



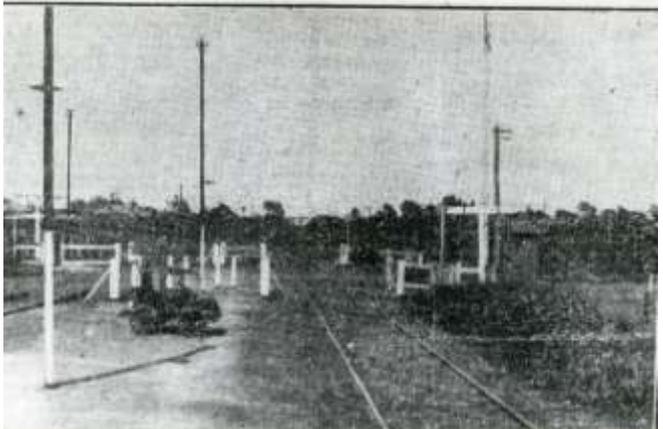
# The West Torrens Historian

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## TRAGEDY AND TRIUMPH ON THE GLENELG LINE

The North Terrace Adelaide to Glenelg railway line (now the Westside Bikeway) saw numerous accidents, some fatal, others very close to disaster and some miraculously avoided. Several of these occurred within West Torrens and have recently been brought to light through access to the 'Trove' newspaper resources. One incident of 1927 which was a close call, was recorded in 'The West Torrens Historian' of December 2010 (page 1). Prior to this, on Thursday 11 January 1912, 2 horses of Reid's horse bus were killed when they collided with the Glenelg train at this same

location on Hilton Rd (now Sir Donald Bradman Drive) - known then as Bagshaw's Crossing. There was no bell or person to give a warning at this spot which had a high fence obscuring the vision of oncoming traffic. A little further down the line at the South Rd crossing a fatality occurred on Wednesday 25 June 1924 when Mr Isaac Kennett of Mile End stepped from the footpath into the path of the train from Glenelg. The man was 'carried across the cattle pits and deposited in some water'. Possibly the best remembered accident was at the Richmond railway station crossing on



*Richmond station level crossing—scene of tragedy 1924.*

Nottingham Ave (now Richmond Rd). 'On the morning of Monday 1 September 1924 passengers for the city by the 8a.m. train from Glenelg - had their attention directed, on arrival at Richmond - to a schoolgirl who was standing near the level crossing and crying with agony. "That is my mother." She had just seen her mother, Mrs Marr, struck by the engine and knocked down under the wheels. The 13 year old Thelma Marr was on her way to Adelaide High School and had gone



*The Marr family showing Mrs Marr with her husband and nine children.*

ahead of her mother to buy the tickets from the station master Mr Tuckwell. He had warned Mrs Marr who was seen running to catch the approaching train but apparently she did not hear him. The engine driver Mr J T Spry saw the woman at the crossing and sounded the train whistle loudly, but could not stop the train in time. He later suffered a nervous breakdown and sadly died within a month of the tragedy.

At 7 pm on Monday 25 January 1904 James Henry Tilbrook – a man of ‘good sight and hearing, sober and careful’ was driving his hooded buggy over the crossing by the Plympton railway station when he apparently noticed the train coming and let the reins down on the horse’s back as if urging the animal on. The engine driver noticed the buggy, blew the whistle and applied the Westinghouse brake. The side of the engine struck the horse and fore-carriage of the buggy and the engine wheels skidded owing to the ‘greasy horseflesh being on the line’. Because the line at this time was single track and no turntable was available at Glenelg, locomotives had to travel ‘bunker first’ in one direction which impaired visibility from the cabin and there was not the protection of a cow-catcher at that end. The Coroner reported that ‘it was a frequent occurrence for people to cross over in front of the train at the crossing – particularly cyclists – and when they escaped by a hair’s breath they would put their fingers to their noses in defiance.’



