

EXPLORE

The Charles Sturt Memorial Museum Trust Inc.

CHARLES STURT MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2023

ISSUE NO. 38



On the 11th December 2022 Her Excellency, the Honourable Frances Adamson, Governor of South Australia, AC, officially opened The Grange Visitor Centre. It was a beautiful day for the launch of the Visitor Centre with ninety guests in attendance to celebrate this auspicious occasion. We were extremely pleased that Her Excellency accepted our invitation to unveil the entrance to the Centre.

Prof. Scott Smith, a Trustee, officiated as the Master of Ceremonies, introducing our President, Merle Weston and Chair, Tony Botten, to thank the those who contributed to the construction of the Centre and the development of the exhibition gallery. Her Excellency and Vice-Regal party were provided a private tour of the Exhibition by its designer Denise Schumann OAM. Guests retired to the Heritage Garden for canapes and drinks, with wines donated by Edwin and Patricia Michell of Marble Hill Wines.



HER EXCELLENCY, THE GOVERNOR OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA HON. FRANCES ADAMSON AC, Opening Address

"It is a great pleasure to be here at the Charles Sturt Memorial Museum, to officially open the new Visitor Centre.

This is the first time Rod and I have visited this historic site, and we are looking forward to getting to know the museum community here today.

Since its opening in 1967 by the Governor, Lieutenant General Sir Eric Bastyan, this museum has educated many thousands of visitors on the life and home of Captain Charles Sturt. It has captured the imagination of locals, interstate visitors and international travellers as they have contemplated the achievements of one of Australia's greatest explorers.

Sturt is remembered most notably as a founder of South Australia, the explorer who uncovered the secrets of the Murray Darling Basin, and the first European to almost reach the centre of Australia. Importantly, he was also a great lover of flora and fauna, a drawer and painter, and a writer of detailed journals, which show us his respect for Aboriginal people and interest in understanding their culture.

I note that the new exhibition, 'Antipodean Dreams', moves beyond a traditional depiction of Sturt as 'colonial explorer', challenging romantic notions regarding the history of exploration in Australia, and capturing the many dimensions of Sturt's life, achievements and character.

I thank all the Museum staff, and exhibition director Denise Schumann, for the dedicated work they have invested in bringing this exhibition together, and their commitment to excellence in museum practice.



Prof. Scott Smith, Trustee; Merle Weston, President; Tony Botten, Chair; Angela Evans, Mayor of City of Charles Sturt

Friends: undertaking a project like the creation of this new Visitor Centre, with the funding and logistics challenges involved, is no small feat for an organisation run entirely by volunteers. I congratulate the Trust's Board and members for bringing this project to fruition. It must be extremely satisfying to see your vision come to life!

I thank sincerely the supporters who donated generously to this project, foremost among them the late John Howland. I trust he is here in spirit with us today. I also thank President Merle Weston, the Copland Foundation and the History Trust of South Australia for their important financial contributions.

I am very grateful to the Trust's volunteers for their work on this project and the broader museum, particularly during the challenging times of the last few years. Volunteers have shown outstanding dedication to keep the museum running during the pandemic and the building works. From liaising with architects and builders, writing grant proposals, assisting with research for the exhibition, developing website content and countless other tasks – I thank you all for your hard work and enthusiasm.

Congratulations to the Charles Sturt Memorial Museum Trust on the completion of this major project. It is now my great pleasure to declare the Visitor Centre open!"

ANTIPODEAN DREAMS EXHIBITION

Denise Schumann OAM has worked with the Trust for twenty years developing our exhibitions, arranging conservation of artefacts and introducing lighting and soundscaping into The Grange homestead. In 2020 she proposed a new gallery exhibition that would shine a light on Sturt through a different lens – a story that is of an Englishman motivated by dreams and desires that emanated from another culture. His quest was to map and survey an ancient continent but in the process his beliefs, perceptions and understanding of country and self were challenged. *Antipodean Dreams* traces these profound events by providing insights into Charles Sturt's extraordinary life through a beautiful blend of storytelling, artwork, and archival treasures.

The development of the gallery space and exhibition would not have been possible without the funding of The Copland Foundation and the History Trust of SA.



Their support is immensely appreciated.

The Copland Foundation has recently provided additional funding of \$36,802 for new lighting in Galleries 2 and 4, and the purchase of a Mila Wall that will increase our display space and the design and development of a new exhibition "My Country" by Denise Schumann & Associates.

