FACES & PLACES
CURRAMULKA
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The students and staff of Curramulka Primary School would like to thank the community of Curramulka and the individuals who provided the invaluable information for this book. That includes also the many hours spent by parents typing and transporting children.
Special thanks must go to Audrey Tucker without whose assistance this publication would not have been possible.
To the students of 2002, Monica Goodes, Sarah Goodes, Tyson Tilbrook, Matthew Goldsworthy, Ebony Fleming, Billy Matic, Charlie Paech, Joseph Parsons, Jessica Buttfield, Emily Clift and Victoria Agnew well done on an excellent community project. They researched and compiled the information to produce this booklet.
Together with the new students Kiryn Clarke, Ben Agnew, Angus Short, Toby Matic, Lucy Short, Nadine Parsons, Jodie Cates, Rachel Goodes, Tyronn Tilbrook and Leeah Walker in 2003 they edited and published this book.
Sincere thanks to Andrew Cheel of the SYP Telecentre for the hours he spent teaching the students about the publishing process and for arranging the printing of this book.

Take this book, Faces and Places of Curramulka and read about this diverse and unique community hidden on Yorke Peninsula.
Be surprised as you find out just how important this little place was and is still today on a global level and its amazing community spirit.
CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION-JENNY HANSEN

EMU WATERHOLE-GAVIN TWELFTREE

MY SCHOOL DAYS-LAURA MAY

FAMILIES OF CURRAMULKA-HELEN POWER

CURRAMULKA TOWNSHIP-REX WATTERS

CURRAMULKA SCHOOL-AUDREY TUCKER

CURRAMULKA CAVES-JOHN JUERS

WHEAT AND BARLEY-JEFFREY CLIFT

S.Y.P BLUE METAL QUARRY-DAVID NEWBOLD

OSTRICH FARM-TONY AND LYN HAYLES

THOROUGHBRED HORSE STUD-RON DANIELS
INTRODUCTION

The information contained in this book was a compilation of the work done by the Upper Primary class at Curramulka in 2002. The students visited many local people and invited others in to speak to them. They aimed to find out more about their local community and the important roles of the people in it. They were amazed to find out how many of the local products went overseas. They began the journey by visiting the aboriginal significant site of Emu Waterhole from which Curramulka got its name “Gorry” – emu “Mulka”-waterhole. The list of contents is by no means a comprehensive one as students found there are many diverse rural activities taking place that another group might like to study or an interested community member.

One thing that was highlighted was that a lot of what has happened and is happening is not documented.

In order to make the information in here as accurate as possible Mrs Audrey Tucker local well-known resident and former Curramulka schoolteacher worked with the class checking and revisiting. As far as possible we believe the information to be accurate but ask that readers take into consideration that the authors were primary age at the time of writing this.

We hope you enjoy learning more about this unique place as we did.
Emu Waterhole

Long before the white settlers arrived on Yorke Peninsula members of the Narrunga tribe occupied the land. Originally they numbered roughly 800, but by 1881 their numbers had disappeared to less than 100. This was due in part to diseases introduced by the white population and genocide because of fear of the white man. Drifting sandhills at Pondalowie Bay have revealed the site of a mass grave where numbers of aboriginal people were massacred and buried.

The aborigines lived a nomadic life, hunting kangaroo, possum and emu for food, or fishing with nets made of animal sinews, reeds and vegetable fibre. They used rough throwing sticks and spears as weapons. They had no boomerangs or woomeras. Their knives were made from sharp shells. Later they used glass from bottles washed up onto beaches, although they didn’t understand where these came from.

Their clothing consisted of cloaks made from possum or kangaroo skins dried out in the sun and stitched together with kangaroo and wallabies tendons. These were worn under one arm, and fastened on the other shoulder with a pin made of bone, thus leaving the arms free. In winter the men greased their bodies with emu fat to keep out the cold. They later used mutton fat for this purpose, much to the annoyance of the early pastoralists.

Vegetation throughout the Peninsula was natural scrub, and their houses were make-shift shelters of tree branches and leaves. After the white man came, permission was granted to the aboriginal people to run away in order to save their lives. This resulted in new blood being introduced into the Narrunga tribe.

One of Curramulka’s most significant Aboriginal sites is Emu Waterhole. It is not a spring. It can become dry in summer. Water drains off of the rocks where long ago a glacier existed. The water is about two and half metres deep. Curramulka gets its name from “Gorry” meaning Emu, and Moolka means a stone waterhole. There is a Dreamtime story, which mentions Emu waterhole, which has been handed down to aboriginal children. Mr Kevin O’Loughlin of Tauondi Incorporated has kindly permitted us the use of this story.
Emu Water Hole

Emu Waterhole

Glacier scoured rock
Irene Agius

THE STORY OF BUTHERAS’ ROCK

Buthera was a big strong man on a journey through his country to the southern part of Yorke Peninsula. On the way he camped and met a stranger who said he was Mudjitju the leader of the bat people.

Buthera was angry with Mudjitju coming into his land without permission. They fought and Buthera cut Mudjitju in two, which is why the bat has short legs today and the folds where he was cut can still be seen on his body.

Buthera continued along his way until he came to Gardiemulka (called Curramulka today, meaning Emu Water Hole) where a group were camped by the water holes. They had been told of the fight by the willy wag tail (a bird that the Narrunga and many other people believe to be a messenger and bearer of news).

Buthera was annoyed that the people knew of his fight with Mudjitju and caused a great bush fire to encircle them. The people tried to escape into the water holes but they were all burnt. The wind rose turning them into birds, magpies, shags and seagulls. Today we can see how their bodies were burnt black by the fire and smeared with the grey and white ashes.

