

EXPLORE

The Charles Sturt Memorial Museum Trust Inc.

CHARLES STURT MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2019

ISSUE NO. 30

Welcome to the new year. One that will offer the Trust the opportunity to celebrate the legacy of Captain Charles Sturt. 1795 – 1859.

This year we celebrate the

224th Anniversary of Sturt's Birthday Sunday 28 April 2019

150th Anniversary of Sturt's Death Sunday 16 June 2019

175th Anniversary of Sturt's Departure for central Australia Saturday 10 August 2019

Sturt's Birthday is being celebrated as part of the History Festival's **Open Door - Built Heritage** with the Trust presenting *An Invitation to Grange*.

Saturday 27th April will give visitors an opportunity to tour Grange 11.00am – 5.00pm and enjoy a barbecue lunch and later a high tea.

Sunday 28th April will begin at 2.00pm with the Sturt Address given by Mike Burdett, Surveyor-General of South Australia talking about the early surveys of Adelaide. This will be followed by the cannon salute by the Fort Glanville Historical Association. For the first time in many years, the Garden Party will be open to the paying public for \$25.00 per person but free to members and invited guests.

Other celebrations are still in the planning stages.

The last six months have seen a number of small achievements, primarily in our marketing approach. Our new street sign set the tone. We procured a feather banner for our entrance gate, notifying the public of our museum opening; updated our website and brochure; advertised in Messenger Press, The Advertiser and Sunday Mail. We are now on Facebook and recently a Board Member went on ABC Radio to tout our opening hours which drew a good response. Twelve people attended a tour guide workshop in July, led by Nina Chicco from Ayers House which is enabling the museum to draw on more volunteers for tours. The Board has initiated a series of Strategic Planning Sessions to analyse our business operations and establish our objectives for the next five years. The first was held in January with another to be held in March. These sessions will assist the Board in responding to the History Trust of South Australia's Self Review process. The Community Museum Program will cease by the end of 2019 and be replaced by Museums and Collections.

The Museum has started serving morning/afternoon teas in the garden for group tours which has increased our group tour rate. These conform to the requirements of the City of Charles Sturt Public Health requirements. Our small team of volunteers devote time to tour guiding, supervising functions, maintaining the house and garden. Our gardening group meets twice a week to care for the garden. The garden is becoming an attraction for visitors with arrangements being made for the Australian Garden History Society (SA) and the Pioneers Association to visit this year.



Jetty Street frontage displaying recent signage

We were very pleased to receive \$2,811 funding from the State Government's, Grants SA to purchase an 8m x 4m collapsible marquee and 40 garden chairs. It will be used for Trust functions and hired for events.

Elections were held on the 17 November at the Annual General Meeting for the term 2018 – 2020. The Board Members are as follows:

President:	Merle Weston
Vice President:	Paul Hilbig, Judith Seedsman
Chair:	Anthony Botten
Hon. Secretary:	Margaret Phillips
Committee:	Sally Pentland, Bill Parry, Graham Pike, David Duffner

A nomination for Hon. Treasurer was not received and given that the Trust Constitution only allows for the filling of casual vacancies, Margaret Phillips will continue to hold the role of Acting Treasurer until another Board Member can accept the position.

The Trust would like to thank Arthur Jeeves AOM for his many years of service as President and Acting Hon. Treasurer and welcome Merle Weston to the senior office.

In August, Trust members were invited to have morning tea with Mrs Le, wife of His Excellency the Honourable Hieu Van Le AC, Governor of South Australia. Mrs Le was a very generous hostess, meeting us in the garden on arrival to enable many photographic opportunities. We were introduced to her staff who were responsible for organising the occasion, and then invited to take an extensive guided tour of Government House. Merle Weston thanked Mrs Le for her kind invitation and presented her with flowers and a copy of Sturt's Two Expeditions into Southern Australia.