Annual General Meeting

Held on Sunday 30th October 2022, the Annual General Meeting for Trust members was held within the new Visitor Centre. The Financial Report was tabled and the Board Election returned all existing board members for another two years.

President:	Merle Weston
Vice President:	Graham Pike
Chair:	Tony Botten
Hon. Secretary:	Anne McCutcheon
Hon. Treasurer:	Margaret Phillips
Committee:	Paul Hilbig, Bill Parry, Sally Pentland, Scott Smith.

Chair's Report's in summary

Our major focus over the last 12 months has been the construction of the Visitor Centre. Its completion in late August brought to fruition a project which started in 2016 with the donation of \$200,000 by John Howland for the design and construction of a Visitor Centre. We should justifiably feel proud that we now sit within this wonderful new building. The total cost of construction was \$551,770 on completion. We owe a debt of gratitude to those who donated to the building fund to the amount of \$73,672 in particular our President, Merle Weston, Patron, Hon. Dean Brown, AO, Mary Starck, Anne McCutcheon, Scott & Lisa Smith, Heather Sturt-Haaga and Paul Galarneaux Haaga Jr, and the Lions Club of West Beach.

The Trust, particularly Anne McCutcheon and Margaret Phillips have worked hard to promote the museum especially during construction when the museum was closed. The Museum website www.charlessturtmuseum.com has been restructured for easier searching, more information added, and updates continue to be made. Updates have also been made to the Adelaide Beaches, City of Charles Sturt, History Trust Community and SA Tourism websites. Anne McCutcheon has been providing talks to various service groups to raise awareness of the museum as a tourist destination. Anne's engagement with these groups has not only resulted in their interest in visiting but also in donations to the Building Fund and Garden Project. Our Facebook page *Charles Sturt Museum*, is generating plenty of interest. Margaret Phillips regularly posts items of interest from the collection to support our mission to keep the history of Charles Sturt alive. Visitors to the Facebook site are being encouraged to visit the museum when opened. .

Our membership of the Museums and Collections Program with the History Trust of South Australia was renewed, after a significant amount of work by Margaret Phillips and Anne McCutcheon to detail all current aspects of the Trust's operations. It is an important membership as it gives the Trust credibility within the museum field, offers significant grants to interpretive

history and conserve the Collection. The History Trust of South Australia also provide advice on conservation, museum methods, workshops to assist with museum programs, a profile on their website, opportunity to attend history conferences and involvement in the History Festival.



We were saddened to report though, after the Annual General Meeting, that Paul Hilbig submitted his resignation from the Board due to family commitments. Paul has been on the Board since the 1990's not only devoting time to his Board duties but as a tour guide, lecturer, researcher, writer and drafter of building plans. Before retirement Paul was a lecturer at Gilles Plains TAFE College in architectural design and was introduced to the Sturt Trust through a design project for his students to design a new Discovery Centre. Once involved he was hooked and after some thirty years later he is still devoted to the Trust. In the last couple of years he had been preparing an extensive report for the Federal Government to have Depot Glen placed on the National Estate, even taking a 4WD trip to Corner Country to talk to stakeholders in the area. Not getting sufficient support for the project from all stakeholders, the application could not be lodged. It did leave Paul with an immense knowledge of Sturt's Central Expedition, a knowledge of the country Sturt traversed and a good network of friends in Corner Country.

Paul had always been a fine contributor to the Board particularly for his concise and analytical reports on a variety of projects that were tabled before the Board. His resignation has not dampened his enthusiasm for the Trust, still giving tours, lectures and giving a helping hand during working bees.

We welcomed David Posaner to the Board with his significant financial experience. He retired from the South Australian Government Financial Authority (SAFA) part of Treasury & Finance as Director of Corporate Governance and Planning. His ancestors were Pitcairn Islanders who settled on Norfolk Island in 1856 and were descendants of the HMS Bounty mutineers.



We start the year with a busy program. With funding from a Dept of Human Services Volunteers Grant we were able to purchase a Paykel & Fisher fridge and arrange for Artlab to conduct a Preventive Conservation Workshop for our volunteers to be held on February 13th.

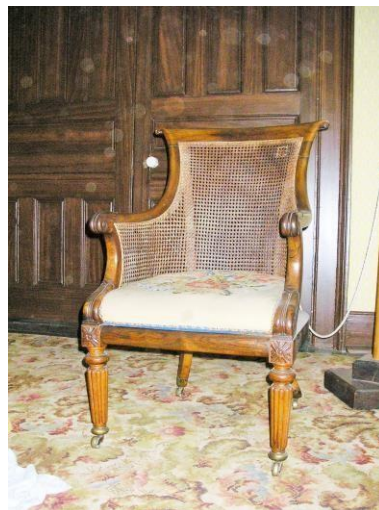
Denise Schumann has offered to run a tour guide workshop of the Gallery exhibition on the evening of 22nd February. Our participation in the May History Festival is planned and will feature an intimate evening with Denise Schumann introducing guests to *Antipodean Dreams – The Story of Charles Sturt's Journey into the Unknown*. Wine and canapes will be served after an evening tour of The Grange.