Buthera continued on his journey until he met Ngarna.

Ngarna was a little man. He saw Mudjitju and Mudjitju was a bat. The two men had an argument and fought. In the fight Ngarna was wounded by Buthera but Ngarna was clever and quick footed and he ran away. Buthera was at Guguthie and he threw his waddy (club) across the bay at Ngarna, who hid behind a rock.

At present (2002) there is a move afoot for claiming the Narrunga territory. This is an area extending over the whole of Yorke Peninsula and embracing Crystal Brook, Snowtown, Red Hill, Lochiel and Port Wakefield.

Aboriginal people today still believe strongly in the Dreaming. Mrs Irene Agius, representing the Aboriginal people of Point Pearce is concerned by the disturbance of spirits at burial sites.

Sincere thanks to Irene Agius and Gavin Twelftree
I commenced school at Curramulka in 1932 with Mr. Johnny Naughton as Head Master. I had turned 7 in May so had started after the school holidays. I went to school with my brother Bert (better known as Bulla) and my sister Nell. Bert finished school at the end of that year, and Nell and I continued, driving a horse and cart to school, each day. Nell left school in May of the following year because she had to help mother at home.

After that I boarded with Mr. and Mrs. Doige. They had a dairy and used to supply the town with milk, cream and butter. To pay for my board I had to help with the milking and after breakfast I would deliver the milk around the town until it was time for school. Some days I would have to go back to the Doige’s for my midday lunch. This meant that I would miss out on play time, and I couldn’t play after school because we had to milk again and deliver the milk before it became dark.

I delivered it in a big pram-like cart which had no hood but which had sufficient room to hold two big cans of milk and one small can of cream. Twice a week I would have to take butter around to the houses.

After 3 years of schooling I had to leave school to work on the farm. It was the time of the great Depression, and my brothers had to go out to earn money, and Dad was finding it difficult to pay for help. Times were very hard.

During the time I attended school we would fall in for Assembly at 8-30 a.m., when the whistle was blown. We would salute the Union Jack and say a Pledge. Then the teacher would go along the lines inspecting our fingernails and shoes. Woe betide any child whose finger nails and shoes were not clean, or whose hair was untidy.

Someone in the group would be selected for Observation of the various cloud forms and the effect upon the weather before another whistle was blown to signal the time for marching into school.

Sincere thanks to Laura May for her contribution.
I was born at the Curramulka Hospital, the youngest of 7 children and a third generation descendant of the original Hayles family settlers. I attended Curramulka Primary School, and then had three years of college in Adelaide. I have lived all but 18 years of my life in the Curramulka District. My great-grandparents, grandfather and great uncle moved to here in 1881 after purchasing land 10 kms north east of Curramulka on the Ardrossan road. They initially lived in a tent, and then a hut. The old cottage just along from the “twelve mile” was my grandparent’s first home. My father used to ride a horse to Curramulka school from there and his sisters used to board at Curramulka whilst attending school. Imagine what the area was like in those early days. It was covered by trees which had to be cleared by hand using axes and saws, really backbreaking work. In those days all farming was done with teams of horses, and all transport was on horseback or in horse drawn cart.

Up to 1874 most of the land east, west and south of Curramulka was leased from the Government as station country by two gentlemen, Mr.Anstey and Mr.Giles. Mr.Stephen Goldsworthy held country extending north along the coast to Black Point, and inland almost to Mount Rat, under a separate lease. These men received notice from the government that the area, later known as the Hundred of Curramulka, would be opened up as farmland. So began the settling of Curramulka as we know it today. The land was first advertised in 1876. The first to take up the offer chose land that was Sheoak tree covered as these trees were much easier to remove than the mallee, little realising that the mallee
grew in deeper, and therefore better, soil. Those who came second in the selection of land proved to be the winners.

My Grandmothers brothers William, John and Frances Gregor were named amongst the first original landowners in the district. Mr. Phillip Gregor is a descendant, and still works some of the land. The names of Cameron, Goldsworthy, Litster, Lovelock, May, Parsons, Stone, Watters, Agnew and Short are all familiar names in the district and descendants of original farm owners. The availability of water was always a problem. The clearing and farming of the cleared land occupied all their time. The farmers had no time to establish holding dams or other means of water storage, so they would have to cart water from the wells that had been established by the previous station owners, sometimes from many kilometres away. Remembering that the only "horse power" was really draft horses, and that when you got to the well many other people on the same mission might be queued up ahead of you, the task could often take from sun-up to sundown.

Quite often these wells would dry up with the over demand. Depending on the numbers of stock and people needing the water at home, the poor fellow carting the water may have just unloaded it before having to go straight back to the well for a further supply.

The Curramulka Well was established in 1865, remarkably a natural hole in the ground approximately 27 metres deep and providing an endless supply of water to the township and surrounding district. The use of the well became unnecessary when the pipeline that carries our water supply was built in the early 1960’s.

Electric power for the township was provided by a huge generator till the early 1950’s The farms of the district provided their own power generators before the provision of a power supply became available in the mid 60’s. Since then our power supply has been provided by the Port Augusta Power Station.

History has proven that most families don’t remain in farming past the third generation. The Hayles family is now in its fourth generation of farmers, as are all but three of the farming names I quoted earlier as original settlers. Despite toiling hard from dawn to dusk, these original settlers found time for sport, establishing sporting bodies which still exist today.

