1927) have been Labor men. By contrast, at the Federal level, the electorate has been represented mostly by Labor men from the industrial towns of Port Pirie, Whyalla and Port Augusta. Only P A M McBride (1931–1937), A O Badman (1937–1943) and D S Jessop (1966–1969) have been successful anti-Labor candidates.

At the State level, representation has been influenced by changing electoral rules and boundaries. From 1882 to 1901 the electorate was called Flinders, it included all of Eyre Peninsula and two candidates were sent to Parliament after each election. These included W A Horn and J Moule in 1890, A Poynton and J Moule in 1893, Poynton and W Mortlock in 1896 and Poynton and D McKenzie in 1899. Of these the most sympathetic to the early settlers of the Far West was David McKenzie, for he had been a settler himself in the Franklin Harbor district.[55]

Between 1902 and 1913 the electorate was still called Flinders but, in addition to all of Eyre Peninsula, it included portions of the mid-north of the State and the Flinders Ranges. During that period three candidates were sent to parliament at each election and they were T Burgoyne, R Foster and D McKenzie in 1902, Burgoyne, Foster and A Inkster in 1905, Burgoyne, Inkster and J Travers in 1906 , Burgoyne, J Moseley and J O'Loghlin in 1910, Burgoyne, Moseley and Travers in 1912. Of these, only Inkster was regarded as a Coaster — he had been Town Clerk at Elliston. The rest, except for McKenzie, were predominantly men from Port Augusta and places east. Moseley, however, did have some pastoral interests in the Gawler Ranges.

From 1913 to 1936 the electorate was redrawn as Eyre Peninsula only and was still called Flinders. This was the time when the *West Coast Sentinel* began publishing and supporting the Conservative side of politics; this was particularly so when Moseley owned the paper from 1913 to 1921. Two candidates went to parliament after each election. They were Moseley and Travers in 1915, Moseley and J H Chapman from the Farmers and Settlers Association in 1918, Moseley and Chapman in 1921, Moseley and J O'Connor in 1924, Moseley and E Coles, Country Party, in 1927, Moseley and E J Craigie, Single Tax Party, 1930, Craigie and A W Christian 1933. Chapman, Coles and Christian, were Eyre Peninsula farmers with Christian being the best known in the Far West because his farm was at Minnipa.

In 1936 the electoral boundaries were changed dramatically and an irregular subdivision across the centre of the peninsula was called the electorate of Eyre. South of it was Flinders and north of it was Stuart. Each of these electorates sent one member to parliament and for Eyre at the elections of 1938, 1941, 1944, 1947, 1950 and 1953 it was always A W Christian.

At the next boundary change in 1955 Eyre was made larger, but was still essentially central Eyre Peninsula with boundaries on each coast. Christian retired from parliament at the 1956 election and G Bockelberg, also a farmer in the Minnipa district, took his place. He was re-elected in 1959, 1962, and 1965. E C A Edwards, a farmer from Darkes Peak, was elected in 1968.

The Eyre electorate in 1970 was redrawn to include most of the western areas of the peninsula and a huge area to the north making up almost fifty per

cent of the land in the State. Graham Gunn, a farmer from Mount Cooper, was elected in that year and he has continued in parliament ever since with re-elections in 1973, 1975, 1977, 1979, 1982 and 1985. During that time the boundaries of Eyre have been changed to include less of the peninsula and more of the far northern areas of the state. The Far West is still in Eyre and Ceduna is now the largest town in the electorate.

Alexander Poynton was probably the most distinguished of the politicians chiefly because he entered Federal parliament in 1901, remained there until 1921, and held several cabinet positions including Treasurer and Postmaster General.

Moseley, Christian and Gunn have all been very memorable for their years of service, 22 years, 23 years and 18+ years respectively. Moseley is credited with getting the Tod Water supply to the Far West. Christian had the advantage of serving in government in the Playford era and was made Minister of Agriculture and Minister of Forests between 1954 and 1956. His great contribution for farmers was bulk handling. Graham Gunn, who has spent most of his parliamentary years on the Opposition benches, has nevertheless contributed significantly to improving the network of sealed roads in the Far West.

Each of the politicians has made contributions to the development of the resources of the Far West and usually their most effective method has been to ask a telling question in parliament as a means of stirring up some action. A few of many examples have been used as marginal quotations throughout the book. Some others specifically related to the topics in this chapter are:

Water: J Travers, 6 July 1916, 'As the township of Penong is badly in need of a water supply will the Government have a tank constructed there as soon as possible?'

Gypsum: G Bockelberg, 5 September 1962, 'Can the Premier say whether further development is likely to take place regarding the gypsum deposits at Penong?'

Fishing: A Christian, 5 August 1952, 'Following on my visit to Thevenard some weeks ago I made a request to the Minister for Agriculture for financial assistance for the establishment of a boatslip there for the fishermen. Has the Minister any information to give on this matter?'

Tourism: G Gunn, 7 August 1979, 'Will the Government allocate financial assistance to other tourist groups in South Australia to assist them in their promotional activities similar to the allocation towards tourism promotion in the South East.'

Contained within the last question is an enduring concern for the Far West. Put another way, the same question has been asked ever since settlement began: 'Will the government assist the Far West in the same way as it assists other less remote parts of the state?'