Bookings can be made from 1st April through Eventbrite for 6.30pm May 25th. Cost \$30.00 pp.

This year, we will return to The Grange for the celebration of Captain Charles Sturt's birthday anniversary. The program for the event has not been finalised but the expected start time will be Friday 28th April at 2.00pm for the official welcome and giving of the Sturt Address, followed by afternoon refreshments at 3.00pm. and concluding at 4.30pm. Invitations will be distributed in March but if you would like additional information please contact Margaret Phillips on markethistory@bigpond.com or mobile 0422 434 403.

With the Visitor Centre constructed, the Trust will now focus attention on the maintenance and conservation of The Grange and its historic collection. Our first step is to have the electrical wiring tested, assessed and costed for replacement including recommendations for replacement internal lighting. This will occur at the end of February.

Artlab have assessed a number of historic items from the Collection for conservation and restoration. These include two pole screens panels, padded woolwork bird embroideries and two embroidered cushions, embroidered by Lady Rosa Louisa Josefa Grey, (daughter of Charles Sturt's, brother Henry Evelyn Pitfield Sturt) in the 1850s and were a feature of Charles' furniture at his home in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. All have shown signs of fading and textile deterioration.



A cushion from a Rosewood drawing room armchair – one of two

Artlab have provided a quotation of \$4,175 for the conservation of the pole screen panels, while the cushions quotation amounted to \$3,075.

Another item, is the partial remains of a chandelier, that was described in 1852 as "a splendid chandelier". It held pride of place in dining room of The Grange, where it still hangs today. Purchased by the Dixie-Finey family, after Sturt's return to England, it was transferred to their new home where was a prized possession for over a century. Unfortunately, it fell from their ceiling in 1973 and they were unable to replace the bottom bowl. The upper section was donated to the Trust, in the hope of future restoration. The cost of restoration was always prohibitive.

Artlab have now provided a quotation of \$14,630 to repair the cracked glass, cut, re-pin all the crystals and reduce the tarnishing of the metal ornate band frame. However further research is required to recreate the ornate bottom section.



Original chandelier

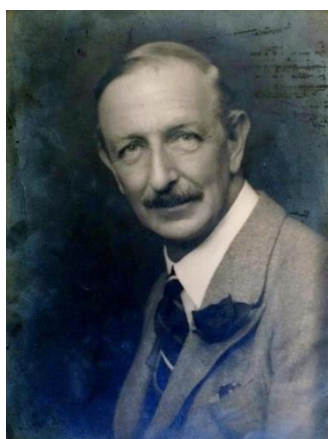
These are but a few pieces of the Sturt Collection that are in earnest need of conservation. To that end, we have established a Conservation Fund, for the exclusive purpose of funding conservation work. Donations to the Fund are tax deductible, or you may prefer to select an item from the Collection of particular interest for you, and to fund its restoration. Please contact Margaret Phillips our Hon. Treasurer/ Hon. Curator on markethistory@bipgond.com for details.

Frequently, our tour guides are asked whether any of the Sturt family remain in Australia, given Charles Sturt returned to England in 1853. The standard response would be the Sturt-Bray family who live in South Australia, the great great grand nieces and nephews of Charles Sturt. The family are descendants of Henry Richard Sturt, Commander RN, a brother of Capt Sturt. His three daughters migrated to Victoria in the 1890s.

Charlotte 'Theresa' Jane Sturt B1852 Wareham, Dorset, D1941 at Heidelberg, Melbourne. Victoria and buried Warringal Cemetery.

Augusta Harriet Annie Sturt B855 Wareham Dorset, D1938 Ivanhoe Victoria. Newspaper reports of her death in the Melbourne Age, reported her as cousin to Lord Allington and a kinswoman of Lord Napier of Muchison. Her social status not diminished by living in the outskirts of Melbourne. Both Augusta and Charlotte lived together at Brassey Avenue Rosanna, Melbourne.