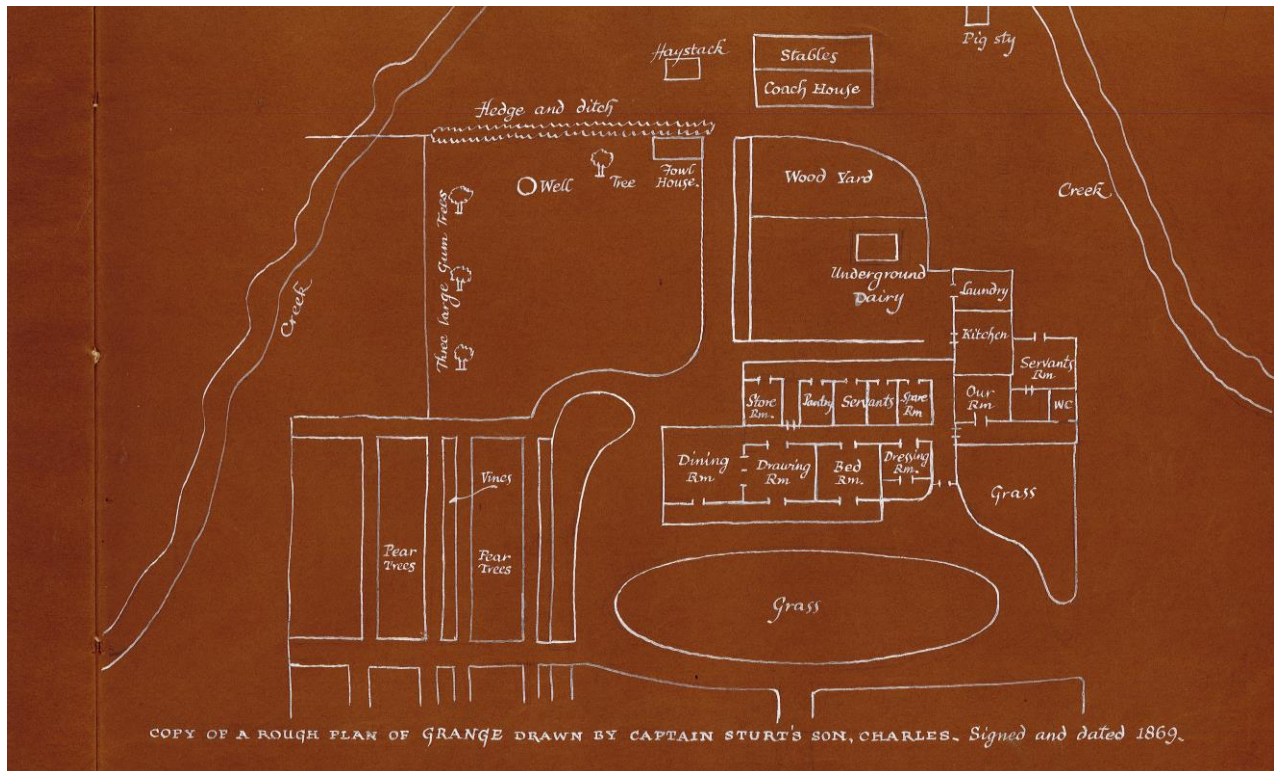
Our Heritage Garden development continues to please visitors and surprise Trust members. The garden has been transformed over two years, thanks to the hard work of our volunteers and the funding provided by the City of Charles Sturt. The old shed has now been removed, opening up the garden to further improvement. Three tool sheds are being erected near the boundary fence which will allow easy access to garden equipment and function furniture. A large hedge row will shield the sheds from view. .





The refined sketch (shown below) of Charles Sheppey Sturt's 1896 garden plan is being used as the basis for the new garden. The original plan indicates some of the plants grown, while Beatrix Sturt's publication *The Life of Charles Sturt* offers further insights and information. Although the orchard cannot be replicated as there were at least 3,000 trees, volunteers have planted apple, pear, lemon, turkey fig and loquat. An 1862 A.H. Davis, Moore Farm, Reedbed's garden catalogue guides our selection. Davis, was a renowned orchardist, having supplied the Adelaide markets since 1841.

Charles Sheppey's garden plan will be reproduced for display in the garden.