The cricket club was formed during the winter of 1877 soon after the first crops had been sown. This was followed by the now defunct Athletics Club and Rifle Club, both founded in 1878, and the Coursing Club founded at the beginning of the 20th century. It wasn’t until 1888 that the Football Club was formed. The original oval was down near the golf club house. In 1910 the legal formalities were completed to set aside the present oval area for sporting purposes.

The most noteworthy footballer from Curramulka was the late Harold (Dribbler) Hawke, who won the Magarey Medal in 1937, playing football until he was 51 years of age.

In 1887 the first race meeting was held. By 1900 a tennis court had been established for social tennis. With the formation of the Golf Club in 1924, the
Tennis Association in 1927, Bowls Club in 1945, Netball (formerly called women’s basketball) in 1952 and Basketball in 1959, Curramulka residents have proudly and successfully competed in sporting events.

Over the years the township of Curramulka has provided work opportunities in such businesses as its 2 general stores, 2 butcher shops, 3 garages, insurance and stock agents, the hotel, delicatessen, bank and hospital, greengrocers, carriers and a barber shop. Mechanisation of farm machinery has led to less people needed to work and maintain farms. This in turn has sorely affected local employment in both farming and businesses in the town. People have been forced to seek employment elsewhere, mainly in Adelaide. The loss of the younger generations from small country communities is foretelling a significant effect on the future of the township and surrounding district settled by our forebears all those many years ago.
In order to find out what Curramulka was previously like, the Upper Primary Class invited highly respected local resident Rex Watters to take the students on a tour of the town. The following is the really interesting information he talked about as the class toured with him in the school bus.

If you should travel west from the back gate of Curramulka Football Oval along High Street, you pass on your left, the site of the Doctor’s residence, the consulting rooms and the Curramulka Private Hospital.

Across the road from the hospital is the Baptist Church, now a residence. This building was used as a schoolroom in 1939 when school enrolments dictated that a third teacher be employed.

Continuing on, the triangular War Memorial Gardens are situated at the junction of High Street and Main Street. The gates and arch at the entrance are known as the Melross Thomas Gate, a tribute to the only serviceman from Curramulka to lose his life in World War 2.

Across the road from the Memorial Gardens you will find the Institute, first built in 1884 and enlarged in 1906. A supper room was added and completed by 1922. For many years Benbow’s Picture Shows were presented on a Saturday night, a treat for young and old.

Dances and balls were also held at the Institute. Curramulka having the reputation of having the fastest floor of all the towns since the boards were polished to shine like glass.

A new library was erected at the High Street frontage.

In 1938 school was held at the institute while the local school building was upgraded.

Alongside the Institute is the Uniting Church. This building was the third Methodist church to be built in Curramulka, the foundation stone being laid in 1911.

Previously there was another building on this site, an older church, built in 1878 as the second Wesleyan church. This was later used as a Sunday School. When it became obvious that this building was deteriorating badly, it was demolished in the late 1990’s.

There is a stone cairn in the area where the Sunday school building once stood.

After crossing over Fourth Street we pass, on our right, the site of the old grain store, used in the early days for this purpose. Later travelling salesmen visiting the town to display their clothes and merchandise used it as their base. The grain store also served as a baker’s shop and for a time Mr. Rex Watters cut hair here.

The building was vacant for sometime before finally being demolished.
The original bank building was built alongside the Grain Store. When the new Bank of Adelaide was built, the old bank became Mr Gordon Pointon’s barber and men’s wear shop.

It has also been used as a betting shop and as a dentistry on a once a week basis. Alongside the bank building was a general store and drapery. Saturday night shopping was available and the grocer called at farms to collect orders and distribute the groceries as a weekly service.

It is now a private residence, at present occupied by the Briggs/Anderson family.

Directly across the road from the bank buildings, is the current business operated by Mr. A Cook, Curramulka Rural Supplies. This building originally housed the blacksmith factory of Mr. Dan Tucker. Here the first stump jump ploughs were manufactured.

By the end of World War 2 this building had become a motor garage, supplying the town with electric power.

In 1947 there was a fire, which destroyed Tucker Brothers Central Motor Garages.

Dalgety’s had an office in Tucker Brothers in the 1960’s before building their office on First Street.

Curramulka General Store, situated alongside Curramulka Rural Agencies, has had many changes of ownership.

Where they once stocked groceries and drapery, they now stock mainly grocery items. Half of the shopfront is occupied by with a Co-op where people sell crafts and second hand goods.

At present Curramulka Supplies is the outlet for bread, meat, fruit and vegetables and is also the agency for Australia Post and Bank S.A.

The Post Office on the corner of the Main Street and Reserve Terrace has been closed and has been converted to a private residence. Mrs. Blythman makes good use of the large old post office counter for sewing and book covering for the school.

Continuing on down Main Street and crossing Third Street we come to the Hotel on the corner on our right.

Erection of this building was commenced in 1878 and it opened for business in June 1879. The building in the outyards of the hotel was once a two storeyed barn with a loft and supplied chaff for the horses of travellers. It has since been demolished.

In the past commercial travellers were regular visitors to the Peninsula, taking orders from local businesses, staying overnight at the hotels. But with advances in communications and marketing strategies this is no longer as common.

The Town Reserve is where the Town Well is situated, and is opposite the Curramulka Hotel.

For many years it was the scene of Guy Fawke’s celebrations, when huge bonfires were lit and “guys” with exploding crackers delighted the children who gathered from far and wide to enjoy the spectacle and let off their own Catherine Wheels, rockets, jumping jacks and sparklers.