*Train running bunker first at Kurralta Park.*

A much happier story occurred near the Plympton railway station in June 1924, when an aged Mrs Mary White of Mooringe Ave was gallantly rescued by John Alfred

O’Donohoe, a junior porter at the station. He was cleaning lamps in the station office when he heard the engine of the train from Glenelg whistle several times. He rushed to the door and saw the elderly woman about to cross the up line. With great presence of mind and at much personal risk he ran towards her and endeavoured to turn her off the line. She resisted and said something about getting a ticket! O’Donohoe took the woman in his arms and lifted her across the line just in front of the train. For his heroic actions he was awarded the Humane Society Bronze Medal for his bravery. Earlier, in 1909 Warden F W Vasey of the Marine Board had an unpleasant experience at the Plympton station when seeing some friends off. While standing in the station yard he was knocked down by the engine as the train slowed up in front of the platform. Fortunately he fell clear of the line and escaped with a broken arm and bruises. He admitted that he “saw the train coming, but thinking that it intended to swerve off on to a different set of rails, he maintained his stand on the line.” He had a narrow escape. 1 month later in the same year a major accident occurred at Plympton on



*All that remains of the Plympton station platform.*

3 July when a passenger train from North Terrace had stopped to take on fuel at the coaling depot. A special goods train following on the same line approached but owing to the dense fog the passenger train was not noticed until it was quite close. The driver of the passenger train who had seen the goods engine approaching attempted to move on but it had just begun to gain momentum when the goods train hit its back carriage causing injuries to several passengers and great damage to the carriage. Several passengers had jumped clear before the impact. A little further down the line at the Camden station on Sunday 16 November 1924 two lads travelling on the train from Glenelg were ‘struck by the platform’. They had evidently been riding on the foot board of one of the carriages resulting in one boy losing his legs and the other gaining compound fractures of the right leg. These are but a few of the tragedies and triumphs along this line which, in its 49 years, certainly had its fair share of accidents.

## A SLICE OF HISTORY - GOLF COURSES IN WEST TORRENS

West Torrens is home to four 18-hole golf courses. The western part of the district was considered especially suitable as a site for golf courses because the land was undulating, sandy (and therefore quick to absorb water), had adequate native vegetation and was relatively cheap. Several other golf courses have been created in the western suburbs and for the same reasons. The Kooyonga golf course at Lockleys was laid out in 1923-24, and officially opened in June 1924. The syndicate setting up the course, headed by H.L. ('Cargie') Rymill, bought 90 acres (c.36 hectares) from the estate of farmer Caleb May (c1843-1921), plus 40 acres (c.16 hectares) previously belonging to John White Mellor (1868-1931). The Glenelg golf course opened in May 1927. The course took up 174 acres (c.69.6 hectares) of sections 170 and 186-187, Hundred of Adelaide, that had once belonged to West Torrens land Leviathan W.H. Gray (1808-1896). The Westward Ho golf club at West Beach was created in 1957. The club is now based in the Adelaide Shores recreation complex which boasts two 18-hole golf courses.



*Kooyonga club house 1924.*



*Westward Ho golf course.*

The presence of golf courses in West Torrens has influenced the naming of the district's streets. For example, when a private subdivision was developed immediately west of the Glenelg Golf Club in October 1952 two of its streets had golfing connections: Fairway Avenue and McLachlan Avenue. The latter was named for Jimmy McLachlan, who was in 1928-36 the first club professional at the Glenelg Golf Club. McLachlan was a Scotsman who was formerly club professional at Turnberry, Scotland. His starting salary when appointed to Glenelg was £2 10s per week. (later reduced in the Depression to £1 per week). According to the historian of the Glenelg Golf Club McLachlan was 'popular ... courteous, with a pleasing personality and a good teacher of the science of golf'. As well as teaching at Glenelg, McLachlan occasionally competed in professional golf tournaments. When the club fell upon hard financial times in the mid-1930s McLachlan, with the help of golfing enthusiast Lord Gowrie, the then Governor-General of Australia – and a former Governor of South Australia – was appointed professional at the La Perouse club in Sydney. McLachlan died in a Borneo prisoner of war camp in the second world war. The Jimmy McLachlan Memorial Trophy, a much-prized award at the Glenelg Golf Club, was established in 1948. When in September 1961 the Glenelg Golf Club developed a 12-allotment subdivision on its eastern boundary they named the centrepiece street Nagle Crescent in honour of Australian golfing great Kel Nagle. Novar Gardens adjoins the Glenelg golf course on its southern side. When the South Australian Housing Trust created a substantial private estate there in February 1966 five of its streets were named for prominent British golf courses – Hoylake Street, Muirfield Street, St. Andrews Crescent, Sunningdale Avenue and Troon Street. When the Housing Trust developed a second estate at Novar Gardens in the early 1980s it followed the trend by naming the estate's streets after well-known golfers: Devlin Road (Bruce Devlin), Graham Crescent (David Graham), Irwin Court (Hale Irwin), Jacklin Road (Tony Jacklin), Marsh Court (Graham Marsh), Miller Court (Johnny Miller), and Thomson Court (Peter Thomson). There is also a Links Road in the area.