References

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2 SAPP 5 Nov. 1913
3 SAPP 50 1916
4 Educ. Dept. of S A (1956), *Some Great Enterprises in South Australia*, p.33.
5 WCS 28 1 24
6 WCS 20 9 24
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8 WCS 11 3 27
9 Hammerton, Marianne, *Water, South Australia*, (1986) p.188.
10 FWLHN Official Souvenir of the Opening of the Tod River Water Scheme, 1925.
11 E&WS Information Bulletin No. 9 (1983), Water Supply for Eyre Peninsula.
12 Information from Peter Phillips, Acting District Superintendent, Ceduna Water District.
13 WCS 25 12 31; 18 3 32
14 WCS 4 8 48
15 WCS 1 9 48, 16 2 49
16 WCS 13 4 49
17 WCS 25 1 78
18 WCS 27 11 85
19 WCS 29 11 72
20 WCS 26 6 15
21 FWLHN Sleep family history
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23 WCS 6 1 23
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27 WCS 21 11 62. Also Ted Hughes, SA Manager Boral Ltd personal communication. Line was opened 11 2 66.
28 *Johnny Green's Journal*, Jan. 1985, p.2.
29 WCR 3 11 09; 3 12 09.
30 SAPP 89 1913, Minutes of Evidence, Cape Thevenard Select Committee.
31 WCS 20 5 20
32 WCS 1 10 25
33 WCS 21 3 41
34 WCS 3 12 58; 5 8 59
35 WCS 16 3 77
36 WCS 26 6 63
37 Licence statistics courtesy SA Dept. of Fisheries
38 WCS 22 7 12
39 WCS 11 2 38
40 WCS 15 8 51. This Caravan Park was sold by the Council in 1987.
41 *The News* 28 6 67
42 Hibbert, Kevin, 'Highway 1', *S A Highways Magazine*, Dec. 1973, p.6.
43 WCS 28 10 70; 16 12 70
44 WCS 27 1 71; 24 11 71
45 WCS 3 3 71; 29 1 75
46 WCS 6 3 68
47 WCS 13 3 68
48 WCS 24 2 71; 25 7 73
49 WCS 7 2 73
50 WCS 15 8 73
51 WCS 7 12 77
52 WCS 23 5 71; 26 9 79
53 WCS 6 2 80
54 Personal communication, Graham Gunn, Member for Eyre, SA Parliament.
55 Details of the backgrounds of the State politicans are taken from several sources, chiefly Coxon, Playford and Reid, *Biographical Register of the South Australian Parliament 1857-1957*.

Appendices

A. Biographical Sources Index

It has not been possible to devote much space to histories of the families that helped to develop the Far West of South Australia. Instead, the following index of references is offered for people who wish to pursue details about their family histories. In most cases the references are taken from the *West Coast Sentinel*. Where this is different it is indicated.

Adey, C M	November 25, 1927
Alexander, George	December 23, 1953 (aged 104)
Alexander, Mr & Mrs G	May 6, 1943 (farewell)
Allen, Michael J	May 13, 1959 and May 20, 1959
Allen, Mrs M	September 14, 1918
Anson, Harry	March 16, 1977 (Smoky Bay)
Anson, Mr & Mrs Ike	October 25, 1950 (Smoky Bay)
Armour, Mr & Mrs T B	September 22, 1954 (Golden Wedding — Thevenard)
Audoss, William Edward	July 18, 1956
Bagshaw, Charlie	April 4, 1962
Barnett, Mrs Alicia	March 22, 1967 (Merghiny)
Bascomb, J	May 31, 1940 (Petina)
Bassham, J W	April 24, 1968 (Maltee)
Bassham, Mr & Mrs	February 26, 1943 (Maltee)
Bates, Leonard Clifford	November 1, 1967
Bates, Norman R	January 25, 1967 (Smoky Bay)
Beattie, Elwyn John (Scobie)	March 16, 1966
Beattie, Fred	November 6, 1963 (Smoky Bay)
Beck, C B	June 25, 1947
Beer, Carl Julius	June 20, 1962
Beinke, Mrs T E	December 7, 1955
Bergmann, C J W	February 13, 1974
Bergmann, Mr &-Mrs C W J	February 17, 1971 (Golden Wedding)
Bergmann, Mrs M L	November 29, 1940
Betts, Dr L O, OBE	January 22, 1943
Betts, F W	April 29, 1970
Betts, H A	September 28, 1960 (80th birthday)
Betts, H A F	August 26, 1963
Betts, James Frederick	June 22 and July 13, 1983
Betts, Mrs F W	May 25, 1949
Betts, Mrs W H	October 18, 1935
Betts, Reg	February 10, 1965
Bluett, Capt. Clive	October 5, 1960
Blumson, Albert	April 28, 1948

Blumson, J W	May 7, 1937
Borlase, E M	October 2 and October 9, 1946
Borlase, Mrs M	August 9 and 16, 1961 (80th birthday)
Bowell, A J	March 29, 1967
Bowell, Mr & Mrs W	July 15, 1943 (Golden Wedding)
Bowell, Mrs E M	September 8, 1954 (80th birthday)
Bowell, Mrs E M	April 24, 1963
Bowell, W W	November 21, 1945
Boxer, Charles David	May 27, 1959
Boxer, Dave	May 14, 1952 (87th birthday — Fowlers Bay)
Brook, Basil Andrew	January 9, 1963 (Penong)
Brooks Victor H	July 15, 1959 (Point Bell)
Brooks, C A	October 5, 1934
Brooks, Mrs E	August 20, 1969 (farewell — Pt Bell)
Brown, A C	May 27, 1927
Brown, Mrs Mabel Florence	January 13, 1971 (Charra)
Brown, W H	July 18, 1930 (Watraba)
Bruggeman, A H	February 26, 1969 (Koonibba)
Burner, W	February 2, 1934
Chadwick, Allan Edward, MBE	July 26, 1972
Chandler, J T	October 9, 1963
Chandler, H M (Nell)	January 30, 1980
Chandler, Maude	August 19, 1987
Christian, A W	January 11, 1956
Claxton, N A	December 12, 1951 (Adelaide)
Cock, R J	August 11, 1954 (80th birthday — Petina)
Coleman, Ray S	October 10, 1973 (Koonibba)
Collins, M	May 23, 1962 (80th birthday)
Collins, Mrs M A	May 25, 1966 (90th birthday)
Collins, Mrs Mary Ann	August 23, 1972
Cooper, George	June 24, 1938 (Bagster)
Cooper, Mrs Emma	August 22, 1941 (80th birthday)
Coote, A H	May 3, 1940
Coote, Leonard	July 4, 1962
Coote, Mrs H E	April 24, 1957
Coulter, I.	February 22, 1950
Cranwell, Mrs F M A	June 14, 1940 (Maltee)
Crisp, Barry	January 13, 1982
Crocker, Mrs C	December 22, 1948
Dahl, E O	July 23, 1958
Darby, H W	May 10, 1940
Daveron, Mrs H	January 14, 1957
Davey, Richard	February 13, 1942 (Penong)
Day, George	May 14, 1952 (81st birthday — Fowlers Bay)
Denton, James	February 13, 1926 (Charra)
Denton, William	April 21, 1933
Dixon, A D	September 4, 1931
Dodd, A Leonard	June 4, 1958 (Smoky Bay)
Dodd, Mr & Mrs E J	May 25, 1944 (Smoky Bay)
Dodson, Jeffrey	June 3, 1970
Doecke, Andrew	May 24, 1967
Drever, Ken	July 4, 1956
Drever, T D	September 10, 1958
Dunn, F J	January 4, 1945 (Petina)
Dunn, Horrie	September 4, 1968 (Carawa)
Dunn, Mrs A M	March 4, 1932
Dunn, Mrs S M	April 4, 1956 (80th birthday — Carawa)
Dunn, Ron P	October 5, 1983 (Nunjikompita and Penong)
Dunn, Stan & Dulcie	November 7, 1984 (Golden Wedding)
Dunnet, George S	November 2, 1966
Dunnett, Mrs Margaret	November 13, 1931
Dupree, Mrs Rose	November 24, 1954 (80th birthday)
Dupree, W F	July 6, 1949
Dutschke, Mrs Louis	July 3, 1936