Unfortunately the practice had to be abandoned because of the danger of bush fire.
Curramulka’s Delicatessen was situated alongside the Reserve and for many years this was not only the deli, but also a billiard room, a barbershop and a green grocery. Once again it is now a private residence.
Alongside the Deli was a tin building from which a carpenter operated. This building is now a private residence.
In 1945 farmland occupied the site of the present bowling green, tennis courts, basketball courts and R.S.L. Hall. The R.SL club room was opened in 1958 and is now used by the playgroup. This land was leased to the Progress Association by Mr Hec Correll.
Curramulka District is renowned for its sporting achievements.
Now if we turn around and venture up Third Street, the house immediately north of the hotel was a saddlery and the one north of it was a wheelwrights premises.
In the 1920’s two dressmakers had a workshop in this house.
Across the road is the first hospital, built and run by a very competent nurse in 1912. Her name was Mrs. Lockyer. There is a hitching post by the old hospital, one of the very few remaining in towns today.
People visiting the town used hitching posts to tether their horses while they went about their business just as the cowboys do in the old Westerns. There is another hitching post situated in Fourth Street.
The old hospital had two wards, one for men, the other for women. There was a morgue alongside the hospital building.
If we retrace our steps up the Main Street to pass the Memorial Gardens we will see the last butcher shop as well as Elder’s. Cross Fifth Street to Sixth Street and we will find the site of a fuel depot on the corner. Another fuel depot and transport base was at Mr. Jim Thomas’s till he retired. Main Street leads us across East Terrace to the main Oval gates. Should we continue along the road it will lead us past the Golf Club House to the cemetery.
The golf course is built on parklands. For many years townspeople grazed their milking cows on the parklands for there was no milk supplier in the town.
There have been two butcher shops in the town; one in Fourth Street and the other previously mentioned one in Main Street. In the past Curramulka can also boast of having several outlets for fruit and vegetables.
The present day school was established in 1880 but the first school lessons were held in the wood and iron Wesleyan chapel built across the road from the well. These days buses transport the children from outlying areas to school.
In its heyday Curramulka was a flourishing town with two grocers, two garages in the town (and one a few miles out), two butchers, a baker, a delicatessen, a barber and two permanent green grocers as well as greengrocers’ delivery trucks traversing the area.
Most farmers employed workingmen for seeding, harvest, bag sewing, carting and lumping. As the population decreased so did the need for many services. Thus their demise or change of usage to private houses.
At the Port Vincent turn off you will find a picnic area tucked away in the Reserve. Further along Reserve Terrace is St. Christopher’s Anglican Church, built in 1914.
Prior to the building of the church mission services were held at various locations.
Mr. Rex Watters

The First Hospital
Old Consulting Room
Old Hospital
Memorial Park
Curramulka Institute
The Original First Bank
The Old Post Office
RSL Hall
St. Christopher’s Anglican Church
Over £15,000 Damage In Garage Fire

PORT VINCENT, Nov. 23.

Damage estimated at more than £15,000 was caused at Currambilga last night when the Central Motor Garage belonging to Messrs. Tucker Bros., and the town's electric power plant, were completely destroyed in one of the biggest fires on Yorketown for many years.

Regarded as one of the best equipped garages on the Peninsula, the building contained two trucks, two tankers, three fuel tankers, a refrigerator, an engine, engines, and other machinery, all of which were destroyed.

One of the trucks belonged to Mr. Keith Reid, and the other to Mr. R. Hiles, both of Currambilga. Both were the property of Messrs. Tucker Bros.

Portion of the building, which was mostly of iron and wood, was used as a hairdressing salon by Mr. G. Polton.

The cause of the outbreak, which was not discovered until about 11.30 p.m. when the fire in the theatre building broke out, is not known.

Building Gutted

Smoke from burning oil could be seen 10 miles away, and at times the flames were nearly 60 feet high.

The pressure of the town water supply, which is drawn from a well, is too weak to be of any assistance in quelling the fire.

Currambilga is now without a lighting system but it is hoped to install an emergency plant by running a generator off a tractor in the next day or so.

Many of the office records and the tools of the trade were saved, and it is believed that the building and much of the equipment was saved.

Postmasters are greatly recommended to the garage for the coming harvest.

Mounted Constables' House, of Minilah, is making enquiries.
CURRAMULKA SCHOOL  By Mrs Audrey Tucker

Curramulka School has maintained a close parent –teacher relationship since it commenced on a provisional basis in 1878 when Miss Isabella McLeod first conducted lessons in the Wesleyan Chapel by the Town Well.

In 1880 a wooden construction was erected before the present main stone building was constructed in 1891. Originally it had a triple stepped floor along which the long desks rose in tiers, younger students at the front, older students at the back.

Around about this time monitors, who had completed their own schooling, served an apprenticeship in teaching. This form of teacher training existed in South Australia till 1930. The school was remodelled in 1938 with the addition of a brushwood arbour.

With the purchase of a movie projector and wireless set in the 1940”s, Curramulka School was moving forward.

The introduction of school bus services in 1947, the erection of portable classrooms, the extensive bituminising of the school grounds and the acquisition of lands for the well-tended grassed oval have all added to the school’s impact on the community.

Added to that we now have adequate computers for the children’s use, and a whole range of modern technological improvements.

Other schools in the district, which were established at the turn of the last century and existed up to the 1950’s, warrant a mention.

