

A Finale to Place Names

The One Duty We Owe to History is to Rewrite It

(Oscar Wilde – *Intentions* – 1891)

In my twilight years, aged 85, I applaud many people, some of whom are cited within this book and elsewhere; in total, these wonderful friends and acquaintances have contributed and encouraged me to pursue what, in September 2000, Yvonne Allan of North Brighton, in her most informative discourse on Kaurua life in the Holdfast Bay area to 1850, described as 'Footprints in the Sand'.

Further, in respect of my ancillary work on South Australian history, I have been more than encouraged by, for instance, a gracious invitation from the Rector of the Christ Church, North Adelaide, in April 1998, to attend:

The opening of the 150th Jubilee celebrations ... Our special guest on this day will be the Primate of England, the Most Reverend and Right Honourable, Dr David Hope ... The Governor will launch a Souvenir Booklet at the Reception.

This courtesy followed some 15 pages of little known facts surrounding both the Church and North Adelaide that I submitted for consideration – the published history contains an acknowledgement to my 'historical research and much useful text.' For example, on a humorous note:

The wily organ blower, Harry Lewis, lived at the upper end of Kermod Street ... Unfortunately for him, there was no known organ blower's union in existence; that later product of civilisation, known as labour strikes was unknown. Therefore, Harry was thrown upon his own resources and 'invented a strategy' which, when brought into action, bore a close family resemblance to that 'go slow' policy that has become so fashionable in more recent years.

[His campaign for redress] was scheduled to start at the 11 o'clock service ... and its effect was speedily evident, when the supply of wind began to fall. Then the organist, leaning away from the keyboard on the port hand, admonished the hand at the bellows – 'More wind, Harry' – 'What about more pay, Mister?' **Organist** (impatiently) – 'No time or place to be talking about salary rises. More wind, Harry. More wind.' **Harry**, (with decision) – 'If there ain't more pay, there ain't going to be any more wind.' **Organist** (in desperation) – 'All right. All right, you'll get it, but more wind for goodness sake.'

By this time there was little wind left in the instrument but, as Harry swung heavily on the bellows, there pealed forth a triumphant note of victory. Harry had won. Meanwhile his congregation wondered.

Such is the stuff of history - Many more anecdotes, of a similar ilk, from correspondents over the years, aided and abetted by inherent dicta, are to be found in Personal Record Group 412 in the State Library.

One that comes to mind is as follows:

Many years ago I received a communication from a French quasi-public servant who was about to depart for Australia with a view to presenting a report on Australian place names that smacked of a Francophile origin. He waxed and waned on the exploits of Baudin and the interposition of Freycinet (*see Appendix 7*), together with the ignominy of World War I that saw the extinguishment of German place names from the face of South Australia with a consequential intrusion of names associated with the carnage of World War I (*see Appendix 43*).

However, he expressed a certain perplexity as to why an insignificant railway siding between Port Augusta and Kalgoorlie, Western Australia, was dubbed with the cognomen of 'Lyons', a prominent city in France. He appeared quite unabashed when I advised that the name commemorates Joseph Aloysius Lyons, a former Prime Minister of Australia! As a matter of historical interest, following his death, his wife, Dame Enid Lyons, engaged in a public career and became the first woman to hold ministerial office in Australia.

Finally, I advise that I designed and created the layout of this book, thereby resurrecting a skill taught me by my dear departed friend, Peter Cotton, late of the defunct Gillingham Printers and, in so doing, I revere his memory and the many courtesies extended to me over three decades.

Indeed, the fruits of my initial research into place names would not have seen the light of day without both his professional advice and company's financial support.

Accordingly, I pay homage to him within a few lines attributed to George Eliot:

Oh, the comfort – the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person, having neither to weigh thoughts, nor measure words, but pouring them all out, just as they are chaff and grain together; knowing that a faithful hand will take and sift them – keep what is worth keeping – and with the breath of kindness blow the rest away.

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