Edson, Mrs F	March 15, 1950
Edson, Mrs Grace	March 24, 1954
Edwards, J W	May 15, 1912 (Penong)
Ettridge, Fred	August 9, 1950 (Mudamuckla)
Ettridge, Keith David	December 16, 1981 (Smoky Bay)
Ettridge, Mr & Mrs W E	May 25, 1955 (Mudamuckla — Golden Wedding)
Ettridge, Mrs Samuel	January 22, 1937
Farrelly, P	November 2, 1928 (Penong) (Western Mail)
Ferguson, Mrs Edith	March 6, 1963 (80th birthday)
Foggo, George	May 10, 1961 (80th birthday)
Fox, C W	June 30, 1939 (Penong)
Fox, Walter	April 7, 1965 (Coorabie)
Free, Micky (alias Laurie)	April 30, 1947 and May 14, 1947 (Koonibba)
Geue, Fred	January 29, 1947
Geue, Harry	December 13, 1961 (80th birthday)
Gibson, Dr R W	November 3, 1948
Gravestocks, E A	December 4, 1942 (Penong)
Gray, Edwin (Pat)	January 13, 1971 (Bookabie)
Gray, Frank Snr	August 3, 1944 (85th birthday — Fowlers Bay)
Gregor, Frank	April 2, 1952
Gurney, Emma C	February 2, 1940
Gurney, Mrs E L	May 16, 1951
Handtke, Adolf	May 2, 1956
Handtke, Albert	September 28, 1955
Handtke, Anna H G	March 28, 1973
Handtke, J G	February 20, 1926 (Denial Bay)
Harris, Charles M	July 20, 1960 (Penong)
Harrison, Mrs M B	December 11, 1963 (80th birthday — Smoky Bay)
Haseldine, Leslie John	December 7, 1966
Haseldine, Mrs Mary	January 31, 1951
Haseldine, Tom	September 5, 1956
Hasting, Mrs C A	July 9, 1952
Hasting, E A	May 17, 1940 (80th birthday)
Hasting, E A	March 13, 1942 (Denial Bay)
Hasting, Hugo	October 18, 1967 (80th birthday)
Hasting, Ida	September 12, 1984 (90th birthday)
Hasting, Mr & Mrs E A	February 22, 1934 (Golden Wedding)
Hirte, J W	April 21, 1933
Hirte, Mrs M M	January 18, 1956 (79th birthday)
Hobbs, Harold	June 19, 1968 (80th birthday — Coorabie)
Hoffrichter, A H	December 7, 1934
Hoffrichter, A O	February 21, 1930
Hoffrichter, E A	August 29, 1941 (Denial Bay)
Hoffrichter, Mrs L J (Ann)	May 12, 1965
Holmes, Kell	January 26, 1983 (Smoky Bay)
Hoobin, B F	May 16, 1956
Hoppe, Charles Francis	October 3, 1962
Hoskin, Luke	February 24, 1933
Howard, H H	April 24, 1985 (Petina)
Howlett, A (Bert)	January 16, 1985 (80th birthday)
Hunt, John S	March 31, 1965 (Smoky Bay)
Hunt, Mrs Thomas	July 21, 1934
Hurrell, Fred	November 9, 1949
Hurrell, Mrs Elsie M	July 9, 1969
Hurrell, Mrs F	October 23, 1942
Irvine, W H	March 14, 1941 (Athenna)
Jebydah, Ernst	July 28, 1965 (Koonibba)
Johns, E H	October 18, 1967 (Coorabie)
Johnson, William Joseph	November 28, 1962
Kean, Robert	January 28, 1970 (Koonibba)
Kelly, Mr & Mrs Cyril	December 17, 1975 (Golden Wedding)
Kelly, Mr & Mrs Cyril	December 18, 1985 (Diamond Wedding)
Kies, Ronald Alex	May 3, 1961
Kies, W	October 23, 1946

