

## **4.0 THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE MEDIA**

It is now timely to sample the principal sources of information essential to developing an understanding of the Mediterranean from its weather patterns and climate onwards to demonstrate how different areas of study have been isolated, enmeshed, ravelled and unravelled into a cloth of interdependent threads of ideas that give form to our insight into the nature of things Mediterranean. Within the time frame established in this paper, the study of the Mediterranean in many of its aspects reached high into the realms of scholarship and at the same time penetrated public consciousness, both academic and popular interest being permitted by the advent in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century of the means of mass communication. Hence the following survey was made possible and accessible at this distance.

### **4.1 The Mediterranean climate type**

The pervasive nature of Mediterranean consciousness throughout Anglo-European societies following the Napoleonic Wars was, perhaps, more penetrating than might presently be appreciated. Since that era things have moved on and concepts and theories relating to matters Mediterranean have been cast aside or at least long forgotten. One of the most potent ideas of the day was that of 'climatography' – the idea that the air, or climate, possessed some specific quality, by virtue of which it directly cured disease. In an age where medical cures based on pharmaceutical treatments or prophylaxis (vaccination) were found to be unresponsive to conditions caused by invasion by micro-organism such as respiratory disorders medical scientists reverted to natural therapies to find cures. The reasons for this reversion are hardly important here but relate to a malaise in the medical profession brought on by the impact of apparently intractable chronic endemic diseases such as bronchitis and pulmonary consumption. English historian, John Richard Green, writing in the 1870's pondered the annual bustle of migration and the

transformation of humble French and Italian fishing villages into fashionable winter resorts, and saw them as a tribute to the power of the British doctor.<sup>83</sup>

*It is he who rears pleasant towns at the foot of the Pyrenees, and lines the sunny coasts of the Riviera with villas that gleam white among the olive groves. It is his finger that stirs the camels of Algeria, the donkeys of Palestine, the Nile boats of Egypt. At the first frosts of November the doctor marshals his wild geese for their winter flitting, and the long train streams off, grumbling but obedient, to the little Britain's of the South.*<sup>84</sup>

To appreciate 'climatography' there must be some appreciation of just what is meant by a Mediterranean climate. A translation<sup>85</sup> from *Flore des Arbres Arbustes et Arbrisseaux Region Mediterraneene*<sup>86</sup> provides a useful insight:

*The Mediterranean region is above all defined by its climate: heavy rain in autumn and winter, summer rains rare, irregular and violent which is poorly absorbed by the vegetation. Summers hot and dry, winters mild and frosts rare along the coast. Bright light is important. Although less marked in other regions of the Mediterranean these characteristics are well defined in France. The physical characteristics although secondary are also important. High altitudes exist near the coast and because of this there are two different sorts of vegetation in the strictest definition of the Mediterranean area, and a third type of vegetation due to the Mediterranean influence ... The strictly defined limits for the Mediterranean used to be the culture of olives [*Olea europaea*]<sup>87</sup> but we prefer the association with the evergreen oak [*Quercus ilex*].*

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<sup>83</sup> John Pemble, *The Mediterranean Passion - Victorians and Edwardians in the South*, Oxford University Press / Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1987, p. 84.

<sup>84</sup> J.R. Green, *Stray Studies from England and Italy*, 1876, p. 31.

<sup>85</sup> Translation by Janet Blenkinsopp, Crete, June 2000.

<sup>85</sup> Pemble, *The Mediterranean Passion*, p. 84.

<sup>85</sup> Pemble, *The Mediterranean Passion*, p. 31.

<sup>86</sup> R. Rol and M. Jacamon, *Flore des Arbres Arbustes et Arbrisseaux Region Mediterraneene*, La Maison Rustique, Librairie Agricole, Horticole, Forestiere et Menagere, Paris, 1968.

<sup>87</sup> See Braudel's ref to olives as the boundary markers of Mediterranean climate.

Peter Dallman<sup>88</sup> provides a more expansive definition that establishes the other mediterraneoid zones of the world: California in the northern hemisphere and central Chile, western Cape Province, Western and South Australia in the southern hemisphere as legitimate components of the ecotype. For Dallman's full definition see Appendix 1.

Rol and Jacamon add further to a broader conceptualisation of the Mediterranean climate through their expansive description alluded to above. The three mediterraneoid sub-climates they refer to are later filled out: '*mediterraneene inferieur*' (hot, dry zone as between Nice and Menton, also North Africa), '*mediterraneene superieur*' (sub-humid zone, as in Provence, Gard, Herault, Vaucluse) and '*des basses montagnes mediterraneene*' (the humid zone, maritime situations as on the peninsula Cap St Jean Ferat and the Alpes Maritime)<sup>89</sup>.

Thus the complexities of the idea of a Mediterranean climate type are differentiated. Dallman adds further to the tripartite conception of Mediterranean climate by nominating locations in California that he believes are equivalent to those nominated by Jacamon and Rol. In turn Dallman runs his nominations on from work reported by P.E. James<sup>90</sup> in which he set down a definition of the climate (C) with dry summers (s) as Csa (hot summers), Csb (moderate to warm summers), and Csbn (cool summers with fog). The linkages that suggest themselves are:

- ❖ '*Mediterraneene inferieur*' (hot, dry zone as between Nice and Menton, also North Africa) ≡ Csa (Sacramento, Stockton and Los Angeles).
- ❖ '*Mediterraneene superieur*' (sub-humid zone, as in Provence, Gard, Herault, Vaucluse) ≡ Csb (Santa Rosa, Santa Barbara and Long Beach).

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<sup>88</sup> Peter Dallman *Plant Life in the world's Mediterranean Climates*, California Native Plant Society and University of California Press, Berkeley, 1998.

<sup>89</sup> Rol & Jacamon, *Flore des Arbes Arbustes et Arbrisseaux Region Mediterraneene*.

<sup>90</sup> P.E James. *The Geography of Man*, Ginn, Boston, 1965.

- ❖ ‘*des basses montagnes Mediterraneene*’ (the humid zone, maritime situations as on the peninsula Cap St Jean Ferat and the Alpes Maritime) ≡ Csb<sup>n</sup>\* (San Francisco, Santa Cruz and Monterey).

\*(n stands for *nebel*, the German word for fog).

In relation to translating the concept of Mediterranean climate to Australian shores, George Seddon<sup>91</sup> has offered a view based on comparisons of the geographical parameters of degrees of longitude and latitude that suggests very strongly that there is a serious mis-match between the two locations, sufficiently so to be misleading. In a paper entitled ‘Mediterraneity’ he argued that the broader view of the climate as ‘the climate of mid-latitude places with a wet winter and dry summer’ is dangerously inexact. His reductionist view, while it may appear a more rigorous and scientific approach, is unhelpful in determining ‘Mediterraneity’ in that Seddon tells us what it cannot be (by his definition) rather than what it is, or could be. More specifically, Seddon in being exact to the point of verging on pedantry cuts off any consideration of the complex nature of the entity. It is, and can only be, a rich, diverse and complex thing.

Seddon’s research does, however, redeem itself somewhat by identifying and making clear the range of climates and locations within Australia that fall into the broad classification of ‘Mediterranean’. While Perth and Adelaide have long been understood to be Mediterranean in nature Seddon’s extracted figures for rainfall and temperature show that places such as Melbourne and Hobart can also be considered Mediterranean in the climate they experience. Clearly such a proposal will challenge conventional wisdom about the climate types found in Australia, south eastern Australia and Tasmania in particular. Seddon’s proposal also necessitates a review of the Adelaide climate as ‘Mediterranean’ in that it suggests South Australia experiences the drier end of the Mediterranean climatic spectrum; an idea that will be equally as unsettling as the Tasmanian revelation to some landscape designers and garden makers.

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<sup>91</sup> Seddon, George, ‘*Mediterraneity*’, unpublished paper presented at *Desert Gardens; waterless lands & the problems of adaptation Conference*, National Library of Australia and Australian National University Humanities Resources Centre, March 2005.

Wishing to name the entity as it exists in Australia and elsewhere, to attach to it a sense of established place such as the Mediterranean has by dint of its long history and cultural traditions is a perfectly natural human condition. To deny it would be to cast us adrift from that sense of place. Can we collectively shed our cultural attachments and personal histories? What then would they be replaced with? Seddon may favour a severance from European and Mediterranean links so that a totally new sense of place can be forged that is uniquely Australian. Perhaps this may be a valid environmental and ecological view but one that is just as vulnerable in its uncertainty as that which he finds in the inexact-ness of the broader, global view of the Mediterranean sponsored by Braudel and his colleagues.

It is hardly consistent with Seddon's line of argument to come up with the term 'Mediterraneity' to express what he is talking about. For Seddon to offer up 'Mediterraneity' as terminology for a set of geographic and climatic conditions that exist in parts of Australia is contradictory. Surely he should have been able to apply his intellect to proposing a suitably unique, localised term free of any direct reference and association with the Old World concept?

Most recently Daniels and Tait<sup>92</sup> have introduced another term, 'cold Monsoon', to describe the climate of the Adelaide Plains. While it carries none of the cultural associations attached to a 'Mediterranean climate' its values free meteorological approach is hardly any more enlightening than Seddon.

#### **4.2 The Mediterranean, the media and medicine**

Natural therapies based in 'climatography' generated a literature<sup>93</sup>, that while not enormous in volume; none-the-less had an enormous impact within the medical profession and among their patients, particularly those wealthy enough to follow the treatments established from the theory. Principal among the theoreticians and practitioners were Dr Robert Scoresby Jackson's *Medical Climatology*, Dr Thomas Henry Burgess's *The Climate in Italy in Relation to Pulmonary Consumption*, Dr John Paterson's *Egypt and the Nile Considered as*

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<sup>92</sup> Daniels, Christopher and Tait, Catherine, *Adelaide Nature of a City*, A7 Designs, Adelaide, 2005, chapter 2 *The Ecological History of Adelaide*

<sup>93</sup> Pemble, *The Mediterranean Passion*, pp. 84-96.

*Winter Resorts for Pulmonary and Other Invalids*, Dr James Alexander Lindsay's *The Climatic Treatment of Consumption*, Dr James Clark's *The Sanitive Influence of Climate* (Clark was Physician-in-Ordinary to Queen Victoria), Dr James Henry Bennett's *Winter and Spring on the Shores of the Mediterranean* and Dr Thomas More Madden's *On Change of Climate*.

Influential subjects of 'climato-therapy' on the French and Italian Riviera's included such delicate folk as the Empress-Mother Alexandra Feodorovna of Russia, the Emperor Frederick of Germany, Queen Victoria and Prince Leopold,<sup>94</sup> Robert Louis Stevenson, Aubrey Beardsley, Oscar Wilde, Marianne North, Elizabeth Barrett Browning and tens of thousands of other consumptives, coughers, wheezers and hackers. It was on the basis of warm climate and dry airs, new railways and new hotels<sup>95</sup> that the Riviera grew into the winter playgrounds of the aristocratic, rich, famous and infamous of Europe and the Americas.

There were books and pamphlets to advise invalids (and their nurses, companions' chaperones and servants) on where best they might seek respite and restoration from their particular combination of symptoms. For example, Edwin Lee's (ed.) *Bradshaw's Invalids Companion to the Continent*, A.R. Hope Moncrieff's (ed.) *Where to go Abroad*, Dr Herbert Coupland Taylor's *Wanderings in Search of Health*, Dr John Davy's *Ionian Islands and Malta*, and Dr William Marcet's *Health Resorts* and *The Principal Southern and Swiss Health Resorts*. More general pocket books and travellers' guides<sup>96</sup> also provided detailed information about hotel accommodation, villa rentals, the costs of servants, foods, horses and carriages, as well as providing maps and plans for walks and drives and longer excursions. Thus, armed, those unwell and wealthy could confidently go abroad to repair the ravages imposed on delicate constitutions by industrialised living and the stresses induced by appearances at royal courts and ceremonial levees.

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<sup>94</sup> See also, Michael Nelson, *Queen Victoria and the discovery of the Riviera*, I B Tauris, London, 2001.

<sup>95</sup> (author unknown) *Guide to Nice and its Neighbourhood – courteously offered by The Grand Hotel*, Nice pub., Société d'imprimeries et Journeux du Littoral, Nice, c.1900.

<sup>96</sup> Charles B Black, *The Riviera – or the Coast from Marseilles to Leghorn, including the Interior Towns of Carrara, Lucca, Pisa and Pistoia*, Adam & Charles Black, London, 1903 (13<sup>th</sup> ed.).

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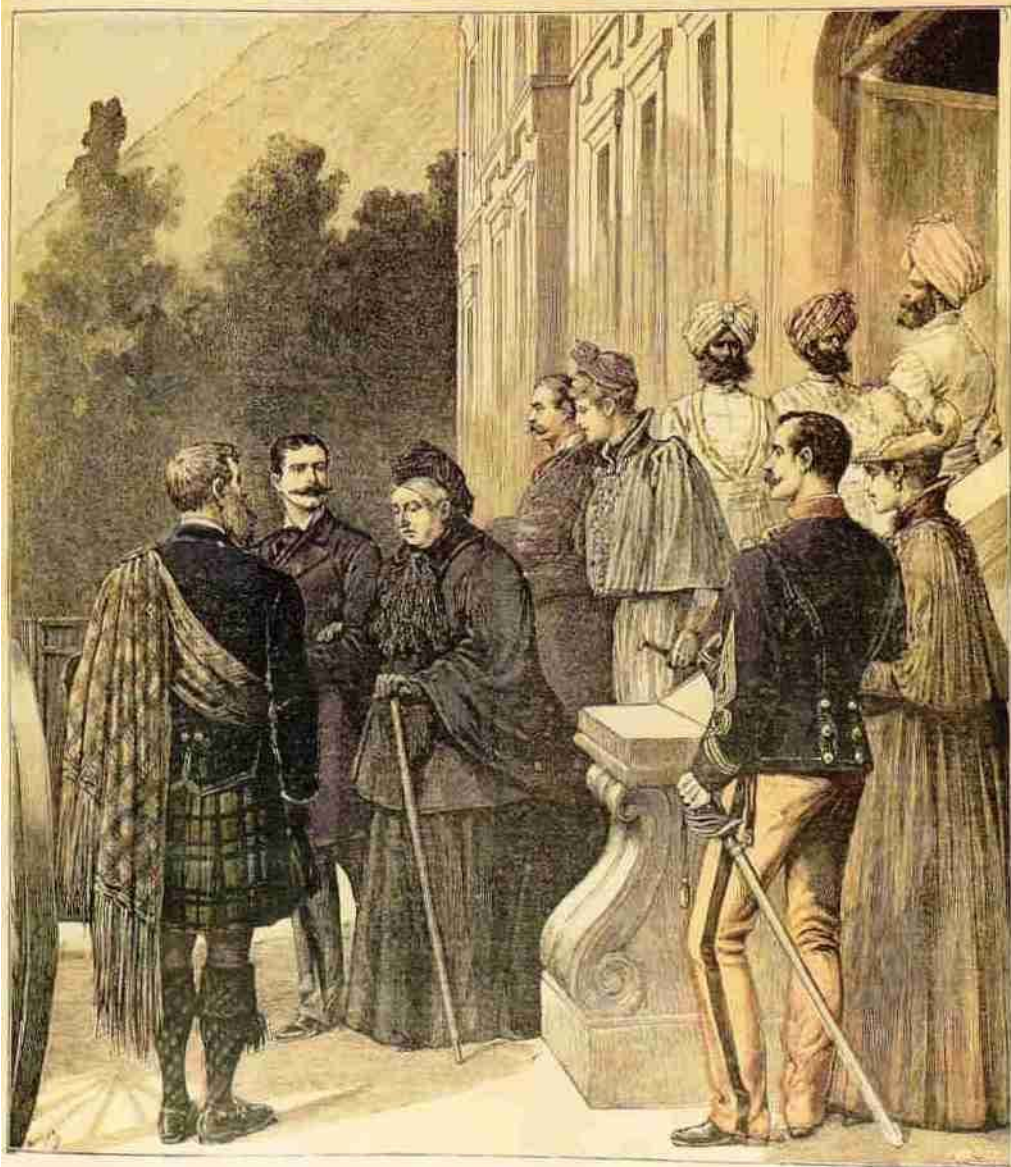
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Queen Victoria made annual trips to the French Riviera to mark the death of her son, Prince Leopold, Duke of Albany, who died at Cannes in 1884 .  
Later these turned into pleasurable holidays from the pressures of monarchy and set the Riviera up as a respectable tourist destination.



George Lambert, *Cheltenham Street* (London) 1910.

A doctor listens to his patients lungs, perhaps checking for signs of respiratory illness so common in London at the time, and that required climato-therapeutic treatment on the Riviera.  
(National Gallery of Australia collection)

Climato-therapeutic ideas spread to the medical professions in Australia too, though not so much attached to taking cures by travelling far from home. Family history<sup>97</sup> relates of ancestors being sent as children to reside on the

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crest of the limestone ridge that runs from Prospect through North Adelaide to Walkerville. Dr Newland (later Sir Henry Newland) (1873-1969), family doctor, neighbour and family friend decided the dry airs caused by the absorptive nature of the limestone would cure childhood asthma and bronchitis. Similarly he directed older, lady members of the family to reside in the sand hills close to the sea airs at Semaphore as a cure for certain womanly conditions associated with melancholia, morbidity and hypochondria. Considering the alternative pharmaceutical treatments – digitalis, laudanum (opium), hemlock, alcohol, iron and quinine, and phlebotomy (blood letting) – in themselves sedative and depressant, it was hardly surprising that a measure of fresh air, gentle activity and congenial socialising were seen as preferable.

Glenelg and Brighton, along with Port Elliot, Moonta Bay, Robe and Port Willunga, had their reputations as places where the climate was invigorating, bracing and restorative; the airs dry and warm, and the general conditions 'curative' for invalids and those with delicate constitutions. South Australia may not have had the attractions of the thermal spas at Daylesford (Victoria) or Menlo Baths (NSW) but even here associations were made between the South Australian climate and that characteristic of the 'curative' Mediterranean. It must be stated that the cure enabled by favourable climatic conditions were later seen not as pertaining to some intrinsic mysterious magical Mediterranean power; but rather that under Mediterranean conditions the body was best placed to heal itself, that is medical science saw doctors as assisting a patient's natural powers of resistance and recuperation.

The threads of similarity between the climates of South Australia may have been obvious to those acquainted with the literature, medical or otherwise, or with the Mediterranean itself in the course of their travels. The cool, wet relatively mild winters – short, frost free, snow free and often with sunny skies were related to the broad climatic situation around the shores of the Mediterranean. Long, hot, dry summers were also seen as typical of the region but while European invalids sought respite from the debilitating heat and dust, and disease (especially cholera), of the Mediterranean in summer by travelling

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<sup>97</sup> Rigby-Ringwood family oral history as related by Mrs A. Venn, descendant of William C. Rigby, publisher, Adelaide (1834–1913).

North to their homelands, or, increasingly to Switzerland or the Rhine, Adelaideans had to approximate it with the relative coolness of the mountain hill-stations around Marble Hill, Crafers, Stirling, Bridgewater and Aldgate.

Not that the climate was always thought beneficial and benign. Recently private letters held in the Mortlock Library have been scanned by James Potter<sup>98</sup> and found to contain references to the debilitating effects of heat and wind on the colonists in South Australia. Indeed at least one colonist writing home to England drew on Mediterranean climatic references to convey a comprehensible impression of the heat and winds of mid-summer:

*We are occasionally afflicted with irregular, or extraordinary visitations of heat, in the shape of hot winds, or siroccos, blowing from the centre of the continent; and these are, in reality, a dreadful bane to the colony.*<sup>99</sup>

Potter goes on to report the heat and winds as being a cause of eye diseases in children, and the widespread fatiguing effects of depression, melancholia, mental exhaustion among them. He also lists other words found in colonist's letters that use other Mediterranean metaphors for the devastating hot dry and dust laden winds – *simoon*, *simoom*, *hasmin*, *tramontana* – and others.

Disappointingly, William Light ((1786-1839), makes no reference to any similarities with the Mediterranean climate in the diaries<sup>100</sup> he kept while resident in Adelaide. Typical perhaps of a military man his entries are extremely brief and restricted to basic facts about the weather, his state of health (he was dying of tuberculosis) and how he fared in the hot weather, whom he saw or with whom he dined. It is only through his paintings that we can see the clarity that he saw between the Mediterranean and the Adelaide Plains and Hills. Being acutely conscious of his deteriorating health there could be little doubt that Light, and his doctor, would have been aware that the dry,

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<sup>98</sup> James Potter, *Forefathers Spooked by the Hot Breath of Summer*, in *The Adelaide Review*, February 4, 2005, p. 13.

<sup>99</sup> Potter, *Forefathers Spooked by the Hot Breath of Summer*.

<sup>100</sup> William Light, *A Brief Journal & Australian Diaries* (1839), (intro & end notes by David Elder), Wakefield Press, Adelaide 1984.

warm climate of Adelaide was likely to give some relief to his fatal condition; a view that is supported by the prevailing medical views at the time.

As an aside to the medical concerns with Mediterranean climatology there were developed minutely detailed records of weather patterns in all the significant resort towns, particularly those along the Riviera's and the Grande Corniche but also for destinations in Algeria, Egypt, Cyprus, Malta and Palestine. Dr Scoresby Jackson<sup>101</sup> relates statistics covering temperature, rainfall, hours of sunshine, direction and velocity of winds, atmospheric pressure, humidity, electricity and the general vagaries of the weather in all the best-known localities. By this means doctors were able to plot the most suitable progress from resort to resort for their patients so as to promote a gentle, steady recuperation.

Pemble<sup>102</sup> characterised the Victorian era as being dominated by concerns for health, hygiene (natural therapies) and hypochondria. This may be too harsh a summation of the age but the widespread general fascination with health matters, verging on hypochondria as it did, made common knowledge of the influence of climate on health even amongst those confined by circumstance to the healthy, invigorating chilly breezes of Brighton, Bognor and Blackpool. Such common-place intimate acquaintance with the subject is reflected in popular books of the day, Charles Dickens *Little Dorrit*<sup>103</sup> being a prime example in which Dorrit passes from pallid puberty in England to sun-bronzed, sexualised womanhood as a result of time spent in Mediterranean health resorts<sup>104</sup>.

### **4.3 Phillip Muskett – the art of living in Australia**

The all pervading Anglo-Australian interest in healthy living was most strongly advocated by Phillip Muskett (1857-1909)<sup>105</sup>, a sometime pamphleteer and

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<sup>101</sup>Dr Robert Scoresby Jackson, *Medical Climatology*, 1862.

<sup>102</sup> Pemble, *Mediterranean Passion*.

<sup>103</sup> Charles Dickens (1812-70), author, *Little Dorrit*, 1857

<sup>104</sup> Dickens also wrote a less well-known Italian travelogue *Pictures from Italy*, 1846.