*Glenelg golf course 1934.*

## A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT.

What a wonderful response to our exhibition 'From Corner Store to Corporation' which was on display in the Hamra Library Auditorium for the month of May. Pleasing numbers of viewers passed through the area and many commented favourably to library staff and Historical Society members. Several phone calls with requests for copies of photos and questions about them, helped to make the work in setting up the display very rewarding. A big thankyou to all those who assisted in arranging the photos, mounting them on display backing and arranging and dismantling them in the auditorium. As a result of the article in 'Talking Points' asking for photos we gained extra material for our files. One in particular brought to light a familiar business which operated for many years in Torrensville by the Hender family, jewellers. We have already been asked to present another display in 2014 and are open to suggestions! The big task of collating the extra photographs from the exhibition will now be undertaken by our volunteers. A further response came from the Camden Park area



*L Hender's shop Henley Beach Rd (South side) - later moved to the Town Hall building on the opposite side of the road.*

where photos were provided of properties which have since been demolished (see below), along with photos of the sites as they are today.

**John Andrewartha.**



*Shops on the corner of Patricia Ave & Clifton St.*



*Carlisle St horse stables.*

## THE DISAPPEARING SAND-HILLS OF WEST TORRENS.

Perched on a white sandy seaside rise near West Beach, James Ashton sketched the scene looking east across the Reedbeds area c 1899. Rows of firstly white, then further inland turning to red lines of sand dunes covered with low growing shrubs and hardy grasses stretched away amongst the swamps towards the settlement of Adelaide situated on the higher ridge which Colonel Light selected as 'the place for a city'. As late as the 1950s the fine red sand hill areas extended from just south of Semaphore to near the Anzac Highway at Plympton.



*'Where reeds and rushes grow' - James Ashton.*

They were a few hundred metres inland from the white sea sand hills of West Lakes in the north to about 3kms inland in the south at Netley. In the early 1950s efficient earth moving machinery and loaders became available and over a period of about ten years most of the red sand areas were levelled. It was used mainly for breaking down Adelaide's heavy clay soils, and for filling low lying areas in preparation for house building. In a few places, especially on Tapleys Hill Rd and along Henley Beach Rd, the original sand hills can still be seen where houses were built up on top of them to avoid the frequent flooding of the River Torrens.



*Plympton sandhills 1937.*

Kooyonga Golf Course has retained much of the old sand-hills making for an interesting and sometimes challenging environment. The many sand-hills of the Adelaide airport were levelled to fill the lower swampy areas. Charlick's dairy was on the airport property and Mr Charlick would not accept the authorities' payment for his land. The case went on for several years, until eventually he accepted equal acreage in the sand-hill land on the south side of Bonython Ave, and west of Morphett Rd down towards Lightburn's factory. It was an extension of the Glenelg Golf Course sand-hills. His son Glen, who lived on Morphett Rd opposite Bonython Ave saw an opportunity to go into

business on his own and bought a track loader and trucks which he used to load sand out of his father's property for years. Glen built the large house that is on the north east corner of Bonython Ave and Nagle Crt. There were large sand-hills off Morphett Rd south of the airport in the West Torrens Council dump area extending south as far as Mooringe Ave. Instead of buying loads of sand the two Carlier brothers (who lived in Wood St) and Ken Sutter loaded their trucks by shovel for years in the dump area. Just behind this site was Wadewitz's plant nursery where Campbell's Cash and Carry is today. Off Marion Rd in Harvey Ave Netley, just west of Beare Ave, was a twenty foot high sand-hill where Frank Thompson started loading and carting sand.