Klau, G D	July 28, 1948 (75th birthday)
Kloeden, August	December 19, 1956
Kloeden, Mrs A	August 29, 1962 (70th birthday)
Kloeden, Mrs C M S	May 31, 1929 (Western Mail)
Kloeden, Mrs E	April 10, 1957 (70th birthday)
Kloeden, Wilhelm	May 2, 1956
Kuhlmann, C H	October 30, 1963 (Mudamuckla)
Kunst, Mr & Mrs C	April 20, 1966 (Golden Wedding)
Kunst, Mrs C	February 8, 1967
Lang, E E	March 5, 1975 (Nunjikompita)
Lang, Mrs Isobel	April 23, 1975 (Nunjikompita)
Lavern, Ernest (Hec)	January 27, 1965
Leckie, W A	June 12, 1914
Leopold, C J	July 29, 1943 (Penong)
Lewis, W G	August 30, 1945 & September 13, 1945
Linke, C P	December 2, 1964
Linke, Heinrich Bernhard	May 28, 1958
Linke, Mr & Mrs H B	November 7, 1956 (Golden Wedding)
Lister, Mrs C	November 27, 1931
Lloyd, Mrs F W	September 16, 1943 (Ceduna)
Lovegrove, E H	March 12, 1969 (Pimbaacla)
Lovelock, E	December 27, 1929 (Western Mail)
Lowe, Mrs E C	July 15, 1959
Lowe, Mrs K	March 13, 1946
Lutz,	February 18, 1922
Lutz, E A C	January 18, 1967
Lutz, E E E	January 19, 1966
Lutz, Herman Ernest	May 15, 1963
Mackenzie, W	December 12, 1906 (*West Coast Recorder*)
Maguire, Arthur	July 27, 1966 (83rd birthday)
Mahar, George Patrick	May 10, 1972 (Bookabie)
Mahar, Mrs G P	May 1, 1985 (Bookabie)
Marchant, Andrew	May 28, 1975
Martin, L M	January 25, 1961
Martin, Mrs E A	July 23, 1958
Mason, J T	September 9, 1943 (Thevenard)
Mastrosavas, Bill & Mary	February 23, 1977 (farewell Thevenard)
May, John	November 16, 1960
May, Josiah Charles	November 29, 1961 (of Nunjikompita)
McInerheney, James	January 8, 1937
McInerheney, Mrs Con	February 21, 1936
McInherney, Mrs Mary Ann	January 13, 1933
McPherson, Spencer Oliver	July 25, 1956
Miller, Harry R (Yarry)	January 13, 19670 (Koonibba)
Miller, Herbert Phillip	November 2, 1983
Miller, J J	June 2, 1948 (Penong)
Miller, Mrs Julia	January 18, 1929 (*Western Mail*)
Moody	January 20, 1917
Moody, Mrs Albert	February 27, 1957
Moody, Mrs Alice	June 3, 1959
Moreland, Betty	August 8, 1979
Moreland, Walter	November 4, 1987
Morrison, Mrs Dorothy	November 30, 1966
Morrison, Mrs P S	March 22, 1940
Morrison, P S (Sid)	December 12, 1979
Moseley, J G	July 16, 1937
Mudge, Mrs Jessie H	August 4, 1965
Mudge, Thomas	December 27, 1929 (*Western Mail*)
Mudge, Tom	June 27, 1956
Muegge	March 18, 1922
Muegge, Mrs R	March 9, 1944 (Penong)
Murray, A B C	February 26, 1908 (*West Coast Recorder*)
Murray, Miss M	July 19, 1935
Neave, Betty	May 4, 1983

Nicholls, J G	July 6, 1949
Nicholls, Mr & Mrs E H	January 21, 1953 (Golden Wedding)
Nicholls, Mrs A S M	July 23, 1958
Nieass, George	September 21, 1949 (Penong)
Nielsen, Anker	December 7, 1966 (80th birthday)
Nielsen, Capt O	November 11, 1943 (Penong and Norway)
Nielsen, Olaf Nicolay	February 11, 1970
Nielsen, Walter A	September 24, 1975 (Penong)
Nisbet, J G (Jock)	January 27, 1971 (Thevenard)
Noske, Gordon	February 3, 1939
Nugent, William Malbern	January 7, 1976 (Denial Bay)
Oats, E J	November 4, 1943 (Tallala)
Oats, Mr & Mrs E	January 25, 1945
Oats, Mr & Mrs J	June 2, 1917 (farewell — Penong)
Oats, Mrs S J	October 4, 1950 (81st birthday — Penong)
Paech, Mr & Mrs J E	November 9, 1955 (Golden Wedding)
Paech, Ralph, DFC	April 3, 1946
Parr, J R	October 6, 1954 (Penong)
Payne, E A	October 19, 1944 (Charra)
Pearson, C H	December 1, 1948
Place, John	November 20, 1946
Place, W L	September 4, 1963 (Penong)
Post, Mr & Mrs W H	March 2, 1960 (Golden Wedding)
Poupe, Josef	October 21, 1987
Price, Mrs	April 3, 1942 (Tallala)
Price, T S	January 29, 1932 (Tallala)
Puckrige, Kenneth J	February 1, 1967
Queema, Ernie	September 19, 1979
Richards, T J (Jimmy)	January 11, 1950
Riddle, George Henry	March 16, 1966
Riddle, Mrs E J	April 8, 1953 (Fowlers Bay)
Riddle, Mrs F J	August 29, 1973 (80th birthday — Fowlers Bay)
Roberts, Francis Leo	September 27, 1961 (Puntabie)
Roberts, Gordon	May 4, 1955 (Petina)
Ross, Miss Linda	February 19, 1937
Ross, Mrs Elizabeth	April 20, 1977 (90th birthday)
Ross, Mrs F	April 12, 1967
Salmon, Jillian	December 22, 1970
Saunders, John	December 22, 1982
Saunders, Mr & Mrs J	February 8, 1961 (Golden Wedding)
Saunders, Mr & Mrs Jack	February 10, 1971 (Diamond Wedding)
Saunders, Mrs Agnes Anne	December 3, 1975
Saunders, Mrs E	July 1, 1953 (Penong)
Saunders, William	April 21, 1933
Saunders, William Edward	July 19,1978 (Thevenard)
Schultz, G E F	May 29, 1931 (Koonibba)
Schultz, Mrs A E	November 27, 1946
Schulz, Mrs Maud Alis	January 9, 1963 (Petina)
Schulz, W L	September 10, 1958 (Petina, Pimbaacla)
Schwarz, Mrs Lydia	August 1, 1972
Seamark, Miss M A	April 13, 1918
Sedgley, H T	August 30, 1945
Sedgley, W H	September 7, 1955 (90th birthday)
Sedgley, Walter H	September 9, 1959
Selwyn, Harold	March 31, 1948
Shipard, Arthur	September 7, 1947 (80th birthday — Penong)
Shipard, Mr & Mrs Blackiston	October 24, 1951 (Golden Wedding)
Shipard, Mrs A	June 1, 1955 (Penong)
Shipard, Mrs Emily J	December 4, 1957
Shipard, Roy Wilfred	October 11, 1961
Shipard, T D	August 21, 1974
Shorne, Mrs S	February 1, 1950 (Maltee)
Simounds, Mrs Ethel	June 1, 1977
Skinner, E C	June 9, 1971 (Thevenard)