Mt. Rat Crossroads School began in the Wesleyan Chapel at Mt. Rat, opening in November 1878 and enrolling 12 children, only 24 days before the end of the year.
In 1881 a provisional school was built near Mt. Rat Hotel, and between 1882 and 1884 there were between 70 and 80 enrolments with an average attendance of 30. This building was eventually shifted to Waraultee. In 1905 Mr Reade built a new school at Mr. Rat Wells which was used for the next 46 years.

Arbour Day and the school picnic were important annual functions at the school. Cranbrook School was opened from 1892 to 1906, and reopened from 1914 to 1951. Children walked to school, sometimes a long distance. Frequently they walked barefoot, carrying their boots which they put on for the duration of the school day. During World War Two. The children were involved in activities, such as collecting paper, scrap metal, bones etc. for the schools Patriotic Fund. Money raising activities such as euchre card evenings and dances were held at the school building at weekends.

The Hundred of Curramulka School, situated near the lake on the Port Vincent Road, opened in 1901 with an enrolment of 18. It closed in 1904, and then briefly reopened in 1929.

Roolama School, the name made up from letters taken from the names of families in the district, opened in 1926 and closed in 1937 due to lack of numbers.

Children often walked barefoot to school, carrying the tin billy which contained their lunch, by the handle.

Raeburn School, a converted room, at the end of a barn, was opened in 1928. Teachers boarded with the parents of school children. The rural setting offered wonderful opportunities for Nature Study, as well as places to hide when school “went in” after play. The school was closed in 1940.

All of these schools have played their part in the education of the children of the district.

I personally played a part, teaching at Curramulka School for almost 30 years. I had attended Stansbury Primary School until Grade 7 when I passed the Qualifying Certificate and obtained a Q. C. Exhibition. From the Exhibition I received 30 pounds for 3 years and this helped towards paying my board when I attended Kadina High School.

At the time there was only a Higher Primary School at Minlaton, but no Secondary school and there were no Area schools at Maitland or Yorketown. After matriculating from High School I was still too young to attend teachers college so spent a year as a junior teacher at Brentwood for the first term, and Warooka for the last two terms.

The school year at that time was divided into three terms.

As an Adelaide Teachers College student in 1946 and 1947 I boarded at a Y.W.C.A. Hostel in Adelaide.

The Second World War had just ended and there were a number of ex-servicemen attending the college at that time, even though many of them were not much older than we were, their war experiences made them seem much older. It was an unusual time for us and them.

My first appointment after leaving Teachers College was at Horndale, a little one teacher school near Jamestown. The children rode to school on horse-back or in horse-drawn carts. I was always terrified that I might have to kill a snake in the schoolyard, but fortunately this didn’t happen.

From Horndale I was transferred to Bute where I taught the middle grades and Home Science, the latter not very successfully. After a year as a Junior Primary
teacher at my home town of Stansbury I was married and resigned from teaching until I was asked to go back to it in September, 1958. This was due to a shortage of teachers.

I stayed at Curramulka for almost 30 years, teaching my own children, my nieces, nephews and the children of my friends. Mrs Doreen Whyte taught with me at Curramulka for many years, and I also taught with Mrs Cheryl Agnew, Mrs Lyn Tilbrook and Mrs Beth Faulkner.

When I first began teaching at Curramulka, Richard, my eldest son was in Grade 1 and the twins, who were not at the time five years old, came to school with me since there was no kindergarten at Minlaton at the time.

I was a temporary assistant, for in those days married women were not permitted to be on the permanent staff. In fact, you signed a bond requiring you to repay money to The Education Department if you married within three years of teaching and you had to resign from teaching when marrying. As a temporary teacher I was not allowed to take out superannuation, nor could I be promoted.

I was a ‘temporary teacher’ for almost twenty years. The school was very different in 1958. We had no office, no telephone, no staffroom, no facilities to make coffee, no television, no teacher aides or clerical or office assistants. Yard duty lived up to its name. We were out in the yard. Every day we had assembly in the morning before going into school, and most afternoons lined up again after the lunch break. On Mondays we saluted the flag, pledged our allegiance to the Queen and country, and sang “The Song of Australia” followed by “The National Anthem”. Sometimes there was an inspection of hands and nails to check on cleanliness before we marched into school to the beat of the big drum and the kettledrum. At times there was a pipe band also.

I taught under Mr Laragy (briefly), Mr Woods, Mr Kerin, Mr Sladden, Mr Guerin, Mr Lange, Mr Scheer, Mr Frank, Mr Schubert, Mr Hancock, Mr Rayner, and Mr Lindus. In those days women were never appointed as School Principals, although I was occasionally Acting Principal in latter years if the Head Master was absent for a few weeks.

The Principal, or Head Master as he was then called, used to cane boys for things such as swearing, being naughty, cheeky or inattentive. Girls didn’t get the cane. The Principal was supposed to write up canings in the Punishment Book, but I suspect there were more canings than entries.

I used to punish the children by sitting them on the Naughty Seat at recess time. This seat was outside my classroom, and they were expected to sit there without playing until given permission to leave. They hated it because everyone knew that they’d been naughty. Recently a 30 year old ex-pupil told me how he hated that seat, and he should know. He did penance on it frequently.

Children starting school in 1958 learnt to read from the “Happy Venture Readers” - Here is Dick. Here is Dora. etc. Actually they memorized much of the text, and sometimes wondered whether they learnt to read in spite of us teachers, and not because of us.

There was no provision made either for truly gifted children. During my time at Curramulka I taught two really clever children but little effort was made to fulfil their needs because these needs were not recognised.

