

## HISTORY WALKS PROGRAM—MAY 2016



History SA arranges a History Festival each year during May, and as this year is the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the formation of Belair National Park, the Friends will be taking part in the Festival with three walks to showcase the history of the Park. Belair National Park became South Australia's first national park (and Australia's second) when it was gazetted on the 19<sup>th</sup> December 1891. This is why we celebrate our birthday tea on 19<sup>th</sup> December each year.

However, the Park as we know it had a much earlier history through the setting up of the Government Farm at Belair in the early 1840s. The Farm included the Park area as we now know it and five sections on the western side in what is now Glenalta and Belair. These five sections were removed from the Farm in 1844. In 1848 a small cottage was erected as a residence for the Keeper of the Farm and in 1858 it was decided to build a "cottage residence for the Governor", with the Keeper's cottage allocated as quarters for the Governor's servants.

The construction of the hills railway in the early 1880s provided the potential to provide transport to the hills for many holiday-makers from the city. In 1881 there was a proposal by the Government to sell the Farm in small allotments which aroused a strong protest in the public press. Local resident, Walter Gooch, was especially active in condemning the proposal, and he was supported by the Australian Natives Association and the Field Naturalists' section of the Royal Society of South Australia. A memorial, bearing the signatures of many influential men in the colony, was presented to the Commissioner of Crown Lands in 1882, protesting against the disposal of the farm. Purposes for the retention of the land included a water reserve, an experimental farm, a zoological garden, a forest reserve, an acclimatisation station for trees, a national recreation ground and even a cemetery. The Government Nursery, now State Flora, was set up in its current location in 1886 and plantations of Sugar gum and *Pinus radiata* were planted near the Belair Railway Station. A maze was planted nearby.

*Ron & Pam Tamblyn*

### The walks will be:

Sunday May 15: The Heart of the Park:  
Meet at the Old Government House car park

Sunday May 22: **The** Northern Precinct:  
Meet on the southern platform Belair Railway Station

Sunday May 29: The Main Oval Precinct  
- Meet Main Oval Pavilion, Belair National Park

Walks are from 1.30-3pm - gold coin donation.

Tina Gallasch, (0417 870 596 or [friendsofbelairpark@msn.com](mailto:friendsofbelairpark@msn.com)) is managing bookings for our walks from early April for these walks. Bookings are essential.

More information on these and other History Festival events will be in the printed program available at local libraries, the History Festival website ([historyfestival.sa.gov.au](http://historyfestival.sa.gov.au)) or the History Festival app from April.

