

Brig 'Rapid'

## **Finniss Valley ... port, flour mill, timber town, and holiday destination**

**S**econd Valley was discovered by Colonel William Light and his survey party in September 1836, after first landing at Rapid Bay from his ship *Rapid*, while looking for a suitable site for the planned city of Adelaide.

On 17 September, after William Pullen (later Admiral Pullen), William Claughton, William Jacob, and Dr John Woodforde landed to walk to Yankalilla from Rapid Bay, Light took the gig to examine an inlet two miles northward, where he was to meet up with the walking group. From Light's journal entry that day:

'... On landing at this inlet, which I shall call 'Finniss Valley', I found there was a little cove for mooring a vessel of 70-90 tons, in any weather, but there is only room for one; and there is a beautiful stream of fresh water running into the sea, where a boat may approach within 50 yards of a good spot for filling water casks. On joining my shipmates on the rising ground above, we beheld a valley three times as extensive as the last, and equally rich in soil; there is abundance of wood all the way, yet not so thick that agriculture might be pursued without the trouble of clearing.'



*William and Ann Randall's home 'Randalsea' at Second Valley, built in the 1850s. (YDHS collection.)*

William Light had named the valley after deputy surveyor general on the *Rapid* Boyle Travers Finniss (later South Australia's first premier). In his diary entry for 12 November 1836, Light referred to this place as the 'second valley', and Second Valley, where the Parananacooka River runs into the sea, remained, although sometimes Finniss Vale was used.

William Randall (1820-1898) and his wife Anne (nee Wickes) arrived in Adelaide with their young daughter Annie in December 1846 aboard the *Duke of Richmond*. Randall initially bought a property in Magill and an 80-acre section which he called 'Burnside' before selling up and purchasing property at Second Valley, becoming one of its earliest landowners. Having been appointed a Justice of the Peace in 1850, he regularly travelled to Willunga and Normanville for court sittings. He also conducted occasional inquests at the Finniss Vale Hotel, built in 1851 (burned down in 1928).

Randall purchased a property from Henry Jones in the mid-1850s and named his estate 'Randalsea'. He had also bought several sections in Glenburn (Delamere) in 1850. Randall built a farmhouse 'Randalsea' at Second Valley, as well as a two-storey house today known as 'Palm House',

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built in 1855, which later became a guest house. On 29 July 1857 the official private subdivision of a town, following the name of his estate, was declared.

Randall's property had 30 acres of vineyards, a winery, dairy, 1200 sheep, pigs, and crops including wheat and potatoes. He also bred horses.

In 1854 William Randall became chairman of the newly constituted Yankalilla and Myponga Council. Two years later, he was appointed chairman of the new Rapid Bay Council, holding this position for nine years. In this role he was one of the main drivers for the building of decent roads and bridges in the district. The following year, in 1855-56, a wharf was constructed of stone, on what is today generally referred to as 'the island' with a wooden quay for vessels to moor, with a depth of six feet at low tide, and a single-track tramway connecting the wharf to the shore. Land for the new access road was purchased from William Randall for £60.

Randall drew up plans in 1857 to subdivide some of his land into a township called Randalsea, although these documents weren't lodged with the Land Titles Office until 1866.

William Randall was captain of the Finnis Vale Mounted Rifles when it was formed in 1860, and they regularly held drills on Randall's land at Second Valley, and also hosted the Yankalilla Rifles for joint drills, sham fighting, and socialising. He was one of the trustees of the Second Valley School, as well as a



*Palm House, Second Valley, built by William Randall as a guest house in the 1850s. (YDHS collection.)*

lay preacher, with Church of England services held at his home on Sundays.

Other early buildings included the three-storey steam-driven flour mill which was in operation by 1859, land having been purchased by the Leonard family in 1858. John Clover Leonard operated the mill and lived in the mill house. His brother James Leonard lived in nearby Palm House, where they also operated a store. The Leonards were instrumental in establishing the Wesleyan chapel at Second Valley and the institute.

On 20 April 1863, the *Adelaide Observer's* Finnis Vale Correspondent reported that:

'A fine brig, the *Centaur*, belonging to the Messrs Butterworth, has just taken her third load this season from our wharf. Some idea of our facilities for shipment may be formed from the fact that 1142 bags of wheat were put on board in one day.'