Skinner, Frederick O	January 18, 1967
Skinner, W	July 1, 1916 (Denial Bay)
Sleep, Emma Jane	December 15, 1971 (Penong)
Sleep, Nelson John	May 24, 1972 (Penong)
Sleep, W	September 5, 1941 (75th birthday — Penong)
Smith, Henry Bastian	July 5, 1972
Smith, J H	August 12, 1953
Smith, Mr & Mrs H B	September 28, 1955 (Golden Wedding)
Smith, Mrs H B	June 26, 1957
Smith, Paul	December 23, 1916 (Penong)
Spry, Colin	October 6, 1965
Spry, Jeffry	September 3, 1980
Spry, Mrs Charity	July 1, 1932
Spry, Mrs G	July 10, 1957 (73rd birthday)
Spry, Mrs S	July 1, 1932
Stiggants, James	July 14, 1948
Stiggants, Mr & Mrs Roy	February 24, 1971 (Golden Wedding)
Stone W E	September 28, 1955 (Petina)
Stretton, E J	February 28, 1951
Symonds, W J	May 19, 1933
Symons, S W	May 10, 1940
Talbot, J	November 13, 1946 (80th birthday)
Talbot, J B	October 14, 1953
Thiselton, Stan	July 15, 1970
Thiselton, W D	April 28, 1933
Thompson, Mrs Dorothy	September 25, 1985 (90th birthday)
Tomney, Mrs	May, 2 1930 (Tallala)
Tonkin, C A (Pat)	February 26, 1964
Tonkin, G A	March 11, 1953
Tonkin, Mrs G A	July 20, 1928
Topsy	June 29, 1934
Tremaine, Mrs Mary	September 9, 1959 (Smoky Bay)
Trewartha, Mrs Sarah	July 9, 1975 (80th birthday)
Trewartha, Sidney	June 26, 1963
Trezona, A C (Bert)	October 2, 1968 (Petina)
Trowbridge, Mary	April 9, 1958 (82nd birthday)
Tudor, R	October 10, 1941 (Charra)
Walkom, W H	May 2, 1951
Ware, Bob	July 10, 1915 (Fowlers Bay)
Watson, E A (Ted)	February 6, 1957 (83rd birthday)
Watson, Howard Gwyn	January 14, 1970 (72nd birthday)
Watson, Leo Cyril	June 17, 1959 (Mudamuckla)
Watson, Mr & Mrs H	February 15, 1950
Watson, Mr & Mrs W H	September 20, 1961 (Golden Wedding Anniversary)
Watson, Mrs Emily	November 11, 1959
Watson, W H	August 21, 1963 (Mudamuckla)
Weibusch, Rev C A	January 13, 1933
Westrup, Ron	November 9, 1949
Will, Carl	May 31, 1961
Winter, Mrs I H	May 9, 1956
Wright, Allen Claude	October 23, 1936
Wright, Mrs W	September 22, 1954 (70th birthday Penong)
Wright, William	May 12, 1948 (Charra)
Young, Spencer	March 16, 1955 (Glen Boree)
Zippel, C A	October 20, 1932

B. The District Council of Murat Bay

Chairmen

C A Tonkin	20/6/25 to 8/7/30
J B Talbot	9/7/30 to 12/7/32
G O Lovelock	13/7/32 to 8/7/41
D E Moloney	9/7/41 to 13/7/43
E M Borlase	14/7/43 to 9/7/46
P S Morrison	10/7/46 to 7/7/59
C Keitel	8/7/59 to 7/7/70
J C Bergmann	8/7/70 to 10/7/79

Mayors

J [illegible] Bergmann	11/7/79 to [illegible]/10/83
D [illegible] Wetherall	14/10/83 to [illegible]/5/87
J [illegible] Bergmann	12/10/87 to 15/5/[illegible]
M [illegible] Buckridge	[illegible]/[illegible]

Clerks

C M Adey	13/10/25 to 22/11/27
I. Adey (Acting)	23/11/27 to 10/1/28
W M O'Dea	11/1/28 to 13/3/29
A E White	14/3/29 to 10/9/30
R J Fairbrother	15/10/30 to 7/4/37
L E Mudge	20/4/37 to 14/12/38
A Messner	18/1/39 to 14/8/40
Dorothy Webber (Temp.)	11/9/40 to 8/4/42
G Wilson (Temp.)	13/5/42 to 11/11/42
Mrs P S Morrison (Temp.)	12/11/42 to 13/1/43
H A Betts (Temp.)	14/1/43 to 20/4/46
A Messner	26/4/46 to 13/11/46
G F Pedder	14/11/46 to 8/11/50
V G Evans	13/12/50 to 11/4/51
T G Hough	13/6/51 to 8/5/57
J W May	24/6/57 to 14/12/60
C V Hennessy (Temp.)	15/12/60 to 12/4/61
E D Spencer	13/4/61 to 13/5/70
G J Pfitzner	14/5/70 to 22/12/80
R S Dobrzynski	9/2/81 to 29/6/84
C S Wilson	30/6/84

