



## *Spring Newsletter 2021*



### ***Wilkins the Explorer***

On Sunday September 19th a special screening of 'The Eye of Wilkins' was held in the Burra Town Hall.

Peter Maddern, a local Adelaide writer and producer with a passion for photography, has written a comprehensive account of the life and times of Sir Hubert Wilkins. The film completed the picture of the remarkable life of this extraordinary man.

Sir Hubert Wilkins was born at Mt Bryan East on the 31<sup>st</sup> of October 1888, the last of 13 children. As a teenager, he moved to Adelaide where he found work with a travelling cinema. He then went on to Sydney and worked as a cinematographer, and finally to England where he became a pioneering aerial photographer. His photographic skill earned him a place on various Arctic expeditions, including the controversial 1913 Vilhjalmur Stefansson-led Canadian Arctic Expedition.

He enlisted and served in World War 1 and was appointed as an official war photographer. In June 1918 Wilkins was awarded the Military Cross for his efforts to rescue wounded soldiers during the Third Battle of Ypres. Wilkins work frequently led him into the thick of the fighting and whilst assuming command of a group of American Soldiers he added a bar to his Military Cross in the 1919 Birthday Honours. Sir John Monash praised him as a 'True Australian Hero' akin to Lawrence of Arabia. (To be continued)



**Sir Hubert Wilkins**



**Descendants of Sir Hubert Wilkins, Marie Norman (nee Wilkins) from Adelaide and Louise Wilkins from Sevenhill with Peter Maddern author of 'The Eye of Wilkins'**

# Brief Land History of the Watervale Institute and War Memorial

We believe Watervale was settled in the early 1840s and the Institute built 1915 on the burnt out 1850s creamery site. Squatters had followed noted young explorer John Ainsworth Horrocks who had settled Penwortham, 3 miles north, in 1839 - the first European settlement north of Gawler.

In 1847 David Davies was granted Sections 145-146 and laid out his town.

Watervale was then a private township; the squatters were required to negotiate the purchase of their selection or pay rent! Property boundaries were stepped out, and later some were found to be inaccurate. *i.e., present Creamery-Institute backdoor is built on the surveyed boundary.*



The Institute's foundation stone was laid at a large gathering in April 1915. The building comprised three rooms and a passage, consisting of a meeting room, public-reading room, and a members' room. It was then listed with the affiliated South Australian Institute Association.



1975, time the National Bank shared a room, a front gate, and WWI Machine Guns each side of entrance path.

In 1982 the 'Watervale Institute' was dissolved, and library services transferred into the Saddleworth & Auburn Council public library, later becoming part of the Clare & Gilbert Valleys Council, who retained the Watervale Institute as a depot.

In 1983 the Mt. Horrocks Historical Society opened an archive/research centre in the front room, now a small office with archive boxes, computer/scanner, filing and map cabinet etc. Since the council library closed in 2009 the Society collection expanded into the three rooms. They now have a historical artefacts collection from 1839 of schools, clubs, trophies, maps, photos and a library of family publications, with a meeting/research room.

1921 the War Memorial was unveiled, on section 'C 2'. Unfortunately, after the road re-alignment, it needed to be shifted. For a short time, it was re-located at the entrance of the Soldiers' Memorial Recreation Park.

The road was again re-aligned in the 1950s, and the memorial returned to its prominent position, at the top of the main street and is now on the Institute's grounds, section 293.



The Mt Horrocks Historical Society is currently in negotiations with The Clare and Gilbert Valley Council regarding the future of the Watervale Institute.

MHHS 2021

Acknowledgement to Joelle Hancock research into South Australia's 352 Institutes.



# “Of Auburn” World Premiere

Over the weekend of September 10-12 Auburn held its inaugural Frenchfest.

Auburn was transformed into a French village. From Crepe making, Pentanque, French cars, French lessons, French food, music, and theatre, there was something for everyone.

One of the many productions on offer was “Of Auburn.”

This beautiful account focused on the World War 1 experiences of women through personal accounts in diaries, poetry and song.

The audience were taken on a journey which included the wartime poetry of Auburn’s favourite son CJ Dennis combined with the narration of Madge Yeatman. Madge was a nurse and was also from this small village in South Australia.

Wartime photographer Frank Hurley’s powerful images were combined with compelling French music and songs which portrayed the anxiety, sorrow and hopes of that time.

The production was written by Steven Oppes, directed by Lisa Harper Campbell, with Clare Mansfield as Madge Yeatman, Nicolas Conway as CJ Dennis. Music was performed by Minne Little.

The production will be featuring in the 2022 Adelaide Fringe Festival.



## Collection Box at the Cottage

Colleen Grace, a member of Mt Horrocks Historical Society, was surprised to see that her late father Keith Grace had donated an old Baptist Church Collection Box to the Society.



### Baptist Church Collection Box

Used at Leasingham Baptist Church until 1936.

Rescued from the Watervale dump in 1973 by Keith Grace of Leasingham.

Restored by John Palmer in 1987.

## Vale

### Alan Williams

It is with regret that we advise members of the passing of Alan Williams. Alan was a long-standing and valuable Committee Member of the Society. Without Alan’s advice and supervision many of our restoration projects would not have been so successfully accomplished. His expertise in building matters and friendly disposition will be sorely missed. The Society offers condolences to his wife Kay and family.





**The Mt Horrocks  
Historical Society invite  
all members and friends  
To Christmas Lunch**

**Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> December 12pm**

**Little Red Grape  
Leasingham**

**All Welcome**

**RSVP 29-11-21 Ph 88434123**

**(Lunch and drinks at own expense)**

**Maintenance Work at John Horrocks  
Cottage**

MHHS Secretary Mal and willing volunteer Bob working at the cottage. They removed an old narrow drainpipe under the main path into the cottage and replaced it with a larger pipe.



**Committee Members**

President Wendy Spackman  
Vice-President Janet Morran  
Secretary Malcolm Paterson  
Treasurer David Spackman  
Committee: Alan Williams Nan Berrett

Newsletter  
Minute Secretary  
Publicity  
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Jim Morran & Meredith McInnis  
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Details of charges for research undertaken by the Society are available on request.

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