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*Finnis Vale Hotel c.1928, built c.1851. (State Library of South Australia B-4735.)*



*Second Valley jetty, 1900s (YDHS collection).*





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Although wheat was the principal produce shipped from Second Valley, a considerable amount of ore left the port from the mines of Wheal Coglin and Campbell's Creek, the first shipment occurring at Second Valley wharf in May 1864.

Rapid Bay Council, under chairman William Randall, in October 1864 defined an area of Crown Land to be gazetted as a timber reserve, known as Second Valley Forest, believed to be one of the colony's earliest such reserves, which Woods and Forests Department would later establish in 1912.

By 1866, there was a hotel, post office, store, and steam-powered flour mill at Second Valley. The wharf enabled wheat, timber, and wattle bark to be shipped from the little port. When wheat yields declined many families left the area, and winter storms took their toll on the port structures. A storm on 8 July 1867 caused most of the wharf to be washed away, together with the weighing machine and 20 bags of wheat belonging to Robert Alexander. Huge pieces of timber were strewn along the beach which in places was sown with wheat, and the solid wall of the tramway was breached for a length of about 10 feet; rendering the shipping facility useless. The jetty at Rapid Bay, built in 1865-66, especially for the use of the Wheal Coglin mine, had also long since disappeared.

A month after destruction of the Second Valley wharf, in August 1867 residents petitioned for a new jetty, to be built straight out towards the sea, and with only a third of the tramway to maintain, on the site of the present structure. However, after being back in service for less than a year, gales and heavy seas in July 1868 once more destroyed the wharf and caused breaches in the stone walling for up to 30 feet.

Plans for a new jetty at Second Valley, to cost £1700, were approved in 1870 by Rapid Bay Council. Construction was completed by May 1871 but the jetty was only 51 feet long and 12 feet six inches wide, and connected to the 1855 causeway with a 85 feet stone extension. This small jetty served the district for many years until demolished in 1910, when a new jetty, 150 feet long, was completed in November the same year, and the three-ton crane overhauled and replaced on the jetty.

By 1867, most of Randall's property was sold to Joseph Grundy, and the following year Randall



left the district to live with his brother at Mount Crawford. William Randall was appointed Clerk to the local courts at Port Pirie, where he lived until his retirement in 1892. He returned to Adelaide and lived with his son in North Adelaide until his death in 1898.

Second Valley Cottages, over the track from the flour mill, began life as 'Poplar House', the ever-expanding family home for a Scottish immigrant Alexander Florence, and his family, including 16 children. Mr Florence received the title for the land on 9 September 1852.

William Roper Snr, who had worked for the Leonard brothers at their flour mill, took over the mill in 1877 when the Leonard brothers moved to Wauraltee on Yorke Peninsula. William Roper Snr paid £600 for the mill and associated buildings, and wheat grinding continued until 1890. Following his death in 1893, the mill passed to his son George Roper and it was used for grinding wattle bark until 1935. George's wife managed the business.

Second Valley Forest was planted in 1912. James Small from Parilla, near Pinnaroo, took on five men with him to start planting. Of these five, four were from the local Jones family. A century later, members of the Jones family had provided more than 250 years of service to Forestry SA.

Thomas Backhouse built a sawmill on section 1554, Beach Road (now Finnis Vale Drive), Second Valley, not far from the jetty. When Broken Hill mines could no longer secure oregon timber from the US for pit props, it sourced stringybark as an alternative native timber which was available on government land close to Second Valley.

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## 100 years ago

(*Observer, Adelaide, Saturday 14 March 1925, p. 11.*)

### SECOND VALLEY

March 3.—On Monday evening a valedictory social was tendered Mr and Mrs AJ Grundy and family in the memorial hall. Having disposed of their farm, Glenbracken at Second Valley, Mr and Mrs Grundy are leaving the district to take up residence at Glenelg. The hall was crowded, there being visitors present from Yankalilla, Myponga, Cape Jervis, and also Broken Hill, which amply testified to the wide popularity of the departing guests. Addresses were given by Messrs Putland, Ness, Roper, Campbell, Williss, Bennett, Severington, and Refchange, each of whom endorsed the many sterling qualities of Mr and Mrs Grundy, and deplored the loss Second Valley would sustain through their departure. Mr Grundy, whose ancestors were among the early pioneers to the district has always taken a keen and lively interest in its affairs, and besides being for some time a member of the district council he also filled the position of secretary of the Agricultural Bureau. As secretary of the memorial hall committee it was largely through Mr Grundy's untiring efforts that the building of the hall became an accomplished fact. Many other public movements also received the hearty support of both Mr and Mrs Grundy.