Emily Selina "Adeline" Amelia Frederica Sturt Bray B1857 Dorset, D1939 Heidelberg Melbourne Vic. She arrived at the turn of the century following the death of her husband Major Norman Aiton Bray (pictured) 108th Inniskilling Fusiliers in 1891 at Endawgi, Myanmar.



Two of their daughters had died earlier, Muriel in Belfast Ireland in 1883 aged 3 years and Theresa in 1889 in Surrey, England aged 1 year. It would appear their son Norman Napier Evelyn Bray, remained in England where he joined the 18th Kings G. Own Lancers and served as a British officer in the Indian Army and was awarded an OBE, Military Cross for conspicuous gallantry in Bengal, India. He died in Paddington, London in 1962.

It was his son David Sturt-Bray however, who came to Australia in 1949 and raised his family in Adelaide, South Australia. Ten years later was instrumental in establishing The Charles Sturt Memorial Museum Trust to restore The Grange.

His sister Marian "Miriam" Adeline Bray came to Melbourne with her mother, Adeline, in the early 1900s and by 1905 Adeline was operating a dairy farm at Box Hill. By 1912 they were residents of Rosanna Road, Heidelberg. When Adeline died in 1939, Miriam went to live with her aunt Theresa. Miriam had established a horse riding school at the junction of Plenty and Rosanna Roads, Rosanna, but was sadly killed in 1947 in Fitzroy, when the horse she was riding was struck by a car. She was 63 years old.

Yet surprisingly there are many other Charles Sturt's relative's living in Australia.

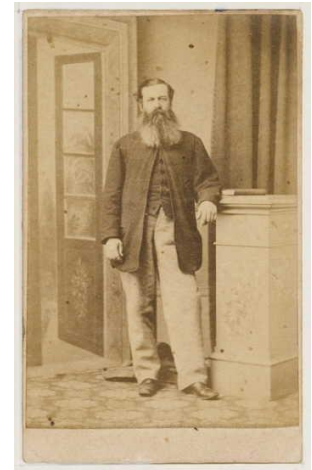
George William Milner Sturt, (son of the Rev. George William Milner Mourdant Sturt) Sturt's first cousin, migrated to New South Wales and married Anne Bolton at St Phillip's Church in Sydney N.S.W. on 27 February 1840. They settled on the Tumut Plains and raised a very large family. The late actor Rod Taylor was a descendant as is Trust Board Member Prof. Scott Smith.

George's sister Mary Sturt married Lt. George William Lydiard RN. Their three sons William Lydiard, Charles John Pitfield Lydiard and John Henry Stonhouse Lydiard migrated to Victoria in the 1850s and 1860s.

William B 10/6/1843 arrived as a First Class passenger on the *Albamba* in 1862 and was listed as a Clerk. He married Maria Alice Johnston in Sydney in 1868 D 20/7/1912 Parhran Victoria.

Charles John 'Jack' Pitfield Lydiard, opposite

(Police Superintendant) joined Victorian Police Force serving in Maitland Victoria before being appointed Supt of Police in Bathurst NSW. 1/7/1851-31/8/1860 and died in Bathurst in 1889. He was in charge of the first gold escort commencing from Ballarat on 23/9/1851. He was appointed Supt of Police in Bathurst where he served for 23 years. Lydiard Street Bathurst is named after him. On retirement he moved to Port Fairy in Victoria. He married Charlotte Louisa de Belin on 11/8/1857 in Melbourne and had 6 children. Charles George Sydney Lydiard was the only male offspring. A witness to the wedding was: Evelyn Pitfield Sturt, Charles Sturt's brother.



John Henry Stonhouse Lydiard, opposite (Sub Inspector) arrived in Victoria in 1852 and on 1/4/1852 joined the Victorian Police as a cadet when part of gold escort, stationed at Carlsruhe and Castlemaine. During the Eureka Stockade uprising, he was one of twelve troopers sent to Ballarat to quell the miners.

Later he became a well known pastoralist in the Riverina district as owner of Stations Moolpa and Coree. He married on 27/12/1851 to Louisa Hopetoun Mackinnon at St Pauls Church Swanston Street, Melbourne. John and Louisa left Melbourne in December 1858 for Scotland and England to see family and returned on 3/4/1863. John and Louisa both died in South Yarra, Victoria.

It was quite surprising that during the year, the Trust was contacted by Graham Sturt from Tumby Umbi, New South Wales requesting ancestral information on the Sturt family in Fiji. His family had always indicated a close relationship to Captain Charles Sturt so we have been assisting with his research to trace his ancestry ties.

Their family history began in William Thomas Sturt born 1842.