I also taught a profoundly deaf girl who would otherwise have had to leave home to attend Townsend House. She is now a renowned artist. I also taught a blind child who later transferred to Townsend House where more facilities for teaching the blind existed.
When I started teaching at Curramulka children in the J.P. classes sat in dual desks with a seat that tipped back. Their books were stored in a shelf under the desk top. Later they were provided with wood and iron tables from which they suspended a hessian book bag hooked onto two cup hooks. At the end of each term we scrubbed these wooden tables and matching chairs. By the time I retired from teaching children sat at laminated tables and their belongings were stored in individual plastic drawers fitted into cabinets on castors. When I first returned in 1958 the School Inspector used to make two visits per annum to schools, putting fear into the hearts of pupils and teachers alike. He used to give an examination to all pupils, and the teacher’s efforts and reputation were judged on the performance of their pupils. As well we had Friday tests, even for Year 1 children, where they were tested on the weeks work in Dictation & Spelling, Arithmetic and Mental Arithmetic. When Year 7 students sat for the Qualifying Certificate, students from little, one teacher schools used to travel to a bigger centre for the examination, which was set by a Public Examination Board. Just imagine how these children must have felt. Alone, unknown, isolated and scared! Later children had to pass a Progress Certificate; an examination set by the school, before being accepted by the secondary school. At the end of each term in Primary Schools an examination was set. Your promotion into the next grade was determined by your exam results at the end of the year. Prize books were usually given to the Dux of the grade.

Sports Days have always been important to Curramulka School. Initially we held internal Sports Days with the houses Eyre, Flinders and Sturt competing for a House Shield. The children were trained like robots. At a whistle they rose, another whistle dispatched them to their team places in readiness for the game, and another blast on the whistle started the game. Discipline was never a problem. Later we became involved in Interschool Sport where too much of the competitive spirit was frowned upon. We did, however send teams away to S.A.P.S.A.S.A., Curramulka almost always supplying players. Other important days were Arbor Day when trees were planted. Visiting Day when parents and families visited the school and inspected the children’s work and the School Concert where every student took part in some aspect of the programme. Woodwork was taught to Grade 6 and 7 boys, and the girls displayed their sewing at mannequin parades, which I used to compere. Schools regularly displayed work at the Minlaton Show. In all these activities, Curramulka School has played a proud and important role with great parental support. Sincere thanks to Audrey Tucker for her contribution to our Curry Book and for the wonderful work she did in her 30 years at Curramulka Primary School.
Curramulka Caves-John Juers

Our early settlers first visited the Curramulka Caves at Corra-Lynne in August 1880. Since that date they have presented a challenge to cave explorers. The caves are made of limestone, there are stalactites, which hang down from the roof and stalagmites, which grow up from the floor. These are not significant enough to present a tourist attraction. No one, except the Star Force and members of CESAG (Cave Exploration Group of S.A), is allowed entry to the caves.

Initial visitors were only sightseeing. No systematic exploration or mapping was carried out.

By 1886 the settlers were aware of two levels of passages and chambers. A network of tunnels branch off at all sorts of angles and at close intervals. Later a third level was revealed. It is impossible to travel more than 100 feet along any tunnel without meeting another branching off in some direction. Nothing could be easier than getting lost in Corra-Lynne.

In the early 1950’s local Boy Scouts used to explore the then known parts of the caves. Then in 1955 the Cave Exploration Group of South Australia [CEGSA] was formed to explore and map the caves. Geologists, palaeontologists [people who study fossils] naturalists, surveyors, map markers and photographers have all played a part in mapping these caves.

In 1974 a survey team used a radio direction finder to detail and accurately map the three levels of Corra-Lynne. It was determined that they are the biggest caves in the Southern Hemisphere. They stretch underground for about 10 km.

Features of Corra-Lynne Caves are Grand Central, an intersection of tunnels. As well there are the Wombat Runs and Taylor’s Tomb where a caver was just saved from death when he began sliding over the edge of a deep hole. There is The Walrus, with stalactites like a walrus’s tusks, and The Drumstone, which booms when hit.

In addition, there is The Town Cave, sometimes known as the Well Cave. This is a “live” cave, (still forming and growing)

The Town Cave was discovered when searching for water, a necessity, for the first settlers to provide for their sheep and horses, as well as themselves. The well, situated in the Reserve across the road from the Curramulka Hotel, was established in 1865. No matter how much water was raised or pumped from it when it was the town and district's water supply, the water level never fell. It is said that it is fed by an underground river that flows from Curramulka to Sheoak Flat

About halfway down the well is a large cave. Blasting from the nearby limestone quarry has loosened many stones in the well. In its current condition it is too dangerous to allow access. Members of CEGSA would like to make this cave safer but are unable to do so because of Government regulations.

Fossils have been found in the caves and quarry. Bones have been found of a marsupial lion and the giant wombat. In recent years, rabbits, possums, wombats and birds have been trapped in the caves but no human remains have ever been found.
Over the years there have been accidents including one fatality. This occurred when a little boy was killed when he fell in after visiting the cave at the town well.

The early settlers found other caves in Curramulka. Shepherds employed by Matthew Goldsworthy’s great, great grandfather, who had a sheep run in the days before the land was farmed, filled one in. The Agnew family used one as a pit for the carcasses of animals, which had died. This was a collapsed cave known as a sinkhole. The Cave Exploration Group later cleaned this one out.

In its caves Curramulka has got a unique heritage. Sincere thanks to Mr John Juers for providing this information for the students of Curramulka Primary School.