On behalf of the residents of the district, Mr F Putland presented to Mr Grundy a very handsome and largely signed illuminated address, and Mrs Grundy was made the recipient of a beautiful rose bowl by Mrs CW Ness, as tokens of esteem. Presentations of a bound volume each was also made to Misses Melva and Thelma Grundy, and also Masters Joe and Lionel Grundy, on behalf of the scholars of the Second Valley and Delamere Schools. Mr Grundy feelingly responded, after which all present joined in lustily singing 'For they are jolly good fellows'.

Supper was served, and dancing was then indulged in. Mr B Williss capably fulfilled the duties of MC. Music for the dance was supplied by Misses J and D McArthur, Mrs Fowles, and Messrs Williss, Jones, and Hamlyn. On behalf of the committee responsible for arranging the social Mr Putland moved a hearty vote of thanks to all those who assisted to make the function a success, after which the singing of 'Auld lang syne' brought the evening to a close.

SECOND VALLEY, March 8.— A farewell social was tendered to Mr and Mrs AJ Grundy and family on March 2, in the Soldiers' Memorial Hall on the eve of their departure from the district. The popularity of the guests was evidenced by the large attendance of friends, every home in the district being represented, and of visitors from Yankalilla and Myponga. Mr Grundy was born in the district on property acquired by his grandfather more than half a century ago from Mr Randall and, with the exception of several years at St Peter's College, has

spent all his life in the district. He has been secretary to the hall committee, and has been a hard [sic] for the fine building that the district now boasts. He is also a trustee of the hall. He has taken an interest in agricultural affairs in the district, and was secretary of the Agricultural Bureau. He served the ratepayers as a councillor for several terms. The Chairman of the district council (Mr F Putland) voiced the regret of the district generally in the departure of the guests, and his remarks were amplified by Messrs GVJ Roper, CW Ness, AL Campbell, BG Williss, sen., AG Bennett, GP Refchange, and EJ Leverington. Mr SJ Lord read the inscription of an illuminated address, which contained 75 signatures, after which the Chairman asked Mr Grundy to accept the address. Mrs CW Ness presented Mrs Grundy with a suitably inscribed rose bowl. Miss Freda Ness presented the Misses Grundy, on behalf of the schoolgirls of Delamere and Second Valley, with a volume each, and Master Charles Coad performed a like duty on behalf of the boys to the boys. Mr Grundy responded on behalf of the family. Dancing was then indulged in, Mr BG Williss, jun. being MC, and the music was supplied by Mrs WL Fowles and Misses J and D McArthur and Messrs BG Williss and H Hamlyn. Supper was provided by the ladies.

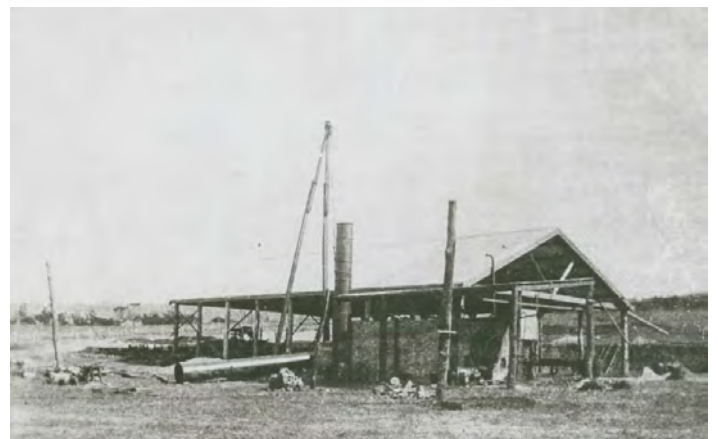
[These articles are reprinted from original newspapers. Accuracy of information therein is not guaranteed to be correct, and is not authenticated by the Yankalilla and District Historical Society Inc.]

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The felled logs were carted by horse teams to the newly-built sawmill not far from the jetty.