<sup>105</sup> Dates from State Library of South Australia.

writer who was also Surgeon Superintendent to the Government of New South Wales, Medical Superintendent of the Quarantine Station at Sydney and Senior Resident Medical Officer at Sydney Hospital. His principal book *The Art of Living in Australia*<sup>106</sup> begins with a telling statement:

*Australia is practically Southern Europe.*

While he does not actually use the term 'Mediterranean', his assertion is clear in the chapter headings of his table of contents. Aside from chapters about climate, ablution, bedroom ventilation, exercise and clothing suited to the climates found in Australia, Muskett includes large chapters about diet, Australian food habits, fish and seafoods, salads and Australian wine. He is acutely aware of the difficulty he faces in convincing Australians of the time to move away from their *Anglo-Saxon heredities* that is, their preferences for meat, potatoes, cabbage, tea drinking, and wearing heavy clothing and long sleeved ankle length night gowns!

Obviously wide ranging in his views and opinions much of Muskett's work has been discussed at length by various food symposia. What are of note here are his frequent references to "Southern Europe" as the source for much of his evidence for the right way to live in Australia. He bemoans the lack of market gardens, the low levels of consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables, the popular view that sea foods were the food of the poor and under-privileged – considered very inferior alongside beef, lamb, mutton and pork. Generally, Muskett rails against the John Bull and roast beef view of the stuff that made Englishmen and the British Empire great. The consumption of salads, fresh fruits and vegetables, and of sea foods are items of diet considered principal ingredients of Mediterranean cuisines.

Of Australian wine, Muskett writes:

*The chief purpose of this chapter, indeed, is to insist upon the value of our wines as the most wholesome drink for Australian use. It is a strange anomaly this, that at the present period of our existence a declaration of*

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<sup>106</sup> Phillip Muskett, *The Art of Living in Australia*, Eyre & Spottiswood, London, 1893.

*this kind should be necessary. Yet it is only in keeping with the rest of our food habits, with their perpetual challenge to our semi-tropical environment; and hence we are confronted with the astounding fact that although we are practically in Southern Europe, yet we follow a mode of living suitable only for a rigorous climate and a land of ice and snow.*<sup>107</sup>

In relation to olives, Muskett has comparatively little to say of them as having a desired role in Australian horticulture. He does advocate the use of olive oil in dressing salads in the French manner; a use to which his Anglo-Saxon audience is barely aware. Undeterred he declares:

*With many people the olive, like the tomato, is an acquired taste, and unfortunately too many fail to overcome their first impressions; but it is certainly worth acquiring, even if the process takes a long time and requires much perseverance, on account of its highly nutritive value.*<sup>108</sup>

Prefacing his book Muskett takes a strong line advocating for the superior dietary qualities of salads, and in doing so advocates equally as strongly for the development market gardens – the realm of much despised *John Chinaman*. In doing so he nominates a variety of “Southern European” vegetables as likely, indeed much needed, produce to *create the very bone and sinew of any population*.<sup>109</sup>

Of salads and salad vegetables and herbs Muskett has much to say in his Preface and in his chapters on ‘Australian Food Habits’<sup>110</sup> and ‘On Salads; Salad Plants and Herbs; and Salad Making.’<sup>111</sup>

Muskett notes the history in Australia of that most Mediterranean vegetable the tomato (even though it is native to South America):

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<sup>107</sup> Muskett, *The Art of Living in Australia*, Chapter 12, p. 178.

<sup>108</sup> Muskett, *The Art of Living in Australia*, p. 66.

<sup>109</sup> Muskett, *The Art of Living in Australia*, Preface, p. vii.

<sup>110</sup> Muskett, *The Art of Living in Australia*, Chapter 9, p. 114.

<sup>111</sup> Muskett, *The Art of Living in Australia*, Chapter 11, p. 161.

*The history of the introduction of the tomato into Australia is instructive in the connection (the local resistance to vegetables highly appreciated on the Continent). For years and years it struggled desperately, but unsuccessfully, for a place, and the attempt to bring it into use was on the point of being abandoned in consequence. But at last its undeniable merits were recognised, and today it is in universal request. Now it is perfectly safe to assume that the same recognition would be awarded to many other vegetables at present practically unknown in Australia. For instance, sweet corn ... .<sup>112</sup>*

These introductory comments are the lead up to his bold advocacy of the salad in all its numerous combinations. Muskett holds it up as the most needed change to the Australian diet of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and once again refers to its dominance in the diet of Southern Europeans:

*But if there is one desirable form of food which we should expect to find in daily use by the whole community, it is surely the salad. More than this, it deserves to meet with favour as the national dish. It takes pre-eminent rank in Southern Europe, and is certainly entitled to occupy a similar high position the Australian food list. Unfortunately there is the same sorry story to tell, and the strange neglect of salads can only be expressed by the term incomprehensible. It is a waste-saving dish; it is wholesome, in that it is purifying to the blood; it is full of infinite variety, and its low price brings it within easy every-day reach even of the humblest dwelling. But as things are even the salad plants themselves are represented by a meagre list, and are confined to only few varieties. And as far as salad herbs are concerned, they are literally unknown.<sup>113</sup>*

Despite the pervasive influence of the *Anglo-Saxon heredities* that mitigated against the adoption of a diet (and other features of daily life) suited to the Australian climate, Muskett throughout his book makes a creditable case for his advocacy of an approach to living in Australia that bears strong correlations with that already so well established in Southern Europe. While other cultural issues

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<sup>112</sup> Muskett, *The Art of Living in Australia*, Preface, p. viii.

<sup>113</sup> Muskett, *The Art of Living in Australia*, Preface, p. ix.

drawn from the same region were more evident on the Australian cultural landscape, in fields such as the Arts, the awareness of the Mediterranean as a source for the arts of living here were paid scant attention in the radiant light of Industrialism and the predominance of the British Empire.

#### **4.4 Acclimatisation Societies**

What then of more local evidence of Mediterranean influences? Local literature, such as it was in South Australia, is confined to newspaper reports, the minutes of various learned societies such as the Adelaide Philosophical Society, the *Government Gazette* and newspapers such as the *The Register*, *The Observer* and later, the parliamentary record of *Hansard*. Within the limits imposed by incomplete archives it is possible to detect discontinuous evidence of matters Mediterranean influencing events in South Australia. Largely these were confined to the vital interests of the shareholders of the South Australia Company and the colonists in establishing viable and profitable agricultural crops. In this there appears to be a singular divergence between early endeavours to acclimatise a wide range of crops thought suited to the perceived Mediterranean climate and the natural conservatism of farmers to stick with what they knew best.

From the perspective of present times it is understood that acclimatisation was the driver behind settlement everywhere. The successful transfer of livestock and agricultural plants from the Old World to the New was a critical factor in colonies and settlements around the world. Such transference of economic resources was natural to émigrés from England and Europe particularly in roughly equivalent climatic zones. In sub-Tropical and Tropical climates exotica such as, sugar cane, cotton, cochineal hosting cacti, indigo, tea, coffee, rubber and other economic crops had to be brought in from similar climatic zones, even if via the mechanisms for introduction came via the heated stoves at Kew. But in the case of South Australia plants considered perfectly normal for farming – wheat, oats, barley, rye, pasture grasses, apples (*Malus* spp), cherries (*Prunus cerasifera*), plums (*Prunus x domestica*), apricots (*Prunus armeniaca*), peaches (*Prunus persica*), table grapes (*Vitis* spp), pears (*Pyrus* spp), cabbages, turnips, carrots, etc., arrived without fanfare or special efforts. Even plants better suited

to South Australian conditions, and Australian conditions in general, were introduced via purchases of plants and livestock made at the Cape of Good Hope on the voyage out. Olives (*Olea europaea*), wine and drying grapes (*Vitis* spp), almonds (*Prunus dulcis*), *Citrus* spp, pomegranates (*Punica* spp), fruiting cacti (*Opuntia* spp.), guavas (*Psidium* spp), persimmons (*Diospyros* spp) and flowering plants were purchased from farms, nurseries and the gardens of the VOC.

From the perspective of colonial times things looked decidedly different. Cash crops delivered to familiar markets using known trading systems and utilising relatively economic transport routes led to first plant wheat, or corn as it was then known, and to grow wool. Generating a quick return and cash flow were key influences in farmers considerations, especially for those moving into new districts and reliant on paying off heavy borrowings as speedily as possible. It took but a few seasons for settler-farmers to realise that however desirable this might be, it was an expectation too far removed from the uncertainties of farming anywhere, let alone farming in an unknown climate on unknown soils.

After the first colonists began to realise and understand the differences between their farming techniques and crops that were successful in England, and those that might necessarily be adopted in South Australia, a point had been reached where formally constituted acclimatisation projects got underway.

Plants successful on farms in the Mediterranean region were sought out as being most likely to be successful in South Australia.

The activities of the South Australian Acclimatisation Society and individual leaders of colonial society in experimenting with new Mediterranean crops was overwhelmed, as time passed, by the persistence of farmers in growing crops they were familiar with in England; namely wheat and wool, beef and dairy cattle and the pasture crops that supported them. Pome fruit orchards and market gardens growing traditional Anglo-European crops were established while carob (*Ceratonia siliqua*) plantations, olive (*Olea europaea*) groves and other exotic experiments failed and dwindled due to lack of markets, lack of knowledge and lack of the necessary skills of husbandry.



Unlike colonists in New Zealand and New South Wales and Victoria, South Australian settlers were late in taking up the ideals of acclimatisation and assimilation. A report on the 'newly fledged' South Australian Acclimatisation Society in *The Garden and the Field* in February 1879<sup>114</sup> makes a detailed discussion of the risks involved and the bitter experience of those other colonies in being over-run with introduced species that had quickly grown to pest status.



South Australian coastline, summer, near Maslins Beach.  
The landscape and vegetation (sans *Agave americana*) bears close resemblance to the coast of Spain around Malaga and the Costa del Sol. (authors photograph).

There is a strong inference that the rabbit (*Oryctoagus cuniculus*), the brown hare (*Lepus capensis*), common pheasants (*Phasianus colchicus*), the house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), the Scotch thistle (*Onopordon acanthium*), and Cape marigold (*Arctotheca calendula*) had been introduced by well-meaning but amateurish individuals as either objects of beauty or utility. The difference between these accursed souls and the members of the Acclimatisation Society was that the members of such a society would be organised:

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<sup>114</sup>*The Garden and the Field*, February 1, 1879, p. 139-140.



Savannah grassland and open woodland, Spring Gully, Clare Valley, South Australia, in summer character. The hot, long, dry phase of the Mediterranean climate regime is clearly evident: the grass is yellow and the trees are aestivating. (author's photograph).

*... members of such Associations are supposed to act after due deliberation, and to be possessed of full knowledge of the nature and habits of any plants or animals introduced by them.*

Discussing the *balance of nature* the author of the article shows a wry sense of humour on the subject by providing an example of the problems associated with hasty introductions

*... from the Cape of Good Hope we might obtain many varieties of antelope which exist in the interior part of that colony, which would find a congenial home in the Far North – though probably they would increase so abundantly as to eat up all the pasture, and make squatters wish for the importation of a few lions, hyenas and other enemies of the antelope tribe.*

On a more serious note the author sets out his argument:

*... a look at a map of the world will show a vast extent of country lying on the same latitude as those in which we are situated, and in those*

*countries there are doubtless existing many forms of vegetal and animal life which it would be highly desirable to introduce here.*

The author goes on to enumerate the range of such countries:

*... endeavours should be made to procure contributions to our gardens and parks from the American states of Florida, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, southern California &c., and from Afghanistan, the Punjab, Tibet, Shanghai, Persia, Turkey, Japan and such countries, all of which must possess many desirable additions to our stock of plants and animals.*

And what sort of plants did the unknowing eco-friendly journalist nominate as likely candidates for acclimatisation? Why no lesser plants than

*... the succulent Opuntias, or cacti, of the Cape, of India, Spain &c., [which] if planted in the dry places of our interior would in time afford a means of existence to numbers of animals which could not exist at present in those localities.*

Prophetic words indeed, if more ironic than the author could possibly have known.

#### **4.5 Grapes, Wine and wine making**

The wine industry, subject of extensive research and publication in South Australia, is the prime example of the successful adaptation of a traditional Mediterranean industry to this mediterraneoid region. The existence of the Thomas Hardy Wine Collection in the State Library, the largest such collection in the world, exemplifies the success and importance of the industry. Some reference must be made to the archival material that refers to this successful effort at acclimatisation and methodological transfer. John Bleasdale, himself a local vigneron at Langhorne Creek, is tinged with the same enthusiasm as that which coloured the progressive stance of the members of the acclimatisation

society. His pamphlet *Pure Native Wine*<sup>115</sup> of 1860 is a relic of the optimism for new crops then running high. When E. Burney-Young published his pamphlet



Corrugated landscape of vineyards, Summertown, described thus by David Dridan<sup>116</sup>, could be equally as well described as 'wave-like' in Braudelian terms. (author's photograph)

*What Inducement can we Offer to Vine Growing*<sup>117</sup> in 1892 the early optimism clearly needed a boost. Given the eventual success of wine making as in

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<sup>115</sup> John Bleasdale, *Pure Native Wine*, Adelaide, 1860.

<sup>116</sup> David Dridan, Adelaide artist, gallery owner, art historian.

<sup>117</sup> E. Burney Young, *What Inducement can we Offer to Vine Growing*, Adelaide, 1892.

industry in South Australia <sup>118</sup> despite its early struggles it is illuminating to see how many other mediterranean crops were tried and failed.

The influence of early German involvement with the wine industry cannot be ignored and while their experiences in viticulture proved invaluable their choice of grape varieties and wine styles must have proven problematical given the much colder climate they were accustomed to produce in. Given a little time and with the realisation that their main export market would be Great Britain they changed from producing German style table wines to making the fortified Spanish and Portuguese styles such as Port, Sherries and Madeira in so much demand there. Consequently there was favour given to increased plantings of suitable grape varieties to meet the demand. While quantities of red and white table wines continued to be produced, mainly for local consumption, the market for fortified wines remained predominant over the period under discussion.



Vineyards, Spring Gully, Clare Valley - verdant waves across the landscape.  
(author's photograph).

#### **4.6 The Olive, olive growing and olive oil**

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<sup>118</sup> See George Bell, *South Australian Wine Industry 1858 – 1876*.

Of all the exotic plants tried by colonists anxious to secure their fortune in South Australia the olive (*Olea europaea ssp. europaea*) was, without doubt, one which appeared to hold great hope for success. The first olive trees were brought from the Cape of Good Hope in the South Australian Company's ships and planted here about 1837. The sight of the young trees as they took root and grew in the first years of the colony must have heartened all those who watched their progress. As colonists and farmers cleared their land ready for planting and cropping they represented one of the first signs that productive agriculture could be successful in South Australia. As stocks multiplied and were made available plantations and groves were established the largest was probably that of John Bailey in his Hackney Garden. Such an early start reflected the wishes of the South Australian Company that the olive should be among the productive trees tried out from the first. It also meant that South Australian olive oil could be exhibited by George Francis at the Great Exhibition in London in 1851. Sufficient numbers of young trees were propagated that four years later the Adelaide Parklands could be re-afforested by Bailey with olive groves between the Police Barracks and the Old Adelaide Gaol in Bonython Park (Park Number 27, 'Tulya Wodli') and in the North East corner around Lower North Adelaide at the junction of Mann Terrace and Park Road ( Park Number 7, 'Kattinga' and Park Number 8 'Barnguttilla'). These substantial 1855 -56 plantations formed the backbone of the earliest Mediterranean type horticulture in South Australia; a considerable proof to diffident farmers that successful farming in the new colony would be quite different to that practiced at the time in Great Britain. Even after planting the Parklands groves Bailey is reputed to have auctioned off around 15,000 olive trees when he shut down his Hackney Garden nursery in 1858. The importance of the olive continued as the colonist-farmers struggled to find a successful combination of crops and techniques that could sustain them and deliver a financially viable business outcome.

Thomas Hardy (1830-1912) was one of the strongest advocates for the plant, as he was for wine grapes, and maintained a steady stream of correspondence to *The Garden and the Field*, as well as addressing the principal horticultural and agricultural societies on the subject. According to reports of meetings published in *The Garden and the Field* Hardy spoke to the South Australian Gardeners' Society, the South Australian Gardeners' Mutual Improvement

Society and the Royal Agricultural Society of South Australia asserting certain knowledge above that of his fellow colonists. Hardy opines that:

*... the importance of the olive, as a future source of wealth and employment for us, cannot be fully realised by those who have not seen the olive grounds of Europe.*<sup>119</sup>

Hardy goes on to advise readers of *The Garden and the Field* of his experience and knowledge on the subject. As evidence for their hardiness and productivity he cites a 40 year old tree in the garden of George Stevenson's<sup>120</sup> (1799-1856) North Adelaide garden and 25 year old specimens in his own neighbourhood of 'Bankside' (Reynella). By 1881 Hardy reported returns of his own block of 50 established trees and also refers to 10,000 trees planted by the Stonyfell Olive Company, and the several thousand trees in plantations around the Adelaide Gaol. Hardy gives a detailed paper of practical advice to those intent on setting up in the olive business. Besides the production of olive oil, Hardy also promoted their use as a timber wood for cabinet makers, as an essential item for wool processing, as a source of fuel, and as a source of food for poultry (*viz.* the spent paste 'cake' from which the oil is extracted under pressure).<sup>121</sup>

Hardy's 1877 article was followed the next year by a most impressive publication: *The Olive, Its Culture and Products in the South of France and Italy* by William Boothby<sup>122</sup> with 24 photographs taken in European olive (*Olea europaea*) groves by the author. Under the imprint of the Government Printer, the book carried with it a certain weight of official approval, especially since the author was the Sheriff of South Australia and Supervisor of the Adelaide Gaol. One of Boothby's responsibilities was the maintenance of the olive (*Olea europaea*) plantations near the Gaol. It is clear that Boothby took his responsibilities in this regard very seriously and may well have been under some official expectation of demonstrating the value and appropriateness of the olive (*Olea europaea*) industry for South Australian conditions.

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<sup>119</sup> Thomas Hardy, Olive Planting, in *The Garden and the Field*, August 1, 1877.

<sup>120</sup> George Stevenson, nurseryman and florist, Adelaide.

<sup>121</sup> Thomas Hardy, 'Olive Culture', in *The Garden and the Field*, October, 1881.

<sup>122</sup> William R. Boothby, *The Olive, Its Culture & Products in the South of France and Italy*, Adelaide, Government Printer, 1878.



Dorrit Black, *'The Olive Plantation'* 1946, depicts mature olive groves established in the foothills near Magill, possibly those of the Stonyfell Olive Company (est. 1876) at Stonyfell.  
(Art Gallery of South Australia collection)

While prominent among the advocates for new crops such as the olive (*Olea europaea*) in Adelaide's Mediterranean climate, Hardy was by no means the only promoter. Albert Molineux (1832-1909) editorialised in *The Garden and the Field* in November, 1880, on the idea of the olive (*Olea europaea*), interplanted with almonds (*Prunus dulcis*) and sunflowers, as a replacement for wheat on the old impoverished soils of the Adelaide Plains.





Olive Grove, Adelaide Parklands probably planted by William Boothby (Sheriff of South Australia and Supervisor, Adelaide Gaol) rejuvenated by Senor Villanis and now maintained and harvested by TAFE students stand as 150 year old evidence of transplanted Mediterranean influences in South Australia almost from the first days of the settlement.  
(authors photograph)

Arguing along the lines of economics, sustainability, risks, markets and returns, Molineux proposed olives (*Olea europaea*) as the answer to crop failures, market collapses, transport losses and crop diseases and other vagaries of the wheat farmer's lot.

*We cannot very well produce too much olive oil for the world's wants, and it is only the thinking men of the colony who will be likely to adopt the advice we are now offering<sup>123</sup>.*

My underlining draws attention to the tensions that were beginning to develop between the 'new economy' progressive acclimatisers and the 'old economy' traditional farmers in the colony. Molineux was at pains to show that the difficulties many wheat farmers faced could be ameliorated by the potential profits of smaller areas of olives (*Olea europaea*), almonds (*Prunus dulcis*) or sunflowers.

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<sup>123</sup> Albert Molineux, 'New Life for the Farmers', *The Garden and the Field*, November 1880, p. 84.

*It may be remarked that sunflower seeds, almonds [Prunus dulcis], and olives [Olea europaea] all require to be gathered at a time long after the wheat harvest is in, so that they do not interfere with that most important event, and it is just as likely as not that if the 96 acres [38.8ha] of wheat turn out a failure, the four acres [1.6ha] of olives [Olea europaea], or almonds [Prunus dulcis] or sunflowers may pay for all losses.<sup>124</sup>*

Mr G.L. Barnard, in a paper presented to the Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society in September, 1881<sup>125</sup>, added his observations concerning the present condition of olives (*Olea europaea*) in South Australia. Of note is his report of 51,000 olive (*Olea europaea*) trees<sup>126</sup> planted in and around Adelaide including plantations of heavy bearing selected and grafted sorts owned by Mr Everard (Everard Park) and Mr Pole (Fulham). He cited research by Surveyor-General George Goyder (1828-89) that demonstrated the viability of the hardy olive (*Olea europaea*) alongside more risky wheat crops showing 70 trees on one acre can produce oil to the value of 7 guineas annually equal to the income produced by 30 bushels of wheat that occupied a larger (un-stated) area. For want of careful observation and selection of heavy bearing seedlings and grafting upon wild olive (*Olea europaea*) stocks the golden oleaceous bounty of the Mediterranean could be husbanded in South Australia.

Another who contributed to the early discussion of olive tree cultivation as a strong source of potential income for South Australia was Signor Paolo Villanis, an Italian and Engineer to the Italian Court at the Melbourne International Exhibition of 1880-81. At the conclusion of the Exhibition Villanis decided to remain in Australia with his family and eventually journeyed to Adelaide. His resume, published in detail in *The Garden and the Field*<sup>127</sup>, in a reply to questions raised about his qualifications at meetings of the Council of the City of Adelaide and the Royal Agricultural Society shows his considerable experience in the French wine industry. It is in respect of wine growing that Villanis first appears in the pages of *The Garden and the Field*. Villanis is quoted at

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<sup>124</sup> Anon., *The Garden and the Field*, November 1880, p. 84.

<sup>125</sup> Anon., *The Garden and the Field*, October 1881, p. 67.

<sup>126</sup> Statistical Returns 1878.

<sup>127</sup> Albert Molineux. 'About Signor Paolo Villanis C.E.', *The Garden and the Field*, April 1885, pp. 164-165.

verbatim from an article he had published in *The Register, Exhibitors and experts in Judgement Upon the Reserved Wines*<sup>128</sup> and directly contributed a series of articles on wine making<sup>129</sup>.

In relation to olives (*Olea europaea*), Signor Villanis gained some notoriety after being quoted as saying,

*I see the olive is shamefully neglected in South Australia.*<sup>130</sup>,

during a visit to the colony while employed at the Melbourne International Exhibition. Villanis gained further notoriety after being given the task of pruning and rejuvenating the groves of olives (*Olea europaea*) planted in the Adelaide Park Lands<sup>131</sup>. It was this that caused the questions of his qualifications to be raised, so great was the outcry about his decimation of the overgrown, unproductive and unkempt trees. Despite having published a detailed description of the methods of pruning olives (*Olea europaea*) used in commercial groves in France, Spain and Italy<sup>132</sup>, accompanied by a full page illustration of the step-by-step process, it seems his detractors found his methods outside their comprehension, and the result beyond their comfort zone. Molineux, editor of *The Garden and the Field* took a defensive posture to these critics and appears to have given Villanis commissions to write for the publication perhaps out of admiration for his obvious skills and knowledge but also because Molineux perceived that Villanis represented the emerging Mediterranean agriculture that Molineux wished to advance as an editorial policy.