Councillors

1925	C A Tonkin	E A Hasting	J Mason	C H Kuhlmann	J W Blumson	L B Hughes	H A Betts
1926	C A Tonkin	E E Lang	A E Gregor	J B Talbot	E A Hoffrichter	L B Hughes	E A Payne
	Carawa	**Charra**	**Chinta**	**Denial Bay**	**Merghiny**	**Murat Bay**	**Murraminga**
1927	E E Lang	E A Payne	L B Hughes	E A Hoffrichter	J B Talbot	C A Tonkin	A E Gregor
1928	E E Lang	E A Payne	L B Hughes	C J W Bergmann	J B Talbot	C A Tonkin	A E Gregor
1929	E E Lang	E A Payne	L B Hughes	C J W Bergmann	J B Talbot	C A Tonkin	A E Gregor
1930	E E Lang	E A Payne	L B Hughes	C J W Bergmann	J B Talbot	J Mason	G O Lovelock
1931	T D Drever	E A Payne	L B Hughes	E A Hoffrichter	J B Talbot	J Mason	G O Lovelock
1932	T D Drever	E A Payne	L B Hughes	E A Hoffrichter	J B Talbot	J W Betts	G O Lovelock
1933	T D Drever	E A Payne	L B Hughes	E A Hoffrichter	J B Talbot	J W Betts	G O Lovelock
1934	T D Drever	E A Payne	W J Tucker	E A Hoffrichter	J B Talbot	S S Cranna	G O Lovelock
1935	T D Drever	E A Payne	W J Tucker	E A Hoffrichter	J B Talbot	S S Cranna	G O Lovelock
1936	T D Drever	E A Payne	W J Tucker	E A Hoffrichter	C H Collins	W H Sedgley	G O Lovelock
1937	T D Drever	E A Payne	W J Tucker	E A Hoffrichter	C H Collins	W H Sedgley	G O Lovelock
1938	T D Drever	E A Payne	W J Tucker	E A Hoffrichter	C H Collins	W H Sedgley	G O Lovelock
1939	T D Drever	E A Payne	D E Moloney	W C Kloeden	C H Collins	H G Watson	G O Lovelock
1940	T D Drever	E M Borlase	D E Moloney	W C Kloeden	C H Collins	H G Watson	G O Lovelock
1941	T D Drever	E M Borlase	D E Moloney	W C Kloeden	C H Collins	H G Watson	H H W Denton
1942	T D Drever	E M Borlase	D E Moloney	W C Kloeden	C H Collins	W H Sedgley	H H W Denton
1943	T D Drever	E M Borlase	D E Moloney	W C Kloeden	C H Collins	W H Sedgley	H H W Denton
1944	T D Drever	E M Borlase	D E Moloney	W C Kloeden	P S Morrison	E O Dahl	H H W Denton
1945	T D Drever	E M Borlase	C E Kelly	W C Kloeden	P S Morrison	E O Dahl	H H W Denton
1946	T D Drever	E M Borlase	C E Kelly	W C Kloeden	P S Morrison	E O Dahl	H H W Denton
1947	T D Drever	E M Borlase	C E Kelly	W C Kloeden	P S Morrison	E O Dahl	H H W Denton
1948	T D Drever	E M Borlase	C E Kelly	W C Kloeden	P S Morrison	E O Dahl	H H W Denton
1949	E E Dunn	E M Borlase	C E Kelly	W C Kloeden	P S Morrison	E O Dahl	J S Hunt
1950	E E Dunn	E M Borlase	C E Kelly	W C Kloeden	P S Morrison	E O Dahl	J S Hunt
1951	E E Dunn	E M Borlase	C E Kelly	W C Kloeden	P S Morrison	E O Dahl	J S Hunt
1952	E E Dunn	E M Borlase	C E Kelly	W C Kloeden	L J Martin	P S Morrison	J S Hunt
1953	J R Ford	E M Borlase	C E Kelly	W C Kloeden	L J Martin	P S Morrison	J S Hunt
1954	J R Ford	E M Borlase	C E Kelly	W C Kloeden	M J Martin	P S Morrison	J S Hunt
1955	B H W Mudge	E M Borlase	C Keitel	C F Kloeden	M J Martin	P S Morrison	J S Hunt
1956	B H W Mudge	W C Trowbridge	C Keitel	C F Kloeden	A J Marchant	P S Morrison	J S Hunt
1957	B H W Mudge	W C Trowbridge	C Keitel	C F Kloeden	A J Marchant	P S Morrison	J S Hunt

1958	B H W Mudge	W C Trowbridge	C Keitel	E G Koch	A J Marchant	P S Morrison	J S Hunt	
1959	B H W Mudge	W C Trowbridge	C Keitel	E G Koch	A J Marchant	P S Morrison	J S Hunt	
1960	B H W Mudge	W C Trowbridge	C Keitel	E G Koch	A J Marchant	W H Brown	J S Hunt	
1961	B H W Mudge	W C Trowbridge	C Keitel	I. L. Hoffrichter	A J Marchant	W H Brown	J S Hunt	
1962	B H W Mudge	R E Borlase	C Keitel	I. L. Hoffrichter	A J Marchant	P S Morrison	J S Hunt	
1963	B H W Mudge	R E Borlase	C Keitel	I. L. Hoffrichter	A J Marchant	P S Morrison	J S Hunt	
1964	B H W Mudge	K B Nielsen	C Keitel	I. L. Hoffrichter	A J Marchant	J A Curyer	J S Hunt	
1965	B H W Mudge	K B Nielsen	C Keitel	D T Trewartha	A J Marchant	J A Curyer	G J Gregor	
1966	B H W Mudge	K B Nielsen	C Keitel	D T Trewartha	A J Marchant	J A Curyer	G J Gregor	
1967	B H W Mudge	K B Nielsen	C Keitel	D T Trewartha	A J Marchant	J A Curyer	G J Gregor	
1968	B H W Mudge	K B Nielsen	J C Bergmann	D T Trewartha	A J Marchant	C Keitel	G J Gregor	
1969	I. A Hamence	K B Nielsen	J C Bergmann	A E Kloeden	A J Marchant	C Keitel	T L Dodd	
New Wards	**Carawa**	**Charra**	**Chinta**	**Denial Bay**	**Merghiny**	**Murat Bay**	**Murat Bay**	**Murraminga**
1970	I. A Hamence	K B Nielsen	J C Bergmann	A E Kloeden	M J Martin	D R Whitmarsh	W J Mastrosavas	T L Dodd
1971	I. A Hamence	K B Nielsen	J C Bergmann	A E Kloeden	M J Martin	D R Whitmarsh	C Keitel	T L Dodd
1972	I. A Hamence	K B Nielsen	J C Bergmann	A E Kloeden	M J Martin	D R Whitmarsh	S G Dunn	T L Dodd
1973	I. A Hamence	K B Nielsen	J C Bergmann	A E Brown	M J Martin	D R Whitmarsh	P D Spry	J H Tremaine
1974	N A Gaden	K B Nielsen	J C Bergmann	A E Brown	F C Kuhlmann	D R Whitmarsh	P D Spry	J H Tremaine
1975	N A Gaden	K B Nielsen	J C Bergmann	I. K Hoffrichter	F C Kuhlmann	D R Whitmarsh	P D Spry	J H Tremaine
1976	N A Gaden	K B Nielsen	J C Bergmann	I. K Hoffrichter	F C Kuhlmann	D R Whitmarsh	P D Spry	J H Tremaine
New Wards	**Carawa**	**Ceduna**	**Ceduna**	**Central**	**Charra**	**Maltee**	**Murraminga**	**Thevenard**
1977	I. A Hamence	D R Whitmarsh	V R Spry	J C Bergmann	P A Trowbridge	F C Kuhlmann	T W Blumson	C H Chamberlain
1978	I. A Hamence	G Duregon	V R Spry	J C Bergmann	P A Trowbridge	F C Kuhlmann	T W Blumson	D M Pope
1979	I. A Hamence	G Duregon	P Gynell H D Coleopy	T G Trenowden	P A Trowbridge	F C Kuhlmann	T W Blumson	W J Miller
1980	I. A Hamence	M J Puckridge	H D Coleopy	T G Trenowden	P A Trowbridge	M K Dodd	T W Blumson	W J Miller
1981	I. A Hamence	M J Puckridge	J Bunker	T G Trenowden	P A Trowbridge	M K Dodd	G R Thomas	M A Mahar
1982	I. A Hamence	M J Puckridge	J Bunker	T G Trenowden	H D Coleopy	M K Dodd	G R Thomas	R J Nicholls
1983	I. A Hamence	M J Puckridge	J H McCarthy	T G Trenowden	D J Wright	K A Wright	T L Dodd	W J Miller
1984	I. A Hamence	M J Puckridge	D R Whitmarsh	T G Trenowden	D J Wright	K A Wright	I S Hunt	W J Miller
1985	E A Watkinson	M J Puckridge	D R Whitmarsh	B J Beattie	A E Brown	T A Zippel	I S Hunt	D W Gillies
Wards Abolished								
1987	B J Beattie	H J Bergmann	N H Chandler	J F Furnell	D W Gillies	C J Meathrel	E A Watkinson	T A Zippel

