

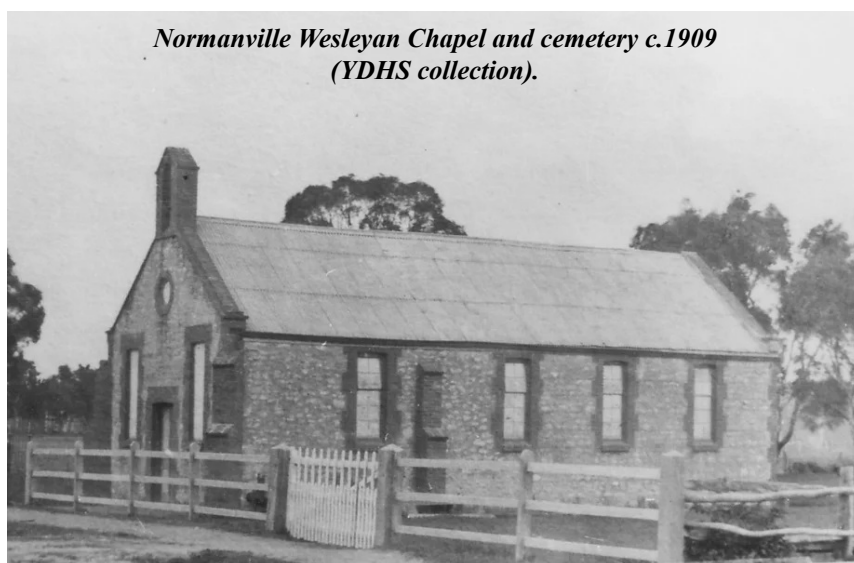
Brig 'Rapid'

Normanville Wesleyan Chapel and cemetery ... to RSL Hall

Like many early churches and chapels in the district, Normanville Wesleyan Chapel was sold when its parishioner numbers dwindled. The building subsequently became home to the Yankalilla Sub-branch Returned and Services League of Australia (RSL) for more than 70 years.

Section 1037, Hundred of Yankalilla, was originally granted to Nelson Leak on 28 July 1851. Nelson Leak (c.1811-1869) had arrived in South Australia from Lincolnshire, England, aboard the *Ramillies*, in 1853, with his wife Elizabeth (nee Parkinson) and four children.

Early in 1854, he sold part of section 1037 to the Wesleyan church for £10, and the foundation stone for a chapel was laid on 2 March. By November the same year, Nelson Leak, a stonemason, had completed building the chapel. It measured 30 feet by 18 feet and, together with furniture, cost about £310. The original trustees were Robert Kelly, Enoch Tonkin, Nelson Leak, George Sara, Charles Tonkin, Joseph Hill,



*Normanville Wesleyan Chapel and cemetery c.1909
(YDHS collection).*

James Tonkin, Robert Wenham, and Bennett John James. Robert Kelly preached the first sermon in this chapel. About 1861 the manse was added, prior to which the ministers were unmarried. The old manse on Main South Road is now a private home.

Over the years, morning and evening services were held, with occasional afternoon services. Tea meetings at church anniversaries were a feature of the church life, and often there were four speakers for the evening meeting. The church was later lengthened and the whole building cost £700. The debt was finally paid in 1882.

Services in the chapel ceased in July 1945, recommenced in November 1947, and finally concluded in October 1949, when Rev. LF Ashman conducted the final service. In 1952, the Wesleyan Chapel was sold to the Yankalilla Branch of the RSL for £900; and the church furniture was loaned to the Willow Creek Church.

The first recorded burial in the cemetery (Normanville and Wesleyan Cemetery c.1856-1900) at the rear of the

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chapel is that of Nelson Leak's wife Elizabeth, who died in July 1856. Nelson Leak is also believed to be buried there but no headstone defines a site for him. This cemetery is the earliest in the townships of Yankalilla and Normanville, and one of the earliest in the Yankalilla district.

In response to concerns about the location of the burial ground in close proximity to the River Bungala, the *Regulation of Cemeteries Act* was passed in 1862.