Olives (*Olea europaea*) as a table fruit or condiment rate only a small entry. Following a desultory report on the sad state of the olive (*Olea europaea*) grove at Buckland Park,

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<sup>128</sup> Molineux. 'About Signor Paolo Villanis C.E.', *The Garden and the Field*, April 1885, pp. 164-165.

<sup>129</sup> *The Garden and the Field*, January 1884, *Notes on Wine Making*, p. 125.

<sup>130</sup> *The Garden and the Field*, October 1881,

<sup>131</sup> Current research on the history of the Park Lands olive plantations is being conducted by Craig Hill, Master of Arts (History) candidate at Adelaide University. His work includes identifying the varieties planted, the personalities involved in the early industry, surviving literature and govt. reports, market place reports and conservation issues.

<sup>132</sup> *The Garden and the Field*, October, 1883.

*... a number of very large olives [Olea europaea] loaded, nay overloaded with fruit were [also] seen [though] no use is made of the fruit.*

But even the enthusiastic advocacy of Molineux flagged at the thought of pickled olives (*Olea europaea*) as food: ‘

*... olives are an acquired taste – and the taste is entirely an acquired one*<sup>133</sup>.

At the same time this olive (*Olea europaea*) lionising was going on *The Garden and the Field* published a lengthy piece by an unknown author about the date palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*). The article is noteworthy not only because it demonstrates the endeavours of colonial agriculturalists to diversify in accordance with the perceived Mediterranean climate of South Australia but also for the moral tone of the piece<sup>134</sup>.

Cultural superiority, indeed cultural imperialism is proclaimed as is the occupation of the land:

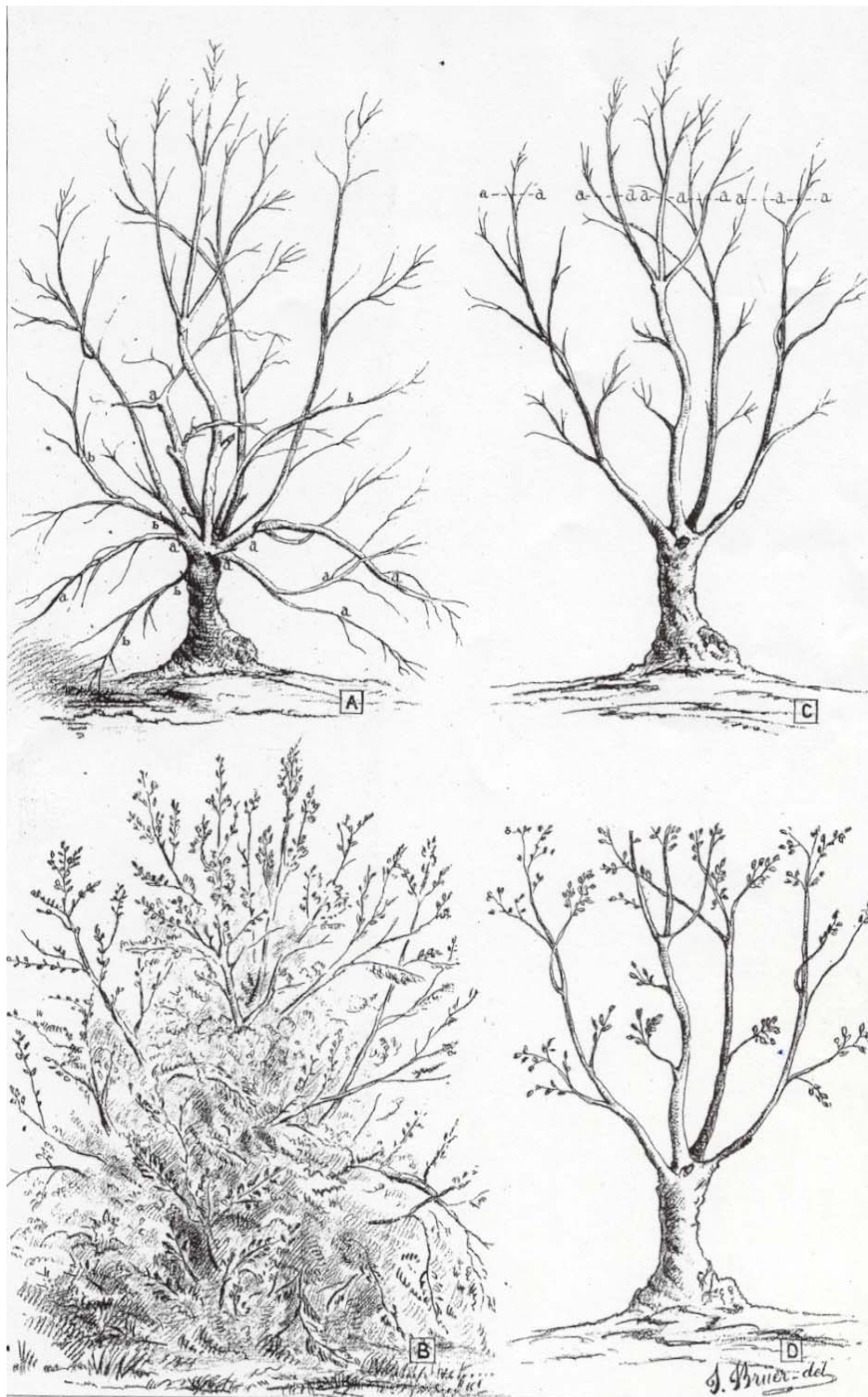
*Though few fruits and vegetables – all unknown before the pioneers – were found at all palatable to their tastes, yet they and the products of the chase had been sufficient for untold ages to supply the wants of the native tribes – esteemed low, even very low, in comparison to the invaders – yet wonderfully adapted to the circumstances in which they found themselves (my underlining).*

The attractions of the date as a foodstuff that could be grown with profit and ease in South Australia are somewhat misleading in their simplicity, particularly because contrary to the views of the writer date palms need expert and timely care especially in ensuring the pollination of the flowers.

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<sup>133</sup> *The Garden and the Field*, October, 1887, p. 100.

<sup>134</sup> Anon., ‘Cultivation for Posterity’, *The Garden and the Field*, April, 1885, pp. 166-167.



Senor Villanis's illustrated guide to pruning the colonists overgrown & unproductive olives. Modern techniques show he knew what he was doing, despite what the scandalized settlers thought. Illustrated in *The Garden and the Field Supplement*, October 1883.

The utility of the tree in all its parts is stressed: as light durable timber, as fodder, as fuel, as a source of fibre, as thatching - though there is an implied assumption that farmers and townsfolk of British and European stock would

enthusiastically adopt Arabic construction methods and develop Asian basket-weaving skills. On a note of high Romance the author concluded:

*If our park lands were studded with dates [Phoenix dactylifera], instead of sickly gums [Eucalyptus ssp], poets might even be found to sing their praises.*

Citrus trees, another important and characteristic Mediterranean crop, were also tried early and found happy accommodation in the deep alluvial soils and high water tables along the Torrens and the creeks of the Adelaide Plains. Groves were successfully established at Springfield, Campbelltown, Marden, Joslin, Payneham, Evandale and further afield along the Gawler River at Angle Vale. Later, as these sites were developed, the citrus industry found a long-term foothold in the Riverland as the various irrigation schemes, often associated with soldier settlements, were established at Renmark, Berri, Loxton, Baramba and Lake Bonney after the initial ventures between the state government and the Chaffey brothers in 1887 established agricultural irrigation as viable despite early setbacks and bankruptcies for the brothers.

Resurrecting an earlier Mediterranean theme, Molineux reprinted an article originally published by Sir Samuel Davenport (1818-1906) in the *Proceedings of the Adelaide Philosophical Society in 1864*. In the reprinted article, published in *The Garden and the Field* in 1882, Davenport presented an overview of the methods and likely subjects for the extraction of scents from plants<sup>135</sup>. A strong advocate for developing a perfume industry in South Australia, Davenport stated his case:

*... the question brought home to us is whether this, our own sunny soil of South Australia, should not join competitor with these other fair spots [favoured parts of Europe and Asia] of their production, nor leave the fine fragrance of its flowering to be longer wasted on the wandering air. Great*

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<sup>135</sup> Samuel Davenport, 'The Extraction of Scent from Plants', *Proceedings of the Adelaide Philosophical Society*, November 15, 1864.

*Britain pays annually to foreigners for perfumes half a million of money, because none of her own colonies as yet supply her wants.*<sup>136</sup>

Among the plants he lists as suited to the production of essential oils were balm, mint, wormwood, lavender, thyme, rosemary, verbena, rose, jasmine, heliotrope, citron, orange flowers, aniseed, fennel – all of which are regarded as Mediterranean plants and which were known as the principal crops of the French perfume industry based at Grasse and Nice, and at that time the most highly developed and profitable perfume industry anywhere.

In his discourse on extraction methods for perfumers, Davenport recommended olive (*Olea europaea*) oil, or purified sheep fat or beef fat as the preferred receptive / extractive agents for the *effleurage* process. Could it be that he was trying to suggest the possibility of a profitable collaboration between plant acclimatisers and dyed in the wool farmers in order to advance his cause to realisation?

The suggestion of developing a perfume industry was taken up by Molineux in a short article in *The Garden and the Field* in which he cited a lengthy list of scent bearing plants worthy of consideration by those interested. Among the likely subjects included are the Eucalypts (*Eucalyptus* spp):

*... a perfume that improves upon acquaintance;*

while Provençal lavender (*Lavandula stoechas*) was recommended as growing best on dry calcareous soils such as are found on 'The Long Desert' (the Mallee) and jasmine (*Jasminum* spp) was advocated for its high return per acre: £230 profit from 10,000 pounds (4,536kg) weight of flowers grown on 2½ acres (1.0ha) of land<sup>137</sup>.

Still following the line of exploration established by those looking for new agricultural crops suited to the climate of South Australia, Molineux took up his

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<sup>136</sup> Samuel Davenport, 'The Extraction of Scent from Plants', *The Garden and the Field*, October 1882, pp. 68-70.

<sup>137</sup> Albert Molineux. *The Garden and the Field*, July 1888, p. 21.

pen to advance the cause of fibre crops<sup>138</sup>. In an extensive survey he included the Agave (*Agave americana*; *Agave rigida* ssp *sisalana*; *Agave ixtli* (Pita); *Agave Mexican*; *Agave cubensis* (Maguey); *Agave saponaria*; *Agave vividividum*), New Zealand Flax (*Phormium tenax*), Ramie (*Boehmeria nivea*), Canna (*Canna gigantean*; *Canna coccinea*; *Canna edulis*; *Canna flaccida*; *Canna glauca*), Hemp (*Cannabis sativa*), Cabbage Tree (*Cordyline* spp), Furcraea (*Furcraea gigantean*), Sea Island Cotton (*Gossypium barbadense*), Hibiscus (*Hibiscus* spp), Mallow (*Malva* spp), Mallow (*Lavatera* spp), Flax (*Linum usitatissimum*), False Mallow (*Sidalcea rhomboids*), African Hemp (*Sparmannia africana*), Kurrajong (*Brachychiton* ssp syn *Sterculia* spp), Esparto Grass (*Stipa tenacissima*). Molineux added, where appropriate, comment on the suitability of the Agaves (*Agave* spp) for producing soap substitutes and paper, and a variety of distilled liquors such as maguey (*Agave cubensis*), mescal and pulque<sup>139</sup>. As well, Molineux prognosticated on the possibilities of some native plants as the suppliers of raw materials for twine, rope and cordage, and paper – *Dianella* spp; *Carex* spp; *Stypandra* spp; Bulrush, *Typha angustifolia*; *Xerotes longifolia*; *Scirpus* spp; *Cyperus* spp; *Commersonia fraseri*; *Gahnia cladium*; *Tetrarhena juncea*; *Caespitosa* spp; *Scoenus brierifolius*, and *Lepidosperma* spp. Ramie (*Boehmeria nivea*) is again taken up by Molineux in the following issue pointing to it as a cash crop successfully grown in Catalonia, and by inference well suited to South Australia. In his opinion, it compared favourably against flax, hemp and jute.

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<sup>138</sup> Albert Molineux. *The Garden and the Field*, July 1888, pp. 16-17.

<sup>139</sup> All kinds of rough tequila





‘Coriole’, McLaren Vale, South Australia, an elderly Carob (*Ceratonia siliqua*) tree outside the farmhouse. Once planted as a drought tolerant fodder tree, it has become a valued element in the domestic landscape.  
(authors photograph)

Alternative crops were extended, by Molineux, to include Malaga raisin production<sup>140</sup> while in the same issue a Monsieur E. Bourbaud advocated the cultivation of the caper bush in South Australia<sup>141</sup>.

Coincidentally, in a front page advertisement of *The Garden and the Field* for October 1887 nurserymen E& W Hackett announced their offer to farmers of seeds of *Acacia arabica* – ideal on dry, calcareous soils and the best source of Gum Arabic for medicinal and technical purposes, and also producing ‘Baboon Bark’ for tanning.

Apparently not one to give up his Mediterranean proselytising and advocacy of farm diversification, Molineux maintained a stream of articles urging, suggesting, advising, and cajoling his readership to try new crops as a means of addressing the challenges faced by farmers in farming the new lands and in managing the risks of mono-cropping and far distant markets. The pages of *The Garden and the Field* are liberally salted with his detailed suggestions for

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<sup>140</sup> Albert Molineux, *The Garden and the Field*, 1888, p. 51.

<sup>141</sup> Molineux, *The Garden and the Field*, vol 12, 1887, p. 75.

osiers (*Salix* spp) around Lakes Alexandrina and Albert, and along the banks of the Murray and everywhere in the Adelaide Hills; for flax, hemp and tobacco in the Onkaparinga valley; for cochineal production on cactus groves in drier areas; for mangolds and wurzels for cattle food on the heavy soils of Mitcham and elsewhere.

When there was bad news from the London Corn Exchange, or news of bumper harvests in America, Canada or the Crimea depressing markets; when shipping delays caused heavy losses and when drought and disease struck the colonists crops, Molineux took up his causes as palliatives to the ill fortunes of South Australian farmers.

His enthusiasm seems not to have struck too many responsive chords among those considerable numbers of farmers struggling to make a living by growing wheat and wool. “What’s a poor farmer to do?” increasingly became the subject of letters to the editor. A particularly bitter campaign was waged by one subscriber/ farmer who, in letters published in volume 12 of *The Garden and the Field*, demanded the return of his subscription and severely criticised the usefulness of the information Molineux published.

The severe drought, occurring at the time, above Goyder’s Line may have engendered this attack but there was nothing more Molineux could say that was not carping. He said it anyway, publishing a detailed description of the dried fruit industry of south-eastern France and included a lengthy paper by J.F. Pascoe on irrigation generally and a discussion about water use in South Australia in the same edition. He had made his case, as had members of the South Australian Acclimatisation Society and the ‘thinking men of the colony’. But, their cause had not found fertile ground amongst the small-holders and farmers of the colony. Trapped by old knowledge, old experiences and old practices they just were not able to step outside their conservatism to see beyond the markets of ‘Home’ and the British Empire to the possibilities of an agriculture and horticulture based on Mediterranean concepts and practices.

#### **4.7 Information Sources for the Colony of South Australia**

“Bring everything useful that can be neatly packed up” was the advice given to intending settlers, and for cabin passengers entitled to extra stowage space above that allowed for settlers travelling steerage that meant as many of the items needed for civilized living as could be managed.

Beside the items required to be taken by the South Australian Company and its shipping agents – a mattress, blankets, sheets, a coverlet, towels, knives, forks, spoons, tin plates and mugs, an iron kettle, saucepans, frying pan, tea-pot and tin pail, a stock of summer and winter weight clothes, shoes, boots, etc., and four pounds (1.8kg) of soap - cabin passengers took much more. Private medical ‘comforts’ (casks of port, rum, whisky or brandy), chests of drawers, charcoal water filters, safety lanterns were among the smaller items frequently stowed by cabin passengers but they were also advised

*... that it would be desirable to take out a wooden house ... a marquee or lined tent, [wooden] deals for flooring and rafters ... doors and shutters.*

While others took barrels of nails, cart wheels, axles, bullock and horse tack, brewing equipment and other trade accoutrements, and according to diaries quoted by Kerr<sup>142</sup> many had books of plays, poems, almanacs and copies of the Bible as comforts for the long hours of idleness aboard ship. Within a year of first settlement, houses were graced with bookshelves and pianos<sup>143</sup>, fitted up with mantles, fenders, grates<sup>144</sup>, and countless other domestic comforts.

It is intriguing to ponder what horticultural books there may have been among the luggage and chattels of the colonists to South Australia. There appears no record of any such items, yet for such well prepared and ambitious folk, keen to prosper in the new colony, and with town and country acres to take an income from they must surely have brought more than the *Hints to Emigrants*<sup>145</sup> and

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<sup>142</sup> Colin Kerr, *A excellent colony – the Practical Idealists of 1836 1846*, Rigby, Adelaide, 1978, pp. 23-24.

<sup>143</sup> Kerr, *A Excellent Colony*, p. 72.

<sup>144</sup> Kerr, *A Excellent Colony*, p. 94.

<sup>145</sup> Henry Capper, *South Australia - containing Hints to Emigrants*, London, 1838.

the optimistic broadsheets published by the South Australian Company. In these the climate is compared favourably

*... the beginning of winter is described as resembling spring in the South of Spain*<sup>146</sup>

But what could they make of that? Experienced farmer and eager landowners alike had little to guide them in the practice of agriculture or horticulture in the unknown climate they were about to face.

Unlike the other Australian colonies, South Australia began as a planned scheme of migration and settlement, so it is hardly surprising that among the many other objectives of the South Australia Company was the (eventual) expectation that a mechanics library would be established for the purpose of instructing colonists in the finer points of husbandry, industry and useful knowledge. The Minutes of the South Australian Scientific and Literary Association record the arrival of a trunkful of some 200 books<sup>147</sup> supplied to Robert Gouger (1802-46) by the Company's agents in London to which were added supplementary collections provided by George Fife Angas (11789-1879) and the Society of Dissenters. The catalogue of what was contained in the original shipment of 200 books is general rather than listing specific items such as 'a treatise on theology' or 'a treatise on animal husbandry' so identifying individual books is problematic. Fortunately research by Michael Talbot<sup>148</sup> has cross-referenced old books on the earliest acquisitions lists and catalogues of the State Library with the vague list of the trunkful of books and produced a list that is more specific even though still with some question marks.

As the colony grew and eventually prospered substantial collections of relevant material were gathered in what became the Library of the SA Parliament, the Public Library and the library of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens, though the first

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<sup>146</sup> Alfred Duckham, agent for the South Australian Colonisation Commissioners, Falmouth, broadsheet issued to farmers.

<sup>147</sup> Carl Bridge, *A Trunkful of Books- History of the State Library of South Australia and its Forerunners*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1986.

<sup>148</sup> Michael Talbot, *A Chance to Read – a History of the Institute Libraries*, Library Board of SA, Adelaide, 1992.

and last named were pretty well restricted in public access. Research by Payne<sup>149</sup> and Hodgkinson<sup>150</sup> reveals the intensity and diversity of reportage and public discussion concerning a suitable agriculture for South Australia that developed in the broadsheet newspapers and journals of the era. Discussion extended beyond the practitioners of agriculture and horticulture and included lively interchanges between other parties interested in the economic development and success of the colony, including the substantial community of German speaking settlers and members of the Chamber of Manufactures and the Chamber of Commerce.

There were also quite large collections in local mechanics institute libraries, such as that at Kapunda endowed by Adamson, a founding member of the Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society of South Australia.

It is to be regretted that sales catalogues and inventories from the estates of the landed gentry do not contain much useful information on the subject. It is known that leading squatter families – Mortlock, Barr Smith, Duncan, Dutton, Bagot, Angas, Gosse, Hawker and others all had significant private libraries but little is known of the titles they contained; many having been dispersed before inventories were considered worthwhile as compiled by auctioneers or family historians. Peter Waite (1834-1922), Sir Samuel Way (1836-1916) and Sir Josiah Symon (18465-1934), all leading professional men of Adelaide, also had considerable private libraries, including gardening and horticultural book that were bequeathed variously to major public institutions: the University of Adelaide – Waite Institute and Barr Smith libraries; and, the State Library of South Australia.

It is particularly frustrating not to have any significant information regarding the libraries of the Bagot or Dutton families, for each had a reputation for leadership in matters horticultural and botanical. At 'Anlaby' homestead, founded by the Dutton family in 1839, a very substantial library and reading room was built that was well furnished with books. By the 1978 clearance sale when the property

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<sup>149</sup> Pauline Payne, *Dr Richard Schombergk and the Adelaide Botanic Garden 1865 – 1891*, PhD thesis, University of Adelaide, 1992 Chaps 5, 6 and 8 in particular.

<sup>150</sup> Roma Hodgkinson, *Gardens and Gardening in Adelaide in the Nineteenth Century*, Journal of the History Society of SA No. 19 pp 42 77.

and contents were sold by the family, a large number of sporting, gardening and horticultural books had already been disposed of through the services of Harry Muir in 1962 when Geoffrey Dutton inherited the property. Included in the 1978 sale was a sizeable quantity of garden memorabilia including several thousand cast bronze name tags bearing the names of Roses (*Rosa* spp). In the early 1900's the rose (*Rosa* spp) gardens at 'Anlaby' were reputed to be the largest in the southern hemisphere and constituted by far the largest single-species garden around this mansion. Early photographs provide clear evidence that rose (*Rosa* spp) cultivation was one of the areas of expertise necessary for the team of fourteen gardeners employed there. Many of the books from the library were disposed of to Muir as boxed selections and bundles but fine illustrated works such as Redouté et Thory's *Les Roses, Les Liliacées* and *Choix des plus Belles Fleurs*, in the Ariel editions, were auctioned in their sets and individual volumes, including a number of illustrated botanical and floricultural 'plate' books. Earlier similar books were supplied by Muir of Beck's Book Shop, Pulteney Street, to Ursula Hayward of 'Carrick Hill' when a fire in the library in 1954 destroyed the original Hayward library collection. A replacement collection was purchased with the insurance payout as a job lot with a large amount being sourced from Muir, including a number of garden related titles.<sup>151</sup> Included among them were Gertrude Jekyll's *Roses for English Gardens*<sup>152</sup> (1902) and *Wood and Garden*<sup>153</sup> (1899), and William Paul's *The Rose Garden*<sup>154</sup> (1848). These should still be among the present holdings at 'Carrick Hill' along with titles more or less contemporaneous with the refurbishment of the destroyed collection including: *Garden Notebook*<sup>155</sup> (1940), *The Old Shrub Roses*<sup>156</sup> (1955), *Old Garden Roses*<sup>157</sup> (1955), *Les roses*<sup>158</sup> (1959).