It begins with a story of two brothers William Thomas and Richard Sturt, the sons of William Sturt, a painter and decorator of Brighton Sussex. Born ten years apart, it was natural that the eldest William would be the first to leave home in 1864 to seek his fortune in the colonies of the Empire. William arrived in Fiji in 1869 after working the goldfields of New Zealand and Victoria Australia. He began immediately planting cotton at Tai Levu in partnership with W.H. Lee.

Why cotton? The American Civil War had reduced the supply of cotton to the international market so new suppliers were required. Thousands of European planters flocked to Fiji to establish

plantations but found the indigenous population not keen to work in the cotton fields. A new source of labour was sought primarily from the Melanesian Islands. So began the labour trade between the islands and the cotton plantations, much of it slave labour.

William's arrival in Fiji had closely followed the formation of The Polynesian Company Ltd., a Melbourne Association of 10,000 investors, which secured land rights to Suva in November 1868. The Company entitled shareholders to select land within the Suva area. – one selection with a sea frontage limited to 160 acres. The Suva Area was first occupied by settlers in 1870 who arrived in the steamer "Alhambra" to take up allotments of land.

After six months cotton planting and still in partnership with Mr Lee, William went to Levuka, and purchased the schooner "Argo" a labour vessel trading between Fiji and the New Hebrides, the Banks and other groups to source labour for his fields.

At the time, there was in a three way tussle with Britain, America and Australia for control of Fiji. The finance raised by the Polynesian Company was intended to pay a £9,000 debt owed by the Fijian President Cakobu's to the Americans. In the end Britain paid the debt and the Company collapsed. On 10 October 1874 the senior chiefs of Fiji signed a Deed of Cession, formerly founding the British Colony of Fiji.

By now, William was disillusioned by the ramifications of the labour trade so sought an opportunity to serve the growing European population. In 1872 he purchased the Levuka Hotel, said to be the "finest establishment of its kind in the Pacific" with over sixty rooms and a verandah of 4.2 metres surrounding the whole structure. Financial success was his, and at 31 years old he married Elizabeth Penman, daughter of a leading builder and contractor of Sydney and had six children.

With the transfer of the Capital from Levuka to Suva in 1882 William moved his investments to Suva and purchased the Suva Hotel which he rebuilt on a grand scale. Unfortunately the hotel was destroyed by fire in 1891 and rather than rebuild, he decided to build a new hotel called The Club Hotel in Victoria Place. Two years later he was issued yet another hotel licence in Suva.

In 1893 he decided to sell his interests in hotels and joined the trading firm of Messrs Henry Marks & Co. Within two years the partnership dissolved and William formed a new partnership Sturt, Ogilvie & Co. a hardware, grocery and general merchant business in Suva.

Two of his sons followed him into the merchandising. Sydney George, the eldest born 1875, was educated at Sydney Grammar School and returned to Suva, firstly to work in the services of Messrs. A.M. Brodziak & Co., training in several departments before moving to Henry Marks & Co. On the formation of Sturt, Ogilvie & Co. Sydney joined his father's enterprise.

Alfred Ernest born in 1879 in Levuka, had private tuition in Suva and also served an apprenticeship with Henry Marks & Co., later taking up a management position. He married his first wife Adelaide Wilson in 1908 in Fiji. She died young and only left one child. Ernest Harold Wilson Sturt, Graham's father. Alfred remarried Evangeline Mason in 1928 and the family lived at Darlinghurst, Sydney

N.S.W. until their death. Alfred's brother Frederick had also left Suva by then and died in 1953 in Mosman, N.S.W.

As to Richard Sturt, William Thomas Sturt's brother, now 36 years old, arrived in Sydney, New South Wales in September 1886. His wife Lydia and three children followed in May 1887. They moved to Fiji in 1888 where Montague Harold Sturt was born in 1889 but it would appear Suva did not hold much appeal for Richard and his family, so they returned to Sydney. Two more children were born - Cecil in 1892 and Constance in 1894 – in Petersham.

Richard continued to work as a painter, residing in Petersham until his death on 3rd April 1917 at 192 Denison Road, Petersham, Sydney N.S.W. Lydia passed away in 1940 followed by her children - Sydney in 1951, Montague in 1976 Cecil in 1970, Constance in 1976 and George in 1979.

Research is still being undertaken to establish if any links exist between the Sturt's of Fiji and Captain Charles Sturt. Confirmation will reveal the breadth of the Sturt family relationships across Australia and Fiji.



Vice-Regal tour of Antipodean Dreams exhibition by Denise Schumann OAM