Acknowledgements

In May of 1985 the District Council of Murat Bay, represented by Jeff Bergmann, Des Whitmarsh, Malcolm Puckridge and Craig Wilson, asked the South Australian Centre for Settlement Studies to prepare a book on the history of the Far West of South Australia. As the geographical historian associated with the Centre I was given the task and now, three years later, the book is finished.

Gordon Young, the Director of the Centre for Settlement Studies, gave me generous support in all that I did and I am also indebted to other members of the Centre particularly the Chairman, Graeme Pretty, for encouragement and support.

The District Council of Murat Bay provided me with funds for some 14 visits to the Far West between July 1985 and May 1988; and with the friendly assistance of Mayor Jeff Bergmann, Mayor Malcolm Puckridge and Chief Executive Officer Craig Wilson, an enormous task was made as easy as possible. Financial assistance also came from the Outback Areas Community Trust to record the history of the top end communities, Penong, Bookabie and Coorabie.

On Saturday 26 October 1985, with the assistance of the District Council, the Ceduna Area School, Pauline Jolly and Des Whitmarsh, a History Resources Day was organised in the Ceduna Community School Library. Dozens of people brought in their memorabilia and 1500 pages of written material were copied. At the same time, some 400 photographs were taken. All of this material was used as an introductory data bank and now, supplemented by many additions, it has been deposited in the Community School Library for the benefit of future generations.

In addition to material gained in this way significant contributions came from Lyn Dayman's Jubilee 150 local history collection, from Milton Gooley's papers on the Smoky Bay district, from the Fowlers Bay police station records originally in the possession of Walter Johns, from interview notes made by Patricia Summerling for Danvers Architects in their Heritage Survey or Eyre Peninsula, from the resources of the National Trust Museum in Ceduna and from the historical papers of Anne Watson and Geoff Lowe.

Many of my students in the unit *Settlement Studies* at the South Australian College of Advanced Education assisted in the early stages of the project. Those who produced quality work which was useful for certain chapters were Kath Duncan, Dianne Gillman, Russell Uebergang and Andrew Venning. Rosemary Winderlich of Ceduna, although not a student, agreed to contribute to the project in a similar way and spent many hours gathering information for the chapter on Aborigines.

There are more than 300 photographs in the book. Most of these were provided by local people and the contributions from the following were especially useful: Fred Blumson (particularly those taken by his father Albert in the first 40 years of this century), Ruby Freeman, Pauline Jolly, Russell Jolly, K Schwarz, M Collins, C Hoffrichter, L Kuhlmann, J Bergmann, T Schwarz, E G Betts, B Sampson, V Schwarz, C Bubner, R Trowbridge, A Bowell, B Elsley, E T Schwarz, R Sleep, W Bubner, W Skinner, P Lange, G Redding, R Hardy, Mrs Hill, K Gregor, Mrs Gillies, K Dunn, D Beattie, F Marshall, C Lowe, J Ferguson, M Dunkley, M Puckridge, L Trewartha, E Nicholls, A Hoffrichter, Mrs Edwards.

Other photographs were obtained from many sources such as the *West Coast Sentinel* (which also lent me their microfilm copies of past editions of the paper), the Mortlock Library, Martin Cameron MLC, the Bush Church Aid Society, *News* Ltd, the Weekend Australian, Pat Richards, Merna Mueller, the Edwardes Collection in the State Library, the South Australian Museum, Peter Baker, Deputy Principal Modbury South School, Cooperative Bulk Handling Ltd, the Back to Smoky Bay Committee, the Little Schools of the West Committee and the files of the Ceduna Area School. Additionally, many photos were taken in the Far West by the author and by Ken Thompson.

The cover photograph was a difficult choice between two beautiful sunsets over Murat Bay taken by Trevor Woolford and Karen Trowbridge. Karen's was finally chosen because it was better suited to a wrap-around cover.

The excellent work of preparing the photographs for the manuscript in 1986 and 1987 was done by Ken Thompson, Technical Assistant in the Department of Geographical Studies at the Magill Campus of the South Australian College of Advanced Education. Russell Uebergang, Dianne Gillman and Carolyn Collins made valuable contributions with the 1985 photographic work.

Most of the maps were drawn by my colleague, Kevin Harris, of the South Australian College of Advanced Education. Those not done by Kevin were the work of Ken Thompson.

The following people gave their time generously to take me on conducted tours around portions of the district: Geoff Gregor, Alan Lowe, the late Wally Moreland, Malcolm Puckridge, Ken Wright, Dulcie Blumson, Garth Murray, Stuart Shipard, Dan Mahar, Rosemary and Robert Winderlich.