#### 4.8 George Strickland Kingston (1807-80) and Settlers of Substance

<sup>151</sup> Personal conversation with His Honour, Judge Christopher Legoe, nephew of Ursula Hayward.

<sup>152</sup> Gertrude Jekyll & Edward Mawley, *Roses for English Gardens*, Country Life, London, 1902.

<sup>153</sup> Gertrude Jekyll, *Wood and Garden*, Country Life, London, 1899.

<sup>154</sup> William Paul, *The Rose Garden*, 1888.

<sup>155</sup> Constance Spry, *Garden Notebook*, Dent, London, 1940.

<sup>156</sup> Graham Stuart Thomas, *The Old Shrub Roses*, Phoenix House, London, 1955.

<sup>157</sup> Sacheverall Sitwell & James Russell, *Old Garden Roses*, Rainbird & Collins, London, 1955.

<sup>158</sup> Redouté et Thory, *Les Roses*, Ariel Press, London, 1959.

George Strickland Kingston<sup>159</sup> (1807-80) provides the first architectural evidence for Mediterranean influences in South Australia. As an architect, surveyor and civil engineer in South Australia from 1836 to 1880 he drew on ideas gathered while he was serving in the Mediterranean basin to construct domestic and public buildings that featured thick walls, shuttered and louvred windows, deep eaves, verandas, arcaded porticoes and colonnades. Old Parliament House, 'Cummins House', 'Government House', and 'Kingston House' (see Appendix 3) are all surviving examples of his eminently sensible designs. There were others too, now demolished that suggest a strong awareness of the Mediterranean climate and the architectural devices capable of reducing its impact on domestic and public life. The fact that many of the first settlers, those of substance who came out ready to set up proper establishments from the beginning employed him for their homes and various business offices is evidence enough that his approach to design struck a resonant chord with the client base in early Adelaide.

NOTE: This image is included on page 95 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

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<sup>159</sup> See Elfreda and Rolf Jensen, *Colonial Architecture in South Australia – a definite chronicle of development 1836 – 1900 and the social history of the times*, Rigby, Adelaide, 1980.

The library 'Anlaby' about 1910 showing the large collection of books included in which were many botanical and horticultural titles. Such large collections were considered a necessary adjunct to civilised life for well-to-do South Australian pastoral families, who lived between homes in the city and the country. (photo. from *The Australian Homestead*, not attributed.)



19<sup>th</sup> C Nursery Catalogue by Elisha (c.1826-1914) & Walter Hackett (1827-1914), that includes extensive lists of agricultural and horticultural plants well limited to cultivation in South Australia's Mediterranean climate. (private collection, Adelaide)

#### 4.9 South Australian sources

Thus far consideration has been given to the influence of media, communications and Mediterranean experiences largely from outside South



Australia. There exists a substantial body of local material and it is timely to introduce it, explore it and assess its contribution to our understanding of the Mediterranean as a force in cultural and landscape developments here. Individual authors such as George McEwin (1815-85) and Ernst Heyne (1825-81) appeared early and showed an understanding of the Mediterranean nature of the locale.

The first significant assembly of South Australian materials was mounted in Adelaide in 1987; easily accessible to the general public *Gardens in Time* was an exhibition of horticultural and gardening related publications, and works on paper. At an official level the exhibition, held in the State Library, was organised and curated by the librarians of the North Terrace institutions: the State Library, the Public Library, the Barr Smith Library and its associate the Waite Library, the Botanic Gardens library and the State Herbarium library. However, significant input was provided by at least two private book collectors concerned with matters horticultural and botanical: Robert Swinbourne and Trevor Nottle (b.1947). The catalogue of the exhibition<sup>160</sup> recorded only the items on loan from these public collections. For whatever reasons the items loaned by the private collectors, with one exception, were not recorded. However, there was displayed a significant number of early South Australian nursery catalogues and several books relating to gardening in South Australia from these private sources. Swinbourne's collection of early nursery catalogues was later given to the State Library Rare Books Collection, and may have been transferred to the Mortlock Collection; regrettably the collection appears to have been dispersed in the general collection, or could even have been 'de-acquired' at a later date subject to reviews of the acquisitions policy of the organisation. Whatever the case, it is not now possible to identify or locate items from this collection.

By a most fortunate happenstance Swinbourne had early published *Years of Endeavour*<sup>161</sup>, a history of the nursery industry in South Australia. The first three chapters provide a great deal of information about the lists and catalogues

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<sup>160</sup> Robin Eaden (ed.), *Gardens in Time* – 20 October–20 November 1987, State Library, Adelaide, 1987.

<sup>161</sup> Robert Swinbourne, *Years of Endeavour*, South Australian Association of Nurserymen (at Gillingham Press), Adelaide, 1982.

issued by the first nurserymen of the state. A chronological bibliography of nursery catalogues and seed lists from his, and other collections, is recorded in the book (see Appendix 5).

Among South Australian items on display were George McEwin's *The South Australian Vigneron and Gardener's Manual (1871)*<sup>162</sup> and Ernst Heyne's *The Amateur Gardener (1886)*<sup>163</sup>. Both books provide a valuable insight into the understanding of climate and its impact on horticulture and garden making in South Australia. Without directly acknowledging any Mediterranean similarities, McEwin provides detailed accounts of plants suited to the local climate. His previous experiences as gardener to George Stevenson (1799-1856), himself a knowledgeable gardener at North Adelaide, and as a nurseryman in his own right show in his writing: the plants McEwin lists are clearly appropriate to the climate. McEwin's particular bent was fruit trees and grape vines; two areas of production horticulture that he later capitalised on as an orchardist and commercial jam maker. First published in 1843, his focus was aimed largely at promoting plants useful to the colonial economy of South Australia and he paid little attention in his early editions to ornamental horticulture.

Heyne, a German-trained and Australian experienced ornamental gardener who settled in Adelaide in 1870, published a more balanced book with roughly equal space devoted to useful and ornamental plants. He observed the distinct differences between the climate on the Adelaide Plains and in the Adelaide Hills, giving appropriate advice in each case. Heyne also recommended that his readers *design* their gardens and plan for trees and shrubs according to the *mature* size of plants. First published in 1871, Heyne's book went through many editions and achieved success because it was such a good practical guide, written for the specific soils and climate of the colony. According to Payne<sup>164</sup>, perhaps his most detailed biographer, Heyne also

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<sup>162</sup> George McEwin, *The South Australian Vigneron and Gardener's Manual*, 2nd ed., Andrews, Thomas & Clark, Adelaide 1871.

<sup>163</sup> Ernst Heyne, *The Amateur Gardener for South Australia*, 4th ed. J H Sherring & Co., Adelaide 1886.

<sup>164</sup> Pauline Payne, 'Heyne, Ernst Bernhard', in Richard Aitken and Michael Looker eds., *The Oxford Companion to Australian Gardens*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2002, p. 300.

... *provided guidance for its* [South Australia's] *Mediterranean climate.*

This conclusion was most probably drawn from the 'Introduction' to his book where Heyne comments on settlers from

... *his European home or other countries in the colder regions*

finding delight in being able to enjoy sub-Tropical and even Tropical plants that are

... *quite new and unexpected to a horticulturalist accustomed only to the usual style of gardening carried on in the more northern parts of Europe.*<sup>165</sup>

Payne had access to much German material including personal letters from Heyne to his family so her statement may have arisen from information gleaned from these sources rather than his publications in English.

Direct reference by nurserymen to climatic similarities with the Mediterranean seem hardly to exist in the surviving literature. Yet from the first there was acknowledgement that the climate was different and plant stock chosen accordingly. Among the several books published for the benefit of intending settlers to Australia, Heyne published one in German called *Australia Felix* (1850)<sup>166</sup> – one year after his arrival in Australia. His observations on society, the landscape, climate and opportunities in the new colony would have provided his readers with an informed view of the prospects for horticulture and agriculture based on his training at Dresden Botanic Gardens and experience at the Melbourne Botanic Gardens under Ferdinand von Mueller (1825-96). Travelling widely botanising with Mueller as his secretary and assistant, Heyne would have seen much of southern Australia during their collecting trips. Clearly much of the land would have been un-improved apart from a few cleared sheep and cattle runs, especially in western Victoria, the ranges of central Victoria and the Mallee. So it would seem a fair expectation that Mueller

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<sup>165</sup> Heyne *The Amateur Gardener for South Australia.*

<sup>166</sup> Ernst B Heyne, *Australia Felix*, Dresden, 1850.

would have been a voluble companion and with an eye to the potential of the land for farming, grazing and forestry. Having first landed at Adelaide, it could have been possible for Mueller to have been instrumental in Heyne's move from Melbourne to Adelaide to support the German farming communities there and to find good business opportunities for himself.

The importance of the German connection cannot be under-estimated in South Australia. Mueller had a wide circle of contact with German migrants, and with scientists and intellectuals in Germany. He took on himself the role of community leader across Australia and engaged in a wide ranging and far reaching correspondence. He first arrived in Adelaide in 1847, later moving to Melbourne in 1852, where he was offered, and accepted, the role of Director of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens in 1853. A prominent Acclimatiser, he was in a position to introduce and distribute plants very widely, which he did with considerable and single-minded enthusiasm. Also in Adelaide from 1848 were the German farmer-nurserymen brothers Richard (1811-91) and Otto Schomburgk who operated their business 'Buchsfelde' on the Gawler River. They offered vine cuttings and rootlings for sale and fruit trees. Otto died young and Richard was appointed Director of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens in 1865. So the networks were built up that enabled émigré German peasants to transform themselves into Australian farmers and vigneron. Richard Schomburgk also had connections in South America. It is tantalising to think there may somewhere exist letters and papers showing links between them and the German settlers on the border of Brazil and Argentina in the country that became the Oriental Republic of Uruguay<sup>167</sup>, a climate very similar to that of South Australia. Unfortunately contemplation of this intriguing idea is well outside the purview of this paper. What is known is that Schomburgk had strong links with other Germans in the colony who formed an educated and intellectual circle that linked to von Mueller, and beyond him back to horticultural and scientific institutions in Germany, and to the German diaspora. Men from the agricultural community such as Martin Basedow (1829-1902) and Friedrich Krichauff (1824-1904) were particularly strong in their working relationships with Schomburgk who had a horticultural and scientific background.

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<sup>167</sup> Declared by Papal decree to be outside the Western Hemisphere in an attempt to define the boundaries of the Spanish Empire in Brazil and resolve demarcation issues with non-Spanish colonies in what is now Argentina.

On scanning through some of the early nursery catalogues and lists it become evident that while many nurserymen indulged their own passions for all manner of new plants from orchids and ferns to tropical foliage plants, cacti and epiphytic Pitcher plants, their bread-and-butter lines are pretty consistent: fruit trees and vines for the rapidly expanding farming settlements on the Adelaide Plains, in the Adelaide Hills, the Barossa, McLaren Vales, the Riverland and South East.

Figs (*Ficus* spp), almonds (*Prunus dulcis*), olives (*Olea europaea*), Citrus spp, stone fruits, table grapes and wine grapes appear consistently along with apples (*Malus* spp), pears (*Pyrus* spp), cherries (*Prunus* spp) and walnuts (*Juglans* spp) for the cooler areas. These species comprised essentially a Mediterranean selection for production and sale locally or internationally in accordance with the intentions of the South Australian Company shareholders. Indeed, the Commissioners of the South Australian Company sent a consignment of figs (*Ficus* spp), (grape) vines (*Vitis* spp), almonds (*Prunus dulcis*) and olives (*Olea europaea*) to South Australia where they were grown on by John Bailey (1800-64) on the site of a defunct Botanic Garden at Hackney. It was the wish of the Company to stimulate propagation of varieties thought most suitable by private nurserymen in the colony rather than go into the trade themselves. Small mixed farms and more specialised groves of fruit and nuts, and vineyards were the ideals established by the standards of the day for self sufficiency and colonial economic growth. As the settlements began to make their marks on the landscape the bush turned to a more regulated framework of fields and paddocks surrounded by dry stone walls or rough hedges<sup>168</sup> and the enclosures Europeanised the landscape from something unfamiliar to something more familiar. Once the landscape was regulated and production and income seemed secure property owners could look to further civilising pursuits such as ornamental gardening, and within the bounds of possibility in the climate many nurserymen – keen plantsmen themselves, stood ready to indulge the taste for novelties and old favourites so long as they could handle the rigours of the Mediterranean climate.

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<sup>168</sup> See the evidence of dry walled enclosures and small fields exposed by the recent bushfires around Mount Osmond along the South Eastern Freeway east of Glen Osmond.

#### **4.10 Botanic gardens and nurseries**

Action to improve agricultural and horticultural productivity in South Australia through successful acclimatization programs was based largely on the personal enthusiasms of the gentleman farmers and graziers who were members of the (Royal) Agricultural & Horticultural Society of South Australia and the Acclimatization Society of South Australia. The entrepreneurial farmers who saw themselves as progressive and modern were also more organized efforts to discover suitable produce and products that would take advantage of conditions in South Australia. These came about through the agencies of the Colonial Office, the London agent of the South Australian Company and its office in Adelaide, and the colonial government, and at a more market sensitive front through the local nursery industry.

Considering the great difficulties of transporting plants (and animals) safely to South Australia from overseas, and the potential for huge losses and financial disaster it is understandable that well organized and financed organizations could command and pay for the resources that were necessary for this to happen. Plants had to be imported in sufficient quantities to make a dent on the demand for seeds and plants with which to establish an economy based largely on agriculture and horticulture. Individual enthusiasts with money and personal connections might well import a few novelties to amuse themselves and impress fellow gentlemen members of the Royal Agricultural & Horticultural Society of South Australia and the Acclimatization Society of South Australia it was quite another to conduct a systematic and wide ranging program of introduction.

It is worth noting that although the Botanic Garden might have been expected to play a significant role here too, the harsh economic realities of the colonial period ensured that scant government resources were tightly focused on matters more serious than botanic gardens in their money hungry formative years. Instead of playing a vital role in acclimatizing and introducing useful plants to South Australia the Botanic Garden became a foundling. Left in the care of the first director, George William Francis (1800-65), after a long period

of dis-establishment, relocation, discontinuity, and what would be called today 'out-sourcing', the various sites and short-lived appointments were leased and granted to private individuals such as John Bailey (1800-64) (Colonial Botanist), George Stevenson (1799-1856) (entrepreneur and horticulturalist), his gardener George McEwin (1815-85) and William Haines. The intricacies of this unsatisfactory situation are best explained by Barbara Best's biography of *George Francis*<sup>169</sup>. The official history of the Botanic Garden<sup>170</sup>, being a government report, is necessarily benign and bland in its commentary on the political vagaries of government policy in times of financial duress from 1837 to 1855 when the Botanic Garden were finally established. What is evident from Best's work is that prior to 1855 public expectations about the establishment of a botanic garden were not being met, scarcely being even considered. This angered South Australian Company investor-settlers who expected a botanic garden as part of the amenities essential to a new colony with democratic and egalitarian ambitions, and it angered the numerous colonists who had purposely subscribed monies to the establishment of such a crucial institution for high-minded public education and self improvement. As the colony's finances began to come good in the 1870's the Botanic Garden experienced a significant boost in funding that did allow the aspirations of the citizenry to be more fully realised.

Significantly the non-event of an official Botanic Garden and the various decisions to employ private horticulturists and nurserymen in short term arrangements in response to public disquiet led to a confused and ad hoc situation. This left the door open for the self-aggrandizing gentlemen colonists who considered themselves landed gentry and assumed leaders of the settlement to pursue their own private indulgences for introducing animals for sport and plants for profit and pleasure without any but amateurish considerations of what should be acclimatized, e.g. Rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), hares (*Lepus capensis*) and foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*) for hunting and coursing, gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) for making field jumps for horse riders and hunters, bracken for cover for field birds – pheasants (*Phasianus colchicus*), grouse, quail (*Coturnix ssp*) and such like.

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<sup>169</sup> Barbara J. Best, *George William Francis, first Director of the Adelaide Botanic Garden – a biography*, privately published by the author, Adelaide, 1986.

<sup>170</sup> Max Lamshed, *The People's Garden: A Centenary History of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens 1855–1955*, Government Printer, Adelaide, 1955.

Those appointed to such short term and precariously funded positions as Colonial Botanist and Botanic Garden Directors were themselves inclined to make the best of a poor prospect by using their impecunious appointments as a useful adjunct to private enterprises and personal ambitions for colonial survival and success. John Bailey set up Hackney Nursery when his position was terminated because the government could not afford to operate a botanic garden. Stevenson and McEwin were well known horticulturists and transformed themselves into successful nurserymen after their stint as directors of the non-existent Botanic Garden. Stevenson developed lines in ornamental horticulture importing quantities of English and European trees, camellias (*Camellia* spp) and other flowering plants. McEwin went on to become a wholesale grower of fruit trees for orchardists and was eventually the proprietor of a very successful jam factory

Of William Haines, almost no more can be said. He does not appear in *The Adelaide Botanic Garden 1855 - 1955*<sup>171</sup>, nor in Best's book and in neither of Swinbourne's texts *Years of Endeavour*<sup>172</sup> and *Gardens Lost*<sup>173</sup>. Best commented that he produced quantities of vegetables when he was lessee of the Old Botanic Gardens site at Hackney suggesting that he may have been more a successful market gardener than a horticulturist of the botanical persuasion. Indeed, he was not considered a 'gardener of note' by the South Australian Company that employed him<sup>174</sup>, perhaps a further indication of his focus on making a profit from the rich alluvial river flats rather than on any high-minded purpose the company intended from the lease of the Botanic Garden site.

From this congregation of early aspirants to be founding directors of the Adelaide Botanic Garden, George Francis appears to be the only one to have had any experience of the Mediterranean; as a young man he visited Italy, Sicily and Spain in the 1840's. In what capacity is not recorded but since he was

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<sup>171</sup> Lamshed, *The People's Garden*.

<sup>172</sup> Swinbourne, *Years of endeavour*.

<sup>173</sup> Swinbourne, *Gardens Lost*, unpublished manuscript given to the author by Swinbourne in 1988 with a view to being edited and published by The Australian Garden History Society.

<sup>174</sup> Best, *George Francis*, p. 12.



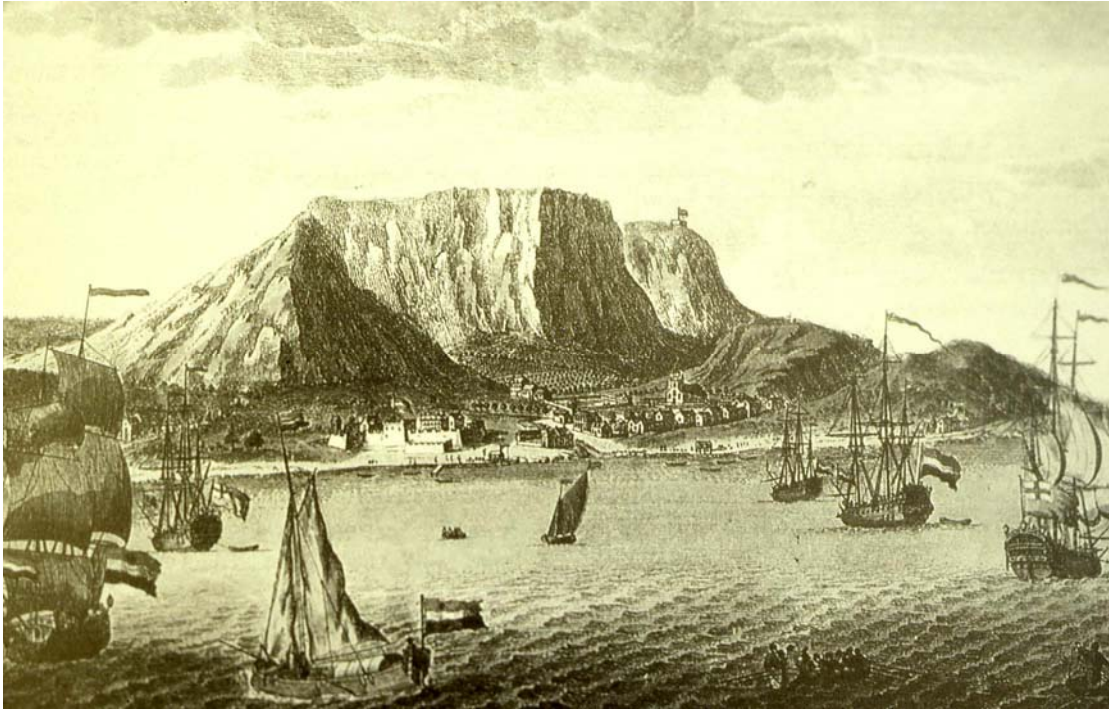
preparing himself for a life as a botanist and collector from childhood onwards it may be confidently assumed that at least part of his travels were in pursuit of botanical goals and learning. About the same time he spent two years living in France at Boulouge as a school master and furthering his experiences and studies as a lecturer in botany and allied subjects. Elected as a Fellow of the Linnean Society (1839) and of the Royal Horticultural Society, Francis must have had a considerable standing as a systematist and scientist with considerable skills in observation and drawing conclusions from what he saw and his approach to investigation of natural phenomena. While in France Francis studied the perfume industry at Grasse and wrote for *The Garden and the Field* an article on *The Manufacture of Essential Oils and Perfumed Waters*<sup>175</sup> based on his observations. It is tempting to think of Francis as a leading light in 'Mediterranean-ism' with his travels and powers of observation coming together in a great realization of the Mediterranean nature of the settled areas of South Australia. However, it seems the exigencies of keeping his head above the financial waters of a depressed economy and the need to keep the governors of the Botanic Garden satisfied meant that he had to subdue any insights he may have had to the practicalities of staying within a budget straightjacket and following the wishes of his Board.

Straitened circumstances in the young colony did however produce a degree of urgency in establishing an appropriate agricultural economy and to this end the scientific skills of Francis was employed by Sir Samuel Davenport (1818-1920) (Commissioner for South Australia to the Great Exhibition). Francis was prevailed upon to make olive oil (*Olea europaea*) from fruits harvested at Davenport's 'Beaumont' estate on the foothills, just south of Waterfall Gully<sup>176</sup>. Conveyed to the Great Exhibition of All Nations in London in 1851, and afterwards to Marseilles, the oil received Honourable Mentions; facts that cannot be under-estimated in any appreciation of the potential Mediterranean nature of the South Australian environment.

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<sup>175</sup> *The Garden and the Field*, February, 1879.

<sup>176</sup> Craig Hill *The History of the Adelaide Parklands Olive Plantations*, thesis in preparation, Adelaide University.



The Veringde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC, Dutch East India Company) settlement and trading post at the Cape of Good Hope where colonists stopped to buy seeds, plants and animals on the final leg of their journey to establish new farms and homes in South Australia.  
(private collection, Cape Town)

The fruits which Francis pressed were gathered from young plants, barely established truncheons imported from Marseilles and elsewhere in France, possibly Montpellier where there was, and is, a major agricultural tertiary institute. Among those independent minded importer-acclimatizers whose trees were planted by Davenport at 'Beaumont' were Bailey, the South Australian Company, and Stevenson.