Charles Sturt was an avid horticulturalist and served in 1836 on the first Committee of Superintendence of the Australian Museum and Botanic Gardens in Sydney. In South Australia he served as Vice President of the Horticultural and Agricultural Society and on the Committee to establish the Botanic Gardens in Adelaide. His biographer, Beatrix Sturt claimed that when Sturt sold his Mittagong property, he moved to Varroville near Liverpool in New South Wales and it was here that "Sturt was able to gratify his passion for gardening, as flowers and fruit thrive well". p125

While at Grange, he wrote to his old friend George McLeay at Brownlow Hill, Camden N.S.W. "My only enjoyment is in wandering over my garden with my two beautiful boys. I will early send you a box of plants. In a case lately received from Loddige's, some fine fuchsias, laurel, chestnut and white roses came safely, but the lilacs, arbuti, and other specimens were dead. Will you send me pine seeds, seeds of Cupressus callitris, the white cedar and the loquat?"p207 (Note: Loddige's were a famous plant nursery in London who traded in introduced exotic plants, tree, shrubs, ferns, palms and orchids. They introduced the use of Wardian Cases to transport live plants from Australia – Wikipedia)

In a letter to his brother William, the Military Secretary in Calcutta dated 9/4/1842, Sturt writes, "Send me any seeds you like – a good burden of all kinds; fruit and flowers; especially some of the Hill seeds and bulbs. Dr Wallich will supply you. You might put cuttings of various trees, stowed close in a barrel with wet moss at the bottom; or a case of orange trees in pots. Send me pineapples, but above all, indigo seed, which I am very anxious to try. P221

He writes again on 14/9/1842 'You can see Wallich and send me seeds and cuttings. Put the cuttings into damp moss in a box, and the seeds into dried sand. Send pineapples, bananas, arrowroot, sugar-cane but all risks indigo seed". Dr Wallich's two cases of plants for our Horticultural Society came in excellent order. None of those you sent me did I ever get. Send me melon seeds of varieties, pumpkins, Bengal chillies and any others. I want to try indigo, cotton and other things. p225 (Note: Nathaniel Wallich was a Danish botanist, serving as the Superintendent of East India Company's Botanic Garden at Calcutta and later professor of botany at Calcutta Medical College)

It is obvious by his requests that he was very keen to procure any type of plant to enhance his garden. Unfortunately the sandy soil of Grange and the dryness of the climate would have presented him with challenges. He tried to emulate George McLeay's garden at Brownlow Hill, but the coastal conditions were often against him. More than once did the Torrens floods ruin his attempts. In October 1842 he suffered the loss of 3,000 fruit trees and 1800 vines. P223

We can only hope that the new Grange garden will achieve Captain Charles Sturt's dream.

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At a soiree at the Grange in 1847, a guest, Eliezer Montefiore, drew this sketch of Charles Sturt. It later came into the possession of Fanny Nicholls, companion to Mrs Sturt during Sturt's absence in central Australia.

But who was Eliezer Levi Montefiore?

He was a businessman and etcher, born in 1820 in the West Indies to Isaac Levi, a merchant of Barbados and Brussels. His mother Hanna, was a cousin of the Philanthropist, Sir Moses Montefiore and in due course Eliezer and his brother Jacob adopted the name Levi Montefiore.

Educated in England, Eliezer migrated to Adelaide in 1843 to join his brother Jacob, who was a South Australian Commissioner. E.L. established himself as a commission and shipping agent and through his brother's colonial contacts found himself on the Government House guest list for Queen's Birthday celebrations. Eliezer was a keen supporter of steam navigation on the Murray River and clearly shared the same mindset as Charles Sturt, who chaired the first meeting of Steam Navigation committee. Although Eliezer was Jewish, single and 25 years junior to Sturt when invited to the soiree, he was obviously

considered a young man of intellect, charm and full of potential.

Having married in 1848 he moved to Melbourne in 1853 as manager of the Victorian branch of J. B. Montefiore Graham & Co. but resigned and became secretary of the Australasian Insurance Co.

Though appointed a justice of the peace he was mainly interested in literature and the arts. In 1861 he was a member of the committee to arrange a celebration for the 300th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth. In 1870 he helped to found the Victorian Academy of Art and on its behalf presented the prizes at the International Colonial Exhibition in Sydney. In February he became a trustee of the Melbourne Public Library, Museums and National Gallery but resigned early in 1871 and settled in Sydney.

Extract Australian Dictionary of Biography



Eliezer Levi Montefiore