*Levelling the sandhills at West Beach in 1926.*

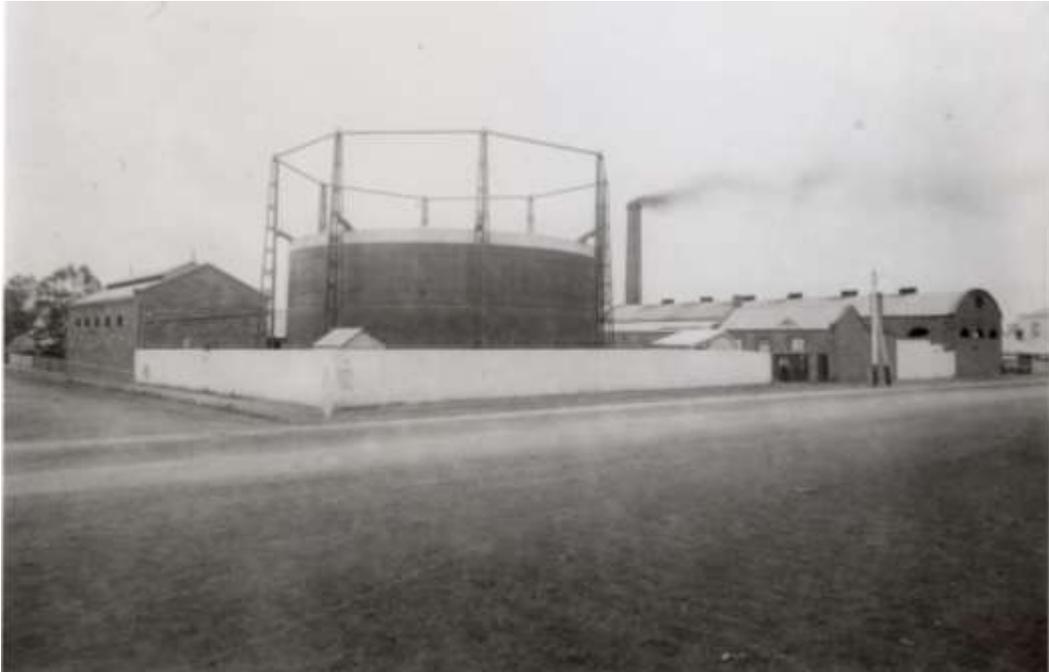
After clearing the roadway the sand-hills south of the road became available. These extended right down to Streeters Rd Netley was a big area of sand-hills. The land where the Plympton coursing and later polo grounds and where the hunt club with their red jackets, horses and hounds chased the foxes was all levelled and became the Birkalla sports ground and later the Plympton High School (now William Light R-12 School). Yes, the sand-hills of West Torrens are nearly all but a memory.

**Ken Sutter.**

# From Our



*Substitute 'tram' used on Henley Beach Rd. Underdale during floods of 1923.*



*Thebarton gasworks Port Rd established 1872 (now 23 James Congdon Drive - the site of Ice Arena).*

# Photo Album



## **Torrensville United Football Club — premiers 1947 West Torrens District Football Association (Gold Division).**

Back Row: P Minear, W Butterfield, B McKay, A Turner, V Henshaw, R Hammond, A Pelgrave, J Pelgrave, K Atwood.  
2<sup>nd</sup>. Row: T Adams, L Brown, A G Barnes, F Graham, A Guest, G Graham, W Minear, E Chapman, R Frost.  
(Coach) (Secretary) (Vice-president) (Captain) (President) (Vice-captain) (Vice-president)  
3<sup>rd</sup>. Row: I Lynagh (Timekeeper), P Grady, A L Barnes, K Riches, B Graham, T Ryan, M Ryan.  
In Front: V Robinson (Boundary umpire), J Foody, B Jones, M Evans, D Whenan, K Barnes, B Lampshire (Goal umpire).  
Inserts: R Minear (Assistant Secretary) D McQualter (Vice-president).



South Adelaide  
Christadelphian Family  
Home.  
Alice St & Elizabeth Ave  
Plympton.  
Formerly South Plympton  
Baptist Church  
established  
15 December 1928.