There are a number of unmarked graves in the cemetery, many of which belonged to children. The Berrill triplets are most likely buried there. Thomas Berrill was one of the first two police troopers stationed at Normanville in 1856. His wife Bridget gave birth to triplets in 1857, but two were stillborn and the third died three days later. Other children are two grandchildren of Charles Hewett, Alfred and Louisa, aged under three years, one of whom died of diphtheria in 1868; the other had died in 1862.

Other significant interments include Mary Ann Roads and her son Isaac (aged 4), George Fergusson, son of Gorge Mill owner William Fergusson, who died tragically in an accident at the mill in 1858, aged under two years.

Among others buried in this cemetery are Nelson Leak's brother William, a tailor, who died in 1858; Ann Mills, wife of George John Mills who, from 1857 to 1867, owned the land on Hay Flat Road which was later owned by Robert MacIndoe Robertson and



Yankalilla RSL Hall (YDHS collection).

given the name Appakaldree. Also interred there were Elizabeth Thomas (nee Sampson), Mary Archer Dodd, John Dodd's second wife who came out from England with him and eight children; and John Butterworth, who died aged 17 of a diabetic coma, the third son of miller John Butterworth and Isabella.

The last known burial in the cemetery is that of Caroline Thurston, who died on 29 January 1893, aged 85 years.

Normanville Wesleyan Cemetery, 18 Main South Road, Normanville, was designated a State Heritage Place (No. 26433) on 22 April 2015, of archaeological significance associated with the early development of the district of Normanville and Yankalilla and reflects its development as a wheat growing and milling district close to the port of Normanville.

However today, like many RSL associations,

memberships have declined and, the Yankalilla Sub-branch at its AGM in February 2025, made the reluctant decision to close. Apart from holding its own meetings, the Yankalilla RSL Hall is also available for community hire, and many groups take advantage of this. Fortunately, the Yankalilla and Normanville Progress Association has offered to assist the Yankalilla RSL committee where possible.

The Yankalilla Lions' Club has taken on the task of periodically maintaining the grounds of the cemetery. ■

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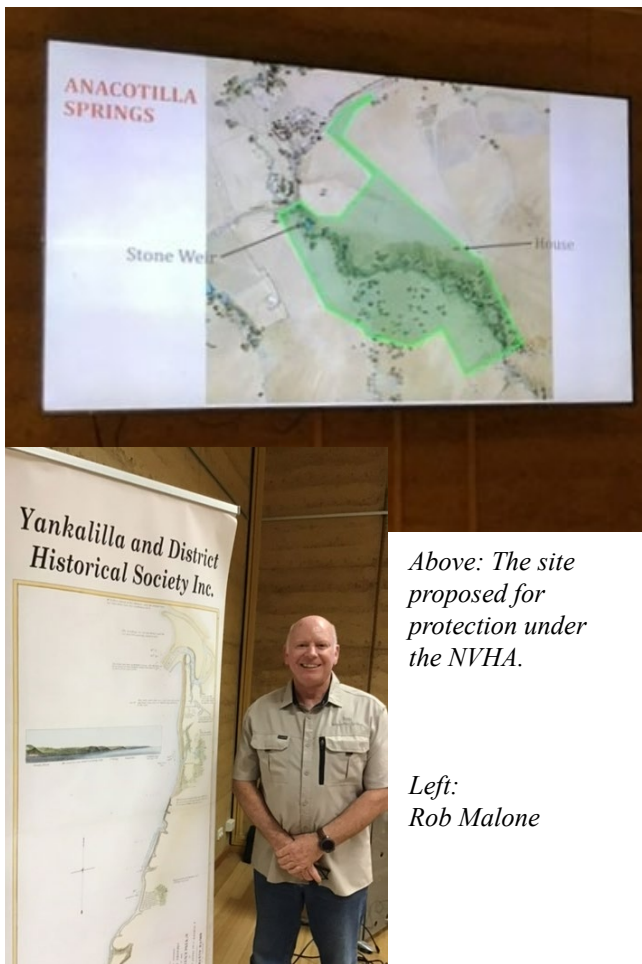


Painting of Trooper; Allan Stuart McArthur, 1st Light Horse Regiment 'C' Squadron of Second Valley, via Yankalilla. KIA 18 May 1915, Monash Valley, Gallipoli Peninsula, aged 23.