In all this independent importation and acclimatization there arises a question about the role and nature of the horticultural trade between South Australia and the long established Dutch colony at the Cape of Good Hope. Earlier reference has been made of the importance of the botanic gardens of the Governors of the Dutch East India Company at Cape Town, and of the farms of the Cape colony inland from Cape Town. It was from these sources that many migrants in transit to Australia purchased both animals and plants for relocation to the new colonies before making the last hop across the Indian and Southern Oceans to their destinations in *Terra Australis*.

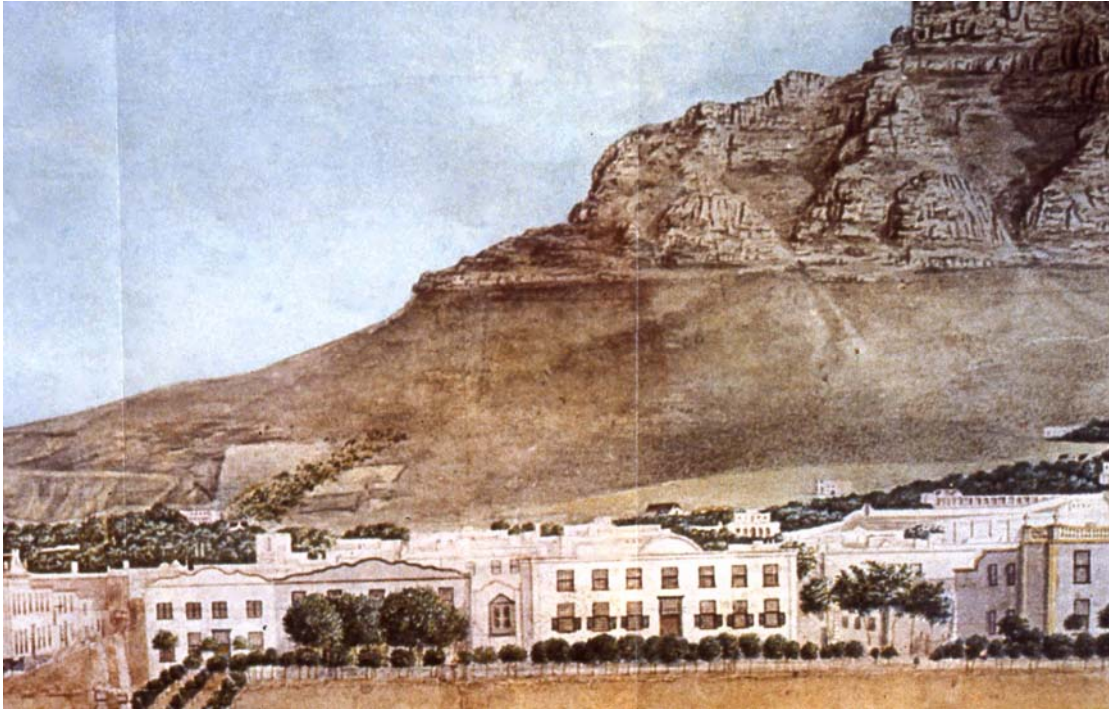
An appreciation of the extent of the exchanges of plant material between Cape Town and Adelaide may be gained from consulting the extensive reports of the Adelaide Botanic Garden from 1865–90.

What was the nature of these transactions between the canny Dutchmen and the relatively naïve English settlers? Buying animals might be relatively easy considering the rural experiences of some of the gentlemen and farmers bound for South Australia. But on what basis would the means of horticulture in the new colony be satisfied? Extensive research by Dr Gwen Fagan<sup>177</sup>, garden historian of Cape Town and responsible for major restoration projects at the Citadel and Governors Palace in that city, and the historic precinct of the city of Tulbahg, has produced nothing of consequence on this subject. Likewise correspondence with Dr Chris Brickell, Librarian of the Royal Horticultural Society, has produced no commentary concerning this relationship between old colonists and settlers on their way to new colonies. The Royal Horticultural Society library holds material, including letters and diaries of travellers<sup>178</sup> to the Cape in this period but it appears the attitude of the traders at the Cape did not excite any comment; negative or positive. This seems a bit odd considering the commercial and colonial rivalry between the two nations. Perhaps the immigrant traffic was so commonplace that few thought it worthy of comment? Certainly First Fleeters, conducting the same trade in the same region of the Table Mountains fifty year earlier commented on meeting other Englishmen engaged on the same purpose but they (the Englishmen) made no comments in their surviving diaries and correspondence.

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<sup>177</sup> Personal correspondence 1984-2004.

<sup>178</sup> Captain Watkin Tench, *Sydney's First Four Years – a narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay and a Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson* (reprint) Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1961.



The Governors Palace and VOC offices at Cape Town in the 1700's with the botanic garden, physic garden and produce gardens showing behind, from which colonists to Australia could buy seeds and plants to establish farms and gardens in their new homeland.  
(private collection, Cape Town)

Detailed commentary on the Dutch East India Company's garden at Cape Town is given by Mia Karsten in *The Old Company's Garden at the Cape*<sup>179</sup> providing some useful information and observations of what was grown in the gardens, and presumably available on request to the Governor's Superintendent of the gardens. But being written from Dutch sources it is hardly surprising that there are no negative comments about the hard nosed Dutch businessmen who traded at the Cape; instead they were seen as energetic, alert and having a keen eye to a profitable deal!

Neither parties would have had any or much information about conditions in South Australia, other than the rosy reports written by the publicists and boosters of the South Australian Company. Buyers with no real indicators for what plants to buy could well have opted for a mixed lot chosen for them by the Dutch colonists from what they had available. It was fortuitous that the climates of the two colonies was similar; hence colonists bought with them grape vines (*Vitis* ssp), almonds (*Prunus dulcis*), olives (*Olea europaea*), pomegranates

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<sup>179</sup> Mia Karsten, *The Old Company's garden at the Cape & its Superintendents* Maskew Miller, South Africa, Cape Town, 1951.

(*Punica* spp), stone fruits, figs (*Ficus* spp), citrus trees (*Citrus* spp), carob trees (*Ceratonia siliqua*) and a selection of flowering trees and shrubs.

Research conducted by Swinbourne, and written up by Brian Morley (b.1943), concerning the range of plants commonly grown in early Adelaide gardens was published by Nottle (b.1947) as an appendix to *The Cottage Garden Revived*<sup>180</sup> in 1984. Much of the material represented was garnered from reports in *The Garden and the Field, South Australian Register* and the archives of the Royal Agricultural & Horticultural Society by Swinbourne<sup>181</sup>. The introductory lines to the Swinbourne–Morley list, *Trees, Shrubs and herbs Common in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*, demonstrates some awareness of the Mediterranean nature of the South Australian climate twenty years ago:

*The common plants grown in gardens with a Mediterranean climate in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century divided into herbs, shrubs and trees, and including a selection of non-European exotics.*

It is possible to extract from these lists a number of plants native to the Cape Province region of South Africa:

Belladonna Lily	<i>Amaryllis belladonna</i>
Leonotis	<i>Leonotis leonurus</i>
Star-of-Bethlehem	<i>Ornithogalum umbellatum</i>
Pelargonium	<i>Pelargonium</i> spp.
Scilla	<i>Scilla peruviana</i>

Another larger group of medicinal plants, known to have been cultivated in the Physick collections of the Dutch East India Company's garden at Cape Town, included:

Monkshood	<i>Aconitum napellus</i>
Golden Garlic	<i>Allium moly</i>
Southernwood	<i>Artemisia abrotanum</i>
Borage	<i>Borago officinalis</i>
Marigold	<i>Calendula officinalis</i>
Lawn Chamomile	<i>Chamaemelum nobile</i>
Saffron Crocus	<i>Crocus sativus</i>

<sup>180</sup> Trevor Nottle, *The Cottage Garden Revived*, Kangaroo Press, Sydney, 1984; see Appendix 1, p. 83-85.

<sup>181</sup> Personal communication with the author

Wild Carnation	<i>Dianthus caryophyllus</i>
Common Foxglove	<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>
Fennel	<i>Foeniculum officinale</i>
Heliotrope	<i>Heliotropium arborescens</i>
Hyssop	<i>Hyssopus officinalis</i>
Rhizomatous	<i>Iris germanica</i> 'Florentina'
Jasmine	<i>Jasminum odoratisimum</i>
Common Jasmine	<i>Jasminum officinale</i>
Arabian Jasmine	<i>Jasminum sambac</i>
Bay Laurel	<i>Laurus nobilis</i>
Lavender	<i>Lavandula officinalis</i>
Madonna Lily	<i>Lilium candidum</i>
Lemon Balm	<i>Melissa officinalis</i>
Common Myrtle	<i>Myrtus communis</i>
Tobacco plant	<i>Nicotiana tabacum</i>
Devil-in-a-Bush	<i>Nigella damascene</i>
Sweet Marjoram	<i>Origanum marjorana</i>
Common Peony	<i>Paeonia officinalis</i>
Opium Poppy	<i>Papaver somniferum</i>
Rose	<i>Rosa x alba</i>
Rose	<i>Rosa x canina</i>
Rose	<i>Rosa x centifolia</i>
Damask Rose	<i>Rosa damascena</i>
Rose	<i>Rosa elegantula</i> 'Persetosa'
Crimson Damask Rose	<i>Rosa gallica</i>
Rosemary	<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>
Butcher's Broom	<i>Ruscus aculeatus</i>
Common Rue	<i>Ruta graveolens</i>
Black Elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>
Common Comfrey	<i>Symphytum officinale</i>
Shrubby Germander	<i>Teucrium fruticans</i>
Thyme	<i>Thymus serpyllum</i>
Garden Thyme	<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>

These plants were grown to make homeopathic remedies for the numerous ailments that beset the employees of the Dutch East India Company, especially those in the tropics at trading posts and colonies in the East Indies (now Indonesia) and in India and southern China. To supply these needs considerable quantities of plants must have been grown and made into a range of simple treatments. It was the Company's policy to develop this trade and thus both the cures and the plants were sold to passing travellers, including most likely settlers bound for South Australia. Seeds, cuttings and rooted plants were on hand at the Company's garden to meet the needs and demands of a steady supply of customers in transit to even further corners of the globe.

Listed along with these 'necessaries' were other plants both useful and decorative that found a ready market with settlers bound for Australia:

Almonds	<i>Prunus dulcis</i>
Apples in variety	<i>Malus ssp</i>
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>
Quince	<i>Cydonia oblonga</i>
Figs in variety	<i>Ficus ssp</i>
Grapes in variety	<i>Vitis ssp</i>
Juniper-berry	<i>Juniperus ssp</i>
Medlar	<i>Melisпилus germanicus</i>
Mulberries	<i>Morus ssp</i>
Oleander	<i>Nerium oleander</i>
Oaks of several kinds	<i>Quercus ssp</i>
Olives in variety	<i>Olea europaea</i>
Date Palm	<i>Phoenix dactylifera</i>
Pines of several kinds	<i>Pinus ssp</i>
Oriental Plane Tree	<i>Platanus orientalis</i>
Pomegranate	<i>Punica granatum</i>
Pear	<i>Pyrus communis</i>
Laurustinus	<i>Viburnum tinus</i>

Settlers intent on establishing themselves in the new home-land had plenty of choice provided they could pay and find space aboard the crowded ships for their purchases to be carried safely.

The relative proximity of such a source of plants must have had a worrying influence over the settlers who intended to establish themselves as nurserymen in the new colony. Price would have been the biggest advantage the Dutch traders had, that and their formidable reputation as skilled propagators and growers, and they had the accumulated stock from 200 years of settlement to draw on for mass propagation. Competition must indeed have been intense, even if felt at a safe distance.

As the annotation of the Swinbourne-Morley list, Swinbourne and Morley suggest that the Cape colonists had already achieved a clear advantage in producing useful and decorative plants suited to a Mediterranean type climate. How then could the nurserymen of South Australia develop their own businesses; certainly not by simply replicating supplies of plants already available to every settler who passed through Cape Town on their way to Port Misery and Adelaide?

There is only circumstantial evidence that any of these attempted, or succeeded, to develop some sort of importation deal with the Dutch nurserymen at the Cape, even though the Dutch would have almost certainly have been open to the suggestion of such a profitable arrangement. Maybe the distance and risks were just too great? Maybe the restricted cargo space of the ships in transit was too little to allow large cargoes to be taken on board at the Cape Town docks? Or perhaps the ship's captains were simply not prepared to take on the responsibility for such a vulnerable deck cargo. Dutch nurserymen had a reputation for 'ill using' their foreign customers, particularly those from England, if copies of business correspondence from Charles Giles (c.1807-87)<sup>182</sup> to a Dutch bulb dealer in Holland can be believed; he complained bitterly about having sent the money for his order and not receiving what he paid for! Whatever the reason, such business arrangements appear not to have been successfully brought to conclusion.

A demonstration of the collaborative efforts of local nurserymen to take up the challenge can be seen in the trio of sources for olives (*Olea europaea*) that Davenport accessed to create his grove at his 'Beaumont' estate. No one had enough to meet the demand but between them they managed the order for trees – even if the plants were little more than rooted truncheons instead of established plants.

This, however, was not sufficient to answer the ambitious plans for growth and profits that stirred the first nurserymen in South Australia. Basic supplies of plants suited to the Mediterranean climate would never serve their needs for rapid expansion and profitability derived from their investment in the colony and requirement for a good return on capital. Consequently, they quickly moved away from the staples of the developing trade into more high risk lines with equally high returns. They turned to a wide variety of new novelty plants that despite the generally slow economy found a market among those with solid capital backing behind their business ventures in the new colony. Nurseries developed specialist lines to answer the demands of a discriminating if diverse

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<sup>182</sup> Sighted by the author in the family archive of Margueritte Giles, descendent of Charles Giles, 'Grove Hill', Norton Summit.



market – roses (*Rosa* spp), orchids, tropical foliage plants, ferns, fuchsias (*Fuschia* spp), geraniums (*Pelargonium* spp), bulbs, cacti and other collectors items were introduced taking advantage of the introduction of the Wardian case<sup>183</sup> (1854) and an articulated town water supply to Adelaide (1859). Any consideration of plants suited to the Mediterranean climate quickly dissipated under the onslaught of novelties that swept the English and European gardening world at the time. A scan of the existing period trade catalogues (see Appendix 4) show that a few suppliers of fruit trees and vines to orchardists and grape growers continued their trade and imported further stocks as new varieties were developed and introduced but by and large Mediterranean plants lost out to the capacity to suspend climatic realities by the use of irrigation technology and public utilities for water resource management and distribution.

#### **4.11 Walter Bagot (1880-1963)<sup>184</sup> and Elsie Cornish (1870-1946)**

An important academic and architect Walter Hervey Bagot (1880-1963) played a significant role in arguing for an approach to public and domestic architecture that reflected the Mediterranean nature of the South Australian climate. Elsie Marion Cornish (1870-1946), was often his landscape design collaborator on many important projects such as the University of Adelaide campus on the banks of the River Torrens. The pair are credited with using a design ethic derived from Mediterranean sources to fulfil their commissions. Conservation of their remaining work has been subjugated by the competing interests of faculty growth and building developments on the campus but none-the-less their contribution to realisation of the Mediterranean nature of the local climate has played its part in the built environment and the academic debate about sustainability.

More significant to this study is what might have been in the library of the Bagot family at 'Nurney House' in North Adelaide and at 'Forest Lodge' in Stirling/Aldgate, in particular the books collected by Walter Bagot as an architect, traveller and Italo-phile. Now dispersed amongst family members

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<sup>183</sup> A glazed and closely sealed mini-greenhouse which enabled plants to be safely transported around the world. Invented by Dr Nathaniel Ward, physician, of London.

<sup>184</sup> David Jones, 'Regionalist Adelaide Design, Traditionalism and Walter Hervey Bagot', in *20<sup>th</sup> Century Heritage – Our Recent Cultural Heritage: Proceedings of the 2001 Australia ICOMOS Conference*, ed. David Jones, 2001, , pp. 310 -319

Bagot's books and papers could have provided a very positive insight into his interests in the Mediterranean and its culture. As things stand it is only possible to conjecture at what books he may have purchased on the theme.

Jones has a rather brief list of gardening and horticultural books known to have belonged to Bagot that were kept by him at 'Forest Lodge' but these seem to be a rather limited selection. Apart from several volumes concerning conifers they seem a very dated lot, a good many predating his birth and rather a curious mix too<sup>185</sup>. Apart from *Wall and Water Gardens* and *Garden Ornament* by Gertrude Jekyll and William Robinson's *The English Flower Garden* there seems precious little to provide inspiration to a garden maker looking for ideas. The oldest amongst this collection is Benjamin Maund's *Botanic Garden*<sup>186</sup>, that would have provided Bagot with hundreds of hand-coloured plates for his consideration and choices of flowering plants – if indeed, he had the whole set of 18 volumes. This and several other titles may well have been inherited from his father, John Bagot, who was a keen gardener and dendrologist. The question that arises out of this list of books, is not so much as what is in it but one of what was not in it. Rather than looking to records of Bagot's gardening books, a list of his architectural books might have been equally or more useful in establishing his garden design sources.

Perhaps there was inspiration elsewhere in books with an architectural and landscape focus? Just what were the large tomes that stood on the bottom-most shelf of the 'Forest Lodge' library that family members pointed out to visitors as "Walter's corner"? Would H. Inigo Triggs's massive architectural books be among them? After all Triggs was the Godwin Bursar of the Royal British Institute of Architects at the time when Bagot was studying, and as such his position would have been one of prominence in the affairs of the Institute and brought his achievements to the fore among members and articulated students such as Bagot. So too would the measured drawings of Italian villas and gardens made by numerous English and American architects who made the pilgrimage to Italy in the late 1800's and published folios of drawings,

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<sup>185</sup> Hand typed list provided to Dr David Jones by Helen Bagot, sister-in-law of Walter Bagot circa 1998.

<sup>186</sup> Benjamin Maund, *The Botanic Garden*, serial publication with several publishers 1825-50. See Bernard Quaritch and Sotheby's 1987 catalogue, *A Magnificent Collection of Botanical Books*, p 250, and also Sotheby Parke Bernet & Co. 1975 catalogue, *The Magnificent Botanical Library of the Stiftung fur Botanik, Vaduz, Liechtenstein (Arpad Plesch)*, Part 2, p. 173.

perspectives, cross sections, elevations, ground plans and longitudinal sections of the great Renaissance villas and gardens. Were the singularly important architectural tomes of John Ruskin gathered in his library? *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*<sup>187</sup>, and *The Stones of Venice*; especially the latter in view of the subject under discussion. That Bagot had the means and the inclination seems in no doubt, but the reticence of his heirs to reveal the answers, while almost aristocratic in its circumspection, is a great frustration to scholarship.



‘Nurney House’, Kingston Terrace, North Adelaide – Roman tiles, stuccoed walls, Classical porté cochère, gate piers and curved fore-court walls create a strong impression of an Italian Renaissance *villa urbana*. (authors photograph)

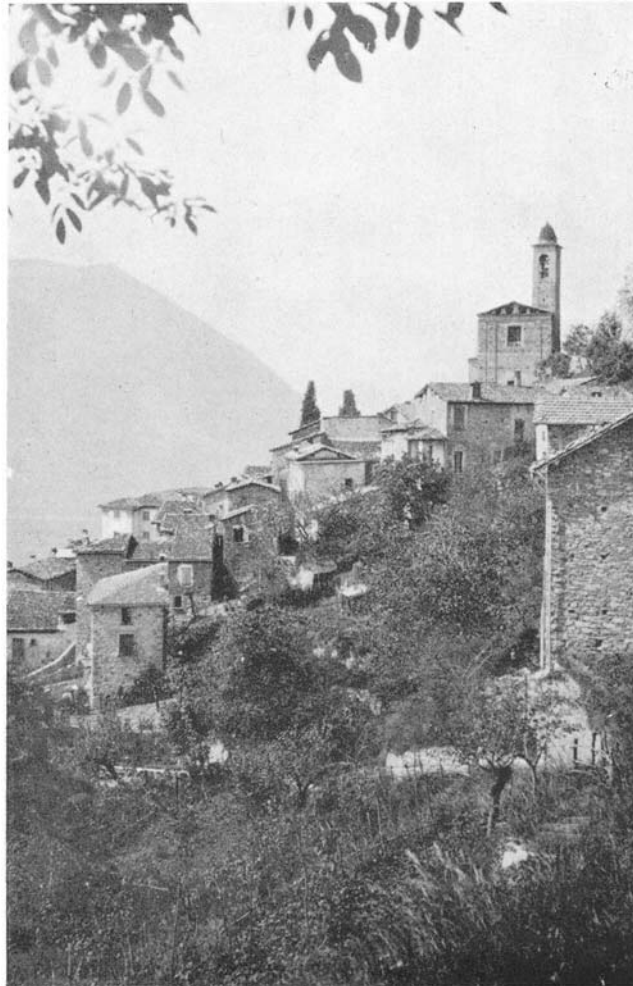
It is intriguing to ponder whether the depths of Bagot’s interests as an architect and book collector carried him as far as Ruskin’s *Studies of Peasant Life - Songs of Tuscany*? As it is we are only left to wonder, thrown off track perhaps by the dour titles on *Coniferae* collected no doubt by an earlier Victorian generation interested in creating a Teutonic Pinetum to set off the castellated Baronial mansion of ‘Forest Lodge’. No doubt the German gardener, Ernst Menzel, and his sons, helped in a picturesque way, aided by Veitch’s *A Manual of Coniferae*<sup>188</sup> that was in the Bagot library.

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<sup>187</sup> John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, Smith Elder & Co., London 1849; John Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice*, 1853.

<sup>188</sup> James M. Veitch, *A Manual of Coniferae*, Royal Exotic Nursery, London, 1881.

Any assessment of the importance of Bagot can only be a cautious balance between his local reputation and social standing, his surviving works and his scant writings. His feeling for Mediterranean influences inspired by environmental sensibilities and his responses to them are evident.



Albogasio, Lago Lugano – an Italian hillside village, photograph by Josephine Bagot, reproduced in her book *Reveries in Retrospect*, 1946

His own homes, 'Nurney House' and 'Forest Lodge', were given landscape and architectural features during his ownership that suggest some appreciation and his simple Italianate designs for the University of Adelaide's North Terrace campus buildings owe something to his desire to have an Italian village that could be viewed across the River Torrens from the arcaded courtyard of his home in North Adelaide to the city.