The former flour mill, sea wall, and geological features are State Heritage listed. Second Valley Forest, to the east of the settlement, now has shared-use trails for walkers, horse riders, and bike riders. The flour mill was used as a shearing and storage shed until 1984 when it was sold and restored by architect David Grieve and, until 2022, was a restaurant. ■



*Thomas Backhouse's sawmill under construction c.1914, then sold in the early 1920s to Junction North Broken Hill Mine Ltd.*





## Vale Ron Blum

**S**adly, we learned last month that Ron Blum had passed away, aged 90. Ron had a long association with our district, especially at Second Valley.

His late wife Karen's parents, Rex and Merle Thomas, built their shack opposite Jetty House (now the Second Valley shop) in 1953. Before that, they camped next to Jetty House from 1948 until 1952 with other regular campers, although they had camped at Second Valley intermittently from 1929. Ron and Karen took over the family shack in the early 1980s.

Ronald James Blum was born at Semaphore, South Australia, on 6 October 1934, to Frederick Johannes Blum and Merle Blum (nee Carver). He was introduced to photography by his mother who worked in several photographic studios during the glass plate era as a photo retoucher and colour artist when photos were coloured by hand.

Ron became an engineer, and worked in oil refineries in several countries for more than 30 years before retiring. He lived in Oaklands Park but continued his interest in photography which lasted more than 60 years. He also enjoyed walking and marathon kayaking, and competed in many canoe races including 100, 200, and 400 kilometres. He was a Life Member of Marathon Canoe Club and Paddle South Australia, and was one of the founding members of the Murray 200 in 1988, which is now known as the Riverland Paddling Marathon.

He developed an interest in stereoscopic images and started collecting 3D views as a hobby until it became almost an obsession! He amassed the largest collection of stereographs in the Southern Hemisphere. The driving force was the historic aspect of these images; it was like walking through a window



into the past, such was the realism of 3D. Over the years Ron joined many national and international stereoscopic societies and has written articles for their journals.

Ron started collecting glass and film negatives as well as photographic prints. He took a particular interest in the Melbourne photographer George Rose who formed the Rose Stereograph Company in the 1880s and Ron has written two books relating to the photographic work of George who took his 3D camera around the world. One country visited was Korea in which he took some wonderful images. This fact came to the attention of the Australia-Korea Foundation (funded by Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade) such that Ron was asked to go to Korea to assist with a photograph exhibition using Rose's Korean images. This successful exhibition toured the country for two years culminating in a coffee table book of the Korean images, and Ron was again invited to South Korea for the book launch. Ron has also been involved with the South Australian Museum's Polar Collection, creating stereographs from more than 100 raw glass plate negatives taken on Shackleton's 1907-09 Antarctic Expedition. Most of this collection has never been seen in 3D before.

Ron has written many books, mostly photography related, but locally, he wrote *The Second Valley: A History of Second Valley, South Australia*, in 2002, followed by a revised edition in 2020, with sketches by Sue Speck and, in 2013 Ron published *Sawmills, Holidays and Boat sheds*, updated in 2015.

Ron will be sorely missed by everyone who knew him. Sincere condolences to his family from his many Fleurieu Peninsula friends. ■



*The Thomas family campsite, No. 1, alongside Jetty House, Second Valley. (Photo: Rex Thomas)*



## Library history talk – Friday 21 March 'History of Festival Fleurieu (Leafy Sea Dragon Festival)'

**L**orraine McLoughlin, co-founder of the Linaugural Leafy Sea Dragon Festival (now Festival Fleurieu) in 2005, will share the history of the biennial festival over the past 20 years.

Held biennially, Festival Fleurieu celebrates our region's unique artists, artisans, and other creatives.

The talk, at 10 am on 21 March, at the Yankalilla Library provides an opportunity to learn about past festivals and the eras in which they took place. The 2025 Festival Fleurieu will run from 19 April to 27 April.

**Bookings required – 8558 2043**

[library@yankalilla.sa.gov.au](mailto:library@yankalilla.sa.gov.au)

Yankalilla Library Main Hall  
181 Main South Road

## Time travel to meet the Mitchells

Join a bus tour of historic Yankalilla, Hay Flat and Bald Hills' sites relating to the Mitchell and Hoskin families.