Honour Roll hanging in the RSL Hall 'Men who answered the Empire's call from Normanville Church'.

Native Vegetation Heritage Agreement (NVHA) sought for Anacotilla Gorge



Above: The site proposed for protection under the NVHA.

Left: Rob Malone

Local property owners Rob Malone and Pamela Wright have applied under the NVHA for an Incentives Grant to ensure the ongoing rejuvenation and protection of Anacotilla Gorge, home to 300 to 400-year-old red gum trees near Anacotilla Weir.

The site is proposed for Local Heritage listing under the District Council of Yankalilla's Heritage Code Amendment.

Rob explained that the grant scheme, administered by the Native Vegetation Council of the SA Department for Environment and Water, has been in operation since 1980 to maintain ecosystems by attracting biodiversity and building resilience to climate change. The Agreement is attached to the land itself in perpetuity. Owners are required to co-contribute to grants with money/hours worked, such as providing community activities like talks and walks to interested groups, for example Birds SA. The land is valued differently which means there are rate deductions, and also specific requirements such as no horse trails, but walking trails and eco-tourism are permitted.

The proposed Anacotilla Gorge area is about 28 hectares of the total property of 53 hectares. Prior to taking on the property in 2012, it had been overgrazed, but since then Rob and Pamela have undertaken weed control, fencing, and replanting with native species. ■



160 years ago

(*South Australian Register*, Adelaide, Monday 1 May 1865, p. 3.)

YANKALILLA.

[From our own correspondent.]

Yankalilla, April 26.

Last Sunday the Rev. BT Craig preached two sermons in Christchurch, Yankalilla. The church was literally crowded; the rev. gentleman fixed the attention of and highly edified the congregations. Yesterday the Sunday-schools of the respective churches of Yankalilla and Normanville had their annual treat, which was provided by Mesdames Hibbert and J Heathcote as lady superintendents of the respective schools. Upwards of 100 children were on the ground (contiguous to the Wissanger District School, and amused themselves to their hearts' content till about half-past 4, when they went in to tea, which they seemed to enjoy as only children can; after which some very pretty hymns were sung by the adults present as well as the children, and many of the scholars recited their pieces very creditably indeed. The Chairman (Mr Craig) then distributed the prizes, accompanying each with suitable remarks and exhortations. The teachers also were presented with handsome books as a slight token of appreciation of their untiring efforts in the cause of the church. In the evening a vestry meeting was held in Christchurch, Yankalilla, to receive

the accounts of the outgoing Churchwardens, audit them, and also elect Churchwardens for the ensuing year. The Rev. Mr Craig was voted to the chair. The Churchwardens' accounts were gone through carefully by the Auditors, and passed by the meeting, when it was resolved to send an amount – viz. £50 – to the Secretary of the Leigh Fund for investment, there being sufficient left in hand to carry on for the year. This a gratifying fact, seeing that much money has been lately spent in repairing, adding to, and beautifying the interior of the building. Messrs Poole and Goode were elected Churchwardens. Votes of thanks were passed to the returning officers (Messrs Heathcote and Foale) and to the Chairman, when the meeting terminated.

The District Schoolroom has just been painted and cleaned at the expense of the District Council, but as the room is far too small to accommodate the daily-increasing number of pupils, it is to be hoped that a suitable room will be erected this season. This I know, that funds will not be wanting if the Council take the matter in hand.

Our Literary Institute, which promised some time since to be of great benefit to the neighbourhood, has (at least the books have) been stowed away under the bed of an obscure slab hut in Yankalilla.

Sic transit gloria mundi. [Latin, meaning 'thus passes the glory of the world'.]