The same style was used for the main building of the Waite campus of the University of Adelaide at Urrbrae. Since these buildings cannot be seen from

North Adelaide it must be assumed that his commitment to the Mediterranean style was based on grounds more important and considered than personal idiosyncrasy and what he could see from his loggia. His reworking of the earlier colonial mansion 'Nurney House' to a palazzetta was convincing inside and out thanks to his architectural observations in Italy and substantial purchases of artefacts during his travels there. The elevated site enabled him to add a raised terrace and build an elegant courtyard at the rear of the house. On the street front he rebuilt the house and its principal entrance with the addition of high curved side walls with a central porch that also acted as a porté cochere and on one side the coach-house gained the appearance of a pavilion attendant to the main block of the house. The restructured building was given the treatments appropriate to a stately Renaissance villa – stuccoed walls, carved stone and terracotta embellishments, wall plaques, wall fountains, finials, roof tiles, door furniture, window grilles, a carved stone well and wrought iron well head, paving and sculpture. For Adelaide folk it was all quite convincing and fabulous.

At 'Forest Lodge', in Stirling, he made less ambitious alterations and improvements; an Italian garden was laid out in a simple formal manner with English box (*Buxus sempervirens*) hedging and feature *Coniferae* (*Cupressus* ssp, *Chamaecyparis* ssp, *Picea* ssp, and *Pinus* ssp). What made the garden definitively Italian was the collection of fine terracotta and majolica armorial pots that he displayed there along with large terracotta figures of Flora, Ceres, Pomona and other Roman deities. Elsewhere in the garden, towards the boundary he created a long formal vista from an avenue of sentinel Italian cypresses (*Cupressus sempervirens* 'Stricta') with a massive old gum (*Eucalyptus* sp) tree as the focal point in front of which he erected a copy of the Medici vase or tazza mounted on a high plinth. All this was inserted into an earlier Picturesque landscape that included a Japanese garden complete with a moon-viewing bridge, a pinetum, an arboretum of deciduous exotic trees, banks of rhododendron (*Rhododendron* ssp) and azaleas (*Azalea* ssp), a rock and water garden, serpentine paths and shrubberies, a large timber lath house and a modest heated green-house. Even though not such a thorough remodelling as at his town house, this still represented a major expression of Italianate landscaping; one that had not probably been emulated anywhere else in Adelaide or South Australia.

Even though a less ambitious project than the conversion of 'Nurney House', the Italianisation of 'Forest Lodge' was sufficiently convincing for it to evoke considerable reverie in the mind of his wife, Josephine, who in her post-humorously published book *Reveries in Retrospect*, sets the Mediterranean tone by describing with considerable affection the Arcadian existence there when

*Long chairs would be placed on the lawn and some Opera, perhaps 'Aida', would be played on a distant gramophone.*<sup>189</sup>

Her book, though small, is a significant indicator of the strength of feeling that she and her husband both felt about the Mediterranean nature of South Australia. The entire text makes continual reference to the place itself, or to the atmosphere and culture of the place as she felt it was experienced here. In publishing these reveries Bagot paid tribute to her inter-twined messages of endearment to the civilised Mediterranean world she felt was crumbling around her as World War II dragged on in her beloved southern Europe. In particular, her poem 'Monte Casino 1944', and her short essays on 'The Parthenon', 'The Campo Santo' and 'The Alhambra' demonstrate the depth of feeling Josephine shared with her husband for these Mediterranean sacred sites.

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<sup>189</sup> Josephine Margaret Bagot *Reveries in Retrospect*, posthumously and privately published by W.H. Bagot at the Hassell Press, Adelaide, 1946.



Bookplate of Josephine Bagot, taken from the frontispiece of her book *Reveries in Retrospect*, showing a stylised view of the atrium at 'Nurney House' with the slightly re-positioned campanile of Brougham Place Uniting Church, in North Adelaide, beyond.

In his foreword to the book Walter says

*I hope they [the words and images in the book] will awake an echo in some kindred spirit.*

The sentiment expressed so elegantly through the book should cause us to ask if that echo has yet awoken?

While it is evident from surviving material that Bagot did admire and respect the Mediterranean architectural tradition, history and culture it is the extent to which he pursued that interest that is open to suggestion and question. As an architect he was, no doubt, aware of many developing ideas and projects in England, Europe and the United States of America. However tantalising it may be to ponder the possibilities there are questions that must remain unanswered without deeper and further research.



'Forest Lodge', Pine Street, Stirling

The Italianate long vista, characterised by Italian Cypresses (*Cupressus sempervirens* 'Stricta') terminated by a marble plinth holding aloft a copy of the Medici Vase.  
(author's photograph)

Was Bagot aware of the historicist architect Emmanuel Pontremoli and his patron for the 'Villa Kérylos' (1902), Théodore Reinach? Did he know of the astonishing building that grew on the Baie des Fourmis in Beaulieu-sur-Mer on the French Riviera? The fame of the building and his interest in such suggests the possibility.





Copy of the 'Medici Vase' bought in Italy by Walter Bagot and placed at the end of the Italianate long-vista at 'Forest Lodge', Pine Street, Stirling (author's photograph)

When buying architectural fragments for his own building project at 'Nurney House' did he encounter the voracious American millionaires and their agents then competing for all manner of carved stone bits from the Medieval Mediterranean world? Was he aware of the activities of Harold Peto for 'Iford Manor' in this respect, or of Lord Astor buying for 'Hever Castle', or of William Randolph Hearst snapping up everything he could for his own self aggrandisement at 'La Cuesta Encantada' in California? While wealthy by South Australian norms, Bagot's means were hardly comparable with the vast fortunes of Astor and Hearst, and any number of other millionaires hell-bent and determined on arriving in established society in England, Europe and the United States by means of a purchased escutcheon and a reconstructed ancestral pile.

Bagot's private commissions show little influence of his Italianate inclinations, except for 'Broadlees' at Crafers for the Misses Waite (1925) he seems to have followed his client's wishes in matters of external appearances and spatial arrangements.

'Broadlees' is nowhere near such an emphatic statement as his designs for his own pleasure and occupation. It bears some resemblance to vaguely 'Mediterranean' villas popular with English ex-patriates and holidaying aristocrats at the time along the French and Italian Riviera's. It was a kind of pastiche of external references to local architectural idioms – courtyards, walls, roof tiles, terraces etc grafted onto buildings that were internally identical to the larger kinds of free-standing Georgian villas; on the ground floor (the piano nobile) formal reception rooms arranged around a central staircase hall with private accommodation upstairs.



Walter Bagot's Italian Garden inserted into a Gardenesque landscape.  
The image depicts many artefacts that have now been removed. 'Forest Lodge', Pine Street, Stirling  
(author's photograph)



'Forest Lodge', Pine Street, Stirling  
Armorial Majolica garden urn bought in Italy by Walter Bagot, now removed for safe keeping. (author's photograph)

A typical example is found in the villa of Miss Ellen Willmott<sup>190</sup>, 'Boccanegra', on the Italian Riviera near Ventimiglia. A wealthy, blue-stocking gardener and connoisseur, she also had another, grander Continental house in 'Chateau de Tresserve' and her home at 'Warley Place' in Essex. She gardened on an extravagant scale at all three houses but 'Boccanegra' is significant here because it was on the Riviera, and therefore Mediterranean in climate, and because of the proximity to 'La Mortola', a private botanic gardens owned by the Hanbury family.

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<sup>190</sup> Audrey Le Lievre, *Miss Willmott of Warley Place*, Faber & Faber, London, 1980.

The gardens at 'Broadlees', terraced down a steep slope, appear 'Italianate' in style due to the formality of the terracing and the manner in which Italian cypresses (*Cupressus sempervirens* 'Stricta') are used to punctuate the skyline at key points. The garden is credited to Miss Eva Waite with help from both Bagot and his collaborator Elsie Cornish<sup>191</sup>. It is reputed to have been influenced by Gertrude Jekyll through her books *Wall and Water Gardens*<sup>192</sup> (1901) and *Some English Gardens*<sup>193</sup> (1904), though given the dates of the books and the garden some more Mediterranean influences from the intervening period could be admitted without too much contention. To see Miss Cornish as playing Miss Jekyll to Bagot's Lutyens solely on the basis of this collaboration may be asking too much of a slender line of evidence. Her approach to collaborating, or at least complementing his Mediterranean village on the University of Adelaide's North Terrace campus and along the adjacent banks of the River Torrens do suggest a wider palette than Jekyll would have attempted; she had very few commissions outside Great Britain and no experience of designing for foreign climates apart from one garden in Normandy, France. Apart from the books of Jekyll, at least two other sources could have played a role in the development of Cornish's plant palette at 'Broadlees': Edward Augustus Bowles's gardening trilogy<sup>194</sup> and Sitwell's<sup>195</sup> *On the Making of Gardens*. Each of these enthused about the pleasures of succulent plants and the garden making derived from Mediterranean models, particularly those of Italy. Bowles being strongest on the plants, in *My Garden in Summer*, and Sitwell being strongest on style and arrangement each were well known in their day as influential gardeners and writers.

A case has been made by Jones<sup>196</sup> that the Misses Waite were also influenced in the layout of 'Broadlees' by visits to Jekyll gardens while travelling in England. This is a little debatable in part as the women may have almost

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<sup>191</sup> Louise Bird, 'A Vanishing Garden Passport: South Australian Gardens of the 1920s-1940s', in *20<sup>th</sup> Century Heritage – Our Recent Cultural Legacy, Proceedings of 2001 Australia ICOMOS National Conference*, ed. David Jones, pp. 320-327.

<sup>192</sup> Gertrude Jekyll, *Wall and Water Gardens*, Country Life, London, 1901.

<sup>193</sup> George Elgood & Gertrude Jekyll, *Some English Gardens*, Longmans, Green & Co., London 1904.

<sup>194</sup> Edward Augustus Bowles, *My Garden in Autumn & Winter*; E.A. Bowles, *My Garden in Spring*; E.A. Bowles, *My Garden in Summer*, Jack, London 1915 (3 vols.).

<sup>195</sup> Sir George Sitwell, *The Art of Gardening*, 1909. \

<sup>196</sup> David Jones, 'Broadlees', in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Gardens*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2002, p. 106.

certainly travelled on the Continent seeing gardens there as well as those in England. Being keen gardeners they may well have attended meetings of the Royal Horticultural Society in London and, if so, would almost certainly met other regulars, such as Willmott, Lawrence Johnston and Humphrey Waterfield – all of whom had large and lavish gardens on the French Riviera. The sisters would also have been influenced by their father's approach to gardening at their family home 'Urrbrae House' on the Adelaide Plains.

NOTE: This image is included on page 125 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

'La Serre de la Madone', Lawrence Johnston's lavish and influential garden near Menton on the French Riviera, almost as famous as his garden in England: 'Hidcote Manor'.  
(photo. Ministère de l'Équipement, du Logement, de la Aménagement, Paris 1983)

Peter Waite was a dedicated acclimatiser and experimenter with plants he thought suited to the Mediterranean climate of Adelaide. His interests were both agricultural and horticultural and it seems highly likely that his daughters would have been deeply influenced by his over-riding enthusiasms for plants hardy in South Australia.

It is of interest that an article in *The Australian Home Beautiful* of 1932 describes 'Broadlees' described as

*... a perfect blend of Italian and English Georgian Architecture*<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> Elizabeth Auld, 'Mt. Lofty's Most Beautiful Home' in *The Australian Home Beautiful*, February 1, 1932.

Bagot saw his work as a domestic architect as work that embraced Mediterranean design theory in building and landscape design. He felt this offered to clients and students of architecture the simplicity of Italian domestic architecture combined with the spaciousness and comfortable accommodation of English Georgian design features<sup>198</sup>. Bagot seems not to have been much caught up in the Arts and Crafts Movement, as was his Victorian contemporary Harold Desbrowe-Annear, who first engaged in half timbered, semi-Tudor houses before reworking his design ethic in accordance with the California version of Arts and Crafts tradition, and arriving at a Mediterranean feel in his designs for commissions in Melbourne in his designs for 'Inglesby' (Francis House, South Yarra, 1915) and 'Broceliande' (Elliott House, Toorak, 1916)<sup>199</sup>. Bagot, in contrast, went straight to the source for his inspiration, and found a degree of empathy between his experiences in Italy, conditions in Adelaide, and his Anglo-Mediterranean cultural sensitivities. His built output may not be all that large but his intellectual contributions in professional spheres, as in his contribution 'A Plea for Tradition' that appeared in *Domestic Architecture in Australia*<sup>200</sup> in 1919, would have influenced architectural students in Adelaide, and in Australia generally as the publication was used as a theoretical text in Australian architectural schools in the 1920s.

More closely connected with Bagot and the Mediterranean ethic in architecture and landscape design was Professor Lesley Wilkinson, architect and academic of Sydney, who encouraged Bagot in his contributions to think about the best conceptual framework for domestic architecture in Australia. Bagot's significance is acknowledged in the 'Introduction' to *Domestic Architecture in Australia*<sup>201</sup> where Wilkinson poses a few telling questions:

*Although it is generally granted that most English domestic work reaches a high standard, the climatic and other conditions here [in Australia] are such that considerable modifications must be made in adapting it to these new circumstances.*

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<sup>198</sup> David Jones, 'A Plea for Tradition: the Ideas of Walter Hervey Bagot and his Mediterranean Landscape', *Studies in the History of Gardens and Designed Landscapes*, 2002.

<sup>199</sup> Harriet Edquist, *Harold Desbrowe-Annear - A Life in Architecture*, Miegunyah Press, Melbourne, 2004.

<sup>200</sup> Sydney Ure Smith, Bertram Stevens with W. Hardy Wilson, *Domestic Architecture in Australia*, Angus & Robinson, Sydney, 1919, pp. 25-28.

<sup>201</sup> Smith, Stevens with Wilson, *Domestic Architecture in Australia*, p. 1.

*And is it certain that it is wise to attempt to follow Northern methods of building under conditions so dissimilar? Geography suggests that the shores of the Mediterranean may be richer in suggestion, or the California coast manner so largely derived there-from.<sup>202</sup>*

And further:

*Australia is a sunny land, the climate hot, encouraging outdoor life by day and night; so that the house required is rather a shelter from heat, wind and dust than from cold, rain and snow. This suggests spacious rooms, somewhat lofty with thick walls, not over-windowed – the windows probably double hung sashes, ample verandahs with shelter from ‘Southerlies’, ‘Westerlies’, and ‘Northerlies’, and a sound system of protection from hungry insects to attack the structure and its inmates.<sup>203</sup>*

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<sup>202</sup> Smith, Stevens with Wilson, *Domestic Architecture in Australia*, p. 3.

<sup>203</sup> Smith, Stevens with Wilson, *Domestic Architecture in Australia*, p. 4.

NOTE: This image is included on page 128 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

'Broadlees', Waverly Ridge Road, Crafers, showing a distinct Mediterranean influence – shuttered windows, deep eaves, balconied windows on the upper floor and sentinel Italian cypresses (*Cupressus sempervirens* 'Stricta') in the terraced garden (photo. Historic Gardens Survey, South Australian project, Rodney Beames and Tony Whitehill)

#### **4.12 Mediterranean ascendancy**

While the stylistic similarities of 'Broadlees' and 'Boccanegra' can only be seen as coincidental, tenuous at most in having no documented relationships, they are remarkable in that they demonstrate the strong links between aristocratic and diplomatic Englishmen and their Australian cousins; fashions in architecture were transmitted just as rapidly between them as were those for clothes, gardens, art, plants, music, polo ponies and race horses. One verifiable instance is found in the hybrid Gigantea roses (*Rosa* ssp) of Alister Clarke sent



by him to the Hanbury's at 'La Mortola'<sup>204</sup>. At least one of these was passed on from there to the aristocratic Anglo-Italian Howard-Caetani family, Dukes of Sermoneta, and owners of 'Ninfa'<sup>205</sup> garden and estate south of Rome. Such transmissions at this level of society are known in other areas of shared interest too, and seem not to have been effected by national or international boundaries.

Transmissions of a more organised, systematic nature were also prominent in spreading the range of plants suited to Mediterranean climates. First there were the Desiderata and seed lists distributed by public and private gardens with a botanical focus. Of particular note here are the collecting expeditions and distributions of private botanical gardens on the Riviera. Most prominent among them was 'Les Cédres'<sup>206</sup>, home and garden of the Marnier-Lapostole family, closely followed by the Hanbury family at 'La Mortola' and then by a considerable number of specialist collectors and wealthy gardeners – Humphrey Waterfield, Ellen Willmott, Nigel Service, Lawrence Johnston among them. Extensive printed catalogues, in book form, were published by Karl Dinter<sup>207</sup> and Alwin Berger, botanists employed by the Hanbury family. Both Hanbury's and the Marnier-Lapostole family grew a wide range of Australian native plants so it is not unreasonable to suggest that at least some of these were acquired directly by seed exchange with Australian sources. While many may have come via the great institutions such as Kew or St Louis there is a distinct chance that some seed could have originated with South Australian collectors such as Edwin Ashby (1861-1941), William Bishop, John McConnell Black (1855-1951), or John 'Forester' Brown (1847-1899). Two further important sources for the distribution of seeds and plants suitable for Mediterranean climates were the US Department of Agriculture and private commercial ventures. Most far reaching of the US Department of Agriculture distributions were made from the Allison Vincent Amour Expeditions of 1925

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<sup>204</sup> Paola Gastaldo and Paola Profumo, *The Hanbury Botanic Gardens*, Umberto Allemandi & C., Turin, 1999; Lady Dorothy Hanbury, *La Mortola Garden*, Oxford Uni Press, London, 1938.

<sup>205</sup> Marella Caracciolo & Guippi Pietromarchi, *The Garden of Ninfa*, Umberto Allemandi & C., Turin, 1995.

<sup>206</sup> Jean-Pierre Demoly, *Les Cedres – an exceptional Botanical Garden*, Editions Franklin Picard, Paris, 1999.

<sup>207</sup> Karl Dinter, *Alphabetical catalogue of Plants Growing in the Open Air in the Garden of Sir Thomas Hanbury, Palazzo Orengo, La Mortola, near Ventimiglia, Italy*, Karl Dinter, Genoa, 1897; Cecil Hanbury, *Hortus Mortolensis, being an illustrated Catalogue of the plants at La Mortola, Ventimiglia, Italy*, Oxford University Press, 1938.

and 1926, and the 1927 expedition of David Fairchild<sup>208</sup> in which he scoured the world for cultivated plants that were suitable for introduction to the USA. While the focus of collecting was strongly on plants with agricultural potential for California and Florida many decorative plants were also introduced and news of them added to a heightened awareness of plants for Mediterranean type climates that originated with the work of Luther Burbank (1849-1926) in Santa Rosa, California. On a smaller scale commercial plant collections and introductions had their impact too, such as the efforts of Henry Simon<sup>209</sup> (Algerian-Tunisian expeditions 1910-14) to establish a date palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*) industry in California; this also found an echo in South Australia at Marree and Kudla.

Without doubt the transmission of ideas and information, at least at the higher levels of society depended on the interconnectedness of families and the appearance of a number of illustrated magazines and professional journals that circulated more or less internationally. The high degree of interconnectedness is reflected in *Walburga*, Lady Paget's two volume memoirs of her private life after her husband retired from the British diplomatic service for the Foreign Office. They seemed to be on a never-ending cycle between, homes, residences, hotels, resorts and embassies between London, Rome, Vienna, Florence, Le Touquet, Nice, Monte Carlo, Cannes, Baden Baden and Deauville. Circling around them in the firmament of the International Colony were a stellar collection of slightly lesser galaxies – the Henry James Americans, sundry industrialist millionaires and billionaires, the odd maharajah and Russian royalty. And from time to time luminaries of Australian vice-regal circles and the squattocracy came into orbit, however briefly and glimmered in the starlight of the Côte d'Azur and the Grand Corniche.

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<sup>208</sup> David Fairchild, *Exploring for Plants*, MacMillan Co., New York, 1930.

<sup>209</sup> Hilda Simon, *The Date Palm – Bread of the Desert*, Dodd, Mead & Co., New York, 1978.

NOTE: This image is included on page 131 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

*Côte d'Azur* (20<sup>th</sup> Century travel poster, Musée d'Orsay)

#### 4.13 The Mediterranean as a source of International architectural style

Magazines and journals such as the *Architectural Review*, the *Architectural Digest*, the *American Architect*, *Country Life*, *Apollo*, *Connoisseur*, the *Illustrated London News*, *Harper's Magazine*, and *The Spectator* were particularly attuned to the Mediterranean as a centre of high society living and lifestyle from the 1880's until the 1920's; a region where new architecture, new art forms and a more relaxed and less restrained manner of living could be enjoyed.

What is noticeable in these and other architectural sources is the transformation over time of Classicism towards a more relaxed architectural language that has been labelled 'Mediterranean'. Classical references are strong and clean, but these were, and remain, the indulgences of mega-wealthy dilettante clients and their academic architects. As the shores of the Mediterranean became a popular destination for holiday-makers and people seeking a more benign climate the pressures for new accommodations and housing saw an inevitable dilution of Classic principles and the emergence of a range of styles that variously retained and discarded features of classical, vernacular, peasant and other motifs, even Gothic and a heavy Teutonic baronial style. Evidence of these will be discernable in illustrated books.

More recent studies of the Mediterranean as an influence on architecture and landscape provide a powerful reminder of the strength of the oeuvre as it developed in its Golden Age (1880-1920). Principal among them is David Ottewill's *The Edwardian Garden*<sup>210</sup> where he considers developments in the UK, USA and on the Riviera. It is worth noting that he records also the ripple of interest and debate that occurred in Australia regarding the Italian question.

The matter was of sufficient interest to the architectural and horticultural professions that a formal debate was conducted in Melbourne with the leading protagonists for and against formalism and naturalism. Walter Butler (1864-1949), architect, argued for formalism and a direct relationship between house and garden. Charles Bogue Luffman (1862-1920), horticulturist and academic, spoke in favour of a more truly 'Gothic' approach that featured wayward growth

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<sup>210</sup> David Ottewill, *The Edwardian Garden*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1989.

and winding glades that spoke directly to the 'primeval Wilderness' rather than the architecture and the house. Of particular interest in Ottewill's contention that Edna Walling (1895-1973) created "Italian inspired gardens in Victoria", citing 'Warrawee' (1906-10) in Toorak, and 'Marathon' (1913-14) on the Mornington Peninsula at Mt Eliza, as principal examples.



Rupert Bunny *An Idyll* (1901) Blue skies, blue seas, a handsome young couple admired by a fawn. The Classical Mediterranean in popular Victorian art. (Art Gallery of SA collection)

A narrower view is taken by Collas and Villedary in *Edith Wharton's French Riviera*<sup>211</sup> that focuses singly on the Riviera and its social milieu. In a somewhat rambling text the pictures are probably of greater importance than the words but there is mention of two Australians who lived a fabled life in one of the grandest of the grand villas: 'La Fiorentina'<sup>212</sup> on the Point St Hospice of Cap Ferat. Enid, Lady Kenmare, an expatriate Sydney girl three times married and her son Roderick Cameron occupied the mansion in the glory days before World War II broke out. Coming right at the end of the period of this study Lady Kenmare's ownership could be seen as the actualisation of what was a dream for at least some of Australia's more cosmopolitan social elite. An earlier owner, Countess de Beauchamp – an Englishwoman, had used the services of Ferdinand Bac to develop the grounds, the bones of which formed the basis of Cameron's later acclaimed design. If the grandeur of 'La Fiorentina' and St

<sup>211</sup> Philippe Collas & Éric Villedary, *La Côte d'Azur Autemps de edith wharton (Edith Wharton's French Riviera)*, Flammarion, Paris, 2002.

