



## ALEXANDRINA LIBRARY SERVICES

# HISTORY ROOM

### NEWS

No 25

by Dawn Juers

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Last month I joined a group who participated in a tour of Parliament House and the Medina Treasury tunnels under the old Treasury Building. This warren of tunnels was interesting to visit and were purported to enable the gold to be transported to the GPO, but this cannot be substantiated.

The Treasury building is now a hotel and they have been mindful of the building's heritage whilst making renovations to make it a workable hotel. The ceilings of some of the rooms were fascinating, in so much that they were curved with the original bricks showing, having been erected without mortar or other adhesives.

We were also able to visit the Cabinet Room where the Torrens Title legislation was first mooted.

In 1852 between 17000 and 20000 men were said to have joined the grand exodus to the Victorian goldfields. Active males became a scarce commodity and gold coin and trade slumped alarmingly.

Capt Alexander Tolmer, Inspector of Police, suggested to the Governor that diggers from Adelaide would prefer to send their wealth back home with a reliable escort, rather than entrust it to Melbourne or bring it back themselves through bushranger country. Tolmer pioneered a gold escort from the diggings across country to Adelaide. He offered 72shillings an ounce (at least 12 shillings better than the Melbourne price). Eight days and 544 bone jolting kilometres later, the inspector was back in Adelaide with 21,000 pounds of gold dust deposited by 318 diggers.

The higher offer tempted SA diggers and financial collapse was averted, and by the end of 1852 the lucky ones were returning home to invest their wealth in property and land.

To encourage the flow of precious metal into the Colony an Assay & Bullion Act was passed, to enable the banks to issue their own notes in exchange for the gold.

On the Treasury Building a plaque gives details of the gold rush. It reads:

*'Gold Escort Route Government Assay Office. During 1852 and 1853, eighteen gold escort parties under Commissioner Alexander Tolmer (SA Police) brought 328,509 ounces of gold from the Victorian diggings to the Government Assay Office, which opened on this site on 10-2-1852 and processed 407,132 ounces of gold before closure on 15-2-1853.'* Affixed 1970.

Gold brought a new spurt of prosperity to SA, and was an indirect cause of the old Government Offices being demolished and replaced by the Treasury Building in 1858-79. Over the years the building has been used by many Government departments and for meetings of Executive Council.

#### Sources-

*'Adelaide-a sense of difference'* Derek Whitelock

*'Adelaide-an Illustrated History.'* Max Colwell/Alan Naylor

*'Memories in Stone'* Eric Gunton

Our volunteers in the History Room are still busy working behind the scenes even though like many groups we come and go with holidays and sicknesses. Our additions to the oral histories are being worked on quietly and efficiently. We are also compiling a collection of indices/index of local residents extracted from various books that were published without an index.

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### **New Websites -**

For those with Currie connections there is to be a worldwide clan reunion in 2007. They have over 3,000 members worldwide and the reunion will coincide with the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Bute Highland Games (Scotland). See [www.clancurrie.com](http://www.clancurrie.com) or [www.butehighlandgames.org.uk](http://www.butehighlandgames.org.uk)

Anyone with an ancestor who travelled on the *Titanic*'s doomed maiden voyage will soon be able to gain access to their details on the internet. 1837online.com has signed a deal with National Archives for their entire historical database of passengers who embarked British shores 1890-1960, including the *Titanic*.

Recently I was given the website for Menindee History Group  
[www.members.iinet.net.au/~mewilson/menindeehistory.htm](http://www.members.iinet.net.au/~mewilson/menindeehistory.htm)

This is a site for anyone with an interest in the area. It contains the transcript of the report on the fatal explosion on the steamer *Providence* while heading down the Darling with a load of wool, having sailed from Goolwa to Burke. A heritage sign has been placed beside the remains of the *Providence* in Kinchega National Park.

For those researching in the South East of SA the local Family History Group has a website [www.seol.net.au/sefhg](http://www.seol.net.au/sefhg)

Western Aust. have extended their online Historic indexes for births (1841-1913) deaths & marriages (1841-1905) <http://www.justice.wa.gov.au/portal/server.pt>

National Archive of Memorial Inscriptions – an accessible archive of UK memorial inscriptions <http://www.memorialinscriptions.org.uk>

Australian Cemetery Geolocations by Paul Blair (working draft)  
<http://www.pcug.org.au/~pblair/auscem/auscemlist.php> then click/ show all.

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### **Just Be Thankful**

Four old Scotsmen were out golfing – as they had been doing for over 50years. “*These hills are getting steeper as the years go by,*” one complained. “*These fairways seem to be getting longer too,*” said one of the others. “*The sand traps seem to be getting longer too,*” said the third senior. After hearing enough from his old friends, the oldest and the wisest of the four of them (at 87 years old) piped up and said, “*Just be thankful we’re still on the right side of the grass!*”  
[Rampant Scotland Newsletter]

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### **Didn't we do well!**

The Alexandrina Council is the proud winner of the Local Government Australian Service Excellence Award for South Australia 2005/06. The award was presented by the Customer Service Institute of Australia, Australia's peak customer service organization.

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Genealogy help is available by appointment on Thursdays, to guide you through your research. Please phone the Library on 8555-7000 to make an appointment.

For comments, suggestions or to receive this newsletter – email [historyroom2004@yahoo.com.au](mailto:historyroom2004@yahoo.com.au) or phone me, Dawn Juers on 8555-2885.

Back copies of this newsletter can be sourced on the Alexandrina Council website - <http://www.alexandrina.sa.gov.au/site/page/cfm> then Library – Local Family History Room.