[This article is reprinted from an original newspaper. Accuracy of information therein is not guaranteed to be correct, and is not authenticated by the Yankalilla and District Historical Society Inc.]

Restore, repair, revive ... Biddle cottage working bee

On **Sunday 18 May 2025, at 9.30 am**, learn from conservation architects Robyn Taylor and Paul Stark who will explain the importance of a considered approach to restoring an historic building.

Find out the plans for the former Biddle cottage, on property now owned by Mark and Roxanne Chapman at 265 Parawa Road, Torrens Vale, during an initial working bee to remove and store the original roofing slates.

Heritage stonemason Jed Masters will be involved with the future steps needed to stabilise the walls to support a new roof.

Learn about reconstruction from the experts at a barbecue lunch and consider how the community can help preserve heritage buildings.

In 1855 James and Ann Biddle acquired section 18 (which they called Spring Farm). After first living in a tent, then a wattle and daub hut, James had a



new stone house with slate roof built, with one floor raised off the damp ground, as Ann suffered from rheumatism.

To be involved, contact Sue Speck
0448 438 974 or yank.hist.soc@gmail.com



Delamere Community Hub art exhibition



District Council of Yankalilla Mayor Darryl Houston opened the Delamere Community Hub art exhibition last month to an enthusiastic crowd. The exhibition ran from 23 to 27 April.

The small hall at the Delamere Uniting Church had been lovingly prepared for the day to display numerous artworks from local artists including teacher and artist Jane Whitelock, former teacher now Delamere resident Carmen de Miguel, tapestry weaver Betty Wolf of Wirrina Cove, Delamere resident Anne Petch, and many more.

The wide range of exhibits included paintings, sculpture, pottery, photography, ceramics, and crafts including some beautiful quilts made in the district, one of which was offered for a raffle, with proceeds going to Women for Change, helping women and children in Afghanistan with food and education.





Talks at the Library – Friday 23 May

‘Doing the graveyard shift’ – Q&A forum with guest speakers

Ever wondered who looks after historic graveyards? What happens to a cemetery when it is no longer used or is sold as part of a church property?

Come and hear how people in the Yankalilla district have dealt with these issues and, along the way, have uncovered buried stories.

Guest speakers are Alan Barnes (Uniting Church), Marilyn McLaren (Myponga cemetery), Nigel Pile (Lions Club work maintaining historic cemeteries), and Georgie Tape (Inman valley Church and cemetery).

10 am Friday 23 May 2025

Yankalilla Library

181 Main South Road

Free but bookings required.

Phone: 8558 2043



Normanville Wesleyan Cemetery.

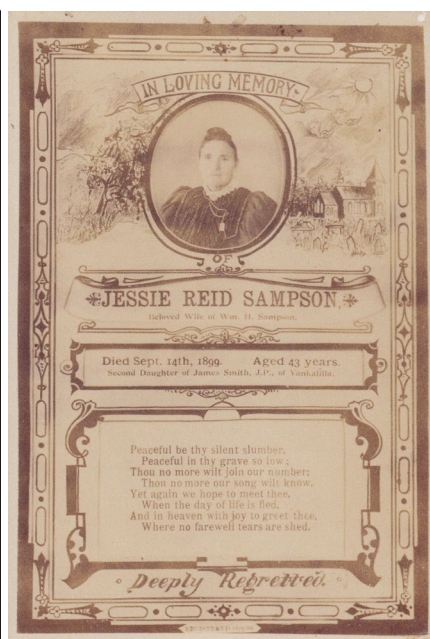
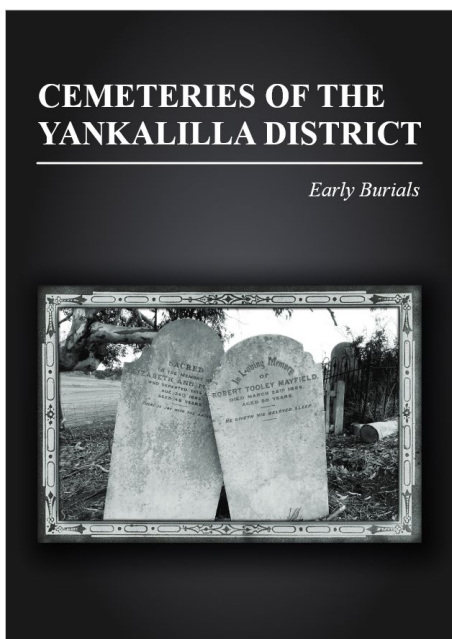
email: library@yankalilla.sa.gov.au