# Flashbacks

Extracts from the  
files of the  
West Torrens Historical  
Society

## THE THREE MERGING BOWLING CLUBS.

H H Norman, R C Fielder and A Ferris-Scott decided in 1934 to inaugurate the formation of a bowling club on Holbrooks Rd at Underdale on land adjacent to the Norman's winery and vinyards. Two rinks were laid down on the property of Messrs. A Norman & Sons, and an old house formerly occupied by H H Norman was used as a clubhouse. The first meeting of the club was held at H H ('Top') Norman's house on 9 January 1935 when a committee was appointed and an annual subscription was fixed at £1/1/-. Electric lights were installed in 1936. By 1938 the club had purchased land from Mr A E Norman allowing it to increase the number of rinks to 12. The Underdale Women's Bowling Club was established in July 1937. In 1996/97 the Thebarton Bowling Club which was struggling for membership joined with the Underdale club after vacating their property on South Rd. A third club was to amalgamate with Underdale in 2007. Formed in 1960 as The Civil Aviation Institute Bowling Club with greens on the Adelaide Airport property, its name was changed to Adelaide Airport Bowling Club in 1985. With development at the airport the lease of the club was not renewed and a new venue was sought at West Beach. This did not eventuate so the Underdale facilities were used and then a formal amalgamation was established on 15 May 2011, which has resulted in the name change to The Underdale Airport Bowling Club. The colours of the club are maroon (for Underdale), gold (for Thebarton) and blue (for Adelaide Airport) and the club's motif is the Jets.



*The Underdale Bowling Club, Holbrooks Rd in the 1980s.*

## FIGHTING AT FULHAM.

Normally a quiet backwater, the area known as The Reedbeds, through which passed the road to Henley Beach, was on more than one occasion the scene of illegal prize-fighting. On 10 January 1882 one Maurice Ewens and two accomplices, Baxter and Charles saw cause to confront another pugilist named Thompson who had been antagonising them. The newspaper of the day described Thompson as 'a sort of professional boxer and a known bully who had insulted different people'. Ewens remonstrated with him and a fight took place with some injuries to both parties. Ewens later challenged Thompson to a prize fight and a combat ensued. Ewens was 'knocked insensible but his antagonist, who was extremely violent and vindictive, administered further punishment. Upon Ewens being sufficiently recovered the tables were turned and Thompson received blows and sustained falls which disabled him, acknowledged himself beaten, was carried home, sponged, put to bed ....

and was found dead in the morning'. The remarkable illustration which appeared in Frearson's Weekly, graphically depicts two policemen, with one restraining the other from making an arrest, commenting 'It's prime fun, let 'em have another round then we'll knab 'em!'



### **CENTENARY OF FORMER CHURCH BUILDING AT BROOKLYN PARK.**

The foundation stone of the Brooklyn Park Methodist Church was dutifully laid with flags flying and all attending in their 'Sunday best' on 27 September 1913. This was the culmination of much volunteer hard work over a period of months in placing the cement foundations and erecting the brick walls of the Methodist Church building at No 5 May Tce. The Church, which had been designed by Rev T Geddes White (at that time minister at Fulham), had been erected in response to the need for a more central place of worship, as the suburb of Lockleys, at the end of the third section of the tramway from the city had begun to develop. Many of the local residents had been attending the chapel at Fulham on the corner of Tapleys Hill Rd and Henley Beach Rd and, as the nearest church to the east was at Torrensville, it was considered important to have a more readily accessible building particularly as the area between May Tce and Tapleys Hill Rd was regularly flooded by waters from the River Torrens. The property is now the home of 'Trees for Life (SA)'. A celebration will be held on Sunday September 15th 2013 in the Adelaide West Uniting Church, Sir Donald Bradman Drive, Brooklyn Park commencing at 2.00pm to celebrate the building's centenary.

*Mrs T Geddes White laying the foundation stone 1913.*

# NOTABLE HOMES OF WEST TORRENS

## ASHFORD HOUSE at ASHFORD.

Ashford House on Anzac Highway (formerly the Bay Road) was originally the home of Dr Charles George Everard, who was born in Gloucester, England on 29 August 1794. Dr Everard arrived at Kangaroo Island on the "Africaine" on 3 November 1836 and, four days later, sailed for the mainland, where he pitched a tent at Holdfast Bay on 9th November. Some years later, Dr Everard was elected to the Legislative Council at the first election held under "Responsible Government" and, at that time, was the only member to serve his full 12 year term. Ashford House, his first home, was built in 1838. A pisè construction, the house had walls made of a composition of good loam mixed with finely chopped grass. The lightly dampened mixture was rammed into a wooden frame about six feet long and three feet high (the walls could be any width). The frames were progressively moved and raised, as the walls of the building rose. Dr Everard lived on this estate until his death on 30 March 1876. The good



1853 sketch by William Leigh of Ashford property.