<sup>212</sup> Shirley Johnston, *The Villas of the Riviera – Magnificence and Majesty on the Côte d'Azur*, Thomas & Hudson, London, 1998; Cameron, Roderick, *The Golden Riviera*, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, London, 1975.

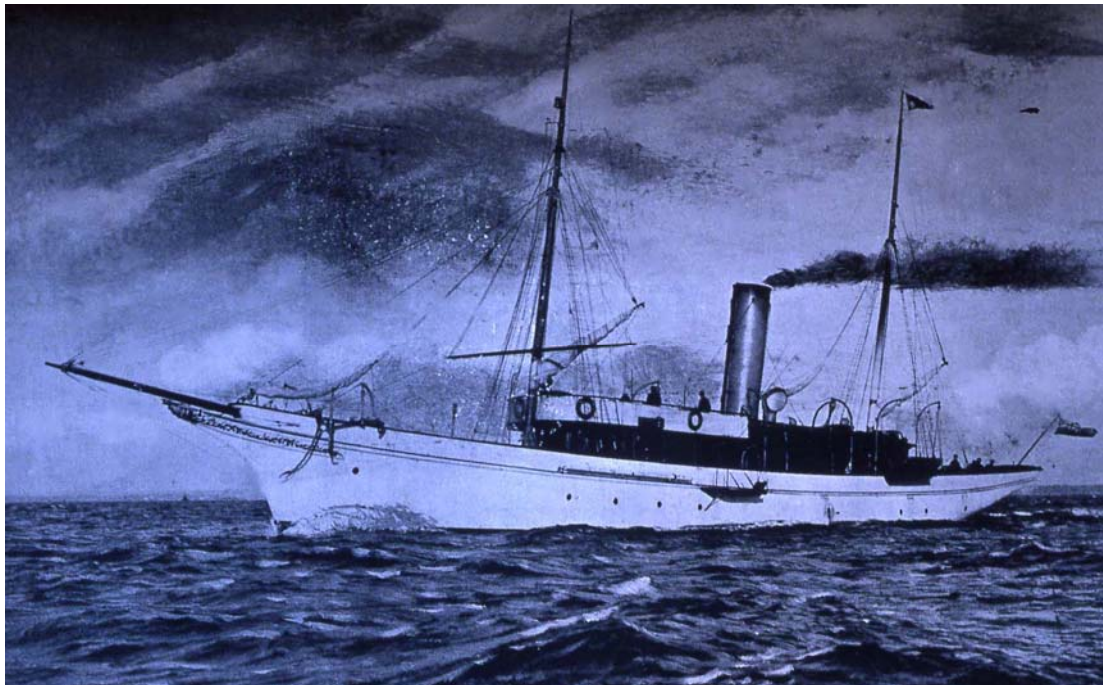
Jean Cap Ferat was the apogee of one Australian's ambition it seems appropriate to ask whether there were any equivalents in South Australia? There is no evidence of any such grandeur anywhere along the Gulf St Vincent or the Backstairs Passage. The artist's colony at Port Willunga may well have been viewed as the local version of the bohemian one at (slightly) down-market Hyères?

NOTE: This image is included on page 135 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library

*Summer on the French Riviera by the Blue Train* (English travel poster, Musée d'Orsay)

Setting Walter Bagot against this international trend is helpful, not in establishing his innovation of an architecture based in Mediterranean imperatives but in showing him as a small part player in a much wider trend.

His training, linked as it would have been to the all-powerful British Institute of Architecture through the professional affiliations and training of the Adelaide School of Mines & Industries engineering department must have exposed him to some of the seminal Beaux Arts writers and architects of the day who took part in ‘the Italian Affair’.<sup>213</sup> A primary source would have been H Inigo Triggs’s *The Art of Garden Design in Italy* (1906)<sup>214</sup> more than adequately supplemented by *The Gardens of Italy* (1905)<sup>215</sup>, Sir George Sitwell’s *On the Making of Gardens* (1909)<sup>217</sup>, and Edith Wharton’s *Italian Villas and their Gardens* (1904)<sup>218</sup>.



MS ‘Adele’ owned by Henry Dutton brought a touch of the high life of the French Riviera as it cruised the Gulf of St Vincent in the early 1900’s. (photo. author’s collection)

<sup>213</sup> J. Derrick Kendrick, *Some Information on the Background and Prior History of the University of Adelaide School of Architecture*, Adelaide, no date; V.A. Edgeloe, *Engineering Education in the University of Adelaide 1889-1980 – A Registrar’s Retrospect*, Adelaide, no date.

<sup>214</sup> H. Inigo Triggs, *The Art of Garden Design in Italy*, Longmans & Co., London, 1906.

<sup>215</sup> Avery Tipping, *The Gardens of Italy*, Country Life, London, 1905.

<sup>216</sup> Sir George Sitwell, *On the Making of Gardens*, Dropmore Press, London, 1949; Sacheverell Sitwell, Osbert Sitwell, Sir George Sitwell & Resesby Sitwell, *Hortus Sitwellianus*, Michael Russell, 1984.

<sup>217</sup> Edith Wharton, *Italian Villas and their Gardens*, The Century Co., New York, 1904.

<sup>218</sup> Tipping, *The Gardens of Italy*.

<sup>217</sup> Sitwell *On the Making of Gardens*; Sitwell, Sitwell, Sitwell & Sitwell, *Hortus Sitwellianus*.

<sup>218</sup> Wharton, *Italian Villas and their Gardens*.



English practitioners who worked directly in the architectural field along the Riviera<sup>219</sup> and in Tuscany included Arthur Acton and Cecil Pinset – ‘Villa la Pietra’ (1902) and ‘Villa I Tatti’ (1910) at Florence, and Harold Peto – ‘Villa Sylvia’ (1902), ‘Villa Maryland’ (1904) and ‘Villa Rosemary’ (1908) at Cap St Jean Ferat.

Each of these represents a significant far-reaching commission for design, construction, and landscape architecture using new and recycled architectural elements, design features and plants appropriate to the settings and climate, and they received extensive photographic coverage, especially from Avery Tipping, editor of *Country Life* whose commissioning such massive and expensive works regarded themselves as the ‘Merchant Princes’ of Edwardian England and the United States; the style they preferred reflected their self-image as the new Medici on a global stage.



‘Anlaby’ – An Edwardian era garden party held on the Italianate balustraded belvedere on the garden front of the mansion. (author’s photograph)

In England itself there were also significant excursions into Italian and Mediterranean styles of architecture. Peto’s own home, ‘Iford Manor’ (1899)<sup>220</sup>,

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<sup>219</sup> Mrs Phillip Martineau, *Gardening in Sunny Lands*, Cobden-Sanderson, London, 1924.

is a tour de force in Italianate terraced garden design with much statuary, Roman antiquities and architectural masonry fragments imported to make the composition more convincing. Peto was commissioned by Lord Jacob Astor to design major parts of the landscape and gardens at 'Hever Castle' (1903) where his fortune and taste were restoring, converting and re-interpreting a small Tudor castle and farming estate into a fantasy English Village. Peto's Italian garden, built especially to display Astor's collection of ancient Roman sculptural fragments, well heads, sarcophagi, busts, torsos and body parts, was his masterpiece. Peto was not alone working in England; the architect Clough Williams-Ellis, indulged himself in a complete Italian village at Portmerion and Lord Lever's 'Port Lympne' also showed many Italianate features in the layout and construction of the gardens and broader landscape. Coming at the peak of interest in 1925 Shepherd & Jellicoe's *Italian Gardens of the Renaissance*<sup>221</sup>, offered further information on the theme from original sources – if such were needed.

The English were not alone along the Riviera in France and Italy. Ferdinand Bac and Octave Goddard were two important French designers who explored the Mediterranean ideals in architecture and landscape design. Goddard produced a book<sup>222</sup> that recorded his achievements and the design considerations that lay behind them. Bac had much to say but his limited editions<sup>223</sup> are little catalogued in libraries. Better known as an illustrator and decorator, Bac none-the-less exerted an influence that carried as far as the young Luis Barragán (1902-88). Bac's 'Les Colombières' at Menton stands as monument to his imaginative and Romantic vision of Mediterranean gardens. Paris-based landscape architect J.C.N. Forestier (1861-1930) also had commissions in the south of France where his preferred Renaissance formalism style was readily translated to the Mediterranean format.

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<sup>220</sup> Harold Peto, *The Boko of Iford*, Libanus Press, Marlborough (UK), 1993.

<sup>221</sup> J. Shepherd & Geoffrey Jellicoe, *Italian Gardens of the Renaissance*, Alec Tiranti & Co., London 1953.

<sup>222</sup> Octave Goddard, *Les Jardins de la Côte d'Azur*, Paris 1927.

<sup>223</sup> Ferdinand Bac, *Jardins Enchantés, Un Romancero*, Louis Conard, Paris, 1925; F. Bac, *Les Colombières, Ses Jardins et Ses Décors*, Louis Conard, Paris, 1925; Guy di Diesback, *Ferdinand Bac*, Flammarion, Paris, 1979.

Not that the Mediterranean was the sole inspiration of architecture and landscape design, especially in France where it was strongly challenged by Modernism and the advocates of Charles Édouard Jeanneret *aka* Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe. In the same era that the Mediterranean *Romancers* of Bac were being dreamed up, drawn and sometimes built architect 'Rob' Mallet-Stevens and his collaborator Gabriel Guévrékian<sup>224</sup> were astounding or stunning Riviera habitués with the 'functional' villa 'Parc St Bernard' and its cubist garden for Viscount Charles de Noailles at Hyères (1928). Such was the notoriety of this particular building and garden that it was widely reported internationally, especially in influential architectural and design journals.

NOTE: This image is included on page 139 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library

Ferdinand Bac, 'Les Colombières', on the French Riviera, constructed in 1919 and widely publicised and illustrated in the architectural press of European and Anglo-America as an example of modern landscape design in the Mediterranean tradition.  
(photo. Ministère de l'Équipement, du Logement, de la Aménagement, Paris 1983).

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<sup>224</sup> Dorothee Imbert, *The Modernist Garden in France*, Yale University Press, London 1993, pp. 125-145.

Long before it was illustrated and discussed as a model for the future in Christopher Tunnard's (1910-70) landmark book *The Garden in the Modern Landscape*<sup>225</sup> the landscape at 'Parc St Bernard', and several derivatives, had been featured in books such as Geoffrey Jellicoe's *Garden Decoration & Ornament*<sup>226</sup> and G.C. Taylor's *The Modern Garden*<sup>227</sup>, as well as being featured in *Country Life* and publications of *The Architectural Press* (UK).

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<sup>225</sup> Christopher Tunnard, *The Garden in the Modern Landscape*, The Architectural Press, London, 1938.

<sup>226</sup> Geoffrey Jellicoe, *Garden Decoration & Ornament*, Country Life, London, 1936.

<sup>227</sup> G.C Taylor, *The Modern Garden*, Country Life, London, 1936.



Hamo Thornycroft 'Teucer' (1904)

Caught between Classic form and Art Deco modernism the archer reaches across Mediterranean history as an enduring theme that found an appreciative owner in South Australia. (private collection, Adelaide)

Given the dependence of architects and designers everywhere at the time on illustrated books and magazines as the most rapid means for the transmission of ideas it would be reasonable to expect that Bagot and other local architects had plenty of information about what was happening along the Riviera, in California and elsewhere. Even if he had not the inclination to purchase such

items personally he would most likely have seen them in professional and academic libraries as he moved among society and his peers. One can only wonder what he would have made of it. If anything his more Classical inclinations would have had him shaking his head.



'Parc St Bernard', landscape designed by Gabriel Guévrekian in 1928 as a distillation of Mediterranean motifs for Charles, Vicomte de Noailles, for his Mallet-Stevens designed villa at Nice.

In a preliminary paper for the conference *Images and Shadows, Anglo-Italian Cross-fertilization*<sup>228</sup> the author has drawn parallels between the Modernist garden and the Italianate tradition by suggesting that both were concerned in the main about functionality and geometry; an insight that certainly confronts landscape Romantics and hard line Modernists alike.

#### 4.14 American Influences

There were Americans at work in the field too. Foremost amongst them were the brothers Charles Platt (1861-1933 and William Platt; the former a painter and the latter trained as a landscape architect at Harvard. The two made a tour

<sup>228</sup> Katie Campbell, 'The Renaissance Revisited', *Hortus*, no. 73, Spring, 2005, pp. 45-54.

of Italian Renaissance villas and gardens in 1892 that produced commentaries, photographs, perspectives and measured drawings used in Charles Platt's *Italian Gardens (1894)*<sup>229</sup>. William Platt died young but Charles is widely regarded as a leading light in the revival of scholarly interest in Italian Renaissance architecture.

Scholarly interest aside there were many other American architects and landscape designers who took the Italian Renaissance and the Mediterranean as the source of their inspiration. On the East Coast these were largely limited to the commissions of magnates for grandiose homes in the north and for palatial holiday residences in southern Florida. In the north sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens house and garden 'Aspet' in Cornish, New Hampshire, was a small but particularly refined Classical Italianate establishment set with arcades, colonnades that formed an apt setting for his Neo-Classical style sculptures. Nearby, in the same town, Charles Platt worked out the Italian villa theme that later transformed the American country house movement<sup>230</sup>. In the south, the 14ha 'Vizcaya' (1912-1919) on Biscayne Bay, Florida, stands as the *nonpareil* of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Renaissance Italianate style in the United States, and probably in the entire New World. Even Mrs Ringling's three ring circus, 'Ca d'Zan', an Italianate Renaissance garden on nearby Sarasota Bay, looked gauche alongside it, despite the vast formal array of antique Classical sculptures imported from Europe to stand in legions around the belvederes and terraces. Built for James Deering, 'Vizcaya' was based on 'Villa Rezzonico' near Venice. The development of the estate, buildings, gardens, furnishings and art collection was overseen by the owner and art expert Paul Chalfin. Among the team involved was landscaper Diego Suarez, a Peruvian who trained in Florence under the aegis of Arthur Acton who owned and had restored the 'Villa La Pietra' there – a genuine Renaissance structure.

On the West Coast, a slightly more egalitarian society saw the spread of Mediterranean architecture and landscape design across a wider spectrum of society from the winter mansions of eastern states magnates to the spacious

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<sup>229</sup> Charles Platt, *Italian Gardens*, Harpur Bros., New York, 1894.

<sup>230</sup> MacGriswold & Eleanor Weller, *The Golden Age of American Gardens*, Abrams, New York, 1991.

homes of the stars and starlets of Hollywood to the castles and ranches of billionaire media owners and millionaire film studio owners. Kate Sessions (1850-1947)<sup>231</sup>, a nurserywoman by trade and having access to the Mediterranean climate plant material introduced by Kinton Stevens, a nurseryman at Montecito (1885–c.1893) and Dr Francesco Francechi<sup>232</sup>, who established a nursery at Santa Barbara (1894-1913), was able to supply a wide variety of Mediterranean type plants to meet the demand for mass plantings and mature specimens brought on by the rapid population growth of the west. Florence Yoch (1890-1972)<sup>233</sup>, a young set designer to the film industry built up a strong reputation as a garden designer to the stars with whom she worked. Regrettably many examples of her work have been destroyed by more recent construction in the suburbs around Hollywood and in the Hollywood Hills.

Wealthy private clients intent on building impressive estates have left a more enduring record. Two examples will stand to testify to strength of the Mediterranean influence; William Randolph Hurst's 'La Cuesta Encantada' (1919-25)<sup>234</sup> south of Big Sur near Piedras Blancas on the coast, and Henry Huntingdon's estate (1905-27)<sup>235</sup> at San Marino are but two splendid, indeed magnificent examples.

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<sup>231</sup> Charles Birnbaum & Robin K Fasala, *Pioneers of American Landscape*, National Park Services/McGraw Hill, New York, 2000.

<sup>232</sup> Victoria Padilla, *Southern California Gardens – an Illustrated History*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1961.

<sup>233</sup> James Yoch, *Landscaping the American Dream – the Gardens and Film Sets of Florence Yoch*, Abrams, New York, 1989.

<sup>234</sup> Ken Murray, *The Golden Days of San Simeon*, Doubleday & Co., New York, 1971.

<sup>235</sup> William Hertrich, *The Huntingdon Botanical Gardens*, Huntingdon Library, San Marino, 1949.



NOTE: This image is included on page 145 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library

'La Cuesta Encantada', San Simeon, California. Side elevation showing stone window cases removed from a range of French, Venetian, Spanish and Florentine Medieval buildings utilised to suggest a kind of Mediterranean antiquity. (photo Julia Morgan archive)

Hurst was aided in his expression of magnificence by engineer/architect Julia Morgan, who had the competence and skill to engineer the relocation of mature oaks that weighed 600 tons, and Huntingdon by William Hertrich, a practical gardener and landscaper, still held in high regard for his insight into using and introducing a wide variety of plants suited to Mediterranean climate gardens.

Smaller scale estates were developed *en bloc* in gated locations favoured by a wealthy elite who regarded themselves as *bon ton* social colonies in towns such as Montecito<sup>236</sup>, Pasadena, Monterey, Santa Barbara, Carmel and Pebble Beach.

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<sup>236</sup> Elizabeth Vogt, *Montecito*, MIP Publishing, Santa Barbara, 1993; Elizabeth McMillan, *Casa Californica*, Rizzoli, New York, 1996; Winifred Starr-Dobyns, *California Gardens*, McMillan Co., New York, 1931.

NOTE: This image is included on page 146 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library

'La Cuesta Encantada', William Randolph Hearst's California mansion, showing stone window cases removed from ten old Venetian buildings to create a strong 'authentic' Mediterranean pastiche. (photo Julia Morgan archive)

Their favoured designer/ architect/ landscapers were essentially artists with a variety of professional qualifications who had the skills, knowledge and ability to put together a closely detailed total concept and see it through to completion. It was not unusual for such practitioners to advise their clients on the purchase of antiques and fine arts as well as designing mansion and landscape, over-seeing the project and acting as interior designers as well. Lockwood de Forest, George Washington Smith, Myron Hunt, Addison Mizner, Ralph Stevens and others<sup>237</sup> were prominent among them.

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<sup>237</sup> Birnbaum & Fasala, *Pioneers of American Landscape*.



Antique stone lions removed from European Medieval buildings await shipment to the USA through the architectural antique dealers Arthur and Mildred Byne, c.1920. Items such as these helped create the authentic Mediterranean ambience sought by wealthy California plutocrats such as William Randolph Hearst. (photo. Historic Conservation Commission, Santa Cruz)

One-off commissions were common too, and in relation to Mediterranean sensibilities, were explored through the Californian version of the Arts and Crafts Movement. Green and Green were among the important architects who translated the Arts and Crafts ethic from the English referenced style to a California idiom. Hand crafted buildings and fittings, natural materials and respect for local traditions were paired with native stones and timbers and built features that took account of the Californian climate. Patios, pergolas, courtyards, shutters, over-hanging eaves, enclosing walls and other climate ameliorating features were melded from colonial Spanish-Mexican traditions and techniques and those of southern Europe and the shores of Mediterranean.

On the public front Americans were exposed to a free-wheeling meld of Italian Renaissance/Spanish Colonial and Mediterranean styles of architecture and landscape design through the huge industrial and cultural expositions that were held in the 1890's and early 1900's. The fore-runner was the World's Columbian exposition held in Chicago in 1893 where Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903)<sup>238</sup> responded to the Renaissance Classicism of the building with a formal Italianate layout. More particularly the concurrent Panama – Pacific

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<sup>238</sup> Walter T. Punch (ed.), *Keeping Eden – A History of Gardening in America*, Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1992.

International Exposition in Balboa Park, San Diego and at San Francisco in 1915 exerted a huge impact on the public acceptance of the style.



California State Building, Panama –Pacific International Exposition, 1915. Hand-coloured photograph of the Spanish Colonial style building reproduced by the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, 2004



Court of Abundance and Mulgardt's Tower a Spanish-Moorish fantasy at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, 1915. Hand-coloured photograph reproduced by the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, 2004

Inspired by the 18<sup>th</sup> century Spanish architect Jose Churriguera, architects Bernard Maybeck and John MacLaren worked their Mediterranean magic on hundreds of thousands who visited the two sites. There were also significant expeditions into Mediterranean styles of architecture and landscape design in civic and educational projects such as the Spanish-Colonial public library at Pasadena and the campus of Stanford University where the whole academic residential quarter was comprised of very spacious imitations of Palladian villas and the university buildings display an eclectic mix and match of Renaissance Revival, Spanish Colonial and Palladian styles.

Etzkowitz and Schwab posed the question “Is America Necessary?”<sup>239</sup> in their book of the same name. Their argument encompassed the world of politics and military influence, and the cultural impact that nation has exerted on the development of societies in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Matters to do with landscape, gardening and design sympathetic to environmental conditions did not concern them but the question could be validly asked as much of these matters as with almost any other. If that question were asked it seems clear from the extant constructed gardens and published material that there is ample evidence that indeed America was necessary to the international popularisation and growth of Mediterranean influences in landscape design. The question remains to be answered in the Australian and South Australian context.

That which was written and created at vast expense in California was echoed in Australia but on a much smaller, less grand and more economical scale. The Mediterranean idioms found a footing among Australian architectural academics as well as among practitioners. In the South Australian context one stands out: Walter Bagot.

#### **4.15 The Bagot – Cornish Collaboration Summarised**

Two further factors need to be briefly explored in the relationship between the Mediterranean and Bagot, and these are the extent to which he used siting and aspect, and built structure to ameliorate or utilise the local climate. Chip Sullivan’s detailed survey of this relationship<sup>240</sup> between site, structures and climatic ‘engineering’ provides a background against which to consider Bagot’s work.

Beyond ornament, architectural fragments and bagged walls rendered with terracotta washes, did Bagot’s work in any way modify the Mediterranean climate in which he lived, built and made gardens?

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<sup>239</sup> Henry Etzkowitz and Peter Schwab, *Is America Necessary?* West Pub Co., New York, 1976.

<sup>240</sup> Chip Sullivan, *Garden and Climate*, McGraw Hill, New York, 2002.

NOTE: This image is included on page 151 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library

‘Nurney House’, Kingston Terrace, North Adelaide.

A marble wall fountain in the form of a Bacchanalian Satyr and lavabo imported from Italy by Walter Bagot and placed in the arcaded loggia of the *piano nobile* of the palazzetta.  
(photo. Heritage Garden Survey, SA project, Rodney Beames and Tony Whitehill)

Apart from the atrium/ courtyard at ‘Nurney House’ it seems unlikely. The atrium was situated where views over the city to the Adelaide Hills could be had, and the open arcading would allow cooling gully breezes to come into the house after a hot summer day so it has potential to act as a climate modifier. There is a small fountain too, another potential climate modifier but we can only guess if the area was regularly used for eating or working outdoors; if the atrium was used as an outdoor living space as it was in every Mediterranean farmhouse. The orientation of ‘Nurney House’ seems not to be considered except in its alignment with Kingston Terrace so little consideration seems to have been given at the time of remodelling to shifting the house to reduce its

exposure to the sun. Maybe this was beyond Bagot's intention after all he already had a substantial two-storey stone house to deal with. The addition of curved screening walls and a largely blank façade facing north may have been a reasonable compromise between the ideal and the possible. At 'Forest Lodge' the question of siting would have already been settled by the existing house which was not altered. Only the garden got the Italian treatment.