**Cave entrance**

**Mr. John Juers**
Wheat & Barley by Jeffrey Clift

150 years ago wheat was first grown on Yorke Peninsula. Much of the production went to local use in Adelaide, and the extra went to England, sold at three pence a bushel. In 1883 John Ridley invented a stripper which made harvesting easier. Windjammers sailed into the bays of the peninsula, loaded and carried the grain overseas. Many streets in the coastal towns bear the names of these magnificent ships.

Mr. Jeff Clift, a local farmer, spoke to the students of Curramulka Primary School about the growing of wheat and barley. His family came originally from England and Scotland before settling at Port Noarlunga, south of Adelaide. Mr. Clift’s family settled on York Peninsula before shifting to Bookabie (Eyre Peninsula) where his father was born. The family of the late Mr. Jack Kemp, former resident of Curramulka, lived across from the road from them. Both families later moved back to Yorke Peninsula, for which they were very grateful. In 1950 the Ardrossan silo was built and managed by South Australian Co-Operative Bulk Handling. Mr. Clift was a director and chairman of SACBH for twelve years. South Australian co-operative Bulk Handling was established to provide for the local farming community. SACBH has now changed name to Ausbulk.

Wheat is used for making flour. Durham wheat is the best variety. It was brought to Australia from Italy, and it is used in making pasta and Spaghetti. Today, Italy purchases Durham wheat from S.A. San Remo, one of the world’s largest pasta producers, buys their wheat, paying $250 to $300 a ton. The moisture content is acceptable at twelve and a half %. If it exceeds that, the farmer has to take it home until it meets requirements.

Malting Barley is used for malting beer. Coopers buy barley to make beer. Yorke Peninsula grows the best barley in the world. Minlaton and the surrounding district are known as the barley capital of the world. Malting Barley is sold to China and Japan and some Arabs nations where people are developing a taste for beer.
Ausbulk also handles peas, beans, lentils and canola. These have become major crops, supplementing wool and sheep growing on the peninsula. Canola is exported to China, Japan and Pakistan. In 2002 it was priced at $474 a ton and is a very useful product. Canola seed is crushed to produce oil, and canola meal is used as a high protein livestock feed. Canola oil is used for a range of cooking purposes, for cosmetics and to help make a range of other products, including industrial lubricants, fungicides, herbicides and pesticides.

Before silos were introduced farmers bagged their grain. Bags were carted to grain stacks at ports, or inland to railway sidings, and then shipped by ketches or sent by train. The use of bags provided employment for rural workers; bag sewing, bag carting by carriers, bag lumping by strong men who "lumped" the bags onto their shoulders and backs to carry them. Nowadays farmers live a far less arduous life. Powerful tractors with air-conditioned cabs are seen everywhere. Their auto-headers are huge and are very expensive. Other machinery on farms are air seeders, sprayers, slasher, plough, super spreader which make the farmer’s work more efficient.

Many problems are encountered at the silos. Small conical snails can be a problem too. They are sprayed and baited, and the silo is fumigated with methyl bromide. Locusts are sprayed also but this happens in the paddocks. During a mouse plague however, there are no problems because the silo cells are mouse proof, and the edges of the bunkers are sealed with bitumen and methyl bromide.

Mr. Clift told us that over 1.4 million tonnes of grain were held in the silos at Ardrossan, Bute, Paskeville, Pt. Giles and Wallaroo in 2001. This was nearly as much as the amount produced by the whole of Eyre Peninsula. The grain industry in Southern Yorke Peninsula is very significant.
S.Y.P BLUE METAL QUARRY

Situated just outside the town limits of Curramulka is the SYP Blue Metal Quarry. It was originally opened by Quarry industries in the late 1940’s after the Second World War to supply metal for much needed road building. Mr David Newbold, the present owner and operator, has worked there for 25 years, but started in business in 1989. The materials quarried are dolomitic limestone, the larger armour rock being currently used for such projects as the breakwater at Pt Turton, and the finer crushed rock for concrete aggregate and road sealing aggregate.

At present there are eleven people employed at the quarry, six in the quarry itself and another five as truck operates who operate the quarry owned trucks. In the quarry are excavator operators, loader operators, dump truck operators, crusher operators and drillers. The rock is supplied to areas south of Maitland and Ardrossan on Yorke Peninsula, and occasionally beyond that.

Mr Newbold conducted us around the quarry to view it in operation. First we visited the crushing plant where a series of screens emptied rock of four different sizes (14 mil, 10 mil, 7 mil and fine crusher dust) onto different belts for stockpiling for use in concrete mix, sealing for roads and topping for roads. We also saw a huge machine capable of dealing with 200 tons per hour of metal, which sprayed water onto road metal so that it could be rolled immediately after delivery.

Two large excavators, one fitted with a big hammer to break the rocks down, periodically loaded waiting trucks. A safety feature for the excavator operators is the distance they can operate from the quarry face, this ensures the operators safety in the event of a rock fall. Safety barriers are erected to prevent people from entering whilst the machines are operating.

The loader operators have scales so they can estimate the weight on the trucks that they are loading. Large rocks can weight from 3 to 10 tons. The driller bores a series of 89 mil holes into which goes 3 tons of explosive called Nitropril. He sets them so there are a series of detonations rather than one explosion.

Safety issues at the quarry are checked by the Mines Dept. Equipment such as guards on moving parts of the machines, safety helmets ear plugs and safety glasses are all provided.

There is still 100 million tons of rock on this 100 acre site, so the quarry will continue to operate for many years. Whilst it is still in operation, there is no obligation on the owner to effect environmental repair. However, Mr. Newbold undertakes to plant 50 trees per year on the site.