I am grateful for information given either in conversations or in written form by dozens of Far West people. A full list of all who helped in this way is too long to print, but, wherever possible, their names were put in the body of the text or in the lists of references.

In the time consuming research with primary resources I had the voluntary assistance of George Daws and I was able to employ on special tasks Roslyn Pledge, Ken Thompson and Dianne Gillman. For Dianne it was an involvement of many months; her contributions to the book begin with the cover (her suggestion) and permeate through all the chapters.

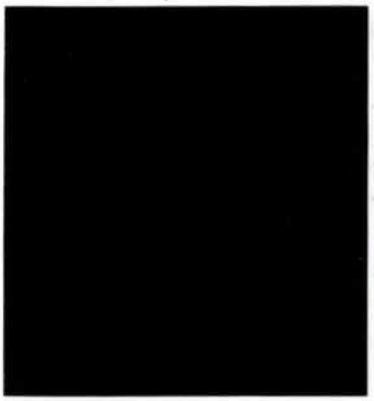
Ros Leane, in her spare time over two years, typed and corrected more than 600 pages for the manuscript. It was a monumental effort done with perpetual cheerfulness and genuine interest.

Throughout the entire project I had the assistance of Pauline Jolly as my chief liaison person in the Far West. She answered every question and performed every task I put to her. Her local knowledge is exceptional and she deserves not only my thanks, but the thanks of the entire district for the work she has put into this book. On many occasions she was helped by Des Whitmarsh and it was Pauline, Des and Kaye Gregor from Smoky Bay that I asked to read the manuscript. I am grateful for the diligent way they did this. Because of their efforts I was able to correct many small errors in the text. Those that remain are my responsibility alone.

Finally, this book would never have been written without the tolerance of my family Carol, David and Ben. I was glad that on two of my last trips they were able to join me in the Far West. There, after some good fishing and some famous Far West hospitality, it was much easier for them to understand my three year obsession with the history of the area.

JIM FAULL
January 1988

The Author:



Jim Faull is Senior Lecturer in Geographical Studies at the Magill Campus of the South Australian College of Advanced Education. He is also Deputy-Director of the South Australian Centre for Settlement Studies. As a boy he lived at Streaky Bay for several years and has fond memories of life on the West Coast. *Life on the Edge* is his twelfth book.

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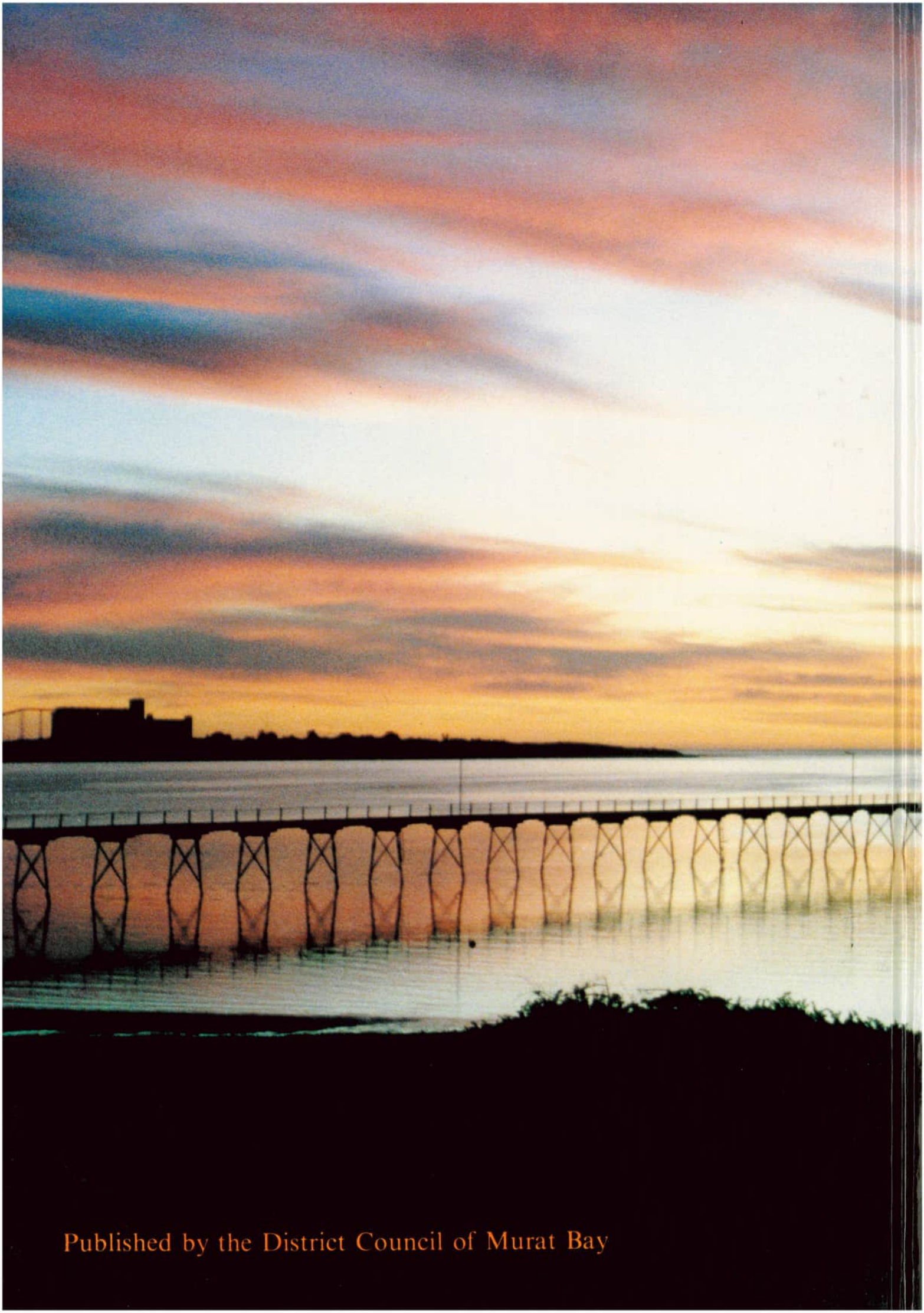
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