Student Union Building, Victoria Drive, University of Adelaide  
The arcaded loggia is all that shows of Walter Bagot's Italianate village building. (author's photograph)

As for the University of Adelaide buildings, only the Student Union Building has any comment worthy Mediterranean features<sup>241</sup>. The rest are of an extremely pared-down version with orientation only to Victoria Drive and the impact of the summer sun and light being scarcely acknowledged. There are no overhanging eaves, the shallowest possible window recesses, no shutters, no shadowy facades and no relief from the heat. The Student Union has an arcaded loggia and a courtyard of attractive size and proportions that almost answers the same arrangement across the River Torrens at Bagot's home on Kingston Terrace, 'Nurney House'. Once again the orientation seems to be related to its alignment with Victoria Drive than it does to any modifying influence it might have had on the climate. Can an answer be drawn from the evidence

<sup>241</sup> Bagot's proposal for Mediterranean style ceremonial Great Hall was rejected by Bonython in favour of the Gothic style Bonython Hall on North Terrace.



presented here? On the surface Bagot may appear to have been an academically significant entity in relating the influence of the Mediterranean to local conditions and architecture. His insight appears to have found resonance with his landscape collaborator on the university campus, Elsie Cornish, and together their work produced a layout that had and still has considerable local significance, despite losses due to poor maintenance and parts of the site having been reclaimed for the construction of new buildings. On balance, however, the impact of their collaboration appears to have had little impact on either the adoption of Mediterranean sensibilities to architecture or gardens in Adelaide. Bagot's personal affection for things Mediterranean apparently did not strike many responsive chords in the hearts and minds of his clients; numerous Queen Anne and Tudor villas and quasi-Georgian public architecture designed by his contemporaries Woods, Wright, Soward, Bayer, Garlick, McMinn and English, vastly outweigh any influence of the Mediterranean villa in Adelaide's cityscape and in the suburbs. And, Cornish's hardy succulents, tough shrubs and drought tolerant trees found few echoes in the trim and traditional 'English' gardens of Unley Park, Prospect, Walkerville, Beaumont and Springfield.

Until further material is researched and published the best that can be said is that their mutually supportive sensibilities and ideas were in advance of their time for South Australian clients both public and private. Detailed research being undertaken presently by Bird, in her forthcoming untitled thesis, may well deliver sufficient information to permit a more generous assessment of the products of the creative relationship between the two.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> Louise Bird, Master of Landscape Architecture thesis in preparation, University of Adelaide, 2006.

NOTE: This image is included on page 154 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library

As a centre for the Arts the French Riviera attracted film producers. Among the avant-garde and Modernist Movement included Man Ray and Marcel L'Herbier. Eventually even Hollywood took to the Mediterranean as a background for love, adventure, intrigue and the glamorous life shown here in *To Catch a Thief*, the Alfred Hitchcock film made in Monaco and starring Grace Kelly and Cary Grant. (Paramount Pictures Corp. poster – private collection, Adelaide)

#### **4.16 George Goyder (1826-98) and John 'Forester' Brown (1848-99)**

In terms of a continuing development of a Mediterranean climate approach to horticulture and garden making in South Australia we must look for a source which is less reliant on markets than the commercial plant trade and free of the economic constraints imposed on relatively indulgent diversions such as botanic gardens. What organization had the capacity and interest in funding such relatively unrewarding work? The government! The key change agents charged with this task were George Woodroffe Goyder (1826-98) and John Ednie 'Forester' Brown (1848-99).

Through the office of the Surveyor-General, George Woodroffe Goyder, moves were made somewhat belatedly in 1870, to encourage the planting of forest trees. Goyder noticed the rapid rate of uncontrolled felling of native forests and

was moved to remedy the situation through representations to the House of Assembly by a member Friedrich Krichauff (1824-1904). Krichauff proposed a Return to Order as to

*... what is the BEST SIZE OF RESERVES for FOREST PURPOSES, and where they are to be made, to recommend the best and most ECONOMICAL MEANS OF PRESERVING THE NATIVE TIMBER thereon, and of PLANTING or REPLANTING the RESERVES as PERMANENT STATE FORESTS and what are the most VALUABLE INDIGENOUS or FOREIGN TIMBER TREES, having in view as well as supply for public purposes, also an annual revenue from the sale of surplus timber.*<sup>243</sup>

The Order was not returned until 1873 when an *Act to Encourage the Planting of Forest Trees* was passed through the colonial parliament. Progress was slow and a Forests Board was not established to implement the *Act* until 1875. The board comprised Richard Schomburgk (1811-91) (Director of the Botanic Gardens), Colonel Barber, the Hon. B Finnis, George McEwen and Goyder. Goyder was elected as Chairman. With control of 195,000 acres (78,900ha) the Board had responsibility to protect and regenerate natural vegetation, and to demonstrate the practicability of forestry in South Australia. Setting its own terms of reference the Board

*... decided to grow only useful timber: and where ornament and use could be combined, preference was given to such varieties ... and where quality of timber was equal, preference was given to that variety having the most rapid growth.*<sup>244</sup>

By late 1876 some 132,757 trees were ready to be planted out as yearlings. Included were 12,000 pines – Radiata Pine (*Pinus radiata*), Aleppo Pine (*P. halepensis*), Canary Island Pine (*P. canariensis*) and Maritime Pine (*P. pinaster*) and between 50 and 500 each of introduced oaks (*Quercus* spp), ashes (*Fraxinus* spp), elms (*Ulmus* spp), walnuts (*Juglans* spp), poplars (*Populus* spp)

<sup>243</sup> Hansard, Parliament of South Australia, 7 September, 1870 in N. B Lewis, *A Hundred Years of State Forestry – 1875 - 1975, for the Minister of Forests*, Brian Chatterton M.P., Government Printer, Adelaide, 1975, p. 14.

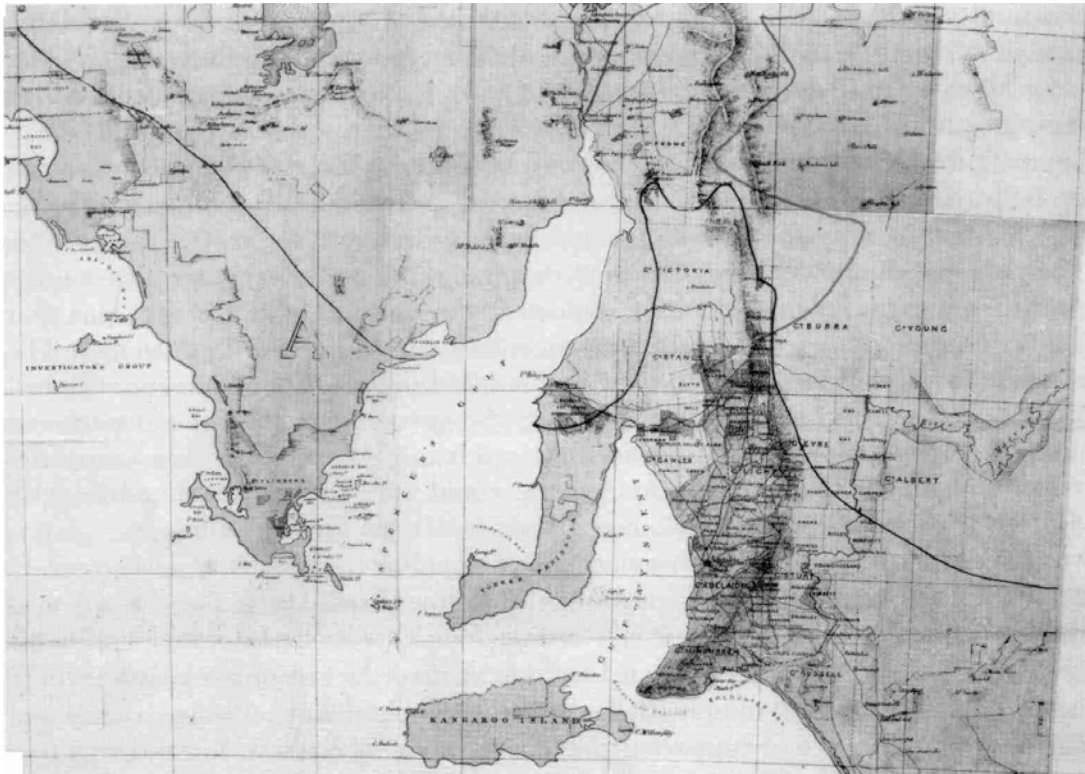
<sup>244</sup> Lewis, *A Hundred Years of State Forestry*, p. 14.

and willows (*Salix* spp). Of the pines planted in large numbers the Aleppo Pine (*Pinus halepensis*), the Canary Island Pine (*Pinus canariensis*) and the Maritime Pine (*Pinus pinaster*) are native to the Mediterranean basin, while the fourth is from California that has a Mediterranean type climate. Just securing the seed stock for such large plantations must have been a huge task, presumably drawing on the contacts of government agencies and those in the trade, but handling them and raising them to planting size would have required a level of resources and effort that could only have been met by a specialist facility set up for the purpose: this took the form of a nursery established by the Board at Wirrabara.

Despite calling on the expertise of his nurseryman brother-in-law, Edwin Smith, Goyder's initiative was not easily established; losses were high in the new plantations and the operations of the Forests Board were closely scrutinised by the government with the outcome that the Board was abolished by the *Woods and Forests Act* of 1882. Before this happened, the Board had seen to the appointment of John Ednie Brown as the second Conservator of Forests (1876-90).

'Forester' Brown, as he became known, was committed to the idea that rainfall followed tree planting; a view not dissimilar to the idea popular at that time that rainfall followed the plough. Goyder was very sceptical of this idea but otherwise agreed with Brown's experimental approach to discovering the best native and exotic forest trees for South Australia. As head of the Woods and Forests Department, Brown used his position to institute a wide spread practice of establishing tree trials in small and large plots across the state. In railway yards, along roadways, in plantations at the edges of towns and on farms, and around reservoirs a wide range of trees was tried over an equally wide range of soils and climate. Given the thrust to open up new wheat lands in the north, it is scarcely surprising that Brown's belief and practice was enthusiastically adopted, though in the end it turned out to be over optimistic. Plantings intended to bring rain to places like Oodnadatta, Quorn, Willochra and

Boolcunda failed; the trees died and no rains came. Goyder was vindicated and his sub-ordinate Brown shown as wrong-headed and too strong headed<sup>245</sup>.



Goyder's Line as presented in February 1866 in a section of a Map of Northern Runs.  
(Latrobe collection, State Library of Victoria)

Lewis, writing in *A Hundred Years of State Forestry 1875 – 1975*, suggests that Edwin Smith, Goyder's brother-in-law, may have acted as advisor to him in forming views about forestry management and practice, and through him influenced Brown's choice of trees. A Scot and trained as a nurseryman, Smith was a product of the apprenticeship method of training that predominated horticulture in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The greater proportion of training was undertaken not by botanic and public gardens, but by the owners of private estates up and down the length and breadth of Great Britain. Since these estates included large areas of forest, woods and plantations of trees, it is possible that Smith had received a solid grounding in the principles and practice of forestry on one of the great Scottish estates. But this is conjecture, even if it does seem probable. Brown himself was a forester of experience and note when he arrived in South Australia. He had experience in forestry plantations in

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<sup>245</sup> Tim Sherratt, Tom Griffiths & Libby Robin, *A Change in the Weather Climate and Culture in Australia*, National Museum of Australia, Canberra, 2005, pp. 56-65.

Scotland and Canada, and was the son of a noted Scottish forestry expert. It would be reasonable to think that Brown was perfectly capable of discerning the kinds of trees that would grow best in South Australia without deference to any other person, however well informed. Whatever the sources of information available to Goyder and Brown they were both wide ranging in their scope of tree selections and focused on discovering what forest trees would do best in South Australia. Without question the best trees were pines, particularly Radiata Pine (*Pinus radiata*) from the coastal ranges of central and southern California, a region that bears remarkable resemblances to the topography and climate of South Australia.

Any commentary on the Mediterranean background of Brown's work must necessarily be cautious. He does not make any specific Mediterranean connections, apart from habitat notes, for trees reported in his *Practical Treatise on Tree Culture in South Australia*. So while pines (*Pinus* sp) and oaks (*Quercus* sp) from lands around the Mediterranean were included in his report he does not draw any particular conclusions about the usefulness of plants in general from that region in relation to developments in South Australia.

Such was not included in his terms of reference as Conservator, so however great may be the attraction of claiming Brown as a major advocate for a developing Mediterranean awareness the direct evidence is slim; more a suggestion than a clear fact. What can be said is that his eclectic selections, given trials over a wide range of South Australian soils and climates, did establish a palette of exotic plants in the landscape and in gardens that have proven to be well adapted to our Mediterranean climatic conditions. Brown's pragmatic approach on discovering what would do not just well, but best, in South Australian conditions has established a strong footing for understanding and further development of Mediterranean-ism as a conceptual framework.

Thus, from 1878 to 1890, Brown exerted a steady and wide spread influence over the developing settled landscape of the state. While the commercial nursery industry waxed hot and cold over new stylistic garden fashions and novelty plants that distracted public and private attention from getting to terms with local conditions, Brown was able to pursue his acclimatization experiments

relatively free of the rapidly fluctuating influences on landscape and gardens emanating from England and Europe, and from North America.

Has the influence of the nursery industry been too lightly passed over, or too harshly assessed? As a group comprised of small individual or family business each pursues, and has pursued since the first, its own best interests as the proprietors see fit. Lumping them together and placing some sort of developmental expectation on them as a measure of their collective usefulness to the growth of an understanding of how to respond to the local situation is problematical since none have ever been notified of the expectation. It is unrealistic to do so; it is not a role that is taken by private entrepreneurs. Research and development is not often the focus or forte of private enterprise.

All the same some did select novelty lines of exotics, which on being introduced were found to do well in South Australia; in some cases too well. A few introduced plants have become weeds, so well do they prosper in conditions here. But who was to know that the novelty Harlequin Flower (*Sparaxis* ssp), *Watsonia* ssp and Corn Lilies (*Ixia* ssp) of the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century would become invasive weeds in South Australia by the 1950's? Who could have foreseen that the olive (*Olea europaea*) would invade the creek beds and hillsides of the lower Mount Lofty Ranges and Clare Valley? Who had the insight to see the potential weedy qualities of Algerian or Persian Ivy (*Hedera colchica*), English Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Sea Buckthorn (*Rhamnus alaternus*) or any of the hundred and one others that have shown themselves to be thuggish escapees; even the redoubtable agapanthus (*Agapanthus orientalis*) and Radiata Pine (*Pinus radiata*)?

Previous publications by the several authors have documented in detail the range of species and 19<sup>th</sup> century plants, particularly ornamentals that adapted well to the Mediterranean climate regions of Australia. Information of a general nature may be found in Crittenden<sup>246</sup> and slightly more specific plant information in Brookes and Barley<sup>247</sup> while *Trees and Gardens from the Gold Mining Era* –

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<sup>246</sup> Victor Crittenden, *Yesterday's Gardens* Mullini Press, Canberra, 2002.

<sup>247</sup> Margaret Brookes & Richard Barley, *Plants Listed in Nursery Catalogues in Victoria 1855 -1889 – Taken from General Descriptive Catalogues of Ornamental Trees, Flowering Shrubs, Plants, Bulbs, Florists Flowers etc etc etc.*, Ornamental Plant Collections Association, Melbourne, 1992.

*A Study of the Maldon Landscape*<sup>248</sup> is of particular interest as the climate experienced in the Central Victorian gold mining region that bears many similarities to those of the Mediterranean climate. Other useful sources have been written by Peter Cuffley<sup>249</sup>, a cultural historian from Castlemaine in Central Victoria. His books are useful because the material he draws on is taken from collections and references found in his locale.

Initial research by Nottle relating to Mediterranean climate plants in South Australia was delivered in 1980 to the inaugural Australian Garden History Society Conference. This took the form of a summary<sup>250</sup> of collections made of 19<sup>th</sup> century plants that had been garnered from old gardens and churchyards in South Australia; mainly in the Adelaide Hills and the copper mining towns of Moonta Mines, East Moonta, North Yelta, Kadina and Kapunda. Further research and field notes were published in the first issue of the *Journal of the Australian Garden History Society*<sup>251</sup> in relation to plants surviving in the churchyard of St James Church at Blakiston in the Adelaide Hills. Somewhat later, in the same journal, Nottle published an account of the cottage garden around the National Trust miner's cottage at Moonta Mines on Yorke Peninsula<sup>252</sup>.

Other publications by Nottle make specific reference to 19<sup>th</sup> century plants that were the mainstays of garden making in South Australia's Mediterranean climate<sup>253</sup>. A later publication *Gardens in South Australia 1840–1940*<sup>254</sup>, co-

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<sup>248</sup> Peter F. Lumley, J. Dyke, R.D. Spencer & A.D. Gardiner, *Trees and Gardens from the Gold Mining era – A Study of the Maldon Landscape*, Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne, 1982.

<sup>249</sup> Peter Cuffley, *Cottage Gardens in Australia*, Five Mile Press, Melbourne, 1983; Peter Cuffley, *Traditional gardens in Australia*, Five Mile Press, Melbourne, 1991.

<sup>250</sup> Trevor Nottle, '19<sup>th</sup> Century Plant Material' in Sue Ebury (ed.), *Proceedings of the First Garden History Conference*, National Trust of Australia (Victorian\branch) Melbourne, 1980, pp. 46-47.

<sup>251</sup> Trevor Nottle, 'A Wealth of Flowers' in Miranda Morris-Nunn (ed.), *Journal of the Australian Garden History Society*, Spring 1980, vol.1, no.1; Trevor Nottle, 'Gardens of Remembrance', *Journal of the Australian Garden History Society* Summer, 1982.

<sup>252</sup> Trevor Nottle, 'The Miner's Cottage Garden', in Tim North (ed.), *The Australian Garden Journal*, vol. 2, no.8 August, 1983, pp. 136–138.

<sup>253</sup> Trevor Nottle, *Growing Old Fashioned Roses*, Kangaroo Press, Sydney, 1983; Trevor Nottle, *Cottage Garden Flowers*, Kangaroo Press, Sydney, 1988; Trevor Nottle, *Old Fashioned Gardens*, Kangaroo Press, Sydney, 1992; Trevor Nottle, *The New Cottage Garden*, Kangaroo Press, Sydney, 1997.

<sup>254</sup> David Jones, Pauline Payne & Trevor Nottle, *Gardens in South Australia 1840 -1940*, Dept. for Environment and Heritage, Adelaide, 1997.



authored with Jones and Payne, also contains extensive reference to plants well suited to the climate experienced in the settled parts of South Australia, many of them well within the time frame for this study.

The more or less systematic selection and acclimatization work done by Brown through the agencies of government as a matter of policy and practice introduced many plants, especially forest and ornamental trees that were suited to the climate. These have substantially contributed to the development of the broad landscape a somewhat Mediterranean feel through the addition of conifers that have added large tall elements of dark, dense growth and silhouettes to a landscape otherwise open and light with comparatively few dark tones and shapes. To this have been added the more or less idiosyncratic selections made by amateurs and nurserymen. While none, so far as is known, made consciously Mediterranean references in their choices they were all guided, in greater or lesser degree, by the need to import or breed plants that would find conditions in South Australia at least tolerable and preferably congenial to growth and widespread use.

On a curious but Mediterranean note, mention must be made of efforts to introduce the date palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*) to South Australia. The original intent was to establish dates as a commercial crop, particularly in the Far North region of the state. While this venture did not really come to much the demand for date palms (*Phoenix dactylifera*) for decorative gardening and landscapes is such now that many times more than are available could be used, and there are even now those entrepreneurs willing to risk capital on developing a new date fruit industry. The initial impetus was provided by a report to the Legislative Council of the South Australian parliament presented in 1885. Entitled *Planting of Olives and Mulberries in the Mallee Lands, Dates in the Far North and Wattle Cultivation Generally in the Colony*, the paper stimulated a trial of thirteen date (*Phoenix dactylifera*) seedlings at Hergott Springs (now Maree) in 1889. A further 285 were planted out at the same site by the Woods & Forests Board in 1891. It seems these were seedlings too, provided as were the former by William Guilfoyle, Director of the Melbourne Botanic Garden and himself an acknowledged palm enthusiast.

The experiment was continued by the importation of two hundred suckers of the *Deglet Noor* variety from 'Kurrachi' (Karachi) in India in the same period. A further 450 female and 60 male suckers were imported from Oued Rir in the Algerian Sahara and others were obtained privately from Tunis. Plantations at Hergott Springs, Oodnadatta and Lake Harry (on the Birdsville Track) were made and trial plots established at Coward's Springs and Killapaninna Mission on Coopers Creek. While successful, the plantations were distant from markets, the fruits liable to damage in transit and vulnerable to minor changes in the weather at ripening time. Later attempts, in 1914, were made to establish groves on the River Murray at Cobdogla and Berri by relocating mature trees from Lake Harry. These seem not to have been successful.

Thus there is living evidence that the plant described as one whose climatic range defines the Mediterranean climate region, has been introduced and now reconsidered as a crop plant in South Australia. While it is hardly likely that the date palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*) will become a significant feature of the urban landscape, or even the rural landscape, it is heartening to see specimens being introduced as dramatic and dominant features of one component of the North Terrace redevelopment project in the Museum courtyard<sup>255</sup>. As a reference both to the past and the Mediterranean nature of the climate they are telling, appropriate and imaginative inclusions. As indicators of future sustainable urban and city landscapes they are fine examples of a growing Mediterranean awareness and of a visually exciting potential.

When the date palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*) and its climatic range are taken into account alongside those other indicators of Mediterranean authenticity, the olive and the Holm Oak (*Quercus ilex*), it is evident that significant parts of South Australia meet the proofs required by Braudel.<sup>256</sup> It was he who suggested the range of the olive (*Olea europaea*) as his preferred criteria for Mediterraneanness, and Rol and Jacamon<sup>257</sup> who first favoured the olive (*Olea europaea*) but later nominated the range of the Holm Oak (*Quercus ilex*) as the definitive indicator for the climate type. However defensible the natural botanical

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<sup>255</sup> Taylor, Cullity & Lethlean, *North Terrace Landscape Redevelopment Plan*, for the Adelaide City Council, 2003 -2004.

<sup>256</sup> Braudel *The Mediterranean*.

<sup>257</sup> R. Rol & M. Jacamon, *Flore des Arbres Arbustes et Arbrisseaux Region Mediterraneene*.

boundary markers might be, or not be, to defining the borders of the Mediterranean climate is less at issue than the 'fit' they demonstrate between the Mediterranean climate and climatic conditions prevailing across South Australia.