The Adelaide Museum sends geologists to look at the seams and fissures in the quarry face from which a giant wombat tooth and a giant python vertebra have been excavated. The quarry has provided employment to many over the years, and will continue to do so for many more.
S.Y.P BLUE METAL QUARRY

Loading the truck

The crushing plant

The drilling rig

David Newbold, Billy Matic, Matthew Goldsworthy & Audrey Tucker
OSTRICH FARM Lyn and Tony Hayles

On June 28th years 5 to 7 of Curramulka Primary School wended our way north east of Curramulka Township to visit Tony and Lyn Hayles’s ostrich farm. We were anxious to learn all that we could about this venture.

Due to the fact that farming was not as commercially viable as in the past, Lyn and Tony felt the need to diversify their activities, but what direction should they take?

After considering the options of concentrating upon sheep and cattle, and after consultation with Lyn’s brother and sister, it was decided that ostrich farming would furnish the best return for their investment.

To establish such a farm it was necessary to purchase a breeding pair, which cost them $8000. Initially there were many problems to be overcome. They had trouble incubating the eggs. When they had only two pairs of ostriches they realised that it was insufficient because they were incubating one chick only. They needed to expand the numbers. They now have 39 breeding birds and over 200 birds altogether.

Tony and Lyn learnt from experience about the care and maintenance of ostriches. Special care was needed with eggs. The incubation was to remain at a constant temperature of 36.4c, with a humidity of 20%. Eggs had to be rotated until they hatched, taking 38 to 42 days. Each egg weighs 1.2kg. The chicks have to be kept warm and sheltered. High fences are required to contain the birds with straw bales around the perimeter to protect them from running into the wire.

These are big birds, growing to a height of 3 metres (9 feet) and weighing in at 80 to 140kg. The ostriches sometimes manage to dig under the fence to escape. Since they can run at from 45 to 60 kph, you can imagine the difficulties experienced in re-penning them.

Their food consists of whole grains, peas, beans, barley, lucerne and wheat, which is pre mixed. They eat one and a half kg. of grain per day and between the 200 ostriches they consume one and a half tonne of grain per week. They have such powerful legs, and kick when they attack, it is advisable to keep out of their way. When the male has a red neck it means that he is feeling aggressive and ready to attack.

When transporting ostriches it is necessary to have them hooded and transported at night because otherwise they get spooked. When ostriches are marketed, they are trucked live to the slaughtering facility. Ostriches are slaughtered for their meat, leather and feathers. Australians do not buy our meat. It finds a market in Japan, Europe and Asia. The feathers are used for feather boas, and feather dusters for computers and the hide is used to make a very fine leather.

Some artists use the eggs for painting and carving in egg artistry. Tony and Lyn have some beautiful samples at the farm.

Before leaving the farm Monica Goodes, a year 7 student of Curramulka School, thanked Tony and Lyn for hosting a very interesting and informative visit, and presented them with a small gift of appreciation.
OSTRICH FARM  Lyn and Tony Hayles

Charlie Paech and Joseph Parsons
Young ostriches

Male ostrich display
Ostrich products

Mature ostriches
Ostrich egg
Thoroughbred Horses by Ron Daniels

On Friday 28th June 2002, the Upper Primary Class went to see Mr. Daniels to find out about thoroughbred horses. He lives very close to Curramulka. Mr. Daniels has been interested in horses most of his life. He breeds the horses to race at different race meetings and he breeds them to sell at the yearling sales.

Two of his most successful horses were Arnie, which had 14 wins from 31 starts and Gratton Street which had 12 wins and one second place from 25 starts, before fracturing a pedal bone.

Looking after horses is a big job. They have to be fed chaff and lucerne, and minerals mixed with molasses, special food because they have to keep up their stamina. They have to groom them daily. They have to teach them from a young age to get used to handling and being shod by a blacksmith to protect their feet. These have to be kept clean. They have to train them, ride them daily and take them swimming. Mr. Daniels takes them to Waraultee beach to swim.

They are broken in at two years. First they have to adjust to having a bit in their mouths, then to having a bridle on, then to walk when the trainer wants them to. Trainers use a long rope and stand behind the horse. Once the horses are shod, they learn to trot around the lunging area. They then learn to canter and do pace work. At ¾ pace they should take 17 seconds to cover 200 metres, at an even pace they do 15 seconds per 200 metres, and at a gallop, if they are really good, they cover 200 meters in 11 seconds. Most horse breakers break in horses gently and kindly.

All horses have their birthday on the same day, August 1st. They can live more than 25 years. Ron sends his mares off to be mated which can cost from $1500 to $20,000 depending on the stallion. Some of his horses came from Glen Logan Park. Mares are mated in September. The gestation period before the foal is born is for 11 months. This means that foals should be born after August 1st, the official birthday of horses.

Horses need a dentist like people do. Where they chew the bit they have to get their teeth filled. Horses can get colic, which can kill them so they have to watch what they eat. Racehorses can get problems with their legs, which can get very serious. The vet is called in for problems with horses’ joints, for major cuts and illnesses or if antibiotics are needed. The daily routine on this horse stud is as follows. 7am feed and water the horses, check for injuries, and prepare feedlots. For the next two hours the horses are taken one at a time to be worked out. Some are taken for a swim. Between 3 and 6 p.m. the horses are fed, brushed and groomed. A trotting machine at the farm is not viable because the ground is too rocky.
At his farm Mr. Daniel also has ducks, turkeys, silkies, geese and cats.

Thank you to Mr. Daniels for this interesting information.