Doctor's property was set on Country Sections 43, 44 and 52, and by 1840, he had 30 acres of land enclosed with half under crop. A second dwelling, this time a brick structure, was built as were a stable, stockyard and sheep pens. It is reported that by 1840 'Ashford' boasted the best orchard in the colony containing pomegranate and mulberry trees that Dr Everard introduced into South Australia. He also grew apples, cherries, plums, almonds, peaches and watermelons. Aided by the good soils and irrigation from the nearby Brownhill Creek, most of the trees prospered. Dr Everard built a stone bridge over the Brownhill Creek adjacent to his property making the Bay Road much safer in winter. After the doctor's death the house was occupied by his son William, who later became Minister for Education in South Australia. William gave a contract to Mr Farr, who had done a fine job on the intricate stone work on the Adelaide Town Hall, to extend the house by building two rooms and a hall which were opened on New Year's Day 1882. Ashford House today displays its original gates with the carved stone supports and is still a fine building which in more recent times became the home of the Ashford Special School.



Ashford House 1910.



The beautiful gates fronting Anzac Highway.

Many reminders of the Everards survive today, from the name of the modern suburb of Ashford to road names such as Everard Avenue.



## COMING EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

### WEST TORRENS HISTORICAL SOCIETY MONTHLY MEETINGS at “Kandahar” Commencing at 7:45pm

Monday August 26th: **Special Meeting.** Guest speaker Brett Charlesworth from Charlesworth Nuts - from small beginnings in the Central Market to the large family business today. *Please bring supper.*

Monday September 23rd: **General Meeting.** Highlighting the suburb of Torrensville and incorporating the former suburb of New Mile End.

Monday October 28th: **General Meeting.** A time to bring reports etc. Programme planning for 2014.

Monday November 25th: **Christmas Meeting.** “The Centenary of the Brooklyn Park Methodist/Uniting Church 1913-2013. **John Andrewartha & Rob Goldsmith will present an audio visual.** *Please bring supper.*

*Please note: No meeting in December.*

## Website access to Local History through the West Torrens Library.

The West Torrens Historical Society web-site is [users.chariot.net.au/~wths/](http://users.chariot.net.au/~wths/)

THE West Torrens Historical Society is currently digitalising all its files in partnership with the West Torrens Hamra Centre Library. This is an ongoing project. Hundreds of WTHS files – photographs, images, documents, transcribed interviews and newspaper articles are already accessible via the Hamra Centre Library’s website.

To help you access these files, follow these instructions:

Go to the City of West Torrens website <http://www.wtcc.sa.gov.au>

At the top of the Home Page click on “Library” and then in the drop-down box “Library Web Catalogue”.

This will open the Home Page of the West Torrens Library Service.

At the top of this page click on “Collections”.

This will take you to a search page; click on “Local History”.

This will open the search page for Local History; follow the search instructions.

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### SUBMISSIONS TO NEWSLETTER

Submissions to the newsletter are welcome but their publication is at the discretion of the Newsletter Committee and can be given to Members or sent to PO Box 43 Marlestone SA 5033.

Friends of the  
West Torrens Historical Society Inc.  
**Application for Membership**

Please post to:

The Secretary  
West Torrens Historical Society Inc.  
PO Box 43  
Marleston SA 5033



MEMBERSHIP FEE: \$20

I/we wish to become a (member/renew membership) of the Friends of the West Torrens Historical Society Inc. I enclose my membership for 2013.

Name(s):.....

Address:.....

..... Postcode:.....

Contact Details: My own interests are:.....

Phone:..... Signature(s):.....

Mobile:.....

Email:.....

***Please make cheques payable to "West Torrens Historical Society Inc."***

*Membership is renewable in March each year.*

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*Correct as at August 2013*

**BOOKS NOW AVAILABLE:** Gateway City \$5; West Torrens Suburb Names \$5;  
A Pictorial History of West Torrens \$10. (postage extra)

**While limited stocks last!**