or online:

<https://events.humanitix.com/doing-the-graveyard-shift>

Launch of booklet – *Cemeteries of the Yankalilla District* – plus cemetery tour

Join the Yankalilla and District Historical Society Inc. at the former Normanville Wesleyan Chapel (now Yankalilla RSL Hall) for the launch of its newest publication.



Left: Front cover. Right: Back cover (YDHS)

Cemeteries of the Yankalilla District: Early Burials, covers names of early recorded community residents in 14 burial grounds from the 1850s to 1900.

The launch will be followed by a cemetery tour and plaque dedication in the adjoining State Heritage listed 1856 cemetery, which also features some early slate headstones.

**10 am to 1 pm, Saturday
24 May 2025**

18 Main South Road, Normanville

**FREE but bookings required:
Fleurieu Coast Visitor Centre**

8558 0240

cooe@visitfleurieucoast.com.au



MUSEUM MUSINGS



'Toto' the Diprotodon an outstanding attraction!



A good turnout at the Fleurieu Coast Visitor Centre last month saw the unveiling of the life-size replica *Diprotodon optatum* by Dr Aaron Camens, Senior Paleontology Lecturer at Flinders University.

The *Diprotodon* replica, named 'Toto' by local schoolchildren, will be the drawcard for the Yankalilla Historical Museum's new megafauna display.

The new display features a beautiful mural painted by Gay Robertson depicting other megafauna that roamed the local area 50,000 to 100,000 years ago. The museum's display, featuring various other fossilised bones and replicas, has been assisted by the Palaeontology Department of Flinders University, and the museum's consultant and retired geologist Rob Kirk (pictured at right).



Above: The museum's new megafauna display featuring Gay Robertson's beautiful mural, and including a fossilised *Diprotodon* thigh bone, found in the 1890s in a swamp on the Robertson's property at Hay Flat near Normanville.





*Please welcome our
new member since
1 April 2025:*

Cecilie Siggs

**YDHS local history sessions at
the library - Wednesdays
10 am to 12 noon**

**Next YDHS general meeting
7 pm Monday, 8 September 2025**

**Yankalilla Library Meeting Room,
181 Main South Road**

**Guest speaker: Barry Jeffery
'Yankalilla District Lions Club'**

followed by meeting and supper

All welcome!

Check out the YDHS website ... more than just old things!
www.yankalilladistricthistory.org.au

An evening with Colonel Light ...



An Evening with Colonel Light in the garden pavilion at Bungala House, Yankalilla, is set to be a sumptuous celebration of Colonel William Light's decision for Adelaide's location, and his visionary plan for the new colony.

The focus for the evening is in keeping with the 2025 SA History Festival theme 'Decisions'.

The event will start **6 pm on Thursday, 15 May**, and combine theatre, music, a choir of voices, a raffle, a silent art auction, as well as food and drink, with some tantalising history and a bit of historical fiction.

Two artworks are on offer via a silent auction and a raffle. One is a portrait of Colonel Light, the other a pencil (replica) drawing of the settlement in Adelaide. Proceeds from the raffle and auction will support refugee causes.

Colonel William Light, who arrived on the brig *Rapid* in 1836, and fulfilled the role of the state's first Surveyor-General, was himself an artist (and writer).



Venue:

**Bungala House
34 Main Street
Yankalilla**

Cost: \$25 per person

Bookings:

<https://www.trybooking.com/CZCBF>