Start with a burial and end with a wake. The tour stops at the Murch/Hoskin house, Mitchell Cottage, and then view the renovation of Gully House.

**Wednesday 23 April - 12 noon to 4 pm - \$35**

**Bookings essential, Fleurieu Coast Visitor Centre,  
8558 0240**

Meet at Yankalilla Public Cemetery, 2832 Inman Valley Road.



*George and Sarah Mitchell and family on their golden wedding, at Bald Hills, 1925.*



## Heritage Conservation Grants Program closes 2 pm, 31 March 2025



**G**rants up to \$20,000 for conservation work or documentation are available (dollar-for-dollar) for owners of State Heritage Places, or a place within a State Heritage Area.

Prior to lodging an application, professional heritage advice must be sought (either via Heritage SA, local councils, or privately), and attached to the application. See *Heritage Conservation Grants Guidelines for Applicants* on the SA Department for Environment and Water website. Minimum grant for any project is \$1000, with three categories of funding.





## MUSEUM MUSINGS



**Help us celebrate the museum's newest addition!**



### **Yankalilla Museum opening hours**

**Monday to Friday – 9 am to 5 pm**

**Saturday & Sunday – 10 am to 2 pm**

**Phone (08) 8558 0240**

**Entry via Fleurieu Coast Visitor Centre for  
self-guided tour.**

**For group bookings, a tour guide can be  
arranged upon request.**

*Below: Fossilised Diprotodon thigh bone on  
display at the museum.*

**O**n 6 April, at 2 pm outside the Visitor Information Centre, the newest addition to the museum will be unveiled – a life-size replica of a *Diprotodon* – an extinct giant marsupial that roamed the local area along with other megafauna 50,000 to 100,000 years ago.

This will be the main attraction and drawcard to the Yankalilla District Historical Museum's new megafauna display to be launched on the day. There will also be a mural depicting other megafauna and various replica bones.

The new display has been assisted by the Palaeontology Department of Flinders University, and the museum's consultant Rob Kirk.

The Yankalilla and District Council has provided the site foundation for the *Diprotodon*.

*Diprotodon optatum* was the largest known marsupial to have ever lived. The South Australian Museum excavated a full skeleton in 1907 which now forms part of its megafauna display.





*Please welcome our  
new members since  
1 February 2025:*

**Judith and Allan Francis  
Jo and Brenton Lush**

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

**Next YDHS general meeting  
7 pm Tuesday, 11 March 2025  
Yankalilla Library Meeting Room,  
181 Main South Road  
Guest speaker: Margaret Macilwain  
and Lorraine Day  
'Yankalilla Branch of National Trust of SA –  
its formation and purpose'  
followed by meeting and supper  
*All welcome!***

**Check out the YDHS website ... more than just old things!**  
**[www.yankalilladistricthistory.org.au](http://www.yankalilladistricthistory.org.au).**

## Local history

Interested in the history of the Yankalilla district? Then *To Find the Way*, compiled by Roy Williams and published by the Yankalilla and District Historical Society Inc., is the definitive book outlining the history of the district. The society also has a library of other books about local history, as well as an extensive collection of old photographs.

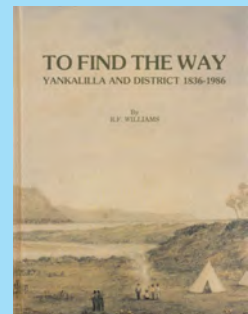
The Yankalilla and District Historical Society Inc. was formed in 1977 to promote interest in local history and encourage the preservation of historical buildings and sites, as well as collecting and recording items of general historical interest in the district.

## Family history

Researching your family history?

The Yankalilla and District Historical Society can help you. The society has copies of SA births, marriages and deaths, local cemetery records, biographical index, photos, and more.

For any information about local or family history, or if you have any historic photographs or documents relative to our district that you would like to share, please contact us by phone, email, or on our Facebook page.



## Become a volunteer researcher

If you enjoy doing family history research, please let us know and we can discuss which family you might like to research. If you have not had any experience in family history research but would like to give it a go, we could arrange some beginners' workshops to show you how to get started and what resources the society has to help you. Contact Margaret Morgan if you are interested ([yank.hist.soc@gmail.com](mailto:yank.hist.soc@gmail.com)).